CHAPTER-III

ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

3.1 Income
3.2 Occupation and Employment
3.3 Decision Making
DETERMINANTS AFFECTING WOMEN STATUS

CHAPTER THIRD FALLS in two parts. The first part elaborates in occupation, decision making capacity in women, education, health & family welfare and, religion with the importance & review as well as problems for advancing suggestions. Next part of the chapter has been discussed in Chapter IV following.

INCOME-OCCUPATION:

A women, like a man represents an economic unit and therefore, the planning and programming for socio-economic development of the country has to take cognizance of this dimension. The late realization of this fact has made our planners review the status and issues related to women in the light of the plan provisions in order to chalk out new programmes and activities for women’s development. A systematic effort in this direction
encompassing all areas of women's development was made in the mid sixties.

**OCCUPATION:**

According to occupational patterns, educators like teachers, lecturers, and heads of institutions formed almost 18 percent of the total respondents. Another 18 percent were professionals, like doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc., 36 percent self-employed, 10 percent labourers and daily wage workers, and the remaining 18 percent employed in offices and banks. 72 percent of the respondents were aware of employment opportunities for women. Except daily wage and labourers, the rest of the respondents had some idea about the status of women in society.

Sixty seven percent of the respondents had 20 to 30 years of work experience. They were mainly educators, officers, and professionals. Six percent of them including business women and labourers have been working for the last 30 to 40 years.

**INCOME**

The average monthly income of the respondents was Rs. 3,060 though there were business women who earned more than Rs. 7,000 per month. Similarly, there are also some women, like labourers, whose earnings were below Rs. 1,000 per month.
The average monthly income of the husband was estimated at Rs. 3,290 per month. From this it is evident that family needs at current prices, could not meet easily with only the husband's income. Therefore female employment has become inevitable.

Above 70 percent of the respondents drew their salaries on a monthly basis while 24 percent were daily wage earners. Only four percent of the employees got their salaries weekly, and two percent, annually.

A majority of the women were found to have achieved success in their jobs. Most women (64 percent of the respondents said they spent their salaries for family needs only.

It was found that a majority of the respondents were unable to take independent decisions at home or in the office. The husband or their male colleagues tried to influence the decisions made by the women both at home and at work.

Secondly, majority of the working women in Elura said they had inadequate facilities at work for relaxation.

The study showed that the respondents had not enough time to pursue their personal hobbies and activities.

The women generally devoted their time for the welfare of their family members and children, at home.
Thus, 80 percent of employed & self employed women in elur town do not enjoy socio-economic independence, though they were earning.

**In order to improve their status some basic social and psychological changes are required.** Changes in the attitudes of percent and the male population towards working women have to be changes to tally. Simultaneously, the girls should be taught from childhood to be ambitions and career-ordinate. More over, they should be brought up with the idea of becoming self-reliant and bold enough to face the problems they come across.

**GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES:**

The years also saw the enactment of important specific legislation's like the Equal remuneration Act and amendment in the existing legislation's to protect the interest of women.

The was a continuation of the process begun in the 1950's. The creation of a separate, Bureau of Women's Development in the then department of social welfare and the setting up a national committee with the Premise Minister as the Chairman were other development. We new have a separate department of women & child development which not only implements a number of programmes but also acts as a nodal point on matters relating to women's development.
The sixth plan (1980-85) for the first time presented an integrated strategy for women's development by considering them equal partners and not just beneficiaries of welfare. It emphasised a multi-sectoral approach to the development of women and drew specific attention to inter-linkages. The seventh plan continued this strategy. In recent years a few more important initiatives have been taken. A national perspective plan for women has been prepared which provides directions for the development of women in various fields. The national commission on self-employed women has analyzed the problems affecting the very large number of women engaged in the informal sector and the steps that need to be taken to improve their status.

WOMEN'S STATUS NEEDS RECONSIDERATION:

The high rate of illiteracy and low economic status of rural women stress the need for greater attention to their economic emancipation. The provision of opportunities for independent employment and income to such women boosts their social status. In most of the developing countries Governments are emphasizing the need for development activities for women. In India also, constant efforts are being made by the Government to include women below the poverty line under various schemes. Any appraisal of women's economic roles and their opportunities for participation in economic activities cannot be done in isolation of
the society's stage of development, the socio-cultural attitudes towards women's role in the family and in the wider society, and the social ideology concerning basic components of status. At certain stages of development, capacity for work may provide the highest claim to status. But when society become inegalitarian, leisure may substitute work as the indicator of status.

The debate regarding women's economic role and the need for equality of rights and opportunities for economic participation centres round three arguments:

1. That women's economic subjugation or dependence leads to exploitation and is a denial of social justice and human rights. Both Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi opposed the rigid distinction between men's and women's roles from this standpoint.

2. That the development of a society requires full participation by all section by all sections of the population, and opportunities for full development of the potentialities of women. This is the keynote of the U.N. declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women.

3. That modern trends in demographic and social changes, e.g., rising age of marriage, smaller families, urbanization, migration, rising costs, and standards of living and calls for
greater participation in decision making are introducing major changes in women’s roles and responsibilities. A social crisis would result if women are unable to meet these challenges because of social handicaps.

The opposition to increasing women’s economic activities springs from (1) the conservative view that women’s roles must be confined within rigidly defined limits (patterns of this division of labour between sexes have varied, not only between but even within societies) and (2) the fear that chronic unemployment may result if women enter the labour market on a large scale. The results in theories of women’s ‘marginal’ role in the economy. The theory is, however, inapplicable to agrarian societies where the family is the unit of production, and men, and children, all participate in the production process. Transition from traditional agricultural and how should industry to modern organized industry and services, and from rural to urban areas, destroys the traditional division of labour, and substitutes the competitive relationship between individuals as units of labour for the complementary one of the family. Technological changes in production methods call for new skills. Women, handicapped by lack of opportunities to acquire these new skills, find themselves unwanted by the new economy.
This is the situation that the large masses of Indian women face today. Among cultivators, the artisans and those performing menial services in the traditional village economy, women played a distinctive and accepted role in both production and marketing, and continue to do so wherever the traditional economic forms prevail, particularly among marginal and landless agriculturists, most scheduled castes and tribal communities, and traditional industries and crafts like weaving, basket making, and food processing (by hand). Though there are regional variations in the normal governing women's work a traditional upper the norm that of excluding women from labour outside the family still remains a status symbol, and is often emulated by many who want to enhance their social status.

DECLINING ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN ECONOMY:

The forces which have most affected the role of women in the Indian economy are: the general decline of handicrafts; increasing pressure of population on agriculture; increase of poverty in the rural sector resulting in migration; development of modern industry with its increasing technological advance; the spread of education; and the increasing cost of living, particularly in urban areas. In the initial phase of industrial development, textiles and jute (the earliest industries) as well as plantations and mines continued the traditional pattern of family participation and employed large
number of women and children, confining them to certain unskilled and semi-skilled types of work at lower rates of wages. Technological changes, have since affected the employment of women in these industries adversely. At the same time, the decay of village industries has thrown more and more women on agriculture for their livelihood, increasing their numbers and percentage but reducing their levels of employment. On the other hand, rising costs of living, education, and social change in the urban areas have led to the withdrawal of taboos that earlier affected women of the higher classes and have enabled some of them to enter new professions or occupations in the tertiary sector which were closed to them earlier.

Because of this differential impact of development, a microanalysis of women's economic participation purely in quantitative terms cannot tell the whole story. Any appraisal of women's economic roles has to be separated for specific segments, differentiated by socio-economic and locational characteristics as well as by their degree to adjustment to the economic process. The greatest difficulty in understanding the problems of women's participation has thus been caused by looking at women workers as homogenous group. This assumption has influenced the collection of data, the laws and the policies adopted to improve conditions of
women workers, and also the popularly held nations about women's participation in the economy.

A macro-analysis reveals that women's economic participation has been declining since 1921, both in percentage of workers to total female population and in their percentage to the labour female population and in their percentage to the total labour force. While the total number of women workers declined from 41.8 million in 1911 to 3.2 million in 1971, their percentage in the total labour force declined from 34.44% in 1911 to 17.35% in 1971. The percentage of women workers to the total female population declined from 33.73% in 1911 to 11.86% in 1971. This decline has been even more precipitous in recent years. During 1961-71, while the male and female populations increased by 25% and 24% respectively (20% and 21% in the working age group) and the number of men workers increased by 15.2%, women workers declined by 41.4%.

It is often argued that this decline is the result of changes in the definition of workers adopted by these two censuses. It is a fact that the census basically measures the level of employment of men and tends to ignore the interchangeable roles of women as housewives and gainful workers. Since many of them are unpaid family workers, exclusion of secondary activity from the definition of workers affects the recording of female employment adversely. As
many as 2.3 million such women were recorded as non-workers in the census of 1971, which does not really make a substantial difference. On the other hand, the generally held view that the 1961 definition was very liberal has been found to have not made much difference in the collection of data except in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the female activity rate of 27.5% reported by the 1961 census agrees with the rate of 27.72% reported by the comparable round of the National sample survey of the same year. We therefore think that the impact of changing definitions is only marginal and that the declining participation trend of women has been a continuous one. The ratio of female to male workers has declined in all categories in the rural land in most categories in the urban areas. The participation rates of men and women differ widely in all age groups except the youngest (0 to 14), the difference in urban areas being much higher than in rural areas. The decline from 1961 is clear in all the age groups. This overall decline in the percentage of women workers is visible in all states for both rural and urban areas but is sharper in the urban areas. The distribution of women workers in the nine industrial categories adopted by the census shows their increasing dependence on agriculture and a decline in both the industrial and the service sector.

CATEGORIES OF WOMEN WORKERS:
Our investigation showed that the census categories are not really useful for a proper assessment either of the nature and extent of women's participation in the economy or of their problems and disabilities. We, therefore, classified women workers into two broad categories according to the degree of organisation and nature of problems of their sectors of employment viz, the unorganised and the organised sectors. The difference between these two is not functional as between agriculture, industry and services, because these functions may be found in both sectors. The real difference between them lies in the organisation of productive relations, the degree of penetration of public control and regulation, and recognition by data-collecting agencies and scientific investigation.

The organised sector is characterized by modern relations of production and is regulated by laws that seek to protect the security and working conditions of labour as well as by labour organizations that can negotiate in collective bargaining. This includes the entire public sector of services and industry, as well as that part of the private sector which is regulated. The unorganized sector, which includes agriculture as well as various industries and services, is characterized by the absence of all these protective measures and machinery. Information about socio-economic conditions and work opportunities in this sector is also exceedingly scanty. The status of women workers in India is obvious from the fact that 94% of them...
are found in the unorganized sector leaving only 6% in the organized sector.

I. WOMEN IN THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

The gradual commercialization and modernization of the economy and the efforts made by government to replace traditional by modern institutions of credit and marketing, to stabilize ownership of land and to maintain minimum wages have by no means succeeded in organizing the production relations or in controlling the degree of exploitation of the weaker sections, either in agriculture or in non-agriculture occupations in this sector. Nor have they solved the problems of low productivity, poverty, unemployment, and under-employment. The impact of this intermixture has been greater on women whose wages are uniformly lower than those of men, even within the lower wage structure in this sector. A large number of them are unpaid family workers whose contribution to the family's earnings is not always recognized. Various estimates indicate that they from 15-17% of the male labour force and 41-49% of the female labour force. While relatively more information is available on agricultural workers, there is practically no reliable information on non-agricultural occupations. The census classification of workers by primary activity ignores the overlapping nature of agricultural and non-
agricultural occupations and the seasonal and fluctuating nature of these occupations.

In spite of the difficulties in estimating employment, unemployment, and under-employment in this sector, the committee on unemployment found women to be a greater victim of both unemployment and under-employment. The number of unemployment women in rural areas was estimated to be 4.5 million as against 3.2 million males in 1971. Women constitute nearly 60% of the rural and 56% of the total unemployed in the country. As this estimate takes into account only persons recorded as seeking work the actual number of unemployed women will be much higher, since there is large number who need employment, but do not seek it in the absence of employment opportunities, information and training. Similarly, the number of under-employed women becomes higher than that of men when the hours of work available to them during week is 22 to 28 hours in both rural and urban area. When the hours of work are less, their proportion is less than men.

The basic problems that affect women’s roles and opportunities for employment in this sector spring from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities limited skills and illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status. The occupational status of the women
worker is rural areas. The lack of control over productive resources and a persistent gap between consumption and a persistent gap between consumption expenditure, leading to perpetual indebtedness, deprive them of all bargaining power and occupational mobility.

No reliable data are available for estimating the number and proportion of women below the poverty line. But the higher level of unemployment and under-employment has led us to conclude that their proportion is likely to be higher than that of men. Components of this vast group are the unskilled workers, landless agricultural labourers, of households with uneconomic holdings, and those in traditional village and cottage industries. We received reports of increasing destitution among women from various quarters though no reliable data are available.

The special disabilities that characterize the rights and opportunities for women’s economic participation are more predomination in the unorganized sectors and will require social attention and remedial measures, since structural changes in the economy which may reduce the share of this sector can at best be regarded as a very distant objectives.
AGRICULTURE:

According to the census of 1971, 80.1% of women workers are in agriculture, constituting 87% of the female work force in rural areas and 17.5% in urban areas.

1. Decline in employment opportunities:

The system of land relations and labour utilization is closely inter-connected with the hierarchic structure of the village community where status is linked with land, caste, and economic power. The census classified agricultural workers into only two categories, ignoring the various intermediate categories of both cultivators and labourers, viz, absentee land-owners; taints of different categories including share-croppers and marginal farmers; casual, daily wage labourers and attached workers both contracted and bonded. It is difficult to clearly demarcate these categories because of a process of movement from one to the other though changes in their income position, land values, rates of return, and degrees of indebtedness. While there is a certain degree of upward mobility among a very small minority, caused by improved productivity, rising land valued and ownership, increasing pressure of growing families on small holdings, and indebtedness leading to loss of land makes the general pattern of change a downward one for the majority.
The impact of this process is visible from the sharp decline in women cultivators from 18.3 million in 1951 to 9.2 millions in 1971. This can be attributed to increasing pauperisation leading to loss of land, and inadequate growth of productive employment opportunities on family farms leading to withdrawal of women for matching cultivation. The increase in the number of women agricultural labourers from 12.6 million in 1951 to 15.7 millions in 1971, a shift from less than one-third to more than half of the total women work force, is the greatest indicator of increasing poverty and decline in the level of employment, and not of increasing opportunities. The first (1950-51) and the second (1956-57) Agriculture labour inquiry and rural labour inquiry (1964-65) and some intensive studies of rural households (1967-68) show that the level of female unemployment is considerably higher than that of males.

2. WAGE DISCRIMINATION:

The low rates of wage for the women farm labour are due to the unorganized nature of employment, the ease with which hired labour can be substitute by family labour, the seasonal nature of the demand for labour, and the traditional classification of certain jobs as the monopoly of women. The machinery for wage fixation and enforcement of minimum wages fixed under the minimum wages Act, is not uniform and many areas have still not been brought
within the ambit of the Act. Farm labourers, particularly women who are handicapped by poverty, illiteracy ignorance of the law, and the casual nature of employment, are not able to employ methods now common to industrial labour. The wage fixing machinery in some states maintains wage differentials between men and women for the same operations, and prescribes lower rates for the jobs traditionally done by women. Another factor contributing to low wages for women is the practice of identifying a work day as equivalent of 7-9 hours. Women reporting even half an hour late because of domestic responsibilities are paid wages for half a day only.

Though its enforcement is inadequate, the minimum wages Act has helped to reduce wage discrimination and some state Governments, e.g. Bihar have recently stopped prescribing different rates for some jobs.

3. **DISABILITIES AND EXPLOITATION:**

The decline of village and cottage industries and the consequent loss of alternative employment as well as skills, has resulted in occupational immobility a disability for women. The rural works programmes may meet short-term needs, but their impact is not continuous, either in maintaining a steady level of employment or in generating new skills.
Women agricultural workers prefer to seek employment in their own village or within a short distance from home. Apart from the voluntary reasons for this restricted mobility which is due to socio- psychological reasons and family responsibilities, the decision is involuntary for many of them because of the status of their husband or sons attached labour.

The vulnerability of women because still greater when her husband is reduce to the status of hounded labour. The National commission on labour admitted this system grew out of acute indigence and helplessness of tribal and semitrial communities in the grip of a precarious subsistence economy. There was a combination to reasons for the depression of this class like uneconomic holdings, tenurial insecurity, high incidence of rent, inadequacy of loans from institutional sources, coupled with the problem of wide gap between consumption and income. It was brought to our notice that the system of bonded labour sometime led to various forms of exploitation of women. Some recent studies in the hill regions of U.P. revealed a close relationship between the incidence of bonded labour and and trafficking in women for much families.

Although it is difficult to establish a quantified relationship between social status and economic position in the agricultural system, there are indicators to show that a large proportion of
women agricultural labourers are drawn from the socially depressed communities of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. In 1961, 42.9% of women workers of the former and 21.33% of the latter were agricultural labourers.

Another problem that affects women's participation in agriculture is the introduction of modern method of cultivation which is resulting in a gradual displacement of women and shrinking of their activities. This is due to the biased approach of agricultural extension workers, who teach new methods to men only, thus precipitating changes which will have an adverse effect of women.

The basic solution for the exploitation of agricultural workers lies in redistribution of land, but legislation for this purpose has been grossly ineffective so far. What is worse, some of the landceiling laws discriminate against women. In the ceiling laws of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Kamataka, while major son is entitled to a unit of land outside the family ceiling, no such provision is made for a major daughter, married or unmarried. Side by side, agricultural labour needs to be organized to improve its bargaining power and to prevent exploitation and low wages.

Except for some rough estimates based on the 1961 census, no reliable information is available regarding the volume of employment and characteristics of this amorphous groups,
employed in the unregulated industries and services. These widely scattered and small establishments, with low capital investment, include the traditional village, and cottage industries, household and small scale industries, and unregulated services like sweepers, scavengers or domestic servants. The industries suffer from poor techniques, low productivity, and inadequacy of institutional credit. The decline of domestic and small-scale industries as a consequence of unequal completion from factory production started much earlier, but data regarding women's participation in household industries are available only for the 1961 and 1971 census. During this decade, the number of women in household industry declined from 4.6 millions to 1.3 millions. In the absence of any reliable data about employment in other small-scale enterprises and unorganized services, our estimate of the number of women engaged in this sector is only deceptive. Our of 31 million women returned as workers by the 1971 census, 25 millions were in agriculture and about ten millions in the organized sector. We have, therefore, estimated that the remaining four millions were in non-agricultural occupation in the unorganized sector and suffered from insecurity of employment, lack of standard minimum wages, excessive hours of work, and absence of any welfare amenities. Their helplessness stems from their lack of organization and failure of the public regulatory services to protect them. The women who
work at home for various industries are even more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. The minimum wages formulated for certain scheduled employment's in these industries remain unendorsed, recent attempts by government to regulate working conditions in this sector through the contract labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, or the Bidi and Cigarette (condition of employment) Act, 1966, and the various state Acts to regulate conditions of employment in shops and commercial establishments, can only oe effective with strong labor organizing and a vigilant enforcement machinery.

The disabilities of women in these industries are manifested in the illiteracy, helpless dependence on intermediaries to obtain employment and ignorance of agencies or laws which can given them protection and a fair deal. The variety in the pattern of organisation of these industries (which range from workshops to individuals working in their hoes with short duration of employment and high rate of turnover) present difficulties in organizing or even identifying the different types of labour. Their subsistence level of living and indebtedness to the employers or contractors make them vulnerable to all form of exploitation could only attempt an analysis of some of the special problems of the wage-paid and self-employed women in this sector through a few illustration given in the paragraphs that following:
1. CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY:

The construction industry which employs a large number of women as contract labour provides a typical illustration of the conditions of these workers, mostly employed as unskilled manual labourer. Two studies initiated by us unskilled manual labour. Two studies initiated by us in Bihar and Delhi reported waged discrimination, deferred employment, unexplained fines and deduction, deferred payment, unexplained fines and deception generally made by the contractors or sub contractors as well as a high degree of indebtedness of the workers two these persons. The women are mostly drawn from the rural poor and their earnings constitute the major share of the families incomes nearly 80% of the sample were young women below 35 who began their working life as wage labourers early in childhood, and 98% were illiterate. Most of them were married in childhood. Infant mortality is very high and in the absence of maternity relief or minimal health facilities, coupled with continuous malnutrition, the life expectancy of these workers remains low. The study has discovered that, in spite of commitments made by the contractors to government regarding fair wages, housing and sanitary services as well as welfare facilities like creates, little attempt is made to provide these. Government, which insisted on these conditions in the contract, has to also provided any enforcing agency.
2. **BIDI INDUSTRY:**

The bidi industry is notorious among the most sweated industries in the country. The committee was appealed by the conditions of women and children working both in workshops and in their homes. Their wages are frequently through various devices. While welcoming the recent judgment of the supreme court making the provisions of the bidi and cigarette Act and provisions of maternity relief applicable to the home workers, we feel that a special machinery has to be created for the purpose because, without it, it will be impossible to implement this decision effectively.

3. **THE CHIKAN INDUSTRY:**

About 97% of these workers are women and they include contract workers (95.8%). Self-employed-cum-contract workers (3.6%), and a handful of direct employees (0.5%), mainly recruited through intermediaries. The workers are mainly illiterate Muslim women, whose seclusion provides a reason for their dependence of intermediaries. The majority of these workers live below the poverty line. A large number are widowed or deserted women supporting their families. The intermediaries who control both production and marketing are traditional money lenders. The wholesalers margin of profits ranges between 60 and 70%. The difference between wages paid by government agencies and those by wholesalers ranges
from 20 to 30%. The women interviewed by us complained of frequent cuts in their wages, not only by the ordinary intermediaries, but even by cooperatives and voluntary organizations which marked their products. Their desire to become self-employed is defeated by lack of capital, education and the inaccessibility of the market which is now highly commercialized.

4. SELF-EMPLOYMENT:

The commercialization of production and marketing and the rise of intermediaries have caused hardships to a large number of women who were self-employed earlier either as products or as retailers. The rapid increase in unemployment has recently led to emphasis on the need to promote self-employment and government is providing assistance through training and credit facilities. In our experience self-employment is successful only where women are in a position to market their own products as in Manipur whenever they get dependent on intermediaries for this purpose, their returns are very meagre. The efforts of welfare organization to develop self-employment in the production of processed food, handicrafts, garments, etc. frequently fail through lack of control over the marketing system.

Handicapped by illiteracy, lack of resources and ignorance of modern marketing methods and techniques of sales promotion,
women's efforts at self-employment can not produced good results. Credit agencies like banks often discriminate against women as they are considered poor risks. In our opinion, a programme for generating self employment among women has to be based on an integrated network of training, production, and marketing and should be designed in relation to local resources and marketing potential. The present programmes tend to display an urban bias and cannot meet employment needs of the large masses of women in villages and small towns.

II. WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZED SECTOR:

This sector includes all public sector establishment and non-agricultural private sector establishments employing 10 or more persons. It is governed by various laws and regulations and detailed information regarding workers is collected regularly by the ministry of labour. The number of women employed in this sector has increased from 1.37 millions in 1962 to 2.14 millions in 1973, i.e. an increase of 56.2% while this increase was faster than the rural increase of employment in this sector, women's proportion in the total employment has remained practically constant at 11% during this period. This size of this sector has been steadily growing. Women employed from only 6% of the total women workers in 1971, 2.7% being in industry and 3.3% in the services and professions. The number of women employed in the public
sector increased by 110.4%, but in the private sector this increase was only of 26.9% women's proportion in the public sector has increased from 35% to 47% while their share in the private sector has declined from 65% to 52.8% during this period. The share of public sector employment is provided by state Government, local bodies and public undertaking. Their position in the central Government is not very satisfactory.

INDUSTRY:

Though total employment in factories has been increasing steadily, women's employment in this sector has decreased since 1964, their share being reduced from 11.34% in 1951 to 9.1% in 1971. In mines, the number of women declined from 109,000 to 75,000 during 1951 and 1971 whereas total employment increased from 549,000 to 630,000. This women's share of employment declined from 21.1% to 1.9% i.e., a decline of 47.4% the heaviest decline being in coal mines, from 55,000 to 2,000 plantations, which require female labour for specific purposes, provide the only sector where women's employment has remained steady or has increased slightly during this period (in tea plantation, their numbers increased from 250,000 to 270,000 between 1954 and 1962, representing an increase from 46.1% to 49.2% of the labour force in these plantation. Similar marginal increases have taken place in coffee and rubber plantations also.
The declining trend of women’s employment in industries and mines is generally attributed to the adverse effects of protective labour laws for women, the policy of equalizing wages and structural changes in the economy leading to modernization and rationalization of production methods. We have examined the validity of these assumptions in considerable detail with actual cases of specific industries. In our view, the first two assumptions are invalid and stem from an attempt to justify non-employment of women. It has been found that the provision of maternity benefits or welfare amenities like crèches and separate sanitary facilities required by the law for women permanent workers constitutes a negligible expenditure in the budget of an establishment. Besides, in areas covered by the employee state insurance scheme, maternity benefits are no longer a burden on employers. A study done by the ILO as well as the National commission on labour dismissed the argument that the reason for retrenchment of women in industries was due to the cost of maternity benefits. Similarly, the arguments that the ban on night work has adversely affected women’s employment can apply only to a few industries which have adopted a multiple shift system. We came across two distinct views in this regard. Some employers and a few representatives of trade unions suggested that permission to extend the period up to 10 P.M. if made available to all industries, would enable women’s
employment on two shift and remove the present excuse for retrenching them. The other point of view, expressed by trade unions, labour officials, and experts, in industries like textiles, are performed during the day. Since permission to extend the period of work up to 10 P.M. is provided by state Governments specific industries on request, there is little doubt that this legal restriction does not constitute a serious obstacle to women's employment. While the ban on hazardous occupations, particularly the lifting of weights, has to a certain extent, affected the employment of women in the jute industry, the view that the ban on underground working is primary factor responsible for decline in women's employment in mines cannot be accepted, since the reduction in the number of women workers in mines began long before this law was enacted.

Official agencies admitted that no assessment has been done as to the extent to which the equal pay principle has resulted in the displacement of women workers. After examination of different industries we however came to the conclusion that the principle of equalization has not been seriously applied in most industries which continue to maintain wage differentials by direct or indirect methods. Evidence for this is available in the occupational wage surveys conducted by the ministry of labour, indicating differences in the minimum, maximum and average earnings of women in most industries. Though the survey reported that employers evade this
principle by not employing men and women for the same jobs in the same establishment, we found such differentials even within the same establishment in some cases. A more successful method for evading this principle is by restricting women to certain jobs and prescribing lower wage rates for the. A study initiated by us conferring a sample of 200 undertakings in the public and the private sectors revealed the concentration of women at the lower levels of the production process in mostly unskilled and semi-skilled work. They were found at the skilled levels only on some engineering, pharmaceutical, electronics, and textile industries. In the public sector, women are found at supervisory levels in some of the highly technical industries like electrical telecommunications, etc. But in the private sector, they are conspicuous by their absence at the supervisory level. Restricting women to a few limited types of occupations is the manifestation of (1) prevailing social attitudes regarding their attitudes; (2) resistance of employers; (3) dearth of training opportunities in higher skills to women; and (4) the ignorance of most women regarding opportunities open to them. There is no definite policy for determining jobs as suitable or unsuitable for women. Wage discrimination is maintained on groups of the low productivity of women without any scientific appraisal of their capacity. Only in a few industries, mainly in the public sector,
did we come across any system of scientific assessment of women's attitude and productivity in particular jobs.

After examine the situation in the particular industries where the decline in women's employment has been most substantial, viz., textiles, jute, and mines, we find that the most important factor contributing towards this decline is the extend and nature of modernization methods. Industries which have adopted a higher capital intensive technology resulting in displacement of labour have found it easier to displace women rather than men. They have justified this on the ground that women lack skills and are illiterate and unwilling to learn new processes. While a chance for on-the-job training is generally denied to women, there is evidence to show that wherever such training has been provided, women have proved themselves capable of acquiring new skills and have even proved to have greater aptitude than men (e.g, in some of the new industries). In the more labour intensive industries like plantations, there has been no displacement of women though wage differentials are skills maintained, due purely to social prejudices. We can not also accept the women argument about the traditionalism of women in matters of dress and occupations, as it is non-applicable to modern industrial workers whose exposure to urban influence and the industrial workers at the beginning of the century.
Apart from illiteracy, ignorance regarding alternative job opportunities and absence of training opportunities the decline in women's employment is also due to the rising level of general unemployment in the country. Their restricted mobility has also affected women's competitiveness. This problems will require special attention and consideration from government, employers, and trade unions.

SERVICES AND PROFESSIONS:

The immediate factors responsible for emergence of women in non-traditional services and professions in the post-independence period are:


2. Development of women's education and their subsequent entry into areas of education and higher to monopolized by men;

3. A gradual change in social values relating to women's paid employment among the urban middle class, due to growing economic pressure; and

4. Expansion of the tertiary sector as a direct consequence of development in the post-independence period.

In the public sector, the number of women employees in the categories of professional, technical, and related workers including
teachers, has been continuously rising since 1960, although their proportion to total employees has remained more or less constant. The number of women as administrative, executive and managerial workers, which increased trend in 1968. In the category of clerical and related workers, the number of women has gone up from 37,000 in 1960 to 79000 in 1968. Their proportion to total workers in the period has gone up from 4.2 to 7.68. The number of woman workers in transport, storage, and communications has remained steady, but in services, sports and recreation, their number has gone up from 5,000 to 13,000 during 1960-68 (from 1.1% to 2.4%). In this category, however, the majority of women were working as maids, cooks, house-keepers, cleanmess, and sweepers. The number of women unskilled office workers has declined from 25,000 to 16,000.

In the private sector, the categories were both the number and proportion of women workers has shown a study increase are: clerical and related workers service, sports and recreation workers and primary and middle school teachers. There was a general slump in the employment of women in al categories in 1963. This decline was more marked among administrative, executive, and managerial workers (from 5,000 to 1,000) and professional, technical and related workers (from 55,000 to 31,000) some of the new industries, like advertising, market research, hotel
management cadre. The traditional industries have not yet accepted women at this level.

While it is difficult to give a correct statistical profile of women in services and profession, a review of the available data does indicate a change in the occupational pattern and two trends are clearly visible: (a) The concentration of women in the profession of teaching and medicine; and (b) recognition of certain low prestige jobs in the clerical services as particularly suited to women.

1. TEACHERS:

In 1970, only 17% of the professional, technical, and related workers were women, of which three-fourths were teachers. Among the scientists, social scientists formed the major section, as research and social ratios of women to men in selected professions are: physicians and surgeons 7.1%; lawyers 1.2%, and scientists 10.9%.

Primary schools account for 71% of women teachers, followed by secondary (21%). This concentrations of women in teaching represents both opportunity and preferences. In the prevailing socials ethos, a long-term professional training's for women needed for professions like engineering, medicine, etc., is still accessible to a small minority in the upper middle class.
Teaching is approved by society for women as they can easily combine their home rules with it.

2. **DOCTORS:**

   In 1967-68, the medical work force of 120,000 doctors included 12,000 women. While the number of qualified women doctors is 25 per hundred men, according to the 1971 census (1% sample data), the ratio of women physicians and surgeons employed is only 6.1% per 100 men. This indicates there were underutilization of women doctors and also their migration to other countries for employment. Since the majority of their clients are women, most women doctors specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, though they have recently entered other fields like pediatrics, surgery, pathology, or radiology. About 20-40% of them are concentrated in urban areas.

3. **NURSES:**

   There has been greater expansion in the number of nurses, midwives, and health visitors during the past two decades. Inspire of government’s assurances, the discrimination against married women in this profession still continues, particularly in the army, which neither recruits them none provides maternity benefited nurses and doctors.
4. **LAWYERS:**

While the number of women lawyers has increased, only one has been appointed a High Court Judge. Women lawyers complain of lack of opportunities in judiciary.

5. **SOCIAL WORKERS:**

This new profession has emerged after independence. The majority of professionally trained social workers are employed in institutions and departments engaged in social welfare both public and voluntary. According to a study in 1968, there were 3,153, social work graduates whose number is estimated to have increased to 6,000 by 1971. In the sample covered by the study, 30% were women. Women find employment in this profession which greater ease than men, because their personal inclination for this profession make them less selective about the type of employment and because more of them specialize in primary social work and community organisation. Men in this profession tend to concentrate on labour and industrial relations, job opportunities in which are not adequate. In spite of the large number of women in this profession only a few of them hold key post.

6. **CLERICAL AND RELATED JOBS:**

All available data indicate that jobs as receptionists, clerks, stenographers, and typists are absorbing more and more educated
women. Data collected from various Ministries and other agencies of the central Government showed the largest concentration of women at the level of class III, i.e. ministerial and related staff. The increase in the number of women at the level has been much faster than at any other level of the public services. One interesting trend visible for the replies from the Ministries is that the scientific Ministries, e.g. Atomic Energy, Department of science, and cultural and education and social welfare have employed more women affairs, finance, railways, or the economic Ministries have engaged very few women. The replies received from 200 undertakings for the public and the private sectors also indicate a concentration of women in clerical work. In the public sector, the proportion of women in clerical work outstrips their proportion at the production level. While their presence at the managerial level is negligible in the private sectors, a few women have achieved these positions in the public sector.

7. **CENTRAL SERVICES:**

In the central services which give equal opportunity to women candidates to complete, there is a steady increase, in the IAS/IPS, FS examinations, the ratio of women the men, recommended for appointment, has improved from 1:8:6 in 1960 to 1:7:6 in 1972. But in the other services, viz, the Indian Economic Services, statistical Services and the Engineering services, their
production remains very low. We were unofficially informed that of the ten class I service of the Railways, women are accepted only in Accounts and Medical Services and have denied the opportunities to enter the traffic or other services.

An important issue concerning women in central services came up in regard to the constitutional validity of rule 5(3) of the IAS recruitment rules which empowered government to demand the resignation of a married women officer on grounds of efficiency. The rule was cited by a pharmaceutical concern before the supreme court 1967 in defence of its own service rule which terminated the service of women employees automatically on marriage. The Court, which striking down the rule in the said concern, upheld the IAS which was however, deleted in 1972 in response to representatives from some officers.

Disparities in the proportion of women at higher levels of responsibility are due to both prejudices and discriminatory recruitment policies, as well as to lack of career-orientation and commitment on the part of women. Many private concerns and even a few in the public sector, in response to our questionnaire, admitted that they do not recruit women at the managerial level a matter of policy.
While there is no doubt that opportunities for women have wended in the tertiary sector it has to be remembered that part of this is the reflection of the rapid growth of the tertiary sector in general and the public sector in particular because of the expanded role of government at all levels of the development process in recent years. With increasing constraints of resources, the growth of this non-productive sector will inevitably slow down considerably in the nearly future. Since most of the increase in opportunities for women’s employment has taken place in this sector, there is a possibility that the slowing down of its growth will result in the reduction of women’s employment. Unless there are opportunities for women development in the productive sectors, it will not be possible either to arrest the declining trends or to reduce the present imbalance, in women’s employment.

EMPLOYMENT:

Any appraisal women’s economic roles and their opportunities for participation in economic activities cannot be done in isolation of the society’s stage of development, the socio-cultural attitudes towards women’s role in the family and in the wider society, and the social ideology concerning basic components of status. At certain stages of development, capacity for work may provide the highest claim to status. But when society be comes inegalitarian, leisure may substitute work as the indicator of status.
The debate regarding women's economic role and the need for equality of rights and opportunities for economic participation centres round three arguments:

1) That women's economic subjugation or dependence leads to exploitation and is a denial of social justice and human rights. Both Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi opposed the rigid distinction between men's and women's roles from this standpoint.

2) That the development of a society requires full participation by all sections of the population, and opportunities for full development of the potentialities of women. This is the keynote of the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

3) That modern trends in demographic and social changes, e.g., rising age of marriage, smaller families, urbanization, migration, rising costs, and standards of living and calls for greater participation in decision-making are introducing major changes in women's roles and responsibilities. A social crisis would result if women are unable to meet these challenges because of social handicaps.

The opposition to increasing women's economic activities springs from (1) the conservative view that women's roles must be
confined within rigidly defined limits (patterns of this division of labour between sexes have varied, not only between but even within societies) and (2) the fear that chronic unemployment may result if women enter the labour market on a large scale. This results in theories of women's marginal role in the economy. The theory is, however, inapplicable to agrarian societies where the family is the unit of production, and men women, and children, all participate in the production process. Transition from traditional agricultural and household industry to modern organized industry and services, and from rural to urban areas, destroys the traditional division of labour, and substitutes the competitive relationship between individuals as units of labour for the complementary one of the family. Technological changes in production methods call for new skills. Women, handicapped by lack of opportunities to acquire these new skills, find themselves unwanted by the new economy.

This is the situation that the large masses of Indian women face today. Among cultivators, the artisans and those performing mental services in the traditional village economy, women played a distinctive and accepted role in both production and marketing, and continue to do so wherever the traditional economic forms prevail, particularly among marginal and landless agriculturists, most scheduled castes and tribal communities and traditional industries and crafts like weaving, basket-making, and food processing (by
hand). Though there are regional variations in the norms governing women’s work a traditional upper class norm— that of excluding women from labour outside the family—still remains a status symbol, and is often emulated by many who want to enhance their social status.

DECLINING ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN ECONOMY:

The forces which have most affected the role of women in the Indian economy are: the general decline of handicrafts; increasing in the rural sector resulting in migration; development of modern industry with its increasing technological advance; the spread of education; and the increasing cost of living, particularly in urban area. In the initial phase of industrial development, textiles and jute (the earliest industries) as well as plantations and mines continued the traditional pattern of family participation and employed large number of women and children, confining them to certain unskilled and semi-skilled types of work at lower rates of wages. Technological changes have since affected the employment of women in these industries adversely. At the same time, the decay of village industries has thrown more and more women on agriculture for their livelihood, increasing their numbers and percentage but reducing their levels of employment. On the other hand, rising costs of living, education and social change in the urban areas have led to the withdrawal of taboos that earlier
affected women of the higher classes and have enabled some of them to enter new professions or occupations in the tertiary sector which were closed to them earlier.

Because of this differential impact of development, a microanalysis of women's economic participation purely in qualitative terms cannot tell the whole story. Any appraisal of women's economic roles has to be separated for specified segments, differentiated by socio-economic and locational characteristic as well as by their difficulty in understanding the problems of women's participation has thus been caused by looking at women workers as homogeneous group. This assumption has influenced the collection of data, the laws and the policies adopted to improve conditions of women workers and also the popularly held notion about women's participation in the economy.

A macro-analysis reveals that women's economic participation has been declining since 1921, both in percentage of workers to total female population and in their percentage to the total labour force. While the total number of women workers declined from 41.8 million in 1911 to 31.2 million in 1971 their percentage in the total labour force declined from 34.44% in 1911 to 17.35% in 1971. The percentage of women workers to the total female population declined from 33.73% in 1911 to 11.86% in 1971. This decline has been even more precipitous in recent years.
During 1961-71, while the male and female populations increased by 25% and 24% respectively (20% and 21% in the working age group) and the number of men workers increased by 15.2%, women workers declined by 41.4%.

It is often argued that this decline is the result of changes in the definition of workers adopted by these two censuses. It is a fact that the census basically measures the level of employment of men and tends to ignore the interchangeable roles of women as housewives and gainful workers. Since many of them are unpaid family workers, exclusion of secondary activity from the definition of workers affects the recording of female employment adversely. As many as 2.3 million such women were recorded as non-workers in the Census of 1971, which does not really make a substantial difference. On the other hand the generally held view that the 1961 definition was very liberal has been found to have not made much difference in the collection of data except in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karanataka and Tamil Nadu. Besides, the female activity rate of 27.5% reported by the 1961 Census agrees with the rate of 27.5% reported by the 1961 census agrees with the rate or 27.22% reported by the comparable round of the National Sample survey of the same year. We therefore think that the impact of changing definitions is only marginal and that the declining participation trend of women has been a continuous one.
The ratio of female to male workers has declined in all categories in the rural and in most categories in the urban areas. The participation rates of men and women differ widely in all age groups except the youngest (0-14) the difference in urban areas being much higher than in rural areas. The decline from 1961 is clear in all the age groups. This overall decline in the percentage of women workers is visible in all states for both rural and urban areas but is sharper in the urban areas. The distribution of women workers in the nine industrial categories adopted by the census shows their increasing dependence on agriculture and a decline in both the industrial and the service sectors.

**CATEGORIES OF WOMEN WORKERS:**

Our investigations showed that the census categories are not really useful for a proper assessment either of the nature and extent of women’s participation in the economy or of their problems and disabilities.

We, therefore, classified women workers into two broad categories according to the degree of ‘organization’ and nature of problems of their sectors of employment, viz, the unorganized and the organized sectors. The difference between these two is not functional, as between agriculture, industry, and services, because these functions may be found in both sectors. The real difference
between them lies in the organization of productive relations, the degree of penetration of public control and regulation, and recognition by data-collecting agencies and scientific investigators.

The organized sector is characterized by modern relations of production and is regulated by laws that seek to protect the security and working conditions of labour as well as by labour organizations that can engage in collective bargaining. This includes the entire public sector of services and industry, as well as that part of private sector which is regulated. the unorganized sector, which includes agriculture as well as various industries and services, is characterized by the absence of all these protective measures and machinery. Information about socio-economic conditions and work opportunities in this sector is also exceedingly scantily. The status of women workers in India is obvious from the fact that 94% of them are found in the unorganized sector leaving only 6% in the organized sector.

I. WOMEN IN THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

GENERAL:

The gradual commercialization and modernization of the economy and the efforts made by government to replace traditional by modern institutions of credit and marketing, to stabilize ownership of land and maintain minimum wages have by no means
succeeded in organizing the production relations or in controlling the degree of exploitation of the weaker sections, either in agriculture or in non-agricultural occupation in this sector nor have they solved the problems of low productivity, poverty, unemployment, and under-employment. The impact of this intermixiture has been greater on women whose wages are uniformly lower than those of men, even within the lower wages structure in this sector. A large number of them are unpaid family workers whose contribution to the family's earnings is not always recognized. Various estimates indicate that they form 15-17% of the male labour force and 41-49% of the female labour force. While relatively more information is available on agricultural workers, there is practically no reliable information on non-agricultural occupations. The census classification of workers by prior activity ignores the overlapping nature of agricultural occupations and the seasonal and fluctuating nature of these occupations.

In spite of the difficulties in estimating employment, unemployment, and under-employment in this sector, the committee on Unemployment found women to be a greater victim of both unemployment and under-employment. The number of unemployed women in rural areas was estimated to be 4.5 million as against 3.2 million males in 1971. Women constitute nearly 60% of the rural and 56% of the total unemployed in the country. As this
estimate takes into account only persons recorded as seeking work; the actual number of unemployed women will be much higher since there is a large number who need employment, but do not seek it in the absence of employment opportunities, information and training. Similarly, the number of under-employed women becomes higher than that of men when the hours of work available to them during a week is 22 to 28 hours - in both rural and urban areas. When the hours of work are less, their proportion is less than men.

The basic problems that affect women’s roles and opportunities for employment in this sector spring from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities, limited skills and illiteracy, restricted mobility, and lack of autonomous status. The occupational status of the woman workers is linked to that of her husband or father, particularly in rural areas. The lack of control over productive resources and a persistent gap between consumption and expenditure, leading to perpetual indebtedness, deprive them of all bargaining power and occupational mobility.

No reliable data are available for estimating the number and proportion of women below the poverty line. But the higher level of unemployment and under-employment has led us to conclude that their proportion is likely to be higher than that of men. Components of this vast group are the unskilled workers, landless agricultural
labourers, members of households with uneconomic holdings, and those in traditional menial jobs. A larger number of them are engaged in traditional village and cottage industries. We received reports of increasing destitution among women from various quarters though no reliable data are available.

The special disabilities that characterize the rights and opportunities for women’s economic participation are more predominant in the unorganized sector and will require special attention and remedial measures, since structural changes in the economy which may reduce the share of this sector can at best be regarded as a very distant objectives.

AGRICULTURE:

According to the census of 1971, 80.1% of women workers are in agriculture, constituting 87% of the female work force in rural areas and 17.5% in urban areas.

1) Decline in Employment Opportunities: The system of land relations and labour utilization is closely inter-connected with the hierarchic structure of the village community where status is linked with land, caste, and economic power. The census classifies agricultural workers into only two categories, ignoring the various intermediate categories of both cultivators and labourers, viz, absentee land-owner; lease
holders; tenants of different categories including sharecroppers and marginal farmers; casual, daily wage labourers; and attached workers—both contracted and bonded. It is difficult to clearly demarcate these categories because of a process of movement from one to the other though changes in their income position, land values, rates of return, and degrees of indebtedness. While there is a certain degree of upward mobility among a very small minority, caused by improved productivity, rising land values an ownership, increasing pressure of growing families on small holdings, and indebtedness leading to loss of land, make the general pattern of change a downward one for the majority.

The impact of this process is visible from the sharp decline in women cultivators from 18.3 millions in 1951 to 9.2 millions in 1971. This can be attributed to increasing pauperization leading to loss of land, and inadequate growth of productive employment opportunities on family farms leading to withdrawal of women from active cultivation. The increase in the number of women agricultural labourers from 12.6 millions in 1951 to 15.7 million in 1971, a shift from less than one-third to more than half of the total women work force, is the greatest indicator of increasing poverty and decline in the level of employment, and not of increasing
opportunities. The First (1950-51) and the second (1956-57) Agricultural Labour Inquiry and Rural Labour Inquiry (1964-65) and some intensive studies of rural households (1967-70) show that the level of female unemployment is considerably higher than that of males.

2) Wage Discrimination: The low rates of wage for the women farm labor are due to the unorganized nature of employment, the ease with hired labour can be substituted by family labour, the seasonal nature of the demand for labour, and the traditional classification of certain jobs as the monopoly of women. The machinery for wage fixation, and enforcement of minimum wages fixed under the minimum wages Act, is not uniform; and many area shave still not been brought within the ambit of the Act. Farm laborers, particularly women who are handicapped by poverty, illiteracy, ignorance of the law, and the casual nature of employment, are not able to employ methods now common to industrial labour. The wage fixing machinery in some states maintains wage differentials between men and women for the same operations, and prescribes lower rates for the jobs traditionally done by women. Another factor contributing to low wages for women is the practice of identifying a workday as equivalent of 7-9
hours. Women reporting even half an hour late because of domestic responsibilities are paid wages for half a day only.

Though its enforcement is inadequate, the minimum wages Act has helped to reduce wage discrimination and some State Government e.g. Bihar, have recently stopped prescribing different rates for some jobs.

3) Disabilities and exploitation: The decline of village and cottage industries and the consequent loss of alternative employment as well as skills, has resulted in occupational immobility a disability for women. The rural works programmes may meet short-term needs, but their impact is not continuous, either in maintaining a steady level of employment or in generating new skills.

Women agricultural workers prefer to seek employment in their own village or within a short distance from home. Apart from the voluntary response for this restricted mobility which is due to socio-psychological reasons and family responsibilities, the decision is involuntary for many of them, because of the status of their husband or sons as attached labour.

The vulnerability of a woman becomes still greater when her husband is reduced to the status of bonded labour. The
National commission on Labour admitted that this system grew out of acute indigence and helplessness of tribal and semi-tribal communities in the grip of a precarious subsistence economy. There was a combination of reasons for the depression of this class like uneconomic holdings, tenurial insecurity, high incidence of rent, inadequacy of loans from institutional sources, coupled with the problem of wide gap between consumption and income. It was brought to our notice that the system of bonded labour sometimes led to various forms of exploitation of women. Some recent studies in the hill regions of U.P. revealed a close relationship between the incidence of bonded labour and trafficking in women from such families.

Although it is difficult to establish a quantified relationship between social status and economic position in the agricultural system, there are indicators to show that a large proportion of women agricultural labourers are drawn from the socially depressed communities of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In 1961, 42.9% of women workers of the former and 21.33% of the latter were agricultural labourers.

Another problem that affects women's participation in agriculture is the introduction of modern methods of cultivation which is resulting in a gradual displacement of women and shrinking of their activities. This is due to the biased approach of
agricultural extension workers, who teach new methods to men only, thus precipitant changes which will have an adverse effect on women.

The basic solution for the exploitation of agricultural workers lies in redistribution of land, but legislation for this purpose has been grossly ineffective so far. What is worse, some of the land ceiling laws discriminate against women. In the ceiling laws of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka, while a major son is entitled to a unit of land outside the family ceiling, no such provision is made for a major daughter, married or unmarried. Side by side, agricultural labor needs to be organized to improve its bargaining power and prevent exploitation and low wages.

NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS:

Except for some rough estimates based on the 1961 census, no reliable information is available regarding the volume of employment and characteristic of this amorphous group, employed in the unregulated industries and services. These widely scattered and small establishments, with low capital investment, include the traditional village and cottage industries, household and small scale industries, and unregulated services like sweepers, scavengers, and domestic servants. The industries suffer from poor techniques, low productivity, and inadequacy of institutional credit. The decline of
domestic and small scale industries as consequence of unequal completion from factory production started much earlier, but data regarding women's participation in household industries are available only for the 1961 and 1971 censuses. During this decade, the number of women in household industry declined from 4.6 millions to 1.3 millions. In the absence of any reliable data about employment in other small-scale enterprises and unorganized services, our estimate of the number of women engaged in this sector is only deductive. Out of 31 million women returned as workers by the 1971 census, 25 millions were in agriculture and about two millions in the organized sector. We have, therefore, estimated that the remaining four millions were in non-agricultural occupations in the unorganized sector and suffered from insecurity of employment, lack of standard minimum wages, excessive hours of work, and absence of any welfare amenities. Their helplessness stems from their lack of organization and failure of the public regulatory service to protect them. The women who work at home for various industries are even more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. The minimum wages formulated for certain scheduled employment's in these industries remain unendorsed. Recent attempts by government to regulate working conditions in this sector through the contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, or the Bidi and Cigarette (conditions of Employment) Act,
1966 and the various state Acts to regulate conditions of employment in shops and commercial establishments, can only be effective with strong labour organizations and a vigilant enforcement machinery.

The disabilities of women in these industries are manifest in the illiteracy, helpless dependence on intermediaries to obtain employment and ignorance of agencies or laws which can give them protection and a fair deal. The variety in the pattern of organization of these industries (which range from workshops to individuals working in their homes with short duration of employment and a high rate of turnover) present difficulties in organizing or even identifying the different types of labour. Their subsistence level of living and indebtedness to the employers or contractors make them vulnerable to all forms of exploitation.

In the absence of any systematic or comprehensive study, we could only attempt an analysis of some of the special problems of the wage-paid and self-employed women in this sector through a few illustrations given in the paragraphs that follows:

1) Construction Industry: The construction industry which employs a large number of women as contract labour provides a typical illustration of the conditions of these
workers, mostly employed as unskilled manual labour. Two studies initiated by us in Bihar and Delhi reported wage discrimination, deferred payment, unexplained fines and deceptions generally made by the contractors, or subcontractors as well as a high degree of indebtedness of the workers to these persons. The women are mostly drawn from the rural poor and their earnings constitute the major share of the families income. Nearly 80% of the sample were young women below 35 who began their working life as wage labourers early in childhood, and 98% were illiterate. Most of them were married in childhood. Infant mortality is very high and in the absence of maternity relief or minimal health facilities, coupled with continuous malnutrition, the life expectancy of these workers remains low. The study has discovered that, in spite of commitments made by the contractors to government regarding fair wages, housing, and sanitary services as well as welfare facilities like creches, little attempt is made to provide these. Government, which insisted on these conditions in the contract, has not also provided any enforcing agency.

2) Bidi Industry: The bidi industry is notorious among the most sweated industries in the country. The committee was applied by the conditions of women and children working both in
workshops and in their homes. Their wages are frequently cut through various devices. While welcoming the recent judgment of the Supreme Court making the provisions of the Bidi and Cigarette Act and provision of maternity relief applicable to the home workers, we feel that a special machinery has to be created for the purpose because, without it, it will be impossible to implement this decision effectively.

3) The Chicken Industry: About 97% of these workers are women and they include contract workers (95.8%) self-employed-cum-contract workers (3.6%) mainly recruited through intermediaries. The workers are mainly illiterate Muslim women, whose seclusion provides a reason for their dependence on intermediaries. The majority of these workers live below the poverty line. A large number are widowed or deserted women supporting their families. The intermediaries who control both production and marketing are traditional money-lenders. The wholesalers margin of profits ranges between 60 and 70%. The difference between wages paid by government agencies and those by wholesalers ranges from to 50%. The women interviewed by us complained of frequent cuts in their wages, not only by the ordinary intermediaries, but even by cooperatives and voluntary organizations which marketed their products. Their desire to become self-
employed is defeated by lack of capital education and the inaccessibility of the market which is now highly commercialized.

4) Self-employment: The commercialization of production and marketing and the rise of intermediaries have caused hardships to a large number of women who were self-employed earlier either as producers or as retailers. The rapid increase in unemployment has recently led to emphasis on the need to promote self-employment and government is providing assistance through training and credit facilities. In our experience, self-employment is successful only where women are in a position to market their own products as in Manipur where this is institutionalized through the women's market. Whenever they get dependent on intermediaries for this purpose, their returns are very meager. The efforts of welfare organizations to develop self-employment in the production of processed food, handicrafts, garments, etc., frequently fail through lack of control over the marketing system. Handicapped by illiteracy, lack of resources and ignorance of modern marketing methods and techniques of sales promotion, women's efforts at self-employment cannot produce good results. Credit agencies like banks often discriminate against women as they are considered poor
risks. In our opinion, a program for generating self-employment among women has to be based on an integrated network of training, production, and marketing and should be designed in relation to local resources and marketing potential. The present programmes tend to display an urban bias and cannot meet the employment needs of the large masses of women in villages and small towns.

II. WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZED SCOTER

General

This sector includes all public sector establishments and non-agricultural private sector establishments employing 10 or more persons. It is governed by various laws and regulations and detailed information regarding workers is collected regularly by the Ministry of Labour. The number of women employed in this sector has increased from 1.37 millions in 1962 to 2.14 millions in 1973 i.e. an increase of 56.2%. While this increase was faster than the total increase of employment in this sector, women's proportion in the total employment has remained practically constant at 11% during this period. The size of this sector has been steadily growing. Women employed formed only 6% of the total women workers in 1971, 2.7% being in industry and 3.3% in the services and professions. The number of women employed in the public sector
increased by 110.4%, but in the private sector this increase was only of 25.9%. Women's proportion in the public sector has increased from 35% to 47% while their share in the private sector has declined from 65% to 52.8% during this period. The share of public sector employment is provided by State Governments, local bodies, and public undertakings. This position in the Central Government is not very satisfactory.

Industry:

Though total employment in factories has been increasing steadily, women's employment in this sector has decreased since 1964, their share being reduced from 11.43% in 1951 to 9.1% in 1971, i.e. a decline of 21.7%. In mines, the number of women declined from 109,000 to 75,000 during 1951 and 1971 whereas total employment increased from 549,000 to 630,000. The women's share of employment declined from 2.1.1% to 11.9%, i.e., a decline of 47.4%, the heaviest decline being in coal mines, from 55,000 to 2,000. Plantations, which require female labour for specific purposes, provide the only sector where women's employment has remained steady or has increased slightly during this period (in tea plantations, their numbers increased from 250,000 to 270,000 between 1954 and 1962, representing an increase from 46.1% to 49.2% of the labour force in these
plantations. Similar marginal increases have taken place in coffee and rubber plantations also.

The declining trend of women's employment in industries and mines is generally attributed to the adverse effects of protective labour laws for women the policy of equalizing wages and structural changes in the economy leading to modernization and rationalization of production methods. We have examined the validity of these assumptions in considerable detail with actual cases of specific industries. In our view, the first two assumption are invalid and stem from an attempt to justify non-employment of women. It has been found that the provision of maternity benefits or welfare amenities like creates and separate sanitary facilities required by the law for women permanent workers constitutes a negligible expenditure in the budget of an establishment. Besides, in areas covered by the employees, State Insurance Scheme, maternity benefits are no longer burden on employers. A study done by the ILO as well as the National commission on Labour dismissed the argument that the reason for retrenchment of women in industries was due to the cost of maternity benefits. Similarly, the argument that the ban on night work has adversely affected women's employment can apply only to a few industries which have adopted a multiple shift system. We came across two distinct views in this regard. Some employers and a few representatives of trade
unions suggested that permission to extend the period up to 10 A.M. if made available to all industries, would enable women's employment on two shifts and remove the present excuse for retrenching them. The other point of view, expressed by trade unions, labour officials, and experts, stated that most operations in which women are engaged, even in industries like textiles, are performed during the day. Since permission to extend the period of work up to 10 A.M. is provided by state Governments to specific industries on request, there is little doubt that this legal restriction does not constitute a serious obstacle to women's employment.

While the ban on hazardous occupations, particularly the lifting of weights, has, to a certain extent, affected the employment of women in the jute industry, the view that the ban on underground work is the primary factor responsible for decline in women's employment in mines cannot be accepted, since the reduction in the number of women workers in mines began long before this law was enacted.

Official agencies admit that no assessment has been done as to the extent to which the equal pay principle has resulted in the displacement of women workers. After examination of different industries however came to the conclusion that the principle of equalization has not been seriously applied in most industries which continue to maintain wage differential by direct or indirect
methods. Evidence for this is available in the occupational wage surfs conducted by the Ministry of Labour, indicating differences in the minimum, maximum, and average earnings of women in most industries. Though the Survey reported that employers evade this principle by not employing men and women for the same jobs in the same establishment, we found such differentials even within the same establishments in some cases. A more successful method for evading this principle is by restricting women to certain jobs and prescribing lower wage rates for them. A study initiated by us covering a sample of 200 undertakings in the public and the private sectors revealed the concentration of women at the lower levels of the production process in mostly unskilled and semi-skilled work. They were found at the skilled level only in some engineering, pharmaceutical, electronics, and textile industries. In the public sector, women are found at supervisory level in some of the highly technical industries like electrical, telecommunications, etc. But in the private sector, they are conspicuous by their absence at the supervisory level. Restricting women to a few limited types of occupations is the manifestation of (1) prevailing social attitudes regarding their aptitudes; (2) resistance of employers; (3) denial of training opportunities in higher skills to women; and (4) the ignorance of most women regarding opportunities open to them. There is no definite policy or criteria for deterring jobs as suitable or
unsuitable for women. Wage discrimination is maintained on grounds of the low productivity of women without any scientific appraisal of their capacity. Only in a few industries, mainly in the public sector, did we come across any system of scientific assessment of women's aptitude and productivity in particular jobs.

After examining the situation in the particular industries where the decline in women's employment has been most substantial/viz., the textiles, jute and mines, we find that the most important factor contributing towards this decline is the extent and nature of modernization methods. Industries which have adopted a higher capital intensive technology resulting in displacement of labour have found it easier to displace women rather than men. They have justified this on the ground that women lack skills and are illiterate and unwilling to learn new process. While a chance for on-the-job training is generally denied to women, there is evi
ded women have proved themselves capable of acquiring new skills and a few have even proved to have greater aptitude than men (e.g. in some of the new industries). In the more labour intensive industries like plantations, there has been no displacement of women though wage differentials are still maintained, due purely to social prejudices. We can not also accept the common argument about the traditionalism of women in matters of dress and occupations, as it is non-applicable to modern industrial workers whose exposure to
urban influence and the mass media have made them much less
traditional than the industrial workers at the beginning of the
century.

Apart from illiteracy, ignorance regarding alternative job
opportunities and absence of training opportunities, the decline in
women's employment is also due to the rising level of general
unemployment in the country. Their restricted mobility has also
affected women's competitiveness. These problems will require
special attention and consideration from government, employers,
and trade unions.

SERVICES AND PROFESSIONS:

The immediate factors responsible for the emergence of
women in non-traditional services and professions in the post-
independence period are:

1) Constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination and equality of
   opportunity in matters of employment:

2) Development of women's education and their subsequent entry
   into areas of education and employment hitherto monopolized
   by men;

3) A gradual change in social values relating to women's paid
   employment among the urban middle class, due to growing
   economic pressure; and
4) Expansion of the tertiary sector as a direct consequence of development in the post-independence period.

In the public sector, the number of women employees in the categories of professional, technical and related workers including teachers, has been continuously rising since 1960, although their proportion to total employees has remained more or less constant. The number of women as administrative, executive and managerial workers, which increased from 10,000 in 1960 to 12,000 in 1966, showed a downward trend in 1968. In the category of clerical and related workers; the number of women has gone up from 37,000 in 1960 to 79,000 in 1968. Their proportion to total workers in the same period has gone up from 4.2 to 7.6%. The number of women workers in transport, storage, and communications has remained steady. But in services, sports and recreation, their number has gone up from 5,000 to 13,000 during 1960-68 (from 1.1% to 2.4%). In this category, however, the majority of women were working as maids, cooks house-keepers, cleaners and sweepers. The number of women unskilled office workers has declined from 25,000 to 16,000.

In the private sector, the categories where both the number and proportion of women workers has shown a steady increase are: clerical and related workers, service, sports and recreation workers and primary and middle school teachers. There was a
general slump in the employment of women in all categories in 1963. This decline was more marked among administrative, executive and managerial works (from 5,000 to 1,000), and Professional, technical and related workers (from 55,000 to 31,000). Some of the new industries, like advertising, market research, hotel management, and cottage industries are employing women in the management cadre. The traditional industries have not yet accepted women at this level.

While it is difficult to give a correct statistical profile of women in services and professions, a review of the available data does indicate a change in the occupational pattern and two trends are clearly visible: (a) The concentration of women in the professions of teaching and medicine; and (b) recognition of certain low prestige jobs in the clerical services as particularly suited to women.

1) Teachers: In 1970, only 17% of the professional, technical, and related workers were women, of which three-fourths were teachers. Among the scientists, social scientists formed the major section, as research and social work are emerging as new occupations suitable for women. The ratios of women to men in selected professions are: Physicians and surgeons 7.1%; lawyers 1.2%; teacher 30.3%; nursing and other health technicians 72.2%; and scientists 10.9%.
Primary schools account for 71% of women teachers, followed by secondary (21%). This concentration of women in teaching represents both opportunity and preferences. In the prevailing social ethos, a long-term professional training for women needed for professions like engineering, medicine, etc., is still accessible to a small minority in the upper middle class. Teaching is approved by society for women as they can easily combine their home roles with it.

2) Doctors: In 1967-68, the medical work force of 120,000 doctors included 12,000 women. While the number of qualified women doctors is 25 per hundred men, according to the 1971 census (1% sample data), the ratio of women physicians and surgeons employed is only 6.1 per 100 men. This indicates underutilization of women doctors and also their migration to other countries for employment. Since the majority of their clients are women, most women doctors specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, though they have recently entered other fields like pediatrics, surgery, pathology, or radiology. About 20-40% of them are concentrated in urban areas:

3) Nurses: There has been great expansion in the number of nurses, midwives and health visitors during the past two decades. In spite of government's assurances, the
discrimination against married women in this profession still continues, particularly in the army, which neither recruits them nor provides maternity benefits to married nurses and doctors.

4) Lawyers: While the number of women lawyers has increased, only one has been appointed a High Court Judge. Women lawyers complain of lack of opportunities in the judiciary.

5) Social Workers: This new profession has emerged after independence. The majority of professionally trained social workers are employed in institutions and departments engaged in social welfare—both public and voluntary. According to a study in 1968, there were 3,153 social work graduates whose number is estimated to have increased to 6,000 by 1971. In the sample covered by the study, 30% were women. Women find employment in this profession with greater ease than men, because their personal inclination for this profession makes them less selective about the type of employment and because more of them specialize in primary social work and community organization. Men in this profession tend to concentrate on labour and industrial relations, jobs opportunities in which are not adequate. In spite of the large number of women in this profession only a few of them hold key posts.
6) Clerical and Related Jobs: all available data indicate that jobs as receptionists, clerks, stenographers, and typists are absorbing more and more educated women. Data collected from various ministries and other agencies of the Central Government showed the the largest concentration of women at the level of class III, i.e., ministerial and related staff. The increase in the number of women at this level has been much faster than at any other level of the public services. One interesting trend visible from the replies from the Ministries is that the scientific Ministries, e.g. atomic Energy, Department of Science, and Culture and Education and social Welfare have employed more women at different levels, while the order Ministries like Home Affairs, Finance Railways, or the economic Ministries have engaged very few women. The replies received from 200 undertakings from the public and the private sectors also indicate a concentration of women in clerical work. In the public sector, the proportion of women in clerical work outstrips their proportion at the production level. While their presence at the managerial level is negligible in the private sector, a few women have achieved these positions in the public sector.

7) Central Services: In the Central Services which give equal opportunity to women candidates to compete, there is a
steady increase. In the IAS/IPS/IFS examinations, the ratio of women to men, recommended for appointment, has improved from 1:81.6 in 1960 to 1:7.6 in 1972. But in the other services, viz. the Indian economic service, statistical Service, and the Engineering Service, their proportion remains very low. We were unofficially informed that of the ten class I Services of the Railway Ministry, women are accepted only in Accounts and Medical Services and have been denied the opportunity to enter the traffic or other services.

An importance issue concerning women in central Services came up in regard to the constitutional validity of Rule 5(3) of the IAS Recruitment Rules which empowered government to demand the resignation of a married woman officer on grounds of efficiency. This rule was cited by a pharmaceutical concern before the supreme Court in 1967 in defense of its own service rule which terminated the services of women employees automatically on marriage. The Court, while striking down the rule in the said concern, upheld the IAS rule, which was, however, deleted in 1972 in response to representations from some women officers.

Disparities in the proportion of women at higher levels of responsibility are due to both prejudices and discriminatory recruitment policies, as well as to lack of career-reinsertion and commitment on the part of women. Many private concerns and
even a few in the public sector, in response to our questionnaire, admitted that they do not recruit women at the managerial level as matter of policy.

While there is no doubt that opportunities for women have widened in the tertiary sector it has to be remembered that part of this is the reflection of the rapid growth of the tertiary sector in general and the public sector in particular because of the expanded role of government at all levels of the development process in recent years. With increasing constraints of resources, the growth of this non-productive sector will inevitably slow down considerably in the near future. Since most of the increase in opportunities for women's employment has taken place in this sector, there is a possibility that the slowing down of its growth will result in the reeducation of women's employment. Unless opportunities for women develop in the productive sectors it will not be possible either to arrest the declining trends or to reduce the present imbalance, it women's employment.

The sector-wise examination of women's employment trend indicates that the major forces affecting women's employment stem from structural changes within the economy as a whole (from a traditional to modern market economy, from a laissexfaire to deliberate planned development, from unorganized to organized production, from unregulated to regulated relations of production, or
from labour to capital intensive ethnology), and from the intensification of socio-economic inequalities. As women are a vulnerable group with fewer opportunities, they have been affected more adversely than men. Whether this situation improves or is aggravated further depends upon the level and extent of the infrastructure provided. This will include education, vocational and technical training, and several important special measures to adjust women's employment to their special needs as housewife and mothers and to prevent discrimination and exploitation.

**DECISION MAKING:**

So far as decision-making is concerned, here an example relating to family size is being taken for the understanding. The same is implied in other cases like realign, politics, health, economic independence and educational etc. Besides, political & economic decision-making is also discussed under this heading.

Out discussions with the informants how that in the absence of husband-wife communication, it was generally the husband who had the "final say" on the number of children the couple should have. Women played a negligible role in such decision-making processes. In fact, when the women were asked how many more Children they would like to have, many replied that their husband should be asked this question and not they however, the second all
India family planning survey data show that in rural India about 33% of the respondents said that the decision on family size was taken jointly by the husband and wife. About 53 per cent reported that is what the husband who took the decision and in about 9 per cent of the cases, an elder member of the family was mentioned as the final decision maker (Table3)*.

**TABLE 3**

Who takes the decision about family size?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Rural (%)</th>
<th>Urban (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder family</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ‘N’ (in 92656 thousand)</td>
<td>24346</td>
<td>117002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probing for the reason(s) of non-acceptance of family planning revealed that there of the 15 non-practicing respondents were widows. Of the remaining 12, six had, on average, two to three living children and wished to have another two or three children to complete their family size. As reported earlier, neither had the informants ever discussed family size with their husbands nor had their husbands taken any initiative to use a temporary family planning method to space pregnancies.

A number of studies in India have also shown that with education, particularly of the wife, inter-spouse communication increase and so does her role in deciding the number of children. 4, 5, 11.

Two of the female respondents stated that they would to convince their husbands to allow them to adopt sterilized after theory had achieved their desired family size. They strongly felt. That women should have the right to control their family size and that they should not go on bearing children “like animals”. Commenting upon this one of the two women, said:

“After all, we are human beings and not bitches. A bitch gives birth to 4-5 puppies at a time and that too many in her lifetime. Her puppies are left at the mercy of nature. If we bear the same number
of children, nature would never come to our rescue. "(Jamuna Devi, age 22 years, matriculate; husband: agriculturist and matriculate).

However, both the women agreed on one point, namely that the final decision about whether or not they should accept family planning would be the husband's. The remaining four who had not completed their desired family size were not certain as to whether they would practice family planning in future. Of the remaining six informants who had already achieved their desired family size, there were against family planning on religious ground "conception is exclusively a gift of God and hence contraception is a sin. "Their views were also shared by their husband. The remaining three informants waited to adopt family planning but had not taken any action. One of them said she was continuously trying to convince her husband to permit her to undergo the tubectomy operation but he had not agreed so she added:

"I have been insisting with him for the past one year to give me permission for a tubectomy. But every time I express this desire, I get scolded and beaten up. Now I have decided not to allow him to have intercourse with me till he gives me sanction, whatsoever be the consequences of this revolt".
A number of studies 4, 10 have shown what husband wife communication on these aspects plays a crucial role in the acceptance of a family planning method and in limiting family size.

This example clearly demonstrates that the women is often eager to accept contraception but it is the apathy of her husband which prevents her from doing so. Similar result were obtained by Khan et al. 10 in a village in Western Uttar Pradesh. It may be interesting to mention here that similar proving of non-acceptor women who had achieved their desired family size indicated that their non-acceptance was due to their fatalistic attitude (12 per cent), dislike of existing family planning method (16.6 per cent), and lack of awareness of modern contraceptives (3 per cent). Interestingly, non mentioned opposition from the husband or his apathetic attitude towards family planning as a reason, perhaps because in such large-scale sample surveys, building up confidence with the respondents is rather difficult and hence one often misses the true Procter on such sensitive issues.

It may not be out of place to mention that in village Romper all the non-acceptors had fairly goods knowledge about family planning methods. They unanimously felt that a couple should adopt a permanent method (sterilization and preferably, tubectomy) in case they were both agreeable. They were also aware of the
disadvantages of temporary methods. Acceptors, the ANM and friends, in that order, were their main source of information.

In India, women’s participation in economic & political decision-making is low. Human Development Report 1999 shows that the ratio of women administrators and managers in India is as low as 2.3%, which is even lower than the countries like- Pakistan (4.3%) and Bangladesh (4.9%)

The share of females in parliament is 8.3% in India, whereas the same for Bangladesh is 9.1%. One consequence of this low participation of Indian women in decision-making process, is that many social issues relating to women and gender issues do not receive due attention, e.g. the issues of violence, atrocities, discrimination against women and material mortality etc. There are evidences of relative neglect of the health and well-being of girls & women. The girls are given less food and care than boys. In some cases women & girls are given remaining foods & other articles.

Not only the above discrimination, girls are breast fed for a shorter time, taken to fewer magical consultations and often very late or not at all the hospitals in comparison to boys or male child only because of very low participation in decision-making process.

Bhattacharya, Manasi: “Gender Disparity and Poverty-Where we stand”, YOJANA, Vol. 43, No.12, Dec. 1999, Page-14
Ibid.