CHAPTER: VI

Observations and case studies related to Work-Pattern

In every human society since the dawn of civilization, women have been assigned certain roles such as wife, mother and daughter-in-law, based on gender specific division of labour. In traditional societies, women were almost confined to such gender roles. Generally they had no other role to play as the members of a community outside the home. They were expected to be totally obedient, self sacrificing, and dependent while performing their gender roles. As Dube (1963) maintained, “In the traditional system a wife, had to obey her authoritarian and dominating husband. She had to regard him as her master and should serve him faithfully. The husband is superior, the wife is his subordinate.” (Dube, 1963:141)

Women were expected to satisfy the needs of their family members in their different roles, particularly as a house wifes. As Indra (1955) writes, “She was to spend the whole day in considering matters entirely related to the house, was particularly to be attentive to the needs and desires of her lord-always subordinating her own comforts and convenience to his.” (Indra, 1955:30-1)

The likes and dislikes of women were totally neglected in relation to their role performance. They were only expected to perform according to the taste and will of their husband and in-laws. Women were socialized in such a manner that they had strictly to accept and follow certain myths associated with their gender roles.

Gender role ideology encourages women to accept unequal work loads at home. Traditional role ideology defines childcare and housework as women’s responsibility while the role of men is defined in terms their being the family breadwinner. Consequently, women are unlikely to question arrangements which coincide with perceptions of men’s and women’s natural roles. Women may perceive the division of domestic labour as satisfactory if their partners are working outside. In other words, women may be satisfied if they see their
partners contributing economically to the household in ways other than by performing domestic tasks.

Recently, there have been attempts to capture some of the evidence on unpaid work by women, through time-use surveys. These in general show not only that a very substantial amount of women’s time is devoted to unpaid labour, often at the cost of leisure and rest, but also that such unpaid labour may actually be increasing over time, especially in the past decade.

There are several reasons for this. Structural adjustment policies, which have squeezed various types of government expenditure, have in effect meant a reduction in access to a range of public goods and services for ordinary citizens. This tends to affect women especially adversely as the additional burden normally falls on them. Cutbacks in per capita health expenditure and the increase in user charges for such services reduce the extent to which the poor use such facilities. Quite apart from reducing their own access to health facilities, this in turn increases the burden of labour on women in poor households as the responsibility for caring for the sick who cannot be hospitalized usually falls on them.

Most of the activities women are involved in are life supporting and sustaining, and do not go through the market, and are not valued. The intra-household relationships are being reshaped and gender roles within the household redefined. Nevertheless, men are still the heads of households and the major decision makers.

In most households, women continue to undertake the bulk of childcare and housework duties and consequently spend significantly greater amounts of time on domestic labour than men. Men report high levels of satisfaction with these arrangements, but surprisingly it was observed that almost all the women also report satisfaction with these arrangements. This finding has been reported in a number of other studies. These studies shows a clear division of labour along traditional lines with men participating in outdoor
work and women taking the primary responsibility for childcare and indoor activities such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. Most of the domestic work does not simply involve carrying out a series of thankless and repetitive tasks. It also involves the ability to manage and co-ordinate the specific needs and time table of each member of the household. The time devoted to different domestic tasks is somewhat measured but the mental burden of co-ordination of these tasks escapes accurate analysis. The mental burden of domestic work continues to weigh almost on women.

Throughout history women have been in charge of maintaining and sustaining these domestic units by means of their labour, time and skill. Women’s domestic labour has not been considered in the economic context, but rather as a fundamental part of their “virtue” as women. This has been essential for the family and key for the well being of the society.

The women of the villages under study consider themselves primarily as housewives with their roles of wife and mother being most important. They define their work in the household as connected with food, personal activities to the husband, and child care. Cooking is considered to be the main work. It is usually unpleasant and menial work and includes cleaning of the house and washing clothes, food preparation which is a necessity but most of the women enjoyed it and only a few considered it as burden. Most of the village women do not consider taking care of children as work, because they considered it the basic duty of their lives. Religious activities are also considered as their duty and essential for the peace of mind. The village women do not have any clear perception about leisure. However, many of them are of the opinion that gossiping is the best method to enjoy their leisure time.

At the same time family work is often seen as an expression of love for one’s family (Game and Pringle 1983). The emotionalisation of housework means that for many women doing housework is a way of expressing love for their family. Even if women do not enjoy doing housework and childcare, they still may be satisfied with the current situation since
they feel that they work for people they love. Studies have also shown that wife’s employment is often described as secondary. The fact is that domestic work is considered as women’s primary responsibility and while husbands may be expected to help out, they are not expected to take full or even major responsibility for household work.

Moreover, in each age group females spend more time on unpaid work as compared to males. Differences between age groups reflect the influence of labour force participation and the presence of young children in the family. Women’s unpaid work participation is greatest in the years when they are most likely to be looking after young children, while men’s participation in unpaid work is to a very less extent.

The major categories of unpaid work are: household work, giving care to the household members, purchasing goods and services for the household and unpaid work outside the home. Women spend more time than men on each of these activities. Females also spend more than twice the time as compared to males on giving care to other household members, predominantly the young children.

The category of household work includes a range of different tasks. The most common of these are food and drink preparation and clean-up, and indoor cleaning and laundry. On an average, women spend over an hour a day on each of these tasks except on cooking which is two and half hours a day, while men spend significantly less time. However, males spend considerably more time than females on home maintenance and slightly more time on grounds maintenance.

Women's participation in agriculture and animal husbandry, and their role in decision making is not fully recognized by policy makers, extension institutions and development agencies. The causes of these are complex, historical and are reinforced by social, cultural, political and religious practices and beliefs. Serious inaccuracies and measurement failure
occur in the recording of the work that women do due to conceptual and operational (enumerators' and respondents') biases at the time of data collection. Women are known to work longer hours than men and the fact is that women participate in the work force to a far greater extent than is measured by the data.

Food preparation is seen as the central role to the women. Many women begin their day around five-six a.m. They prepare breakfast which is eaten by all the family members. They pack the tiffin boxes of their school going children. Food must not only be cooked, but also served by the women.

The observations made during the study revealed that women in farming households (small farmer’s households) spent more time in farm work in addition to performing the majority of household chores. They also had less sleep, and less leisure time. Some time their daughters helped them in serving of the food.

Men did most of the work in wheat and paddy cultivation with the help of agricultural labourers and by using tractors. Women were busy preparing food for the labourers and carrying food and water to the fields. In addition, they did some vegetable cultivation. Activities carried out by women in agricultural field are of sowing, weeding and transplanting of crops.

Men spent on an average three times as much time in cultivation and farm- work as compared to their wives. Much of paddy cultivation was done by hired labourers. When children grow up, it is especially the males who relax while the children share some of the duties with them. The households were also evaluated according to social status. Men of higher status had more land and spent time supervising the hired labourers. Their work was less heavy, but their total working time was about the same as that of less well-to-do farmers. The data reveal that most of the pre -harvesting operations, were carried out by men specially ploughing, sowing, watering and fertilization. The use of machinery is confined to the males
but some of the task like weeding or removing stones from the field, winnowing, cleaning and storage of grains are done by women. On the other hand, tasks like ploughing, sowing, watering and fertilization are carried out by servants. Harvesting and threshing of wheat crop is shared by hired labour and the landlords.

Some important observations based on the analysis of data alone are as follows:

1. Women spent far longer amount of time on domestic tasks as compared to men. There is a clear division of labour in the tasks between men and women. Women are responsible for most indoor activities, for example, cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children etc. while men take major responsibility for outdoor activities. These patterns have shown a consistency over time.

2. Despite this unequal distribution of tasks, a significant proportion of women express satisfaction with the household division of labour. The explanation seems to lie in gender role attitude which men and women internalize during the socialization process. Most of the men and women still believe that housework and childcare are women’s responsibility. If men participate in some conventional female tasks women feel that their partners are contributing over and above and beyond their normal expectations.

3. The observations also show that age is not a very important factor. For almost all household tasks, age does not influence who performs which of the household tasks. The only aspect where age makes some difference is who did more of the shopping, or cooked food or took care of children, sick and elderly.
4. Younger generation is also subject to the same division of household work as the older one, and involvement in the household tasks. Younger women do less housework as compared to older women but younger men spend a similar amount of time on agricultural tasks as their fathers spend.

5. Despite the technical progress in the domain of housework, like the introduction of washing machines, pressure cookers, gas stoves etc. women still spend most of their time on domestic work.

6. It was also observed that where children have grown up women spend lesser time on domestic tasks, as the grown up girls help their mothers in these tasks.

7. The task of household management is undertaken by women of all social and economic classes, which is assigned to them by the cultural norms. The analysis showed that household work is mainly women’s job and they do it happily and willingly. It was also found that in all the strata women tend to work longer hours than men. Men dominated the productive activities, whereas household activities are on the women’s shoulders. Women were actively found sharing livestock and farm work while men’s sharing of household work including child care was very negligible.

Case Studies

Case studies typically examine the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of an event or a situation as possible. This type of comprehensive understanding is arrived at through a process known as thick description, which involves an in-depth description of the entity being evaluated, the circumstances under which it is used, the characteristics of the people involved in it, and the nature of the community in which it is located. Thick description also involves interpreting the meaning of demographic and
descriptive data such as cultural norms and mores, community values, ingrained attitudes, and motives.

This is a practice derived from legal studies where a case is an event or set of events involving legal acts from the study of which the student derives both the principles and the practice of the law relevant to the case. In sociology, case study method is a holistic treatment of a subject whereby through the detailed examination of one instance information about a class of entities of which this is one may be obtained. (Bhushan 1989: 21)

“Case study is a method of exploring and analyzing the life of a social unit- be that unit a person, a family, institution, culture group or even an entire community.” (P.V.Young, 1960: 229).

“The case study, then, is not a specific technique. It is a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied” (Goode and Hatt, 1952: 331)

The analysis of data regarding gender division of labour has been presented in the previous chapters. However, the pattern of gender division of labour varies in accordance with the socio-economic status of families. Mencher (1982) in a study of predominately landless households in a sample set of villages in Kenda in Tamil Nadu region demonstrated that women work for long hours, contributing all of their incomes for their household’s maintenance in the context of substantial poverty. Majumdar (1979) has maintained that while the economic roles of upper class women within agricultural societies are confined to processing the storage of agricultural products within the home, the landless lower class women are engaged in work labour and suffer from over-extended work days, poverty, malnutrition and perpetual insecurity.
In the present chapter, a few case studies of males and females from the lower caste and landless agricultural labourers have been presented to depict their work pattern and day-to-day activities.

Before describing the case studies in detail it is necessary to consider the productive and social roles of Punjabi rural women in the present socio-economic context. Generally, in the Punjabi families the role of women in agricultural activities has been quite insignificant as compared to the males. Moreover, the percentage of female workers is much higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas. However, most of the females are engaged in household work and that is why the proportion of ‘other female workers’ is the highest in Punjab as compared to other states of India. The lesser extent of female participation in agricultural work can be explained in terms of the unfavorable attitudes towards sending females to the fields, especially the unmarried girls as well as women belonging to groups of the higher socio-economic status. A number of studies like those of Sandhu (1976), Sethi (1982), Aggarwal (1989), Abbi and Singh (1997) and Rastogi (2000) have highlighted the withdrawal of women from agricultural activities, the under evaluation of various tasks performed by women, lower proportion of female workers in specified populations (F.L.P rates), socio-economic discrimination of women etc. however, most of these studies pertain to women of socio-economic groups of higher status.

In the previous chapters the work participation of females in various activities has been analyzed. However, this analysis pertains only to the upper caste women. As the number of lower caste household was quite less in the villages under study, it was considered appropriate not to collect data regarding these households with the help of interview schedules as this data could not be subjected to any meaningful statistical analysis. Therefore, the data with regard to the lower caste women and men have been collected with the help of
case study method. These case studies of lower caste women have been presented in this section.

**Case studies of Females**

**Case no. 1**

The first case is that of Labho of village Lang. She is fifty years of age and is married to Teja Singh, who works as agricultural labourer in the fields of landlord. She works as a domestic help in the household of the same landlord in whose fields her husband works as a labourer. Prior to her marriage, Labho was also working in the house of a landlord in her parent’s village. Besides working as a domestic help in the landlord’s house she also helps in the dairy and poultry which is being run by the landlord.

The daily routine of Labho is as follows. She gets up at 5 a.m. and cleans the shed of the domestic buffalo, which their family is keeping to meet the requirements of milk and allied products for their family. After milking the buffalo and feeding it, she prepares tea for all the family members. After that she prepares the meals for her husband and children. At 8 a.m. her husband leaves for the landlord’s fields and children leave for school. Then she also leaves for her work at the landlord’s house. There, first of all she cleans the buffaloes’ shed, and then she cleans the house, the utensils and the clothes of the family members of the landlord. She also helps in other domestic chores like cutting vegetables, kneading the flour etc. After completing the domestic work she goes to the fields or common land of the village to bring fodder of the buffaloes. After that she comes back to landlord’s house and feeds the buffaloes.

In the afternoon she goes back to her own home for a few hours to look after her children and take a little rest. In the evening at about 4 p.m. she is back again at the landlord house where she prepares tea for all the family members. Then she again cleans the buffalo shed and feeds them. After finishing her work at the landlord’s house she generally goes to
the fields to assist her husband in some agricultural activities like weeding, transplanting, picking of vegetables, pulses etc. After spending almost the entire day in different types of SNA and extended – SNA activities she finds some time in the evening and she generally spends this time in talking and gossiping with friends and neighbours.

For the services rendered at the landlord’s house she gets payment both in cash and kind. Besides some monthly payment in cash she also gets grains after the rabi and kharif harvesting seasons. After the harvesting of wheat and paddy she goes to the fields to collect the remains after threshing and for this work she gets some quantity of grains.

In case of Labho, she used to work as a domestic help in the landlord’s house at her parents’ village as well. But she says that the burden of work was much less. During the conversation she also told that;

Viah to pehlan zindgi kaffi sukhali si, kam vi ghat karna painda sit e koi fikar vi nai si hunda, par hun kam vi dagna karma painda hai, gallan vi sunnian pandian han te, mehnat vi ziyada karni paindi ai. Bachian de dekh bhall di vi saari zimewari meri hai te ehna de bhaapu dian vi zaroortan da khayal rakhna painda hai. Jadon bache choote si tan sara kam kale mere upper si hun beti de vadde hon karan oh mera kam vich hath wata dendi hai, jis naal mainu thoda jeha aaram mil gaya. Kadon din chadia te kadon khatam ho gaya pata hi nahi chalda. (I had to do much more work at the landlord’s house besides attending to her husband and children. As the children are grown up now, the burden of work has decreased a little, but still she feels lot of strain in doing the work as her own age has increased.)

Case no. 2

Another case history is that of Swarno of Lang village. She belongs to Ramdasia caste, a scheduled caste. She is 42 years of age and is married to Baldev Singh. She has three children, two sons and one daughter. She works as a domestic servant in two houses of
landlords. Her husband is an agricultural labourer but whatever he earns, he spends most of it on his drinks. He gives very little money to Swarno and according to her it becomes very difficult to manage even two square meals a day. The husband also gives a beating to her after he is drunk. Thus she is leading a miserable life.

She gets up at 4.30 in the morning. Early morning she gets busy with her domestic chores. First of all she cleans the house and the cattle shed. She owns two buffaloes; therefore after cleaning the cattle shed she milks the buffaloes. Some amount of milk is kept for domestic use and the rest is sold to two other families of her caste. After cleaning the house and cattle shed, she takes a bath before preparing tea for the family members. Then she prepares morning meals and after sending her husband to work and children to school, she leaves for work in the houses of landlords where she is employed as domestic help. In the landlords’ houses she has to clean the cattle shed, after which she cleans the house, the clothes and the utensils. She also helps the landlord’s families in picking the vegetable from the fields. She is busy in all the aforesaid activities in the landlord’s houses till late in the afternoon. After completing her work, she goes to the fields to cut fodder for her own buffaloes and then returns home. By this time, the children come back from school and she gives them food and tea. After that she feeds the domestic cattle and also milks them. In the evening she washes the clothes and utensils of her own household. Late in the evening she is again busy with preparing dinner.

During the paddy season she also helps her husband in transplanting paddy in the fields. Later she is also involved in weeding out grass from the paddy fields. She also helps her husband in harvesting for both rabi and kharif crops. During the harvesting period her day starts a 4 am and she cannot go to sleep before 10 p.m. Thus she is over worked in harvesting and transplanting season. She told the investigator that:
je main kam na karan tan main te mere bache bhukhe mar jande. Bachian khatir hi main kam kardi han tan jo ohna nu koi kami na mehsoos hove. Karme da baapu sharab pee ke aksar mainu kutda marda vi ae. Paise di tangi karke main bimari vich kam kardi han zayada chutti vi nai lai sakdi. Eh sab tan mere piche janam de karaman da ntija ae jehra mainu is janam vich bhugatna pae rea. (If I do not take up this agricultural work, then she and her children will starve, because the husband spends a larger part of his earnings on liquor. Due to the economic hardship, even during the period of confinement on sickness, she stops work only for a couple of days and sometimes she has to work even if she has not completely recovered from her illness. She attributes her miserable condition to her karmas (deeds) in the previous birth).

She says that in the present life she is performing only good actions so that she may get decent life in her next birth.

Case no 3

Rani is a thirty three year old married woman belonging to Jheur caste. She is a Hindu by religion. She resides in Ditupur, the village of her parents. She is married to Pammi, who also resides with her in his in laws house. She told that she is residing in her parent’s village because there is no work for her in village where her in-laws reside. She works as a domestic help while her husband works as agricultural labourer. They have two daughters, one is nine years old is going to school, while the younger one is five years old.

Rani has to do all the household work herself as her children are too young and not of much help to her. Moreover she has to look after her ailing mother as well. She gets up at 4’clock in the morning, and then makes tea for the family. After that she cleans the house and the cattle shed where they have two cows and one buffalo. Later she prepares food for the family members. She leaves for her work at 7’ clock in the morning during summers and at 8’
clock in the winters. After working as a domestic help in the two landlords families she returns in the afternoon and looks after her ailing mother and children. In the evening at 4 p.m. in winters and 5 p.m. in summers she again goes to the landlord’s families for domestic work in their houses as well as picking vegetables from the fields. She returns home late in the evening and completes all the household chores in her own home. The husband, who returns from the fields in the evening, does not lend a helping hand to her in the various household tasks as he strongly believes that these are female tasks. Her nine years old daughter helps her in washing clothes and utensils. During her absence, the elder daughter also looks after her ailing grandmother.

Rani was married at the age of twenty years. She stayed with her in laws for a couple of years but as there was no work for her and her husband in her-in laws village she shifted to her parents village. She earns Rs. 500 per month from the landlord’s families where she works as domestic help. Some times she also gets some vegetables from these families which she picks from the fields. Her husband also earns Rs. 100 per day besides getting some grains at the time of harvesting. She also sells cows milk and earns some money. Thus she says that they are not in a very tight position economically. Her only grouse is that she has to work for long hours and she does not have sufficient time for rest. She says that her day begins with work and ends with work. All the day she is working either in her own home or in the homes of landlords. In the end of the talk Rani replied that “mera tan sara din ehna kam dhandian vich hi nikal janda hai, aram lai te T.V dekhan daa sama mere kol kithe” (My whole day is spend in the work I do not have any time for leisure time activities.)

**Case no 4**

Gammo a resident of Ditupur village is fifty five years old and is the wife of Ishar Singh. She is a Majhabi Sikh (a scheduled caste) and her parents reside in Madhomajra village of Patiala District. She has six children- three sons and three daughters. The eldest son
is married and after marriage is living separately from his parents. Gammo and her husband Ishar Singh are working as agricultural labourers on daily wages. Both of them earn rupees hundred per day besides some grains which they get at the time of harvesting of crops. During the harvesting season one of her grown up sons and one grown up daughter also work in the fields of landlords for which they are paid in kind, that is in form of some amount of grains.

Ishar Singh, the husband of Gammo is sixty years old and it is not possible for him to undertake hard physical labour. Therefore, he works as agricultural labourer only occasionally. That is why Gammo has to work hard to meet the basic needs of the family. Moreover, she is worried about the marriage of her daughters. She told the researcher that when she got married, she received only a few pieces of cloth and utensils from her parents as dowry. But now the demand of dowry has increased and she tries to save something for the dowry of her daughters. She says that she might not be in a position to give large amount of dowry to her daughters but she will have to give much more than what she brought as dowry at the time of her wedding. She feels that poverty is the greatest curse in their family which always keeps all members of the family tense and disturbed. For the sake of meeting the basic needs of the family members and for saving something for the dowry for her daughters she has to put in hard labour, even though her health does not permit her to do so much strenuous work. She told the investigator that:

*dhiye meri saari umar tan kam dhandhian te apnian dhian lai paisa jodan vich hi nikal gai. Je kite main na kamandi tan mere ghar de halaat kharab hone si, roz marra dian zarriottan nu poora karan lai te dhian de viah lai kam kardi han. Hun umar ho jaan karan kna tan kam karan nu jee krda hai ten na hi sehat ijazat dendi hai eh tan meri ik majboori hai. Rabb kare agle janam vich main vi wadian sardarnian waang zindgi basar karan.* (Gammo feels that without her earnings, the situation in the
family would have been really worse. She is remorseful as she thinks that all her life has been full of monotony, drudgery and hard labour as she has also no time for leisure time activities. She dreams of living like the landlords’ wife might be in the next birth).

Case no 5

The next case is that of Melo of Sular-Gharat who belongs to Majhabi Sikh caste, a scheduled caste. This caste is traditionally engaged in scavenging work. But now they have abandoned that work and taken to occupations like domestic help or agricultural labourer. Melo is 58 years old and married to Bagh Singh aged 62 years. She is employed in a private school in a nearby village as a sweeper. She earns rupees seven hundred per month from the school for this work. Her family consists of five daughters and two sons. Four of her daughters are married and do no live with her now. The unmarried daughter works as domestic help in one of the landlord’s house. She cleans the cattle shed and house of the landlords besides washing the utensils and clothes. One of her sons is working as an agricultural labourer and younger son is going to school. Her husband is not engaged in any regular work as he is 62 years of age and does not have much physical stamina. However, he works in the fields at the time of harvesting.

The day starts for Melo at 4.30 a.m., when she gets up. First of all she cleans the house. Later she prepares tea and food for the family. She leaves for her job in the school at 6.30 a.m. as is takes half an hour to reach the school where she works as a sweeper. She remains in the school from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. After returning home in the afternoon she takes some rest. In the evening she also works in one the houses of the village as a domestic help. She takes leave from the school for a fortnight during the harvesting of wheat and is engaged in harvesting work in the fields during this time. For harvesting of wheat crop, she gets some
amount of grains along with payment in cash. During the conversation with the investigator she told that:

Ghar de halaat theek nai han, ehna di vi umar hon karan hun ehna ton zayaada kam nai hunda jis karke mainu kam karma painda hai. Aje tan ik kudi vi viauni hai oh vi zimidaran de gharan vich kam kardi hai pher vi main tan ohde viah joga paisa ikhta karna hi hai, nalle jehrian chaar dhian viahian han ohna naal vi koi na koi dukh sukh lagea rehnda hai. Bhachian khatir is umre vi kam karna painda hai. Meri tan saari umar ehi dhand pitdian lang gait e jehri reh gai oh vi isse taran lang jaugi. (The family is in tight position economically, because they have to save something for the marriage of her unmarried daughter and for the daughters who are married too. Moreover, her husband is not working regularly due to the old age. I am working just because of my children otherwise now I can not work much. My whole life went in working only and rest of life will also pass in the same manner).

Case no 6

Another case is that of Neetu, a scheduled caste. She is married and has three children- one daughter and two sons. She is illiterate and therefore she works as an agricultural labourer and domestic help. She is a seasonal agricultural labourer and has work opportunities for a maximum period of three months during the wheat harvesting season and paddy cultivation season. When she is not employed as an agricultural worker, she works as a domestic servant in the homes of land owners for which she is paid some money and a couple of chapattis.

She does all the housework herself, but some times her daughter helps her in some of the household activities like serving the food, cleaning utensils etc. She believes that men are not supposed to do any house work but they do some out door work such as fetching fire wood. In case of sickness her daughter looks after the house. Her day begins at 4 O’clock
in the morning when she prepares tea for the family members. After that she sweeps the house and prepares food for the family members. After that she leaves for the fields and stays there till 6 p.m. After coming back from the fields she again does all the house work such as cooking food, washing utensils, clothes and heating the water for bath in winters. She does not like to work either in the fields or in the houses of landlords but due to her economic condition she has to work and can not leave the work. Her day ends at around 9 p.m. When Neetu was asked about her leisure time she replied, “vehla time milda hi kithe hai, mere kol tan maran da vi time nahin hunda.” (I do not get any spare time and I do not even have any time to die.)

Case studies of Males

The activities of males in the farm include irrigation of fields during the day and night as well, bringing in the fodder and feeding animals, cleaning the cattle shed, participating in agricultural activities like sowing, manuring, harvesting and threshing of crops etc. On an average they spend 10-12 hours in a day and even longer in the peak season.

Case no.1

The first case is that of Bhag Singh. He works as an agricultural labourer. His day begins at 4 a.m. in the morning. According to him in summers he has to work more as compared to winters. In the months of June- July the transplantation of paddy is carried out so he has to put in hard labour. He firstly ploughs the fields and prepares it for transplantation of paddy. Due to electricity crisis in Punjab during the paddy season, sometimes he has to stay in the fields at night also, so that whenever there is electric supply, he can start the submersible to irrigate the fields.

In the morning firstly he goes to the landlords’ house and feeds the animals. Sometimes he also cuts the fodder for feeding the cattle. After having tea he leaves for the fields at around 6 a.m. and performs the field activities like ploughing, leveling the land with
the help of tractors and then he takes his morning meals which come from the landlord’s house it generally includes roti with lassi and pickle. After that he waters the fields for paddy transplantation if the electricity is there then he immediately switch on the pump otherwise he had to wait for the electricity. After watering the fields he again ploughs the fields with tractor and then transplantation of paddy is carried out. He has to water the fields every day as this crop needs lot of water for good yield. In the afternoon he comes back to the landlord’s house for mixing and chaffing the fodder for the cattle and has food over there. He also gives bath to the cattle, sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the evening. He again leaves for the fields and works there. At about 4 p.m. he gets tea in the fields. In the evening he feeds the cattle and then ties them in the cattle shed. Then he takes his dinner. After that if some work is to be done in the fields then he goes there, otherwise he leaves for home. Around 9 p.m. he goes back to his house.

Case no. 2

Ishar Singh also works as a agricultural labourer in the fields. He wakes up at 4.30 a.m. in the morning. Firstly he goes to the landlord’s house. There he feeds the cattle and gives them a bath. He cleans the cattle shed and after that he takes tea in the house and leaves for the fields. In the fields he works for the preparation of land for cultivation. He waters the fields and sprays the chemicals to remove weeds from the fields. When the landlord ploughs the field with the tractor he follows him for the removal of extra stones or weeds from the fields.

Then he takes breakfast which comes from the landlord’s house. Generally he gets chapatti with pickle and lassi (a drink made from yoghurt). After that he again starts his work in the fields. In the noon he takes some rest for about half an hour and then he again starts his work. In the afternoon he goes to the landlord’s house where he feeds the cattle and mixes the
fodder for the cattle. In the meantime food is prepared which he takes to the fields for the family members and other labourers working there.

He helps the landlord’s family in their domestic chores like picking and carrying vegetables from the fields. He takes care of their pet dogs also. In the evening at around 4.30 p.m. he takes tea and after taking rest there for half an hour, he again starts working. In the evening at around 7 p.m. after finishing his work he leaves for his house. When he was asked about his leisure time he replied:

*Kehra araam, kehri chaan, asi tan saara din khetean vich marde han. Khetan de kaman de naal –naal zimindaran de gharan nu vi jana painda hai, othe jaa ke vi kam karne painde han, bus aukhe sokhe guzara hoi janda. Eh soch ke sabar kar laida hai ke kadi tan rabb saadi vi sunuga te saanu vi thoda bahuta araam miluga.* (We work in the fields for full long day; we do not have any time for taking rest. While working in the fields we also go to the landlord’s house and work there also. One day God will listen to our prayers and we will also get some time for rest).

**Case no. 3**

Teja works in fields as well as a peon in the private school of the village. In the morning at around 5.30 a.m. he goes to the fields and works for sometime over there. Around 8’ o clock in the morning he leaves for the school where he works as a peon. In the school he performs activities like cleaning the Principal’s office, carrying papers, serving water and tea to the staff members. He also looks after the needs of the students. He works there for extra income to fulfill his family needs and better future of his kids. He spends half day in the school and the remaining time in the fields of the landlord. Till 3’ o clock he is in the school and after returning from there he leaves for the fields again. There he takes rest for sometime and takes tea after which he starts working in the fields. He waters the fields, and looks after the vegetables. As a matter of fact he is involved in all the field operations like ploughing,
watering, spraying chemicals, fertilizers and weeding etc. In the evening he goes to the landlord’s house and looks after the domestic buffaloes. He mixes the fodder for them and after feeding them, cleans their shed also. After taking tea he leaves for the fields again to look after the pending work and by 10’o clock he leaves for his home.

During the peak agricultural season like plantation or harvesting, he sometimes eats and sleeps in the fields only. He gets his wages partly in kind and partly in cash. In kind, he gets a specified quantity of grains every season.

In the winter season especially in the month of November he works harder as he has to store the grains of the first season and has to prepare the fields for the next season (wheat cultivation). He helps as the domestic servant. He performs the activities like grinding the wheat to make flour or he has to go the city or village shop for purchasing various things. He also helps in repairing of machines and implements. Sometimes during the peak season he has to carry food for the members of the family in the field.

Case no 4

Pammi works as a agricultural labourer in the fields. He is paid in cash as well as kind after harvesting. His day begins at 5.30 a.m. in the morning. Firstly he goes to the landlord’s house; there he feeds the cattle and gives them a bath. In the fields he works for the preparation of land for cultivation. He waters the fields and sprays the chemicals to remove weeds from the fields.

Then he takes breakfast which comes from the landlord’s house. Generally he gets chapatti with pickle and lassi (a drink made from yoghurt) and sometimes tea. After that he again starts his work in the fields. In the afternoon he goes to the landlord’s house again for bringing food in the peak agricultural season for the family members and other labourers working there.
He helps the landlord’s family in their domestic chores like picking and carrying vegetables from the fields. Even when the landlord’s family goes out, he guards their house as well. In the evening at around 4 p.m. he takes tea and after taking rest there for half an hour and again starts working. In the evening at around 7.30 p.m. after finishing his work he leaves for his house. During the peak season he has to stay in the fields during night also for watering the fields. At the end of the talk he said: “mera tan sara din khetan te zimindar de ghar de kaman vich hi nikal janda hai. Bas sara din eheo dhand pitde raedae tan jo chaar paisa hath vich aa jaan te ghar da guzara hunda rawe jinni zindgi ditti hai rabb ne isse taran hi nikal jaani hai.” (My whole day is spent in the fields as well as in the landlords house. We work just to get some money so that daily needs get satisfied. The whole life which has been given by the almighty will pass this way only).

Case no 5

Baldev works as an agricultural labourer during the harvest of wheat and paddy and also during transplantation of paddy. Besides this, he works as a construction labourer. When asked about why he is working in the fields and as well as agricultural labourer he said: Ik passé kam karan naal guzara aukha hunda hai, naale khetan vich kam karan naal lod vehle sardar oori maddad vi kar dende ne (By working on one side needs are not satisfied and the other reason is that at the time of the need they help us also).

His day begins at 5.30 in the morning. He milks the domestic cattle which is kept to meet the family needs only. Then he takes breakfast and leaves for his work by 7.30 a.m. There he has to work whole day which lasts for 8-9 hours. Then by 6.30 in the evening he comes back home. On his way back home he takes liquor, sometimes on the way to home and sometimes at home. He told that whenever he drinks his wife fights with her he commented this way:
Ladies are always ready to fight if we drink then they come to eat. They do not know about us that how many tensions we have. We drink just to get some relief but they do not understand). His wife was sitting beside she immediately replied on what he said: 

bibi ehna nu tan gallan karnian hi aundian ne, sharab pee ke jehra saanu kutde ne, gallan kadde ne ohna da nai pata, asi vi tan saara din kam kardian han gharte vi, hor gharan vich vi jaaiaa, khet vich kam karida hai asi nai thakdian. Ik din roti tuk te gharm de hor kam karne pae gae tan aape hi akal tikane aa jao pher puchoon wadde laad sahib nun. (Sister they only know to gossip. After drinking when they beat us and use ill language what about that. We also work full long day in the house, and then go to landlord’s house and even in the fields we do not get tired. They will come to know only when they have to cook meals and perform other household chores then I will ask him).

During the harvest times he takes leave from the construction work and works in the fields as an agricultural labourer. The reason behind working as agricultural labourer during harvesting season is that he gets some amount of grains which meet his family requirements during the whole year.

Case no.6

Jeet works as a daily wager in the fields. He is 40 years old. He is paid in cash 100 rupees per day. During the time of harvesting he is also paid in kind. He wakes up at 5.00 in the morning. He leaves for the fields by 7.00 o clock. Sometimes he firstly goes to the landowner’s house. There he prepares food stuff for cattle, clear the cowshed and shift the animals to the open space. In the fields his day is long and exhausting. He undertakes all the
agricultural activities like watering of the fields, preparation of land, sowing, weeding, reaping and spraying of chemicals. When asked about his work he replied:

_Apnian roz marra dian zarrortan nu poora karan lai kam tan har koi karda hai, main kehra koi vakhra kam karda han. Khetan vich dehari kar ke guzara kar laidha je kite padia likhia hunda tan wada afsar lagg janda. Chalo jo meri kismet ch si oheo milna si kisse vele eh jhora zarror aunda hai ke jinni mehnat karidi ohna mehntana nai milda guzara aukha hunda ae. Mann ch ikko khawish hai ke bache pad likh jaan te kite afsar na sai babu hi lagg jaan._ (Everyone works to fulfill his daily needs I am not alone who is working. The difference lies is that I work as a agricultural daily wager in the fields if I have also studied I must be an officer somewhere or I do have the luck as of landlord. The thing which disturbs me is that I do not get sufficient reward for the labour I put in to the work. There is only one desire that my kids must study and work in an office).

When Jeet was asked whether he helped his wife in some of the domestic chores or not he replied that whenever his wife is ill then he assists her in some of the domestic tasks like cleaning of the household and serving the food. But whenever his wife is in good health he does not undertake any type of domestic work. As regards leisure time activities Jeet mentioned that he hardly gets any spare time for such activities but whenever he finds some time he listens to radio or watches television at his friend’s house.

The main findings based on observations and case studies related to work pattern have been summarized in ensuing paragraphs.

The observations during the course of study reveal that the males spent most of their time on production related activities (SNA). On the other hand, the participation of females in SNA activities is confined to the women of lower strata as they have to participate in these
activities because of economic compulsions. However, the time devoted to SNA activities by women is significantly lower as compared to that of men.

Women spend far longer amount of time on household work as compared to men. Despite this unequal distribution of work between men and women, a significant proportion of women express satisfaction with this type of division of labour. The younger generation is subject to same division of household work as the older one. However, the younger women do less household work as compared to middle aged and older women. The household work is considered mainly as women’s job and they do it happily and willingly. It was also found that women from all strata also found that they tend to work longer hours as compared to men.

A few case studies of males and females from the lower economic strata were conducted in order to find out their work pattern. The case studies pertaining to the females clearly indicate that they are overburdened with work. In addition to domestic work they are also involved in productive activities in order to supplement families income. Thus, the females from lower strata are involved both in SNA and extended –SNA activities and consequently they have lesser time available for leisure time activities and personal care (non –SNA activities). Some of the female respondents from the lower strata have also mentioned that they are victims of domestic violence. The husbands of these females generally take liquor and drugs and under the influence of these intoxicants they subject their wives to physical torture. Some of the females also mentioned that they are fed up with their lives because of the monotonous and hard labour. But they attribute their plight to their past karamas (deeds). Some of them also pray to God that in their next birth they may be born in Jatt families.

A few case studies of males from the lower economic strata were also conducted. The main activities in which they were engaged into are irrigation of fields during the day and
night as well, bringing the fodder and feeding animals, cleaning the cattle sheds and participating in various agricultural activities like sowing, manuring, harvesting, threshing of crops etc. On an average they spent 10-12 hours in a day on these activities and even longer amount of time in the peak season. Most of the males’ complaint of hard work and mentioned that they were over burdened with work. Due to lack of time at their disposal they do not have any time for recreational activities. Thus they feel that their life is full of drudgery.