Chapter II: Review of Studies

2.1 Theoretical Formulations

Various theories have been advanced to explain why men monopolize higher paid positions and why women perform most unpaid household labour. Such theories also predict the conditions under which divisions of labour might change. The theories can be grouped into three general categories according to the primary causal processes thought to govern the sexual division of labour: nature, culture and economic.

Nature

Biological and religious arguments suggest that women are physically or spiritually predisposed to take care of children and husbands; housework is assumed to follow naturally from the nurturance of family members. Similarly, functionalist theories suggest that the larger society needs women to expressive roles in the family while men perform instrumental roles connecting the family to outside institutions. (Thorne and Yalom 1992)

Even in the ancient world, when they formulated the first theories about gender patterns, one finds this assessment of women’s labour as “virtue” clearly expressed as something attributable to their “nature”. It is significant that the first treatises on economics clearly specify women’s work as something peculiar to their nature. This approach, argued in classic Greek thought, is picked up later by Roman writers. Thus Columela echoes these ideas in the first century:

Nature has destined that the labour of women is to be the care of the household, and that of the husband is to be for the practice of law and for outdoor labours…almost all household work was particular to women, so that the heads of families, on returning to their houses to rest from their public business, didn’t need to do all the
housework…Through her care the wife…put a lot of effort into augmenting and improving the well-being of her husband…both collaborated in order to increase their common wealth, fortunate that the precision of the woman in her household duties was equal to the industry of the husband in his public business. (Columela (http://www.gender&housework.htm))

Culture

Theories that consider the division of labour to be culturally fashioned tend to emphasize the importance of socialization and ideology. Historical analysis of the ideal of separate spheres fall into this category, as do cultural spheres do rely on rituals, customs, myths and language to explain divisions of labour. Socialization theories suggest that children and adults acquire beliefs about appropriate roles of men and women, and that they fashion their own family behaviours according to these gender scripts (Bem 1993). Some socio-cultural and psychological theories suggest that exclusive mothering encourages girls to develop personalities dependent on emotional connection, which in turn propels women into domestic roles. Boys also grow up in the care of mothers, but in order to establish a masculine identity, they reject things feminine including nurturance and domestic work (Chodorow 1978). The basic idea in most cultural theories is that values and ideals shape people’s motivations and care them to perform gender-typed activities.

Economy

Theories that consider the division of labour by gender to be a practical response to economic conditions are diverse and plentiful. New home economics theories suggest that women do the house work and men monopolize paid work because labour specialization maximizes the efficiency of the entire family unit. Women are assumed to have “tastes” for doing housework, and their commitments to child bearing and child rearing are seen as limiting their movement into the market place (Becker 1981). Most studies find that the
number of hours spouses are employed is more important to the division of household labour than simple earnings. Time demands and time availability-labeled by researchers as practical considerations, demand-response capability, or situational constraints-under gird most people’s decisions about allocating housework and childcare.

The final set of theories also focuses on economic power, but more emphasis is placed on conflict and gender inequality. Women are compelled to perform household labour because economic market inequities keep women’s wages below those of men, effectively forcing women to be men’s domestic servants. Unlike the new home economics, these theories do not assume a unity of husbands and wife’s interests, and unlike many resource theories, they do not posit all individuals as utility maximizers with equal chances in a hypothetical free market. Other versions of theories in this tradition suggest that social institutions like marriage, the legal system, the media, and the educational system also help to perpetuate an unequal division of labour in which women are forced to perform a “second shift of domestic labour when they hold paying jobs (Chafetz 1990; Hochschild 1989).

Adam Smith was the first scholar to introduce the term ‘division of labour’ in social thought. He described the role of division of labor in the manufacturing process. Smith termed it as economic division of labour and used this term to describe the consequences of division of labour in the production process. He used the term to refer to the increase in productivity which takes place as a result of division of work between the workers during the manufacturing process. Smith maintained that when people divide their labour to perform various tasks and operations, there is a dramatic increase in productivity and thus the process of dividing labour tends to accelerate the rate of production.

Considerations on gender division of labour are to be found in the writings of both Karl Marx and F. Engels. According to Paresh Chattopadhya (2001): “Not only throughout his life Marx spoke out against women’s domestic ‘slavery’ and ‘exploitation’ beginning
with triumph of patriarchy, but, coming to modern times, he has also underlined women’s infinite ‘degradation’ and their gender differentiated exploitation under capital’s ‘werewolf gluttony for surplus labour’.” (Chattopadhya, 2001)

Marx believed that the division of labour and the social form of co-operation which it presupposes are found first and foremost in classical manufacture. According to him, the division of labour developed throughout the period of nineteenth century with the development and progress of manufacturing and industry. Marx stated that the division of labour led to a ‘particular sort of co-operation’ which he called ‘complex co-operation’. Simple co-operation is a situation of production in which one capitalist employs a number of craftsmen who all perform the same work. On the other hand, complex co-operation occurs when each individual performs operations which are disconnected and isolated from one another and carried on side by side.

It was Karl Marx who first pointed out [i] how the distinction between wage-labour (paid labour) and domestic labour (unpaid labour) emerges under capitalism and how [ii] domestic labour, which produces use-values instead of exchange-values, comes to be regarded as unproductive by the capitalist regime. Marx thought that domestic labour was real and productive and, therefore, he severely condemned its devalorisation in capitalism. F. Engels, following Morgan, explained the origin of patriarchy in relation to the rise of economic surpluses and private property. According to him, the end of private property would end the malaise of both patriarchy and capitalism.

Marx’s collaborator Engels had put forward an argument for the initial existence of a matriarchal society by the differentiation between production and reproduction. As production-sphere of men began to provide surpluses, so it achieved predominance over reproduction- the sphere of women-and led to the creation of whole panoply of institutions associated with patriarchal control: private property, social classes and the state. In theory,
since patriarchy was derived from private property, and since working men’s exploitation of their female partners was a reflection of their own exploited position within capitalism, the elimination of capitalism and private property would reintroduce sexual equality (Engels, 1968).

The basic problematic regarding the gender division of labour has not changed much since Marx and Engels. At a general level, the gender divisions of labour and the inequalities associated with it have been accounted for in relation to biology or patriarchy or capitalism, or some combination of the three. Goldthorpe (1983); Edwards (1979), Ruberty (1980), Firestone (1974), Eisenstein (1984), and Delphy (1977), and Walby (1990)- all have put forth alternative theories of gender division of labour, emphasizing one or more of the above factors. It is generally agreed that women are exploited and discriminated against both inside and outside the home (as in labour markets). Views differ, however, whether it is patriarchy or capitalism, which is the main culprit.

A comprehensive theoretical formulation of division of labour has been presented by Emile Durkheim. The term division of labour is used in social theory to refer to the process of dividing up labour among individuals in a group so that the main economic and domestic tasks are performed by different people for the purposes of collective maintenance of society. Durkheim was of the opinion that the division of labour was the result of the social process taking place within the structure of society rather than the result of private choices of individuals or the result of organic trades that emerged during evolution.

The term social division of labour was used by Durkheim to describe the social links and bonds which develop during the process that takes place in societies when many individuals co-operate for purposes of carrying out joint economic and domestic tasks. Durkheim related the process of division of labour to the principle of social cohesion, that is, a system of attachment to society. Durkheim termed it as social solidarity, which according to
him linked individuals to each other and to society as a whole. He classified social solidarity in two types that is mechanical and organic. The societies which have mechanical solidarity are homogenous in nature and the individual members are linked directly to society through various points of attachment which act to bind all members of the group together collectively.

In such societies the division of labour is rudimentary so that individuals perform economic and domestic tasks for common social purposes in which they co-operate together collectively. On the other hand, the societies characterized by organic solidarity are heterogeneous societies having large populations spread over broader geographic areas. In such societies there is an increased complexity of division of labour leading to specialized economic function in which individuals are more dependent on others to perform economic functions which they cannot perform themselves.

Max Weber has not explicitly referred to gender division of labour. However, he has expressed his views about patriarchy. Although he was sympathetic to certain aspects of the women’s emancipation movement in Germany, yet he regarded the existence of patriarchal domination as inevitably in the light of the normal superiority of the physical and intellectual energies of the men.

**Patriarchy**

Etymologically, patriarchy derives from two Greek words, namely, *pater* meaning father and *arche* meaning rule. Thus, patriarchy literally means the rule of the father, and this is how the term is ordinarily understood. Patriarchy is also known as father-right while matriarchy is known as mother-right. Let us recall in pre-modern times, God, King and Father were homologous and interchangeable terms. The way God ruled the universe and the king ruled the country, the patriarch ruled his family. In metaphoric substitutions, God was regarded as both King and Father. Inversely, the patriarch or the father was regarded as both lord and king of the house.
In academic or scholarly discourse, the concept of patriarchy has been employed chiefly in anthropological and feminist writings. In anthropology, patriarchy was an object of study in evolutionary, Marxist, and structural-functional theories. In feminism, it is particularly the radical feminists, as distinguished from both liberal and Marxist feminists, who have invoked the concept of patriarchy to explain institutionalized male dominance. The following discussion tries to sketch the anthropological as well as feminist perspectives on patriarchy.

*The Penguin dictionary of sociology* states:

This concept is used to describe the dominance of men over women, a dominance, which appears in several quite different kinds of society. It is also used to describe a type of household organization in which an older man dominates the whole household, including younger men. While male dominance is often explained biologically, usually by reference to the necessary reproductive functions of women, most sociologists argue that patriarchy refers to social, not natural relations. There is considerable debate about the sociological explanation of patriarchy. It has been suggested, for example, that compulsory heterosexuality, male violence, the way men are organized in the work-place and socialization into gender roles are all causal factors (Abercrombie *et. al.*, 1984:181).

Three extremely important points are made in this definition or rather characterization of patriarchy. Firstly, the concept of patriarchy is presently used in two senses (i) as a system of dominance of men over women who appear in different kinds of society and (ii) as a system of household organization in which an older man dominates not only women but also younger men. While the first sense is emphasized in feminist writings, the second is more pervasive in anthropology. Secondly, patriarchy refers to social and not natural relations. Lastly, the definition pinpoints important variables that have been suggested as explanations.
of patriarchy. Let us see how anthropological and feminist perspectives approach the issues raised above.

Starting in 1860s, writes Patricia Uberoi (2003), “Anthropology had been preoccupied with debates on sequencing and diffusion of forms of the human family. On the basis of classificatory kinship terminologies and the ethnographic record of exotic kinship practices on the one hand, and evidence of “mother-goddess” cults in many contemporary and historical societies on the other, a number of scholars had sought to posit a universal stage of mother-right, preceding the stage of father-right in the evolution of humankind towards the supposedly civilized form of conjugal family found in the advanced societies of the West (93).” J.J. Bachofen’s The mother-right (1861) and Lewis Henry Morgan’s Ancient society (1877) are two well-known examples of the evolutionist thesis that matriarchy preceded patriarchy and was in fact a normal stage in the orderly evolution of human societies. For Bachofen it was ignorance of paternity and for Morgan agricultural activity [in the context of Iroquois Indians] that was responsible respectively for the precedence of matriarchy and matrilineality over patriarchy and patrilineality. Writes Richard A. Dello Buono (1995) “Morgan came to realize that once exposure to European colonizers took place under highly unequal terms, it elevated the importance of those activities that were controlled by men. This in turn caused a relative devaluation of the role of women, paving the way for a transition to patriarchy (925)”. Interestingly, Eleanor Burke Leacock’s 1981 study of Montagnais-Naskapi, an Inuit (Eskimo) people called Myths of male dominance lent support to Morgan’s thesis.

After the evolutionists, it was the turn of the Marxist F. Engels to argue in favour of the historical priority of matriarchy. In his classic work inspired by Morgan The origin of the family, private property, and the state published in 1884, Engles associated the rise of patriarchy with the rise of private property. He argued that “the overthrow of the mother-right
was the ‘world historical defeat of the female sex’ in which women were reduced to instruments of economic production (and biological reproduction) in societies based on private property. Yet Engels further argued that patriarchal domination could itself be overthrown with the abolition of capitalists of private property, the socialization of industry, and the eradication of the coercive family” (Buono op.cit.: 926). Corroboration of Engels’ theory has come from a comparative empirical investigation by Karen Sachs reported in her paper Engels revisited: Women, the organization of production and private property published in 1975.

The next and last approach to patriarchy is the structural-functional approach of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. Radcliffe-Brown wrote a paper in 1924 called The mother’s brother in South Africa in which he defined patriarchy in definite terms. He wrote:

A society may be called patriarchal when descent is patrilineal, marriage is patrilocal, inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line, and the family is patripotestal (i.e. the authority over the members of the family is in the hands of the father or his relatives). On the other hand, a society can be called matriarchal when descent, inheritance and succession are in the female line, marriage is matrilocal, and when authority over children is wielded by the mother’s relatives (Radcliffe-Brown 1952-22).

There are three comments that come to mind immediately. Firstly, in the set of five features of patriarchy mentioned above, authority is mentioned the last. This contrasts with feminism, where male authority is what is emphasized above all others. Secondly, in the case of patriarchy it is the authority of father or his relatives, but in the case of matriarchy it is only the authority of mother’s relatives that is highlighted. This introduces an asymmetry in the definition. Thirdly, as Uberoi (2003) has pointed out the nature of the typology is not clear whether it is ideal typical or descriptive, and whether the relation between the two types
is of the taxonomic type [either or type] or of polar opposition [allowing a pint of neutrality between the two poles]. In a paper entitled ‘Patrilineal and Matrilineal succession,’ Radcliffe-Brown (1935) substituted the terms patriliney/matriliny for patriarchy/matriarchy thus privileging descent over other variables. Radcliffe-Brown’s whole point was that “In any society in which kinship is of fundamental importance…it is essential for social stability and continuity that the rights of different individuals over a given individual should be defined in such a way as to avoid as far as possible conflicts of rights (As quoted 1952:40).” And rights can be clearly defined if a definite system of unilineal descent is followed.

After Radcliffe-Brown, the structuralists and alliance theorists “attached no special significance to the fact of patrilineal vs matrilineal descent, which Levi-Strauss described as merely ‘an illusion of traditional sociology’ (Uberoi 2003:105). The problematic of patriarchy shifted from anthropology to feminism. This discussion has been revived by feminists in the recent times. The feminist movement is internally highly differentiated and we have a great variety of feminisms - liberal, radical, Marxist or socialist, post-modernist.

Liberal feminism seeks the causes of gender inequalities in social and cultural attitudes, “but [liberal feminists] do not see women’s subordination as part of a larger system or structure” (Giddens 2001: 115). On the other hand, radical feminism sees the systematic domination of women by men in human society as related to patriarchy:

Patriarchy is viewed as a universal phenomenon that has existed as a universal phenomenon and that has existed across time and cultures. Radical feminists often concentrate on the family as one of the primary sources of women’s oppression in society. They argue that men exploit women by relying on the free domestic labour that women provide in the home. As group men also deny women access to positions of power and influence in society (ibid: 115). Radical feminists do not believe that women can be liberated from sexual oppression through reforms or gradual change. Because patriarchy is systematic
phenomenon, they argue, gender equality, and can only be attained by overthrowing the patriarchal order (ibid.115).

To patriarchy, Marxist or socialist feminists add capitalism as an additional and perhaps more basic factor responsible for women’s exploitation and oppression. Engels has shown that how the rise of private property gives birth to patriarchy. In her review of feminist social theories, Beatrice Kachuck maintains that socialist feminism or feminist socialism is “the most promising….the vision of the end of capitalism offers hope of eliminating not only gender but all oppressions by eradicating hierarchical social structure (Kachuck 2003:81)”.

While liberal, radical and socialist feminists often talk of women as a homogeneous category, postmodernists invite attention to the differences among them along caste, class, race and ethnic lines.

In the preceding discussion, a few feminist approaches to patriarchy have been described. There is, however, need to consider at least one specific feminist theory of patriarchy in some detail. It is Sylvia Walby’s theory put forth in her *Theorizing patriarchy* (1990). Walby makes the following points:

Firstly, Walby clearly defines patriarchy as “a system in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.”

Secondly, Walby holds, that patriarchy is essential to any analysis of gender inequality.

Thirdly, historical or cultural variations within patriarchy must be taken into account.

Fourthly, Walby sees patriarchy and capitalism as distinct systems which interact in different ways, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes in tension. However, capitalism has generally benefited from patriarchy.

Fifthly, she identifies six structures through which patriarchy operates
i. Production relations in the household; ii. Paid work; iii. The patriarchal state; iv. Male violence; v. Patriarchal relations in sexuality; and vi. Patriarchal cultural institutions.

Sixthly, Walby distinguishes two forms of patriarchy; Private and Public. Private Patriarchy is the domination of women which occurs at the hands of an individual patriarch. It is an exclusionary strategy, because women are essentially prevented from taking part in public life. Public patriarchy, on the other hand, is more collective in form. Women are involved in public realms, such as politics and the labour market, but remain segregated from wealth, power and status.

Lastly, Walby contends that at least in European societies such as English society, there has been a shift in patriarchy, but there is a shift only in degree. Patriarchy has not been defeated. “If at one time women’s oppression was found chiefly in the home, it is now located throughout society as a whole - women are now segregated and subordinated in all areas of the public realm. In other words, patriarchy has shifted from private to public. As Walby quips: ‘Liberated from the home, women now have the whole of society in which to be exploited’ (Quoted in Giddens 2001:117).

The vigorous and global feminist movement has of course considered the entire gamut of issues - of truth as well as of power – relating to gender differences and gender disparities. It is on two main issues, however, that the feminists have remained divided: namely, [i] the role of nature versus culture and [ii] patriarchy verses capitalism in producing gender differences and gender disparities. [iii] A third issue has related to the following question: Whether to achieve gender equality by emphasizing difference or identity between men and women. The Encyclopedia of feminist theory edited by L. Code (2000) delineates the full range of feminist approaches – liberal, radical, Marxist, eco-feminist, postmodernist, and so
on. These issues have particularly surfaced in the context of discussions on domestic division of labour (or domestic labour) and gender-based horizontal and vertical segmentation of labour market.

2.2 Recent Foreign studies

Hee Kang Kim (2009) in study on American and South Korean couples concluded that women perform householdwork and child care whether they work outside the home or not. On the other hand men perform market tasks and have very less responsibility for household and child care as compared to women. The study concluded that both American and South Korean women suffer from gender inequalities in regard to gender division of labour.

Farzana Shahid (2005) in her study on women of Barani village Pakistan concluded that women of lower economic strata participate in agricultural activities as well as they are performing household chores. They are more burdened with work as those of upper economic strata. The introduction of technology in agricultural field has reduced the female participation especially of upper economic strata.

The American Time Use Survey (2004) based on US Census Bureau reports from a study of 21,000 people on their activities during one day last year. It marks the Department of Labour’s first comprehensive attempt to examine how Americans divide their time between official employment, unpaid housework and leisure time. It was found that on average, about 84 percent of women and 63 percent of men spent time on housework. Men spend slightly more time at work each day, but researchers say the difference mostly reflects the larger number of women who work part time. Meanwhile, men spent slightly more time engaged in leisure activities than women – 5.4 hours for men compared to 4.8 for women.

The Central Statistical Office of Mauritius while conducting the fourth round of the continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey (CMPHS) from January to December 2003
found that the women are more likely to be reported as homemakers (35 percent against 0.3 percent among men) whereas men are more likely to be employed (75 percent against 37 percent among women). Women spent nearly four times as much as men on unpaid productive work, (277 minutes compared to 72 minutes). Women spent about three and a half hours per day on housework while men spent only an average of 36 minutes on such activities. On an average, women devoted 42 minutes daily to care of children (including teaching) compared to 12 minutes for men. On the other hand, men spent more time on home improvements and maintenance (7 minutes against 1 minute) and on shopping, payment of bills, etc. (20 minutes against 15 minutes).

A World Bank Report (2002) indicates that, in most countries, women work longer than men when the time they spend on domestic work is added to the hours they work outside the home and in family enterprises. The data for developing countries show that girls tend to spend more time on domestic chores than boys and thus have more limited opportunities for education and leisure activities.

A paper on Time Allocation and the Gender Division Of Labour in France and Sweden (2001), revealed that in both the countries, the women’s share of household activities (housework and care to children) significantly exceed the male’s share but the inequality in the domestic division of labour remains more pronounced among French couples. In France, around 70 percent of the time spent on household activities is performed by women, compared to around 60 per cent in Sweden. Overall, even if Sweden exhibits a more equal gender division of labour, the two countries still display a high degree of gender specialization (Source: 1986 and 1998-1999 “Time Budget” surveys, INSEE, France, and 1984 and 1993 “Household Market and non-Market Activities” surveys, Department of Economics, University of Goteborg, Sweden).
A study in Bangladesh (2000) reveals that women in Bangladesh enjoy lesser importance than men. “She is little more than a free servant and a child bearing machine.” A Bangladeshi woman’s major recognized role is that of a housewife. From childhood, a girl is trained to be a wife and a mother. Generally, this term refers to those who do not engage in economic activities. However, in our country, none can afford to sit idle in the family at home. But all work and activities involving child bearing and rearing, and the care of other family members and dependant- past (grand parents), present (parents) and future (children) are limited to reproductive role. Bangladeshi society regards these duties as women’s natural vocation and lack of skill in such work is regarded as a flaw in her personality. Thus women’s household work remains unrecognized, uncounted and invisible. National Labor Force Survey also reflects this bias. Non-recognition of household work shows almost half the population as unemployed and inactive.

According to Human Development Report (1995), women work longer hours than men in every country. The total burden of work on women’s is 53 percent in developing countries and 51 percent in industrial countries. The United Nations (1991) conducted a study on the World’s Women (1970-1990). According to this study, in all societies men and women have different responsibilities for various types of work which are required for the development of communities. Within the existing division of labour, the responsibilities for the maintenance of human resources fall largely on women’s shoulders. Women’s work in the household, in subsistence agriculture and such activities are generally not considered to be economically productive and is either not accounted for at all or is grossly under valued, if counted. The time use studies help in covering some or all aspects of women’s work.

A time use study in Germany (1990), found that both in East and in West Germany women spend twice as much time doing housework as men. East Germany always was in the lead in the modernization of the gender division of unpaid work. In the 1960s, the division of
housework was extremely traditional in West Germany. Only 35.9 per cent of all men reported doing any housework, compared to 72.8 percent in the GDR. Men spent less than three hours a week doing housework. Women did between 13.0 times (in a city sample) and 14.5 times (in a national sample) as much housework (30.8 or 35.4 hours a week). In the GDR, men spent more than seven hours a week doing housework—women did 4.2 times as much (33 hours a week).

The World Conference on agrarian reforms and rural development (1979) held in Rome, Italy, recognized the vital role of women in the socio-economic life in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities for successful rural development planning and programme implementation. It further recommended that rural development based on growth with equity will require full integration of women, including equal access to land, inputs, services and opportunities to develop and employ their skills.

**INSEE, (Institute National de Statistique et des Etudes Economiques) France** (1966) conducted national survey on comparison of the daily activities carried out by both men and women on the time budgets of the French population found that the weight of domestic burden falls disproportionately on women, 1975, for example, for people in the 18 to 64 years old range, employed women spent nearly 33 hours (32 hours and 54 minutes) on domestic work per week whereas men spent around half of that (16 hours and 20 minutes). Women spent a staggering 54 hours and 29 minutes.

### 2.3 Indian studies

Indian social scientists—sociologists, anthropologists, cultural geographers, labour economists, scholars working in the field of literary and cultural studies, – have not lagged behind in making theoretical and empirical contributions to gender and women studies. Leela Dube, Devaki Jain, Nirmala Bannerjee, Krishanraj, Karuna Chanana, Geeta Sen, R. Barooha, Sharmila Rege, Madhu Kishwar, Patricia Uberoi, M. Meis, Vandana Shiva, Menefee-Singh,
K.P. Singh, Raj Mohini Sethi – all have made useful contributions in these fields. Patricia Uberoi (1995) has been particularly interested in theoretical issues and has examined closely the concept of patriarchy; Kishwar (1999) has analysed the ideological undertones of western feminism; Devaki Jain (1985, 1996) has looked into household tyranny and laid stress on measuring housework on the basis of time allocation; Raj Mohini Sethi (1982), Geeta Sen (1982), K.P. Singh (1986), and Malkit Kaur (1988) have focused on women workers in the context of Green Revolution and development; all of them have invariably been concerned with gender disparities in different contexts.


Starting with *Towards Equality* Report (GOI: 1974), what these studies have collectively established can be summed up in the words of Patricia Uberoi (2003) as follows:

[They] confirmed the gender-based horizontal and vertical segmentation of the labour market; the historical downturn in women’s paid work in certain important sectors of the economy; the geographically uneven rates of women’s work force participation through South Asia, correlating with other indices of women’s backwardness and deprivation; the under-enumeration and under-valuation of women’s work; and women’s preponderance in the informal or unorganized sector of the economy, where their work is underpaid, unregulated and largely invisible (209).

Kiranjot Sidhu, Kunwarjeet Pannu (2005) in their paper, “Women participation in farming under varying landholdings: the study in rural Punjab” represented by five distinct
landholding categories clearly indicates an active participation in most of the selected activities but ranged from 65.21 percent to 98.40 percent in varied landholding categories and in different activities. Women belonging to landless families were participating in harvesting, weeding and sowing operation, jointly with male members. The picture was similar in ten cases of families of small and marginal landholdings. The independent participation of women and joint participation with other women, however, decreased with increase in land holding and participation in harvesting and weeding also decreased substantially. The least, independent participation of women was observed in seed treatment and fertilizer application mainly due to the technical aspects involved. Low participation of women in irrigation management can be attributed to the restriction on movement of women outside the house at odd hours.

U.A. Shimray (2004), in her study on Women’s work in Naga society concluded that women have a greater responsibility-from domestic work- to various agricultural activities. In Naga society, one finds more division of labour in house work. In housework women spent 53 hours whereas, men spent only 17 hours weekly. Housework and household activities are still consuming women’s time and energy. She concluded that cleaning and washing is 100 percent women’s job, whereas 77 percent of women are involved in cooking, 73 percent in care of children and 70 percent in care of sick and elders. Regarding the agricultural activities both men and women are equally important. The time spent by men is 56 hours whereas for women it is 44 hours.

Bhatia (2002), in his paper on gender disparities has observed that there is a clear bias on the basis of gender in the amount of time spent on different activities. Men dominate the SNA activities whereas; the extended-SNA activities appear to be the sole responsibility of women. A significantly larger proportion of time spent by women in SNA activities goes into unpaid work as compared to that in the case of men. Men get more time than women to spend
on Non-SNA activities which include leisure, learning, and personal care, social and cultural activities.

A qualitative and quantitative research study on two villages, Ashta and Umra located in Nanded district of Maharashtra measuring number of hours per day during the year (2002-03) time use pattern for family farm work revealed that the home is defined as the domain of women while the work-place has increasingly been constructed in a male idiom, despite the fact that women work in the fields in large numbers. Along these lines, a clear-cut division of labour between men and women in both Ashta and Umra is observed. Women usually perform tasks which require so-called feminine endurance and patience. In contrast, men perform non-repetitive tasks that are not monotonous. Men and women in Ashta and Umra work together on farms but perform different kind of works.

Time use survey conducted by Central Statistical Organisation in 1999 in six districts of India also found that household work is mainly a female responsibility as compared to men. Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation, Government of India, conducted the time use studies in six states (Harayana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya). The main objectives of the survey were to collect data to properly quantify the economic distribution of women in the national economy and to survey gender discrimination in household activities. The survey reveals that out of the total 168 hours in a week, on an average men spent about 42 hours in SNA activity as compared to only 19 hours by women. However, the situation completely changes when we consider extended SNA activity, men spent only 3 to 6 hours as compared to 35 hours by women. Women spend about double time in the care of children, sick and elderly people. In the survey, the difference in time spent on personal care by men and women was not found to be significant. Personal care and self-maintenance is necessary for the health and well-being of an
individual. In case of traditional society, time use patterns are flexible and unregulated. This is because of the nature of the work and economic activity.

D.K. Sudha (1998), in her study in Karnataka state concludes that women perform all the basic duties of a housewife expected in the Indian society. The domestic tasks like cooking, washing, cleaning are still categorized as women’s domain. The study reveals that 85 percent of women do all the housework, in which the participation of husbands is either nil or negligible. Regarding the care of children women have more responsibility as compared to men. 65 percent of the women respondents believed that children are their own responsibility.

Malkit Kaur and M.L. Sharma (1994), in their study found that the majority of women work on family farms which are unpaid work. In a day the average working hours for women are 13.2 hours. They devote almost 3 hours on farm work, 1.7 hours on housework, 2.4 hours on food preparation, and 2.5 hours on care of animals and 1.2 hours on child care. Usually rural women are busy with domestic work, animal care, grain processing and cleanliness of home. They spend longer hours and much effort on these tasks as compared to that of men.

Savita Singal (1989), in her study on Gender Differentials in Work Pattern of Rural Households in Haryana (India), found that in village Rwanda, women virtually do all the household work, three quarters of other agricultural work and half of the work with animals, taken together women in this area work over three times as much as men. The findings reflected that housework (child care and household chores) and economically extended work (i.e., fetching of water and fuel and making of cow dung cakes) which is crucial for family’s survival, is still exclusively a women’s responsibility. Except for fetching of fuel, it was the female children who extended a helping hand to their mothers for the above tasks. Women absolutely do not get any help from their men folk for domestic activities and economically extended activities (except for fetching of fuel).
A study by Kanhere (1989), *Differential Socialisation of Boys and Girls: A study of Lower Socio-Economic Households among Gujarati caste/communities in Ahmedabad*, finds that teenage boys and girls were socialized differently for different ends. Girls were restricted to home and household activities. Marriage was made an ultimate goal in their lives and they were trained basically for life in the in-law’s house. On the contrary, boys were compelled to study failing which they were encouraged to take up jobs or to assist parents in the family economic activity, if any.

Devi (1986), found that on an average rural woman spent 40.42 percent of time on household activities, 15.83 percent on agricultural activities and 43.7 percent on sleeping, resting, social and other leisure activities.

Similarly, Munjal *et.al.* (1985), on the basis of their study on work participation and time allocation pattern among rural women of Haryana have concluded that farm women play a significant role in home, dairy and farm activities, while differences exists in time spent during slack and peak agricultural period in these activities. Women spent 12.19 and 13.93 hours on home, dairy and farm activities during slack and peak periods respectively thereby having a busier schedule of work during peak period.

Rajamal Dev Das (1983), reported that rural women in our country share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the household and the family (like child care, collection of fodder and fuel, cooking, washing and sewing), as well as attending to farm activities, dairy, animal husbandry and extending a helping hand in rural artisanship and handicrafts.

Mencher (1982), in a study of predominantly landless households in a sample set of villages in Tamil Nadu regions demonstrated that women work for long and hard hours, contributing all of their incomes for household maintenance to meet the family needs in the context of poverty.
Raj Mohini Sethi (1982), in her study in Punjab villages has concluded that 80.47 percent of the women respondents did all the housework themselves, while 17.97 percent were helped by their female relatives like daughter, mother-in-law or daughter-in-law. Only 1.56 percent respondents were helped by husbands or sons. Regarding child care the duty primarily falls on the mother and if any other female member is present in the home.

Mann (1979), in a study of villages in North India, also indicated that rural women had to work from early morning until late at night. Women also contribute to agricultural economy. They work day and night and in shoulder to shoulder with men but their position in society remain insignificant.

According to Majumdar (1979), while the economic role of upper class women within agricultural society are confined to processing and storage of agricultural products within the home, the landless lower class women are engaged in work labour and suffer from over extended work, poverty, malnutrition and insecurity.

Devdas et.al. (1972), concluded farm women spent on an average 10 hours and 13 hours daily on household and agriculture activities daily during ordinary days and peak period. Chakravarthy (1975), found that an active female member spent 15-17 hours on farm, care of animal and in attending household chores during peak season.

Last but not least, reference should be made to a few studies touching gender division of labour that have been conducted in Punjab, for example, by Abbi (2003), Kaur (1998), and Sandhu (1976). Kumool Abbi’s is the most useful for the present study as it directly deals with gender division of labour in rural households and throws up some interesting ideas. Her main conclusion is that:

….technological modernisation of farming and associated property, withdrawal of women from agricultural work at all levels of the village society, their increased involvement in catering to household consumption and status appropriate lifestyle
maintenance needs as well as taking to professional and other tertiary occupations, both signify and help to promote Punjab’s characteristic modernization process (Abbi 2003: 288).

The big questions are where are we standing right now in the context of the gender roles and what implications does it have on human existence? Gender of a person reflects the masculine or feminine attributes of an individual, with respect to the psychology, biology, and role in society. A gender role is the responsibility or the way of living of a person in society, with respect to the lifestyle of the society. Traditional gender roles in society have been shouldered by people based on their biological orientation. With the passage of time and creation of a 'liberal' value system, the marked differences between the male and the female form have faded to a great extent, starting with the western culture.

An overview of studies reviewed

A number of studies reviewed in this chapter have revealed that on average men spend a higher proportion of time on production related activities. As the studies reviewed are from the rural sector the production process relates to agriculture. Therefore the studies have reported the average time spent by men on various agricultural and agriculture related activities. Many studies have shown that the participation in these productive activities (SNA activities) is mainly confirmed to men. Very few women have been reported to be participating in these productive activities and these women are from the lower economic strata. The women of upper and middle economic strata do not participate at all in these productive activities. The abstention of women from productive work is considered as a status symbol by the economically well off families.

The household chores, care of children sick and elderly have been classified under the category of extended –SNA activities. All the studies, whether foreign studies or Indian studies, have pointed out that women spent much higher amount of time on such activities as
compared to men. The higher participation has been attributed mainly to the cultural factors. The cultural norms of all societies, especially the traditional societies, prescribe that all household related work is the domain of the women. The men are not expected to share any type of household maintenance responsibilities with the women. The women of lower economic strata are reported to be over worked in most of the studies. The women from these strata have to spend sometime in the production related activities also because of the economic compulsions. These women generally participate in some agricultural activities like harvesting, weeding and sowing. Thus they have to spend time both on SNA as well as extended SNA activities. This results in greater burden of work for the women of the economically weaker section of the rural society. Thus, the landless lower class women suffer from over extended work, poverty and insecurity.

The studies reviewed in the previous paragraphs have used some concepts and definitions which are relevant to the present study. These have been briefly described below.

**Gender:**

The term gender implies the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learnt through the socioalization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is a part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.
Division of Labour:

All societies have some division of labour based on age and sex but with the development of industrialization the division of labour becomes far more complex which affects many parts of the social cultural system. Life is generally organized around an implicit “social contract” Two of its components, the gender contract and the employment contract define the current division of family and labour market roles. Within the “gender contract”, women assume the bulk of the family care and domestic functions, while men are ascribed primary responsibility for the family’s economic or financial well being. The “employment contract” reinforces this division of labour by defining as its norm the sole breadwinner and life-long employment. The social contract conflicts with the new reality of men and women’s lives. The division of labour by gender refers primarily to the segregation of paid and unpaid work between women and men in private and public life. This division reflects the traditional division of women’s work being often invisible and therefore undervalued in national accounts, and under-represented in the labour market.

Gender division of labour:

The division of work roles and tasks into those considered by any cultural system to be most suitable for men and most suitable for women is referred to as gender division of labour. The division of labour between women and men depends on the socioeconomic and cultural context, and can be analyzed by differentiating between productive and reproductive task. Productive tasks refer to work undertaken by either men or women to produce goods and services as well as the processing of primary products. Reproductive tasks refer to child bearing and the different activities carried out in what is called the “care economy”; namely, the many hours spent caring for the household members and the community, for fuel and water collection, food preparation, child care, education and health care, and care for the elderly. Women’s involvement in both productive and reproductive tasks means that they
invariably work longer hours per day than men do. Women’s activities are often unpaid or take place in the informal sector not covered by labour legislation. As a result women’s work is also often excluded from national employment and income statistics.

**Gender roles:**

Gender roles are learnt behavior in a given society, community or social group in which people are conditioned to perceive activities, tasks and responsibilities as male or female. These perceptions are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or other ideologies and by the geographical, economical and political environment. Changes in gender roles often occur in response to changing economic, natural or political circumstances, including development efforts; structural adjustment or other nationally or in recreationally based forces. The gender roles of men and women within a given social context may be flexible or rigid, similar or different, and complementary or conflicting. Both women and men play multiple roles- productive, reproductive and community management- in society. Usually perceived as breadwinners, men are able to devote more time to a single productive role, and play their multiple roles one at a time. In contrast to men, women are often seen as secondary wage-earners. They must play their roles simultaneously and balance competing claims on their limited time. Women’s work time and flexibility are therefore much more constrained than has been the case for men. Since men and women have historically played different roles in society, they often face very different cultural, institutional, physical and economic constraints, many of which are rooted in systematic biases and discrimination.