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## SUBJECT I

### WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Women in Rural Economy: The Case of India\*

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### I

#### INTRODUCTION

It is widely argued that rural women constitute one of the most vulnerable sections of our society. In spite of this, however, two basic issues in this context are still unresolved in the literature: (1) how to measure accurately the role of rural women in the economy, and (2) if rural women are so vulnerable, why they have remained so and what can be done to help them. The present paper attempts to discuss these two issues.

As far as the measurement of the role of rural women is concerned, one can say that one of the major issues with respect to labour force statistics in India has been to capture women's work and her contribution to the economy accurately. Continuous efforts have been made by Census of India (Registrar General of Population) and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) to improve concepts and methodology of estimating workers, and particularly women workers. Several other departments such as Departments of Labour, Industry, Social Welfare are also collecting data on female labour force to capture the different aspects of their work. Recently, two major efforts have been initiated by the Department of Statistics, Government of India in this context: One is pertaining to mixed surveys (household-cum-enterprise survey as recommended by International Labour Organisation) and the second is the Pilot Time Use Survey conducted in six states in the country. Though the first survey is on-going, some results of the second survey are now available. It will be useful to see how these efforts have succeeded or not in netting women's work, particularly in rural areas.

It is important to note at the outset that women's work should be netted in the context of the definition and coverage of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the country. That is, the estimate of the workforce in the economy should include all the workers who contribute to the GDP. It has been observed that the correspondence between the GDP and the workforce is not maintained in the case of women workers, and particularly women workers in rural areas because those women who contribute to GDP either do not know that they are contributing and therefore do not report themselves as workers, or are not seen as workers by investigators. As a result, they are under-reported as workers.

The scope of the concept of GDP has expanded considerably after the adoption of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993 at the global level. The new SNA covers, in addition to marketed goods and services, the goods produced for self-consumption within the household. This wider definition of GDP will automatically increase the size of the

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workforce, women being the main component of the increase. This increase will perhaps be larger in the case of rural women where there is a prevalence of subsistence economy and therefore the system of production of goods for self consumption is quite common.

Any assessment of women's role in the rural economy has to view women's contribution in this wider perspective. This does not mean, however, that the data collected through the Census and the National Sample Survey (NSS) are not relevant. In fact, these data throw very useful light on the status of rural women in the formal labour market. In fact, it will be useful to study the role of women in the rural economy with the help of these data to start with.

Section II of the paper discusses the Census and the NSS data over time to understand the status of rural women in the labour market; Section III discusses the pilot time use survey and some of its results; while Section IV draws inferences of the first two sections for netting women's work and their contribution to the rural economy in India, as well as for improving their status in the economy.

## II

### WOMEN'S WORK AS PER THE CENSUS AND NSS STATISTICS

As is well-known, two major sources of data on women's work in India are the Decennial Census of Population and the quinquennial NSS Rounds on employment and unemployment. Both these sources together throw useful light on women's work in the labour market. In spite of their conceptual and methodological limitations, they do throw light on the broad features of women's work in the formal labour market.

Before we study these data, however, it is important to understand the differences in the concepts of work and workers as used by these two sources of data. According to the Census of Population, "any productive work for which remuneration is paid and is market related" is to be treated as work. If a person had worked for a major part of the reference year (not less than 183 days), he is regarded as Main Worker, and if he has worked for less than this period, he is regarded as Marginal Worker. The task of the investigator is to ask a person whether he is a worker or not, and then classify him as a main or marginal worker depending on the number of days he worked in the reference year.

This approach of the Census has several limitations (Hirway, 1994).

(a) First of all, unpaid productive work which does not enter into the market but part of which (good for self-consumption) is covered under SNA 1993 is excluded from the definition of 'work' with the result that the large part of the females' production work is not counted as work and these women are classified as non-workers.

(b) Secondly, because of cultural biases and false perception about their own work many women reported themselves as 'housewife' and thereby non-reported or under-reported their work.

(c) Thirdly, since Marginal Workers were not classified into occupation categories, the information about the women's occupation (women predominate as marginal workers) could not be collected satisfactorily.

In addition to the above, there were a few other problems regarding the Census of Population data on women.

(a) To start with, the occupational group of 'non-workers' in the Census created several problems for reporting women's work. The categories included under 'non-workers', namely, housewife, students, dependants, retired persons, beggars and vagrants, inmates of jails and mental institutions, and "persons not covered in any of the above groups but who were looking for work" were not mutually exclusive, though these were treated as such by the Census. Consequently, those who fell into more than one of the sub-categories could not be reported correctly. Women who reported themselves, as housewives could not be included as "looking for work" even when they looked for work in reality. These women were wrongly treated as outside the labour force.

(a) Secondly, the Census has limited scope for reporting subsidiary occupations. Since women in developing economies are observed to be doing multiple jobs, this information could not be collected under the Census.

(b) Thirdly, the concept of "head of the household" was not clear in the Census. It was not explicitly stated whether the head here meant the social head or the main earner of the family. In the male dominated society of ours, therefore, frequently a man was reported as head though the woman was the main earner of the family. As a result, the data could not give accurate information about the gender of the main earners of households in the country.

The 1991 Census of Population tried to overcome some of these problems. Using some of the recommendations of the project undertaken by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and some academic institutions, the Census authorities made some changes in the methodology of investigation in the Census:

1. A longer reference period was used to capture women's seasonal and inter-continent activity in agriculture and informed sector in a better way.
2. In order to identify the status of women in the labour market correctly, the term 'seeking work' was replaced by 'availability for work', if it is available.
3. In order to reflect the earning capacity of self-employed, a distinction was made between recipients of incomes and unpaid family workers.
4. A genderwise break-up of data on head of household was included for tabulation.
5. Introduction of the clause "including unpaid work on farm or family enterprise" was added in parenthesis to the concerned question, "Did you work any time at all last year?" in the Individual Slip that classified the population into workers and non-workers.

In order to support the implementation of the above changes Census Enumerators were given specific instructions. They were asked not to accept 'house work' as an answer from women respondents before probing the details about their activities. They were also told not to ask direct questions in the exact form as given in the Individual Slip of the Census, but to ask probing questions to get correct information about women's work.

According to the definition of 'worker' under the Census even if a woman has worked for a day in the last year, she should be called a worker. In order to help the investigators the Census authorities had made a list of all those activities, which are home-based or are usually carried out at home by women. After identifying the work done by a woman, the investigator was also expected to find out the time devoted to this work, and put for as main or marginal worker on the basis of this. The enumerators were also told that if a woman is not working, attempt should be made to find out whether she looked for work or was available for work during the last year. These instructions expected to enable the enumerator to know the correct status of women in the labour market.

The 1991 Census, however, could not be rated as very successful in implementing these changes (Hirway, 1994; Premi and Raju, 1994). It was almost impossible to train all the investigators about (1 million) in the country in the new approach and it was unrealistic to expect all of them to spend the required time in investigation. The net result is that the data on women's work as per the 1991 Census were highly uneven. The data were good only in those pockets where intensive efforts were made to train the investigators. The other areas did not show much improvements. As Premi and Raju have concluded, the workforce participation rates (WPRs) of women as per the 1991 Census are still ridiculously low (Premi and Raju, 1994).

As is well-known, the NSSO has tried to improve upon the Census data on work and workers. To start with, an NSS investigator does not ask the person whether he is a worker or not, but asks what the person is doing. Based on the answer the respondent is classified as a worker if he is engaged in "economically meaningful activities". This is a better approach than the approach of the Census as it is left to the investigator and not to the person to describe him as a worker or not. In addition, the NSS has a well trained and experienced team of investigators, and a smaller population (sample) to investigate. In the 32nd Round the NSS also tried to extend the concept of work by including free collection of fuel and water as 'work'.

In spite of these achievements, however, the NSS data have some problems: The NSSO has not been able to overcome the problem of socio-cultural biases of people. Women who refuse to call themselves as 'workers' still perhaps do the same under the NSS at least to an extent. It is argued that the NSS has not been able to establish the right correspondence between the coverage of GDP and the worker who contribute to it. The WPRs of women under the NSS are still very low.

In spite of the limitations of the Census and the NSS data on female workforce, the data are very useful because they capture, more or less accurately the workforce that is engaged in the formal labour market. The under-estimation of women workers is largely for those women who work at home and/or in home-based enterprises. It is very useful therefore to understand the characteristics of rural female workers as per these two data sources. The following paragraphs discuss these.

### *1. Rural Women in the Total Workforce/Labour Force*

Table 1 presents data on the workforce in India from 1972-73 to 1993-94. The table shows that of the total workforce of 374.39 million in India in 1993-94, 121.63 million (32.5 per cent) were women. This percentage was 35.72 for rural areas and 21.03 for urban areas, which indicates that relatively more women participate in work in rural areas than in urban areas.

The rural female workforce has increased by more than 50 per cent during the last two decades, from 69.2 million in 1972-73 to 104.29 million in 1993-94, while the rural female population has increased at a much lower rate, by 43 per cent during the period.

The same is reflected in their WPRs also. Table 2 shows that about 33 per cent of rural females participate in the workforce against a mere 15.4 per cent of urban females. The WPR of rural women has shown the highest increase, among all the components of labour

force (an increase of 15.1 per cent) during 1981-1991. The long-term increase between 1972-73 to 1993-94, however, has been the highest in the case of urban females largely because of the very small base in the initial years.

TABLE 1. ESTIMATES OF POPULATION AND WORKERS FOR MID-POINT OF SURVEY PERIOD BY SEX AND RESIDENCE: 1972-73 TO 1993-94: ALL-INDIA

NSS Round (1)	(million)								
	India			Rural India			Urban India		
	P (2)	M (3)	F (4)	P (5)	M (6)	F (7)	P (8)	M (9)	F (10)
<b>(a) Population</b>									
27 (1972-73)	573.05	296.84	276.21	455.21	233.56	221.66	117.83	63.28	54.55
32(1977-78)	637.57	329.98	307.59	496.14	254.43	241.72	141.42	75.55	65.87
38 (1983)	718.12	371.70	346.42	546.65	280.61	266.04	171.46	91.09	80.18
43 (1987-88)	790.65	409.91	380.74	593.43	305.51	287.92	197.22	104.40	92.82
50 (1993-94)	865.10	464.56	430.54	657.31	339.36	317.95	237.78	125.20	112.59
Percentage change 1972-73 to									
1993-94	50.96	56.50	55.87	44.40	45.30	43.44	101.80	97.85	106.40
<b>(b) Workers</b>									
27 (1972-73)	233.41	156.90	76.51	194.40	125.20	69.20	39.01	31.70	7.31
32(1977-78)	265.87	176.79	89.08	217.21	138.41	78.80	48.66	38.38	10.28
38 (1983)	302.32	200.13	102.19	243.94	153.49	90.45	58.38	46.64	1.74
43 (1987-88)	324.61	217.50	107.11	257.67	165.67	93.00	66.94	52.83	14.11
50 (1993-94)	374.39	252.76	121.63	291.95	187.66	104.29	82.44	65.10	17.34
Percentage change 1972-73 to									
1993-94	60.40	61.10	58.97	50.18	49.89	50.71	111.33	105.36	137.21

Source: NSS Rounds. P= Person; M=Males; F=Females.

TABLE 2. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY RURAL-URBAN RESIDENCE AND SEX, NSS AND CENSUS 1971 TO 1993-94: ALL-INDIA

Year/ Source (1)	All-India			Rural India			Urban India		
	P (2)	M (3)	F (4)	P (5)	M (6)	F (7)	P (8)	M (9)	F (10)
	Census 1971	34.0	52.7	13.9	36.1	53.6	15.5	29.6	48.9
1972-73(27)	40.7	52.7	27.8	42.8	53.6	31.4	32.6	49.4	13.2
1977-78(32)	41.6	53.4	28.9	43.8	54.4	32.6	33.9	50.0	15.3
Census 1981	36.8	52.6	19.8	38.9	53.8	23.2	30.0	49.1	8.3
1983(38)	41.8	53.5	29.3	44.2	54.3	33.7	34.0	50.9	14.9
1987-88(43)	40.9	53.0	28.0	43.3	53.9	32.3	34.0	50.6	15.2
1988-89 (45)	41.5	53.9	27.9	43.7	54.8	31.9	33.7	51.2	14.6
1990-91(46)	40.4	54.2	25.4	42.7	55.3	29.2	33.8	51.3	14.3
Census 1991*	37.5	51.6	22.3	40.0	52.5	26.7	30.2	48.9	9.2
1993-94 (50)	42.0	54.5	28.6	44.4	55.3	32.8	34.7	52.0	15.4
Percentage change 1981-91									
	1.9	-1.9	12.6	2.8	-2.4	15.1	0.7	-0.4	10.8
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94									
	3.19	3.42	2.88	3.74	3.17	4.46	6.44	5.26	16.67

Source: NSS Rounds and 1981 and 1991 Censuses.

\* Excludes Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. P = Persons, M = Males, F = Females.

In other words, though women's participation in the labour market is much lower than that of males, rural females have a much higher WPR compared to urban females, and the rural female workforce has shown a much faster increase in the recent decade. This higher participation of rural women, however, is not accompanied by any other positive characteristics of the workforce: rural females enjoy much lower occupational diversification, very poor employment status and high unemployment rates.

## *2. Diversification of the Workforce*

As far as occupational diversification is concerned, the bulk of rural women workers are still in the primary sector. Table 3 presents the distribution of workers according to industry categories in India for the years 1981 and 1991. The table shows that 89.8 per cent of rural women workers in India were in the primary sector in 1991. This proportion was slightly lower (89.45 per cent) in 1981, implying a marginal increase in the share of women workers in the primary sector during the decade. As against this, the proportion of male workers was smaller (80.36 per cent) in the primary sector in 1991 and their percentage declined by about 3 points between 1981-1991.

In fact, the table shows that rural women workers are the least diversified component of the labour force in the country! Tables 4 and 5 which are based on the NSS data also confirm this observation. According to the NSS data, 86.1 per cent of female workers in rural India work in the primary sector, which is the highest of all the other components of the workforce (Table 4).

What is much more serious, however, is that there is an increase in this percentage during the recent years as per both the Census (1981-1991) as well as the NSS data (1987-88 to 1993-94), while there is a decline in this percentage for male workers. In other words, it is only rural female workers who are experiencing negative occupational diversification in India in the recent years when all the other components of the labour force are experiencing larger diversification!

A careful study of the different occupation categories of male and female workers in rural and urban areas (Tables 3 and 5) throw more light on the pattern of diversification of rural female workforce in India.

1. Within the primary sector female workers predominate as agricultural labourers: 49 per cent of rural female workers work as agricultural labourers against 26 per cent of rural male workers. However, when it comes to employment intensity, i.e., average number of days of employment as hired agricultural labour and wage rates, rural women labourers get much less employment and much lower wages. While adult male labour gets 305 days of work (main workers, when fully employed), female labour gets 265 days of work. Also adult male labourer earns Rs. 1.90 as wage rate (at 1960-61 prices), while female labour earns Rs. 1.30 as wage rate (at 1960-61 prices) (Unni, 1991) (Table 7).
2. The increased share of rural women's employment in the primary sector is largely because of their increased employment in cultivation, mainly as unpaid family workers. Women are also occupied in animal husbandry, but their percentage share is very low (1.6 per cent) and declining (Table 3). This is perhaps due to the fact that women's work in this sector is not netted properly by the Census of Population.

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN WORKERS BY SEX AND INDUSTRIAL CATEGORY, INDIA (TOTAL, RURAL AND URBAN): 1981 AND 1991

Industrial category (1)	1981			1991			Percentage change 1981-91		
	Persons (2)	Males (3)	Females (4)	Persons (5)	Males (6)	Females (7)	Persons (8)	Males (9)	Females (10)
				All-India					
(i)	41.46	43.71	33.09	38.41	39.63	34.22	-7.36	-9.33	3.41
(ii)	25.12	19.57	46.34	26.44	21.05	44.93	5.25	7.56	-3.04
(iii)	2.25	2.37	1.83	1.90	1.99	1.60	-15.56	-16.03	-12.57
(iv)	0.58	0.63	0.35	0.62	0.70	0.34	6.90	11.11	-2.86
Sub-total Primary	69.41	66.28	81.61	67.37	63.37	81.09	-2.94	-4.39	-0.64
(v) v (a)	3.45	3.18	4.57	2.42	2.09	3.53	-29.86	-34.28	-22.76
v (b)	7.85	8.91	3.60	7.76	8.89	3.88	-1.15	-0.22	7.78
(vi)	1.66	1.87	0.87	1.95	2.32	0.66	17.47	24.06	-24.14
Sub-total									
Secondary	12.96	13.96	9.04	12.13	13.30	8.07	-6.40	-4.73	-10.73
(vii)	6.33	7.41	2.04	7.46	8.98	2.26	17.85	21.19	10.78
(viii)	2.75	3.36	0.37	2.81	3.54	0.32	2.18	5.36	-13.51
(ix)	8.55	8.99	6.99	10.23	10.80	8.26	19.65	20.13	18.17
Sub-total Tertiary	17.63	19.76	9.40	20.50	23.32	10.84	16.28	18.02	15.32
(i-ix) Total	100	100	100	100	100	100			
				Rural					
(i)	50.95	55.16	36.94	48.15	51.40	38.58	-5.50	-6.82	4.44
(ii)	30.09	24.00	50.36	32.17	26.35	49.32	6.91	9.79	-2.07
(iii)	2.37	2.53	1.84	1.96	2.08	1.61	-17.30	-17.79	-12.50
(iv)	0.45	0.49	0.31	0.47	0.53	0.29	4.44	8.16	-6.45
Sub-total Primary	83.86	82.18	89.45	82.75	80.36	89.80	-1.32	-2.21	0.39
(v) v (a)	3.07	2.87	3.77	2.20	1.96	2.93	-28.34	-31.71	-22.28
v (b)	3.43	3.82	2.11	3.60	4.03	2.34	4.96	5.50	10.90
(vi)	1.02	1.17	0.56	1.04	1.30	0.27	1.96	11.11	-51.79
Sub-total									
Secondary	7.52	7.86	6.44	6.84	7.29	5.54	-9.04	-7.25	-13.98
(vii)	2.79	3.27	1.12	3.26	3.99	1.10	16.85	22.02	-1.79
(viii)	1.10	1.39	0.11	1.23	1.62	0.08	11.82	16.55	-27.27
(ix)	4.73	5.30	2.88	5.92	6.74	3.48	25.16	27.17	20.83
Sub-total Tertiary	8.62	9.96	4.11	10.41	12.35	4.66	20.77	24.00	13.38
(i-ix) Total	100	100	100	100	100	100			
				Urban					
(i)	5.11	5.2	4.63	4.94	4.91	5.13	-3.33	-5.58	10.80
(ii)	6.08	4.66	16.65	6.75	5.42	15.61	11.02	16.31	-6.25
(iii)	1.79	1.81	1.77	1.71	1.74	1.52	-4.47	3.87	14.12
(iv)	1.06	1.10	0.69	1.12	1.19	0.68	5.66	8.18	-1.45
Sub-total Primary	14.04	12.77	23.74	14.52	13.26	22.94	3.42	3.84	-3.37
(v) v (a)	4.91	4.22	10.44	3.15	2.50	7.53	-35.85	-40.76	-27.87
v (b)	24.76	26.04	14.59	22.06	23.24	14.14	-10.90	-10.75	-3.08
(vi)	4.12	4.26	3.10	5.06	5.32	3.30	22.82	24.88	6.45
Sub-total									
Secondary	33.79	34.52	28.13	30.27	31.06	24.97	-10.42	-10.02	-11.23
(vii)	19.89	21.32	8.92	21.91	23.69	10.01	10.16	11.12	12.22
(viii)	9.07	9.98	2.24	8.24	9.19	1.94	-9.15	-7.92	-13.39
(ix)	23.21	21.41	36.97	25.06	22.80	40.14	7.97	6.49	8.57
Sub-total Tertiary	52.17	52.71	48.13	55.21	55.68	52.09	5.83	5.63	8.23
(i-ix) Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Population, Office of the Registrar General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.



TABLE 4. BROAD SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS (IN TERMS OF USUAL STATUS) BY SEX AND RESIDENCE: 1972-73 TO 1993-94: ALL-INDIA

Sector/ Year (1)	Persons			Male			Female		
	Primary (2)	Secondary (3)	Tertiary (4)	Primary (5)	Secondary (6)	Tertiary (7)	Primary (8)	Secondary (9)	Tertiary (10)
All-India									
1972-73	73.9	11.3	14.8	68.8	12.8	18.4	84.3	8.2	7.5
1977-78	71.0	12.6	16.3	65.6	14.2	20.3	81.8	9.5	8.7
1983	68.6	13.8	17.6	62.1	15.7	22.2	81.2	10.3	8.5
1987-88	65.0	15.9	19.1	58.7	17.4	23.9	77.7	12.8	9.5
1993-94	64.7	14.8	20.5	58.3	16.5	25.2	78.0	10.9	11.1
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	-12.45	30.97	38.51	-15.26	28.91	36.96	7.47	32.93	48.00
Rural India									
1972-73	85.6	7.2	7.2	83.3	7.8	8.9	89.7	6.0	4.3
1977-78	83.4	8.0	8.6	80.7	8.8	10.5	88.2	6.7	5.1
1983	81.5	9.0	9.4	77.8	10.0	12.2	87.4	7.4	4.8
1987-88	78.3	11.3	10.4	74.6	12.1	13.3	84.8	10.0	5.2
1993-94	78.2	10.2	11.5	74.0	11.2	14.8	86.1	8.3	5.6
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	-8.64	41.67	59.72	-11.16	43.59	66.29	-4.01	38.33	30.23
Urban India									
1972-73	14.8	32.2	53.0	10.7	33.1	56.2	32.9	28.8	38.3
1977-78	15.2	33.2	51.6	10.6	33.7	55.7	31.9	32.4	35.7
1983	14.8	33.9	51.3	10.3	34.6	55.1	32.0	31.2	36.8
1987-88	13.6	33.6	52.8	9.1	34.3	56.6	30.5	31.3	38.2
1993-94	12.3	32.2	55.5	9.0	33.1	57.8	24.8	29.3	45.9
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	-16.89	0.00	4.72	-15.89	0.00	2.85	-24.62	1.74	19.84

Source: NSS Rounds.

- It is important to note that the diversification of rural women's work is, unlike that of men, more in the secondary sector and less in the tertiary sector. The same is not the case for urban female workers or male workers in the rural and urban areas. For example, in 1991, 5.54 per cent of rural female workers were engaged in the secondary sector against 4.66 per cent in the tertiary sector (Table 3). The same percentages are 24.97 and 52.09 for urban women workers, 7.86 and 9.96 for rural and male workers and 34.52 and 52.71 for urban male workers.
- There is a clear decline in the percentage of rural women working in traditional household industries (as in the case of rural males). There is, however, an increase in the share of women workers working in non-household industries in both rural and urban areas. In other words, women have got better access to non-traditional industries. The quality of this employment, however, is relatively poor as we shall see later on.

5. In the tertiary sector women workers are predominant mainly in the service sector. About three-fourths of women workers in the tertiary sector are employed in services, and most of these are petty low paid services (Table 3).
6. In short, rural women workers are mainly employed in the primary sector (primarily as agricultural labourers and unpaid family workers), and their small diversification is observed mainly in non-household manufacturing and petty services (Table 5).

TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS (USUAL STATUS)  
BY SEX AND RESIDENCE: 1972-73 TO 1993-94: ALL-INDIA

Sector/Sex/ Industry	(1)	(2)	1972-73 (3)	1977-78 (4)	1983 (5)	1987-88 (6)	1993-94 (7)
All-India							
Persons	1. Agriculture		73.9	71.0	68.6	65.0	64.7
	2. Mining and quarrying		0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7
	3. Manufacturing		8.8	10.2	10.7	11.1	10.5
	4. Electricity, gas and water		0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
	5. Construction		1.9	1.7	2.2	3.8	3.2
	6. Trade		5.1	6.1	6.2	7.2	7.4
	7. Transport and storage		1.8	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.8
	8. Services		7.9	8.1	8.9	9.3	10.3
	All		100	100	100	100	100
Males	1. Agriculture		68.8	65.6	62.6	58.7	58.3
	2. Mining and quarrying		0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9
	3. Manufacturing		9.9	11.0	11.7	11.9	11.0
	4. Electricity, gas and water		0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
	5. Construction		2.1	2.2	2.9	4.2	4.1
	6. Trade		6.5	7.8	8.0	9.2	9.5
	7. Transport and storage		2.6	3.1	3.6	3.9	4.0
	8. Services		9.3	9.4	10.6	10.8	11.7
	All		100	100	100	100	100
Females	1. Agriculture		84.3	81.8	81.2	77.7	78.0
	2. Mining and quarrying		0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.34
	3. Manufacturing		6.6	8.5	8.9	9.5	9.3
	4. Electricity, gas and water		*	*	*	*	*
	5. Construction		1.3	0.8	1.0	2.8	1.2
	6. Trade		2.3	2.8	2.7	3.1	3.2
	7. Transport and storage		0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
	8. Services		5.1	5.7	5.5	6.2	7.6
	All		100	100	100	100	100
Rural India							
Persons	1. Agriculture		85.6	83.4	81.5	78.3	78.2
	2. Mining and quarrying		0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6
	3. Manufacturing		5.4	6.2	6.8	7.2	7.1
	4. Electricity, gas and water		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	5. Construction		1.4	1.3	1.6	3.3	2.3
	6. Trade		2.5	3.3	3.4	4.0	4.3
	7. Transport and storage		0.6	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.4
	8. Services		4.1	4.5	4.9	5.1	5.8
	All		100	100	100	100	100
Males	1. Agriculture		83.3	80.7	77.8	74.6	74.0
	2. Mining and quarrying		0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
	3. Manufacturing		5.7	6.4	7.0	7.4	7.0
	4. Electricity, gas and water		0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
	5. Construction		1.6	1.7	2.2	3.7	3.2
	6. Trade		3.1	4.0	4.4	5.1	5.5
	7. Transport and storage		1.0	1.2	1.7	2.0	2.2
	8. Services		4.8	5.3	6.1	6.2	7.1
	All		100	100	100	100	100

(Contd.)

Table 5 (Concl.)

Sector/Sex/ Industry (1)	(2)	1972-73 (3)	1977-78 (4)	1983 (5)	1987-88 (6)	1993-94 (7)
Rural India						
Females	1. Agriculture	89.7	88.2	87.8	84.8	86.1
	2. Mining and quarrying	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
	3. Manufacturing	4.7	5.9	6.4	6.9	7.1
	4. Electricity, Gas and Water	*	*	*	*	*
	5. Construction	1.1	0.6	0.7	2.7	0.8
	6. Trade	1.5	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1
	7. Transport and Storage	*	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	8. Services	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.4
	All	100	100	100	100	100

Source: NSS Rounds.

### 3. Employment Status

Table 6 presents data on the employment status of male and female workers in rural and

TABLE 6. STATUS DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS (IN TERMS OF USUAL STATUS)  
BY SEX AND RESIDENCE: 1972-73 TO 1993-94

Sector/ Sex/ NSS Round (1)	All-India			Rural India			Urban India		
	Self- employed (2)	Regular employees (3)	Casual labour (4)	Self- employed (5)	Regular employees (6)	Casual labour (7)	Self- employed (8)	Regular employees (9)	Casual labour (10)
Persons									
27 (1972-73)	61.4	15.4	23.2	65.3	9.3	25.4	41.2	46.3	12.5
32 (1977-78)	58.9	13.9	27.2	62.6	7.7	29.7	42.4	41.8	15.8
38 (1983)	57.3	13.8	28.9	61.0	7.5	31.5	41.8	40.0	18.2
43 (1987-88)	56.0	14.4	29.6	59.4	7.7	32.9	42.8	40.3	16.9
50 (1993-94)	54.8	13.2	32.0	58.0	6.4	35.6	42.3	39.4	18.3
Percentage change									
1972-73 to									
1993-94	-10.75	-14.29	37.93	-11.18	-31.18	40.16	2.67	-14.9	46.4
Males									
27 (1972-73)	60.5	19.8	19.7	65.9	12.1	22.0	39.2	50.7	10.1
32 (1977-78)	58.0	18.3	23.7	62.8	10.6	26.6	40.4	46.4	13.2
38 (1983)	55.9	18.1	26.0	60.5	10.3	29.2	40.9	43.7	15.4
43 (1987-88)	54.5	18.2	27.3	58.6	10.0	31.4	41.7	43.7	14.6
50 (1993-94)	53.7	16.7	29.6	57.9	8.3	33.8	41.7	42.1	16.2
Percentage change									
1972-73 to									
1993-94	-11.24	-15.66	50.25	-12.14	-31.40	53.64	6.38	-16.96	60.4
Females									
27 (1972-73)	63.1	6.3	30.6	64.5	4.1	31.4	48.4	27.9	23.7
32 (1977-78)	60.8	5.3	33.9	62.1	2.8	35.1	49.5	24.9	25.6
38 (1983)	60.0	5.4	34.6	61.9	2.8	35.3	45.8	25.8	28.4
43 (1987-88)	59.0	6.8	34.2	60.8	3.7	35.5	47.1	27.5	25.4
50 (1993-94)	56.8	6.2	37.0	58.5	2.8	38.7	45.4	28.6	26.0
Percentage change									
1972-73 to									
1993-94	-9.98	-1.59	20.92	-9.30	-31.71	23.25	-6.20	2.51	9.7

Source: NSS Rounds.

urban areas. The table shows that here also rural women workers are not in any advantageous position.

About 58.5 per cent rural women workers are self-employed against 56.8 per cent of rural male workers and 45.4 per cent of urban female workers. This self-employment of rural women is largely as unpaid family workers as revealed by the Economic Census 1990. It appears that self-employment of rural women has continuously declined during the past two decades, from 64.5 per cent in 1972-73 to 58.5 per cent in 1993-94 (Table 6).

The decline in self-employment of rural women has been mainly due to their increase as casual labour. The share of casual workers among rural women has increased by 23.25 per cent, from 31.4 per cent in 1972-73 to 38.7 per cent in 1993-94.

As regards regular employment, rural women are again in the worst position. Only 2.8 per cent of rural women workers are employed as 'regular' workers against 28.6 per cent of urban women workers and 8.3 per cent of rural male workers. Regular employment of female workers has also shown the highest decline of 31.71 per cent between 1972-73 and 1993-94.

It seems to us that the rural areas have experienced much higher decline in regular employment between 1972-73 to 1993-94 in the case of both male and female workers. This decline is, again, much more in the case of female workers. On the whole, women workers in rural areas have suffered as rural workers as well as female-workers.

#### 4. *Unemployment Rates*

Table 8 presents unemployment rates of male and female workers in rural and urban areas as per their usual status, current weekly status and current daily status.

As far as usual status of workers is concerned, the unemployment rates are very low, 2.2 per cent for male workers and 1.4 per cent for female workers at the all-India level. For rural areas the rates are 2.0 and 1.3 for male and female workers respectively. These rates are, however, fluctuating during the five NSS Rounds and they do not show any clear trend.

In the case of the unemployment rates as per current daily status (CDS), the rates are much higher in general, as expected, and female rates are much higher than those of male workers. At the all-India level the rates were 6.3 and 5.9 per cent for females and males respectively and for rural areas they were at 5.6 for both males and females.

There is a consistent decline in the rates of unemployment of females in both rural and urban areas, while the same cannot be said of male workers. It is important to note that rural female workers have shown the highest decline in CDS unemployment rate during the two decades, a decline of about 62 per cent.

To sum up, our discussion on the Census and NSS-based data on rural women workers leads us to observe that rural women are in the worst position in the labour market in terms of occupational diversification, employment status and wages. Rural women seem to be suffering in two ways, as rural workers as well as women workers. The changes in their position in the labour market during the last two decades also are not very encouraging. Their diversification is almost stagnant, their employment status is not improving and their wages are increasing at much lower rates. The only positive aspects are (a) their slow increase in the labour market, (b) the small improvement in their share in the manufacturing

sector and (c) the decline in their unemployment rate. These changes, however, are very small. The overall scene is very grim and does not lead one to expect for a very bright future for rural women in the labour market.

TABLE 7. REAL AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL WAGE EARNINGS AMONG WAGE WORKERS IN RURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS AT 1960-61 PRICES

Sector/Sex/ NSS Round (1)	(Rs.)			
	Agriculture		Non-agriculture	
	Males (2)	Females (3)	Males (4)	Females (5)
1974-75	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.6
1977-78	1.2	0.8	1.9	0.9
1983	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.8
1987-88	1.4	1.1	1.7	1.2
1993-94	1.9	1.3	2.8	1.5
Percentage change 1974-75 to 1993-94	111.11	116.67	154.55	150.00

Sources: Government of India (1973; 1981 a; 1981 b; 1984; 1994; 1998) and Unni (1997 a, b).

TABLE 8. INCIDENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA, BY SEX AND RESIDENCE, NSS DATA

NSS Round (1)	Usual status			Current weekly status			Current daily status		
	Males (2)	Females (3)	Persons (4)	Males (5)	Females (6)	Persons (7)	Males (8)	Females (9)	Persons (10)
	Rural								
27 (1972-73)	1.17	0.48	0.9	3.61	7.4	3.9	8.19	14.67	8.2
32 (1977-78)	2.27	5.83	1.5	3.90	5.4	3.7	7.93	11.33	7.7
38 (1983)	2.37	1.80	1.1	4.43	6.2	3.9	8.64	11.57	7.9
43 (1987-88)	1.80	2.40	2.0	4.20	4.3	4.2	4.60	6.70	5.2
50 (1993-94)	2.00	1.30	1.1	3.10	2.9	3.0	5.60	5.60	5.6
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	70.94	170.83	22.22	-14.13	-60.81	-23.08	-31.62	61.83	31.71
	Urban								
27 (1972-73)	5.03	6.44	5.1	6.26	10.94	6.6	8.79	16.74	9.0
32 (1977-78)	6.94	21.60	7.1	7.24	11.39	7.8	9.80	16.23	10.3
38 (1983)	6.37	17.74	5.0	7.21	9.63	6.8	10.14	13.77	9.6
43 (1987-88)	5.20	6.20	5.4	6.60	9.20	7.0	8.80	12.00	9.4
50 (1993-94)	4.50	8.30	4.4	5.20	7.90	5.8	6.70	10.50	7.4
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	-10.54	28.88	-13.73	-16.93	-27.79	-12.12	-23.78	-37.28	-17.78
	All-India								
27 (1972-73)	1.9	1.0	1.6	3.7	5.9	4.3	7.0	11.5	8.3
32 (1977-78)	2.2	3.3	2.6	4.4	5.0	4.5	7.6	10.0	8.2
38 (1983)	2.3	1.2	1.9	4.4	4.8	4.5	8.0	9.3	8.3
43 (1987-88)	2.6	2.9	2.7	4.8	5.0	4.8	5.6	7.5	6.1
50 (1993-94)	2.2	1.4	1.9	3.5	3.8	3.6	5.9	6.3	6.0
Percentage change 1972-73 to 1993-94	15.79	40.00	18.75	-5.41	-35.59	-16.28	-15.71	-45.22	-27.71

Source: NSS Rounds.

## III

## WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC WORK: EVIDENCE FROM TIME USE SURVEY

We have seen in the previous sections that women's contribution to economic work is not likely to be measured accurately by the Census of Population and NSSO Surveys as (a) not all those women who contribute to GDP are likely to report themselves as workers or likely to be reported as workers by investigators and (b) several of women's activities which should be included in GDP are not likely to be included through the surveys. The reasons for both these problems are primarily the inadequacy of concepts and methodologies of netting women's work.

Indeed, it is difficult to believe that only 22 per cent of women (or 28 per cent of women as per NSSO) participate in economic work in India or only 26 per cent of rural women and 9 per cent of urban women participate in economic work.

The 1991 Census tried to correct the situation by paying special attention to net women's work. But as seen above, the results have not been very encouraging. Recently, several methodological innovations are being tried out in India. Two major innovations are (a) household-cum-enterprise survey - mixed survey which is being carried out by the NSSO in its current round (1999-2000), and (b) pilot time use survey which has been just completed in six states in India. The results of the mixed survey are naturally not available, but some results of the first sub-round of the time use survey are now available. We shall examine this mainly to emphasise the under-estimation of women's work in the Census-NSS data and to analyse some of its major results.

Historically speaking, time use studies originated in the early 1900s as a means of analysing social phenomena, and provided comprehensive information on lifestyle of families and patterns in social life, as defined by the allocation of time by people among different activities. These studies were used in understanding changing lifestyles, division of labour within families and social change in general. Over the years, however, time use statistics are increasingly used for estimating the value of household production, allowing for more objective comparison with the overall value of national production.

Time use studies essentially provide information on how individuals spend their time on a daily or weekly basis, and reveal the details of individual's daily life with the combination of specificity and comprehensiveness not achieved in any other type of social survey. This information can be extremely useful in estimating work and workers in an economy. Both developed and developing economies therefore find time use studies useful in improving their statistics on workers as well as on national income. There is, however a difference between the objectives of time use studies in developed and developing economies. In developed countries where official statistics provide fairly reliable information on market-oriented activities, time use studies are used mainly as a source of information on activities not covered by official statistics, such as leisure, household work, family care, etc. Time use statistics here are used mainly for measuring unpaid activities performed at home, to analyse the relationships between market and domestic labour and to serve as a basis for quantifying domestic work in monetary terms comparable to production included in national accounts. In developing economies where work included market-oriented work, and workers are grossly under-estimated because of the inadequacy of the prevalent concepts and methods to capture these satisfactorily, the main use of time use studies is to provide realistic statistics on economic production and workforce. The other use, namely, estimation of domestic

work, of course, remains an important objective of these studies.

Time use surveys are conducted at present mainly in some developed countries, usually by their national statistical offices. The methodologies of conducting the surveys and the techniques of the data analysis are fairly advanced in these countries. In spite of these studies, however, time use studies are still in the pilot phase in many developed economies of the North and these are not conducted regularly as a part of national accounts data collection.

Developing countries today mostly conduct small scale pilot time use surveys covering a few villages/towns and cities on an experimental basis. A few countries, however, have begun conducting large-scale surveys also. India has recently made some beginning in this direction.

The Government of India appointed a Technical Committee on Time Use Survey in 1997 mainly to conduct a methodological survey in the field.<sup>1</sup> The specific tasks of the Technical Committee have been laid down as follows:

1. To advise the Government on designing, planning and related matters leading to conduct of a time use survey.
2. To suggest appropriate definitions and concepts, schedule of inquiry and a suitable reference period for the purpose of data collection through a survey.
3. To suggest an appropriate methodology for building up the annual estimates of time-disposition on the basis of the survey data.
4. To advise on any other matter referred to the Technical Committee by the Department of Statistics in respect of time use survey.

The Technical Committee has realised that time use surveys can throw light on:

- (a) Marketed economic activities not included in GDP due to the inadequacy of concepts and methods of collecting statistics,
- (b) Non-marketed economic activities covered under the 1993 SNA Production Boundary,
- (c) Non-marketed non-SNA activities which are covered by General Production Boundary of SNA, and
- (d) Personal activities that cannot be delegated to others.

These data can contribute in improving labour statistics as well as national accounts statistics. The contribution of non-marketed economic activities can be presented in satellite accounts. Time use statistics thus can make the invisible work of labour visible.

The pilot time use survey was conducted in six states in India located in the six different regions, namely, the South (Tamil Nadu), the West (Gujarat), the North (Haryana), the East (Orissa), the North-East (Meghalaya) and the Central India (Madhya Pradesh). The survey was conducted in four sub-rounds during 1998-99 (July 1998 to June 1999).

### *Sampling Design*

The overall sampling design is two-stage stratified sampling: The first stage units are census villages in rural areas and NSSO urban frame survey blocks in the urban areas. The second stage units are households. Except for Meghalaya (which is a very small state), one-third of the districts of the states are selected circular systematically after arranging the districts in four strata on the basis of density of population and proportion of tribal population. The allocation of districts in the four strata is done in proportion in these strata. In the case

of Meghalaya half of the districts are selected. The allocated sample of the selected district is distributed in rural and urban areas in proportion to the rural and urban population in the district as per the 1991 Population Census. All the villages in the district are grouped into three categories based on the size of the population and the allocated rural sample is distributed in these three categories in proportion to their population. The same method is used in urban areas for selecting the sample.

Samples of households are selected after listing the households and their main characteristics, viz., land ownership, major source of income, earnings and employment characteristics (i.e., self-employed in agriculture/non-agriculture, regular wage/salary earners, casual labour and others). Table 9 gives information about the selected samples in the six states.

A detailed Instruction Manual has been prepared for the investigators and it has been translated in each of the six state languages. Intensive training programme was organised at the all-India level for senior officers, and a similar programme was organised in regional languages in each of the states. Intensive monitoring of the survey has been organised systematically as this survey is a rather difficult one.

TABLE 9. THE SAMPLE FOR THE TIME USE SURVEY

State	Number of districts	Sample allotted	Sample districts	Household per district	Villages/hamlet	Urban blocks	Household per village/urban
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Madhya Pradesh	45	5,027	15	335	20	8	12/12
Gujarat	19	3,174	7	453	26	12	12/12
Meghalaya	7	520	4	130	7	4	12/12
Tamil Nadu	29	5,588	10	560	33	14	12/12
Haryana	17	1,320	6	220	13	5	12/12
Orrissa	30	2,758	10	276	16	7	12/12
Total		18,387					

#### *Methodology of Collection of Information*

It is not easy to collect information on the time use in India because one cannot use the diary method (which is very common in developed countries) as the level of literacy is low and because people, and particularly rural population, are not always used to clocks or watches. Initially, the observation method was tried out by some scholars, but it was found that this method does not give reliable results as people become conscious and do not behave normally when they are being observed continuously by an outsider. It was therefore decided to use one-day recall method. In order to ensure rapport of the respondent, it was also decided that the investigator would spend 9-10 days in the village and cultivate familiarity with the household and its members.

For each activity, information about some contextual variables was also collected. These were (a) whether the activity was done in or outside the home, (b) whether it was paid or unpaid and (c) what was the mode of payment, if paid. At the end of the survey each investigator was expected to comment on the quality of the response of the respondent. This was to assess the quality of the data collected.



### *Classification of Activities*

Classification of activities is crucial in the analysis of time use information. In developed countries the classification focuses primarily on understanding the household-based activities of men and women such as maintenance of the household, taking care of children, hobbies and leisure activities, etc. In developing countries, however, the need is to study the different categories of SNA activities also. A fresh classification was, therefore, developed for our use. This classification is more comprehensive to take care of all the activities conducted by people, particularly the activities not included under market-SNA framework.

The classification of activities under a time use survey is extremely important for achieving the objectives of the survey as it facilitates analysis of the data to reach the objectives. The following objectives were kept in mind while designing the classification of the time use survey activities:

1. To improve the existing statistics on work by getting correct estimates of the time spent on market-oriented SNA activities and non-market SNA activities (falling in the SNA Production Boundary), non-market non-SNA activities (falling in the General Production Boundary using the third person criterion) and personal activities. The classification of activities therefore should be able to throw light on the work done in the formal and informal sectors in different industries (as per the industry classification) and occupations by workers with different employment status.
2. To improve estimates of national income by estimating correctly the contribution of paid and unpaid work to the national income. This calls for collection of the required data for the purpose of valuation of work covered under the time use survey.
3. To understand the way the time is spent by men, women and children in the family on different activities such as drudgery/very hard work, leisure or unemployment/under-employment, hobbies, travel, etc.

Keeping the above objectives in mind, a new classification of activities was designed which basically divided the activities into (a) market-SNA activities, (b) non-market SNA activities, (c) non-market non-SNA activities-falling in General Production Boundary and (d) personal activities that cannot be delegated to others (such as sleeping, watching TV, etc.)

### *Valuation and Compiling Satellite Accounts*

The last important component of the pilot time use survey is valuation. The valuation, which will be attempted later on, will access the value of (a) non-market SNA activities and (b) non-market non-SNA activities falling in General Production Boundary.

### *Analysis of Some Preliminary Results*

The results of the survey are not yet fully available. The results of the first sub-round are, however, available, which are presented in the following paragraphs. The results refer to all the six states combined.

Table 10 presents data on the persons participating in SNA and extended SNA activities for males and females in rural and urban areas of the six states selected for the time use survey. SNA activities refer to all the SNA activities convened under the 1993 SNA. That is, these include SNA marketed activities as well as SNA non-marketed activities such as free collection of fuelwood, water, fodder, etc., construction and repair of buildings, ponds, wells, etc., and production of goods for self-consumption. Extended SNA activities include unpaid services carried out for (a) household maintenance and management, (b) care of the old, sick and children and (c) community services and voluntary services.

1. Table 10 reveals that workforce participation rates (WPRs) were 76.30 per cent for males and 62.32 per cent for females in the six states combined. It is to be noted that the definition of 'worker' here is as per the NSS definition.
2. The table also shows that WPRs for males in rural and urban areas are 78.68 and 71.10 per cent, and for females 72.19 and 38.64 per cent respectively. In other words, time use survey seems to have given close to reality data on women workers.
3. The table indicates that as far as extended SNA activities are concerned, women's participation is much higher than men's in both rural and urban areas. Also, there is not much gap between the participation rates of rural and urban women. The rate for urban women is 86.62 per cent while the same for rural women is 87.54 per cent. This indicates that women's contribution to family welfare is highly significant.

TABLE 10. PARTICIPATION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN SNA AND NON-SNA ACTIVITIES (PERSONS)

Activities/Sex (1)	Rural (2)	Urban (3)	Total (4)
(A) SNA activities			
Males	4,473 (78.68)	1,848 (71.10)	6,321 (76.30)
Females	3,986 (72.19)	890 (38.64)	4,876 (62.32)
(B) Extended SNA activities			
Males	2,536 (44.60)	1,355 (52.13)	3,891 (46.97)
Females	4,833 (87.54)	1,995 (86.62)	6,828 (87.26)
(C) Total			
Males	5,685 (100)	2,599 (100)	8,284 (100)
Females	5,521 (100)	2,303 (100)	7,824 (100)

Source: Government of India, *Time Use Survey*.

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the totals.

Table 11 presents the same data but in terms of hours spent by men and women. It therefore provides information on the intensity of SNA and extended SNA work done by men and women in rural and urban areas of the six states.

1. Men spent about 46.04 hours on SNA and extended SNA activities put together per week, while women spent about 52.32 hours per week on these activities. That is, men put in

about 6.5 hours per day on both these activities put together against 7.5 hours by women. This implies that women's contribution is much more than men's (in terms of time) to the production and welfare within and outside the household combined.

2. In the case of rural areas, however, the share/contribution of women is much higher. As against 45.99 hours of men's SNA and extended SNA work per week, women put in 54.10 hours of such work. Clearly, rural women are working much harder than rural males as well as urban females.
3. Rural women also work much longer on SNA activities than urban women. They put in 14.16 hours of their time per week on SNA activities against 5.64 hours per week by urban women.
4. It is also clear that rural women do not get enough work, and therefore work only for about 3.74 hours per day on SNA activities, against more than 6 hours by rural men.

TABLE 11. PARTICIPATION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN SNA AND NON-SNA ACTIVITIES (HOURS SPENT IN 7 DAYS)

Activities/Sex (1)	Rural (2)	Urban (3)	Total (4)
(A) SNA activities			
Males	42.42 (25.25)	42.32 (25.19)	42.42 (25.25)
Females	23.80 (14.16)	9.48 (5.64)	20.58 (12.25)
(B) Extended SNA activities			
Males	3.57 (2.12)	3.90 (2.32)	3.62 (2.15)
Females	30.30 (18.03)	36.55 (21.75)	31.74 (18.89)
(C) Total			
Males	168 (100)	168 (100)	168 (100)
Females	168 (100)	168 (100)	168 (100)

Source: Government of India, *Time Use Pilot Survey*.

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the totals.

#### *Time Spent on Selected Activities*

Some of the interesting observations emerging from the results of the first sub-round of the survey are discussed below:

1. Women spend much more time on free collection of goods like fuel, fodder, water, fruits, fish, etc. While men spent about 0.65 hour per week on these activities, women spent 2.12 hours per week. The figure is slightly higher, 2.54 hours in the case of rural women. This is more than 10 per cent of the time spent by women on the total SNA activities!
2. Though women spend slightly less time per week (3.12 hours) on animal husbandry than men (3.93 hours), women spend most of their time on tending animals, making dung cakes and milking, while men spend time on grazing and tending, sales and purchasing, and related activities.
3. Rural women workers spend more time than men on processing and storage of food which is a part of the SNA activities.

4. As far as extended SNA activities are concerned, women spend about 25.2 hours on household management (men 2.34 hours), 5.06 hours on taking care of children, the old and the sick (men 1 hour), and 0.07 hour on community services, etc. (men 0.12 hour) per week.

It must be recognised that the results are tentative in the sense that they refer to only one sub-round (out of the total four sub-rounds), which was the first sub-round and therefore it faced some teething problems also. What is important to note, however, is that the time use survey method has a potential of netting women's work more realistically. And the Survey results do show that rural women participate much more on SNA activities than what is observed through Census and NSS data.

#### IV

##### INFERENCES AND IMPLICATIONS .

The inferences and implications of the discussion in the preceding two sections are broadly discussed in two areas: (1) implications for survey methodology for netting women's work and (2) policy inferences for strengthening rural women's position in the rural economy.

As far as the issue of netting rural women's work is concerned, it is clear that the concepts and methods adopted by the Census of Population and the NSS are not adequate. These methods present gross under-estimates of women's participation in economic activities. The time use survey method gives some hope in this context. One should try to develop on this line.

For the pattern of employment of women in the formal labour market, however, one will have to depend on the Census and the NSS data. The value of these data is primarily in this field.

The issue of policy inferences for improving rural women's position is indeed a very serious issue. In spite of the efforts of the Central and State Governments as well as of NGOs for more than two and a half decades, rural women have gained almost nothing in terms of gender equity in the labour market! Rural women remain the most vulnerable and the least developed lot even today! This is not to rule out some successes in some states/pockets. The national scene, however, is not very bright.

We would like to make the following points in this context:

1. The contribution of rural women, in terms of time and efforts, is not low or less than that of men in any way. However, this is largely unpaid, home based and therefore not visible. This contribution is neither counted nor considered as an input while formulating policies and programmes for (rural) women. The constraints put by this large chunk of unpaid work of rural women on their development opportunities are neither understood nor measured by policy makers. Consequently, these basic constraints continue without any changes restricting the scope of development of rural women.
2. It is not that efforts are not made by the Central and State Governments for improving the position of rural women. In fact, a large number of programmes in the areas of self-employment, welfare and security and even empowerment of women have been designed and implemented in the country. Somehow, these have not clicked in the sense that these have not brought about any radical changes in the conditions of rural women. One major lesson that one can learn from the long history of programmes is that the

programme approach will not work. Even when programmes are well intentioned and well designed, and sometimes well implemented also, they look at the problems of women in a piecemeal manner.

3. What is needed is a gender-centred development approach that keeps gender equity at the centre of the development process and not at the margin to be addressed by ad hoc piecemeal programmes. That is, the development strategy should address the exclusion and marginalisation of rural women while working for their higher incomes and higher welfare. Several theoretical postulations are already existing in this sphere and it should not be difficult to adopt one for our country.
4. However, this calls for political and economic commitment on the part of the policy makers. Unless that happens, the tinkering with isolated programmes will not be of much use.

#### NOTE

- I. A Technical Committee has been appointed by the Department of Statistics, Government of India under the Chairpersonship of Indira Hirway.

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