

ECONOMICS OF FEMALE LABOUR IN THE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH KERALA

**By
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DECLARATION

I, Kochuthressia C.T., do hereby declare that this written account titled "ECONOMICS OF FEMALE LABOUR IN THE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH KERALA" is a bonafide record of research work done by me under the guidance of DR.LAKSHMIDEVI K.R., Professor of the Department of Economics, University of Calicut. I, also declare that this has not been submitted by me fully or partially for the award of any degree, diploma , title or recognition before.


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INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades there has been commendable enlargement in the horizons of the social sciences as they relate to the theoretical and empirical themes regarding gender location and power in human societies. Subordination and super ordination in gender relation has become the major issue of the time. Just as constructs like marriage, family and household require analysis, so too does the empirical category - women. The images, attitudes, activities and appropriate behaviour associated with women are always culturally and historically specific.

One of the striking features of women's labour force participation is its drastic change in size and composition in the last several decades. During the first forty years of the last century the labour force participation rate of women rose slowly, tended to be either single, middle class, white collar workers who retired from paid employment upon marriage or poor single or married women who worked in factories and in domestic services. The heavy demand created by world too initiated a rapid growth in women's labour force participation. As the size of the female labour force grew, its composition also changed. Growing numbers

of women of all ages of marital statuses sought paid employment. Despite some modest changes, women are still concentrated as before in a very narrow range of occupation compared to men.

The work activities of women are not well described by conventional data collection methods. The indicator most used to measure women's work is Labour Force Participation Rate, number of economically active women and men. According to International Statistical standards economic activity includes all work with the production boundary of the System of National Accounts (Rao, B. and Pushpalatha, D., 1998).

It is widely recognised that women have been victims of discrimination both in developed and under developed countries. This discrimination is manifested in many spheres-political, social, familial, economic etc. But economic discrimination probably is at the root of other discrimination. Even in the developed Western countries where women have got equal social and political rights, the discrimination is very acute. This widespread discrimination against women has been a matter of great concern all over the world. The uniform conclusion of the decade's research is that with a few exception, women's access to

resources, income and employment has worsened their burdens of work.

The single most significant message for India from Human Development Report (1995) is that India has to go a long way in the struggle for gender equality. Indian women fare poorer than men not only in health but also in education and income levels. Adult literacy in India in the 90s was 35 per cent for females and 64 for males compared to Sweden with 99 per cent for both males and females. Similarly the share of national income earned by Indian women amounted in 1992 to mere 19 per cent as compared to 42 per cent for their Swedish counterparts. India performs poorly in terms of both Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure occupying 99th rank out of 130 countries and 101st in field of 116 nations respectively. In Sweden 34 per cent of the parliamentarians, 39 per cent of administrators and managers and a whopping 63 per cent of all professional and technical workers are women. Further 50 per cent of the Cabinet Ministers in Sweden are women. Contrast to this in India, only seven per cent of parliamentarians, two percent of managers and administrators and 21 per cent of professional and technical

workers are women. Not surprisingly, India ranks 101st in a field of 116 nations (Lalitha, N., 1996).

In India under the planning progress based on trickle down theory, it was expected that women would equally benefit along with men. The six plan document recognised that in spite of the development measures and constitutional legal guarantees women lagged behind in almost all sectors. Under the six plan policies and programmes relating to women were given a shift in approach from 'curative' to 'preventive' and welfare to 'development'. Economic development through income generating programmes were given the highest priority so that women would become economically independent and self reliant to take part in the socio economic development of the country. Although 'women in development approach' benefited a section of women, their status in the family and society could not be raised to the expected level.

1.1 Women and economic development

Participation of women in socio-economic activities is prevalent in all countries. Women have been working in each and

every society of the world since the beginning of human civilization. Women contribute a significant portion to the labour force and are increasingly joining the labour market. However, this capacity of female population has been largely ignored over the years and has resulted in the poor economic position and low status of women. The contribution of women to the national economies of many developing countries has largely been ignored in economic measurement. Restricted by social customs, religious practices and deprived of educational opportunities and avenues for gainful opportunities, women are economically dependant and socially exploited. Low earning, lower wage, low level of skill, dearth of entrepreneurship, poor standard of health and lack of awareness are some of the other dimensions of their low status.

As a large portion of female population is engaged in non-income earning household activities, women are often considered, wrongly as unproductive and the substantial labour force they constitute remains invisible and thus their contribution to the national well being remain hidden in the routine work of daily life. The U.N report of the states of world women revealed that women do almost all the world's domestic work together with outside work. Women form one third of the world's labour force

but are concentrated in the lowest paid occupations and are vulnerable to unemployment (U.N. Report, 1995).

The need for women's participation in the economic development process is widely accepted by planners and policy makers. Women's inferior position is usually seen as a result of their performance of a less specialised and therefore less-productive role in society. As a result of the exploitative nature of male dominated society, women are not able to play their role effectively. The existing sex wise educational imbalance and earmarking women to specific jobs have undervalued women's contribution to economic development.

The role of women in the economy is one aspect of the more comprehensive question of the social role of women in the society. Considering the economy in general, what we observe is the form of division of labour on the basis of gender. The existence of the division of labour is not limited to the sphere of wage work-whether in farming, in urban employment, in trading and manufacturing or in domestic work sexual division of work is a continuing fact.

According to Organisation of Economic Corporation and Development study (1975) the world level pattern of female labour force participation rates can be broadly grouped into three:

- where the female employment has been steeply increasing - these are Australia, Canada, France, Sweden and U.S. In these countries women's economic participation rates has increased more than 33 per cent.
- where the female participation rates have been more or less stable. Denmark and Finland fall in this group.
- where proportion of working women de linked in relation to the level maintained earlier in the centuary consisting of Belgium, Italy and Japan.

1.2 Women in the global economy

Women face both new challenges and persistent labour market barriers in the midst of ongoing global economic change. For women workers, the world and its labour markets are

changing. The continued globalisation of the international economy has increased employment of women, as has the growth of service sectors. However, pressures to reduce the size of public sectors and the trend towards increasing labour market flexibility do not necessarily work to the benefit of women.

Women have provided the bulk of new labour supply in both developed and developing countries over the past two decades. Using I.L.O. employment data we can note that the women's; labour force growth since 1980 has been substantially higher than labour force growth for men for every region of the world except Africa (World Employment Report, 1998-99). One of the important sources of change in the labour market for women has been the rapid pace of technological progress in production. Recent technological changes in the production process have tended to lead to an increased demand for high skilled workers and a falling demand for the low skilled in many countries.

1.3 Integrating women in economic development

Before the United Nations decade for women (1976-1985) development policies and programmes were considered

to be gender neutral, i.e., they did not distinguish between men and women but were assumed to benefit automatically all people, women as well as men. Attention was given to women primarily as mothers and careers or as a particularly vulnerable group. Consequently, programmes directed at women were related mainly to nutrition, childcare, health and population and aimed at improving family life and controlling women's fertility. Beginning with Ester Boserup whose ground breaking book which was published, women researchers and activists began to make women visible as active participants in production, in the household and other sectors of the society. Studies revealed that women have often been victims of development programmes that were assumed to benefit everybody really benefited men only and often had negative effects not only on women but on the whole community. The high rate of failure of development policies, programmes and projects is attributable at least in part to the neglect or lack of knowledge of women's productive and reproductive roles.

By the mid 1970s, the international year of women, a new policy to integrate women in development gained a footing among development agencies. It was assumed that the neglect of women could be remedied and their situation improved by

including them in development projects and programmes. The integration of women in development became a central element in what is known as women in development approach used by development agencies throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Caroline O.N. Moser, 1993).

The number of women in the labour force rose in both the developed and developing countries between 1950 and 1986 in terms of both the proportion among all adult women carrying out or seeking paid employment and the share that those women represented to the labour force in total. Discrimination in working conditions and job opportunities exists in almost all the countries of the world barring a few at the top. According to the report more than 45 per cent of women all over the world in the age group of 15 to 64 are contributing to the economy in a significant way. In South Asia about 44 per cent of all women work outside the home compared to the figure of only 25 per cent about 20 years ago (IRTI, 1989). It was also noted that the females suffer from two sets of discrimination firstly pre market discrimination that is the lack of access to factors such as education, training experience. Secondly the cost market discrimination namely differential wages for similar work (Arunachalam, J., 1997).

In many parts of the world women have been the primary agricultural producers, providing up to 70 per cent of the food supply (Blumberg, R.L., 1981). The colonial officials automatically assumed that men were the agricultural producers because in England and other core countries men controlled agriculture (Seidman A., 1981). Further the arrival of land reform often meant the displacement of women from the land. The colonial officials gave the ownership of property and land to men instead of women who were working on the land (Blumberg, R.L., 1981). Even though women have produced most of the food, men controlled the distribution of the food or the profits from selling/trading the food (Sanday, P., 1974).

The arrival of new technology from the core countries has displaced women from possessing employment (Chancy E., and Schmink M., 1980). The introductions of rubber rice rollers from Japan created unemployment among women as only men were hired to operate the rollers (Tinker, I., 1976). Even though women might have provided cheaper labour, patriarchal relations restricted women's access to new technology and employment.

With the advent of the world system and the arrival of the colonial administrations and trading companies men gained access to and control over the international and national trading routes. Meanwhile colonial officials who ignored women's long standing roles in trade restricted women to regional and urban enclaves (Papnek, H., 1979). The effects of the arrival of the world system on women traders has been their increasing dependence on men for licenses and capital, even where men expected women's socio economic independence (Jules - Rosette, B., 1982).

The structural distortion of the economy in the periphery occurred with the extraordinary growth of the service sector relative to the industrial sector (Evans P. and Timberlake M., 1980). In the experience of core nations the agricultural force, displaced by mechanisation moved into labour intensive factories. Much later workers moved into the service sector as capitalism progressed and industries utilised more capital-intensive technology rather than labour intensive technology. Agricultural workers displaced by the mechanisation of agriculture by core and local elites competed for a limited number of industrial positions. Hence many workers poured into less productive and low wage service sector.

Table 1.1 Sexwise Workforce Participation 1980-1997

(Percentage)

Countries	1980		1997	
	M	F	M	F
Africa				
Central A	56.6	48.8.	53.2	43.9
S. Africa	48.9	26.2	49.4	29.4
Zimbabwe	50.4	39.5	51.6	40.6
Algeria	41.4	11.4	46.9	16.7
Europe				
U.K				
Albenia	53.5	36.1	56.8	41.4
Austria	56.7	34.5	56.7	37
France	54.2	34.7	51.0	39
Germany	60.2	36.6	59.2	41.1
Asia				
Afghanistan	54.4	30.5	54.0	30.7
Bangladesh	52.7	41.2	57.4	44.3
China	60.6	48.9	63.7	55.7
India	55.8	30.5	57.6	28.9
Iran	47.0	12.4	44.2	15.6
Korea	48.3	38.5	59.8	46.0
Nepal	57.9	38.5	54.3	37.8
Pakistan	52.2	16.9	51.7	20.7
Sri Lanka	42.7	13.6	44.5	16.2
America				
Argentina	55.8	20.7	54.9	24.7
Brazil	56.2	22.2	60.2	32.2
Canada	60.1	39.1	58.9	47.9
Chile	51.3	17.8	54.6	25.8
U.S	58.2	39.1	56.4	45.7

Source: World Employment Report 1998.p.140.

In Central Africa a negative growth rate is recorded for both women and men work force participation from 1980 to 1997. The South African countries and Algeria have recorded substantially high growth rate while Zimbabwe has recorded only a slight change from 39.5 per cent to 40.6 per cent.

In Asian countries both India and Nepal have recorded a negative growth for women work force i.e., from 30.5 per cent to 28.9 per cent and 38.5 per cent to 37.8 per cent respectively. Pakistan has recorded a negative growth for men while for women it is increased from 16.9 per cent to 20.7 per cent.

In European countries France and Germany have recorded a negative growth rate for men i.e., from 54.2 per cent to 51 per cent and 60.2 per cent to 59.2 per cent respectively. In most of the countries women workforce has recorded a positive growth. A negative rate of growth is recorded in Argentina and Canada for men workers from 1980-1997. All the countries in America have shown positive rate of growth for women while Brazil ranks first with a change from 22.2 per cent in 1980 to 32.2 per cent in 1997.

The I.L.O. has noted that approximately 100 million children in the world are without any access to primary education of which 60 per cent are girls (I.L.O., 1989). As a result women workers are mainly concentrated in the informal sector which does not require much training or education i.e., in activities which are traditionally known as women's work such as domestic services, laundry, child minding etc. In Asia and Africa most women workers are found in the agricultural sector where wages are among the lowest and more than one third of women in non-agricultural activities are in the informal sector.

Regional variations in the rate of female labour force participation are worth noting. Women are almost as important in the labour force as men in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe where, male and female participation rate is particularly high in North America. At the other end of the scale lies the Middle East and North Africa where women's participation is low and where it actually fell rather than rose with the local rise in income from increased oil revenues from the mid 1970's onwards. Cultural traditions in these areas have always limited the public role of women in Latin America too. Cultural values discourage women's active participation rate, though it has been rising steadily. In most

places in Asia and Africa, cultural values do not mitigate against allotting women as visible, productive role to the same extent and the variations in female labour force participation are correlated with income level.

In African countries in spite of poor living conditions and education levels, have a high female participation in economic activities (Boserup, 1970). Sub-Saharan Africa shows a negative rate of growth. It is clear from the above table that in the developed regions the percentage growth of women workers has not made much progress.

A survey of the position and the role of women in the advanced countries and the third world countries points to the need for integrating women into the development process as equal partners with men. It is increasingly being realised that lack of effective linkage between local and national levels or between specific programmes and macro policies, usually prevents the achievement of women's integration in development. Women must be integrated into the development process not only symbolically and through concrete local projects but in the most central process of resource allocation in development planning (Papnek, H., 1981).

Cross national studies on female labour force participation focus on the point that despite the tremendous growth in the size of the female labour force women still hold traditional jobs, occupy low status jobs and earn much less than men do (Papola, T.S., 1993). Full time engagement in household activities combined with social constraints on participation in non-household economic activities prevents most of them from becoming a part of the labour force.

1.4 Research approach on women

Labour is a subject of study, which can't be disciplined as it deals with human beings who can't be confined under the limits of any single discipline. A plea has often been made that it should be treated as inter disciplinary subject and studied in an interdisciplinary perspective. Need has also been expressed to evolve a trans-disciplinary approach to labour studies. Such an attempt on female labour started in the 1970s when there was a tendency to study various segments of labour. The labour markets are segmented by industry, occupation, rural and urban as well as geographical aspects, by sex and by educational levels (Papola, T.S., 1999). Issues such as invisibility of women's work,

interaction between their productive and reproductive roles and impact of technological changes on women's employment attracted the researchers.

The study of women and work has always taken a multi-disciplinary approach. Participation in economic development was assumed to be the precursor of social political and cultural change bringing improvements to women. Women's position was evaluated with respect to educational and employment opportunity, health status, technological innovation and institutional representation (Susan Jokes, 1989). Despite the multidisciplinary approach, concern with economic behaviour especially with work roles has always been central to the study of women in development. A varied set of world conferences on different topics devoted increasing attention to women's roles along with their primary roles in the family.

1.5 The significance of the study

The status of women workers in India is obvious from the fact that 94 per cent of them are found in the unorganised sector (Krishna Raj, M., 1985) the basic problems that affect roles and

opportunities for employment in the unorganised sector spring from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities, limited skills and literacy, restricted mobility. Lack of control over production of resources and a persistent gap between consumption and expenditure, leading to perpetual indebtedness; deprive them of all bargaining power and occupational mobility. No authentic data are available for estimating the number and proportion of women labour below the poverty line. But higher level of unemployment and under employment lead us to conclude that their proportion is likely to be higher than that of men components.

Women's employment in the unorganised sector consists of self employment in petty trade, food processing or in the household units of traditional occupation or manufacturing establishments that are small workshops scattered geographically or in various forms of putting out systems in household units. A household unit of production is defined as one conducted by the members of the household (definition accepted by the all India population census 1961). In Kerala of the total labour force of 82.33 per cent in the traditional industries, 62.83 per cent are women. Most of these industries are in the unorganised sector and employs

family labour (Report, Directorate of Economics and Statistics for Planning 1980). Where the nature of work is traditional and unorganised in character and where the differences between women and men are prominent i.e., where women are given a special type of work, where the mental distance from home and work place is minimum - such a sector is chosen for study. The general objective of the present study is to analyse the economics of the female labour in a few traditional industries of North Kerala, which has nearly 75 per cent of its labour force in the unorganised sector.

The concept of traditional industries covers a wide variety of activities. The sector is split into eight sub sectors namely khadi village industries, handloom industries, sericulture, handicrafts, coir, small scale industries and power looms (Six plan Draft, 1980). Of these the first six sub sectors constitute traditional industries and the last two the modern small scale industries.

The present study is with reference to the female labor in the traditional sector in North Kerala. Though Kerala's industrial sector employs a high proportion of the total working force compared to all India figure, large number of workers are in

fact linked up with low productivity, agro based, traditional and backwards industries. Mention must be made of coir, handloom, cashew and beedi. These industries play a prominent role in the industrial and economic base of the state.

Kerala with its high social development indicates but poor industrial growth. It's ranking in terms of industrialisation being 10th among the other Indian states, presents the importance and the role of traditional industries, which absorbs nearly 80 per cent of work force. The post 1970 position of Kerala as an industrially backward state raises questions about the role of historical forces in shaping and determining the overall structure of the industrial economy of the region. The influence of colonial capital, the impact of labour conditions and the origin and development of a nascent bourgeoisie and their role in industrial transformation attracted scholarly attention in three important works of Tharakan, M., (1984), Mahadevan (1988) and Ram Mohan (1988). Their studies have supported and justified the backwardness of the industrial structure in terms of the inherent weakness of the indigenous bourgeoisie capitalist class.

In several respects, the state of Kerala is distinct from the rest of the country. The agricultural sector in the state recorded negative growth rate since 1975 and this necessitated shift to non-agriculture for employment. Thus the proportion of agriculture labour household has declined from 28 per cent in 1964-65 to 27 per cent in 1983-84, those of other rural household rose from 14 per cent to 23 per cent during the period (Kuttikrishnan, T.N., 1991).

Kerala has the highest rate of rural employment in India. The rate of participation of women in the labour force is estimated to be 16.5 per cent (Census, 1991). Kerala has also the third highest wage rate for the agricultural labourers after Punjab and Hariyana. In the state the male wage rate is 90 per cent higher than the wage rate prevailing in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu (Kuttikrishnan, K.N., 1991).

Taking into consideration the aspects of sex typing of jobs and wage difference, organisation of production and its influence of the women workers in the traditional industries, the following objectives are formulated for the present study.

1.6 Objectives

- to discuss the nature of female employment with special reference to the unorganised sector.
- to examine the employment pattern in traditional industries in Kerala.
- to discuss the production process and gender based division of work in the traditional industries.
- to discuss the unorganised nature of production and its influence on women workers in the traditional industries.
- to examine the socio - economic status of the women workers in the selected industries

1.7 Scope of study

In general there are several studies to analyse the female labour force participation in the country. But the research coverage on women and traditional industries in our country with special reference to the state of Kerala is limited. The present exercise is to discuss the problems relating to the female workers in a few selected traditional industries like beedi, handloom and coir,

which provide 15 per cent, 44 per cent and 22 per cent employment respectively.

A detailed study of women in a few selected traditional industries with respect to their problems at various fields will be analysed with the help of primary data collected from various centres of three main districts. It is hoped that it would help in working out the magnitude of the problems faced by them and suggest a few policies to eradicate them.

1.8 Plan of work

The study is divided into the following chapters

1. Introduction
2. Review of literature and methodology
3. Women and work - Theoretical issues
4. Nature and pattern of female employment with special reference to the unorganised sector
5. Employment in traditional industries in Kerala
6. Profile of the selected area and sample workers
7. Production process and gender division of labour

8. Unorganised nature of production and women workers in the selected traditional industries
9. Socio-economic status of women workers in the traditional industries
10. Summary of the study, major findings and conclusion

The first chapter deals with the introduction, which includes the role of women in economic development. It includes the significance of study, plan of work and limitations of the study. The second chapter discusses the review of literature and methodology. The third chapter gives critical view of the theoretical issues on women and work. The illustration of the pattern of female employment in the global, national and the local levels is given in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter with the help of limited available secondary data gives the details of pattern of employment in the traditional industries of Kerala. The profile of the selected units and the area of study are given in the chapter titled-profile of the study area and the selected units'. The rest of the chapters are the analysis of the primary data. The sex typing of labour and the production process in the traditional industries are brought out supplementing it with the various aspects of organisation of production and its effects on women.

The socio-demographic particulars and the working and living conditions of women workers are also analysed.

1.9 Limitations of the study

One of the serious inhibitions in conducting research in the traditional sector is the lack of reliable data. Moreover, if it is a study on women workers, one has to depend mainly on the village survey.

The present study is restricted in its scope. Since no proper records are maintained about the traditional industries it was difficult to get the current data of the traditional industries. For example, the Directorate of Handloom and Coir in India and in Kerala has not conducted any survey since the year 1976 and 1988 respectively. The industrial workers of beedi industry in the Northern districts could be located with the help of the records of Dhinesh Beedi Co-operative. The National commission on labour stated that the government has paid inadequate attention to the unorganised workers despite the fact that they contribute a fair proportion of those who produce goods and service (Report, National Commission on Labour, 1990). It was not possible to

establish the accurate population of each industry. The percentage rate calculated were mainly from the old records of 1974 census for traditional industries and the interviews conducted in the villages. The selection of a particular method of sampling for each industry created a lot of problems in the formulation of methodology. The areas of particular villages with concentration of women workers had to be the sample for study. The selection of household for primary survey lacked accuracy and precision. Since the factory workers and unorganised home workers existed side by side in these industries only a few of the selected area with more than 50 per cent of women workers were selected as sample units.

The officials like the contractors engaged in unorganised beedi industry, managers of the private firms in the handloom and coir industry were reluctant to give details regarding wages, non wage benefits etc. Some of the contractors even refused to give an appointment for interview and gave information, which was not true.

Women in the unorganised units had to be interviewed in their houses. They were reluctant to give the details of income etc., thinking that they will be penalised by the employers. Some of

them believing in their fate were not ready to reveal the truth. Language was a problem with a few of them in the district of Kasargod as they belonged to the Thulu speaking community. Most of the women workers were unable to give reliable facts regarding their share in the income of the family as they considered themselves only as subsidiary workers in the family.

The study is restricted to only a few industries in the traditional sector with special reference to North Kerala.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

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CHAPTER - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

Prior to the coming of Industrial revolution and the factories, household was the focus of production as well as consumption. After the industrial revolution, these activities shifted from home to factories and economic conditions of families changed. It is commonly argued that women moved in and out of the labour force in response to the economic conditions. Since the Second World War, national planning primarily by the state in many third world countries has been directed toward a model of import substitution. However in the early seventies the limitations of this model in terms of employment generation and national income became clear (Berholet, C.J.L., 1975). At the same time, restructuring of industry in the industrialised countries was occurring at a rapid rate. A large number of developing countries then adjusted their policies to make room for export-oriented industrialisation. The goal of these new policies was to improve the national balance of income and to generate large scale employment in a short period of time (Evers B. and De Groot 1978).

2.1 Review of literature

Several studies on the position of women in society and problems of working women are conducted by the scholars. These can be broadly placed under two categories. General studies on the position and status of women and studies on women and work which cover socio economic conditions psychological aspects, attitudes, role conflict and the like. An attempt is made to review the studies in the second category under different levels.

2.1.1 I.L.O. sponsored studies

The classical studies by Engles have attempted to historically explain the causes of the inferior position of women in society (Engles, F., 1968). In second sex, the authoress, Beavoir, historically explains the status of women within the broad framework of materialism, existentialism and psycho analysis (Beavoir, S.D., 1974). There has been a growing literature in the area of women and work as a result of international interest in development programmes. The international Labour office and other U.N. studies have sponsored many area studies in order to assess the impact of development and social exchange on women

within a view to policy recommendations. These reports have stressed the importance of recognising women's economic contribution in the third world context where their work is unmonitored. The need to focus on intra household exchange relations too have been emphasised by experts (Palmer, I., 1977). All these reports ascribe the deteriorating conditions of women especially in rural areas to inadequate access to crucial production inputs, whether in agriculture, rural industry or any kind of self-employment. These reports refer to political, attitudinal and conceptual blocks. An important contribution of these reports is the similarities and dissimilarities, which they illumine of what is happening to women and how it is happening in the different regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A series of I.L.O. sponsored studies have gone further in building links between the household as an economic unit and the broader economy. Four regional studies Mhatre-Sharaju (1981) Omvedt, Gail (1981) Brahme Sulaba (1990) trace the impact of various changes not only on women and work but also on their total life situation. All these studies analyse the situation of women in the context of capitalist development.

2.1.2 Literature - global and national level

The International Women's decade has served to highlight women's problems and questions in India. It has created a popular interest among different sections of people all over India. A large number of scholars are engaged in studies on women and their role in the Indian society. However despite the plethora of studies on women the problems of working class women workers in India have remained untouched by Indian sociologists and Anthropologists.

Sinha (1961) attributes the declining share of women in economic activity between the years 1901-1964 mainly the loss of opportunity for women in the non-agricultural sector. He argues that technological change reduced scope for female employment in some industries and services. He further added that the reduction in women's share of services could be due to either changes in life styles and functions of certain services or due to the voluntary withdrawal of women from low status jobs.

Thorner (1962) presenting the secular trends in the Indian term stress on the trend of decline in female employment.

While calling attention to the fall during this period in the rate of working force participation of all workers, she shows that the contrast between the employment patterns, an upward trend for agriculture and downward trend for manufacture where as for men it was the reverse.

Attempting a comparison between developing and the developed world Sinha (1965) put forward a model. According to him the scope for women's employment contracts because of reduced possibilities in agriculture and the expansion of the modern sector.

Among studies based on field surveys, Mukerjee (1967) analysed the determinants for married women's participation in work. He found no consistent relationship with the number of children, joint family or literacy. By contrast he found sharp difference between rural and urban women of the working age group. The results are not surprising for his model makes no class and caste distinctions, which are of crucial importance for women's work participation. Marriage and children are determinants to middle class women's participation both because of attitudes regarding the upbringing of children

and the nature of white collar occupation that have to be done to strict time schedules and away from home. Jorapur (1968) in his study of twenty villages of Sharwar similarly found that marital status did not affect rural women's work participation and in fact the participation among married women was quite high. Mainbeu Kara's study (1971) however attributes most of the changes in the Indian working women to a narrower aspect of modernisation process namely the visible impact of industrialisation among the working women in India.

Shastri (1973) compares India with several other countries to see the relationship between female work participation and fertility. His hypothesis of an inverse relationship is not confirmed. One may suggest that this failure stems from his conceptualisation of the problem. It is only in the urban setting and in certain urban occupations that fertility may be expected to influence female labour force participation. He compares India with several other countries to see the relationship between female work participation and fertility. It is only in the urban setting and in certain urban occupations that fertility may be expected to influence female labour force participation.

Major attempts at all India level with greater methodological sophistication began in the latter half of the seventies with the pioneering work of Ambannavar (1975). He noted the falling share in non-agricultural activity. Similar results are shown by Prakash (1975) who also attempts a trend analysis of occupational changes using census data, Kapur, P. (1975). In her study of the attitudes of the educated working women of the urban middle class working. Followed by her more comprehensive studies on marriage and the working women in India has highlighted their problems ranging from marital adjustment to the increasing achievement motivation and need for self-expression. Sethi (1976) has stressed the value changes among the Indian working women as resulting from the modernisation.

Similarly Kala (1976) provides a long and detailed inventory of agricultural tasks in Kerala, specifies the distances over which women work allowed and beyond which it is considered public sphere.

The collection of papers published by the I.L.O. emphasised the disadvantaged situation of women in the labour

market and explained this as a consequence of their position in the society and the total exclusion from decision making and sources of power.

Researchers have tried to look and find out whether there are regional differences in the rate of work participation and its decline. They have used census data, draw conclusions from field studies and have undertaken cross section analysis with statistical techniques such as multiple regression to isolate significant factors. Some studies seek explanatory variable by means of temporal comparison of the last three Censuses.

Banerjee (1978) basing her observation for women has observed various factors about the labour market. Normally there are five factors that influence the supply of labour - the current wage rate, the level of family income, the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the work, the life term expectations regarding earnings and the attitude of society to work. The factors more forceful in the case of women are the level of family income and society's and their own attitude to work. Despite the drawbacks, these studies have succeeded in isolating significant factors. Even though firm relationship have not been established, it appears that

type of agriculture which as crop intensity, use of irrigation and the specific nature of rural or urban industry, exert important influences on the demand side while caste and the historical division of labour between the sexes and the levels of the women's family income affect the supply.

Rayappa and Grover (1978) employ a macro model in their "Modernisation and Female Work Force Participation" using census data and other documenting evidence from different countries, they postulate a U shaped model. These models failed to account for the co-existence of poverty and technologically more sophisticated new industries such as electronics recruiting female labour in the third world countries.

Others seek to link variation in female labour force participation with stages of economic development. In her analysis of Bengal experience 1911-1964 Banerjee emphasises the supply aspect more, by stressing that women were not employed by modern industry because they did not have the skills. As a result women labour is demanded if at all only in certain sectors where special skills are not needed and where women's willingness to take low wages helps to meet the uncertain returns

to capital in a fluctuating market. The study had concluded that women are more vulnerable even when it comes to machines replacing craft labour

Acharya (1979) explains the decline in women's employment in modern organised industry as the consequence of technological change. Using the more refined indicators of capital accumulation and capital intensity, he demonstrates shifts in industrial structure over the period 1950-74 which eliminated many jobs previously done by women and provided few opportunities for entry of women into new occupations. The technological mix chosen arose from pressure to obtain equal factor productivity across international boundaries and to maximise absolute net value per worker.

Tilak's (1980) study of a sample of 1000 sample is a major contribution despite methodological hurdles. It indicates that unemployment is higher for women at every level of education. Studies on wage and employment discrimination need greater methodological innovation.

Nerukar (1980) argues similarly that even within crafts women's employment is in the simpler ones such as bamboo, mat, pottery etc. While in the more skilled and artistic crafts such as stone, metal sculpture, brass, copperware etc. they are less represented. Saika's (1981) study women's labour in North East brings into question our notion of the high status of tribal women in general. Women's work burden in agriculture is extremely heavy, they perform most of the agricultural operations, while the men are busy conducting various negotiations. Saika concludes that participation in these cases does not offer any advantage for women rather they are literally beasts of burden.

Dandekar, V.M. (1982) basing his observations on a sample of 2379 households in 34 villages of Maharashtra points to lower employment of women due to their preoccupation with house work. It is not clear what the study includes as housework.

Gulati (1984) makes inter state comparisons of female work participation and find that regression analysis using literacy, size of schedule caste population etc., does not yield

results to be sensitive to differences caused by such factors. Two regional studies may be mentioned as they have new clarifications to offer. Chakravorthy (1983) makes a distinction between taboo for women against manual work as such against outdoor work. He suggests that over time, historical process may disrupt the socialisation process between mother and daughter, which imparts skills to the daughter resulting complete loss of such skills. This is offered as an explanation of why in some regions women opt non-agricultural work even when there is demand for women for agricultural work and that too at higher wages. Most of the papers dealing with the question of what determines female labour participation highlights the inhibiting factors as coming from the socio-psychological climate.

The first effort at trend analysis was made by the planning commission headed by Datar, B.M. (1985). This study dealt with the employment of women between 1901-1956 under both industrial and occupational categories and recorded the disappearance or diminution of many traditional occupations of women. Two distinguished contributions from Mitra (1986) to the analysis of falling female labour force participation link the decline in female work participation with mortality and literacy.

Both studies provide evidence of the erosion of female participation in the vital income and wealth producing sectors of the economy. To Mitra, the under valuation of women as reflected in high female mortality and excessive child bearing is due to directly to the loss of employment and inadequate access to education. He attacks the argument that the decline in female work participation is spurious and is due to changes in definition or to the voluntary withdrawal of women.

Researchers have tried to find out any universal patterns in the relationship of female labour force participation and stages of development. Attempting a comparison between developing countries and the developed work, Sinha put forward a model. According to this thesis, in the early stages of development, the scope for women employment contracts because reduced possibilities in agriculture and the slow expansion of the modern sector and in as situation of general unemployment and under employment the modern sector prefers and can obtain men. This model ignores current complexities of the international economy but it is valuable in highlighting how changes on the demand side affect women's work. We can see clearly from this model how given the existing sexual division of labour and

women's position in society, imbalances in the demand situation, creates serious loss of employment for women more than for men.

The work of Jose, A.V (1989) includes six studies in the volume on the results of an ARTEP research project titled 'Labour Force Participation of women in India'. The study concentrates on identifying specific typologies of labour force participation in relation to varying regional characteristics. A notable finding reported in the volume is the increase in the number and proportion of female agricultural wage labourers in most states between 1961-1981.

The analysis of Appleton and S. Collier (1990) focuses attention on the determination of participation and wage rate for the root cause of inferior female accessed wage employment. The inferior labour mobility is found to lie in education. It is concluded that there are substantial gender related asymmetric in the labour market.

The employment of women was found to be significantly determined by total income of the family, age and

education of the respondent and family size (Rani P.S. and Raju U.T. 1990). It is argued that in addition to providing equal payment for similar work performed by males and females, rural women should be offered non-farm employment opportunities.

Jose A.V. (1990) in his study stress on the pattern of women's labour force participation in relation to some specific development indicators of the labour market such as the age specific participation rate, employment status etc. It is argued that there are certain preconditions such as improvements in women's educational standards and reduction in fertility rates which need to be fulfilled in developing countries in order to set the stage for entry of women into non-traditional employment

Ways to improve women's opportunities to participate in development are examined by Herz and Khander (1991). The study demonstrates relationships among women's education, work chores, productivity, income, family Welfare and family size. It is concluded that education is shown to improve women's labour force participation and productivity.

The level and pattern of women's employment in Pakistan is examined in the context of supply and demand factors influencing women's participation in the labour market (Kasi, S. and Raza, B., 1991). There is a trend towards duality of female employment, reflected in increased participation in the labour force of women at the top and bottom of the socio economic scale. The disadvantaged position of women is the result of cultural restrictions, household responsibilities, low levels of education and skills and restricted demand for women in the modern sector.

2.1.3 Literature on female labour in the rural unorganised sector

To turn to rural women we can see three types of studies-documenting the level and kinds of employment and conditions of work, detailed listing of female economic activities, determination of factors that influence female participation. There is much greater awareness in these studies of the weight of influence exerted by demand factors in a discriminatory environment, though caste and landholding structure are also taken into account. The pervasive segmentation by sexes in agricultural operation makes impossible any straightforward demand and supply analysis. There is considerable evidence that

rural women's labour force participation is due not to a choice exercised by women but to their disadvantaged position in labour market, which offers them only conditional entry.

Studies pertaining to various aspects of women workers such as invisibility of women's workers, trends and determinants of women's economic participation, causes of low level of economic participation, employment status relationship, impact of mechanisation and industrialisation of women's employment, discrimination faced by women in labour market in the form of wage discrimination, employment discrimination etc, got the attention of researchers.

In rural area and other small industrial sectors, technology has displaced women. The situation in fishing industry is studied by Leela Gulati (1975). She points out the problems of the introduction of trawlers producing disparities in the fishing industry. Devaki Jain (1984) has made a study of the impact of technology in the handloom sector. The author makes a study of how employment in the industry is snuffed out by the impact of technology i.e., by the fast expanding power loom sector affecting the female labour.

There is considerable material on women workers in the unorganised sector in the form of both case studies and broad surveys under the descriptions of working conditions in the cashew industry by Kannan (1978), and about women in the coir industry by Moly Mathew (1979). Zarina Batty (1980) has made a detailed study of beedi workers and the cotton pod shellers hand loom weavers and fire pickers are studied by SEWA (1980).

The women lace workers have been the major concern of Mies (1981). Karlekar (1982) has made a study of the sweeper women workers. With regard to women weavers in India we have the work of Isa Baud (1982) who has made a detailed study of the women weavers of Coimbatore emphasising on the gender division of work in the industry. The study focused on the impact of economic status of women and her social autonomy.

2.1.4 Industrial and agricultural workers

Various researchers have studied women in the urban unorganised sector. It is an offshoot of the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. Pande P.N. and Papola have (1985) made a study of the economic conditions of women Khadi workers. Women in food processing industry have been studied

by Mital Associates (1986). Women vendors in Indian Urban centers have been studied by National Council for Self Employed Women (1987) Sarojini Seth (1990) has made a serious search into the economic conditions of women employed in the rural unorganised sector of Maharashtra. The plight of women workers in the diamond trade and industry has been studied by Subhadra Patwa (1994).

A number of studies on women agricultural workers have been an insight into the problems faced by women in socio-economic fields. The study of Nagaraj K. (1980) on women in Tamil Nadu, the works of Jane M. and Nayar M. (1985) Jhurani. K (1985), the work of Arteya Gita (1985), Bahuguna A. (1985), Narayan Sachinida (1985), Chen Marty and others (1986) have thrown light on the various problems faced by women in these sectors. The work of Nayyar Rohini (1988) on women in Punjab and Haryana, Jose A.V (1989) and Nata Duvvry (1989) etc., are some of them. Women casual workers have also attracted the attention of the researchers. The own account women workers in cultivation, fish trading, street vending, petty commodity trading, dairying, sheep rearing, sericulture, handicrafts, bamboo goods,

cane weaving etc have also become the topic of discussion among the researchers.

Industrial development in India has manifested new forms of organisation of production. Sub-contracting or putting out system is one such manifestation. Women workers are increasingly employed under the forms of employment. They are home based workers paid on piece rate system. Though their work is related to industrial production they are not employees of the industry. These women can be described as informal workers of the formal sector. Women are employed in home based work as it is more convenient for them to take up this work at home. Studies have made to understand various aspects of employment conditions of these workers. Home based workers has tremendous disadvantageous in terms of low wages, lack of workers organisation, absence of protective measures of social security measures. Many studies belong to this group.

2.1.5 Literature on women in traditional industries

Women workers in the unorganised sectors like traditional industries are covered by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. A few studies related to the present study are

reviewed here. Goswami, T.D. (1960) has emphasised the importance of handloom in solving the pattern of employment of women as it gives pleasure and employment in their leisure time.

Lakshmi Devi, K.R. (1985) compares the situation of women beedi workers in the factory system with those working at home in relation to employment, work, output, wages and working and health conditions and benefits. Mehta Prayag (1985) describes how women are forced to mortgage their children because of their low wages and the people for whom they work maltreat these children. Women in beedi rolling industries have been studied in an extensive manner. Kalpana Sharma (1987) describes how labour laws and employers violate social legislations.

Anuradha, G. (1986) has made a cross section of the people involved in it. It outlined the features of an action programme and suggests patterns of follow up action. Hussain (1987) highlights those women who constitute 60 per cent of the labour force in beedi industry work mostly at home under miserable conditions. The exploitation of women in the beedi industry of Andhra Pradesh is studied by Akhileshwari, R. (1988)

which proved that the laws meant to help them are ineffective. Kannan (1990) highlights the health hazards such as anemia, undernourishment and gynecological ailments faced by women as the women beedi workers in a factory system with those working at home in relation to employment, output, wages, working and health conditions and benefits.

Somewhat similar is the work of Manjit Singh and K.Gopal Iyer (1991) on women workers in Ludhiyana Hosiery industry where they analyse mainly the problems of gender division of labour and wage discrimination in the industry. With regard to the issues of women workers in Kerala we have very limited literature. Indira J. Parikh's (1991) work covers the case study of a few women workers from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Through the case study method she has explained a few social and economic problems of women in the weaving sector.

With regard to women weavers in India we have very limited studies. Isa Baud (1992) has made a detailed study of the women weavers of Coimbatore. It is an attempt to analyse the problems of the women weavers from various angles.

Women in the coir industry are studied mainly by Molly Mathew (1979) and Meera Velayudhan (1984). The authors study the struggles of women workers for minimum wages and their retrenchment.

The growth of the traditional industries and the organization of workers and system of production became the center of attraction of the researchers in this area. In this context four major commodity studies in Kerala need to be mentioned Kannan, K.P. (1978) T. Issac (1984) Pyarilal Raghavan (1995) Mridul Eapen (1991) have examined the traditional industries like Cashew, coir, beedi, handloom, etc. The above studies have examined the respective traditional industries in the broader context of industrial transformation, organisational factors, labour process and the survival of strategy of workers during the crisis phases of the industry and unionisation as well as the state of technology and marketing.

Analysing and reviewing literature on women worker in India certain common features could be noted. The general tendency is to consider the socio economic conditions of women labourers in various sectors. This is justified by empirical work

with survey and case study method Papola (1980) provides some analysis of the reasons of emergence of an unorganised sector and women's special vulnerability cause the more highly organised private industrial sector sticks to rigid and standardised hiring norms which make the access for women difficult. As family income proves more and more inadequate, women try to earn in any way they can to achieve this. In effect this has several implications, exploitations of men workers has the direct consequence of even more oppressive exploitation for women. It helps to keep the general wage rate low and thereby aids family subsistence wage. It increases enormously the workload on women and thus endangers their health. All this makes it increasingly difficult for the women to break out of the poverty gap.

There has been growing literature on the impact of the development and strategies on women. The International labour office and other U.N. bodies as well as various aid giving agencies in the west have sponsored studies in order to assess the impact of development and social change on women with a view to policy recommendations. The International reports stress the importance of women's economic contribution in the third world

context where the work is unnoticed. It also recognised the importance of improving data collection and survey design. All these reports ascribe the deteriorating conditions of women especially in the rural area. Remedial measures suggested should aim to give them requirements including credit, marketing, leadership, training, general education, health services and amenities like fuel and water supply.

The results of a number of micro studies analysing impact of development on women may be characterised as patchy and piecemeal. Dubey and Bardhan (1978) have described a case involving tribal woman in Himachal Pradesh. The findings show that fertility has gone up and monogamous nuclear family units are emerging. Mazumdar (1978) in her book on rural women and development identifies ownership pattern, family and marriage system, migration, political and administrative structure as important variables. However, we do not know the precise way in which these variables interact to produce models. One significant beginning in this direction is made by Saradamoni (1983). In her study of the impact of land reform legislation on women in Kerala, she has introduced new dimensions to the concept of development. She writes that women enter the field of

development as a specific and independent factor. Development is seen as a social process, which offers continuous expansion of opportunities and the enhancement of human capacities as facilities needed to exploit them. She applies this standard in assessing the major social processes in Kerala during the 19th century in which the decline of landlordism played a significant role.

From the above review of studies it is clear that there is a growing literature on women and her economic role especially from the year 1975, the International year for women. But in Kerala it has not got a momentum. There are only limited studies on women and her work situations especially in the field of traditional industries, which occupy nearly 62.80 per cent female labour force. Scarcity of literature on women in the unorganised sector is also very visible. This has to be rectified and various characteristics of female workforce need to be exposed. An attempt is made in this study to fill this gap by taking into consideration three industries in the traditional sector of North Kerala namely beedi, handloom and coir.

2.2 Methodology and sample frame

Concepts used in the study, research approach, the data sources, the sample frame and the tools of analysis are discussed in the section.

2.2.1 *Concepts used in the study*

2.2.1.1 *Workforce participation rate*

If work is defined as a goal directed expenditure of energy, it is apparent that almost every one works. The work people do is of great personal and social significance (Vroom, V. 1954) Work plays an important role in helping individuals establish their identity and self esteem. It contributes to peoples self esteem in two ways i.e., by giving mastery over themselves and their environment and by producing something valued by others, they gain a sense that they are needed. Work is an important phenomenon of great significance for individuals and for society. Like most important social activities, it is pursued and experienced in different ways by different groups of people. Men and women differ in their experiences with both paid and unpaid work. In comparison to men, for example, women do a

disproportionate share of unpaid and usually less valued work (Arun H. Strongberg, B. Shirely Harkess.1978).

A more specific definition of work is the participation in the labour force. Economically it provides the goods and services used by a society and give individuals the financial means to satisfy their own needs. Work is a phenomenon of great significance for individuals and for society.

The percentage of a country's population or of a subgroup in the population that is in the labour force at time is termed its labour force participation rate usually shortened to participation rate. An individual is counted as being in the labour force if she or he is able to work and either has a job or is 'actively seeking' work. This apparently simple definition leaves considerable room for doubt in many cases.

Broadly speaking in the 1951 census of India, classification as worker or non-worker was based on the income approach in which persons were classified as self supporting, earning dependent and non earning dependent based on whether earnings were sufficient to support. This approach was replaced

by the work approach in the 1961 census. The person was considered a worker in activities as such as cultivation, dairying and household industry, if she/he has some regular work of more than one hour a day throughout the greater part of the working season (Mahendra K.Premi).

The 1971 Census divided all persons into two broad streams- workers and non-workers - according to the main activity of a person. A worker was a person whose main activity was participation in any economically productive work for pay or profit by his physical or mental input.

According to the current weekly status approach every individual member of the household was classified either as working, seeking work, not seeking but available for work, not available for work, on the basis of ones activity position during the week preceding the date of the survey. A person working one hour or even one day of the reference week was considered working. But for assigning the current status of seeking or being available for work during the reference week to a person, the necessary pre condition was that the person must not be working for any of the seven days of the week. The status of being out of

the labour force was the residual category. According to the current daily status approach, the unit of measurement and classification was day, instead of one week. The respective rates were measured in terms of person days and not in terms of persons.

The 32nd round survey provided estimates of 'total usually employed' under two categories-those employed in the principal status and those employed in the subsidiary status (main workers and marginal workers) within the two broad categories of activity, the detailed activity category was determined on the basis of time spent criterion. A person categorised as worker' on the basis of his/her principal status was referred to as 'principal status worker'. A non-worker who pursued some gainful activity in a subsidiary capacity was referred to as a subsidiary status worker. These two groups together constituted all workers according to usual status classification (Mathew E.T. 1997).

Work involved not only actual work but also effective supervision and direction of work. In 1981 Census all persons were classified into three broad categories-main worker, marginal worker and non-worker. Every person irrespective of sex or age

was first asked if she or he has performed any economically productive work for pay or profit by physical or mental activity, at any time during the one year preceding the Census. The 1991 census also adopted the 1981 census definition of work force.

Recent years have seen enormous changes in the structure of the labour force and the organisation of paid work in modern capitalist countries. The forms of restructuring have been varied from country to country, but overall division of labour has become increasingly internationalised. A very important structural change has been the feminisation of the labour force (Veronica Beechey, 1988).

For the present study work of an individual both as main worker or marginal worker are taken into consideration. The purpose is to make a comparative study of the female worker in the category of main worker or marginal worker, which basically comes under the division of factory worker in the organised system of work and the household worker in the family system of work.

2.2.1.2 Gender

The term gender is generally used to indicate the differences between sexes. The social scientists use this term in broader sense to indicate the social, political and economic barriers, which people undergo on the basis of sex distinction. These handicaps formed the basis of discrimination based on gender and they form the subject matter of several theories explaining gender based discrimination.

The gender system is conceived as an artifact of patriarchy designed to exclude women from full participation of the world outside the home. As in the words of Millet, Patriarchy is a familial, social, ideological, political system in which men by force direct pressure or through traditional law and language, customs, education and the division of labour determine what part women shall or shall not play and in which the female is everywhere is subsumed under the male (Millet, K., 1970).

The subordination of women under patriarchy is a complex matter. The rule of men is not enforced by means of visible coercion, but rather through the continued reproduction of

an ideology that reinforced a separation between male and female roles and then created or sustained a set of beliefs about the roles thus created or sustained a set of beliefs about roles thus created (Parsons, E., 1970).

The idea that the basis of the subordination of women laid in material conditions not in patriarchy has been developed in the context of feminist theory. There is considerable variation in the interpretation of the term material and in the degree of significance accorded to material factors. A new materialist view of history has been launched based on sex itself, which would lead to the true and final revolution in which women would seize control of the means of production.

2.2.1.3 Organised and unorganised sector

For the present study women workers are classified into two broad categories according to the degree of organisation and nature of problems of the sectors of employment namely organised and the unorganised sector workers. The difference between these two is not functional as between agriculture, industry and services because these functions may be found in

both these sectors. The real difference between them lies in the organisation of productive relations and the degree of penetration of public control and regulations by data collecting agencies and scientific investigations. The organised sector is characterised by modern relations of production and is regulated by laws that seek to protect the security and working conditions than can engage in collective bargaining.

The unorganised/informal sector may be broadly characterised as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organisation, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations, where they exist is based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees.

The unorganised informal sector is regarded as a group of production units, which according to the definitions and classifications provided in the United Nations System of National

Accounts form part of the household sector as household enterprises or equivalently, incorporated enterprises owned by households. Household enterprises are units engaged in the production of goods or services which are not constituted as separate legal entities independently of the households or household members that own them and for which no complete sets of accounts are available.

2.2.1.4 Traditional industries

The industries in our countries include organised large and medium industries, small industries and unorganised traditional industries. The last two i.e., village and small scale industries constitute an important segment of the economy. Village and small scale industries are again divided into eight sub sectors namely khadi, village industries, handloom, sericulture, handicraft, coir, modern small scale industries, the other six sub sectors constitute traditional industries which has an important place in the rural industrialisation.

The concept of rural/traditional industries has undergone thorough change from April 2nd 1991 with the change

in the structure and definition. A dynamic distinction has been created by Central Government. The small and village industries are distinguished from the traditional industries. Crafts and modern industries are those with plant and machinery up to Rs. 60/- lakhs with export oriented and ancillary going up to Rs. 75/- lakhs each. It was in the same year August 1991 a package of small and tiny industries have been announced with the objective of imparting more vitality and growth impetus to this sector.

A spectacular change has been made by the planners in expanding the scope of rural industries in designing the eighth plan. In the plan draft the concept of small industries extended by the inclusion of the category of heavy, medium, light, engineering industries in addition to village and small industries. In the eighth plan period, rural industries have been classified into four categories according to scale or primary function as fits to the need of resources-human and material. Of these four categories the traditional and village industries includes Khadi, leather, tanning, wood work, artisan industries, cotton cloth both handloom and power loom and fabrics, handicraft, coir, sericulture and wool. Beedi industries though not as separate are

included in the handicraft development. In the present study a sample of three traditional industries in North Kerala giving weight age to percentage of employment in these industries are considered.

2.2.1.5 Household industry

A household industry is defined as an industry conducted by the head of the household himself/ herself and or mainly by the members of the household. At home or within the village in rural areas or only within the premises of the house where the household lives in urban areas. The industry should not be run on the scale of registered factory (1971 census definition). Household industry can work under two categories of single worker system, which is not different from craftsmen in the sense that labour is not separate from the owner of the means of production and the other is the type of household industry with family worker. In the case of single worker, it is possible that the single worker is either independent or the worker is dependent on a merchant or middlemen for one or all the requirements. The family worker can be either dependent or independent. In all aspects it is similar to the case of the single worker. In household

industry using family labour, there is a recognised division of labour within the family. The division of labour in such cases is strikingly different from the capitalist division of labour. In the latter the labour power of the members involved is treated as commodity, even a piece rate is paid. This is not only because, most often the family labour is only deemed to be helping the main worker or head of the household industry tasks is perceived as an extension of family labour. Unlike the capitalist division of labour, which is geared to the generation of greater surplus value, in the family labour the process and product of patriarchal domination exists. Patriarchal domination is a social system where the man is recognised to be the provider and protector of the family. Man does the task assignment and the nature of the task assignment is such that the chances of skill acquisition are low for the women. Where the production process is carried out simultaneously involve female family labour, women are sometimes found to do tasks of greater drudgery. Family workers constitute the largest among household industry (49 per cent), female family workers account for 57.17 per cent of the all female workers in household industry (Kalpagam, U., 1993). There are also household industries with employees. In this category, the enterprise is carried on at the household level with hired labour.

Unlike the factory production the owner not only undertakes the risks of business, but also is invariably involved both as labourer and supervisor of the work. While hired labour is used, family labour is also used depending upon the scale of operation. Once the need to extract the surplus value from hired labour becomes important, the former patriarchal division of labour breaks down. The division of labour among hired workers is both an extension and modification of the patriarchal division of labour that existed when the scale of operation involved only family labour. Patriarchal division of labour assigning women to tasks involving less skill and greater drudgery and the practice of not treating women's labour power as a commodity still reinforce the notion that women should be paid a lower rate for their labour power.

2.3 Research approach

The research approach adopted in the present study comes under the descriptive design where the researcher describes or presents picture of a phenomenon or phenomena under investigation. The methodology hence is qualitative in nature producing descriptive data i.e., peoples own written or spoken

words and observable behaviour. The following were the main steps in the research design where the participant observation was given stress which included pre field work, field work and data analysis.

Through the social interaction with the subjects, data are collected unobtrusively and systematically. The pre fieldwork was carried out by the researcher who went herself to the field with certain general questions. Detailed field notes were prepared during the process. Time had to be given to gain rapport with the respondents by continuous interaction with them. During this time a close observation and even participation in the activities done by the informant were useful. The data collected for the present study belong to two categories - Primary and Secondary Data.

2.3.1 Secondary data

For the purpose of collecting secondary data concerning the topic, information was obtained from Census Report, Census Report of the Directorate for Traditional industries, the I.L.O. Report, the NSS records, The Publications of

the Registrar General, The Publications of State Planning Board, Records of the Directorate of Coir and Handloom, Documents of the Co-operative Societies of Traditional Industries and Documents of Coir Project Office, Kozhikode and employment files of Dhinesh Beedi Co-operatives, Kannur were used.

2.3.2 Primary data

Primary data has been collected from 310 women workers from Beedi, Coir and Handloom industries with an aim to examine the sex typing of work in these industries, the organisation of production and its implications on women and the socio economic status of women workers. For the purpose of collecting primary data, with the help of a structured interview schedule, a field investigation was conducted in the three main districts of North Kerala. The selection of sample households was done after a village survey. A comparative group of women engaged in the organised and unorganised units of the traditional industries were chosen. After obtaining the preliminary information, the respondents were chosen at random basis.

The researcher herself interviewed the respondents stating the details of the purpose of the study. The confidential and academic nature of the study was also explained. As many of the respondents were not able to fill in the questionnaire, it took time to make them express their view. Only a few were not co-operative, their cases were substituted by alternatives. The interview situation in most of the cases was similar. Almost all the respondents in the unorganised sector were interviewed in their homes where as those in the organised sector in their factory units. The interview schedule was used not only as a guide for interviewing but also as an instrument for recording. Most of the interview schedule was filled in by the researcher and others by the respondents themselves. In some units the Secretaries of the units helped the respondents to write answers for them.

The interview schedule included questions to be filled up giving the characteristics of each area surveyed regarding environment, water, electricity, education and household assets. In the interview schedule, most of the questions were structured in such a way that the respondent had to express their own judgment, understanding and experience about things. The interview schedule was prepared on the basis of an outline

prepared earlier including the desirable items to be included for the discussion of the economic status of female labour in the traditional industries of North Kerala. It was tried on 50 cases in Kannur district in the year 1998. The pre-testing helped in formulating the final shape of the schedule. In order to capture the dynamics and the informality of the production organisation in the traditional industries it was essential to cover both the factory and home workers.

2.3.3 The sampling framework

The North Kerala includes five districts mainly i.e., Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, Wyanad, and Kasargod. Wide variations can be noted in the distribution of traditional industries. The Kerala State is divided into three zones with regard to the distribution of traditional industries. North Kerala has the domination of Beedi and Handloom industry. Though coir industry has a major share in the southern districts, the districts of Kannur and Kozhikode have certain pockets, which provide employment to large number of workers.

A four staged stratified sampling process was used for the present study. The sampling units at different stages are: Industries, districts, villages and households.

An attempt was made to situate the traditional industries in Kerala. The traditional industries provide employment to large number of people. It is estimated that the Coir industries provide employment to 44 per cent, Handloom to 22 per cent, Handicrafts to 15 per cent, Cashew to 10 per cent and Khadi and Village to 11 per cent workers (Report, State Planning Board, 1995). A total of 61 per cent of workers in the Handloom industries are from North Kerala, with 46 per cent from Kannur and Kasargod, 15 per cent from Kozhikode. The Southern districts have a share of 21 per cent of handloom workers (The State Planning Board, 1995). The Coir industries provide employment to four lakhs people. 11.23 per cent of the units are in the Northern districts while the first place goes to Alleppy which has 72.03 per cent (Report, Directorate for Coir, 1997). The districts of Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod have 29,955 families attached to Coir Industry (Employment Files for Coir, 1997). The Beedi industry is another important traditional industry of North Kerala. Out of the total 352 registered units, Kannur alone has 208

registered beedi producing units. It is estimated that the North Kerala has a share of 65.5 per cent units, while the Central and South Kerala have 33 per cent and 1.5 per cent (The Annual Survey of Industries, 1987). The share of the workers in the unorganised units had to be computed from the oral interviews with the Contractors, experienced personal and Managers of the Welfare board for these industries. The unorganised workers of the Coir industry are estimated to be 15,000 under the private entrepreneurs. There are 1,12,779 weavers in Kerala working on 63,204 looms spread over the state. While 47,204 looms are under various cooperative weavers societies and 16,000 are in the unorganised sector. Weaving is considered to be the main work in the handloom while large number of workers is engaged in pre-weaving work, which does not have any official documents (Economic Review, State Planning Board.1995). There are 735 weavers' co-operative societies in the state of which 133 are factory type. The North Kerala has a share of 61.3 per cent Co-operative units in the state.

The following table gives a rough estimate of the share of factory workers in the districts.

Table 2.1 Percentage share of the factory workers of Beedi, Coir and Handloom industries in North Kerala.

(percentage)			
Districts	Beedi	Handloom	Coir
Malappuram	8.38	2.38	0.65
Kozhikode	0.63	34.12	57.37
Kannur	52.15	50.49	41.38
Kasargod	38.56	7.55	0.60
Wyanad	0.28	5.46	-
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Computed from the records of the District Industrial Centres, Dinesh Industrial Co-operatives, Welfare Board for Coir, Kozhikode, Directorate for Handloom and Coir, Economic Survey, (1999) State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

From the above table it is clear that besides the workers in the unorganised home work system, Kannur has the concentration of Beedi, Coir and Handloom workers, Kasargod has the units of Beedi and Handloom, Kozhikode district has the domination of Handloom and Coir workers

Though no official data is available about the female workforce participation in these industries, a rough estimation of female workforce in these industries based on the Census for

Cooperatives show that female workers have the major share of the workforce with more than 75 per cent in the Handloom and Beedi industry and 90 per cent in the coir industry.

It should be noted that the traditional industries of Beedi, Handloom and Coir provide employment to large number of workers in the unorganised sector too. Different system of production i.e., contract system, craftsmen system etc., discussed in the following chapters show that the unorganised nature of work is an important characteristic of employment in the traditional industries. Since there are no official documents regarding these workers, a village survey with the help of the information received from various officials, contractors, people of the village had to be taken to locate these workers. The following ideas were formulated.

Besides the co-operative and industrial units of these industries it is estimated that the unorganised units of beedi industry provide employment to nearly 45,000 workers in North Kerala for which Kasargod district alone has nearly 100 contractors for a particular brand called Bharath, which is marketed in Mangalore. The important brands of beedi in the

private sector are Bharath, Ganesh, Fileman, Desai and Telephone. Sadhoo Beedi employs nearly 5000 workers in various units Kannur with its main unit in Chakkarakallu. Kannur circle has 50 contractors for the brand called telephone, which is again marketed in Mangalore.

Information regarding the workers in the unorganised units of Handloom units was collected from the President, Chaliya Samithi Kannur, an Association of Chaliya weavers who dominates the Handloom industry in the unorganised units in North Kerala. The Chaliyas who settled in Malabar resides in streets, which are called 'Theru' where they engage in the work in their own houses. They take yarn from companies, which do the marketing of their products. For example, The Ramdas Textiles and Rajalakhmi Textiles in Kannur. The North Kerala has more than 100 streets of such types.

As per the records of the Coir Welfare Board in Kozhikode there are more than 15,000 workers in the districts of Kannur and Kozhikode who do work in the unorganised home units (Employment Files, Coir Welfare Board, 1999).

The next step was the selection of the units of these industries and the sample workers. The villages in North Kerala with concentration of workers both in the organised and unorganised home units were located. The factory units with more than 30 female workers and contractors with more than 25 female workers were selected from the areas chosen for each industry in North Kerala. Kannur circle one has two villages where large numbers are engaged in beedi rolling - Katampally village of Kannur and Anjarakandi village of Thalasserry. In Kasargod Thaluk two villages with high concentration of Beedi workers were selected. They are Adakathumbayil and Ramdas Nagar. In the same way the concentration of coir workers were located in the villages of Pappinisserry in Kannur and Karimpanapalam and Cherukulam in Kozhikode. For the workers in the Handloom sector, two Chaliya streets called Pattuvam street and Kadalai street of Kannur and weavers street of Kasargod were selected.

2.3.4 The sample design

Of the total, 17.74 per cent of the samples are from the district of Kozhikode, 59.58 per cent from Kannur and 22.68 per cent from Kasargod. From a total of 3634 female workers both

in the organised and unorganised group, a random sample of 310 (8.53 per cent) was taken which includes 160 home workers and 150 factory workers. The following table gives a detailed picture of the sample taken for the study.

Table 2.2 The sample frame of the study

Beedi

Districts	Factory			Homework			Grand Total
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Kannur	58	699	757	227	392	619	1376
Kasargod	48	296	344	13	269	282	626
Kozhikode	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	106	995	1101	240	661	901	2002

Coir

Districts	Factory			Homework			Grand Total
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Kannur	8	150	158	18	160	178	336
Kasargod	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kozhikode	30	340	370	29	180	209	579
Total	38	490	528	47	340	387	915

Handloom

Districts	Factory			Homework			Grand Total
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Kannur	123	172	295	267	456	723	1018
Kasargod	21	34	55	141	318	459	514
Kozhikode	54	168	222	0	0	0	222
Total	198	374	572	408	774	1182	1754

Industries	Total population	Female population	Sample selected	Per cent sample
Beedi	2002	1656	130	7.85
Coir	915	830	80	9.63
Handloom	1754	1148	100	8.71
Total	4671	3634	310	8.53

In order to compute the sex wise productivity in the work of rolling of beedis and weaving of handloom, a random sample of 50 men beedi rollers and 50 men weavers were considered from two apex units of these industries i.e., The Dinesh Bhavan and Chirakkal weavers.

2.3.5 Data analysis

In the present study the post fieldwork entailed the following steps. A master table was prepared and the typology and classification scheme was done after the tabulation of data. The data was sorted and examined again for analysis. The descriptive statistical tools were used to test the relation and association between different variables. For analysing the measures of Association Chi-square test was used.

Chi- square is defined as the square of the difference between observed and the expected frequencies in a category divided by the expected frequency, represented by

$$\chi^2 = \sum \left(\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \right)$$

It is a static used to find out the association between two variables. The sample is divided into various categories on the basis of the values of a variable and the number of class under each category is found out. Using these frequencies in the categories based on two variables, it is possible to find out whether the variables are associated or not. Observed frequencies

are indicated by F_o and the expected frequency by F_e . The square of the difference between the two is divided by the expected frequency. The observed frequency is collected from the data and the expected frequency is found out using the formula, $F_e = \frac{C_t \cdot R_t}{C_t}$. It is possible to compare the value with the value given in the table. If the obtained value is less than the table value for the given degrees of freedom at the selected level of significance, we conclude that variables are independent. If the obtained value is more than the table value for the given degrees of freedom at the selected level of significance, then the two variables are not independent i.e., they are related. Degrees of freedom in Chi-square is decided by $(C-1) (R-1)$. The relation between the marital status and the work system, the literacy and the work system etc were analysed using the Chi square test.

2.3.5.1 *Quality of life index*

The level of social and economic conditions was examined at the household level of the sample workers. For this purpose a group of persons normally living together and taking food from a common kitchen was treated as a household. The status of the household was ascertained in terms of the

educational level, employment profile, income size and structure of asset holding conditions. Labour productivity was measured by relating the physical output per man day of eight hours by various labour categories in the sample. The degree of misery of household was also measured in terms of the household monthly income. The Quality of Life Index was computed from the schedule to evaluate the housing and living conditions of the household. Giving weight age to the pattern of housing, facilities of drinking water and the holding of assets, the quality of life index (QLI) was constructed. The score rate was considered to categorise the workers in the low income group, poor workers and very poor workers (Scheme for scoring is given in the Appendix II). For ascertaining conditions and positions of women the burden of work, the participation and autonomy in decision making process at the household level and participation in social and cultural organisations was considered.

The system of work in each industry was studied by looking into the process of production and division and sex typing of work and the wage difference between different categories of workers. The organisation of production has been analysed by comparing the organised factory group of workers and the

unorganised home workers and the contract workers. Wherever the variables are self explanatory, the statistical tools like Arithmetic mean, percentage growth ratios etc are used.

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WOMEN AND WORK - THEORETICAL ISSUES

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CHAPTER - 3

WOMEN AND WORK - THEORETICAL ISSUES

There is no unique thematic model, which can capture the diversity in the women's work situation. Several theoretical models have been formulated. The existing theories could be categorised into the following - segmentation models, human capital theories and marginalisation thesis. The changing labour force participation rates of women and the persistently lower pay they receive for their efforts are the two topics on which the economists are recently concentrating their attention to a considerable extent. A critical approach to the theoretical issues on female labour is the theme of the present chapter.

The classification of labour as wage labour vs self-employment has been criticised by various scholars (Mac Even Scott 1979.106-12). An alternative approach, which is more explicit concerning the specific labour relations to form of production have been developed by Bronley, R. and Gerry, G., (1979). Their topology is a continuum between formal wage labour and self-employment and takes into account a number of intermediary forms of work, which are covered by the blanket

term-unorganised casual worker. This term is defined as a way of making a living, which lacks a moderate degree of security of income and employment. The division of categories are as follows-short term wage work - this is contracted and paid by the day, week, month or season or contracted and paid for fixed terms or tasks with no assurance of continuity of employment. Disguised wage work - a firm regularly and directly appropriates part of persons work without that person being legally employed by the firm, for example, outworkers. Dependent work - the worker is dependent on one or more firms for credit, the rental of premises or equipment, a monopolistic outlet for his production. True self-employment - a person works independently, obtaining an income without engaging in wage work, disguised wage work or dependent work. Outside the domestic subsistence economy, the truly self employed workers must rely on inputs provided by others, on the receipt of output by others and on a system of payment in goods, services or money. All these categories of workers are taken as organised unorganised workers in the present study where as the organised sector includes the type of wage labour in permanent employment, such as that characteristic of large companies and government bureaucracies. This division excludes the category of unpaid family labour, which is

also included in the present study under the term unorganised sector. The following section deals with the various theoretical debates on women and work.

3.1 Women and work - theoretical issues

The current process of industrialisation in third world countries is characterised by a combination of large scale capitalistic factory production which tends to be monopolistic and is often linked to foreign ownership-and a wide range of small scale form of production (Harris, O., 1982.). With the change in the process of industrialisation, various changes took place in the categories of labour used within the various types of production. The recruitment of women and children became part of the system of home based production (Mac Even Scott, 1979). The consideration of the categories of labour into which workers can be drawn leads to the question of how workers particularly women gain access to various types of employment and the mechanism by which this occurs, attracted the attention of researchers.

The idea of reserve army of labour originally posited by Marx has been picked up again in recent years by many authors within the socialist - feminist framework (Beechey, V., 1977; Anthias, F., 1980). It consists of various groups of potential workers, who are presently not participating in production process in industry. Three groups are distinguished-the floating, stagnant and latent reserve. The floating reserve consists of that section of the labour force in the capitalist industrial sector, which is constantly renewed-basically temporarily unemployed workers who are looking for work (Siltanen, J., 1981). The latent reserve consists of all people working in agriculture but thrown out of it because of capitalisation of agriculture. The stagnant reserve is the casually and irregularly employed labour force. These forms of labour have been discussed within the context of the development of capitalism in the 19th and 20th centuries in the U.S.A. and its impact on women's productive work within the household (Power, M., 1983) and recent trends in women's labour force participation particularly married women in Europe and North America (Braverman, H., 1974; Humphries, J., 1983), Braverman currently sees the housewives in the U.S.A. as a form of reserve labour on the assumption that these women would primarily define their role as such. But more emphasis should be

put to possible difference between women on the basis of their age, marital status and position within the household.

Though people vary in terms of acquired education, training and work experience, these factors alone are not enough to explain difference in job allocation between men and women. At this juncture it is necessary to take into account the mechanism of the labour market segmentation with regard to gender. Information on systematic difference between men and women in occupation came from the U.S.A rather than from developing countries. There the evidences that indicate even when differences in worker characteristics are taken into account, women are paid lower wages for the same job, are crowded into a smaller range of occupation and are segregated into industries with lower rates of profit and less market power (Stevenson, 1975).

3.1.1 Labour market segmentation

Labour markets are defined as those institutions, which mediate, affect or determine the purchase and the sale of power (Edward C. Rich M. and Gordon, D.M 1976).

Authors working on segmentation in the U.S.A. and European countries concentrated on the division of labour market into two sectors-the primary market with low paying, low status and self-determining jobs. Two types of explanations have become common: the first is that of economic flexibility of employers and the second linked to various strategies of control over the workforce by employers (Doeringer, P.B., 1980).

The classical labour market analysis assumes that wages and employment are determined by demand and supply and that demand is determined by the marginal productivity of homogenous units of labour. There will be only one wage rate at which the supply and demand for labour will be in equilibrium. It assumes that the demanders of labour make no distinction between workers other than on the basis of their marginal productivities. Classical economic analysis was not formulated to give an account of gender relationship. Historical and contemporary evidence demonstrates that male exclusion practices have been very significant in denying women access to particular jobs. The principle of exclusion has been often gender alone: that is women were barred from particular occupations, simply because they were women. The reason for not explaining

gender specificity in classical period is that the power over women while in the workplace, more or less consciously operate so as to exclude women from more remunerative and prestigious occupations, and render those tasks and occupations that women do perform as low status women's work.

The theories proposed to explain sex segregation in the labour market can be divided into those, which emphasise individual attributes and those based on a structural analysis of the labour market. The former include the neo-classical and human capital theories while the latter ranges from the institutional to the segmented labour market models to the Marxist feminist perspectives.

Neo-classical economic theories also view occupational segregation as a consequence of quality of the different 'offerings' of men and women in the labour market. However the concentration of women into particular occupation is seen as resulting to invest in their human capital to gain formal, work related qualification.

With regard to discrimination neo-classical theorists such as Becker, G. (1957) and Arrow K. (1973) assumes that discrimination of course exists in the labour market. According to them discrimination is attributed to tastes and predicted that it will vanish under competitive conditions.

Neo-classical theories have been elaborated by the "new home economics" where the division of labour between men and women is seen as an outcome of rational decision-taken by individual within the family unit (Mincer, J. and Polachek, S., 1974). Occupational segregation is therefore an outcome of household specialisation in domestic or market paid work. With two people and two sets of tasks to be achieved, it is best for each individual to spend all or most of his or her time on one set of tasks and for each to divide the time between both tasks. Here there is an echo of the women's two role discussion. Seccombe (1974) has argued that women's domestic labour in the home makes an indirect contribution to the realisation of surplus value in providing the replacement/replenishment costs of the male labour force. Bergmann (1974) in her work links earnings to occupational segregation or occupational 'crowding'. Exclusion of women from certain jobs ends up in diminishing marginal

productivity. Her contribution is an important starting point for the development of segmented labour market theories.

Those using the segmented labour market approach have made several points concerning women's employment. These improve the earlier explanations on women's position in the labour force by pointing out that discrimination against women's workers is the result of group treatment based on the norm by which workers are selected. However the segmented labour market approach is limited in its explanation regarding women. It can't explain the variation in wages and working conditions within the range of predominantly female jobs. Neither can it explain the difference between men and women in the primary segment of the labour market.

The factors mediating access to the employment can be clustered into two categories. The first set is related to the interaction of women's employment and their position in the household/family linked to the class background of the household. The second category of factors are those related to forms of production and class formation and pertain to the way in which employers, unions, workers and the state try to influence

what type of employment she gets and to what extent gender plays a role in the struggle between groups. In the case of the traditional industries both these categories have got great application where the workplace and the homestead are so very linked. In the case of work, women gain access to formal sector employment only in a limited capacity. This situation has been thoroughly described in a number of industrialising countries (Baud Isa, 1977).

3.1.2 Human capital approach

Human Capital theory is another theoretical perspective that has increasingly been brought to bear on observed male/female differences in the labour market earnings. The Concept of human capital was adapted from physical capital investment theory by Becker, G. (1957). An individual can make an investment in himself or herself by devoting time for education acquiring skills and work experience. In the extreme, this approach seems to be formulated to demonstrate that observed sex differences are the result of differences in productivity between male and female or of sex differentiation in socialisation

that occurs prior to labour market entrance and of sex differentiation in the household division of labour.

The application of human capital theory to the problem of women earning was undertaken first by Mincer, J and Polacheck, S. (1974) suggested that women in general have different expectations from men and therefore women make different investment decisions. Steven Sandell, S.H. (1973) working with a human capital model went somewhat beyond the incorporation of discontinuous labour force participation by including an explicit measure of one type of labour market discrimination i.e., different rate of return to investment in human capital. Further he examined the theoretical implications of changes in this type of discrimination on investment behaviour and its interaction with labour force participation.

The majority of the third world women outside agriculture work in the informal sector (Heyzer, S., 1981). They tend to be concentrated in employment related to or extending their household work or traditional productive tasks like washing, cleaning, cooking, food processing, and trading. The variety of jobs for women also tends to be less than for men

(Nelson, N., 1979). These women often have little or no education or vocational training and develop their skills while working. Beneria and Rolden (1987) have traced the existence of sub-contracting chains in Mexico City from multinational enterprises to domestic network. They found that smaller firms tended to be more 'feminised' and that this was almost complete for domestic out work. The extent of women's employment tended to increase noticeably at the level where production units changed from legally registered units to semi-legal or illegal units. Women are commonly clustered in different jobs than men and received lower wages on an average than men.

Several researchers have indicated that women find little formal wage employment in large scale domestic industries. Jokes, M. (1982). Indicated that women in Moroco make up less than 10 per cent of the formal labour force. In India women form a minority of workers in the major industries (N.C.O.T.S.O.W. 1974).

3.1. 3 Industrialisation and marginalisation

There has been a greater stress on how industrialisation has changed the share of women's work in total

employment. The main thesis concerning women's share of employment during industrialisation has been that women become marginalised. Women lose their traditional roles during economic development and are given little access to newly created industrial employment (Isa Baud, 1977). The central idea, drawn from Marxist and socialist feminist writings in Europe and North America, holds that women's marginalisation is a product of capitalist organisation of production and use of labour. The separation of production and reproduction, the hierarchical structure of capitalist enterprises, the rise of surplus labour and the industrial reserve army and the mutual accommodation between capitalism and patriarchy (Hartmann, 1979; Beechy, 1977) which results in women's confinement to inferior jobs and to the reserve army of labour etc. have become the major issues (Mac Ewen Scott, 1986).

A number of studies concerning the new international division of labour resulting from industrial relocation have shown that specific groups of women are drawn into the labour force in factories producing for the world market. This situation has led to a focus of attention on the types of jobs women hold rather than the extent of women's labour which stresses the fact that

characteristics of the jobs to which women are recruited are important than the mere availability of job to women (Elson, D. and Pearson, R. 1981., Safa, A.I., 1981).

The marginalisation thesis has thrown light on various aspects on women and labour. Changes in the labour process in the developing countries differ from those in the industrialised countries. The idea of women as reserve army has been given more attention. The emphasis is on the export industry with a labour process in which women workers are subordinated to the machines. Very little information is available on the effects of technological change on women's work in other types of production, especially small scale production and artisanal production. The issues like substitution of men by women workers, deskilling of functions accompanied by relegation of women to less skilled functions, forms of control and organisation of workers, wage level differences between men and women are not given due importance.

The effects of technology on the use of labour have been studied mainly in the context of the industrialised countries. Later economists have largely ignored this. However a number of

management studies, industrial sociologists, Marxist thinkers and socialist feminists have reopened this issue. Scientific management was introduced by Taylor, F.W. (1903) whose main concern was re-organising work to a higher degree of efficiency by dividing work between management and workers. In the third world context, the issue of technology and labour utilisation has been little examined with an exception of the work of Schmitz, H. (1985). On the basis of case studies on the textile chemical fibres and hammock industries, he shows that the relative importance of deskilling control, wage levels and labour mobility is different in a third world context.

The extent of marginalisation has been studied with special reference to the substitution effect between men and women. In industrialised countries various patterns have been noted. In the printing industry, women are replacing men in certain jobs as part of management strategy. Lower levels of payment and deskilling of the work often follow such feminsation of jobs. In the third world countries the opposite trend has been evident in the few national large scale industries where women find work. Men replaced women in the Indian textile industry in the thirties as unions bargained with management concerning

streamlining of production (Chachi, A., 1982). Such substitutions is linked to changes in functions in the production process. When tasks become more mechanised men replace women workers (Dauber, R. and Cain, M.L., 1981).

In the third world countries the trend is more frequently that mechanisation leads to the acquisition of new skills by men and loss of employment for women. In India the point of deskilling in small scale manufacturing industries has been documented in traditional handicraft and handloom industries and in the coir industry (Patel, V., 1984).

Market prejudice has also been a potent factor explaining the lower wages for women. Becker (1984) provided a theoretical framework for market discrimination. According to this approach, employers may be willing to appoint females only in certain jobs like secretaries, receptionists, school teachers etc. But they may be reluctant to take them as factory workers, supervisors, engineers etc. This is because their sex might prejudice their effective functioning. Some workers might find it demeaning to work under female supervisors and this prevents their effective functioning. Thus the disutility in appointing

female members have to be compensated by discounting their wages.

Phelps (1972) developed models of statistical discrimination. Here male and female workers are not considered to be perfect substitutes. In an environment of imperfect information, statistical discrimination occurs, employers consider women as imperfect substitutes for men and they may be willing to appoint women only at a wage discount (Piore, M., 1971) and consider that women are generally excluded from primary sector requiring firm specific skills, characterised by higher wages, good promotional opportunities and low turnover rates. They are employed in secondary sector comprising of low paid jobs.

The control over the workforce within the production units is predicated not only in their situation as workers but also incorporates patriarchal aspects. Within the large scale national industry, control over women workers has been based on direct strategies of management towards all workers as well as on strategies which differentiates among workers, using gender among other factors. A patriarchal form of control is mentioned in the Indian mining industry where whole families are recruited

to work under a contract signed with the male head of the family. Thus wages for women and children are subsumed under the one wage paid out (Ghosh, A., 1984).

Sub contracting to small production is a major form of control often used to constrain women. Control is exercised by having a long chain of geographically decentralised sub contracting units and middlemen. The indirect employer - employee relation make it difficult for workers to organise themselves. The more casual the production unit, the greater the extent of women employment (Beneria, L. and Roldan, M., 1987). When work is contracted by middlemen at the neighborhood level who control channels for selling the manufactures products, existing social network make it difficult to make demands. Women can also be recruited as unapid family workers on the basis of patriarchal control.

Subcontracting of production originally carried out in production units leads to lower wage, lends out higher labour turnover. For domestic work, wage levels are several times lower than for factory work, payment are in piece rates and irregular and the amount of work available fluctuates (Pineda-Ofreneo R., 1984).

The family household is a major factor in the process of growing up influencing the life choices women make in terms of education, work and marriage partners. These determine a first line of limitations of choices of work. Women's access to material resources is related to the characteristic of the household, to the characteristic of the work they perform and more generally the existing cultural norms and values (Isa Baud, 1982). A primary distinction could be made between male and female headed households (Buvinic, M., 1983). The number of female headed household all over the third world is increasing. The children take over a measure of responsibility for both productive and domestic labour in female headed households (Chant, S., 1985).

Variations in the distribution of productive and domestic labour between men and women and children in the working class family could be seen in relation to its development cycle which has different phases of expansion, consolidation and dispersion (Gonsalvez de la Roche, 1984). In the expansion phase, the household is imbalanced-many mouths to feed and only a few to work, so that women carry the full load of the double burden. In the consolidation phase children start to contribute income and mothers often diminish their productive work relative to their

domestic labour. In the dispersion phase, economically active children leave their more aged parents.

A critical analysis of the various theories and models developed on women and work clearly show that a number of factors influence women and her access to the labour market. The present study will apply a few of these theories and develop a model that will fit the women workers in the traditional industries particularly of North Kerala.

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NATURE AND PATTERN OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE UNORGANISED SECTOR

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CHAPTER - 4

NATURE AND PATTERN OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE UNORGANISED SECTOR

The factors driving global integration namely trade expansion, technological change and the internationalisation of production have indeed altered production patterns and promoted growth and development. Along with output changes there are significant changes in global employment pattern (Rekha Mehra and Sarah Gannage, 2000). In developing and developed countries these changes include more and better employment as workers shift out of agriculture into waged employment in the expanding manufacturing and service sectors. The percentage of labour force in agriculture in the developing countries fell from 72 per cent in 1960 to 61 per cent by 1991, and for industry and service it rose from 11 per cent to 14 per cent and 17 per cent to 25 per cent respectively over the same period (Report, I.L.O., 1995).

4.1 Female employment - global view

Women have benefited from improvement in the world economic pattern of employment and income generation. Global

trends in shaping global integration affect women differently (Tzannatos, S., 1996). On average 39 per cent of the labour force and 19 per cent of the Asian labour force would need to change sectors in order that men and women are represented proportionally in each sector (Standing, 1999). The decade spanning the late 1980's and 1990's is one of heightened labour insecurity and flexibility. It is the spread of more flexible and informal employment that accounts for much of the upward trend in female share of the labour force. Home workers defined, as either dependant or independent workers who carry out remunerative work within their homes, comprises a large and growing portion of the workers in many countries. In these sectors the informal worker actually subsidise capitalist growth by providing infrastructure and often work.

Globally with increasing industrialisation and expansion of services, employment in agriculture has diminished the importance. This trend holds for both developing and industrial economies and is likely to intensify with policies that favour export promotion and provide impetus for technological growth and financial liberation. The percentage of the total female labour force employed in agriculture has fallen down or remained

static in all regions except for East and South Asia. Although many of the with-in regional trends are downward, in the developing countries for approximately 62 per cent of the total female employment in both 1980 and 1990 is in agriculture and remains the most important sector for female employment in much of Africa and Asia (Report, U.N., 1995).

Women's representation in services grew significantly in the newly independent states where the share of total female employment in services increased from 27 per cent in 1970 to 38 per cent in 1990. The per cent of women in the service sector in this period increased from 47 per cent to 56 per cent within the most dramatic increase accruing in Eastern Europe where almost 73 per cent of the service sector was dominated by women (Moghadam, M., 1992).

Informal sector is vital for economic survival of poor women (Berger and Buvinic, 1989). It provides more employment for women than the formal sector and in fact for the majority of the labour force in most developing countries, more than 80 per cent of the workers in low income countries and 40 per cent of those in middle income countries are employed in the informal sector

(Chen, M, 1996). Of these, women represent a significant share. Virtually all women workers in low income countries such as Tansania and Ghana are concentrated in informal sector employment. Even in middle income countries a large proportion of women are in the informal sector, notably 76 per cent in Thailand and as such as 50 per cent in Turkey. The informal sector is becoming important in transition, especially for women retrenched from the formal labour force (Beigum, A., 1994).

The trends shown in the Table 4.1 demonstrate that the steady increase in women 's economic participation rates do not uniformly reflect economic growth and prosperity. The share of total female employment in the manufacturing sector increased in the developing countries and particularly in Asia and also in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the South Asia and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The share of service sector showed an attractive increase in all the countries.

Table 4.1 Percentage distribution of women labour force in different sectors

(in percentage)

Countries	1980			1990		
	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Ser-vice	Agriculture	Manufacture	Ser-vice
Sub Saharan	30	18	28	37	28	36
North Africa	5	11	9	20	23	17
South Asia	17	12	9	32	41	15
East Asia	34	41	33	34	44	41
China	-	-	-	47	43	38
Latin America	12	29	43	16	36	48
Middle East	12	12	12	12	10	17
Newly independent states	50	38	47	45	43	56
OECD	25	27	40	33	29	48

Source : Report, statistical division of the United Nations, 1995.

Female workforce participation in general has increased throughout the world. A positive change is seen in

almost all the countries. The overall increase in the women's activity rates was absorbed primarily by a growing share of women employed in the service sector, defined as clerical, sales and services. Women's representation in services grew significantly in the newly independent states where the share of total female employment in services increased from 47 per cent to 56 per cent.

4.2 Female employment in India - in retrospect

The position of women in India includes their cultural, spiritual and social attainments. In India in the Vedic age, they were given full freedom for spiritual progress and intellectual development. During the period of Buddhism in India, women were assigned an honorable place in social life. The position changed during the Mughal period. Within the advent of the British rule, women occupied a subjugated and inferior position in society. The western influence brought to them a totally new concept of themselves as persons 'individually important' and 'nationally needed'.

4.2.1 Role and status of women in India

In 1920's all over India, the artisan classes were thrown out of work by de-industrialisation. They were flooded into

agriculture as their last resort. During 1921-31 agricultural labourers had increased from 21.5 million to 31.5 million (Anupama, S., 1985). There was a break up of the village community, but all communal institutions did not vanish (Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishna Raj, 1987). Besides spinning and weaving there were many occupations in which women were engaged not only for their consumption but also for sale. All over India several lakhs of women did rice de-husking for which they received payment in cash and kind, enough to ensure a decent living. Milking of cows, cleaning them, cleaning the cattle sheds, selling milk, butter, ghee etc., were always women jobs. Women carried out marketing of vegetables and fish (Francis Buchanan, 1807).

By the mid 19th century most of the great crafts of India had declined. Handloom weaving suffered the most serious set back. The first factories were set up. Textile mills came first to Bombay and Bengal presidency. With the system of indentured labour, men and women migrated to Sri Lanka, West Indies, Malaysia and Burma to become industrial workers. Generally, women with one or two able bodied men folk migrated (Neera Desai and Mythreyi K. Raj., 1987). Plantations and mines employed

large numbers of women and children. Despite these instances, Indian factory labour was pre dominantly male dominated. In Kerala the major change in land relations led to the break up of the 'tharawad', the joint family system (Saradamoni, K., 1983).

Though there were sectoral variations, the fact remains that during the first half of the 20th century while male industrial employment reached 2632 thousands, female employment was just 510 thousands. For every one job for women, 12 were created for men. In the service sector the female work force decreased by 189 thousands while that of male increased by 3237 thousands and opportunities for males were greater in the better paid administrative, defense and professional jobs. In trade and commerce, the disappearance of village weekly fairs, the growth of towns, transport and large scale commercialised operations eliminated women. In construction too, males displaced females (Alice, T., 1990).

The Constitution of India names women as weaker section of society, deserving special protection, care and welfare. It had placed the women issue on the agenda for development long before the United Nations sensitised the world about the need to do

so by declaring women's decade (Suma Chitnis, 1993). Operationally the emphasis on the weakness of women has had far reaching implications. Until well over five decades after independence, women were viewed primarily as objects of welfare in the national plans and strategies of development. The Central Social Welfare Advisory Board set up in the 1950's was primarily charged with the responsibility of advancing the health, the education and the general situation of women, children and handicapped. But they were not viewed as partners or even targets of development. There has been a slow evolution of policies aiming at integration of women in the development effort. In the first few plans the emphasis was on organising women for a collective action through Mahila Mandals. Subsequently a number of measures were added.

In 1974, the report of committee on the status of women in India stressed that dynamics of social change and development had adversely affected a huge section of women and created imbalances and disparities evidenced by declining work participation, lower sex ratio and expectancy of life. Focus was laid on women as critical impetus for national development rather than the target for welfare policies. The report led to the

National Plan of Action based on the guidelines prepared by the United Nations World Plan of action for women which identified areas of employment, health, education, nutrition, legislation and social welfare for planned intervention so as to improve the conditions of women in India. Concern for women ultimately materialised in the formation of a separate Department of Women and Child Development in 1985 and a National Commission on self-employed women. A national perspective plan for the development of women has been prepared.

In order that women may be allowed to fulfill her legitimate role in the family and the community, adequate services needed to be promoted for her welfare. Since then a number of programmes have been formulated in the field of health, education and employment up to the fourth plan. The stress was on the provision of curative sources. Thereafter the emphasis shifted to the promotion of preventive and developmental programme. In the 80s women development was recognised as one of the developmental sectors by including a separate chapter entitled women and development in the 6th plan document. Reservation of certain percentage for women under various poverty

alleviation programme such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, Training of youth for self-employment etc., in addition to 27 beneficiary schemes for women were identified by the Priminister's office. Setting up of a National Committee on women in India, setting up of a Department for Women and Children at the national level and establishing cells in different ministries and departments were to consider women's issues in the respective sectors.

The multiple role played by women at different levels of economic life are not perceived because of the definition of the work for pay or profit. There are in fact seven categories of work performed by women in rural and urban India. They are wage and salaried employment, self employment and outside the household for profit, self employed in cultivation, household industry for profit, self employment and other subsistence activities in allied sectors like dairying other livestock rearing, such as poultry, etc., activities related to domestic work such as fetching fuel, fodder etc., domestic work such as cooking, cleaning etc., (Moddie, A.D. 1990).

In the following pages an attempt is made to analyse the nature and the pattern of female employment in the country with special to the unorganised sector.

4.2.2 Gender composition of workforce in India

Wide fluctuations could be noted about the rate of employment through out the past decades. The female work force rate has been fluctuating and there is a declining tendency in the strict sense of the term. The rate of growth of female labour shows a negative trend and wide fluctuations could be also noted between the measurements between the surveys, which noted that the concept used in the surveys, had certain methodological flaws. The following table gives a broad view of employment trends of both male and the female from 1911-1994.

A declining rate of growth of female labour force is noted over the years, 1911-1994, while through the last two decades, the rate of growth has shown some positive trends and the reduction in the growth between 1981-91 is come down. Female

workforce in 1993 is estimated as 22.4 per cent while for male it is 51.6 per cent.

Table 4.2 Gender composition of work force in india-1911-1994

(in percentage)			
Year	Person	Male	Female
1911	48.2	62.3	33.9
1921	47.0	60.9	32.8
1931	43.6	57.9	28.4
1951	39.1	53.9	23.4
1961	43.0	57.0	28.0
1971	34.0	52.7	13.9
1972-73	20.7	52.7	27.8
1977-78	41.6	53.4	28.9
1981	41.6	53.4	28.9
1983	36.8	52.6	19.8
1987-88	53.5	29.3	41.8
1991	40.9	53.0	28.0
1993-94	37.5	51.6	22.4

Source: Census and NSSO tables

The work force participation rate for women has declined between 1911 and 1991 (-11.4 per cent) and this could be expected to continue because of the rising school attendance ratios and the associated classification of children in the age group 5-11 as non-workers. However much of the drop in the female work force between 1931 and 1951 was a result of difficulties of implementing the complicated instructions to identify self-supporting persons and earning dependents.

Wide variations could be noted between the work force participation rate between the rural and the urban area. Female work force participation has recorded a highest rate in the rural area and in the urban area according to the 38th NSS round. While for the male it is in the 1961 census for the rural area and in the 9th round of NSS for the urban area. A general increase in the female labour force is estimated as 4.76 per cent. The increase in the rural female labour force is estimated to be 22 per cent while the urban increase is estimated to be 31.2 per cent. There is an increase in the female employment both in the rural and the urban area.

4.2.3 Women workforce – agricultural and non-agricultural

India being an agricultural economy absorbs nearly 70 per cent of its population either directly or indirectly in the agricultural and allied sectors of the economy. The rate of absorption of female labour is found to be relatively high in the agricultural and allied sectors compared to the non-agricultural sector. But the composition of labour force in the country has undergone significant changes over time, which has remarkable implications for the economic development of the nation.

The Table 4.3 clearly tells us that percentage share of women in agricultural and non-agricultural activities varied widely. Women are still concentrated in the agricultural sector increasing their rate of participation from 71.35 per cent to 78.44 per cent, while their share as non-agricultural labourers has come down from 28.65 per cent to 21.65 per cent. The share of male workforce in non-agricultural activities is increased from 34.89 per cent to 39.17 per cent from 1911-1991.

Table 4.3 All India labour force composition by activity status and gender 1901-1991

(in percentage)

Year	Agricultural labour		Cultivator		Total Agricultural Labourers		Non-Agricultural Labourers	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1901	12.39	25.81	53.22	45.54	65.61	71.35	34.89	28.65
1911	15.28	30.65	53.22	45.26	68.5	73.91	31.50	26.09
1921	13.51	24.95	56.36	50.57	69.87	75.52	30.13	24.48
1931	17.95	38.89	50.78	32.39	68.73	71.28	31.27	28.72
1951	14.95	31.39	51.90	45.42	66.85	76.81	33.15	23.19
1961	13.42	23.86	51.46	55.72	64.88	79.58	35.12	20.42
1971	21.35	50.40	46.24	26.69	67.59	80.09	31.41	19.91
1981	19.59	46.18	43.70	33.20	63.26	79.38	36.74	20.62
1991	21.11	44.29	39.72	34.15	60.83	78.44	39.17	21.56

Source : Asoka Mitra. The Status of Women -literacy and employment ICSSR programme of women's studies Allied Publication New Delhi p.91

Census of India 1981, Series 1, Paper II, Table 16.

Census tables of India 1991, Provisional 1941 census not available due to world war.

4.2.4 Nature and volume of female unemployment

The unemployment rates obtained from different quinquennial National Sample Surveys support the fact that the rates in 1977-78 were higher for women than men. By weekly status, work participation rate has gone up during 1987-93 for women and men, both in rural and urban areas. Even when we consider the larger time span viz. from 1983 to 1993-94 work participation rate for women is noted to be going up in the adult age group 15-59, both in rural and urban areas. On the other hand Workforce Participation Rate by daily status namely person days of employment has gone up for all the categories, the increase being higher for women. One can therefore argue that the amount of work available to women has increased in recent years, despite the stability in the proportion of usually working persons during the eighties and early nineties.

4.3 Women work force in the unorganised sector

One of the important characteristics of female employment in India is the over representation of women in the unorganised sector which is estimated to be nearly 95 per cent. In the rural sector the unorganised sector is largely confined to small

peasant agricultural production and non-agricultural artisan work. While in the urban sector it includes small manufacturing trade and petty services. The significance of the unorganised sector in the development process was highlighted by Lewis, W.A. (1954). He has theorised that the surplus labour in the traditional sector of the backward economy is a potential source of capital formation.

The unorganised sector continues to remain a sector of abject poverty. This has instigated social scientists to venture into an empirical investigation of the economies of the unorganised sector specially the urban informal sector. With increasing demographic pressure, neither the agricultural sector nor the organised non-farm sector has been able to absorb the growing labour force. Informal sector is not so conspicuous sector. Yet it plays an important role in the Indian economy. Informal activities exist in the primary, the secondary as well as the tertiary sectors of the economy. While the exact contribution of this sector to the national economy is not known, it is of crucial importance in the national economy.

Since mid sixties, innumerable empirical works have attempted on this sector. Most of these studies were sponsored by

I.L.O. based on multi country studies. The I.L.O. has defined unorganised sector as that set of economic activities characterised by relative ease of entry, reliance and indigenous resources, family ownership, small scale operation, labour intensity, reliance on skills acquired outside the formal education and unregulated and competitive market. By contrast the formal sector refers to that set of activities in private or publically owned enterprises or civil services which confine generally to tax and labour laws and other regulations (Sethuraman, S.V., 1976). Various studies have proved that the production process in the unorganised sector is characterised by the pre dominance of tiny units, using primitive technology, operating at low level of productivity and working under highly competitive conditions. Because of the smallness of the size, the units in the unorganised sector by pass the existing regulations about workers' protection and minimum wages.

Early seventies witnessed a marked change in the approach of development economists and policy planners in redefining the nature and in analysing the scope of economic activities of urban places of developing countries. The analysis arising there of revealed the dualistic nature of the urban economy - where in economic activities or enterprises could be easily

classified into categories based on its organisation, technology used, industrial relations and size of employment. These dual systems have been identified, classified and labeled in different terms by researchers in a manner, which does not convey identical meanings. The formal - informal terminology was also used by Keith Hart in his study on urban Ghana (Keith Hart, 1973).

From the analysis of the conceptual frame of informal sector, it may be inferred that attempts at characterising the informal sector ostensibly lead to definitions based on the size of employment of the firm, type of technology used, industrial relations practiced in the firm, entrepreneurs access to market and institutionalised facilities and skills of workers and entrepreneurs.

Unorganised sector in terms of size of employment, has been defined to consist of self employed individuals and enterprises employing less than ten persons. The rationale for this choice stems from the fact that these units fall outside the nets of data collecting agencies of the third world countries in general. Further it is believed that such units in the urban places are motivated mainly by employment and income rather than profit

(Sethuraman, S.V., 1976). Studies conducted in the Indian context have different sizes of units for analysis. It varies from less than four workers to less than twenty five workers.

Technology criterion of defining the informal sector assumes that the sector is using inefficient labour-intensive technology resulting in adverse wage/rental ratio. This view would seem to be inconsistent in the context of developing economies, which are basically capital scarce and labour surplus economies. (Ramanujam, M.S. and Surendra Prasad, 1993).

Enterprises in the informal sector do not have a definite form of organisation and are generally not subject to labour legislations protecting the interest of the workers in matters of recruitment, working conditions, hours of work, leave, payment of wages, dismissals and employment of child labour. Workers engaged in this sector are mostly illiterate and hence fail to organise themselves into pressure groups or unions (Biplab Dasgupta, 1973). The unorganised sector in fact includes as a vast majority "footlose" workers such as hawkers, vendors, and other self employed units. In such cases the question of having a firm

organisational set up and or of application of industrial relations do not arise.

The various attributes of informality of the sector indicates that these are not necessarily consistent with each other and nor are they be found universally in different situations and thus it confirms the confusion regarding the meaning and the definition of the concept. Different countries have adopted the definition, which is appropriate to their needs and the system of data collection for the same. In India the term 'informal' has been used neither in the official statistics nor in the national accounts statistics (NAS). The term used in the Indian contest are 'organised' and 'unorganised' interchangeably. In fact the terms 'informal sector' and 'unorganised sector' are quite similar to each other. As per 1993 System of National Accounts, the informal units are unincorporated enterprises, a typical characteristic of which is that they do not have complete sets of accounts available with them, while all informal sector enterprises can be considered as being part of the formal sector (Kulshreshtha and Gulab Singh, 1999).

The issues of the informal sector are common to all the developing countries but have to be understood in the context where informal casual systems of work are promoted and encouraged among the working poor. In India out of the 297 million persons in the labour force, 30 million are in the organised sector and the rest of 267 million are in the informal sector. Out of this, 25 million earn Rs. 250 - 500/- per month and the rest get only Rs. 60 - 300/- per month (Dr. Arunachlam, J., 1997).

Varying definitions make accurate comparisons impossible regarding the size of the informal/unorganised sector. Informal sector accounts for the major share of employment in India. In India, taking the economy as a whole in 1981, the unorganised sector accounted for 99 per cent of the workforce in agriculture, 78 per cent in manufacturing, 34 per cent in mining, 58 per cent in construction, 70 per cent in trade, 46 per cent in transport and 67 per cent in services to the government of India. (Planning Commission draft five year plan 1978-83).

The Director General of Employment and Training (DGE&T), Ministry of Labour provides the estimates of

employment in the organised segment of the Indian economy. Information collected through the network of employment exchanges in the country under the Employment Market Information (EMI) programme covers the organised sector. The employers in this sector furnish the requisite information through the employment returns prescribed under the Employment Exchanges Act of 1959 and that from smaller non-agricultural establishments in the private sector employing 10-24 persons is collected on a voluntary basis. Out of the estimated total working force of 364 million in the unorganised sector in the year 1993-94, agricultural sector accounts for as much as 257 million. Thus the size of the informal sector excluding agriculture in the Indian economy is of the order of 107 million, the largest employer of the informal sector being the manufacturing activity (38 million) followed by the trading activity (26 million), community services (14 million) construction activity (11 million) and transport activity (7 million) - (Kulshreshtha, A.C. and Gulab Singh, 1999).

According to the I.L.O. report discrimination in working conditions and job opportunities exists in almost all the

countries of the world barring a few at the top. According to the report more than 45 per cent of women all over the world in the age group of 15 to 64 are contributing to the economy in a significant way. The salient feature of employment of women according to the report is that they are mainly concentrated in the informal sector which do not require much training or education, in activities which are traditionally known as women's work such as domestic services, laundry, child minding etc. "Not only do men and women have different occupations, men commonly do work for higher pay and status" (Lim Lin, 1995). In Asia and Africa most women workers are found in the agricultural sector where wages are among the lowest and more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of women in non-agricultural activities are in the informal sector. Women predominate in this sector because the only work they can find is informal in nature and their incomes are at the poverty level (Dr. Aarunachalam, J., 1997).

The growth of employment in the organised sector in India has been falling steadily between 1973 and 1994 (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Percentage growth of employment in the organised sector (1973-1994)

Sector	(in percentage)			
	1973-78	1978-83	1983-88	1988-94
Agriculture	2.22	1.30	1.11	0.35
Mining & Quarrying	5.20	2.56	0.88	1.04
Manufacturing	2.30	2.0	-0.09	0.04
Electricity Gas, water, supply	3.27	3.67	3.26	1.58
Construction	-1.95	1.91	1.25	-0.62
Trade	-13.26	1.94	1.43	0.42
Transport, storage	1.62	2.25	1.20	0.42
Services	4.31	2.96	2.25	1.76
Total organised	2.45	2.48	1.38	1.05
Public sector	-	2.99	2.17	1.00
Private sector	-	1.41	-0.43	1.18

Source: Successive Annual and Quarterly Employment Review, Ministry of labour New Delhi, 1993.

This is true for almost all industry groups, which implies that the growing labour force cannot be fully absorbed within the shrinking sector. Given that open unemployment rates in India have not increased over the period, the labour force was absorbed in agriculture and in the unorganised informal segments of the non-agricultural sectors. In effect this lead to an increase in women's employment in the informal sector. The growth of

ancillarisation and industrial employment through sub-contracting combined with a steady fall in incomes of households due to the poor performance of the economy as a whole are additional factors that account for the increase in the number of women entering the informal sector. The process of globalisation, export oriented industrialisation and relocation of industries from the developed to the developing countries lead to the increase in employment in the informal sector. There is an increasing trend towards subcontracting of work whereby work is pushed out of the factories and formal work establishments into the small workshops, the homes and informal situations. This has resulted in an increase in informal work, often in home working. The workers on the other hand in factories or informal work situations are governed by looser contracts and obtain fewer social security benefits.

The basic problem of unorganised sector is unstable and irregular employment. The other issues include variable hours of work, low wage rate, ease of entry and high turn over of labour. As the planning commission has observed in the absence of any legal protection like Contract Labour Regulation Abolition Act, 1970 and Interstate Migrant Workmen Act 1979, the workers in the unorganised sector undergo large scale exploitation in terms of

work as well as wages, it is argued that the majority of the casual workers in this sector receive an income below the legal minimum wage in turn keeps them always at the subsistence level. Though there are cases of workers in the informal sector receiving wages higher than some section of the workers in the organised sector, since majority of the workers in the unorganised sector are illiterate and unskilled there is hardly any scope for these workers to achieve vertical mobility in the occupational ladder (Doeringer, B. Peter and Michael, 1980). For the present study women workers are classified into two broad categories according to the degree of organisation and nature of problems of the sectors of employment, namely the organised and unorganised workers. The following is the rough figure of the labour force in unorganised sectors in the economy.

The shares of the organised and unorganised sectors make the national income. The contribution of the unorganised sector has been substantial. In 1960-61, 92.26 per cent of the work force was shared by the unorganised sector. The above table shows that the share of the unorganised sector in the total labour force has been always above 90 per cent (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Estimate of workforce in the unorganised sector of the economy

Years	Unorganised sector (in lakhs)	Total workers (in lakhs)	The share of UOR (per cent)
1961	174.10	188.70	92.26
1971	206.70	226.90	91.10
1981	214.00	236.90	90.33
1987-88	268.00	293.70	91.25
1991	256.38	286.08	90.66

Source: Computed from Drafts, five year plan Government of India

Table 4.6 provides an idea of the percentage of women in the organised sector, which further clarifies the point that a large number of women are engaged in the unorganised sector.

The percentage share of women in the organised sector has never been more than 12 per cent. The basic problems that affect women roles and opportunities for employment in the unorganised sector spring from their helpless dependence, caused by lack of adequate employment opportunities, limited skills and illiteracy, restricted mobility and lack of autonomous status. The occupational status of the women worker is linked to that of

her husband or father, particularly in rural areas. The lack of control over productive resources and a persistent gap between consumption and expenditure, leading to perpetual indebtedness, deprive them of all bargaining power and occupational mobility.

Table 4.6 Employment of women in the organised sector of the economy

Year	Women's employment (in thousands)	Percentage share of women to total employment
1951	290.0	11.4
1961	372.3	10.6
1971	370.3	8.6
1981	497.8	9.3
1991	514.4	9.9
1992	524.4	10.2
1993	535.6	10.5
1994	591.2	10.7

Source: Labour Bureau, Report Various Years, Ministry of Labour.

No reliable data is available for estimating the number and proportion of women below the poverty line. But the higher

level of unemployment and under employment has lead us to conclude that their proportion is likely to be higher than that of men components, which include the unskilled workers, landless labourers, members of households with uneconomic holdings, and those in traditional sector. A large number of them are engaged in traditional village and cottage industries. Except for some rough estimate based on the 1981 census data, no reliable information is available regarding the volume of employment and characteristics of those employed in the unorganised sector.

In recent years considerable attention has been paid to the development of the informal sector, as the unorganised sector is also called, and women's concentration in it. Because of rapid industrialisation and mechanisation that have destroyed traditional crafts, poor women in the world face acute unemployment. Their retention in traditional and unorganised units is due to the special difficulties women face in gaining entry into the more structured units such as illiteracy, low technical skills and lack of opportunity for acquiring either literacy or new skills. Over and above women's mobility is restricted due to the family obligations as well as attitudes regarding what is permissible for them. The

major problem for women is not being pushed out, as staying where they are while men move up through education to higher jobs. Women continue to hold traditional occupations that ensure basic survival for the family. Though over all female employment had declined without question, there are essential sectors in rural and urban areas that employ women in large numbers.

4.3.1 Status distribution of workers: element of casualisation

The activity status classification in the traditional censuses and labour force surveys distinguishes workers between self-employed and employees. In India the employees are further split into the regular and casual workers. There has been a decline in the proportion of self-employed workers. Among employees there was an increase in the number of casual workers among both men and women. Among regular workers however there was a small increase in the proportion of women in urban areas, while there was a decline in the number of male workers in both rural and urban areas.

Table 4.7 Status distribution of workers in terms of usual status
(percentage)

NSS round	Principal status			All workers		
	Self	Regular	Casual	Self	Regular	Casual
Rural Male						
50 th	56.9	8.5	34.6	57.9	8.3	33.8
43 rd	57.5	10.4	32.1	58.6	10.0	31.4
38 th	59.5	10.6	39.6	60.5	10.3	39.2
32 nd	62.2	10.8	27.0	62.8	10.6	26.6
Female						
50 th	51.3	3.4	45.4	58.5	2.8	38.7
43 rd	54.9	4.9	40.2	60.8	3.7	35.5
38 th	54.1	3.7	42.2	61.9	2.8	35.5
32 nd	56.3	3.7	40.0	62.1	2.9	35.1
Urban Male						
50 th	41.1	42.7	16.2	41.7	41.7	16.2
43 rd	41.0	44.4	14.6	41.7	43.7	14.6
38 th	40.2	44.5	15.3	40.9	43.7	15.4
32 nd	39.9	47.2	13.9	40.4	46.4	13.2
Female						
50 th	36.4	35.5	28.1	45.4	28.6	25.6
43 rd	39.3	34.2	26.5	47.1	27.5	25.4
38 th	37.3	31.8	30.9	45.8	25.8	28.4
32 nd	42.2	30.8	27.0	49.5	24.9	25.6

Source: NSS 1996, Sarvekshana, Various issues

The term status is used here to highlight an important dimension of the nature and scale of employment by focusing on the relationship between workers in their enterprises. There has been significant changes in the nature and sectoral distribution of the workforce as given in Table 4.7. The percentage of self-employed persons to total workers including the subsidiary workers has gone down systematically in rural areas from 1977-78 to 1993-94 for males and females. In urban areas too the figure had gone down for females. It is only for urban males that the figure can be said to have gone up or remained stable over the years.

A clear declining trend is observed in the number of regular/salaried workers as a proportion of total workers for males. The incidence of regular/salaried employees among rural females, as a proportion of total workers, has remained constant while that for urban females has increased significantly. Casualisation has been largely a rural phenomenon as the percentage of casual workers has gone up significantly since 1977-78 both for males and females. In the case of urban males too, one observes an increasing trend in the share of casual

workers with a consequent decline in the share of regular/salaried workers.

The percentage variation is calculated for both male and female between the 32nd round and the 50th round of the NSS. For both male and female under the principal status category, there was a positive change in casual employed. For the rural male it increased from 27 per cent to 34.6 per cent and for rural female it increased from 40 per cent to 45.4 per cent (Table 4.7). For urban male and female too, there is an attractive positive change in the category of the casual employed.

The Department of Women and Child Development, constituted a National Commission on self-employed women and women in the informal sector in 1987 to make a comprehensive study of the status of self employed women and women in the informal sector. The commission conducted a limited sample survey of women workers in poverty and accumulated a wealth of first hand information and published in a document running into 370 pages. The National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 prepared by the core group set up by the government also documented the contribution of women in the informal sector. The

1981 census has computed the roughly women workforce in the informal sector.

Table 4.8 Percentage distribution of women workforce in the unorganised sector (sector wise)

Categories	Employment (millions)
Agriculture	1.87
Dairying	75.00
Fishing	1.00
Small animal husbandary	15.00
Khadi and village	1.70
Handloom	2.98
Handicrafts	54.00
Seri culture	1.30

Source : Census Records 1981, Population census, Government of India

The census of 1981 reveals that the informal sector provides employment to about 94 per cent of the total women's workforce. The informal sector continues to be one of the important sources of employment for women.

4.4 Female work force in Kerala

The estimation of the workers in the unorganised sector in Kerala has not been satisfactory. The limitation cited above is applicable in the state and there are not many attempts to estimate the number of workers in the unorganised sector specially the women workers. Various studies have made an attempt to analyse the socio-economic conditions of women who are engaged in a few unorganised industries of the state. An aggregate estimate of the women employed in the unorganised sector has not been a success. The traditional industries, which absorb nearly 62.83 per cent of women workers, have its major portion of workers in the unorganised household sector. Before going to the details of employment in unorganised sector in Kerala it is essential to look at certain points pertaining to female employment profile of Kerala.

Kerala has a unique position in regard to sex ratio, which is expressed as the number of females per 1000 males. In all the previous census, females outnumbered males in Kerala which is just contrary to all India pattern. At the turn of the century, the sex ratio of the state was 1004 females per thousand males and till

1971, it showed a fluctuating trend. Since then it has shown a steady increasing trend and has reached a maximum in 1991 i.e., 1040. In many districts the pattern of sex ratio is not uniform. In 1991 census it was the highest in Thrissur with 1088 while the lowest is recorded in the hilly district of Wyanad with only 967. Another hilly districts of Idukki records only 977 females per 1000 males. All the other districts have dominion of females over males (Table 6.1).

Kottayam has the highest female literacy rate followed by Pathanamthitta. Iduki has the lowest rate. A disparity between the southern and northern regions could be noted. The northern districts have got comparatively low female literacy with an exception of Kannur and Kozhikode districts.

The following table gives a clear picture of women work force participation rate in the Southern states of the country. Kerala ranks the lowest among the southern states in the case of female work force participation rate followed by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In 1981, the female work force participation rate, 16.6 per cent, was reduced to 15.9 per cent in 1991. Kerala has a very

low share in the work force participation, which is less than the national average.

Table 4.9 Work force participation rates in southern states and India
(percentage)

States	1971			1981			1991		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	41.4	58.2	24.2	45.8	57.7	33.6	45.1	55.5	34.3
Tamil Nadu	35.8	56	15.1	41.7	56.6	26.5	43.3	56.4	29.9
Karnataka	34.7	54.4	14.2	40.3	54.6	25.3	42.0	54.1	29.4
Kerala	29.1	45	14.6	30.5	44.9	16.6	31.4	47.6	15.9
India	32.9	52.5	11.9	36.8	52.7	19.8	37.5	51.6	22.3

Source: Census Report of 1971, 1981 and 1991.

The following table gives a detailed idea of the work force participation rate though out the past century. Technically speaking, women in Kerala are privileged than women elsewhere in India. In spite of the better social, educational and health status, the work participation rate of women in Kerala is very low compared to other Indian states. It is unfortunate that the state, which has achieved social development comparable to the U.S.A in several

aspects, does not have a Female workforce participation rate anywhere near to the rate of developed countries and even to the national level. The female workforce has declined from 23.7 per cent in 1901 to 15.9 per cent in 1991 showing a negative growth rate of -7.8 per cent. The male workforce participation rate also showed the same trend.

Table 4.10 Female workforce participation rate in Kerala 1901-1991

(percentage)

Year	Kerala		India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1901	56.3	23.7	61.1	31.7
1911	53.8	28.7	61.9	33.7
1921	51.1	24.9	60.5	32.6
1931	50.0	35.9	58.3	27.6
1941	Na	Na	Na	Na
1951	46.7	28.3	54.1	23.3
1961	47.2	19.7	56.2	27.9
1971	45.2	14.6	52.8	14.2
1981	44.9	16.6	52.6	19.7
1991	47.8	15.9	51.6	22.7

Source: Census of India, population census, Reports for various years.

4.4.1 Changing employment profiles of India and Kerala

An analysis of the female employment profiles of Kerala in comparison with India reveals certain glaring features of similarity and dissimilarity. The following table gives a sex wise percentage distribution of workers by industrial classification in Kerala and India from 1971 to 1991.

One of the important features that could be observed is that among the female workers, agricultural labourers are the largest category absorbing the highest proportion of females both at the state as well as national level. In both the cases proportion of female agricultural labourers to total female workers has continuously declined during the period. For example at the state level, the proportion declined from 49.1 percent in 1971 to 43.6 per cent in 1981 and further to 36.1 percent in 1991. While at the national level the respective decline was from 50.5 per cent in 1971 to 46.2 per cent in 1981 and further to 44.2 per cent in 1991.

Table 4.11(a) Sex wise percentage of workers by industrial classification - India and Kerala

(percentage)

Industrial Category	India								
	1971			1981			1991		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1. Cultivators	43.4	46.2	29.7	41.6	43.7	33.0	37.7	29.9	34.6
2. Ag. labour	26.3	21.3	50.5	24.9	19.6	46.2	26.1	30.8	44.2
3. Livestock	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.6	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1
4. Mining and quarrying	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.3
Total Primary	72.6	70.4	83.1	69.4	66.3	81.6	66.5	63.5	80.2
5. Manufacturing									
a) Household	3.5	3.3	4.2	3.5	3.2	4.6	2.4	2.1	3.5
b) Non-household	5.9	6.6	2.9	7.8	8.9	3.5	7.7	8.8	3.8
6. Construction	1.2	1.3	0.6	1.7	1.8	0.8	1.9	2.3	0.7
Total Secondary	10.6	11.2	7.7	13.0	13.9	8.9	12.0	13.2	8.0
7. Trade & Commerce	5.6	6.4	1.9	6.3	7.3	2.0	7.5	9.0	2.2
8. Transport & Communication	2.5	2.9	0.3	2.7	3.3	0.4	2.8	3.5	0.3
9. Other services	8.7	9.1	7.0	8.6	9.2	7.1	10.2	10.8	8.3
Total Tertiary	16.8	18.4	9.2	17.6	19.8	9.5	20.5	23.3	10.8
Grand total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4.11(b) Sex wise percentage of workers by industrial classification - Kerala

Industrial Category	Kerala								
	1971			1981			1991		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1. Cultivators	17.8	21.8	4.6	13.1	15.7	5.0	12.3	14.2	5.6
2. Ag. Labour	30.7	25.1	49.1	28.2	23.3	43.6	25.5	22.4	36.1
3. Livestock	7.0	7.5	5.4	9.6	10.4	6.2	9.2	10.1	6.2
4. Mining and quarrying	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.3	1.0	1.1	0.8
Total Primary	56.0	55.0	59.3	51.7	50.3	55.1	48.0	47.8	48.7
5. Manufacturing									
a) Household	4.3	3.1	8.1	3.7	2.4	7.7	2.6	1.7	3.9
b) Non-household	11.4	11.2	12.3	12.2	12.8	11.6	12.7	11.6	15.8
6. Construction		1.7	2.1	0.3	3.0	3.3	0.7	4.0	0.9
Total Secondary	17.4	16.4	20.7	18.9	18.5	21.1	18.2	17.2	21.6
7. Trade & Commerce	9.1	11.3	2.0	11.0	13.7	3.3	12.6	15.0	4.6
8. Transport & Communication	3.9	4.8	1.0	5.0		6.0	1.6	6.0	7.3
9. Other services	13.6	12.5	17.0	13.4	11.5	18.9	15.2	12.7	23.6
Total Tertiary	26.6	28.6	20.0	29.4	31.2	23.8	33.8	35.0	29.7
Grand total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from Population Census of India 1971, 1981 and 1991

Taking the case of cultivators as an industrial category, the magnitude was strikingly different in both the cases. Although it formed an important category at the national level absorbing a considerable proportion of female workers and this proportion has been continually increasing, at the state level their proportion was drastically low and was remaining more or less stagnant throughout the period.

From the above table it is clear that a higher proportion of females at the state level are found in the livestock. Mining and quarrying are equally insignificant both at the state and national level, absorbing only a very small fraction of the female workers.

From the point of view of employment, the non-household industries are more important than the household industries at the state level in all the years, but no such uniform pattern exists at the national level. Construction is insignificant at both the levels absorbing only less than one per cent of the total female workers in all the years studied. However taking into account the secondary sector as a whole the state level proportion 20 to 22 per cent is well above the national level (seven to eight

per cent) taking the tertiary sector as a whole at the state level a very significant proportion of the total female workers are absorbed by this sector i.e., 20 to 29.7 per cent, while at the national level the corresponding proportions are relatively low i.e., 9.2 to 10.8 per cent.

It should be noted that non-agricultural sectors i.e., Industry and service are more important in Kerala than in India as a whole. In 1991, compared to the 80.2 per cent of women workers in the primary sector in the national level, the corresponding figure in Kerala is as low as only 48.7 per cent. The tertiary sector seems to be very important both in the national and the state level. But while this sector provided employment to only 10.8 per cent of employed women in India, the same in Kerala was as high as 29.7 per cent. This is considered to be one of the important characteristics of Kerala model of development.

No data is available about the unorganised women workers in Kerala. What we can note is the magnitude of employment in the organised sector over the years. The following table highlights this point.

Table 4.12 Women employment in the organised sector of Kerala

Year	Public sector	Private Sector
1981	26.5	44.3
1982	26.6	44.2
1983	26.7	43.2
1984	27.0	43.2
1985	27.4	42.7
1986	27.3	44.0
1987	27.8	44.2
1988	28.10	44.58
1989	29.44	43.35
1990	30.16	42.35
1991	29.41	43.35
1992	29.1	59.05

Source: Employment Review, in 'Women in Kerala', Department of Economics and Statistics, Vikas Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram, 1992

The present table gives a picture of women in various private and public sector of the state of Kerala. It is interesting to note that through out the years there is only a slight variation in the rate of women engaged in the public and a slight better rate in the private sectors of the economy of Kerala. Even with a high

literacy rate of above 90 per cent, the rate of participation is not so attractive, is an important question to be analysed.

Table 4.13 District level Sex wise work force participation rate in Kerala

Districts	Male		Female	
	1981	1991	1981	1991
Iduki	51.51	56.56	23.51	26.23
Wyanad	51.08	53.09	24.26	24.93
Kottayam	49.89	51.29	24.30	23.66
Ernakulam	46.95	52.28	22.45	23.25
Thiruvananthapuram	46.35	49.93	21.54	21.36
Palakkad	47.09	48.69	18.55	20.01
Thrissur	47.81	48.41	16.37	17.76
Pathanamthitta	46.28	48.07	17.15	17.14
Kollam	44.89	47.81	16.61	16.90
Alappuzha	43.89	47.27	14.49	16.00
Kasargod	43.84	47.17	12.79	14.18
Kozhikode	45.64	45.93	14.16	13.81
Kannur	43.15	44.30	12.92	13.13
Malappuram	40.14	41.10	11.38	9.52
Kerala	44.9	47.6	16.6	15.9

Source: Census Tables, 1981, 1991.

A look at the sex wise workforce participation rate will give us a real picture of the level of female employment in Kerala. Iduki tops the list with a rate of 56.56 per cent for men and 26.23 per cent for women. Four districts namely Iduki, Wyanad, Kottayam, and Ernakulam have more than half of the male population working.

The absorption of female work force in the non-agricultural sector have become the recent pattern of women workers in Kerala. The following table provides data on the significance of non-agricultural employment across districts, which have been arranged geographically. Broadly speaking the male non-agricultural employment increased from about 39 per cent in 1971 to 43 per cent in 1981. In the following decade it recorded a marginal increase to 44 per cent. In 1991 almost the same proportion of male and female workers were engaged in non- agricultural activities i.e., 44 per cent.

The state average does conceal some inter district variations. The share of non agricultural employment for male varies from 23 percent in Iduki in 1991 to 57 per cent in Kozhikode and 56.4 per cent in Thrissur. Other districts where it is

substantially higher than the state average for males are Ernakulam 52.5, Alappuzha 49.5 and Malappuram 46 per cent. At the state level the share of non-agricultural employment for males increased between 1971 and 1991 for almost all districts.

Table 4.14 District wise rural non-agricultural employment in Kerala 1971-1991

Districts	1971		1981		1991	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Kannur	42.9	20.9	45.6	36.3	43.6	47.7
Wyanad	-	-	22.8	9.8	26.5	17.1
Kozhikode	39.4	27.4	54.8	54.7	56.7	61.6
Malappuram	36.5	22.2	43.6	28.8	36.5	22.2
Palakkad	35.1	12.9	41.5	16.0	43.7	16.7
Thrissur	48.3	37.1	52.3	43.9	56.4	47.6
Ernakulam	46.4	47.1	50.9	42.8	51.9	48.9
Idukki	-	-	20.6	10.3	23.3	16.5
Kottayam	28.9	24.5	42.0	51.8	42.6	55.7
Alappuzha	42.3	43.3	48.1	54.1	49.1	57.4
Kollam	35.2	70.8	38.7	58.4	42.6	70.6
Pathanamthitta	-	-	-	-	35.9	48.8
Kasargod	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thiruvananthapuram	35.7	62.5	38.6	59.3	37.4	56.7
Kerala	38.9	35.4	43.0	38.8	44.0	43.7

Source: Censuses of India, General Tables 1971, 1991.

During 1981 and 1991 the increase in male non-agricultural employment was marginal. The same districts continue to occupy the top ranks in terms of share in the rural non-agricultural employment i.e., Thrissur, Wyanad, Quilon and Malappuram. In the case of Kannur, the share of male in the non-agricultural employment declined. Except for the districts Palakkad, Iduki and Wyanad, the share of non-agricultural employment for women is higher than the state average of 43.7 per cent.

Despite some development, Indian economy continues to be an agricultural economy particularly from the employment point of view. In Kerala this domination is much less. Inspite of the high literacy rate of the people work participation among both males and females are markedly lower than those in India as a whole. From employment point of view non-agricultural sectors i.e., industry and service are important in Kerala than in India as a whole.

There are no data available on the quantum of workers in the unorganised sector in Kerala. But in the traditional industrial sector it is estimated that about 62 per cent of the labour

force is constituted of women workers and more than 75 per cent of them belong to the unorganised sector. The declining tendency of women in the organised sector over the years show that women are getting absorbed in the unorganised sector. An attempt to study about women in the traditional industries will give sufficient information of the women who are engaged as the unorganised group of workers. The following section throws light on various aspects of employment of women in the traditional industries of Kerala.

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EMPLOYMENT IN TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES IN KERALA

Kochuthressia. C.T. “Economics of female labour in the traditional industries with special reference to north Kerala ” Thesis. Department of Economics
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CHAPTER - 5

EMPLOYMENT IN TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES IN KERALA

The over concentration of women in the unorganised sector is one of the characteristics of women workers in India. The unorganised nature of production is seen widely in a field like the traditional sector, which has high percentage of women workers. By and large women go to work because of the irregular nature of employment that men are involved in and the low income they make. By taking to such work, women minimise the number of days either of them is without work and also supplement the family's income. As regards the kind of work opportunities open to women working in the unorganised sector, very often the choice is made for them in the sense that they go for the type of work their parents or relatives are involved in. They are initiated into these jobs as children. This section will throw light on the traditional industries, which have large portion of workers as unorganised family labourers.

5.1 Traditional industries - what and why?

Broadly the traditional industries come under the general context/heading of village and small scale industries. It could also be put under the category of rural industrialisation. Rural industrialisation is looked upon as process confined to the development of village industries. The term industry generally covers any productive activity involving collection, processing, manufacturing, repairing, addition or alteration, servicing etc. According to the section 2(J) of the industrial disputes Act 1947, the term industry means any business, trade, undertaking, manufacture of calling, service, employment, handicraft or industrial occupation or a vocation of a workman. Rural industrialisation is important not only as a means of creating employment for the labour force and raising the real income of the nation but also it contributes to the development of agriculture and urban industries. The development of rural industries also creates opportunities for women domestically and changes the pattern of leisure and work (Vasant Desai, 1993).

So far no acceptable definitions of small scale industry, village/traditional industries, tiny industries and artisan activity

have been available. For the purpose of distinguishing small scale industry from traditional industry, different countries have categorised these industries by using different parameters such as number of persons employed, type of activities, use of energy, capital employed etc.

The traditional ideology about the role of small and cottage industries in our country is generally propagated by what Professor Myrdal calls unreconstructed Gandhists (Myrdal Gunner, 1968). The idea of reviving the traditional industries emanates from the significant role they are playing in promoting employment, particularly to the poor (Prabin Baishya, 1989). The villager lives a lifeless life. Their life is a process of slow starvation. Extinction of village/ traditional industries would complete the ruin of the 70,000 villages in India (Gandhi, M.K., 1959).

Village industries predominantly in the form of traditional crafts have engaged a part of the rural population for centuries. They form a part of the rural occupational structure and their decline leads to the dislocation of a sizable number of workers (Papola, T.S. and Ashok Mithra, 1982). With small amount

of capital investment it is possible to employ people in these crafts provided a market is assured for their products.

The concept of traditional industries cover a wide variety of activities. The sector is split into eight sub sectors namely Khadi Village Industries, handloom, sericulture, handicrafts, coir, small scale industries and power looms. Of these the first six sectors constitute traditional industries and the last two, the modern small scale industries (Agarwal, A.N., 1993).

The characteristics that are common to the traditional rural industries are as follows. They are quite different from industries in the organised sector. They use simple tools, skilled and unskilled labour, simple methods of management and do not maintain census records. Irregular employment, working conditions independent of industrial regulations, existence of organised and unorganised sector, segregation of occupation as female and male, wage difference, capitalist organisation with contract labour and putting out system etc., dominate the traditional industries. These characteristics with its influence on women workers will be analysed in the following chapters.

5.2 The role and relevance

During the 17th and 18th century, our country with its very well developed system of traditional handicraft and village industries throughout its length and breadth was considered to be the industrial workshop of the world. The traditional craft, which started languishing under the foreign rule, received a face lift with the revival programme launched by our national leaders under Swadeshi movement as a part of freedom struggle. Nonetheless the economy as could be seen on the eve of independence was predominantly that of agricultural base with traditional industries. The need for rural industrialisation was felt in the economy.

The Government of India evolved a general policy of traditional and village industries. In the first plan, these industries were treated as an integral part of agriculture and the emphasis was on local consumption. In the second plan on the advice of the village and Small Scale Industries Committee 1955 and in consonance with the Industrial Policy Commission of 1956, Khadi and Village industrialisation was given importance. The third plan retained the emphasis while highlighting the need for an integrated

approach. In the successive plans, the emphasis and policy were shifted from one of production of such industries to positive forms of assistance, such as improving skills, supporting technical guidance, better equipment and adequate credit with a view to increasing productivity and reducing cost.

During the post independence period this sector received very little financial and policy support as it is evident from the policy of allocating funds for these industries. Small and village industries sector were clubbed together while allocating funds under various plans. This has resulted in relegating the position of village industries to the background in preference to the small scale sector. Experience in the past has revealed that bulk of the allocation (for example 8.5 per cent of the total outlay in the ninth plan) has been set apart for small scale industries.

There could be two possible sources of employment namely agriculture and industry. But agriculture has its limit to absorb additional work force and ensure sufficient earning and a reasonably comfortable living to the existing hands. Rural industries are labour intensive and capital saving in nature as such they could provide employment to rural masses with low capital

investment and simple technology and thus help in solving unemployment and underemployment problems in rural area (Kamal Taori 1992). It will also help to open avenues to village entrepreneurs to start industrial units with low investment as they have the capacity of attracting small saving to productive channels. With this end in view the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) was established in April 1957, under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act 1956. The all India Congress Committee organised the spinners in 1925 under the umbrella of All India Spinners Association. This was followed by the establishment of another organisation in 1935 called the All India Village Industries Association to look after the other village and traditional industries such as hand pounding of paddy, bee keeping, hand made paper etc. The establishment of the Khadi Commission was the culmination of the efforts to organise cottage and village industries during the freedom movement. In 1951 Sarva Seva Sangh took over the work of All India Small Industries Association and All India Village Industries Association as a part of an integrated plan for rural industrialisation. Based on the recommendations of a High Power study team in 1974, which was headed by a member of the planning commission, the policy for the development of the handloom industry in India was embodied in

the Government of India Resolution Act 1975. The major objectives of these policies were to expand the co-operative coverage of handloom, to start an intensive development project and to set up a number of export oriented production centres with a view to improving the quality and design of the cloth manufactures for export.

As regards the issue of fostering new units of traditional industries the Karvey Committee (1978) report has advocated the case forcefully on the premise that the principle of self-employment is at least as important to a successful democracy as that of self-government. It recommended the development of traditional industries as hand pounding of rice, oil pressing in the Ghani, palm gur, gur and khadasari making, village pottery and blacksmith.

There exists in our country what economists call a "Dual economy" (G.C., Allen, 1946) consisting of modern and traditional sectors. As in several other developing countries, this duality of the modern and traditional sector both in Agriculture as well as industry is likely to continue for a long force in the absence

of a well thought out policy and programmes for a gradual change over from zero productive occupational pattern of population.

Rural India accounts for 44.7 lakhs workers in the household industries and 36 lakhs in the non-household industries. Together they constitute 5.5 per cent of the total rural area accounts for about 4.8 per cent in the net domestic product by industry origin (Vasant Desai 1993). Most of the rural industries are household or cottage industries. The main rural industrial activities relate to handlooms, handicraft, raw silk, khadi, coir, agricultural processing etc. (Ruddar Datt and K.P.M. Sundarm. 1996). The employment in these industries is around two million persons and the total annual production is valued at around Rs.200 crores. The handloom industries with around three million handlooms fare better than village industries. The handicraft industry depends mostly on external demand. The dairy industry offers a good scope in rural areas but requires concrete co-operative development efforts for this purpose.

The importance of the village and traditional industries arises from the significant role these industries are

playing both in terms of value added and employment provided in the economy, which is clear from Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Employment in the Traditional Industries 1975-85

Industry	Value added (in crores)	Employment (in lakhs)
Khadi	98.00	11.24
Handloom	1740.00	61.50
Seri culture	131.00	16.00
Handicraft	2050.00	20.30
Coir	86.00	5.29
Other village industries	314.00	18.21
Total	4419.00	132.54

Source: Draft Sixth Five Year Plan, Government of India, 1985

5.3 Employment in the traditional industries in Kerala

The industrial structure of Kerala has been proportionally smaller as compared to All India Industrial scene. In April 1990 there were 210 manufacturing companies in the large/medium scale sector of the state with an estimated, gross fixed asset of Rs. 1,990/- crores, employment of around 99,000

persons and turnover of Rs. 3,278/- crores. The average turnover ratio is rather poor and tells upon the low productivity and high rate of under utilisation of installed capacities. There are also some structural deficiencies. Much of the large and medium sector investment is accounted by Central Public sector (47 per cent) followed by the private sector (29 per cent) and the state public sector (19per cent) (Prakash, A.B., 1990).

At the outset the structure of manufacturing industry is based on local raw material and in terms of employment the composition is still dominated by traditional industries. They play a vital role in the economy of Kerala. Both in the factory and small scale sector, the traditional industries producing relatively low value added items, occupy a prime place particularly in terms of employment (Pillai, P. P., 1994). The dominance of these industries of low valued products result in low overall productivity of the industrial sector. The most important traditional industries that dominate the traditional sector as well as factory sector alike are coir, cashew and handlooms industries. These industries together provide employment for about one million persons (Indian Express 4th December, 1987). The other industries belonging to the traditional sector are beedi, tile and handicrafts. The high ratio of

employment in these sectors with a fairly large number of registered factories has distorted the comparative industrial status of Kerala as against other states in India. These industries have great potential for employment if proper care is taken for expanding the markets for these products. The following table gives the employment potential of these industries. Traditional Industries in Kerala assume importance because of the large percentage of the work force involved in these industries.

Table 5.2 Employment in Traditional Industries in Kerala

Categories	Employment (in lakhs)	Financial outlay (in lakhs)
Coir	4,00,000	4408.33
Cashew	1,50,000	350.40
Handloom	1,03,500	1418.25
Handcraft and other traditional industries including beedi, bamboo	3,88,000	286.00
Khadi and Village	2,10,500	1617.08
Total	12,52,000	8080.06

Source: Report of the task force traditional industries State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993.

The modes operandi adopted to salvage the traditional industries has been the organisation of workers into co-operative societies. The minimum wages have been introduced in the major industries of the state namely coir, handloom, cashew and beedi. As the wages in the adjacent states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka remain to be much less than of those prevalent in Kerala, private industrialists prefer to start their units in those states rather than pay high wages and other statutory benefits to labourers in Kerala (The report of the task force, 1997).

The growth of the traditional industries and the organisation of workers and system of production become the center of attraction of the researchers in this area. The various studies on traditional industries (mentioned in the review) have examined the respective traditional industries in the broader context of industrial transformation, organisational factors, labour process and the survival of strategy of workers during the crisis phases of the industry and unionisation as well as the state of technology and marketing.

A common feature shared by all the traditional industries is the regional concentration on account of geographical

historical and sociological factors as well as resource endowment. For instance coir industry had flourished throughout the coastal belt of the state with concentration in Chiranjikizhu (Thiruvananthapuram district), Quilon and Karunagapally and Ambalapuzha and Chertala in Alappuzha district and Kozhikode and Kannur in North Kerala. Manufacture of coir products was concentrated in Alappuzha. Similarly handloom industry is concentrated in Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram districts and most of the cashew processing units were confined to around Kollam district. Again beedi industry and handloom industries are concentrated in Kannur districts (Mohan Pillai and Shantha, N. 1997).

The capitalist development in industry is usually equated to progress from domestic production to large scale manufacturers through a process of mechanisation. There are two major factors within the structure of capitalist organisation of production and relations of production, which enables women's work to be unpaid and invisible or poorly paid and marginalised. They are the privatisation of women's work and the constitution of women as subsidiary or secondary worker (Moser, C. and Young, K., 1981). Historically increasing stratification by gender has

accompanied the development of industrial capitalism and the loss of families' role as primary unit of social production through the separation of the functions of production and distribution (Reeves, M., 1979).

Based on the labour absorption characteristics, these various traditional industries can be said to be ranging between formal and real subordination of labour to capital. Formal subordination of labour to capital is associated with that stage of capitalist production in which the objective of the capitalist is to maximize absolute surplus value using traditional technology (Marx, K., 1974). Though most traditional industries in Kerala have the characteristics of a process of formal subordination of labour, some industries such as coir and cashew are closer to large scale industries.

Agriculture was the major sector in which Kerala women were engaged in the past. The emergence of traditional industries such as coir in 1860 and cashew in the beginning of the past century opened up employment opportunities to women in the industrial sector.

5.4 Female employment in the traditional industries

In most traditional industries of Kerala women have a dominant place in the work force (Issac, T.M. and Kannan, K.P., 1983). Workers in some of these industries were recruited from the lowest rungs of the social and economic stratum. Work meant for them low and uncertain income, arbitrary terms and conditions of work. The establishment of cashew and coir factories opened up for those agricultural workers some chances of regular wage payment. The overriding desire to overcome social barriers and achieve freedom of labour was another strong incentive to seek work in these industries. More specially, work in those factories meant the prospect of money wages, fixed hours of work though it also meant longer working hours and more important the continuity in employment.

The traditional industries such as handloom, beedi and fish processing are of later origin compared to cashew and coir. In these industries women of forward communities also have been increasingly employed. As society in general looked down upon work in cashew and coir, belonging to forward communities, while attaching a superior status to work in such factories looked down

upon trade unionism as something foreign to them. The capitalists could exploit these favorable factors to their advantage.

The system of recruitment of labour is also similar in most traditional industries. Along with women a large number of children are also recruited for work in cashew and coir industries. While recruitment of plantation labour, has been done under kankani system, the institution of Moopan performed the same function in both coir and cashew industries (Kannan K.P. 1991). The institution of moopan, usually a senior man arranged the recruitment and control of women workers. This was a direct control mechanism in the hands of the capitalists in two ways. Firstly, it reduced organisational cost and effort, and secondly, as labour becomes indirectly recruited, the capitalists become in no way answerable to the former. Until the end of 1960's the Moopan and kanakani system prevailed in a slightly different form in fish processing. The peeling of fish, which is the major activity in which women are employed, was predominantly done by the large and medium scale-exporting firms. These firms used to process the prawn produced by them in peeling sheds attached to their freezing plants. A male worker assumed the role of accountant cum supervisor. Piece rate system of wage payment prevailed. The

male workers' function was to distribute fish for peeling among workers and keep accounts relating to their wages.

The piece rate system, one of the most effective forms of work supervision, quality control and extension of working hours is still prevalent today. The workers are meted with severe punishment in cases such as defective beedi, cloth, eating of kernels or taking prawns for their own use. The contractors in the place of Moopan of the past do the same today. The workers have wage cuts if they are not faithful in their duties and do not give up the finished product on time. Very often the workers are not given the passbook where the entries are made regarding the quantity of the product, frequency of collection etc., which have a great influence in the calculation of bonus and other increments to their wages. The workers are kept as temporary workers for years. This was noted in the case of women beedi workers especially in Kasargod district.

Informalisation and decentralisation influenced the women workers in the traditional industries in Kerala. Informalisation means a shift of processing of production from factory to cottage level. The process of informalisation offered a

number of advantages to the capitalists (Mathew, P.M., 1992). The most important objective of informalisation was to check the growth of radical working class movement, which originated in industries such as cashew and coir in the early part of the present study. Moreover this enabled the capitalists to escape labour laws besides minimising costs and time of supervision of work. The process of informalisation took different forms in different industries and its strategies also varied from industry from time to time.

The earliest form of informalisation was a change in the gender structure of employment. For instance in the early days of the cashew industry, nearly 15-20 per cent of the workers were males. Gradually in most activities men were dispensed with. Subsequently the percentage of women workers in the industry stabilised around 94 per cent (Kannan, K.P., 1991). In the coir manufacturing industry, on the other hand percentage share of female labour declined. While in 1938-39, the percentage share of female labour was 11.1 per cent (Statistics of Travancore, 1938-39). This change can be attributed to two reasons. The gradual process of mechanisation that took place in the industry, while reducing total employment, also resulted in a fall in the percentage share of

women workers as the nature of work also changed. Another was the unionisation of women labour and the consequent general increase in the basic wages by 25 per cent. Moreover the rate of maternity benefits also was raised as a result of collective bargaining (Pillai, G.P. Committee Report, 1955). At the same the percentage of women workers in the coir processing sector increased.

Beedi industry underwent a change in the gender structure of workers. During the early days of the organised sector in this industry, male workers were employed in factories. Subsequently more and more male workers were substituted by female labour (Abdul Azeez. 1990). Women were easily employed in these industries and unorganised labour became the major portion of workers in these industries. It is estimated that there are nearly 50,000 women workers in the unorganised sector of these industries in the districts of Kannur and Kasargod.

The handloom industry, which was concentrated mainly in North Kerala, witnessed a combination of transplantation and informalisation. The factory sector, which was once dominant in the industry, began to subcontract to small producers

since 1971-72. This provided substantial employment to women. However, since wage rates were substantially lower in Tamil Nadu, the emerging trend has been transplantation of units to that state leading to declining employment levels within Kerala.

A major variant of the shifting of industries has been mechanisation. This happened mainly in the coir industry. Moreover the industry has been continuously arguing for mechanisation on grounds of competitiveness in the export market though this has been strongly opposed by trade unions. From 1986 onwards mechanisation influenced these industries. Mechanised ratts replaced the wooden ratts. This had a serious set back on women. But today under the peoples planning scheme a good number of women are given training in the use of mechanised ratts and in the districts of Kannur and Kozhikode this field is fully dominated by women workers.

5.5 Employment in the traditional industries in North Kerala

5.5.1 *Beedi industry*

In the organised economy of Kerala beedi industry occupies a second place in terms of the number of units with 348 registered reducing units (Annual survey of Industries, 1987). First

place goes to saw mill industry with 557 units. In terms of volume of employment beedi industry occupies third place. The units covered by the Annual Survey of industries were beedi producing units under the beedi and cigar workers conditions of employment Act 1966. But in the field of beedi production in Kerala, unorganised sector, which somehow manages to circumvent the provisions of the act, consists of far more number of units. But the data collected by the commission of beedi workers welfare fund shows that the number of beedi workers in Kerala comes to 1,84,365 (Report, Tobacco workers Union, Kannur, 1984). When the self-employed beedi workers are also included the volume of employment goes up to 3.5 lakhs.

Before beedi became a commodity of exchange, smokers used to roll them into beedis whenever they wanted to smoke. This practice of self-rolling of beedis by beedi smokers is seen even today among some old people particularly in Kannur district. The structure of the beedi industry in those days consisted of both large factories employing more than 500 workers and small factories with 50 or 60 workers.

The beginning of the present century witnessed the spread of the industry in the southern states and also in the northern states like Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Madras was in the forefront among the southern states with large beedi manufacturing units in the districts of Madras, Trichy, Coimbatore, South Canara and Malabar.

The year 1938 witnessed the beginning of a new trend. Industrialists from outside Kerala came to Kannur and set up beedi producing units. The Mangalore P V S beedi company started their branch in Kannur in 1938 followed by the opening of a branch of the Mangalore Ganesh company in 1941. The great Durbar beedi company of Karnataka based firm also started their branch in Kannur in the same year. Other big producers like Bharat beedi company also followed suit. The appearance of these large producing units led to the closure of many local small units. Yet some producers like the Sadhoo Beedi managed to withstand the threat of unequal competition. The history of beedi industry after 1950 is the history of attempts of the existing producers to consolidate their position among their respective consumers. The absence of labour legislations and other regulations was beneficial to the producers to exploit the workers to earn large surplus.

In order to avoid the exploitation of the workers an attempt was made to bring manufacturing of beedis into co-operative sector. 14 co-operatives were started in the country in 1958 to organise beedi production but due to paucity of capital and stiff competition from the private sector producers, these co-operatives were not able to survive as visible industrial units.

5.5.1.1 Beedi industry and co-operative societies

Tyler, J.B. observes that "the co-operative movement must teach men to view life steadily so as to enable all men to live it to the full. It cannot do this unless industrial production, too is co-operatised" (Tylor, J.B). It represents a fundamental change in the basic relations in production, which in turn became the basis for other social rights and freedom of the workers.

In Kannur district of Kerala, beedi manufacturing was well entrenched since the turn of the century on account of the concentration of skilled beedi workers in the region. This led to the introduction of several factory type beedi manufacturing units in the district by employers from the neighbouring states of

Karnataka. Indian Parliament enacted for the first time the legislation for the benefit of the of beedi workers namely the Beedi and Cigar workers (conditions of employment) act in 1966. The crux of this act has been the abolition of the contract system, besides the various financial obligations stipulated on the part of the contract system. The government of Kerala decided to implement the provisions of the act in the state from October 1968. On this score, the prominent beedi manufactures like Ganesh, Bharath, Durbar and PVS abruptly closed down their factory units in Kannur and shifted their operations to the neighbouring state of Karnataka. As a result more than 12,000 families in the District who earned their livelihood from this industry lost their employment (Mohan, N., 1984). Effort to persuade the employers to reopen the units did not succeed. The misery of the workers families and the socio-economic problems underlying this phenomenon forced the government to undertake ameliorative measure. In this circumstance, the government decided to organise the workers in same industry on co-operative basis. This was done after a serious consultation with diverse trade unions through "consensus Approach". The strategy was to organise 20 primaries and a central society as the federal body. Thus the Kerala Dhinesh Beedi Workers Co-operative (KDBC) was born.

Two more primaries were organised in subsequent years. Dhinesh Co-operative Society portrays the saga of self help movement of the Indian industrial Scene.

Table 5.3 District wise distribution of beedi Rollers in Kerala
Dhinesh Beedi Workers Co-operative Society, Kannur

District	Male	Female	Total
1. Kozhikode Dt.			
Vatakara	603	82	685
2. Kannur Dt.			
Thalassery	429	670	1099
Pinarai	899	1595	2494
Dharmadam	429	708	1137
Kodiyor	3359	1193	1552
Chala	890	1298	2188
Chalad	133	70	203
Kannur	112	171	283
Kannur city	58	143	201
Thottada	277	292	269
Valianur	799	729	1528
Chombal	174	328	502
Azhikode	381	248	629
Kakkad	219	152	371
Payyanur	265	837	1104
3. Kasargod Dt.			
Horsdug	256	1368	1619
Kottachery	138	1158	1296
Nileshuaram	291	1019	1310
Cheruvathoor	336	1454	1790
Kasargod	24	613	637
Macheswaram	67	964	1031
Bathaiaduka	24	619	643
Total	7163 (31.33)	15704 (68.67)	22867 (100)

Source: Computed from the files of Dhinesh Bhavan, Kannur, 2000.

In the units of Dhinesh Co-operative Society, 68.67 per cent of workers are women while men have only a share of 31.33 per cent. Beedi industry is an important source of employment to women in North Kerala.

5.5.2 *Coir industry*

Coconut husk being the raw material of coir industry, coir production depends primarily on the production of coconuts. Coconut is cultivated in more than 30 countries belonging to the tropical belts in Asia, Africa and West Indies. Region wise analysis of the world coconut production reveals that Asian countries account for more than 80 per cent of the total production. Country wise production data indicate that Philippines, Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka are the four important coconut producing countries in descending order in the world. India, with an annual production of about 6000 million nuts occupied the third rank in the world coconut production. According to latest statistics available the world coconut production is around 35,000 million nuts and India's share is 17 per cent of world production. Although coconut is cultivated in a number of countries, coir industry could develop on a commercial scale only in India and Sri Lanka. Therefore, only a

very small fraction of coir production potential in the world is exploited.

Kerala state with 60 per cent of the area under coconut contributed to only 53 per cent of the production where as the neighbour state of Tamil Nadu with only 11.3 per cent of the total area accounts for 20.3 per cent of the production. It could be seen that there has been a sharp decline in the share of Kerala to the total production of coconut in India. The share was 73 per cent in 1956-57 and it declined to 52 per cent during 1980 and 1983 (Report, Task Force, 1997).

5.5.2.1 Employment in coir industry

According to the survey conducted, the number of units engaged in the production of coir and coir goods in the unorganised sector is estimated at 97489. This estimate is slightly higher than the one obtained from the survey of the coir workers conducted by the directorate for coir in 1981 i.e., 94127. According to the census carried out in 1988, the coir sector in Kerala employed 3.83 lakh workers belonging to 2.12 lakh coastal households. Women constituted more than 84 per cent of the total workforce.

There has not been any noticeable change in the overall workforce in the industry since 1988. The district wise break up of the coir households and the distribution of workers in the coir producing units are given below.

Table 5.4 District wise breakup of the coir households in Kerala

District	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	3864
Kollam	5362
Allapuzha	17519
Kottayam	1819
Ernakulam	2540
Thrissur	1030
Palakkad	320
Malappuram	1459
Kozhikode	4248
Kannur	1330
Kasargod	16

Source: Report of the special task force on coir industry 1997,
State Planning Board

Table 5.5 Distribution of workers in the coir producing units in the unorganised sector

Category	Number	Percentage
Men	36,446	13.24
Women	2,19,989	79.90
Children	18,884	6.86
Total	2,75,319	100.00

Source: Report of the special task force on coir industry 1997, State Planning Board

It should be noted that the coir industries do not exist in all districts of the state. High concentration of industries is in Alappuzha and Kollam in the Southern Kerala and Kozhikode and Kannur in the Northern Kerala. According to the present survey, total number of persons - both full time and part time employed in the unorganised sector is estimated at 2,75,319. The composition of employment given above shows that women workers constitute 80 per cent of the total employment in the industry.

Retting of husk, beating the retted husk to extract fibre, cleaning the fibre, spinning fibre into yarn and manufacture of mats, mattings and other coir goods are the important activities in coir industry. The number of persons engaged in important activities are given in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Activity wise distribution of coir workers in Kerala

Type of work	No. of persons employed
Retting	15,766
Beating	54,276
Fibre cleaning	8,006
Manufacture of products	20,590
Finishing and packing	1,179
Other related works	6,187
Total	1,06,004

Source: Report of the task force on traditional industries. Ninth Five Year Plan 1997 - 2002. State Planning Board Thiruvananthapuram, January, 1997.

The traditional husk retting, fibre extraction and spinning operations are carried out in the most unhygienic conditions. Because of the unhygienic process and the drudgery involved in the traditional fibre extractions and spinning, the younger generations are reluctant to take up work related to coir industry. So also the traditional retting process being a source of pollution to the rivers and lagoons, environmental consciousness is another deterrent factor in the expansion and even for the continuance of the traditional coir manufacturing process.

The coir industry is undergoing a modernisation process aimed at dispensing with the polluting retting process and the traditional fibre extraction and spinning process. Machines have been developed for the extraction of fibre from green coconut husk without the necessity of soaking the husk in water for prolonged period. The machines developed are called combing machines. They minimise the breakage of fibre and can be used for extracting fibre from dry coconut husk.

The modernisation taking place in the spinning sector also includes development and use of motorised spinning ratts which are very compact and consumes only $\frac{1}{4}$ HP of electric power. These ratts have been found to be acceptable to the traditional workers.

Of the total 162 units in North Kerala, 95.06 per cent belong to the three important districts of North Kerala. Kannur and Kozhikode have the larger share, Kozhikode has 63 units and Kannur has 48 units.

Table 5.7 District wise details of coir co-operative societies in Kerala

Districts	Taluk	Number of units
Thiruvananthapuram	Chirayankizu	66
Kollam	Kollam	127
Alappuzha	Allapuzha	116
Kottayam	Vaikom	30
Idukki	Nil	
Ernakulam	N. Paravoor	32
Thrissur	Thrissur	31
Malappuram	Ponani	8
Palakkad	Palakkad	43
Kannur and Kasargod	Kannur	48
Kozhikode, Wyanad	Kozhikode	63

Source: Report of the task force and coir industry 1997, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

5.5.3 Handloom industry

The term handloom weaving has a wide connotation. In India it comprises weaving of fabrics of cotton, silk, wool, jute coir and cora grass weaving. Jute is woven as handlooms in Bengal

and in Northern villages, coir manufactures are seen in the west coast. Wollen spinning and weaving as cottage industries are found in many regions, especially in Punjab and former states of Haydrabad, Kashmir and Mysore. Silk worm rearing and silk twisting are common in Mysore, Bengal, and Kashmir. While silk weaving is carried on in many important cities all over India. But all these together do not equal to cotton textile weaving, which is occupying a prominent place in the national economy in providing livelihood particularly in villages. Women have been occupying an important place in the weaving industry (Isa Baud 1970).

It is somewhat difficult to establish the precise period when cotton handloom weaving first developed in the state (Nagam Aiya and Velupillai, T.K., 1947). History of handloom industries is shrouded in legends. According to one such legend about 350 years ago, prior to the present period, the Raja of Travancore imported six families of weavers from Devagiri and settled them near Kottar in Nagarcoil. Kottar soon become a flourishing centre for the silk industry. But silk had only a limited market since the main buyers were from the nobility. So when fine English spun yarn was introduced into the Indian market around the middle of the 19th cent, the silk weavers of Kottar increasingly

took upon the weaving especially in Neyatinkara and Balaramapuram, two other regions of south Travancore, which is said to have historical roots going back to the latter part of the 19th century. In addition to the expatriate weaving community settled in specific regions and producing for a specific market under royal patronage, weaving also seems to have been an important subsidiary occupation of agriculturists especially during the slack season (Smauel Matter, 1883).

There are various legends regarding the origin of weaving in Malabar. A few families were supposed to have migrated from Thondayar Mandalam near Kanjipuram and settled in various parts under the patronage of the Zamorins of Calicut and Chirakkal Rajas of Kannur. The majority of them are reported to belong to the other backward communities of India as per constitutions. Community of Chalayas is a caste, which comes under the category Hindus.

The settling of Chaliyas in streets is very much connected with the Zamorins of Calicut. The courtier of Zamorins was unhappy with these strangers and wanted to pollute them by giving them non-vegetarian meals at a meal, which was an aversion

for these families. Feeling very much insulted, all the Brahmins wanted to commit suicide. But the Zamorins persuaded them to stay on, gave them a separate temple and land to settle in a place segregated from the main streets of towns. This enabled them to offer poojas and conduct rituals. He supported their work and helped them to carry on their traditional work of weaving (Shaliya, Kshema Smathi, 1976).

Introduction of weaving with Jacquard looms in 1872 and mercerized yarn (this refers to yarn treated under tension with caustic alkali to give greater strength and lustre) for production of furnishing material with intricate designs, required expert supervision. It could be done only in factories. The new technology tended to reinforce the factory system. Steam engine was introduced in 1895 in the factories in Mangalore, Calicut and Kannur for twisting and winding of Yarn and in dye works before the turn of the century. But the actual weaving continued to be done by hand. A certain degree of specialisation was achieved in various weaving units for meeting different kinds of demand. Manufacturing factory specialised in the production of superior mercerized linen, stockinet material and hosiery. Kannur factories

specialised in production of checkered material or material design of continuous lines.

Together with technical improvement, there was a major transformation in the organisation of production and marketing. By 1940, the handloom industries in Kannur had assumed certain distinctive features. While industry in Travancore remained essentially decentralised, the industry in Kannur was relatively more organised. The Basel Mission has contributed significantly to make the industry in Kannur more organised. Further confirmation of this is evident from the fact that the industry in Malabar exhibited greater dynamism in Chirakal and Thalassery taluks of the Kannur district. It is interesting to note that in 1940 out of the 14857 looms in Malabar, 10000 were in Chirakkal taluk including Kannur town (Basel mission records, 1946).

The handloom industry in Kerala encompasses within itself a wide range of production system. They range from large scale manufacturers where production and marketing is centralised to individual weaving household units for the purpose of study, the industry is broadly divided into two, namely co-operatives and

the private sector. Within the latter, we could distinguish between household and non-household units. The non-household units can be further subdivided into organised or factory type units and unorganised units. Co-operative units can be further divided into Industrial co-operatives or primary society where production is carried out in household units.

Table 5.8 Household and non-household units of handloom industries in North Malabar

(percentage)

Household					
Places	Total No.	Looms	Per cent	Workers	Per cent
Malabar	6,357	20,359	51	26,332	56
Kerala	26,681	63,169	70	88,985	75
Non-household					
Malabar	1,574	19,785	49	2,07,446	44
Kerala	2,057	26,861	30	30,167	25

Source: Handloom census 1976 and report on the survey of non-household handloom units in North districts, Directorate of Handloom, government of Kerala 1981.

The females and children dominated the industry in Thiruvananthapuram even in the non-household sector. In fact the proportion of women workers and weavers is higher in the

non-household sector. The pre dominance of women in the handloom sector of Thiruvananthapuram is a comparatively a recent phenomenon. Women constituted only 13 per cent of the workforce. The 1961 census also records that male constituted 65 per cent of the workforce, which had declined to 35 per cent. It appears that it was during the years 1961-76 that women came to dominate the industry in Thiruvananthapuram. The reason for this dramatic shift in the composition of the workforce had not been explained either in the official or non-official publication. The fact that industry is household oriented further, facilitated the entry of women.

5.5.3.1 Employment in the handloom industry

The composition of the workforce in Kannur has not undergone any special change during the early decades. Thus while in 1961, 71 per cent of the workforce was male, in 1976 male continued to constitute 72 per cent workforce (Census for Handloom, 1976). A further point to be noted is that among the female weavers, 87 per cent are members of the concerned household and only 17 per cent are employers. This is further

investigated in the field survey stressing the peculiar type of division of labor that is existing in the industry.

Weavers co-operatives existed in Malabar even prior to independence. In Malabar the radicalisation of the industrial labour force, through participation in the freedom struggle combined with the crisis in the late 1930s gave an impetus to the formation of co-operatives. Thus it is claimed that Chirakkal weavers was started in 1946 at the incentive of the trade union by the end of 1950. It was estimated that about 37 per cent of looms were brought under the co-operative scheme. The committees favored the formation of co-operatives of the industry to overcome the general crisis then facing the industry.

The estimated number of handlooms in the state in 1996-1997 is as follows. These include 40,591 co-operative sector looms and 5,048 looms in the private sector. Number of looms in the organised sector has shown marginal increase of one per cent during the year 1996. The number of co-operative societies in the state has increased slightly from 502 to 607.

Table 5.9 The district wise details of number of weavers in the state both in the organised and the unorganised sector

Number of district	Weavers under co-operative sector	Weavers private sector	District total
Thiruvananthapuram	40,195	8,229	48,424
Kollam	10,271	2,104	12,375
Pathanamthitta	281	58	339
Ernakulam	3,994	1,842	10,836
Thrissur	6,052	1,240	7,292
Palakkad	11,186	2,291	13,477
Malappuram	2,274	568	3,342
Kozhikode	11,401	2,336	13,737
Wyanad	57	13	70
Kannur	13,635	2,793	1,64,228
Kasargod	3,401	697	4,098
Total	1,12,773	23,097	1,35,870

Source: Employment Files of Directorate of Handlooms, Vikas Bhavan Thiruvananthapuram, 1998

The following is the estimation of employment in the handloom industry taking into account all type of workers, weavers, supervisors, dyeing men etc.

Table 5.10 Estimated employment in the handloom industry in Kerala (man days in lakhs)

Type of industry	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Co-operative	574	574.6	N.A
Corporate (unorganised Pvt.)	36	30.0	N.A
Total (Co-operatives, corporate and unorganised)	610	610.6	N.A

Source: Economic Review, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999.

Employment of mandays has remained the same for the years 1996-97. Total numbers of looms were 47,265 in the co-operative sector in the year 1996-97 which increased to 48,962 in 1998-99 in the co-operative sector. The number of weavers in the co-operative sector were 1,04,570 in the year 1996 and increased to 1,04,620 in 1998-99. The number of weavers increased in the private sector from 8,205 in 1996 to 9,337 in 1999 and the number of weavers in corporate unorganised sector also increased (Economic, Review, 1999).

Table 5.11 District wise male female employment in the handloom industry

District	Men	Women	Child	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	8,403(35)	10,308(43)	5,374(22)	24,085
Kollam	2,887 (46)	2,351 (37)	1,098 (17)	6,336
Alappuzha	421 (46)	411 (45)	90 (9)	922
Kottayam	525 (49)	502 (37)	156 (14)	1,053
Idukki	32 (31)	68 (67)	2 (2)	102
Ernakulam	1,217(29)	1,880 (45)	1,070 (26)	4,176
Thrissur	1,015 (37)	1,474 (52)	339 (11)	2,864
Palakkad	4,185 (47)	3,633 (41)	1,136 (12)	8,954
Malappuram	1,247 (51)	1,096 (45)	86 (4)	2,429
Kozhikode	1,258 (60)	7,486 (35)	1,065 (5)	21,132
Kannur	34,005(72)	12,133(26)	940 (2)	47,078
Total	24,590 (31.85)	41,242 (53.43)	11,356 (14.72)	77,188 (100)

Source: Handloom Census (1976), Directorate of Handloom and Report on Handloom Census, Government of Kerala.

According to the fact finding committee (1940) report, out of 1,475 factory Units in different centers in India, Malabar area alone accounted for the largest concentration of handloom industries where Kannur district alone has accounted 8.27per cent

of total units. Some of these units are pioneers in evolving new patterns and creating new markets for handloom products. Recent experience in expansion of the industry in the area bear testimony to this, the introduction of new pattern of cloth crepe which found wide acceptance in national and international markets in the early 1970s led to the large expansion of loomage in the area, over a period of the past decade there was 46.02 per cent increase in the number of looms in the district which is known as the city of "looms and lores".

Industrial activities of the Basel Mission were the pioneering efforts in modern manufacturing in both Malabar and South Canara even before the British colonial capital turned its interest towards establishing manufacturing units in India (Kumarov, E.N., 1965 and Ifran Habib, 1975).

5.6 Technological innovations in the selected industries

Traditional macro economic theories of technological change have primarily been concerned with analysing the impact of technological change on the distribution of income. Economic pre occupation with this link between technological process and the

functional or class distribution of income has a long and distinguished history, going back to Ricardo's famous and controversial chapter "on Machinery", where Ricardo was concerned with analysing the consequences of the introduction of machinery into production process and its resulting impact on the working class (Ricardo, D., 1951). Marx's ideas on labour saving technological change resulting in the maintenance of a reserve army of labour to keep down the real wage rate under capitalism also essentially centered around the same sets of issues.

It has been observed that in many traditional societies the work obligations are considered to be almost exclusively male or female domains of work. Under such circumstance, in order to study the impact of technological change on income distribution, male and female workers are taken as the two relevant groups and see how technological change affects the traditional shares of these particular groups. Between 1911-1961, the worker rate had fallen for both sexes but while the decline for male was only eight per cent and the decline of female was 18 per cent. More severe was the progressive decentralisation for women to greater extent than for males (Alice Thorner, 1990).

In the older and more traditional industries, the changes were not uniform. There were some that declined over a period, such as processing of food grains, manufacture of various food and vegetable products, ropes, footwear and earth ware where female labour dwindled with mechanisation of these because there were industries with huge female concentration (Sinha Anbanavear, 1975). Between mid 19th century and early 20th century, cotton textiles, handloom and hand spinning were affected badly by competition from British manufacturers and their exports through heavy duties. But with the establishment of mills in India, employment picked up. In 1919 women formed 20.3 per cent in 1934 to 14 per cent in 1939 with automation of reeling and winding (Morris, M.D. 1965). Dairy products, textile garments, clay products industries attracted the female labour to a considerable extent. Though there were sectoral variations, the fact remains that during the first half of the past century, while male industrial employment reached 26,32,000, female employment was just 5,10,000. For every one job for women, 12 were created for men (Krishnaraj, M. and Neera, D., 1987). The retention of women in traditional unorganised units as well as their entry into only certain types of jobs reduced preference for works in the coir industry. Enough labour was not there in particular to the

defibring node. In this changed context trade union resistance to mechanisation was quieted down.

5.6.1 Technological reorganisation in the coir industry

Technological innovations affected the coir industry in various ways. Instead of backwater retting of husk, mechanical extraction of fibre from green husk followed by its treatment with bio-inoculants for improving the quality of fibre is proposed and carried out in some districts. This is carried out in ground level storage tanks filled with bioinoculants. This is expected significantly to reduce retting time and to avoid pollution of backwaters. Defibring mills would eliminate defibring by hand i.e., beating in a phased manner. The defibring mill is operated by electricity. The electric motor powered spinning machines would replace the traditional wheels operated by hand. This is expected to increase productivity and to turn out value added products. Modernisation scheme envisages the conversion of difibring waste, pith into a commercial product, the 'pith plus' fertilizer. Further as all production operations would be shifted from open air to indoor, work can be done even in adverse weather conditions.

Table 5.12 Technological reorganisation in the coir industry

Node	Node I Production of fibre	Node II production of yarn	New node created production of pithplus
Traditional technology	Backwater retting of green husk and extraction	Spinning by hand on ratt	Pith is subjected to value addition
New technology	Mechanical extraction from unretted green husk and bioinoculant treatment of fibre	Spinning of wheels driven by electric motor	Production of pithplus from pith

Source: Kerala Research Programme, Discussion Paper 4, K.T. Rammohan for local level development Centre for Development Studies. TVM, October 1999.

The technological reorganisation of the industry resulted in retrenchment of workers. The official argument is that all workers displaced from the defibring node would be absorbed in the spinning mode. It is not clear as to who would shoulder the responsibility of reemployment of the defibring workers in the private sector. Moreover, full employment seems unlikely even within the co-operative segment, given the age and lack of experience in any other activity other than coir, alternative

employment may not be possible. This would mean that number of women workers employed would come down drastically. Secondly requirements of human power are much less in the mechanized mode of work. While manual defibring of 10000 husks requires 100 person's days, 15 workers can compete the job in a day in defibring beaters. Thus there is as shortfall of five persons days per 10,000 husks processed. There should be conscious gender planning in introducing new defibring technology (Ram Mohan K.T., 1999).

The on going scheme of modernisation is mainly confined to the co-operative sector. The field study highlighted interesting facts about modernisation in the coir industry. The defibring machines are mainly in the papers under project scheme. They are under reconsideration and will take a long time. The workers have a positive attitude towards technological changes in this sector. Women workers who are engaged in spinning found that mechanisation of this particular field of work are helping them in many ways. In fact many workers come forward for the training programme organised by the co-operative industries. The number of women workers who have undergone training increased considerably and it was pointed out by the secretaries of the

societies that women workers now come forward to this work, as they don't find the work drudgery.

New products are also being developed in this sector. Rubbersied coir mattress industry is a well-developed industry and the product is widely accepted. The mattress industry has the advantage of making use of fibre from dry husk also, which will lead to better utilisation of husk.

5.6.2 Handloom crisis

The handloom industry in the last decade witnessed a crisis serious in term of its intensity and expanse. The consequences of this were large scale displacement of weavers, steady decline in handloom cloth production cause sever hardships to the weavers resorted to occupational shift and migration survival.

The economic reforms initiated by the new congress government at the centre in June 1991 furthered the liberalisation process at work since mid 1980's. One of the principal objectives of the economic reforms package, introduced after the severe balance of payments crisis experienced by the Indian economy in 1990-91, is

to boost the foreign exchanges reserves. Central to the handloom crisis is the sudden and unexpected spurt in the prices of hand yarn used in the handloom production. Though the National Textile Policy promised to ensure adequate availability of yarn to the handlooms at reasonable prices and intended to keep up to his promise through the provision of hand yarn obligation by the spinning mills and it seriously affected the industry.

As specific response to the handloom crisis, the government introduced the Mill gate price Scheme (MGPS) and Hank Yarn Price Subsidy Scheme (HYPSS). Under the MGPS while the yarn supply target was 10 mm kgs, the yarn actually supplied to the weavers during 1992-93 was 1.6 mm kgs during 1993-94 it was only 4.94 mm kgs.

It is pertinent to note that in the last couple of decades there has been a steady but definite decline of the independent weaver system and also of the co-operatives. This decline has been largely due to the unequal competition from the power loom sector and its relatively cheap and affordable cloth flooding the rural markets. The hike in the raw material prices in contrast to the relative stagnation in the handloom product prices has increasingly

titled the economies of scale in favor of the power loom sector. Unable to cope up with the adversity of the emerging scenario, the vulnerable independent weavers have either resorted to an occupational shift or settled with the master weavers as wage earners. Obviously this meant large scale migration of the weavers to the major handloom centres. It is these uprooted from their native villages who account for most of 3.27 per cent loomless weavers, in other words they have been rendered 'loomless' in the context of a survival crisis leading to the decline in the independent weaving sector (Srinivasulu, K., 1985).

The clue to the magnitude of migration and occupational shift among the weavers could be found in the Handloom Census itself that is in its discovery of 2.79 lakh idle looms in the country. In view of this reality, the introduction of a scheme to distribute looms on only be considered either as an act of madness or have willful destruction of the handloom sector.

The artisanal communities engaged in handloom weaving, inspite of their numerical strength, could show only a limited capability for protest and resistance to serious crisis faced in the handloom sector and they fail to be heard and their limited

organisation fails to threaten the governing elite. The ineffective policy initiative and disinterestedness and indifference to the implementation of the existing policies are largely due to the disorganised nature of the handloom industry.

The present structure of the industry in North Kerala has to a considerable extent been conditioned by the historical legacy of the Basel Mission. The technical improvement, introduced by them revolutionalised the industry. The frame loom referred to as European loom in the mission records was introduced as early as in 1887. Its greater productivity combined with large supply of good timber on the Malabar Coast assured its wide acceptance. The introduction of the fly shuttle was another innovation. The introduction of jacquard looms in 1872, helped to widen the range of products that the industry could produce. Till about 1895, all the work in the weaving industry was done manually. Steam power was introduced in 1895 for doing the winding and twisting of threads on bobbins and in the dye works to raise productivity (Hofmann, H., 1913).

Together with technical improvement, there was a major transformation in the organisation of production and

marketing. The Basel Mission pioneered the concept to integrate handloom factories. Handloom factories or "karkhanas" had developed indigenously and were in existence at least from Mughal time (Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, 1982). The unique feature of industries was that they had integrated all the process, from the purchase of raw materials, to manufacturing and marketing under one roof. The advantages of these factories encouraged a number of private entrepreneurs to start similar factories.

Change in the technology and organisation were also reflected in the product mix. Right from 1850 onwards new items of clothing were introduced. Heller, the European specialist is credited with having invented the Khaki dye from locally available materials. By the 1940s the Handloom industry in North Kerala had assumed certain distinctive features. The private factories were also equally versatile in their products. There was in fact a significant difference between the goods produced in the factory sector and that in the traditional sector. Industries in the North Malabar geared its production to an external market.

5.6.3 Beedi industry - challenges ahead

Though there isn't any innovative method in the production of beedi, it is essential to look into the challenges faced by the beedi industry today. It is important to analyse whether the beedi industry would continue to provide employment in the context of the order passed by the High Court in Kerala in 1999 banning smoking in public places. Wide propaganda through media on the dangers caused to health by tobacco is getting momentum. In view of the future crisis, the organised group of Dhinesh Co-operatives, Kannur started diversification of products in 1998. Production of curry power, curry mix, jam, squash etc., have become the programme of Dhinesh Co-operatives. 300 beedi workers in Kannur division have been diverted to this section with the same privileges as the members of the society (Employment Files, Dhinesh Bhavan, 2000).

The crisis caused in the plantation crops especially in rubber production caused serious unemployment problems in the North Kerala, which indirectly increased demand for employment in beedi industry. But no new recruitment has taken place in the industry since 1996 as the company is having a stand still in the

production. The new trends and challenges will surely affect employment prospects for women in North Kerala. The plan of the government to introduce a bill banning the use of tobacco will surely affect the beedi sector. Women respondents showed great concern during the field survey as they could not think of any other alternative employment.

A brief sketch of the selected industries has shown that these industries still have an important role in the provision of employment. The role and relevance of traditional industries further necessitates wider research into this sector.

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PROFILE OF THE SELECTED AREA AND THE SAMPLE WORKERS

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CHAPTER - 6

PROFILE OF THE SELECTED AREA AND THE SAMPLE WORKERS

The Kerala model of development has been a much discussed topic among the international economists. Among the individual researchers, Amartya Sen's magnum opus, "India, Economic Development and Social opportunity" is one which projected Kerala as a model for the first world. Kerala has achieved exceptional social development despite low economic growth. Sixty eight per cent of the households in urban centers in Kerala have electricity, 38 per cent of the households have safe drinking water and 73 per cent have toilet facilities where as in rural areas they are in the order of 42 per cent, 12 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. On the other hand in contrast to East Asian experience, social development has not become an instrument to trigger economic development, especially in this era of liberalisation and market based economic reforms (Ratan Raj, D., 2000).

Table 6.1 District wise decennial growth and sex ratio in Kerala

Districts	Decennial growth rate	Sex ratio
Alappuzha	7.28	1051
Ernakulam	11.12	1000
Idukki	11.23	977
Kannur	16.63	1049
Kasargod	22.78	1026
Kollam	10.68	1003
Kottayam	7.71	1027
Kozhikode	16.69	1053
Malappuram	28.87	1061
Palakkad	16.53	1062
Pathanamthitta	5.60	1036
Thiruvananthapuram	13.50	1085
Thrissur	12.21	1088
Wyanad	21.32	967
Kerala	14.32	1036

Source: Kerala At A Glance, District wise statistical review, Dr. R.K. Tukral. 1998

In the early thirties the entire Malabar was one district of Madras Province. Cochin and Travancore were princely domains. The one district of Malabar was split into two-north and

south. Since then the number of districts steadily increased specially after the reorganisation. Today there are a total 14 districts in Kerala from Kasargod in the North to Thiruvananthapuram in the South. Kasargod was recently carved from the rest while North Wyanad taluk of Kannur was allocated to the newly constituted Wyanad district. Three districts together have nine taluks and 22 blocks. The Table 6.1 gives the details of the decennial growth rate of population and the sex ratio in the state.

The annual exponential growth rate in all three districts is higher than the state average level i.e., 1.34 per cent. Kannur has 1.54 per cent, Kasargod 2.05 per cent and Kozhikode has 1.54 per cent. The decennial growth rate also shows a higher percentage than the state average. Kozhikode district ranks third in the state in density of population i.e., 1118 where as Kasargod district has 538 and Kannur 759, which is closer to the state density 749. Kozhikode district ranks high in the sex ratio i.e., 1053 higher than the state average where as Kasargod and Kannur is close to the state figure i.e., 1026 and 1049. The sex ratio also shows variation in the region wise Idukki having the lowest sex ratio and Thrissur the highest. The inhabitants between the age of 15 and 60

are deemed to constitute the worker segment of the population, between 15 and beyond 60 are deemed as non-workers (Thukral, R.K., 1998).

6.1 Resource survey of the selected area

Land is deemed primarily the arena for food crops and commercial crops. Wind energy, energy harnessable into power through power mills etc., also be deemed as a land resource. So also the topography divides the area into three natural, North and South zones. The highlands lies on the east side, along the Western ghats, the low lands on the west side along the Arabian sea coast, the mid lands lie in between. Delta plains and sea washed areas are useful for coconut, paddy, maize, other coarse grains, tobacco, vegetable etc. Hilltops and slopes are useful for cashew and coconut and mineral. Land put into non-agricultural use in the three districts under study is calculated to be 65,876 hectares. There are 281 inhabited villages in these three districts, the net area sown in these districts is estimated to be 5,07,711 hectares. The total coastline is 87 K.M. (Kasargod) 65 K.M (Kannur) and 60.K.M. (Kozhikode) forming nearly 30 per cent of the state coast line of 600

K.M. The exclusive economic zone extends too more than 500K.M in the districts.

Marine resources are in five categories-sea shores, sea surface, continental shelf, sub sea floor and deep-sea bed. Water is deemed as agency for hydel power and inland navigation. Broadly water requirements are reckoned for domestic consumption, industrial use, miscellaneous like anti salinity measures, inland navigation forming nearly 36 per cent of the annual yield.

Transport is provided by land, water and air. By land the system comprises roadways, in vehicles of animals drawn, manually operated and mechanised types, railways and waterways. By sea the system comprises coastal vessels and minor ports. The airport in the district of Malappuram is useful to the people. The roadways are classified as national highways and village roads (Kilo Meters 90+80+60 and village roads 40+70+55). The railway line broadguage stretches along the coastal region for the districts estimated to be 145 kilometers. The system is more important for goods traffic than for passenger traffic. The Konkan railway line connected with North Kerala is a boon for trade and commerce. Waterways comprise the coastal sea line and the inland rivers and

canals. The coastal sea line is served by four minor ports, Azikal, Kannur, Thalssery, Beypore. Of the potential river line routes, three are operational in Kannur and two in Kozhikode.

Primary minerals like oil, coal, iron ore form the backbone of heavy industries. Such core minerals are yet to be located any where in Kerala. Even the more important peripheral minerals like ignite, bauxite etc., remain undiscovered in Kasargod, Kannur and Kozhikode districts on economically exploitable basis. Among identified mineral deposits in North Kerala China clay is the most important; others are lime shell and bauxite.

The highest importance of human resources as the very life and soul of other sources could be seen though the population chart having the literacy rate 88.92 per cent in the rural area and 92.25 per cent in the urban area. Education is imparted at lower, primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary or pre-degree etc. Three districts together have 1719 lower primary schools, 841 upper primary schools and 466 high schools. Kannur district has 17,533 students in 11 arts and science colleges, Kasargod has 5,312 students in five colleges and Kozhikode has 21,485 in 14 colleges. Rural literacy is estimated to be high in

Kozhikode, which is estimated to be 90.43 per cent and Kannur has 89.97 per cent, both having a higher per cent than the state level 88.92 per cent. Kasargod has only 81.66 per cent, which is less than the state average.

For revenue purposes, administration is through the four tier system. Village, firka, taluk and district. For development purposes, the system changes into village, panchayat, block, district. Panchayats and blocks are smaller in size than firkas and taluks. Kozhikode has three thaluks and 12 development blocks. Kannur has three taluks and nine developmental blocks and Kasargod has two taluks and four developmental blocks.

Rice is the staple or major food item of the area. Other edibles like tapioca, maize, pulses, fruits, vegetables, etc., are minor items. Milk, eggs, meat are to be deemed as food items. The cultivated area is steadily decreasing over the past two decades from 18.6 per cent of the total to 13.2 per cent. Paddy cultivation forms 17.3 per cent of the cultivable area.

All cultivated items, other than food crops are deemed as commercial. Some of them like coconut, find part utilization to

supplement food, others like rubber are wholly non-food. Commercial crops also known as the cash crops generate income. The more important cultivated commercial crops are Coconut (90 per cent of the area), Pepper (23.5 per cent) Cashew (16 per cent), Arecanut (16 per cent), Rubber (29 per cent) (Report, North Kerala, 1988).

Kerala with its high social development indicators but poor industrial growth, its ranking in terms of industrial growth, being 10th among the other Indian states, presents the importance and the role of traditional industries which absorbs nearly 65 per cent of the labour force. The post 1970s position of Kerala as an industrially backward state raises questions about the role of historical forces in shaping and determining the overall structure of industrial economy of the region. The influence of colonial capital, the impact of labour conditions and the origin and development of a nascent bourgeoisie and their role in industrial transformation has attracted scholarly attention of researchers.

Agriculture is the prime sector, which absorbs large number of people. Where Kannur district having a highest percentage followed by Kasargod and Kozhikode. Percentage of

workers engaged in agriculture and allied activities seemed to be high in all the three districts of North Kerala, Kannur has the highest percentage for female (54.4 per cent). Female workforce participation rate for Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod is 13.81 per cent, 13.13 per cent and 14.18 per cent respectively (Census 1991).

Though Kerala's industrial sector as a whole employs a high proportion of the total working force compared to the all India figure, large numbers of workers are in fact linked up with low productivity, agro based, traditional and backward industries. Mention must be made of coir, handloom and cashew and beedi. While an average factory workers daily earning in India is Rs.610/-, an average industrial workers daily earning in Kerala is as low as Rs.35/-. The backward character of the industrial sector in Kerala generally can be seen from the fact that the capital investment per worker is only Rs. 3,737/- where as the figure for all India is Rs.5830/- (Dr. Mathew Kurian, 1972).

The major industrial centres of the state are Ernakulam, Kannur, Kozhikode and Kollam. Kozhikode in North Kerala has advantages of the structural facilities such as the harbour and commercial markets. Traditional industries, which

have great place in the employment generation have a special place in Kerala. The major industries include ivory carving, metal casting, mat weaving, reed weaving, cane work, wood and horn carving. It is estimated that nearly 50,000 crafts men depend on this industry. The bamboo industry and beedi industry are the other two major small scale industries in Kerala. Nearly three lakhs people depend on the former while the Kerala Dhinesh Society itself provides job to 25,000 workers throughout Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod. A study on regional disparities in the economic growth of Kerala makes a comparative study of economic growth in the inter district level. The composite index of development is calculated based on the indicators of development, agriculture, industry, human resource development, transport, health, banking, power, income and housing (Thomas George, 1988). Ernakulam stands ahead with a value of 1.41 in the composite index of growth followed by Quilon and Trichur with 1.30 and 1.16. Backward regions are those having the value for indicators less than 100.

The study clearly shows a better growth trend for central and south Kerala and the backwardness of the Northern region. The Northern region also has shown a disappointed

figure with regard to income level as Kannur showing 0.926 as quotient of disparity of income, Kasargod, 0.876 and Kozhikode 0.939. This picture clearly tells us about the performance in the agricultural sector and low profile of industrial sector. The traditional industries of Malabar, the major industries of the area could be considered as the backbone of the industrial growth of the region. The traditional industries can no longer play the role of the residual sector in Kerala's economy especially in North Kerala.

6.2 The traditional industries in North Kerala Under the Basel mission

During the span of the activities of Basel Mission (1834-1914) we find a distinct evolution of the missionary interest in the economic activities. Three distinct phases could be observed in the evolution of industrial activities of the mission in Malabar and South Canara. They may be chronologically placed as early phase 1834-1852, middlephase 1852-1882 and the final phase, 1882-1914.

Initially the missionaries organised various industrial activities mainly based on local crafts. During this period, the mission also undertook its effort to rehabilitate converts in

agriculture. The early phase of industrial activities was characterised by the industrial missionaries on their own. The organisation of industrial activities was also marked by a high level of decentralisation. The middle phase was characterised by the establishment of factory type of production organisation. Handloom weaving establishments grew at this time. It is during this period that handloom industries reached viable levels of growth.

Table 6.2 Growth of weaving industry in Malabar and South Canara under Basil Mission

Industry	Place	District	Year
Weaving	Mangalore	South Canara	1851
	Moolky	" "	1853
	Kannur	Malabar	1852
	Thalasserry	" "	1860
	Chombala	Malabar	1860
	Calicut	" "	1859
	Codacal	" "	1860
	Quilandy	" "	1880

Source: Computed from various reports of Basel Mission.

Other establishments of the mission included tile making, mechanical establishments, printer and book binding which was started in Mangalore (1865), Calicut (1873) Malpe (1886) Codacal (1887) Palaghat (1887) and Feroke(1905).

Basel mission concentrated their industrial activities in the district of Kannur and Kozhikode. The putting out system was attempted only in the first stages when the mission was attempting to organise weaving as cottage industry. One of the factories were established, work was given out only in order to take care of the excessive demand of certain times.

Women participated in the missionary, social and industrial activities of the Basel mission in number. Women were employed in large numbers in the weaving establishments during the early stages. As per the employment record of the weaving units as on 1877, out of the total of 392 workers, 216 were women- all employed in one category 'thread makers and spoolwinders'.

Textile, beedi and coir are the important traditional industries in the district of Kannur. About one lakh people depend on the textile industry for livelihood. The beedi industry provides

employment to about 50000 people. The coir industry, which uses traditional technology, provides employment to about 11,000 workers (District Hand Book, 1993).

Among the important industries in Kozhikode mention must be made about textiles, coir, plywood's, splints, printing and publishing. It also includes general engineering and oil. According to the latest statistics available there are 16 large and medium units and 7709 small scale industrial units; of these 843 units are agro based, 1031 forest based, 105 animal based, 824 textile based, 890 chemical based, 1018 engineering based and 2794 miscellaneous (District Hand Book, 1993).

As far as the district of Kasargod is concerned, Kasargod district has vast potentials for the establishments of large and medium industries, but the district at present is industrially backward. As per the records there are 2395 small scale industrial units in the district (District Handbook, 1993).

After having surveyed the resource base of the selected districts of North Kerala, it is fitting to have a detailed study of the profile of the sample workers selected from these districts.

6.3 Profile of the sample workers

The sample consisted of 310 households who are engaged in the three selected industrial units i.e., beedi, coir and handloom industries. From an original list of women workers, two sets of households were taken into consideration i.e., organised factory workers and the household workers. The 310 households have 1668 members of which 47.42 per cent are male and 51.95 per cent are female.

6.3.1 *Caste*

Caste system is the most important and utmost universal basis of social stratification. Though its binding force is diminishing in social communication and outward behaviour, it is still a potent factor in influencing social values, attitudes and marriage relations.

Community of Hindus dominates the industries (65.59 per cent) followed by Muslims (16.48 per cent) (Table 6.3). Others include those who have not marked clearly their caste. It was observed that a particular community of Hindus, called the 'Chaliyas' dominated the handloom industries. Though the

Chaliya community dominates the handloom industry, there is a declining trend in the number of Chaliya streets of Malabar.

Table 6.3 Distribution of the respondents according to caste

Casts	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total	Per cent of the sample
Hindus	65	50	92	207	65.59
SC/ST	20	20	-	40	12.90
Muslim	38	10	-	48	16.48
Christians	4	-	6	10	3.22
Others	3	-	2	5	1.81
Total	130	80	100	310	100.00

6.3.2 Age

Age is one of the important variables in the understanding of women and her work field. With change in age, the women's status and the role also change. Age signifies experience. It is symbolic of the social exposure to which a person has undergone. The attitude, mental set and the behaviour pattern of persons varies with the variation in the age.

Inter - industry variation could be noted with regard to the age distribution of the selected household. Beedi and handloom industry employee women at a younger age and continue till they become very old.

Table 6.4 Age Profile of the respondents

Age	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total	Per cent of the sample
0-15	10	2	9	21	6.77
16-30	54	50	50	154	49.68
31-45	44	15	21	80	25.81
46-60	10	5	15	30	9.68
61-75	12	8	5	25	8.06
Total	130	80	100	310	100.00

The average age of the Beedi workers is 32.78, coir 21.38 and for the Handloom workers it is 31.55.

6.3.3 Place of birth

In the case of women the information about the place of birth is relevant in the sense that it points out the migratory tendency of their parents, family and the spatial mobility of the

respondents on account of education, marriage and occupation. While in traditional Indian society, marriage was the only factor, which contributed to the change of residence of the women from their parental residence to their husband's place.

Table 6.5 Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their places of origin

Categories	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total	Per cent of the sample
Natives	85	30	80	195	62.90
Settled from other districts	30	40	8	78	25.14
Settled from other states	15	10	12	37	11.96
Total	130	80	100	310	100.00

In Kasargod districts 20 per cent of women are settled from Mangalore for job purposes. Out of 50 coir workers settled from other districts and states, 12.5 per cent are settled from Tamil Nadu settled mainly in Kozhikode district.

It should be noted that occupation and heritage of the family have played an important role. Women remain a static

segment of the society. While men have moved out for various work. This is very clear in the case of unorganised workers in the streets of Chaliyas. 90 per cent of women are confined to the streets while men have moved out for work and other activities.

6.3.4 Family size

The joint family system has been the most important structural unit of the Kerala society since time immemorial. Its structural features have relatively remained unchanged. In modern times, however, traditional joint family is breaking up and a new type of family organisation i.e., nuclear family organisation is coming up. In between these two dichotomous patterns of family organisation, certain variations in the nuclear as well as joint family are found. These families may be termed nuclear extended and joint extended families. Nuclear extended families denote that family in which apart from husband and wife and their children, some other close relatives such as sister or brother also live together. Joint extended family is that family whose members, on account of business or service are scattered and living at different places but on ceremonial occasions they gather where their original family resides. These two types of families are

indicative of the conflicting nature of the existing pattern of joint family organisation in India and the demands of the new social situations.

Table 6.6 Distribution of respondents and the family size

Family Size	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total	Per cent of the sample
0-3	36	38	35	109	35.16
4-7	60	29	45	134	43.22
8-11	34	13	20	67	21.62
Total	130	80	100	310	100.00

More than half the percentage of the household belonged to the medium size family. Naturally the women workers in their groups are engaged in the economic activities of the house. It is true that the relationship pattern is undergoing rapid metamorphosis. Hence it could be concluded that modern social forces have exerted influence over the family size. The trend is towards the smaller family. The average family size of beedi workers is 5.20. For the coir industry it is 4.25 and for the handloom industry it is 4.85.

6.3.5 Marital status

The case of divorce and separation are high in the case of beedi industry and this is not found much in the coir and the handloom sector. The widows belong to the age of above 45 and the divorced belonged to the age group of 30-45. The main cause of separation is the ill treatment of such women either by the husband or the members of the family. As a whole divorce is rare in these industries. The details of the age at marriage are taken into consideration in chapter nine.

Table 6.7 Distribution of respondents and marital status

Industry	Married	Single	Window	Divorce	Total
Beedi	72 (55.35)	35 (26.92)	15 (11.58)	8 (6.15)	130 (100.00)
Coir	44 (55.00)	32 (40.00)	4 (5.00)	0	80 (100.00)
Handloom	75 (75.00)	15 (15.00)	8 (8.00)	2 (2.00)	100 (100.00)
Total	191 (61.61)	82 (26.46)	27 (8.70)	10 (3.23)	310 (100.00)

Note: Figures in bracket shows percentage

6.3.6 Household head

Generally in all the three industries in North Kerala the custom of male ownership of the household is found. Among the coir workers a small percent of 8.75 per cent have the female ownership of the household.

Table 6.8 Distribution of respondents and the female headed household

Categories	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Female headed	5	7	0	12 (3.87)
Male Headed	100	70	95	265 (85.48)
In law as head	25	3	5	33 (10.65)
Total	130	80	100	310 (100.00)

Note: Figures in bracket show percentage

In the case of beedi workers 19.24 per cent of the household are managed by the in-laws. Among the Chaliya group, which is engaged in the traditional weaving sector, it is fully dominated by the male members and the in laws. Of the total only

3.87 per cent are female - headed household and 85 per cent are male headed.

6.3.7 Education

When asked whether their parents wanted to educate both sons and daughters equally, 70.4 per cent of the respondents agreed that their parents had not discriminated them in this regard. Only 12 per cent of respondents opined that their parents do not give them equal treatment in matters of education Compared to sons.

Table 6.9 Distribution of respondents and educational status

Educational Status	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Illiterate	37	12	35	84 (27.10)
Primary	35	20	45	100 (32.27)
Middle school	35	24	15	74 (23.87)
High school	20	15	5	40 (12.90)
S.S.L.C	2	5	-	7 (2.25)
Technical	1	4	-	5 (1.62)
Total	130	80	100	310 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

Of the total workers 27.10 per cent are illiterate and those who reached up till class X seems to be very few (3.87 per cent). Lack of opportunities of higher education could be one of the reasons for the concentration of women workers in the unorganised sector. Technical education too has not attracted many. It is essential that women have better facilities of vocationalised education as to make them self-dependent.

6.3.8 Occupational status of the household

From the following table it is clear that the majority of the population revolve round the traditional industries, though not remunerative according to them.

Exclusive dependence on household traditional industrial activity is very evident in most of the cases. More than half of the total population, 913 (54.73 per cent) are directly engaged in the traditional industries. 310 (18.58 per cent) are unemployed in the sense that they are not income supplementing members in the family.

Table 6.10 Distribution of household with occupational status

Type of activities	Beedi			Coir			Handloom			Total
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Farming	58	30	88	28	18	46	10	-	10	144 (8.63)
Construction	88	21	109	59	36	95	20	-	20	224 (13.42)
Traditional Industries	132	208	340	50	105	155	188	230	418	913 (54.73)
Not employed	60	91	151	26	81	107	32	20	52	310 (18.58)
Children	13	10	23	17	10	27	10	17	27	77 (4.64)
Total	351	360	711	180	250	430	260	267	527	1668 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

In the traditional industries concentration of women workers in the unorganised sector is a common feature. The details of the structure of work system and the gender system of work etc are analysed in the following sections.

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PRODUCTION PROCESS AND GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR

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CHAPTER - 7

PRODUCTION PROCESS AND GENDER BASED DIVISION OF LABOUR

The main thrusts of the theory of labour market segmentation that developed in the west in the 1970s was to provide an alternative approach to the neo-classical theoretical framework in order to explain the discrimination observed in the labour markets. The theories suggested that there were social cultural and institutional factors and not merely skill differentials that lead to the discrimination. Explanatory theoretical attempt is made here to further develop the notion of labour market segmentation by introducing into the analysis, elements of patriarchy and capitalism in the context of differentiated production structures that are co existing and mutually inter acting. The stress is on the implication of division of labour and of different kinds of production structure and the consequent effect on the type of labour mainly used i.e., female labour.

7.1 Gender system of work

The labour in production system is precisely defined as the combining of the material instruments of production and social

organisation of labour (Schmitz. 1985). Each of the different form of production are characterised primarily by one type of labour process. The impact of different labour process as women's productive work could be looked at with special reference to the access of women to different types of work, within a production unit. The proposition is that women's work and worth are generally undervalued and hence underpaid. The National Commission on self employed women pointed out that although women work for longer hours and contribute substantially on income, they are not perceived as workers by the data collecting agencies and government. It is rightly observed that half of the women's work is underpaid and other half is unpaid (Regional Seminar in India, I.L.O., 1981). This is because either woman are concentrated in traditionally poor paid work or they are penalised in mixed jobs. The low status of wages for women pointed out by the National Committee (Report of National Committee on the status of women 1971-74) is due to the unrecognised nature of employment, the ease with which hired labour can be substituted by family labour, the seasonal nature of the demand for labour and the traditional reservation of certain jobs for females. In the following section an attempt is made to see whether those

characteristics are seen in the cases of labourers in the selected units, which results in unrecognised nature of their employment.

Women have traditionally been restricted to selected number of occupations characterised by a resemblance to their domestic responsibilities (e.g. nursing, teaching, domestic service) by low pay, low status, and instability. This very inclusion in to certain section of labour market has often been occasioned by the need to reduce the control over capital, thereby increasing the surplus (Philps and Taylor, 1986) or by large scale emigration of men from such area (Messiah, 1986). The fact that so many women are employed throughout world and yet are to be found in so few occupations that are accounted suggests the presence of some devices restricting their mobility. Flexibility and low cost are also the main incentives behind the prevalent use of female home workers in industry (Lauren A. Benton, 1989).

It is well known that different occupations have different pay rates and the skilled workers certainly earn more than the unskilled workers. Workers are not homogenous so that natural ability may be a barrier to movement between jobs (Savithri, A., 1992). In certain cases, artificial barriers to the

mobility of labour are created which have the effect of benefiting special interest groups. Such barriers still exist in the traditional sector allocating certain work for men and others for women. Culture, tradition, and social belief combine to influence and generate an unfavorable occupational discrimination among female workers vis a vis male workers and to create wage difference between males and females.

Table 7.1 List of job with 50 per cent and more female workers in the traditional industries

Industry	Total No. of jobs	No. of jobs where women exclusively are in large nos.	No. of jobs where female is employed.
Cotton textile	28	1	Winding/reeling
Jute	37	1	Hand sewing
Silk	33	5	Picker, examiner receiver
Woolen	26	1	Darning
Beedi	11	1	Rolling
Paper	27	1	Rag sorting
Match	26	3	Hand rolling, box filling
Coir	20	1	Spinning
Cashew nut	20	7	Shelling, grading
Tea/coffee	7	1	Plucking
Rubber	6	1	Field jobs
Coal mine	26	1	Shale picking
Manganese	20	5	Sweeping, sorting
Mica	20	2	Surface labour

Source: Report on Second Occupational Wage Survey, 1963-65
Vol.1.

The report of the Second Occupational Wage Survey has made certain observations regarding women's work in the traditional industries in the country. Out of 295 types of work in different industries, women have access only to a limited number of 30 types of work, which shows that women do not have even 6.78 per cent of share in the total work (Occupational wage survey, 1963). Catherine Hakim analyses the process of occupational segregation with the concept of horizontal and vertical segregation of work, which is maintained by the recruitment of men and women into sex typed masculine and feminine occupation. The occupational order ranges from higher-level occupation and such a job becomes male or female. The demand for labour to fill it tends to expand or contract as sex specific demand, barring major disruptions of labour supply or a basic restructuring of the labour process. In the words of Hakim, "the horizontal occupational segregation exists when men and women are more commonly working in different types of occupation. Vertical occupational segregation exists when men and women are most commonly working in higher grade occupations and women are commonly working in lower grade occupations" (Hakim, C., 1981). In order to understand the peculiar nature of the female labour in the selected traditional industries of Kerala it is essential to discuss the

production process of each industry and the access of women to different types of jobs.

7.2 Production process in the selected industries

7.2.1 *Beedi industry*

Beedi is a crude cigarette in which tobacco is rolled in a small beedi leaf (tendu) and tied with a cotton thread. It is considered the poor man's cigarette. The four main steps involved in producing a beedi are-rewinding the thread, cutting the beedi leaves, rolling the beedi and the folding the beedi head. It would be useful to give a brief description of these four steps to understand how the different aspects of beedi making facilitate the creation and the maintenance of division of labour, and the high labour absorption capacity of this occupation, particularly the opportunities of employment for children and women. The job of rewinding involves just rolling the thread from a small bundle onto an object. It takes about 30 minutes to an hour to rewind a bundle of thread. It has to be done almost every second day. Cutting leaves is the next step. Leaves are cut into rectangular pieces using 'ace' a rectangular metal strip, for measurement. Each brand has slight variations in their 'aces'. The plate is placed on the leaf, which is cut with scissors. Normally an average sized beedi leaf

can be cut into four pieces. This requires some skill because the maximum number of pieces cut from a beedi leaf depends partly on the acquired skill of the worker.

Rolling the beedi leaf with tobacco is the main job in the beedi making process. Three main steps are involved in making a perfect beedi. Tobacco is to be rolled first in the leaf and tied with the thread. The pinch of tobacco rolled into a beedi must be accurate enough, failing which the beedi may be too small or too big. The contractor will not reject such abnormal beedis and the workers will also incur loss because the big beedis consume more tobacco than the required level. In order to rectify the loss, workers have to buy extra tobacco from the market. While rolling the beedi between the thumbs and the forefingers enough pressure must be applied to make the top end of the beedi appear broader than the bottom end. The main workers can stop after rolling and another person can do tying and the folding of the beedi top. Beedi assistants who are in the learning process are mainly employed in folding the top. The completed beedis are bundled, each bundle consisting of 16 beedis, which are then taken to the company/contractor.

The process of production in the organised beedi factory units will involve a few more personnel who are engaged in the work (Report of the Occupational Survey 1978). The divisions of work take the following form:

Beedi checker cum supervisor: Who supervises various operations such as collection of finished products checking the quality and number of beedis rolled.

Tobacco distributor: Supervising and guiding the workers engaged in tobacco mixing and processing.

Furnaceman: Who looks after the operation of curing rolled beedis by placing them in mesh trays that are then placed in furnaces and examines the cured beedis to ensure proper curing.

Leaf distributor: Who takes out tendu leaves and ties them in small bundles to be given to the rollers.

Labeler: Wraps the rolled beedi lots with paper bearing the trade mark and other details and packs them into different types and sizes and affixes big labels on them.

Beedi rollers: Help them in cutting the tendu leaves, in soaking them, typing the thread at the tapered end of the beedi

etc. The beedi rollers out of the wages they receive pay them.

Driver: Is seen in beedi processing firm and is responsible for driving the vehicles for transporting goods and materials. He also attends to minor repairs of the vehicles.

Watchman: Guards the premises of the factory/ shed where the manufacture of beedi or any process incidental there to is carried out.

Sweeper: Sweeps and cleans the premises of the factory/shed.

Table 7.2 Gender division of work in the beedi industry

Types of work	Gender structure	
1. Tobacco distributor	Male only	-
2. Furnceman	Male only	-
3. Beedi checker	Male only	-
4. Labeler	Male	Female
5. Helper	-	Female only
6. Driver	Male only	-
7. Beedi roller	Male	Female
8. Watchman	Male only	-

Field Survey

The field survey in the selected districts revealed that women are engaged mainly in two categories of work i.e., beedi rolling and labeling besides a few in the category of helping. Table 7.2 shows the sex categorisation of work in the beedi industry.

Besides the division of work as male and female job in the industry, work is also categorised as time rated and piece rated for the wage payment.

Table 7.3 List of work and system of payment in the beedi Industry

Occupation	Time rated	Piece rated
Beedi roller	-	100 per cent
Labeler	-	100 per cent
Furnace man	100 per cent	-
Driver	100 per cent	-
Watchman	100 per cent	-
Helper	100 per cent	-

Field Survey

From the two tables given above it is clear that women have more access to the type of work which have piece rated system of wage payment. The field survey reports also proved the same facts about the type of work that women are engaged in the beedi industry. Among the three types of jobs set apart for women, women workers are mainly engaged in the beedi rolling and a few in the labeling. The following table throws light on this point.

Table 7.4 Percentage distribution of respondents and division of work in beedi industry

Categories of work	Number of workers	Per cent of the sample
Beedi rolling	115	88.46
Labeling	12	9.23
Helping	3	2.31
Total	130	100.00

Field Survey

Out of the total respondents 88.46 per cent are involved in beedi rolling. Only a small percentage of (9 per cent) are in the section of labeling and a very few in the category of helping. It is clear from the above table that in the beedi industry women are mainly engaged in the beedi rolling. District wise

variation could be seen in the type of work done by women. In Kasargod 12 were engaged in labeling, as there were companies who did the packing of beedi while in the district of Kannur all were engaged in beedi rolling.

Wide variation could be seen in the organised factory group and unorganised home based system of work. The unorganised work system does not show the division of work so visible as the organised factory units where the work units have separate time rated furnaceman, driver, tobacco distributor etc. The work available for both men and women is exclusively beedi rolling in the organised sector while the contractors themselves undertook the other seven types of work.

The production system and the nature of labour are analysed in the other two traditional industries also. The segregation of occupation makes the unorganised flexible type of female labour easy in the industry. The unaccounted and the unremunerated work become a common feature of work in the traditional industries, which is further analysed in the following section.

Underestimation of the number of people employed in beedi industry in the unorganised homework system results in the invisibility of women's labour and contributed directly to their vulnerability. Various factors make it difficult to arrive at reliable estimates of employment in the industry. The very large precedence of the home workers is one such factor. By not recording the home workers, employers can hope to avoid various legal provisions. Such undercounting results in further limiting the already restricted impact of legislation to support the living standards of beedi workers.

7.2.2 Coir industry

The system of production in the coir industry has its start from the time of collecting husk from coconut producers. Coir yarn is marked by a twin identity. It could be an intermediate product or a final product. As an intermediate product, yarn is used for weaving into mats and mattings, which are major items of export. Coir matting has a variety of uses. Its traditional use has been as underlay for carpets. Currently coir matting is increasingly used as geo-textile to prevent soil erosion.

The coir yarn production comprises two major nodes. Production of fiber, and production of yarn. The production of yarn involves two important operations retting and defibering. Retting refers to treatment of raw husks (green husks) to loosen fiber from the husk shell and to ease its extraction. This is carried out in the backwaters, which washes away the kannim and thus facilitates bacterial action that decomposes the fiber binding pectin. Salinity lends strength to the fiber. For retting, a pole is driven into the bed of the backwaters and husks are arranged one on the top of the other in a circle. It is then covered with mud, palm leaves and coir net. Usually huge stones are placed on the top to allow the husk to sink. The bundle remains in the water for several months for bacterial action. Each bundle known as Kolli or Mali has a diameter of 10 meters and contains 10,000 husks. It requires four workers, working together for four hours, to make a mali. While male workers make the mali, women carry raw husk to the backwater side and the retted husk is carried back to the site of defibering (Employment Files, D.I.C. 1999). Defibering denotes the preparation of fibre into yarn. Spinning is carried out on wooden spinning wheels (ratts) that are operated by hand. A woman worker rotates the fixed wheel while each of them drawing out a

stand of yarn and later twisting these into one by pushing forward the moveable wheel.

Fibre production node involves both men and women. Mostly Women are engaged in the defibering and yarn production. The following is the major characteristic of the industry in terms of the nodes and processes of yarn production and composition of workers. Node one includes the process of defibering and node two, the spinning of yarn.

Table 7.5 Gender structure of work in the Coir industry

Node 1			Node 11
Operation	Operation 1 retting	Operation 11 Defibering	Spinning
Process of conversion	Raw husks=retted husk	Retted husk Coir fibre	Coir fibre Coir yarn
Gender composition	Both men and women	Only women	Only women

Source: Kerala research programme. Discussion paper four. K.T Ramohan. For local level development centre for development studies. October 1999.

Several sub operations tie themselves to the major operations of each node. They are necessary even after the introduction of mechanised ratts in the production system. The following is the sex typing of job in the coir industry.

Table 7.6 List of male/female job in the coir industry

Type of workers	Sex categories	
	Male	Female
Head load workers	-	100 per cent
Carrying the husk to the water	-	100 per cent
Retting the husk	100 per cent	-
Taking the husk from the pit	100 per cent	-
Beating the husk	-	100 per cent
Cleaning and drying	-	100 per cent
Pressing the bundle	100 per cent	-
Transporting	100 per cent	-
Supervisors	100 per cent	-
Spinning	-	100 per cent
Bundling the yarn	100 per cent	-

Field Survey

Out of ten types of work done by the coir workers, only four are done by women, making certain job as women's work and others as men's work. As in the case of beedi industry, the jobs allotted for women are the type, which is listed under the piece rated system of wage payment. The following is the division of work and the percentage of respondents under each category.

Table 7.7 Percentage distribution of respondents and the division of work in the Coir industry.

Type of work	Number of workers	Percentage of respondents
Head load workers	10	7.50
Cleaning	18	10.00
Spinning	52	82.50
Total	80	100.00

The above table shows that 82.5 per cent workers are in the field of spinning, making this particular job exclusively for women. Women do not have opportunities for other categories of work like the supervisors, transporters, bundlers of yarn etc. In the coir industry the degree of exclusiveness of a particular job for women is high as more than 80 per cent are engaged in the work of

spinning. Going a step further, we can say that spinning is labeled as women's job in the coir industry.

7.2.3 *Handloom industry*

The Handloom industry too has a peculiar production system, which facilitates vulnerable and flexible nature of the female work in the industry. The Census Handloom has made in its estimate a distinction between the subsidiary workers and the main workers in the handloom industry.

Handloom weaving is a labour intensive technology. It involves different operations, each of which requires a particular skill and it requires more than just the male weavers. To produce five to six saris or dhotis, the maximum number that can be woven in one week on a sample loom, the following jobs have to be done.

After the yarn is produced it has to be washed in the boiled water. The first stage includes bleaching and treatment of the yarn with caustic soda. Then if colored saris are to be produced, the yarn is dyed and finally starched. To handle the yarn and to prevent damage, it has to be made somewhat stiff, not

soft. In both cases the yarn would be wasted. The next step is the drying of yarn. The yarn is usually rolled on bamboo rods. These initial activities take half a day's work. It is put on bobbins by means of a small wheel which is called winding of yarn. This takes almost two days for half a bundle. The bobbins are used for two purposes, for warp and weft respectively. To make the warp, bobbins are put in a bamboo case. One man walks up and down between two poles with the bamboo case putting the threads alongside bamboo sticks. In this way the threads are stretched length wise between two poles, covering many yards. How many times one has to walk up and down within the bobbins depends on the quality of the cloth to be produced.

After the warp is completed, the threads are rolled round the bamboo sticks and the bundle is ready for weaving. Then the warp is once more taken out and one side of it attached to the wooden beam of the loom. Putting it through the bamboo comb and rolling the thread on the wooden beam are also labour intensive procedure. After the threads are rolled round the beam, it is placed in the loom, opposite the weaver's seat, the threads again are passed through the combs. Now with a stock of bobbins to supply the shuttle, the weft can be woven into warp and the

weaving could be started. To operate a jacquard loom one additional stand is required. The design must be drawn and set on top of the loom. Then the weaver polishes the cloth with his hands and rolls it on the smaller wooden beam. It takes at least one day's work to weave one sari or dhoti on a simple loom. Starching is required only for a certain type of yarn.

The minimum wages committee divided seven categories of skilled workers, twenty six categories of unskilled workers and five categories of supervisory staff in the handloom industry.

Category a: Weavers, jacquard fitters, lacers, carpenters, fitters, blacksmiths and chemical weighers.

Category b: Machine bobbin winders, machine pirn winders, doublers, bobbin sorters, healders, bobbin carriers, handpirn winders, rung weft winders, warpers, hemmers, stitchers, folders, ironers, ware house mazdoors, warp joiners, cloth carriers, packers, general mazdoors, warp joiners, cloth carriers, packers, general mazdoors, firemen, sample mazdors, chainers, bleachers, vat dyers, dryers, builder and yarn boilers.

Category c: Supervisory staff, weaving master, assistant weaving master, dyeing master, designer, master cutter.

The Census of Handloom India 1988 divides the members engaged in the handloom industry as preparatory workers and as full time and part time workers. 75.90 per cent of women are engaged in the preparatory work in the handloom industry, which includes mainly winding of yarn. Women getting engaged in the part time weaving and part time preparatory work is also revealed by the Census (Records, The Census of Handloom, 1988, Appendix III). The fieldwork report also showed a similar trend of women workers in the handloom industry.

Type 7.8 Gender structure of work in the Handloom industry

Type of work	Gender system	
	Male	Female
Winding	-	100 per cent
Warping	100 per cent	-
Dyeing	100 per cent	-
Weaving	100 per cent in the home based and in the factory, major share is done by men	

Field Survey

Women have been segregated to certain types of job and they are mainly in the preparatory work as the Census calls. The workspace of women thus becomes inseparable from the expectations attached to the domestic sphere as large number are engaged in home works of winding the thread.

Table 7.9 Percentage distribution of respondents and division of work in the Handloom industry

Types of work	Respondents	Per cent of the sample
Winding	88	88
Weaving	12	12
Total	100	100

Field survey

The concentration of women in one particular job i.e., winding which is called the preparatory work of handloom industry is clear in the above table. It was interesting to note in the field survey that women were getting into the work of weaving with the help of the training given by the Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation. They get better access to the factory system of work through this programme. Wide variations could be noted between the organised and homework system. Of the whole

group of weaver respondents, only two who were above 40 years of age were from the unorganised home workers. The access of women to the factory sector through the training programmes were highly appreciated by the workers.

7.3 Determinants of gender system of work

Patriarch is the specific family and household organisation which builds up around a material base provided by production and characterised by partilineal inheritance, patrivirlocal residence and the authority of a senior most male member of the family. This results in rigid curtailment of women's mobility, posited life long security and support for them. The structural elements of patriarchic control in the society produce a rigid division of work within or near the household while men specialise in work outside the homestead. Naturally she is centered in the unorganised home based units. A considerable amount of structure as Bourdieu's word thus goes into the making of a woman worker in the traditional sector. The importance of the notion of structure in describing the position of women in the community could not be underrated. "... there exists, in the social world itself and not merely in symbolic systems, languages, myth etc...

objective structure which are independent of the consciousness and desires of their representation" (Bourdieu, P., 1977).

There are two levels of structures or institutions, which must be related in examining the location and roles of women in the business of living i.e., the economy on the one hand and family household system on the other. The field survey showed that the percentage share of wage to the family income by the female labour was unaccounted, though most of them spent long time, more than eight hours a day in the household units of work. Conflict then emerges as they try to balance the demands of family labour against time and resources necessary for their individual projects and enterprises. The percentage share of female income in the family income and the per capita income of the women workers etc., are analysed in the next section.

The family patriarchs operate the exercise of male control over women's labour and this discourages women from seeking wage employment or engaging in work outside their homes. On the other hand the capitalists control the wage unit and the family unit is widely exercised by the contract system of work in the traditional sector. This involves the transfer of work

formerly done within a firm to another firm, an artisan workshop or to domestic outworkers (Fergus Murray, 1983). An agent gives raw material to women in their homes or they themselves collect it from companies. The agent returns at a later date to collect the finished product and pay women for their work on a piece rate basis. In the case of women in the traditional sector, the ideology of women as housewives and the ideology of female seclusion have worked together with a peculiar conjunction of relations that have permitted women to generate supplementary income for the household without altering the nature of labour process. Women are inserted into capitalist relations of production in a way, which does not depend on a separation between the home and the work place. This has resulted in economic subordination of women.

In the society instructions, sanctions and interjections associated with the work space and the domestic space of women lend themselves to the construction of social space of men and women with powers accorded to each. The result is a model of a social world, which separated the domestic from the public work and allocated different rights to the gendered individuals in those separate different worlds.

The social world can be said to consist of invisible relations and those very same relations that constitute a space of positions exterior to each other and defined by their proximity. The identification of different rights for men and women further forms, categories of perception of what women were meant to be both within the home and the community. For example, in the Chailya community women were engaging themselves in the pre-weaving section of production, which the census calls the subsidiary work. She paves the way for the weaving work in the industry. She is engaged in the inside and the 'invisible' work of winding which will set the founding for weaving. The whole production process revolves round the winder, placing her in the list of primary agent of production, yet the splitting up of the production process leaves her into an invisible world, having no sense of the final product with which she could identify.

Patriarchal set up is mainly fortified more by attitudes than by political or economic structures. This helps in the reproduction and the maintenance of the system that perpetuates the subordinate position of women. The persistence of the system of male domination is possible through the attitudes, which emphasise the fact that gender behaviour is a social artifact. So

deeply embedded is patriarchy that the character structure it creates in both sexes is perhaps even more a habit of mind and a way of life than a political system.

The idea about the women's place are internalised by women and perpetuated by them in large measures. Psychology of women need not entirely be invented and imposed by men. Many women in fact are brought into the mythology, on the ground that it held certain rewards for them. They agree to exchange private power in return for public submission. This is the regular orthodox bargain by which men rule the work and allow women to rule in their own place.

In order to find out the sex wise productivity, it was essential to consider a random sample of men and women who did the same type of job in these industries. As spinning was exclusively a female job in the coir sector this point was not applicable in the industry. But in the case of handloom and beedi industry this could be done as the work of rolling and the work of weaving which was done by both male and female in the industry. It was observed that among the men weavers in the organised units more than 75 per cent of them could weave eight to eight and a half

meters of cloth per day while women could do only six to seven meters. The secretaries of the unit were of the opinion that there is a marked difference in the case of young women who have undergone training and they have the same speed and quickness in the work as men weavers. Though a few old men engaged as part time winders at home, a comparison between women and men winders could not be done very effectively.

7.4 Division of work and wage in the selected industries

Wage differential in terms of gender is quite apparent in most of the traditional industries and occupations in agricultural, service and industrial sector. The site of extreme wage difference would be say, agricultural labour in general and agro processing like tea, cashew in particular type of work organisation which facilitates higher wage advantages to male workers in a particular type of work of course with marginal variations over time. Even if the rate of wage does not reflect much of gender differentiation, gender based wage differential fixed at some initial time point still continues (for details of gender based wage difference by industry and education see Appendix VI). In the case of selected industries wage difference is mainly through the

segmentation of work and restrictions on movement from one job to the other.

Wage negotiations in the traditional industries has undergone an apparent metamorphosis from daily wage system to work contract, where labour expended time is not considered, instead the workload is considered. What is pre-dominant in such contract of the total work and its remuneration as against piece wage is that the total quantum of work, the hours of work and its remuneration are fixed beforehand. Instead of labour expended time, which is more of a quantitative variable, when workload is the basis of reference, it is extremely difficult to any kind of assessment of the slightly less professional employer. This form of work contract system sidelines reasoning based on unemployment etc., and calculation of work by man-hours in the settlement of wage.

There is strong preference for those jobs, which has security and permanence. The above section clearly showed the various activities of the selected industries. The following section deals with the variations in wages in different types of work. The wage rate for rolling 1000 beedis is given below.

Table 7.10 Division of work and rate of wages in the beedi industry

Type of work	Wages
Rolling of Beedis (1000 Beedis)	Rs. 65.70
Labeling (1000)	Rs. 63.20
Furnace man and driver	Monthly wage of Rs. 2500/-

The above wage rate includes dearness allowance of Rs. 31.20/- which factory workers enjoy. The majority of the unorganised workers do not have this facility. Hence wage for rolling 1000 beedis never exceeds Rs. 47/- in the case of the contract workers.

In the case of handloom industry, as noted previously nearly 88 per cent of the respondents are engaged in winding and only a few are engaged in the weaving sector, which naturally fetches a high rate of wages. In the case of unorganised sector hardly one per cent that too aged women between 40 and 45 are engaged in the weaving. Based on the information gathered from the primary survey, wage is calculated for different types of work in the industry.

Table 7.11 Division of work and rate of wages in the handloom industry

Type of work	Rate of wages (in rupees)
Winding	48.15
Warping	56.09
Weaving	88.53
Dyeing (8boxes)	70.20

Winding is calculated as for "Kai" per day - a mode of measurement like meter. Normally a woman is able to make 8-10 Kais, which will fetch her Rs.17.92/-. Including the dearness allowance she gets Rs. 48.15/-. Wage for weaving is calculated as per meter and warping is as per the cloth to be woven.

Coir sector has also the wage variations for different types of work. The categories of work like retting, cleaning, spinning etc. have different wage rates and we could note that women are mainly engaged in such types of work, which fetch low wages.

Table 7.12 Division of work and wage in the coir industry

Retting	Rs. 120(1000)
Spinning (Hand ratt)	Rs. 9.25 per kg (6kg per day)
Motor ratt	Rs. 10 per kg (9 kg per day)
Head load workers	Rs. 20 (1000 husk)
Beating	Rs. 15 (1000 husk)

Women are mainly engaged in the category of head-load workers, beaters and spinners; Wages also differ between spinning by hand ratt and motor ratt. Wide variations in the wage rate was noted in the inter district level which does not exist in other two industries. The factory sector of coir industry is confined to the co-operative societies and a few private entrepreneurs who pay them very little. The wage variation between the organised and the unorganised sector is highlighted in the following section.

The above analysis has clearly shown that a subtle way of sex typing of work is taking place in the selected industries, which is always disadvantageous to women workers. The gender system of work also limits the access of women to all types of work in these industries. The tendency of overcrowding of women in

the unorganised units due to the prevalence of various forms of organisation of production needs to be studied. The following section highlights these aspects taking into consideration the division of work as contract workers, self-employed and factory groups.

It should be noted that in all the three selected industries the gender system of work is an accepted fact and wage differed between different types of work and not between men and women for the same work done in the industry. Hence it is essential to look into the various aspects of female labour in these industries mainly the overcrowding of women in the unorganised sector which is promoted by various systems of production that exist in the industry.

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UNORGANISED NATURE OF PRODUCTION AND WOMEN WORKERS IN THE SELECTED TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

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CHAPTER - 8

UNORGANISED NATURE OF PRODUCTION AND WOMEN WORKERS IN THE SELECTED TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

The segregation of workers based on particular gender division of work in the industries further facilitates the existence of different forms of production in the industry. The following section goes into the details of organisation of production and its implications on women workers in the traditional industries of Kerala.

The traditional industries in Kerala witnessed decentralisation. In the process of development of industrial development, various forms of small scale production seem to persist despite competition among themselves as well as from the large scale units. The organisation of production in the traditional industries of Kerala is characterised by various features. A short account of the reorganisation programme in the selected industries is given below.

8.1 Subcontracting in the traditional industries

On the eve of independence, Indian industry was dominated by lower forms of production. These forms of production account for 75 per cent of the total number of persons employed in the industry and 60 per cent of the industry, generated net income (Shirkov, G.K., 1976), (Levokovsky, A.L., 1972). The semi natural cottage industries (Khadi and Rural Industries) and small machanised units (employing under 10 workers) registered high growth rates in terms of labour absorption.

During the pre-1974 period, the widening of markets (domestic and foreign) broke the direct link between artisans and consumers. The former became dependent middleman who often combined the function of material supply and products marketing and co-ordinated social division of labour and specialisation. The middle man did this in such a way that they could squeeze the artisans on the one hand and find a hedge against demand instability on the other (Gadgil, D.R., 1971). The crafts in which such organisation occurred were art metal (metal brass and copper) ware, hand printing, handloom (Cotton and silk) weaving, wire and

tinsel or gold and silver thread pulling, wood and ivory carving, carpet making and shall-making etc.

The traditional industries in Kerala -Coir, Cashew and Handlooms, Beedi, Fish processing, Vegetable and fruit processing -exemplify the reverse process of factory system turning into decentralised system of production in the unorganised sector via sub-contracting.

8.1.1 Beedi industry and contract system

It is said that sub contracting in various forms operated in the distant past and that it operates significantly even today in the traditional manufacturers. In the case of Beedi industry the decentralisation in the post independence period witnessed as shift of small scale establishments by middle men to the workers own households. This was the result of the Beedi and Cigar industrial Premises (regulation of conditions of work) Act in 1961. Some of the smaller firms were successful in farming out production to the households. These small firms' directly organised production in households and the organisation of production was known as the passbook system. Under this system the beedi firms

directly supplied the raw materials and took back the rolled beedis, the transaction of which was entered in a passbook. The middlemen decided wages and it continued to be the characteristic feature of the industrial organisation. The passbook system was an important weapon in the hand of the firm.

There are basically three systems under which beedis are manufactured. 1) The factory systems where a firm of Beedi manufacturer directly employ worker to make beedis in its own premises and under its own supervision 2) Factory cum-contractor system where beedis are manufactured in the place usually a sort of shed, but tobacco and leaves are supplied to the workers through the contractor. The contractor receives commission from the firm and the workers are paid a piece rate. The quantity of tobacco and leaves required for making a beedi of the prescribed size is standardised. From the tobacco and leaves received, workers make as many as they can and take them back to the contractor who examines, that whether the quality was maintained and if he found any substandard piece, he rejected the same and paid the wage for the remaining. No payment is made for the rejected beedis, which in most cases are appropriated by the contractors/ managements. The contractor makes a further deduction at specified rates as sort

of penalty if the number of beedis produced falls short of the expected i.e., the number for which tobacco and leaves were supplied. Comparing the quantity of leaves and Tobacco per 1000 beedis supplied by the contractors would normally be less by 30 per cent particularly in the case of tendu leaves. Even when enough leaves are supplied their quality will be poor, so that many leaves could be not utilised for making beedis. The contractor makes the deduction as penalty for making less beedis though in fact there is no cause for penalty, because there has not been any wastage of materials. The deduction he makes is thus a net gain for him (for details of categories of employment in beedi industry see Appendix IV).

The Beedi workers cannot make for the short supply of materials by reducing the weight of the beedis. For any short of weight, beedi is rejected and no payment is made for it. Each beedi of a given size is to have a standard weight and can be declared as under weight on being weighed. The contractor does not however, weigh every single Beedi but he picks a few from a bundle of beedis, feels them with his workers, he delivers to the firm and receives payment. The contractor exploits the workers on many counts. Sometimes the contractors will fully delay payments of

wages but sells provisions on credit at high price, out of their own stores. Delaying payment is a regular feature. Very often a fortnight's payment is held up with the contractors.

Commission system and trade system also exists in the Beedi sector (Pyarilal Raghavan 1989). The middle men either manufactured beedis on a commission basis for the firm or purchased the raw materials from the firm and sold back to the firm. The former is the commission system and the latter is the trade system. The middlemen who take the raw material supplied by the firm are supposed to return to the beedi company the product. Failure to meet the output resulted in the reduction of the value of the beedis not produced from the payment to the middlemen. The beedis supplied by the middlemen are subject to quality checks. The inferior quality products that do not conform to the specified norms of those with a poor finish are rejected.

Under the trade system the purchase of raw materials and products are more often on account book transaction than actual trading. The firm sells the raw materials to the middlemen and debits the amount to the middlemen account. By the end of the

week the middlemen settle the accounts upon delivery of the manufactured products.

A system of two tier middlemen exists in the Kasargod area for beedi industry. The chief middlemen are called the main contractor while the lower level of middlemen are called sub contractor. The sub-contractor has no direct relation with the beedi firms. The number of sub contractors engaged by the main contractor varies. The main contractor usually is a close relative of the beedi entrepreneurs. The beedi firms meet most of the overhead expenses of the main contractor like rent for the buildings, warehouses and transport charges. Normally the, main contractor gets a commission of 10 to 15 paise for every thousand beedis produced. The major expenses of the chief contractor are the salaries of the checkers employed by him to test the quality of the beedis delivered by the sub contractors. The sub contractors collect the raw materials from the main contractor and deliver the finished beedis at regular intervals. Normally the sub contractor gets a commission of 90 paise for every thousand beedis at regular intervals. Out of this he has to pay for his salaried employee, transport charges and other expenses of production. In Ramdas Nagar of Kasargod district alone has 50 sub-contractors engaged in

beedi production. Out of the two thousand workers engaged by these contractors, 98.2 per cent are women.

8.1.2 Handloom industry and household sector

Sub-contracting, a type of inter firm linkages is the dominant form of production of fabrics and garments. The different contractual agreement, according to which one party exercises control between the other, establishes the linkages between the firms (Won Pon Kam, 1991). This is seen not only in fabric production. The contractors who supply the raw material employ a checker and one or two helpers to weigh the raw material. The workers have no direct or indirect contact with either the contractors or the main employer. However, the sub-contractor approaches the contractor if the behaviour of any company employee is unacceptable.

The handloom industry in Kerala encompasses within itself a wide range of production system. They range from large scale manufactures where production and marketing is centralised to industrial weaving household units. For the purpose of classification we can divide the industries into two, namely

co-operatives and private sector. In the private sector there are household and non-household units. The non household units can be further divided into organised or factory type units and unorganised units. Co-operative or primary societies are where the production is carried out in household units. A household industry according to All Indian population census is defined as an industry conducted by the members of the household at home or within the village in rural areas and at home in urban area.

The decentralisation of Handloom production is one of the important features of handloom production of North Kerala. In Kannur and Kasargod districts together have more than 65,000 workers in the household sector. It is found in the Handloom Census of 1988 that the industry is equally divided between the household and non-household sector (Handloom Census, 1988). This is an indicator to show that the non-household sector has declined and the household sector was increased. The household and non-household sector is largely integrated in North Malabar. Within the household sector there is a group of weavers who produce goods on the basis of Master Craftsmen and also a group of loom less weavers who hire themselves out to master craftsmen. There are other weavers who belong to co-operative societies,

which appears to be the largest category and is increasing over time.

Weaver's co-operatives were in existence even prior to independence. In Malabar the radicalisation of the industrial labour force, through participation in the freedom struggle combined with the crisis in the late 30's gave an impetus to the formation of Co-operatives. Thus it is claimed that the Chirakkal Weavers Society was started in 1946 at the initiative of the trade unions. It was after independence that the Co-operative movement really got a fillip.

There are two types of Co-operative Societies, primary and industrial co-operatives. The primaries are engaged on a production cum sales pattern. The societies procure and distribute yarn and other raw materials to their members and undertake the marketing of the finished products. In these societies production is decentralised and it is carried on in the member households. The industrial co-operatives on the other hand are regular factories owned by the co-operative.

The organised private sector dominates the handloom industry in North Kerala. Nearly 50 per cent of the loom age is in the private sector (Census of Handloom, 1976). However, since in the latter half of the 70's certain changes could be noticed. A very large number of non-household units have closed down or are working far from below capacity. Hence some of the non-household unorganised units and the household units have come to be linked in varying degrees with organised factory sector. The most visible aspect of this link is sub-contracting system.

At the top there are large scale factory owners of whom some export directly while others produce export goods for exporters based in metropolitan cities. There are small factory owners who subcontract from the local factory owners and also the exporters in the metropolitan cities. There comes the group of craftsmen in the household units. The master craftsmen take order from factory owner, partly execute it himself and farm out, getting women in the household who engages themselves in the units. Large scale exploitation exists in the system of production with regard to wages, income, employment, etc.

8.1.3 Unorganised nature of production in the coir industry

More or less the same pattern existed in the coir industry too. In North Malabar mainly two forms of production exists i.e., the co-operative system and the private unorganised system of production. A significant portion of the yarn production still is in the hand spinning sector where not even rudimentary tools are used. It presents a wide spectrum of pre-manufactory production organisations such as independent domestic producers, varied forms of the putting out system and rarely the direct use of hired labour under a common shed. Even in the spindle spinning sector the industry where a crude spinning wheel is used for spinning yarn, the production process on the whole tends to be fragmented (Thomas Issac T.M. and Chandan Mukerjee, 1981). However, this sector reveals very significant variations in the development of capitalism. A long chain of middlemen link these small producers of coir yarn scattered along the coastal belt of Kerala to the exporters in the port towns.

The scattered petty producers are totally dominated by traders in the raw material markets and in the finished goods yarn markets. The operations of these traders and the fluctuations in the

export demand have made the existence of the petty producers left with bare subsistence. Because of the popular pressure, the government has attempted to co-operativise the spinning sector and regulate the husk and yarn markets. The coir industry, the spinning sector is considered here as it is popularly spread in the Northern Kerala. A significant portion of workers, especially women are involved in the preparatory and finishing activities and they are mainly employed through the contractors. The management paid the contractor on a lump sum basis. For all practical purposes the contractor was the employer of the workers. He was responsible for recruitment, fixation of wage rates, supervision of work, payment of wages and ensuring the security of tenure of the workers under him. The company managements directly employed the majority of the workers specially the weavers. The supervisory roles as well as the task of recruiting according to the demand of the trade were combined in the institution of Moopan. The Moopans were trusted skilled workers who have been in the employment of the company for a long period. Usually they were men of considerable influence among the workers. They were responsible for the maintenance of the discipline in their respective departments and had the right to impose fines. Wages were dispersed through the Moopans whose

earnings consisted of commission (Moopan Kasu) deducted from the wages of workers (George, K., 1953).

Under conditions of labour scarcity such systems of labour recruitment ensured supply and control of labour. The piece rate system of wage payment universally prevalent in the industry also imposed self discipline on the worker as his earnings depended on the out-turn. A true wage, for instance would have involved, such questions as a guaranteed minimum out turn, regular employment and regular attendance. Employment of such discipline has been extremely difficult given the production condition in the industry (for details of employment in coir industry see Appendix V).

8.2 Contract system and women workers

The different forms of production in the traditional industries in Kerala have various implications on women. These systems of production makes the existence of unorganised sector easier where large number of women workers in one way or the other suffer with respect to the mode of recruitment, wage system, employment benefits etc. The point is further analysed

distinguishing the workers as contract workers, self-employed workers and factory workers.

In the present investigation, workers in the factory group and home based units include a variety of nature. The factory workers include those in the private industrial groups and those in the factory units of the co-operative sector. The self employed, the hired workers and the workers who are recruited by the contractors constitute the unorganised home workers. There is a wide discrepancy between the organised factory group of workers and the home based workers with reference to their income and socio economic standard which will be discussed in the following chapter.

8.2.1 Functional status of workers

Women experience wage discrimination due to the particular gender division of work and their limited access to only certain types of work. Besides this discrimination, they are also subject to wide variations in the wage structure between the organised sector and unorganised sector. This dichotomy was brought home most forcefully during the fieldwork. Those

working in the factory units had the privilege of coming to the factory with regular hours of work and security of wages. Those in the unorganised group were constantly aspiring to get job in the organised sector where they could be entitled to many facilities and not subject to the arbitrariness of the employers. Though majority of the present sample did not complain of discrimination and moral exploitation at their work sites, the degree of resentment among those in the unorganised sector was substantial especially with regard to the wages and other allowances. These aspects are analysed in this section.

Table 8.1 Percentage Distribution of Workers according to the system of work

Type of work	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Factory workers	50 (38.46)	50(62.50)	50 (50)	150 (48.38)
Contract workers	56 (43.08)	8 (10.00)	10 (10)	74 (23.87)
Self employed	24 (18.46)	22(27.50)	40 (40)	86 (27.75)
Total	130 (100.00)	80 (100.00)	100 (100.00)	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Contract workers and the self-employed workers constitute the unorganised group of workers in the present study.

It should be noted that the contract workers varied industry wise. The beedi industry has got a higher percentage of contract workers (43.08 per cent) where as the self-employed group dominates the handloom industry (40 per cent) where the work is mainly done in the household sector. The tendency of women to be confined to the traditional sector could be seen from this point.

8.2.2 *Mode of recruitment*

Recruitment by and large is done informally through word of mouth or through agents in the factories. There are two types within this mode, one through labour contractors and the other directly to the factory site. This distinction is crucial to understand the importance of the role played by the mode of recruitment in exercising control over labour.

Apart from administrative personnel, employment of the workforce is entirely casual in nature. The workers during the survey expressed that those workers in the unorganised category hardly have work permanence. Though the casualisation of workforce began mainly with the decentralisation of production, this process has been further accentuated. Eighty per cent of the

workers agreed upon the importance of numerical flexibility in the lowering of production costs. Production not very consistent, employers manage to enhance their profits by offloading their workers during the slack season and recruit them during the peak season. When recruited through labour contractors, the quantum and mode of payment is settled through the labour contractors. The contractor is paid a fixed amount for the completion of the order and it is up to him to fix the mode of payment to the workers. Any delay would imply a cut in the commission paid to the contractor. Given the seasonability of employment, workers prefer the piece rate system as they feel that they have to earn enough to compensate for off-season employment.

The following table gives the details regarding recruitment of women workers. Other than the factory workers majority of the workers are through the contractors or the agents, which means that they do not have any contact with the employer and they become a prey to the manipulations of the contractor.

Table 8.2 Percentage distribution of workers and mode of recruitment

Category	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Directly employed	40 (30.75)	32(40.00)	28 (28.00)	100(32.26)
Appointed during peak season	10 (7.00)	18(22.50)	22 (22.00)	50 (16.13)
Appointed through contractors	56 (43.80)	8 (10.00)	10 (10.00)	74 (23.88)
Self employed workers				
Own units	18 (13.85)	12(15.00)	26 (26.00)	56 (18.06)
Hired units	6 (4.60)	10(12.50)	14 (14.00)	30 (9.67)
Total	130 (100.00)	80 (100.00)	100 (100.00)	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

8.2.3 *Payment of wages*

Wage is an income, but cost to the businessman and a source of taxes to the Government. The term wages may denote several concepts. Wages include all payments made to the worker. They refer to earnings, i.e., basic wages and dearness allowance, production incentive, bonus, attendance bonus, overtime payments and other allowance namely house rent, transport, personal

allowance and special allowances (Shreekant, Parlekar, A., 1962). Basic wage is the price of labour and it is determined by the interaction of demand and supply, which in the end is based on the cost of reproducing the labour force (Woytinsky, W.S and Associate, 1953). In fixing the basic wage consideration is given to the amount of skill, hazard and strain, which the employee undergoes in the performance of the job.

Every workmen should have a wage which will maintain him in the highest state of industrial efficiency, enable him to provide his family with the material things which are needed for their health and physical well being and enable them to discharge their duties as a citizen (V.R. Pillai, 1954). There are various systems of wage payment but the most important are two-one is payment by time and the other is payment by results. Time payment, which is very common in most of the industries, is the standard time rate of payment. It is the standard time which is a rate of payment for a given type of work for a fixed number of hours and is incumbent of the worker to have physical presence at the place of work for fixed period, to claim wages. Payment by result is based on piecework. The fundamental characteristic is that there is direct

relationship between the wages and the work done. According to the system of piece rate wage payment a worker is paid according to the output he produces (Rabindra Nath, 1976). The traditional industries based on different types of work have got mainly the piece rate system. In order to calculate wages in different rates, actual amount earned by a worker was obtained from the wage of the worker. The workers of different occupations on the basis of actual wage earned by the worker and the time spent in the work was taken into consideration.

8.2.4 Wage and time of work

Time factor differs between the organised and unorganised workers. Wide variation could be seen between hours of work and the wages of workers in organised and unorganised sector. Wage system in the factory and home based unorganised sector differ widely. This can be analysed by taking into consideration the hours of work, system of payment and employment benefits.

The following is the pattern of wage rate per day and the duration of hours spent in the work daily.

Table 8.3 Distribution of workers with time of work and wage per day

Wage rate Hours of work	0-25	25-50	50 -75	Total
Factory workers				
4-5 hours	4	12	4	20 (11.33)
6-7 hours	-	67	43	110 (75.34)
8 and above	-	4	16	20 (13.33)
Total	4	83	63	150 (100.00)
Home workers				
4-5 hours	22	4	-	26 (16.25)
6-7 hours	64	20	-	84 (52.5)
8 and above	28	22	-	50 (31.25)
Total	114	46	-	160 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Variation in wage rate and the hours of work could be noted in Table 8.3. Out of 150 factory workers, 42 per cent of the workers could get Rs. 50/- and above as wage alone per day. None of the workers in the unorganised sector could get Rs. 50/- as wage per day. In the case of home workers 56.14 per cent got the wage

rate of Rs. below 25/- with six to seven hours of work per day. This analysis helps us to conclude that the majority of home workers put in maximum hours of work and get very limited wage rate with which they would not be able to manage their livelihood.

8.2.5 Wage period

To regulate the payment of wages at fixed intervals the payment of wages Act 1936 provided that every industrial establishment should fix wage period, which should not exceed one month. Wide differences could be noticed between workers in the mode of payment and the wage period.

The production process is organised on either by piece rate system or time rated system. Both in the factory sector and home based work units, the piece rate system of wage payment has great significance. The main work, which women are engaged in all the three industries are the type which pays them the piece rated wages. Besides the segregation of work as women's work, the existence of piece rate system has a lot disadvantages. For example, in case of handloom industry the work is done in union

with the other workers like warper and weaver. If the warper is on leave the worker does not get any wage unless they complete the work. The beedi roller who takes the tendu leaf is expected to roll 1000 beedis per day. On getting poor quality of tendu leaf very often they can't make the number expected by the manager or the contractor. The coir workers also suffer from piece rate system of work. When they are not given raw material on time they won't be able finish the quantum of work they are expect^{ed} to do per day. In the case of motor ratt the workers complained that the power failure is often a block. Payment of wages was done in most of the cases on weekly basis. The following table gives the details of distribution of workers according to the wage period.

Table 8.4 Percentage distribution of workers and type of payment of wages

Wage period	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Irregular	28(21.50)	15(18.75)	12(12)	55(17.74)
Weekly	84(64.66)	54(67.50)	52(52)	190(61.29)
Daily	10(7.69)	7(8.75)	8(8)	25(8.06)
Not responded	8(6.15)	4(5.00)	28(28)	40(12.91)
Total	130 (100.00)	80 (100.00)	100 (100.00)	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

The present table gives a detailed picture of the wage system that is prevailing in the traditional sector. Besides the piece rate system of work and payment, the interval with which the workers get wages also affect the workers very much. 17.4 per cent of workers expressed that their wage system is irregular as the contractors often put off the payment. Though the collection of finished product is done every week, full payment is not done regularly. Majority of workers (61.29 per cent) including factory workers fall under the category of who received the weekly wages.

The group of workers belonged to category of irregular and the daily wage earning were not happy about the system of payment, as they had no guarantee of their job. Industry wise variations also are noteworthy. Among the 130 Beedi workers 21.50 per cent belonged to the group of uncertain wage earners and 6.15 per cent were the group of invisible workers where as the handloom workers who belonged to this group were 28 per cent. Among the coir workers 67.5 per cent of workers were sure of their work and only 8.75 per cent were engaged as daily wage earners who were the stop gap in the work.

8.2.6 Industry wise wage variation

Table 8.5 Industry Wise distribution of workers and rate of wages

Wage per day	Beedi		Coir		Handloom		Total
	F	H	F	H	F	H	
10-20	-	65	10	30	-	40	145 (46.77)
21-30	30	15	10	-	30	10	95 (30.65)
31-40	20	-	30	-	20	-	70 (22.58)
Total	50	80	50	30	50	50	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Among the 145 (46.77 per cent) workers who get an average wage of Rs. 15/-, the home based workers constitute 93.10 per cent of which there are 44.8 per cent beedi workers and 27.5 per cent are handloom workers while among 30.65 per cent of workers who get as Rs. 25/- as wage, 73.68 per cent are factory workers. Besides this they are also eligible of other non-wage benefits and the dearness allowance. The average wage of factory workers in the beedi industry is Rs. 29/- while for the home

workers it is only Rs. 16.88/-. For the handloom workers it is Rs. 29/- and Rs. 17/-. For the coir workers it is Rs. 43/- for the factory group and Rs. 15/- for home workers. It should be noted that the coir workers taken a whole have a better wage rate while taken separately for the factory workers and the home workers; the condition of the home workers is a very pitiable state.

Dearness allowance is compensation in the erosion in the payment packet of employees resulting from the rise in the price of essential commodities. This allowance was first granted in India during the years of the First World War to the cottage textile workers of Ahmedbad and Bombay. However, during the recession in the early outbreak of the Second World War workers began to demand dearness allowance to neutralise the rise in the cost of living and the system of paying separate dearness allowance come to stay since then. Today dearness allowance is an important component of workers' earnings. But the field survey noted that most of the women do not earn any dearness allowance in the unorganised household system of work.

In the case of the factory workers of beedi industry, the rate of dearness allowance is recommended along with the

settlement of wage rate. For the beedi workers dearness allowance is at the rate of 30 paise for every five point increase in the cost of living index. To calculate the amount of dearness allowance the minimum rolling of beedis per day was fixed as 800 beedis and dearness allowance has to be paid for six days of work per week. In the North Kerala the co-operative factory workers of the coir industry do not receive the benefit of dearness allowance. But the factory workers of the handloom industry have the facilities of this programme like those in the Beedi sector. Hence we can say that among the factory workers only 100 workers out of 150 (66.6 per cent) received the benefit of dearness allowance.

8.2.7 Non wage benefit

There is no doubt that the factory workers received the non-wage benefit like bonus, gratuity, thrift fund, medical allowance etc. The welfare fund of the coir workers and the welfare programme of the co-operative societies were a blessing to the workers. Bonus was enjoyed by most of the workers but wide variations could be noted between the organised factory group and the unorganised group. For most of the workers in the household

sector, bonus was just a sum of money decided at the mercy of the contractor.

The welfare activities also differ widely for example, the medical care fund, educational allowances etc., were very much restricted. Wide variations could be seen in the working environment of the workers too. The home workers managed the work field within the home premises while the factory workers had the advantages of coming over to the factory and getting all the benefits attached to it. The possibilities of trade union activities were very much restricted to the home workers. They hardly went out of group to protest while the chance for the factory workers for such activities were comparatively high.

Table 8.6 Distribution of workers with employment benefits

Categories	Factory	Contract	Self employed
Bonus	150 (100.00)	8 (10.81)	4 (4.65)
Welfare fund	64 (42.66)	20 (27.02)	12 (13.95)
Provident fund	100 (66.66)	-	-
Medical aid	69 (46.00)	4 (5.40)	8 (9.30)
Dearness allowance	100 (66.66)	-	-

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage of workers who got the benefit of non wage allowances

Total factory workers - 150, Contract workers - 74 and Self-employed-86

On the basis of the recommendations of the bonus commission, Government of India issued an ordinance in May 1965 and the Bonus Act was passed in September 1965. It regulates the distribution of bonus to the workers. The Act confirms that bonus is not an ex gratia payment, depending entirely on the good will of employment. Now it can be claimed as a legal right. Though the rate of bonus differed, all the factory workers were in the know of it. Among the contract workers 10.81 per cent workers got the benefit of bonus. The contract and self employed workers got mainly the privileges of the welfare fund as they got registered in the welfare board after they became permanent members. This analysis clearly shows that the organised group of workers was mainly the recipients of the non-wage benefits.

8.2.8 *Wage cut*

Quality of products has been one of the important aspects in the traditional industries. Great demand for our product was mainly due to the fineness of the product, which was able to capture the international market. Hence checking the quality of product is an important aspect of the industries. Checking of the product by the agent, manager etc., is the regular feature of the

traditional industries. Most of the respondents complained that the raw material of yarn and tendu leaves they receive are of low quality and if the product is not turned out to satisfy the agents, they experienced severe wage cut. The size and the weight of the Beedi, the finish of the product etc., had to be considered. Very often the women workers had to beg of the agents to exempt them from severe wage cut.

Another way of manipulating the wage rate was seen in the case of beedi workers. Out of 0.32 kg of tobacco powder and one kg of tendu leaves, they are expected to make 1000 beedis. Usually they got only 0.74 kg of tendu leaf and 0.23 kg of tobacco powder. If the leaves are not of seasoned type they will not be able to meet the demands of the agents. Very often when the leaves are soaked in the water, it breaks and workers find it difficult to manage with the low quality leaves. In the factory sector too quality checking is a very important item. The mastery (leader) comes around to checking the product every week when they collect the finished product and wage is cut when the product is not up to the mark. Reduction in wages is also important if the workers specially the home based workers do not give up the finished product on time.

It is to be noted that the workers experienced wage cut both in the factory and the home units. Among the three industries the beedi workers and handloom workers experienced this problem very much.

Table 8.7 Distribution of workers with wage cut

Type	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Factory workers	16	5	48	69 (22.27)
Contract workers	46	4	7	57 (18.38)
Self-employed	18	19	15	52 (16.77)
Not complained	50	52	30	132(42.58)
Total	130	80	100	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

8.2.9 Permanence of contract

Permanence of contract was something the respondents would have liked to have. Most of them suffered from the lack of it. Job security is an important fact in any ones job career. All other requirements like wage, equality in promotion possibilities, dignity of labour etc., are important for the workers but secondary to permanence of contract. Not only the job seekers, but also

incumbent workers, employees and those who are voluntarily unemployed long for it (Sasikumar, S.K. and Raju, S., 1999). The kind of relation between permanence in job and security of life are already well normalised in the society. Present condition of one's being is to a great extent is defined by the work in which one is involved in, i.e., one's identity is constituted primarily on basis of his position in the work.

One of the reasons for the women workers to get concentrated in the unorganised sector of these industries is the easiness with which they may be kept as temporary workers. It is one of the important techniques of contract, which by pass the stickiness of wage, by giving a wage which is much lesser than the minimum. This temporary type of job contract seems to be economical to the employer in two different ways: with a low wage and minimum supervision, standard of level of output is ensured. Secondly maximum labour power is released without future obligations that are legally attached to the long term contracts.

In the present study the contract and the self employed workers do not have permanence in their work. The contractors in

the beedi industry keep the workers as temporary workers for many years without issuing them with a passbook. A passbook is a small handbook kept with the worker with a record of the work done specially for calculation of the wage per week and also for settling the yearly bonus based on the quantum of work done. One of the respondents expressed clearly that the agent would never issue passbook in her name because he will have to give her regular allowance of bonus and a small increment in the wages. The newly employed workers got a lower wage rate compared to the experienced workers. The workers under contract system of work are expected to be permanent workers after three years of issuing the passbook. Registration of the workers are also delayed very often as to keep them always as temporary workers in the sense that they will not be even called regular workers under a particular agent.

The following table gives a picture of workers who experienced this problem. The number of years worked under a particular agent and the benefits received by the workers also differed.

Table 8.8 Distribution of workers and permanence of service

Years of service	Beedi		Total	Coir		Total	Handloom		Total	Grand Total
	Temp.	Permanent		Temp.	Permanent		Temp.	Permanent		
Less than a year	10	-	10	30	-	30	30	-	30	70 (22.58)
1-5 years	12	5	17	14	4	18	20	10	30	65 (20.96)
5-10 years	22	23	45	4	8	12	12	15	27	84 (27.10)
More than 10 years	16	42	58	-	20	20	-	13	13	91 (29.36)
Total	60	70	130	48	32	80	62	38	100	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Among the beedi workers 46.15 per cent did not have permanent job while in the coir industry it was 60 per cent and 62 per cent in the handloom industry. It should be noted that the beedi workers though majority were the contract workers they were sure of the job once they were given the passbook. The probability of sending away was rare in the beedi industry.

8.2.10 *Work situation*

The peace and the tranquility in the work spot and the efficiency of a labourer depend to a considerable extent upon the wage structure and the amenities provided at the work field. Further the psychological conditions of the workers are influenced by the situation prevailing in the work site. Since a large number of women are engaged in these industries, the matter of improving their working conditions depend on the relationship that exist between them and their employer. In the case of home based workers, only the self-employed knew who their employer was but the contract workers had dealings with the agent only. The workers complained that the contractors were highly authoritarian in their attitude and often hurt them with abuses when expressed their problems.

It is significant to note that 95 per cent of the workers were not aware of the Minimum Wages Act. They were forced to remain and go on with a meager wage due to their poverty and lack of opportunities for job. Asked about any union activities, the home workers hardly spoke about them. Though 90 per cent are aware of the exploitation caused on them through the contractors

they were aware of that nothing special is done to rectify it. Most of them complained that their situation has not improved much after being in the field for so many years. Though the older members expressed satisfaction in the recent raise of the wage rate they complained that the wage rate in these industries and other jobs like construction is very different. What they have experienced through out their life is misery and poverty. The culture and the family background always acted on them and they could not look for some other job. 70 per cent remained at home, five per cent went out for other works which shows that unemployment was a major problem among women workers.

8.2.11 Labour Productivity - industry wise variation

In beedi industry women are engaged in two important function of rolling and labeling of beedi. Only a few are engaged in labeling and helping, which are not considered in the context of computing the productivity of workers. The following table gives the details of the number of beedis rolled.

Table 8.9 Distribution of workers and the number of beedis rolled per day

No. of beedis rolled	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
0-300	5	47	52 (45.26)
300-600	15	23	38 (33.04)
600 and above	25	-	25 (21.70)
Total	45	70	115 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Out of the 130 workers 88.46 per cent are in the category of beedi rolling and 33.04 per cent could roll more than 450 beedis a day. 21.70 per cent who could role 600 beedis and above are all factory workers only. Home workers mainly fall in the category of rolling up to 300 beedis only. The category of labeling also showed some difference though only a small group is engaged in it. What we could conclude from the above analysis is that the productivity of beedi rollers in the factory and the home based workers differed widely. On an average the factory workers rolled 517 beedis a day while the home workers could do only 275. Non-availability of raw material, lack of proper time table and motivation etc., seemed to be the reasons for low productivity among home workers.

Table 8.10 Percentage distribution of workers and the amount of coir yarn spun per day

Spinning	Factory workers	Home workers
0-4 kg	10 (25.00)	8 (66.67)
4-8 kg	24 (60.00)	4 (33.33)
8 and above	6 (15.00)	-
Total	40 (100.00)	12 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

Among 40 factory workers who are engaged in spinning, 60 per cent are able to spin about four to eight kg of yarn per day while among the home workers 66.67 per cent could do only one to four kg of yarn per day. It is to be noted that among the coir workers the spinning women are in an advantageous position but not the group of those in retting and cleaning who get less than Rs. 15 per day. Mechanised fibring process is taking momentum in North Kerala. The spread of motor rats^k seemed to be a blessing for women. Women have a positive attitude towards it. On an average the factory workers could spin six to seven kg yarn per day and the home workers could not only 3.5 Kg.

Women winders in the handloom industry give a true picture of women workers in the handloom industry.

Table 8.11 Percentage distribution of weavers and winders and the quantum of work per day

	Winding			Total	Weaving			Total
	0-5 kai	5-10 kai	10 kai and above		0-4 mts	4-8 mts	8 plus	
Factory worker	8	30	2	40	4	6	-	10
Home worker	31	17	-	48	2	-	-	2
Total	39 (44.32)	47 (53.40)	2 (2.28)	88 (100)	6 (50)	6 (50)	-	12 (100)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Kai is a mode of measuring the thread rolled on a wooden stick, which is used for warping

Out of the 88 per cent of workers in winding the 64.58 per cent of home workers could roll only less than five kais of thread a day which fetches them less than Rs. 18/-. While 75 per cent of factory workers are able to roll 7.5 kais of thread per day, which will fetch them Rs. 25/-, and more with other employment benefits. Women weavers also cut a sorry picture. 60 per cent of workers in the organised group could weave about six

meters of cloth a day while in the home units, the capacity is very much limited. They expressed their difficulty that they were not able to do the work at a stretch due to other obligations in the house. Factory workers on an average make 7.5 kais of thread a day while the home workers make only 4.27 kais.

8.2.12 Sex wise labour productivity

Besides comparing the productivity of organised and home workers in the industries we could also observe the male/female productivity in these fields where men and women have access to the jobs. This could be done specially in the case of female and male beedi rollers and handloom weavers. In the case of coir industry this comparison was not very effective as there were only women spinners.

Table 8.12 Sex wise productivity of beedi rollers

No. of beedis	Male Rollers	Female Rollers
0-300	19 (38.00)	43 (37.26)
301-600	16 (32.00)	37 (32.28)
601-900	15 (30.00)	35 (30.46)
Total	50 (100.00)	115 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

There is only a slight difference between the male and female beedi rollers in the work of rolling beedis, while the number of beedies rolled with experience. But difference in productivity was noted between men and women weavers.

Table 8.13 Sex wise productivity of handloom weavers

Quantity of cloth	Male	Female
0-4 meters	3	4
4-8 meters	32	8
8-12 meters	15	-
Total	50	12

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Out of 50 male weavers taken for a comparative study in the case of weaving, 15 male weavers could weave nearly 10 meters of cloth per day, while women could reach only upto six meters and times it came upto seven to eight meters. The access of women to the work of weaving through Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation, has improved the situation, as there is a marked difference between the younger women with training in weaving. It is the practice and the training that makes the difference in productivity.

8.2.13 *Employment availability*

Factory legislations themselves are not precise on the concept of permanent, temporary, casual and contract employment (Kalpagam, U., 1993). The ESI act specifies that any worker in the factory unit is eligible for the benefit from the first day of employment, though permanent identity card are issued after 13 weeks of employment. The traditional industries experience insecurity in employment due to various factors like lack of raw material and lack of market etc. Though permanency is conferred to the workers at times, they are not able to get employment throughout the year. The following table gives a picture of the intensity of unemployment experienced by the workers both in the factory sector and in the unorganised home sector.

Unemployed days have been a regular feature in the traditional industries of the 39.91 per cent who did not have work for nearly 100 days during the year the home workers constituted 64.65 per cent. 35.35 per cent of the factory group falls in this category, while of the category of those who did not have work for more than 150 days, the home workers constituted 88.31 per cent (Table 8.14).

Table 8.14 Percentage distribution of workers and unemployed days per year

Industry No. of unem- ployed days	Beedi		Coir		Handloom		Total
	F	H	F	H	F	H	
0-80	42	10	38	8	26	-	124 (40.00)
80-160	8	12	12	20	15	32	99 (31.91)
160-240	-	50	-	2	9	16	77 (24.83)
240 and above	-	8	-	-	-	2	10 (3.26)
Total	50	80	50	30	50	50	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

The visible, unorganised nature of work and its implications on women in the form of wage variations, wage cut and mode of payment and recruitment are explained in detail in this section. Forming of co-operatives has been a blessing for the workers. The subtle ways of under accounting of the work done by women rollers, winders and spinners have been the attractive way

of overcrowding women in the home based system of work. Various systems of work that is prevalent in these industries have shown how it affect women in various ways.

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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN WORKERS IN THE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

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CHAPTER - 9

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN WORKERS IN THE TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

The heterogeneous character of Indian economy and the uneven rates of development have had varying degrees of impact on the different segments of the labour force. Therefore the different segments need to be estimated separately, taking into account such important characteristics as religion, age, marriage and educational attainments (Report, Ministry of Labour, 1970). If any evaluation of women's economic roles is to be meaningful, it has to take into account the socio economic structure of different categories of female workers engaged in different occupations.

The level of socio economic conditions of women in any society indicates their level of status. In a heterogeneous, complex and stratified society, like ours, the position, the dependence and disabilities of workers stem from their occupational immobility caused by a variety of economic and social factors (Report of the Ministry of Labour, 1970).

The prevalence of family labour and the factory system have got great implications on socio economic status of women

workers in the selected industries. There is no doubt that access to earned income substantially improve women's position within the household, gives them greater control over the distribution of such earnings and household resources and generally improves their status and strength in the society. It should be noted that such employment need not improve the social and economic conditions of women workers if it occurs in the context of declining aggregate household real incomes because of falling real wages and of unemployment of other household members.

The social network of any group largely reflects the orderly form in which the constituent members are grouped to perform several functions toward meeting the various needs of the individuals. Social organisation is discussed from intricate social relationships. These relationships have their roots in numerous social institutions regulated by traditional norms, customs, beliefs and values (Vedevalli, L., 1994).

The following section throws light on the socio economic status of women workers in the selected industries.

9.1 Caste structure and work system

"Caste appears to be an institution of a highly complex origin, an origin so complex indeed that in its every nature it must be limited to a single area, and that no doubt, why it is only found in India... no comparable institution to be seen elsewhere has anything like the complexity, elaboration and rigidity of caste in India" (Hutton, J.H., 1973).

It is well known that traditional industrial activities in villages in the past have been carried out on caste basis for centuries over the period. The caste affiliations may have been expected to get loosened, particularly when the technology of production changed, economic compulsions and motivations became prominent, commercialisation took place and education spread in the villages. The changes in the social values brought about by education and by technological and organisational transformation of activities have influenced the social segregation of occupation and activities. The particular activities are not economically remunerative enough to induce the people to engage in the old traditional activities. Many of the traditional activities

have developed new caste and community affiliations and concentration.

In the present study it is observed that the occupations are not fully caste based. But the concentration of certain communities in certain occupations could be widely noticed. Among the Hindus more than 75 per cent of Chaliyas dominated the handloom industry, a group that settled in Kerala in the 19th century.

An attempt was made to situate women in the Chaliya Street, which is supposed to be the power tower of the weavers in North Kerala. The very nature of the street spoke much of the secluded nature of the community. The starting or the end point of the street is the Mandapam, which signifies the God to which it is dedicated. The streets have 50-250 houses. All the members of the streets accept all its rituals and ceremonies. The temple communities are acting as the administrative wing for the street. The customs and traditions are similar to the Hindu customs and traditions. The houses are decorated with the statues and frames of God. The offering of flowers and oil to this inside God is considered as Women's work.

Muslims dominated the Beedi industry in the unorganised sector in Kannur (76 per cent) where as in Kasargod it is the Kannatika who belong widely to the 'Hindus' is concentrated. The coir industry is a case of mixed caste. The possession of skills rather than caste based aversion to an activity could be the base for certain group taking up particular jobs. The skills however, be expected to spread across castes and communities if the activity is remunerative enough.

The following table throws light on the structure of caste and the work system. Home based unorganised groups is mainly represented by the two groups of Muslims and the Chaliyas who live in colonies and streets respectively. The Chaliya streets enclosed with the Chaliya Mandapam and temple symbolically express the fact that women in Chaliya community are confined to the street only.

Of the total respondents, 65.59 per cent are Hindus and 16.48 per cent are Muslims. Among the 97 Hindu workers in the home units more than 50 per cent are from the community of Chaliyas. In the factory units the category of Hindus include

Ezhavas, Nambiars etc. As noted in the table, another community that dominate the home units is Muslims (25 per cent).

Table 9.1 Distribution of respondents according to Caste and Work system

Types	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
Hindus	110 (73.33)	97 (60.63)	207 (65.59)
SC/ST	30 (20.00)	10 (6.25)	40 (12.90)
Muslims	8 (5.33)	40 (25.00)	48 (16.48)
Christians	-	10 (6.25)	10 (3.22)
Others	2 (1.34)	3 (1.87)	5 (1.81)
Total	150 (100)	160(100)	310 (100)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

The association between the caste system and the work system is analysed by testing the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the caste and the work system. The table value of Chi Square is 9.488 and the calculated value is 38.501. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value we reject the hypothesis that there is no relation ship between the caste system and the work system. The choice of the workers of the type

of work system i.e., whether to choose the factory work site or the unorganised home work system is influenced by the caste system.

9.2 Occupational mobility

Occupational mobility refers to the movement of individuals from one occupation to another in economic hierarchy. The time phase dimension involves intergenerational and intra-generational mobility (Tewari, H.R., 1999). Lack of opportunities and chance limit the frequency of movement in the traditional occupations. Education and training enhances frequent occupational changes. The higher the education and training, greater is the possibility of change. However, changes in occupations of low skill and manual labour could be higher than of those with high skill and training. For the skilled workers usually change their occupation after experience and seniority is duly acknowledged.

More than 66.75 per cent have inherited their occupation from their parents. Only 33.25 per cent have started the work by the present generation. Among these, the coir workers constitute 67.50 per cent (Table 9.2). The introduction of motor ratt

in the coir industry has influenced the coir workers very much and younger generation has a positive attitude to work in the coir sector.

Table 9.2 Distribution of workers according to occupational heritage

Industry	Inherited job	Started by the present generation	Total
Beedi	88 (67.69)	42 (32.31)	130 (100)
Coir	26 (32.50)	54 (67.50)	80 (100)
Handloom	92 (92.00)	8 (8.00)	100 (100)
Total	206(66.75)	104 (33.25)	310 (100)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

The option for an occupation that is different from the family occupations is also seen from the aspirations of women workers for their children and the attitude of women towards their present occupation. The tendency to move out and look for some other occupation reveal that the traditional unremunerative and invisible work has not attracted many workers.

Table 9.3 Distribution of workers and their aspiration for their children regarding employment

Jobs preferred for children	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Construction work	20(15.21)	43 (53.75)	21 (21.00)	84 (27.08)
Jobs in gulf countries	66 (50.77)	14 (17.50)	6 (6.00)	86 (27.59)
Government Services	24 (18.64)	8 (10.00)	4 (4.00)	36 (11.61)
In the present field	15 (11.53)	-	67 (67.00)	82 (26.45)
Others	5 (3.85)	15 (18.75)	2 (2.00)	22 (7.27)
Total	130 (100.00)	80 (100.00)	100 (100.00)	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

The general tendency amongst the human being is that if the parents are not able to achieve better status, they should get a higher status or particular employment at least for their children. Out of the total sample workers 82 workers (26.45 per cent) did not mind their children working in the same field but they wanted regular employment. In the handloom sector 67 per cent of workers wanted their children to be together with them engaging themselves in work other than weaving but go in for tailoring and clerical work etc., 86 workers (27.59 per cent) expressed their desire

to send their children abroad expecting better prospects for them. 93 of them (30 per cent) expressed their aspirations to send their children for higher studies and get them into government services.

9.3 Family size and employment aspects

"The family is an organised group. It's members occupy an definite set of mutual statuses, interact according to definite behaviour patterns and are motivated by reciprocal attitudes and centiments" (Kingstey D., 1954). It is a social unit, performs many functions. As a social institution, family serves to meet the various basic needs of the constituent. Many of the changes originating in the west like industrialisation, concomitant growth of scientific knowledge and extension of communications have influenced family today (Gisbert, P., 1959).

Family is the basic unit of social organisation a membership in the family is acquired either by birth or marriage. A family may contain all the members of a lineage, both lineal and collateral relatives namely father, mother and their children. A distinction can be made between family, household and a

residential unit. The term household denotes groups of people not necessary related to each other but live under the same roof and share a common hearth. The referent of the family is kinship while the referent of the household is propinquity of residence (Kolenda, Pauline M. 1968). Collateral family is the one where two or more married couples between whom there is sibling on usually a brother, plus unmarried children.

The family structure with its secluded nature and rigid attitude has undergone great change in the selected area. Today the younger members enjoy more freedom in the choice of work and other important events of life. Men are not confined to the street alone and are exposed to other field of work. This has influenced their aspirations and expectations of future. The tendency of the young to leave the traditional occupation has seriously affected the economic stability of the family. The unemployed youth is a threat to the family. Women are expected to be pious, soft spoken and submissive and surrender her to the parents and elders of the family. They are directed and guided by the head of the family. A strong presence of patriarchy is felt in the family structure.

The material base that supports patriarchy and the sexual division of labour is the family unit of production. What has to be noted from the above description is that despite the weakening of male bonds and obligations, patriarchal control over women's social and economic sphere is still widely enforced in the community. The central paradox faced by women is the exercise of male control over women's labour, which is operated by the family patriarchs and this discourages women from seeking wage employment or engaging in work outside the homestead. This particular conjunction of productive and reproductive relations has permitted women to generate supplementary income for the household without altering the sexual division of labour or the nature of gender relation. Women are inserted into relations of production in a way, which do not depend on a separation of the home and the work place.

The average family size of the three industrial units differs. It is high in the Beedi industry i.e., 5.20 followed by the Handloom industry i.e., 4.85 and the coir 4.25 respectively. The respondents commented that division of families into constituent nuclear units is on the increase today. But the individual families find solace during times of crisis from kindred. The nuclear family

creates a harmonious environment with the absence of avoidable inter personal conflicts across the generation and facilitates a conducive environment for unequivocal development of personality.

In this context it is essential to see the relationship between the size of the family and the work system.

Table 9.4 Distribution of the respondents according to family size and the work system

Size of family	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
0-3	75 (50.00)	34 (21.25)	109 (35.16)
4-7	50 (33.33)	84 (52.50)	134 (43.23)
8-11	25 (16.67)	42 (26.25)	67 (21.61)
Total	150 (100.00)	160 (100.00)	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

The average family size of the workers in factory group is 4.7 and of the unorganised workers it is 5.2. Of the total number of 35.16 per cent workers belonged to the family size of zero to three, 50 per cent belonged to the factory group and 21.25 per cent in the unorganised home workers. 26.25 per cent of the

unorganised home workers belonged to the category of the family size of eight and above. It could be concluded that unorganised workers in the traditional industries in North Kerala have a larger family size compared to the organised factory workers. Women need to be conscientised about the need of a small family.

The size of the family and the literacy of women workers are also to be noted.

Table 9.5 Distribution of the household with family size and educational status

Family size	Literate	Illiterate	Total	Percentage
0 - 3	823	74	897	56.38
4 - 7	241	111	352	22.13
8- 11	198	144	342	21.49
Total	1262	329	1591	100.00

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

Of the total household excluding 77 children below five years old, the literacy rate is estimated to be 79.32 per cent. Out of 20.68 per cent illiterates, 43.75 per cent belongs to the family

size of eight and above. The number of illiterates increases as the size of family increases.

9.4 Age at marriage

The significance of marriage cannot be ignored in any group of workers. "It is a socially legitimate sexual union, begun with a public announcement and undertaken with some idea of permanence" (William N. Stephens, 1965).

Table 9.6 Distribution of workers according to their age at marriage

Age	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
15-19	42	16	58(25.45)
20-24	43	32	75(32.90)
25-29	29	38	67(29.36)
30-34	8	20	28(12.29)
Total	122(53.51)	106(46.49)	228(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

The average age at marriage of the respondents differs between home based workers and factory workers. Out of the 228

(73 per cent) married respondents, 46.49 per cent of home based workers and 53.51 per cent of factory workers are married. The average age at marriage of the factory workers is 22.59 and of the home workers, its 25.64. Out of the 82 single workers of the respondents, a good many belong to the homework. The single women in the family are the earning members. Late marriage is also noted among the home workers. 18.86 per cent got married after 30 years of age. While in the factory group it was only 6.55 per cent.

Rearing children is an activity, which is supposed to characterise domestic groups throughout, on the whole range of human societies. The norm that has wide acceptance in the Chaliya community is that women have to be confined in home with children, organising her day around the primary tasks of childcare. Her symbolic space is so defined by her being the power of the community who will produce children, wives and mothers to maintain its strength and might. Women contribute to this end by remaining 'chaste, circumspect and modest' (Johanna, L., 1990). Women for example either as wives of winders or actual weavers or as Beedi rollers or spinners start assisting in the work as soon as their hands are capable of doing any work.

Before a worker woman is made especially in the community of Chaliyas, a considerable amount of structure has gone into the making of her identity as women herself. Though in the geographical space men and women are found to interact with each other in close proximity, their social space mutually distance them. The position of women relative to that of men in a community and the relations between these positions while delineating the social space of women folk in a community similar to each other, in a way is characteristically different from that make them similar to each other. The responsibilities of women in the family make her less available for the work outside home in comparison with men. In sheer physical terms, traditional women are unfit for work in the organised sector on equal terms with men. Being female is centered round a whole set of norms and expectations in the family which are defined in terms of its oppositions to another such set, except that it creates the male space (Kochuthressia, C.T., 1994).

It was interesting to note whether the marital status of women is associated with the type of work system they are engaged in. The following table throws light on these aspects.

Table 9.7 Distribution of the respondents according to marital status and the work system

Categories	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
Married	120	108	228 (73.54)
Unmarried	30	52	82 (26.46)
Total	150	160	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Out of the total number of married women i.e., 73.54 per cent, 53.50 are in the organised sector and 46.49 per cent are in the unorganised sector. Out of the 82 single women, a good many belonged to the unorganised group of workers.

The association between the marital system and the work system is tested with the chi square analysis. The calculated value of Chi Square is 6.12, which is higher than the table value 3.84 at one per cent degree of freedom and five per cent significance. Since the calculated value is higher than that the table value, we reject the hypothesis i.e., there is no relationship between the marital status and the system of work. It could be concluded that the work system and the marital status of women are related.

9.5 Unorganised nature of women's work

The study of family and wage labour with reference to the social space is useful in comprehending the relationship between work and subordination. What could be observed from the interview was that women's household and personal characteristics influenced her subordination to the male category. Her confinement to the homestead was reflected in the choice of the domestic sphere in production, mainly in the unorganised household work system. The extent to which women carry out household work in addition to their productive work influenced their social role. It was observed that the more time they spent in the domestic sphere, the smaller was their participation in the public fields. The tendency in general is to protect her, at the same time she calmly satisfies with herself as supporter of the male member in the work field assigning her in the subsidiary items of work.

The tendency of women to be confined to the traditional sector could be noted. Of the household, 61.83 per cent are attached in the unorganised home units and this tendency is

strong in the Handloom industry. 92.30 per cent of women are attached to the home based units as workers and helpers.

Speaking of women in the traditional sector it would be instructive to place her within the nature of the dichotomy of 'nature' / 'culture' (Ornter, B., 1974). The inferior status of women as ensuing from her association with nature could be made clear if we consider a number of practices, which are widely accepted in the community she belongs to. Behavioral taboos and restrictions placed on her by the community come in her way to express herself in various fields she is situated. For example, in the Chaliya community men are to govern the street, the society and the Mandapam and above all the work field of weaving and women would govern the home environment. The result is a model of social world, which separated the domestic from the public world and allocated different rights to the gendered individuals.

9.6 Employment of the spouses

Occupations of the spouses of the respondents influenced the women workers and her attachment to the traditional sector.

Table 9.8 Distribution of workers according to the occupation of the spouses

Categories	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Farming/coolie	34	20	-	54(23.68)
Construction	22	4	2	28(12.28)
Traditional industries	28	18	68	144(50.00)
Unemployed	11	6	15	32(14.04)
Total	95	48	85	228(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Of the total married sample respondents, 23.68 per cent of the spouses are coolie workers. About 50 per cent are engaged in the traditional industries either partially or fully. This shows that there is a tendency among the male workers to be engaged in the traditional industries if the wives are engaged in it. Of the total population 32.68 per cent of workers engaged in the traditional industries are women.

9.7 Educational status and women workers

Of the total illiterate women 58.31 per cent are in the unorganised sector and 41.69 per cent are in the organised sector.

Those who are qualified above the middle school have a tendency to occupy factory units. But it is not so evident in all the industries.

Table 9.9 Percentage of respondents with educational status and the work system

Educational category	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
Illiterate	35	49	84 (27.09)
Primary	51	49	100 (32.27)
Middle school	29	45	74 (23.87)
High school	27	13	40 (12.90)
S.S.L.C	6	1	7 (2.25)
Technical	2	3	5 (1.62)
Total	150	160	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Education has not played much in the case of women workers as we notice that the choice of work is a matter of earning income for the family. The association between the work pattern and the literacy of women is analysed by testing the hypothesis that there is no relationship between the educational status of workers and the work system. Since the calculated value of the

Chi Square i.e., 9.6726, is less than the table value, 11.071, we accept the hypothesis that there is no relation ship between literacy and the work system that the choice of work system depends on the familial and cultural aspects.

9.8 Age and employment

For women in the sample, the time when they take up a job is significant. Work becomes a must for them to maintain the family. "It is uncommon for a woman in the traditional family to accept the employment outside the home" (Gore M.S.1968).

Of the total sample, child labour among female workers is rare. Only 11.65 per cent are engaged in work between one to 12 years of age. The highest number of women is employed in the age group between 13-25. Inter industry variations also could be noted. Beedi industry has the highest number of workers in the age group of 13 to 25 and 26 to 38 years while the handloom and the coir industry have got the highest number of workers in the age group 26 to 38. Of the total number of workers 14.83 per cent try get job after the age of 39. This is mainly due to the utter

poverty and the lack of employment opportunities women face in the traditional sector.

Table 9.10 Distribution of workers and age at which work started

Age of workers	Beedi		Coir		Handloom		Total
	Factory worker	Home worker	Factory worker	Home worker	Factory worker	Home worker	
0-12	-	8	5	-	-	20	33 (11.65)
13-25	32	40	18	10	14	20	124 (40.00)
26-38	10	22	21	20	20	14	107 (34.52.00)
39-51	8	10	6	-	16	6	46 (14.83)
Total	50	80	50	30	50	50	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

An analysis who took the decision on whether women should work or not have much implication among women workers in the traditional sector. Work has become a social and traditional phenomenon for women. No discussion precedes work. Women at an early age are exposed to the work culture of the community. Among the elderly group those who dropped out from the school

naturally got stuck with their traditional work. This tendency is also getting changed today. The younger group of the present age tries to persevere in their education and is hardly seen in the work site of the home units. It was noticed that in most of the organised units nearly 60 per cent of women workers expressed the desire to get better jobs in the future, while some of the women workers in home units would not mind remaining in the same work field as they think that it is their fate that they have to be in such situation. The norm that women have to be confined to the home stead is widely accepted in the community.

9.9 Number of years of service

Men and women always desire permanency of tenure of jobs even if a job is less paid. Duration of working life differed for those in the organised and unorganised units. Women of younger group wanted to get into factory units when they could have some continuity in their work. Even this group suffered from regular days of employment yet the workers preferred to be in the factory units, which gave them the dignity of a working woman. Most preferred factory system having regular days of employment

regular payment of wages and increment. The following table gives a rough idea of the year's service the sample workers had.

Table 9.11 Percentage of respondents with years of service

No. of years	Beedi		Coir		Handloom		Total
	Factory workers	Home workers	Factory workers	Home workers	Factory workers	Home workers	
Less than a year	10	-	20	10	20	10	70 (22.50)
1-5 years	17	-	12	6	20	10	65 (20.96)
5-10 years	50	30	10	2	2	20	84 (27.10)
10 and above	8	50	8	12	3	10	90 (29.36)
Total	50	80	50	30	50	50	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

It is noted that women in the sample have a long duration of service in the unorganised sector. They belong to the category of five to 10 and more than 10 years of service which means either they get into the work at a very early age or they go on doing the work till they grow very old. In the handloom

industry because of the training given to women by Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation many young girls have got into the work who have a very few years of service. On the other hand unorganised sector has got a large share of women in the category of five to 10 years of work (61.90 per cent).

Another important point that has to be noticed about the workers in the unorganised sector is that though they spend long years in this field of work, they are looked down upon as workers who did not do anything other than the household work. The invisible nature of women's work in the unorganised household system is very clear in the selected industries.

9.10 Training for job

Traditional industries in Kerala face a lot of challenges. One of the serious set backs in this sector is the falling trend in the number of workers engaged in these industries. For the sample under consideration, it was noticed that 30 per cent of women in the age group of 18 to 30 years have undergone special training for different types of work in the selected industries but they specialise mainly in any one area for example, weaving in the field of

handloom industry and spinning in the coir industry, which means they continue the jobs allotted to them. The number of trained workers is more in the coir sector specially those in the units, which have motor ratts for spinning. Almost 70 per cent of the workers have undergone training for the work, which makes them feel confident and efficient in their work.

9.11 Income, expenditure and saving

To earn more is a natural instinct, more so in case of people engaged in less remunerative jobs. An important fact that has to be noticed among the workers is that the whole family and not just one breadwinner is the productive entity. Often the whole household earn depending on the situational requirements and composition of family. Nearly 30 per cent of them had this phenomenon in practice.

The size of family is one of the deciding factors indicating the income pattern of the workers. To go further, the size of the households income is affected by two factors i.e., the number of persons working in a household and the work system in which they are engaged i.e., the organised or the unorganised

sector. The composition of age, structure of a household etc. determines the number of persons who can work and contribute to the family income. Age and family size structure determine the type of work each person in a household can undertake. Even in some households where children and old people are also active in the economic activity, their contribution is relatively low because of the type of the work they have undertaken. The older members and children depend upon the younger generation.

Household is the resource generator cum expenditure unit. In general resource is generated through employment in the industrial and household unit. The wage thus received is to be spent on buying food and other items. Though they desire to save, very rarely do they get any surplus especially those in the unorganised sector. They hardly get anything balance to be kept for future needs.

There is a clear cut distinction between the income of the individual household in organised factory units and the unorganised home units. The wages in unorganised home units on average range between Rs.20/- to Rs.40/- where as in the organised unit it is Rs. 50/- to Rs. 70/-. The low wage structure in the

unorganised sector necessitates the involvement of all the able bodied members of a family to meet household expenses. This has deprived the children of higher education particularly the female children who had to look after the household chores.

Table 9.12 Distribution of the respondents and monthly income

Income range	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
0-800	44	29	31	104(33.56)
801-1600	36	34	40	110(35.48)
1601-2400	42	8	15	65(20.96)
2400 and above	8	9	14	31(10.00)
Total	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Majority of the workers belong to the category of a family income in the range of Rs. zero to 1600/-. Among them, the beedi workers constitute 61.50 per cent. 71 per cent are handloom workers and 78.75 per cent are coir workers. The average income of the workers differs between industries. The mean income of the beedi workers is Rs.1154.00/-. For the coir workers it is Rs. 1270.31/- and for the handloom workers it is Rs. 1254.50/-. The female workers contribute much to the total family income by their

involvement in the traditional sector though very often it is unaccounted and unnoticed.

Most of the respondents expressed their view that the little income they could earn is a blessing for the family. The following table highlights the wage income pattern of the respondent workers.

Table 9.13 Distribution of sample workers by size of wage income per month

Size of income	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
0-300	60	10	18	88 (28.30)
301-600	38	18	26	82(26.35)
601-900	20	20	52	92(29.67)
901-1200	10	30	4	44(14.39)
1201 as above	2	2	-	4(1.29)
Total	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Out of the 28.3 per cent who have only Rs.150/- as their average wage income, the beedi workers constitute 68.18 per cent followed by the handloom workers (20.45 per cent) and the

coir workers (11.36 per cent). The average wage income of the workers also differ industry wise.

The female workers contribute well to the total family income and takes initiative to manage the family expenditure. The share of female income to the total family income could not be calculated in an accurate manner but the female workers are able to contribute to the family income by way of their wage income, which is shown in the above table. The average wage income was computed from the wage they are expected to receive if they were involved in the work in a regular manner. A rough estimate of the average wage income of the beedi workers is Rs.418.53/- and the Coir workers and the handloom workers got a wage income of Rs.735.5/- and Rs. 1170.31/- respectively. Most of them were not able to give a clear idea of the income they received, as they themselves do not have the habit of calculating how much they could earn by their work. These attitudes need to be changed as to make them feel that they contribute much to the income of the family.

9.12 Expenditure pattern

According to Engel's law, lower the income of the people, the larger is the share spent on food. This generalisation holds good for the sample household. It is very hard to get an approximate figure of expenditure of the women workers. Because in many cases their income is irregular and spend on immediate needs as soon as it is earned. Secondly they do not follow a system of planned expenditure. Budgeting is rarely done and accounting finds no place in their economic life. Since their earnings are not uniform and show wide fluctuations every month, the expenditure pattern goes the same way. In case not enough, they borrow from their friends. Social occasions and ritual celebrations are some of the occasions where money is spent easily. Four items of food, clothing, housing and entertainment (smoking, drinking and cinema) dominate the list of expenditure and expenditure on these items vary according to the income earned. Most of them responded in the affirmative. The highest number of respondents who meet their expenditure out of their own income came from the coir industry. The largest single group, which does not meet its expenditure, is found in the handloom industry. The following

table gives a clear picture of the expenditure pattern of the workers.

Table 9.14 Monthly expenditure pattern and number of workers-industry wise

Rupees spent	Food				Education				Recreation			
	B	C	H	Total	B	C	H	Total	B	C	H	Total
Nil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102	60	80	242 (78.06)
1-200	10	2	2	14 (4.52)	105	40	87	232 (74.83)	28	20	20	68 (21.94)
201-300	10	12	8	30 (9.67)	15	20	10	45 (14.51)	-	-	-	-
301-400	110	66	90	266 (85.81)	10	20	3	33 (11.66)	-	-	-	-
Total	130	80	100	310 (100)	130	80	100	310 (100)	130	80	100	310 (100)

Note: B - Beedi industry
 C - Coir industry
 H - Handloom industry

The above table clearly shows that the major share of the income of the workers in all three industries is spent on food items. Education comes the second important item of the expenditure. 85.81 per cent of the respondents spent an average of

Rs.350/- on food items. While only 11.66 per cent of respondents could spend same amount on education. 53.80 per cent could spend hardly Rs.100/- on education of children. Only 1.95 per cent of the workers could think of spending some money on medicine. Most of the respondents could not give an accurate picture of their expenditure on medicines majority of the workers in all the three industries spent an average of Rs.350/- on food alone.

9.13 Saving

Saving is an important aspect of economic life. Not only do they reveal the level of people income they also determine the level of capital likely to be generated for future investment. It demonstrates people's economic status and the level of their social and economic security. Assessment of saving is a tricky proposition. Saving generally means margin above expenditure. But what complicates the situation is that money spent on maintenance and improvement of dwelling is not considered or money spent on maintenance and improvement of dwellings are not considered or accounted as savings. Two indices i.e., possession of household items and money saved in the form of chitties and kuries are used to assess trend of the women workers

earning or saving capability. In general it was noted that only a very small size of the sample workers were able to save. The most important attitude noted during the interview is that there is a tendency to save money however small it may be.

Table 9.15 distribution of respondents and saving

Rate of saving	Beedi	Coir	H.L	Total
Nil	60	40	40	140(45.16)
1-500	20	26	29	75(24.20)
501-1000	34	9	20	63(20.32)
1001-1500	10	3	6	19(6.13)
1501-2000	6	2	5	13(4.19)
Total	130	80	100	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Savings is a mirage among the labour households. As their daily earnings is hardly adequate to meet the days expenses, savings is rather an extremely difficult feat for them. But it is significant to note that though a large number of the female respondents are in debt, a few of them could save some money to meet the incidental expenses. However they have chosen different means to preserve their savings.

Among the respondents 45.16 per cent do not have any saving, 10.32 per cent of workers have a saving of Rs.1000/- and above. Majority of the workers belong to the category of an average saving of Rs.250/- per year. Saving habits was widely noticed among the factory workers. The average saving of 70 beedi workers in Rs.764.28/-. The coir workers who have saving (i.e., 40) have an average saving of Rs.512.25/- and 60 handloom workers have got Rs. 642.6/- as the saved income.

The welfare schemes adopted by the factory units seem to be blessing for the workers. In the coir sector both organised and unorganised sector actively involve themselves in the welfare programmes in the factory sites. The following table gives an idea of the saving pattern of the sample workers.

Wide variations could be noticed between the factory workers and the home workers with regard to their saving rate. The unorganised home workers, only 50 per cent of workers, have a saving of Rs. 337.5/- and the rest not have saving at all. In the case of the organised workers the average saving is Rs.950/-.

Table 9.16 Saving of the workers and the work system

Saving	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
Nil	60(40.00)	80(50.00)	140(45.16)
0-500	9(6.00)	66(41.25)	75(24.20)
501-1000	49(32.67)	14(8.75)	63(20.32)
1001-1500	19(12.66)	-	19(6.13)
1501-2000	13(8.67)	-	13(4.19)
Total	150(100.00)	160(100.00)	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Those who could save Rs.500/- and above revealed that they belong to those who have some means of earning money other than their daily work in the traditional sector. It could also be those whose spouses engaged profitably in some work or other.

Majority of the workers have the habit of putting money regularly in chities and kuries owned and creates a social bond among the workers (47.41 per cent). The popularity of chitis among the beedi workers can be attributed to the possibility of auctioning or otherwise adjusting chitis at time of need in order to

get a lump sum amount. Chit funds to which workers subscribe are generally organised and conducted by local influential people. Banks and post offices are becoming popular as a result of fieldwork by the agents^{of} National Saving Scheme.

Table 9.17 Distribution of workers and saving pattern

Type of saving	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Bank	2	2	-	4(12.90)
Chitis and kuries	55	36	56	147(47.41)
No saving	60	40	40	140(45.16)
At home	13	2	4	19(6.13)
Total (100)	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

The utilisation of the saved money was mainly for the following items which high lights the fact that the respondents used the saved income both for productive and unproductive purposes.

Out of 54.83 per cent of workers who have got some saving, 48.82 per cent spent the saved income mainly for marriage purposes. 21 per cent spent it for clearing their debt and 22.94

per cent have spent the saved income for improving the home premises 8.24 per cent spent it for education of their children.

Table 9.18 Distribution of respondents and utilisation of saved income

Activities	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
For marriage	42	16	25	83(48.82)
Clearing of default	12	6	16	34(21.00)
Maintenance of houses	10	15	14	39 (22.94)
Education of children	6	3	5	14(8.24)
Total	70	40	60	170(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

9.14 Debt pattern

Debt mounts when people do not keep expenditure within their normal budget. Though comprehensive data are not available on this aspect, on the basis of information gathered, it become evident that borrowing money for consumption and day today expenditure is not a common feature of the respondents' economic life. The prominent reasons, which cause debt are marriage expense, funeral, festival or severe and prolonged illness

of the family members. While many exaggerated their borrowing, others understated it. Many felt shy of disclosing or talking about their borrowing habits while others resented it. The tendency is that while income is understated, expenditure is exaggerated.

Table 9.19 Percentage distribution of respondents and indebtedness

Debt in rupees	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Nil	14	20	10	44(14.19)
500 - 1000	50	28	42	120(38.71)
1001 - 2000	26	27	36	89 (28.71)
2001 - 3000	32	3	9	44(14.19)
3001 - and above	8	2	3	13(4.20)
Total	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Most of the respondents expressed their helplessness to meet both ends with the limited amount of the income of the family. The sad tone with they expressed their problems reveal that most of them had debt and repayment of debt was a big botheration for them. Their immediate needs like marriage expense, pay up pending bills, maintenance of the houses etc., always caused financial crisis. Only 14.19 per cent did not have

any debt. Majority belonged to the average debt of Rs.750/-. Paying up the uncleared debt seems to cause tension to the workers. The average debt of the beedi, coir and handloom workers is estimated to be Rs. 1482.75/-, Rs. 1150.50/- and Rs. 1200.50/- respectively.

Table 9.20 Distribution of respondents and sources of loan

Source of loan	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Nil	14	20	10	44 (14.17)
Friends and relatives	35	32	64	131 (42.28)
Boss/manager	66	18	20	104(33.55)
Banks	15	10	6	31(10.00)
Total	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Workers depended mainly on friends and relatives i.e., 42.25 per cent workers borrowed from relatives and friends 33.55 per cent depended on the facilities available in the work place. Only 10 per cent depended on bank credit. The workers found it convenient to depend on their family members and friends though at times it caused high interest rates. This was very severe in the case of workers who used the loan for unproductive purposes.

Most of them always pledged their property for loan purposes, which seriously affected financial position of the workers.

9.15 Domestic conditions and household responsibilities

This is one of the important factors that influenced women and her work conditions. It had both positive and negative effects. Women's functions could effectively be classified into productive and unproductive sphere. If the productive functions refer to be so called wage employment, the unproductive functions refer to the domestic child rearing and child bearing functions. Productive functions come under wage earning work or income generating operations while the unproductive functions are non-remunerative and confined to the household duties. Women of all classes have to invariably discharge the unproductive functions alike without much discrimination.

Women in general are not treated on a par with men either in the family or outside. She is subject to suffer under various authorities like political, clan, religious and masculine (Shobha, V., 1987). Nearly 60 per cent of the respondents mentioned that lack of alternative employment opportunities in the villages forced them to join these occupations in order to save

themselves and other members of the family from starvation. Others in the category revealed that they had followed their friends and relatives with a view to supplement to the income of the family. Almost all had joined to support their families. Poverty was the main reason put forward by nearly 90 per cent of the sample workers.

Those in the homestead and those in factory units expressed different views regarding this factor. Women of unorganised home workers were happy that they could do the work in the home premises, which was a boon in their responsibility of looking after household chores. Though most of them did not get much income as their own, they were happy that they got enough money as not to depend on their spouses. This autonomy was a blessing for many.

Those in the factory units nearly 60 per cent of the women in the coir units, 35 per cent in the beedi units and 40 per cent in the handloom industry had to spend nearly rupees three to five per day as their traveling expense. Those who wanted to save this money had to spend long hours in walking, which always caused an additional burden to them.

9.16 Assistance in household work

A women worker generally has a dual role of an earner and a housekeeper. The magnitude of the household responsibilities varies with the size of the family, the age of the children and family's status. In large families she has more responsibilities and a meager family income is always a strain on her. The majority of the world's employed women combine working for a salary with innumerable unpaid household chores. Men perceive of themselves primarily in the role of bread winner, they undertake a minimum of domestic work and when necessary expect their women folk to earn as well as assume full responsibility of balancing budgets (Malavika, K., 1982).

A poor woman worker's satiation is different from other middle class woman who manages many things with labour saving devices. The respondents were asked the details of the household chores besides the official duty chores in the factory site. This includes the cleaning of the house, preparing food, carrying of water and collecting fuel. Only five per cent of the total household has the facilities of cooking gas. The women workers of the unorganised sector though could not calculate the exact hours,

found that 90 per cent of them take the full responsibility of the household management. A few of them got assistance in certain activities. The Table 9.21 highlights this point.

Table 9.21 Distribution of workers according to the assistance received at household work

Type of activities	Factory workers	Home workers	Total
Cooking	10(6.67)	8(5.00)	18(5.80)
Carrying water	35(23.34)	22(13.50)	57(18.39)
Buying vegetable & other things	70(46.66)	90(56.50)	160(51.61)
Collecting firewood	15(10.00)	10(6.25)	25(8.06)
Help in the rearing of livestock	20(13.33)	30(18.75)	50(16.14)
Total	150 (100.00)	160 (100.00)	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Assistance was mainly in the field of collecting things from outside including collecting water and getting vegetables from the market. Women mainly managed the internal affairs. Nearly 45 per cent of the workers were assisted by other family members, including their in laws and children specially in cleaning the house and surroundings. This was possible only in joint or

extended nuclear families. Quite a number of them had assistance in collecting water. Though such help is part-time it eliminates part of the drudgery of the household work. The convention that household labour is women's work and that a man found engaging in it would be considered strange or ridiculous.

9.17 Participation in trade union activities

Women of all the industries have taken very little participation in developmental activities undertaken by the government too. Some women know about the organisations through radio, newspapers and magazines. Such particulars regarding the respondent are high in the case of coir industry.

Table 9.22 Percentage distribution of workers and trade union activities

Respondents	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Membership in trade union	50	30	50	130 (41.93)
Active participation	12	3	-	15 (4.83)
Taken role as leader	5	-	-	5 (1.61)
Note applicable	63	47	50	160 (51.63)
Total	130	80	100	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Representation of women in various voluntary and social organisations of the sample workers is very inadequate. This is primarily because of the fact that women are less exposed to such organisations and they are not trained and encouraged to participate in them actively. Though almost all of them have heard about the union activities, variations could be noticed in industry wise too. Active participation of women in the trade union activities was restricted to mainly the beedi and the coir industry (4.83 per cent) and not the workers in the handloom industry. In the organised factory units of beedi industry women actively participated in the dharnas, protest meeting and rally etc. One member was the leader of the unit in the factory in Kannur for three years. Wide distinction could also be noted between the factory and the home workers. Only two per cent of the home workers were in the know of the union activities but hardly participated in the union activities.

9.18 Women and social activities

The involvement of women in social and voluntary organisation shows that they hardly had any involvement in such association whether it is the cast/community organisations or any

voluntary organisation in the social and political fields. For example, the temple committee of the handloom weavers streets did not have adequate women representation. The Shaliya Khema Samithi of Puthiyatheru in Kunnur city did not have any women leader in the administration. The co-operative societies for handloom production at times had women delegates but women did not have the role as secretary or the board member. Women seem to have known and familiarised with other voluntary associations like Mahila Samsithi, Vanitha Vedi etc. The following section highlights certain points in this area.

Table 9.23 Particulars of respondents' participation in social and cultural organisations

Type of organisation	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Mahila Samithy	6	4	-	10 (3.23)
Panchayat committees	8	9	-	17 (5.48)
Co-operative societies	15	4	6	25 (8.06)
Vanitha vedi	-	4	-	4 (1.29)
Not involved in any organisation	101	59	94	254 (81.94)
Total	130	80	100	310 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

Women's representation in various voluntary and social organisations too is very inactive. The membership of women in such activities show that they are rarely exposed to such organization (Table 9.23).

9.19 Exposure to mass media

Nearly five per cent of women in the sample knew about recent developments and activities through radio, newspapers and magazine. The respondent women who read newspapers were comparatively low in village of Kattamilly and Chirakkal in Kannur where a large number of handloom workers and beedi workers are congregated.

9.20 Awareness of politics and voting behavior

Political activity and voting behavior may be used as a measure of the degree with which persons feel that they are part of the community and behave as if they can influence the major policy decisions affecting them. The source of information with which a worker become aware of political behavior in the society may be broadly divided into three categories they are reading the newspapers and periodicals, discussion with another

person and participation in political activities and programmes. Only 12 per cent of the workers had access to the newspaper. The political awareness was limited to only using the freedom of franchise.

Membership of professional and occupational Association paves way for the workers political participation. Out of the 310 workers only 165 (53.22 per cent) were members of political parties and out of these only eight could actively participate in the activities. Of the total workers, 95.10 per cent were aware of their right of franchise.

Work and leisure are two aspects of social life. Leisure is best understood against the background of work. Out of 310 respondents, nearly 75 per cent could not think of spending much on recreational habits. Money spent on visiting temples, religious places and attending festivals etc seem to be greater than ordinary events like picnics, tours and cinema. Talking, gossiping, attending friend's marriage, festivals etc appear to compensate enough for the monotonous work. The income of the workers also played a significant role in determining their leisure and recreational habits.

9.21 Land and other productive assets

The income of the sample household derived from different sources is hardly adequate to meet their daily necessities. The sources of the income of these families are their productive assets and their own labour power. Majority of the respondents do not possess any productive asset through which they could derive some income. Hence most of them are dependent upon the money earned from their own labour power. The following table gives the details of the land asset the sample households possess.

Table 9.24 Distribution of respondents and ownership of land

Categories	Beedi	Coir	Hand-loom	Total	Per cent of respondents
No land	24	18	26	68	21.90
Less than five cents	41	34	33	108	34.83
5-10 cents	62	16	32	110	35.48
Above 10 cents	3	12	9	24	7.79
Total	130	80	100	310	100.00

Most of the respondents belong to the group of the laboures who have five to ten cents of land. The average size of

land of the workers differ industry wise 21.90 per cent did not possess any land and 34.83 per cent have just enough land for the house constructed, 35.48 per cent of workers possessed between five to ten cents of land and among these only two per cent used land for vegetation. No worker possessed land for cultivation except 2.10 per cent workers in the beedi industry in Katampally area in Kannur.

9.22 Cattle and livestock

Majority of the sample household did not possess any type of livestock asset while they are owned by only a fraction of the sample. This again is the revelation of the sheer poverty of the workers in these industries whose economic conditions deteriorated over the years.

A few sample workers had to spare their time to rear the animals like buffaloes, goats, sheep and chicken. Though the money earned on this is meager, it has contributed something to economic position of the families. Women had to bear the brunt of the additional burden by taking care of animals, feeding and rearing them, milking them and also selling the milk. However

only little income is made out of the tiny bits of land and the animals they possess. In general the respondents do not have made any profit out of the farm produce.

9.23 Other physical assets

This includes the assets like T.V., sewing machine and electric gadgets of the household. Only a small share of respondents had the privilege of it. Among them less than five per cent possessed T.V. and nearly 10 per cent had Radio or transistor. Hardly 1 per cent had electric iron and only less than five per cent had gas or stove in the kitchen.

9.24 Housing conditions

The housing conditions of the respondents cause much inconvenience to them. The huts and hut like houses without proper ventilation and adequate accommodation largely impede the social and psychological bearing of the female workers. Those who possess cattle give shelter to them right in front of their houses cause the unhygienic atmosphere in their surrounding. The raw material collected for work usually is kept along with the other things in the house. Hardly any worker has a special room for their

work except for example if weaving is done in the house, a small shed is constructed attached to the house. The following is the pattern of houses of the sample workers.

Table 9.25 Distribution of sample workers and type of houses they possessed

Categories	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
Tiled/thatched houses	110	62	62	234(75.49)
Huts	16	12	28	56(18.06)
Roof concreted	4	6	10	20(6.45)
Total	130	80	100	310(100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets show percentage

Majority of the workers had houses tiled as they thought it would have less recurring expenses (75.49 per cent). 18.06 per cent of workers had only huts without proper walling of the houses and used one room for multi purposes. Quality of life index is computed from the available information of the workers housing and living conditions, which reflected the living standard of the workers. The following

variables are taken into consideration for the computation of the index.

- Possession of physical assets
- Possession of land
- Facilities of drinking water
- Housing conditions

Weightage is given to each of these variables and scoring is done accordingly. The score level helps to evaluate the living conditions of the workers (The method of constructing the index is given in Appendix II).

Grade A, score above 50-	High
Grade B, score 40-50	- Very good
Grade C, score 30-40	- Good
Grade D, score 20-30	- Poor

Wide disparity could be noticed between industry wise workers living conditions, which is graded into four categories A, B, C, D. There aren't any worker who belong to the category of high living conditions with score 50 and above. The average score of beedi workers is 24.38. The coir workers have an average score of 26.5 and the handloom workers have only 23. On the whole 3.23

per cent of workers belong to the group of low standard of living conditions.

Table 9.26 Distribution of female workers by score in the quality of life index

Score	Beedi	Coir	Handloom	Total
0-10	6	0	4	10(3.31)
10-20	45	18	42	105(33.80)
20-30	42	40	28	110(35.48)
30-40	25	14	26	65(20.96)
40-50	12	8	-	20(6.45)
50 and above	-	-	-	-
Total	130	80	100	310(100)

Note : Figures in brackets show the percentage

The coir workers seem to be in better living conditions followed by the beedi workers and the handloom workers. The coir industry is functioning in well North Kerala compared to the beedi and handloom industry as the unemployed days, irregularity of work are rare in this sector compared to the other two industries. Most of the coir workers are in the category of the co-operative type of factory units of the coir industries, which is able to give

better employment to the workers. The beedi industry and the handloom industry workers seem to be in a pathetic condition as majority of the workers belong to the unorganised type of work system.

9.25 Empowerment of women

Women's autonomy and empowerment is an important corollary of development in the widest sense of enlarging women's choices and in the attainment of full personhood. The degree of autonomy that women have is determined by various historical, cultural and economic factors. The Gender Empowerment measure is an index of women's participation and decision making in the economic, political and professional spheres (Maitreyi Das, 2000). Autonomy and empowerment thus take into account the activities that women engage in and the power that they exercise as a consequence of their status while the status can be argued to be a static concept that does not focus on women's active role in society.

The status and autonomy of women in the present context could be better evaluated by the nature of decision taking

capacity of women in the household economy. The decision role by the household would indicate the extent to which the particular individual is able to exercise influence over family work and other matters (Giriappa, S., 1988). In order to specify the decision role of women, an attempt is made to distinguish the roles pertaining to work conditions, family maintenance, household expenditure, leisure and recreation including entertainment, festivities, social relations, education and health problems.

Table 9.27 Percentage of women workers by their role in decision making

Type of decision	Not responded	Husbands	Wives	Wives and husbands	Total
Buying of food	6 (1.94)	80 (25.80)	104 (33.55)	120 (38.70)	310
Education of children	68 (21.94)	120 (38.71)	80 (25.81)	50 (16.19)	310
Public activities	88 (28.39)	200 (64.52)	12 (3.87)	10 (3.23)	310
Work related events	-	202 (65.16)	74 (23.87)	34 (10.97)	310

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

Women had greater share in decision making with regard to buying food items and matters related to work activities. Most of the respondents expressed that there was some sort of discussion and joint decision in these two events compared to other items like the education of children and exposure to the public. It was surprising to note that only (23.87 per cent) of women workers had autonomy in decision taking related to work and work activities. In most of the cases it was the monopoly of men. This was slightly better in the case of factory workers who had to follow the instructions in the factory site.

9.26 Health status of women workers

Among the respondent women, the incidence of sickness is high among beedi workers households. This is mainly due to the exposure to tobacco dust 40 per cent of the women beedi workers in the sample reported one or the other type of ailment. Beedi workers sit for long hours carrying on their lap baboo trays with tobacco. More than 86 per cent of the sample attributed the occurrence of many deceases to beedi workers. Two reasons were shown i.e., continuous inhaling of tobacco fume and continuous sitting in ill ventilated unhealthy surrounding. T.B, Asthama and

other respiratory troubles are the result of continuous work at the beedi sheds. Other problems include fever, cold and backache, joint ache and other chest diseases. About 60 per cent of the women surveyed reported giddiness and headache of which the main cause could be the exposure to tobacco dust. Compared to the beedi workers, the health problems among the handloom and coir workers seemed to be little except for a few complained about allergy problems. Among the women weavers about two per cent complained of backache and body pain. Five per cent of women in retting of husks complained about pain and skin diseases on palms and hand.

The discussions and analysis carried out in the present section clearly shows the social familial, demographic, personal and cultural perceptions of women in the traditional industries. On the whole it could be noted that there is wide difference between the economic and social status of women workers in the factory units and the home units. The exposure of women to the public world contributes a lot to their mental, personal and economic status. Work gives them autonomy. At the same time the invisible and unrecognized role women play in the society, if not accepted, will surely affect them.

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SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Kochuthressia. C.T. “Economics of female labour in the traditional industries with special reference to north Kerala ” Thesis. Department of Economics
Dr. John Mathai Centre , University of Calicut, 2001

CHAPTER - 10

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Participation of women in socio-economic activities are prevalent in all countries. They contribute a significant portion to the labour force and are increasingly joining the labour market. However this capacity of female population has been largely ignored over the years and has resulted in the poor economic position and low status of women. The present section deals with the summary of the study followed by major findings, conclusion and recommendations.

10.1 Summary of the study

Traditional industries in Kerala provide employment to 12,52,000 workers. The study is an attempt to expose various aspects of women workers who are engaged in the traditional industries of beedi, coir and handloom of North Kerala, which provides employment to 15 per cent, 44 per cent and 22 per cent of the total workforce. The basic objectives of the study are listed as follows: To discuss the pattern of female employment with special reference to the unorganised sector, to examine the nature of

employment in the traditional industries of North Kerala, to discuss production process and the gender based division of work in the traditional industries, to discuss the unorganised nature of production in the traditional industries and its implications on women workers and to examine the socio-economic status of women workers in the selected industries.

The introductory chapter throws light on the employment aspects of men and women in the global level. On average 39 per cent of the labour force and 19 per cent of the Asian Labour force would need to change sectors in order that men and women be represented in each sector. In all the developing countries wage gap is reduced and women get 65 per cent of the wages of men. Sex wise unemployment percentage also reveals certain facts. Only in Turkey and in Singapore the unemployed rate is high for men than women.

The first chapter also deals with the significance, scope, limitation and chapterisation of the study. There exists in our country what economists call a dual economy of modern and traditional sectors. The employment of 13.2 million persons engaged in the traditional industries in the country is a very

significant phenomenon. The traditional sector of the economy in the context of labour surplus of the developing country can otherwise be called the unorganised sector of the economy.

Agriculture is the major sector in which Kerala women were engaged in the past. The emergence of traditional industries in Kerala such as coir, cashew and beedi opened up employment opportunities to women. Handloom, beedi, tiles, khadi and village, cotton spinning belong to the factory sector types. Considering the factory and non-factory type of industries, 10 lakhs persons are employed of which cashew, handloom, coir, bamboo and beedi are important. Two thirds of these workers are in the unorganised units. In most traditional industries in Kerala women have a dominant position in the workforce. Exclusive dependence on agriculture sector for work meant for them low and uncertain income and arbitrary terms and conditions of work.

The present study is restricted in its scope and has certain limitations. Since no proper records are maintained about the traditional industries, it was difficult to get the current data of the these industries. The Directorate of the traditional industries has conducted no survey since 1976. The officials like the

contractors engaged in these industries were reluctant to give the details regarding the wages, time of work etc. Some of them even refused to give an appointment.

The introductory section is followed by nine chapters, which fulfill the goal and objectives of the present work. An extensive review of literature on women and work is done in the second chapter. Special reference to women in the unorganised sector shows that no comprehensive study on women in the traditional sector is done specially of the State of Kerala. It is followed by theoretical clarification of concepts like female work force participation, gender system of work, household industries, traditional industries and organised and unorganised sector. A clear vision of the meaning of these concepts has helped to formulate the methodology for the study.

The methodology in the study covers the data sources, procedure of sampling, the sample frame and the data analysis. Data sources include both the primary and the secondary data. The selection of the sample households was done after the village survey.

The third chapter makes a critical discussion of the theoretical approaches that have been developed on study of women and work. The categories of labour into which workers can be drawn leads to the question of how workers, particularly women gain access to various types of employment and mechanism by which this categorisation takes place. The idea of the reserve army of labour posited by Marx^s has been picked up again in recent years by many authors in the socialist-feminist framework. Different forms of labour i.e., the floating reserve, the stagnant reserve, the latent reserve have been discussed within the context of the development of capitalism in the 19th and 20th century and its impact on women's productivity within the household.

An attempt is made in this section to analyse critically the views of the Neo classical theories which includes the 'new home economics' and the human capital theories which suggest that the sex differences are the result of differences in productivity between male and female or sex differentiation in socialisation occurs prior to labour market entrance. A critical analysis of the various theories and models developed on women and work clearly show that a number of factors influence women and her access to the labour market. The present study applied a few of these

theories and developed a model for women workers in a few traditional industries in North Kerala.

The sample for the present study consisted of 310 household drawn from three important traditional industries of North Kerala. A four staged stratified sampling process was used for the same. The sampling units at different stages are districts, industries, villages and households.

The North Kerala includes six districts mainly i.e., Malappuram, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Kannur, Wyanad and Kasargod. Wide variations can be noted in the share of industries in the provision of employment. The Kerala state is divided into three zones with regard to the distribution of traditional industries. The North Kerala has the domination of two industries taking a share of more than 60 per cent of the workers in these industries. Though the coir industry has a major share in the southern districts, the districts of Kozhikode and Kannur have certain pockets of these industries, which provides employment to large number of workers.

Chapter four discusses in general the nature and the pattern of female employment with special reference to the

unorganised sector. The study reveals certain interesting facts with regard to the share of women work force in the agricultural sector and the concentration of women in the service sector etc. The percentage share of the total female labour force in agriculture has fallen down everywhere except for East and South Asia. What we need to observe is that the decline in the agricultural sector and non-increase in the manufacturing sector was compensated by the increase in the female share of employment in the service sector. Women workers in non-agricultural activities like manufacturing and services are mostly concentrated in the low wage occupation and informal segments of these factors.

Casualisation of female labour became the significant aspect of women workers in India. The percentage of casual workers among urban females has neither increased nor decreased during 1973-93. One of the important thrusts of this chapter is the findings of the Employment Market Information on the organised segment of the Indian economy under the director General of employment and Training and Ministry of labour. A rough estimate of the total size of the unorganised sector besides agriculture is as follows. The total size is 107 million of which the manufacturing activity has 38 million followed by 26 million in the

trading activities. Community service absorbs 14 million, construction group engages 11 million and transport sector has seven million. Among these, women work force estimated in the unorganised sector are as follows. Agriculture has 1.87 million, fishing has one million, small animal husbandry has 1.5 million, Khadi and village has 1.70 million, handloom has 2.98 million. Handicraft has got 5.4 million and sericulture has 1.30 million women workers. On the whole 94 per cent of the total women workforce is in the unorganised sector, which is estimated to be 42.76 million women.

The discussion of the nature of female employment is followed by the discussion of female labour force in the traditional industries in Kerala in the fifth chapter. There are no reliable data on the quantum of workers in the unorganised sector of Kerala economy. Evaluating general trends of female employment in Kerala the following facts are observed. Female workforce participation in Kerala has come down from 23.7 per cent in 1901 to 15.9 per cent in 1991. But the absorption of women in non-agricultural employment is very significant (43.7 per cent). The tertiary sector provided employment to only 10.8 per cent of women in India but in Kerala it is as high as 29.7 per cent. This is

one of the important characteristics of Kerala model of development.

The percentage of employment in the traditional sector is estimated to be 82.55 per cent of which 62.83 per cent are women. Researchers have made an attempt to study the traditional industries in Kerala in the broader context of industrial transformation, organisational factors, labour processes and the survival of strategy of workers. The first section of this chapter discusses the role, importance and characteristics of the traditional industries.

The second section discusses the informalisation process that took place in these industries with special reference to the industries in the North Kerala. The study has observed the role of Basel mission in the development of these industries. Through sub-contracting and parent ancillary relationship, the informalised system of production took place in these industries, which were always disadvantageous to women. An attempt is made to study about women in the traditional industries of the women who are engaged in the unorganised sector of Kerala.

Chapter six titled "The profile of the study area and the sample workers" gives a detailed account of the resource base of the selected districts and the profile of the sample workers selected. Kerala with its high social development indicates but poor industrial growth, its ranking 10th among the other Indian states, presents the importance and the role of the traditional industries. The primary sector mainly the agricultural sector absorbs large number of people. The traditional industries of Malabar, the major industries of the area could be considered the backbone of the industrial growth of the region. They can no longer play the role of the residual sector in Kerala's economy. After having surveyed the resource base of the selected districts, the profile of 310 sample workers i.e., the personal, demographic, familial and educational status of women workers are discussed in this section.

The process of production and the gender based division of work in the three selected industries are discussed in chapter seven. Explanatory theoretical attempt is made to develop the notion of labour market segmentation by introducing into the analysis, elements of patriarchy and capitalism in the context of differentiated production structures. Besides the main work of

rolling, tying and labeling there are eight types of work in the beedi industry. In the same manner the handloom industry has got the main division of work as pre weaving and weaving section. The pre weaving includes winding, warping, dyeing and the main work is the weaving. The whole process is also called the skilled and non-skilled work. The Coir industry includes two nodes of operation in which the first node includes the operation of retting and defibering of husk followed by the second node which includes spinning of coir yarn. The following facts were observed with regard to the women workers who are concentrated in particular type of work in these industries.

In the Beedi sector, women are seen mainly in the rolling of beedi and the labeling section. Both men and women have access to these types of work. Of the total workers 88.46 per cent are engaged in the beedi rolling and 9.23 are in the labeling and 2.31 per cent are in the helping section. Wide variations could be observed with regard to women in the organised factory groups and unorganised home workers. The organised factory group does not show so visibly the division of work as in the unorganised sector. It was studied that women are not to be seen in the section of workers as supervisors, tobacco distributors and furnaceman.

Fibre production in the coir section involves both men and women. But women are exclusively engaged in the defibring and yarn production. Of the total women workers 82.5 per cent are engaged in the spinning section.

Handloom weaving which involves labour intensive technology requires a large number of workers than the male weavers. The workers are divided into various categories as group A, B, C by the Minimum Wages Committee. A large number of women are engaged in the pre-weaving section of work, which includes mainly the winding and helping section. Of the total number of respondents 88 per cent are involved in the winding sector in which 55.23 per cent are organised workers and 46 per cent are unorganised workers. There are only 12 per cent workers in the section of weaving. Women have been segregated to certain types of work and they are mainly in the type with piece rate based payment system. Concentration of women in the unorganised group of workers also entails various types of economic and social problems for women.

It is observed that the segregation of work or the gender system of work in the traditional industry is an artifact of

patriarchal system. The exercise of male control over women's labour is operated by the family patriarchs and thus discourages women seeking wage employment or engaging in work outside their homes. The capitalists control the wage unit and the family unit is widely executed by the contract system of work in the traditional sector. For women in the traditional sector, ideology of female seclusion has worked together with a peculiar type of production relation to ensure cheap labour supply to the traditional industries. Women are inserted into the capitalist relations of production in a way which does not depend on a separation between women and the work place. This has resulted in economic subordination of women.

The identification of different rights for men and women further forms a category of perception of what women is meant to be both within the home and the community. She is engaged in the inside and invisible work which will set the foundation for main production process. The whole production process leaves her into an invisible world, having no sense of the final product, which she could identify. The gender system excludes women from full participation of the world outside the home. Conflict then emerge as they try to balance the demands of

family labour against time and resources necessary for their individual project and enterprises. The exercise of male control over women's labour discourages women from seeking wage employment in work outside their homes.

The present section also highlights the various aspects of differences in wage rates with regard to the gender system of work. Wage differential between comparable occupations take place through segregation of work process and restrictive mobility from one to another through gender based reservations. In the case of selected industries difference in wages is mainly through segmentation of work and assigning work to particular sets and restrictions on movement from one job to another. Wage differential is so visible in the case of Beedi workers who fetch Rs. 65.70/- for rolling 1000 beedis in the organised factory system while the unorganised workers can never get Rs. 47/- for 1000 beedis. Labeling also fetches Rs. 63.20/- for 1000 bundle in which one bundle has 15 beedis. Variations in wage is noticed not between male and female workers but between the different types of work and the work system. In the case of handloom industries wage rate differs between different types of workers and women are concentrated in these types of work, which fetches them low

wages. Wage for winding is calculated as per 'Kais' A woman can do only 8 to 10 kais a day which will give them Rs. 17.92/- besides the dearness allowance of Rs. 48.15/-. The weaving workers get at the same, for a day Rs. 88.53/- and the dyeing man gets Rs. 70.20/- and warping section gets Rs. 59.09/-. Women are mainly in the section of winding, which fetches them very low wages.

Differentiation in wages between different types of work could be noticed in the coir industry too and women are concentrated in a particular job of spinning. On average women workers can spin six kg of yarn on a hand ratt. With the introduction of motor ratt they are able to produce 9 to 10 kg which could fetch them Rs.70/- a day. What we need to observe is that the subtle way of sex labeling of work in the selected industries is always disadvantageous to women workers. The gender system of work also limits the access of women to all types of work in these industries.

Chapter eight discusses one of the important objectives of the study i.e., the unorganised nature of production in the traditional industries in Kerala and its implications on women workers. This has been achieved by a detailed discussion of the

decentralised system of production, via sub contracting. The sub contracting out firm and the sub contracting in firm facilitates a method of organisation of production based on technical and social division of labour, which is widely noticed in the selected industries.

Women experience wage discrimination due to the particular gender system of work and their limited access to only certain types of work. Besides this discrimination they are subject to wide variations in the wage structure due to the existence of different forms of organisation of production. There was a hierarchy of status between employment under factory system and employment in the private household. Contract workers and self-employed workers constitute 51.62 per cent of the total respondents while those who are enrolled as factory workers constitute 48.39 per cent. The coir and handloom industry has got comparatively less number of workers who are under a contractor.

The mode of recruitment of workers has wide implications on women workers. When recruited through the labour contractors, the quantum of work and the mode of payment are settled through the labour contractors. The workers do not

have any contact with the employer. 23.88 per cent of the respondents were appointed through the contractors while 18.06 per cent worked in their own units, 9.07 per cent worked in the hired units in the household.

Two types of wage payments were observed under different forms of organisation-payment by time and payment by results. All three industries have got this system of payment. More than 90 per cent of the respondents were given piece rate system. The workers of different occupations on the basis of the actual wage earned by the worker and the time spent in the work thus becomes very important.

Time factor differs among the workers in different forms of organisation. Most of the women in the household units had no idea of the time spent in their work since they felt that the work they are engaged is only the work of the household which they have to complete for the main work.

The present study makes an attempt to highlight the differences that could be noticed between workers not only in the mode of payment but also the wage period. Wages are paid weekly

or daily. Fortnight payments are also not uncommon. The salaried staff are given the payment monthly. 61.29 per cent of the respondents got weekly wages while only 8.06 per cent got daily wages.

Industry wise variations are also revealed in the present study. Among 130 beedi workers, 6.15 per cent were not able to compute their wages while in the handloom sector it was 28 per cent. The coir workers seem to be sure of their work (67 per cent) and only 8.06 per cent were engaged as daily wage earners who were the stop gap in the work.

Among the 46.77 per cent who got on an average wage of Rs.15/-, the home based workers constituted 93.10 per cent. In this group 44.80 per cent are beedi workers and 27.58 per cent are handloom workers. The average wage of the factory workers in the beedi industry is Rs.29/- while for the home workers it is hardly Rs. 16.88/-. In the handloom sector it is Rs.29/- and Rs.17/- respectively. For the coir workers it is Rs. 43/- and Rs. 15/- respectively. The present chapter also high lights the non wage benefits enjoyed by the workers include the dearness allowance, provident fund, medical aid and bonus.

Checking the quality of the products is an important item in the traditional sector. The size and the quality, the finish of the product etc., were considered. Manipulations of wage rate through wage cut were an important problem. Reduction of wages for a small reason was a common feature among the contractors. In total 57.42 per cent of workers experienced wage cut. 61.54 per cent are from the beedi industry.

One of the important features of the traditional industries is the lack of job security. One of the reasons of the concentration of women workers in the unorganised sector of these industries is the easiness with which they could be kept as temporary workers. These ideas help us to understand the temporiness of job contract, which seems to be economical in two different ways - a low wage and minimum supervision. Thus maximum labour power is released without future obligations that are legally attached to the long term contracts. Among the beedi workers 46.15 per cent did not have permanent job while in the coir and handloom industry it was 60 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. During the slack season most of them remained at home without any job. Culture and the family background always acted on them and they could not look for any other job.

In the Beedi industry, on an average the factory workers could roll 517 beedis a day while the home based worker could do only 275 beedis approximately. Non-availability of raw material, lack of proper time table and motivation etc., seemed to be the reasons for low productivity among the home workers. In the case of coir workers 60 per cent of workers in the factory group could spin on an average about eight kg yarn a day while the home workers (66.67 per cent) could do only four kg of yarn a day. The spread of motor ratts in the factories seem to be a blessing for women. Variation between the productivity of women workers in the factory sector and the home based system makes us think of the possibilities and the need of putting more workers in the factory group.

In this context the sex wise productivity difference in the selected industries of handloom and beedi industries are also considered. In the case of coir workers, this comparison is not effective as there were only women in the group of spinning. It was observed that the male weavers could weave about eight meters of cloth per day. In the case of young trained women weavers they too could weave six to seven meters a day. This is mainly due to two reasons-they were given training programme by

the Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation and they were better motivated as they had voluntarily opted for this particular job. A comparison of the productivity of men and women could not be done effectively as there were difference in the age, training and the duration of service etc. One thing to be noted is that an effective training programme for women will be very much useful to increase the productivity of women. More and more of such training programme will help to increase the self-image of women and thus raise their productivity and motivation.

Any study of women and her work would be meaningful if we take into account the socio economic status of female workers engaged in different occupations. This particular objective of the study is fulfilled by a discussion of socio economic conditions of women in the traditional industries in chapter nine highlighting the caste, family structure, income and expenditure pattern etc.

The prevalence of the family labour and the factory labour have got great implications on the socio economic status of women workers in the selected industries. There is no doubt that

access to earned income substantially improves women's position within the household, gives them greater control over the distribution of such earnings and household resources and generally improve their status and strength in society.

The association between the caste system and the work system is tested with the Chi-square analysis and has been proved that the choice of workers i.e., to choose the factory site or the home based units is highly influenced by the caste system. The traditional Hindus and the Muslims remain in the homestead for work, though there are signs of changes due to the educational facilities for women.

Sixty seven point sixty nine per cent of the beedi workers and 92 per cent of the handloom workers have inherited their work from their forefathers while 67.5 per cent of coir workers have started the work by the present generation. Of the total respondents 66.75 per cent have inherited their job while 33.05% are new members. Only 26.45 per cent of the workers preferred jobs for their children in the present field while 27.08 per cent wanted construction work which could fetch them Rs.150/- per day. Among the workers 27.5 per cent aspired to send their children

abroad to the gulf countries for better prospects. Younger generation showed a negative attitude specially to the home based work while 70 per cent below the age of 25 did not mind to remain in the field provided they have regular work and regular wage in hand which they felt gave them a lot of freedom and autonomy.

The family structure with its secluded and rigid nature has undergone great change in the selected area. Personal and informal interviews with the respondents helped to realise about the present family system. Men are not confined to the streets and colonies alone and are exposed to other fields of work. The tendency of the younger generation to leave the traditional occupations have affected the economic stability of the family. Unemployment of the youth is a threat to the family. A strong presence of patriarchy is felt in the family structure. The division of families into constituent nuclear units is on the increase today. The unorganised workers of the traditional industries in the selected area have a larger family size compared to the organised factory workers. The need to conscientise women of the small family size is the need of the time.

Of the total population 65.92 per cent belongs to the family size of less than four members. As the size of the family increases, the number of illiterates is also on the increase and vice versa. There are 27.09 per cent illiterate the total sample populations. It was observed that the literacy rate will go up in the traditional industrial sector in the near future as most of the respondents expressed the desire to send the children to schools.

The average age of marriage differed between factory workers and home workers. Early marriage takes place among the women of handloom industry, average age at marriage of the factory workers and the home workers is 22.59 and 25.64 respectively. The association between marital status and the system of work is studied with the help of a Chi-square tests. Late marriage takes place among the women of home based work system and the unmarried rate is also high in the home based system. Of the total unmarried respondents of 26.45 per cent, 63.3 per cent are in the unorganised home workers.

The invisible nature of work is another important point that is observed in the present study. The extent to which women carry out household work in addition to their productive work

influenced their social role. 54.73 per cent of women workers are depending on the traditional occupation of the family and they are engaged as also part time workers. The field of activities of women in the traditional sector can be broadly grouped as household work without direct economic benefit and wage earning employment. Most of the work of women are directly or indirectly linked up with economic activities but more than half the percent could not compute the amount of work towards wage earning and domestic work. They always mingled up both, not able to differentiate one from the other. Of the total population, 34.26 per cent are engaged in direct economic activities and only 2.83 per cent are considered as helpers and 37.9 per cent are casual workers. 50 per cent of the spouses of the workers are also engaged in the traditional industries. This shows that traditional industries continue to be a major agent of employment for both men and women.

Education has not played a very significant role in the life of the workers, though the change is started to feel in the streets and colonies. Of the total illiterate of 27.09 per cent, 58.33 per cent are unorganised home workers and 40.69 per cent are factory workers.

Various aspects in connection with age and employment reveals certain interesting facts about women workers in this field. Only 29.36 per cent of workers are engaged in the work for a period of 10 years. Women at the age of 30 too have tried to get job in this field. 60 per cent of workers expressed their desire to change the occupation even after only two years of service in this field. 10 per cent of workers seem to have undergone training given by various agencies. Among the three industries the coir workers seem to have regular training especially in the use of motor ratt. The peoples planning have also come forward with training programme for women.

The average income of the workers differs between industries. The average income of the respondents is in the category of Rs. 1154/-, 1270.31/- and 1254.50/- for beedi, coir and handloom workers respectively.

The expenditure pattern of the respondents did not show a steady nature. They do not follow a system of planned expenditure. Budgeting is not properly done and accounting finds no place in their economic life, as they do not have a steady income. But the general law of Engel, i.e., lower the income of the

people, larger is the share spend on food holds good for the workers. On average the workers spent, Rs. 350/- on food alone.

An index showing the grading of workers with regard to the possession of physical assets, possession of land, facilities of drinking water and housing conditions reveal certain facts about the living conditions of the workers. Workers could be categorised in the group of poor, normal and minimum conditions of living. On an average 3.23 per cent of the workers seemed to be in the list of poor workers and the average scoring of the workers are 24.38, 26.5 and 23 for Beedi, Coir and Handloom workers respectively.

The aspect of the empowerment of women workers is discussed in this section by taking into consideration the decision making capacity of women in the area of buying of food items for the family, education of children, public activities and work related events. Both husbands and wives were involved in taking decisions regarding buying of food (38.70 per cent). While 33.55 per cent of women workers made their own decision. In the case of education of children 38.71 per cent of the husbands of the workers took the decision while only 16.19 per cent workers had joined effort with the husbands. Women had greater share in decision making in the area of only buying food items for the family.

10.2 Major findings

The study has come out with informative findings on female employment with special reference to the traditional sector, which has a major share of workers in the unorganised units. The cumulative increase in the employment rate of women has been noticed all over the world. But the increase has been experienced mainly in the service sector and the non-agricultural sector. Which means the increase in the labour force is not felt qualitatively. Women remained disadvantaged relative to men in terms of unequal opportunities and treatment in labour market - unequal participation in economic decision making and greater vulnerability to retrenchment and unemployment. The clustering of women at the lower levels of occupation reflects that women in general got access to low paid occupations. The feminisation of employment especially in the unorganised sector is possible because women are cheaper and more flexible and they are tried with casual, temporary and part time job.

The present study shows that main castes that are engaged in these industries are Hindus and Muslims and a very small portion of Christians. Among the Hindus the Chaliya

community dominate the handloom industry (66.4 per cent). In Kasargod district it is found that 20 per cent of the workers are settled from the suburbs of Mangalore for job.

The production process and the division of work in all the three industries have revealed that there are different stages of work often categorised as skilled and non-skilled job. In the Beedi industry there are eight types of jobs and in the Handloom industry there are three main divisions. The coir production has two main nodes of productions. The characteristic features of these types of jobs revealed certain facts. Jobs are segregated as hundred percent male/female and a few which are shared by both the groups.

The segregation of work as male and female clearly proves that men and women have specific fields of work and wages do not differ between men and women for same occupations but between different types of work. It is found out that majority of women are engaged in low paid occupations such as spinning of yarn (82.5 per cent), rolling of beedis (88.46 per cent) and winding of thread (88 per cent).

It should be noted that in all the three selected industries, the gender system of work is an accepted fact. The family structure plays an important role in perpetuating the gender division of work which is widely accepted in the society. The restrictions on women to only certain types of work help to make them remain always as subordinate, flexible and unaccounted labour category. The division of labour based on gender is not likely to change as production is based on the complimentary functions of different family members.

The factory and household type of production are the common pattern in all the industries. The historical and geographical factors have also helped in the decentralisation of production in these industries. Contract system, commission system, passbook system etc., are the major forms of organisation of production in these industries. These various systems have acted disadvantageous to women in the form of wage cut, manipulations in non-wage benefits, insecurity of job etc. The number of contract labourers is high in the Beedi industry (43.08 per cent) while the intensity is less in the coir and the handloom industry. Reduction in wage/wage cut, is one of the

important problems faced by the labourers under contract system. (61.54 per cent) experienced wage cut in the Beedi industry.

The workers in all the selected industries experienced lack of permanence of job contract. 54.8 per cent workers in general did not have permanent job. Though it is a problem in both the factory type units and the home based workers, the situation of workers was worse in the case of home units. Piece rate and not time based payment of wages existed in these industries. It was remarkable to note that women in the home based units were not able even to calculate approximately the amount they earned, as they felt they are not contributing to the main income but only supplementing to it. The easiness with which women are kept as temporary workers is felt in all the three industries. Maximum labour power is released without future obligations that are legally attached to the long term contracts.

The average wage of the factory worker in the beedi and hand loom industries varied between Rs. 29 to 35/- besides D.A. But for the Coir workers it was Rs. 43/- without D.A. It was observed that the industrial workers of the co-operative societies for coir industry have not started the system of dearness allowance

in Kannur but in Kozhikode they have just started the system. The average wage for the beedi workers in the home units is only Rs. 16.88/-, for handloom workers and for coir workers it is Rs. 17/- and Rs. 15/ - respectively. Coir workers though not given a consistent dearness allowance had regular days of work in the factory units and seemed to have regular income unlike the beedi and handloom workers.

Variations in wage are noticed not between male and female workers but between the different types of work and the work system. In all the three industries there exists two types of wage payment. Payment by time and payment by results, More than 90 per cent of the respondents were given piece rate system of wage payment.

There is a wide discrepancy between the wage and non wage benefits availed by the factory workers and the home workers. 66.60 per cent of the factory workers enjoyed dearness allowance and bonus while 10.81 per cent of the home workers got the bonus. Majority of the home workers did not get any other allowances that were enjoyed by the factory workers.

An attempt is made to calculate the sex wise productivity of labourers. Wide variations are noticed in the case of weavers in the handloom industry Women weavers could weave only four to six meters a day while men weavers could do seven to eight meters. Changes are noted in the case of women weavers who have undergone training under the Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation. Wide difference is noticed among women beedi rollers in the home units and the factory units. The factory workers could roll 517 beedis on average per day while the home workers could do only 275 beedis a day. Nearly 50 per cent of the factory workers could get an average wage of Rs.50/- per day besides the dearness allowance with a minimum of eight hours per day while home workers could get only Rs. 35/- for the same amount of time. There is not much difference between the productivity of male and female beedi rollers. Non-availability of raw material, lack of motivation for work etc., affected women workers.

The socio economic status of women is measured by taking into account the family structure, the caste base, the educational stand, the employment opportunities, the income and expenditure pattern, saving and debt position etc. Though the

traditional industries are not fully caste based, the influence of the caste structure is noticed in the choice of women workers to the factory site and the home based units.

The family structure is undergoing changes due to the influence of educational status especially through the parallel educational institutions in the colonies and the streets. This has also influenced the attitude of women and men taking employment outside the homestead. The unemployed youth is a threat to the family.

The occupational status of the population has revealed that traditional industries play a major role in the provision of employment to the members of the family. 54.73 per cent are directly engaged in the traditional industries. Unemployed days have been the regular feature in the traditional industries. Average unemployed days differ industry wise. Both the factory and home workers experienced this problem.

Women in general found to be spending a higher amount of income on food followed by the education of children, leisure. Expenditure on medicine is an important item for the

women workers in the beedi and the handloom industries as they were easily succumbed to the diseases of asthma, bronchitis and allergic problems. Education has not played a very significant role in the life of the workers, though a change is felt in the streets and colonies.

In the case of the organised group of workers the saving on average found to be Rs. 950/- for a small portion of workers but for the home workers it never reached the amount of Rs. 290/-. The tendency to spend on highly unproductive items like the wedding ceremony, religious festivals and pilgrimages etc., affected their income level.

About 82.33 per cent of the women respondents had no membership in any social or community organisation. This was the pattern in all the three industries. Only 4.84 per cent participated in the union activities. The membership in the co-operative societies seemed to be better. But they hardly took up the role of a leader. It was consoling to note that 95 per cent exercised their right to work.

The social autonomy, the element of empowerment of women is discussed in the context to which one has the power over oneself and the degree to which one can take decisions concerning ones own life and that of others. In all the three industries the role of women workers making decisions in the household seemed to be very poor. The female headed household is a rare feature except the coir workers seemed to be a better position showing eight per cent of women headed the household.

The quality of life index constructed to assess the living and housing conditions of women workers showed the grading of workers who live in very poor situations. 3.23 per cent of workers remain in a situation without having the minimum necessities of life.

10.3 Conclusion and recommendations

The study with a special reference to the three industries of beedi, coir and handloom of North Kerala is summed up with the following conclusions.

Traditional industries continue to be a major source of employment for women. The division of work and a gender based production process in the industries is a means of setting aside women for certain types of job. Women get access to those types of work where the mental distance from the work site and the homestead is the minimum. This helps her to extend her homestead to the worksite without a dichotomy between the two. The ideology of women as housewife and the notion of 'mother worker' that are maintained through a patriarchal set up facilitate the gender system and sex labeling of work. This further encourages a system of unorganised and flexible labour, which is one of the important characteristics of contract system of work. The unorganised nature of work in the industries always acts disadvantageous to women especially in the form of wage cut, non availability of wage allowances, irregular employment and insecurity of job.

The major findings in this study lead us to conclude that the general conditions of women workers both in the organised factory group and the unorganised home based units are in a pitiable condition. These findings could be applied to other traditional industries where the similar tendencies in the production process and organisation of production are noted. It is

true that women in the organised factory group seemed to be in a better position compared to those in the home based units. But the main chunk of the traditional industries i.e., nearly 70 per cent are in the unorganised sector in which large number of women workers are engaged.

Based on the findings and conclusions in the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The census of the traditional industries needs to be revised. The task force on the traditional industries both in the national and the state level should be revived. A detailed knowledge of the workers both in organised factory groups and unorganised sector is essential for any policy formulation on the part of the government and local administrative bodies.
2. The co-operative societies could be revived and better schemes of providing raw materials to the society, marketing facilities etc., could be arranged in the state level.

3. Welfare schemes and welfare board for these industries exist. Workers need to be conscientised about it and they should be, especially the unorganised workers, enrolled as members of these boards.
4. Training centres should be made attractive to the youth even by giving scholarship to the aspirants of the training. Students after their schooling could be diverted to vocationalised training skills in these jobs. Training centres under peoples planning for women section would be advisable.
5. Contractors who are acting as agents for the capitalists are always manipulating the women workers in one way or other. Hence some measures of recognising the existence of these contractors could be made through compulsory registration/ license system.
6. Women should have access to all types of work. They should have records and registers to show their years of service etc. Passbook to the workers should be issued within the prescribed time. Wide discrepancies in the

wage rate of the factory workers and the home workers need to be looked into. Voluntary association for workers in the household units and active participation in the union activities are to be encouraged. A committee should be formed to work on the problems and difficulties of the workers in the traditional industries specially the women worker.

It is essential to encourage serious research in the field of traditional industries, which is still the backbone of Kerala economy. The research area to be covered could include the following: a comparative study of women workers in the traditional industries in Kerala, the impact of the schemes of the government for the promotion of traditional industries, prospects and challenges of traditional industries in the new millennium and technological revolution and the women workers in the traditional industries in our country.

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APPENDIX I **Interview schedule for fieldwork**

I. Personal

1. Name :
2. Address :
3. Block :
4. District :
5. Caste :
6. Age :
7. Education :
8. Marital Status : Single/Married/Divorced/Widowed
9. Head of the household :
10. Native place :

II. Familial and demographic details

Sl. No.	Name	Relationship	Sex	Age	Occupation	Education	Wage

III. Occupation

1. Occupation : Parttime/ continuous
2. Occupation of the husband :
3. Year of service :
4. Whether working at your house or factory :
5. Details regarding
 - a) Timings :
 - b) Hours of work :
 - c) Production :

6. Do you attend all phases of production?
If not specify your work
7. On average how many days do you get work per month
8. Does your work affect your family :
9. Details of other members who assist in your work
 - a) Name :
 - b) Sex :
 - c) Relationship :
10. The age at which you started the present work:
11. Training undergone if any.

IV. Wages and earnings

1. Wage period : Weekly/daily/monthly
2. Wage rate for your work :
3. Details of raw material and products returned
4. Quantity produced per day
5. Wage income per month
6. Do you have the problem of wage cut? On what grounds
7. Overtime wage, if any, give the details.
8. If you fail to do the stipulated quantity from the raw material received, who bears the burden?
9. Is there any practice of rejecting your product? Who bears the loss in this respect?
10. Are you satisfied with the wage? If not why?
11. Is there any difference between the wage you are paid and the wage of the local units?
12. Do you have any other source of income?
13. Are you happy with the job?
14. Do you receive non wage benefits as

Dearness allowance	Bonus
Leave with wage	Festival and Holiday allowance
Subsidised loans	Credit facilities
Provident Fund	Gratuvitiy
Medial aid	Educational scholarships

15. Whether the wages are at par with men
16. Whether any advance is given to you by the employer or firm
17. If piece rated, who keeps the account book?
18. Did you have increment over the years?
19. Any fine or punishment if the product is not up to the mark?
20. Details of the holidays and leave

V. Details of expenditure

Items of expenditure and the amount spent per month

Item	Rs. Spent.
Food	
Clothing	
House rent	
Education	
Transport	
Entertainment	
Social ceremony	
Religious festivals	
Rituals	
Medical and others	

VI. Assets

1. Savings

a) Monthly

Bank
Cooperative

Insurance
Society

Post Office Chit fund
Cash in hand saved

2. Landed property : House

3. Consumer durables : T.V/ Electric iron/ Sewing
Machine/ Radio/ Fridge

4. Others... Specify the item :

VII. Income

1. Total Household income

- By way of wages :
Agricultural work if any :
Rearing animals :

VIII. Debt

Your debt if any calculated per month.

Amount - Source: Money lender/Employer/Banks/Neighbors/
Relatives

Purpose : House maintenance/ to repay the old debt/
animal husbandry/ Medical treatment/
festivals/ marriage

IX. Housing

1. Own/rented/provided by the employer
2. Type of house : Hut/flat/thatched/ tiled/R.C.
3. Number of living rooms
4. Kitchen
5. Toilet facilities
6. Drinking water : Well/ neighbours well/ pipe water
7. Sanitation
8. Distance of house from the work place

X. Source of energy

1. Lighting Cooking

XI. Health

1. Did you suffer any disease due to your work? Specify
2. Method of treatment
3. Who helped you with money? If yes, How much
4. Did you continue your work immediately

XII. Domestic Conditions

1. How many hours a day do you engage in the household chores?
2. Do you get help in the household duties?
3. Do you like your children to take up your job?
4. Do you like to opt for some other job?

XIII. Trade Union/other associations

1. Are you a member of the trade union?

If so do you attend meetings and take up responsible work?

Have you participated in any protest rally, dharna etc.

2. Are you aware of the beneficial legal provisions relating to women workers?

Minimum wages act/Equal remuneration Act/ The Maternity benefits Act?

3. Are you a member of any other Association- Mahila Samaj/Sthri Shakti/ Bodhi or any other?
4. Do you exercise your franchise?
5. Exposure to the Media

Your access and reading of the newspaper/ daily news on radio or T.V. in the Community hall/awareness of political conditions.

XIV. Decision Making

Are you able to make decision in the family regarding?

- a. Purchase of food
- b. Consumption style
- c. Education of children
- d. Regarding work for ex: whether to do the work or not
- e. Work of the children
- f. Future of the children
- g. Regarding your access to the outside world- meeting friends, going out for programme, attending religious and social ceremonies.

XV. General information

1. Are you satisfied with your work?
2. Will you opt for another job?
3. Why did you take up this job?
4. What are the problems you face in the house/work place and in the society?
5. Your comments on the problems women face in the society?
6. Do you get chances to meet your friends and relative?
7. Any other observation you want to specify

APPENDIX II
Quality of life index

Items	Score
1. Possession of land	
- more than 5 cents	10
- less than 5 cents	5
- no land	0
2. Housing pattern	
- own house tile/terraced	10
- hut like	5
- rented	0
3. Living rooms	
- more than two	10
- less than two	5
- multi purpose room only	0
4. Drinking water	
- own well	10
- public water system	5
- Friend's or neighbour's well	0
5. Physical assets	
- Home appliances	
Having assets worth Rs.2000 & above	10
Less than Rs.2000	5
No assets	0
Total score	= 75

APPENDIX - III
Employment in handloom industry

1. The total population of weaver households by men, women and children

Kerala	Men	Women	Children	Total
Urban	5986 (35.47%)	7091 (42.02%)	3800 (22.52%)	16877(9.65%)
Rural	57769(36.54%)	65024(41.13%)	35310(22.33%)	158103(90.35%)
Total	63755(36.44%)	72115(41.21%)	39110(22.35%)	174980(100.00)

Source : Census of Handlooms in India . 1987-88

2. The total number of men, women and children engaged in preparatory work

a) Full time preparatory

Kerala	Men	Women	Children	Total
Urban	33 (3.86%)	772 (90.4%)	49 (5.74%)	854 (6.43%)
Rural	1700 (13.66%)	9322 (74.91%)	1423 (11.43%)	12445(93.57%)
Total	1733 (13.03%)	10094(75.90%)	1472 (11.07%)	13299 (100.00)

Source: Census of Handlooms in India. 1987-88

b) Part time preparatory

Kerala	Men	Women	Children	Total
Urban	15 (3.89%)	350 (90.9%)	20 (5.19%)	385(8.63%)
Rural	446 (10.94%)	3031 (74.34%)	600 (14.72%)	4077(91.37%)
Total	461 (10.33%)	3381 (75.77%)	620 (13.89%)	4462(100.00)

Source: Census of handlooms in India. 1987-88

3. Number of women and children engaged in weaving (full time)

Urban	Men	Women	Children	Total
Urban	2149 (56.3%)	1663 (43.6%)	2 (0.05 %)	3814 (7.77%)
Rural	23839(52.65%)	18056(39.88%)	3383 (7.47%)	45278(92.23%)
Total	25988(56.38%)	19719(42.78%)	385 (0.84%)	49092(100.00)
Part time weaving				
Urban	37 (41.57%)	52 (58.43%)	-	89 (8.37%)
Rural	287 (29.47%)	486 (49.9%)	201 (20.64%)	974 (91.63%)
Total	324 (30.48%)	538 (50.61%)	201 (18.91%)	1063 (100.00)

Source: Census of Handlooms in India. 1987-88 (figure in brackets shows the percentage)

APPENDIX IV

Employment in beedi industry

Activity	Male				Female				
	Rural	Urban	Total	Per cent	Rural	Urban	Total	Per cent	F:M
Cultivation and processing Plantations	111965	0	111965	8	38451	0	38451	2	0.34
Preparing raw leaf tobacco	5484	4890	10374	1	11724	18742	30466	1	2.94
				9				3	
Manufacture									
Beedi manufacture	312557	304436	620993	46	102485	988167	2012852	91	3.24
Manufacture of cigar/cigarette	7156	18878	26034	2	0	1416	14616	1	0.56
Manufacture of snuff etc.	9463	16141	25604	2	5364	15511	20875	1	0.82
Manufacture of pan masala	7643	5596	13239	1	8594	8442	17036	1	1.29
				51				94	
Trade									
Wholesale trade	13354	16693	27547	4	1600	0	1600	0	0.06
Retail trade in pan, bidi	175927	311608	487535	36	29039	42223	71262	3	0.15
				40				3	
Total	649279	701684	1350963	100	1120660	1087701	2208361	100	1.63

Source : NSS 50th Round (1993-94)

Employment by labour status category

Status	Male				Female				
	Urban	Rural	Total	Per cent	Urban	Rural	Total	Per cent	Per cent
Own account worker	108642	103627	212269	34	394462	35494	746956	37	3.52
Own employer	2716	5268	7984	1	784	0	784	0	0.10
Unpaid family helper	47864	16044	63904	10	148660	155857	304517	15	4.76
Wage employee	544270	43310	975880	16	118266	147314	265580	13	2.72
Causal labour	90944	148308	239252	39	325995	369020	695015	35	2.90
Total	304436	316557	620993	100	988167	1024685	2012852	100	3.24

Source : NSS 50th Round (1993-94)

Percentage distribution of beedi rollers by mode of employment and sex

Sl. No.	State	Directly employed				Employed through contractors				Total			
		Men	Women	Child- ren	Total	Men	Women	Child- ren	Total	Men	Women	Child- ren	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	100.00	-	100.00	-	100.00	-	100.00
2.	Bihar	-	-	-	-	70.1	29.3	0.6	100.00	70.1	29.3	0.6	100.00
3.	Gujarat	7.6	47.2	-	54.7	7.6	37.7	-	45.3	15.1	84.9	-	100.00
4.	Karnataka	3.6	23.2	-	26.8	19.5	53.7	-	73.2	23.1	76.9	-	100.00
5.	Kerala	13.2	5.0	-	18.2	-	81.8	-	81.8	13.2	86.8	-	100.00
6.	Madhyapradesh	-	-	-	-	82.7	17.3	-	100.00	82.7	17.3	-	100.00
7.	Maharashtra	0.6	37.0	-	37.6	13.8	48.6	-	62.4	14.4	85.6	-	100.00
8.	Orissa	-	-	-	-	43.6	53.7	2.7	100.00	43.6	53.7	2.7	100.00
9.	Rajasthan	25.9	74.1	-	100.00	-	-	-	-	25.9	74.1	-	100.00
10.	Tamil Nadu	30.8	24.5	-	55.3	8.3	36.4	-	44.7	39.1	60.9	-	100.00
11.	Uttar Pradesh	-	-	-	-	29.0	71.0	-	100.00	29.0	71.0	-	100.00
12.	West Bengal	17.0	61.5	2.7	81.2	2.3	15.2	1.2	18.7	19.4	76.7	3.9	100.00
	Total	5.2	19.1	0.4	24.7	26.1	48.6	0.6	75.3	51.2	67.8	1.0	100.00

Source : Government of India (1995.P.557)

APPENDIX V

Nature of employment in coir industry

Category	Number employed					
	Full time	Per cent	Part-time	Per cent	Total	Per cent
Men	24177	66.34	12269	33.66	36446	100.00
Women	73150	33.25	146839	66.75	219989	100.00
Children	6385	33.81	12499	66.19	18884	100.00
Total	103712	37.67	171607	62.33	275319	100.00

Regular employees and family workers in the coir industry

Category	Wage paid employees		Unpaid family workers		Total
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
Men	18925	51.93	17521	48.07	36446
Women	52850	24.02	16139	75.98	219989
Children	5665	30.00	13219	70.00	18884
Total	77440	28.13	19879	71.87	275319

Source: Government of Kerala 1993, Report, The Task Force on Traditional Industries in Kerala, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram

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APPENDIX VI

Gender based wage differentials of regular wage salaried employees
aged 15-59 by industrial and education 1987-88 and 1993-94
(Female wage/ male wage x 100)

Industry division	Educational level				
	Not literate	Literate upto middle school	Secondary	Graduate and above	All levels
1987-88					
Agriculture	79.1	73.3	97.7	105.1	69.6
Mining	69.9	83.8	132.7	74.3	68.1
Manufacturing 2	43.9	43.8	66.5	78.4	43.8
Manufacturing 3	64.8	68.3	81.5	77.4	76.2
Utilities	94.2	71.4	79.5	77.2	87.6
Construction	52.4	60.2	44.1	73.6	70.5
Trade	43.4	86.9	82.3	113.5	81.5
Transport	115.9	104.3	87.5	94.9	115.4
Finance	103.2	171.0	64.9	77.4	86.8
Services	57.2	66.8	82.8	82	78.1
All industries	59	67.1	83.9	81.6	83.0
1993-94					
Agriculture	92.0	89.4	114.2	92.9	90.8
Mining	77.1	22.8	82.3	67.8	67.8
Manufacturing 2	46.6	51.5	54.7	88.5	53.0
Manufacturing 3	68.3	50.3	70.6	78.6	73.8
Utilities	44.2	0.0	79.5	86.9	89.3
Construction	46.0	59.7	106.9	47.7	54.1
Trade	59.3	87.1	89.0	85.7	99.5
Transport	117.0	75.1	94.9	84.5	103.7
Finance	48.2	60.0	74.5	80.5	84.3
Services	56.6	54.8	88.2	76.1	72.0
All industries	57.8	56.8	88.3	77.2	79.8

Source NSSO 1990 Table 79, p. S 342 NSSO 1997 T.55 P. A.307&308