

## Chapter VI

### ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN'S PREFERENCE

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals a great deal of unknown data. We have surveyed 952 women aged 15 years and above of 600 households for the purpose of knowing their work preferences.

To begin with, however, we analyse the actual employment position of men and women. In general we have classified the major operations of employment into seven categories :

- (1) Raising crops, flowers, vegetables and fruits,
- (2) Animal husbandry,
- (3) Crafts and cottage industries,
- (4) Independent professions,
- (5) Work in offices and educational institutions,
- (6) Trading in shops,
- (7) Wage earning.

Duration of employment has been recorded under five categories. They are :

- (1) Below 50 days,
- (2) 50 – 100 days,
- (3) 100 – 200 days,
- (4) 200 – 300 days,
- (5) Above 300 days.

For the purpose of calculating total mandays for any category of seven major operations we have found the following formula as realistic, On the basis of this formula we have

Duration of employment	Average mandays
Below 50 days	30 days
50 – 100 days	80 days
100 – 200 days	150 days
200 – 300 days	250 days
Above 30 days	300 days

found total mandays employed against each of the seven major operations. Then we convert these total mandays into fully employed man-years taking 150 mandays of employment as one fully employed man-year. This target, though modest, is not currently being achieved in lagging rural economies.

## 6.2. ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT

Table 6.2.1  
 Employment for One or More Days  
 Twelve Villages of Koch-Bihar Block I and Block II  
 Year 1994-95

Sl. No.	Major operations	No. of persons in employment for one or more days of the year	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	582	08
02	Animal husbandry	395	01
03	Crafts, cottage industries	55	17
04	Independent profession	53	-
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	117	5
06	Trading in shops	33	-
07	Wage earning	42	-
08	Total	1277	31

Table 6.2.2  
 Employment for One or More Days  
 Total of Six Villages of  
 Koch-Bihar, Block I  
 1994-95

Sl. No.	Major Operations	No. of persons in employment for one or more days of the year	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	270	05
02	Animal husbandry	144	-
03	Crafts, cottage industries	25	14
04	Independent profession	44	-
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	63	3
06	Trading in shops	21	-
07	Wage earning	26	-
08	Total	593	22

Table 6.2.3  
 Employment for One or More Days  
 Total of Six Villages of Koch-Bihar Block II  
 1994-95

Sl. No.	Major Operations	No. of persons in employment for one or more days of the year	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	312	03
02	Animal husbandry	251	01
03	Crafts, cottage industries	30	03
04	Independent profession	9	-
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	54	2
06	Trading in shops	12	-
07	Wage earning	16	-
08	Total	684	09

Table 6.2.4

Actual Number of fully Employed Persons  
Twelve Villages of Block I and Block II  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl. No.	Major Operations	Number of Fully Employed Persons	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	128.40	1.60
02	Animal husbandry	79.80	0.20
03	Crafts, cottage industries	26.80	5.40
04	Independent profession	44.93	5.00
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	117.00	5.00
06	Trading in shops	33.00	-
07	Wage earning	23.16	-
08	Total	453.09	12.20

Table 6.2:5  
 Derived Fully Employed Person-Year  
 Total of Six Villages of Koch-Bihar Block I  
 1994-95

Sl. No.	Major Operations	No. of Fully Employed Person-years	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	58.00	1.00
02	Animal husbandry	28.80	-
03	Crafts, cottage industries	10.73	4.80
04	Independent profession	36.93	-
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	153.30	7.30
06	Trading in shops	25.00	-
07	Wage earning	12.63	-
08	Total	325.39	13.10

Table 6.2.6  
Derived Fully Employed Person-Year  
Total Six Villages of Koch-Bihar Block II  
1994-95

Sl. No.	Major operations	No. of Fully employed person-years	
		Male	Female
01	Raising crops, flower, vegetables, fruits	70.40	.60
02	Animal husbandry	51.00	.20
03	Crafts, cottage industries	16.07	.60
04	Independent profession	8.00	-
05	Work in offices and in educational institutions	122.52	48.66
06	Trading in shops	16.52	-
07	Wage earning	10.53	-
08	Total	295.04	50.06

In these twelve villages of two blocks of the district of Koch-Bihar 1277 males and 31 females are in employment for a day or more.



Of these 1308 (1277 +31) persons, from 600 households, who get chance to cling to some sort of employment, (117 + 5) or 122 persons are fully employed in offices and educational institutions and another 33 persons all of them being males and some sort of shop owners are treated as fully employed outside their villages.

Leaving them aside, we convert the rest of the employment figures into fully employed man-years using 150 days of employment as one fully employed man-year. After this conversion and taking into account the fully employed 155 persons (outside these villages) we find that only 453 men and 12 women can be given full employment.

This means that of the 1277 males 31 females now enjoying some employment 824 males 19 females are denied any employment whatsoever.

The needs of formulation of a policy makes it imperative for us to know, as we shall see its uses later, (a) the total number of men and women who depend on household productive activities alone for some sort of employment, and (b) what amount of full employment rather than partial employment, can be given by the household productive activities.

On (a) the preceding figures affirm that 1127 men and 26 women share employment made available by household productive activities and they are in deplorable state of underemployment. On (b) it can be verified that the household productive activities can choose between under-employing 1127 men and 26 women and fully employing 303 men and 7 women. That means, to repeat, if only full employment is given then (1127-303) or 824 men and (26-7) or 19 women are denied any employment.

We can see immediately that if 1127 men and 26 women, rather than 303 men and 7 women, are to be given full employment by the same household productive activities the total output of these household productive activities must increase itself fourfold.

Apart from the data we have collected and organised on (1) male-female ratio in employment and (2) male-female ratio on domestic chores, (3) an interesting opinion survey of 600 families brings to light about the so long suppressed will to participate in paid work outside homes.

Of the various forms of male-female ratio in employment, the one which is the ratio of number of male mandays to the number of female mandays declines with the incomes and assets of the family. Because this ratio is dominated by the ratio in services and professions.

We have collected elaborate data on male-female ratio on domestic chores. The burden of the domestic chores is borne overwhelmingly by the women at home. There are differences in this ratio in the three principal kinds of domestic chores. Weekly outer domestic chores are dominated by men as the male-female ratio turns out to be 2.89. But the over-all male-female ratio on the total of domestic chores remains as low as 0.41.

About the results of the opinion survey, mentioned in a preceding paragraph, of the 952 employable women in 600 families or 86 per cent are keen on paid work outside homes. 100 per cent of unmarried women and 89 per cent of married women seek work. But only 51 per cent of the widowed women desired paid work outside homes. If we consider only unmarried and married women only then 90 per cent of them seek paid work in one or two shifts for a total of eight hours a day.

The point about the work seeking women is that if they do not get any work according to their education they are prepared for any hard work including raising of crops, flowers, vegetables and fruits, animal husbandry and even independent shop-keeping.

Ninety per cent of the work seeking married women will be content with a monthly salary or wage of less than Rs. 1500/-. Only 10 per cent of the married women expect Rs. 1500/- and above a month. They have passed Madhyamik or post-Madhyamik examinations. Even these women are ready

to accept any work if they can earn atleast Rs. 1500/- a month. They do not have a taboo on any sort of field of work, easy or difficult.

With the availability of 90 per cent of unmarried and married women the pressure of demand for full employment on the household productive activities further increases. We have already seen that if household productive activities give nothing but full employment to their work participants.

We have a backlog of 824 males 19 females demanding full employment. Besides we have also some males who do not have the opportunity of sharing the present system of under-employment or sharing poverty. We estimate their number to be 22 males. Let us now sum up the males and females whose demand for full employment has to be satisfied.

Table 6.2.7  
Net Demand For Additional Full Employment  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

	Males	Females	Total
Backlog	824	19	843
Estimate of unemployed males	22	-	22
Married and unmarried women ready to work hard	-	763	763
Widowed unemployed women	-	52	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>1680</b>

So the net demand for additional employment is computed at 1680 persons of whom 846 are males 834 are females.

### 6.3 WOMEN'S PREFERENCE FOR WORK

Table 6.3.1 gives an idea of the women work seekers by marital status. This Table 6.3.1 shows that nearly 86 percent of adult women (above 15) are work seekers. Hundred percent unmarried women demand work. Above 88% of married women are available for according to their choice. Even among the widowed women about 51 percent are decidedly looking for work.

Table 6.3.1  
Women Work seekers by Marital Status  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl.No.	Item	No.	Percentage
01	No. of families surveyed	600	-
02	No. of women employable	952	-
03	No. of unmarried women	93	-
04	No. of married women	757	-
05	No. of widowed women	102	-
06	No. of work-seeking women	815	85.61
07	No. of work-seeking unmarried women	93	100.00
08	No. of work-seeking married women	670	88.51
09	No. of work-seeking widowed women	52	50.98

Now let us look for the level of education of these work seeking women in Table No.6.3.2 We also give a picture of the education level of unmarried women in Table 6.3.3

Table 6.3.2  
 Education Level of Work-seeking Women  
 Twelve Villages  
 Koch-Bihar  
 1994-95

Sl.No.	Education	No.	Percentage
01	Nil	220	26.99
02	Upto 6 Years	300	36.80
03	More than 6 Years	189	23.19
04	Matriculation and post-matriculation qualifications	106	13.00
	Total	815	99.98

Table 6.3.3  
Distribution of total No. of Unmarried Women by Education  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl.No.	Education	No.	Percentage
01	Nil	09	9.67
02	Upto 6 Years	24	25.80
03	More than 6 Years	21	22.58
04	Matriculation and post-matriculation qualifications	39	41.93
05	Total	93	100.00

We thus see that whatever be the education level all unmarried women seek work and if given are prepared to work hard.

Table 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 can be read together to find that work seeking married women having matriculation qualification or higher are willing to work in one shift of eight hours on a monthly salary of at least Rs.1500/-. Only married women having less or no education are willing to work in two shifts, each shift being of four hours of duration. They are willing to work at less than Rs.1500/- a month. This is true also for widowed women.

Table 6.3.4

Distribution of Work-seeking Married Women by Education Level  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl.No.	Education	No.	Percentage
01	Nil	182	27.16
02	Upto 6 Years	257	38.36
03	More than 6 Years	164	24.48
04	Matriculation and post-matriculation qualifications	67	10.00
	Total	670	100.00

Table 6.3.5

Working Hours and monthly minimum Wage Desired by Married Women  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Shift	Monthly Wage	Rs. 1500/- and below	Rs. 1500/- and above	Total No. of married women	Percentage
One Shift of 8 hours		-	67	67	10.00
Two Shift each of 4 hours		603	-	603	90.00
Total		603	67	670	100.00

The choice of sectors of productive activities is presented in Table

6.3.6

Table 6.3.6  
Choice of Major Sectors of Activities  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl. No.	Major Operations	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Total
01	Raising crops, flowers, vegetables and fruits	93 (23.96)	670 (26.83)	52 (29.05)	815 (26.59)
02	Animal husbandry	81 (20.87)	632 (25.31)	52 (29.05)	765 24.96)
03	Crafts, cottage industries	91 (23.45)	652 (26.11)	52 (29.05)	795 (25.94)
04	Work in offices or in educational institutions	39 (10.05)	67 (2.68)	-	106 (3.45)
05	Running of shops	84 (21.64)	476 (19.06)	23 (12.84)	583 (19.02)
	Total	388 (100.00)	2497 (100.00)	179 (100.00)	3064 (100.00)

These totals exceed the totals of their respective numbers, because one may be willing to vote for more sectors and would select according to availability. Figures in parentheses are percentages to column totals.

The great finding of the opinion survey is that work seeking women, whether they are unmarried, married or widowed and whether they have



passed Secondary and Higher Secondary examination or not will be content to earn through the raising of crops, vegetables, fruits and flowers.

The actual employment of women and men derived in Table 6.3.7 is in the sharp contrast with what women want on their free will.

Table 6.3.7  
Comparison of Actual Employment of Male and Female  
Twelve Villages  
Koch-Bihar  
1994-95

Sl.No.	Category	Male	Female
01	Total population	1995	1599
	Population not included in the labour force :		
02	a) Population upto 15 years	410	357
	b) Students above 15 fully engaged in studies	90	83
	c) Students above 15 partially engaged in studies	186	182
	d) People above 15 found sick or living on charity	10	25
03	2a + 2b + 2c + 2d	696	647
04	Employable labour force Category(1) – Category (3)	1299	952
05	Number of employed persons *	1277	31
06	Percentage of workers to employable labour force Category (5) ÷ Category (4) x 100	98.31	3.26
07	Percentage of unemployed labour force	1.69	96.74

\* Employed = Employed for one day or more during the year.

#### 6.4 CONCLUSION FOR THE CHAPTER

That so many of our womenfolk in the villages are in inwardly craving for work signify the utter poverty of our villages. Two factors kept their urge unexpressed. Firstly, men of these families are in deplorable underemployment. Secondly, the great majorities of the women have had less than 6 years in the school and so naturally are very shy and too weak to be organised.