

**GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR, AND SOCIAL-
CHANGE**

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Abstract

The division of work by gender has been a basic characteristic of human society, and it has historically assigned different tasks to men and women according to cultural, economic, and social systems. In the past, women were expected to take care of the home and family, while males were the ones who were in charge of public and economic matters. However, these conventional positions have changed dramatically due to fast societal developments, such as industrialisation, globalisation, technology breakthroughs, and governmental reforms. The slow but considerable adjustment in the division of labour is due to the rising engagement of women in the workforce, changes in family dynamics, and the growth of gender-inclusive laws. Even while progress has been made, there are still hurdles that prevent full gender equality, including salary discrepancies, occupational segregation, and unpaid household work. This study looks at how the distribution of work by gender is changing, the main reasons for these changes, and the social and economic effects of these changes. In order to create a society that is more fair and inclusive, it is important to understand these shifts.

Keywords: *Gender, Labour, social-change***Introduction**

For hundreds of years, human cultures have been characterised by a division of work based on gender, which has influenced economic systems, family relationships, and social hierarchies. Traditionally, males have been identified with productive labour in public and commercial arenas, while women have been largely responsible for reproductive and household tasks. This split has strengthened gender roles and power disparities in society, and it is strongly based in cultural, historical, and economic circumstances. However, these old institutions have been challenged by enormous social, political, and economic changes that have occurred during the past century. Women have been given greater possibilities to join the official labour as a result of industrialisation, urbanisation, globalisation, and technical improvements. Policy measures, such as legislation that promote gender equality, improvements in education, and safeguards in the workplace, have also had a role in changing gender roles. Furthermore, the changing nature of families, the growing awareness of gender rights, and the push for equality have all contributed to a reconsideration of the old division of work. Even with these improvements, there are still inequalities in many communities. Women still have to deal with problems including income inequalities, occupational segregation, and the weight of unpaid household and caregiving tasks. At the same time, males are also going through changes in what is expected of them, especially when it comes to their responsibilities in childcare and home chores. In order to achieve greater gender equity and ensure inclusive economic

growth, it is essential to understand the dynamics of gender division of work and the forces that drive societal change. This study examines the historical backdrop of gendered work division, the factors that are driving change, and the current constraints that prevent true gender equality in employment markets and household realms. This investigation seeks to identify solutions to promote a more fair distribution of employment between genders.

The Origins of Gender-Based Labour Disparities

For a long time, traditional civilisations have divided employment according to gender. In many pre-industrial cultures, the division of labour was based on physical characteristics. Men usually did jobs that required physical strength, such as farming, hunting, or fighting, while women were responsible for domestic work, such as taking care of children and preparing food. These roles were not just determined by economic factors; they were also supported by cultural norms, religious practices, and legal systems that frequently restricted women's access to resources and opportunities outside of the home. The beginning of industrialisation was a significant moment in history. As societies transitioned from agriculture to industry, the public sphere grew, creating new opportunities in factories, offices, and other industrial environments. Men gradually took control of these new industries, while women, even if they were part of the workforce, were sometimes limited to lower-paying or "feminised" positions. This division not only increased economic inequality but also made the connection between masculine and public labour and femininity and household obligations more concrete. Feminist groups started to question these entrenched distinctions in the middle of the twentieth century. Activists, researchers, and politicians raised concerns about the legitimacy of allocating tasks based only on gender and pointed out the economic and social consequences of such a strict divide. These discussions established the foundation for policies that are intended to encourage equal chances, which in turn has created the conditions for major social and economic changes.

Contemporary Dynamics and Social Change

In the last several decades, a number of factors have come together to change the way that conventional gender roles are viewed:

- **Economic Globalization and Technological Advancements:** The globalisation of economies and rapid technology advancements have led to a need for a workforce that is increasingly competent and diversified. These innovations have made it possible for women to enter areas and occupations that were previously closed off to them, which has allowed for a rebalancing of the conventional gendered division of work. In addition, developments such as digital communication and remote work have made it easier for both men and women to manage the difficulties of work and life by providing more flexibility.
- **Policy Reforms and Legal Interventions:** A number of legislative and regulatory changes, including as anti-discrimination legislation, paid parental leave, subsidised childcare, and equal opportunity efforts, have directly addressed some of the structural hurdles that have historically marginalised women in the workforce. These reforms have not only made it easier for women to participate in industries that have historically been controlled by males, but they have also led to a progressive change in the roles that people play in the home.

- **Cultural Shifts and Changing Social Norms:** The changing way that society views gender roles has led to a reconsideration of the conventional "breadwinner" and "homemaker" concepts. The increased acceptability of flexible jobs can be attributed to media depictions, educational activities, and grassroots campaigning. Even with these good improvements, long-held preconceptions and cultural expectations still have an impact on how paid employment is distributed and how unpaid home obligations are divided. Despite the fact that progress is apparent, there are still considerable impediments to reaching real gender equality, including salary differences, vocational segregation, and the ongoing burden of unpaid household work. These problems emphasise the necessity of ongoing efforts to comprehend and solve the structural and cultural elements that underlie the division of employment based on gender.

Welfare consequences of female specialisation in domestic work

When considering individual wellbeing, it is commonly assumed that women who primarily work as carers have access to the income of their male partners. However, there is a lot of evidence suggesting women who specialise in domestic labour are at a disadvantage in many ways. Women are 14% more likely than males to live in homes with equivalised earnings below the poverty line, which is estimated at 60% of the median income. Households led by women, particularly single parents and senior women living alone, are at a higher risk. Evidence shows that women endure significant decreases in income after separation or divorce, whereas males tend to see slight improvements in income⁹. Pensions that are based on payments made throughout a full-time, continuous working lifespan of 40 years or more discriminate against women without being explicit about it. It is estimated that just 49 percent of women retirees receive the full Basic State Pension, while 92 percent of males do.¹⁰ Additionally, there is evidence that women who do not participate in the labour market are at a greater risk of experiencing domestic violence, maybe because their economic dependency makes it more difficult for them to leave an abusive relationship. Finally, both theory and data from the intra-household bargaining literature imply that specialisation in the domestic sector may have ramifications for an individual's well-being within a marriage, as well as in the case of relationship breakup. Brines (1994) points out that we might consider the family in which spouses specialise and trade with one another to be a case of bilateral monopoly. However, Brines goes on to point out that there is a basic imbalance in the nature of what each side has to offer in the trade: Housework, which is unpaid work done in the home, does not have exchange value in the traditional sense. This means that it is not a kind of cash that can be easily transferred or exchanged for anything else, unlike the work that the primary earner does. As a result, if a person has acquired relationship-specific domestic human capital, they will have a lower expected utility in the event of a divorce than their partner who specialises in market work. This is due to the fact that they can expect to earn less money if they have to support themselves and because they will be less desirable to potential partners for remarriage. The literature on bargaining suggests that the spouse who has the stronger "outside option" will have more power over how resources are distributed in the household. For example, the spouse with the stronger outside option could use the "threat" of divorce to influence the partner with the weaker outside option. For a review of the literature, see Lundberg and Pollak (1996). Folbre (2001) proposes another explanation for why specialising in the home sector might reduce a person's ability to negotiate. People who work in caring professions, such as childcare, may not be able to credibly threaten to stop working as a way to negotiate. This is because they may become a "prisoner of love," meaning that their unwillingness to neglect the children allows their spouse to take advantage of them.

One area of research looks at how much the income that the husband and wife manage affects the conduct of their family. This literature shows that when a wife's income increases in relation to her husband's income, they tend to spend more on restaurant meals, childcare, and women's clothing, while spending less on alcohol and tobacco (e.g. Lundberg, Pollak, and Wales, 1997; Phipps and Burton, 1992). Mothers' control over resources has also been associated with improvements in child health, nutrition, and survival rates (e.g. Hoddinott and Haddad, 1995). This indicates, first of all, that men and women have different preferences regarding how household income should be distributed, and second of all, that the amount of money a person contributes to the household is a factor in family negotiations, in addition to its implications for external threat points. According to Pollak (2005), spouses may keep "mental accounts" that connect each spouse's spending to the amount of money they give, and this may be further supported by money management methods like having separate bank accounts.

The role of wages in the gender division of labour

It is evident that previous decisions about labour supply and occupational choice would have a significant impact on the gender wage gap that is shown in cross-sectional data on spouses. In this work, we do not want to determine whether the observed inequalities in wages between genders are the cause of the observed division of labour. Additionally, wages are not assigned to people from an outside source. For such an analysis, it would be necessary to have some external variation in pay or data having a panel element that could be utilised to tie changes in earnings to changes in time allocation. Instead, we want to know if individuals really do use their time in the way that economic theory would suggest, taking into account the earning potential of both spouses in the labour market. If the allocation of time is sensitive to disparities in spousal wages, then it is at least feasible that changes in the gender distribution of salaries would be accompanied by changes in the division of work. On the other hand, if biological differences and societal norms are more relevant than other variables, it is improbable that equal pay for men and women will significantly reduce gender specialisation. Becker's (1991) groundbreaking research on the economics of the family proposes two explanations for why variations in wages between spouses based on gender may be linked to a conventional division of labour. The first one is about the situation in which people behave as independent, self-centred individuals and spend their time in a way that maximises their own (selfish) utility. Chapter 1 of "A Treatise on the Family" describes a model that demonstrates that when a person is part of the labour market, the marginal utility of time from all uses must be equal to the wage rate in equilibrium. The salary is a good representation of the "price" of time spent on non-market activities in terms of consumption that is not realised. When wages go up, there will be both an income effect and a substitution effect. The income effect lowers the amount of time spent on market labour because it raises the demand for non-market time. On the other hand, the substitution effect increases the amount of time spent on market work since non-market time becomes comparably more costly. If the substitution effect is the most important factor, people who earn higher wages will spend more time working in the market and less time on non-market activities, such as home production, than people who earn lower wages. In practical terms, the individual utility function model reflects the idea that when pay rates are higher, individuals may find it best to use the money they receive from increased market employment to buy market substitutes for domestic production (like daycare or restaurant meals). When wages are lower, the actual price of these goods and services is greater, making it more economical to create them at home.

Gender Role, Household Production and Division of Labour

According to Bittman and Lovejoy (1993), contemporary patriarchy attempts to subordinate women while claiming to promote equality. Sullivan (2000) and Crompton, Brockmann, and Wiggins (2003) argue that work intensification may be preventing men from participating more actively in domestic tasks. As a result, women are caretakers while men are breadwinners (Barnett and Gareis, 2006). According to Muller (1997), the household is the foundation of all economic units, and it is here that we can identify the differences in activities and obligations based on gender. For women, production and reproduction are two interconnected activities that take place within the context of household responsibilities, where males have limited involvement. The Kom household's activities were mostly in line with the traditional gender roles of women being responsible for home matters and men being the primary earners. The idea that "women should be responsible for household chores and childcare rather than formal education" was a widely held belief among the people. The Kom women carry out domestic activities that include all of the tasks that are related to the daily necessities of living, such as childcare, subsistence, and other forms of household maintenance. These tasks are referred to as "production for use" (Bender and Sahlins, 1967) (Bender 1967; Sahlins, 1972). Kom women are noted for taking care of their families and children, preparing and processing food, and performing other home tasks. They also have the freedom to manage and control domestic operations. However, women's economic activities and output are not limited to the homestead; they also include participation in other traditional economic activities, such as fishing and gathering food plants, which take place outside of the domestic compound. The sexual division of labour in the domestic economy is based on socially constructed gender roles. In this division, women are responsible for mothering, child care, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic responsibilities, as well as gathering firewood and wild edible plants. They also participated in agricultural operations at the same time. It is clear that males do not contribute more to the work force than women do, but their various labour activities are important for family economic output and food supply. The busy schedule that comes with the season sometimes goes beyond the division of work based on gender. In the spring, women are likely to gather seasonal wild vegetables such as uthum, tarung, charep, sawon, mushroom, loklei, and aitaang. However, it is difficult to collect firewood from the neighbouring forest for usage throughout the year before the rainy season begins. The Kom have a division of family labour based on conventional gender norms. In this division, women spend more time than men doing household duties that are traditionally considered to be women's work. However, it is sometimes impossible to distinguish between domestic female work and male labour outside home tasks. Although this overlap of gender tasks appears to be fairly normal, it does not imply that there is no precise normative realm of labour for both genders.

In addition to childbearing and child-rearing, cooking is one of the key occupations that women engage in. The process of cooking involves several phases, starting with husking paddy grain and ending with the rice being served on the dining plate. It is clear that the complicated series of grain processing operations, which begins with drying the paddy in the sun, continues with pounding and winnowing the rice grain, and ends with cooking, is a procedure that takes a long time. Men are responsible for specialised duties such as craft production, hunting, fishing, earning a living via wage labour, making weaving tools, and building houses, among other things. The handmade goods include a variety of baskets for storage (rhaithuk, kharang/tingkho), sifting (tingwang), and winnowing (shasep), as well as bamboo rope (manang shun), a hat (lukhum), a fish trap (chok), a fish container (tingpor), and a wooden pestle and mortar (shum-charei). Wood and bamboo are also used to make a variety of weaving tools, including kongwon, tatim, takam, taru, tukdet, sakhumarui, chai/chairel, timbu, and themtuisse/themde. Hunting in groups from time to time was primarily seen as a distinguished activity that men did in their spare time. Hunting often took

place in the spring, namely in April and May. There were several sorts of animals in the forest that was nearby. The principal species that are hunted are wild boar (ramwok), deer (sakhi), sangai, kharasa, and kayuk (the animal of Kayuk Hill). These creatures may be found in the jungle that surrounds the area. The distribution of flesh from the killed animal to the clan and village leaders, as well as community eating, were both important aspects of the social order. They symbolised the collaboration and togetherness of the tribe. Fishing is another activity that both men and women engage from time to time to earn money, unlike hunting, which only males participated in. Table 1 shows the home activities that are divided by sex and space within a household.

Table 1: Household activities based on sex and space, as well as the appliances that are used

Activity	Name of tool use	Gender	Activity space
Paddy pounding	Bigmortar(<i>Shum</i>)	Women	Veranda(<i>sumphuk</i>)
Rice win no wing	Bigpestle	Women	Veranda(<i>sumphuk</i>)
Water fetching	Waterpot(<i>tuibeh</i>), carryingbasket(<i>Borwang</i>)	Women	Streamaway from household
Weaving	<i>Kongwon, taru, themde, takam, tatimsakhum arui, tukdetchairel, timbu</i>	Women	Veranda/ <i>shangkul</i> (non-domesticstructure)
Damp timber splitting	Axe(<i>Rhei</i>)	Men	Forecourt(<i>telai</i>)
Log splitting	Axe(<i>Rhei</i>)	Women	Forecourt(<i>telai</i>)
Paddy drying	Paddyspreadingbasket (<i>Kharang</i>)	Women	Forecourt(<i>telai</i>)
Weaving tool making	Cleavers(<i>Kapakchem</i>)and blades(<i>chemcha</i>)	Men	Forecourt(<i>telai</i>)
Craft production	Cleaver(<i>Kapakchem</i>)and blade(<i>tangshi</i>)	Men	Forecourt(<i>telai</i>)
Iron tool making	Hammer(<i>lungthang</i>),Iron bar (<i>lung-ong</i>), tong(<i>chakep</i>),straightsnips (<i>kati</i>)	Men	Storehouse(<i>shangkul</i>)/ attached extended structure
Field cultivation	Spade(<i>thirpak</i>),dao (<i>Chemlakur</i>),Plough (<i>Langkun</i>)	Both men and women	Non-household product
Jhum cultivation,	Spade(<i>thirpak</i>), hoe(<i>kutu</i>), ironcleaver (<i>chem</i>)	Both men And women	Out side homestead
Horticulture	Spade, hoe, cleaver	Both men And women	Settle land and jhum land(<i>chinglei</i>)
Fishing	Fishingtrap(<i>Chok</i>),fishing container(<i>tengpor</i>)	Both men And women	Out side homestead
Hunting	Spear(<i>thangjo</i>),bowand arrow	Men	Out side home stead

Paddy harvesting	Sickle(<i>koite</i>),threshing stick (<i>cheirung</i>), paddy shober (<i>shason</i>), winnowingfan(<i>yangyap</i>)	Both men and women	Out side home stead
House construction	Hammer,rope,cleavers, digging bar, hand-saw, chisel	men	Within and outside the village

The economic activities that take place outside of the family are naturally influenced by the environment, weather conditions, and the season. Agriculture is still the foundation of the Kom's economy, and 90% of the total population of the Kom is involved in agricultural activities (Serto, 2007). They utilised shifting agriculture, and rice was the sole important food crop. The many operations of the agricultural cycle are organised by season. For example, land clearance begins at the start of the dry season, which is in October or November. Land clearing, burning dry trees and shrubs that have been chopped down, spreading seeds, weeding, and harvesting are all activities that are associated with shifting agriculture. Both men and women took part in all of the agricultural operations, with the exception of clearing the jhum land and fire activities, which are jobs that only males do. Recently, certain Kom villages have been seen to be practicing established wet and dry farming. In addition to their domestic responsibilities, women had an active role in a variety of tasks on the Jhum fields (*chinglei*) throughout the agricultural cycle, serving as the active labour force. While both men and women participate in most activities, males tend to work greater hours than women in most of these activities. Men are responsible for more labour-intensive land tasks, such as clearing and preparing jhum land, chopping down trees, burning dry plants, hoeing, and fencing. Women participated in transplanting, weeding, and harvesting, and they even helped transport agricultural products to their homes. Women make up a large part of the workforce throughout the long and exhausting operations of weeding and harvesting. Beans, groundnuts, potatoes, tomatoes, and green vegetables are some of the other key food crops. Cotton was also grown for the purpose of producing yarn for weaving. Cotton plantations were also one of the significant economic activities that occurred during the months of March and April. Women are responsible for the majority of this time-consuming labour, which includes everything from preparing the planting locations and seedlings to safeguarding the sprouting sensitive cotton plants from insects and harvesting them.

Conclusion

The distribution of work between genders has changed a lot. It has gone from being rigid and historically established to being more flexible and dynamic. This change has been influenced by globalisation, technological innovation, and aggressive governmental actions. Although there has been progress towards gender parity in both the public and commercial sectors, difficulties such as salary inequality, occupational segregation, and the unequal allocation of home obligations continue to exist. In order to create successful interventions, it is essential to understand the historical backdrop and the factors that are driving change in the present day. As societies continue to develop, it will be necessary to take a holistic strategy that includes legislative changes, cultural transformation, and focused research in order to create a more inclusive and equitable future.

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