

Chapter 29

Shelter and Income Opportunities for Women in India

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In India, most working people, male and female, are "self-employed." The self-employed include all those people who have to earn their living without a regular or salaried job. There are basically three categories of self-employed women:

1. The small-scale hawkers, vendors;
2. Home-based producers; and
3. Laborers selling their services.

This essay explores various issues related to home-based producers and studies the conditions of home-based women workers in the urban and rural context.

The invisibility of home-based women workers is of great concern to the women's movement in India. Mahatma Gandhi had recognized the special role of home-based workers in general and women in particular. In fact, it was the central issue of his economic thought. Today, many organizations are working for the betterment of these women workers and their efforts are also important for this study. The potential of shelter in providing economic opportunities to women is quite high in India. It is important for architects and planners to address the needs of the home-based women workers, creatively supporting them in their designs for housing, neighborhoods, townships, and city development plans.

Family, Occupations, Shelters and Settlement Patterns

Human economic activities (i.e., production of goods and services) have a great bearing on settlement patterns. In India, the majority (70%) of the population is engaged in agricultural production. This divides India into two basic settlement units: rural and urban. These two categories have very few things in common. Hence it is necessary to treat them separately here.

Rural Production and Settlements

People in rural India are basically engaged in agriculture. This is both land-intensive and labor-intensive. Mechanization and automation are not widespread. A large work force is necessary. In the absence of irrigation, most of the agricultural work is seasonal. The dependence upon monsoon rains dominates the working pattern of the people. At harvest time, the demand for labor is very great. This provides continuous work for three to four months of the year. But after the main crop has been harvested, there is little work on the farms. Processing of agricultural produce is then shifted to the

residential sphere and women have a greater role in this. Dairy and animal husbandry are the other two main occupations of the rural population. In such a situation, women as laborers have to contribute to production. Division of work based on the sex of worker exists but is not clear-cut. Both men and women work together on farms and residences. Hence rural "domestic space" in India has a very different meaning from what is generally understood by the term "house" or "home." In typical farmers' houses, there are no specific areas for sleeping, living, children's play, dining etc. The built-up space and surrounding open land, semi-covered areas, and courtyards are used in multidimensional ways.

Regional differences in space planning as they have evolved over centuries, construction materials, and methods are well maintained. The built form is largely governed by the environment and the nature of human activities. The whole process of designing, planning, and construction is determined by the family members. The regeneration, maintenance, and addition to the rural house takes place outside the planning process of state or governing authorities, architects, engineers or planners, the so-called specialists. The houses in rural India are designed as:

- Shelters for family members
- Shelters for animals
- Areas where agriculture produce is processed
- Store for agriculture produce and grains
- Space for caste-based production of goods; e.g., weaving, shoe making, pottery, carpentry, etc.
- Space for storage of raw materials and finished goods

All the necessary services are related to domestic spheres. Families are large and children, old people, and the disabled are cared for in the residence itself. Functions such as marriages also take place in the residences. Many of the large houses have special rooms for childbirth. Necessary medical experts and help are brought to the houses. Many trading families have storage, go-downs, and workplaces in their houses. Houses also act as retail outlets for small goods and daily necessities and food items. The Brahmin caste (priest) families have a close relation with the village temples or schools where knowledge is being imparted.

Such examples are numerous. One can very well imagine that such houses provide very close spatial relations for all human activities. And these are very common even today in rural areas. In such a situation,

there cannot be a very sharp division of labor based on sex. Men and women necessarily have to participate in all human activities together. The houses in rural areas are not branded as "women's sphere." And as compared to their urban counterparts, the role of women in practice is not secondary. This does not mean that women have "equal" social status in society. The religions do not allow such views. However, the "economic" role of women is well recognized in reality. When men and women work in fields as casual laborers, they are given a share of the produce, not always cash. While cash can be easily appropriated by men and spent, the share in grain remains for the use of family members. Education and training in trade or production of goods also take place in the domestic sphere. Girls and boys from one caste learn the same trade and processes from childhood on. And when girls get married, they generally carry on the same work, since the marriages generally take place within the same caste.

Even today, villages composed of such households are more or less self-sufficient but only at the subsistence agricultural level. The lands of villages, before the British rule, were distributed to the families according to their needs as well as the status and number of family members. Production of other goods was entrusted to particular castes and families. This production of goods was undertaken for the entire village population and craftsmen were paid for their services in kind. The production of particular goods was the responsibility as well as the right of the families. One caste was not allowed to indulge in the trade of another caste.

The village settlement pattern is based on castes. Families within one caste are grouped together. Upper castes command the "prime" locations of villages, near temples or water sources. Occupations which create pollution are located on the outer peripheries. There is not much vehicular traffic. Hence roads and lanes are narrow and houses are closely packed. The village population always remains limited. This is generally decided by the sustainable level of production. When population pressure is felt, the surplus laborers have to move out. In the past, when such pressure was felt, new lands were brought under cultivation and new settlements, based on old village patterns, were created. The kings and rulers had the responsibility of creating and facilitating such new settlements. Today, the population pressure on land is so great that the surplus population migrates to the urban centers in search of work and sustenance.

Urban India

In the past, before the British Raj, there were few towns. These settlements varied little from village settlement patterns, except that these were centers along trading routes and comparatively richer than villages. The population in these towns was composed of various castes and there were more traders and artisans settled in towns. However, caste-based settlements were the norm. Towns were planned by the town planning experts and natural phenomena like sunpath, wind direction, water sources, etc., were well considered. Various castes were located according to hierarchy and type of goods produced (many of the historical towns still maintain their spatial divisions). The roads and lanes were named by the caste names: Brahmin Lane (Priest Caste), Chamar Ali (Cobbler Street), Tambat Galli (Coppersmith Street), Gavli Gally (Dairymen's Street), etc. Life in these towns varied little from that in villages, except that women had less access to production and agriculture as compared to women in villages. The trading towns were also attractions for bandits, thieves, and frequent outside interference by and the rivalries of kings. Hence, there was greater need and tendency to "protect" women. Areas having a high frequency of attacks like the Rajasthan, Northern, and North Western regions of India restricted women more than did the South.

Present Indian towns and cities are the products of colonial rule as well as post-independence industrialization policies. Settlement patterns in urban India are more or less governed by "market" processes. These towns have few links with traditional settlement patterns. Most people in urban areas have no link with agricultural production. The growth of the towns is influenced by Western town planning concepts of zoning. Women in such centers have been thrown out of traditional economic spheres as the production activities and services have been removed from the domestic spheres. Industry, business, services, hospitals, schools, etc., have taken over the "traditional" family functions. And there has emerged a clear-cut "domestic" sphere exclusively used as residence. Women's activities, to a large extent, are limited by this "domestic" sphere. Traditional, informal participation of women in the production of goods and services has received a setback. The growing affluence of industrial workers in the formal and organized sector is affecting women's roles. Activities of the "domestic" sphere have a secondary position in the "market" economy, and most of the women in the middle and upper layer of society have been subjected to the "housewifization" process.

However, due to very limited growth of the formal and organized sector of production after independence and limited job opportunities, most urban residents have no choice but to look for self-employment. And there are larger numbers of self-employed women than men even in urban areas. Large numbers of women have to work in their homes for their livelihood. Large-scale migration from villages to urban areas has created difficult conditions in urban centers. Traditional crafts and skills have little place in urban economy. They have great difficulty in getting a livelihood, shelter, services, etc., in urban areas. Modern town planning, land-use patterns, and zoning do not recognize the need for such large numbers of migrants to cities. Ghettos and slums seem to be the only places for the migrating population.

Self-Employment In India

A large number of the people in India are self-employed. The self-employed category in the labor force accounts for about 57.3%. The growth of the organized sector in Indian economy has been rather slow. The organized work force accounts for only a tenth of the total employment. The percentage of women in the self-employed sector of the economy is higher than that of the men. Sixty percent of the 98,400,000 female workers (59,100,000) are self-employed. In rural areas, the percentage of self-employed women is larger than that in the urban areas. Of self-employed women, 43% work in their homes and are engaged in various occupations. The total lack of salaried jobs in rural areas forces women to seek a means of self employment. The seasonal agriculture work also limits their opportunities to find permanent employment outside their homes.

Self-employment, by and large, constitutes the dominant sector of employment in our economy. This sector is characterized by "easy entry" and "less waiting time," where the choice of activity is mainly guided by the association of other members of the family in a particular activity, or their "previous experience," or their acquaintances. Most of the activities involve no or little capital. The capital requirement is met almost entirely through family and informal sources. This sector, by and large, generates its own capital. This sector is also characterized by almost unrestricted working hours.

Home-Based Women Workers

Home-based workers, a majority of whom are women, can be divided into two broad categories. The prominent category is that of the piece-rated home workers, working for some other employer or small artisans. The

second is own-account small entrepreneurs or small artisans. The problems and hardships faced by these two groups, though both are home-based, are different. The piece-rated home workers are "exploited" by outsiders like contractors and are paid very low wages. The workers in this category need better wage protection and implementation of labor laws. Own-account workers need better facilities and arrangements for raw materials, marketing, credit, storage, workplace, and better prices, and protection from harassment by public authorities. These women face forcible eviction from their workplaces or confiscation of their goods by municipal authorities and police, as their activities are often viewed as illegal.

The self-employed section of the population is the poorest in the society. Their need for work is for sheer survival. Men and women have to undertake any kind of work. And the availability of a large, unorganized work force reduces their wages further. In a sense, there are no idle and unemployed workers. The poverty of these people forces them to live on a "day-to-day" basis and survival without a job, even for a few days, is difficult.

Profile of Economic Activities

The type of economic activities women undertake in their homes varies according to their rural and urban status. More than 50% of the women in rural areas are engaged in dairy, poultry, and animal husbandry, followed by weaving and spinning and tailoring. A significantly low percentage of women are engaged in manufacturing of other goods. Tailoring is the only manufacturing activity which women undertake in rural areas. In urban areas, 26% of the women are engaged in dairy and animal husbandry. Tailoring is the activity in which 40% of urban women are engaged, followed by spinning and weaving (15.25%). Many women prefer part-time activities. This is because responsibility for the household and the family are the primary concerns of women.

The households in rural areas have many tasks to be performed for the betterment and functioning of the family. Besides cooking, cleaning, and other household services, many women have to spend time in fetching water, collecting firewood, collecting fodder for animals, and making cowdung cakes for use as fuel. The lack of basic amenities in rural areas has an adverse effect on the economic potential of women. Next to agriculture (which includes animal husbandry), manufacturing constitutes the single biggest source of

employment. The proportion of women engaged in this sector has shown the tendency of growth in last two decades. But within this sector, a large number of women are engaged in the traditional sector. Food, beverages, tobacco, textiles, wood and wooden products, and ceramics account for 86% of female workers engaged in the manufacturing sector.

Compared to the rural areas, the opportunities of generating income from self-employment in urban areas are more and varied. A large number of educated urban women undertake economic activities in their spare time, especially in the service sector of the economy. Job opportunities in this sector have shown the tendency of growth in the last two decades. Many professional women, such as doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, accountants, and teachers, like to operate from their residences. Many financial institutions have provided employment for women, viz., Indian Postal departments, Life Insurance Corporation, Unit Trust of India. After completing their household duties, women are gainfully engaged in their spare time and these activities provide them with independent incomes. Many women also operate trading and retailing business from their homes. Modern technological developments also have a potential of generating income from the residential premises, e.g., computers and electronics are two areas to which women from urban centers are attracted.

There are large numbers and types of activities that women undertake in their homes that generate an independent income. In fact, Indian women have found many indigenous ways of generating their own incomes. In many of the poorer families, women's work provides for a subsistence-level livelihood for the whole family without which the families would not survive. It is not the lack of work that women can undertake in their homes which is of more concern: it is the lack of recognition of the fact on the part of society in general, which many times discourages women and affects them adversely.

Adaptation of Shelters

It is observed that construction of houses takes place outside the field of physical planners and architects. But the general pattern of development has thrust many changes on the villages. Governmental policy decisions are affecting the settlement patterns. Developmental activities pertaining to irrigation projects, power projects, and large public and private sector investments in chemical, fertilizer, and nuclear industries, in petrochemical complexes, and in transport and communica-

tions all have an impact on rural areas for the better as well as for the worse. Changes in land-use patterns, agricultural production, cultivation methods and marketing facilities have affected the total population. Traditional social and economic institutions are undergoing rapid changes. People get dislocated in such development processes. A large, landless work-force is generated and thrown out of villages where land has become an exchange commodity. Large-scale migration is accelerated. Traditional, stable life patterns are shaken, and mobility is on the increase. Urbanization on a large scale is expected to grow still further. Large population growth is also a cause of concern.

Migration on a large scale has caused unprecedented urbanization. Most of the poor migrating from rural areas in search of opportunities are not welcome in the cities. The strain on urban land is such that poor people are forced to live in already crowded slums. They lack modern technical skills, and education. However, on their arrival in urban areas, most people acquire small skills. Old, large-family relations and regional ties make their survival in cities possible to start with. Hard work, self-help, and opportunities of work and education allow the migrants not only to survive in urban centers but to do much better economically than they could have dreamed of in villages. These people, men, women, and children, are engaged in many useful activities without which Indian cities could not function. This self-exploitation of unorganized masses, their work, and real value added to the economy are never properly understood by authorities, economic planners, and urban planners. There is a tendency to look at these hard-working people as burdens, while in actuality they are assets to the economy.

The slums, in reality, are busy economic units like houses in rural areas. The "spaces" in slums are used in multidimensional ways, especially by women. Very small rooms with poor light and ventilation and lack of other facilities such as water and sanitation are used as shelters for a number of people in the family. After the men depart from home for their jobs or economic activities, women use the homes as "space" for generating incomes of their own. Cities like Bombay have very crowded localities. But women manage to put the spaces to productive purposes. The activities are independently carried out by women alone or other family members also participate in such activities. "Dharavi," the largest slum in Bombay, is also a thriving business and manufacturing locality. Leather work, wood work, small industrial goods assembly, and

manufacturing also take place. Handicraft, basket weaving, rag picking, food processing, packaging, tailoring etc., which do not need large areas, are undertaken by women as economic activities. Some of the cities and towns have become special production centers, where a large number of women are engaged in the activities at their homes. "Bidi rolling" (making a kind of indigenous cigarette) is one such activity in the town of Nipani in the tobacco-growing region. Handloom weaving in Bhivandi and other towns, papad (a snack) making, and food processing, are some of the common activities undertaken at homes. Women also operate from homes as vendors and do some small retail business. In fact, every family in the slum area and all the members, including the children, participate in a number of activities which generate income (it may be very small, but is very useful) which allows them to survive in the cities. And even when few opportunities are provided, many manage to do even better than just subsistence level.

Many industries, large and small, take advantage of the situation. Many jobs, otherwise undertaken in factory premises, are handed to women to do in their homes on a piece-rate basis. This way, the cost of providing space, and the need for facilities such as water, sanitation, electricity, and minimum wage or other benefits which would have been necessary by the law, can be circumvented. This reduces the costs for the industries, and their profit margin increases. The slums and domestic spaces near the industries thus help the industries, on the one hand, and provide economic opportunities to poor women on the other. This mutual relationship is also very important in a business district like crowded office areas of south Bombay. Providing very cheap food is a great thriving business for many families. Semi-cooked food is prepared in the domestic areas or in slums and is sold on the streets for the benefit of a large number of white-collar workers at very low prices. Quality and hygiene are at stake, and the streets become eating places during lunch time. This is an example of the failure of physical planners to understand the relation of the informal sector and the business district and to provide facilities for both. It is also an example of the failure of following the Western zoning norms without proper adaptation to local needs and local conditions.

This large, unorganized, largely home-based sector of workers has another kind of impact on the organized workers' movements and struggles. Whenever large-scale industrial unrest and disputes take place in

organized sectors of the economy, the unorganized sector of the economy absorbs the shock. On the one hand, it allows the struggle of organized workers to last longer than would have been possible without it. On the other hand, it takes over the production of goods thus affected by strikes and closures in the factories, and reduces the ability of the working class to force the management to settle. Thus, there is not much loss of production, and the availability of goods to the society is not necessarily affected. This was witnessed in the strike of textile workers in Bombay.

The strike in Bombay Textile Industry in 1984 involved about 200,000 workers. The strike continued for two years. The Textile Industry owners were least interested in finding a solution for the simple reason that the industry had become unprofitable. Modernization was opposed by workers. And the industry was not able to compete in the market. The industry had become a burden to them. However, the strike continued. But this did not affect the supply of textile goods in the market. The production was shifted to a nearby town, Bhivandi, where the powerloom and handloom sector increased its capacity and the goods were branded and sold by the textile mills. The families of the striking workers in such conditions had to survive and had to find solutions to the economic needs. Many workers were supported by the women who started their own economic activities, in an unorganized way. Subsequently, these unorganized women were supported and got organized to promote their own activities. It was the beginning of organizations for home-based workers in Bombay.

Home-Based Women Workers and Their Organizations

Home-based women workers are one of three groups of self-employed women workers. The three groups are:

1. Small-scale vendors, small traders, hawkers selling goods such as vegetables, fruits, fish, eggs, and other staple foods, household goods, garments, and other similar products.
2. Home-based producers such as weavers, potters, bidi workers, milk producers, garment stitchers, and processors of agricultural products, and handicraft producers.
3. Laborers selling their services or their labor, including agricultural laborers, construction workers, contract laborers, hand cart pullers, head loaders, washerwomen, cooks, cleaners, and other providers of services.

The home-based, self-employed women workers are literally invisible to society; they work within their homes and do not appear in the census or other official statistics. These are the workers whose organization is very difficult. The home-based workers, because of their isolation from general workers and even from their own group, remain unnoticed and, hence, are exploited in many ways. They have no employer, yet they have to obtain raw materials and deal with the consumers in the market, financiers, and middlemen in case they are not able to sell their goods directly. The self-employed lose income when:

- They buy raw materials and inputs
- They hire tools and equipments
- They need cash for working capital; and
- They sell their produce in wholesale or retail markets

The self-employed generate income when they:

1. Buy inputs in bulk
2. Provide tools on hire purchase
3. Obtain capital; and
4. Organize marketing of their produce

It is clear from this that the home-based women workers have a greater need of organization if they have to generate proper income from their activities. It was Mahatma Gandhi who first recognized the importance of the promotion of home-based workers in general and women in particular. His strategies for economic self-reliance had roots in the traditional Indian methods of home-based production.

KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission)

This is a large and important organization of home-based workers in India. Established in 1956 to carry out the work of rural reconstruction through development of the economic activities, KVIC activities have proved important to poor women, as one of its objectives is to provide employment for women at their doorsteps. The major activities of KVIC are in spinning, weaving, leather industry, soap making, rice pounding, bee keeping, oil milling, woolen and silk textiles, as well as food processing. Recently, KVIC has also entered the field of electronics in a big way. In the state of Kerala, KVIC gives training to women and then provides work at home. Work such as assembling electronic circuit boards is provided. KVIC has a very large marketing

network and large showrooms in the large cities and towns in India.

**SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association),
Ahmedabad**

Inspired by the Gandhian philosophy and expanding on the basic idea, this independent organization has been actively involved with a large number of self-employed women and home-based women workers since 1972. The women felt that, as a workers' association, SEWA should establish itself as a trade union. This was a novel idea because the self-employed have no real history of organizing. The first struggle SEWA undertook was to obtain official recognition as a trade union. The Labor Department refused to register SEWA because it felt that, since there was no recognized employer, the workers would have no one to struggle against. SEWA argued that the union was not necessarily against an employer but for the unity of workers.

A similar problem was faced by Illa Bhatt of SEWA at the International Forum in 1974, when she was told that she was ahead of her time by ILO in Geneva. Talking about her experience, she says, "In 1981, I was ridiculed when I talked of recognizing piece-rate, home-based workers as 'workers' and providing them with legal protection and social security. I was ridiculed at the national and international forum. In 1988, the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Brussels) World Labor Congress at Melbourne passed [SEWA's] resolution to bring home-based workers within the fold of the labor movement."

The success of SEWA is in its approach of combining three movements: the labor movement, the co-operative movement, and the women's movement. SEWA was born in the labor movement with the idea that the self-employed, like salaried workers, have the right to fair wages, decent working conditions, and protective labor laws. They deserve recognition as a legitimate group of workers with status, dignity, and the right to organize bodies to publicly represent their interests. Most importantly, most workers in India are self-employed and, if unions are to be truly responsive to labor in the Indian context, then they must organize them. This requires going beyond the western model of the trade unions as practiced in the advanced countries where labor is mainly composed of wage earners working for large-scale manufacturers or enterprises.

In addition, SEWA feels that the co-operative movement is very important for the self-employed. Not only is it

important for the self-employed to struggle for their rights, but they also need to develop an alternative economic system. The co-operative movement points the way to such a system in which the workers themselves would control their own means of production, an alternative system without employer and employees, but in which all own what they produce. SEWA accepts the co-operative principles and sees itself as attempting to reach the goal of social change and economic relations.

The women's movement in India began with the social and religious reforms movement in the late nineteenth century. Under Mahatma Gandhi, women actively participated in the freedom struggle and became active in their own liberation. In the 1970's, the women's movement took a new radical turn, with women participating actively in social movements and demanding capabilities and opportunities in all spheres of life. The women's movement pointed out that women constitute 50% of the world's population and do two-thirds of all the work in the economy. For this work, women are paid only 10% of all wages, salaries, and remunerations. At most, 1% of this income is owned by women. All this is because women's work is not recognized as work and, hence, is not paid for or is paid for at a very low rate. SEWA has been part of the growing women's movement. It is felt that the bulk of women in India are poor, self-employed, and mainly rural. For the movement to be successful, it must reach out to these women and make their issues—economic, social, and political—the issues of the movement.

Annapoorna Mahila Mandal (AMM), Bombay

The textile workers' strike in Bombay was mentioned earlier. The women of the striking workers had no option but to support their families. Some were already engaged in providing food to the migrant workers. Most new migrants to Bombay leave their families behind in the rural areas. The women engaged in supplementing their family incomes now had a greater need for more income to support their families. The need for better organization was realized through the Annapoorna Mahila Mandal. (Annapoorna is the Goddess of Food.) The AMM today has a large membership (50,000) and a consolidated base in the working-class area of Bombay. The organization arranges for the soft loans that are required by women to start their own catering business and gives support to women on many issues. The members of the organization are also motivated to participate in many social programs such as literacy, adult education, family planning, cleanliness, and other women's issues such as dowry and family counseling.

This well-knit organization has successfully evolved market support for the food products.

Mahila Grih Udyog (Lijjat Papad)

This co-operative is exclusively for home-based women workers. The main activity of this organization, i.e., production of papad, is undertaken by many women in their homes. The rolling of papad is based on the easily available skills of the women. The prepared dough, with all its ingredients, is provided to the women after a very short training in achieving uniformity of the product. The women roll the papads in their homes and deliver the product in semi-dried condition to the collection centers. Hundreds of women members of this co-operative from a large number of towns are engaged and generate incomes regularly. The organization has a large domestic market and has been successful in exporting the products to many countries and popularizing the product through modern marketing techniques. The organization is also diversifying in many other products and is establishing a large network of packaging centers. It has been a very popular organization among women and, at the same time, a very successful commercial venture.

Home-Based Women Workers and Related Issues

Invisibility

Recognizing the category of home-based workers poses a great problem. Most of the issues related to the well-being of the home-based women workers remain unnoticed due to their general invisibility.

Health Hazards

Many of the home-based women workers suffer from multiple health hazards. Not all are necessarily related to their economic activities. However, the living conditions of poor women are so bad that all the activities become inter-related. Most of the women have little idea of health hazards and, even if they do, they have very little control of their environment. There are no safety regulations or health services. Crowded residences in the cities lack sanitation and water supply. Many handicraft workers suffer from bad eyesight caused by lack of proper lighting conditions and lack of electricity. In the case of the Bidi (a kind of cigarette) workers, who roll tobacco in leaves by hand, poor ventilation and fine tobacco dust cause tuberculosis

and cancer. Continuous back-breaking work, unlimited working hours, and awkward postures with general malnutrition cause many ailments. Most family members, including young children, are adversely affected by the working conditions.

Poverty

Illiteracy, lack of education and training in skills, as well as many social drawbacks such as the caste system, untouchability, and traditional social practices adversely affect women's work, health, and status. Women are doubly exploited. They are exploited by the traditional joint family system of patriarchy and the modern economic system. Barring a very few professional and educated women, most of the home-based workers lack the ability to interact with the outside world effectively. Hence, they do not become independent in spite of their economic activities and incomes of their own. Their isolation in the home is not so total in the Indian context. On the other hand, women in India have very little or no privacy.

Effects of Technology

With the introduction of modern technology in production processes, traditional skills and production are challenged. However, a number of crafts and skills are still preserved through family traditions. The artisans are economically exploited by the market system. However, artists also benefit from the modern communication system and market expansion if they are able to organize themselves. Many of the performing arts are not only preserved but have received a great boost through modern media.

Lack of a modern communication network interlinking large numbers of villages is a major cause of isolation of the rural communities. There is an additional cause for concern. The introduction of modern technology in only a few fields such as electronics and computers without corresponding changes in other fields can aggravate the situation. Introduction of appropriate technology in most of the fields can, on the other hand, help society in general and women in particular. "Operation Flood" is an example of the successful combination of the innovative use of modern technology and old forms of production organization. The scheme promotes production of milk by giving support to individual producers, many of them women, and central collection, processing, and distribution of milk and milk products to the urban population. This approach provides remunerative

prices to the individuals for their product. This approach also has the advantage of distribution of wealth to a large population.

Conclusions

In India, a large number of women generate income from various activities undertaken in their homes. Home-based women are the most exploited section of the self-employed workers category and form the poorest strata of society. The organization of these women is an important task. Various issues related to home-based workers need greater attention from planners. It is essential to give special attention to the needs of this section of the economy so as to strengthen its position in society.

Residential settlements devoid of any income opportunities reduce women to the "housewifization" process, isolation, and dependence. Separation of all the economic activities of production and services from the domestic sphere necessarily limit income opportunities for women. This also leads to spatial determinism and wasteful travel and energy consumption which are the results of present zoning plans.

Division of work based on sex and division of space in commercial and industrial zones and non-economic residential zones are closely related. This relationship, at present, is governed by market forces. Alternative urban and rural planning strategies based on the needs of the people and women in particular have to be developed, if they are to be effective. Architects and physical planners have the responsibility to create a better environment for the future. Hence, they must seek active participation of women in the planning processes.

Home-based economic activities of women are important to society. Creating better opportunities through physical planning is the responsibility of the architects. Such opportunities need not be only for women but can also be extended to include men. This approach can help in overcoming the present division of work based on sex and can provide equal status to men, women, and their works.

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