

A Study on the Gender Wage Gap in India

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Chapter: 1

An Overview of Gender Wage Gap

I Introduction

Evidence from across the world suggests that men and women are paid differently for a job of the same nature, and also paid differently for a job of varied nature but amounting to equal value. The existing Gender Wage Gap is a violation of human rights, and major violation of the principles of Decent Work. It has rightly been highlighted as one of the major issues of present day as gender pay gap between men workers and women workers raises some fundamental questions about how and by what means human labour is assigned and accorded value? The very existence of wage gap leads to the important question of whether the valuation is prejudiced by the social stereotypes which lead to discrimination against women in the labour market or it is founded on inherent differences in the productive capabilities of men and women.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) identifies the gender pay gap as a globally persistent phenomenon: “Throughout most regions and many occupations, women are paid less money than men for the same job. In a majority of countries, women's wages represent between 70 and 90 per cent of men's wages, with even lower ratios in some Asian and Latin American countries.” (ILO 2009: 19).

In general, two main reasons for the pay gap can be identified (UNDP 2006): *direct gender discrimination* in labour markets and *occupational segregation*. Direct discrimination occurs when people who have the same level of educational attainment and work experience are treated differently because of their gender: different pay levels for the same work or different job requirements for the same pay level. Efforts and achievements in the field of direct discrimination have been made in many countries by passing laws or establishing supportive institutions.

The various forms of discrimination relating to *occupational gender segregation* are more subtle as well as more difficult to address through policy measures, as underlying social norms and practices are largely responsible for this. According to the ILO, women represent 40.4 percent of the worldwide workforce. However, that proportion is not reflected when investigating occupational groups within the various sectors: 46.3 percent of employed women work in the services sector, 35.4 percent in the agricultural sector and only 18.3 percent in the industrial sector (compared to 26.6 percent of employed men) (ILO 2009). The specific sectors in which women employees are the vast majority – secretaries, teachers and nurses – also are poorly paid work areas. And even within these jobs they are paid less than their male colleagues (IWPR 2009). This fundamental under-valuation of women's work results basically from two facts. Firstly, women's primary responsibility for unpaid care work within the home, including child and elderly care, cooking, cleaning, other home management; as well as provisioning for water and fuel where these are drawn from natural resources, influences the manner in which women present themselves for work in the labour market (UNIFEM 2005). Some researchers refer to differences in occupations between women and men as the selection effect (e.g. Petersen and Snartland, 2005). The selection effect implies not only that women choose certain kinds of occupations, but that employers are favoring men over women instead of taking up the measures to make the work zones friendly for both women and men. Secondly, the specific way in which work skills are attained plays an important role in their financial evaluation: “The physical strength of the labourer may not be particularly well remunerated unless supplemented with time-served, learned building skills. But by the same token, the 'talents' of women, such as the capacity for and the skills involved in caring, are not rewarded either.” (Rees 1992: 17). The under valuation of care work leads to undervaluing the labour of the care giver as well. Further, women as a group are insufficiently represented within organised unions so that they lack effective bargaining power in the labour market.

Social norms and practices influencing women's work choices are reflected in the gender bias relating to duties of parenthood. Girls and boys are socialised from an early age into accepting differences, where the boy child is given a different sense of duties and responsibilities than a girl child of the same family. Women are more likely to work part time or take a break from their careers to give birth to and bring up children, and are often unable to return to the same position and income should they choose to re-enter the labour force once

children are older. Paternity does not lead to the same breaks in career or conflicts between work and home in working full-time. Even women who don't have children are considered as “potential mothers” and thus may be denied promotion opportunities (Goldberg Dey/Hill 2007). As a consequence the gender pay gap tends to be higher in countries where the female labour force participation rate is high but childcare is not provided as public service by respective states.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has put considerable efforts towards a greater recognition of “pay equality” as fundamental right of workers. On 29 June, 1951 the ILO adopted the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100). The convention supports equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. The convention has been ratified by 167 countries. The convention was ratified by India in 1958. Sex discrimination in remuneration remains as one of the important causes of existing gender pay gaps. The Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) is one of eight core ILO conventions, which seeks to remove discrimination in remuneration by ensuring that men and women receive equal remuneration not just for similar work but also work of equal value. This Convention can be applied by:

- National laws or regulations.
- Legally established or recognised machinery for wage determination.
- Collective agreements between employers and workers; or
- A combination of these various means.

Several studies have confirmed that the implementation of the Equal Pay Convention 100 of the ILO can have a positive impact in reducing a country's gender pay gap. It may also lead to positive developments in economic competition (ITUC 2008).

However, often these measures are part of a wider set of policy initiatives by governments to try to remove existing inequalities in society, such as enabling the re-entry of females in the labour market through the improvement of childcare facilities, improvement of access to education, and improvement of bargaining power to negotiate with the employer.

In India, the Constitution recognized the principle of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' for both men and women, and 'Right to Work' through Article 39(d) and 41 respectively. As far back

as 1976 the Equal Remuneration Act came into effect and yet unequal pay affects working women in India. From small businesses to large organisations to the unorganized sector, women are paid lesser wages than men for the same work.¹

The average daily wage rates for women were found to be generally lower than those for men in most of the occupations. (MoL, 2009-10) India has an average gender pay gap of 30%, according to a recent global survey conducted in 20 countries by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Amsterdam-based WageIndicator Foundation. In India, the online survey covered 4,608 candidates of which 85% were men, while the comparative ratio for other countries stood at 58% (men) and 42% (women) respectively.

II Objectives of the present study

- (1) To provide an overview of the existing nature , dimensions and causes of the gender pay gap in India
- (2) To provide a set of key policy and institutional recommendations to address the gender pay gap based on the findings of the analysis.

III Methodology

The study has reviewed the existing literature in the field of gender pay gap, analysed data from the NSS survey of 2009-10, and collected some data from the field. The sixty-sixth round of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data (2009-10) have been used for the analysis. Moreover, the unit level information of quinquennial employment-unemployment Surveys of NSSO² has been taken into consideration for statistical analysis. Apart from the secondary data, detailed interviews were conducted among a group of key

¹ A study conducted by ISST for the ILO on the ERA and howit had been used showed that few cases have been filed under this Act.

² The Employment-Unemployment Surveys of the NSSO is the single most important data source on wages is available from the quinquennial employment and unemployment surveys undertaken by the National Sample Survey Organization of Central Statistical Organization (NSS-EUS). The data is taken from the current weekly status data on wages and is usually represented as wages per week or wages per day. The data is available for regular workers and casual workers. A wide degree of disaggregation is possible at the unit level data. The data can be analyzed at the NIC industrial classification and/or at the NCO classification for rural/urban sectors. Since the data is at the individual level it can be used to explore individual characteristics associated with wages.

informants from selected industries through a semi-structured schedule. For this purpose, teachers, construction workers and agricultural labourers have been interviewed.

Median hourly wage rates in rupees have been taken for males and females to compare the level of wage rate. Median wages have been preferred to avoid the problem of outliers in the data set. However, it should be noted here that NSSO collects the data of Weekly wage rates of workers. Female workers are often in part time/ secondary jobs therefore it may be misleading to compare weekly wage rates; hence hourly wage rates have been derived by dividing the weekly wage rate with work intensity. The study has selected the occupational category (three digits, NCO-2004³) for the analysis. The compilation of secondary data, the analysis was done with the help of SPSS software.

The occupations⁴ for the analysis are identified on the following basis:

(1) In which both male and female have more or less equal participation.

Educational level	Occupations with more or less equal participation
Low	Agricultural, fishery and related labourers (920)
Medium	Social work associate professions (346),
High	Secondary education teaching professionals (233), college, university and higher education teaching professionals (231)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis are occupation codes taken from NCO classification-2004, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

(2) In which women dominate with a comparator from a male dominated sector.

Educational level	Female dominated Occupations	Male dominated Occupations
Low	Food processing and related trade workers (741), Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers (913)	Mining and construction labourers (931), Pelt leather, shoe making (743)
Medium	pre- primary education teaching associate professionals (332), Nursing and midwifery associate professionals (323)	Other teaching associate professionals (334)
High	Nursing Professionals (223)	Computing professionals (213),

Note: Figures in the parenthesis are occupation codes taken from NCO classification-2004, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

³ . NSSO 66th round has given the data according to NCO 2004 at three digit level.

⁴ The study will undertake NCO classification 2004 to identify the above said sectors provided by Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

Chapter: 2

Nature and Extent of Gender Pay Gap: A Review of Literature

Several authors have analyzed the existence of gender wage discrimination in developing countries in recent years. The primary technique employed in these studies is the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition technique which classifies the part of the wage gap unexplained by productive characteristics as the discrimination component. Several studies have further used the Brown et al. (1980) method to distinguish between the components of discrimination (whether it is due to unequal access to occupations or due to unequal pay within occupations).

I. Segregation of Tasks on Gender Basis

One factor which is widely seen as an explanation of gender wage gaps in the literature on the subject is occupational gender segregation. It is a proven fact that the majority of women work in specific occupations which are female-dominated and offer lower wages. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the wage gap has been accompanied by unequal occupational distribution of women, which measured by the Duncan index of segregation has stood well above 60% (Blau et al., 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that occupational choice and the percentage of women in different occupations could help explain the variation of wages between the two genders. In so far as people decide on a particular type of work solely on the basis of their own abilities and preferences and the job requirements, such a distribution of labour would be seen as being 'unbiased'. However, that would not be the case if women are guided by social stereotypes into specific occupations that are women-dominated, socially acceptable, and where they do not expect to face discrimination. Moreover the expectation of future care responsibilities is usually different. In this sense, because at the point of entry into the labour market men and women do not face a level playing field, wage differences that result from variation of occupational choices and segregation can be seen as evidence of discrimination against women. This is why the interpretation of results obtained using the residual approach is very sensitive to the assumptions made about the underlying causes of occupational segregation.

In some other studies, the authors have attempted to disentangle these effects by estimating the impact of occupational segregation on the wages of men and women while controlling for

the heterogeneity of skill demands and working conditions across occupations. Replacing the typical controls for occupational categories with these more specific characteristics, they took into consideration the particular factors that make some occupations more attractive for women and others more attractive for men. Thus, the measure of occupational segregation captures the residual effects of gender barriers in different occupations. This might be one way to obtain a more insightful estimate of the portion of the wage gap that can be explained by discrimination and the portion that can be explained by the different abilities of men and women to meet various job requirements and conditions. (Zlaveta et. al. 2010).

Marilyn Jacob (2006) examined the changes in the wage gap by gender and caste in India using NSSO data. The study established that there are unexplained wage gaps, and found that even after controlling for occupations, industries, characteristics of workers and jobs, almost half the wage gap between male and female workers is unexplained. The Oaxaca-Blinder procedure used in this study helps to understand the extent to which the overall wage gap can be explained by observed productivity characteristics between men and women, some of which would be the result of pre-labour market discrimination.] The occupation-based decomposition analyses show that the differences in occupational attainment are not statistically significant. The study finds discrimination is the primary cause of wage gaps for female and male workers across all castes. The study concludes that within-occupation discrimination adversely affects women in India; is not stronger among lower caste groups; and that there is no significant discrimination in access to occupations either gender-wise or caste-wise. This conclusion may be partly the result of affirmative action programmes, which provide for subsidized schooling and higher education, and coaching to prepare for entrance exams, besides reservations in government sector jobs for lower castes. The study reveals that educated workers face somewhat lesser hurdles in accessing the labour market than non-educated work force.

II. Extent of Gender Pay Gap in India

A recent study by Centre for WTO Studies, IIFT (2010) on Sectoral Impacts of Trade on Gender, Wages and Employment in India aims at ascertaining the magnitude of wage premium earned by men in the Manufacturing and Services as well as the Agricultural sector in India. The study uses the unit-level data provided by the 64th Round of the National Sample Survey which is conducted for the period July 2007 to June 2008.

The study highlights the fact that men undoubtedly earn more than women and the percentage gap between the average monthly wages is of about 53%. The study also concludes that Services sector is the second largest employer as per the sample. The status of women in services sector is better as compared to men in this sector. This is evident from the fact that the monthly wages for women are higher on an average than for men by almost 7%. Lastly, manufacturing sector employs only about 8% of the total population shows the highest disparity in average monthly wages of men and women. However, the study could not go beyond highlighting those facts.

Goel (2009) while working on trends in wage inequality looks at the case for India, in post economic reform phase. The study argues that on one hand the economy is growing rapidly but on the other the wage inequality is increasing in India in favor of more educated and experienced workers. There has been an increase in relative wages of highly educated workers despite an increase in their relative supply. Thus, demand for these workers has certainly increased. In particular, there is skill upgrading within all two digit industries. The study uses NSSO data for the analysis. The sample covers the period 1983 to 2005.

Further, the study argues that the increase in overall inequality could be due to increasing inequality between various demographic or skill groups and/or due to increasing inequality within these groups. The study suggests that the gender wage gap in India is high, but has fluctuated. Amongst high school and college graduates, the gap is much lower than amongst lower education groups, and the gender wage gap amongst college and high school graduates has increased over the time between 1983 and 2005.

It is evident that for both males and females, the proportion of middle, high school and college educated workers has been increasing steadily. The vast majority of women in the labour force are uneducated. The same is true for men, though to a lesser extent. But amongst both men and women, the supply of this education group has fallen substantially over the 22-year period (1983-2005).

III. Causes of Gender Pay Gap

There are reasons for believing that the effect of globalization may be to widen the gender pay gap. If trade is skill-biased in nature, and women have lower levels of skills than men,

then there may be a widening in the unadjusted gender pay gap, as women are unable to avail of the benefits of trade-generated work. In addition, if firms are potentially more mobile and can move from one country to another, the threat of movement may exert downward pressure on the unskilled wages of those most at risk, which may disproportionately comprise women.

Reilly and Dutta (2005) use nationally representative employment surveys to examine the magnitude of the gender pay gap in India and its relationship to a set of trade liberalisation measures. Separate wage equations, corrected for selection bias, are estimated for men and women in wage employment. Conventional index number procedures are used to decompose the gender pay gap into 'endowment' and 'treatment' components. The 'treatment' components comprise about one-third of the overall wage gap – a result also seen in other studies on India.

The authors argue that, there is some evidence that the 'treatment' or residual components are declining over time but the point estimates for the differentials in these components between the initial and terminal years of their analysis are found to be imprecisely determined. A methodology suggested by Horrace and Oaxaca (2001) is used to compute industry specific gender pay gaps and their relationship with selected trade-related measures (e.g., tariff rates and trade ratios) is then examined econometrically within a Generalized Least Squares (GLS) framework. The authors find little evidence that the trade related measures are important determinants of the industry-level gender pay gap and appear to have exerted a relatively benign influence on the evolution of the industry gender pay gap in India over the last two decades.

The finding of a relatively stable average gender pay gap in India and the absence of any obvious trade-related effects should be taken to represent only a very partial assessment of the effect of trade liberalization on women's relative position in the Indian labour market. It is possible that the stability observed in the gender pay gap is attributable to the selective withdrawal of the 'less able' (in terms of their unobservable characteristics) women. The stability of the gender pay gap is similar to the experience of formerly socialist economies during their transitional process as documented by Reilly (1999), Newell and Reilly (2001).

Since 1991, with trade liberalization and resultant competition, firms have faced growing pressure to cut costs in order to remain in production. The study by Menon and Van der

Meulen Rogers (2008) addresses the question of whether the increasing competitive forces from India's trade liberalization affected the wages of male and female workers differently. Neoclassical theory implies that costly discrimination against female workers should diminish over time with increased competition (Becker 1971). The authors incorporate this idea into a theoretical model of competition and industry concentration in which the net impact of international trade on the gender wage gap could be positive or negative depending on the initial size of Becker's discrimination coefficient. The study tests the theoretical model using repeated cross sections of India's NSSO household survey data merged with trade and production data from 1983 to 2004. The authors employ Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and Fixed Effects techniques at the industry level to estimate the relationship between the male-female residual wage gap and measures of domestic concentration and international trade competition. Results indicate that increasing openness to trade is associated with a widening in the wage gap in India's manufacturing industries. This result is consistent with female workers in India having weak bargaining power and a lower workplace status. They are thus less able to negotiate for favorable working conditions and higher pay, a situation that places them in a vulnerable position as firms compete in the global market place. [Menon and van der Meulen Rodgers (2008)]

IV. Sectoral Variations in Gender Pay Gap

The research paper by Mahajan (2011) seeks to understand the regional variation in the gender gap in agricultural wages across India. The paper estimates district-level structural demand equations for female and male agricultural labour. In particular, the paper asks whether exogenous variation in female and male labour supply to agriculture plays any part in causing the gender wage gap. It looks at the regional variation in agricultural wages received by men and women in India and tries to explain a seemingly contradictory observation that the gender differential in wages is greatest in the Southern states of India, where women enjoy a better status in society as compared to the Northern states. To understand the factors which lead to a higher gender differential in wages the author estimates district level aggregate demand equations for total male and female labour. In particular the paper asks whether variation in female and male labour supply has any role in the observed regional pattern of wage differentials. Suitable instruments for labour supply of men and women are used to identify the structural demand equations. Using the neo-classical

framework it formally tests the hypothesis previously put forth by Ester Boserup that this geographical pattern of wage differentials in India could be a result of greater female labour supply in these states as cultural restrictions on participation in work force on women is much less in these states. The findings provide evidence that greater female labour supply to agriculture reduces female wages more than male wages in agriculture and hence affects the female to male wage ratio negatively. Greater male supply on the other hand affects both male and female wages equally negatively. The asymmetry in effects of male and female labour supply on wages needs further investigation.

Mahajan and Ramaswamy (2012) undertake a formal test of the Boserup proposition, that greater labour supply of women in the South depresses female wage rates and leads to higher gender gaps. Econometrically, the main challenge is to relate wages to exogenous variation in labour supply. This paper examined the effect of variations in female labour supply to agriculture (in part due to cultural restrictions) and variations in male labour supply to agriculture (because of non-farm employment opportunities) on female and male wages and the gap between them. The results showed that differences in female labour supply are able to explain 55% of difference in gender wage differential between northern and southern states of India.

ITUC Report on Global Gender Pay Gap (2008) reports that the world average gender pay gap is 15.6 per cent according to the IDS analysis of publicly available data sources, with Europe, Oceania and Latin America generally showing more positive results than Asia and Africa, for which the data availability is limited. The gender pay gap is unable to capture female participation in the informal economy, which particularly distorts the pay gap figures in countries where such economies are large, such as in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America. Research has shown that the implementation of the Equal Pay Convention 100 of the International Labour Organisation has a positive impact on a country's gender pay gap, and that economic competition may also have a positive effect, but the precise impact of this is not clear because it is often part of a wider set of policy initiatives to combat inequalities in society. The pay gap tends mainly to be higher in female-dominated work environments (such as health, education and social work) than in male dominated environments, which is probably due to the fact that managerial positions in these sectors are

often held by men, and women in these sectors frequently work in the lower-paid/ part-time role.

The authors of the report largely conclude that trade can potentially be beneficial to women by decreasing discrimination, but any improvement in women's relative wages will depend on other factors as well, such as programmes to improve women's education and skills to be able to better compete in a competitive market. The report refers to existing research about the effects of increased openness to trade in the manufacturing industry in India, the enforcement of equal pay and equal opportunities legislation, improved labour standards and the eradication of employer practices that favor male workers, and these are mentioned as instruments to tackle the gender pay gap. There are studies that have produced evidence for a widening in the wage gap among India's manufacturing workers, which the authors relate to the weaker bargaining power of female employees and their lower status in the workplace compared to their male colleagues. This makes it more difficult for women to negotiate higher wages, and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation in a sector characterised by high pressures to cut costs. These findings result in the conclusion that the impact of trade liberalization on poverty and inequality is mixed, with women 'bearing a disproportionately large share of the costs of trade liberalization'.

The report demonstrates the presence of occupational segregation along gender lines: education and health and social work are particularly female-dominated areas, while manufacturing and construction are typically male-dominated work environments.

It is estimated that in India about 60 per cent of all agricultural operations are handled exclusively by women. Female hourly wage rates in agriculture vary from 50 to 75% of male rates, and are too low to overcome absolute poverty. Young women living in cities and trying to make a career rarely can rely on a "fall-back scenario" in which they can go back to their families who make a living from agriculture. (Van Klaveren et. al. 2010)

The study (Van Klaveren et. al. 2010) found for 2004-05 the very large gender pay gap of 57% in the formal (organised) sector. Comparisons with the unorganised sector showed that wage rates here were 20-30% of those in the organised sector, though wage rates varied widely across states and activities. Among casual workers, gender pay gaps showed up of 35-37%.

According to the UN MDG Indicators, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has grown slowly but continuously: from 12.7% in 1990, via 16.6% in 2000, to 18.1% in 2005. In the early 2000s, on average about 60% of all agricultural operations like sowing of seeds, transportation of sapling, winnowing, storage of grain, etc were handled exclusively by women. Women wage workers in agriculture continue to receive lower wages than men.

The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI, CSO 2007) only provides non-detailed overviews (divided over employees and (manual) workers, workers divided over male, female, child and contract workers) in the “organised factory” sector, totaling nearly 8.5 million workers in 2004-05 – about 40 per cent of total in the organised manufacturing sector. The latest publicly available ASI figures, those of 2004-05, indicate very large wage differentials. Whereas the average wage per “man day worked” for regular male workers was Rs. 212.30, for female workers that was only Rs. 91.00, implying a gender pay gap of 57 per cent. In 2000-01, with average wages of respectively Rs. 180.02 and 78.45, the gender gap was nearly the same (56 per cent). In turn, workers in the organised sector earned on average much more than those in the unorganised sector. According to NCEUS calculations on 2004-05 NSS data, male casual workers employed in the formal sector earned on average Rs. 73.00 per day, whereas male casual workers in the informal sector earned an average Rs. 51.30; for female casual workers these amounts were respectively Rs. 47.40 and Rs. 32.40 (NCEUS 2009a, 24). Here, gender pay gaps show up of 35% in urban areas and 37% in rural areas. Because of the much lower productive days per year in many unorganised trades, the inter-sectoral distance measured in yearly earnings is mostly much larger.

v. Perceptions about Gender pay gap

Madheshwaran and Guha Khasnobis (2007) argue that the gender based discrimination prevalent in wage compensation and earnings is an outcome of attitudinal and perceptual notions reflected in the behavior of various agents- employers, state, contractors, and workers themselves. Unless these stereotypes are changed or women’s position and status in society undergoes significant alteration, the wage shares and payments will continue to be imbalanced and unequal despite the legislative provisions such as Equal Remuneration Act. Any effort to alter these circumstances has to aim at addressing gender inequalities from a multi-dimensional perspective and seeking to change perceptions regarding women’s role and

contribution, in addition to economic growth and enhancement of women's employment (Rustogi, 2006)

In conclusion, this review of literature helps to place in context the analysis reported in the next chapter, and also offers a wider perspective on the extent and trends in gender wage gaps in India. The literature confirms the existence of gender wage gaps, as well as the fact that these cannot be explained adequately by reference to 'objective' differences in characteristics of workers, and that social norms and practices which cannot be captured in numbers, play a significant role in observing wage differences. Studies that have shown that greater supply of female labour (as in agriculture) tend to exert downward pressure on female wages but have little impact on male wages are a stark illustration of this point.

Chapter-3

Extent, Dimensions and Causes of Gender Pay Gap in India

I. Introduction

This chapter is based on NSSO individual level data which provides the information on workers' weekly wages. The main objectives of this chapter are to find out the extent of gender pay gap in selected occupations and its various dimensions. For this analysis, latest round of NSSO's Employment Unemployment Survey⁵, 66th round has been employed. This round has collected the information of workers on the basis of NCO-2004 at three digit levels (National Classification of Occupation) and NCI-2004 at five digit levels (National Classification of Industry). In the present analysis, NCO have been followed because of two reasons (1) the sample size for NCI was too small to analyze for some of the industries and (2) industrial classification does not segregate the type of work clearly. To understand the causes of gender pay gap, the study has conducted personal interviews and focus group discussions on few sectors. This qualitative information will help in interpreting the likely causes of gender pay gap indicated by the data analysis.

This chapter has been divided into six sections- in the second section the selection of occupations and sample sizes have been discussed. Third section examines the extent of gender pay gap in selected occupations. Fourth section analyses the various dimensions of gender pay gap. Fifth section explores the causes of gender pay gap. The final section concludes this chapter.

⁵ The Employment-Unemployment Surveys of the NSSO: The single most important data source on wages is available from the quinquennial employment and unemployment surveys undertaken by the National Sample Survey Organization of Central Statistical Organization (NSS-EUS). The data is taken from the current weekly status data on wages and is usually represented as wages per week or wages per day. The data is available for regular workers and casual workers. The sample is drawn based on a stratified random sampling procedure. The survey covers an entire year divided into four sub-rounds of three months each. Estimates can be generated at the sub round level as well as for the country as a whole. A wide degree of disaggregation is possible at the unit level data. The data can be analyzed at the NIC industrial classification and/or at the NCO classification for rural/urban sectors. Since the data is at the individual level it can be used to explore individual characteristics associated with wages.

II. Selection of Occupations

In the analysis, the study has considered the level of gender participation in a particular occupation as a basic dimension; it has grouped the selected occupations into three parts namely, (1) Occupations with more or less equal participation by men and women; (2) women dominated Occupations and (3) men dominated Occupations. A selected number of occupations has been chosen under each category.

Educational level	Occupations with more or less equal participation	Female dominated	Male dominated
Low	Agri labour (920)	Food processing (741) Domestic helpers (913)	Mining and construction labour (931) Pelt, leather, shoe making (743)
Medium	Social work professionals (346),	Preprimary teaching (332), nursing and midwifery (323)	other teaching professionals (334)
High	Secondary education teaching (232), College teaching (231)	Nursing professionals (223)	Computing professionals (213)

Occupations with 'more or less equal' participation include Agricultural, fishery and related labourers (920)⁶, Social work associate professions (346), Secondary education teaching professionals (232), and College, University and Higher Education teaching (231). Women dominated occupations include Nursing Professionals (223), pre- primary education teaching associate professionals (332), Nursing and midwifery associate professionals (323), Food processing and related trade workers (741), Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers (913). Men dominated occupations include Pelt, leather and shoe making trades workers (743), Computing professionals (213), other teaching professionals (334) and Mining and construction labourers (931).

The number of workers in selected occupations is presented below in Table 1. NSSO 66th round has used NCO-2004 at three digit level; hence it will not be possible to analyze the male-female wages for exactly same work. However, through studying the NCO

⁶ The figures in the parentheses are Codes given by National classification of occupation, 2004 at three digit levels. The description about selected occupations can be viewed at <http://dget.nic.in/nco/welcome.html> (Directorate General of Employment & Training, Ministry of Labour, Government of India).

classification we can say that a particular occupational category requires similar level of skills to do the job. Although described as 'more or less equal', the first group includes occupations with unequal participation of female workers because these were the only occupations where we have found a considerable number of female workers involved. We have tried to include those occupations where the numbers of workers is quite large so that the analysis may be credible.

Table 1 Frequency Table of Sample Size

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
I. Occupations in which both male and female have more or less equal participation			
Agricultural, fishery and related labourers	47823374 (65.80)	24894276 (34.20)	72694038 (100.00)
Social work associate professionals	39377 (50.70)	38317 (49.30)	77694 (100.00)
College, university and higher education teaching professionals	461633 (63.60)	263785 (36.50)	725418 (100.00)
Secondary education teaching professionals	394368 (63.50)	226689 (36.50)	621057 (100.00)
II. Female dominated occupations			
Food processing and related trade workers	765476 (45.60)	912139 (54.40)	1677615 (100.00)
Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers	890507 (28.00)	2293316 (72.00)	3183823 (100.00)
pre- primary education teaching associate professionals	109383 (19.60)	449980 (80.40)	559363 (100.00)
Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	103464 (22.80)	350626 (77.20)	454090 (100.00)
Nursing Professionals	23184 (12.30)	165463 (87.70)	188647 (100.00)
III. Male dominated occupations			
Mining and construction labourers	16193595 (81.70)	3618780 (18.30)	19812375 (100.00)
Pelt, leather and shoe making trades	3179293 (78.90)	850098 (21.10)	4029391 (100.00)
Computing professionals	592484 (86.80)	89747 (13.20)	682231 (100.00)
Other Teaching Professionals	151586 (79.00)	40214 (21.00)	191800 (100.00)

Source: Employment and Unemployment Survey, Unit-Level Data, 66th Round NSSO (2009-10)

III Extent of gender pay gap in selected occupations

Table 2 shows the Median Wage per hour (in rupees) of workers in selected occupations. A difference in male-female wage rate is found in all 13 occupations. The gap is negative for nursing professionals (-50.17per cent) however, for all other 12 occupations it is in favour of male workers.

In the first section of Table 2, the occupations where participation of both genders is relatively equal have been taken into consideration. One can note that in manual work that is agricultural, fishery and related, occupations have relatively lower pay gap (28.80 per cent) than the other three occupations. In this section the maximum gap is found in social work associate professionals (78.99 per cent) followed by secondary education teaching professionals (44.45 per cent) and secondary education teaching professionals.

Table 2 Overall Gender Wage Gap in Selected Occupations

Occupation	Median Wage (Rs/Hr)		Absolute Difference	Percentage Difference
	Male	Female		
I. Occupations in which both male and female have more or less equal participation				
Agricultural, fishery and related labourers	12.29	8.75	3.54	28.80
Social work associate professionals	41.66	8.75	32.91	78.99
College, university and higher education teaching professionals	104.16	89.10	15.06	14.45
Secondary education teaching professionals	37.50	20.83	16.67	44.45
II. Female dominated occupations				
Food processing and related trade workers	14.58	8.75	5.83	39.98
Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers	14.58	7.29	7.29	50.00
pre- primary education teaching associate professionals	34.72	10.41	24.31	70.01
Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	41.66	25.00	16.66	39.99
Nursing Professionals	25.83	38.79	-12.96	-50.17
III. Male dominated occupations				
Mining and construction labourers	16.04	13.12	2.92	18.20
Pelt, leather and shoe making trades	17.50	11.66	5.84	33.37
Computing professionals	102.08	62.50	39.58	38.77
Other Teaching professionals	52.08	41.66	10.42	20.00
Total	14.58	9.52	5.06	34.70

Source: Employment and Unemployment Survey, Unit-Level Data, 66th Round NSSO (2009-10)

On the basis of participation of female workers, occupations in second section of Table 2 are considered as female dominated. It can be observed that percentage gender wage gap in pre-primary education teaching associates and Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers is more than 50 per cent, that is, female workers are getting almost half the wage

received by their male counterparts. For Food processing and related trade workers and Nursing and midwifery associate professionals the pay gap is more than 39 per cent. In Nursing Profession the gap is negative to the tune of -50.17 per cent, this is the only occupation where we have found female professionals are getting higher wages.

In the third section of Table 2, four occupations have been taken which were found to be male dominated. In all the four occupations gender based pay gap exists regardless of level of education. The gap is highest in computing profession (38.77 per cent) which is considered as high skilled occupation. In this section among all occupations gender pay gap is more than 30 per cent except for Mining and construction labourers (18.20 per cent).

As a whole, gender pay gap in all the selected occupations taken together, is found to be 34.70 per cent in India.

IV Dimensions of Gender Pay Gap in India

Gender pay gap is not a simple phenomenon to understand but involves a lot of factors. The type of work has an important bearing in determining the male/female wage rates; and these can be expected to vary by the level of skill required. , the variations by education and caste also need to be investigated. In this section, the data is analysed to reflect the effect of education and location (rural-urban) on the gender pay gap within the selected occupations.

Various educational categories have been made namely illiterate, primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary, graduate and post-graduate to get a pattern of gender wage gap for each educational group. Table 3 has been divided into three groups of occupations requiring low, mid and high level of education. It is worth mentioning that some of the educational categories are blank due to the fact that there was no worker in that category.

Table 3 shows that in all the categories of occupation, the extent of gender pay gap tends to decline with an increase in the level of education. It is clear from the three sub- totals that wage gap is declining consistently with increasing level of education. However, it should also be noted that the gender pay gap in the first set of occupations, where low level of education is needed, is relatively lower than the other two sets of occupations.

Table3 Percentage Gender Pay Gap by Educational Categories

Occupation	illiterate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher-secondary	Diploma Holder	Graduate and above
I. Occupations which requires low level of education							
Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers	32.05	56.27	37.49	31.94	20.03	-	-
Agricultural, fishery and related labourers	29.44	25.02	33.36	30.00	33.36	-	-
Food processing and related trade workers	42.87	55.36	20.00	44.43	-65.13	-	-
Mining and construction labourers	15.71	25.61	9.10	16.69	14.45	-	-
Pelt, leather and shoe making trades	34.68	33.33	22.24	49.98	61.89	-	-
Sub-Total	38.42	39.99	39.99	30.04	20.03	-	-
II. Occupations which requires Mid level of education							
Social work associate professionals	-	-	85.00	48.42	80.15	-	-
Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	-	-	62.49	29.22	61.10	58.34	-7.12
pre- primary education teaching associate professionals	-	-	-	83.33	-55.68	80.52	55.87
Other Teaching Professionals	-	-	-	90.67	72.00	-10.20	-
Sub-Total	-	-	75.01	56.93	68.75	51.30	33.83
III. Occupations which requires High level of education							
Nursing Professionals	-	-	-	30.43	-259.20	65.11	-149.98
Secondary education teaching professionals	-	-	-	-	72.00	6.66	40.00
Computing professionals	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.29
College, university and higher education teaching professionals	-	-	-	-	-	-	30.00
Sub-Total	-	-	-	59.84	57.13	12.51	48.10
All Occupations	38.42	39.99	39.99	28.60	10.84	-66.67	16.67

Source: Employment and Unemployment Survey, Unit-Level Data, 66th Round NSSO (2009-10)

For Agricultural, fishery and related labourers the wage gap is more or less similar among all the educational categories. A variation in the wage gap can be seen for Other Teaching Professionals, Social work associate professionals and Secondary education teaching professionals. It can be observed that gender pay gap is in favor of female professionals with the increase in educational category for Other Teaching Professionals. For Secondary education teaching professionals and Social work associate professionals the trends are not clear; level of education cannot be correlated with the extent of gender pay gap.

Food processing and related trade and Domestic and related helpers and cleaners and launderers, gender pay gap is on a decline to some extent or in favor of female workers when one moves to higher educational category. The extent of gender pay gap is very high in case of

Nursing and midwifery associate professionals and Pre- primary education teaching associate professionals except for one or two educational categories. Nursing Professionals is the only occupation where the gap is in negative terms.

For Mining and construction labourers, the gender pay gap is relatively less for all the educational categories than other occupations. Pelt, leather and shoe making trades, pay gap is higher for high educational categories. For Computing professionals and College, university and higher education teaching professionals, the gender pay gap is found 40.29 per cent and 30 per cent respectively for graduate and above category.

Table 3 gives us some general observations which are as follows:

1. Level of education has an important bearing on wage discrimination. Gender pay gap reduces in general with the increase in the level of education.
2. Nursing professional is an occupation where females are widely preferred; therefore very few males are diploma holders and specialized in nursing. This fact becomes the cause of negative pay gap.
3. Gender pay gap persists regardless of type of work. In the third section of the table it seems that female workers are not preferred at all in male dominated occupations requiring high levels of education regardless of type of work.

It can be seen that amongst the *occupations in which male and female have relatively equal participation* the gender pay gap is generally higher in rural region (see Table 4). Gender pay gap for Social work associate professionals in urban area is in negative.

In the second section of Table 4, the gender pay gap is higher in urban area in general. In the third section of Table 4, except for Pelt, leather and shoe making trades, in all the occupations the wage gap is higher in urban region than rural region.

The extent of gender pay gap is very high in rural areas for Social work associate professionals, Other Teaching Professionals, Nursing Professionals, pre- primary education teaching associate professionals and College, university and higher education teaching professionals. It can also be noted that all these occupations require high education; therefore, it seems that in rural areas gap persists generally among high skill occupations.

Table 4 Gender Pay Gap by Region (in percentage)

Occupation	Rural	Urban
I. Occupations in which both male and female have more or less equal participation		
Agricultural, fishery and related labourers	26.96	29.97
Social work associate professionals	80.15	30.00
Secondary education teaching professionals	60.00	41.66
College, university and higher education teaching professionals	58.34	68.54
Sub-total	27.56	30.01
II. Female dominated occupations		
Food processing and related trade workers	25.02	60.01
Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers	46.44	51.76
pre- primary education teaching associate professionals	59.64	74.28
Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	50.01	32.49
Nursing Professionals	-343.31	39.13
Sub-total	22.81	48.16
III. Male dominated occupations		
Mining and construction labourers	16.67	21.36
Pelt, leather and shoe making trades	30.72	28.60
Computing professionals	-36.92	38.77
Other Teaching Professionals	83.05	-60.00
Sub-total	17.40	30.00

Source: Employment and Unemployment Survey, Unit-Level Data, 66th Round NSSO (2009-10)

V Cause of Gender Pay Gap: Experience from the Field

In this section, the causes of gender pay gap have been examined through field interviews conducted in NCR Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan. Few interviews were conducted of private school teachers (primary and secondary teachers), government school teachers, agricultural labourers, (khet mazdoors), a social activist, construction labourers, contractor and a few farmers. Some details around wage fixing in particular tasks are described below.

Secondary and Higher Secondary School teaching professionals:

- Based on two focus group discussions in Chandigarh with school teaches. One with four teachers (men) and one with three female teachers. And
- One interview with a Principal of a Private Higher Secondary School (Woman) in NCR Delhi

Punjab government has made it mandatory that teachers with a B.Ed degree should be given Rs 5000 to 6,000 per month (approximately) in a private school. However, B. Ed teachers are getting only Rs 3 to 4 thousand rupees per month. Private schools are found to be engaging in mal-practices by operating bank accounts and ATM cards of their teaching staff. Every month the school administration will deposit the recommended amount in the bank account to show compliance with the rules and regulations. Since the school administration itself is operating these accounts, they subsequently withdraw the money, give only Rs 3000 per month (approximately) and retain the rest of the salary. This appears to be a common practice in private schools. Within this system, a male-female pay discrimination can be observed. Male teachers are given Rs 3 to 4 thousand rupees per month whereas on an average female teachers are getting less than that of their male counterparts to the tune of Rs.1000 per month. During summer vacations, salary is not given. Most of the teachers educated 'below graduation' are females and are engaged in teaching below-primary level classes. They are getting only up to Rs. 1000 per month. According to a social activist these teachers are employed just to control the junior classes in the school. The main objective of their employment is not the quality of education.

After asking the reasons of male-female pay discrimination various types of responses were received. One of the reasons given was the belief that females are 'less efficient' and 'less intelligent'.

When questioned about whether the female teachers have ever asked the school authorities as to why they are given lower salary in spite of the fact that they are teaching the same subject as men teachers, the response received was that no, they had not.

“See, the male teachers handle subjects like Science and Mathematics, while the women teachers generally teach humanities and social science subjects. Mathematics is a heavy/technical subject in comparison to history, hence the salary has been structured accordingly. On the other hand, the male teachers also can handle higher and bigger classes easily, whereas the female teachers cannot do that...”

– Principal of a Private High School (woman) in NCR Delhi

In a few of the schools it was found that female teachers are given only junior classes to teach. The explanation given was that only male staff can handle and control senior classes and teach 'tough' subjects like mathematics and science. On this basis female teachers are paid lower salary compared to male teachers in the schools. This was seen to be so especially in rural areas.

Agricultural Labour

- Based on Focus Group Discussions separately with five men and five women (agricultural labourer) in Sri Ganga Nangar, Rajasthan. And an in-depth interview with a land owner in Rajasthan. One Focus Grup Discussion with female agricultural labourer in Abohar, Punjab and one labour contractor in Abohar, Punjab.

Where payment was being given by piece rate, there is no gender difference, in case of agriculture. It was found out that in case of cotton harvesting, wages were given on the basis of weight of cotton picked per person. Harvesting for almost all the crops is done on the basis of piece rate. Therefore looking at piece rates there is no gender difference (however men and women may be engaged in different tasks and hence be receiving different wages). For instance, the harvesting remuneration of wheat is 140 kg/acre and this payment in kind is the same for male and female workers. During sowing season of paddy, male and female wage rate is same; in Punjab sowing rate of paddy is about Rs. 1800 to 2000/per acre. However, daily basis wage rate of female agricultural labourer is lower than that of the male worker. Gender pay gap was found among workers working on harvesters. The average daily wage difference is found to be Rs. 30 to 40. The main reason for this difference that was offered to us was that female workers are physically less strong and therefore are able to do less work in the day.

“In harvesting or sowing seasons the wage is set on the basis of piece rate. For instance, the harvesting remuneration of wheat is 140 kg/acre which is same for male and female workers. However, if labour is hired on daily basis, the female labours are paid less. If a male laour earns Rs. 200 per day the female would earn only Rs.140-150. The female wage is set on the basis of preconceived notion that the female is relatively slower than the male worker.”

- land owner, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

Female labourers are preferred for certain operations such as cotton harvesting, wheat cutting, and paddy sowing etc. and these are described as 'light' work. For Machine operations, irrigation and other 'heavy' tasks in the field only male labourers are preferred. There is thus a kind of division of the tasks which are allocated to men and women workers.

While conducting the field study among the farmers of Rajasthan, it was found that cotton picking is considered as a special task only done by female labourers. The reason behind that is they are more efficient in picking than male labourers. On an average one female worker can pick 80 kg/day. It is also found that people considered this task as 'women's work'; therefore men did not seek to do this work. This way, the work remains women dominated and the question of whether men and women should be paid the same for cotton picking does not come up.

I Negotiate:

“Men are the main bread earners of the family, there is nothing wrong if they earn more. You see, they can work harder and they work more... If I don't work, the contractor will get somebody else in my place. On the other hand, if I don't fight with my contractor, I get work throughout the year, that is more beneficial for me. However, I do negotiate with my contractor to increase my wage. I feel good if he increase my wage.”

- A female agricultural labour, Punjab

Construction labour

- Based on an in-depth interview with a labour contractor in Abohar, Punjab and a trade union worker, in Abohar, Punjab. And a labourer contractor in Sri Ganga Nagar, Rajasthan.

Despite the fact that there is legislation on minimum wage rates for construction work, this does not seem to be applied. Male wage rate is Rs. 250 per day but for female labourer it is Rs. 200 to 210 per day. This difference is justified by allocating different specific tasks to women and describing these as 'light work'. Along with different wage payments therefore there is a segregation of male and female labour by tasks. .

Most of the migratory labourers are getting employment through a contractor. The contractor receives the wages on behalf of the workers and then distributes it among them, after deducting an amount as his share. The contractors are doing injustice in the sense that even when they are getting the stipulated amount in full from the employers they are paying out less than this to workers, both men and women. Further, there is a difference by gender, with female workers getting almost Rs. 40-50 less; again, justified by saying they are 'physically weak' and do less work than men in the same time.

*“In construction work we hire both male and female labours. Yes, I agree that female labours are paid less, because the work load is much less for them. See this is manual work and the wage is set on the basis of the work they do. **In the case of construction work, I would say one male labour is equivalent to two female labours.** Male labours execute much heavier works than their female counter parts, naturally they should be paid more.”*

- Labour Contractor, Abohar, Punjab

Other striking fact noticed was that due to competition in the labour markets, contractors/builders are able to fix contracts with employers only by agreeing to very low wages. They then set a wage for the labour that they bring in, and in order to avoid a reduction in their own earnings, they prefer to bring in women workers at lower wage rates. In this sense, female workers willing to work for low wages (or coerced by circumstances into doing so) have been used to generate profit for the contractor. Under such kind of circumstances, female workers are getting only Rs. 120 to 150 daily wages. Female labour engaged in this way agree to lower wages because they get assurance of employment for several months at a time, or because they do not have to seek for work every day.

As per legislation, unskilled worker should be given Rs. 10,000 per month, and skilled worker Rs. 15,000 per month.

An interview with a contractor was conducted to understand the causes of wage differentials between male and female worker. Three years back, he signed a contract with a builder where

he employed around 750 labourers including male and female workers. He employed more female workers than male workers. According to him, the site of work was near to a village. There are restrictions on women's mobility because of which, he said, female workers hardly move out of village and they prefer to do work in the village or at nearby sites, even if this means accepting lower wages. He also said that female workers are more reliable.

Three years back the wage rate of a male worker was Rs. 160 per day and that of female was Rs. 120 per day. During a period of labour shortage, he had increased the wage by Rs. 10 for female and Rs. 20 for male workers. When asked about the reasons for wage difference, he claimed that female cannot do heavy work like basement digging etc.; they can do only certain tasks in construction and so being less 'able' this may lead to wage discrimination. According to him a single male worker can work more than two female workers. This is the common perception about female labourers that might lead to gender pay gap.

In Rajasthan, average male wage rate is Rs. 250 daily/person and for female, wage rate is around Rs. 200 daily/person. According to a few villagers, there is a gap of Rs. 50 to 60 person/day. They also believe that female labourers work consistently and do not waste time while working.

Chapter-4

Conclusion

I. Summary

This study is a preliminary analysis, using 2009-10 NSS data, of the extent and dimensions of gender pay gap in India. A brief review of the recent literature on the gender pay gap in India found that other studies too confirm that there is a significant gap between the wages of male workers and female workers in India across regions and sectors. However, most of these studies have tried to analyse the extent of gap in the wages across the sectors over time. There is a shortage of literature bringing out the nature and causes of gender bias and discriminations at the micro level in the context of wage gap.

For detailed analysis, the study has selected 13 occupations. It has considered NSSO 66th round data for the analysis. The occupations have been categorised in three broad groups; (i) occupations with more or less equal participations by both the genders, (ii) occupations which are female dominated as far as participation is concerned in terms of numbers, (iii) occupations that are clearly dominated by the male workers, as far as participation of workers are concerned. The analysis of the secondary data has provided information on the dimensions of the gender pay gap in each of the selected occupations.

The wage used is the median hourly wage, calculated using weekly wages and employment data, and includes payment in cash as well as kind. State level differences have not been explored.

To test this analysis against field evidence, interviews were conducted with a sample of persons, both employers and workers, from three of the selected sectors in two states.

The study has found out that gender pay gap exists in all 13 selected occupations. However, except for the nursing professionals, the male workers in remaining all other sectors receive higher wages than the women workers. In other words, women are paid less than their male counterparts in almost all occupations, across sectors. The fieldwork shows that gender

stereotypes are used to enforce segregation of work by tasks between men and women, even within the same occupational categories. To capture the dynamics of such occupational segregation, an in-depth field based study could be designed.

It was surprising to note that in the female dominated occupations the gender pay gap was found to be very substantial, with the exception of nursing professionals. This suggests that the few men who are found in female dominated occupations are placed at the high end of that category and are paid more. Nursing professional is an exceptional case where gender gap is found negative, women are paid more and there are relatively few men. This can be attributed to the type of work in the sense that this occupation, of care giving, is considered as a feminine task. Females who have the qualifications are preferred in this occupation and that may be the reason of negative pay gap.

In the group of male dominated occupations, it was found that pay gap exists even in the case of College, university and higher education teaching profession which is a highly skilled and organized occupation. Therefore, in this group regardless of the level of education, gender pay gap remained high.

In the majority of occupations, gender pay gap was between 25 to 35 per cent which also supports the existing literature in the Indian context.

The study has observed that education has an important role to play in bringing down wage gap between men workers and women workers. Higher level of education, in general, tends to reduce the pay gap between men and women across occupations and sectors. However, it does not show any universal trend in reducing the pay gap. The study has found existing high gender pay gap among college, university and higher education teaching professionals, where the workers are in general highly educated. Except nursing professionals, which is predominantly a female job, and very few male workers were found with a technical diploma in nursing.

On the basis of regional dimension, it can be seen that in the first group of occupations, the gender pay gap is generally higher in rural region. Gender pay gap for Social work associate professionals and Other Teaching Associate Professionals in urban area is in negative terms however, sample size for these occupations was very small which may sometimes lead to over/under estimation. In the second group of occupations, the gender pay gap is higher in urban area in general. Only in the nursing category, the gap was found negative in rural area which is exception. It seems that in rural region, certain occupations are being segregated on the basis of gender. Third group showed higher wage gap in urban region for all occupations except for College, university and higher education teaching professionals

Some of these occupations include persons working for government. For example, aanganwadi workers or Asha workers are given low payments as 'honorariums'. To what extent such task-based segregation explains the high observed wage gaps needs to be further analysed.

Qualitative information showed the different causes of gender pay gap in selected task based occupations. In teaching occupation it seemed that female teachers were working for lower pay in private schools and were not seen to be protesting the situation. Upon asking the reasons of male-female pay discrimination various types of responses were received. One of the reasons given was that females are considered as 'less efficient' and 'less intelligent'. In a few of the schools it was found that female teachers are given only junior classes to teach. The explanation given is that only male staff can handle and control higher classes and can teach, subjects which are perceived as tough subjects like mathematics and science. On the basis of this perception, female teachers are paid less salary compared to male teachers in the schools, especially in rural areas. Qualified women have to contend with such hostilities if they attempt to shift the boundaries of what women teachers can do.

For agricultural labourers, piece rate is found equal for both the genders, but men and women may be hired for different tasks.. Harvesting for almost all the crops is done on the basis of piece rate and equal wages offered to men and women. There is also no wage difference found when the remuneration is done in kind. The average daily wage difference with respect to money wages is found to be Rs. 30 to 40. The main reason given for this difference is the belief that female workers are physically 'less strong', a belief that partly draws on biological

differences between men and women and consequent socialisation that encourages men and women's bodies to develop in different ways, acquiring different physical capabilities. .

The apparent 'equality' in piece rates hides the fact that payment is often made to family as a unit or to couples ('jodis') as for example in brick kiln work or some types of agricultural tasks; in this case women often become unpaid workers as the wage is received by one person on behalf of both. Further, task based segregation may also be found in piece rate systems of payment.

The average daily wage difference is found to be Rs. 50 to 60 for construction workers. The labour market is segregated on gender basis; there are certain tasks which are done by only a particular gender. Female workers are given tasks that are classified as 'light tasks' and therefore they are paid lower wage rates.

The study has found that, on many occasions gender based pay gaps occur in the disguise of task based segregation. In the labour market, women do not have much choice in selecting the task. They are assigned certain tasks on the basis of their gender without any judgment of skills. This phenomenon is common across the sectors and regions.

Thus, occupational segregation, constraints on women's mobility, cultural factors influencing gender roles and processes of socialisation all interact to shape the nature of women's access to labour markets, and constitute underlying factors influencing the gender pay gap.

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II Policy Implications

The gender wage gap is a complex social and economic problem. Therefore, elimination of gender wage gap would only be possible, if employers, trade unions, governments come together with the intention of valuing women's work equally with that of men. Recognizing that perceptions about gender roles and responsibilities are internalized by workers as well as employers, building awareness and commitment to equality has to be done at all levels of society and economy.

However, it has to be kept in mind that the first challenge towards eliminating the gender wage gap would be to recognize a standard definition of gender wage gap. To develop a standardized format for collection and sharing of data on gender disaggregated earnings would be important in this direction.

As several national and international reports on gender pay gaps have already pointed out, a key challenge also will be to distinguish pay differences resulting from different labour market characteristics, on one hand and differences due to indirect or direct discrimination on the other, including the societal differences in the valuation of work and the emergence of female dominated sectors or occupations.

If the work to be done is valued without reference to who would be doing it, this would become an important instrument in ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. Another equal pay measure that can be put into place is the implementation of regular equal pay audits in the workplace, although this is more difficult to implement in the unorganised sector or for home based work where there is no 'workplace' in the conventional sense. Moreover, as advised by other researchers, equality policies in other areas are required at the same time, to eliminate general gender discriminations within the society, in terms of choice and rights of education, employment and mobility etc.

In India, the discussion on the gender wage gap as a political and economic issue is understood as a huge task, and not possible to handle this at one level. A multi-level programming is required to eliminate gender wage gap. This recognition, however, should not become the source of inaction.

The fact that gender wage gaps are high in occupations with strong presence of government provided work suggests that relevant agencies could start the work of changing norms and perceptions from these occupations which are in the direct control of the government.

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