

WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS
OF
MAHARASHTRA

Devaki Jain Chayya Datar C. P. Sujaya Sandhya Naik

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Institute of Social Studies Trust
Delhi and Bangalore

1990

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Women construction workers are part of the vast, exploited, unprotected, unorganised sector of the Indian labour force. Women construction workers fall under the category of "Female Non-Agricultural Unorganised Sector", the size of which has been assessed to be 4 million, by the Committee on the Status of Women in India, in 1974, on the basis of 1971 Census figures. The 1981 Census of India found women workers in the construction sector to number 0.3 million, forming 9.9% of the total workers in the Sector. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) estimates the total number of workers in the Sector to be 6.5 million, out of which 15% i.e. 1.0 million are women. The complexity of organisational and production forms in this sector, however, makes it difficult to obtain accurate estimates of female participation. No agency in India has been made squarely responsible for collecting and compiling, at regular intervals, information on employment provided by the unorganised sector.

Construction sector activities, like the other employment systems of the non-agricultural unorganised sector, provide a precarious livelihood to its labour force. Besides the basic lack of security of employment and a standard living wage, this sector is characterised by a number of other adverse features which operate to the disadvantage of workers, especially the women. Frequent changes of work places, lack of health and education facilities, limited access to food supplies, exploitation by contractors or sub-contractors serve to reduce women construction workers to a peripheral existence in the labour force.

Women are employed as unskilled workers, carrying earth, mortar, bricks or crushed stone. Wages are paid as for unskilled work. However, instances have been found where the women have been doing skilled work and receiving wages for unskilled work. The National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, on their field visits, saw at several work sites, men and women doing similar work. Women in Banda district were digging stones from the earth - traditionally held to be a man's job. They were also loading the trucks. In Madras, the Commission talked to women contract labour who were doing masonry work, earth work, mosaic work, roofing and concrete work. Though these jobs require a higher level of skills, the women workers were labelled "unskilled" and paid at the lowest rates. A woman construction worker in Madras complained to the Commission that after 27 years of work, she still earned Rs.12 per day, whereas raw young men, new to the work, earned Rs.20. There were no women masons. Women

even with long years of experience behind them, were not considered suitable for skilled jobs.

The following extract from the Report of the National Commission gives a synoptic and graphic illustration of the vagaries of the lives of women construction workers.

"Thirteen women were sitting on an open slope in Shiulaha village, Banda District, U.P. when the Commission passed in their jeep. It was 12.30 p.m. The sun was at its peak, scorching hot. There was no tree in sight. The women continued on though, at work, pounding and pounding to crush stones. Thirteen of them earn Rs.34 for filling two trolleys with their crushed stone. This comes to less than Rs.3 per woman for an entire day's work. But they do not get this work everyday - the trolleys come irregularly.

Once someone came from the village, promising to give charkhas and khadi work to the women. He collected Rs.10 from each of them and never returned.

When asked about their contractor's name, their supervisor, the government officials, and Department, they had no idea about any of them. One woman said, 'We do not know whose stones we are crushing, we do not see who pays our wages, nor do we see how much is actually paid to our Supervisor. We only know these stones - nothing else.'

One day, from Allahabad to Banda district, the Commission stopped on the roadside where Kol women were involved in construction work. Some were digging stones out from the earth; others were crushing them. Forty-six families involved in this work had been camping there for many years. The women gathered and hesitantly talked about their work. They work 15-20 days a month. Wages are paid to the group. They get Rs.200 for loading one truck. Although there is a fixed size truck for this rate, the contractor always sends a larger one, with no increase in payment. Each truck is loaded by five workers, usually three men and two women. The truck comes once in 10-15 days.

There is no difference in the work of men and women. Both break stones, and do loading. This is government work, given out on contract to the thekedar. He takes no signature upon receiving payment. They take advances from him when needed - which is most of the time. He deducts the advance from their wages, plus an extra Rs.10 for Rs.150 they borrow. The payment of wages is done to their men, because 'they are our maliks'. Originally these workers came from Rewa district in M.P. but that was 20-30 years ago. Many have no belongings in their native place, no land, no houses. They all leave at Holi and return in the monsoon. They also go back for marriages.

In the nine working months they go to work early, without food, in the afternoon they return home, and cook food. Once in seven days, they go to collect firewood. Though the forests seem close, they have to walk very far. They give Rs.3 to the forest guard who allows them to collect wood.

They want regular work throughout the year. Their earnings are not sufficient to even fill their bellies. Their camp was on the roadside, on government land. Hence, the authorities often evict them. They retreat to the forest for a while, then come back.

People working at the worksite breaking stones receive payment every 15 days. Women get Rs.9, girls Rs.5, men get Rs.11, boys Rs.7. The little girl labourers were miniature copies of their mothers - already married, heads covered, breaking stones, headloading. The muster stated that 32 workers were on duty for the day. All 32 names were men's. We counted a total of 43 workers, 3 men, 14 children, and 26 women, on-the-spot, there and then. The supervisor could only answer 'that's the way it goes here'.

None of the workers vote, and none of the women know anything about payment because it all passes through their men's hands."

The construction sector is dominated by the contract system of employment. The workers are hired, not by the employer responsible for the construction activity, but by a 'middleman' a contractor or a sub-contractor. The National Commission on Labour found that the construction undertaken by the Public Works Department of the Government in 1957 employed 60% of their labour on contracts. Though Government, as the principal employer, is liable to ensure the benefits of the Minimum Wages Act, the Contract Labour Act, the Inter State Migrant Workers Act etc. the weaknesses of the implementing mechanism result in the deprivation of these benefits to the women. The Committee on the Status of Women in India had received evidence that contractors and sub-contractors had a tendency to keep the workers in semi-perpetual bondage through a system of extending credit to them. This resulted in the workers being unable to free themselves even for taking up farm work during the agriculture labour season. The Committee had initiated two studies on women construction workers, one in Patna and the other in Delhi. The Patna study revealed that sub-contractors obtained the contract for the job on piece-rate basis, but made the payment to the women on daily wage systems, thus keeping a portion of the contract money for themselves, illegally.

The studies, however, clearly found that the earnings of the women constituted a vital part of the families' income and went to finance the purchase of food and other essential items. Both the Delhi and Patna groups of women were indebted to the extent of

37%, the reasons for which were, most commonly, consumption on social functions such as marriages etc. The finding of the CSWI, about the importance of the women workers' income in maintaining the family, is entirely in consonance with other similar studies and research reports which establish that poor women's contribution to the survival needs of the family is significant, though invisible and undervalued. 98% of the women of both these groups were illiterate.

Chapter II

HOW IT BEGAN - BACKGROUND OF EGS

Public Works are the main stay of construction activity in India, though organised industry also deploys a vast labour force in this activity. Government works such as roads, railways, buildings, irrigation works, dams etc. provide the major impetus to the employment of construction workers. Besides fulfilling development goals in sectors such as communications, transport, power, agricultural production etc. construction activity has increasingly been seen as a strategy to contain chronic unemployment, and underemployment. In regions affected by natural calamities public works programmes have been launched to bring short term relief through wage payment and food distribution. Earlier decades witnessed such programmes being developed as a more or less spontaneous response to natural calamities leading to widespread distress. The perspective, in such cases, was short rather than long term. The resources already on the ground in terms of supervisory manpower and administrative machinery was used to look after the new programme. There was, as yet, no attempt to have a separate manpower planning exercise for the planning and administrative requirements.

Maharashtra was one of the pioneering States to take up such relief works and programmes. In 1965, a pilot scheme for integrated area development was started in Tasgaon block, which provided work for landless labour and marginal farmers. In 1969, a pilot programme at village level was launched in several blocks for giving guaranteed employment to rural labour.

The State Government consolidated the experiences of both these programmes when formulating the new Employment Guarantee Scheme which it introduced in 1972-73. The Employment Guarantee Act was passed in 1977 and brought to force in 1979. Under the Act, every adult person in rural areas acquires the right to get guaranteed employment by way of unskilled manual work.

Maharashtra is one of the 24 States of India, situated on the Western part of the country. 15% of the cropped area of the State is irrigated. In the un-irrigated areas the uncertainty of rainfall is a major constraint to agricultural production. The State has areas prone to drought. Many irrigation schemes have been taken up, including large and medium irrigation, yet the increase in irrigated area has taken place at a very slow pace. The large and medium irrigation schemes have benefitted sugar cane cultivation in certain parts of the State. This is an important cash crop. Labour requirement peaks at harvest time which is generally from October to March. Other crops grown are Jowar, wheat, groundnut, bajra and paddy. 76% of the landholdings in the State are small. 65% of the population earns its living from agriculture. Maharashtra is an industrially advanced State, the maximum industrial productivity and activity being concentrated in the Bombay-Pune belt.

Table 1 shows the break up of the main workers of rural Maharashtra for the Census years 1971 and 1981. An increase of 34.49% has been recorded in the number of female agricultural labour during this ten year period. Similarly, there has been a large increase of female cultivators - 73.5% - over the same period. In both these worker categories, the increase in the male labour force has been much less.

Table 2 presents the change in the composition of the workforce by indicating the per centages of each category of workers. While female cultivators and agricultural labourers formed 38.01 and 56.06 per cent of the total female work force (main workers) in 1971, in 1981 the percentage of female cultivators went upto 43.53 per cent, whereas the agricultural labourers decreased to 49.77%. In absolute terms, however, both these categories increased in number over the 1971 Census figures (Table 3) The agewise break up shows that in the age group of 60 and above, a percentage increase of 77.60 was recorded, in the category of agricultural labourers. This shows a deteriorating trend in the situation of the aged women, who are forced to join the work force out of sheer economic necessity. This Table also reveals that, in absolute terms, the number of women agricultural labourers - 316.6 million, exceeds that of male agricultural labourers, which is 295.4 million. This trend is the same in all the age groups, except 15-19 years and 60 +.

Table 4 gives the per cent distribution of working person days. Manual work in cultivation dominates the list of activities of female workers, in the self-employed (i.e. self cultivation group) and the casual labour categories, contributing 80.24% of working person days per day of persons. Manual work in agricultural and non-agricultural activity together accounts for 13.79% only. Other activities account for 5.97%.

TABLE 5 shows the number of female workers in Maharashtra as compared to a few selected major States. The proportion of female main workers to the female population is quite high in Maharashtra. Only one other State has a higher per centage. For manual workers, Maharashtra shows the 4th highest per centage. In both categories, Maharashtra shows higher per centages than all India rates.

The importance of sustaining the small and marginal farmers through supporting the subsistence agricultural economy in rural Maharashtra can hardly be overstressed, given the slow pace of irrigation, the small landholdings and the predominance of agriculture as the mainstay of the majority of the population. Agricultural labourers form a most vulnerable group, whose working potential is dependent on rains and the extent of irrigated land. According to the NSSO 32nd Round, 87.91% women are engaged in cultivation and other agricultural activity. Yet the work is very scarce and women do not get enough sustenance from agriculture to support an adequate living. Hence the search for non-agricultural work, especially during the slack season in agriculture, provides the only hope for these groups.

The Employment Guarantee Scheme had, as its background, the imperative of providing manual labour to all able bodied citizens demanding work.

"Whoever demands work will be given work", so runs the literal translation of the Marathi phrase used for the programme. The start of the programme was somewhat delayed by a prolonged drought which overtook the State in 1972-73 and 73-74. At this time, several leftist opposition groups among the political parties put up demands and organised agricultural labourers in favour of arranging continuous construction work to beat the debilitating social and economic costs of the drought. The 'Right to work' is enshrined in the Constitution of India as a Directive Principle of State Policy. Earlier centuries of Indian history are replete with instances where kings, emperors and rulers have sanctioned huge building construction projects to save the peasantry in times of drought.

The Resolution adopted by the Maharashtra State Assembly in December 1974 referred to the Directive Principle in the Constitution that "the State shall make effort to provide employment to those who seek it". The Resolution described human labour as an important capital asset with the help of which the Government would create more capital assets. The twin objectives of the EGS were employment and growth.

The salient features of the EGS were as follows :-

1. A guarantee of unskilled employment is provided to all adult persons living in rural areas. A statutory basis is provided for the guarantee.
2. The persons demanding work have no choice of work. The guarantee is to provide work anywhere in the district, though operationally, work is normally provided within the Panchayat Samiti area.
3. Work is to be provided to any person demanding employment within 15 days of such demand. The work to be provided should normally last for at least 30 days so as to avoid frequent shifts of the labour from one work to another.
4. Only productive works are permitted under the scheme. The major types of works which have been taken up under the scheme are labour intensive components of major and medium irrigation projects, minor irrigation, percolation and storage tanks, soil conservation and land development works, anti-water logging and water training drains and distributory canals, field channels and afforestation works. Where such productive works are not available, road works are taken up.
5. Only such works, of which the cost of the unskilled component is more than 60% of the total cost are permitted under the scheme.
6. The works are invariably executed departmentally and, therefore, there is no intermediary between the Government and the labour. The only exception is made when skilled items of the tank works are to be executed in the interest of the speedy completion of work. Such works can be executed through piece workers on conditions that the local labour should be used and they should be paid wages according to the schedule of rates prescribed by the Government.
7. The wages are linked to the quality and quantity of the output or work by the labour.
8. The wages prescribed for the Employment Guarantee Scheme are so designed that an average person, working diligently for seven hours should earn a total wage equal to the minimum wage for agricultural labour in the lowest zone in the State. Thus agricultural operations and at the same time the agricultural labour is assured of the minimum wage.
9. A blueprint of works which can be taken up under the scheme is kept ready for each Panchayat Samiti so that there is practically no time lag between the registration of the actual

demand for work and starting of the work. In order to enable the authorities responsible for implementation of the scheme to plan for the operation of the scheme, a manpower budget is being prepared in each Panchayat Samiti, for Collectors were given powers to move the village employment fund, to meet gaps caused by exigencies on the part of the State Government.

Payment of wages was partly in cash and partly in kind. The workers were covered by the Food for Work Programme being implemented by the Government of Maharashtra in collaboration with Government of India and donor agencies such as CARE etc. Payment in kind was to be roughly 40% of the cash component of the weekly wages.

The Employment Guarantee Act 1977 brought further improvements to the scheme. Payment of unemployment allowance to persons registered for work but not finding it within 15 days, was made mandatory. In case of death or disablement, ex-gratia payment upto Rs.5000 was provided.

The EGS was planned not to interfere or affect adversely the supply of labour for agricultural operations. This was one of the important parameters of the EGS which had very important implications for women's labour and employment. In taking precautions to ensure that deployment on EGS works did not affect agricultural production, the Scheme took on the contours of a residual provision. This was reinforced by the stipulation, built into the Scheme, that the EGS budget should be used only after the non-plan and plan funds for development projects approximating EGS activities are totally exhausted.

Resources for the EGS were raised by the Government of Maharashtra by resorting to Special Taxes and matching this mobilisation effort by an equal amount of budgetary grant from the State Government's finances. Taxes on motor vehicles, sales tax, irrigated lands, land revenue (surcharge), urban land and ceilings, professions, trades etc. were levied for the purpose. The taxes raised, along with the matching State Government contribution, were credited to a separate fund called the Employment Guarantee Fund. This meant that these amounts could not be utilised for any other purpose by the Government.

For the purpose of ensuring people's participation, the powers to supervise and review the implementation of the scheme were placed at district and sub-district (Panchayat Samiti) level with the Panchayat Raj Institutions which constituted the legal structures for democratic decentralisation. The Act provided for Committees to be set up at the level of these elected bodies. The State Legislature also appointed a Special Committee which was empowered not only to review scheme, but to make visits to the works, hold discussions with the workers, formulate their views and present

them in the form of a Report to the Legislature. Many such Reports were presented. In the first seven years of the scheme, the expenditure incurred and the mandays of employment generated were as follows:-

Years	Expenditure (in million Rupees)	Mandays (in millions)
1972-73	18.8	4.5
1973-74	18.9	5.1
1974-75	137.2	48.1
1975-76	344.3	109.5
1976-77	498.8	133.2

From 1977-78 onwards, the programme expanded dramatically. In 1985-86 the expenditure was Rs.2343.35 million and the mandays generated rose to 220 million. Table 6 shows the yearwise figures on expenditure, mandays generated, number of registered employment seekers, average labour attendance, wages, per centage expenditure on wages etc. for this 9 year period. The number of employment seekers rose from 2.83 million to 4.33 million in 1984-85, and the average attendance at the sites rose from .39 million in 1977-78 to .73 million in 1985-86.

The generation of mandays of employment kept pace with the expenditure on the whole. However, there has been constant criticism about the insufficiency of the work generated by the EGS. Acharya reported 64 days in a year in Thane District in 1985. Dandekar reported 160 days in 1978.

Irrigation, soil, conservation/land development, road construction and civil works comprise the major activities under EGS. In 1976-77 per centage expenditure under these four heads in the three districts under study is indicated in below:-

District	Irrigation	Soil Conser- vation/land development	Road Cons- truction	Others	Total
Dhulia	24.4	41.8	21.2	12.6	100
Ahmednagar	77.4	20.2	0.3	2.1	100
Bhandara	61.9	26.6	3.6	7.9	100

Source: Planning Department, Government of Maharashtra, Courtesy Mr. V. V. Karjatkar (Asst. Manpower Officer) 21 September, 1977.

Table 7 shows the expenditure under different heads from the years 1977-78 to 1984-85. We see that irrigation and soil conservation/land development are the two items on which maximum investments have been made. In comparison, afforestation has received negligible funding. The pace of expenditure on road construction has, however, picked up from 1977-78 onwards. From 10% it has gone up to 36% in 1984-85. Proportionately, the expenditure on irrigation has come down from 53% to 37% during the same period and the expenditure on soil conservation/land development has also come down from 27% to 18%. Annual total expenditure in 1984-85 came to Rs.2000 million. The position of works completed during years from 1979-80 to 1985-86 is shown in Table 8. This table also shows the number of new works sanctioned during the year. As we can see, the number of incomplete works at the beginning of the year has been steadily increasing, whereas the number of new works sanctioned during these years does not show the same trend. Similarly the number of works completed during the year are also on the decline during this period.

Though the importance of the construction sector for women workers has been well recognised, the specific impact of these programmes on women has not received much attention from researchers and programme analysts. Women tend to be affected by work at construction sites in ways different from those in which men are affected. Men's work at sites, for example, indirectly affects the women and children in the household. Women's access to work at the sites is constrained by her child bearing and child rearing responsibilities. Her mobility is circumscribed. The pattern of female labour demand differs from that of male labour. Women may need employment for longer periods in the year through public works programme and not merely during agricultural slack seasons. Women's attendance at the work sites continues to remain high in spite of these evident constraints. The extent of deprivation and the urgency of their survival needs seem to belong to quite another dimension.

The 1978 study, therefore, was taken up with a view to better understand women's response to such employment programmes and the positive and negative aspects of the programme in relation to women's capabilities and needs. The experiences of women belonging to the poorest households could be meshed with quantitative data about women's participation rates, attendance at sites, increases in income levels, the factors that pull them into such work and as well as the intrahousehold dynamics that selectively pushes females into such work, the caste, class age elements in this flow of labour. Their preferences for work and

supportive services were proposed to be investigated as well as their perceptions about work of various categories - house work, outside labour, wage work, and other relevant details.

Specifically, the 1978 study had the following objectives:

- (a) its direct employment effects on the poorest rural women.
- (b) its impact on their socio-economic condition.
- (c) its indirect socio-economic impact on women who have not participated directly but whose men are participants in the scheme.
- (d) evaluate the content of the employment guarantee in relation to felt needs.
- (e) identify policies, programmes and procedures of implementation which have helped or hindered women's participation in the programme.
- (f) analyse the factors which have contributed to the success or failure of the scheme in providing employment to rural women, and
- (g) assess the appropriateness of such public works schemes in generating employment for rural women in relation to other forms of employment programmes.

The study was taken up and completed between June 78 and January 79. The sample was drawn from 8 work sites in 3 districts of Maharashtra. An 86 point questionnaire was administered to 180 women in these districts, spreading over 5 community development blocks. A small pilot study (April 1978 to June 78) preceded the main study. Some of the work sites were visited twice, once during the pilot study and then again during the main study. The study design drawn up by ISST was partially changed on the basis of the results of the pilot study. Students and social workers helped in collecting the data from the work sites and interviewing the women. An economist working for a development agency acted as the field officer. The sample included participants as well as non-participant women. Besides, non EGS participants, who were working in other sectors such as sugar cane harvesting and bidi making, and some non participant men workers of these localities were also interviewed.

Table 9 shows the distribution of the sample disaggregated by district, block and work site. The type of EGS works studied were, percolation tank and nala bunding which come under irrigation and land development/soil conservation respectively,

and road construction. Besides, studies were also made of work sites and camp sites on which sugar cane workers were carrying out harvesting operations.

The three districts selected were Ahmednagar, Dhulia and Bhandara. They offer a variety of geographical features, work and occupational patterns, as briefly described below:-

Ahmednagar District lies in the rain shadow belt and is a drought prone area. Attendance at the work sites is very high. Portions of the district are irrigated where sugar cane and food crops are cultivated. Migrant labour work on the sugar cane farms. The per centage of gross irrigated area to gross area sown (1968-69) is 12.62. .704 million workers in the rural population of the district have agricultural labourer, marginal or small farmer status.

Dhulia District has an undulating terrain and is predominantly tribal. Plantation crops are sown. Migrant as well as local labour is used. The district has a history of sustained peasant movements, with a strong organisational base of tribal labour. There are drought prone areas in the district. In 1977-78, two blocks were severely affected by drought. Expenditure on EGS from 1972-73 to 1975-76 is Rs.14.66 million. In mid year 1976, 37,221 persons were working at the sites. .522 million rural workers in this district are agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers. The per centage of gross irrigated area to gross cropped area is 8.79.

Bhandara District is located on the state border with Madhya Pradesh, the adjoining State, and has characteristics somewhat different from those of the other Maharashtra regions. The district is not drought prone. The per centage of gross irrigated area to gross area sown (1968-69) was 25.72%. There were 50 EGS works in progress in October 1975. The expenditure on EGS from 1972-73 to 1975-76 is Rs.71.89 million. In mid year 1976, there were 46,074 persons working at the sites. .654 million rural workers of the district are agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers.

The second 1987 study was undertaken after the lapse of a little less than a decade of the 1978 study. During the intervening period, the EGS scheme, with variations and modifications, had been tried out in other States and also launched as one of the anti-poverty programmes at the national level. The common experience has been that women's participation in the labour at the work sites has been very high, often much higher than the attendance figures would reveal. It was therefore felt that it would be useful to conduct a re-evaluation of the scheme to assess the changes, if any, that had taken place during the interregnum.

This was seen as a necessary step if interventions in the design of the programme were to be carried out from the point of view of women.

The objective laid out for the 1987 study were as follows:-

1. To assess the EGS as a viable employment programme, for the proposed target group.
2. To assess its impact on employment pattern of gender differentiated rural labour.
3. To assess its performance in terms of land improvement and creation of assets.
4. To understand the perception of functioning of EGS by participants during last eight years (since ISST's earlier study of 1978), in terms of availability of work, wage payment system, parity in wages for men and women, gang formation, distance they have to walk to reach the site of work, delivery of various amenities and provisions.
5. To understand the impact of social interaction, enabled by EGS, on the intra household relationships of men and women and social relations among the participants, as well as with state machinery.
6. To understand needs of employment of women and men belonging to different landholding classes and try to suggest recommendations to incorporate these needs into the design of the scheme. It also means developing a new approach to labour allocation policies in rural Maharashtra.
7. To understand unpaid subsistence production activities of women and suggest how experiences too can be incorporated into the design of the scheme.

The following hypotheses were to be tested:-

1. That, a decade of EGS programme implementation would have made a decided impact on wage rates, by creating a substantial demand for labour which would push up the agricultural wages.
2. That, EGS would stabilise female wages on par with male wages and thus improve the equity of women.
3. That, as EGS was aimed at creating productive assets near the homes of the women workers, especially in irrigation and land management, women's operations in agriculture would be enhanced productively and improve their living styles.

In addition to the three districts taken up in the 1978 study, namely Ahmednagar, Dhulia and Bhandara the 1987 study took up district Beed, where the incidence of sugar cane workers was quite high. Since the 1987 study attempted it was also intended to re-evaluate the impact of the scheme on women workers across time, visits were paid to some of the villages which were taken up in 1978 Study.

Meetings with women workers became a frequent feature mostly at night, so as to create a participatory mode of communication, which in turn would improve the quality of the information being collected.

The total sample for the 1987 Study consisted of 640 persons. Participants in the EGS, as well as non-participants who were employed in some other type of work, comprised the sample. The non-EGS participant workers were mostly drawn from amongst sugar cane workers and Beedi workers. A worker-participant of EGS was defined as one who had worked in EGS for a period of 50 days minimum for at least a year, during the period 1984-86. A non-EGS worker participant was essentially a member of the same socio-economic strata as the EGS workers, but who earned her livelihood from some other work.

Table 10 shows the composition of the sample of 640 persons district wise, activity wise, showing men and women separately.

Out of female respondents from the four districts 68% are staying with their husbands, 14% with in-laws, 5% with parents, 11% separately and 2% with others. 10% of the sample consists of widows. Levels of literacy among the woman respondents are very low. 83% are illiterate and 17% are literate. The literates consist of 1% literacy through non-formal education, 10% primary pass, 4% secondary pass, 1% matriculate and 1% higher education.

Compared to this, men respondents' literacy levels are much higher. 53% of the men are illiterate and 47% are literate. Out of literate category, 38% are primary pass, 11% are secondary pass, 4% matriculate, 2% higher education and 2% literate through non-formal education.

As part of the re-visits to the same villages as were taken up, in-depth interviews were conducted with a small sample of women after identifying 47 out of the sample of 100 EGS participants used for the earlier study. This exercise was aimed at having a telescopic view of the changes that had taken place in the lives of individual women workers of the EGS system across a time interval of nearly a decade. The changes related to the relative economic status of the households in terms of impact of EGS.

The methodology of administering the questionnaires differed from the 1978 study since they were canvassed in the villages, where the women workers lived and not at the work sites. Due to certain changes taking place in the design of the EGS at the time, it was found that there were very few women workers at the sites, which made it very difficult to select a sample at the site, especially when a search for a small sample of the women studied in 1978-79 was also to be made. The questionnaires were therefore canvassed at the homes of the women workers in April and May 1986. The recall method was used to investigate the perceptions of the women workers, backwards across time, relating to work and EGS. The study team prepared a list of assets created out of EGS in the village studied so as to improve the interview base.

Chapter III
A SIGHT UNSEEN
FEMALE ATTENDANCE AT WORK SITES

The high rates of female attendance at the EGS work sites has been a recurring feature of the programme, from its inception. In the 1978 Study, daily labour attendance of female workers was charted in terms of per centage of total labour attendance in the 3 selected districts for the years 1976, 1977 and 1978, broken down monthwise (the 1976 figures cover April to December). Combined for this 3 year period, the average daily female attendance per centage is 39 for Bhandara, 49 for Ahmednagar and 36 for Dhulia (data missing for about a year for Dhulia). These figures are collected from official sources. Table 11 presents these figures.

The Government of Maharashtra has given a figure of 43 as the per centage denoting the female participation in the EGS labour force for the whole State. This figure has been calculated for the period January - March 1978.

The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission conducted a study on EGS in 1978 based on data collected from 25 work sites in 4 districts of the State. This study has calculated the per centage of female labour attendance to total labour attendance on EGS to be 57.

The ISST study collected data on female labour attendance from sites, comprising the sample. These figures reveal a higher attendance than the Government of Maharashtra per centages compiled at State level. Two types of attendance figures were collected from the sites, (a) from the muster rolls maintained for each work site (b) from actual site attendance. Needless to say, there are discrepancies in the two sets of figures. Table 12 presents the attendance figures for 3 sites (one partly). The per centages worked out on muster roll basis are as high as 56 and 77. None of the per centages (3 sites) dip below 50.

The 1978 study team had interviewed Shri V. S. Tungare, a senior State Government civil servant who was earlier involved in the programme. His observation was that women come to the site to work because men drink. On his visits to a site, he had seen 60% of the men drunk, who left the site by noon. The women worked till evening. In places where there was a social taboo on high caste women working in the open, low caste (Harijan) women could still be found working at the sites.

Table 13 presents attendance figures of female labour in 4 out of the 8 work sites comprising the sample, using the size of the gang and the number of women in the gang, based on questions put to women workers at each of these sites. A comparison of Table 11 and Table 12 shows that 3 work sites are common in both Tables and that the gang per centage is higher in case of the site in Ahmednagar district than the per centage calculated on muster roll and site attendance basis.

This table also shows the type of work taken up in each of the 4 sites, 3 sites having percolation tanks and the fourth site having taken up construction of a road. There appears to be no correlation between the type of work and the extent of female participation as far as this sample is concerned.

Similarly, a look at Table 11 does not reveal any common peak periods of female attendance in the 3 districts. There are different peak periods in each case. The Chief Executive Officer of the Dhulia Zilla Parishad, for example, stated during the course of an interview that October and March were peak agricultural seasons for Jowar and that the lean season stretched from June to September. Normally attendance should peak during this period in this district. A look at Table 11 however, shows that while November shows the lowest attendance (22%) the 'lean period' does not show markedly high attendance.

During a visit to a site outside the sample, the research team found 6 females and 3 males attending to nala bunding work under EGS. The time was 10 a.m. Two of the women were young girls of 11 and 14. One of the older women was interviewed who was working at the site along with her father. She was supporting her two sisters who were staying along with her and her father. She had been turned out by her husband from the marital home after having suffered abuse and physical violence. The two sisters could not work on account of weak eye sight. They owned 30-35 acres of land but could work on it only if the rains were plentiful. She had been working on the EGS site for 3 years where the working hours were 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Agriculture labour on other's fields brought less money to her as compared to male wage rates, and the working hours, too, were longer - 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. She had to walk 3 miles every day to come to the site.

Visits paid to 3-4 work sites by the Research Team for the Pilot Study revealed the following female attendance:-

<u>Name of the site</u>	<u>Total labour present</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>
1. Hanmantgaon Dist. Aurangabad	275	153
2. Sarswadi Dist. Pune	9	6
3. Arangaon Dist. Ahmednagar	13	10

The Pilot Study found that at certain sites, the high female to male ratio precipitated a break down of the accepted gender division of labour in construction work. Women had to dig as well as carry the earth. Where husband and wife pairs worked on the sites, the digging was done by men and the carrying of earth was done by the women. The status of widows, single women, female heads of household etc. has a different implication not only on the nature of the work she is obliged to do, but also on her access to work on the EGS site. Absence of a male often meant that women were turned away from the work site.

Dr. Sulabha Brahme, Fellow of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics during her meeting with the Research Team (1978 Study) felt that the presence of a large number of women on the site is because while men are engaged in their 'own' work, i.e. self-employment, trade etc. women do not have this access. Women actually report in much larger numbers at the site. Some times 70% of the labour turning up at the site are women, but the engineer wants a 50:50 ratio of women and men in the gangs before starting a work.

One of the findings of the Pilot Study was that almost all the women interviewed (30 female workers 88% of whom are in the age group of 15-30 and 31-45 years, 80% are married, 10% divorced/widowed and 10% unmarried, 65% land holders and 35% landless) demanded that EGS work be continued throughout the whole year (90% of the landed women workers had holdings below 20 acres).

The 1987 Study has collected data from the monthly progress reports of 7 Government agencies implementing EGS in 104 work sites in Beed district. 5 out of 7 agencies, have collected figures of average per centage of women labour attendance for the period January 1984 - December 1985. The per centages are 45, 58, 64, 57 and 60. The attendance figures for female labour for the

whole of Maharashtra for the period 1979-85, collected from the Planning Department of the Government of Maharashtra, gives an average per centage of 39. This is shown in Table 14 as also the average female attendance per centages in the four districts taken up under the 2nd Study. All the four districts have returned per centages below 50, with the lowest per centage in Bhandara, being 40. Both the Studies have expressed apprehensions about the discrepancies between figures compiled at the State level and those collected from the sites through implementing agencies and muster clerks.

The 1987 Study has found that average number of women working as EGS workers per household for all the four districts is greater than the average number of men as EGS workers. For example, Ahmednagar has 1.24 women EGS workers per household, as compared to 0.87 men workers of EGS. Bhandara district has 1.19 women EGS workers, as compared to 1.13 men EGS workers.

The number of women actually working at the sites tends to be under-reported for another reason. The men registered at the sites often do not turn up for the work but send the women instead. Registration figures, therefore could be misleading. Some times 70% of the labour turning up at the site are women.

1978
The Research Team had visited Ranzangaon in Ahmednagar for a detailed site study. The type of work being carried out under EGS was a percolation tank. There were 226 workers on the site out of whom 163 were women. The percolation tank was the third in a series that were being built in the neighbourhood of Ranzangaon, with one more tank proposed to be taken up. People from 3-4 villages within a radius of 5 kms. from the work site were being covered by the scheme. The total number of workers registered on the muster rolls were 234 out of which 182 were women and 52 men. It was functioning for 10 months each year, since the time it started.

This site was visited by the Research Team twice in 1978, once in June and then again in November. Both these are agricultural peak seasons, when there is a high demand for male and female labour. But the Research Team found that whereas men were absorbed in agricultural labour, women were still engaged in the EGS sites. The Research Team had two hypotheses for this. One was that the women preferred EGS work, and the other was that the wages paid to women in agriculture was much lower than the prevailing rate and that women tend to be under employed in agriculture. Evidence gathered from this site appeared to show that women considered EGS work to be stable, settled and 'respectable' work, and therefore a first priority choice. Men, on the other hand, took up agriculture work whenever it was available, as the first choice, and went to EGS sites only when work in agriculture was scarce.

The 1978 Study found a high proportion of female headed households represented at the work sites. 18% of the sample (23 women) were the bread winner and heads of household. Out of the married women, (38 in all) 16 women, i.e. 40% were the bread winners, all in the landless group.

The 1997 Study has quoted a study carried out by Ms K. Dandekar in 1979-80 on the EGS. 28 projects were surveyed in this study, which found 1283 female workers on the sites per 1000 males. The author has echoed the other researchers' apprehensions about the reliability of statistics collected at the District or State level. Thus, the government showed the per centage of female to total workers as 40. Actual site inspection resulted in a different conclusion.

The driving logic and rationale behind the launching of the Employment Guarantee Scheme was, as we have seen, the need to give people a right to demand work. It aimed at providing unemployed labour with work during the agricultural off season. The scheme has inbuilt safeguards which ensure that deployment on EGS works will not depress the supply of agricultural work during the harvesting, ploughing and other peak demand seasons. District Collectors are bound to close the sites during these periods. The assumption is that labour supply behaviour has no differentials based on gender, and that peak demand for agricultural labour will occur at the same period for both men and women. This premise has taken considerable battering during the course of the two studies.

Chapter IV

"SEEING" THE WOMEN AT WORK — SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The socio-economic backgrounds of the women participants in EGS was gone into considerable detail in both the studies. In the sample drawn up for the 1978 Study (131 women) the landless women constituted 50%. Table 14 shows the landholding distribution of the 131 women. As we go up the scale of landholding, the number of EGS women participants taper off. Women with above 20 acres constitute less than 3% of the sample. However 46 women have less than 5 acres and 15 women have holding between 5 and 20 acres. Women landless labourers and marginal/small farmers appear to be the backbone of the EGS programme. It is they who throng at work sites and outnumber the men. These women lack mobility, security, skills and training. They also suffer from the oppression of a male dominated society. We have seen how the exigencies of female labour supply affect the EGS programme and how the latter is, in turn, affected by it. Women from these two categories have major responsibilities in fodder and fuel collection, animal care, etc. which, of necessity, takes them outside the home. 76% of the

landholdings in Maharashtra fall into the small farmer category and 65% of the population of the State is still dependent on agriculture for livelihood. Irrigated land being scarce, the small farmers and the agricultural labourers have to deploy their labour on dry land agriculture. The employment provided by agriculture in a year, is however, quite insufficient to earn an adequate livelihood. One of the objectives of the EGS is to build a long term potential for employment through the creation of various productive assets. Thus percolation tanks constructed under EGS would stabilise the ground water availability, bring up the water table and thus pave the way to greater agricultural productivity where the labour intensity of cropping would also be higher. The two Studies have however questioned the applicability of this premise on a uniform basis to both the major target groups. Whilst the farmers with small holdings would be benefitted, both by creation of assets and higher labour days on own farms, the landless labourers do not stand to benefit in the same way. The 1987 Study has therefore called for a differential EGS for landless labourers. While this critique applies uniformly to the EGS across the sex divide, it is also revealed that women belonging to these two categories have more commonalities on account of gender, than the men of these two categories. Thus, it was seen that in small and marginal land owning households, women suffer from subtle and overt discrimination as far as the nature of work entrusted to them is concerned. Not being trained in management or supervisory functions, they are sent out to the work sites readily, in search of labour, even before the men.

Table 15 reveals the reasons why the women joined EGS. The women have been categorised as per landholding. The main reasons given by the women is that no other job is available near the villages or that the available work is insufficient for their needs. The landless women as well as the women with small holdings have advanced the same reason. Out of 114 women (total sample 144) who gave these two reasons, 62 are landless women and 45 are women with holdings less than 10 acres. Of the total sample, 79% have given these two reasons for coming to the work sites.

Table 16 juxtaposes duration of participation in EGS by the women with the size of the landholdings. Here we see that it is the landless women (67) and women with holdings less than 5 acres (46) who are evenly distributed across the time classes. These two categories work for short durations, i.e. a month, as well as for over 8 months a year. The bigger landowners tend to come in smaller numbers, but for longer periods.

Table 17 shows that 12% of the EGS workers depend only on EGS work. The majority spend less than six months in the year on EGS work sites, the per centage of women of this category to the total sample being 62%. Most women who come to the sites for work are

from households of marginal farmers and casual labourers. The share of households of artisans and other type of asset holders is quite minimal. 23 women out of the total sample of 131 returned themselves as belonging to households of artisans, home based workers, service - workers, traders and livestock breeders. Out of them only 5 women have worked in EGS for more than 6 months. The largest categories of households returned are self-cultivators and agricultural labourers, having 30 women from each of these type of households. Surprisingly, only 5 women came from the households where the head of household worked on EGS combined with agriculture work. Similarly a very small number of women - 5 - belonged to households where the head was a self-cultivator but augmented this work with agricultural labour. This is to be contrasted with the comparatively large number of women belonging to households dependent purely on either self cultivation or agricultural labour (30 each).

This could be explained by the predominance of males as heads of households combined with the disinterest shown by males in joining EGS work when other job opportunities are available. Out of total sample of 131 women, 16 women had returned themselves as heads of household. This comes to a little above 12%. It roughly corresponds with the extent of female headedness in the State of Maharashtra and the country as a whole. However, available research shows that the real extent of female headedness in rural India amongst the economically vulnerable groups is much higher. Cultural mores and self perceptions prevent women who may be the sole or major breadwinners in the family, to think of themselves as heads of households, as long there is a male - husband, father-in-law, son or other in the family.

The low participation of homebased workers, artisans and other asset holders in EGS work may be due to the wage differentials. But, as far as priority target groups go, a reading of the EGS programme will make it clear that they are marginal farmers and agricultural labourers.

In a detailed site report of a percolation tank work in Ranzangaon described in the 1978 Report, there were a total of 36 respondents out of whom 26 had worked on the sites for more than 6 months. 14 out of these 26 women workers belonged to the landless category. Even in the category of landed women, numbering 12, 10 women had holdings between 2 1/2 and 12 1/2 acres. Only 2 women had land more than 20 acres. On the other hand, of those who worked for less than 6 months on EGS, (10 women) only one was landless. The remaining had land holdings of 1-10 acre range. This seem to reinforce the finding that exclusively wage earning households send their women to EGS work sites for fairly long periods - over 6 months.

The location of self-cultivators i.e. marginal and small farmers in the employment scenario of EGS is to be seen independently and not merely as an adjunct of the landless labour category. We have seen that small cultivator households send their women as often to the sites as the landless labour households, even though availability of farm work is greater in the case of the former. In a sample of 40 respondents whose participation in EGS according to time periods was collected as per occupation of head of the household, 14 women were seen as belonging to self-cultivation families. Out of 14, 6 women had worked in EGS for less than 6 months and 8 women had worked for more than 6 months. This is the largest group of females in the sample. This sample shows a very small number of EGS participants from agricultural labourer households (3 only). This gives a picture different to that shown in Table 17 as the dominant position here is that of the small cultivator households. Only 3 women come from households subsisting on agricultural labour only, out of a total sample of 40. (There seems to be an impediment or some lack of access to women of the landless households from availing of EGS work. This however, needs to be studied in greater detail).

In another sample of 39 women drawn from the same site, the landholdings and occupation categories were seen together. While 9 landless women were kept occupied by EGS work only, throughout the year, 5 landless women were combining EGS work with manual work in non-agricultural sectors as well as agricultural work. While the total in the landless group totalled 14 women, self-cultivators with holdings upto 15 acres accounted for a total of 17 women, all except six of whom had other occupations besides EGS to keep them at work during the year. The self cultivator female labour force appears to be surplus to a degree more pronounced than the self cultivator males. Their dependence on EGS work, though different in nature from that of agricultural labouring women, appears to be as critical. As Dr. Sulabha Brahme has reasoned, women of this class get excluded from management, decision-making and supervision of their own plots on account of overall low status within the household and their own powerlessness. Their work on own farms is by way of unpaid labour. They have no access, (or very little access) to cash income. This further aggravates the intra-household balance of power between the sexes. EGS work is, on the other hand, easily available wherever a site has been opened, is within walking distance, and above all provides a cash income which goes for buying the family necessities. Thus, while their dependence with EGS work may not be as critical for sheer survival as in case of agricultural labour women, it is vital for bringing about a change in the quality of their position within the household in terms of status and access to control over cash income.

"A visit was made to a site in the Poona District..... The nature of the work was nala bunding..... The time was about 10 a.m. There were only 9 persons on the site, 6 females of whom 2 were small girls, aged 11 and 14 and 3 males, supervised by a Mukkadam One woman about 35 years old was interviewed. She was separated from her husband who she said was a drunkard, would beat his wife and married another woman. She lived with her father, and two other sisters. Her sisters she said had weak eye-sight and could not work but she and her father both worked at the site and earned Rs.15 to Rs.25/- per week. If three persons work she said they could earn nearly 45/- to 50/- a week which was an ample income. She reported that the family owned 30-35 acres of land but unirrigated. They were a joint family with 4 brothers and their wives, in all 14 persons. They grew Jowar and Bajra on their land, Jowar October to December and Bajra June to August. She added that they had work on their own land only when the monsoon was favourable; otherwise they were unemployed. Regarding employment on other people's land, she said the males got Rs.4.30 per day while the females Rs.2/- to Rs.2.50/- per day and had to work from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. On the other hand on EGS site she said the working hours were 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. They lived three miles from Sanaswadi and took one hour to come to the site, she said. She claimed that she has been working on the EGS for nearly three years. Regarding indebtedness she said they usually borrow money from the money lender or wheat from the shopkeeper until she gets the wages. She added that her father had borrowed Rs.3,000 - 4,000 for the marriages of the daughters but had not yet been able to repay it. While she could not remember the exact rate of interest he paid, she felt it was about Rs.50 to Rs.100/- per month. They have already sold their animals and therefore, cannot work on their land. They had no money to buy labour or animals.>>

" 1978 STUDY "

In the 1987 Study, days of employment from 4 sources available to households with different land holdings were assessed. Table 18 reveals that whereas the landless households receive 36% of their employment days from agricultural work, marginal and small farming households do not lag very far behind. In their case, 33% and 31% respectively of employment days is obtained from agriculture work. In so far as EGS is concerned, the corresponding per centages for these three categories are 54, 54 and 52 respectively, meaning thereby that landholding wise EGS provides almost as much workdays to marginal and small farmers as to landless labour. Though this table does not disaggregate employment days by sex, it is significant that all three groups - landless, marginal and small farmers - are clustered close together in actual number of employment days.

Women participants in EGS work less number of days on own farm than the men participants. The difference is quite considerable (20 days and 40 days respectively). But they put in more workdays in agriculture work, EGS, other wage labour as well as household occupations as compared to men.

Women's dependence on wage labour exceeds that of men. In the 1987 Study, the Research Team comes to the conclusion that EGS is a favourite with poor women because it is seen as a "supplementing" programme, especially because the work sites close down periodically and the work is seen as broken or discontinuous. The proximity of the site, the working hours, the fact that it is government work, all contribute to viewing it as a somewhat 'soft' option.

Table 19 presents data on age and landholding in respect of 131 respondents. In the landless class, we see that 67 (a little over half) women work on the sites. The age group, 30-39 and 40-49 are well represented - 42 out of 67. The next most populous categories are the groups having holdings 0.1 - 2.5 acres and 2.6 acres to 5.0 acres. 46 respondents are found in this category out of the total sample of 131. Here again 24 out of 46 respondents are between 30 and 49. Thus, landless women and women owning up to 5 acres of land demonstrate their affinity for EGS in the later age groups, that is, after the child bearing years.

In the Ranzangaon study, out of 38 women found on the percolation tank construction site, 20 belonged to the age group 30-49. In this site however, there were 11 girls belonging to the age group 15-19. The minimum age limit for EGS work has been set at 18 years by the Government. Cross classifying with extent of landholding, we see that the women above 40 on this site are either landless or marginal cultivators. We find fewer women of the higher age groups in the higher landed categories. The young

women at the site were mostly in the medium to large size land holding category i.e. upto 30 acres. Summing up, the position is as follows:

50%	of the landless women are above 40 years
18.8%	of the landless women are between 15-19 years
18.2%	of marginal cultivators are above 40 years
18.2%	of marginal cultivators are between 15-19 years
9.1%	of those with larger holdings are above 40
54.5%	of those with larger holdings were in the age group 15-19 years.

The 1978 Study reported that women's knowledge about their age was not accurate, neither could the team elicit ready responses from all the women. The majority of women being illiterate, this is not surprising.

In this sample, the biggest number of women belonged to the age group 15-19 (28.9%). The older age groups 40-49 and 35-39 followed as the second and third most populous categories. In the 1978 study sample, 18 out of a total sample of 131 were in the age group of 15 - 19.

The per centage distribution of the Ranzangaon age sample shows a U shaped curve, with larger numbers of women of the pre-child bearing and post-child bearing age groups. Participation during the child bearing years is at a much lower level. The women in these age groups, however, represent the neediest sections. This is the period during which lack of nutrition and health care take a very heavy toll of poor womens' strength and capacity to work. However, child rearing and child bearing restrict women's mobility, and in the absence of facilities for child care, and health women are not able to take up physically strenuous jobs which keep them away from their homes. When the respondents were asked for their views regarding facilities for child care on the site, the response was positive in a majority of cases. Other amenities demanded, such as shed at worksite, drinking water, medical aid etc., show the importance attached by the women to health and provisions for rest etc. In the responses given by non-participants in EGS to questions as to why they did not join EGS, women stated that distance of work site from the village was too far to carry children. Other reasons stated were that escort was not available and the heavy burden of housework. It appears that unless there is a systematic effort at providing health, rest and child care facilities, women of the neediest sections, i.e. the child bearing years, will not avail of EGS work opportunities to a greater degree.

In the study, the women workers had expressed a preference for EGS work because it is 'easy' work provided by the government, as compared to work on farmers landholdings. The strenuous nature of EGS work however sometimes tends to be overlooked. The women have also expressed preference for the working hours of the EGS over the timings of agricultural labour. Since EGS payment is based on piece-work, the women use this provision with flexibility. Thus, at the height of summer, women would start work early and try to finish before the hottest part of the day. The wages obtained by women for farm work is lower than that obtained by their male counterparts. For all these reasons, a decided preference on the part of the women for EGS work has been stated. On the other hand, at many sites, women take up physically taxing jobs such as digging, which "traditionally" are done by the men, on account of gang composition weighing more heavily in favour of women. We also see in the Ranzangaon site report that women of the land owning categories in the upper age groups do not attend to EGS work. It means that where there is a clear choice, older women who are not as precariously placed as the landless women in terms of economic security, tend to opt out of the EGS routine. This also gives an indication of the physically strenuous nature of the activity at the work sites. The fact that landless women of the higher age groups continue to work on the sites is on account of their extreme dependence on waged work of any nature. Landed women have also the option of withdrawing from EGS and working on their own farm plots. Running through the entire background is of course the pattern of domestic work, which forms a permanent feature of the lives of all the women EGS workers, irrespective of asset and land holding.

Younger women, as compared to women in the age group 40+ (especially those above fifty) are more productive on farm labour; especially if they are unencumbered with child bearing and rearing. In the Ranzangaon site, we see a large number of young unmarried girls, over half of them from families having over 7 1/2 acres of land (out of which all except one household has land above 10 acres). In the 1978 Study sample, 18 out of 131 respondents are from the same age group (15-19 years). Their marital status, however, is not indicated.

The marital status of the EGS workers and their relationship with the head of the household can be seen in Table 20. In the 1978 Study sample, women were asked to indicate their status in their family. 73 out of 131 respondents were married, 23 were unmarried daughters, 10 were daughters-in-law and two others were widowed relatives. 23 women returned themselves as head of the household. Of the 73 wives 38, i.e. more than 50% belonged to the landless category. 28 wives belonged to the 0.1 - 5 acre landholding category. Only 7 wives had land above 5 acres. Amongst unmarried daughters, 14 out of 23 had land, and 8 of them, in turn, had land above 5 acres. The unmarried daughters, were distributed over all

the categories of land holding; from landless to those with 20 acres and above. The daughters in law on the other hand were found only in the landless group and largely in the group with land below 5 acres. The women who had indicated their status as heads of household were predominantly in the landless group (16 women out of 23) and the others fell in the category with less than five acres.

In the Ranzangaon sample an almost similar distribution between landed and landless wives was seen. Here, the total respondents were 35, out of whom 18 were landed and 17 landless. The landed wives formed 44% and the landless wives 41.2% of the total number of wives. Similarly, of the wives in the landed category, 75% have land holdings between .1 and 5 acres. Only 25% have land above 5 acres. In both the samples, therefore, the married women who come to work on the EGS sites belong to the marginal farmer households. Half the number of wives, however, belong to the landless category.

In contrast, the married daughters of the Ranzangaon sample are predominantly from the landed category (6 out of 9) out of which 4 have landholdings above 10 acres. Thus wives and unmarried daughters who together form 73% of the First Study sample and 68% of the Ranzangaon sample, exhibit contrasting features in terms of landholding. Clearly, married women tend to withdraw from EGS work as family landholding increases. This withdrawal need not imply a total withdrawal from the female labour force. It is more likely that she engages in unpaid labour on the family farm; whereas the women in more marginal landholdings and are consequently more under employed in comparison to the men in the family, approach EGS for cash income of which they are deprived, even when they work on their subsistence holdings. The withdrawal of women belonging to landed families from work outside the home in general, and agriculture work in particular, is not, as we know confined to EGS only. This has been a phenomenon that has been well documented in extant literature.

Another reason for this withdrawal could be the need to carry out the responsibility of domestic work, especially its supervision and management. Younger daughters, with less responsibility and experience in guiding home work, may be considered less suitable for this work, and may therefore be sent to the sites.

The higher participation of unmarried daughters from landed families, as we have seen above, contrasts sharply with the withdrawal of married women of this group from EGS work. We can attempt to understand this by recalling that there may be, in certain situations, less social opposition in allowing unmarried girls to work in the open. Free from child rearing and child bearing responsibilities, their services may be needed at home mainly for sibling care and to help the mother in the household.

But with the prospect of cash income from EGS, a decision may be taken to allow the young girls to earn more income.

In all cases, rational decisions appear to be taken on the deployment of the female labour force within the household, within the frame work of certain existing social norms. A trade-off between women's contribution to domestic work and their unpaid labour on the family farm on the one hand and wage earnings in EGS work on the other appears to be made within the family, to see which option would bring the maximum benefits to the family.

The main sample (1978 Study) has returned a high number of EGS workers who are "Heads of Households". 23 women (same number as the unmarried category) have stated that they head their households - i.e. about 18%. In the Ranzangaon sample 8 women out of 35 have claimed this status on the basis of being widows. This comes to 22%. Both these percentages are much higher than the officially accepted incidence of Female Headedness, which according to the Census of 1981 is 11%. As stated earlier on, however, the proportion of female headed households rises as we go down the income ladder.

The incidence of female headedness in the two samples combined is nearly 19%. In both the samples, the majority of the female heads of households belong to the landless classes. In the main sample 16 out of 23 FHH are landless. In the Ranzangaon sample, 6 out of 8 FHH are landless. Total incidence of landlessness among female headed households in both the samples comes to approximately 71%. None of the landed women who are heads of households possesses more than 5 acres of land.

The extent of participation in EGS by women is affected by their child rearing and child bearing responsibilities at home. We have already seen that women between 20 and 30 tend to avail less of EGS work opportunities as compared to women in older age groups. For the purpose of getting respondents' reactions, children below the age of 12 only were taken into consideration. The respondents were divided into single occupation and multi occupation categories. The women in the first category worked at EGS work sites only, whereas the second category combined EGS work with any other occupation/occupations. Out of total respondents numbering 34, 15 were single occupation women only, working at EGS worksites. 20% of the respondents did not have children below the age of 12. 30% had just one child of this age group. Thus half the women who work only on EGS did not have young children. This confirms the earlier finding that women in the child bearing and child rearing age group have difficulties in participating in EGS work. Immediate responsibilities of looking after small children seem to receive higher priority than cash income from wage work in

EGS. The remaining 50% of the respondents have two or more children under 12 years, and 32% have more than 3 children of this age group.

Women with smaller number of children seem to be participating in EGS as well as in other occupations. But women with two or more children (11 out of 17 single occupation women) are found in greater numbers in EGS only. When these findings are kept alongside the earlier finding regarding less participation in EGS only by women with child rearing responsibilities, a complex picture appears to emerge. Whilst women do not normally prefer to engage in EGS work when they have small children, sometimes economic imperatives determine otherwise. Where such decisions are taken on a rational basis, in order to maximise the benefit accruing to the household, etc. women do not appear prepared to dissipate their energy in a number of occupations. They generally seem to prefer to stick to EGS work only. When respondents were asked the reasons why EGS work was acceptable to them in comparison to other work alternatives, we recall that one of the replies given to the Research Team was that EGS permits small children to be brought on the site. (The crucial importance of providing child care, nutrition and health care facilities at the work sites needs to be stressed again and again here.)

The 1987 Study has a sample of men and women respondents who are asked to reveal the sources from where they came to know about the Employment Guarantee Scheme. Among the women respondents, the most popular and effective source were friends and relatives, with 40% of the respondents indicating so. Sarpanch, Panchayat members, Gram Sewak and Patwari etc. accounted as the chief source of information for 29% of women. The muster clerk and other officials of the EGS administrative machinery provided a ready guide to 20% of the women. Family members, on the other hand, were named as an information source only by 9% women. By contrast, very few men - 9% - returned the elected local Panchayat leaders or the lower level functionaries as the source of knowledge about EGS. The two sources quoted by largest numbers of male respondents were, friends and relatives and the muster clerk and other officials.

The 1978 Study has tested the knowledge of female respondents of specific legislative provisions regarding wages as well as of the wage rates of EGS. Disaggregating the responses received by age groups, we see that the majority of women, in a sample of 133, professed ignorance regarding wage payment on the basis of piece rate in EGS, schedule of rates used for payment for EGS, provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act which provides for equal pay for men and women etc. The research/study team found very large numbers of women who did not respond to these questions. Out of 133 women respondents 30% did not respond to the questions regarding different wages for different jobs. 31% did not respond

to the question of rate schedules for the EGS. 32% did not respond to the question regarding their awareness of the Equal Remuneration Act. The Research Team found that the women were very unwilling to respond to questions. The team members were also handicapped in their access to new tools to be used for eliciting information from the women. The limitations of conventional methods of eliciting answers through questionnaires were painfully exposed.

Chapter V

PAYMENT OF WAGES

The 1978 Study attempted to compare the wage levels obtained by the respondents in non EGS occupation in the previous year, with the rates of payment obtained in EGS. All the respondents reported higher wage levels in the EGS as compared to other occupations. The wage difference between non EGS and EGS rates ranged from 50 paise to Rs.1.80 per day. The wage difference between agricultural labour and EGS is approximately 50 to 75 paise. The difference between EGS and non EGS nala bunding comes to Rs.1.25 a day.

In Ranzangaon, the average daily wage for the percolation and construction, as reported by the respondents was Rs.2.50 - Rs.3.00. This does not include the value of the coupons. Since payment in kind is also made in wages for agricultural labour, this element was not counted on both sides. The women stated that they received Rs.2 as daily wage in agriculture, and that the rate was generally in the range of Rs.1.50 - Rs.2.00. Since comparison was being made between wage rates received by EGS workers and those received by workers in other types of wage work, the position of unpaid family workers, i.e. women, who had marginal or small holdings, was not taken into account. We have seen that the women of this group constitute an important section of the EGS female labour force. Their perceived vulnerability in their home setting stems from their imperfect and asymmetrical involvement in management of the family plot compared to the men of these families. For these women, EGS work provides a comparatively easy opportunity for obtaining cash income. For the other women, the EGS wages are clearly higher than in other wage earning occupations.

The earnings of the male workers of the households of EGS women workers from occupations other than EGS were examined, so as to compare it with EGS wages. Whilst women workers had reported Rs.2 as the daily wage in agriculture, the men reported a wage rate of Rs.3-4 per day. Other types of manual labour, such as nala bunding, not connected with agricultural labour also carried the same wage range. Self employed artisans such as blacksmiths,

earned Rs.6-7 per day. Fishermen earned Rs.3 per day. Trading and livestock paid in the range of Rs.4-6. Plantation work paid Rs.3. Men and women at Ranzangaon EGS site reported receiving equal wages.

It appeared (tentatively) that male workers received much lower wages in EGS as compared to other occupations, such as artisan activity, trading, dairying and livestock etc. The wages paid to male labour for agricultural work, non agricultural manual work etc. are also a little higher than the EGS wage rate. It is therefore possible that male labour's preference for EGS work would be by way of a gap filler, i.e. when there are no other options. This would clearly explain the higher attendance of women on the work sites. The 1987 Study shows the same trend, though certain changes appear to have taken place in the relationship between the agricultural wage rate and the EGS rate for men.

Table 21 is a comparative table of wage rates for EGS and agricultural labour, from 1976-77 to 1984-85. We see the EGS wages to be continuously higher than the agricultural wage rates throughout these years for women. In case of men however the same trend is not as clearly discernible. EGS rates appears to be higher for men than farm wages except for two years 1978-79, 1983-84 (equal). Our findings from the 1978 study regarding women's access to higher wages from EGS, is re-inforced here. A look at Table 22 shows this in greater detail. In three of the four districts selected for the study, EGS rates for women continue to be higher than agricultural wages. The only exception is Ahmadnagar, where there is a difference of Rs.0.15 in favour of agricultural wages. Two of the four districts show nonagricultural work giving the best return for women, higher than EGS (the question of easy access and availability has to be gone into here). In the other two districts, nonagricultural work remains the second best option, next to EGS.

This table shows that the male - female differential in EGS wages ranges from 9% to 36% across the four districts, with the male rates being higher in all cases. In the 1978 Ranzangaon study, it was reported that men and women receive equal wages in EGS. This, however, was based on the statement of the muster roll clerk. The response to this question in the questionnaire from male respondents was very poor. Most male respondents did not answer this question. Since payment in EGS is made on piece rate basis to the gang composed of men and women, there may be a likelihood of skewed distribution of wages within the gangs, since the payment is generally paid to the gang leader. This needs to be explored in greater detail. The 198 study, however, reveals that nowhere are EGS rates etc. same for men and women. When women were asked to comment on this, they expressed their inability to corroborate whether the amounts for which they had signed was the

same as what they received. The data on wage rates given in Table 22 is based on actual reporting, and not taken from the muster rolls, though the Team could not coincide their visits to the women with pay-day.

One of the progressive and innovative features of EGS was its adherence to the principle of equal remuneration for men and women as illustrated in the mechanism of piece rate payment. Thus digging and carrying of soil carried the same weightage. Gender division of labour therefore, could not result in unequal wages in EGS. It is therefore a matter of concern that a wage differential ranging from 9% to 36% should exist between male and female wages. The differentials in Ahmednagar and Dhule are on the lower side, being 9% and 6% respectively. But Beed has 36% and Bhandara 15% differential (Beed district was not taken up during the 1978 study).

Table 23 shows however, that the range of differential in wages is lowest in EGS as compared to the other two employment systems. The differentials are the highest in agricultural labour, and next in 'Other Labour'. District Beed represents the highest differentials in all three occupations, i.e. EGS, Agriculture labour and 'other labour' - 36%, 83% and 90% respectively.

Since the crucial question of intra-gang distribution of EGS wages has been raised here, it would be educative, at this point, to look at the system and the social dynamics of gang formation. In the 1978 study, respondents were asked to indicate the basis for formation of gangs. Out of 123 women who responded, 74% indicated that belonging to the same village was the reason for joining a particular gang. In this sample, family and caste/kinship appeared to account for much lower responses - 16% and 13% respectively. A closer examination of the replies, however, would seem to indicate that belonging to the same village, would seem to partly subsume the family within its broad description. The EGS stipulates that the worksite should be opened within 5 km radius of the village.

The Pilot Study preceding the 1978 study had revealed that caste was the most important factor in gang formation. Only under forced circumstances were Marathas (high caste) found with Mahars (low caste) in the same gang.

Since the nature of the work taken up under the EGS has specific requirements of male and female workers, there is a constant pressure on the women, as we have seen, to get the requisite number of men to the worksite. We have also seen that single women, widows and other female heads of households sometimes find access to EGS work difficult for this reason. The story of the widow of Chorwaghgaon who was turned away from the worksite and who later on mustered up strength to mobilise an all women's gang

could be recalled here. To the married women, the option of calling their husbands appears to be the easiest. In a family setting, gang formation may be attempted on the basis of husband and wife pairs, as well as other male and female relatives in the same family.

The Public Works Department engineers in charge of EGS had claimed that by and large, at least 50% of the Work is available to women. This statement however, glosses over the gender division of labour implicitly accepted in the design of EGS. The concept of 'light' and 'heavy' work is followed when working out labour requirements for particular types of EGS work. If earth is to be dug deep, the higher would be the quantity of earth to be carried by the women.

For these reasons, the women seem to prefer working with male members of their own household, so that the "family" is benefitted by the wages, even if in the process she gets less than her due share. Within the family, her status as a worker is inferior to that of the men. Intra - household allocation of income and resources and the dynamics of group formation and manipulation of wage payment by the gangleader (whose perception of womens' work may follow the traditional societal view) may, therefore, both affect the amount of wages received by women workers in EGS, and subvert the progressive objectives of EGS in breaking down the inequity inherent in the gender division of labour. It is necessary to emphasise this point again and again. In the state of Karnataka where a programme similar to the EGS is being implemented, weekly wages are directly paid to the workers, without going in for formation of gangs.

Do EGS wages push up agricultural wages rates? Has the EGS attained that critical size in terms of impact, that it is able to set or influence farm wages? There is no doubt that in the period between the 2 studies, EGS has showed significant expansion. The number of employment seekers rose from 2.83 million to 4.33 million (1978-79 to 1984-85). Though the number registered is not a true index of the number of people actually working on the sites, the increases over the years does tend to indicate a trend in the direction of growth. It is also relevant to note the findings of the 1987 Study that the rate of increase in generation of mandays is in step with the rate of increase in registration. The 1987 Study found that the annual average of EGS workdays came to 111 in high participation districts. Earlier studies had quoted different figures - (ISST quoted 157 days and Acharya quoted 64 days in these district. Dandekar reported 160 days in 1978). In spite of this impressive record of growth, the 1987 Study has stated that the EGS workers constitute only 4% of main workers in rural Maharashtra. The total number of registered workers in 1984 was 4.33 million. Table 24 During 1985-86 it was reported that .73 million workers work at the EGS sites. This comes to 17% of the workers registered.

The number of workers shown as registered may not be taken as an accurate index of the needy population. We are told that the local revenue officials themselves list out the names of potential participants. It is the "Talathis" who are asked to maintain the register of EGS employment seekers. An application form - called Form No.4 is also given to those who want to demand work immediately. The Talathis' acquaintance with the wage earning families as well as with the families of small and marginal farmers makes it convenient for him to prepare lists of such persons without individually contacting them. At the same time Table 24 reveals that 1.96 million workers out of the total registered number of 4.33 million belonged to the landless category. 1.37 million workers belong to the category of marginal and small land holders. .99 million workers have been categorised as big landholders. 77% of the number of total registered workers, therefore, belong to the landless, marginal and small categories from where the maximum demand for manual labour emanates, during the lean agriculture work months. This table further shows that 2.67 million of those registered are below the poverty line, that is, 62%. In the marginal and small farmer families, especially in the dry regions of Maharashtra, there is inadequacy of farm work, and men and women from these families seek work during the season outside their own land.

The 1987 Study, has referred to unpublished data of 36th round of NSS and 1981 census data which puts the total labour force per working day in rural Maharashtra (current activity status) at 153.3 million (9.54 million men and 5.79 million women). [Table 25] They constitute 87% and 89.1% of main workers respectively. Total unemployed main workers is assessed at 2.05 million (1.37 million men and .68 million women). This, however, does not take into account marginal workers. If these workers are also added, the number of job seekers would go up. Therefore the number of registered job seekers in EGS for 1984 would not be completely off the mark, except may be, for the number of big landholders included amongst the job seekers (.99 million).

There is an inbuilt provision in the EGS that the programme will not drain away labour from agriculture (Refer page 8). This leads to closure of the sites as soon as demand for farm labour is felt. EGS sites are also never opened during the agriculture season. Table 26 shows attendance at EGS sites during the peak and lean season, based on average monthly attendance during eight years. We see that there is a perceptible difference in total attendance at these two points of time.

When the Team visited a site during the Pilot Study (1978) where nala bunding work was going on, they found 60 persons registered, but only 9 persons were in attendance (3 men & 6 women). The supervisor explained that attendance would improve after a week,

as the sowing season was on. In general, maximum labour demand occurs at the beginning and at the end of a season i.e. at sowing and harvesting time. The demand is much less for the period in between. Sowing, ploughing and digging are primarily male tasks.

The onset of monsoons coincides with the closure of the work sites. Partly, this may be on account of the spurt in agricultural work. July, August & September are the normal monsoon months. In Ahmednagar district, however, site figures during 1976-77 & 1977-78 showed that peak attendance took place in July & August. In both these years, the monsoon was delayed up to mid-August and there was very little demand for agricultural labour during these two months. EGS sites remained open for this reason and they provided the only viable alternative to large sections of the rural labour force. In 1978-79, the year of the first study, the monsoons came on time, i.e. in July. Observations by the Team were, that work on the EGS sites was most intense for 2-3 months in summer, when agricultural labour was "idle". The Team came to the conclusion that the EGS was active for a maximum period of 5-6 months during the year.

Activities taken up under EGS fell into four categories:- Irrigation, Soil conservation and Land Development, Road works and Others. Afforestation was also an activity taken up, albeit on a very minor scale. The works taken up under these heads could be either short term projects lasting for two weeks or a few months, or they could be long term projects lasting for more than a year.

The implementing agencies are not very keen to provide job opportunities of each of the four-five categories mentioned above. The 1978 study found that whilst in some areas where there was possibility of locating an irrigation work, the time - horizon for the project could be even up to 5 years, and the implementing agency took up the execution, in some other areas, road works or soil conservation, bunding work etc. were taken-up, which are of short duration (ten days to 2 or 3 months). The Team observed that people rarely obtain work under EGS more than two or three times. In Shahada (District Dhulia) the implementing agency was unable to find a location for an irrigation project (it was an irrigated block). So they decided to take up road work, which was a short duration activity.

In the 1978 Study, it was found that only 12% of the sample worked in EGS for above 8 months. The majority - 52% found work in EGS between 1-8 months. Further disaggregation of 52% shows that 24% of the sample worked for up to 3 months; 14% worked from 3-6 months; 14% worked from 6-8 months (5% of the sample did not respond) 31% did not work on EGS.

This type of short-term employment is a noticeable feature of EGS. The opening and closing of sites under EGS to coincide with

agricultural working seasons tends to throw the already marginalised and under-employed labour to the mercies of the market. They are forced to return to the market, even though the conditions of exchange of labour for wages are weighted against them, especially the women labour. It is, as the 1978 study observes, almost as if the closure of the sites ensures a ready bank of cheap labour for the farmers who can then hire them as per their needs and as per their terms. The labour does not develop any staying or bargaining power, as they are thrust into the labour market without any guarantee of satisfactory conditions of service.

It could be argued here that during times of peak agricultural demand, the labour would not report at the EGS sites. The study has observed that in places where irrigation is well developed the wage rates for farm labour increase upto 150-200% of the minimum wage. But this does not automatically mean that women labour in their entirety, is absorbed on the farm, in the high growth agricultural belts. We have seen, first of all, the differential between male and female wages for agricultural work. Secondly, the female labour demand and supply is quite different from that of male labour. Data on employment/unemployment collected at the state level for Maharashtra shows that there is a preponderance of adult women in the "idle" labour force. Women accounted for more than 2/3rds of man days of employment demanded for the whole state. During 1977-78, there was a shortfall of employment of 700-1000 million man days out which women account for 500-800 million "man" days. Women tend to remain unemployed for a greater part of the year as compared to men. But agricultural work does not create a simultaneous or concurrent demand for male and female labour. In Karnataka State the Employment Affirmation Scheme had a similar design and objective as the EGS. When the 1978 Study was going on, the Team leader paid a visit to Karnataka. At one place, the women told her that the work site had been closed for 11 days. All the twelve women were out of work. They said that the farmers had called the labour to work on their lands. But they had no use for female labour at this time, except to do occasional odd jobs, weeding etc. The women therefore, wanted the sites re-opened as they had no other source of employment and wages.

Female labour tends to be deployed for less number of activities in agriculture. When the Team visited Ranzangaon in 1978 they found ploughing being done by men. Agricultural labourers were deployed on this work (males). But women belonging to the marginal and small farmer households, owning the land, were not finding work. They were the surplus labour. Thus, even on family farms, male members were found occupied, hired labour were found working but women are jobless, during the agriculture season.

So to assume that peak agricultural seasons would mop up the labour released from the EGS sites would not be valid in the context of female labour.

The features of EGS described above namely, (a) inbuilt safeguards in the scheme against deployment of labour during agricultural working season (b) short-term duration of the majority of the works taken up (c) discontinuous nature of the engagement of the labour in these works (d) closure of the sites during monsoon and peak demand season (e) failure of the scheme to understand the pattern of female labour demand and supply (f) high wage differentials between male and female labour rates in agriculture (g) low coverage of labour by EGS as compared to total number of registered job seekers (h) lower wage rates in EGS as compared to the market, would seem to indicate that the EGS has not been able to create an impact on agricultural wages. As already hinted earlier, it appears that the exodus from the EGS sites at the beginning of the sowing season favours the farmers, who dip into this pool of cheap labour. Coming to the question of impact of EGS on female wage rates, we see that the women have demanded, again and again, year round employment on the EGS works. Stability and permanence coupled with "closeness" of work sites to their homes, appear to weigh the most with women workers. Women of this labour have a propensity to sell their labour cheap - witness the marked differentials with male wages in agriculture, as well as in EGS - but EGS pays women higher than agriculture and therefore, for them appears to be a first option.

As long as surplus pools of labour exist, the potential for mobilising and organising rural labour around gestures of equitable wages and work cannot be fully realised.

At the policy level, some revealing statements have been made by senior civil servants and leaders on the scope and objectives may have a bearing on the issue debated above. Mr. V. S. Pagey was an elected representative of the Maharashtra State Assembly in 1974, when he initiated the Employment Guarantee Scheme. Speaking to the Team which did the First Study, Mr. Pagey suggested that EGS should provide work only when there is no other pull of employment and that the wage should be lower than the market wage so that it mops up only those who cannot reach for regular employment. He wanted to ensure that the programme is available mainly and solely for the poorest, and that it should be geared to eradication of destitution and hunger. He did not favour the merging of EGS with general employment generating programmes. EGS should be kept separate, designed to take care of the employment needs of a particular group.

Mr. V. S. Tungare was earlier Executive Chief of the Employment Guarantee Programme. He said he did not want the Programme to be looked at as an employment scheme. EGS work does not fall into

the description of a "job" as defined by the International Labour Organisation. Manual work must be made available to those who are physically able. EGS must fill the void, and must "wither away" when jobs or employment become available. He thought that the small farmers come to work on EGS for capital accumulation, whereas the poor or the landless would work for survival.

The linkage of wage payment in cash with payment in kind, of a component of food grains/cereals was recommended by the Study Committee on Employment Conditions of Agricultural Labour in Maharashtra. The food grain was recommended to be issued through the fair price shops. The coupon system was introduced to facilitate this transaction. A portion of the weekly wage was not paid in cash, but a coupon was given to the worker who had to exchange it for foodgrains at the nearest ration shop. A sample of 131 respondents were asked questions about the receipt and use of coupons by EGS workers (1978 Study). 72 out of 131 women, i.e. 55% had received coupons as part of wage payment. 32 women, i.e. 24% had not. 27 women i.e. 21% women did not respond to the question. Women were also asked to indicate the distance they are required to cover, to reach the ration shop. Only 3 women indicated the distance to be 2 kilometres or less. 29 women i.e. 22% said they walked between 2 & 1/2 and 5 kilometers. 8 women, i.e. 6% said they had to travel 5 kilometres or more. A large number of women - 68% - did not respond to the question. Approximately half the women confirmed that they used the coupons to buy the grains. Slightly less than half the women, did not respond to this question. None of the women wanted the payment to be made in kind only. 17% of the women wanted the payment to be given only in cash. 55% wanted the present system to continue, and the remaining women did not respond.

The failure to receive coupons was clearly tied up with inefficiency at particular work sites. 2 out of 7 work sites studied, had issued almost no coupons.

The system of payment through cash and coupon on weekly basis presupposes that the EGS workers have enough "staying power" to get through the week by utilising their cash reserves. However, it is often observed that the very poor have very inadequate liquidity. They resort to buying very small quantities of essential items at a time - often, daily requirements. They do not look for cheap credit or bargain stores - they borrow at higher rates of interest, and buy at far from reasonable rates. The public distribution system, through its net work of fair price shops, provides a good support service or a facility to assetless households. But there are certain inbuilt features of the system which prevents open access of the poorest to the ration shops. Possession of a ration card is the most basic requisite. Migrant workers are put in an specially vulnerable position, as they are not eligible to get a card issued in their name. The method of

packing and the minimum quantities used for sale do not suit the EGS workers' pocket. Lack of storage facilities at home, such as bins, containers etc. is another pointer to the gap between the system and the client for whom the system is meant.

EGS does not provide any advance system, either in cash or through coupons. Yet we find that in many plantation (tea, coffee, rubber etc.) the system of advance payment is a genuine facility to poor households. In a very recent development in one of the privately run tea estates in South India, the management, out of a genuine desire to help the plantation workers, opened a fair price shop in a conveniently located place and simultaneously withdrew the existing facility of advance payment of weekly wages, this facility having existed since the plantation was started several decades ago. The plantation workers, most of whom were women, agitated against this move on the ground that the fair price shop forced them to buy items they did not need, and did not always stock the items they needed. Plantation workers are part of the organised sector of employment and are covered by various labour legislations. They are by no means as vulnerable to economic pressures as construction workers are. The sugar cane worker's story, which comes on later, also clearly shows that advance payment of wages is always considered to be an incentive by the workers.

The distance between the EGS worker's home and the fair price shop is not the only crucial contingency. Availability of food grains is the other. The situation is described well by the Mr. Pagey when he was interviewed by the Team in 1978. "Mr. Pagey mentioned that he had interviewed a woman at the site. He asked her if she went to the ration shop. She said no. She said, 'When I get wages the ration shop does not have the ration. When he gets the ration I have no wage with which to buy it. Hence I go to the moneylender. The moneylender gives me maize for Rs.10'. When the muster roll clerk is ready to pay her wages, she makes him pay the moneylender Rs.12/-. In other words, Rs.10/- in 15 days becomes Rs.12/- in terms of debt for this worker. Shri Pagey calculated that for one year this would be Rs.48/- and would yield an interest rate of 408% per annum. He showed how the poor were paying the highest interest rates in the country and how vital it was to develop programmes and supporting facilities which made them less vulnerable."

In the Pilot Study of 1978 the Team had visited 2 "feeder" villages of an EGS work i.e. villages which constituted the catchment area for labour to be deployed on the site. Both the villages, Vivagaon and Chord - Wagalgaon, did not have a ration shop. The workers travelled 20 Kilometres to buy essential items. Sometimes, a ration shop catered to workers from 3-4 EGS worksites, with lone queues thrown in.

The 1987 Study had collected district wise figures of users & non-users of coupons, as well as the perceptions of the respondents on the availability of foodgrains. 73% of the respondents were receiving the coupons, 9% were not, and 18% failed to respond. 50% of the women participants thought the supply of food grains was regular, whereas 24% thought they were not. 61% of the women were satisfied with the availability of foodgrains on coupons in nearby villages. 12% were not satisfied. Almost a quarter of the respondents did not respond to both the questions. The system of payment through coupons seems to have become comparatively more streamlined than it was in 1978. It is also seen that majority of the women who were contacted during the Second Study, depended on the shop keeper and the weekly bazaar for their daily necessities. Frequency of procurement was once a week in the case of 71% of the women and daily in the case of 11%. The weekly off-day from EGS work coincides with weekly bazaar in the village. Whether, and to what extent, the women are able to manage their food and nutrition requirements within their wages is a question that deserves to be explored in greater detail.

Though the 1978 study attempted to go in detail into the question of indebtedness on the part of the women workers, the results were less than satisfactory in terms of clarity. It appears that better communication and rapport with the workers is needed if reliable information is to emerge. 29% did not respond to the question on indebtedness and 44% said that they did not have any debt. Money lenders, shop keepers & landlords are the most obvious sources of credit. Yet only 5 out of 124 respondents admitted to having borrowed from these sources.

The 1978 Pilot Study, however, found all landed workers in debt and landless labourers comparatively free from debt. Most of the small farmers had taken loans for cultivation as well as for social ceremonies. Sources of credit were credit societies, rich peasant employers, moneylenders or shopkeepers. The Pilot Study also found that very few of the workers were aware of the interest rates. They did not remember exact amounts of debts. It was also learnt that in a few cases family members were offered as bonded labour for the repayment of debts.

The extent of addiction to liquor on the part of the men folk and the effect this habit has on the overall welfare and well being of the household in terms of deprivation of food and nutrition has also not been given into in detail in either of the two Study Reports. However, comments have been made about the men staying away from the sites and remaining drunk and how the EGS wages obtained by the men are dissipated in drink, more often than not.

Chapter VI
" WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE "
TIME ALLOCATION FOR EGS & DOMESTIC WORK

On being questioned about their reasons for joining EGS, the majority of workers indicated that no other job was available near the village, or even if it was, it was insufficient for their needs. To this extent, the EGS has succeeded in reaching out to the larger group it was planned to serve. More than half the respondents who gave these two reasons (62 out of 114) were landless women. Another 40 women who gave the same reasons, had landholding less than 5 acres. Other reasons were (a) equal wages for men and women (b) higher wages than elsewhere (c) convenient working hours (d) children allowed at site, and (e) time bound work. It is interesting to note that not a single woman gave "creches provided" as a reason for joining the programme, though one woman had indicated that she had joined the programme because children were allowed at the site. Similarly, no woman had indicated "leave with pay/maternity leave" as a reason for joining EGS. Out of the 10 women who had indicated "Higher wages than elsewhere" as the reason, 8 were landless women. Out of 8 women who indicated "Equal wage for men and women" as the reason for joining EGS, 4 were landless and other four were marginal landholders. Apart from the economic reason, landless women had also indicated the nature of the work (i.e. being time bound) and convenient working hours as other reasons (7 landless and 2 marginal landholders). The driving motivation of the majority of the women, therefore, especially of the landless, was the economic one.

In the 1987 study, reasons advanced by the respondents were almost similar. 50% of the female participants in the sample gave the reason that no other job was available nearby. 15% gave fixed working hours, 12% equal wages, 12% higher wages than elsewhere and 5% quoted the reason as children at site. 45% of the women participants were prepared to stay on the worksite, if there was no other alternative. 78% of the total respondents (non participants) from Dhule district replied that they would be willing to work on EGS sites. 84% of the women in the sample (21 of 28) indicated their willingness. Only 12% of the sample did not express their willingness. Compared to the other two districts, Dhule has a much higher per centage of families below the poverty line. The demand for EGS work, naturally, is much higher here. In Bhandara District, which is an irrigated district, and does not suffer from drought, only 20% of the women indicated their willingness to work on EGS, whereas 76% of them did not (non participant sample).

It is significant to find that women, who have child bearing and child rearing responsibilities besides the burden of household management are prepared to leave home to stay on the site if need

be. Further implications of women commuting longer distances for longer periods on their time - use will arise, in the absence of adequate and effective support services, such as child care, food, transport etc. It appears from the answers given to these questions that the women from the assetless and poorest groups weigh every alternative option for employment in predominantly, if not purely, economic terms. The migrant workers who work on sugar cane farms, have had to pay very heavy costs in terms of child security and care, as we shall see later. Nevertheless, the migrant workers do not hesitate to bring their children to the sugar cane farms and keep them the whole day on the labour camp site, if the better option of leaving the children behind, with parents or relatives is not available. Supportive services such as child care etc. are not therefore a high priority nor a "felt need" with women in these economically vulnerable categories.

The present use of time of the EGS women workers in "gainful" work and in domestic work can be examined as a relevant dimension to the above debate. In "gainful work" not only EGS, but all types of paid work has been included. We see from Tables 27 & 28 that 84% of the respondents undertake gainful activity for 6-8 hours a day. Domestic work seems to take upto 4 hours of 62% of the respondents. 32% women spend between 4-8 hours on domestic work. 12 women in the age group 50 to 59 and 37 women in the age group 40-49 work for periods ranging from 2-3 hours to 6-8 hours. The younger age group 15-19 year olds - also consume their time on domestic work - 22 respondents reported spending from 2-3 hours to 6-8 hours. The two age groups in between 20-29 and 30-39, are the child bearing and child rearing groups, and as is evident, their work burden is also very heavy. Only 4 women, 3 of them below 19, spend less than 2 hours on domestic work.

An attempt was made in the 1979 Study, to establish a correlation between family size and time spent in gainful activity. The majority of the women in the sample had families made up of 3-6 members (109 women out of 157) and therefore it was not possible to establish any scientific correlation. However, the largest number of women with family size ranging from 3-6 spend 6-8 hours in gainful activity. On the other hand, women with smaller family sizes also tend to allocate almost the same time i.e. 6-8 hours in gainful activity. In fact, only a very small number of women evenly distributed across family sizes (6 women out of 157) spend less than 4-5 hours on gainful work.

The possibility of a correlation between time spent in domestic work and family size was also examined. Interestingly, with the same distribution of family sizes in the sample as described in the previous paragraph, the majority of women in all family size groups were seen to spend between 2-4 hours on domestic work. Very few women (12 women) spent above 6 hours on domestic work.

In the 1987 Study, time spent separately on domestic work by women and men of the same household, has been calculated. Domestic work here includes gathering of water, fodder, fuel and rearing of livestock, but does not include cooking, cleaning and child care, which are almost completely female tasks. Table 29 shows that 66% of the work burden falls on the women and 34% on the men. Individually, water and fuel collection were the tasks carried out almost completely by women.

Table 30 amplifies this work pattern further by calculating the total number of person days spent in a year on these tasks by the women respondents. 191 person days are spent by the women on these four activities.

The Ranzangaon site report shows that all women working either exclusively in EGS or combining EGS work with other occupations, report a 6-8 hour working day. These women spend between 1-6 hours on domestic work, the majority of them spending between 2-4 hours. Women with EGS as the sole occupation as well as women with more than one occupation seem to allocate the same amount of time to domestic work. Just as family size was not seen as an important variable in allocation of time - use between gainful activity and domestic work by women, single occupation and multi occupation did not show any differential impact on time allocation for productive (paid) and domestic (unpaid) work. Women, very clearly, managed their domestic and other unpaid work with optimum efficiency, so that their time allocation for paid work i.e. 6-8 hours per day is not affected. At the same time it appears necessary to further investigate the situation in the family whereby the extra burden might be being passed on to young female children by the mothers, with adverse repercussions on their education and health. Given the low levels of literacy of the women construction workers and the resulting low motivation to send the children to school, especially the girl children, it appears necessary to look more closely into any possible trade-offs between what the women consider as efficient time allocation in terms of economic return and child development. The case for providing supportive services, including measures for removal of household drudgery is more than ever justified. Older women seem to bear a disproportionate share of the domestic burden. At the same time they also predominantly seek gainful activity outside the home.

Perceptions of the women workers about the nature of work and the conditions of service were obtained in both the Studies. The women were also specifically asked to describe any changes in food intake, health and clothing on account of EGS income. Attitudes of the lower level field functionaries towards the women, as well as the attitudes of the engineer, contractor, supervisor etc. were also asked to be commented on by the women. The women of all categories (landed as well as landless) found the measurement of

work and payment of wages unsatisfactory. Regarding impact of EGS income, the women stated that there was no positive improvement as far as health and clothing are concerned. However, there was definite improvement in levels of food intake. In the Second Study, majority of the women felt that EGS involved hard work and low wage rates, and, more important, that continuous work was not available.

Chapter VII

REVISITS & INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

One of the five villages visited in the First Study, and revisited during the Second Study was Ranzangaon. Ranzangaon was not only visited by the Team in 1978, but a detailed site report was also prepared. The EGS work taken up here was a percolation tank - one of four tanks planned to be constructed about 3 years ago, out of which 2 tanks have already been completed. It was a predominantly high caste (Maratha) village, with a large number of Harijans and Muslims owning land. The major occupation of the people was agriculture and wage labour. The prosperous families send their children to the district headquarters for higher education. The village had a high school. Land holdings are small, medium and major, the latter two being owned by the Marathas. Irrigation is by wells. A cooperative milk dairy was set up in the village. The number of livestock in the village was quite high. The number of workers found on muster-rolls during 1978 was 234 out of whom 182 were women. 55% were marginal and small farmers. There were 9 gangs at the site. Tasks, such as digging and carrying the earth, were being done by men as well as women, though the former was traditionally held to be a 'male' task and the latter, a 'female' task. The higher number of women in the gangs may have caused the change in sharing of tasks. Weeding of grass on the bund, was however, being done by women only. Similarly, the work of supervision of the work was being done by gang leaders, who were all men. Young girls were used for bringing drinking water to the site from 1-2 kilometres away. Men were also working on this task. The village had been afflicted by a very severe drought in 1972. EGS works were therefore taken up as a priority programme. Irrigated land was less than 5%.

By 1986, 3 percolation tanks had been completed, whereas in 1978, one more tank had been planned. Recurring drought had aggravated the situation and eroded the agriculture potential of the land. EGS has therefore become more or less a permanent feature of the village. After the 3 percolation tanks had been taken up and completed, nala-bunding works, road construction etc. had been taken up under EGS. Over the intervening 8 year period, overall mandays of employment available per wage earner have increased. But the absolute number of mandays provided by EGS has declined.

Except for 2 villagers who confirmed that agricultural productivity had increased on account of the percolation tanks having been completed, there was no clear evidence as to whether the completed EGS assets had led to increase in crop production and hence pushed up labour demand. On the contrary, it appeared that EGS was being taken up as the panacea for unemployment caused by drought. No long term development perspective was seen. The women of the village appeared ignorant of the working of the EGS, its implications for women, its benefits, objectives etc. though the scheme was in operation in the village since 1978.

Lakhori village in 1978, had a large number of bidi workers. The women seem to have preferred bidi rolling to EGS work, as it provided steady employment. Lakhori village had landholdings of various sizes, with a preponderance of small holdings. There were 263 landless households and an almost equal number with holdings of less than five acres. The percolation tank had been completed a few days before the visit. The village was dominated by Mahars (Harijans) who were landless and depended on bidi rolling. The work on the percolation tank had been going on for 3-4 years. Yet the women who worked for short periods on the site - one to four months - invariably left the work and came back to bidi rolling. EGS wages was only half the amount of wages given by the bidi contractor. Women felt that EGS work was more physically taxing. One reason for low EGS wages could have been the fact that the EGS work was not being executed by the department or the implementing agency, but by a private contractor.

In the bidi industry, women receive wages daily and there are no delays in payment. An average of 8-9 hours are spent on bidi rolling by the women, often with the help of the young daughters. Occupational health hazards were involved, on account of postural defects.

In 1986, the Team found that the overall employment in the bidi industry had gone down in the area as it had shifted its operations to the adjoining state of Madhya Pradesh. This has led to an increase in EGS employment. The share of employment of bidi had gone down from 77.6% to 45% in terms of total mandays available in the sample. The share of EGS has, correspondingly, increased from 0 in 1978 to 20% in 1986. 613 persons had registered themselves as job seekers with the EGS, out of whom 316 (51.5%) were women. Works taken up under EGS included repair of common village tank, road works, minor irrigation works etc.

"Shri Tungare added that EGS works could be misused by exploitative elements and gave an illustration from the

district of Bhandara where bidi manufacture is a predominant activity for women. The bidi contractor had closed down this

operation in retaliation for a demand for higher wages by the workers. The pressure on the contractor from the public was mounting as the distress of the women workers increased. When asked to join the EGS, the women refused saying they demand the right to work on bidi, to be given leaves to roll. However, the collector opened the site and thereby the women lost their strength. The contractors found this a simple way out of the confrontation".

(From an interview with Mr. Tungare, formerly Executive Chief of the Employment Guarantee Programme by the Study Team in 1978).

Katharde village in District Dhulia. Block Shahada had taken up the construction of a 5 km road, connecting Katharde to another village Parivardha in 1978. At the time of the team's visit in 1978 there were 402 workers on the muster roll, of which 227 were women. There were 389 workers present on site, of whom 169 were women. The road being constructed was not expected to have a time horizon of more than 6 months. Villagers would engage themselves in work on the road as long as the distance between their homes and the site did not increase. This meant not more than 3-4 months for the residents of a particular village. Not more than three adjoining villages were covered in the labour catchment area of the work. This was a predominantly Adivasi area. 75% of the workers on the muster roll were tribals. 13% belonged to the Scheduled Castes. The tribals possessed small fragmented holdings. The major portion of the land was held by big landholders. 60% of the families were landless. Literacy level was 30%.

Over the last half a century a process of land alienation has been going on whereby the small holdings of the Adivasis were usurped by enterprising migrants from other districts belonging to the Rajput and other higher castes. The intruders belonged to the trading and the mercantile class. They reduced the one time tribals to "attached" labourers and themselves became rich landlords. The system of "saaldar" or "attached labour" is akin to bonded labour. The tribals are not given minimum wages. They are bound to the landlords for working on their lands.

The area has seen many social reform movements since the 1940's. Most of them were spearheaded by reformers who came to Shahada from outside and organised the tribals. There was a movement against liquor consumption in 1942. Baba Amte and his followers worked intensively with the tribals. Some local tribal leaders were also involved from the inside by these reformers.

In the 1970's, a small militant group calling itself "Shramik Sangathan", was formed which aimed at mobilising the agricultural

labourers so that they could improve their bargaining power vis-a-vis the landlords. They encouraged direct confrontations between the labourers and the landlords. Workers who were identified with the organisation were dismissed by the landlords and dealt with harshly. The dismissal effectively barred them from getting any agricultural work in the area. Strikes of farm workers were also organised by the Sangathan.

With the introduction of the EGS programme, the Sangathan activated the district administration to set up a work site for providing work to labourers dismissed by the landlords. Adivasi women, who were comparatively free from the hierarchical domination of upper caste males in traditional Hindu families had enthusiastically joined the Sangathan. They formed a smaller organisation of women and attempted to fight liquor consumption and its evil effects at the family level by taking cudgels on behalf of the women against the husband or the male relative.

The Katharde - Parivardhe Road was taken up as an EGS work in response to popular demand, with the active support of the Sangathan. The team learnt about an incident where a Sangathan worker was assaulted by a landlord and how he was given shelter by the Adivasis of the village, who saved his life. This was said to have been the origin of the proposal to have an EGS work site in the village.

By 1986, when the village was revisited by the Team, the activities of the Sangathan had almost ceased. The village Talathi revealed to them that very few EGS works had been undertaken near the village. The morale and self confidence of the tribals were at a low ebb. During the 8 year period, the surveyed households had received less than 190 days on an average per worker. The Team learnt that an EGS work site was started recently, but it was situated 8 Kms away from the village. Only 3 families in the village appeared to have benefitted from this new work. For the last several days, however, there was a problem of workers being given invalid coupons on which no food grains could be issued. So the villagers had stopped going to the work site.

It appeared, that with the Sangathan receding into the back ground, the impetus to have EGS works in the village, was also missing. Shahada was an irrigated block, and three crops were taken in a year. But surprisingly the levels of farm employment appeared to be shockingly low. The agricultural wage rates were even lower than in the other unirrigated areas.

Some of the anti-poverty programmes such as IRDP, NREP, etc. have been introduced in the village. Some of the earlier EGS women workers had now received financial assistance from IRDP to buy milch cattle. Another previous EGS woman worker had been selected as a child care programme worker under a nationally administered

scheme at the local centre. These were however, the few exceptions. By and large, most of the landless farmers did not find any gainful employment either in agriculture or elsewhere. The villagers wanted a village nursery to be started for providing saplings to social forestry plantation work. The Panchayat was willing to donate a piece of land to the Forest Department for this purpose. Follow-up action on this suggestion, by the local administration was, however, not forthcoming easily. The villagers felt very frustrated.

INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

From Sandhya Nair's visits to EGS sites in 1978 & 1986

1. "Beneficiary of EGS Works
Shakuntala Maroti Ramteke
Lakhori, Sakoli, Bhandara
17th December, 1978

I entered the house of a dalit caste family in Lakhori. A young woman, age around 30 to 32 was pounding tobacco in the veranda. In one corner, an old man was lying on the bed, very weak and coughing all the time. I could see that he had lost his eyesight.

I introduced myself to Shakuntala and explained the purpose of my visit. Immediately the old man got up from his bed offering me a seat. I felt a little embarrassed.

Shakuntala's husband had died six months ago. He was a 'Kotwal' of the village. He had been seriously ill for 3 years. The family had to sell off their small piece of land to meet the medical expenses. Shakuntala had 3 children, two sons and one daughter. All of them used to go to school. The old man was her father-in-law. Her mother-in-law was cooking inside the house. She also came out and joined the conversation.

Shakuntala said, bidi rolling was not an easy job. They had to carry out various preparatory tasks before they actually started rolling bidis. The tobacco leaves were first pounded into a powder. Tendu leaves were moistened and carefully cut into the perfect size and shape. After this tiresome work of whole day, she managed to earn Rs.2 or Rs.2.50 per day, depending on the number of bidis she rolled. After years of work of bidi rolling, Shakuntala's fingers were permanently stained. Because of the awkward position required for this work she had developed a back-pain. But she had no alternative. There was no other suitable employment available in the neighbourhood.

Shakuntala's mother-in-law was a midwife. Through this profession she provided some supplement to the family income. But the family was in a disastrous economic condition. The gloom and the depression on Shakuntala's face was very disturbing.

I asked Shakuntala, whether she would prefer to join EGS work? "Why not?" she said.

But there was no ongoing EGS work.

15th May 1986

It was late in the afternoon. I recognized Shakuntala, as I entered the house. She was rolling bidis. Her sons and daughter were grown up. They were assisting her. In the same old, corner of the house, an almost invisible figure of her father-in-law was lying in the bed.

I said, "Shakuntala, did you recognize me?"

She smiled and welcomed me. After I settled down, I asked her, "What have you been doing these 8 years?" "What else? Rolling bidis". She replied. "We don't get this work, though, throughout the year, as in earlier days. It has become very undependable", she said.

Our conversation continued. Though the Bidi work had become uncertain, for the last 3 or 4 years, some EGS works had been started near the village. Whenever EGS work was available Shakuntala entrusted the bidi rolling to her children and attended EGS work. Her mother-in-law had also become very weak due to old age. Shakuntala had learnt midwifery as well from mother-in-law and taken over her profession.

"Our condition is getting better" she said. I could sense the self confidence in her voice.

Economic Profile of Shakuntala's Family

	1978	1986
1. Family Size	6	6
2. Total earners	2	4
3. Family Income	Rs. 800	Rs. 4,560
4. Types of Employment opportunities available	i) Bidi ii) Midwife	i) Bidi ii) EGS iii) Midwife
5. Total No. of Mandays of employment of the Family	230	530

	1978	1986
6. Mandays of Employment through EGS	Nil	120
7. Mandays of employment received by Shakuntalabai	200	220

Beneficiary of EGS Assets

Parubai Bansi Sarode
Ranjangaon, Parner, Ahmednagar.
1st July 1978.

I saw her first at Ranjangaon percolation tank. She was carrying earth on her head. Time was short and I had to complete many interviews. But Parubai was one among those who had a small piece of land of their own. She was the right person, who would represent the mood of small or marginal landholders.

Parubai's family owned five acres of land. Out of these five acres, three acres were irrigated with the help of water from a well in their own farm. If it rained abundantly, the family managed to take one crop a year. But in 1978 when I visited Ranjangaon, her well had dried up. There was no work on the farm.

Parubai had two sons and one daughter. All three of them used to go to school. Her husband and herself were the two earning members in the family.

I asked Parubai, "what does your husband do?"

"He looks after the farm" she replied.

"But is there any work on the farm?"

"No!" She said.

"Then why can't he join you on EGS?" I asked her.

"Oh!" she said, How can he do this sort of work?"

I was confused.

"If you can join EGS, why can't he?" I asked.

She looked at me in disbelief. How could an educated woman like me ask that stupid question! How could she expect her man to rub shoulders with other landless labourers on EGS work?

13th April 1986

There was no ongoing EGS work near Ranjangaon in 1986. I happened to meet Parubai in the office of a co-operative society, in the village. She looked comfortable and contented.

I asked her what she had done during last eight years, there was a smile on her face. Her children had grown up. Her daughter was

married off. Because of percolation tank built under EGS, the well in her family's farm retained water for longer period. Parubai was therefore assured of growing at least one crop in a year. And if the well retained water for longer duration she could take even a second crop. Rest of the time she either worked on others farms or whenever EGS work was available near the village, she joined the work. And now Parubai was not alone. She had a daughter in law in the family. She accompanied Parubai in search of work. Parubai had found an heir for herself.

Parubai was the first person who told me of having been benefitted by EGS assets. I became curious to know the impact of EGS assets on the rest of the village. When I asked Parubai, she shrugged her shoulders. She was contented taking care of her own family. I could read on her face that such affairs and topics were the territory of men in the family. Parubai's brother-in-law was also around during our discussion. He joined in. He informed that the percolation tank near Parubai's farm covered 40 wells in its command area. And nearly 200 acres of land were irrigated by this water. The Zilla Parishad looked after the maintenance of the percolation tank.

I left the village with mixed feelings.

Economic Profile of Parubai's Family

	1978	1986
1. Family Size	5	6
2. Total earners	2	5
3. Family Income	Rs.3,500/-	Rs.6,640/-
4. Types of Employment opportunities available	i) Own farm ii) Agricultural Labour iii) EGS	i) Own farm ii) Agricultural Labour iii) EGS
5. Total Mandays of employment of the family	351	1020
	1978	1986
6. Mandays of Employment available through EGS	150	300
7. Mandays of Employment received by Parubai	150	210

Unsupported by EGS Work

Seeta Bhra. Jalya,
Pari Vardhe, Shahada, Dhulia
18th November 1978

It was a pleasant evening at the end of a very exhausting day. Prakash and I were waiting for the villagers at Jamsingbhau's house. We had called a meeting of the 'Adivasis' associated with 'Shramik Sanghatana' and those working on ongoing EGS works near the village. One by one the adivasis were trickling in. I was busy in conversation with some of them.

Suddenly I was startled by the bold and commanding voice of a woman.

"We have a right to work, we must get it. We are not cowards. We are not scared of the police."

An aged woman was shouting slogans as she entered the house.

For a moment I felt panicky. "Am I the police officer she is referring to?" And suddenly I felt amused at myself - consciousness and subconscious guilt complex. It was a very heartening sight to see that there was at least one person and that too a woman who had the courage to come forward and give expression to the suppressed feeling of slavery.

"This is Seetabai from Parivardhe", Jamsingbhau whispered in my ears. Seetabai, age around 50 years. There were 7 members in her family - Jalya, her husband, a son and a daughter, daughter-in-law and two grand children. Seetabai, her husband, son, daughter and daughter-in-law were wage earners in the family. Wage work was the only means of livelihood. The only substitute for wages on lean days was the loans received from a money lender. Seetabai's husband Jalya was a 'Saldar'. Only in the recent past, the saldars in Shahada taluka had gone on strike, demanding a raise in pay known as 'Saldarki'. Many saldars who participated in the strike had to lose their job. Jalya was one amongst them. The assured source of income to the family was lost.

Shramik Sanghtana had forwarded an application of employment seekers to the Tahsildar, demanding work under EGS for the landless adivasis. Accordingly, the road work was started under EGS on the outskirts of the village two months ago. Seetabai and her family members joined this work. However, the number of employment seekers became so large that the work which was expected to last for 6 months, was nearly completed within 3 months time (in nearly half of the time estimated earlier). Seetabai was concerned about the impending future. Her family members were not likely to be absorbed in local agricultural work,

owing to their association with Shramik Sanghatana. Neither were they willing to go back to the same ruthless rich farmers to beg for the saldarki at humiliating and dehumanising wage rates. EGS was the only slender hope. Would EGS guarantee the survival of Seetabai and her family? I had no answer.

25th July, 1986

It was late in the morning I was visiting Parivardhe for the second time. I was not very sure in my mind that I would be able to meet my earlier respondent households. The wisest thing to do was to first get in touch with Jamsingbhau. When I reached his house, there was no one there.

I enquired about Jamsingbhau's whereabouts at the next door, and found that he would not return the same day or possibly even for another two or three days. Jamsingbhau and his family had gone out, some ten to fifteen kms. away from the village, in search of temporary work. I enquired about the households that I visited earlier in 1978. Jamsingbhau's neighbour was very helpful. He got hold of a small boy and called all the women folk who unfortunately for them were at home due to lack of work.

I could not recognize her. Mansingh, the man whom I was talking to, said "here comes Seetabai". I looked in the direction he was pointing out, and I could not believe my eyes as I saw an old woman coming with a defeated, pathetic expression on her face and walking without a word.

"Is this Seetabai whom I met last time?" I said to myself. Some where deep down I had a feeling of distinct discomfort and I could not find words. But then I had to compose myself. I started talking to her about her family, just to verify whether she was really the same person, the militant Seetabai of 1978.

Seetabai said that she had become old. In fact she looked worn-out and older than her age. She earned some wages during the agricultural season, but most of the time she was wageless and looked after the grand children at the home. Her husband was also weak and tired, unable to do any labourious work, though at the time he was employed as a guard on sugarcane farms. Seetabai's son was not well. In fact he could not do any work because of poor health. Her daughter was married off, but the daughter's son was living with Seetabai. Seetabai's daughter-in-law worked on the farm and as a house servant with one of the rich farmers in the village. Therefore, there were only two permanent earning members in her family of nine members now.

As the Shramik Sanghtana had been dissolved, there was nothing to look up to, she said. They could not seek work under EGS as no one listened to them. Seetabai said, the last time they earned

two meals due to EGS, was in 1978. As a agricultural labour, she received less wages than a man. Seetabai's family and many others in the village were registered as families living below the poverty line, though none of them received any aid under IRDP. All of them had also registered as employment seekers under EGS, but in vain.

Parivardhe is comparatively a rich village. Sugarcane is the principal cash crop. 16.4 per cent of the land is irrigated and it was reported that all farmers having irrigated land grow 3 crops in a year. On this background the plight of Seetabai and many other like her was pathetic and infuriating, at the same time.

Seetabai said, "Tai, please do something for us to get work".

All these women were looking at me with some hope.

What could I say?

Economic Profile of Seetabai's Family

	1978	1986
1. Family Size	7	9
2. Total Earners	5	3
3. Family Income	Rs.3,360	Rs.2,420
4. Types of employment	i) Agricultural Labour	i) Agricultural Labour
5. Total Mandays of employment received by the family	875	720
6. Mandays of employment received by the family on EGS.	375	NIL "

Chapter VIII

MIGRANT WOMEN — THE DOUBLE BIND SUGAR CANE WORKERS

Two of the 8 work sites studied in the 1978 Report were those of sugarcane workers. These were located in Rahuri Block of Ahmednagar District. The district as a whole is identified as a drought prone area, but Rahuri Block represents a subregion which is irrigated and has extensive sugar plantations. 38% of the gross cropped area of the block is irrigated. Hired migrant labour participate in sugar cane cultivation, half of which is made up of women. The labour migrates from adjoining blocks and districts. Beed district, which has been taken up for study in

the 1987 Report, sends migrant labour to work on sugarcane farms in Rahuri Block. Labour also comes from Aurangabad district. They are mostly skilled labour, as harvesting demands skilled work.

Rahuri sugar cane farmers are medium to big size landlords. Since the cane is to be fed into the factories - Rahuri town has its own sugar factory - the work of cutting, tying and transporting the cane is done by the factory management and not by the sugar cane farmers. They appoint their own contractors for the purpose, who bring the hired labour, generally in pairs, from outside. The labour demand is for the entire harvest period which starts in October - November and goes on for about 3-4 months. The contractors generally advance money to the labour, sometimes as loan, for mobilising them to come to the sugar cane farms. The labour moves from one farm to another, as soon as the work of harvesting the cane is over. They may be kept on the move, in this fashion, for four - six months. However, they may not be fully employed throughout this period, as work may be stopped on account of rains or any other reason. During the working season, the labour stays on campsites provided by the contractors.

Each contractor has 20-40 labourers. Their contract with the factory owners lay down the terms and conditions of the agreement about work. These contracts are generally renewed every year.

There is a clear gender division of labour in sugar cane harvesting work. Men cut the cane and women tie them into bundles and load it on to the bullock carts. The contractors carry the draught animals with them and get hiring charges for the bullock for transporting the sugar cane.

The rate in 1978 was Rs.9.45/- per ton of harvested cane, per pair of workers. Payment is made by the contractors who also give them a fixed quota of foodgrains.

The camp sites, where the migrant labour stay, do not have many facilities. The factory owners do not provide drinking water, shed or medical aid. An officer of the factory is charged with the responsibility of looking after the permanent workers but he does not carry out these duties. The contractor, who is an outsider, receives a commission of 9%. There are no labour laws protecting the terms and conditions of these workers. One of the women told the Team that she had received Rs.75/- as payment for an entire fortnight. Some of the women said that they had received Rs.500/- as advance from the contractor, which is later deducted from their wages.

There are no fixed working hours. Sometimes they have to work at loading the lorries late in the evening. Generally, they work till 5.30 p.m. Children are left behind in the camp sites. Men

leave the camps early in the morning, as they have to cut the cane. Women follow a little later. Cutting of sugar cane can be a hazardous job. Large leaves with sharp edges can cut and injure the workers.

Mostly, the worker - pairs belong to the same family (husband - wife or other relationship). Wages are to be shared equally, as there is no differential wage based on gender. However, the women told the Team that men get higher wages, though they knew that according to law this is not correct. Some of them compared it unfavourably with the EGS system, which they felt was more fair, as it ensured equal wages for men and women.

23 women from this group were interviewed. The majority of them (64%) are in the age group 20-29. less than 1/5th (18%) are in the age group 30-39. These migrant workers belong predominantly to a younger age group than the EGS workers, where we have seen that the women of the child bearing years do not participate in large numbers. Almost all the women are married, and their husbands were also with them on the camp site. The number of widows, unmarried women and other female headed households were very few. 68% of the women belonged to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. 56% of the women owned land, majority of them owning between 2 and 7 1/2 acres of land. 14% of the land is irrigated. 85% of the women had families comprising of 2-6 members. Half the families had 75% of the members engaged in gainful activities. It was common for such workers to regroup as a nucleus or unit of an immediate family, consisting of say, a husband, wife and children and leave the larger or extended family back at home temporarily, during their migratory work period.

The presence of young children with the parents has serious implications for child development. The parents are forced to leave the children at the camp site, as it is not possible to take them on to the farm in all cases. The distance between the two was 3 - 8 kms.

The women worked for 6 months on sugar cane harvesting outside their homes and another 3-4 months in agriculture in their own villages. A few women worked for 5-6 months in agriculture. Much of this work was in the form of unpaid labour on family farms. They generally worked for a total of 12-13 hours a day out of which 25-30% was taken up by domestic work.

The average daily earnings of the women workers from sugar cane harvesting ranged from Rs.1.50 to above Rs.5.00. 50% of the women received an average daily wage of Rs.2.00. In case of 35% of the women the average daily wage was Rs.3.00. Only 10% women received Rs.1.50 and 5% women received above Rs.5.00. Payment was made once a week and was based on the piece-rate system. Wages are calculated on the basis of tonnage of sugar cane harvested or

handled. Sometimes the weekly wage was paid partly in cash and partly in kind, on the weekly bazaar day. In other cases, the wages were paid in cash to the working pair. Since payment is not made individually, the rate of wage earnings of women indicated above are imputed earnings, taking 50% of the total wage as the share of the women. Higher rates of earnings indicated in 5% cases indicate the use of labour- owned bullock carts, for which payment is much higher- Rs.25-30 per day.

Though the respondents had indicated that they were engaged in farm work in their home villages, they did not clearly indicate their earnings from this work. One reason for this could be that in the case of half the number of women, the work was on their own farms, ie. unpaid. Some of the women with considerably large holdings, say 30 acres or above 10 acres, said that the time put in by them on farm work was quite high - 4-6 months. The women on the whole, did not attach much importance or weightage to their agricultural work. Only one woman indicated that whenever farm work was available, she was paid Rs.2/ per day. The family income of the respondents, in 43.5% of the cases, was in the range of Rs.1,500/- - 2000/- per annum. 13% of the women were in the range of Rs.1000 to Rs.1500 and another 13% women were earning between Rs.2,000/- 2,500/- per annum. The family income included not only the respondents earnings but also that of all her family members carrying on gainful activities.

In Rahuri block, no EGS site had been started, even though drought prone areas existed in the block, not very far from the sugar - cane growing areas. Sugar-cane factories prefer to import skilled labour for harvesting. But planting and sowing work is not done by the migrant labour. The reasons for not starting EGS work sites in this block have been interpreted as pressure from the big land-lords who are afraid that the supply of labour may be squeezed in that situation. This however does not give a clear picture, as it is also stated that local labour is not wanted by the factories because of higher wages. This seems to indicate that local labour is more costly to the sugar cane cultivators than the labour they import from the other districts. At the same time, if EGS works are started in Rahuri Block, the catchment area for the labour supply would be within 5 km radius of the work site. There is little possibility of the migrant labour being included in the catchment area. It would be useful to investigate, more deeply, whether any EGS works have been started in Aurangabad and other districts from where the women (and men) have migrated to Rahuri & whether this had made any difference to their rate of annual migration.

The 1987 Study shows that 54% of the sugar cane workers had remained with the same contractors for the last three years. Sugar cane harvesting provides consistent work for the entire harvesting season. On an average, a worker got 115 days of work

per year over the previous 3 years. Women had opted for this work because their first preference is for good wages. The advance given to each worker by the contractor is a welcome facility to the women. The unbroken duration of the working period also suited them. But on the debit side, the well being and security of the family was jeopardised. The labour camp sites were makeshift arrangements, often made with sugar cane stakes, and liable to be flooded out during rainy days. No drinking water, shed or medical care was available on the farms. The camp sites were situated at distances ranging from 3 to 8 kilometres from the farms. Young children were left alone at the camp site most of the time. Older children had to look after the younger children. Women had to keep long working hours and returned to the camp late in the evening especially when very large numbers of lorries were to be loaded. Working hours were not fixed. They have even sleep in the fields in case of rush of work and be constantly on the move, from one farm to another, in accordance with the harvest cycle. No labour laws afford protection to them. The long distance that separates them from their village homes exposes them to exploitation and distress, especially on account of the children, who are unable to go to school and have a normal childhood.

Chapter IX
FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC DOMAIN
— PARTICIPATION & DECISION MAKING BY WOMEN

EGS provides an opportunity for men and women to interact closely together at the work sites. Given the large coverage of the scheme throughout the state, an opportunity could be sought to mobilise the workers around issues relating to their work and wages or around other issues relating to social development. The participation of EGS workers, especially the women, in such activities, is however, very minimal. Out of 353 women respondents, only 14 were members of Trade Unions. Women had less interaction with district officials than the men workers. The women had contact with the lower level officials, such as the Gram Sewak, Sarpanch, etc. and not with the higher officials such as the BDO or the Tahsildar. The Tahsildar was a functionary of the Revenue department and enjoyed a high level of delegated authority under the EGS programme. He could start works on receiving a demand from 50 potential job seekers. None of the women respondents admitted to having contacted him.

"Shri Tungare sees in this programme a great opportunity for labour to come together. Fifty persons coming together, working together and when there are distances travelling together can be a source of solidarity. However, if they are organised into any form of unions Shri Tungare fears they will be exploited by politicians. Regarding labour co-operatives as

an alternative form of organisation Shri Tungare feels that these become the victims of Panchayat leaders. In Shahada of Dhulia district the landlords or owners of the sugarcane plantations, have organised plant protection armies with fire arms. While they are growing sugarcane they wish to keep away the Adivasis. Sugarcane does not need continuous tending therefore does not offer more than intermittent peak employment for a few months in the year. It is against this kind of terrorisation that Shramik Sangathan is attempted resistance. He also mentioned one person who out of consideration for the Adivasis had employed only Adivasis in a Khandsari factory. But he felt that this gentleman also would be threatened".

(Interview with Mr. Tungare, former Executive Chief of the Employment Guarantee Programme - by Study Team in 1978).

Women respondents, who were EGS workers, did not have a strong institutional base. Very few of them were members of Mahila Mandals. In fact, women respondents who were not EGS workers, appeared to have larger membership in the Mahila Mandals. Some of the non-EGS workers, especially the bidi workers, appeared to be members of Trade Unions. 4% of the women EGS workers were members of voluntary organisations. The only strong workers' organisation in District Dhule, the Shramik Sanghatana, had been quite active in 1978, but had slowed down in the next decade and by 1986 had become almost inactive. Another organisation was, at the later date, working in District Ahmednagar. It was also active in District Beed. These organisations were not supported or encouraged by EGS. Their growth and development was quite a separate activity.

The participation in voting by the EGS women workers in the Panchayat Elections at the Block and district level, was quite high - 64%. Elections in the cooperative societies also elicited good participation - 50% from the women workers in EGS. Women who were not EGS participants, did not take part in voting at the same levels for the Panchayat and cooperative elections. In the elections to the village Panchayat and the Legislative Assembly at the state level, both sets of women participated almost equally. In fact, the extent of the women's participation in voting compares quite favourably with that of the male respondents.

Decision making in most of the crucial household matters still seem to rest preponderantly with the men. Instances of such matters as are decided mainly by the men in EGS households include cropping pattern, expenditure on weddings and other social functions, negotiations for marriages, distribution of responsibilities in the family, etc.

Though men still have the edge in certain other decisions, women have a comparatively greater say in these matters. Instances are, location of work (30% women, 64% men) purchase of household articles (22% women and 55% men) family planning operation (14% women and 28% men) allocation of expenditure on food and clothes (19% women and 70% men) etc. It is only in voting in the elections that women have almost an equal say (41% women and 43% men). Here, the corresponding per centages amongst non-EGS worker households are 30% and 55% respectively, clearly showing that more women working in EGS vote independently.

Though men in the households seem to be taking the decisions regarding children's education, purchase of household assets, requirements, etc., it is very interesting to note that the utilisation of wages from EGS followed almost the same pattern for both women and men. Roughly half the earnings went into recurring expenses, i.e. maintenance of the household (48% women's wages and 49% men's). Roughly one fifth went on children's education (21% women's and 18% men's wages). A slightly lesser amount went to buy household durables. (17% of women's wages and 13% of men's wages). Even here, we see, as compared to daily running and maintenance, purchase of durable household assets and children's education appear to receive greater priority from women for the purpose of expending her wages.

EGS participants were made to evaluate the programme from several angles, including ease of entry or access, availability of work, ability to measure their work in terms of physical output etc.

It was seen that the formalities regarding access, i.e. registration of job seekers under EGS, was a comparatively easy one to go through. A majority of the participants had registered their names. But work was made available to only 12% women, on demand. The corresponding per centage for men was also very low - 16%. The availability of work was examined with reference to each of the four districts taken up in the Second Study for each of the eight years 1978-1986. According to the women participants responses, the work was made available on demand to the maximum extent in 1980, in the four districts combined, when a little less than 25% of the women were able to get work on demand. The next best years were 1981 and 1982, when 22 and 21 per cent of the total number of women registered, were provided with work on demand. For the remaining years, the percentage of women getting work on demand remained within a very low range of 6% to 12%. Looking at the four districts, we see that Bhandara had the highest per centage 43 in 1980, followed by 31%, Dhule 30% and Beed 27% in 1982, 1982, and 1981 respectively. Average availability of work comes to less than four years out of eight years, ranging from 3.22 years in Bhandara District to 4.37 years in Ahmednagar District.

Only 10% of the women expressed confidence in their ability to measure their work on the EGS sites in terms of output - i.e. quantity of earth removed, distance walked etc. Chances of wrong computation of piece rate wages are increased on account of the women's lack of knowledge of the basis of such computation.

Besides availability of work on demand the distance walked by the women from their homes to the work sites is another important indicator of their perception of EGS as a programme suitable to their needs. The replies show that the average distance required to be covered to the work site by the women was 2 kilometres only. The stipulation in the scheme was that work would be provided within 5 km radius of the job seeker's village. By the time the Second Study was taken up, the Maharashtra Government was facing the problem of too many EGS work sites having been opened in the close vicinity of villages. The inbuilt requirement of providing work nearby resulted in pressure on the local administration to sanction works with only this requirement predominantly in view. This had serious implications on the long term developmental impact of EGS, in that such short sighted choices did not have a further ripple effect of generating more employment. Reference has been made earlier on in this Report to road construction, which occupied a minor share of EGS expenditure in the early years of the programme but gradually emerging as a major sector in EGS. Road construction if not planned carefully, as for example connecting production areas with marketing centres, has a tendency to deteriorate into a populist activity. Since the roads constructed under EGS were not metalled many of these roads were washed out in the rains, causing infructuous expenditure. This led the Government to relax the requirement to treat the 'catchment area' as comprising a district, rather than a smaller localised area.

It would be pertinent to note at this point that the women participants' had responded positively to a question whether they would be prepared to leave their homes in search of work (1978 Study). Out of 59 women who responded to the question, 40 women stated that they would be prepared to leave home. Women seem to accord higher priority to wages and security of work, and if these two conditions are satisfied, the question of mobility does not seem to assume that much of importance. The high proportion of women amongst the migrant cane workers is evidence of this. What tends to be overlooked is the enormous cost being paid by the women in terms of loss of a normal and healthy development of their children's lives. This is an index of the trade - off between sheer survival needs and quality of life.

Chapter X

Analysis of Gender Issues

The construction sector consists of self-employed, casual and regular workers. Women workers in this sector are predominantly of casual status. In fact, the incidence of casual employment among women, in rural and urban areas, is much higher than that of men in many other sectors. Women workers in the construction sector consist of 97% casual workers, 2% self employed workers and 1% regular wage employed workers.

In agriculture, there is a large proportion of women who are in the self employed group, i.e. female cultivators or own account workers. The per centages of self employed, casual and regular workers 55, 44 and 1 respectively.

Between the inter-Censal period 1971-81, Maharashtra witnessed increases in the sex ratios (females per 100 males) of cultivators and agricultural labour, from 33 to 50 and 85 to 110 respectively. A similar trend was noticed in the Indian economy as a whole, where women's participation in agriculture was increasing. During the same period the male work force participation in agriculture registered a fall of 3% in the country as a whole. In Maharashtra, the male WFPR fell by 5%. In the same inter-Censal period, the gross cropped area in Maharashtra increased by 16%. The number of workers per hectare increased by 8%. The number of female cultivators and female agricultural labourers also increased in absolute terms over the inter-Censal period 1971-81 in Maharashtra.

These two categories, i.e. female cultivators and female agricultural labour formed the overwhelming majority of the EGS women construction workers. Among the women cultivators, marginal and small farmers constitute the largest group.

These two categories of workers exhibit certain typically common features of the female work force. In certain respects, they differ sharply from their male counterparts. Women agricultural labour suffer from low wage levels, and in-sufficiency and uncertainty of work (as compared to male labour), lack of equal opportunities for skill development and segmentation of labour market. These women suffer from the gender based division of labour which restricts them to a narrow range of agricultural tasks (weeding, transplanting etc.) as compared to the male workers. These tasks are not only lower paid than the agricultural operations carried out by men, they also squeeze the "employable" period of the women in a year, because of the seasonality of the operations. Women of this category of workers therefore have to search for other employment avenues to supplement their income more often than their men.

The female cultivators belonging to the marginal and small farmer households are own account workers whose work consists of unpaid labour on their own farms. Their greatest handicap is their lack of recognition as productive workers. Their lack of access to cash income inhibits their active contribution to household maintenance. They also do not have any access to productive resources or factors of production such as land, credit, technology, extension etc. They also tend to be excluded from operational and management decisions affecting the farm. As compared to male cultivators of the marginal and small farmer households the women cultivators remain unemployed for more days in the year. It therefore becomes more imperative for them to search for paid work outside their farms.

Women of both landless and cultivator status carry out the burden of child bearing, child rearing, household management as well as subsistence tasks (collection of fodder, water, fuel etc.) in addition to their productive work. The cost of bearing the double burden of this work can be quite heavy in terms of health and physical quality of life. It is difficult to have accurate measurements of women's work in these two categories, as the nature of this work is discontinuous multi occupational, meshing paid with unpaid work, domestic with gainful activity, home based work with work outside the home.

Women's participation in EGS is a measure of their vulnerability in the agricultural work force - both as cultivators and as waged workers. The women participants of EGS considered the work provided to them as supplementing their existing economic activities.

In the last four decades, a variety of interventions to increase women's incomes has been tried by the Government of India. Changes in production patterns, location of work places, technologies of production, terms of wage exchange etc. has marginalised large numbers of rural women from production processes and alienated them from main stream development. Income generation has therefore been viewed as the appropriate intervention to change the existing situation of these women. The degree of response of the women to these interventions would depend largely on whether the programme has been able to understand the nature of women's existing work patterns and their need to increase work opportunities so as to bring about a visible change in their income, and to build and design the programme on this understanding.

Women at the subsistence level in India are already working hard for long hours in certain well defined employment systems. Women work for very low wage levels, at very low levels of skills with very little or no job security. The employment systems or sectors, where the majority of India's poor women is to be found,

are Agriculture (and allied sectors such as horticulture, forestry), Dairying, small Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Village Industries and Sericulture. These work systems form separate and distinct sectors from the point of view of production, manufacturing, processes, ownership, marketing etc. But subsistence women workers often work in more than one of these systems. The status of these women is that of either casual or self employed workers, depending upon the particular features of the sector such as ownership and production patterns. Many of these sectors support a very large number of home based workers.

Women in the unorganised sector of employment in India continue to be largely invisible to policy makers and programmers. This is partly because national statistics have not yet found ways of incorporating the work and output of these women into its accounts. Inherent biases in conceptualising the nature of women's work and its contribution to family well being are also responsible. Thus, where women are already working in a particular environment in which they have achieved a certain balance between their productive responsibilities as well as their child bearing-cum-rearing and household management responsibilities in terms of time allocation as well as income, new interventions initiated to increase women's income may be based on teaching women entirely new skills which might, in turn, upset the delicate balance the women have achieved of their various roles. Very often, such a mismatch has resulted in the programmes benefiting women who do not belong to the subsistence category, leaving the latter without any visible impact.

The largest group of unorganised women workers are found in the Agriculture sector. Women of this category, (cultivators and agricultural labourers) constitute 87.4% of the women main workers in India according to 1981 Census. 55% of the women in this group are self-employed workers (female cultivators) 44% are casual labour (agricultural labourers) and 1% are self employed.

The EGS catered mainly to the assetless and assetpoor of the rural areas. Amongst women, the landless formed one large group. The marginal and small farmer households formed the other important group. We have also seen that women who had particular artisan skills did not opt in a major way for EGS. Thus, it was women at the lowest level of assets and skills that flocked to the EGS worksites.

The development interventions introduced by the Government through the provision of income generation for poor women are generally either "women specific" or sectoral in approach. In the former, gender is emphasised - because of the specially disadvantaged position of women in the poverty households. In the sectoral interventions specific problems facing a selected economic or occupation sector are addressed, and women workers or producers

within that sector are singled out for detailed analysis and strategising as well as advocacy with major public sector and government institution. While "women only" programmes of income generation have come to occupy a major share of both government and donor efforts in improving women's status in the country, there has been a growing appreciation of the need to carry out a sector-by-sector analysis of the constraints facing women workers and to design projects within the framework of macro-policies. Seen in this context, the sectoral approach helps in integrating the women in "mainstream" development: programmes, which are primarily aimed at increasing growth and productivity.

As described earlier, there are several production sectors in the Indian economy which support large numbers of poor women, of which the biggest is the agriculture sector. As per 1981 Census of India, there are 75 million men and 20 million women engaged in agriculture. (The number of women actually working in this sector, would be however, much higher, as under reporting of women's work in agriculture is an accepted feature of the Indian census. In almost all farm households, women work as well as the men. The magnitude of under reporting can be seen from this). The workers in this sector suffer from massive unemployment and under employment especially the women. For this reason they are prepared to enter, leave and re-enter the labour market and to accept low wages. Increasing casualisation of the female labour force further affects their income earnings and quality of life. It is to be examined, in the context of the origin and formulation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme of Maharashtra as to whether this new programme was consciously envisaged as a development intervention for women, within the broad parameters of the agriculture work force sector. References have been made earlier to the statements made by senior planners, civil servants and political leaders about the epochal significance of the new programme in the continuing tradition of experimentation and innovation with famine and other relief programmes. The statement made to the Research Team by Mr. V. S. Pagey (who had initiated EGS when he was elected member of the Legislative Assembly) clearly brings out that the main idea was to give work to all. He specifically refers to the core of unemployed rural workers such as small and marginal farmers, and the need to reach the poorest 5% of the labour force through the programme. He thought that there would be 50 men and 50 women at every site, but he saw that women and Harijans came in much larger numbers. Mr. V.S. Tungare, the former Executive Chief, the Employment Guarantee Programme, also made only a passing reference to women, when he said that women came to the site and worked till evening, whereas the men drink and leave by noon time. He also said that in certain drought prone areas, women who were used to working in the open, would come for EGS work, but in other areas, where women are not used to this sort of work, especially those of the higher castes, they might not come to the sites. Low caste women, he felt, might

still come. Mr. Hakim, Dy. Secretary in the Planning Department, told the Research Team that he had inferred that whenever there was a large number of workers reporting, females were an important proportion of the total number of workers.

A look at the salient features of the programme (Refer Page ||) shows that no specific reference to women workers has been included.

The 1987 Study has made a listing of 52 Government orders notified between 1974 and 1984 on various aspects of implementation of the scheme of EGS. These orders provide detailed instructions and guidelines on subjects ranging from payment of wages, payment of wages in kind, peoples' participation through district level and Panchayat Samiti level committees, State level supervision and monitoring, amenities to workers, including education and training etc. Out of these, only 2 Government orders relate to women - specific issues. The first order, issued in 1976, empowers the implementing agencies to appoint a female worker to look after children below the age of 3 years, wherever the number of children of EGS workers is more than 40. The female worker was to be paid Rs.3/- for the duration of 7 hours of work. (In 1980, the requirement of number of children was decreased to 5 and the wages increased to Rs.4/- for 7 hours of work). The second order pertained to the sanction of exgratia payment towards maternity period. In order to be eligible for the exgratia payment, the woman EGS worker should have worked on EGS for at least 150 days during the year. The rate of exgratia payment was Rs.6/- per day for 30 days. The women worker was required to produce a medical certificate from the Public Health authorities. The same facility of exgratia payment was admissible both to the men and the women for undergoing sterilisation - 7 days for males and 14 days for females.

The other burning problems suffered by the women EGS workers, such as lack of sufficient employment in EGS, frequent closure of EGS worksites, lower female wages as compared to male wages, insistence on particular mix of male-female attendance to start a gang etc. have not been touched upon in these orders. The women thronging at the EGS sites, as obvious indicator of the greater distress and vulnerability of the female labour force, does not seem to have been anticipated when the programme was conceptualised and formulated.

In fact the programme managers and executives did not seem to have anticipated the degree of response from the women to EGS. Their perception was that the strenuous nature of the work involved would discourage the women from turning up at the work sites. The feed back received from the work sites quickly dispelled this

notion. Complaints surfaced from a few places that women were being turned away from the worksites because men workers were not available in requisite numbers.

Though several of the orders relate to the norms and technicalities of wage fixation and payment, not a single one referred to the implicitly accepted division of tasks between men and women in the EGS sites, and the implications of this division on the amount of wages actually earned by the women as compared to male wages. It was stipulated in one of the orders that wages would be paid to the group of workers on the basis of the task completed. The mixed composition of the gang finds no mention here. In 1981, a Study Group was appointed to examine the schedule of wage rates. Whilst the Study Group had, under its active consideration, the question of lower output of EGS workers in the hilly and tribal areas, caused by nutritional deficiencies, and made certain recommendations to remedy the situation, the disparities in output based on gender do not appear to have been taken up for examination, especially in the context of "light" work done by women and "heavy" work done by men.

A number of these orders relate to monitoring and supervision arrangements at State district and Panchayat Samiti levels. Committees were constituted at all three levels, consisting of elected representatives, officers, representatives of the workers etc. At the State level, the Committee was to be headed by the Chief Minister, at the district level by the Minister in charge of the District, and at the Panchayat Samiti level by the Sub-divisional Officer. The landless workers, the backward caste workers, non-officials, unions of workers, social workers etc. are represented on these Committees. No women, or representatives of women's groups of voluntary organisations have been included in these Committees, notwithstanding the major contribution of female labour on the worksites.

It appears from the above that the type of sectoral intervention represented by EGS did not fully recognize women's contribution to its overall goals and productivity, nor the impact of EGS on women themselves.

We have seen how available research on women's labour and work patterns have thrown a lot of light on the nature of female involvement in economic activities. The progression from research to programming or designing has to be carefully attempted, to ensure integration of women. The succeeding paragraphs attempt to develop an analytical framework for project analysis of EGS which will facilitate an understanding of how women are affected by the programme as well as how the programme can be affected by women's contribution. The analytical frame-work is borrowed from the

Harvard Case Study on Gender analysis of Projects and relies heavily on a paper prepared by Catherine Overholt, Kathleen Cloud, Mary B. Anderson and James E. Austin.

The basic premise for gender analysis of Projects is that women will impact and be impacted by, most projects falling under the broad category of development planning. Failure to realize this inter-relationship between projects and women have led to under achievement of project goals leading to failure on both equity and efficiency fronts. A given project objective can be rephrased in terms of women's involvement. The project's impact on women can also be anticipated. An adequate data base is necessary as the starting point of this exercise. This information should throw light primarily on women's productive work, reproductive responsibilities, management and maintenance tasks etc. At the same time, the focus is not on women only, but, on gender, so that the inter-relationships between men's and women's roles can be seen.

The framework has a four-stage cycle consisting of the following components -

1. Activity Profile
2. Access and control profile
3. Analysis of factors influencing activities, access and control
4. Project cycle analysis.

Activity Profile - The gender-based division of labour is the starting point for drawing up the activity profile. Thus, in the EGS Project area, the tasks performed by men and women will be separately listed. Age, ethnicity, social class or other important variables can also be used to further disaggregate the lists of activities. The listing should be done separately for production of goods and services and reproduction and maintenance of the human resources.

Under the first heading, women's role as producers will be specifically highlighted, along with details of time allocation. Alongside, the productive activities of men will also be delineated. Since EGS, as a sectoral intervention, has a "residual" connotation, in that it is aimed at providing work during the slack season in agriculture, the activity profile should list tasks carried out by men and women throughout the year. The element of seasonality becomes a very important ingredient of the listing, as EGS works are of short duration as well as of longer duration. We have seen in the two studies that women's labour is comparatively unused at the beginning of the sowing season, whereas the men are all absorbed in farm work, and on the other hand the closure of the EGS sites has thrown the women out of work. A month wise listing of tasks performed by men and women according to the agricultural cycles would provide ready

information on the particular periods where there is lack of work opportunities for women. The social class groupings would cover agricultural labour, marginal farmers, small farmers, medium farmers and others (such as artisans, migrant labour). The age groups could include girl children, adult women and aged women. The same groups could also be taken up for men workers. Thus, the different work patterns of young women, adult women and aged women would be established, along-side work patterns obtaining for men. The following table shows how information on activities can be summarized.

Activity Profile

Socioeconomic Activity	FA	MA	FC	Gender/Age1			TIME2	LOCUS3
				MC	FE	ME		

1. Production of Goods & Services								
a. Product/Services								
1. Functional Activity								
2. Functional Activity								
3. Functional Activity								
b. Product/Services								
1. Functional Activity								
2. Functional Activity								
3. Functional Activity								
2. Reproduction & Maintenance of Human Resources								
a. Product/Services								
1. Functional Activity								
2. Functional Activity								
3. Functional Activity								
b. Product/Services								
1. Functional Activity								
2. Functional Activity								
3. Functional Activity								
1. Functional Activity								
1. Functional Activity								

Code: 1/FA = Female Adult; MA= Male Adult, FC = Female Child; MC = Male Child; FE = Female Elder; ME = Male Elder
 2/ Percentage of time allocated to each activity; seasonal; daily
 3/ Within home; family, field or shop; local community; beyond community

This table covers not only productive activities but also activities related to child bearing, child rearing, household tasks and management, subsistence tasks etc. They have to be seen alongside the economic activities not only because of their allocation in terms of the women's time, but also because these management and maintenance tasks connected with reproduction and the household have a major role in development and preservation of the human capital, or as we can term it, human resources development.

We have seen that in the EGS, women of the assetless and asset poor categories have to take rational decisions on increasing their time on economic activities on the basis of existing work load within the home. Thus women in the active child bearing years find their time squeezed far too tight to allow them to go to the EGS work sites. But women of this very age group also decide to migrate from one district to another in search of agricultural harvesting work (sugar cane) carrying their young children with them. Wages for harvesting sugar cane are higher than EGS wages for women. We have also seen that as the land holdings of the women increase, there is a withdrawal from EGS labour - these women cultivators may be restricted to working on their farms or in their houses, on supervisory and management tasks. At the same time we have also seen that young unmarried girls of the landed families do turn up on the sites for work - they are perhaps less immersed in household tasks as compared to the older and married women in their families.

Women's involvement in the EGS, its degree of response and its intensity and continuity would depend a great deal on how much the women's involvement in EGS labour would cut into their household and reproductive activities on the one hand, and into their existing economic activities on the other.

Listing the economic and non-economic tasks in the activity profile on the basis of gender is therefore, the first step of the project analysis cycle. Once this is completed, we have to look at the ownership, access and control issues relating to the resources in the Project. To what extent is the target group of men and women in a position to command the resources will determine partly, the extent to which the benefits of the project will flow to them or go out of their reach. The gender differentials in the access to the resources have to be identified and put down. The following Table has been suggested for this purpose.

Access and Control Profile

<u>Resources</u>	<u>Access</u> <u>(M/F)</u>	<u>Control</u> <u>(M/F)</u>
Land	F	M
Equipment		
Labor		
Production		
Reproduction		
Capital		
Educational/Training		
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Access</u> <u>(M/F)</u>	<u>Control</u> <u>(M/F)</u>
Outside Income		
Assets Ownership		
In-Kind goods (Food, Clothing, Shelter, etc.)		
Education		
Political Power/Prestige		
Other		

The resources generally taken up for examination under this section are land, equipment, labour, capital, education, training, etc. Access and control are to be separately shown in the case of each resource, as they may mean very different things in relation to particular types of resources. The women in the cultivator group (small and marginal farmer households) may have access to land, but they are excluded from control and hence from crucial management decisions. Regarding equipment, the First Study has made a point that the various implements used by the EGS workers are most inappropriate for their use.

The picks and shovels are heavy, blunt and coarse. The baskets and steel iron dishes used for carrying the earth are small in size and not well made. Stone breaking equipment is also quite primitive in quality. It appears that though the male and female workers have access to the equipment, they do not have the power to ask for change by upgradation of technology thereby improving the user quality. This table is useful for capturing the comparative position of men and women in the use of power in every day life affecting economic and other decisions. In the Indian and EGS context, disaggregation by caste would be vitally required in this table - as there are vast differences between high and low castes in the extent of mobility, social freedom, patriarchal oppression etc. In caste or socio-economic groups where women are less empowered, their interaction with the project may be on quite a

different plane than is the case with castes enjoying more freedom. A differential response from some areas to the EGS can be anticipated as a result of this analysis.

The third part of the Project cycle is an analysis of the factors which could change the existing situation of a given project environment or could be changed by the project. Examples are:

1. Poverty levels, income distribution, infrastructure and other general economic conditions.
2. Institutional structures, including government, for the upgradation of skills etc.
3. Demographic and socio cultural factors
4. Legal framework
5. Training and education
6. External environment

This analysis can facilitate an understanding of the dynamics of the project interacting with a host of macro-factors. Some of these could be of serious impact to the project output in terms of achievement of objectives. The presence of a large number of female-headed households in an endemic migration-prone area may cause problems to the starting of EGS sites because of insistence on the correct gender mix in the gangs. Political changes may have repercussions on the strength and solidarity of worker's movements or trade union growth. These in turn could influence the growth and empowerment of the EGS labour force in terms of legal awareness, workers unity etc. Absence of a supportive and liberal political environment could stunt the growth of voluntary organisations who have a perceived role in encouraging and boosting the self confidence of the workers to a point where they could boldly demand work from the Government. In the EGS Study, we have seen a generally low achievement level in worker - consciousness except in a few selected pockets. Lack of workers organisations could be the cause. Thus, identification of broad national or local trends which influence projects would help to explain the behaviour of men and women at the micro-project level.

With the help of the activity analysis and the access and control analysis, the entire project can be examined from the gender perspective.

If changes or adjustments have to be made in particular areas of a project on the basis of the analysis, these changes could be carried out as a part of the pre-project activities. Generally project cycles consist of a project identification stage, a project designing stage, implementation stage and monitoring and evaluation. At each of these stages in the project cycle, questions would be raised on the relationship of women to the project target group of beneficiaries. This would start right at the stage of defining project objectives.

In the EGS we have seen that the project objectives do not specifically refer to women nor was women's income or any other aspect of their development one of the desired outputs of the project. Following the gender analysis method, each project would define its objectives in terms of women. This would include identification of opportunities for women to improve their status and at the same time map the constraints to women's fuller participation and involvement in the project activities.

At the designing stage of the project cycle, we need to go into questions of women's work, including household work, her ability to access and control resources and her share in the distribution of benefits of the project. Supportive services such as child care, health and nutrition services, transport, legal aid etc. are not normally considered to be integral parts of women's work or income generating projects. But if the activity analysis has highlighted the heavy work load of women in both paid and unpaid activities outside and inside the home, this information would lead to an appreciation of the need to add supportive services to the project. Such clear signalling therefore helps in improving the efficiency of the project delivery system. At the stage of project implementation questions to be raised would relate to status of women workers in the project area vis-a-vis project personnel, women's mobility and ease of access to organisational structures etc. For purposes of evaluation and monitoring data requirements are to be separately drawn up.

Sets of questions to be addressed at each of the four stages in the project circle are given below:

WOMEN'S DIMENSION IN PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

A. Assessing Women's Needs

1. What needs and opportunities exist for increasing women's productivity and/or production?
2. What needs and opportunities exist for increasing women's access to and control of resources?
3. What needs and opportunities exist for increasing women's access to and control of benefits?
4. How do these needs and opportunities relate to the country's other general and sectoral development needs and opportunities?
5. Have women been directly consulted in identifying such needs and opportunities?

B. Defining General Project Objectives

1. Are project objectives explicitly related to women's needs?
2. Do these objectives adequately reflect women's needs?
3. Have women participated in setting those objectives?
4. Have there been any earlier efforts?
5. How has present proposal built on earlier activity?

C. Identifying Possible Negative Effects

1. Might the project reduce women's access to or control of resources and benefits?
2. Might it adversely affect women's situation in some other way?
3. What will be the effects on women in the short and longer run?

WOMEN'S DIMENSION IN PROJECT DESIGN

A. Project Impact on Women's Activities

1. Which of these activities (production, reproduction & maintenance, socio-political) does the project affect?
2. Is the planned component consistent with the current gender denomination for the activity?
3. If it plans to change the women's performance of that activity, (i.e. locus of activity, remunerative mode, technology, mode of activity) is this feasible, and what positive or negative effects would it have on women?
4. If it does not change it, is this a missed opportunity for women's roles in the development process?
5. How can the project design be adjusted to increase the above mentioned positive effects, and reduce or eliminate the negative ones?

B. Project Impact on Women's Access and Control

1. How will each of the project components affect women's access to and control of the resources and benefits engaged in and stemming from the production of goods and services?
2. How will each of the project components affect women's access to and control of the resources and benefits engaged in and stemming from the reproduction and maintenance of the human resources?
3. How will each of the project components affect women's access to and control of the resources and benefits engaged in and stemming from the sociopolitical functions?
4. What forces have been set into motion to induce further exploration of constraints and possible improvements?
5. How can the project design be adjusted to increase women's access to and control of resources and benefits?

WOMEN'S DIMENSION IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Personnel

1. Are project personnel sufficiently aware of and sympathetic toward women's needs?
2. Are women used to deliver the goods or services to women beneficiaries?
3. Do personnel have the necessary skills to provide any special inputs required by women?
4. What training techniques will be used to develop delivery systems?
5. Are there appropriate opportunities for women to participate in project management positions?

B. Organizational Structures

1. Does the organizational form enhance women's access to resources?
2. Does the organization have adequate power to obtain resources needed by women from other organizations?
3. Does the organization have the institutional capability to support and protect women during the change process?

C. Operations and Logistics

1. Are the organizations delivery channels accessible to women in terms of personnel, location and timing?
2. Do control procedures exist to ensure dependable delivery of the goods and services?
3. Are there mechanisms to ensure that the project resources or benefits are not usurped by males?

D. Finances

1. Do funding mechanisms exist to ensure program continuity?
2. Are funding levels adequate for proposed tasks?
3. Is preferential access to resources by males avoided?
4. Is it possible to trace funds for women from allocation to delivery with a fair degree of accuracy?

E. Flexibility

1. Does the project have a management information system which will allow it to detect the effects of the operation on women?
2. Does the organization have enough flexibility to adapt its structures and operations to meet the changing or new-found situations of women?

WOMEN'S DIMENSION IN PROJECT EVALUATION

A. Data Requirements

1. Does the project's monitoring and evaluation system explicitly measure the project's effects on women?
2. Does it also collect data to update the Activity Analysis and the Women's Access and Control Analysis?
3. Are women involved in designating the data requirements?

B. Data Collection and Analysis

1. Are the data collected with sufficient frequency so that necessary project adjustments could be made during the project?
2. Are the data fed back to project personnel and beneficiaries in an understandable form and on a timely basis to allow project adjustments?
3. Are women involved in the collection and interpretation of data?
4. Are data analyzed so as to provide guidance to the design of other projects?
5. Are key areas for WID research identified?

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The seeming contradiction between the numerically high participation of women in the Maharashtra Guarantee Scheme and their comparative invisibility in programme planning, design and execution, partakes of the systemic bias against women's work which is so familiar to observers of current economic development. When dealing with even the assetless and asset-poor categories of women, the middle class perceptions of women not being the breadwinner but primarily housewives and mothers seem to have persisted in the minds of those responsible for the formulation of the programme. Another possible approach to such a programme would have been to view the poor as a homogenous group, the only basis for disaggregation being class and the size of the land or asset holding. Thus, possible categories of rural workers in the Indian context would be the landless, the marginal farmer, the small farmer, the medium farmer, the artisan etc. Gender is excluded from this categorisation. The underlying assumption here, would be that there are no distinctive features which set apart female labour from male labour in situations of demand and supply.

However, all the evidence produced by research scholars reveals that there are many reasons why female labour has to be distinguished from and handled distinctively as compared to, male labour. What are these characteristics? When is it necessary to take note of these differences? When may it not be necessary to do so? These are extremely important questions. Every employment programme must undertake this exercise before it designs the programme. The main differences between male and female labour that have been observed can be listed as follows:

1. The biological difference between men and women requires that women not only have to give birth to the child but also nurture it in its early days of life. This behaviour has led to their having the added responsibility of home and child care even when the children are beyond the infancy stage. Apart from the responsibility, they also undergo physical strain with child-birth and childcare which tells on their physical capacity to do sustained hard work.
2. Various cultural and traditional factors have led to the clear demarcation of economic roles between men and women. For example in rice agriculture it is common to find only women transplanting rice. Weeding, vegetable plucking, and bundling of harvest produce are all usually given to women. In non-agriculture, especially on construction sites, women are often made to carry earth while men dig. In other aspects of construction, men do the skilled jobs of brick laying while women mix the mortar and so it goes on. The more traditional a society, the more clearly

demarcated these rules. Hence, the 'labour market is not neutral between men and women. Males are absorbed for certain jobs and females for others. Even in the case of seasons, the agricultural work cycles do not have the same affect on male and female labour absorption. The ploughing season may absorb men while harvesting may require women. The variations in labour absorption do not end here. Certain crops have different female labour inputs at different times from those of other crops. Sugar cane and its cycles may use a different level and ratio of female labour than rice and its cycles, or wheat and its cycles. The women interviewed on the employment guarantee sites, report that their unemployment is not limited to the lean agricultural seasons, it is all the year around. When the sites are opened, they have some access to work, but when the sites are closed they are without work. In other words, they are not absorbed by the normal agricultural activity which is supposed to be at its peak in certain seasons.

3. Many other reasons have begun to emerge as to why female labour has to be considered distinct from male labour. Nutrition and health levels of households are directly dependent on the access women in the household cash or foodgrains. Thus wages and payment systems which do not deliver this cash or ration to the women could tend to divert the reward for work away from the households' basic needs. Gangs dominated by men and wages paid in cash to male heads of family would exaggerate the problem of intra-household inequality in the distribution of health and nutrition between males and females. Men drinking liquor indicate acute indebtedness in the family. Distances of ration shops from home could mean that women cannot visit them personally and therefore money is sent with the man for buying food. This money can get dissipated into alcohol consumption. Women's work is evaluated according to traditional perceptions. Most employees in traditional occupations like agriculture will perceive the output of women or their contribution as much lower than men and thereby, even if there are laws providing equal remuneration, they will not abide by it as they see the contribution of women as being less in value than that of men. Due to decades of ingrained biases in attitudes, female labour often responds differently from male labour to not only offers of employment but also to various other institutional arrangements. When females perceive their work as being less valuable than males they would also not insist on the exercise of their right both to have work as well as to earn equal reward. The intra household status of women, which is lesser than that of the male is carried to the relationships on the work site where men who are playing the role of foremen etc., would continue to use them for tedious, hard jobs whilst paying them lesser amounts. These are some of the implications which should be borne in mind when assuming that there is no difference between male and female labour in designing employment programmes.

It seems necessary to develop a new and unbiased attitude towards the whole question of gender ratio in the gangs. Most of the works taken up under the EGS consist of conventional irrigation and public works schemes, where traditional norms prevail regarding this question. But even here, we have seen that quite often males and females do identical jobs, such as digging, carrying, etc. and females are in fact doing as many jobs as males. In such a situation, there need to be no justification between "heavy" and "light" work. When labour reports for work, they should be taken on in gangs regardless of the ratio of females to males. Wide dissemination and publicity in the villages will benefit the workers when public announcements are made regarding availability of employment under the scheme.

The restricted range of schemes taken up under EGS has adverse repercussions on long term growth of employment potential as well as on productivity. We have seen how the earlier emphasis on developing common resources of the community, aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, became diluted in the later years of the programme and how an element of "ad-hocism" and populism gradually crept into the choice of the works. Many of these works were of very short duration, for example, road construction. This led to frequent closures of work sites. This discontinuous nature of the work has affected the people's response (especially that of the women) to the programme, adversely. Deshpande has, for example, blamed this aspect of EGS for its inability to have a favourable impact on seasonal migration of Adivasis in Thane district. This insufficiency of employment has affected landless labourers the most. The need for diversifying the portfolio of works under EGS therefore emerged as a strong imperative. Schemes relating to other development sectors like Horticulture, Forestry etc. could be taken up with technical support extended by these departments to the EGS machinery. In Karnataka State, cleaning of villages, improving roads within the village, improvement of Harijan housing, community centres, etc. have been taken up under the government's Employment Affirmation Scheme, benefitting mostly the Harijan labour.

The system of payment of wages in EGS leaves the women with acute problems in household management and maintenance, especially those from the poorest families. Weekly payment makes them vulnerable in relation to borrowing. Whether they borrow from the money lender, the Mukaddam or the shop keepers, they have to borrow for consumption. When the circle starts by borrowing, then there is no end. The payment of wages on daily basis could be considered as a better alternative. The location of the ration shop and the availability of stocks of foodgrains in the shop are two other factors which can either compound or alleviate the distress of the women. The experiences of the women who travel long distances to the shops to return empty handed because of non-availability of food stocks have been recounted in the studies. It should be possible to design a system by which, whenever foodgrains are to be given, these are given on the sites and cash payments made once a week. Another safeguard

for women would be insist that collective wages should not be paid to the gangman, but should be paid directly to the woman individually. This would ensure that partriarchal systems of evaluation of women's work would not be exercised. The system by which payment is made after the period of work, one month or one day, should be reviewed. In the case of the migrant sugar cane workers. advance payment is made by the contractors at the beginning of the harvesting season. This appears to have acted as an incentive. This could be incorporated in the EGS system, irrespective of the periodicity of the payment, i.e. if the wages are to be paid weekly, the worker should be paid weekly wages in advance; if daily, then on the first working day, at least one days' wage should be paid in advance. The apprehensions expressed about the possibility of these facilities being misused do not appear well founded. The system of advance payment is a well accepted mode in many other professions and callings.

The perceptions of the women regarding facilities at the work sites such as child care, drinking water, health care, etc. show that while the importance of these support services is understood and accepted by the women, their first priority is for work and wage. The women's most urgent and pressing demand is for continuous and secure work throughout the year. Lack of work opportunities is the major cry of the women. On the other hand, though the Government of Maharashtra guidelines for EGS provide for child care and maternity benefits, the quality of the service delivery is very poor. This observation also applies to working sheds, drinking water facilities, etc. The perceptions of the male supervisors and trade union leaders of the importance of these supportive facilities has tended to be very much based on their attitudes towards women's roles and work within the home. The tendency appears to be to see the maternity and child care roles of the women in the home being of low value, or not requiring any special support. Therefore, similar needs of women workers on factories, plantation, mines or work sites are not also given much importance. Most of the union leaders, even in the organised sector, being males, do not accord priority to these facilities in their struggle for better working conditions and wages. Most women workers belonging to industries which are covered by unionisation make the complaint that those who lead their unions are indifferent to women's needs. So, while women have reported on the low level of service delivery in these areas on the worksites, they have also reported that the attitude of the EGS staff i.e. muster clerk, engineer, supervisor, contractor, mukadam, etc. towards them are highly unsatisfactory. There is a need for building up women's leadership on the worksites so that their demands could be articulated forcefully. There is also a need to look at the representation of women in the EGS supervisory staff, which at present, is almost non-existent. Women could be given the responsibilities of being paymasters and supervisors. Gang leaders' responsibilities could also devolve on women. Women's gangs could also act as women's groups to both protect and articulate their interests. This would require mobilisation of women as a separate group of workers with some kind of representation given to them which

can be used at the block level. Taking into consideration the whole package of women's needs, namely their requirement of child care, nutrition, health care, regular daily wages as well as their requirement of some kind of power to change prevailing attitudes and perceptions, it seems that some structures may have to be designed innovatively. India has launched major nutrition programmes as part of their social welfare services. These programme are largely funded by the State, and also by donors, where infants as well as lactating mothers are given food free of cost. Programmes are delivered through departmental staff as well as through voluntary agencies. There have been evaluations of these nutrition programmes and frequently it has been said that the programme does not necessarily reach the neediest women and consequently does not reach the largest number of them. Considering that women from the most needy families report for work on these sites and that their children have to be left behind in the villages for long hours while they do manual work, a question that seems to emerge is whether the nutrition programmes could not be fitted into the employment guarantee scheme at the site level. If there are enough trained social workers or implementers of the programme, they should be made into mobile teams and they could service the women on the sites as well as their households in the villages. This would ensure that the programme reaches those who need it most. It would be necessary to re-design some of the existing nutrition programmes, making them peripatetic, camping on sites for that part of the year when the sites are open. This would ensure that the neediest children, i.e. children of the landless and marginal farmer families are not deprived of the minimum calorific intake. The delivery of these services at the village level, on the other hand, tends to dilute the reach of the programme. The great advantage of delivering these services at the sites is that the women workers on the site can form a client group which can continue when the sites are closed. This strategy will, besides ensuring better service delivery, also help in building up an institutional base for the poor women and integrating it into the overall administrative system. This could then become the focal point for many economic and social programmes.

: In the Nilgiris, in tea plantations, women were always super- :
: vised by men, even for tea picking and weighing. These men :
: are called Maistrs and they earn 25-50% more than the workers. :
: A meeting of women workers revealed that women, specially :
: above 40-45 years, had no inhibition to playing the 'Maistr' :
: role. Hence, a women was selected and the management accepted :
: this idea as an experiment. This way women leadership was :
: built-up and the women workers felt they had a direct link with :
: the management.

: Similarly in Kaira District, in the milk cooperatives, only :
: 10% of the members were women, though the workers in milk :
: production are women. Again it was argued that women do not :
: have the ability/the mobility etc., to participate fully in :

| the cooperative. However, when the women, specially those who |
| had become co-op members were asked, they said this was a myth |
| and it was promoted to keep women down. They felt as strong |
| and able as the men and were equipped to handle the manage- |
| ment tasks of the cooperative.

- 1978 Study

One argument commonly heard is that women do not have the skills to become supervisors, paymasters or gang leaders. These skills could be taught to them. A general orientation programme for the women could be planned as part of the EGS. The first day on the site could be made into an orientation day. Information about the scheme, its benefits, the rights of the workers, the duration of the programme, etc. are areas in which the women have very little knowledge and familiarity. Both the studies have brought out that the women are not aware of even the special facilities offered at the sites. The orientation programme could also help in getting the women to group themselves and decide on the leaders. Minimum skills for supervisory jobs could also be given. Given the atomised nature of the EGS workforce and the extremely tenuous employer - employee relationship, the legal framework may not always carry with it the force for implementation. The building up of knowledge of legal rights and labour laws amongst the workers would therefore help to translate these into practice.

Table No. 1

POPULATION AND WORK STATUS OF MAIN WORKERS IN RURAL MAHARASHTRA

1971 & 1981

Figures in 000

		YEAR		IN ,000	
		1971	1981	% Change	
Population	T	34701	40791	+	17.55
	M	17482	20527	+	17.42
	F	17219	20263	+	17.68
Main Workers	T	13394	17417	+	30.04
	M	9195	11055	+	20.23
	F	4199	6361	+	51.49
Cultivators	T	6364	8337	+	31.00
	M	4768	5567	+	16.76
	F	1596	2769	+	73.50
Agricultural Labourer	T	5110	6120	+	19.77
	M	2756	2954	+	7.19
	F	2354	3166	+	34.49
Others	T	1920	2960	+	54.17
	M	1671	2534	+	51.65
	F	249	426	+	71.08
Non-Working Out of Labourforce	T	21307	23374	+	9.70
	M	8287	9272	+	11.29
	F	13020	13902	+	6.77

Source: Census of India, various issues, prepared by Achary.

Table No. 2

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN WORKERS BY
WORKERS STATUS IN RURAL MAHARASHTRA, (PER CENT)

Workers status		1971	1981
Cultivators	T	47.51	47.87
	M	51.85	50.36
	F	38.01	43.53
Agricultural Labourers	T	38.15	35.14
	M	29.97	26.72
	F	56.06	49.77
Others	T	14.33	16.99
	M	16.17	22.92
	F	5.93	6.70
All Main Workers	T	100	100
	M	100	100
	F	100	100

Source: Census of India, 1971 and 1981. Prepared by Achary

Table No. 3

AGE GROUPWISE AND SEXWISE MAIN WORKERS IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR—1981 CENSUS

Figures in Lakhs

AGE GROUP	MAIN WORKERS (FEMALE)		CULTIVATORS (FEMALE)		AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (FEMALES)		MAIN WORKERS (MALE)		CULTIVATORS (MALE)		AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (MALE)	
	No.	Incr. Over 1971	No.	Incr. Over 1971	No.	Incr. Over 1971	No.	Incr. Over 1971	No.	Incr. Over 1971	No.	Incr. Over 1971
15 TO 19	7.53	60.15	3.07	55.70	4.01	63.80	11.85		5.4		4.58	
20 TO 24	8.09	65.00	3.50	57.70	4.03	71.20	13.25		6.05		3.89	
25 TO 29	7.66	75.30	3.34	68.30	3.71	85.40	13.17		5.89		3.29	
30 TO 34	7.20	70.60	3.17	61.60	3.47	63.06	11.6		5.21		2.78	
35 TO 39	7.18		3.26		3.41		11.51		5.58		2.79	
40 TO 49	11.60	61.60	5.45	52.80	5.41	71.70	20.17		10.82		4.66	
50 TO 59	6.14	59.60	2.93	49.80	2.86	70.30	13.59		8.3		2.85	
60 & Above	2.77	67.10	1.28	56.70	1.34	77.60	9.11		6.2		1.75	
All age Group	63.61	66.00	27.69	57.60	31.66	74.30	110.55		55.67		29.54	

The figures of percentage increase are not available for men agegroupwise

Table No. 4

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING PERSONDAYS PER DAY OF PERSONS OF AGE 5 & ABOVE

TYPE OF OPERATION FOR EACH BROAD CURRENT DAY WORK ACTIVITY

Figures in %

Type of Operation	Self Employed		Regular Employee		Casual Labourers		Total		
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	T
Manual Work in Cultivation	81.89	72.53	18.97	16.87	80.65	73.85	80.24	67.12	72.8
Manual Work in Other Agricultural Activity	8.68	8.63	0	6.33	6.71	7.79	7.67	8.1	7.94
Manual Work in Non-Agricultural Activity	3.08	7.53	10.46	23.76	9.54	13.17	6.12	11.12	9.23
Other Activities	6.37	11.32	23.75	53.04	3.72	5.2	5.97	13.65	10.75
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Estd. No. of Working Days Per Day (00)	30783	53447	734	18926	26422	31944	57939	95417	153355

Table No. 5

STATUS OF FEMALE WORKERS IN SOME STATES (1981) (Millions)

		Population	MAIN WORKERS		MARGINAL WORKERS		NON WORKERS	
			Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent
India	Female	245.11	40.43	16.49	18.12	7.40	186.56	76.11
Rural	Male	256.84	134.10	52.21	5.43	2.11	117.31	45.68
Maharashtra	Female	20.26	6.47	31.94	1.80	8.90	11.98	59.16
Andhra Pradesh	Female	20.41	6.70	32.85	2.48	12.04	11.25	55.11
Bihar	Female	30.00	2.94	9.81	1.40	4.67	25.66	85.52
Gujarat	Female	11.46	1.66	14.49	1.34	11.76	8.45	73.73
Karnataka	Female	13.02	2.94	22.61	1.07	8.20	9.01	69.19
Madhya Pradesh	Female	20.31	5.30	26.11	1.90	9.38	13.10	64.51
Tamilnadu	Female	16.09	4.51	28.06	1.03	6.40	10.54	65.54
U.P.	Female	42.94	2.81	6.54	1.74	4.07	38.38	89.39

Source: 1981 Census part.

Table No. 6

YEARWISE WAGES PAID & COST PER MANDAY

SR. NO.	MAHARASHTRA	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86
i	Total Expenditure incurred on E.G.S. (Rs. in Lakhs)	5154.00	7417.69	10923.08	12212.08	12616.75	13093.67	13498.15	20001.01	23433.57
ii	Percentage Share of Expenditure on Wages	74	80	82	76	70	76	75	74	75
iii	Mandays Generated In Lakhs	1153	1635	2054	1715	1560	1280	1645	1780	2200
iv	Registration of Employment Seekers In Lakhs	.00	28.27	37.43	.00	39.61	.00	.00	43.27	
v	Average Labour Attendance In Lakhs	3.91	8.45	6.05	5.70	5.20	4.68	5.52	5.98	7.33
vi	Wages in Cash Per Manday (Rs.)	3.10	3.28	3.39	4.42	5.76	7.41	8.41	8.30	8.03
vii	Average Wages Paid per manday (Rs.)-incash & kind	3.30	3.61	4.36	5.40	6.28	7.60	8.41	8.30	8.34

Source: EGS Statistical Information Book, Planning Dept. Govt. of Maharashtra.

Table No. 7

EXPENDITURE ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORKS

MAHARASHTRA		(Figures in Percent)								
Types of Works	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86	
i Irrigation	53	43	35	34	37	39	37	37		
ii Soil conservation & land development	27	25	21	21	22	18	16	10		
iii Afforestation	3	2	3	4	7	6	6	6		
iv Roads	10	19	22	18	25	33	37	36		
v Other works & other Expenditure	7	11	19	23	9	4	4	3		
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
Actual total Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)	5754	7417	10923	12212	12617	13094	18498	20001		

Source: EGS Statistical Information Book, Planning Dept. Govt. of Maharashtra.

36.6 No. 8

POSITION OF COMPLETED WORKS DURING THE YEAR

Year	TOTAL WORKS UNDER TAKEN			Completed during the year (Percentage to total works)
	Incomplete at the beginning	Sanctioned during the year	Total	
1979/80	31404	20937	52341	20925 (40)
1980/81	31416	12244	43660	9657 (22)
1981/82	34003	19705	53708	13919 (26)
1982/83	39789	20130	59919	15856 (26)
1983/84	44063	17404	61467	14154 (23)
1984/85	47313	18716	66029	14950 (23)
1985/86	185244			118207 (63)
	Since Inspectionn			Completed till to-day

Source: EGS Statistical Information Book, Planning Dept.
Govt. of Maharashtra.

Table - 9

Distribution of sample according to District, Block, Worksite

District	Block	Worksite	Type of work	No. of Respondents		No. of households
				Workers	Non workers	
1. Ahmednagar	Parner	Ranzangaon (Masidiche)	Percolation Tank	19	1	20
"	"	"	"	19	1	20
"	"	Palve Budruk	Nala Bunding	3	-	3
"	Rahuri	Rahuri	Sugar Cane worksite	15	-	15
"	Rahuri	Rahuri	Sugar Cane Campsite	8	-	8
2. Dhulia	Shahada	Katharde Parlwardhe	Road Work	31	2	33
"	"	Vaijall Karmall	Road work	7	-	7
3. Bhandara	Sakoli	Lakhori	Past (Percolation tank)	40	6	46
"	Salekana	Kavade	Past (Percolation tank)	25	3	28
					Total	180

I S S I - M E G S S T U D Y

Table No. 10

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

DISTRICTS	PARTICIPANTS		NON-PARTICIPANTS		TOTAL	
	F	M	F	M	M	F
BHANDARA	87	33	25	16	112	49
DHULE	92	32	25	11	117	43
AHMEDNAGAR	89	34	25	15	114	49
BEED	85	30	27	15	112	45
TOTAL	353	129	102	57	455	186
	482		159		640	

TABLE II

Daily labour attendance - percentage of women workers
(District level) - source: Official

		<u>SHANDARA</u>	<u>AHMEDNAGAR</u>	<u>DHULIA</u>
1976	April	46	51	NA
	May	44	53	"
	June	48	57	"
	July	52	58	"
	August	40	54	"
	September	35	55	"
	October	38	51	"
	November	49	54	"
	December	42	50	"
1977	January	43	53	"
	February	36	49	"
	March	42	45	"
	April	45	52	35
	May	45	48	40
	June	47	48	37
	July	41	48	36
	August	32	48	34
	September	31	52	32
	October	32	52	35
	November	29	32	33
	December	38	52	34
1978	January	42	52	42
	February	37	48	33
	March	29	46	42
	April	36	44	31
	May	40	43	41
	June	27	49	58
	July	49	48	37
	August	33	46	41
	September	29	45	41
	October	31	50	33
	November	NA	42	22
	December	*	46	29
	Average :	39	49	36
1979	January	50	43	41
	February	41	45	51
	March	50	44	51

Table - 12

: Workers on site and percentage share of women
 Source : Field Survey Oct - Dec 1978.

Site	Total		Male		Female		Percentage	
	MR	SA	MR	SA	MR	SA	MR	SA
Katharde								
Pariwardhe	402	389	175	169	227	220	56	56
Ranzangaon	234	226	52	47	182	163	77	72
Lakhori	NA	24	NA	12	NA	12	-	50
Kawade	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palve								
Budruk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

MR : Muster Roll

SA : Site Attendance

NA : Not available

Again as mentioned in Chapter 1, the site figures reveal a higher percentage of female participation than the official State level figures. This is not surprising as most observers and field workers have found that women are many more on the sites than men. Shri Tungare (Appendix 1, Volume I) has explained that men hardly work half a day on the site.

Table - 13

- Rate yielded by Field Survey by Institute of Social Studies Oct - Dec 1978.

Site	Work	Size of gang - Range	No. of women in gang - Range	Total No. of respondents	Average percentage of women in gang
Ranzangaon	P.T.	25-35	23-30	10	80
Katharde Pariwarde	Road	35-45	18-30	25	53
Lakhori	P.T.	10-20	5-15	29	49
Kawade	P.T.	20-21	10-11	24	49

Total number of respondents: 88

P.T. : Percolation Tank

The gang percentage, as reported by the women is higher than that of the site report. There is also a consistency that always Ahmednagar is the highest. The official district data gives 80%, the sites give 72% and the gang gives 80%. The equivalent figures for Dhulia is 36%, 56% and 63%. The Bhandara figures are 39%, 50% and 49%. In all cases the closer to the ground the higher the figure.

There seems no relationship between the type of works and perception of women in the gang. For example, Ranzangaon gives 80% participation whereas Bhandara gives 49%, and both are percolation tanks.

Table No. 14

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LABOUR ATTENDANCE

WITH TOTAL LABOUR ATTENDANCE

FOR THE YEAR 1979 TO 1985

	Percentage	Avg. Female labour attendance per year (Fig.in Thousand)
Maharashtra	39	299
Ahmednagar	49	32
Beed	45	13
Dhule	41	23
Bhandara	40	36

Source: EGS Statistical Information Book ,Planning Dept.
Govt. of Maharashtra.

Table - 15

Reasons for joining EGS and size of landholding of respondents' household

Landholding (acres)	No other job available near village	Other employment insufficient, uncertain	Working hours fixed	Time bound work	Equal wage for men and women	Higher wages than elsewhere	Working hours convenient	Children allowed at site	Crec- hes provided	Leave with pay/ maternity leave	Others	No response to reasons for joining EGS
Landless	37	25	-	5	4	8	2	1	-	-	1	11
0.1-2.5	13	8	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
2.6-5.0	11	8	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	2
5.1-10.0	2	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
10.1-20.0	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
20.1 and above	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	68	46	-	8	8	10	3	1	-	-	3	31

B-7: Size of landholding and duration in EGS

Land size (acres)	Less than 1 month	1 - 2	2.1-3.0	3.1-4	4.1-6	6.1-8	Over 8	No response to duration	Total
Landless	11	7	8	11	3	10	11	6	67
0.1-2.5	1	4	3	8	-	6	1	2	25
2.6-5.0	3	4	3	2	-	5	3	1	21
5.1-10.0	1	4	-	-	1	2	-	-	8
10.1-20.0	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	2	7
20.1 and above	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	3

Note: Respondents with leased out land have been included in the landless categories.

Total sample : 157
 Non-worker + non-EGS: 26
 No response : 11
 Valid sample : 120

Again, it is the landless and the marginal and small farmers who are evenly distributed across the time classes. There is an equal number of landless workers, for example, who work for less than one month, three to four months or over 8 months. In contrast, higher land owners offer to work primarily for larger duration. This would be due to the age/family size/marital status and other such factors operating on the worker's participation in the site, apart from asset ownership. The sites attract an assortment of workers - single and multi occupational.

Table -17

B-6 : Respondents participation in EGS in the latest year of participation and occupation of head of respondents household in that year

	Self-culti- vation (S.C.)	S.C.+ agri- cultural labour (A.L.)	Atta- ched or A.L.	Non agri. manual work	EGS	EGS+ A.L.	Arti- san (black smith, Soner, Carpen- ter	House hold indus- try (tai- ler dhobi, sala- fisher- ried man)	Pro- fes- sion- al vice emplo- yee	Live stock breed- ing and/or milk	Trad- ing	Res- pon- dent self head of house hold	Col- lect- ing grass	Bidi	Ho- use- hold occu- pation
Respondent in EGS for less than 6 months	17	1	24	3	5	3	2	6	3	2	-	9	2	2	2
Respondent in EGS for 6 months or more	10	3	4	-	12	2	1	2	1	-	1	7	-	1	-
Response to time spent by respondent in EGS during the reference year	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	30	5	30	3	17	5	3	8	4	2	1	16	2	3	2

Only 12% of all EGS workers are pure EGS workers i.e. depend only on EGS works. But the majority of women work in EGS work for less than 6 months in a year. These women account for 62% of the sample. The evidence corroborates the earlier picture that the workers who come to sites are basically from the category of casual agricultural labourers and marginal farmers. Those who have any skill like artisans or any assets like stock do not appear to be interested in this kind of labour at the price/wage rate.

Table - 18

SOURCEWISE EMPLOYMENT DAYS ACCORDING TO LANDHOLDING SIZE
(MEAN PERCENT SHARE)

SOURCE	LANDLESS	MARGINAL Landholders	SMALL Landholders	MEDIUM Landholders	TOTAL
Own farm	-	07	11	14	07
Agricultural Labour	36	33	31	31	33
E.B.S. Labour	54	54	52	50	52
Other Labour	11	12	10	04	10
Own Occupation in H.H.	02	02	02	04	02
Base	171	105	127	85	482
Base Percent to the Total base	(35)	(22)	(25)	(18)	(100)

Table - 19

Age of EGS worker - respondent and landholding size

Land size (acres)	Age of EGS worker respondents							Total
	Below 15	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and above	
landless	1	7	14	20	22	3	-	67
0.1-2.5	1	3	3	7	6	5	-	25
2.6-5.0	-	2	7	5	6	1	-	21
5.1-10.0	-	1	1	2	3	1	-	8
10.1-20.0	-	4	1	2	-	-	-	7
20.1 and above	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3
	-	10	27	36	38	10	-	131

Table -20

EGS worker-respondents relationship with head of household and land size of respondents household

Land Size (acres)	Wife	Co-wife	Self head of house hold	Unmarried daughter	Daughter in-law	Widowed sister	Widowed mother	Total
Landless	38	-	16	10	3	-	-	67
0.1-2.5	17	-	5	2	1	-	-	25
2.6-5.0	11	-	2	3	4	-	1	21
5.1-10.0	5	-	-	1	2	-	-	8
10.1-20.0	2	-	-	5	-	-	-	7
20.1 and above	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	3
Total	73	-	23	23	10	1	1	131

Total sample : 157
 Non-worker : 10
 Non-EGS : 16
 Valid sample : 131

While there is more of an every sort be it wives, daughters, daughters-in-law amongst the landless working at site, it is interesting to see that it is mainly the unmarried daughter who goes out to the site amongst the higher land classes. In the land class 10-20 acres, 5 out of a total 7 women workers are unmarried daughters.

Another noteworthy observation is that amongst the poorest a high percentage of women are primary bread winners and heads of households. 23 out of 131 workers i.e. 18% are heads of households. Also 16 out of 38 married women are head of households amongst the landless making the percentage 40.

Table No. 21

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF WAGES

YEAR	EGG WAGES PER MANDAY, RS.		AGRICULTURAL WAGES (MAHARASHTRA), RS. PER DAY				
	At current Price	Base-1960-61 Increase	At Current Prices At Constant Price	At Current Prices Increase		At Constant Prices Real Wage(1960-61)	
			Real wages (Rs.1.00)	Male	Female	Male	Female
1976-77	2.87		.93	---	---	---	---
77-78	3.3		1.03	---	---	---	---
78-79	3.61 (100)		1.14	3.85 (100)	2.59 (100)	1.22	.81
79-80	4.36 (120)		1.19	4.2 (109)	3.1 (120)	1.15	.85
80-81	5.4 (149)		1.4	4.4 (114)	3.3 (129)	1.14	.86
81-82	6.28 (174)		1.32	---	---	---	---
82-83	7.8 (216)		1.71	6.7 (174)	4.00 (156)	1.47	.89
83-84	9.41 (233)		1.62	8.41 (218)	5.72 (221)	1.62	1.10
84-85	8.3 (230)		1.56	---	---	---	---

Sources: 1: ESS Statistical Information Book, Planning Dept. Page 4, table 1.5

2: Agricultural Wages in India, Directorate of Economics & Statistics.

WAGES RATE (RS/DAY)

Table - 22

	TOTAL	TOTAL	DIFF
	RESPON	RESPON	
	FEMALE	MALE	-%
AHAMAD MASAR			
Agri.Labour	6.27	9.10	
E.S.S.	6.12	6.66	
Other Work	8.43	10.93	
B E E D			
Agri.Labour	4.92	9.00	
E.S.S.	7.17	9.76	
Other Labour	5.34	11.11	
D H U L E			
Agri.Labour	5.02	5.14	
E.S.S.	7.94	8.45	
Other Work	7.59	12.00	
SHANDARA			
Agri.Labour	6.58	7.18	
E.S.S.	7.13	8.23	
Other Work	6.89	8.70	

Table No. 23

WAGE RATE OF PARTICIPANTS *Differential between Unemployed*

DISTRICTS	CATEGORY	NO. OF PERSONS		AVERAGE RATE RS.		DIFF. %	M I N .		M A X .	
		FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE		FEMALE	MALE	FEMA	MALE
BESAR	E. G. S.	81	23	6.12	6.66	9	6.50	6.50	13.50	13.50
	Agri. Labour	72	73	6.27	9.10	45	5.50	5.50	10.00	13.50
	Other Labour	36	9	8.43	10.93	30	5.50	4.50	13.50	13.50
BED	E. G. S.	87	27	7.17	9.76	36	4.50	5.50	13.50	13.50
	Agri. Labour	105	32	4.92	9.00	83	2.50	4.50	6.50	13.50
	Other Labour	25	9	5.84	11.11	90	2.50	7.50	10.00	13.50
BULE	E. G. S.	98	21	7.94	8.45	6	2.50	2.50	13.50	13.50
	Agri. Labour	85	32	5.02	6.14	22	2.50	2.50	10.00	19.00
	Other Labour	6	4	9.53	12.00	25	2.50	7.50	13.50	13.50
BODARA	E. G. S.	97	31	7.13	8.23	15	2.50	2.50	13.50	13.50
	Agri. Labour	90	37	5.59	7.19	29	2.50	4.50	10.00	13.50
	Other Labour	74	15	6.39	7.70	12	2.50	2.50	10.00	13.50

Table No. 24

ECONOMIC CATEGORWYWISE REGISTRATION OF
EMPLOYMENT SEEKERS (as on 31-10-84)

(figures in Lakhs)

ECONOMIC CATEGORY	Registration no. (in lakhs)	Percentage To Total
(i) Landless	19.63 (47)	45
(ii) Small/Marginal land holders	13.70 (47)	32
(iii) Big land holders	9.93 (46)	23
(iv) Grand Total	43.26 (47)	100 ====
(v) Below Poverty Line H H S	26.71 (46)	62
(vi) Above Poverty Lline H H S	16.55 (47)	38
(vii) Grand Total	43.26 (47)	100 ====

(Figures in brackets indicate percentage of women
Employment seekers)

Table No. 25
 ABSTRACT OF WORKFORCE BY CURRENT ACTIVITY STATUS

IN LAKHS

CURRENT ACTIVITY STATUS	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PERSON DAYS	
	MALE	FEMALE
1) Total Population of Age (15-59) years (census)	180.46	166.02
2) Main Workers (Census)	110.55	63.61
Percentage to total Population (age 15-59)	60.00 %	38.00 %
3) Total Labour Force (oyal Working)	95.42	57.94
Percentage to Main Workers	87.00 %	89.00 %
4) Total Un-employed main Workers	13.68	6.76
Percentage of unemployed to Main Workers	12.00 %	10.00 %
5) Casual Labour in Non-agricultural activity	4.21	2.52
Percentage to Total Labour Force	4.00 %	4.00 %
6) Casual Labour in Cultivation	23.59	21.31
Percentage to Total Labour Force	24.00 %	36.00 %
7) Casual Labour in other Agricultural Activity	2.49	1.77
Percentage to Total Labour Force	2.00 %	3.00 %
8) Self Employed in Cultivation	38.76	25.21
Percentage to Total Labour Force	40.00 %	43.00 %
9) Self Employed in Other Agricultural Activity.	4.61	2.67
Percentage to Total Labour Force	4.80	4.60 %

Source: NSS, 38th round, 1983, unpublished report

Maharashtra

Table No. 26

PEAK & LEAN MONTHS ATTENDANCE

Based on Averages of Monthly Attendance During Eight Years

DISTRICTS	PEAK Month	PEAK Attendance	LEAN Month	LEAN attendance	DIFFERENCE
Ahmednagar	July	87500	October	54000	33500
Beed	July	36000	November	14000	22000
Dhule	March	63000	March	17000	46000
Bhandara	April	83000	August	5000	78000

Table - 27

: Average time disposition of EGS respondents in gainful work (single or multi occupation

Single/Multi time disposition	Non-workers	Single occupation	Multi occupation	Total number of workers in each time category
Less than 2 hours	-	-	-	-
2-4 hours	-	2	-	2
4.1-6 hours	-	14	4	18
6.1-8 hours	-	62	45	107
8.1 and above	-	-	1	1
No response to disposition of time	10	12	7	29
Total	10	90	57	157

Total Sample : 157
 Non-workers : 10
 Non-response to time disposition in gainful activities : 19
 Valid sample : 157 - (19 + 10) = 128

Out of an effective sample of 128 workers 84% work at gainful activity for 6-8 hours a day. There are more women single occupation workers in this category 48%, than amongst the multi occupation group. Where a minimum of 8 hours seem necessary for reaching the output required for payment, hardly anyone works less than 4 hours or above 8.

Table 28

Respondents age and time disposition in domestic work

Time Disposition/ age	0 Hours	Less than 2 hours	2 - 3 hours	3.1-4 hours	4.1-5 hours	5.1-6 hours	6.1-8 hours	8.1 hrs & above	No res- ponse to time dis- position	Total
Below 15	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	4
15-19	-	2	9	2	2	1	2	-	4	22
20-29	-	-	8	6	5	3	1	1	7	31
30-39	-	1	8	11	6	8	2	1	3	40
40-49	1	-	11	17	2	3	3	-	10	47
50-59	-	-	5	4	1	2	-	-	-	12
60 and above	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Total	1	4	41	41	16	17	10	2	25	157

Total Respondents : 157
 Total non-response : 25
 Total valid sample : 132

Domestic work seems to take upto 4 hours of most (62%) workers whereas 32% report spending 4-8 hours on domestic work. While it would have been expected that those in the age group 15-29 or 50 and above would do more domestic work as the core group 30-49 go to works, it is again this core group which puts in 2-4 hours domestic work also.

Table No. 29

NO OF HOURS SPENT PER DAY

(ALL DISTRICTS)

ACTIVITY	FEMALE MEMBERS	MALE MEMBERS	ALL MEMBERS
WATER FETCHING %	.90 82	.20 18	1.10 100
FIRE WOOD COLLECTION %	.90 82	.20 18	1.10 100
FODDER COLLECTION %	.90 56	.70 44	1.60 100
LIVE STOCK REARING %	.50 28	1.30 72	1.80 100
ALL ACTIVITIES %	2.10 66	1.10 34	3.20 100

Table - 30

NO OF HOURS SPENT PER DAY BY FEMALE RESPONDENTS

(ALL DISTRICTS)

A C T I V I T I E S	F E M A L E R E S P O N D E N T	T O T A L H O U S E H O L D	N O . O F P E R S O N D A Y S S P E N T I N A Y E A R
WATER FETCHING % to Total H.H.hours	.90 82	1.10 100	48
FIREWOOD COLLECTION % to Total H.H.hours	.80 73	1.10 100	41
FODDER COLLECTION % to Total H.H.hours	.80 50	1.60 100	44
LIVE STOCK REARING % to Total H.H.hours	1.10 61	1.80 100	58
ALL ACTIVITIES % to Total H.H.hours	2.10 64	3.30 100	191