

# Multiple Work Status of Women in the Informal Economy



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## Multiple Work Status of Women in the Informal Economy

There is an ongoing debate on how to deal with poverty in the area of liberalisation and Globalisation. Unfortunately many of the solution being proposed do not really correspond to existing situations, especially in developing countries. This has led to the exclusion of the majority of the poor who work in the informal economy from the solution being proposed, not because there is any intention to exclude them, but, just because they do ' fit in '. One of the ways in which the workers in the informal economy do not ' fit in ' is that many of them are not confined to one sector or to one type of work, but vary their work depending on the season or the availability of work. In other words a worker engages in many types of work throughout the year.

However, especially for poor women, the income they earn from any one type of work, is usually insufficient to meet their needs. So they are forced to do more than one type of work even within the course of a day. In SEWA we faced the problem both in classification as well as in programming. Should a woman who sells vegetables and also makes kites at home be classified as a vegetable vendor or as a kite maker ? Will she be covered by social security fund for homebased workers ?

### Method of Study

In order to understand the problem a simple questioner was devised which covered 4750 urban and rural woman of which 3750 were rural and 960 were urban. The information was collected along with collecting the SEWA membership fee.

### Multiple Work

Most member women are found doing more than one type of work at a time.

20.4% women are found doing just one type of work.

40.0% women are found doing two type of work.

25.2% women are doing three types of work at a time.

### Women are doing type of work four or more type of work

No. of types of work	No. of women working	Percentage
Doing one work	986	20.4
Doing two work	1900	40.0
Doing three work	1199	25.2
Doing four work	492	10.4
Doing five work	159	3.3
Doing six work	6	0.1
Doing Nine work	26	0.5
Doing ten work	1	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4750</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From above table we can see that in the present conditions of our country, women are ready to do and are doing whatever work they get and what ever work they are able to do to improve their economic conditions. To run their family women are doing various types of work in a day. In the urban area since the closure of the mills in Ahmedabad many people became jobless resulting in loss of family income and women had to work in work nearer , to satisfy the household needs.

### **Workers: Only one type of work**

In this study only 20.4 percentage of women were found engaged in only one work. Many women are engaged in different works such as Vegetable selling, Readymade garment, Bidi, Tailoring work, Factory worker, Paperwork, Embroidery work, Farm Labour, Daily Labour, Service & Kite maker and other as shown below.

### **WOMEN INVOLVED IN ONE WORK ONLY**

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>No. of women</b>
Daily labour	105
Field labour (agriculture)	426
Bidi worker	74
Vegetable vendors	53
Tailor	43
Readymade	43
Head loads	23
Paper work	31
Construction labour	21
Service	13
Kite	12
Embroidery	11
Other works	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>986</b>

### **Vegetable Vendors doing More then one type of work**

There are many other different types of work that a hard working woman does during a day, which could be seen from this study. For example vegetable vendors are involved in many other different types of work as seen in the table below:

<b>Types of work</b>	<b>No. of women</b>
Vegetables selling and Tailoring	11
Vegetables selling and Cloth selling	6
Vegetables selling and Household work	3
Vegetables selling and Embroidery	4
Vegetables selling and Head loaders	2
Vegetables selling and Running S.T.D. , P.C.O.	1
Vegetables selling and Beauty Parlour	1

Early morning these women buy vegetables and go to sell it. In the afternoon they do some other work. In the evening they separate the stale / spoiled vegetables & again go to sell them. At night also they are doing some other work along with their household work. Many of them do work in their houses itself along with their routine household work.

### **Paper piker doing more then one type of work**

Paper piker doing women are also involved in many other works also such as making files, sweeping and scrubbing, cleaning work, box making, plastic bag making, cloth vendors, selling Readymade clothes, putting sari fall work, making clips, selling soaps, water-huts, tailoring work, they also run small shops etc.

<b>Types of work</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>
Paperwork and wood and iron picking	11
Paperwork and file making sweeping and scrubbing work	18
Paperwork and bags and box making	26
Paperwork and cooking	22
Paperwork and cloth vendor	3
Paperwork and cleaning work	3

At dawn women pick paper on coming home they do their household work after that they go and do some other work also. These women on returning in the evening sort out the papers they picked in the morning. Other family members also help them in this work. Then they go to sell the paper in the market. Thus these women do their household work also.

### **Manjulaben involved in several works:**

My name is Manjulaben Atmarambhai Rawat. I have settled in Ahmedabad after my marriage, since last 20 years. I am 38 years old and since last 10 years I am member of SEWA.

I was born in Ghumasan village of Mehsana District. Parents economic condition was not good so at the age of 8 years I started helping them is making broomsticks. I also use to go to the villages to sell them off.

After that I was married in Ahmedabad. Husband was working in a mill in Ahmedabad. He was staying alone in a rented house. I had three daughters. My husband was getting good salary and so our economic condition was good. Suddenly all the mills of Ahmedabad started closing down and my husband's mill also closed down in 1987. It was hardly 5 years of service and so he didn't get any compensation. So there was a need of doing some other work. In the beginning he started going to factories, but his salary was only Rs. 20/- which was not enough for the family. He suffered from T.B. due to continues work in the factories and due to lack of proper and regular food and medicines he died.

Now all the responsibility of house and daughters was on my shoulders and I started picking papers so that I can take care of daughters and house and do work also. Beside this work, I started doing others work also which I am still doing. My routine starts early morning where I go to sell milk, then I go to a nearby house to do the household cleaning , from there I return home at 10 am. Cook food and go to pick papers, again at 4 pm. I sit to sell chocolates and biscuits. Then I go to the sell the papers to the contractor. After that while my daughters are doing the household work I go buy the ration for cooking from the money got after selling papers and ask them to cook while I go to the to nearby house and do their household work. Then at 9 pm. I come home, we have dinner and by 11 pm. go to bed so that we can start our day early the next day. I become very tired after doing four works a day. While picking paper I have to walk at least for five k.m. In the night my legs nervous stress and pains, due to do doing bungalows household work my hands nervous also stress and pains. I have backache also. I suffers from many other diseases.

In this way I do get very tired doing 4 jobs simultaneously. I walk nearly 5 kms. Daily for picking papers. At night my legs pain due to this. I suffer from back pain also doing the household work in the nearby house.

But I have to suffer and do work because I have to take care of my house and marry my three daughters also. For that I have to save as well. This is my life.

### **Stitching Work doing More than one type of work**

Similarly women doing tailor work are also involved in Readymade garments, Daily labour work, Cleaning work, T.V. Repairing, Beauty Parlour, Embroidery work, Ironing etc. We can say that some women do tailoring permanently while some get this job only during season.

Stitching work	43
Stitching work and Embroidery	38
Stitching work and Readymade	7
Stitching work and selling	5
Stitching work and household work	4
Stitching work and foal beading	3
Stitching work and small shop	3
Stitching work and embroidery and clothes vendor	3
Stitching work and cleaning and making rachis and making Bangles	3
Stitching work - Beauty Parlour and Embroidery	3
Stitching work and Henna designing	2
Stitching work and Readymade and making hair clips and Embroidery and making mattresses	2
Stitching work and filling and lime tubes	2
Stitching work and Beauty Parlour	2
Stitching work and Embroidery and making silver necklace and Agarbatti and papad	2
Stitching work and painting work	2
Stitching work and T.V. repairing	1

Stitching work and Papad and preparing spices (masala)	1
Stitching work and Factory	2
Stitching work and Kitchen work and stitching mattress	2
Stitching work and Cleaning and Ironing work and selling chocolates and biscuits	1
Stitching work and Embroidery and Tuition and Steno graph and Typist	1
Stitching work and Painting and kindergarten	1
Stitching work and Acid business	1

### **Agricultural Labour doing More than one type of work**

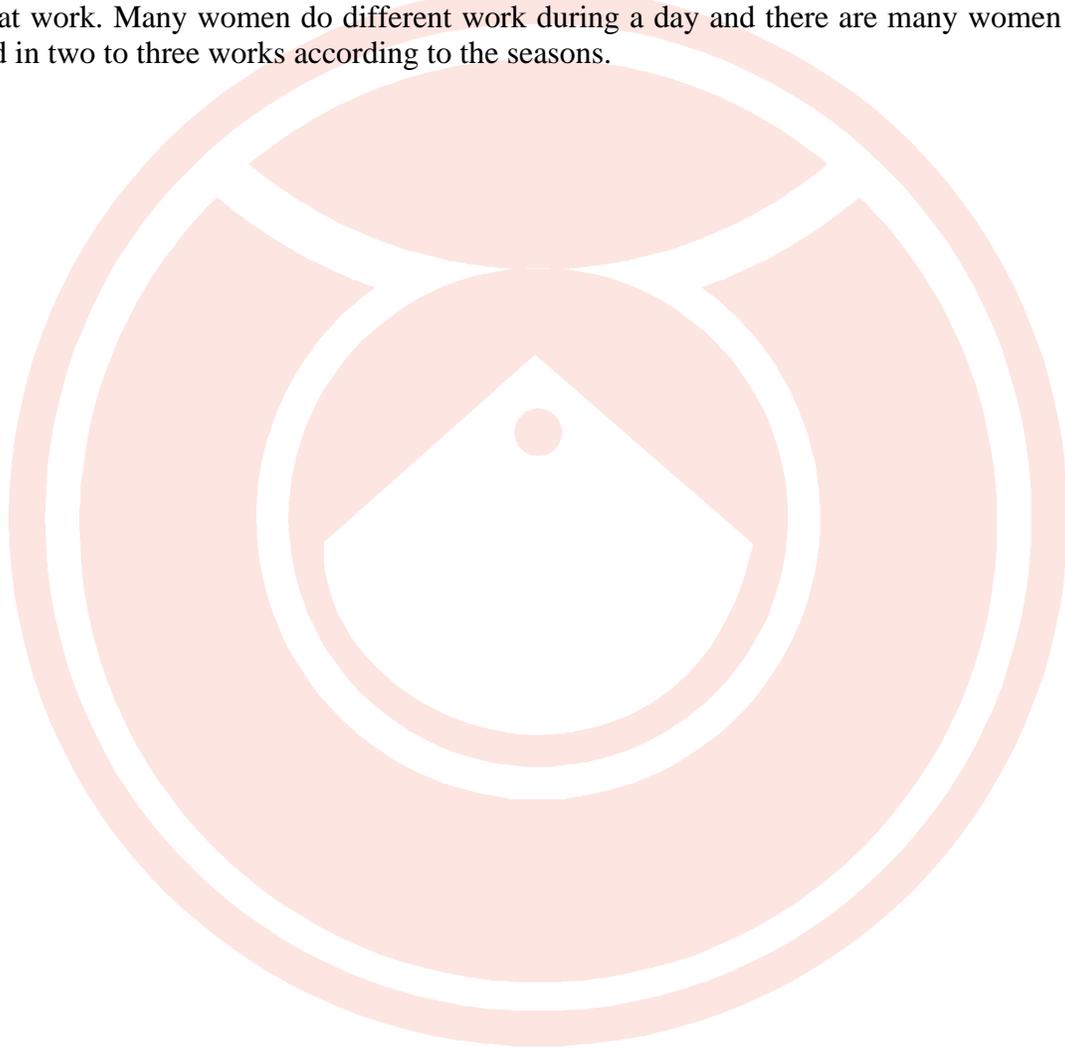
Women doing agricultural field work do other work such as Poultry farm, Glass picking, File work, Cattle rearing, Milk production, Dai work (midwives), Nursery, Tailoring work, Patchwork, Vegetable vendor, Embroidery etc. during a day.

<b>Types of work</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>
Agricultural labour and cattle rearing	777
Agricultural labour and farming and cattle rearing	680
Agricultural labour and Clay work and cattle rearing	114
Agricultural labour and Milk Production	83
Agricultural labour and clay works, cotton seed worker, cattle rearing	58
Agricultural labour and clay work, daily labour work, cattle rearing	47
Agricultural labour and tailoring	42
Agricultural labour and cleaning work	21
Agricultural labour and clay work and cotton seed worker.	20
Agricultural labour & Fertilizer work, clay work, cattle (maneuver) rearing	145
Agricultural labour and sand work, fertilizer work & tobacco work	33
Agricultural labour and thrashing work	39
Agricultural labour and Daily labour, papad cereal work, carrot, chilli, mango breaking work, dhoop making and tailoring work	43
Agricultural labour and clay work and Paper work	34
Agricultural labour and clay work	23
Agricultural labour and Farming and Farm labour	78
Agricultural labour and Farm labour, cattle rearing, cleaning work	41
Agricultural labour and Cleaning, Embroidery	13
Agricultural labour and Farm labour, cattle rearing, milk production & banana work	25
Agricultural labour and Farm labour, Embroidery, sand work, labour work, cattle rearing	16

From above data, one can say that in villages women do various types of work, though work differs according to season.

From this study, we come to know that women are engaged in more than one work. But there are some women who are still doing one work only, that may be because they might be earning enough from one work or they want to do other work but don't get it or they don't have the skill to do that particular work.

From this study we come to know that hard-working women are mostly engaged in more than one work. But they don't take into account the other work they are doing though they might be earning from that work. Many women do different work during a day and there are many women who are engaged in two to three works according to the seasons.



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