

## Chapter – 2

### WORK AND ECONOMIC LIFE

**We learn about the following in this chapter:**

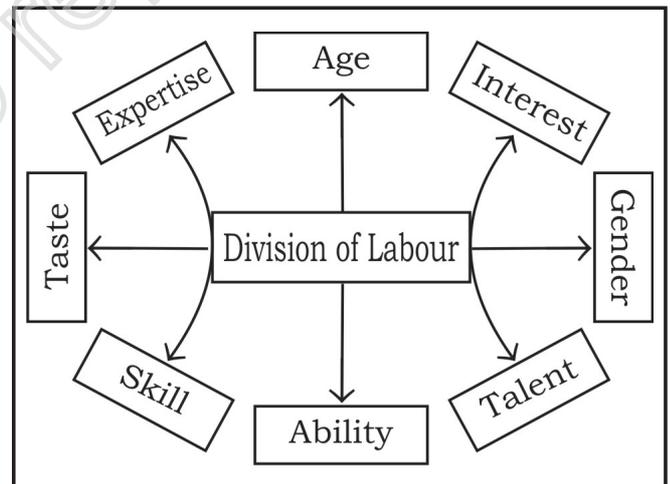
- *division of Labour and classes*
- *discrimination in labour*
- *Unemployment – types, reasons, consequences and solutions.*
- *organized and unorganized labourers*

Labour is an act performed to achieve a particular goal. If an individual is able, through the exercise of his energy or effort, to get economic benefit or any other benefit in material form, it is called labour.

Labour is an integral part of our economic life. It is essential to lead one's life. Labour is related to the external purpose of material benefit and involves effort. In addition to this, there is also the factor of fulfillment of basic requirements of life. Depending upon the economic life, the work assumes various forms and varies from society to society. It also varies from time to time.

#### **Division of Labour and classes:**

Division of labour means work being done by people depending on their interests, tastes, abilities, age, expertise, skills and gender. For example, the cloth that we wear is manufactured by the collective effort of agriculturists, weavers, dyers, traders and tailors who work at different places.



Division of labour leads to specialization. Specialization means achieving sufficient expertise, training and skill in any particular field. Division of labour has helped people to work in various fields and earn economic profit. This has led to the creation of economic strata and class system has been created by Division of Labour. In modern days class system was created by industrialization.

In today's industrialized society, specialization has become very important. With specialization developing in every field, industries have grown in number. Trade and commerce have expanded. Due to this, certain individuals have been able to invest money and become rich by gaining a lot of profit. This has led to formation of strata in society.

### **Paid work and unpaid work:**

Work that provides wages, salary or any other material benefit is called 'paid work'. Engaging in various activities like ploughing in fields, working in factories, teaching in schools, constructing buildings, repairing vehicles etc. has become inevitable in today's complex society.

All human activities cannot be called work. Any activity undertaken for self-satisfaction cannot be called work. It is an activity without material benefit. Activities indulged in without any definite purpose, but which give mental satisfaction are called unpaid work. Ex: an artist painting a picture for his own satisfaction. etc., But in the caste and race system black and lower caste people were forcefully working without pay.

### **Labour Discrimination**

Inequality at work and in wages is called labour discrimination. Although both men and women are engaged in work, their jobs may not be the same. In most countries of the world including India, men are offered better jobs. Similarly, higher responsibilities and remuneration are also extended. Women get lesser responsibilities and remuneration. However, in the governmental sector, discrimination is rare. It is found more in unorganized sector.

There is another form of discrimination as regards work of men and women. Nowadays, women are taking up employment in huge numbers. However, there is discrimination in the remuneration given to them. Though they do exactly the same kind of work as men, the fact that they are being paid less is nothing but exploitation. To put an end to this problem, the Central Government

has enacted Equal Wages Act in 1976. In the organized sectors of major cities, this sort of discrimination is coming down.

Even the agricultural sector practices discrimination based on gender, age and ability. Here too, there is inequality in the payment of wages. As literacy is slowly improving, this kind of discrimination is coming down.

## **Unemployment**

One of the major problems that is haunting the country's economic development and social structure is unemployment. Backward and developing countries are already in its stranglehold. In India, this has become a serious problem. Unemployment means inability to get work in spite of proper age, ability and interest. Those who are willing to work but are denied an opportunity to do so, are called unemployed.

Different kinds of unemployment can be seen. They are: semi-unemployment, hidden unemployment, technical unemployment, intermittent unemployment, optional unemployment, unemployment of the educated and uneducated unemployment etc.

Shortage of qualified people, physical inability, over-population, mechanization, strikes and closures of factories are causes for unemployment.

Unemployment leads to poverty, ill-health, crimes, corruption, family disintegration, cheating, deception, robbery, prostitution etc. This is a serious social malady and is worsening day by day.

### **Do you know this?**

*The time has come to change the popular saying: 'Udyogam purusha lakshanam' (A job defines a man) to 'Udyoga manava lakshanam' (A job defines a human being). In the changed atmosphere, due to the spread of literacy, women are also getting equal employment opportunities, wages as well as facilities. Moreover, we see a lot of competition between men and women in the employment field. Today, the government is planning many projects to empower the women.*

## Remedies for unemployment:

To tackle the problem of unemployment, the government has planned many programs. They are: population control, encouragement to cottage industries, agricultural development, industrial development, educational reforms, five-year plans, encouragement to vocational education, rural development, employment-guarantee programs etc. In recent years, information technology has made significant progress in the country resulting in innumerable employment opportunities in the service sector.

### Discuss :

*Unemployment is not a problem. Though there are opportunities for employment, we create unemployment by not utilizing those opportunities.*

### Do you know this?

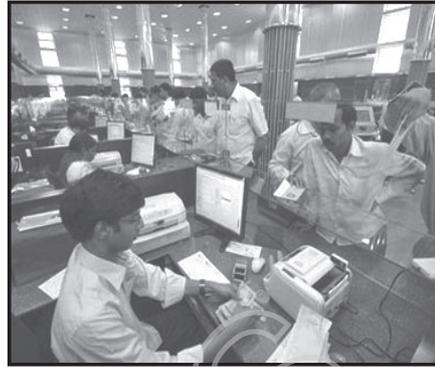
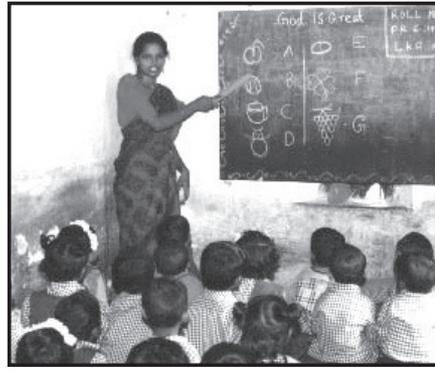
*Today rural areas are witnessing a shortage of qualified, employable youth rather than lack of employment opportunities. The reason for this phenomenon is that the rural youth are migrating to the cities in search of better employment opportunities, thereby creating an acute shortage of hands in the agricultural sector. Similarly, in the cities, there is a shortage of skilled people.*

## Organised And Unorganised Workers

**Organised Workers :** Those who are working in specific fields which are governed by legal rules and regulations are called Organized workers. In the organized sector, every employee's work is subject to specific terms and conditions.

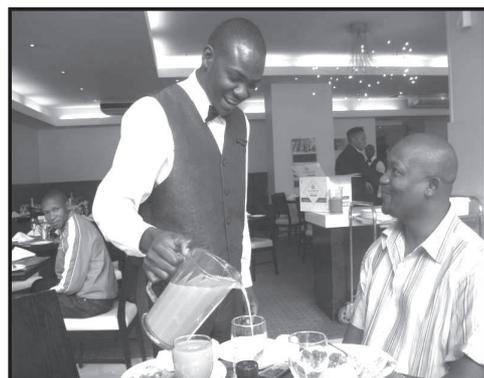
In the organized sector, there is organizational hierarchy. The workers enjoy facilities of specialization, training, talent, experience and educational qualifications. These employees' day to day transactions are recorded in written form. They get fixed wages, allowances, paid leave and pension facilities. In addition, they get medical facility too. They have specific hours of work.

The workers in insurance companies, educational institutions, banks armed forces were identified as organised workers.



**Unorganised Workers** : People who work in areas which are not governed by specific rules and regulations or unions, and lead their lives by earning daily wages or material benefit in any other form, are called unorganized workers. Since unorganized sector is very vast, it is not under governmental control.

For ex: domestic servants, construction workers, agricultural labours, footpath hawkers, vehicle repairers, push-cart vegetable vendors etc also come and this group.



**Problems of Unorganized workers :** The work of unorganized workers is not bound by any rules or regulations. They get only wages for their work without any additional facilities or medical help. They are denied job security, fixed wages and allowances. Sometimes unorganized workers were harassed by entrepreneurs.

### EXERCISES

#### I Fill in the blanks with suitable words:

1. Division of labour leads to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Workers without special training are called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Workers who have special training and expertise are called \_\_\_\_\_.

#### II Answer the following in one sentence each:

1. What is 'division of labour'?
2. What is 'paid work'?
3. What is the meaning of 'Unemployment'?
4. What are the reasons for unemployment ?
5. What are the effects of unemployment?

#### III Discuss the following in groups and answer them:

1. What are the types of unemployment?
2. Explain the nature of discrimination at work.
3. What are the measures for removal of unemployment?
4. What are the differences between organized and unorganized workers?

#### IV Activity.

1. Make a list of organised and unorganised labours in your area.

#### V Project :

1. Conduct an Interview with unorganised labours and prepare a report about their problems.

