

Work

Definition---> work is a distinctive clear-cut activity, which refers to our personal job or occupation in order to fulfill certain activity /labour in a determinate place .

Sociologists have argued how to define paid employment and they identified two division for work done within the economy :

The formal economy---> includes the official paid employment, these are paid weekly or monthly with a salary . Self- employed are paid directly from customers and are asked to pay their own national insurance contributions .

The informal economy---> is the non officially recorded work and is divided in three different parts:

The hidden economy- which is the work done in hand for cash and non recorded on an official pay slip.

Domestic economy- work done at home which includes childcare and unpaid housework

Communal economy- unpaid work .

HOUSEWORK is boring, monotonous and mundane; is mostly done by women and it is said to be low status .

Paid employment

People work in paid employment for different and varied reasons : to find company and friendship through work mates, for status and identity, for job satisfaction and for money .

People might find intrinsic satisfaction within their work, this is found when people find their job interesting, take pride of it and feel fulfilled by it . On the other side, people might work in paid employment solely for money reasons as they don't enjoy their job and to compensate joy they spend their income on leisure activities, clothes and holidays; this means that they find satisfaction outside employment, their satisfaction is extrinsic to their job .

People may also work in paid employment as they find interesting and valuable being in company of colleagues and workmates; for social contacts; and finally as a source of status, prestige and identity, as being regularly paid provides self-esteem by contributing with money to the household .

Technological development at work

Mechanization and automation at work: Over the past 250 years, technological changes have influenced a lot on what has to do with economy and production of goods and services . Since 1750 approximately, the processes of industrialization, mechanization and automation had been a great impact on work, levels of job satisfaction and types of employment .

In the past, the production of goods was based on rural areas and hand made by human producers, over time technology has changed this, production became

mechanized on factories or towns, mechanization became linked to the production of system called division of labour in which each worker has a specific task to do in and workers are not anymore involved in the whole production process . Goods were now mass produced as they had the machinery help rather than relying on the physical and mental labour of a human. Mechanization benefited the customer, the goods were cheaper and people were only needed for certain tasks, such as turn on the machine .

Advantages of automation

- Product costs were reduced and were now cheaper and faster than what they were before.
- Unpleasant dangerous tasks are done by machines ---> safer work environment
- quality of goods and standard of services are improved .
- New jobs created in computer technology to skilled workers
- More people can work from home
- reskilling created by the new technology .

Disadvantages

- It replaces workers, leading to unemployment, replaces both skill mental labour and unskilled manual labour .
- Little job satisfaction
- Cause deskilling because necessary skills required in many jobs became less complex.
- Mundane repetitive tasks .
- Less pride and interest in the job
- Traditional skills were lost .

Alienation at work

Many people may gain little job satisfaction from their work, Karl Max argued that industrial workers might be alienated from their work emphasizing on the powerless, meaningless, isolation and lack of fulfillment experienced by employees at work .

- Features of Alienation --->
- Lack of power: no power/control over the work process .
 - Lack of meaning: they feel their work has no meaning or purpose.
 - Isolation: they may feel cutoff from communication with others.
 - Lack of fulfillment: they might feel they are not using their abilities and not achieving their potential which leads to little job satisfaction .

Unemployment

How to measure unemployment

There are some issues and disagreement to measure unemployment; there are two main ways: the official UK measurement and the International Labour Organization

measurement. These two ways of measurement will give different figures - this is why unemployment is difficult to assess, because it depends on how we measure it and who do we include or exclude -. The official UK measurement counts those who are claiming and receiving unemployment benefits, these might be available for unemployment and seeking for work. Instead, the ILO counts people seeking for work and who are available to start working in two weeks .

Problems of measuring it---> The official statistics on unemployment tend to underestimate the true level of it . Many people are excluded and not counted, which make measurement more difficult to estimate due to the lack of availability of the statistics. For instance: those who are seeking for job but not claiming benefits are not counted; those youth who still live with their parents are excluded; women who have partners with jobs tend to be excluded, as they aren't eligible for unemployment related benefits . These factors make unemployment difficult to measure and to have a true and valuable level of it as it depends on how you define it and who are the ones included and excluded .

Groups who are likely to experience unemployment

Members of some groups are more vulnerable to unemployment than others; these are for instance, the young, mainly the school leavers who lack of experience and qualifications; the older people, who tend to experience long-term unemployment and suffer ageist discrimination; the minority ethnic groups, this is shown by many researches which have demonstrated that unemployment is much higher within ethnic groups pointing out racism, discrimination as possible explanations; and finally, the less skilled and unqualified.

Regional variations in unemployment---> Unemployment rates vary by region, generally inner-city and former industrial areas tend to have higher rates of unemployment while rural areas are less vulnerable to this .

Causes of unemployment

- The introduction of new technology causes the requirement of fewer employees in automated industries .
- Automation has caused the loss of jobs in both skilled -manual and unskilled-manual labors.
- Decline of manufacturing industries = fewer jobs
- Competition arises while wages are low and working conditions relatively poor within the different countries .
- Economic recessions = many people who have lost their jobs during the 70s and 80s never found paid employment again .

Unemployment affecting individuals

Individuals may be affected by poverty, the loss of status, income, status (lack of it), boredom, familiar tensions and problems, loss of friends, loss of identity and aspirations. The loss of these features are manifested in the standards of living and how their lifestyle may be affected . Unemployment affects different groups in different ways . These groups are: Young people, who may be forced

to continue living with their parents leading to family tension, conflict and stress and social and personal difficulties. Depression arises, feelings of worthlessness, listlessness, social isolation and bitterness are manifested as they find person of the aspect of becoming an adult. Black people might also be affected by the arise of racism, prejudice, discrimination and poor housing; women are also affected suffering from income loss, decline in status, social isolation, lack of confidence and decrease of leisure extracurricular activities while men suffer from loss of confidence and self-esteem and might feel threatened by their gender's identity and status.

Unemployment affecting society

- Unemployment affects society as it is a big economic cost, as public money is spent on social security benefits instead of investing it coherently.
- High rates of unemployment means greater inequality meaning increasing poverty.
- high rates of unemployment weaken the trade unions.
- scapegoating and racism.