

In division of labour.  
the table also



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In most of the traditional societies, child rearing and home maintenance are normally regarded as woman's task, while hunting and fighting are always reserved for man. Sexual division of labour seems to have a biological base especially in simple primitive societies. Thus, men are generally given tasks that require vigorous physical activity such as hunting, fishing in the deep sea, or herding. Women, on the other hand, are assigned tasks that do not require much of physical strength and can be performed close to home. Though this is a typical scene found in most of the societies, there is great cross-cultural variation in the kind of labour that is considered appropriate for men and women.

x American anthropologist George P. Murdock once studied [1935] 224 traditional pre-industrial non-literate societies in an effort to discover regularities in the sexual division of labour. " In these societies warfare, metal working, hunting and trapping, fishing, and trade are predominantly male activities. Cooking, the manufacture and repair of clothing, pottery making, and fire making and tending are predominantly female activities. Agriculture, on the contrary, which includes the preparation, planting, and cultivation of the soil, is an activity shared almost equally by the two sexes. It provides a cross-cultural comparison of the division of labour based on sex. : It makes it clear that there is great cross-cultural variation in the tasks that are considered appropriate for men and women. In many societies, the division of labour is completely different from that of the one that we find in the modern societies.

The general tendency, however, is for man to be responsible for tasks involving strenuous effort or great hard work and for women to be

responsible for tasks that can be performed near the home. : The Table reveals that the gender roles are not necessarily innate. Further, gender roles are not wholly determined by a society's relationship to its environment. Although all hunting-gathering societies sent men out to hunt while women cared for the home, in early agrarian societies there was a less rigid division of labour. The table also shows that " as societies evolve from hunting and gathering to agrarian production and the demands of pregnancy and child-rearing are less limiting, the division of labour by sex becomes more varied, although women tend to specialise in household tasks and men in tasks that take them outside home" : The cross-cultural study of division of labour by sex makes it evident that gender roles are highly influenced by culture. Male and female roles are not necessarily fixed for all time even though the relationship of earlier societies to their natural environment often required a division of labour by sex. They can and do change as cultures adapt to new environmental and social conditions. The Impact of Technology: As a result of advances in technology, the greater strength of males becomes less important, and it makes less sense to maintain the earlier divisions of labour.

In fact, the modern societies have demanded more involvement of women in a broader range of tasks. This has given rise to a demand that women should not be excluded from access to any roles, including those that are associated with high levels of power and prestige.