

## Division of Labor

Division of labor first originated from the division of workers in different occupations. Now, when the production is done on a large scale with the help of heavy machines, it is split up into a number of processes and many people join to produce an article. It is called the division of labor. For instance, in a large scale readymade garment factory, a man does cutting of cloth, the second man stitches clothes with machines, the third buttons, the fourth makes folding and packing etc. This way of doing the work is called division of labor because different workers are engaged in performing different parts of production.

### FORMS OF DIVISION OF LABOR

Division of labor has been divided into different forms by the economists which can be explained as follows:

**1. Simple Division of Labor.** When the production is split up into different parts and many workers come together to complete the work, but the contribution of each worker cannot be known, it is called simple division of labor. For example when many persons carry a huge log of wood, it is difficult to assign how much labor has been contributed by an individual worker. It is simple division of labor

**2. Complex Division of Labor.** When the production is split up into different parts and each part is performed by different workers who have specialised in it, it is called complex division of labor. For example, in a shoe factory one worker makes the upper portion, the second one prepares the soles, the third one stitches them, the fourth one polishes them, and so on. In this way, shoes are manufactured It is a case of complex division of labor.

**3. Occupational Division of Labor.** When the production of a commodity becomes the occupation of the worker, it is called occupational division of labor. Thus, the production of different goods has created different occupations. The work of farmers, cobblers, carpenters, weavers and blacksmiths is known as occupational division of labor.

**4. Geographical or Territorial Division of Labor.** Sometimes, due to different reasons, the production of goods is concentrated at a particular, place, state or country. This particular type of division of labor comes into being when the workers or factories having specialised in the production of a particular commodity are found at a particular place. That place may be the most suitable geographically for the production of that commodity. This is called the geographical or territorial division of labor. For example, Assam has specialised in the production of tea, whereas the textile industry is localised in Mumbai and the jute production in West Bengal.

## MERITS AND DEMERITS OF DIVISION OF LABOR

**1. Increase in Production.** With the adoption of division of labor, the total production increases. Adam Smith has explained the advantage of division of labor with the help of an example that a worker can produce only 20 pins daily. If the making of pins in a modern factory is divided into 18 processes, then 18 workers can produce 48,000 pins in a single day.

**2. Increase in Efficiency of Labor.** With division of labor, a worker has to do the same work time and again, and he gets specialisation in it. In this way, the division of labour leads to a great increase in efficiency.

**3. Increase in Skill.** Division of labor contributes to the development of skill, because with the repetition of the same work, he becomes specialised in it. This specialisation enables him to do the work in the best possible way, which improves his skill.

**4. Increase in Mobility of Labor.** Division of labor facilitates greater mobility of labor. In it, the production is split up into different parts and a worker becomes trained in that very specific task in the production of the commodity which he performs time and again. He becomes professional, which leads to the occupational mobility. On the other hand, division of labor implies a large-scale production and laborers come to work from far and near. Thus, it increases geographical mobility of labor.

**5. Increase in Use of Machines.** The division of labor is the result of the large-scale production, which implies more use of machines. On the other hand, the division of labor increases the possibility of the use of machines in the small-scale production also. Therefore, in modern times the use of machines is increasing continuously due to the increase in the division of labor.

**6. Increase in Employment Opportunities.** Division of labor leads to the diversity of occupations which further leads to the employment opportunities. On the other hand, the scale of production being large, the number of employment opportunities also increases.

**7. Work According to Taste.** Workers have their own taste in production. For example, a person can take up that type of job for which he considers himself to be the most suitable and which is in accordance with his taste. Division of labor extends the work to such an extent that every person can find work according to his taste and interest.

**8. Work for Disables.** Division of labor splits up the production work in small processes and different persons can work at different places with the help of machines. Certain machines can be operated with the help of hands only and others with the help of foot as well. "Therefore, the disabled persons can also find work according to their suitability.

**9. Best Use of Tools.** In this system, it is not necessary to provide each worker with a complete set of tools. He needs a few tools only for the job in which he can make their best use. Therefore, the continuous use of tools is possible which are used at different stages.

**10. Best Selection of the Workers.** Division of labor helps the employers in the best selection of workers. As the work is divided into different parts and each part is taken up by such a worker who is more suitable for it, the employer can select very easily the man who is best suited for the work.

**11. Saving of Capital and Tools.** Division of labor helps in the saving of capital and tools. It is not essential to provide a complete set of tools to every worker. He needs a few tools only for the job he has to do. Thus there is the saving of tools as well as capital. For instance, if a tailor stitches the shirt, he requires a sewing machine, scissors, etc. But on the basis of division of labor, one can do the cutting and the other can stitch the clothes. In this way, two tailors can work with the help of one pair of scissors and one machine only.

**12. Goods of Superior Quality.** Division of labor is beneficial in making goods of superior quality. When the worker is entrusted with the work for which he is best suited, he will produce superior quality goods.

**13. Saving of Time.** There is no need for the worker to shift from one process to another. He is employed in a definite process with certain tools. He, therefore, goes on working without loss of time, sitting at one place. Continuity in work also saves time and helps in more production at less cost.

**14. Right man at the Right Job.** Division of labor implies splitting up of production into a number of processes. Each person is given the job for which he is best suited. There will be no round pegs in square holes. In this way, a right man is placed at the right job.

**15. Reduction in the Cost of Production.** If a shoe-maker makes himself two pairs of shoes daily, then four shoe-makers can make more than eighth pairs of shoe if they work in cooperation with each other. In this way, division of labor increase production which reduces the average cost of production. Saving of capital, tools and machinery, etc. also help in the reduction of cost of production.

**16. Cheap Goods.** Division of labor helps in mass production. Thus production becomes less expensive and more economical. Therefore, cheaper goods are turned out, which improve the standard of living of the people.

**17. Saving of Time and Expenses in Training.** Under division of labour worker has to train himself in a small part of production. There is no need to learn the whole process of production. It ensures saving of time as well as expenses in training.

**18. Spirit of Co-operation among Workers.** Division of labor gives chances of working under the same roof and with the cooperation of each other. It further gives rise to the feeling of cooperation and trade unionism in their daily lives. The work cannot be completed unless they cooperate with each other. They help each other at the time of adversities as well.

**19. Development of International Trade.** Division of labor increases the tendency of specialization not only in the workers or industries, but in different countries also. On the basis of specialization, every country produces only those goods in which it has a comparative advantage and imports such goods from those countries which have also

greater comparative advantage. Therefore, division of labor is beneficial for the development of international trade also.

### **Its Demerits**

**1. Monotony** Under division of labor, a worker has to do the same job time and again for years together. Therefore, after some time, the worker feels bored or the work becomes irksome and monotonous. There remains no happiness or pleasure in the job for him. It has an adverse effect on the production.

**2. Loss of Joy.** In the absence of division of labor, he feels a lot of pleasure on the successful completion of his goods. But under division of labor, nobody can claim the credit of making it. The work gives him neither pride nor pleasure. Therefore, there is total loss of joy, happiness and interest in the work.

**3. Loss of Responsibility.** Many workers join hands to produce a commodity. If the production is not good and adequate, none can be held responsible for it. It is generally said that 'every man's responsibility is no man's responsibility.' Therefore, the division of labor has the disadvantage of loss of responsibility.

**4. Loss of Mental Development.** When the laborer is made to work only on a part of the work, he does not possess complete knowledge of the work. Thus, division of labor proves to be a hurdle in the way of mental development.

**5. Loss of Efficiency.** Division of labor is sometimes accounted for the loss of efficiency. For instance, if a cobbler goes on cutting the leather for a long time, he may lose the efficiency of making shoes.

**6. Reduction in Mobility of Labor.** The mobility of labor is reduced on account of division of labor. The worker performs only a part of the whole task. He is trained to do that much part only. So, it may not be easy for him to trace out exactly the same job somewhere else, if he wants to change the place. In this way, the mobility of labor gets retarded.

**7. Increased Dependence.** When the production is split up into a number of processes and each part is performed by different workers, it may lead to overdependence. For instance, in the case of a readymade garments factory, if the man cutting cloth is lazy, the work of stitching, buttoning, etc. will suffer. Therefore, increased dependence is the result of division of labor.

**8. Danger of Unemployment** The danger of unemployment is another disadvantage of division of labor. When the worker produces a small part of goods, he becomes specialised in it and he does not have complete knowledge of the production of goods. For instance, a man is expert in buttoning the clothes. If he is dismissed from the factory, it is difficult for him to find the job of buttoning. Thus division of labor has a fear of unemployment.

**9. Increased Dependence on Machines.** As division of labor increases there will be an increased use of machines. Almost all the workers work on different types of

machines. It is difficult for them to work without machines. Thus, division of labor increases the dependence on machines.

**10. Danger of Over-Production.** Over-production means that the supply of production is comparatively more than its demand in the market. Because of the division of labor, when production is done on a large scale, the demand for production lags much behind its increased supply. Such conditions create overproduction which is very harmful for the producers as well as for the workers when they become unemployed.

**11. Exploitation of Labor** Division of labor is concerned with large scale production in big factories which are owned by the capitalists. No poor worker can afford to start his own production. Therefore, they have to seek employment in big factories of the capitalists. These employers pay less wages to them as compared to their marginal productivity, because there is no other alternative to the worker, but to work at very low wages. Therefore, division of labor results in the exploitation of labor.

**12. Evils of Factory system** The modern industrial or factory system has been developed as a result of the division of labor. This system further gives rise to the evils like dense population, pollution, bad habits of gambling and drinking. low standard of living, poor food, clothes and housing, etc.

**13. Employment of Women and Children.** Division of labor results in the large scale production in which children and women are also employed. It is because a simple and small part of the whole task can easily be performed by them. Thus the number of employed women and children increases. They are also exploited by the employers by paying them lower wages.

**14. Industrial Disputes.** The industrial disputes mean strikes by workers, closure of factory, etc. due to clashes between the employees and the employers. Division of labor results in the division of society into workers and employers. The employer always tries to increase his profits by exploiting the workers and workers form trade unions against the employers to put an end to their exploitation or to make them increase their wages. It gives rise to a severe conflict between the employers and the workers in the form of strikes, closures and lockouts of factories.

**Conclusion.** To sum up, we can say that division of labor is beneficial to the workers, to the producers and to the society as a whole. Its merits outweigh its demerits.