

Unit 20

Urban Informal Sector

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Learning Objectives

After you read this unit you will be able to:

- distinguish the formal sector and the informal sector
- describe the different dimensions of the urban informal sector in India
- discuss the growth of small scale industries
- explain the composition of the informal sector; and
- describe the case studies of government workers in the informal section

20.1 Introduction

In this unit we will discuss about the informal sector in the urban areas. The last Census, held in 2001, showed that around 27% of the population resided in urban areas and the rest in rural areas. The labour force in the country numbered 370 million. Of this a mere 7.5% (around 27 million) was engaged in the formal sector while 370 million were engaged in the informal sector. Women constituted one-third of those engaged in the informal sector and one-seventh of those employed in the formal sector. Around than 250 million workers were engaged in the rural informal sector. The urban informal sector comprised around 100 million workers.

In the following section we will discuss about how the informal sector came into prominence. This will be followed by a section on the definition of the informal sector. In the later sections we will take up case studies on this sector, especially those

involving women, as they are the most vulnerable section in the economy. These include the garment industry...

20.2 Formal Sector and Informal Sector

In the previous unit, No. 19 on **Formal Sector** we have already explained the difference between the formal or organized sector and the informal or the unorganised sector of the economy in India. Here again we will repeat some of the details for your clarity.

The distinction between the formal and informal sectors is crucial for understanding employment relations. Workers in the formal sector are engaged in factories, commercial and service establishments and their working conditions, wages and social security measures are legally protected. The wages of formal sector workers are substantially higher than those engaged in the urban informal sector. Moreover, a range of labour laws, guaranteeing permanency of employment and provision for retirement benefits, protect their jobs.

What is noted above is the formal sector, hence the question is: what is the informal sector? One way of answering this question is: workers who are not in the formal sector are in the informal sector. This may not be a satisfactory explanation as far as we are concerned because it is identified through exclusion. We do not know what the characteristics of this sector are.

Interestingly, this is precisely how this sector was described when it was “discovered” by academics and policy makers. In 1970, J. Keith Hart, an anthropologist who specialised in African societies, was working for a research project of the International Labour Organisation. He was studying the labour market in Accra, Ghana. He found that all the wage earners do not come under the labour market rules. Hart was from a developed country where most activities were in the formal sector. Workers worked in large factories, people bought their groceries from departmental stores and other requirements were bought from large departmental stores. There were laws that regulated their employment conditions and workers were to some extent unionised. In other words there were formal relations between workers and employers and workers and the state (Hart 1973).

Hart's research in Accra showed that the situation was quite different there. He found that there were large groups of workers who had no fixed employer. They assembled in the city in the early morning and those who needed day labourers would come there, bargain over the wage and then employ them for short periods, some times as short as one day. He also found that in the market places, there were people who carried their agricultural produce from their homes in the villages and came to the city to sell their wares. These included food grains, vegetables, meat and poultry, fruits, herbs etc. The whole scenario was quite different from what he had seen in the developed countries. It was also quite different from the tribal economies in Africa that he had studied, where trade in commodities was done through exchange.

Hart also found that this section of labour, and micro-traders, played a significant role in the city's economy. Hence he felt that wage employment was there in the urban economy, comprising factory workers, government employees, teachers etc. Alongside this 'invisible' section also was significant for the urban economy. They encouraged rural-urban migration and provided cheap labour and cheap food. For lack of any better description he labelled this section, 'informal sector'. This was in opposite of the formal sector. Hence the term 'informal sector' was born. The ILO popularised it by using it in their employment mission in Kenya.

Hart has noted certain characteristics of the informal sector that make workers in this sector different from the formal sector. These are:

1. Low levels of skill. Workers in this sector have low levels of education and thus they have low skills. This is the reason why they are engaged in jobs involving low technology. Worker in the formal sector have higher degree of skill and their position in the labour is better.
2. Easy entry. Getting work in the informal sector is comparatively easier than in the formal sector. Hart's study shows that any able bodied person, irrespective of the skills possessed can become a day labourer. With minimum investment the same person can become a street vendor and sell her/his wares at the market. The person need not have money to invest in a shop. In this way the informal sector is able to absorb more workers who would normally not get any work because they are either not qualified or they do not have capital for investing in business.
3. Low paid employment. Because of the requirement of low skills and the easy entry, work in the informal sector has low returns. Workers who offer their labour

are not paid high wages. In fact, the biggest grievance against this sector is that the wages are many times below sustenance level. In many cases, low wages drive other members of the family into the informal work force because the main wage earned is not sufficient for sustaining a household. In this sense, children too may be encouraged to join the labour force.

4. The fourth characteristic of the informal sector, according to Hart is that it is largely composed of immigrant labour. Hart found that the informal sector worker in Ghana had come to the city from the rural areas. As mentioned earlier, workers and small traders in the city came from the rural areas in search of a livelihood. He hence included migrant status as a characteristic of the informal sector.

The four characteristics noted by Hart could be taken as the basic features of the informal sector. However, we shall see later, that these describe the informal sector of a peculiar type. This sector has increased in size as well as in variety. Hence these characteristics can no longer be the features of the informal sector in general. They could no, doubt, describe a major section of this sector, but not all sections.

The features laid down by Hart show that the informal sector is the place where people with little skills find some work. Such a situation is not ideal, especially from the developed countries point of view. The underlying belief was that as these countries advance in terms of development, the features would change. The spread of education among all sections of the population will improve skill formation and people will be equipped to get better jobs. The improvement of the economy through industrialisation will throw up new opportunities for skilled workers. Hence as the economy develops in an industrial economy, the informal sector will be gradually absorbed by the formal sector. In other words, more people will get regular jobs in large enterprises. Labourers will be absorbed in the factories and street vendors will be absorbed in the shops, departmental stores and other forms of retailing and so on. The informal sector was thus a transitory sector that would be absorbed in the formal sector.

This is far from reality. We in fact find that the informal sector has grown tremendously, and even developed countries have a growing section of workers who are in the informal sector. In cities in the USA and UK there are a large number of women who stitch clothes or do other types of tailoring activities from home or from

illegal factories. These women are paid low wages and are no different from home-based workers in the developing countries. They are in most cases immigrants from less developed countries and their husbands do not earn enough to maintain the family. These women have to work in such conditions in order to earn some extra income. Naila Kabeer has done a study of Bangladeshi women engaged in the garment industry in London and Dhaka. We shall discuss this later.

Another section of the informal sector is the street vendors. One will find a growing number of street vendors in most cities in the developed countries. These self-employed people are mainly immigrants from developing countries. They work on the streets because they are unable to get regular jobs. Street vendors can be found in almost all cities, in developed and less developed countries. One can find them in crowded market places selling a variety of less expensive goods and food. In cities like New York, London, Berlin and Paris one will come across a large number of street vendors selling food, flowers and durable goods. Most of these people are immigrants from the developing countries who have migrated in search of better life chances.

Street vendors form a very large section of the urban informal sector in developing countries. In India one estimate notes that around 2% of the total urban population is engaged in street vending (GOI 2004). In Delhi there are around 300,000 street vendors while Mumbai has 200,000 and Kolkata a little more than 200,000. The total employment provided through street vending becomes larger if we consider the fact that it sustains certain industries by marketing their products. A lot of the goods sold by street vendors, such as clothes and hosiery, leather and moulded plastic goods, household goods and some items of food, are manufactured in small scale or home-based industries. These industries engage a large number of workers but they could have hardly marketed their products on their own. In this way street vendors provide a valuable service by helping sustain employment in these industries.

The poorer sections too are able to procure their basic necessities mainly through street vendors, as the goods sold are cheap. The study on street vendors conducted by the author showed that the lower income groups spend a higher proportion of their income in making purchases from street vendors mainly because their goods are cheap and thus affordable. Had there been no street vendors in the cities the plight of

the urban poor would be worse than what it is at present. In this way one section of the urban poor, namely, street vendors, helps another section to survive. Hence though street vendors are viewed as a problem for urban governance, they are in fact the solution to some of the problems of the urban poor. By providing cheaper commodities street vendors are in effect providing subsidy to the urban poor, something that the government should have done.

Reflection and Action 20.1

Take five families in your neighbourhood. Find out how many adult members of each family are working outside home (or inside home as in case of women working for an outside agency)

Write a report of two pages on “The Organised and the Unorganised Sector of Economy” based on the findings in your neighbourhood. Discuss your report with your Academic Counsellor and other learners at your study center.

20.3 Dimensions of the Urban Informal Sector in India

Workers in the informal sector do not get most of the security given to formal sector workers. Their jobs are insecure, as most of the laws do not protect them. Though in principle labour laws in India are expected to apply to all sections of industrial labour, there are in-built provisions which exclude large sections of the labour force. The most important law regulating work in industries is the Factories Act. All other laws such as Employees State Insurance Act, Workmen’s Compensation Act, Provident Fund and Family Pension Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, apply only to establishments covered by the Factories Act. This Act is applicable only to manufacturing units which employ a minimum of 10 workers and which use power in manufacturing and a minimum of 20 workers if the unit does not use power. Hence a large section of industrial workers employed in small industries do not have legal protection in their work. Similarly the Shops and Establishments Act, that grants protection in terms of regulation of work, wages and post-retirement benefits, applies to only those establishments employing more than five workers. Here again, the term ‘worker’ refers to a permanent worker and not temporary or casual worker. Hence if a shop or factory employs permanent workers that are below the minimum number and

alongside employs three times the number of casual labour, it will not come under any of the acts.

The self-employed also form a sizable group. These are workers engaged in home-based production, casual day labourers and street vendors etc. While there are estimates of the number of street vendors, there are no estimates of home-based workers as they constitute an invisible section of the workforce. India has till now not ratified the ILO convention on home-based work. One of the main features of this convention is of maintaining a live register of home-based workers. This helps to understand the numbers involved and also in providing for social security. We can thus see that the composition of the labour force in India shows wide contrasts.

The bulk of the country's labour force is engaged in the informal sector. The 1991 Census noted that the total working population in the country was 317 million, of which 290.2 million (91.5 per cent) was in the informal sector while only 26.8 million (8.5 per cent) was in the organized sector. The earnings of the workers in the two sectors differed considerably. Though the organized sector employed only 8.5 per cent of the total labour force, the workers collectively earned around 33 per cent of the country's total wages and incomes (Davalala 1995). Composition of workers in the informal sector showed that an overwhelming majority was in agricultural area. There were 75 million agricultural workers and 110 million small and marginal cultivators who are also engaged as agricultural labour (Dutt 1997: 10). Therefore there were around 100 million workers in the non-farm rural sector and the urban unorganised sector.

The situation has changed since the Census of 1991. In the same year, on 21 July, the government placed before Parliament the new Industrial Policy Statement which proposed restructuring of industries. This was in tune with the policies of structural adjustment in the wake of globalisation. Though these policies led to some increase in employment, they also encouraged downsizing of large industries, out-sourcing of manufacture to small-scale industries and a decline of employment in the formal sector. A report of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, (GOI 2004) has given the figures for 2000 based on the report of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). It carried out a sample survey (55th Round) in 1999-2000 and its results showed that out of total workforce of 397 million, only 28 million workers

are employed in the organised sector and remaining in the unorganised sector. This means that a decade after reforms were introduced employment in the formal sector has been almost stagnant or slightly declined. The *Economic Survey* for 2004-2005 (GOI 2005: 230) states that the total employment in the formal sector on 31 March 2003 was 27 million. In other words employment declined by one million since 2000. Moreover there seems to be no change in employment in terms of numbers from 1991. This means that a decade after reforms were introduced employment in the formal sector has been almost stagnant or slightly declined. The informal sector, on the other hand has grown tremendously. One of the reasons for the decline of the formal sector is closures of the public sector enterprises.

In 1993, around 70% of the workers in the formal sector are employed in government, quasi-government and public sector enterprises (Papola 1994: 34). This proportion fell by one percent in 2003. The *Economic Survey* for 2004-2005 notes that in March 2003 the public sector employed 69% of workers in the formal sector. In fact formal sector employment fell by one per cent because of a decline in public sector employment of 0.8 percent (GOI 2005: 230). The private sector provides employment to only 30% of the labour in the formal sector.

20.4 Growth of Small Scale Industries

While the formal sector shows a negative growth in employment, the small-scale manufacturing sector shows a lot of buoyancy. The annual pre-budget Economic Surveys show that small industries have been growing steadily. The 2004-2005 survey shows that this sector employs around 28 million workers and its employment is growing by over 4% per annum. The total number of workers in this sector alone is more than the employment provided by the entire formal sector. The growth of the small-scale industries is again a thrust area of the industrial policy of 1991. The policy had stated that the small-scale sector would be encouraged to play a dynamic role in growth and employment. The paid up capital for small-scale industry has been increased considerably—from Rs. 2 million to Rs. 30 million. This means that it is possible to upgrade technology and include the high technology industries in this sector. As a result, small-scale industries contribute to 35% of India's export earnings (GOI 2003). This is certainly a good sign, but it could have been appreciated even more if conditions of its labour had not remained pathetic.

The rapid growth of the small-scale industries is due to the above-mentioned policy measures and also due to the restructuring of large industries, especially in the consumer goods and pharmaceutical sectors. These industries were originally based in urban centres like Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata etc. They started closing down their operations through down sizing the labour force and shifting their production to smaller towns. Labour in these areas is cheap, there are no unions and labour laws are not applied as stringently as in the urban-industrial sector. On the other hand, the government, in its bid to promote industrial development of these areas, demarcates special areas called 'industrial development zones' these are operated through the state's industrial development corporation. The concerned state government usually grants an array of incentives to induce industrialists to set up their units in industrial development areas. These include, availability of land at low rent that has industrial sheds (hence saving the small entrepreneur costs of construction) and exemption of local taxes such as sales tax and excise, for a specific period of time (usually for the first five years).

Several large companies take advantage of such offers and they move production from the larger cities to these smaller centres to avail of the benefits that lead to reduction in costs. This does not necessarily mean that the consumers will benefit by getting the goods at cheaper rates. This process is similar to the type of outsourcing in production witnessed between countries of the North and the South. Just as industrial production in Europe and USA is outsourced to the less developed countries; similarly, the large-scale sector in India out-sources its production to the small-scale sector in non-urban areas, as costs are low.

20.5 Composition of the Informal Sector

The above discussion shows that in most Indian cities the urban poor survive by working in the informal sector. Poverty and lack of gainful employment in the rural areas and in the smaller towns drive large numbers of people to the cities for work and livelihood. These people generally possess low skills and lack the level of education required for the better paid jobs in the formal sector. Besides, permanent protected jobs in the formal sector are shrinking hence even those having the requisite skills are unable to find proper employment. For these people work in the informal sector are the only means for their survival. For the urban poor, street vending is one of the

means of earning a livelihood, as it requires minor financial input and the skills involved are low though the income too is low. A large section of street vendors in urban areas are those with low skills and who have migrated to the larger cities from rural areas or small towns in search of employment. Other employment opportunities for the illiterate or semi-literate migrants are working in small factories or workshops having low level of technology, and hence having a greater reliance on physical labour, and casual day labourers in construction sites or other places.

There is another section of the urban population that has joined the informal sector; namely, those once engaged in the formal sector (see Bhowmik 2000, Bhowmik and More 2001 and Breman 2001). These people, or their spouses, were once engaged in better-paid jobs in the textile mills in Mumbai and Ahmedabad and engineering firms in Kolkata. Formal sector workers in these three metropolises have had to face large-scale unemployment due to closure of these industries. Many of them have become street vendors or workers in small factories in order to eke out a living. A study on street vendors, conducted in these cities, show that around 30% of the street vendors in Ahmedabad and Mumbai and 50% in Kolkata were once engaged in the formal sector (Bhowmik 2000). A study conducted by SEWA in Ahmedabad shows that around half the retrenched textile workers are now street vendors. We can hence see that the urban informal sector has a variety of occupations, though incomes are low and social security is non-existent.

The third category of workers in the informal sector is those who are employed in the formal sector. These people are engaged as temporary or casual labour in industries or establishments in the formal sector. In large factories or undertakings one can find permanent workers and also workers who are employed as temporary or casual labour. In many such organisations, there are sections where casual labour is employed. This could be in the canteen or in cleaning. In many companies the security staffs are not employees of the company. They are hired from a separate company. These people are on contract with that security company. They are hence contract workers. Therefore we have casual and contract workers working in the formal sector organisations. In many organisations we will find that contract labour and casual or temporary labour is used extensively.

The employment of such labour is because many companies do not want to increase the number of permanent workers. The reason is that if a worker becomes permanent then the employer has to make provision for provident fund, give gratuity payment at the time of retirement, provide for medical leave and facilities if the person falls ill, allow the person leave with pay for specific reasons and, in many cases, provide for pension after retirement. The most important reason is that the employer cannot remove a permanent worker from his work. In other words, the employer can hire a worker but he/she cannot fire the worker as easily. There is a long legal process involved. On the other hand, temporary and casual workers do not get any of the facilities cited above and they can be removed from their jobs at anytime. In 1993, a book containing case studies in eight industries (Davala 1993) shows that in some industries casual and contract labour form more than half the total number of workers employed in that industry.

The above discussion brings out certain aspects of the informal sector. The overwhelming majority of the work force in India (97%) lies in the informal sector. There are two aspects of this sector. Firstly, a large section of the informal sector comprises the self-employed. These include street vendors, home-based workers, mainly women, who do not always know who their employers are, rickshaw pullers, taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers etc. These form a large section of the informal sector. They are in fact a part of the informal economy.

There is another section that is found within the formal sector. Hence if we talk of the informal sector as a separate and distinct sector that is different from the formal sector then we could be talking of two distinct sectors that are separated from each other. However in this case (informal sector within the formal sector) we find that the two sectors overlap. Hence we could think of talking about informal employment in this case. This would cover employment in the small scale sector and within the formal sector. Similarly the term 'informal economy' captures the small traders, self-employed etc. in the informal sector. We can hence say that the informal sector comprises two parts, namely, informal economy and informal employment.

20.6 Case Studies of Garment Workers

We have till now discussed the concept of the informal sector and what actually comprises this sector. In the following sections we shall try and understand the type of

work and wages in this sector. We shall do this through case studies. These studies will enable us to get a better insight into the people engaged in this sector.

The garment industry is one of the largest employers in the informal sector. With growing consumerism there is a growth in the demand for clothes. The industry caters to all income groups, namely, manufacturing clothes that will be bought by the poor and also high priced designer wear for the upper income group. Besides, there is an ever growing export market. Till 2005 India faced restrictions on exports as important buying countries like the USA and European countries had imposed a quota on Indian export of clothes. After India joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), these restriction were phased out. By January 2005, all restrictions on import of 'multi-fibre' garments by these countries were removed. This has given India a much better opportunity to increase garment exports. Hence the export market too is an important component of the garment industry.

There are two types of informal workers in this industry. Firstly those who stitch clothes in small factories and secondly, those who stitch clothes from home. Home-based workers out number the factory workers. We can take a brief look at the processes involved in garment making.

The home-based workers are exclusively women. They work for contractors who give them work and pay them at piece rates. In other words, the contractor will give the women the cloth for making the clothes and will pay them according to the number of garments stitched. In most cases the women have to pay for the thread. The payment is low, sometimes they make between Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 a day. If the cost of thread increases, their income decreases or they have to stitch more clothes to make up the loss in income. The founder of SEWA, Ela Bhatt, notes in her memoirs (Bhatt 2006: 59-80) that in 1988 the rate for stitching one petticoat was Rs. 2 in Ahmedabad. Bhatt has shown the way these women (mostly poor, belonging to Muslim communities) were exploited by the contractors and the buyers of the clothes.

Reflection and Action 20.2

Visit your local library or study centre library. Find out a book or article describing the plight of the migrant labour which comes from different regions of India to the city in search of employment. Write an essay in about two pages on the "Migrant

Labour and the Informed Sector” in your city/town/town next to your village. Share your essay with other students at your study center.

Stitching has to be done by sewing machines. These are usually operated by hand or foot. However, if the pace has to increase then electric machines are needed. The women own the implements of production. These are the sewing machines, thread, needles and any other implement. If the woman wants to increase production by improving her implements she should have the resources to do so. Hence, if a woman would like to use an electric sewing machine, she would have to buy it from her own resources. Moreover, the additional cost of electricity was borne by her. Bhatt has shown that the women are so poor that any increase in costs of implements means greater indebtedness. In fact she found that most of the women could not even own manually operated sewing machines. They used to take them on rent.

The type of clothes made by these home-based workers is of low quality and cheap. These are mostly bought by the poor. Hence, Bhatt notes that it is these poor garment stitchers who provide clothes for the poor in the city. Bhatt’s work on these women is certainly worth reading.

The other types of workers in this industry are those involved in small factories. These workers are different from the home-based workers. They do not work from home but they work in small factories. The owner provides them with the machines and other implements. One can find such factories in industrial estates in Mumbai, Delhi and most other large cities. The owners usually produce these garments for a large buyer. The clothes manufactured are of superior quality that are either exported or are sold in large retail outlets.

Naila Kabeer, a Bangladeshi researcher from Sussex University, has made an insightful study on women garment workers in Dhaka (Bangladesh) and London (Kabeer 2000). There are around 20 million women engaged in the garment industry. These women work in factories that have modern machines for cutting and stitching fabrics. The women work on electric sewing machines, stitching garments that are exported to the developed countries. They work for eight hours and they are paid wages that are a combination of piece and time. Each worker is given a certain number of garments to stitch. They have to complete the task within the stipulated

time and they are paid wages accordingly. If they work less their wages are deducted. In case they work more than the quota they get some extra money.

The women are from poor households. The wages they are paid are low compared to the long hours they put in. Most of them have low education. Kabeer finds that around 37% of the women have passed primary school, but very few have had studied further. In fact this was the reason why there were no supervisors from the women. Lack of education and poverty has kept them backward. Moreover, Kabeer mentions, women in South Asian countries are hesitant to work outside the household. In the case of Bangladesh, the purdah system that Muslim women are expected to adhere tends to restrict their mobility and binds them to their homes. Kabeer, however, argues that for these poor women, working outside the home is vital for their survival and the survival of their family. The factories have only women workers and they are protected by walls. This makes it possible for the women to work there.

For the impoverished women, working in the factory gives them autonomy in their lives. This has several implications. Kabeer finds that after having an independent income, some of the husbands have stopped beating their wives. The women in turn use this extra money for educating their children or for improving conditions at home. An interesting finding of Kabeer's study is that many of the women invest their money on their daughter's education. This is one of the positive fallouts of working independently because, as in all South Asian countries, in Bangladesh too, the girl child is treated as inferior to the son.

Despite the positive aspects of women and work in the informal sector one cannot overlook its obvious exploitative aspects. There are different tasks in the garment industry, besides stitching clothes. This includes stitching collars to the shirts, sewing buttons on them, checking the quality of the clothes and, ironing them. Stitching of collars and buttons are done by home based working women. Checking for faults and ironing are done in the factory by women. These tasks involve standing for long hours at a stretch and also bending. This has bad effects on the body and the women develop different types of pains and ailments. The wages too are very low but the women accept these conditions because despite low pay because even this meagre salary gives them some autonomy in their homes.

20.7 Conclusion

In the above sections we have tried to explore the various aspects of the informal sector. We started with how this sector came to be recognised and the initial definition by Keith Hart. We also found that this definition had its limitation because the informal sector has shown many more dimensions. The important feature of all writers and planners on the informal sector was that they viewed it as a transitory sector. It would sooner or later be absorbed in the formal sector. The present situation shows that this did not happen. On the contrary this sector has grown tremendously. In fact we find that the new sources of employment are only in the informal sector.

The urban informal sector comprises those low skill entrants who migrate from rural areas and they work in low skilled, low paid jobs in order to survive. In moving from their insecure, poverty ridden life in the village to the city where they are able to get work, but with low wages, they move from one level of poverty to another level of poverty. The other type of workers is those who had held secure better paid jobs but they were retrenched when their organisations closed down. This is the fate of most workers in the larger industries, such as cotton textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemical etc. In most cities we find that the larger industries have closed down leaving hundreds of workers unemployed. These people seek employment in the informal sector. Hence in this case we find that there is a shift from the better paid, secure jobs in the formal sector to the lower paid, insecure jobs in the informal sector. The third type is the self-employed. These include street vendors, home based workers and the casual labourers. Finally, we should also mention about another type, namely, casual and contract workers engaged in the formal sector.

We can therefore see that the informal sector is not only very vast in number but also very varied. It is also a very important part of our economy because if this sector provides cheap goods and labour and their inputs in effect make life easier for the affluent and the middle class in the cities. The urban informal sector is quite a major part of our everyday lives and it is growing every day.

20.8 Further Reading

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