**Conclusion**

This research work has depicted women's labour market conditions in Russia and India and also given the comparative assessments between them. The focus of this study has been mainly on the conditions after 1990. Though the historical background pertaining to women’s labour market situations in both the countries has been taken into purview, this study has dealt mainly with the situations obtaining after the introduction of privatisation, liberalisation, globalization, structural adjustment policies, new economic policies etc. Which has radically, and often violently, restructured the politico-economic conditions of these two nations. In this study an attempt has been made to show how, along with the reform process, the structure of the labour market also got effected. The technique of production process and the absorption of the workers were restructured along with these changes. Most of these changes had a major impact on the women's labour market conditions, which in the process deteriorated their socio-economic status. Women had to face severe discrimination and exploitation in the labour market in both these nations.

This study has also highlighted the fact that even though there existed a number of laws for protecting women's rights and interests, and a lot of programmes and schemes to alleviate their working and living conditions, the overall discriminative practices against women continued
to be the dominant feature for women at the labour market. In both these countries number of policies have been formulated for the upliftment and empowerment of women in general, and women labour in particular. But, the outcome of these policies was hardly visible and rarely put into practice.

The observations revealed that in Russia and in India women have always been actively involved in the work force, whether they worked in the fields, in the factories or in other workplaces where labour was required. But, they rarely received recognition as workers in the economic sense of the term. Distribution of women workforce in both Russia and India clearly demonstrated that women were generally employed in the areas of economic activities where remuneration, career prospects and chances of skill development were marginal or non-existent. The gender-based division of labour within the family led to gender-based division of labour in the labour market too. The lower status of women at the labour market reflected both past prejudices and present struggle to maintain status quo by men placed in better positions. Historical evidences and present instances demonstrate the reality of discrimination against women. The research observations showed that women in both the Russian and Indian societies were prescribed the tasks in every possible manner, within the four walls, except in some areas, which were again formulated to exploit them further. Most of the time women were deprived
of making individual decisions and choices, as they were molded under the full control of men.

The observations and the data also show that as a result of poverty and unemployment in both Russia and India the women have been the worst effected leading to the phenomenon of feminisation of poverty. It has also been recognized that the new economic policies, which relied heavily on high technology, multinational collaborations, export promotions and encouragement to the private sectors, paved the way for a higher degree of concentration of capital and extremely exploitative labour market conditions, which have had serious implications on women.

The reports show that during the last decade women of both these nations have been at the center of the economic crisis and have borne the brunt of adjustment efforts. Apparently, structural adjustment programmes, market reform policies, and privatisation have reduced services essential to family welfare and in many cases reversed female economic gains achieved during the prior decades. Government cuts in social services, including food subsidies have increased the burden on the poor working women, especially for those who headed the households. Many such families have resorted to bare survival strategies. Some of the strategies adopted were: (i) reduction in the family consumption of fundamental necessities, including cut in food; (ii) withdrawal of their
children particularly daughters (in India) from schools; and (iii) sending their children into demeaning and often dangerous work, including prostitution.

Although women's task in household management differed from rural to urban areas, from region to region and also from class to class, their responsibilities in family care in comparison to men remained largely predominant. In both these nation women's dual responsibilities, even in affluent societies, compelled them to work longer hours than men. The statistical enumeration has also not done justice to women's work. Their unpaid work has not at all been accounted for in data collection systems. Besides, some specific types of paid work carried out by women have also been omitted because of the limitations of definition as well as operational methods of these works. Women were not only segregated in various categories of work, but also within these categories they were placed at the bottom of the work hierarchy. Studies have shown that in both Russia and India women tended to gravitate towards "women-oriented" jobs, because employers' choices had a lot to do with the feminisation of certain forms of work. Women in general were provided the jobs of the inferior status and low payment. The most "invisible" of all the works done by women was the domestic work, despite its crucial importance to the society. It continued to be unrecognized, unpaid, undervalued and largely ignored by the law. It has been argued that if domestic work were
to be quantified, it would contribute up to 40 per cent of the gross national product of any industrialized society.

In Russia as well as in India, women were seen working an average of 56 hours a week around the house. Yet, social values were such that most women whose job description read as "housewives" or "mothers" were not considered among the economically active population of the society. It has been estimated that women headed one-third of the households in Russia and in India. However, economic conditions in female-headed households varied considerably. These women were often found to be the most impoverished and the most burdened by the multiple roles they played. Often these households were below the poverty line and contributed to the deepening of feminisation of poverty. Thus, low income and the pressure to sustain in the labour market were the basic problems faced by these women. Long working hours with low wages, uncertainty of employment as well as poor working conditions became part of women's plight in both these countries.

Following were the main characteristics of women's work in both Russia and India during the last decade.

- There existed a clear segregation of tasks performed by men and women in all the sectors of work. Men performed the more skilled work or sold more profitable lines of products while women were
mostly concentrated in the low paid tasks, weather it was in the service sectors, in the skilled jobs or in other activities. It has also been observed that equal wages were not paid to men and women even if both of them performed similar tasks.

- In these two Nations most of the women's work were seen as labour-intensive and involved hard physical work. Whether they were employed primarily as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, their jobs were not secured. On the contrary, they were easily replaced in accordance with the whims or convenience of the employer. The employment situation of both these countries was more or less similar with high unemployment and very few alternative work opportunities. Any attempt towards bargain for better conditions, lead to the replacement of women workers. The fear of being jobless with no income restrained these women workers from asserting their legal rights, even where these existed.

- Despite the fact that women of these nations worked on land, livestock's and in the field of textiles, they seldom owned these resources. They also had limited access to other supportive resources such as working space, market space, license, technology, training, etc. In the absence of assets their access to the capital, both private and public became severely limited.
- Social security provisions in terms of maternity benefits, crèches at the work site, medical, accidental compensation or occupational safety measures were non-existent virtually in all the sectors where women workers were largely employed.

- Observations covering both these societies revealed that women's working day stretched to fourteen or fifteen hours, leaving them with virtually no scope for leisure or any other activities.

- The sexual division of labour that existed in the labour market in both these countries was mainly due to the sexual division of labour in the society. The position allocated to men was that of "public sphere", as the sole "bread earner" while women were supposed to carry "reproductive tasks" like giving birth and caring for children and the family within the house or within the "domestic sphere".

Fredrick Engles gave an important explanation for the sexual division of labour. According to him in the origins of the family, private property and the state, he believed that the world's historical defeat of the female sex and the beginning of women's oppression, at the same time rise of patriarchy took place with the development of private property. He said, "society evolved through the phases of savagery, barbarism and
civilisation. In the earlier phase there were no class and gender divisions. Gradually, agriculture, animal husbandry and tools were developed. It could be that in the period of barbarism women stayed at the settlement and controlled the supplies of food and the general organisation of the society. Men began using their hunting weapons to overpower other tribes and looted the crops and women. This was the beginning of the formation of the private property. In order to retain power and property and pass it on to their offspring, men overthrew the mother right and established the rule of the patriarch over women and children".1

Another philosopher, Beechey (1978) wrote that, "Married women mostly faced the sexual division of labour, as they could be paid low wages and dismissed easily, due to the notion that they were partly supported by their husband's wages".2

Thus, this research work reflects that women in the context of the labour markets in Russia and India since 1990 were mostly unemployed, underemployed, impoverished and subjected to the oppressive workplace practices. Women continued to be the "second-class citizens" in the labour force in both these countries. Most of the women in both these nations were mostly involved in the clerical, sales and service sectors of

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the labour force. Their participation in the service sector could be seen as
the only area, where they have conquered the market. Women tended to
predominate in this sector, partly because of the influence of sexual
stereotypes, and also because service sector occupations corresponded
greatly to their traditional domestic roles. The recent political and
economic developments that have taken place in these two nations,
coupled with falling per-capita income, soaring prices, interest rate hikes
and drastic cuts in government spending have greatly affected women in
each of their roles.

The impact of the adjustment programme and transition, and the effects
of stabilization, liberalization and privatization have placed a
disproportionate burden on women. These changes have greatly affected
women in carrying out their roles as mothers, as household managers,
as community workers and as producers of various goods and services.
The overall growth in the female labour force has been undercut by the
economic recession in both Russia and India. Women in general
continued to be the last to benefit from the job expansion and were the
first to suffer from job contraction. Women also became the first victims
of the economic crisis and adjustment strategies, which have negatively
affected them in their economic activities, as employment opportunities
and income conditions of the work deteriorated.
The observation of this study is that much of women's work remained unrecognized and greatly undervalued in economic terms. Even women who acquired specialized higher education and skill were prevented by the cultural or economic barriers from taking up jobs in which they could use their valuable skills. As such most of the time their real potential remained underused, and this had had an adverse effect on the status of women in the society and their opportunities in public life resulting in gender-blindness in the formulation of the development policies. Thus, the introduction of market reforms has not done much to improve the gender-biased attitude of the labour market; rather labour market has become structurally gender-biased.