CHAPTER - 2

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years, a significant body of literature has emerged on women’s studies especially focusing on the issues of discrimination of women in society and women's work participation in the industrial sector. An important section of these studies has made social and historical analyses of the various bases of discrimination of women in the society. On the other hand, another category of studies based on empirical investigations has generated enormous data on the form and extent of women's work participation, the various facets of gender-based wage discrimination, impact of technology on women’s work participation, relation between women’s education and work participation, women’s access to legal protection and women’s participation in trade union activities and so an.

2.1 Gender Discrimination: A Socio-historical Analysis

Questions pertaining to the discrimination of women in the family and society in general and in the production process in particular has been an important concern of the social scientists. The early explanation of this discrimination in terms of biological determinism does not hold ground any more. It is pointed out in the biological determinism that sexual identity is the main cause of women’s discrimination in the society. It projected woman as a weak biological entity preoccupied with the reproductive activities and accordingly the existence of sexual division of labour was explained. It also
projected that women are an dependent category which needs protection not only for the reproductive activities but also for their physical protection.

The sexual division of labour, however, is not merely a reflection of the biological differentiation. It has emerged and perpetuated as a process of social construction of gender. Here, one is to distinguish between sex and gender to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of women’s discrimination in the society. As already indicated while sex is a biological differentiation between men and women, gender is more of a social construction describing femininity and masculinity of individuals. There are various bases of the emergence and perpetuation of this gender construction such as material, institutional, ideological and so on. Various social processes like education, socialisation, etc. not only help to perpetuate the pre-existing gender role stereotyping and gender role playing but also to create new avenues of gender construction. It is also to mention here that the biological differentiation may not be hierarchical in nature, while gender construction leads to a hierarchical ordering of men and women.

One of the important bases of discrimination of women has been that of the institution of division of labour. The earlier Marxists believed that women’s economic discrimination has resulted from their disadvantaged position in the labour market following household responsibility. Engels (1976) blamed private property as a root cause of the initial oppression of women in human society. To him, increase of wealth in the society created entirely
new social relationships depriving women of their traditional rights. The communistic households recognised the supremacy of the mother in the house, "just as the exclusive recognition of a natural mother as high esteem for women" in society. In the communistic household, he writes: "Women occupied not only a free but also a highly respected position among all savages and all barbarians of the lower and middle stages and partly even of the upper stage"(226). (To him primitive human society moved from the stage of savagery to barbarism to civilisation).

Nevertheless, as a result of the development of economic conditions of life, introduction of pairing families (one man and one woman) through monogamous marriage and possession of private wealth by the pairing families, the status of women and especially the concept of mother-right was severely affected. To quote Engels, "Pairing marriage had introduced a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother it has placed the authenticated natural father .... According to the division of labour ... the procuring food and the implements necessary thereto, and therefore, also the ownership of the latter, fell to the man; he took them with him in case of separation, just as the woman retained the household goats. Thus ... the man was also the owner of new instrument of labour ... the slaves"(231).

According to 'mother-right', however, children could not inherit from their father. The children belonged to their mother’s genes, and inherited from the mother. When the owner of the herd died, his properties were inherited by his brothers and sisters and their children or by the descendants of his
mother's sisters. Hence Engels writes “as wealth increased, it on the one hand, gave the man a more important status in the family than the women, and, on the other hand created a stimulus to utilise the strengthened position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favour of his children. But it was not possible as long as descent according to mother right prevailed. It has therefore to be overthrown and it was overthrown .... The overthrown of mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex. The man seized the reins in the home also, the woman was degraded, enthralled the slave of man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children” (:232-33).

Boserup (1990) pointed out that women's work, fertility and role in the family and in society at large are radically changed by economic development. As economic development proceeds, family production for its own use diminishes and larger share of family consumption is produced outside the family in specialised enterprises. According to her, “the changes in women's position should be viewed not as isolated factors, but rather as part of general changes that come about as human societies slowly develop from subsistence economies to high technology societies. Economic development is a gradual change from family production to specialised production of goods and services. This specialisation of production makes it possible to use better technologies, scientific methods, and an increasingly elaborate economic and social infrastructure” (:14). As regard to technological development and its impact on women she pointed out that it
has only helped the process of marginalisation of women in the society. Citing example from agriculture she writes "as agriculture becomes less dependent upon human muscular power, the difference in labour productivity between the two sexes might be expected to narrow. In actual fact ... it is usually the men who learn to operate the new types of equipment while women continue to work with the old hand tools ... the productivity gap tends to widen because man monopolises the use of new equipment and the modern agricultural method .... Thus, in course of agriculture, man's labour productivity tends to increase while woman remains more or less static. The corollary of the relative decline in women's labour productivity is a decline in relative status within agriculture and as a further result women will want either to abandon cultivation and retire to domestic life, or to leave for town "(:53).

Technology, however, does not operate independent of the societal values and ideology that legitimise the women's subordinate position in society. Agarwal (1985) writes "the fact that it is women who often tend to lose more or gain less from a scheme than the men of their class again related less to the technical characteristics of the scheme than to these ideology that legitimises and reinforces women's subordinate position, economically and socially, both in the household and in the larger society. This subordination manifests itself in inequalities in women's access to productive resources, especially land, in the roles they assume in the private and public spheres,
and in the sharing of the burden of work and the product/income from such work between male and female household members” (112).

In the process of economic development thus, unequal relationship between men and women have been generated. The sexual division of labour has taken a concrete shape whereby women have been confined within the domain of the household. Their work contribution has got no recognition. Conventionally, there has been a tendency to assume that majority of women are engaged in unpaid and unproductive domestic labour which has led to consistent neglect of women’s considerable economic contribution (Mazumdar & Sharma, 1979:186). Such perception has kept women’s work participation not only invisible but also unrecognised.

This perception of sexual division of labour and gender construction were supported by the ideologies of various institutions namely caste, class, race and the religion. Ideologies of these institutions supported the idea of corporate control over women and confinement of women within the household and reproductive activities and also unequal distribution of power between various individuals. For example, caste as a social institution is based on the principle of hierarchy, purity and pollution, occupational specialisation and endogamy. It has a prescribed rule of behaviour of each member of the caste group. Some traditional role expectations are inbuilt in the caste order for each of its member. Srinivas (1976) points out that traditionally there is a self understood division of labour between the sexes in
India and that in both intra and extra-mural roles there are a clear and minute rules governing the division of labour between the sexes. He writes “while at the bottom level of the rural hierarchy women do both intra and extra mural work, the later being paid while the former is not ... the immurement of women characterises the top level”.

The forms and extent of women’s work participation is closely linked with the caste hierarchy and to the degree of upward mobility in the caste hierarchy. Over the years, the spread of education, modern occupation, mass communications and introduction of new technologies of production have helped enhance the process of upward mobility of a large section of rural population. According to Srinivas, legitimisation of upward mobility of the lower caste is made through the process of Sanskritization, “whereby the lower caste people emulate the life style of the upper caste, but such alteration in the life style and its legitimisation by resorting to Sanskritization have severe negative effects on the lives of women ... it immures them and changes the character of husband - wife relationship; it leads to heightened sensitivity to ideas of purity and pollution and to the performance of rituals and life-style calendrical”.

The process of Sanskritization while imposing several restrictions on the behaviour, movement and work participation of women, implicitly or explicitly recognise the bridleless authority of men over women. For Berreman (1993) “Sanskritization leads to seclusion and relative
circumscription of activities of women and to patrilocal and dowry marriage. Gender hierarchies are most developed and females have the least autonomy and equality with men---in Sanskritized, traditional segments of Hindu society .... The most severe gender inequalities are found among the poor, low caste groups which are striving for upward mobility in the traditional, ritually defined world: They do not have gender parity because of the strictures imposed by Sanskritic status emulation, they do not have economic sufficiency and security because of their class situation (their poverty) and they do not have social respect because of their caste ritual status” (Berreman, 1993, :370).

Similarly, the institutional norms of the family and religion have strengthened the process of discrimination against women. Bardhan (1985) points out that the structural element of the society are mostly responsible for economic exploitation and socially condoned, culturally rationalised discrimination and exclusion of women even within their class.

The conventional development initiative have only strengthened the process of discrimination of women, since all the development initiative are initiated through the existing institutional arrangements. Krishna Raj (1988) observed that development is taking place within a patriarchal structure that “accords an inferior position to women, denies them equal access and control over crucial resources .... In some cases patriarchy assumes new forms .... The underlying theme of this ideological structure is discrimination and
subordination. Various forms of discrimination are enforced, maintained and extended through social control and devaluation of women. There has been not merely discrimination, but a phenomenal increase in violence against women, that threatens their lives, security and physical and emotional integrity, ...” (:82).

She also pointed out that relation between gender “are not merely ideological, for they draw their strength from a material base through production i.e. women’s labour and reproduction relation (women’s role in child bearing, rearing and family maintenance) that links women’s lives and leaves them in a state of dependence. Further mechanism in society exist to perpetuate the discrimination and subordination through socialisation, customs and practices” (:35).

The process of gender role stereotyping and taught role differentiation start in the family through socialisation. While the girls are taught to remain within the fourwalls of the household concentrating on house chores like cooking, taking care of dependants, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, fetching water and collecting fire wood. Whereas the boys are usually forced to be assertive and to take part various social and community activities. After the attainment of certain age, the girls were married and made to leave their houses to live with different groups of people. Boys, on the other hand, play a greater role in the decision making processes both in the family and society. Girls are told to be submissive and invisible whereas the boys are socialised to be visible and audible. This process has wider ramification on
women's access to productive resources, health and training facilities, education and literacy, work status and employment and participation in the decision making processes. Studies conducted in several parts of the country show that even by the most conventional indicators of status in the society women have remained in the most subjugated and disadvantaged position. There has been a gradual declining trend in their sex ratio. This has led to an increase in the proportion of number of illiterate, marginalised their access to health facilities and to productive resources and allowed only peripheral participation in the decision making processes. The prevailing structure of patriarchy, traditional role expectation, discriminatory parental attitude towards the girl child all have contributed enormously in perpetuating gender discrimination in the society. It has also helped to create and perpetuate and background self image of women. Conditioning women into a situation of dependency is also having a negative impact for women. Lower participation of women in the areas of high risk taking and innovative activities is an indicator of such a self image. These also help to perpetuate the structure of patriarchy and discrimination against women adversely affecting women's access to education and training facilities, access to productive resources and alternative life choice and their work participation.

2.2 Women's work participation in Industry

Reference pertaining to women's work participation could be as old as reference to development of human civilization. However, for long, women's contribution in the production process was invisible and
unrecognized in the patriarchal society. Thus, through many historical records, women have got only a marginalised work status. In India, work contribution of women has also been widely ignored in the official documents, because the traditional definition of ‘work’ has excluded household work from within the perview of “economic activity”. However, the industrial sector provides an avenue for work which are not only visible but also recognised as potential economic activity. In recent years the development process, the advancement of agriculture and industry, spread of communication and education, etc. have affected the form and extent of women's work participation in the industrial sector.

There are diverse opinions regarding the women's participation in workforce in the industry. One group of scholars believes that a favourable condition for women's work participation has emerged in recent years caused by expansion of education, development initiatives by the government, industrial revolution and change in the structure of the economy. This group of thinkers have found that the “growing expansion of education” is playing an important role in inspiring large number of women to participate in the labour force. It is also pointed out that the aspiration for high standard of living due to higher education, attracts women towards this working world.

Studies by Parthasarathy and Rao (1981) and few other mentioned that the target oriented approaches of the government, anti-poverty programmes etc. has given a new focus to the role of women in the labour force. The
high rate of women's participation in the paid labour force is considered by Bergmann (1986) as the consequence of the Industrial Revolution which occurred around two hundred years ago. It has enhanced the value of a human being's time. The reason for rise in the price of labour is due to his/her increasing productivity, which has been effectively caused by technological change, growth of capital goods and education. The increasing productivity has further expanded the market for labour. With change in the structure of the economy from agriculture to industry and tertiary sectors, the pattern of employment specially the employment of educated women has also changed towards secondary and tertiary sectors. Such change has enhanced the purchasing power of the household and brought substantial change to life patterns for its members. Thus, the changes in life patterns and the rise in the value of labour have attracted educated women in paid labour force.

Whereas the another group of scholars is of the opinion that modernization and economic expansion is adversely affecting the women's work participation rate. It is observed that, the ‘introduction of high-tech in the industrial sector’ has opened up the avenues for skilled manpower where the women, generally being unskilled and semi-skilled constituent of manpower, are the first sufferers. With the advent of the industrial development in India, as found out by Ramanamma (1987), the production of consumer goods is transferred from home to the factories. With this transformation men got employment in the factories but the women were
segregated from their role in production process. At the same time, with the new mode of industrial development, women could not get place in this emerging avenues of employment. Boserup (1970) mentioned that the economic progress improved the chances of men in the labour market as wage earners in the modern sector, while it adversely affected the women's participation in the labour force. Gadgil (1965) pointed out that the pace of economic development did not appear to have influenced women's employment significantly in India.

2.3 Why Woman Comes out to Work in Industrial Sector?
A significant body of social science literature emphasizes that household economic compulsion plays a crucial role in women's work participation in the industrial sector. Sengupta (1960) mentioned that "women are not choosing a career for the sheer love of working. Neither are working and living conditions conducive to attracting women. When women work it is mostly to ease the economic strain of feeding their family". She also pointed out that sometimes migration of an entire family for work and due to the contract type of work (to finish the work at a stipulated time/days), the husband takes wife as well children to the work field (:42). Hence women participate in the work due to household compulsion. Most of the studies found that economic necessity was one of the important reasons for women's participation in the workforce. One group of study found that women sought industrial work when their husbands were out of town or village for work, while other group pointed
that, the unemployment or irregular employment of husbands, their poor income, bad habits, prolonged illness, sudden death, etc. and large size of family played a crucial role in pushing married women towards factory jobs. In such a situation working as wage earners was not a choice but a necessity for survival. Hiraway (1980) pointed out, "when poverty is extreme, working is no longer a matter of choice. The question then becomes one of availability of jobs" (: 109). Bardhan (1979) found that the participation of women in the workforce depended on her familial economic profile as well as number and age of children and the number of adult male members of the family. Gadgil (1965) and Ranadive (1976) highlighted the fact that the economic crisis of the family brought women to the workforce to supplement the little earning of the family with their labour price. The rising prices of essential commodities raised the economic burden which forced women to come out for job.

According to Andiappan (1980), Kreps and Claric (1975) the technological innovations which simplified the household work and made the women free from such work, the advanced techniques and family planning which reduced the size of the family and availability of child care center (creches) made women available for paid job. Tsuchigane & Dedge (1974) found that the constitutional provision of free and compulsory education to all with special priority to women and weaker section of society, education became universally accessible to all. It generated awareness among the women about their capability and skill as well as the job opportunities. Besides, education
improved job probabilities for women. Bergmann (1986) pointed out that the factors which encouraged women to join the job market were: changes in life patterns, higher wages, innovation of labour saving devices in the home, demonstration effect and the growth of white collar as well as other suitable occupations. To him, besides the above reasons, sometimes protective laws also encouraged women to join work. It is also observed that women came for job for their own development such as a desire to raise their living standards, a wish to use their abilities and to widen their mental horizon, and natural human gregariousness. The advanced household techniques and the small size of the family also gave them the opportunity to go for job. Ranade and Ramachandran (1970) found that there were four important reasons for which women came out of home for job; (1) poor economic conditions of the family, (2) to support and supplement the family income, (3) willingness of economic independence, specially in the case of unmarried women and (4) the encouragement received from relatives and friends.

2.4 Nature of Work and Gender Discrimination

In this men-dominated society, women are often discriminated against widely in the work field. The traditional belief on women's capability put them in the lower rungs of the job ladder. In the industrial sectors, women are concentrated in certain traditional industries like food processing, textile, clothing, cotton mills, leather, garments. Andiappan (1980), Lydio (1975) and others found the concentration of women in apparel leather
products, tobacco and insurance industry, Gadgil (1965) studied them in bidi, agarbatti, matches industries, Sengupta (1960) found them in jute, woolen and silk mills, hosiery industry, rice, flour mills, tea factories, oil mills, cashewnut industry, non-metallic mineral, etc. products. In the service sectors women were found in certain typical women-type jobs like nurses, telephone operator, school teacher, secretaries, typist, etc.

The studies conducted in various sectors of the economy regarding the women's position in the labour market found that most of the women were engaged in the unattractive, tiresome and monotonous jobs. Mukhopadhyay (1981) Andiappan (1980) Gadgil (1965), Sengupta (1960) pointed out that a majority of women was concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. In some of the technically advanced or modern small-scale enterprises women are mostly assigned the work of receptionists, secretaries, typists, telephone operators, etc. which are low paid. Ramanamma (1987) observed that in multinational companies women were doing mostly the routine, monotonous assembling work.

Bergmann (1986) stated that even if women succeeded in taking up challenging job, the so-called men's job, she was often harassed by men co-workers. Andiappan (1980) found that in men-dominated work, women are harassed and even could not get a chance to prove her capability because of the bias prevailing against them in the workplace. Sometimes, they were treated as second-class citizens at the work place. Nolland and Babbe (1949) pointed out that employers' discriminated against women in
matter of work distribution. Men were generally favoured as common
labourers, inservice trade and maintenance whereas women were favoured
in clerical assembly work. To Bergmann (1986) employers did not consider
the individuals' capacity while distributing work; they did not even evaluate
the capabilities of women because of their general biasness. Even employers
did not want to spend on the in-service training of women employees and
"can't tolerate if anyone (women) is considered for high status and high-
paid job". Mukhopadhyay (1981) highlighted that the position of women in
the labour market was more adverse when they were found concentrated in
large number in a few low paid occupations and giving monopolies to the
employers to decide their wage. Ranadive (1976) pointed out that women
workers were used as a source of cheap labour. According to an ILO
study (1975), the blatant forms of discrimination against women would
appear in this patriarchal form of society without reason, regarded as of less
value than that of men and this sex segregation is sustained by behaviour as
well as policy. Bielby & Baron found that "in small entrepreneurial
establishment the sex segregation was more acute. Either they excluded
women labourers totally or confined them just in one or two monotonous,
time consuming, repetitive work". There was "higher level of segregation
in the larger establishments, those with more specialized jobs and a
proliferation of job titles and in unionised settings and those with formal
bridging procedures governing promotions" (Cf. Ramannama and
Bambawale, 1987 : 45). Women were employed primarily in unskilled work
while better paid semi-skilled and skilled work were reserved for men.
Some of the research findings have highlighted the conditions of such gender discrimination in the work place. Elkin (1983) argued that woman faced the discrimination due to her conditional work participation. She seeks industrial work only when her husband is out of work, this irregularity put her at a peculiar disadvantage and shuts down the chances of higher paid, skilled jobs which require practice and regularity (Ranade and Ramachandran, 1970). Srivastava (1978) also mentioned that conditional work participation of women and the choice of occupation are generally determined by their husband's occupation and earnings which put them in the low skilled, low paid job. Andiappan (1980) pointed out that factors like, pregnancy, child rearing, voluntary non-participation of women, etc. retards them to absorb in the highly paid jobs. Bergmann (1986) argued that employers avoided expensive training for women. Besides unwillingness to travel within, and or outside town, unwillingness to work overtime etc., their (women) preoccupation with child bearing and rearing interrupt in their careers. Bielby and Baron pointed out that bureaucratic rules and procedures also "added fuel in the fire of sex discrimination in the work place" (Ramannama and Bambawale, 1987).

Boserup (1970) found that women were eventually subjected to the market segmentation which had various dimensions like (1) earning differential (2) occupational differential and (3) oversupply of labour. Market is adversely segmented towards women workers as majority of them are in
low paid job and earning less. They are confined to the semi-skilled and under paid jobs. Again their supply in few occupation is overcrowding. Though all these dimensions are interlined with each other, studies found that various socio-cultural and economic factors were responsible for such segmentation or discrimination against women. Lack of education and training, employer's negative attitude for women and preference for men, social, cultural and familial responsibility and conservativeness affect women's labour force participatory behaviour, to continue the work regularly, sincerely and committedly. It further depends on her family size, age of children, extent of domestic work, economic profile of the family, women's own perception of their roles in the labour market etc. Sometime women themselves prefer to work in home industries rather than work for wages in large enterprises.

As far as women's competency is concerned, it is found that men mostly worked on machine more continuously and effectively which increased their productivity per hour than their women counterparts, who usually did not work on machine. However in some of the jobs like weaving women are more competent than men. But employers are indifferent to women labourers in this case. Ranadive (1976) also agreed on the point that in some of the activities women were more competent than men and even produce more.

2.5 Gender and Wage Discrimination

Most of the studies found that a woman got relatively low value for her labour time than man. Mukhopadhyay (1981) stated that even among
the professional and skilled workers, women got low remuneration for equal work. Studies on this issue in the context of small scale industry also found that women were paid less than men. Different studies tried to give their own justification regarding wage discrimination. It is also pointed out that the customs and tradition of the society were partly responsible for this discrimination. Again irregularity of job and lack of practice owning to household responsibility pushed the women worker to the unskilled job which was generally low paid. Ranadive (1976) observed that women were not less capable than men but the employers underestimate their capability and paid them less to maximize their profit. Agarwal (1976) pointed out that the excess supply of women to few jobs i.e. mostly women were overcrowded in few jobs due to their social responsibilities and educational backwardness. Therefore, their bargaining strength is very week in the labour market. And their position becomes worst in private sector though not so bad in public sector. Singh's (1961) study in construction sector found that women were assigned subsidiary work which claimed low wages. Mukhopadhyay (1981) argued that employers took the advantage of the women's position and their familial and social responsibility and paid them less for their work.

However, Kannan (1978) argued that women were paid less because of employers' negative attitude towards women's job commitment and productivity. He further argued that as the minimum wages fixed according to the job without looking at the sex, men dominated in high paid job and women were concentrated in low paid job. Parthasarathy and Rao (1981)
concluded that the wage differential between men and women depended on the nature of development take place in the production process. Present production process pushes the women to the traditional low paid job or displaces them from work which in turn enhances the chance of wider differentiation of wages between men and women. Andiappan (1980) suggested that while studying wage difference between sexes, the following factors should be taken into account like number of hours worked, productivity, seniority, absenteeism and education. After considering all these factors he found that women earned 61 per cent of the earnings of men. He further pointed out that government was responsible for such discrimination by fixing minimum wages. Women in private sector suffer the most and it becomes worst in the unorganized sector. Malkiel and Malkiel (1973) found that clustering women in low paid job was the most important reason for wage differential between men and women. According to Lambart (1964) lack of demand and extra cost for women workers in terms of maternity benefits etc. made the employers pay them less.

Gokhale (1981) found that lack of efficiency and inability of women workers made them earn less. He further mentioned that if productivity of women was less than men, then it was not due to inefficiency but due to circumstances. Bergmann (1986) went on to say that it was their bad luck that the women worker were concentrated in those jobs which were mostly low paid. Human capital, that is, knowledge and skill that enhanced the
productivity of the individual, are relatively less endowed amongst the women. Therefore, the wage gap prevails among men and women workers. It shows that women are discriminated against due to lack of education and also lack of on the job training. He found that men and women with equal education were earning almost equal amounts and also interruption in the career of women did not have much effect on wage earning. He further argued that men were also the victims of certain bad habits like alcoholism etc. which adversely affected their earning capacity. Sengupta (1960) pointed out that in the free play of labour market, the remuneration or the value of labour was fixed depending on the knowledge and skill acquired by the labourers. Women got less remuneration than men because of their lack of professional training which was due to both less facilities being made available to women and the less interest shown by women for such training. She further stated that the prevailing social customs and attitude of men towards women were also responsible for the existence of differential wage rate. Besides these, the protective laws and the law of equal pay for equal work were also responsible for low wages for women workers. The Women Bureau Bulletin (1969) pointed out that the income/earnings are depended on the type and length of experience. It also differed depending on the size, location and character of the employing organizations, nature and type of work and the extent of unionization. Women earned less wages due to high concentration in low paid job, less commitment to job and the high turnover, etc. (Sengupta, 1960). Boserup (1970) pointed out that the social restriction on women restricted their
mobility which left few jobs open to them, resulting in large supply of women for these few jobs, was the main reason for lower earnings accruing to women. Madhok (1987) felt that the segregation of tasks at the work place also resulted in the differential of payments to men and women.

2.6 Labour Market Discrimination and Women

Discrimination manifests especially in the secondary segment of the labour market. This discrimination is possible when two groups (male and female) of labour force are substitute to each other in production and they are differentiated in the wage payment by the employers. The employers usually discriminate against women workers in the labour market.

There are two stages of discriminations, pre-market and labour market. Pre-market discrimination occurs even before an individual enters into the job market. They generally face the pre market discrimination during their socialization process and later while getting education and training. Women are introduced to gender role stereotype. Proper education and training are not made available to them. They have less access to training facilities, communication networks and less control and access over productive resources.

Experts are having varied opinions on the characteristics of this discrimination. Why women workers earn less than men? This question is reviewed with reference to social structure explanation, human capital explanation and employer's discrimination explanation. The social structure
and human capital explanations for sex-wage discrimination comes under pre-market discrimination. The existence of pre-market discrimination against women has been found by various scholars. Thurow (1975) and Bergmann (1986) have given more emphasis on the patriarchal pattern of the society as the major cause of bringing discrimination in the society and later on in the job market. Market discrimination is highly influenced by the pre-market discrimination. Ramanamma and Bambawale (1987) pointed out that "employers have taken advantage of pre-existing discrimination, leading to the development of segregated occupational categories which preserve and foster sexually ... discriminatory social patterns" (9-18). According to Sidney Webb (1991) the main reasons of wage discrimination against women are:

(1) restriction of various types imposed on women by the society, (2) confinement and restriction of women into few specific jobs, (3) lack of protective power, (4) restricted alternative and immobility of women, (5) weaker demand for women partly due to lower living standard and partly due to their family situation where they are supported by men, (6) low productivity of women (due to their low standard of education and training), (7) low subsistence requirements of women, (8) the notion of supplementary of women's earnings to family income, etc. Besides these factors, the other factors like male dominated trade union and lack of separate union for women workers generally reduce the bargaining strength of women workers and allow the employers to exploit them by giving low wages than their male counterparts. They further mentioned that "women's
opportunity costs are lower based on the socially available alternative uses of their time. Therefore, they are more willing to accept the low wages, poor working conditions and tedious tasks of secondary work" (21). Edgeworth (1922) stated that labour market structure creates discrimination against women workers. For example, the existence of quasi-monopolistic pressure obstructs competition in the labour market which results in discrimination.

Madden (1973) describes the discrimination as "cumulative discrimination" which starts from the birth of a girl child and continues till they enter into the job market. In other words, the socio-cultural condition brings discrimination between boy and girl child on their level and standard of schooling, health and nutrition, etc. and prepares them for segregated roles which further discriminate their choice of occupation, earnings etc.

Nalla Gounden (1988 & 1992) stressed that "the gross annual earnings difference between male and female may be decomposed and attributed to different sources: one part may be attributed to differences in attitude, attitudes which might have been acquired before entering the labour market; second part may be attributed to difference in occupational attainments given the production characteristics like education and training acquired before labour market entry; third part may be attributed to difference in wage/pay in given occupation; and fourth part may be attributed to difference in labour force participation and time allocation to market work over a year. Part one does not come under post-market discrimination.
It comes under pre-market discrimination and part four as he described may be market or non-market discrimination depending on the decision taken by the employees. Second and third parts are market discriminations" (:57).

Fawcett (1918) and Edgeworth (1922) theory of 'over crowding' explain that the pre market discrimination confined women into few jobs and restricts their mobility. Therefore the elasticity of supply of women workforce is lower. In other words, the labour supply of women is less responded to wage fluctuation, therefore female labour is more subjected to discrimination. Bergmann (1973) has explained the overcrowding approach in a different manner. It is argued that the employer's biasness to women workers restricted them to few specific jobs which leads the oversupply of female labour to those jobs and due to low capital-labour ratio, their productivity is low and hence lower is the wage.

Madden (1973) has expanded the Robinson's monopsony model. Monopsony model of discrimination is possible in a market situation where there is a single buyer of labour (goods). In this context single buyer is the monopsonistic employer who is interested in making profit. The degree of profits of such employer is determined by the elasticity of labour supply. Under such market situation, the wages are generally less than the marginal productivity of labour and when the labour supply is less elastic, the wage rates goes further down and increase the profit rates. Since the supply of women workforce is relatively less elastic to wages, they are more discriminated than men.
Becker's model of market discrimination (1975) is based on the employer's taste for discrimination. For him freedom of taste and choice that assume to be available to the economic agents in the labour market led the employers to adopt discrimination policy (Nalla Gounden, 1992 : 61). He further suggested that "women workers receive less pay because they choose to invest less in education, as a result of the desire to marry and give up working" ( : 61). Kothari (1992) has pointed out that discrimination in the market may induce discrimination at home such as in the case of nutrition and education of female children.

2.7 Women and Technology

Technological innovations have furthered the process of industrialization in India. Indeed, technological advancement has affected the whole gamut of the production process affecting work conditions and work relations of workers distinctively. The effect of such technology on women workers has been studied by various researchers. Bhatt (1985) found that the technological advancement had an adverse effect on women's employment in terms of their displacement. Her findings have been of kind to that of various other studies conducted in and outside India. Sengupta (1960), ILO (1975), Boserup (1970) and Madhok (1987) studies pointed out that automation was one of the important reasons for deceleration in the percentage of employed women in industries in recent years. Banerjee (1985) supported the fact through her finding that women were displaced or retrenched from employment and their status became more adverse.
when technological progress took place in their employing organization. Lim (1978) also agreed on this fact. Bardhan (1985) pointed out that women were displaced due to technological change since most of them were engaged in unskilled jobs. Ramannama & Bambawale (1987) added that "as soon as modern machines enter, women lose their job". However the rate of displacement differs depending on the types of establishments. For example, the recent expansion of electronics and electrical enterprises have introduced the new avenues for women workers, but it is just the reverse in the case of textile industry where the number of women workers has been reduced to a great extent due to the introduction of high-tech. Shah (1985) and Puri (1988) found that when the new technology was introduced in jobs, women workers were either displaced or pushed back to the traditional non-skilled jobs since they had no training to handle the new technology. Similarly in textile industry, as found out by ILO (1968), when a new machine was installed, men substituted for women workers and women worker's shifted to the traditional job. Snow (1980) in a study on electronic industries of U.S.A. found that the use of automatic machines and computer displaced women from industrial employment. Hancock (1980) also found the same result in his study on professional sector of ANA Company Ltd. There was almost total absence of women employees in all areas due to the adoption of highly advanced technology.

However, in some types of industries, especially in the electronic ones the impact of new technology has not been that of adverse on women.
Ramannama and Bambawale (1987) found a reverse trend in their study on electronic industries of Maharashtra. They pointed out that in electronic industries high technological know-how was not essential, therefore, the percentage of women employees was relatively larger. Lim (1978) supported this fact by stating that "manual dexterity and good eyesight are important and better requisites for electronic assembling work and it is often asserted that women have a natural advantage in such work because they have smaller hands and are used to needlework" (p.184). Scholars also pointed out that technological advances, instead of adversely affecting the women workforce, brought new forms of occupation for women workers: mechanization, improved working conditions and better communication which further facilitate the working capacity of women workers. Banerjee (1985), based on her empirical findings, suggested that (a) before adopting any technology in operation, its appropriateness in the Indian context should be studied carefully; (b) alternative venue of employment for women should also be introduced; (c) provision should be made for their proper education and training; (d) on-the-job training should be provided in order to upgrade their skill and technical knowledge; (e) provision should be made to relieve them from their household responsibilities by introducing modern technology for household work, etc.

2.8 Education and Women

Education plays a crucial role in the labour market of the economy. It enhances the productivity of the manpower by generating skill and
knowledge among them. The Constitution of independent India has granted equal rights to men and women. Besides, it talks of the special provisions for the upliftment of educationally and economically backward sections of the society including women.

During different plan periods, attempts have been made to improve women's education. These steps have been specially taken on the recommendations made by the Kothari Commission. The report of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 has also emphasized the need for the improvement of girl's education. The Review committee on the National Policy on Education 1986, popularly known as Ramamurti Committee found that 'inadequate facilities for girls' education at different stages, unequal access to 'non-traditional' courses, gender stereo-types in both the 'official' and 'hidden' curriculum, negative attitudes of teachers and administrators, and poor representation of women in positions of authority and decision making, etc. are the main causes of poor enrollments and high rates of drop-out among the girl children (Ramamurti Committee Report, 1991). The National Programme of Action on Education (1992) recommended that in order to eradicate the gender and regional dimensions of educational disparities, the following strategies should be adopted:

(i)" to gear the entire education system to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women;
(ii) to encourage educational institutions to take up active programmes to enhance women's status and further women's development in all sectors;

(iii) to widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, thereby breaking the gender stereotypes;
(iv) to create a dynamic management structure that will be able to respond to the challenge posed by the mandate " (Programme of Action (POA), 1992)

In order to implement these strategies the following plan of action has been suggested:

(i) All the Bureaus of the Department of Education and its nodal institutions will prepare a concrete action plan addressing gender related concerns in their specific area of work by August, 1993.

(ii) "A monitoring unit will be created in the Planning Division of the Department of Education to ensure integration of gender issues into policies, programmes and schemes. This unit will develop indicators for monitoring implementation, ensure effective dissemination of information and coordinate action.

(iii) Similar monitoring units/bureaus will be set up at the state level.

(iv) Annual report of all the bureaus and institutions will clearly spell out the steps they have taken to enhance women's and girls' access to education, ensuring that the content and process of education is sensitive to gender concerns and equal access is assured for science and technical education at all levels " (Programme of Action, 1992, :2).

As a result of these recommendations and the sincerity of the Government of India regarding the gender and regional dimensions of educational disparities, there is a substantial increase in the literacy rate of women.

So far as women's access to education is concerned, Lydio (1975), Andiappan (1980), ILO (1975) and Boserup (1970) found that women got least preference even in her family for education. Discrimination starts in the family, women are disadvantaged with respect to education because they are daughters and not sons. The general perception that daughters will be the members of other families sooner or later, so what is the purpose of sending them to school (Lydio, 1975). Even when they get chance to go to
school, most of them are concentrated in general education like humanities, arts etc. which are having limited scope in the job market. It further reduces their employability in the labour market. Karve (1975) pointed out that the traditional social attitudes regarding women's education and the stereotyped sex roles prevented young girls in rural areas from utilising the available educational opportunities (28). The social forces, cultural norms and familial responsibility kept women away from technical and professional education as well as traditional men-jobs. Bergmann (1986) found that women were discriminated against in education, training, and on-the-job training facilities which led them to get only a subjugated and marginalised position in the family as well as at the workplace. The Women's Bureau Bulletin (1969) found a positive relationship between education and income. Women without education or with improper education found a place only in the low-paid-jobs.

2.9 Trade Union and Women's Participation

In the democratic set up, labour union or trade union have got the recognition for providing justice to its members. Studies found that in general women were inactive or passive in trade union activities. In other words, their participation in trade union activities was very marginal in nature due to various socio-cultural, economic and political reasons. This phenomenon has become more prevalent among the women labourers working in small and large industries. Ranadive (1976) found that the employer's threat to throw out the union members from job and the
scattered nature of job assign to the women workers were few important factors which prevented them from participating in the union activities. Other studies have pointed out the following reasons for the low or passive participation of women in the trade union activities.

(a) lack of consciousness among women for their own betterment
(b) lack of effort in male dominated trade unions and their male leaders to encourage women to participate in the trade union activities.
(c) existence of discriminatory status in the society which hinders all their (women) activities outside. Due to dual burden of work, they found it difficult to stay back for union activities after 8 hours of factory work.

Sengupta (1960) also found that the traditional social values, customs and dual burden of work (i.e. responsibilities at household and at work place) left them with little time for other activities. These adversely affected the participation of women in trade union activities. However, educated women workers started taking active participation in trade union activities, even in the public meetings, dharna, gherao etc. and also to give speech on such occasion. Ranadive (1976) argued that "gradually the consciousness of the women worker is raising and they started fighting for their rights with their men counterparts" (:7). She has also suggested that the women workers from industrial sector need to be mobilised to fight for their rights unitedly. It can only be possible by providing them proper education, generating awareness about their right among them, keeping the trade unionism away from all personal and political motives and to work wholeheartedly for the welfare of the workers (:73). It is also suggested that
special problems of women should be studied and attempts be made to promote them on the committees by assigning them more responsibilities like managerial, executive in the trade union and to encourage them to participate in the meetings and conferences. A small newsletter should be published for exchanging information on their special problems, their working conditions, legislation and day to day issues, etc.

2.10 Labour Legislation and Women Issues

Access to legal procedure is an important indicator of status of women. Women's position in the labour market is largely determined by the broad framework of the legal procedures. The government of India enacted Protective Laws for women on the basis of the Article 15 of the constitution. In order to regulate the conditions of all workers, including women and children, the government of India has passed various Acts like Factory Act, 1948, Minimum wage Act, 1948, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, and Maternity Benefits Act, 1961. Under the Factory Act, 1948 and its amendment in 1987 certain special facilities like (1) night duty, (7 p.m. to 6 a.m.) for women is prohibited though in exceptional cases permission can be granted. (2) women should not be employed below the ground (3) employment of women in dangerous occupation or jobs which involves serious risk, bodily injury or disease has also been prohibited. (4) maximum weight to lift up by women during job has been fixed at 65 pounds (5) duration of working hours have been fixed both for men and women equally have been provided for women workers. The Maternity Benefit Act,
1961 and its amendment in 1988 says that (1) the employers should provide pay on leave after delivery for 3 months and six weeks in the case of miscarriage. (2) Pregnant women should not be assigned any arduous nature of work. (3) employers can not dismiss women workers during pregnancy or maternity leave. (4) employer needs to provide separate rest rooms and working facilities to their women employees. (5) crèche facilities with educated and experienced 'aya' along with food and toys for employees' children below age six should be provided by the employers during the working hours. The maternity benefits can only be provided to those women who worked with a particular employer at least 160 days in the twelve months immediately preceding the date of her delivery. Under the minimum wage Act, 1948 and amendment of 1984, the employer is required to pay his employees the minimum wage fixed by the government from time to time, irrespective of whether male or female. The minimum salary slab is revised by the government from time to time separately for all categories of jobs.

The impact of Protective laws on the work participation rate of women workers in the industrial sector is a crucial issue which needs to be discussed in detail. Are they affecting the demand for and supply of women workers? No doubt protective laws are meant for the well-being of the women workers. But in reality, as discovered by various researchers, these are adversely affecting the demand for women workers in the labour market. Andiappan (1980) pointed out that these laws have been affecting the
women in two ways; first, by restricting their job choice; and second, by increasing the cost of their labour time. He further stated that most of the cotton textile industries were working in night shift. Due to the prohibition of night work for women workers, they engaged men workers in the place of women, because the former could work in night shift also. Whereas in jute mills, men workers were preferred because of the weight of jute rolling which is about 80 to 110 pounds. Under the Factory Act women should not be asked to lift up more than 65 pound of weight. Due to such law, jute mill owners avoid keeping women employees. Mukherjee (1951) found that the protective laws like prohibition of night work, underground work, etc. had contributed to the decline of women employment. Sengupta (1960) also reported the adverse effect of protective laws on women workers and agreed that women workers of textile and jute mills were the main victim of such laws. She pointed out that the prohibition of underground work for women restricted their entry in the mines which further reduced the proportion of women employment. Besides these, the provision of maternity benefits, creche facilities etc. also discouraged women's demand specially married women workers, in the labour market. Ranadive (1976) and Sengupta (1960) found that most of the industries avoided employing married women and even retrenched existing unmarried girl workers as soon as they got married in order to escape providing the extra facilities to them.

A number of studies have suggested measures for the proper implementation of such facilities. Gokhale (1981) suggests that provision
should be made to provide the benefits like maternity leave, crèche facilities, etc. either by the government or local bodies and to be financed by the employers. The employers need not pay to the employees directly, which Gokhale (1981) thinks would reduce the reluctance of the employers to provide employment to women. Ranadive (1976) suggests that strict implementation of the protective laws is necessary and women trade union should be encouraged so that they can fight with the employers for their right unitedly.

The discrimination of the girl child when it comes to education also needs to be studied on a different context. Based on a popular notion it is usually hypothesized that parents, who are less educated, do not give much importance to the education of their children; and it is more so for the education of their daughters. It further implies that the educational qualifications and their educational performance as well, directly influence the working capabilities and efficiency of the workers.

2.11 A Concluding Remark

The above literature surveyed for this study provide us with some base line picture of women's work participation in industrial sector. As we have observed factors affecting women's work participation are many and diversified. However, in spite of these variations and diversities, women have been unable to ensure gender equality in the work place. Against this backdrop, the issues that have gained currency lately and that we have attempted to address in this study are the following:
Types of women workers in SSIs, reasons for their coming in to this sector for job, impact of change in technology in work participation of women in this sector, nature and extent of gender discrimination in SSIs, relationship between educational qualification and placement of women in SSIs, role of trade union in reducing the gender discrimination, Protective Law and its impact on recruitment of women workers in SSIs, perception of women workers about their position in the SSIs, relevance of education and job performance of women workers, role of social environment and education for the development of entrepreneurship among women, constraints faced by women entrepreneurs in the SSIs. An attempt has been made to look into all these issues and analyse them with special reference to the Okhla Industrial Estate in New Delhi.