CHAPTER: 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature on three key concepts and themes of the present study. These are – Autonomy in decision making for women, domestic workers and organizing the domestic workers.

The chapter is organized as follows
Section 2.1 presents a review of literature on the concept of Autonomy in decision making. This covers the studies based on primary as well as secondary data mainly the national level surveys linking the autonomy measurements to such variables as education, age, employment as well as familial and social contexts in various national and regional settings.

Section 2.2 presents a review of literature on domestic workers in India. A multitude of studies, reports and other literature has been reviewed for the purpose of tracing the earlier work in this area.

In section 2.3, we have presented a literature review on domestic workers in countries other than India. The works chosen for this purpose span the nations and continents and help present a wholesome picture of domestic work globally.

Section 2.4 covers the concept of ‘organising the unorganised’ i.e. organising the workers in precarious or informal work. While the movement of organizing within the informal sector is two decades old, the recent surge in the movement is remarkable. The literature presented in this section includes case studies and impact studies which broadly covers the conceptual and operational issues relating to efforts in organizing the informal workers and especially the domestic workers in India and other countries.
2.1: Review of Literature on the concept and measurement of women’s autonomy

2.1.1 The Study by Dharmalingam A and S. Philip Morgan (1996) contrasts two South Indian villages with different employment opportunities affecting women's autonomy thereby influencing important demographic outcomes. Specifically, in a setting which provides women with an independent source of income, freedom of movement within the village and high levels of interaction with other women, greater autonomy for women is noted than the setting in which most of the women perform housework or agricultural work.

2.1.2 Niraula Bhanu B. and S. Philip Morgan (1996) measure autonomy as freedom of movement and household decision-making. It is found that that individual-level effects are more visible for wives' household decision making than for the freedom-of-movement indicator, which in turn is controlled by the community norms at large. The study also found strong effects of kin visits on household decision making in the more patriarchal settings i.e. stronger kin ties substantially increase women's household decision-making power in the case of more extreme patriarchy. According to the authors, resources provided by the natal kin play a crucial role in this matter.

2.1.3 Mason, Karen Oppenheim, (1997) presents an analysis of how certain family characteristics and women’s position within the household influence their domestic power and autonomy in the developing countries of South and Southeast Asia. The countries are Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Three aspects of women’s autonomy and power are considered: their economic decision-making power, their freedom of movement and the extent to which they are subjected to coercive interpersonal controls by their husband. In the South Asian countries (Pakistan and India), the family
patterns and gender traditions tend to deny women autonomy, decision-making power and freedom of movement in most spheres. In all the aspects, women’s power or autonomy tends to be higher in the Southeast Asian countries, especially in Thailand and the Philippines, than in Pakistan or India. Generally, the longer that a woman has been married, the more likely she is to enjoy economic decision-making power. Being related to the husband does not appear to enhance women’s economic power and autonomy. A negative relationship is noted between the number of children a woman has borne and her level of economic autonomy and power. For South Asian countries, discussing non-fertility issues, such as family finances and community events, and her position vis-à-vis her husband and the other members of her household is related to a greater say in family economic decisions. In South Asia, a woman’s age and education are not very important for her say in family economic decisions. On the contrary, woman’s age and education both are important for her say in family economic decisions in the Southeast Asian countries where norms about women’s participation in economic activities and decisions are relatively supportive. The study concludes that the social context has a strong role in determining women’s autonomy, especially their economic decision-making power and freedom of movement.

2.1.4 Malhotra Anju and Mark Mather (1997) have attempted to bring out the relationship between empowerment, education and employment. Their study uses survey, life history and focus group data to empirically examine the relationship between schooling, paid work and power in domestic decision making for young, married women in Sri Lanka. The study points out that the relationship between education, work and women's control of household decisions is conditioned by the
larger social context. The results of the study underline the multidimensional character of the decision making power. It is found that women who control one of these aspects of family decisions do not necessarily control the other and the factors like education and employment are important in determining women's control over financial decisions, but not in determining household decisions. The study highlights the importance of going beyond variables like schooling and work and considers more fundamental structural factors involving family, social, and economic organization.

2.1.5 Casique I. (2000) examines power in decision making and autonomy of Mexican married women within the household, as well as explores the effect of individual’s and couple’s characteristics on the wife's relative power in decision making and autonomy. The power of decision making is based on who makes the decision. In case of the family issues like decisions on child rearing as well as economic decisions like making daily expenditures, women’s influence is found to be more effective. Autonomy of women is examined as the freedom to undertake a specified activity without husband’s permission. In case of such autonomy, wife's age and education, husband's education, and wife's work have a positive and significant effect. Number of children and residence in rural areas, on the contrary, have a negative effect on women's autonomy.

2.1.6 M. Hemanta Meitei (2001) attempts to find out how far education or earning and access to resources in the given social set-up have an impact on women’s decision making power. Using 10 decisions which are commonly taken at the household level either by husband or wife or both, an index of decision making is created. It is found that most of the decisions are taken jointly (both husband and wife) while working women take more of independent decisions than the non-working women.
Controlling the effect of other background variables, work status of women turns out to be a significant explanatory variable rather than education per se.

2.1.7 Jejeebhoy Shireen J & Zeba A. Sathar (2001), using data drawn from India and Pakistan, explore the concept of women’s autonomy and its determinants. A variety of dimensions of female autonomy, including their decision making authority, their personal freedom of movement, control over economic resources and wife–husband power relations is examined. The findings indicate that women’s autonomy is highly constrained in all the regions studied. The study further points out a considerable variation in the levels and determinants of women’s autonomy in these regions. It suggests that in the more gender-stratified settings of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, autonomy is largely the result of factors that traditionally confer status like family structure or absence of controls and size of dowry, along with economic activity (in Uttar Pradesh) and a secondary education (in Punjab). In contrast, in the more egalitarian setting of Tamil Nadu, education and to a lesser extent, economic activity are influential determinants of almost every indicator of autonomy. These findings suggest that the cultural context (region) influences the factors associated with autonomy, and therefore use of context specific measures of women’s autonomy is advocated.

2.1.8 Jejeebhoy Shireen J. (2002) explores similarities and differences in the perceptions of rural Indian women and their husbands with regard to various dimensions of women’s autonomy and investigates the extent to which various reproductive outcomes like contraception, unmet need, recent fertility and spousal communication are affected by individual partners’ views of women’s autonomy. The study indicates no more than a loose agreement between women and their
husbands concerning the dimensions of women’s autonomy within the home. Where disagreement is expressed, the husbands are more likely to project a comparatively liberal picture of their wives’ autonomy than do their wives, and the inference can be made that in surveys men tended to provide more “acceptable” responses than when they were questioned in greater depth. The findings also suggest that cultural and regional context moulds the influences that wives’ and their husbands’ perceptions of women’s autonomy have on reproductive outcomes. The findings also indicate that women’s perception of their autonomy may be sufficient to enhance inter spousal discussion of family planning and contraceptive practice in settings in which gender relations are relatively egalitarian. However, in those settings where women are powerless, husbands’ perceptions of their wives’ autonomy greatly influence reproductive choices and outcomes.

2.1.9 Mason, K. O., and Smith, H. L. (2003) analyze multiple measures of married women’s empowerment in the domestic sphere. The particular aspects of domestic empowerment examined are: the economic decision-making power, the family-size decision-making power, the physical freedom of movement and the husband’s control of them via intimidation and force. The study investigates whether community or individual characteristics are better predictors of women’s empowerment, and whether different dimensions of empowerment are similarly related to community or individual traits. The analysis shows that the community is a far stronger predictor of women’s empowerment than are individual traits. The relationship of both community and individual traits to different measures of empowerment vary, indicating that ‘empowerment’ is a multi-dimensional concept. Women might be relatively empowered in some spheres but not in others. The study underlines a policy
implication that the community norms and values about gender relations must be changed for empowering women. The results also suggest that the policies like raising women’s age of marriage, enhancing their educational and employment opportunities will be effective in order to empower them.

2.1.10 Handy and Kassam (2004) have studied whether employees of an NGO reflect the self empowering behavior that is advocated by them particularly where the employees are drawn from the same locality and face the same social and cultural pressures as the eligible beneficiaries of the NGO. In an effort to examine whether the employees of the NGO practice what they preach, Handy and Kassam have explored the empowerment as a function of age, family structure, income class, education and tenure at the NGO. The authors have found that the empowerment index of the employees is related to their tenure in the NGO. Education when examined with tenure at NGO was also a significant variable suggesting that women with more human capital are more receptive to the experiences of working in an NGO.

2.1.11 Basu Alaka Malwade and Gayatri Brij Koolwal (2005) have proposed that empowerment, as freedom, should reflect women’s abilities to look after themselves as much as their enhanced abilities to contribute to household welfare. This requires some measure of self-indulgence and the freedom to do relatively unproductive things such as the freedom to listen to the radio, to visit friends and relatives, to be against domestic violence under any circumstances and to set aside money for personal use which can be used as proxies for unproductive autonomy. The study distinguished between outcomes that reflected self indulgence and those reflecting responsibility. The study found that the unproductive freedoms correlated better with reproductive health outcomes (such as food consumption,
anemia and health care for reproductive tract problems) that were related to women themselves rather than to their reproductive capacities as defined by the ability to bear healthy and surviving children. The study also found that women’s decision making abilities in the household might increase women’s ability to improve household and especially child welfare but does not necessarily lead to women’s ability to look after themselves.

2.1.12 A paper by Anderson Siwan and Mukesh Eswaran (2005), using the data from Bangladesh which provides direct measures of female decision making power within the household, concludes that the effect of earned income on women’s bargaining power is far greater than that of unearned income. Further, it is demonstrated that women who earn independent incomes have considerably greater autonomy than the women who work on the household farm and the housewives. Thus, the paper brings out the importance of controlling income, as opposed to merely contributing to the generation of income, as a crucial determinant of autonomy.

2.1.13 A paper by Agarwala, Rina, Lynch, Scott M. (2006) analyses the following dimensions of autonomy: autonomy from violence, autonomy in family decisions, autonomy in community involvement and autonomy in household economics. The paper concludes that autonomy should be measured in its multi-dimensional form and using more robust statistical constructs that will allow for international comparisons and cultural contexts while analyzing women’s autonomy.

2.1.14 The paper by Sen, Rastogi and Vanneman (2006) offers a view on developing societies where extended families are common, senior men and women in the household often have important voices in family decisions. The analysis explores the extent to which a woman is being disempowered by her
husband versus others in her household and examines how a woman’s lack of power is a function of both gender and generation. Based on the information about who has some say and who has the most say in the decisions like what to cook, child care and major household purchases, the paper concludes that age, a senior position in the extended family, and landlessness are all related to more decision-making power for both the wife and her husband. Labor force participation and endogamy, on the other hand, strengthen woman’s say in decision-making relative to both her husband and her senior male in-laws.

2.1.15 The paper by Roy Sanchari (2008) investigates whether inheritance rights empower women by increasing their autonomy/say within the household. Property rights, in particular inheritance rights, can be an important alternative source of such authority since they improve the woman's "outside options" leading to greater bargaining power within the household. The paper concludes that endowing women with inheritance rights equal with men increases their autonomy within their marital families. The effect seems to be stronger for women whose husbands' occupation is complementary to the form of property inherited, especially in rural areas.

2.1.16 Acharya Yubraj (2008) investigates the association between women’s education and their involvement in decision making related to (i) small household purchases, (ii) her own health, (iii) big household purchases, and (iv) visits to her family. The study finds that the relationship between women’s education and their ability to influence decisions within the household varies with the nature of the decision. Further, the study concludes that primary and secondary education levels increase the chances of having women’s input on these
decisions. Therefore, the study concludes that the argument that education empowers women is not always correct.

2.1.17 A report by Kishor Sunita and Kamla Gupta (2009) based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS) III data examines the indicators of married women’s participation in various types of decisions made in households. These are decisions about the use of women’s own earnings and husbands’ earnings, decisions regarding small and large purchases, and other types of personal or household decisions. With reference to the working women, it observes that the control over own as well as spouse’s earnings is less for women than men; and it increases with education and wealth. The report mentions that women who earn about the same as their husbands are more likely to have a major say in the use of their husbands’ earnings than women who earn less than their husbands and those who earn more than their husbands. Less than two third of currently married women participate, alone or jointly, in decisions about their own health care, large household purchases, purchases for daily need and visits to her family and relatives.

2.1.18 The paper by Acharya Dev et al (2010) aims at studying the influence of socio-demographic factors on women's autonomy in decision making in Nepal. The findings indicated that women's autonomy in decision making is positively associated with their age, employment and number of living children while regional variation in autonomy measures is also reported. Women’s increased education is positively associated with autonomy in own healthcare decision making. Rich women are less likely to have autonomy to make decision on own healthcare. Region specific empowerment programmes and better access to community resources are advocated to make women more autonomous in decision making.
2.2: Review of Literature on Domestic Workers in India

2.2.1 Rani Prabha, Poonam Kaul (1986), have presented a survey of Tamil domestic workers working in Delhi. The survey addresses the pressures that induce the long distance migration from Tamil Nadu to Delhi and the factors conditioning the choice of work. It points out that the only work choice for women migrants is that of domestic work reflecting the gendered division of work. At home too, the housework is the sole responsibility of women and their men folk do not contribute to it even if they are without any work. The survey also examines the nature of work, work conditions and living conditions. The work conditions of the Tamil maids are governed by the employers' status, locality, attitude of the employer and the maids are usually not in a favourable bargaining position. Their family life is distressed due to domestic violence, alcoholism, large number of children, poverty and economic uncertainty.

2.2.2 Kothari Uma (1997) examines how the paid domestic labour of lower class girls and women from landless households within the context of a rural society of South Gujarat is undergoing rapid change. This study concerns a small village in south Gujarat, India and covers the caste alignments – workers from Halpati caste and employers from Patidar caste- in the organization of paid domestic work. The study extensively maps the cumbersome and often unclean jobs, like lifting cow dung, assigned to a domestic worker. The study goes on to state that the men rather than women from the Halpati caste are likely to undergo sterilization so that the women do not lose work. The work arrangements of these women workers include agricultural work after finishing the domestic work for which they are paid less than the regular agricultural workers. The study concludes that, the status of the halpati women is no better than the bonded labour; buried under the financial dependence and
increasing manual labour which they are forced to put in to sustain themselves and their families.

2.2.3 The paper by **Ray Raka (2000)** examines the structure of paid domestic work and notions of class, masculinity and femininity in the city of Calcutta placing these ideas within the caste and gendered class culture of Calcutta's middle classes, known as Bhadralok. The paper then goes on to describe the notions of respectability for middle class men and women in Kolkata in the context of women's work outside home and also the paid domestic work. The employers' and workers' perceptions about the manhood or womanhood of the domestics are explored. Ray states that the women's search for autonomy through paid domestic work is outweighed by her search for protection. The paper concludes that the domestic work in Kolkata and in India, is individualized, unorganized and made familial and hence, difficult to unionize.

2.2.4 A study of domestic workers in Kurukshetra, Haryana by **Singh A. N. (2001)** examines several aspects of lives of domestic workers like caste, age, marriage, education and migration. It observes that family compulsions, anti social habits of the spouse and limited family earnings create compulsion to work for the domestic workers. The study also discusses the poor working conditions faced by the domestic workers and difficulties in their family adjustments like looking after the young children at home. An employers' profile including their occupation, income, caste is also presented. The study suggests that workers' education and resource development approach will work as an effective tool for improving the conditions of domestic workers.

2.2.5 A study by **Raghuram Parvati (2001)** of domestic workers belonging to the Balmiki castes hired for the cleaning tasks in Nithari village in Ghaziabad district, Uttar Pradesh
describes the organizations of paid domestic work situated within the socially accepted norms of caste and gender. The study explores the differences in job profiles, intimacy with the household, wages, sense of exploitation, evolution of employment relations in place of Jajmani system (patron system) in the context of caste and gender while stating that the caste divide supersedes that of gender.

2.2.6 Neetha N. (2004) has studied domestic workers in Delhi exploring various socio economic aspects like age distribution, marital status, education, caste and religion of the domestic workers. The study further explored the migration process like reasons and patterns of migration linking the paid domestic work and migrated work force. The study further noted that the migration for domestic work is a female driven phenomenon which is influenced by the social networking among the women domestics. This network consists of relatives and friends, who facilitate the migration process, extend support during the initial period of unemployment and in many cases, also introduce the new migrant to the prospective employer. It is observed that this networking is also effective in creating strong segmentation and identity formation among domestic workers. The study also explored the centrality of female domestic in household finances shouldering the financial responsibilities of the immediate family and family back home too.

2.2.7 The report by Bhat Aparna and Aatreyee Sen (2005) analyses the issues and concerns relating to domestic workers manifested in the public hearings of the domestic workers at Mumbai and Delhi. The report extensively discusses the inadequacy of legal mechanism in India to address the grievances of the domestic workers. These include non-payment of wages, physical torture, sexual harassment and other issues involving human rights violations, accusations of theft, cheating
by placement agencies, regulation of work conditions like minimum wage, leave, medical allowance, increment etc. The panelists suggested a strong legal mechanism ably complemented by media campaigns, social security measures like pension and medical insurance.

2.2.8 A study of domestic workers of Cooch Behar and Dinhata by **Sarkar Siddhartha (2005)** observes that a large section of the domestic workers studied was found to be illiterate and economic compulsion was the main reason behind choosing to work as domestic maids. The majority of domestic workers were found to be native. The study explored the burden of household responsibilities of the domestic workers, physical effort and hardship undergone and absence of any support system at home. It briefly touches upon the savings pattern of the domestic workers and notes that employers are increasingly encouraging them to save in post offices. The problems like excessive work, gender discrimination and sexual harassment by male employers are reported.

2.2.9 A study of domestic workers and the employers of domestic workers in Ranchi, Jharkhand by **Singh Vinita (2007)** aimed at exploring the intricacies of the employer-employee relationship between the domestic workers and their employers. The study found that the domestic works were predominantly in the age group of 15 to 50, majority belonging to scheduled tribes and backward castes, illiterate or semi literate. The study also explored the religious affiliations, marital status, family decision making and other family related aspects, migration and wage structure of the domestic workers as well as employment relationship issues like attitude of employers towards domestic workers. The study reported that employers prefer to pay higher wages to the existing worker than search for and train another worker, highlighting this particular fact as the bargaining point
for the workers. The study further discusses living conditions of domestic workers and their general awareness including exposure to media.

2.2.10 The paper by Chigateri S. (2007) analyses the conditions and the nature of paid domestic work in Bangalore, as well as the articulations of injustice and the strategies employed by the domestic workers movement to deal with such injustice. The paper engages with the literary stream of dalit feminism. It reflects the inadequacy and under-valuation of the work that domestic workers perform in the form of very low wages, ad hoc terms and conditions, verbal contracts, absence of leaves and dependence on the generosity of their employers in the events of festivals, illness, births or deaths. The paper then describes the economic injustice in the form of paltry earnings that domestic workers get and the social injustice that their men folk suffer in the form of inadequate jobs as also the injustice of misrecognition that they are meant to do domestic work because they belong to a certain community. The paper concludes that the affirmative recognition and redistributive strategies that the Karnataka Domestic Workers Movement employ to re-value domestic work as useful and productive work, are inadequate for a politics of transformation, which would entail a disassociation of domestic work with dalit women.

2.2.11 In her M. Phil dissertation, at the University of Pune, Chirmade V. P. (2007) has studied the problems of domestic workers. It is a socio economic study of domestic workers describing their living and working conditions with special reference to Nigdi Pradhikaran area. It explores the reasons for women taking up paid domestic work like economic compulsions and also discusses their problems like indebtedness, precarious nature of work, addiction among husbands, housing and health related problems. The study also focuses on the treatment of
domestic workers at the hands of the employers e.g. more work for less pay and wage deduction. The study includes the employers’ perspective on the issues of employment of domestic workers and organization of domestic work. The study notes that none of the domestic workers interviewed were members of any union.

2.2.12 The paper by Kundu Amit (2008) investigates the conditions of work and rights of the part time as well as full time female domestic workers of Kolkata. The study observes that more than 50% of the respondents of both types of workers belong to the general category and most of them found to be either illiterate or just literate. A predominance of middle-aged women in part-time domestic work and that of aged female members in full-time domestic work occupation is also recorded. It is observed that young married women coming from distant places with higher number of children with low and uncertain income of other family member prefer part-time domestic work to supplement their family income. Higher number of adult equivalent family members, high regular monthly spending on medical and education, low contribution of other family members in the family and higher hourly wage motivates a part-time domestic worker to work more than one house simultaneously. All domestic workers get less than the Government recommended minimum wage. Most of them are deprived of overtime pay, public holiday and timely payment of salaries. They are also dismissed without any reasonable period of notice or informing any valid ground of dismissal. However, one noteworthy observation is that all part-time workers and regular full-time workers did enjoy three-paid holidays per month.
2.2.13 A study by Surabhi Tandon Mehrotra, Mewa Bharati (2008) explores various dimensions of the lives of part time domestic workers – life in slums, working conditions and their attitude towards work. This study focused on two distinct categories of domestic workers – Rajasthanis involving intra-state migration and Bengalis representing inter-state migration living in the slums. The study reports on the age structure, work patterns, size of work and income, work conditions of the domestic workers and their interactions with the employers. The study reports that wages and increments are arbitrary and the recent migrants are forced to work at lower wages to sustain their families. The study notes that on an average, Bengali migrants work for longer hours and they are preferred by employers as they are seen as more punctual and polite and they silently perform their work without wasting time. Another positive aspect of Bengali migrant workers noted in the study is that employers perceive them to be more thorough, understand instructions, especially about electronic kitchen appliances and are faster in their work than the Rajasthani women. The tension among the two groups of migrant domestic workers and disapproval of the Bengali migrant domestic workers by the Rajasthani migrants is also noted.

2.2.14 The paper by Palriwala Rajni and N. Neetha (2009) presents the size and growth in the numbers of domestic workers, their educational status, age structure, religion and caste affiliations. The study notes a rise in the demand for paid domestic work and the significant changes in the organisation of paid domestic work in the recent past. The study also notes that the wages of domestic workers vary according to category of work, gender as well as the paying capacity of the employer. Based on the data collected on domestic workers from Rohtak, Haryana including details of employment and care practices for
their own children, it was observed that the major modes of child minding were sibling care, self or no regulation, relatives or neighbor care or school seen as an alternative. These were in contrast to the practices in Vellore, Tamil Nadu where the use of Anganwadis was more prevalent. The study concludes that the child care practices among the domestic workers are conditioned by age of children, type of family, location and type of work, attitude of employers and the availability of affordable institutional facilities for child care.

**2.2.15** A study by Institute of Social Studies Trust (2009) of domestic workers in Delhi has reported high incidence of illiteracy, migrant status of domestic workers, caste feelings among them and informality in work arrangements. It has reported lack of identification papers as the major hurdle in securing benefits under any government schemes. The study has emphasised that the absence of childcare systems and concerns regarding the safety and well-being of children have emerged as the critical issues that govern the work pattern of domestic workers.

**2.2.16 Shashibala (2010)** has studied domestic workers in four metro cities in India- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. The study found that the major cluster of domestic help was found in the age group of 15-35, largely illiterate and the most common push factor of entering this job was to improve the economic conditions of the family for all the four cities. The caste structure, family structure, educational attainments and migration issues of the domestic helps, however, differed across cities. The study notes that the domestic workers lack access to a saving account in a bank due to non availability of documents. The study recommends framing of suitable legislation, raising awareness of the domestic workers about the legal recourse available to them, organizing as a major tool of positive
intervention, regulation of placement agencies and effective protection for migrant domestic workers.

2.2.17 Mehrotra Surabhi Tandon (2010) has presented the findings of a study of part time domestic workers in a resettlement area in South East Delhi undertaken by a Delhi based NGO, Jagori. The study describes the religion, caste, marital status, living conditions and occupations of spouse of domestic workers. It also describes work conditions like wages, leaves, and other benefits while highlighting social security concerns. Further, the study discusses workers’ own and their family’s perception of domestic work, employers’ attitude and sexual harassment. Employer’s perspective and hierarchical relationship between employers and domestic workers is discussed. The study concludes by stating the need for respect and dignity for domestic workers.

2.2.18 Ray Raka and Seenin Qayum (2010) in their book explore the employer-servant relationship ethnographically treating the domestic service as an institution rather than an occupational category. It attempts to address the issue of perpetuation of cultures of servitude in the broader spectrum of interfaces between middle class and underclass and the persistence of dependency and submission that characterize paid domestic work. Set in the backdrop of modern Kolkata, the book traces various aspects of paid domestic work like the caste, class and gender, generational changes in the employers from colonial days to modern times, transformed nature of domestic labour regime from being a family retainer to being a freelancer and the emotional turbulences felt by the employers and the servants in the process. The work essentially portrays the complex and ever evolving relationship between the employer and the worker; with workers of modern times taking rights based approach to work while the employers are still
trapped in the colonial mindset of a paternalistic benevolent employer. It also underlines the subtle undercurrents of the employers’ expectations regarding the persona and behaviour of the servants that characterize this relationship. As the authors put it, it is an attempt to make the familiar unfamiliar by exposing the nuances of the culture of servitude that is not confined to Kolkata or India.

2.2.19 An exploratory study of domestic workers was conducted by Bharat Jyoti (2011) in 5 major townships in 5 Districts of the State of Orissa namely Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela. The report of the study was submitted to the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Using a two stage random sampling scheme, part time contractual and nonresidential workers were surveyed. The study found that a major proportion of the respondents were Hindu migrant workers belonging to socio- economically backward sections. Daily labour followed by free collection from forest was reported as the primary family occupation with less than 1% respondents reporting any secondary occupation like tailoring. Most of them live in nuclear families in the hutments with basic amenities like toilets being unavailable. Despite poverty, over \( \frac{3}{4} \)th of the respondents do not possess BPL card accentuating the hardships in procuring food and fuel. Only 10% of the respondents reported having a saving account. As far as work conditions are concerned, the wage fixation depends on the types of tasks and the size of the family of employer. The report describes various aspects of work life viz. the wage and festival bonus payments, paid sick leaves, caste feelings among the employers, causes of service termination etc. The report recommends minimum wages, union action, employment contracts and social security mechanisms in order to improve the work and life conditions of the domestic workers.
2.2.20 A paper by Bino Paul G D, Susanta Datta, Venkatesha Murthy R (2011) exploring the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mumbai, brings out the fact that paid domestic work represents critical deficits in human development. The survey was conducted in collaboration with Jagrut Ghar Kamagar Sanghatan (JGKS), Mumbai. The survey covered the themes such as basic demographic features, nature of services, work profile of the domestic workers, access to social security, consumption of edible items, consumption under PDS system, health, union awareness, time use, household assets and liability, habitat and attitude of domestic workers towards gender and domestic violence. Based on the findings of the survey, the paper lays out a case for creating a comprehensive social security system for domestic workers in India.

2.2.21 The PhD. Thesis at the University of Helsinki by Mattila Päivi (2011) explores the paid domestic work as ‘vulnerable employment’ in the context of labour relations between domestic workers and employers in Jaipur, India. It is based on interviews with both employers and workers, and ethnographically oriented field work, carried out during 2004–07. Drawing on the streams of development studies along with gender studies, labour studies, and childhood studies, it investigates how labour relations between domestic workers and employers are conditioned by hierarchies of caste, gender, age, life-stage, ethnicity, and religion, how these relations are seen from the lenses of maternalism and contractualism and how female domestic workers’ trajectories are created. While the study focuses on female part-time maids and live-in work arrangements, it also analyses how work is transmitted from mothers to daughters, and what underlying reasons support such intergenerational practices. The study also discusses the
perceptions of both employers and workers as regards potential regulation.

2.2.22 A report by Bhattacharya Shrayana (2011) presents findings from the study undertaken by Self Employed Women’s Association, Ahmedabad. The important findings of the study are – presence of ad hoc wage rates and the need for standardizing wage calculations based on cluster and tasks performed; lack of savings and the need to introduce a suitable form of savings mechanism for the domestic workers; need for a mechanism that will look into occupational health and compensation for injury at workplace; absence of any institutional childcare facility that forces women to leave their children unattended and also limits their ability to work and earn more.

2.2.23 Harvinder Kaur and Monika Rani (2012) have studied female domestic workers from urban areas of Sangrur district, Punjab. The authors argue that the system of employing domestic workers has its roots in the feudal society. The current trend in the employment of domestic workers can be traced to the rising work force participation of middle class urban women, employers’ perception about their status and upward mobility as well as availability of cheap labour for the purpose of hiring. The study explores the work conditions including wages, living conditions and family related problems of domestic workers.

2.2.24 Seepana Prakasam (2012) in her book discusses the working and living conditions of domestic workers in Chandigarh in a broader context of informal sector, urban poverty and distressed migration. A comparative study of live in and live out domestic workers is presented with respect to monthly earnings, hours of work, family and living conditions. Other aspects that the study explored are education, marital status, caste and migration related factors. The study discusses the concept of decent work for domestic workers with reference to deficits in
decent work and the need to protect the human rights of domestic workers and recommends policy measures that include legislative measures, social dialogue and regulation of work conditions.

2.2.25 A paper by **Samita Sen, Nilanjana Sengupt (2012)** focuses on the questions of marriage and related issues in the context of paid domestic work. The study found predominance of female domestic workers along with pre-marital employment in domestic service and early initiation into domestic work. The study also reports extremely high hopes, desires and investment in education in these poor localities despite acute financial difficulties although it also reveals overt discrimination between sons and daughters as far as access to education was concerned. The study concludes that the practices around marriage, work and education are varied and complex defying any trend or causal relationships between education, marriage and work.

2.2.26 **Madhumathi M. (2013)** in her paper conceptualizes domestic services in Bangalore as a major informal sector activity in the context of transformations in class relations and the development of new life style combined with unprecedented female migration. The study highlights deplorable conditions of work in domestic service with long working hours, low pay and absence of job security despite the state legislation on wages, underlining the need for effective implementation of the law. The study finds that the organizing of domestic workers is difficult due to lack of group psyche, heterogeneity, migrant status and lack of awareness about organizing.
2.3: Review of Literature on Domestic Workers in countries other than India

2.3.1 Anderson Bridget’s (2000) work revolves around the migrant domestic workers from the global South employed in the European countries. Apart from describing the exploitative employment relationship, the book also explores the broader issues like tenets of feminism contrasted with the treatment of these workers at the hands of their mistresses, race and colour of the workers, commodification of migrant domestic labour, physical and sexual exploitation of migrant domestic workers, extent of undocumented workers and their vulnerabilities. A chapter on U.S.A. is a historical perspective on slavery that existed in the past and passing of that legacy to the present in the form of domestic work performed by the migrant domestic workers. Finally the book addresses the issue of work contracts and legal rights of the migrant domestic workers.

2.3.2 Cox, Rosie (2006) has traced the evolution of paid domestic service in Great Britain since the Victorian Times including its explosive growth, predominance of women in the domestic employment, the scarcity of servants in the post world war II period which in turn has been matched by migrant female workforce from the poorer parts of the world. The book goes on to describe the problems faced by the domestic workers in modern England ranging from poor work conditions, long hours of work, lack of security of employment, humiliating treatment meted out to them, loneliness, and lack of effective communication between the employer and the employee. The narrative includes perceptions of employers on why they employ domestic help and also the perceptions of the employees on how their employers wish them to be invisible in certain cases. As a conclusion the book proposes some solutions to the servant problem in the form of regulating the domestic work including
the placement agencies and support and recognition to domestic workers along with a strategic rethinking on (a) global inequalities that generate and perpetuate the exploitative systems of paid domestic work, (b) making an institutional, effective, high quality and affordable child care available, (c) creating a work life balance that is usually absent in the competitive societies making the need of the employers for domestic workers to be on the stand by all the time, and (d) (mis)conceptions about cleanliness, dirt and housework and gender roles linked to these notions.

2.3.3 Shahid’s (2007) Ph.D. thesis at the University of Warwick is a socio-legal exploratory study about law, empowerment and access to justice for women domestic workers in Pakistan. It also describes the nature of domestic service, dynamics of employer-employee relations and complexities of class, gender influencing these relationships. Based on the data collected through semi-structured, group and individual interviews conducted at four sites in Karachi and Peshawar, Pakistan, the study also includes a few case studies to substantiate some of the major themes pursued during the fieldwork. The study questions the efficacy of law as a tool for empowering women domestic workers in their struggle against exploitative practices at the workplace and argues that it is equally imperative to look into non-legal complementary strategies so that access to justice is made possible for these women.

2.3.4 The work of Lutz (2008) reflects upon the paid domestic work performed by migrant women domestic workers in Europe. The work unfolds at the intersection of three concepts or regimes that is care regime, gender regime and migration regime. The concept of care regime engages with the themes like commodification of domestic work, nature of child care
work, gendered nature of domestic work and its low social status, its treatment as family affair and something other than ‘normal work’, racist attitudes of the employers and the need to redefine the relationship of domestic work with other ‘productive’ sectors. The concept of migration regime includes transnational migration spaces within which domestic work is performed. It includes a historical perspective on migration from and to Europe, exclusion of the migrant domestic workers from citizenship rights, occupational mobility and civic participation in the host country, impact of such migration on the families of migrant workers back in their home country. The book also explores the relationship between the state and the market in defining, governing, and regulating the migration and care work. Finally the book brings home the message about the universality and multitude of aspects of migration and domestic work.

2.3.5 The work of Alley Shireen (2009) traces the journey of domestic workers in South Africa from the Apartheid days of servitude to the modern days of protective legislation for domestic workers and explores the efficacy of state mechanism to formalize the informal paid domestic work. The book portrays the image of domestic workers free from the shackles of slavery yet craving for the informal bond of love and intimacy they shared with the employers’ family and which afforded them a degree of control over their work. The book argues that, in a way, the legislation that protected them also turned them into subjects rather than agents of the process of modernizing the paid domestic work. The real life stories of the domestic workers reflect a disconnect between the rights in theory and rights in practice suggesting the limits of state intervention in the intimately woven relationship between the employer and the worker.
2.3.6 A report by Burnham Linda and Nik Theodore (2012) depicts the working and living conditions of domestic workers in USA with an emphasis on wages, lack of contracts, abuse at the work place, and risks and hazards of domestic work. The report is based on the data collected from an extensive survey conducted by National Domestic Workers Alliance. The report puts forth the plight of domestic workers in USA. It states that the domestic workers are often employed in substandard jobs with insecure and isolated work place, remain beyond the reach of labour policies, and often subjected to the whims of their employers who could be demanding, exploitative, and abusive. Their social isolation is further compounded by limited federal and state labor protections for this workforce. The report argues that the vulnerability of domestic workers to exploitation and abuse is deeply rooted in historical, social, and economic trends. The report puts forth the need for extending labour rights and labour protection to the domestic workers and calls for appropriate public policy initiatives. Importantly, the report designates the employers as the catalyst agent and appeals to them to let go of out dated notions of servitude, implement a of clearly written work contract and communicate respectfully with the domestic workers.

2.4: Review of Literature on the theme of ‘Organising the Unorganised’

2.4.1 The work of Martens, M.H. and Mitter, S. (1994) comprises of literature on organizing women workers engaged in informal employment from various sectors- from wage employment to self employment, from domestic workers to workers in Export Processing Zone and from rural to urban settings spanning the economies across the world. The book presents case studies on organizing domestic workers from
Brazil, Mexico and Namibia, tracing the history of organizing domestic workers in these countries, the challenges and limitations of the process, and a path for future. It also discusses the links and ties of these organizations with mainstream unions. The book elaborates on two organizations from India – SEWA and Working Women’s Forum (WWF). It particularly highlights the creation of leadership from below that is a distinctive feature of WWF. The work essentially addresses the issue of women’s unions as well as women in unions and the finer nuances of the organizing process for unorganized workers.

2.4.2 The work by Datt Ruddar (1997) deals with theoretical and sectoral perspectives on the theme of ‘organizing the unorganised’. The book presents several successful experiences of organizing the unorganized urban labour in Maharashtra that include head loaders, casual workers, dhobis, timber workers, and women workers’ organizations like Annapurna Mahila Mandal. It also lays out organizing experiences in rural areas across industries like sugar, kendu leaf collection and agriculture. It also presents a study on tribal domestic workers in the context of ecological transition, drawing attention to the displacement and marginalization of tribal women, their migration to cities and involvement in the paid domestic labour. The organizing experience of the Delhi Domestic Working Women’s Forum is also described. The book also offers a discussion of trade union initiatives in organizing the unorganized workers across the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.

2.4.3 An article by Deshpande Rajeshwari (1999) presents a case study of Hamal Panchayat- an organization of load carriers/ head load works- in Pune as a successful attempt at mobilising the workers in the informal sector and creating a broad-based alliance of unorganised workers and the urban poor. The
objective of the organisation is to make the state and the civil society recognise specific identities and contribution of the informal sector workers to the economy and society. The relentless efforts of the Hamal Panchayat has resulted in financial and social security for the Hamals while its most significant contribution came in the form of implementation of state measures like the Mathadi Act. The article further describes the path breaking role the union has played in the form of forging alliances with similar sectors and forcing the policy makers to take note of the issues that are so crucial for the livelihood of the urban poor.

2.4.4 A study by Dasgupta Sukti (2002) attempts to establish that organizing women workers in the informal economy could have beneficial impacts on their work and their life if such organization combines voice representation along with access to resources such as credit and information - a holistic strategy that provides political empowerment allied with economic empowerment. Using data from the People’s Security Survey carried out by the ILO’s Socio Economic Security programme in India, this paper examines the hypothesis that such organization of women in the informal economy leads to both tangible and intangible benefits - greater income security, employment security and work security along with greater control over their earnings and greater self-esteem.

2.4.5 The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), established in 1972, is a trade union of low-income working women earning their livelihoods in the informal economy. With over 700,000 members in 2004, SEWA is the first trade union of workers in the informal economy not only in India but around the world. The booklet “Towards Economic Freedom” compiled by Chen Martha, Ruchi Khurana and Nidhi Mirani (2005a) assesses impact of SEWA on its members in terms of growth in
employment, income, asset, nutrition, as well as leadership, self reliance and education. The organizing strategies of SEWA and their impact on wider environment is discussed. The work also touches upon the predictable risks and unpredictable crises that poor members of SEWA have had to face and underlines the need for developing alternative strategies to cope with those crises.

2.4.6 A research paper by Gothoskar (2005) discusses the vulnerabilities of the domestic workers in the historical context, as well as their current socio economic conditions, adverse work conditions and inadequate legal coverage. After an introduction to the efforts of various organizations in India and abroad, the paper presents an in depth case study of Pune Shahar Molkarin Sanghatana. The dramatic fashion in which the sanghatana was formed, its objectives and functioning and the favourable impact of its working on the conditions of domestic workers in Pune is extensively discussed. The paper also describes the weak and ineffective legislative measures that were proposed but never turned into reality. The paper further critically reviews the strategies employed by the sanghatana namely organizing, struggle, negotiations at individual and collective forums, harnessing community support, advocacy and lobbying, and forging solidarity with other organizations.

2.4.7 The work by Chen Martha, Renana Jhabvala, Ravi Kanbur and Carol Richards (2007) is a rich contribution to the study of Membership based organizations of the poor (MBOPs), defined as the organizations whose governance structures respond to the needs and aspirations of the poor because they are accountable to their members. An exemplary organization like SEWA has demonstrated that such organizations are central to achieving equitable growth with their commitment to collective action in order to change the
conditions of their poor members. In essence, the work addresses the following issues: the structures and activities that characterize MBOPs; the parameters of their success; factors both internal or external that contribute to their success; the challenges faced by MBOPs; and the ways in which policy design be attuned to the needs of the MBOPs. The diverse structures of MBOPs from cooperatives to self-help groups, strategies employed by them from struggle to inclusion and challenges faced by MBOPs spanning several countries are elaborated upon in this work. The book discusses India and its MBOPs in the context of issues like trade unionism in India and representation of women workers, the lessons from India’s trade unions and experiences of organisation, Cooperatives and emancipation of the marginalized workers, Self help group models of MBOPs and the effectiveness of community-based membership organizations as mechanisms for local resource management.

2.4.8 The work by Kaye Broadbent and Michele Ford (2008) traces the attempts at unionization by women workers in Asia. In the period post globalization, the predominance of part time work and informal work has emerged as a threat to unionization. In addition, women have historically been unrepresented on the platforms of mainstream unions. With this background, the book explores two themes of women organising have been explored in this work - 1. separate organizing i.e. organizing as a section within the existing union and 2. autonomous organizing or separatism i.e. organizing separately as women only organization. A major difference between the two approaches is that the autonomous organizing or separatism can be a goal in itself. The book documents the specificities of individual national contexts while identifying and emphasizing the similarities in women’s experiences of union activism and the barriers that women labour activists face
including the attitudinal biases along with gender, cultural, social, ethnic and religious obstacles. It considers the relationships between women union members and activists and male officials and union members, links with other social movements – particularly the broader women’s movement – and the details of specific labour campaigns and struggles. In doing so, it details the role of women in union activism in Asia, covering all the major economies of the region, and successfully challenges the prevailing conception of Asian women workers as passive and uninterested in industrial issues. The work also focuses on the different organizing strategies and vehicles that women have adopted in their efforts to overcome the tensions they experience in their relationship with the mainstream union movement. It explores women’s responses to unions’ shortcomings, the strategies female labour activists have employed within and outside the organized labour movements different Asian contexts, the challenges they face, their frustrations and their successes. While emphasizing the masculinist culture of mainstream unions and its failure to cater sufficiently for women, the work points to the fact that women have not simply accepted this ‘representation gap’. The work describes the SEWA experience which challenges many aspects of traditional unionism through its focus on the full range of forms of women’s productive work and its holistic approach to women workers’ lives. SEWA’s longevity and vibrancy effectively diffuse the claims that women are not interested in organizing, further indicating that the traditional male centred models of unionism are at fault for women’s poor participation in mainstream Indian unions.

2.4.9 The book by Hill, Elizabeth (2010) develops around the exploration of themes concerning the treatment of labour within the informal sector debate; informal work–life ‘problems’ and
strategies for reform; the social foundations of economic development in poor communities; and social struggle and the politics of economic development. The book offers a view that work-life reform for informal women workers has moral and social as well as economic dimensions. A major theme that the author explores is the dynamics of work life reform and socio-economic change amongst informal workers after joining the SEWA union. The workers interviewed from SEWA reported that they are able to act, speak out, negotiate and advocate within the family, the community, the workplace and the public sphere in ways that were previously unimaginable. This reflects a new sense of identity as workers and builds a capacity to engage in the political economy on their own behalf and that of their work sisters. Workers claim that their newfound agency is due to the recognition and friendship they experience as members of the union, and its impact on their identity as workers. The author has developed a theoretical account of how the experience of collective action at the union delivers a shift in both the moral and material dimensions of the work-life experience of working women. The book further examines the specific pathways by which SEWA’s interventions have addressed the structural forms of labour market disadvantage and socio-economic vulnerability of its members. The discussion reflects a critical appreciation of worker agency and its social foundations, in the context of the capacity for membership-based organisations to simultaneously develop members’ self confidence, self-esteem and self-respect and alternative non-exploitative economic institutions.

2.4.10 A research paper by Bonner Christine (2010) discusses the situation and organizing efforts of domestic workers within the global context of increasing informalisation of work, and the changing labour market for domestic work. It also features domestic workers within the global trade union
movement. Further, the paper identifies and analyses various models of domestic workers organisation from local to international including the church or community based organizations, cooperatives, trade unions and NGOs. It also examines how these models and strategies intersect and describes strategies adopted by different organisations. The paper also suggests that a multi faceted approach is required to facilitate the personal and collective empowerment of domestic workers, and to change the balance of power in their favour. Towards this end, the paper emphasizes the importance of democratic, membership based organisations, preferably "adapted" unions or proto unions, as the primary vehicles through which interests of the domestic workers can represented.

2.4.11 An article by Bonner Christine and Dave Spooner (2011) is set at the backdrop of intensification and growth of informal work and several organizational forms and approaches that have emerged in response to challenges and limitations faced by informal workers and their organizations. The traditional forms of organizing like unions and their practices are being adapted by informal workers’ organizations and new forms reflecting contextual and sector specific factors like political systems and gender are emerging. The article explores the relationships among informal workers’ organizations, trade unions and NGOs, and their importance in increasing visibility, influence and institutional power of the informal labour force. The article also observes the trend within the international trade union movement reflected in a more supportive policy and inclusive practice towards informal sector organising. The need for the international and national organizations to grow larger with strategic alliances in order to productively engage governments and to make an
impact on global developments affecting informal workers’ lives is also noted. In fact, large scale informal sector organizing is seen as an opportunity for the mainstream unionism to revive itself and regain its position vis-a-vis the State. The article concludes that there is no one organizational form or strategy that fits all, but that a flexible, multi faceted approach to organizing is required.

2.4.12 Nimushakavi V. (2012) has presented a case for unionization among domestic workers by comparing the work conditions of unionized and non unionized domestic workers. It is found that the unionized domestic workers have greater access to government schemes and are aware of the wage fixing mechanism as compared to the non unionized domestic workers. She has concluded that significant changes in law have been achieved by the advocacy activities of trade unions and other organizations and the gains made by these organizations are relevant in providing access to workplace rights for domestic workers.

2.4.13 Nayak Nalini (2013) in her article highlights the specific experiences of the unorganized sector workers struggling to survive in the complex and ongoing process of modernization. The article focuses on the labour movement and labour organizing in the context of fish workers and self employed women workers which followed two different trajectories resulting in two diverse outcomes for their members. In case of organizations of fish workers, leadership losing touch with the base, inability to build economic organizations like the marketing and production co operatives and inability to forge alliances with broader labour organizations led to limiting their gains. SEWA has focused on giving the poor women workers a voice and making them visible. In its organizing effort, SEWA Gujarat has established itself
autonomous institutions for its members in health care, child care, home and sanitation, health insurance, a workers academy for research, training and audio visual documentation of their issues as well as a marketing chain for its handicraft which has given the members a sense of sisterhood and a degree of control over the institutions on which their work and livelihood depends. The article touches upon the challenges in the process of organizing the unorganized women workers like opposition and resistance from male leaders and reasserts the need for broad based alliances and concerted voices for the unorganized.

2.4.14 Sen Ratna (2013) in her article asserts that the vast informal sector which grew larger post globalization faces many insecurities and vulnerabilities. She notes that the process of organizing the unorganized in India is five decades old though the degree of unionization remains low. Stating that the informal sector in India covers multiplicity of occupations and employment arrangements, the article describes various forms of organizations of informal labour that prevail in India i.e. unions, co operatives, NGOs and self help groups. The article also refers to the sector specific issues and demands of labour as well as overall challenges faced by the organizers in organizing the informal workers.

2.4.15 Agarwala (2013), in essence, addresses her query to two issues - (1) exactly how informal employment is reshaping workers’ collective action strategies and (2) under what state conditions these collective action strategies succeed or fail. Agarwala, tracing the history of informal labour movement since the 1980s, demonstrates how informal contract workers are organizing effectively to meet their unique interests within the constraints of their unprotected work structure. She notes that Indian informal workers are using their power as voters to demand state responsibility for their social consumption or
reproductive needs (such as education, housing, and health care), rather than fighting flexible production structures and demanding traditional work benefits (such as minimum wages and job security) from employers. In the process, the informal labour movement is pulling the state into playing an even more central role in their daily lives than it has traditionally done for members of formal workers’ movements. Informal workers are thus dignifying their discontent by creating new institutions and forging a new social contract between the state, informal workers, and employers. According to Agarwala, this new movement, expressed through a variety of organizational entities like the left-wing unions, independent unions and NGOs, aims to protect workers within their informal employment status, rather than trying to transform them into formal workers. The recruitment channels have also changed and the tone of the new movement is nonviolent, framed as a bargain between the citizen and the state. A major change that informal workers organizations have succeeded in bringing about is the creation of a new identity for informal workers making them an integral part of the working class. The workers who are the members of these unions feel empowered by way of being a part of a group and exhibit a degree of confidence while dealing with government officials and employers. The exchange of information is also an important channel of transmitting means of empowerment.

The review of literature presented above describes the previous research about the concepts involved in the present study. An extensive body of literature exists on the concept and measurement of autonomy. Domestic work has received more attention in recent times than in the past largely owing to legal and institutional developments at the national and international
level like adoption of an international convention for domestic workers. Organising the unorganised workers has also been a major stream of research in recent times. This study is an attempt to integrate the three very current and critically important concepts of women's autonomy, informal sector organizing and domestic work within the context of Pune city. Pune offers an ideal setting for the study with (a) its history of progressive movements including an initiation of unionization of domestic workers in the city and (b) its rapid expansion offering a large urban market for domestic work. The present study builds upon the studies described above and takes it further in terms of coverage, concepts employed, relationships explored, and treatment of data.