CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION TO BIDI INDUSTRY

1.1. Introduction:–

Bidi industry is one of the most important unorganized agro industries which occupies important place in the national economy. Bidi rolling is manual in all its stages. No tools are used except ordinary scissors, winnows and wire nets. The two principal raw materials are used for bidi making. There are Bidi tobacco and Bidi leaves (Tendu or kendo leaf). They fit a Bidi in the Bidi industry where no foreign exchange, machinery electric power, skilled labour or any others infrastructures are required. It needs just two ingredients i.e. the right type of tobacco and tendu leaves to wrap the tobacco in the blended tobacco and leaves for wrapping are brought from indigenous sources. The instruments of production are only the unskilled female labours that roll out the bidies and supplement their family income.

The Bidi industry discusses legislation and policies developed by the Indian Government aimed at protection of consumers a society, monitoring working condition and providing social security benefits for the welfare of laborers, and fiscal policies with regard to tobacco control. It argues that the absence of policies on pricing and consumption, and that Government and other stakeholders need to consider avenues for providing alternative employment to bidi workers. Bidi smoking, having originated in India, is currently practiced all over the country and is the most popular form of tobacco use. Inadequate awareness about the dangers of smoking, combined with the addictive potential of bidi smoking, the low price, and marketing strategies of bidi rolling have increased its popularity.

The absence of pricing and taxation polices has contributed to bidies popularity, increasing consumption in India and exports to other countries. The bidi Industry has also be accused of evading taxes due to differential tax structures imposed by the Government.

Bidi factory has been started in 19th century in India. It has been in Solapur since 150 years. 50 to 60 % economic condition of Solapur is depended on bidi factory. The factories of bidi are mostly depended on Female bidi workers. Actually, it is 80 lakh bidi workers in all over the India. Bidi factory has been started in other
states of India such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Utter Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. There are 3 lakh Female bidi workers in Maharashtra for rolling Bidis Raw material has been provided from Noxalite arid of Maharashtra state.

About 19% of tobacco consumption in India is in the form of cigarettes while 53% is smoked as bidies, the rest is used mainly in smokeless from 15 roughly eight bidies are sold for 17 cigarette 16 the total number of bidi smokers was estimated to be around 100 million in 1994 the majority of whom were adult males 17 in 1996 the annual bidi consumption was estimated to be around 700 billion sticks. 17 National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data from 1987 to 2000 indicate a down ward tendu in overall bidi consumption but less in the rural areas while the rural per capita consumption decreased by nearly 23% the fall in the urban consumption was 43% bidi tend to be smoked by the lower economic classes cad those with limited funds such as colleges students but not by the upper leases.

Tobacco is the single largest cause of premature adult deaths throughout the work. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a leading cause of death which has shown steady increase since 1950. Since 1979, tobacco related deaths in Female population are rising. It is expected that by the year 2020 a million women will die annually due to tobacco illness. India consumes 6.3% of whole world’s raw material tobacco & 1.7% of cigarettes. Among total tobacco consumption 40% by bidies and 20% by cigarettes which indicate popularity of bidi in India. It is consumed all over south East Asia but it is particularly popular in India. Each bidi consist of a small amount of tobacco (0.2-0.3 gem) prowler of flacks wrapped in tendu or Tambourine leaves and tied with a string despite their smaller size. Bidies yield more tar and nicotine than cigarette.

India is being a developing country. Many families are from very low socio – economic level and Female have to support their family economy. Solapur is a city in Maharashtra well known for textile industry but recently bidi industry has become a leading industry in city and about 70000 populations is involved in bidi rolling. This is a cottage industry spread out in many houses in slum areas and almost all workers are illiterate females. They take the raw material (tobacco tendu leaves and thread) from industry and roll bidies in house that is why small girls 8 to 10 years, start rolling bidies with their mothers and this process continues unto the age of 60 years.
In this way, the whole family is involved in bidi rolling. They work for almost 14 to 16 hours a day and can roll maximum of 1200 bidies per day. They get only 50 rupees for each 1000 bidies almost all bidi rolling women are non-smokers but they are continuously exposed to tobacco due to handling and inhalation of tobacco dust.

Solapur city the area under Solapur Municipal Corporation both existing as well as newly expanse for a special area under Solapur municipal corporation and covers only the air phase of environment in Solapur city Solapur is an important district head quarter in western Maharashtra and in famous for its bed sheet weaving industry (Chadders) Handlooms power looms and Bidi rolling industries. The textile products, especially, the Chadders and handlooms manufactured in Solapur have a great demand in abroad and product is those are exported to several countries.

Solapur city, a district head quarter, is geographically located between 17.15 degrees east longitude the city is situated in the south east fringe of Maharashtra state and lies in the Bhima and Sina river basins and it is drained either by Bhima River or its tributaries. Climatically, the entire district Solapur city comes under rain shadow area, but rainfall is uncertain and scanty. The monsoon period is from second fortnight of June to end September bringing rains from south west monsoon. It adversely affects the on socioeconomic condition of peoples. The population of Solapur city is 8, 72,478 (2011 census) and the area is about 180 sq kms. There are about 4783 industries in Solapur district and the major industries in Solapur are textile, oil mills, bidi factories & sugar factories.

The ancient history of Solapur, before 10th century was shrouded in darkness. Solapur as a small village passed through a number of regimes like those of Satvahana, etc., which had obtained power to rule in some part of present Maharashtra since 90 B.C. It was under the later Chalukyas and the Yadavas in the 11th and 12th centuries, that Solapur began to flourish as a religious centre. The persons responsible for making Solapur as a religious centre were Revansidha and Siddharama. It is found that the Yadavas left several vestiges of their rule in Solapur district among which are a few Hemadpanthi temples including a temple in the Solapur fort. An inscription at Sangur (Havery Taluka, Dist Dharwad) of Yadava Maharashtra Devraja visited Sonnakugenagarao which had been formerly the Sidheshwara lake were built many year before the fort was built.
In 1318 A.D. Alauddin Khilji opened the way to the Solapur which was never shut again. The political history of Solapur till 1818 is nothing but the history of its fort. The fort of Solapur was built originally at the time the Adilshahi Sultans of Bijapur and rebuilt according to inscription on its wall during the regime of Ali Adilsha-I in 1578 A.D. The fort raised by side with its significance as a great centre of religion and pilgrimage. The history of Solapur from 1430 to 1670 was characterized by a perpetual was fare between the two of the five Bahamani of shoots. The fort of Solapur had become an apple of discord between these parties. During the 16th and the 17th centuries Solapur was being tossed from one kingdom to another the districal details of which need not be traced here. After Rajaram flight to Jingi in 1694, in the course of their numerous raids, the Marathas, led by Ramchandra Pant Amatya, levied contributions as much far as Solapur. In 1724, the Nizam threw of his allegiance to the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah (1720-48) and the fort of Solapur passed on to him. During the period 1680-1758, there were about 21 Kiledars. In 1758, Kiledar Khaliluddin handed over the fort to the Peshwa taking Rs. 25000 as a bribe. In 1767-68 during the regime of Peshwa Mahdhvrao- I Mangalwarpeth or Madhave Peth was founded through the efforts of Uddhave Vireshwara, the Killedar who had brought to the notice of Madhavrao personally paid a visit to Solapur of 13th December, 1768, and granted about 73 acres of land to Jagadevapa Shete from Savargaon. Bajirao was being pursued by General Smith in February 1818. After the defeat of Ashti war in February Bajirao retreated to Solapur. On 14th May, after 4 days of siege by General Munro, the foot with its garrison surrendered to the British. After the British conquest Venkatappa, Shrinivasrao and Bhagawantrao administered it on their behalf Bhagwantrao was the first Mameledar in the British rule.

After 1818, Solapur was included in the Pune Collectorate. The municipality came into being in August 1852. The area of the town in 1872 was about eight square miles and the population was 54, 744. In 1890-91, it was recorded that there was a five mile ‘Pakka Road’ built in Solapur. Many parts of the city wall had already been pulled down by the year 1872. The municipality in 1891 rejected the plea that it was the beauty of the town. Since 1893, Solapur was visited by plague for nearly six times. During the most ravaging plague of 1893 as many as 2265 died and the people shifted to other places in large number. In 1895, on an account of heavy rains, there was a famine. The electric light came to use on public roads in 1925. The
municipality began the construction of tar roads in 1933. The episodes of 1930 resulting from the evil disobedience movement the ensuing martial law and the hanging of the four patriot youths of Solapur famous to the city people throughout India. The Razakar regime in water becomes acute and pressing. The police action relieved this menace. During this action, Solapur had become an important strategic point for the mobilization of the Indian police units. The municipality celebrated its centenary in 1953.

Since a long time in the past Solapur has retained its religious tradition right from Revansidha. Among the very old temples are Revansidheshwara, Markandeya, Sidheshwar, Malklikarjuna, Ruppa Bhawani, Tripurentkeshvara, Kaljapur Maruti and Bali Kandoba. In 1904, the Jains built their main temple of Parashwnath in Mangalwarpeth. The tradition of Siddharama still continues. ‘Tirtta Swami’ Pharala swami were some of the successors. The Gadda pilgrimage to the Sidheshwara is held every year with poles and Plags on Makara Sankranti day in January. The origin of Solapur as a market place can be traced to some extent to this Gadda pilgrimage. Besides the temples, there are several Mathas such as the Gavi Matha, Kisti Matha, Nandi Matha, Mhubharaya swami math etc.

Apart from its importance as a place of religious pilgrimage, Solapur was also a commercial place and a trade centre from the very old times. Goods used to be transported to Solapur with bulls and camels as the means of transport: Solapur was situated on the great commercial routes of the middle ages connecting Maharashtra, Karnataka and Hyderabad. Since 1818, its importance gradually grew. Its magnificent situation between Poona and Hyderabad has made it especially since opening of the south East branch of the peninsula railway in 1859. The centre for the collection and distribution of goods over a large extent of this part of the country. On account of the immunity from the risk of robbers resulting from order established by British government, Solapur become a resort of traders. The opening of the railway raised it to be one the chief marts of the Deccan. Salt, kiranls, seeds, grains, oil sugar and other goods from Humnabad and Gulbarga came to the market of Solapur. To other commercial centers like Gulbarga, Bijapur, Bagalkot, Barshi, Latur, Nanded, Parbhani, Mudkhed and Jalana, Solapur was important center of exchange. Raw cotton began to come to Solapur market since 1840 and it becomes the stopple trade of the town. The production of days had been an important production activity of
Solapur. The chief industry of Solapur today is the manufacturing of cotton cloth. Palmori, Kongari, Udgisi and other, sub castes of the sails came and settled in Solapur after 1820 and contribution a good deal to the development of handloom industry. The first mill belonging to the Solapur spinning and weaving company was opened in 1877 with a capital of nearly seven lakhs. Mills gradually increased since the opening of the present century. According to 1951 census, the cotton textiles absorbed as many as 31605 persons (out of which 29310 were males and 2275 were females), and 26761 as employees (25,335 males and 1426 females), 1438 as employers (1398 males and 40 females) and 3386 as independent workers (2577 males and 809 females).

As regards education Solapur has shown a steady progress. In 1853 there was only one Marathi and one English medium School in the town. Girl’s Schools were unknown at that time. Ever since the municipality took over the responsibility for education from government in 1885, it provided careful attention to the progress of education of the town. The first step towards free primary education was taken by the municipality as early as 1920 and towards compulsory education in 1927. From 1947, the municipality started the scheme of basic education making provision for spinning, weaving, carpentry cardboard, modeling etc. In 1953, the strength of the students in the municipal and private (aided) primary school together stood at 31203 (22,392 boys and 8811 girls). The Northcote Government Highschool was established in 1902 and the Haribhai Devakaran Highschool of the Shikshan Prasarak Mandal Poona; the biggest school in the city established in 1918.

This is in brief, the political and social history of Solapur for the last few centuries during which the city gradually grew an importance as a religious, industrial and business center.

1.2. Location and Settlement:-

The Solapur City is the Headquarter of the Solapur district. It is situated in latitude 17° 40’ 18 “North and longitude 75° 56’ East. It lies 1800 Feet above the sea level. Solapur is a station on the South-East of the central Railaway, 263 Kilomites South East of Pune, and 455 Kilometers South-East of Mumbai and 335 Kilomites North-West of Hyderabad.

The areas which new from Solapur district were earlier parts of the three districts namely Ahmednagar, Pune and Satara. Today it comprises 11Talukas, 10
towns and 1142 Villages. It is situated entirely in Bhima, Nira, Sina and Man river basins in southern Maharashtra. It has over 32 lakhs. It ranks 4th in terms of areas and the 7th largest in terms of population among the district of Maharashtra.

Location : 17º 10’ N to 18º 30’ N and 74º 42’ C to 76º 15’ E
Altitude : 455 mtrs. Above seas level
Highest temperature : 45.6º C (May)
Lowest temperature : 14.8º C (December)
Average rainfall : 584.3 mm (23’’)
Maximum rainfall : In September
Population (Solapur City) : 8, 72,478 (2011 census)
Males- : 4, 51, 984 (51.80%)
Female - : 4, 20, 494 (48.20%)
Decennial Growth Rate : 24.84%
Literacy : 56.39%
Cultivators : 58.73%
Agriculture Labours : 31.56%
Total Rail : 423.87 kms
Total Road : 10, 635 kms
Airstrip : 1
Sources of Water Supply : Takali 80 % Hipparga 20%

1.3. Salient Features:-

2. The slop of the district is towards East and South East.

3. Climatically, Solapur district comes under scarcity zone. Rainfall is uncertain as well as erratic in distribution (rainfall in September is more assured).

4. The soils are derived from the Deccan trap which is the predominant rock. Soils are of three types, Black, Grey and Red.
5. The economy of the district depends largely on agriculture. It is famous for producing Jowar. It also produces to a considerable extent of wheat, sugarcane, grapes, and cotton, groundnut and oil seeds.

6. Sweet oil Tur Dal, Cotton bales, Chaddars, towels, wall hangings are major outputs from the industries.

7. Jowar Roti (Bhakri) is the normal meal of the people, whereas on festivals they enjoy eating “Puran Poli”.

8. Maratha, Telgu, Kannada and Urdu are the major languages spoken in the district. The peculiarity in spoken language is that each language is that each language uses number of words of the above different languages.

9. People in the districts are becoming more responsive to the need of limiting the size of family and educational attainments.

10. Traditionally Solapur is recognized as a drought prone district.

1.4. Characteristics of the Bidi Industry:

1. There are about 300 manufacturers of major bidi brands and thousands of small scale contractors and manufacturers involved in bulk production in India.

2. The industry employs approximately 4.4 million full time workers and an additional 4 million in bidi industry-related jobs. Most of them are largely poor and illiterate.

3. The lack of organized production in the bidi industry creates difficulty in regulating the working conditions of workers and in implementing welfare laws.

4. In 1999, the Indian bidi industry generated 165 million in excise and 200 million in foreign exchange revenue for the Indian government.

1.5. Women, Families, and the Bidi Industry:

1. Women make the largest proportion of labour in the bidi industry. Published literature estimates that women make up 76% of total bidi employment. The All India Bidi, Cigar, and Tobacco Workers Federation estimate that women comprise 90 – 95% of total employment in bidi manufacture.

2. Women are the primary bidi rollers and typically operate from their homes. Other members of the family actively assist in the process, especially
children. In many cases, several women from the same household may engage in bidi rolling to fulfill quotas.

3. The industry is male-dominated, contributing to the economic exploitation of women.

4. Middlemen are known to supply female laborers with low quality tendu leaves. They also reject bidies deemed poor quality, but eventually take them without paying.

5. Entire households relying heavily on bidi production for survival are often forced to go into debt to bidi contractors when raw materials to complete the production process are scarce. Contractors then gain financial control over them.

6. Minimum wages are fixed by the state governments and revised from time to time. However, International Labor Organization findings indicate that such provisions had scarce impact on home-based workers. Fixed wages for rolling 1000 bidies vary from Rs. 29.0 in Tripura to Rs. 64.8 in Gujarat.

1.6. Major Issues Related to the Bidi Workers:-

1. The systematic identification of bidi workers, especially home based workers this important if the benefit under the Bidi Workers Welfare Fund (BWWF) is to be available. The access to and improvement of benefits under the BWWF needs to be ensured.

2. State governments are the appropriate for notifying the minimum wages, minimum wages revisions are often delayed. Moreover, significant differences exist in minimum wages rates across different states, which can trigger shifting the industry to the low wages areas. There is a need for uniform national minimum wages for the work in the bidi industry.

3. Arbitrary rejection of finished bidies on the ground of quality, which leads to the shortchanging of the home based women workers.

4. Issue of poor quality and inadequate quantities of raw material (such as tendu leaves and thread) by the contractors / manufacturers / agents, which adversely affects workers’ earnings. (Recommendation standards for rolling 1000 standard size bidi; 800 gms of tendu leaf and 300 gms of tobacco).
5. Lack of information on the provision of the bidi Acts among workers, majority of who are poor from backward castes and illiterate. Need for education and training programs.
6. Occupation health problems and inadequate health care services. Need to expand the health services under the BWWF and involve the primary health care centers of the state governments.

1.7. Bidi Industry:-

Bidi making is one of the most important cottage industries in the district. It provides a subsidiary source of income to a considerable number of persons. As per the 1941 census Report there were 1100 workers employed in this industry of who about 9000 were engaged in Solapur City only. The census figures further show that Bidi making is mostly followed in urban areas rather than in rural area of the district. Besides the other center of production are Barshi, Pandharpur, Madha etc.

Tobacco and tendu leave are the main raw materials required by the industry. Different qualities of tobacco are obtained from Nipani, Sangli, Kolhapur and Gujarat. Tobacco leaves are purchased from Chandrapur and Bhandra districts as also from Madhya Pradesh. The tools and equipment required for Bidi making consist of a factories manufacturing Bidies having patents get better prices. Bidies are mostly sent to various places in the states of Gujarat, Mysore, and Andhra Pradesh and also to the many of the districts of Maharashtra. In some cess, bidi making is undertaken by all the working members of the family at the place of residence. The industry is generally brisk after the harvest and continues to be so till the onset of monsoon. This industry gives full factory owners have their godowns and warehouses for keeping the workers. The leaves are given to the workers cut them into required sizes for preparing Bidies. Wages are paid on a weekly basis, the amount depending upon the individual turnover.

1.8. Process of Work in Bidi Manufactory:-

The bidi leaves tied into bundles are given to the workers in the evenings, roughly to the extent that they are sufficient for making 1000 bidies or the quota allotted to each of the workers. This appears to be the practice everywhere in Hyderabad except in one bidi works at Bijapur in Aurangabad, Gondia, Solapur district where the bidi leaves are given to the workers by weight. These bundles of leaves bend mid-taken by workers to their homes. They are first made soft by soaking
them in water for about 2 hours and, before coming to the factory. They are cut to the required sizes and with a knife the hard mid-rib and the veins are removed to make the leaves bend easily. The leaves are preserved in a wet piece of gunny bag. A few workers cut the leaves at the factory itself and they must be cut into the required sizes there only. There is no system of taking bidi leaves home. This restriction is probably due to the fact that good bidi leaves are not available around the village of Mahboobnagar where the bidi industry had come into existence mainly on account of the availability of the bidi workers. They are brought from Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Mancherial and other places famous for good bidi leaves, or are purchased from the stockiest at Secunderabad and Hyderabad.

On coming to the factory, the workers are given a pound or so of tobacco for making bidies and also some thread. The quantity of tobacco varies. In some factories, it is 20 tolas for 1000 bidies while in others as much as used for the same number of bidies.

Tobacco mixture is placed on the leaf (cut to shape) and spread uniformly lengthwise and the leaf is rolled between fingers and palms of the hands into a conical shape. Some can manage with fingers only. The broad end is then closed and other end tied with a thread. Sometimes, the children who accompany their parents help to seal the mouths. Bidies are then are then tied into bundles of 25 each and the output is placed before the mistry or the bidi sorter who discards those bidies which are not properly rolled, or being rough do not come up to the required standard and such bidies range from 25 to 50 in every 1000. In a few places even greater number of bidies are sorted of bidies sorted out. The wages for such bidies are of course deducted. In a majority of factories, these bidies are destroyed but there are a few where the rejected bidies are sold either separately or mixed up with the accepted ones.

Each worker is provided with a printed form or a card to last for a fortnight or more on which is recorded the date, number of bidies made in a day. The quantity of tobacco, leaf and thread consumed and the wages to be paid in separate columns; and payments are made every week or fortnight or month at the rate fixed for 1000 bidies. The system of making payment daily is also in vogue in some factories. In some places, no such form is provided and entries of production, etc., are made only in the register kept with the proprietor. In a few places, it was, noticed that the workers
themselves are required to bring a note book in which entries about their production or that of the entire party are made.

After collecting bidies from the workers, the next stage in the process is to arrange them in open wooden trays with the heads upward. Usually, each such tray contains 3000 to 4000 bidies. The bidies in the trays are left for airing and getting dried up for some days in the open sun. The number of days depends upon the season and the weather conditions. If it is a rainy or cloudy day, they would be allowed to remain in the open sun for longer time but in the summer, even one day is enough. After this the bundles are put into the iron trays, with the broad ends downwards and facing the fire, and are pushed into the furnace or “Bhatti” and allowed to remain there for few minutes for toning the bidies to the required stiffness and smell. The time for which the trays are kept in the furnace again depends upon the type of the trays whether it the furnace again depends upon the type of the furnace whether it is a Madrasi, Almirah or Karnooli type. The toning of bidies is also necessary to ensure their lighting. It may be stated here that in few places like Warangal, Hyderabad, and Mortad and everywhere in Mahboobnagar village and in Alampur. Each bidies is pasted with a ring containing the name and trademark, after the bidies are dried up in the dun and before their bundles are introduced into the furnace. They are pasted by separate workers called ring-pasters.

The final stage is of wrapping the bundles with papers. The bundles of 25 bidies are packed in three different ways by persons called packers. The full packing is one in which there is a label on chitti and paper fully covering the bundles or half packing is one in which these is a label or “chitti” medium or bundle is half covered with papers and single packing is one in which there is only a label paper. Bundles of 25 bidies are further packed into bundles of 420 or 500 bidies each. Then they are stocked in gunny bags in godowns and released for in accordance with the orders booked.

1.9. Employees in Bidi Making:-

In the bidi making, most common but at the same time sufficiently important category of the bidi makers. These workers, who actually make bidis, go by different names in different places. In some places, they are called bidi makers, while in others, they are known as bidi-rollers or bidi labours.
Bidi factories are situated in large numbers in the Telangana area and perhaps due to this reason generally the Telugu people are found as bidi workers. Even in the factories situated in Maharashtra area, the Telugu speaking persons make bidies. Nanded is a purely Marathi speaking area but all the bidi-making are Telugus. Even at Aurangabad, Solapur, Telugu speaking workers are found as bidi-workers.

Although, the bidi factories remain open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. there are no fixed hours of work for the actual bidi makers. As they consist of mostly women, they work only in the day time and as it suits their convenience. The women workers have to finish their domestic work before they can go to the factory. In some factories, visited by us, we did not find the women workers. Eventhough, it was 12 o’clock, but the usual hours of work appear to be between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. In this period of 8 hours, they do not only make bidies as their time is also taken away by other miscellaneous activities. If there is a stand in queue for taking tobacco in the morning before they can start work. And before they get back to their homes in the evenings, they have to stand again in queue to submit the bidies to the bidi sorter or mistry and to take entries in a form about the raw material consumed and the output of bidies as also to take the bidi leaves for the next day from the leaves supplier. Smaller concerns, however, not much time is taken for obtaining tobacco and bidi leaves and for handing over the bidi. In any case, the bidi rollers can sit for 7 hours or so and they like to do it at a stretch as it given them both concentration and speed. The time taken at home for the preparation of the wrappers by soaking the leaves and cutting them into shape is always besides the time spent at the factory. It is stated that three or four hours are required for cutting leaves for 1000 bidies, but actually they should not take more than 2 hours or so if they are adept enough in this work. The longer hours taken for cutting may be on account of the lack of practice on the part of the part of the women workers or because they do this work while attending to their cooking and other domestic duties.

Besides the bidi rollers, the entire categories of workers likely to be employed even in the biggest bidi factory are supervisors, bidi sorters, bidi counters, tobacco distributions, leaves suppliers, furnace-men, trayfillers, packers, chowkidars; sweepers and clerkes.

The nature of work of most of the categories of workers is evident from their designations, e.g., it is the duty of the supervisor to supervise the entire work
connected with bidi making, sorter has to sort out the other processes, and the standard bides. When workers submit bides to him. There is hardly any need to define the duties of the bidi-counters, tobacco distributions and leaves-suppliers as no special knowledge is required or skill involved in their work and anyone can be employed for the purpose of counting bides, distributing tobacco and supplying leaves. But the furnace-man who is also called ‘Bhatticuwala’ is an important category of worker in a bidi factory particularly when the furnace is of a Madrasi type and not the Almirah or Karnooli type. All these kinds of furnaces are used for the toning of bides. It was stated by a manager of an important bidi factory, in which Madrasi Bhatti was in use that the nature of work of a furnace-man was at least semi-skilled and a man of average intelligence required about three to four month’s time to be able to work satisfactorily as a furnace man. The maintenance of a peculiar temperature of a furnace depends upon experience and practice and any mistake on furnace on the part of the furnace-man is likely to cause considerable loss to the employer. The Almirah or Karnooli (only a ditch) type of furnaces do not require much skill and therefore a person engaged on either of them can be classified with the unskilled person such as the bidi counters, tobacco distributors and others engaged on similar work.

Another important category of workers in bidi factories is of the packers. Both adults and children, even minors, are employed as such. The work of the packers also requires some skill. They are paid in different manner from factory to factory, but the general practice is to pay on monthly basic if the packer, given every day a prescribed amount of work. There is also a difference in the manner in which packing is done and the extent of work that is required to be given by the packers depends upon whether the packing is single, medium or full.

Again, the bidi sorter is also a category of worker of sufficient importance. He is of great significance particularly in factories where the quality of bides is aimed at. Since the earnings of the workers get proportionately less with the number of bides sorted out by the bidi sorter, he cannot be expected to remain popular with the workers. In one factory it was noticed by the Committee that very often the bidi sorters had to be changed. A person becomes a bidi sorter by experience and acquires skill after working for several years. There is no rule or method by which he is guided. Just a look at the bundle of bides or a touch enables him to decide about the
quality of the bidi and the quantity of tobacco used. He handles lakh of bidies throughout the day and it would have become impossible for him to sort out the bad ones if he were to concentrate on each bidi. In some cess, the bidi sorter weighs one or two bidies in a small balance to see that required quantity of tobacco has been used.

1.10. The Difficulties and Challenges ahead Bidi Workers:-

The bidi rolling has been a part of local culture for nearly a century in these areas and promoting employment alternatives in areas (where unemployment is already high) is a challenge. ‘Bidi rolling’ in India is a symbol of poverty and desperation in an area. Bidi work is done because there is no other work. If there were other viable economic activities that people were engaged in, the bidi contractor would not have come into these areas. Creating means of income/employment where there are no other readily available alternatives or infrastructure is therefore a major challenge. Moreover, the bidi women are poor, illiterate (mostly), with little or no skills, socially disadvantaged, with debts and low asset base. The fact that the target group is home based women. It involves overcoming additional considerations of gender discrimination or subjugation within families and restrictive societal attitudes in general which curtail their mobility and the choices open to them. Needless to say, bringing about changes in this kind of environment will take time. Getting women to even attend meetings outside their homes on a regular basis was a problem initially. The project also had to address the issue of absence of capacities of the local organizations and build the same. Approach that first year one would do capacity building and then go on to other things. It needs to be a continuous and an integral part of promoting income generation activities. To create supportive environment, are interventions to change the attitude of the family, male members, community and local government officials. There is a tendency to be apathetic towards the women in general among the official freedom. Changing these attitudes needs time and lot more attention than what has been possible to give during the course of the pilot project. The time available did not permit sufficient attention to this aspect although the project involved other social partners in discussions to sensitize them to the needs of the bidi women.

Finding sustainable alternatives that provide income at least equal to that provided by the bidi rolling in these areas is not easy. Moreover, the viability of many of the small-scale economic activities itself comes under pressure due to declining
purchasing powers in the pilot areas on account of the decline of the bidi industry. Some of the alternatives need investments and involve gestation periods, which these workers are not be able to withstand, unless credit and sustained survival support is extended. The project has in limited ways overcome these problems due to the support extended through skills training, hand holding, provision of micro-credit through the revolving funds and the motivation and support provided by the bidi women’s self-help groups.

Other challenges before the project are - need to provide follow-up support to the women who are undertaking supplemental income generation activities. Being new entrepreneurs, most bidi women are facing the problems of marketing, seasonality of economic activities, issues concerning standardization of products and sustainability of economic activities. The project has tried to overcome these challenges through the provision of business development services to the women and building linkages with other institutions that support income generation activities by the poor women. It is would have been desirable to explore the possibility of setting up a cooperative marketing structure for marketing the products of the poor home based women in the long run. However, the project has not managed to get the second phase funding which would have enabled this. The project also did not get the time to build institutional linkages between the self-help groups (SHGs) of bidi women and other institutions and programmers of the government for women towards the goal of self-sustenance. There is also a need to introduce social security initiatives. All these activities need time frame of 2-3 years, beyond 2003, which is not available.

1.11. Convention Demands Protection to Bidi Workers:

The city of Solapur in south east Maharashtra witnessed a unique rally of bidi workers, joined by hundreds of bidi and tobacco industry owners, demanding protection of bidi workers from the rigours of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 2003. This act passed in parliament during the BJP led Vajpayee regime in May 2003 and being implemented since May 1 this year, has played havoc with the livelihood of Indian bidi workers.

The number of bidi workers over the country is estimated to be more than 15 million, an overwhelming 95 per cent of them being females. Join by children and other family members, these bidi workers are on an average required to work 12 hours
a day to earn a living. Most of the tobacco cultivation is concentrated in and around Nipani district in Karnataka and Khed district in Gujarat, while the tendu leaves for rolling the bidies are grown in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Orissa. It is to be noted here that, unlike the cigarette industry which involves different chemical processes and mechanical operations, bidi manufacturing activity is fully handled by humans and does not require chemical processing and machine operations. Of the 15 million bidi workers, about 2.5 to 3 lakhs are in Maharashtra alone, spread over in remote village areas in various parts of this state. More than 70,000 of them are concentrated in the city of Solapur and its surrounding areas.

The enforcement of the said act’s propitiatory provisions has created gloom in the life of bidi workers and in the bidi and tobacco industry in Maharashtra. The gloom is spreading to other states as well. In Solapur alone, almost 10,000 workers have been rendered unemployed. The industry in Maharashtra is also in the grip of an unprecedented crisis as, according to the industry circles, there is a decline to the extent of 15 to 20 per cent in its turnover.

The main reason for this is that the bureaucrats, who framed the act and the rules hereunder, are callous to the needs of bidi workers and to the problems of the century old industry. Nor did the MPs, who voted for the law in parliament, adequately study the bill before if was passed. On the other hand, the cigarette manufacturing multinationals are flouting the act in many ways, particularly during the big events such as cricket and other sports. The result is mounting joblessness among bidi workers and huge revenue losses to state and central governments. It was in these circumstances that the CITU in Solapur took initiative to organise several joint meetings of trade unions, bidi workers and bidi and tobacco industrial employers. The campaign helped in forming joint committees of various trade unions and the bidi manufacturers associations. The process culminated in the formation of Bidi Udyog Sanrakshan Sanyukta Sangharsh Samiti with Nithubai Desai of bidi industry as chairman and CITU leader Narsayya Adam Master as convenor. This joint committee made repeated representations to the present state government and the previous NDA government demanding modifications in the rules. But all such representations fell on deaf ears. It was in these circumstances that the unprecedented joint convention of bidi workers and owners took place in the Vast Kuche High School Medium in the heart of this historic city of Solapur.
1.12. Bidi Industry in India:-

The bidi industry impacts our economy to a large extent, yet is somewhat misunderstood and quite unknown. Not only does the bidi industry employ six times as many workers than its fancy cousin – Cigarettes – but also quantifies to bear a tremors socio-economic significance in employment generation in India, yielding an average of 1310 million man days of employment. The Indian bidi industry employs over 6 million and is worth INR 100-150 billion. A large part of our human resource sources its livelihood through employment in various organized and unorganized sectors such as the cottage and agricultural industries. Nearly 70% of Indians still reside in rural areas and are largely depend on agriculture for survival and 90% of the working population in our country. Especially in rural areas, it is employed by the cottage industry and which is a major source of income for them. As stated by Ministry of Industry, Government of India in press statement dated 20th January, 2006 "It would be unrealistic to view tobacco purely as a health problem and ignore the economic and social fall-outs of tobacco control… we have to bear in mind the employment and livelihood of the large numbers engaged in tobacco cultivation and production. If we do not conceive of tobacco control as a comprehensive package, our attempts at intervention may become self-defeating… the community at large has to be fully informed and involved".

1.13. Convention of Bidi Workers Organized by: Voluntary Health Association of India:-

A convention of bidi workers was organized by VHAI at Jhangipur in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, on 22nd April, 2009. The objective of this convention was to discuss the issues related to health hazards of Bidi rolling occupation and to explore the idea of alternative livelihood for these Bidi workers. A large number of women, adolescent girls and children took part in this convention. There were open house and group discussions where the bidi workers were given the opportunity to express their views and solutions to it. The regional media, print as well as electronic, covered this convention. Some of the major discussion points were:

1. Poor health facilities for bidi rollers
2. Health hazards of Bidi rolling
3. Impoverished lives of bidi rollers
4. Poor working conditions
5. Loss of childhood as families involved in bidi rolling
6. Lack of any facilities for women and children
7. Poor payment terms
8. Awareness regarding statutory provisions meant for the welfare of the bidi rollers
9. Decades of dependency and no alternative choices of livelihood.
10. Willingness for some alternative occupations

This convention explored the possibilities of alternative livelihoods that the workers would want to be occupied with in future. The outcome of convention was a memorandum on behalf of the bidi workers with their signatures/thumbprints where all of them expressed their willingness to shift for alternative livelihoods. Through this memorandum, VHAI will strengthen its ongoing advocacy efforts for improving the lives of these bidi workers and submit the memorandum to the important ministers and key parliamentarians of the newly formed Government at the centre as well as elected parliament member from the state of West Bengal and other bidi manufacturing states.

1.14. Bidi Workers Welfare Fund in India:

There is no clear evidence as to when the bidi rolling industry began to operate in India. Though production and consumption of tobacco began in India in the seventeenth century. It was probably introduced by the Europeans- either by the British or by the Portuguese. It is also mentioned that tobacco was began to be cultivated in Andhra Pradesh during the reign of Krishna Dev Rai (Chauhan, 2001-12). Thus tobacco cultivation and its subsequent form of utilization consumption in the form of bidi are clearly linked, but the bidi rolling began in India. There is no exact evidence.

Whatever may the year of origin today the industry has come to occupy a very important niche in the overall industrial spectrum of the country by providing employment to a large number of people? The industry is employing more than six million workers in its two activities i.e. from tendu leave collection to bidi rolling stages alone. Bidi rolling itself engages more than four million workers. State-wise estimate of bidi workers shows that the largest number of workers is concentrated in Madhya Pradesh (16.45) Uttar Pradesh and so on. Table shows the distribution of bidi workers across the states. The figures also shows that in six states, namely West Bengal (15.45), Tamil Nadu (12.84), Andhra Pradesh (15.09), Gujarat (1.03), Madhya
Pradesh (16.99), Orissa (5.44), and Tripura (0.2%). More than 90 percent workers have been issued identity cards by the Labour Welfare Organization of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. However, among states, Bihar and Jharkhand are two states where almost half of the estimated workers have not been issued identity as yet.

Table No.1.1
Statement Showing State-Wise Details of the Total Number of Bidi Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Name of the State</th>
<th>No. of Bidi Workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>735000</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>7725</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>335000</td>
<td>6.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>115000</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>50075</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>287082</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>96324</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>827194</td>
<td>16.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>26110</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>256000</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>265000</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>31736</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>9946</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>625000</td>
<td>12.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>450000</td>
<td>9.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>752225</td>
<td>15.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4869417</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the beginning employment in the industry was mostly concentrated in the factories. But now most of the bidi workers are home based workers and again the great majority of the workers are constituted by women and child laborers. Socially, they are mostly constituted by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (G.O.I, 1995). The workers, being unorganized, are generally deprived of many facilities, for instance, minimum wages, social security and other employment benefits. Earlier the workers were not protected by any specific labour laws. However, in 1966 an Act,
namely, the Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 was passed by government to protect the interests of the workers.

1.15. Distribution of State-Wise Minimum Wages Fixed for Bidi Workers:-

The following table shows that the state-wise minimum wages per thousand Bidies and minimum wage rate per day are given to Bidi workers in India.

Table No.1.2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Minimum Wages Per Thousand Bidi</th>
<th>Minimum Wage Rate Per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>38.80</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>52.39</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>73.80</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>132.29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>49.04</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>86.05</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>43.95</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>52.78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>59.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>79.14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The average actual earnings in the bidi rolling work vary widely from state. Even official minimum wages vary significantly from state-wise (as shows in above table no.1.2).

1.16. Labour Welfare Funds:-

The Ministry of Labour and Employment is administering five welfare funds for bidi cine and contain categories of non coal mine workers. The funds have been set up under the following Acts of Parliament for the welfare of these workers.
The Acts enable the central Government to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with measures and facilities which are necessary or expedient to promote the welfare of such workers. In order to give effect to the objectives laid down in the above Acts, various welfare schemes have been formulated and are under operation in the fields of Health, Social Security, Education, Housing Recreation and Water Supply.

Ministry of Labour and Employment has initiated action for rehabilitation of the bidi workers to provide them alternate source of employment for viable alternative sources of livelihood. As there is apprehension among bidi manufacturers bidi workers Associations that employment may be reduced in bidi industry due to the labeling the pictorial warning on bidi bundles specified under the cigarettes and other tobacco products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bidi Workers Welfare Funds Collection and Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Rupees in thousands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidi Workers Welfare Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of Welfare Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cess Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment Government of India, 2010

1.17. Distribution of Bidi Workers in Maharashtra:-

Apart from these figures Director general, Labour Welfare, Ministry of Labour, has generated date on bidi workers throughout the country. Here we have made an attempt to present district-wise data of bidi workers in the country by some state. Here district-wise figures for Maharashtra state.
### Table No.1.4

**District-Wise Distribution of Bidi Workers in Maharashtra**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Total No. of Bidi Workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>25600</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gondia</td>
<td>64140</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>16600</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chandrapur</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nasik</td>
<td>12613</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ahmednagar</td>
<td>21640</td>
<td>8.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sangli</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Solapur</td>
<td>71307</td>
<td>27.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jalna</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jalgaon</td>
<td>5800</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dhule</td>
<td>4700</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nanded</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sindhudurg</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mumbai / Thane</td>
<td>12100</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>256000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Labour Welfare Organization. Nagpur, 2009

The state has a considerable number of bidi workers. The district-wise distribution of these workers in table shows that the largest of bidi workers are concentrated in district Solapur (27.86%), followed by Gondia (25.05%), Bhandara (10%), and Ahmednagar (8.45%). These figures thus clearly show that more than 71.36 per cent bidi workers are concentrated in these four districts. Three more districts have also considerable presence of bidi workers, namely, Nagpur (6.48%), Nasik (4.96%) and Mumbai / Thane (4.72%).

**1.18. Some Industry Statistics:**

1. Out of the nearly one crore people involved in the industry, around 60 lakhs are directly employed in the rolling of bidi activity. The rest are tendu leaves cultivators in the forest areas of the country.
2. Maharashtra is home to around 2.5 to 3 lakhs of this workforce. Solapur district alone employs nearly 71307 workers in different activities of bidi industry.

3. Bidi is a home-based industry and 95 percent of its workers are women.

4. The entire process of bidi manufacturing is by human hands and no mechanical operation is involved.

5. Bidi products are 100 percent natural with low nicotine and tar percentages.

6. Bidi is an important source of income, for women's earnings constitute on an average 45 to 50% of the total income.

All these factors demonstrate the bidi industry's tremendous growth potential which is being driven primarily by various factors like high level of employment, sustained levels of growth in agriculture sector, women empowerment, natural resources management, revenue generation, upgrading of skills and education.

1.19. **Role of Women in the Bidi Industry:**

There are different estimates of female involvement in bidi rolling. One source estimated that women constitute 76% of the total employment in bidi manufacture. The All India Bidi, Cigar and Tobacco Workers Federation pay the figure at 90% to 95%. In some regions of India, bidi making is largely regarded as “women’s work”, with the exception of young boys. In other areas, men roll bides if and when other work is not available or they are unable to engage in manual labor.

The bidi industry is male-dominated, where the manufacturer, the contractor and the consumers are male and only the bidi rollers are female. This often makes women subject to economic exploitation. Some middlemen reportedly supply low quality leaf, and reject bundles of bidies on grounds of poor standards, but then eventually take them without paying. Female bidi rollers also report verbal and physical abuse based on gender and caste differences.

In areas where the bidi cottage industry is pervasive, some women engage in bidi rolling as a full-time occupation and are able to roll 800–1200 bidies during an 8-12 hour day. Other women work part-time while caring for children and attending to household duties and roll 300–500 bidies a day. In many cess, several women from the same household will pool their efforts to fill quotas. Neither observes that bidi rolling is often preferred to other manual labor, particularly in communities where going “outside” the home to work in the fields of “others” is considered lower status than working at
home, especially if one can earn cash. Bidi wages are generally higher than those for manual labor and in some areas, such as southwest coastal Karnataka, the siphoning off of women into the bidi cottage industry has raised local agricultural wages and affected cropping patterns.

The upside of bidi work for women is that it pays in cash on a daily basis and provides small benefits. Regular workers on a local bidi branch (outlet) list may receive minor loans, and be eligible for layaway plans and bonuses, perks designed to retain women’s loyalty to contractors and maintain a steady supply of bidies. The downside is that raw materials are not always available, especially in rainy season when poverty is worst. Women, who primarily rely on bidi work for survival, have difficulty at this time. Households that rely strictly on bidi work are sometimes forced to go into debt to bidi contractors who then gain control over them. For this reason, some households have diversified, with some members rolling bidi and others doing manual labor. The increasing shift of bidi rolling from the factory to a home-based setting and the constant relocation of bidi companies in search of cheap transport and labor also cause insecurity and instability among bidi workers.

1.20. Summary:-

The factories of bidi are mostly depended on Female bidi workers. Actually, it is 80 lakhs bidi workers in all over the India. Bidi factory has been started in other states of India such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gov, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat there are 3 lakhs Female bidi workers in Maharashtra for rolling Bidies Raw material has been provided from Noxalite arid of Maharashtra state. Women make the largest proportion of labour in the bidi industry. Published literature estimates that women make up 76% of total bidi employment. The all India Bidi, Cigar, and Tobacco Workers Federation estimates that women comprise 90 – 95% of total employment in bidi manufacture. Lack of information on the provision of the bidi Acts among workers, majority of who are poor from backward castes and illiterate. Need for education and training programs. Tobacco and leave are the main raw materials required by the industry. Different qualities of tobacco are obtained from Nipani, Sangli, Kolhapur and Gujarat. Tobacco leaves are purchased from Chandrapur and Bhandra districts as also from Madhya Pradesh. The time taken at home for the preparation of the wrappers by soaking the leaves and cutting them into shape is always besides the time spent at the factory.
Though production and consumption of tobacco began in India in the seventeenth century, it was probably introduced by the Europeans- either by the British or by the Portuguese. The workers, being unorganized, are generally deprived of many facilities, for instance, minimum wages, social security’s and other employment benefits. Earlier the workers were not protected by any specific labour laws. The average actual earnings in the bidi rolling work vary widely from state. Even official minimum wages vary significantly from to state-wise. The state-wise minimum wages per thousand bidies and minimum wage rate per day are given to Bidi workers in India. The Acts enable the central Government to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with measures and facilities which are necessary or expedient to promote the welfare of such workers. In order to give effect to the objectives laid down in the above Acts, various welfare schemes have been formulated and are under operation in the fields of Health, Social Security, Education, Housing Recreation and Water Supply. In areas where the bidi cottage industry is pervasive, some women engage in bidi rolling as a full-time occupation and are able to roll 800–1200 bidies during an 8-12 hour per day.

References:-

1. Chauhan Y, (2001), History and Struggles of Bidi Workers in India. New Delhi: All India Trade Union Congress.
sponsored by IDRC, Canada. Centre for Multi Disciplinary Development Research: Dharwad.


9. Chauhan Y. (2001), History and Struggles of Bidi Workers in India. New Delhi: All India Trade Union Congress.


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