CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

3.1 Work participation, dual role and empowerment.
3.2 Education and empowerment.
3.3 Health and empowerment
3.4 Decision making and control over resources and empowerment.
3.5 Socio-cultural factors and empowerment.
3.6 Entrepreneurship and empowerment.
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REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The studies pertaining to women issues have swelled up steadily in India after the declaration of International Women’s year, 1975 by the United Nations Organisation. A number of studies with regard to women status inside and outside the family, their level of health, education, employment, decision making, economic dependence, work participation, access and control over assets, resources and their ownership, entrepreneurship and many others have been undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organisations, research institutions, academicians, individuals research scholars. In fact it is not an easy task to de-link one aspect of women’s life from the other to understand the position and place of women. Most of the studies that have been undertaken on women are more or less confined to middle class urban women. There are very few studies on rural women particularly of women belonging to lower class and lower strata. Further very scanty attention has been given to studies.
of rural women's involvement in informal sector of the economy. In this backdrop an attempt is made in the present study to review the findings and suggestions of relevant and important pieces of literatures carried out by some of the well known researchers, academicians and other institutions over the years. The educational status, health status and work participation of women indicates the extent of their empowerment. Their involvement in decision-making and control over resources also suggest how empowered they are. The socio-cultural factors on the other hand sometimes act against their empowerment. Presently, there is a policy initiative to empower women by encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurship. In this backdrop the literatures reviewed have been put under six heads such as (i) work participation, dual role and empowerment (ii) education and empowerment (iii) health and empowerment (iv) decision making, control over resources and empowerment (v) socio-cultural factors and empowerment (vi) entrepreneurship and empowerment.

3.1 Work participation, dual role and empowerment

Nath (1970) in his study observes that women's participation in the labour force tends to decline with increase in literacy.
Manekar (1975) conducted a study to find out sex discrimination in wages in four states namely Mysore, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. The study reveals that gender discrimination in wages exist in all the four states.

Seth (1975) in his paper observes that lack of mobility among women, the irregular and inadequate employment opportunities near their homes, traditional classification of some jobs which put them in a lower status and are low remunerative as feminine and large number of job seekers for few jobs are the reasons for low wage rate of women.

Das Gupta (1977) observes that female work participation is inversely related to the farm size. Hence female may be forced to work outside the family farm in cases where the family owns little or no land in order to supplement the meager income of the adult male numbers.

Jayalaxmi’s (1977) study reveals that women who suffer from wage discrimination are neither aware of the provision of the law nor are able to improve their bargaining power, because of their illiteracy, ignorance and backwardness.

Mitra’s (1979) objective is to examine female participation in household and non-household industry in comparison to male. He finds out that women are in
employment in low earning sectors of the economy. They are engaged in household 
sector in higher proportions than non-household sectors vis-a-vis men.

Singh (1980) in her paper observes that the higher the rate of economic
development of a state, the lower the percentage of women in the labour force.

Hirway (1980) in her paper observes that there is an inverse relationship
between participation rates of the female and family’s income and husband’s income.

Mitra et al. (1980) observes that the women labour force in India is a reserve
pool of helpless labour.

Sundar (1981) in her article opines that the factors influencing the female
participation rates are structural changes, cultural biases her husband’s and family’s
income and extra economic considerations.

Ghodake et al. (1981) in their paper state that female participation is greater in
irrigated areas than dry areas because of the possibility of double and multiple
cropping in irrigated areas which increases the demand for female labour.

Moser et al. (1981) points out in their study that the reason for poor pay of
women is putting of women as subsidiary workers.
Page (1982) rightly observes that half of the women's work is unpaid and the other half is underpaid. Whatever work women do at home is unpaid and outside it is underpaid. There is no country where considerable differences are not found between the earnings of men and women.

Dandekar's (1982) paper clearly states that low rate of women's participation in economic activity is due to the responsibility of women towards household duties including child care, while less than one per cent men share this burden. He further remarks that women warrants high degree of participation in non economic activities inside and outside the house than men. In the process she is overburdened. He therefore suggests that there is need for redefining the role of male and female inside the house. There should be no gender bias in household work and men and women must share the work equitably.

Malavika (1984) in her study about sweeper women of Delhi remarks that with urbanisation poor women are put to many pressures. Further she points out that the increase in employment due to urbanisation has however not increased their decision making role in the family.

Jhabwala (1984) in her paper observes that in low-income groups, where both husband and wife are workers, their relationship is like the relationship between the master worker and his assistants.
Sherwani (1984) observes that most of the working women have to surrender their pay packets to their parents or to husbands if married.

Banarjee (1985) points out that women’s economic position is worsening because their role in the traditional economy slowly become redundant while their gains in the modern sector remains negligible.

Chakrabarty (1985) points out that invisibility of women as an economic entity is at the root of her low status.

Das Gupta (1985) finds that cooking, collecting fire woods and water, minding the house and child bearing fall within the preview of non-work and leisure of women in rural areas.

Rao (1985) identifies concentration in low-paid or non-preferred jobs, discrimination in hiring and promotion, conflict between maternal and ‘work rules and prevalence of male superiority as the characteristics of the working conditions of modern female workers.

Jumani (1986) points out that women’s work at home-based production is only one of their multiple roles at home. Women in Bangladesh are increasingly being propelled into home based production due to growing poverty, landlessness and incidence of female headed households.
Kachru (1987) observes that women have a larger role to play as primary feeders in the family and as worker in firm or cottage industries.

ICSSR (1988) study reveals that the low rates of wage for women farm labourers are due to unorganised nature of employment, the ease with which hired labour can be substituted by family labour, the seasonal nature of the demand for labour and the traditional reservation of certain jobs for females.

Devi (1989) rightly remarks that the major causes of differential income are reservation of better opportunities of employment to men, discriminatory wage, and exploitation through policy prerogative and unduly long working hours for women.

Sen (1989) observes that duel role of women as paid workers outside the family and as unpaid workers inside the family leads to real contribution to an economy. However her role is under estimated. Therefore he suggests a reliable technique be evolved to quantify her contribution; especially non-monetary contribution.

SEWA’S (1989) study on women reveals that the labour market is not neutral to men and women. Gender inequalities exist in almost all sectors. The division of labour is highly sex based. Operation which fetch high wages is male dominated where as work of arduous nature bringing lower wages are earmarked for women.
Srivastav (1990) points out that the time budget of a rural women is allocated for collecting and sorting fuel, cooking and processing food, fetching and transporting water, earning for the well-being of the family, kitchen gardening, caring animals, cleaning, washing etc. everyday.

Cooper (1992) in his pioneering study on women of USA finds that self-employed women were still spending an average of five hours per day on household tasks only three hours less than the average full time home marker.

Bandarnayake (1993) finds that in Sri Lanka women are traditionally co-producer with men in the agrarian economy and in domestic industry. But women economic roles are affected by socioeconomic class and domestic and child bearing functions.

Ojha et al. (1993) state that there is need to bring welfare to women through identifying their problems and to relive them from being over burdened and form the drudgery or time consuming and unrewarding activities; so as to enable them to switch to time saving, rewarding and economically gainful activities.

Kumari (1994) makes an analysis of relationship between women workers and their social status. The impact of changing role of women in family and society at
large is discussed. It also discusses the process of modernisation and mechanisation and its impact on women. The author concludes that economic empowerment of women can be brought about by changing the outlook of the households and society at large.

Kumar (1995) observes that with the increasing economic necessity and growing cost of living, most women like to continue working. With the break of joint family system, more and more Indian women are hard pressed to fulfil their dual role as a mother and a working woman. If women are to utilise their professional training and continue working uninterrupted, childcare facilities, and the opening of day care crèches, nurseries and balwadis, on a very extensive scale is called for.

Mittal (1995) in her paper observes that the inferior status of women is established right at the birth. Further there are substantial disparities in education, employment on the basis of gender and such disparities are more deep-rooted in rural areas that urban.

Rao’s (1996) paper discusses the dynamics of women’s participation in the informal sector in India in a framework that recognises their livelihood strategies. The paper observes that rural poor woman face many problems on account of their
multiple occupations and multiple life roles, patriarchal controls and exploitation as cheap labour not only in informal sector but in formal sector too.

Pandya (1999) in her article has made an attempt to focus in the changing role of men and women in the society. She observes that with change in social condition and pattern of living, role of women is expanding. She is accepting the dual responsibility of job outside and household work inside. In the process she is overburdened. Pandya therefore suggests that there is need for redefining the role of male and female inside the house first. There should be no gender bias in household work and men and women must share the work equitably.

3.2 Education and empowerment

Gorwaney's (1977) study finds that the factors such as levels of self-esteem, education, employment, technological change and participation of women in it uplift the status of women in the society.

Drandtzeag's (1979) study opines that during modernisation and technological changes particularly in agricultural sector, women suffer a loss of economic authority
because the new technologies are developed and managed by men, the training and new jobs are also reserved for the male workers.

Dauber et al. (1981) observes that discrimination against women in education and employment opportunities systematically excludes them from participatory growth.

Leef (1981) argues that education and training are not made available on an equal basis to women compared to men. Even when they gain necessary education/training, they don’t have equal access to career opportunities.

Cleland et al. (1982) using cross national data find that although maternal education significantly improves the life chances of children especially beyond infancy, more egalitarian treatment of the sex does not contribute to this outcome.

Schultz (1982) in his study does not find a significant effect of female education, on control over employment, on relative female survival at either household level or district level. Nevertheless, at least at the household level the effect of male education on the relative survival of female is significant.

Simons et al. (1982) in their study based on samples from rural Uttar Pradesh find that girls are more likely to survive in relatively more educated households than
in uneducated ones; by contrast the education level of households do not affect male survival.

Chakravarti (1985) in his article states that the rural women still feel that education is most important for boys than girls. He argues further that the feeling of gender bias in education arises due to the patriarchal structure of Indian society and illiteracy.

Seth (1985) opines that the status of Indian Women has gone to higher level during the last two or three decades. The fact that the rate of literacy and employment of women are increasing faster than that of man, has contributed towards raising the status of women in society.

Buri (1989) argues that literacy alone can make women realise their potential and equip them for better employment and wages. Further he stressed that sex wise educational imbalance impair women’s contribution to development.

Sen (1989) suggests that education and training will enrich and empower women through greater multiplier effect than educating men. Therefore he suggests that by imparting general and technical education to women, their condition can be improved.
Caldewell (1990) argues that increasing literacy has two multiplicative impact i.e. it changes behavior of the individuals in relation to society and it changes society as a whole by bringing about shifts in the belief system itself to the extent in as much as increasing literacy exposes individuals to more gender egalitarian western ideals. Greater gender equality may result in female autonomy and empowerment.

Bhuiya et al. (1991) in their study observe that in Bangladesh the risk of mortality is found to fall for both boys and girls with increase in level of literacy; however the reduction in risks for boys is much greater than that for girls.

3.3 Health and empowerment

Gorden et al. (1962) observe that fewer females than males get medical care during severe illness and further that male get higher qualities of care than female.

Gorden (1971) observes that access to medical care in India appears to be differentiated by gender. Further he points out that wider sex differential is found in medical care than in the allocation of food.

Chen et al. (1981) in their distinctive study on Bangladesh meticulously measured individual food intake in 130 families twice a day for three months. They
found that the food intake of males exceed that of females in each age group. Despite adjustments made for observed differentials for body weights, extra calories needs of lactating or pregnant women and assumed activity levels, and the gender differential persisted too.

Miller (1981) in his study finds that differential allocation of food on the basis of gender begins with breast milk.

Brown et al. (1982) in their study find that male children were found to receive both more and higher quality foods than girls of the same age.

Bairagi (1986) in his study on Bangladesh which was conducted during the famine finds that the gender difference in malnutrition is greater among the children of the higher socioeconomic status group.

Dasgupta (1987) obtaining sample from rural Punjab arrives at the conclusion that in the first year of life; expenditure on medical care for son is 2.34 times higher than that for daughter.

Sen’s (1988) remarkable study clearly finds that, health condition of both male and female residents improve with income while female remains disadvantaged in each expenditure group.
3.4 Decision-making, control over resources and empowerment

Chakravarty (1985) observes that due to the non-recognition of the role played by women, she does not have any access to the resources, credit and technology which is the base of all social discrimination against her.

Desai (1986) observes that one of the chief reasons for female’s lower status in the family is the absence of control over income or earnings. Middle class working women however find themselves in better position than other housewives in terms of possessing authority in earnings. Therefore she argues employment per se woman status.

Charyuler (1987) observes that though the dependence of women on men is strong they do have a strong desire to participate in public activities and policy decisions to gain equal status as compared to men.

Devi (1987) in her study tries to identify the changes emerging from education and employment of women in family; a sample size of 160 couples of Visakhapatnam was taken. The major findings were that woman’s education and employment had helped to change role performance, decision making and behavior patterns for egalitarian relations.
Alva (1988) discussing various strategies to enhance the economic status of poor women workers, particularly those who are self employed in the informal sector of economy observes, that (i) women working in the informal sector of economy, be in the rural or urban areas operate in vicious circle of subsistence, deprivation and survival. They are largely assetless and do not own any productive assets in relation to their work and (ii) Provision of productive assets in the hands of women working in the informal sector of the economy; has led to qualitative improvement in their lives over a period of time.

Patel (1989) finds in his paper that the status of women as well as men to a larger extent is determined by the amount of resource at their command.

Rath (1996) firstly attempts to make situational analysis of the women in India in the past and present, the rural setting of the country and the plight of the women therein. Secondly it makes an analysis by discussing the planned proposals launched by the governments for rural development programmes. Thirdly a micro analysis of rural women in the developmental programmes; which embraces the assessment of their awareness and participation in the planning and proper implementation of developmental programmes and finally the benefit they received from the programmes. The author suggests that the rural women can achieve fruit of the
developmental programmes if they come to the forefront of the society, participate in planning and policy decisions and implement the same with utmost care.

3.5 Socio cultural factors and empowerment

Agarwal’s (1973) study reveals that the prevailing social values are not favorable for a female child, and she is looked upon as a transitory member of the family. Further she observes that education is necessary but not a sufficient condition for raising the status of women. It may help to improve their position in society but it can’t guarantee equality with the male within the home.

Agarwal (1976) observes that inequalities inherent in our traditional social structure based on caste, community and class have significant influences on the status of women in different spheres.

Grave’s (1978) study on West Bengal suggests that the age old deep rooted son preference is obviously expected to have an adverse influence on the women’s status in the household.

Srinivasan (1978) observes that among the poor and low caste, the relationship between male and female is more egalitarian than among the higher caste.
Mazumdar et al. (1979) stress in their study that oppression of women was perceived as a traditional instrument maintaining social inequality by the high caste in India.

Desouza (1980) in his study states that the women in the world, in both the industrially advanced and less developed countries are burdened with cumulative inequalities.

Chhabara et al. (1980) in their study on third world countries observed that women are more burdened with cumulative inequalities as compared to advanced countries.

Gandhi’s (1980) Paper asserts that due to the rigid social customs prevalent even today women are generally engaged in specific occupations and most of the women are not allowed to hold a job before marriage.

Pais (1980) observes that the traditional family structure and social outlook in India has kept women away from obtaining adequate education. As a result, women have been kept out of employment and have been unable to make independent income of their own.
Caldwell et al. (1988) observe that the lower castes and landless may not be immune to the impact of the dominant cultural preference for sons. Nevertheless, any discriminatory allocation of resources between males and females in poorer households may not get reflected in gender differences in mortality since such households may be too poor to have effective control over survival of any of their children; male or female.

3.6 Entrepreneurship and empowerment

Boserup (1970) penetrating work documents that developmental strategies have been of little help to women in agricultural sector in the third world. In many cases development projects are rather contributing to the deterioration in women’s status. Boserup attributes this mostly to lack of knowledge about the economic role of women.

Verman’s (1978) study on successful women entrepreneurs in the states of Rajasthan indicates that the impact on independent women beneficiaries under self-employment programme (IRD) is favourable. In the field of decision making in the family matters, the monopoly of husbands and in-laws is slowly vanished and a mutual understanding of both husband and wife is taking place.
Shield’s (1980) study on the labour force in Tenzanian’s main urban centers in the 1970, finds that there exist a positive correlation between the level of education and the earnings of the women microentrepreneurs.

Watts (1984) observes that gender differences in terms of access to resources, geographical mobility and market entry however make women especially vulnerable to shallow markets, while male markets have the freedom to travel considerable distances to a number of markets to purchase inputs and sell products. Women’s ability in many regions is circumscribed by their domestic responsibilities and their need to be close to home. Gender specific roles tend to limit the number of product markets which women are able or willing to enter and further diminish the scope and size of the markets to which women have access. As a result female more than male entrepreneurs suffers from atomistic competition and their enterprises are small and unspecialised. Therefore female entrepreneurs try to find diverse pockets of demand that they can meet without facing such extreme competitions.

Cobbe’s (1985) study on Lesotho women microentrepreneurs finds that they are more involved in enterprise generation rather than concentrating on income generation. The reason for generation of number of microenterprises is mainly because of small market for their goods and services. Therefore, she suggests that
multiple enterprise portfolios can be strategy for amassing working capital for core enterprise.

Bolle's (1985) research suggests that low income female entrepreneurs had little concept of 'profit'; their goal tended to be survival rather than strategic enterprise investment which is very often the objective of their male low income counterparts.

Mead et al. (1986) asserts that diversified income strategies are more prevalent among the rural women entrepreneurs than urban areas. This is because of the prevalence of illiteracy, greater burden and a big family network. Lack of business skills and limited access to extension services and sources of information put them at disadvantage in comparison to urban women entrepreneurs.

Tinker (1987) in his study asserts that the growth of the firm size may not be a relevant basis upon which to judge the success of female entrepreneurs since they have different goals and employ different business strategies than men. The goal of women more than men is to feed and educate their children. To achieve this goal women seek means to secure their income in diverse ways. Men, free of much of the burden of the family, are able to pursue individual interests and to take business risks in search of profits. The consequences of these different business goals and strategies,
according to Tinker, are that women and men display different patterns of growth. While women’s enterprise expands in an amoebae-like fashion, increasing in number rather than size, men’s enterprises more often grow in size.

Hakin (1987) argues in sectorial terms that female self employment is concentrated in the personal service sector, where, start up costs are low, thus reducing the need to apply for agency financing. Reflected in low start up costs, however are low profits and poor growth potential, creating volatile sector highly sensitive to external pressures. The study suggests that to survive the firm demand a high level of commitment from the owner to “make ends meet”. Thus the low paid, low status straineous nature of employment is converted through self-employment to low profit, highly competitive areas of business ownership for women.

ILO’s (1988) study on women around the world observes that women face more obstacles than men in setting up their business.

Alva (1988) argues that for substantially improving the status of poor women working with informal sector of economy, we have to devise concrete strategies, which can be of help to enhance the ownership and control over productive assets by these women.
Massial (1988) in his research from eastern Caribbean region finds that over fifty per cent of the women microentrepreneurs are involved in more than one income generating activity. Some combine formal employment with part time self-employment, while others have interest in multiple enterprise.

Martin (1988) argues that a combination of factors is responsible for making act to ensure that female owned business vulnerable to early failure. One of these factors is that female entrepreneurs are disadvantaged by not receiving the same level of business advice and consultation as their male counterparts.

Carter et al. (1988) in their study identifies lack of financial support and credibility as a barrier to growth of female entrepreneurs.

Grown et al. (1989) in their study observe that men much more than women are able and willing to assume growth orientation even having the meager resources and less access to capital. The threat of abandonment and divorce motivation, women to invest profits in the security offered by kinship networks. On the other hand men not only have access to larger amounts of capital, but also have more aptitude in terms how and where they invest, partly because of their wives security orientations. Moreover, the study pinpoints that men make more risk investments, women tend to invest in safer ventures in order to spread the risk of their husbands investments.
Lefranc’s (1989) research suggests that where female entrepreneurs have the security of a steady income, they are willing to adopt a growth orientation and to take risks. However, those with meager capital resources tend to stagnate in low return product markets and to adopt a survival orientation.

Collier (1990) finds that many microentrepreneurs especially women are concentrating on unremunerative and less specialized activities, which ultimately earn them low income. Out of desperation they get trapped in diversification strategy with limited income, from which they are unable to escape. Therefore he advocated that diversification impedes specialization and in the process economic growth and development.

Downings’s (1991) research findings state that women microentrepreneurs earning are likely to be grossly underestimated, the utility and rational of their business strategies misunderstood and the extent to which they contribute to economic growth undervalued. Therefore, he suggests that there is urgent need for intervention, which should be based on an understanding of women’s present business and growth patterns. On the other hand, if women get stuck with diversified portfolio of low return, low potential enterprises, and then intervention are needed to facilitate their sub-sectoral mobility.
Harper (1991) from his editor's desk opines that women's small business not only provides better investment opportunities for lenders; the results of business training for women may also be better because they are more motivated. If they have been able to make the necessary family arrangements to allow them to attend training at all, they are more likely to make the best of the opportunities.

Kane et al. (1991) attempt to indicate the effect of training on women group micro entrepreneurs. The paper finds that there is positive relationship between training and business activity. Further the business activity is enhanced with the widely varying resources and opportunities available to each group.

Simpson (1991) in his pioneer study observes those additional burdens and dual role on women makes entrepreneurship ineffective in overcoming gender subordination. Women may certainly escape some of the confines of the formal labour market, but they are replaced with a range of problems to face in entrepreneurship, which are gender related. The evidence does not suggest that conjugal roles are being renegotiated. Women are still performing, the 'double shift'.

Singh (1992) in her study attempts to examine the linkages and communication pattern between various supporting agencies and institutions and women entrepreneurs. The empirical finding of the study reveals that majority of
women entrepreneurs are involved in general trading, garment making and knitting because of less risk, low gestation period, no need for technical staff and less problem in procurement and marketing. The study also reveals that most of the entrepreneurs either never or rarely availed of financial assistance provided by large number of organisations. Even for project selection, self-motivation is the dominating source. From the study, it finally emerges that the business world is dominated by men, the women entrants into this field face many obstacles such as government policies and legal aspect, lack of communication and coordination between agencies, long and complicated procedures to avail of the incentives offered by them (the Govt. and the agencies concerned). In addition, finance, raw materials, marketing and dual responsibilities and political interference are the major obstacles. Therefore, the author suggests that the major obstacles must be eradicated through policy prerogatives, so as to promote women's entrepreneurship in both rural and urban areas.

Brush (1992) in her study argues that women perceive their business as cooperative networks of relationships' rather than specific and separate economic activities. Consequently, women are looking for self-employment as an escape from pressures and prejudices associated with their gender. Business ownership is unlikely to offer a satisfactory solution.
Dolinski et al. (1993) in their study on the growth of female entrepreneurship attempt to test two empirical theories, the disadvantaged worker theory and the liquidity constraint theory in the course of examining the long term self employed/business ownership experiences of women. The results of the study indicate that as the levels of educational attainment increase, there is a rise in the incidence of initial entry, continuous 'stayer' and the re-entry status among women. The findings of the study supports the liquidity constraints theory that posits that, less educated individuals are less likely to have accumulated assets and hence are more likely to face liquidity constraint that make it relatively difficult for them to pursue entrepreneurship. This calls for disproportionately more efforts, especially in the spheres of finance and human capital, to facilitate entry of less educated women into informal business or self-employment.

Choudhury (1994) in his study on employment of women in embroidery work states that employment has a positive impact on the social and economic status of the workers. Based on the study, the author suggests that the government should take initiative for modernisation of embroidery industry for improving the status of the worker and encouraging more employment for women in this industry.

Maryln earr et. al. (1994) conducted a study on NGO's experience in South Asia about organising women for economic empowerment. Based on eight case studies of different NGO's from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the
authors observe that rural women in general live in a vulnerable condition in these countries with no power to control their own lives both inside and outside the family. The study also reveals that the economic empowerment is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for a broader empowerment of women, which includes social cultural and political empowerment as well. The authors suggest that the economic empowerment is the most fundamental need but it has to be accompanied by changes in other non-economic fronts, so as to realise the empowerment of women in the true sense of the term.

Samal (1997) in his paper attempts to redefine the concept of the informal manufacturing sector (IMS) based on two surveys done in 1985 and 1994 in Sambalpur, Orissa. In the benchmark study (1985), size of the unit was used as the first order condition for demarcating the informal sector, while on the other characteristics were taken as second order conditions. In the follow-up study, the existing units were classified into three groups using the labour composition establishment approach. The study concludes that irrespective of size, the IMS includes (a) micro business (b) petty producer units and (c) small capitalist producer units involving unprotected wage work and operating in an unprotected economic environment. The study suggests that there is a need for a ‘institutional radicalisation’ with a thrust on credit, access to land and other assets, and improved technology, among other things. There is also a need for reexamination of the role of the informal
manufacturing sector is the economy. Any industrial policy for the small-scale and informal manufacturing sectors must seek to assist the 'productive' entrepreneur while discouraging the 'rent-seeking' ones in the parasite middle class.

Gandhi et al. (1999) conducted a study covering four villages of Hissar district in Haryana to find out the feasibility of different income earning activities for women in rural areas. They observe that women in rural areas generally concentrate on microenterprises and don't venture into big enterprises. The study reveals that suitability of economic activity for women varies from village to village. While dari making is the most viable economic activity in village Ladwa, embroidery in Mirzapur, papad making in Basalmand and tailoring in Rawalwas are found to be more suitable.

After making a review of literatures covering different aspects of women's' lives which might have some link with their empowerment an attempt is made in the next chapter to give a profile of the study area and the respondents covered under the study.