CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of studies have been made in India relating to different aspects of the industrial sector such as spinning mills and their importance in society, workers' status, entrepreneurship, workers-management relations, trade unions and other related aspects. But only limited studies have been made on women workers' problems in spinning mills. Though many aspects of the spinning mills have been studied intensively the nature of violence against women workers in the work place during day and night shift hours in the premises of spinning mills has always attracted the attention of scholars both in India and abroad. Their contribution has come to light in the form of books, research works, seminar reports, committee reports, conference reports, published theses and dissertations and articles published in newspapers. The more important of these relevant to this thesis are summarized below.

Uma Rani and Jeemol Unni (2004) state that the argument of women being burdened with dual responsibility leading to further insecurity is much more pronounced among poor workers. They clarify that gender division of work has not changed among the poor households and women continue to take the bulk of the responsibility for unpaid work in the family, especially childcare and domestic work. They attempt to study the reality, that the responsibility for family subsistence, irrespective of what the males may contribute, has resulted in women constituting a specially disadvantaged group among the poor.
They state that most of the flexible modes of employment are beyond the reach of labour legislation and social protection and are characterized by low incomes and high levels of insecurity. The workers in the informal economy, especially women, are vulnerable, bound by loose contracts and poor remuneration. They reach the conclusion that in the poor households in the informal economy, women often enter the labour market as secondary earners to help the household cope with its basic needs.

They study the diversity in the developing and the developed countries in the institutional response to the productive and reproductive roles of women. Even within the developing countries, there exist differences in women's dual responsibility due to women's economic and social position, which is an expression of social class. They observe that there exist differences in the way upper and middle class women handle dual responsibility compared to poor women.¹

Sushma Yadav (2003), in her research study, makes an attempt to evaluate how gender issues continue to determine the nature and the shape of Indian society. In traditional societies women are treated unequally and do not enjoy an average quality of life equal to that of men in terms of life expectancy, health, mortality, access to education, access to employment, access to lawful freedoms, and the meaningful exercise of civil and political rights. They also explain that they have to break loose from the bonds imposed upon them by their traditional societies and at the same time avoid the trap presented by development and modernizing process in which new forms of exploitation and new problems are embedded.²
A study carried out by Uma Rani and Jeemol Unni (2004) on women in the labour force found that in the developing countries, among the poor households, the movement of women into the work force has been occasioned by many factors: the necessity of supporting a family as a single head of household, the need to supplement a husband’s income, increasing levels of education among women and new opportunities of employment in the industrial sector. They point out that the international trend has been an increasing rate of female participation in the labour force. Women are increasingly pushed into the labour force, often on highly disadvantageous terms, due to the lowering of household incomes as real wages fall and unemployment increases as a result of the ongoing process of globalization.

They rightly point out that unemployment in India is relatively low, while the greater problem faced by the majority of the workers is that of under-employment, or employment at low levels of income. They find that most of the population is too poor to remain unemployed and is forced to undertake some economic activity to survive. That is, they often remain ‘disguisedly’ unemployed.³

Anjuli Rana (2004) attempted to study the problem of violence against women in the family, which is not new in Indian society. Women in Indian society have been the victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation from time immemorial irrespective of the fact that they were also worshipped.⁴

Anne M. Hill and Elizabeth M. King (2000) found that the enrolment rates at school level have been rising in the developing world for both sexes, but the expected attainment levels remain low, especially for females. They indicate that the gender differentials in education persist
because those who bear the cost of investing in schooling for girls and women fail to receive the full return of their investment. The parents’ expectations of receiving greater returns from educating sons than daughters might determine the level to which they educate their children. So the perception of parents may be the key factor in determining the level to which sons and daughters are educated. Such gender disparity was obvious in the survey. In general, the male child was more likely to be educated to higher levels compared to the girl child.5

B.R. Sharma and Manisha Gupta (2005) try to show that, according to the census of India, there were 972 females per 1000 males in 1901 whereas the figure is 933 females per 1000 males in 2001. The authors point out that despite the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, among the crimes against women, torture recorded as high as a 27.8% increase while the incidence of rape increased 69% followed by molestation at 24%. Sexual harassment recorded a consistent growth of 86% during the period 1995 to 1999.6

Yiswanath Kalpana (1971) points out that the Supreme Court of India (1977) specified five actions that qualify as sexual harassment: physical contact or advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography and other unwelcome items, physical and verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct. According to a report, out of every 100 rape cases in India, only 10 are reported and out of every 100 reported cases only 5 offenders are convicted. According to another report, in 1999, every day in India 42 women were raped, 18 cases of dowry deaths occurred every hour, 5 women faced cruelty at home and 4 molestation cases were reported.7
2.1 Wages and Salaries;

Pravin and Yisaria (1977) point out that all manual operations men are paid higher wages than women. Most of the occupations are held in the public or the organized private sector, with more or less fixed salary scales. In other occupations female workers suffer clear disadvantages in earnings.8

Poonam Sharma (1995) presents an in-depth analysis of the issues of women. This weaker and oppressed sections are an important segment of Indian society. She evaluates the neglect of and discrimination against women in India. Woman belongs to the vulnerable part of Indian society as she sleeps last and rises first. She feeds her family first and eats last, receives education last, is the first to drop out and the last to get a proper job or structural adjustment, and she is the last to be consulted in any decision-making process.9

Giritappa (1998) conducted a study of women predominance in different ages and in different societies. It has been proved that no society in the world has provided or provides women equal status with men. Men and women have been performing different roles.10

L. Krisnaveni (1997) attempts to assess the responses of people to the idea that male superiority and female inferiority is an accepted social norm in India. The findings of the study reveal that woman’s inferiority and dependence emanate from the social belief that woman is physically weak, intellectually poor, mentally inconsistent, timid and irrational and psychologically unstable. This study concludes that a woman cannot exist except under the constant protection and supervision of a man who is supposed to be physically strong, assertive, rational and intelligent.11
Murty (2002) highlights the importance of the constitutional provision's Article 14 which保障 equality of opportunities in the matter of public appointments for all citizens. Article 39 mentions that the state shall direct its policy towards providing to men and women equally the right to means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.\textsuperscript{12}

Krishnaraj and Maithreyi (1998) state that the employers use the widespread employment of women as a means of keeping wages down. Further, the market uses female labour on terms that would be favorable to itself and exploits to its advantage the given disadvantages of long-term commitment to work under a rigid sexual division of labour.\textsuperscript{13}

Jean Deze (2004) argues that the keen competition for jobs would be fitted against the increasingly desperate groups of male workers who have the advantage of greater mobility and better access to skills and education. She shares the concern of all feminists about the additional threats women face under the new regime and supports the position that equity, including gender equity, cannot be sacrificed for the sake of economic growth. The author adds that economic reforms inevitably have to focus on women's work as one of the crucial mediation variables. Female labour force participation is important not only to women but also to society at large. So it is very important to study the demand for female labour and more particularly to know the impact of growing employers' preference for female employees over male laboulers.\textsuperscript{14}

Nirmala Banaerjee (1994) observed in the electronic city of Verna in Maharashtra State that industries are employing more female labour with the opening up of the economy to unrestricted multilateral trade and foreign
capital investment and that the competition between the domestic producers and foreign producers liaa increased. Some of the multinational companies, to keep their labour costs down, thrust a strict work schedule on their workers. These multinationals keep the option of moving their capital whenever they find a greater costs advantage elsewhere. So they are not willing to offer the workers long-term and protected work contracts. Such kinds of jobs are readily accepted by women. These big companies give orders to small companies to produce tools, parts, machines and other accessories. Since these small companies get a short-term contract, they employ labour on a temporary basis. In such companies females get jobs and are paid low wages. They also readily accept such wages. Male workers are not recruited in such companies except to work in night shifts and to do some heavy work or to handle heavy machinery. So it can be said that the economic boom in the country has made the labour market unstable. It is a general trend that female employment in the consumer durable industries has been increasing.15

Urmila Patel (1986) states that the working women in general are subjected to discrimination at various levels. The problems and difficulties of working women are multidimensional, varying from woman to woman at the personal level and section to section at the general level and hence they need to be analysed in depth. However, the problems of working women at the work place are multiple and differ from woman to woman according to the nature of the work and their positions. Arana Broota, a psychologist of Delhi University, is categorical in stating that no girl is respected in the office if she is known to be a single woman. In fact, in India, women are considered less of an individual and an object of vice by men whether she is
single or married. This is particularly true for the women who are working among males. They usually adopt their mothers’ role of subservience to the male.

She conducted a broad-based study to explore the efficiency of a working woman. A woman is always suspect in industries, especially in the upper-class cadres. Even when the qualifications are equal, men are preferred. The authorities are doubtful whether she will be able to handle male subordinates, take independent decisions, cope with crises and manage her duties. Even though she has proved her efficiency, they think twice before promoting her. Even if she is given a chance, there is always a remark that she has been taken because she is a woman.  

Sushma Yadav (2003) points out that the male co-workers in the office cannot mentally accept the superiority of the woman’s work. They take extra pains to ridicule her. The male colleagues get together and pass comments. As the woman is brought up in a protected atmosphere in the family, she is not mentally prepared to face this kind of situation. She feels helpless and often breaks down. This further leads to the misconception that women workers are not fit for outside work. She observes that there is another problem while working with men: a woman tends to develop close relations with any one of them owing to prolonged and constant association. This, in the case of a married woman, creates social and psychological problems and tensions in her relationships, while in the case of an unmarried girl, it can create all sorts of socio-psychological problems if she gets involved with married men. The professional male officers are likely to develop attachments which endanger the marriage tie. Even if the woman who is working in the office with men is just good friends with them and
has no intimate relations with any one of them, she is still liable to be suspected and often accused of having intimate relations with them. This often humiliates and annoys her a lot and creates friction in her married life.\textsuperscript{17}

Uma Rani and Jeemol Unni (2004) try to show that women are often claimed to be less productive because they are less educated and less dynamic and because they take more time off to deal with family responsibilities. She says that the education of the male child is considered more important than that of the female child. The expectation of being cared for in old age by the male child, while the girl child would be in her marital home, mainly explains this phenomenon. They conclude that education becomes a major disadvantage when the woman enters the labour market. This is also an indicator of gender discrimination in the allocation of resources within the household. These low levels of education lead to limited work opportunities and low earnings. Due to this women are engaged in jobs involving repetitive type of work and very low levels of skill. This is mainly a structural factor leading to the vulnerability of the women.\textsuperscript{18}

B.R. Sharma and Marisha Gupta (2005) explain that the post-independence period in India has witnessed a marked increase in women’s literacy resulting in a vast number of women being engaged in the work place in all the vital sectors of the country’s economy, whether out of choice or out of compulsion. However, they mostly fall in the unorganized sector, where they are ill-paid but need to cling on to the jobs due to ever increasing unemployment. This need for survival drives women into what has been referred to as ‘rape situations’. Harassment at the work place is real and pervasive jokes with sexual undertones, obscene behavior with sexual overtures, direct advances etc. combine to make the atmosphere at work discriminatory to women.\textsuperscript{19}
Lovely Jacob (2004) tries to gain an insight into the process of the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Platform for Action) which defines violence against women as “any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Further, the study reveals that as an atrocity, rape is the most reprehensible crime that women are subjected to, because once committed not only is the effect on the women as irreversible as in the crime of murder but also the suffering caused to the victim and to her family is much the same. It is not only a physical violation of the body of the victim but also an intrusion upon her mental, psychological and emotional sensitivities. The sense of loss suffered by the victim is so colossal and complete that nothing can restore her self confidence, self respect and self assurance. The social stigma that a woman victim of sexual crime suffers is very painful: she is despised and ridiculed, even in physical terms. She loses all acceptance by society and may even be disowned by her own relatives.

Violence against women is now recognized as a major issue of concern. The need of the hour is to critically analyse the laws and make suitable amendments in the existing laws. This also means that there is a need to evolve a system that is gender sensitive, easy to approach, inexpensive, speedy and with minimum legal formalities. There is also a great need for educational programmes so that society can change the way women are perceived.
2.2 Gender Discrimination:

Martin Patrick conducted a study on gender discrimination in the labour market due to many reasons: women have less accessibility than men to productivity augmentation, opportunities like schooling, required training and experience, continuity in career and regional mobility. This is referred to as pre-market determination since low-level education, work experience, training and constrained mobility are not consequences of labour market discrimination but the consequences of the discrimination prior to entering the job market. Women receive less favorable jobs than men or they will not get any job because of their lower education and experience. If taste for job remains the same and qualifications differ then employment discrimination can take place. Women get lower wages than men for the same job. It can occur in different forms such as collective agreements which can explicitly discriminate against women by creating sex specific wage groups with lower pay for women.\(^\text{21}\)

A.S Dasai (1999) states that discrimination against women continues in employment as women get lower wages in spite of the law prescribing equal pay for equal work (1976), and fewer women are in top jobs. Women are kept in the category of daily rated workers and are never promoted to the supervisory category. Similarly, thousands of women are involved in the small scale sector or in home based industries. But their supervisors or contractors and middlemen are all men. As a result, women are severely exploited on both wages and conditions of work.\(^\text{22}\)
2.3 Social security:

Murty and Gaur (2002) study the present status of the social status of women. They find that social security for Indian women is scant. Many do not earn at all. Of those who do, 80 per cent work in non formal, unorganized sectors. Women do not have access to reasonably priced and adequate social security like health care, childcare, maternity benefits. Papola (1994) argues that given the dualistic nature of the labour market in India, most of the new employment in the restructured sectors are characterized by poor conditions of work, low earnings and lack of social security.23

2.4 Social Status:

Pravin Yisaria (1997) attempts to assess the social status of women in society. He finds that the incidence of discrimination is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Many widows and separated women (disadvantaged both socially and economically) face an intolerable burden of hardship and insecurity, leading to numerous problems. Most policies are male dominated. Therefore, there has never been adequate provision for women who play a dual role as worker and home maker.24

Murty and Gaur (2002) observe that, according to the National Commission of Labour, the pattern of employment of women is that women are employed either on unskilled jobs or jobs requiring traditional skill. They study the national perspective plan for women 1998-2000 and find that women are found to be concentrated in occupations which are usually at the lowest rung of the ladder and in most occupations they are engaged in the more difficult and less skilled areas. Besides low representation of women in the government and public sector employment, women register a low share in regular wage and salary earnings.25
Balasubramaniyan (1998) has studied in detail the problem of working women facing multifarious problems. They are personal, emotional, or say, psycho-physical ones and problems at home as well as at the work place. Women workers in India face some general and some sector specific problems. An attempt has been made to highlight the general problems as well as the specific problems of women workers in a few selected occupations where concentration of women is high.

2.5 General Problems:

He describes the invisibility and the underestimation of women’s economic contribution. Housewives contribute nearly one-third of India’s Gross National Product. But their contribution to the economy is undervalued and invisible. The household activities of women are not estimated as economic activity and, therefore, not considered employment. The labour contribution of women towards the production of goods and services for household consumption as well as for the market is not computed in the market oriented concepts of income and employment. Mostly women are restricted to domestic tasks, thereby reducing the importance of their economic role. Women, as an important human resource of our country, are underutilized and our society is yet to recognize the contribution of women on par with that of their male counterparts.

2.5.1 Plurality of Roles:

He maintains that working women face more complicated situations than their male counterparts as they have to play dual roles and shoulder dual responsibilities of the work place and their families. With the prevailing social and cultural set up they are expected to perform multifarious duties as
wife, caretaker of children, elderly and diseased members of the family, cook and home manager in addition to their different roles in economic activities. This results in a heavy workload on the working women and prevents them from developing themselves to compete on equal terms with men in the labour market. Therefore, working women not only suffer from the problem of double work but also are unable to take care of their career advancement.

2.5.2 Gender Expectation:

He finds that working women’s present plight is their subservient status in society. They are expected to be physically weak, docile, inferior and submissive not only at home but also at the work place. Men are so much prejudiced that whenever women attain prominence, credit is given to their menfolk for their achievements. It is evident that the dominance of men is not just due to their earning capacity but because of their superior gender power, of which they take full advantage and, therefore, working women suffer from wrong gender expectations.

2.5.3 Concentration of women in low paid, less productive, least secure occupations and segregation of women in particular occupations:

Women are concentrated more in the unorganized sector and very less in the organized sector. A large number of women workers are observed in agriculture and animal husbandry, home based occupations like handloom weaving and spinning, handicraft work, tailoring, garment making, food. In formal sectors they are mainly engaged as teachers, midwives, nurses, stenographers, clerks etc. The majority of them work in the urban informal sector as domestic servants, sweepers, washermen, dry cleaners and pressers, street vendors, retail traders, restaurant keepers,
tailors, porters and clay workers and as construction workers. In the organized sector they are mainly engaged in assembling, packing and processing areas in the industrial units. Therefore, they are basically concentrated in occupations having low productivity, low wages, inferior status, poor working conditions, less security and less promotional avenues. The reason may be their lack of formal education, training, limited range of skills, less mobility, gender etc.

2.5.4 Women in recruitment, promotion, decision-making, skill development:

In recruitment, promotion and career advancement, selection for vocational training and in decision-making women are discriminated against. The percentage of employees on wage/salary basis among women workers is around 7 per cent in India. The public sector accounts for over 70 per cent of the organized sector employment. It has women at 12 per cent of its work force. Both in the public and the private sectors women employment is mostly characterized by low share in jobs which are secure, stable and of higher categories operations. Though there has been a slight increase in the number of women employed in professional, technical, administrative and material categories in the last decade they constituted only 19 per cent in 1971 and 23 per cent in 1981. Decision-making is the monopoly of male employees. The women employees are very much neglected in this area. Many a time women are debarred from promotion as they are perceived as unfit for superior jobs. In formal education and for attending vocational training programmes to update their skill and knowledge, women employees hardly get chances in comparison to their male colleagues.
2.5.5 Inequality of payment:

    In unorganized sectors as well as in rural areas women are paid much less than men for the same job. In the case of construction of work labour contractors cheat them out of their legitimate wages. In agriculture the concentration of working women is more and there is also find wage discrimination in this sector in spite of the Minimum Wages and the Payment of Wages Acts. In occupations like garment making and domestic service, which do not come under the purview of the minimum wages legislation, the condition is still worse. Barring a small section of highly educated women, women are paid much less than men doing the same job. The enforcement machinery also operates with various constraints as a result of which this problem is becoming serious.

2.5.6 Sexual Harassment:

    In the informal sector such as domestic service, construction work, forest produce collection and in many other occupations women are exploited by employers, contractors, middlemen etc. In the case of the organized sector, sexual harassment, however, is not wide spread, but some forms of harassment like threat of transfer to distant places, ill-treatment etc., are found.

2.5.7 Reluctance to employ women:

    In most cases employers are reluctant to employ women mainly due to women’s preoccupation with domestic affairs, cost of repeated maternity leave, restricted mobility, unsuitability for some specific jobs and industries. Some employers perceive women as insincere, irregular, less effective and less productive than men. So they do not want to employ women.
2.5.8 Debarring from social security benefits:

More than half of the women labour force are excluded from social security benefits as their nature of employment is casual or on daily wages or on piece rate. In the case of the unorganized sector most of the women workers are not covered by social security benefits.

2.5.9 Lack of economic independence:

In many cases, working women have very little or no control over their income. They hand over their salary to their husbands or in-laws. They take spending decisions very rarely. They have to take permission for their personal expenses. At times the problem of working women even increases when their male counterparts take advantage of their earning capacity and shift the responsibility to their shoulders and withdraw themselves from the household burden.

2.5.10 Health problem:

From early morning to late night working women work round the clock without resting a while to meet their dual responsibilities which proves to be injurious to their health and mind. They are exposed to health hazards in all sectors of employment. The hazards may be chemical, physical, biological or even psychological (Balasubramaniam, 1998). In the informal sector most of the women workers suffer from malnutrition, anemia etc. Due to many reasons they cannot go for regular medical check up.

2.5.11 Sector specific problems:

Besides general problems, working women face some occupation specific problems. In agriculture, during off-seasons, it becomes difficult for
the women workers to generate income. Industrialization of farming practices blocks women from employment. As women are unable to operate agricultural implements and handle insecticides and chemical fertilizers properly, their employment is at stake. Besides, most of the women workers in agriculture are not paid properly.

Women also face a lot of problems in dairying and animal husbandry as they lack special training in cattle care. In many cases, as women do not own assets or land, it becomes difficult on their part to get loans from financial institutions for buying cattle. They go to bed late after taking care of the cattle and get up early for milking them. In fisheries, women face problems such as ill-treatment, exploitation by middlemen, harassment by municipal authorities and policemen and being charged high rates of market taxes etc.

In the case of beedi-making and tobacco-processing, women workers are paid much less than the prescribed minimum. Many a time they are not issued identity cards which will prove the permanent nature of their job. As a result of this they are not entitled to social security benefits and welfare measures.

While the rate of women employment is increasing in construction work, women are very much exploited in this sector by exposing themselves to various risks and health hazards and getting irregular payment, inadequate and low wages in comparison with male workers. Their jobs are insecure and irregular.

In factories women are employed generally by contractors and subcontractors because of which their names are not shown in the muster roll and they are not treated as regular employees. As a result of this they are
not entitled to the benefits of the regular employees as per the labour legislation. In many cases they have to work under unhygienic conditions and are exposed to several health hazards. In the case of mining and quarrying, a high degree of casualization of women employment leads to job insecurity, low wages, hazardous and strenuous work and they are debarred from other benefits.

Women workers working in handicrafts, handlooms, garment-making and quilt-making mostly work in their homes. They usually work under contractors. The contractors supply the raw materials and take the finished products. They do not get infrastructural facilities to start their own establishment. Therefore, they are exploited by the contractors by being paid at a low rate.

In the case of vending, they have to carry a big luggage. Transportation is one of the major problems for them. On the top of this they are harassed by the police and municipal and urban authorities in urban areas.

Women working as domestic workers suffer a lot of exploitation. They are paid very little. They do not have any legal terms and conditions of employment. They work round the clock. They do all types of manual jobs. They do not get any medical facilities. Sometimes they are physically tortured, abused and sexually harassed.

Working women are in a disadvantageous position as far as their working conditions and terms and conditions of employment are concerned. They are economically, socially, physically, psychologically and emotionally tortured. Some major steps have been taken at the national as well as the international level in this regard.
2.6 Steps Taken By Government to Protect the Interests of Working Women:

Realizing the importance of working women, the Indian Government has made attempts to protect their interests, establish their rights, provide them better treatment in the sphere of work and recognize their contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

2.7 Indian Constitution and Women:

The Indian Constitution lists a number of fundamental rights which enable its men and women to get equal rights, privileges and treatment in the field of economic activity. Right to equality: Article 14 of the Indian Constitution says that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law of the country. The law should protect every one. Government jobs are open to all. Right to freedom: Article 19 proclaims that every citizen has the right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation or business. Prohibition or discrimination on the grounds of sex etc is illegal. Article 15 (1) says that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth. Article 15 (3) empowers the state to have special provisions for women and children: it says, “Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children.” Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment: Article 16 (1) says that “there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.” Article 16 (2) states that “No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, residence or any of them be ineligible for or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the state.” Right against exploitation:
under this right no citizen can be forced to work without payment. The
Directive Principles of State Policy in Article 39 State that, “The State shall,
in particular, direct its policy towards securing

(i) that the citizens, men and women, equally have the right to adequate means of livelihood;

(ii) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;

(iii) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused;

(iv) that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter professions unsuited to their age and strength. Article-42 further directs the states to make provision securing just and human conditions of work and to provide maternity relief. The Constitution of India not only provides equal rights and opportunities for women and men but also makes special provisions for women.26

2.8 ILO and women workers:

Murty and Gaur (2002) have studied the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) initiatives to end discrimination against women workers and provide them equality of opportunities in working with men. The study also reveals that the ILO has laid down minimum labour standards, particularly relating to women. There are 22 ILO conventions and recommendations which are relevant to women workers. They are of two major types - protective and promotional. These conventions and recommendations try to provide special protection to women at their work
places and guarantee equality of opportunity and treatment in access to employment, career advancement, training, remuneration, benefits, welfare amenities, social security measures and in organizational decision-making.\textsuperscript{27}

Molly Joseph (1997) has analysed the gender discrimination prevailing in the development process, where gender bias takes the form of alienation of women from the mainstream, with lesser or no benefits for their efforts in terms of return or negotiation, with discriminatory policies and programmes, with no control over resources and regulatory institutions including education, employment and technology and even physical drudgery and mental agony.\textsuperscript{28}

Yashodha Shammuga Sundram (1993) has studied women as wok force. She explains that women are taking up jobs due to various reasons. A few women work as sole supporters of the family while others work as additional bread-winners of the family. Women face lots of problems in seeking employment.\textsuperscript{29}

Archana Sinha (2004) has studied the female labour’s socio-economic problem and its complex and complicated nature in India. The women have to do all the household work along with their employment outside the home, which adds immensely to their mental as well as physical burden. He observes that the household work is usually not shared by the family members. Such doubling of the quantum of work results in reduced efficiency in the work, unhappiness in the family and ill health of the family members.

However, he perceives that the women engaged in the labour force belong to the weaker sections of the society. Their families are unable to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter to their family members. In addition to this, there are multifarious factors
which compel these women to join the labour force, viz., poor economic conditions of the family, too large a family size to support, illiteracy, rising prices of consumable goods, immature death of husband, chronic illness of husband (drinking, fighting nature, drug addiction and gambling etc.). All these add immensely to their mental as well as physical burden and result in stress.30

Promilla Kapur (1974), in her study, finds that women’s problems are of three types, i.e. environmental, social and psychological. Each of them faces strained situations at home and the work place. The study reveals that the social degradation and economic subjugation and dependence of Indian women manifest in triple forms of exploitation first at the family level, in the working environment by their bosses or employers and, finally, by the political leaders, pressure groups and trade unions.

Fogarty and his associates, in their study on the family, career and working life of qualified women in top jobs, find five types of dilemmas:

1) Dilemmas arising from sheer overload;

2) Dilemmas from experiencing in one’s environment strongly conflicting ideas and directions about what is considered right and proper in a given area of behaviour;

3) Dilemmas caused by conflicts within oneself about whether one is being a good person (good human being, good wife and mother, good woman etc.) in leading a certain type of existence.

4) Dilemmas produced by conflicts in obligations, attachments, desires and associates.
5) Dilemmas due to the conflicts between roles that may be variable in their demands at different times. e.g., the marital role demands in relation to the work demands of each partner at different points in the life cycle.\textsuperscript{31}

2.9 Impact on Children:

Sushma Yadav's (2003) study explores the problem of the feeling of neglecting the children when the mother is working. It focuses also on the mothers often feeling or being made to feel that the children are not properly looked after, that they do not enjoy the facilities that the other children enjoy, that they have to let go many things and that, in addition, they have to do some work at home to help the mother. When the mother is tired and gets angry, they feel that are missing the mothers' love and get disappointed. The study tries to gain an insight into the working mother's experience, her psychological problems arising from inner conflict and feeling of guilt. Anxiety or tension are caused by the dual commitment and concern.\textsuperscript{37}

2.10 New Challenges:

Shusma Yadav (2003) observes that by working outside the four walls of the house, women are thrown into the open world. Every day they have new experiences, new challenges and face new situations. Their way of thinking is also changed. The findings of the study point to problems caused by the members of the family still having the same traditional outlook and the generation gap between the elders and the working women which is increasing day by day. This study concludes that the woman is not able to cope with them though she wants to live with them. She hankers after a life of her thinking. This is a constant cause of increasing mental conflicts.\textsuperscript{32}

Anjana Matra Sima (2000) attempts to show how working women are often discriminated against in their work place. However she says that this study can not answer the question whether the women working as contract
labour are blatantly exploited by their employers with regard to wages, 
maternity benefits, schemes, hours of work and other provisions. Working women have to bear the triple burdens of home, work and children.\textsuperscript{33}

Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray (2003) attempt to examine the Acts passed during the 1940s and the reforms advocated by the AIWC. The study reveals that the Factory Act was enacted in 1947, women welfare officers were appointed by the jute mills in Bengal and by the Central government and the Indian Coal Mines Association. A Maternity Benefits Act was also passed in some states. The passing of the Employees State Insurance Act and the Registered Factory Act in 1948 was welcomed by the conference. Some of the suggestions made by the AIWC in previous years were incorporated into these legislations. Again, as suggested by the conference, the Central government conducted an enquiry into the conditions of agricultural labour to improve them.

The Factory and Mines Act and the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Act of 1947 were amended in 1953 to protect women workers and provide for their welfare by regulating working hours and workload in accordance with ILO conventions. The AIWC also demanded equal pay for both sexes and an Act to that effect was passed in 1976.\textsuperscript{34}

2.11 Women Labour and Legislation and Welfare:

Choudhary Rukshaana (1998) examines the provisions in labour legislations regarding maternal and child care functions of women workers in the factory sector. She argues that the responsibility for providing maternity benefits must shift from individual employers to the entire corpus of employers whether they employ women or not. She calls for the setting-up of a central maternity assistance fund by imposing a tax on all employers.\textsuperscript{35}
D. K. Daslal (1990) conducted a study in Andhra Pradesh (costal Andhra, Telengana, Rayalseema). It reveals that despite the Equal Remuneration Act, wage differentials exist on grounds of sex. These were found to be related to the level of awareness, work experience and education of women employees.\(^{36}\)

M. J. Kamalaka (1990) attempts to study the relevance of the Maternity Benefit Act, amended in 1988, which now covers women in all shops and establishments. It provides enhanced benefits to women and has penalties for erring employers.\(^{37}\)

Naik Shridhar (1998) emphasizes the “Sevaghar” scheme to help working women overcome problems related to child care and domestic chores. He points to the two centers at Mulund and Andheri in Bombay, managed by Street Mukti Sangathana. It is found that the scheme will also create job opportunities for women especially from the weaker sections.\(^{38}\)

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, (1986) discussed the problem of accommodation for working women moving away from their homes. An attempt is to made to find out the functioning of working women’s hostels, problems of voluntary organizations in providing hostel accommodation for women and management of working women’s hostels. Also it examines the role of the government and the Central Social Welfare Board in tackling this problem.\(^{39}\)

The panel on working women’s hostels (1988) discussed various schemes to start working women’s hostels. An advisory committee has been set up for the purpose. It is noticed that assistance is available for purchasing buildings for hostels and for short-stay homes to protect and rehabilitate women and girls facing social and moral danger.\(^{40}\)
P. M. Bakshi (1986) takes efforts to tackle a public misconception on the rights of women regarding provident fund. In addition, some provisions of law are made clear. But women themselves are not sufficiently aware of them. He finds that some aspects of the law are unjust and need reform.\(^4\)

The Economic and Property Rights for Women (1988) seminar recommends the following such as legislative rights for women at home, work places, succession rights, ownership rights, enforcement of Equal Remuneration Act, equal opportunities in employment, and a ban on sex-determination tests, among others.\(^5\)

Mahajan Krishan (1989) examines the ineffective implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act and quotes studies conducted in Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh which point to the violation of three crucial components. Also he comments on the apathy of advisory committees and voluntary organizations to take action against violations of the Act.\(^6\)

A. K. Sarma (1989) points out that the major shortcoming of the Equal Remuneration Act lies in its ambiguous definition of ‘same work’ and ‘similar work’. He state that the Act only covers workers in the organized sector while the vast number of women doing home-based work and engaged in small-scale cottage industries and agricultural occupations are left out.\(^7\)

T. N. Srivastava (1985) reviews four comprehensive empirical studies of industrial labourers which cover the problems of women at home and outside, dowry, marital maladjustments, family discord, and problems at place of work. His objective is to identify certain myths and realities. He offers information on the statutory rights of women, benefits and privileges to which they are legally entitled, including social security benefits. Further he discusses the Factories Act, the Mines Act and the Plantation Labour Act.\(^8\)
He discusses amendments in the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 which provides a punishment to employees who discriminate against women employees in respect of remuneration. To plug the lacuna in the Act, a provision has been incorporated to prohibit discrimination against women not only in recruitment, but also in relation to conditions of service subsequent to employment such as promotions, transfers and training and stringent measures for equal wages to women (1987).  

Meenakshi Subramaniam (1968), has studied women workers who wish to work on the night shift for additional pay packets and better promotional prospects. He makes plain other problems in the industrial sector like medicine, nursing, telephones, etc. Night work for women is prohibited under the Factory, Mines and Plantation Labour Acts. He finds that by restricting women’s working hours, they are kept out of certain jobs, violating their freedom to choose their own jobs and hours of work.  

The Hindu dated 02.07.1998 states that the reason for widespread violation of the Equal Remuneration Act is ignorance about its existence. It also raise the question of how, despite laws intended to protect women workers in the organized sector, they remain deprived of various benefits. Women still are not aware of the Equal Wages Act.  

The provisions of the Working Women Welfare Bill, 1985, include setting up of a welfare fund to which government and all employers shall contribute but to which women workers will not have to contribute. The Working women welfare fund is to be utilized to ensure the right to work and other facilities for women employees.
Nivedita Menon (1992) presents the implications of the issue of Equal Remuneration for Equal Work. He says that India ratified the ILO Convention on Equal Pay in 1958 but the Equal Remuneration Ordinance was promulgated only in 1975. This was ratified later by parliament and the Equal Remuneration Act was passed in 1976. The provisions of this Act are:

(i) men and women workers doing the same work or work of a similar nature must be equally paid “Same work or work of a similar nature” was defined as “work in respect of which the skill, effort and responsibility required are the same when performed under similar working conditions by a man or a woman”.

(ii) There was to be no discrimination against women at the time of recruitment.

(iii) Employers defaulting were to be punished by a fine of up to Rs.5000/- but there was no provision for imprisonment.

However, there was no automatic introduction of equal pay for equal work. The industries concerned would be notified by the government within a period of three years. This would give employers ample time to reorganize their workforce in such a manner that jobs classified on the basis of sex would be reclassified in terms of higher and lower categories. Also, the term ‘same work or work of a similar nature’ is capable of providing loopholes because women’s employment is generally restricted to a few spheres where men do not work.⁵⁰

Ashine Roy (2003) has analysed the Report of the World Conference of the U. N. Decade for Women. She reveals the working hours in the industrial sector particularly the level of representation by women. They
represent 50% of world adult population and one third of the official labour force, they perform neatly two-thirds of all working hours, receive only a tenth of world income and own less than one per cent of world property.

In her study, explains that the composition of Mexico’s Constitution and labour code prohibit discrimination based on sex. An attempt is made to find out the feasibility of the constitutional provision of Mexico, i.e., per-employment pregnancy testing did occur in Mexico; there were contradictory interpretations of Mexico’s law regarding the illegality of this practice; and while on-the-job pregnancy-based sex discrimination was clearly illegal under Mexican labour law, greater efforts needed to be made toward awareness programs for women workers. This was the first case heard by the United States National Administrative Office (U.S NAO) that dealt explicitly with the right to gender equality in the workforce.\textsuperscript{51}

Suhail Shaizad, (1995) states that 95 per cent of working women surveyed reported some form of sexual harassment in the work place. The study also showed that the majority of women (55\%) simply ignored such harassment and only 10 per cent actually filed police complaints.\textsuperscript{52}

2.12 Status of Employment:

Murty and Gaur (2002) conducted a study of the status of employment. This study covered the organized sector and what percentage of the labour was engaged in the training institution. They found out that 90 per cent of the women are engaged in doing unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. It is a well recognized fact that one of the basic hurdles to the development of employment of opportunities for women has been lack of adequate training to women workers. Hence, they suggest that there is an
urgent need to introduce a systematic and integrated programme for women's training. It will help to increase the female work participation rate. Further they stress that the existing training centers like the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI), Noida (U.P) and the ten Regional Vocational Training Institute (RVTI) for women in different parts of India should impart basic and advanced levels of training to the female workers.\(^{53}\)

K. Munirthna Naidu and K. Manjushree (1993) show that, generally, female work participation rates are very low in developing countries. Apart from ambiguity and inadequacy of concepts and definitions used in measuring women's employment which provides statistical explanation the real causes for their low employment are to be found in the religious tradition, cultural values, the colonial ideology and the evolution of social institutions that restrain women's entry into the labour market. Social traditions in general have come in the way of participation of women in the away from home economic activities in all the countries. But recently a perceptible improvement in women's participation in economic activities has been observed. This has been possible due to the increasing level of female education. However, the common feature is that women, as the weaker section and on gender considerations, suffer from market discrimination and, hence, are pushed to separate low paying low status jobs.\(^{54}\)

Murty and Gaur (2002) reviewed a number of variables taken into account to know the stresses of industrial women workers. The socio-economic variables which they considered important were age, education, family size and family income etc. The other variables which highlight the stresses of women workers were rules and regulations, awareness about economic status and feeling of injustice towards children and family
members. The relationship of these was worked out by using Karl Pearson's

coefficients of correlation. In the case of MF (Mata Needles), age was found
to be significantly related in the relations with superiors and workers and
awareness about rules and regulations. This indicated that, with the passage
of time, persons become matured in social relations, economic as well as
organizational discipline. Education came to be significantly correlated with
wages, awareness about rules and regulations, awareness about economic
status and feeling of injustice towards family members. This indicated that
the higher the level of education, the higher the salary and awareness and
vice-versa. Education was also highly responsive to the economic status and
a worker with higher educational qualification always had greater feeling of
injustice to the family members than the workers having lower level of
education. This pointed towards the positive correlation of education and
social responsibilities. Family size could establish no relationship with the
work ethics, except a week relationship with the feeling of injustice towards
family members.55

In India, a series of laws have been enacted to encourage women's
participation in different activities of society. Several laws have been enacted
like the Declaration Human Rights of UNO (Directive Principles), the
Indian Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy), The Hindu
Succession Act 1956, the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act 1984, the
Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls (Amendment) Act,
1986, the Factories Act 1947, the Equal Remuneration Act 1976, the
Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of
Service) Act1996. All the legislations have been enacted to ensure that
women get the same rights and privileges as are enjoyed by men. But the
provisions of these laws have not been implemented effectively in India. In practice, discrimination against women continues to exist. Women earn less than men for the same work. They are not allowed to perform work allotted for males.

2.13 Role of lawyers:

He analysed the role of lawyers in promoting disadvantaged sections of the society. Sensitive lawyers can play a significant role in achieving equal legal status for women in India. It is their duty to challenge the discriminations. The lawyer works for the disadvantaged sections of the society and aims to obtain relief for them.\(^{56}\)

The AIWC began labour welfare activities in 1930. The Whitley Commission (Royal Commission on Labour) was engaged in conducting investigations at this time. The AIWC conference also appointed a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Miss. J.E. Copeland to enquire into the condition of women and children employed in organized labour. As a result of its findings, resolutions passed in 1931 and 1932 made a strong plea for urgent reforms which could provide minimum acceptable conditions for women labourers. At its 1933 annual session, while accepting the provisions of the Bill introduced by the Government of India in the Legislative Assembly to regulate payment of wages to certain classes of persons employed in industry, the conference demanded that women be represented at the International Women’s Labour Conference to be held in Geneva. It stressed the need to appoint a committee to look into the hardships suffered by women and children in industrial areas and to suggest preventive measures. It drew the attention of the Government of India to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour and accordingly expressed the desire that legislative measures be taken quickly to ensure proper working conditions, medical facilities, removal of naikns (women
jobbers), separate latrine facilities for female labourers, crèches for children up to six years of age, appointment of women factory inspectors in every province and maternity benefits. (Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray, 2003).  

Law cannot be divided into law relating to men and law relating to women, as the law of any country is applicable to all persons, that is, male and female. Whatever law is applicable to men is also applicable to women equally. However, some enactments may be intended exclusively to uplift the dignity and status of women in society. So, enactments relating to women are of two kinds, one equally applicable to both women and men and the other specially intended for women only.

Kapila Hingorani, a renowned lawyer, provided an overview of women’s empowerment through legal awareness and related issues. She stated that the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) is the most important instrument for women’s empowerment in legal issues. She argued that the current trend of PIL actions is, to a large extent, not in step with the philosophy underlying PIL. The Constitution of India was framed immediately after the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The preamble to the Constitution speaks of justice—social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity and fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual.

In the session the role of various agencies involved in protecting and promoting women’s rights was discussed. The NGOs have recently gained considerable attention as vehicles of change. They aim at consciousness raising, a change of attitudes, organization and mobilization for social, political and economic participation, structural change of institutions and
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Legal changes. The Indian NGO's target is specially women. Women NGOs have a role in changing women's perceptions about their status. Some NGOs are playing a great role in the empowerment and emancipation of women in India (Archana Sinha, 2004).58

Alarmed over the rising cases of sexual harassment of women at workplaces the Delhi Commission on Women (DCW) formalized a compendium which focuses on making women more secure in Delhi. Aiming at confidence building of the victim and tackling sexual harassment, a long set of guidelines would be available to the various departments of the government. "We want to create an awareness in the government departments against sexual harassment and want them to comply with the rules mentioned in the book while handling such cases. Moreover, the departments should keep a tab on the impartial functioning of the Complaints Committee set up within it to tackle such complaints," said Dr Kiran Walia, DCW chairperson (Sonia Sarkar, 2004).59

In 1947, the United Nations established a Commission to deal with the status of women. Its main subject was rights in the political, social and educational fields. Hundreds of recommendations were produced by this social council of the United Nations. The member states, in 1967, finally adopted the declaration on the "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women". It was only in the 1979 convention that this declaration was translated into legal form. India, however, ratified the convention only in December 1992 (Archana Chaturvedi, 2004).60
Education has been considered the crucial factor in movements for women's right to equality, dignity or justice. Access to education for women determines their role in the economy and their freedom in most matters. Women's illiteracy is one of the most characteristic features of developing countries. All over the world, including India, working class women work for the survival and maintenance of their families. The educational system itself has become a very powerful instrument for maintaining class and sexual inequality in society. Women's education has a critical role in notional reconstruction (Sharada Rath and Navaneeta Rath, 1999).\(^{61}\)

In India, now, many young girls are entering into salaried jobs, because women employment is now in many cases considered a passport to marriage. In some cases, women use to work till their marriage. They want to enjoy the sense of economic freedom and to buy certain things on their own without depending any person. These are all some reasons for getting into a job on the part of women. Employment is a substitute for dowry. In the case of women, social security is that they should be married and a suitable bridegroom can be obtained by having a job especially in the case of middle class families (Sharada Rath and Navaneeta Rath, 1999).\(^{62}\)

In India a plethora of labour legislations have been enacted. Unfortunately they provide advantage to one gender over the other. For instance, despite the enactment of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976, gender discrimination is widely prevalent. The Act also prohibits discrimination in employment and recruitment, yet so many hurdles are created by employees to bar women's entry into certain occupations. The law itself does not recognize gender differences in promotion and advancement, but, in actual practice, women are seen as less committed and less productive (Martin Patrick).\(^{63}\)
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The principles of gender equality and equity and protection of women's rights have been the prime concerns in Indian thinking right from the days of independence (Murty and Gaur, 2002).

2.14 Working Condition:

More than 90 per cent of the total workforce of the country is engaged in the unorganized sector. The total employed of women comprise only 4 per cent of the organized workforce and 96 per cent of women are employed in the so-called unorganized or informal sector which is organized, non-unionized, low waged and with unhealthy almost inhuman working conditions. Forty percent of these workers, earn even less than the male workers, in the same employment. The size of the unorganized sector is rapidly increasing with liberalization policies. It is significant to note that women workers in the organized sector are not adequately protected; they do not have employment security; they receive low returns or wages; there is no clear and fixed employer-employee relationship; they do not have access to social security (Reena Jhabvala, 1998).

In order to improve their status, proper action is needed to eradicate illiteracy among women. It is also equally important to motivate women to work as equal porters in economic development (L. Kshnaveni, 1997).

Indian women workers need protection (i) because they belong to weaker sections, and (ii) because of the comparatively unfortunate communities to which they belong. However, in practice, the protection to women workers is the least. The Fair Wages Committee, 1948 considered the question of women's wages and suggested that "diac employment is on place rate of or where the work payable. Where, However, women are
employed on work exclusively done by them or where they are admittedly less efficient than men, the fair wages of women workers should be calculated on the basis of smaller standard than the case of men. Article 39 (d) of the Indian Constitution also suggests a move in the direction of equal pay for men and women for work of equal value. However, it is a general view that the wages of women are quite lower than those of male workers. The differences have tended to narrow down in recent years mainly for two reasons:

(i) fixation of statutory minimum wage under Minimum Wages Act, and

(ii) Standardization of wages for different jobs through the operation of the Industrial Relation Machinery. (Murty and Gaur, 2002).  

Women in poor households contribute substantially to the economic resources of the household and their material standards of living. It is very important to note that women make this financial contribution despite the fact that a large proportion of their employment is in the form of part-time work or informal work. They are low paid, less secure and less protected by legislation or trade union organization (Uma Rani and Jeemol Unni, 2004).  

The voice of a single woman does not carry weight. If a group of women with like minded views join together, form an organization and raise their voice against the suffering of woman, they can make an impact. The organizations should create awareness among women to struggle against their oppression and to fight the persons who exploit, humiliate and torture the women. They may hold protest marches, demonstrations and public meetings, pressurize the police to act speedily, organize orientation camps for women for educating them about their rights and laws relating to these, file writ petitions in courts, follow - up the cases and hold press conferences (M.K. Roy, 2000).
Women are not acknowledged at all. Their low rates of participation in trade union activity is attributed to ‘apathy’. This apathy has been explained by Mathur and Mathur as due to women being more uneducated and illiterate than men, owing to the bonds of religion and social traditions and to the pressure of domestic responsibilities. Since these reasons are very commonly put forward to explain why women are less active in trade unions than men, it is worth-while exploring the ideological presuppositions which underlie membership.

Hence, to attribute the lower participation of women to illiteracy is to leave unquestioned the patriarchal attitudes and structures which inhibit their participation and keep them illiterate in the first place. As to the bonds of religious and social traditions, it is true that women because of their role in the family and in the socialization of children do internalize such traditions to a greater degree than men.

Domestic responsibilities certainly inhibit women’s participation in union activity, but the effort should be directed at questioning this sexual division of labour. There has however been no attempt as such at questioning it either by the trade union movement or by studies of this movement (Nivedita Menon, 1992). Vimal Ranadive of the CITU sees the lack of conscious and persistent effort of trade unions to organize women around equal wages, maternity benefits and retrenchment as the main reason for their low membership. She notes that in many instances the leadership of trade unions has gone to the extent of discouraging women from coming forward to be on executive committees and the like. She suggests that a committee of women trade
unionists be formed in each industry under the guidance of their respective unions. Another study notes that no one trade union is known to have prosecuted a factory owner for ignoring the health problems his factory causes to his female employees (Shehnaaz Anklesaria, 1984).71

The unions do not consider with any seriousness the hold of patriarchal ideology over the working class or over the trade union leadership itself. In their weekly journals, workers are always referred to as workmen and in the masculine pronoun. There is occasional mention in these journals of women workers who have played heroic roles in strikes. However, since such reports are few, they tend rather to reinforce the impression that women rarely participate in union activities so that when they do, it rates a special mention. There are instances such as the fight of the women workers of the Ritz Continental Hotel, Calcutta, who were retrenched in 1976, a demonstration by working and middle class women at Vishakapatnam before the Collector's Office demanding restoration of the rice quota and reduction in its price in January 1975, and the arrest of some women belonging to the families of the workers of a textile mill in Indore who had been agitating for the opening of the mill. Apart from isolated instances like this, however, where women alone have agitated, it would appear from reading the journals of the trade unions that the general workforce is composed entirely of men (Trade Union Record, 1975).12

Women workers did not by and large join trade unions in the early years because social factors disfavored women workers outside. It is generally restricted their freedom to mix with fellow workmen. Their families expect their early return home after the day's work is over and to
keep aloof from union activities. But, at the time of globalization, with the social awakening and the newly acquired freedom, taste for economic independence, women workers are becoming more alive to their interests and joining unions. Now it can be well stated that class consciousness is rapidly increasing day-by-day among the women workers in India. The percentage of women workers is also making progress in employments under the industrial categories: food, beverages, tobacco, textile, mining and quarrying (Murty and Gaur, 2002).73

The studies discussed above are related to the present study, but this study differs from them in several respects. This study gives primary importance to analysing the women workers' problems, their socio-economic status before and after employment, their level of awareness of women labour rights, welfare programmes, their participation in trade union activities, problems faced and resort to solutions in and out of the industrial sector. The study studies 26 spinning mills in Dindigul District to highlight the above mentioned problems. Besides, the study discusses the ways in which the union leaders and other executives use their power and influence with the management for the welfare of the union members.
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