CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Women are an integral part of every economy. All around development and harmonious growth of a nation would be possible only when women are considered as equal partners in progress with men. However, in most developing countries, women have a low socio and economic status. In such countries effective empowerment of women is essential to harness the women labour in the main stream of economic development. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action and central work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one’s destiny and the circumstances of their lives. Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. Women empowerment enables autonomy and control over their lives. The empowered women become agents of their own development, able to exercise choices to set their own agenda and be strong enough to challenge their subordinate position in the society. Although women constitute half of world’s population yet they are the largest group which is excluded from the benefits of social and economic development. Women constitute a strong labour force which needs to be mobilized and encouraged to make an effective contribution to the development process. In India, the work participation rate for women is less than half that of men. Despite efforts made towards economic empowerment of women, majority of the active female population continue to be confined to micro, small scale enterprises and the informal sector.

Women do two third of the world’s work, receive 10percent of the world’s income and own 26 percent of the means of production. This is the present picture of women workers in the era of globalization. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in the year, assessed that significant changes in world economy, such as rapid globalization, fast-paced technological progress and growing informalization of work have greatly altered women’s labour market status in recent years. The idea of forced labour conjures up sights of people in shackles being led off to perform hard labour to pay back debts. But this no longer holds true as the modern
picture of forced labour in globalized work is young girls working long hours as indentured servants to cruel employers, or servicing long hours in sweat shops for a mere pittance of what their time is worth. Millions of women throughout the world live in conditions of abject deprivation of and, attacks against their fundamental human rights for no other reason than that they are women. From coffee to computers, women workers provide the labour that creates the goods that appear in the world’s supermarkets and department stores. The intensity of oppression is high among the country like India where the rigid cultural clutches have not recognized the contribution of the women in the production process, physical and mental activities have not duly acknowledged, even though the continuous efforts of the awareness campaign, legislative protection and the affirmative actions couldn’t reap the adequate outcome, among the industries Leather industry has gained high socio-economic relevance in India. Leather sector has contributed significant economic growth by providing job opportunities. Leather industry in India is spread over more in the unorganized sector. The small scale, cottage and artisan sectors account for over 90 percent of the total production. Today, the industry ranks 8th in the export trade in terms of foreign exchange earnings of the country. Leather industry occupies a place of prominence in the Indian economy, by contributing 2 billion US dollars in terms of export, and its share in world trade is 2 percent. Leather industry is providing employment to nearly 2.5 million people and the majority of tanneries fall under small and medium scale enterprises, at this juncture present work tried to analyze the socio-economic conditions and the role of women workers in the production function of the leather industries, for the study purpose 300 women leather workers were interviewed and systematically analyzed.

The summary of the important findings and meaningful conclusions drawn on the basis of the statistical tests have been precisely presented in this study.

This study was proved to be a valuable and worthwhile one as the inferences drawn throw a good deal of light in understanding and gain meaningful insights in the selected components and aspects pertaining to the profile of the Women leather Workers. Accepting that the universe of the study is limited, taking full cognizance of the fact that the study is limited to selected variables and areas and components and finally realizing the need and scope for further research of areas not covered in this study, a few suggestions have been listed out for further research. However, it
must be admitted that a comprehensive attempt - extensive and intensive research covering all the aspects of career women in general and women leather workers.

7.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The major thrust of this exercise to understand the socio-economic conditions of the women workers of leather industries in Vellore district, findings of the study could be considered as replication of the entire Tamil Nadu structure since the conditions of the workers are more or less similar across the state, before to illustrate the major findings of the study it could be worth enough to sum up the exercise.

The first chapter contains the basic contextual background of the study importance of the women workers and various elements of Labour in India - An overview, Economic Significance of Women’s Role, Constraints of Women Workers, Gender Disparity and Institutional Economics, Women work situation, Women’s work and Wages, Empowerment of Women and work situation, Women Labour in Leather Industries, Selection and justification of the study, workers significance and the features of the workers in India, changing role of women and significance of the study, selection and justification of the study, methodology, objectives have been structured and illustrated in the introductory chapter.

The second chapter consists of literature review pertains to the women workers both Indian and international studies, at present gender issue is gaining prominence in Indian labour market. The women labour is characterized by low wages, tedious work environment etc. There are very few studies done on the alternative employment sources for women labourers during off-season and the impact of off season unemployment of women labour on their income, family status etc. Studies conducted on the employment, wages, non-farm employment etc have been reviewed. Till recently the theoretical and empirical literature on rural labour markets had completely ignored studies on women labourer. Plethora of the studies on the domain have been categorized to have better conceptual and theoretical understanding, Studies conducted on the employment, wages, non-farm employment etc have been reviewed under the following headings. Studies pertains to Women Labour force in the Economy, Studies pertains to the constraints faced by the Women workers, Studies pertains to the Gender based labour market discrimination, Studies pertains to Globalization and its impact on Women workers, Studies pertains to
Women leather workers, This gives sound understanding about the theoretical nuances of the study.

The third chapter examined the various theoretical insights of the women and work, it begun with the feminist perspective and women labour position in the production function theory, Marxism and women, first wave feminist analyses, second wave feminist analyses, psychological theories of women and work, Women Labour force a conceptual development, Labour Market discrimination in India, Globalization and women workers, Women Labour and ILO norms,

Fourth chapter illustrates the Indian Leather industry and the contribution and growth of leather industries in various dimension

Fifth chapter describes the profile of the study area, it deals the historic significance of the Vellore, climatic conditions of the study area, tropical, demographic situation of the Vellore have been illustrated, details of the administrative set-up, Medical and educational infrastructure, rain fall, information on industries and marketing facilities have been illustrated in the chapter.

Sixth chapter exemplifies the analyses of the primary data and the inferences derived from the analysis have been displayed.

Seventh chapter exemplifies the summary and conclusion, major findings of the study, policy recommendations, scope for future research.

7.3. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Significant portion of the respondents 48.7 percentage group up to 30, followed by 32.7 percent were in the age group between 31-40 years. 9.3 and 7.7 percent of them were in the age group of 41-50 years and 51-60 years respectively and 1.7 percent were lies in above 60 years category.

- Nearly 9 percent studied up to primary level, 26 percent got high school education, 8.3 percent and 4.3 percent have studied HSc and degree respectively, 22.7 percent studied ITI, around 26 and 3.7 percent got diploma and professional degree respectively.
With respect to religion around 66.7 percent of the respondents from Hindu religion, 25.3 percent belongs to Muslim and 8 percent belongs to Christian religion.

With regard to caste composition nearly 18.7 percent of the respondents belong to OC, 70.7 percent of the respondents belong to BC, 7 percent hails from and 3.7 percent belongs to MBC and SC respectively.

In connection to marital status around 41.3 percent of the respondents are married, 45 percent of the respondents unmarried, 7.7 percent of the respondents divorced or individual and 6 percent of the respondents were widows.

The information pertains to income level revealed that around 32.7 percent of the respondent’s annual income is less than 60000, nearly 43.7 percent income lies between 60001 to 80000, 13.7 percent constitutes from 80001 to 100000, and 6 percent of the respondent’s annual income is between 100001-120000, nearly 4 percent of the respondent’s income range above 120000.

With respect to savings nearly 48.3 percent of the people revealed that they haven’t made any savings, 25 percent were had savings Rs.0-100 per month, 12.5 percent made saving Rs.101-200 per month, 6.4 percent saves between Rs.200-300 rupees per month, 4.7 percent saved between Rs.400-Rs.500 per month and 3.1 percent were made savings 500 and above per month.

With regard to source of loan, nearly 7.7 percent of the respondents to availed the loan from banks, 6 percent got the loans from state financial corporation, 42 percent obtained from private money lenders, 9.3 percent got from co-operative banks, 35 percent mortgage the jewels in the nearby pawn broker shops for the credit requirement.

Nearly 5.17 percent of the respondents had outstanding debts between Rs.0-10k rupees, 6.7 percent got between Rs.10 k to 20 k, nearly 10 percent got the outstanding between Rs.20 k to 30 k, around 14 percent got the outstanding
between Rs.30 k to 40k, around 27.7 percent had outstanding between Rs.40k to 50k, and 36 percent of the respondents got Rs.50k and above

- With respect to the food expenditure around per month 18.7 percent spent up to Rs.3000, nearly 52 percent spent between Rs.3001-5000, 16.7 percent spent between Rs.5001-6000, 10.7 percent spent between Rs.6001-8000 and 2 percent spent more than Rs.8000 per annum, with respect to the Non-Food expenditure nearly 66.7 percent spent between Rs. 0-3000, nearly 20 percent spent between Rs.3001-5000, 6 percent spent between Rs.5001-6000, nearly 4.7 percent spent between Rs.6001-8000 and 2.7 percent spent more than Rs.8000 per annum for Non-Food expenditure in the study area

II. INFORMATION PERTAIN TO WORK PROFILE

- With regard to the reason to became leather workers around 30 percent stated low educational qualification propel to choose the job, 5.7 percent opined that job oriented to their qualification, 15 percent they don’t have any other job, 12.4 percent lack of infrastructure, 13.7 percent stated friends persuasion and 31.7 percent to cater the family expenditure.
- The experience of the respondents implied that nearly 18.3 percent of the respondents got the experience up to 2 years, 29 percent of the respondents got the experience between 2 years to 4 years, 15.3 percent got the experience between years to 6 years and 37.3 percent had experience more than 6 years.
- With respect to the duration of work nearly 34 percent of the respondents have stated that they use to work for 8 hrs per day, 30 percent of the respondents have opined that they worked for 9 hrs per day, 22.3 percent of the respondents were stated that they are engaging in the work around 10 hrs per day, 13.7 percent of the respondents have stated that they use to depends on the condition of the assignment
- Among the managerial category woman only comprise roughly 0.7 percent of employees while at the worker level they comprise about 59 percent of employees, at the supervisory level 7 percent comprise whereas 33.3 percent of the employees constitutes in skilled workers category
Female proportions are much less in somewhat more technical areas such as knitting with 9 percent, dyeing with 7 percent, processing and stitching with 7.3 and 10.3 respectively, with regard to washing and inspection with 8 percent and 6 percent respectively, 7 percent and 25.3 percent for folding and helping respectively, and 6.7 percent to maintenance.

Nearly 56.8 percent stay within 5 kilometers, and another 9.5 percent of the staff stay between 6 – 10 Km, 7.2 percent of the staff stay between 11 – 15 Km, around 10.2 percent and 4.9 percent resides 16-20 and 21-25 km respectively, 1.5 percent lives 26-30 km, nearly 1.9 percent and 8 percent of the women workers resides 31-30 and more than 35 km respectively from the workplace.

Nearly 44.7 per cent of the women employees travel by train while 29.5 per cent travel by bus., smaller portion of the respondents (8.7) use to reach company by walk and small proportion of the respondents reach by their own vehicle.

Major chunk of the 71 percent of the respondents have one official break during the shift and 29.6 percent didn’t got the same.

With respect to organizational support to enhance the competence 24.6 percent got encouragement and 75.4 didn’t, 32.6 percent got recognition from superiors and 67.4 percent didn’t, 40.5 percent stated superiors shown concern to employees but 59.5 percent declined the same, 46.2 percent got the entitled incentive but 53.8 percent didn’t got the same.

In connection with supervision and management 43.5 percent experienced less harassment. 50.8 percent got motivation during critical situation. 45.5 percent got encouragement, nearly 38.5 percent opined that their immediate supervisors are helpful to solve even family related problems to a large extent, it was nearly half of the employees underwent constraints through immediate superiors.

Nearly 30 percent opined that management is concerned on dignity of the workers to a large extent. Only 37 percent had faith on impartial attitude of management, nearly 34 percent enhance the transparent communication, as the empirical results shown that management concerned towards women employees is quite inadequate.
III. AMENITIES AND PRIVILEGES PROVIDED TO THE WORKERS

- with regard to facilities and benefits received by workers 54.7 percent were not satisfied with the provision of cloth/uniform, 43.7 percent were not satisfied with canteen facilities, 48.7 percent were not satisfied with ESI facilities, 46.7 percent were not satisfied with provision of soap, as half of the respondents were not satisfied with benefits provided and significant portion were less satisfied.
- In connection with the opinion on physical facilities nearly 68.3 percent were not satisfied with cleanliness, 65 percent satisfied with ventilation 71.3 percent not satisfied with lighting, 76.7 percent were not satisfied with protective measures, 82.7 percent not satisfied with sanitation facilities 79.3 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with rest room.
- Majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the procedures and restrictions followed by the companies
- Around 87.3 percent opined that companies does not comply with the special protective measures to women, 93 percent revealed company did not follow any guidelines reading sexual harassment in the company premises.
- With respect to the perception on availability of privileges around 67 percent were not satisfied with the availability of medical facilities, 41.3 percent have not satisfied with separate bathrooms for female, 57.7 percent were not satisfied with transportation facilities, 75.3 percent have not satisfied with the concession given during pregnancy, the results indicated that women were not given entitled privileges in the company

IV. WORK ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHALLENGES

- Major section of the respondents encountered problems in the work place as 78 percent opined underpaid, 86.7 percent stated that prevalence of sexual harassment is high in their work place, underwent sexual harassment, 73.3 percent, nearly 81.3 percent stated that women forced to work more hours, 85.3 percent opined malice attitude of management.
- Majority of the respondents perceived that factory environment were not conducive enough for women to work, prevalence of gender discrimination, more working hours for women, wage discrimination, sexual harassment, existed.
✓ With regard to the rating of respondents on physical infrastructure made available in the work premises 48 percent opined lighting facilities are low, 72 percent stated good ventilation, around 40 percent felt low drinking water facility, nearly 41 percent felt low space available in working place, 56 percent and 58 percent rated sanitation and recreation facilities were low respectively.

V. WORK ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

✓ Work environment caused health deterioration of the workers nearly 69.3 percent stated it triggered headache, 62.3 percent stated it instigated anxiety disorder, 66 percent revealed that it caused limb injuries, 66.7 percent opined that it triggered skin rashes, 61.7 percent and 70 percent stated it caused ulcers and dust allergy lead to respiratory problems respectively
✓ The major chunk of the sample respondents revealed that work environment also caused anxiety disorders and other mental health problems.

VI. PROTECTIVE MEASURES IN THE COMPANIES

✓ Nearly 22.3 percent of the respondents highly satisfied with the safety measures followed in handling chemicals in the company, 25.3 percent were satisfied and 52.3 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the safety measures to use chemicals in the company to produce leather goods in the study area
✓ Nearly 31 percent of the respondents highly satisfied with the safety measures followed in handling machineries in the company, 34 percent were satisfied and 35 percent of the respondents were not satisfied
✓ Nearly 15.3 percent of the respondents highly satisfied with the respondent’s control on workplace parameters, 19.3 percent were satisfied and 35 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the respondent’s control on workplace parameters in the company to produce leather goods in the study area
VII. RESPONDENT’S PERCEPTIONS ON PROTECTIVE MEASURES OF THE COMPANIES

- Majority of the respondents (67 percent) perceived that no protective measures preserve the workers from dye chemicals, similarly 70 percent opined for dust emission, 74 percent for provision of protective equipment, 81 percent for lack of immediate medical facility during emergency.

- With regard to occupational hazardous significant portion of the respondents (47.8 percent) opined it occurred frequently, 68 percent opined skin allergies occurred quite frequently, 38 percent stated limb injuries taken place frequently.

- Perceptions on the comparison of skills between males and females significant portion of the samples (67 percent) opined female workers were highly productive, 78 percent percent perceived woman workers are committed to work, 82 percent stated women workers are more honest than man.

- There is significant wage difference found among the men and women for the same kind of work in the leather industries.

VIII. STATUS OF THE WOMEN WORKERS IN THEIR HOUSE

- Majority of the respondents could be able to manage both domestic commitments and official, however, significant portion also expressed concern that it enhance the stress and affect the family life style to greater extent.

- Most of the respondents opined that they had the capability to take decision in their family issues even though significant portion of the respondents use to get consent from either husband or other family members, at the outset entitlement in decision making at the home got enhanced through the job status of the respondents.

- Majority of the respondents were unmarried however married women stated that the behaviour of the husbands were not conducive enough to ensure the self-respect of them.

IX. PERCEPTIONS ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN WORK ENVIRONMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION

- Around 77 percent of the respondents revealed that management didn’t give liberty to take work related decision

- Nearly 65 percent of the respondents didn’t feeling happy for associated with leather industries
Nearly 63 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the shift schedule, however 37 percent were satisfied with the same.

Around 57 percent were not satisfied with the salary structure and 43 percent were satisfied with the present salary structure.

7.4. POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Continuous efforts are needed to improve the working conditions of women and some of the policy implications stemmed below as an outcome of the study.

1. GENDER SENSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

- Gender differences in employment conditions have a major impact on gender differences in work-related health outcomes. Research and interventions must take account of the real jobs that men and women do and differences in exposure and working conditions.
- Work-related risks to women’s safety and health have been underestimated and neglected compared to men’s, both regarding research and prevention. This imbalance should be addressed in research, awareness raising and prevention activities.
- Taking a gender-neutral approach in policy and legislation has contributed to less attention and fewer resources being directed towards work-related risks to women and their prevention. Health directives do not cover (predominantly female) domestic workers.
- Gender-sensitive interventions should take a participatory approach, involving the workers concerned and based on an examination of the real work situations.
- Women are under-represented in the decision-making concerning occupational health and safety at all levels. They should be more directly involved and women’s views, experiences, knowledge and skills should be reflected in formulating and implementing OSH strategies.
- There are successful examples of including or targeting gender in research approaches, interventions, consultation and decision-making, tools and actions. Existing experiences and resources should be shared.
- While the general trends in women’s working conditions and situation are similar across the Member States and candidate countries, there are also country differences within these general trends. Individual countries should
examine their particular circumstances regarding gender and OSH, in order to plan appropriate actions.

- Taking a holistic approach to OSH, including the work–life interface, broader issues in work organisation and employment would improve occupational risk prevention, benefiting both women and men.
- Women are not a homogeneous group and not all women work in traditionally ‘female’ jobs.
- The same applies to men. A holistic approach needs to take account of diversity. Actions to improve work–life balance must take account of both women’s and men’s working schedules and be designed to be attractive to both.

II. ENSURE THE COMFORTABLE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Women continue to be active in the workforce as shown by their increasing employment rates. However, workers with non-standard employment contracts such as part-time employment or non-permanent contracts accounted for most of the increases in employment figures and there is a trend to multiple employment to be observed. Also, the financial downturn may have an impact on the employment prospective of especially younger women.
- Occupational segregation, overall, the concentration of female activity in a few sectors seems to be increasing rather than falling over time. The move to service sectors particularly affects women, who work in the growing sectors health care, education and retail. Consequently, if it should be effective, OSH policy should continue to address and enhance its activities for these sectors.
- The jobs in which women work and the choices they make still depend largely on their family commitments. This is also true for older women. Inversely, the practices impact on the choices they are given. As this report demonstrates, many women are involuntarily in temporary jobs, on multiple and short-term contracts and this has a high impact on their occupational safety and health.
- The combination of work organizational and physical risks, the links between women’s paid and unpaid work, including combined risk exposures and less freedom in time, and the difficulties in finding a stable job, and their impact on the health and safety of women should be further explored.
- Violence is a particular issue in service sectors, and is increasing. Reporting and support procedures are still lacking and female workers in personal
services and working at clients premises are particularly vulnerable. Additionally, reports on violence vary considerably between Member States and may be linked to a lack of awareness.

- Improving the identification of risks and exposures will be important to ‘make the invisible visible’, as are improved data documenting these risks and exposures, and the related health effects, and a wider range of indicators and more differentiated monitoring instruments to reflect the tasks, occupations and risks specifically faced by women.

- Ensure women’s participation in policy discussions and when laying out legislation. It will be important to ensure that women participate in the development of occupational safety measures strategies and policies and its implementation in the workplace.

- Adaption of labour inspection practice to the increasing number of women in the labour market, the observed shift from industry to services, and the changes in contractual arrangements. A gendered approach to interventions is warranted: resources should be assessed for the contribution they make for an increasingly female workforce, and for how they are adapted to the specific needs in these diverse service sectors.

**III. VIOLENCE AT WORK:**

- Measures to target violence and harassment at work and the special committee consists of lawyers, officials from labour Ministry, women activists and the women workers need to be formed and protect the women from the harassment in the work place.

- Efficient reporting systems for violence at work should be put in place to address underreporting. These systems need to be linked with quick measures for action, whether to provide immediate support to workers in case of an event or counseling after the event.

**IV. ACCIDENTS AND HEALTH EFFECTS**

- Accident rates of female workers high in the leather industries. To target accident prevention, more information should be gathered about the type of accidents of women suffer in different segment of works. Factors such as age, sector and occupation, and migration background should be taken into account
and formulate and implement the strategy to curb the accidents in the leather industries.

- Static work, prolonged standing and sitting, risk factors particularly relevant to female in the work, are not currently monitored and assessed in many workers surveys and the related health effects are underrepresented and explore the occurrence of lower limb disorder in leather industries. Thus the periodical health checkup, proper needed rest during the work need to be given to diminish the negative consequences of the health.

- Women are more susceptible to depression and anxiety than men, and their lower mental health may be linked to the multiple roles they perform on a daily basis which might lead to cardiovascular diseases. So recreation and outlet need to be provided.

- Exposures to dangerous substances in the occupations are frequent, but remain under assessed. Women’s exposure in also involve carcinogens, which would lead to cancer. Gender differences in uptake and metabolism of dangerous substances should also be further explored and protect the women from such kind of hazards.

- WHO research recommended that specific gender focussed research needed to be undertaken in occupational health policies and programmes, to improve training, capacity and the delivery of occupational health services.

V. REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION:

- Gender sensitive rehabilitation need to be conceived incorporating all the element which would diminish the disabilities of the women workers.

- Employers should have flexible and effective rehabilitation work policies for women workers. The female workers need to be explicitly addressed: rehabilitation measures should also be targeted at temporary workers and part-timers, who are often women, young or migrant workers.

- Those responsible for implementing systems need to consider gender issues, and in particular the home life of women and how this affects their rehabilitation. Rehabilitation costs need to include both direct and indirect costs.
There needs to be more research for women on vocational retraining, rehabilitation and re-insertion into work.

7.5. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The outcome of the study unleash the scope for further research in this domain such as

- There could be prospective to explore the relationship between women position in informal job market after the globalization.
- The conditions of women agricultural labourers as major chunk of the women workers concentrated on this domain
- There could be prospective to explore the relationship between sexual abuse in work environment and mental health of the women workers.
- Attainment and challenges of working women in the Indian job market
- Problem and Prospects of women labour in rural and urban area