CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The economy of the third world countries consists mainly of small Informal Sector. The informal sector has a very significant role in urban industrial sectors. The dualistic nature of the urban economy has been recognised by the researchers in many of the Third World Countries. The urban informal sector contains the mass of working poor whose productivity is much lower than in the formal sectors. Earnings of these workers are below the legal minimum wages and they are considered to be under-employed. The earnings of the employees are not enough to meet their minimum basic needs and as such they are not far away from poverty and malnutrition.

The informal sector activities refer only to marginally productive and economically inefficient activities such as petty traders, street-hawkers, food-vendors, shoe-shine boys, rag-pickers and other groups on the streets of towns and cities. Due to rapid urbanization, employment in the informal sector has been growing faster than the formal sector. This chapter briefly reviews the literature on the informal sector in urban labour markets. The research studies and other papers in India and other countries have dealt it separately under different
headings. This review is based on the literature that the researcher had the opportunity to pursue. Though it may not be comprehensive, it certainly indicates the vast amount of interest which the subject has already evoked among the academicians and policy-makers.

The number of persons migrating from the villages to the cities is increasing every year. In search of employment, these people are seen mainly within informal sector. They are offered employment in domestic services like cooking, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, sweeping houses and compounds, fetching milk, and labour services such as construction workers, rag-Pickers, self employed workers etc. The studies conducted in this field are not found sufficient as most of studies deal with the socio-economic condition of the women workers in unorganised sector. The review of literature for the present study is based mostly from Indian studies, no doubt, with few exceptions.

Irene Tom (1989) studied women in a silk industry of Karnataka with aaim to examine the way developments occur in the industrial sector and how these affect women's employment. She has aaim to find how women are being marginalised in the silk industry in South India. She has
collected data with the help of questionnaire which consisted questions partly of open ended and partly of closed type. She has used the Random sampling technique. She took, in all, 68 interviews at Ramanagaram and Anekal, at first place in connection with reeling and second in connection with twisting and weaving.

The aim of the study was that women are obviously being pushed back inside the production process, why their earnings are less, how employment development affects the women. The data was collected through random sampling in the activities of reeling, twisting and weaving in which majority of the workers were women. Her findings are that 80% of the women were working in lower status and incomes as well as with worse labour conditions. As women find employment in reeling, it shows women's marginalised position, division between and within the stages of production and marginalisation of women. There is a strong gender division of labour within the production units themselves. Women are over represented in the low-esteemed and low paid activities. It would appear that the role of women in industrial production is very important. But their condition is overlooked because they often contribute
in home-based production. The category of the unpaid family labourers to the well known typology of labour relations is made by Bromley (1980). Women are paid comparatively less than their male counterparts and are generally associated with low income activities.

A study was conducted by Santosh Kumar (1989) on women construction workers at Delhi. He talked to these women and found that all the women who are construction workers, came from nearby states to Delhi along with their husbands. They do all types of works such as stone breaking, climb upstairs with heavy load on heads etc. They live at their work sites. He found that a woman worker is given eighteen rupees per day while a male worker gets twenty two to twenty five rupees per day, for the same work. These women are victims of society and exploited by a class. But these women cannot fight against exploitation because they become bonded-labourers of brokers. Hema Nair (1988) has studied women construction workers' day routine and found that they work 8 hours in a day and with no medical allowances etc. even if they meet with an accident at the site.

A survey of 2,000 women construction workers at
sites conducted by the National Institute of Urban Affairs in 1982 found that: 97 percent of the women belonged to scheduled castes, 95 percent had obtained the job through contractors and 97 percent had migrated from Rajasthan, U.P. and M.P. 98 percent were in temporary workers category, none had paid leave, not even for injuries sustained on the site, or at child birth. 50 percent of pregnant women worked till the last day of their pregnancy. 83 percent earned Rs. 8.25 per day. Only two percent earned the prescribed daily wages of Rs. 9.25. A survey by mobile creches of 3159 women and 3931 men construction workers on 17 sites in January 1988 in Bombay found that all the women worked as load-lifters. Of the women who do unskilled labour, only 26 percent were paid the prescribed wage of Rs. 11.20 a day, 80 percent get Rs. 6.10 a day and of the 1.39 percent unskilled men workers, only few men earned Rs. 6.10 a day, 454 men were getting Rs. 11.20 a day.

A study of the Silk weavers of Bhagalpur by Bharat Dogra (1990) shows that nearly 211 families of Madninagar Basti, depend on weaving alone. Their stocks were looted in an incident of communal violence. So these
people were not in a position to start their work again. All bastis of weavers were targets of communal violence.

They, very strangely, alleged that perhaps their traders had some inkling of these incidents as they exerted on them to obtain their cash dues on the pretext of pressing cash needs. It is further suggested by him that there is a need to study the relation of violence with socio-economic tensions of the area.

Sumitra Bahave in her book "Pan on Fire : 1990 Eight Dalit women tells their story" has focussed on eight women workers - of a Pune Slum who narrate their images. The aim of research was to know, in their own words, about their family, religion, work and society. This study has not taken any representative sample. This study is done through dia-lo-gical research methods. It is through dialogues, that these women narrate the events and we are able to study the women's self-portrayal. All of the eight women were one of the most suffered lot in their society. They find that the difference in socializing them is based on sex roles. They all feel that they will never be able to hold their own position equal to men. These women live life at three levels society, family and self. In the
society, they find themselves quite powerless with all sorts of restrictions thrust on them. As a wife, these women are not happy but as mothers they find themselves happy and it is this happiness that heals their wounds. The Indian family does not recognise the need to provide for the development of each of its members according to his or her need and ability. This points to a great drawback of its structure. A person's duties and behaviour depends more on his or her place in the family's hierarchy than on his / her inherent ability. Their lack of education has left these Dalit women without any preconceived ideas regarding life and its meaning.

In urban industrialised families also, demarcation between women's work and men's work is growing continuously familiar. Women's work load has increased and now equals that of men. She has lost her earlier emotional compensations and she has not gained economic independence either. The society, where inter-relations depend not on mutual trust and encouragement but on scheme and game playing, is a perverse society. To do away with such a social structure, men and women, who value justice, will have to carefully eliminate power politics from their lives.
R. Satya Raju (1989) studied urban unorganised sector with reference to Vishakhapatnam. The informal sector of this city accounts for about 62% of the total labour force of the city. In all, about 460 interviews of the employees were conducted.

This study is an attempt to know about the background of entrepreneurship, structure of the enterprises, socio-economic profile and working and living conditions of the employees in the unorganised sector.

He studied employment, earnings, mobility and quality of the participants of this sector. He collected data both by primary and secondary sources by selecting the respondents randomly. He found that many of the respondents who were more qualified, wealthy, upercast were enterprising and the less educated, who hailed from lower segment of society were employees. They had worked for fairly long periods. They gained confidence and expertise which in turn gave them a sense of confidence to stand on their own in their respective fields. This is how employees, become employers in informal sector. Such a possibility is rather rare in formal sector. He found that cityward migration and increase in the labour force in
urban areas has been higher than the absorptive capacity of the organised sector in urban areas. The myriad informal sector activities absorbed a large segment of those who could not get entry into the formal sector. Usually, the earnings in informal sector are low and hence, there is poverty, squalor, disease and hunger, over crowding and inadequate housing in slums. All the attendant problems result in a situation where most of the informal sector employees often lead a sub-human life. Even where minimum wages are declared, in many cases, they were not being paid by their employers. Due to low or weak or non-unionisation, they do not have the bargaining power. They are deprived of many of the facilities/provisions concerning hours of work, payment of overtime etc.

Ela Bhatt studied the invisibility of home based workers in India, in the book "Invisible Hands" edited by Adrew M Singh and A.K.V. She classified home based workers in two categories. First, those who are given the raw materials by the employer, who pays by piece rate according to the amount produced. Second, those who buy all their raw material themselves and earn by selling their finished goods. She has focussed in her study on first category
only, through the micro data on piece rate workers. She found that piece rate home based workers are generally women. They are paid according to the numbers, weight or size of the item produced: Beedis, agarbatties, paper bags, garments, cotton-pod-shelling, groundnut-pod-shelling. Matchstick-making, Papad rolls are some examples of home-based products. Piece rate workers, work (8) eight hours a day and earn not more than Rs. 3 as in the case of Zari workers in Delhi and Rs. 1 for lacemaker. Jeneffer Sebstad in her study on self employed women finds that in Ahmedabad the average monthly income for home based workers is Rs. 130 as compared to Rs. 250 for vendors and Rs. 170 for labourers. According to her these workers are invisible and they are not member of trade mark. They are not protected by law or their welfare is not done by Govt. or others.

Loes Schenk-Sandbergen in her book "Poverty and, Survival" 1988 has studied Kudumbi Female Domestic Servants and their Households in Alleppey (Kerala). She has collected data on female household workers because they appeared to be an important additional group in the urban informal sector. She interviewed in all 61 households. The selection was random. Half of the households selected
had a servant and others with no servant, in order to compare them.

Kudumbi Community has no land. The women are only domestic servants and get only one-third of their earnings in cash and two-thirds in kind. But during the menses period, servants are not allowed to work. Young also go to work at their mother's work place. They work as domestic servants, generations to generations. They are removed from employment anytime between 6th to 9th month of pregnancy.

Middle aged and elderly women tend to be servants more often than younger women and they often continue working till death. The average working hours is 8 and their average wage is Rs. 15 per month. There is no relation between the number of hours worked and the income. There is a slight tendency to give older women less pay because they are considered weaker. In this light, years of service have no value. These servants also get food from their employer. But it was not easy to get an estimate of the value of the food given to the women. A saree and some times a blouse are usually given on ONAM. Some old clothes are also given. There is no Sunday. They
do not get food or pay on a holiday.

So there is more pressure on the individual and the work condition is severe under the circumstances. The servant has to present, herself as docile, subordinate, trust-worthy, and satisfied, while in reality, there is no reason why she should feel satisfied. There will be no other solution unless fundamental changes in the wider society free these women from this labour that is traditionally allotted to them. (Nirmala Banerjee (1985) in her book "women workers in the unorganised sector" (Calcutta) found that women workers in unorganised sector work harder, get less pay, no holiday and no other benefits. She surveyed all unorganised women workers' working conditions, and their position at home and society. Sample was drawn from list based on listing of households by the Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Govt. of West Bengal. The sample included 411 women, of which 11 were case studies of prostitutes and 400 were randomly selected from the list of workers.

Her study examined the hypothesis that the number of hours these women worked was a function of the level of per capita income exclusive of their own contributions.
She found that unorganised sector employs a very large section of the work force in the urban regions of India and especially in Calcutta. Working women in the informal sector include a significant number of children and old people. Over 60 percent of this group was illiterate. It was observed that higher a woman's education level as well as her age at marriage, the higher the social group to which she belonged. Nearly 70 per cent of women came from families which were below the poverty line. For sixty percent of the workers the monthly income was below Rs. 100/-. Wage rate and incomes in the informal sector were less than half of those in the formal sector. Self employment was not very common among these women except in the case of traditional occupations such as laundering or in others like making cow-dung cakes or paper bags which needed little capital. The number of self employed persons was increasing very slowly. There was no system of annual increment in this labour market. The only way to increase income is by increasing the working hours. But overtime and longer working hours were not paid at higher marginal wage rate. She also found that the incidence of piece rate work had also increased though the out-workers were usually paid lower piece rates as compared to the workers in the
work-shops engaged in similar tasks. There were no arrangements of creches in any of the occupations, though domestic workers, are allowed to bring their infants to their workplaces. There were no paid leave facilities but domestic servants were given paid leave during child birth or illness. Only one-eighth of the female children of school going age group go to the schools. She also found that these workers and their families faced tremendous difficulty in gaining access to public facilities such as obtaining ration cards or seeking medical aids at health or family planning clinics. They donot know about trade unions. Maria Mies' study, "The lace makers of Narsapur, Indian housewives produce for the world market" (1982) is another importnt work on informal sector. She collected the data of her study through (i) group discussion (ii) life histories and (iii) household survey (amongst 150 women). Her study shows that some women only earn a rupee or two daily after working 6 or 7 hours. She also found that the women wanted to constitute some organisation to help them because if they formed an organisation, they could lookafter their differences.

The research work of Niti Tandon and Niraj Kumar
"A study on employment status and income generation activities of socially under-provided slum women" takes the problem of unorganised women. They studied 100 respondents. They used interview schedule containing open ended questions. All women were randomly selected. The study was carried out in Gilbert Hill slum of Bombay.

The study revealed that majority of i.e., 63 percent respondents were employed. Among employed women 45.62 percent were domestic maid servants and 22.22 percent were self-employed. Most of the women were regular in job. Majority of them worked for 5-13 hrs a day. 4.76 percent workers worked more than 12 hrs a day. They earned Rs. 800 monthly. Only 32 percent workers earned between Rs. 800 to Rs. 1000. They found that women play a vital role in unorganised labour sector. Many women in the lower socio-economic groups are victims of social injustice and have no independent status. It was presumed by them that a woman can hardly ever choose a work. She has to accept whatever happens to her as her destiny and she has to go for low paid jobs as only such jobs are within her reach.

The condition of slum women in particular is worse
than that of their counterparts elsewhere. This study shows that early marriages, having many children, illiteracy etc. are common among them. Majority of women are forced to undertake manual jobs to support their families. They have to labour for long hours in addition to performing their domestic duties.

Usha Jumani's study (1991) Dealing with Poverty" Self employment for poor rural women" finds that economic sector activities are making a significant impact and contribution to the economic in-sight and to rural realities with particular reference to women. However this is only a starting point and book focusses its issue particular to activities related to self employment and to women as workers for a comprehensive picture and an analysis of the inter-relationships behaviour and social and economic issues.

Sandhya Venkat (1991) finds in "study of women in the urban informal sector - A childhood in waste" that with rapid urbanisation growing child comes to cities as earner. India has the largest number of working children. It has been pointed out that as much as (90%) child-workers are found in unorganised sector, as rag-pickers as it
requires no skill or education. The poor are thus found dominating the informal sectors — which is estimated to engage anywhere between 50-75% of urban workers (NIVA 1990). Informal sector activities are typically characterized by abysmal working conditions, little security of work or wages, irregular and long hours of work, excessive exploitation and no support structure. Within the poor, it is women and children who constitute a high proportion of informal sector workers. Continued migration, break down of the traditional family and community structures, have all combined to create a vulnerable group of urban children called "street children" majority of whom work within the informal sector to survive.

Children accompany their mothers on waste picking rounds and it is more often the girls who do so, whereas boys engage in boot polish or waste paper collections. It is significant to note, however, that this does not imply that there are more girl children involved in waste picking than boys. Waste picking is possibly the only occupation which requires neither any investments nor any working capital. It requires no skill, no experience and has no
pre-requisites of any sort. A survey in Bangalore (NIPCCD not dated) found the proportion to be as high as 80 percent of the sample. The parents in some of these families were found to be engaged in other informal sector activities.

The study further finds that with young girls as waste pickers, harassment assumes sexual dimensions. Passes are made at them, vulgar comments passed specially when young girls set out on their own. It is not uncommon to find girls being initiated into prostitution when they are by themselves on the streets for the better part of the day, much more accessible to a variety of people. The study finds that the daily round of waste picker begins anywhere between 4/5 AM till to 3/4 PM or 8 AM till 5/6 PM.

A Delhi survey on children waste pickers found that as much as 75 percent of such children worked in this activity on a full time basis and could be spending as much as 12 hours on waste collection. They are completely exploited by the traders who buy waste from them. Illiteracy, the lack of awareness, the absence of any organisation and indebtedness to traders. All combine and create a situation where the rag-Pickers are unable to bargain. It further pointed out that there are no
occupational mobility in them, "once a waste picker – always a waste picker" is the commonly held opinion of the waste pickers met within Delhi.

The study finds that they mostly reside in slum areas where the dwellings are overcrowded and poorly managed, in dilapidated conditions with lack of ventilation, light, and sanitary facilities. All or any combination of these factors can be detrimental to safety, health or morals.

Vardhraj D. 1988 in a study titled "Exploitation of Domestic Workers: case studies from Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu" has delved into the problems of women in unorganised domestic sector in the states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. One of the objectives of the study was to portray the exploitation of domestic women workers. The study revealed that 38.82 percent of them were exploited. This study has restricted itself only to full time workers and not the part time ones. A multistage sampling technique (Black and Champion 1976) was used for the selection of the sample. Centres with population of one lac and more were selected. She has associated exploitation to staying with employers in Karnataka, Kerala
and Tamil Nadu and the Non-familial structure of the family. Monthly wages, number of working hours and provision of leave are the incitations for exploitation. She found that if domestic women workers are away from home and stay with the employer than the chances of their being exploited become high. She also indicates that due to the lack of qualification or skill getting other jobs may be difficult. The domestic sector which does not demand skills or training attracts them. When the domestic worker stays with employer, the chances of exploitation are enhanced. They are available for work throughout the day except the sleeping hours. Even the sleeping hours are restricted. There are no definite working hours for those who stay with the employers. Their wages are usually not commensurate with the number of working hours. Domestic workers visit their homes only once or twice in a year. They are expected to work even during holidays or festival occasions. If the domestic workers are children then they are exploited much more. She has suggested in the study that certain measures can be introduced to reduce exploitation. If staying of the domestic workers with employers is reduced by providing hostel accommodation for such women workers their rate and quantum of exploitation
can be brought down.

Chayya Datar in her study "Waging Change: Women Tobacco workers in Nipani" (1989) found that the women workers forget their identity as women. They consider themselves workers first and women afterwards. The women's primary problems are those relating to the three basic needs - food, shelter and clothing. Their struggle is primarily for survival - as human beings, as workers who are exploited through low wages, long working hours, health hazards lack of permanency, labour-replacing mechanization, and many others. That is, they face the same problems that all other categories of workers do. Additionally, they are exploited as women, at the work place and outside - through home-based production, job segregation, sexual harassment, family oppression, and so on and so forth.

These two aspects of the struggle for all women workers were found to be totally intertwined. Neither can be achieved without taking the other into account. The struggle against exploitation is directly related to the struggle against oppression in the case of women workers. The class struggle has to necessarily incorporate the struggle against patriarchy. The study says that to ignore
this fundamental truth would be to deny the origin and basis of exploitation and oppression of women workers. It further comments that the objective of a workers’ union is the abolishing of class exploitation and the objective of a women’s organization is to smash patriarchy.

N. Mani Mekalalai and S. Sundari (1991) have studied ‘Mat Industries’ in India and found them to fall under the category of the unorganised sector. It is study of Amoor and Ayyampalayam villages in Tamil Nadu.

The study was conducted with the objective to assess the socio-economic status of women, hours of work and problems faced by women workers.

Respondents were randomly selected and data was collected through structured interview schedule. The sample size was 110 which consisted of 40 respondents of Amoor and 70 of Ayyampalayam village.

The study finds that the vast majority of rural women in the unorganised sector are landless. They work in the fields, they look after the animals, they are actively involved in food production, food processing forestry, and rural industry. They also participate in construction
works, as labourers in the factories, and the mines and engage in trade and vending. In addition, they have the burden of bearing and rearing children, collecting and fetching water, gathering firewood, cooking and cleaning activities which consume much time and energy. Deforestation, famine, drought and other calamities affect women much more adversely than men (Government of India, 1988).

An analysis of the sectorial distribution of the work force showed the women to be mostly confined to low paid jobs. The planning commission fixed the poverty line at an annual household income of Rs. 6400 in rural areas and Rs. 7300 in urban areas. As Amoor and Ayyampalayam are villages, Rs. 6400 per annum was made the basis to classify the sample women workers in the mat industry into two groups: those living above the poverty line and those living below it.

The socio-economic profile of the sample women workers in Amoor and Ayyampalayam revealed that the work force in the mat-industry was dominated by the backward caste Hindu unmarried and illiterate women. Their income was found to be hardly sufficient to cover household
expenditures and this had resulted in irksome debts for these households. Ninety-seven of the households were below the poverty line.

It is further found in this study that the increasing number of women, getting concentrated in the low skill, low wage work is a typical characteristic of the unorganised sector with its attendant's insecurity and this, in part, has been attributed to lack of Government programmes for vocational training, literacy and the wage structure. There is no minimum wage for the workers of the mat industry. The system of wage payment in Amoor and Ayyampalayam village is on piece rate basis. Wages were found to be paid weekly in cash. In a day, on an average, the female workers dried/split three to four bundles of koral grass and hence their earnings ranged between Rs. 3 and Rs. 4 a day. In the case of knotting/binding/drying of mats, women workers on an average did 30 to 40 mats and that average wage earnings were approximately Rs. 3 to 4 a day. On the other hand, men on an average earned Rs. 12 to 15 a day. Thus, the daily wage earnings of men were greater than that of women by three to four times.

The study reveals that 97 per cent of the
respondents lived below the poverty line. The socio-economic conditions of these women workers was characterized by a high rate of illiteracy, large size of family, low income, expenditure overshooting income, poverty and indebtedness. The employment of the female labour force in the unorganised sector of the mat industry in Amoor and Ayyampalayam was characterized by a high incidence of casual labour, piece rate wages, low skills, lack of social security benefits, absence of legal safeguards and trade unions. There is no minimum wage legislation to protect the interest of these workers. Despite their hard work, they were able to earn less than Rs. 4 a day, which is a petty amount considering the present costs of living.

Kishor C. Samal (1990) had studied urban informal sector of Samablapur in Orissa. His study throws light on the economic aspects of urban informal sector. He conducted this study with the aims to know about the production of goods and services in the urban informal sector, socio-economic background of workers and linkages between the formal and informal sectors. The sample selection was done randomly. He has covered in all 182
units spread over six sub-sectors of the informal sector of Sambalpur town. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used for collection of data. One of his findings is that proportion of informal sector employment is generally higher in small cities as compared to big cities of India. It was also noticed by him that the push factors were more in rural area as compared to the pull factors. He found mobility within the urban informal sector. The proportion of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes workers was more than other segments of population in the urban informal sector. He found the level of earnings higher in the formal sector, but not in fact very high. Wage differences are also significant between different segments of the informal sector. On the average it is found by this study, though the wages are lower in informal sector than the formal sector yet there is great deal of overlapping between incomes of the two sectors. However the working conditions were found to be very poor in the informal sector. The size of informal sector was found to be increasing in small towns and cities. Sub contracting has been found to be the linkage between the formal and informal sectors. It was also found in this study that there was more of intra-sector exploitation than inter-sector exploitation; the
main reason of intra-sector exploitation being the sub-contracting alone. He has suggested the need to formulate a policy to take care of over-all development of the informal sector.

The national commission on self employed women and women in the informal sector has published its report titled "Shram Shakti" in 1988. The members of this commission made extensive tours in all states and to special work sites for an in depth analysis of its subjects.

It was found by the commission, in case of women construction workers, that they were not even aware of the names of their contractor in majority of cases. They were not getting any medical benefits, no maternity leave, no paid leave of any kind. Majority of them were having no ration card and were not registered as voters. Wage discrimination was very common.

The commission found that domestic servants in all the metropolitan cities worked from very early in the morning (5.30 AM) to late in the evenings (upto 8.30 PM) and earned on an average about Rs. 85 per month. They are
subjected to all sorts of physical, economic and sexual harassment by the families where they work. They have the constant fear of losing their jobs if they protest. Full time workers earn anything from Rs. 150 to Rs. 600.

These domestic workers are mostly illiterate and cover all the domestic chores that are a part of woman's role in the patriarchal society. There is no protective legislation to protect their interests. They are not only exploited in payment of wages and hours of work but are sometimes suspected/ accused of thefts also. This way they suffer harassment by the employer as well as the police.

The commission has studied their occupation, general problems faced by them, their health problems and their perceptions about their occupation. The commission has given extensive suggestions to overcome these problems.

Abdul Aziz in his study "Urban poor and urban informal sector" 1984 has stressed the need for studies into individual segments of the informal sector and has focussed his attention on the waste-recycle industry of Bangalore city. His aims was to understand the working of informal sector of which poor people are an integral part,
with reference to their earnings, nature and socio-economic structure of the workers. He conducted his studies according to model formulated by Lewis, Kenis, Fei and Todaro. He covered in all 206 respondents. He also looked into the aspect of migration in relation to the urban informal sector. He observed low productivity, low returns and poverty amongst them. He also found that there were no unions of workers and made certain suggestions in this regard.

Manjit Singh in his study "The Political economy of unorganised Industry - a study of the labour process" (1990). took the hosiery industry of Ludhiana as his field of study, covering in all 491 workers of which 148 were females i.e. 30.14%. He collected data through interview schedules. He found these workers to be scattered over a large area, working in small workshops type units and often even as domestic workers. The wages of the male workers were four to five times more than their female counterparts. The work by female workers is considered an extension of their household chores. The female workers are not regarded as competitors of male workers and are instead considered as a reserve force in a
free labour market. 90 per cent of these do not have the normal status of the workers. He observed exploitative nature of the unorganised sector industry with exploitation being done by middle men and contractors etc.

R.N. Mathur conducted a study "Quality of working life—women construction workers" in 1989. His aim was to study the perception of women construction workers about themselves. He selected his respondent in all 220 in number and all females, from 22 construction sites from the union territory of Delhi, randomly and collected data through interview schedules. He found that the women construction workers had a high score on attitude towards education. But these women workers remain in exploitative conditions. They always feel insecure and economically deprived. He observed that they could think about quality of working life only after they get food, clothes and shelter etc.

Heather and Vijay Joshi 1976 "Surplus labour and the city: A Study of Bombay" found that the share of unorganised sector was quite significant—about 45 per cent i.e. about half of the work force in this leading city of India. About 84 per cent of the workers in the
unorganised sector were migrants. The main reason for migration was the economic incentive. He found, in general, low income and long working hours associated with these workers. It was also observed in the study that unorganised sector itself was not homogeneous.

Indira (1990) in her work titled "Women entrepreneurs in the slum of Hyderabad and Secunderabad" has studied their socio-economic status, nature and self employment. She collected data randomly through interviews of the self employed women, the sample size being 300 in all. She found that their monthly income ranges from Rs. 60 to Rs. 750. They work from 6 to 11 hrs. daily. These respondents conceded that their monthly income was not sufficient to make both ends meet. Majority of these women have decision making authority within their families. Generally all of them face the problem of finance in their role as women entrepreneurs. They were also not found to be homogeneous.

D.S. Thakur 1989, "socio-economic conditions of scavengers in Himachal Pradesh", has studied the nature, pattern of income, expenditure, and ways and means for improving their level of living. He collected data through
interview schedules. He found that the local scavengers were still suffering from indebtedness. They were living in deplorable conditions. They had no savings and their level of living was not improving.

Malavika Karlekar 1982 "Poverty and Women's work " Her research field was west-Delhi. She studied sweepers' problems in Balmiki Community. She collected data through interview schedule on eighty Balmiki women. She found that modernisation has not helped the status of the urban poor women. They are confined to the lowest jobs, early age at marriage, earning was below Rs. 100 per month for four or five hours daily household chores in addition to their own household work. Male sweepers were found moving out of their hereditary occupations. Conjugal violence was also seen usually after drinking alcohol. The Balmiki women had a positive attitude towards male - education. But they generally considered female education as a wastage of time.

Leela Gulati (1981) "Profile of female poverty : a study of five poor working women in (Trivandrum) Kerala" studies only five occupation of women in urban informal sector with just five respondents. She made close rapport with the respondents before the research commenced. She
found that the women follow the pattern of their mothers' lives. All the five workers worked 10 to 16 hours daily. Still they could hardly make both ends meet. Sexual harassment was also observed by her. Manual labour is despised in the country. She describes at length almost everything about the five occupations that she studied. She found them all living in acute position and found them doing heavy work all day long.

Chitra Ghosh has done a study of the construction workers, with a Delhi "Jhuggi-Jhopri" colony along the ring road, as her field of study. She has studied their daily routine, living conditions and several other aspects of their family life. It was found that almost 70 per cent of the construction workers were Rajasthani migrants. They lived with poor sanitation and poor lighting, in overcrowded dwellings with unfit handpump water to drink. They had just the name sake facility of mobile creches available to them.

Women construction workers were found to suffer discrimination on the basis of class, caste and sex. Middlemen, known variously as Sardar, mukaddam, chowdhary or Jamadar reap a substantial part of the benefits that is
actually due to these workers. The labour laws were noticed to be limited to books and not being put in practice in the true spirit. The employees were generally ignorant of the provision of labour laws which could otherwise greatly help them. Male female wage differential was found to exist clearly. About 30 per cent of the female construction workers reported beating by husbands, usually when in an intoxicated state. These female construction workers were being employed since they were cheaper and readily available, docile in nature and sincere to work in comparison to male workers.

Inspite of heavy work schedule at the site of work, they are left by themselves for attending to household chores, assisted only by their daughters. These women, in general were conservative in outlook with traditional ideas about dowry etc. These women have accepted their life styles as it existed since they find no way to change it for the better.

Other than the agricultural sector, one of the other segments of exploitation in unorganised sector is the construction industry. The construction industry has become more dependent on migrant labour. Labour
contractors turn them into slave labourers after promising them good jobs in the city. The Interstate Migrant Labourers. Act has become meaningless in the case of most of them because of their illiteracy and powerlessness. Amongst the contract heavy labour class, women are exploited the most. Apart from heavy labour, sexual exploitation of women is not unknown. Even when they are not bonded-labourer women are discriminated in many forms e.g., in a multi storeyed building being put up by the Ministry of Communications in the country's capital, women were found to be paid Rs. 23 per day - below legal minimum wage for Delhi while men were being paid higher. Rs. 2 per day is given to the labour contractor as his commission.

All of them come from other states but they had no benefits that should have accrued to them according to the Interstate Migrant Labour Act. Being a subordinate sex, they were more voiceless as compared to their menfolk. The situation of women is even worse. Nothing is being done in the budgetary provisions to alleviate poverty in the informal sector. In the discussions of the policy little is said about employment generation in the informal sector. Special tax exemption has been given to women
earning up to Rs. 75000 but no welfare provision has been made for women who sweated labour but who may be earning less than Rs. 2000 a year.

Briefly, more than in the past, economic profits are oriented towards middle class alone, with the almost exclusion of the poor and informal sector. During last four decades of planned development, the motto has been to combine production with social justice.

Dalit women in the country can be described as economically marginalised. This necessitates their sharing the economic burden of running their homes by working out-side and doing heavy physical work like construction etc. The majority of women engaged in services like domestic, work laundrying and scavenging etc. come from the scheduled castes.

Their working conditions and life style, low wages compared to the volume of work they put in, job insecurity, long and unregulated hours of work without any benefits of sick leave, holiday and maternity leave etc. tell the tale of their woes. Their living conditions are deplorable as most of them live in shabby dwellings, without any
sanitation, drinking water supply and lighting arrangements. Their illiteracy and lack of skills make it difficult for them to find alternative occupations.

The core group of National perspective plan for women 1988-2000 AD states that female domestic workers have remained grossly under represented in the national data system. The major constraints are the absence of a written contract of the work and protective reegulations. The highly personalised nature of the work further complicates the situations. The immediate task is that of ensuring them equality and security at work. Simultaneously, they must be provided with suitable opportunities to seek alternate employment through training and education (D.W.C.D. 1988).

Concluding observations: The Emerging Trends:

The review of literature alone in this chapter clearly spells out the research trends on women in the informal sector. It is, needless to mention that a great deal of good quality research work has been done on the different segments of the informal sector and women work force in those segments. Field data was collected
variousdy through observations, case studies, interviews etc.

The review of literature shows that the different segments of the informal sector are not homogeneous in nature. However it is found that in whatever segment of the informal sector the various researchers have delved into, it is noticed that the employers have the general tendency to put women workers on the most troublesome and arduous jobs where male and female workers are working together. Another significant common observation of the different researchers about women worker in informal sector has been that they are generally paid less as compared to their male counterparts for the same work. It is also found that majority of these women workers on informal sector belong to the lower segments of society.

The review of literatures shows the level of literacy to be very low. The sexual harassment of the women workers in the different segments of informal sector has been observed in the different studies reviewed above. The sexual harassment has been found to be even more pronounced wherever female workers stay with the employer.
The review of literature also shows the living conditions of these informal sector workers to be very miserable. Overcrowded dwellings, without proper light and sanitation facilities. The working condition are also found to be equally poor. A general trend of poverty, hunger and indebtedness is observed.

The review of literature further shows that these workers are not being given any kind of paid leave; generally no medical facilities also. Middlemen, in whatever capacity they exist, in a particular segment of the informal sector, have been found to be the major exploiters of these workers.

The review of research works has also shown that main reason of continued exploitation of the workers has been due to the lack of effective protective legislation for these workers. Wherever strong labour laws have been found, these have been found more in books only than in practice. Another general reason of exploitation has been observed to be the lack of unions. Without strong union they are not in a favourable bargaining position.

It is noticed that a majority of these studies have been conducted over the last couple of years (last 7 to 8
years) implying thereby that the socio-economic impact of the informal sector in these modern times and the needs of further probes into it, is being increasingly realised by the academicians.

It is observed from the review of literature that most of studies have been conducted either in metropolitan cities or in rural areas. Further most of these studies have their main focus on the economical aspect of their problems rather than the sociological one.

Accordingly, it was decided to conduct a study on the women in the informal sector with a small city as the field of study.

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