Introduction
I

The criteria, norms, values and standards of evaluation of ancient human civilizations were theological, ideological and philosophical. Religions, ideologies and philosophies provided the conceptual framework within which social, economic and political roles were defined and assigned. The prestige, authority and power emanated from definitions, aspirations and prescriptions stipulated within that framework. All the actors in the social drama; the King, the minister, the administrator, the worker, the father, the mother, the son, the daughter, the brother, the sister etc. all had to or were expected to perform their roles as outlined in the script dictated by particular dominant ideology in a given social context. The relationships, duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities emanated from the ruling ideology at various periods of human historical evaluation. The worldviews consciously as well as unconsciously were translated into corresponding value systems.

Human history went through a radical transformation in the modern era. This transformation was brought about by scientific research, technological sophistication and industrial revolution witnessed during the modern era of human history. The classical values and norms were
redefined and reformulated in the light of increasing secularization dictated by the increasing demands of scientific, technological and industrial culture. The process of secularization was accompanied by an ethic of rising individualism. The emphasis now shifted on individual's achievements and aspirations, interests and expectations and joys and pleasures. The rising democratic revolution throughout the globe celebrated individual's rights and concerns. In the process, a new age of common man was inaugurated. Socialism too was an uprising by dispossessed people against huge monopolies consequent upon the on going & increasing process of industrialization. With the onset of 20th. Century a general anti-establishmentarian climate was created and sustained by multiple factors. The first half of the 20th. Century was characterized by socialist movements and anti-colonial struggles throughout Asia and Africa. The end of World War II signaled the establishment of various socialist states following the 1917 socialist model of the then Soviet Union and emergence of numerous free republics as a result of the successful anti-colonial struggles carried out by hundreds of millions of people in Asia & Africa.

While people of Asia & Africa in general were involved in anti-colonial struggles, women in Europe and America were engaged in struggle for gender equality,
gender justice and gender liberty. They launched agitation for their social, political, economic, educational and cultural rights. The women’s liberation movement picked up momentum in the beginning of the 2nd half of the 20th Century.

Women’s Studies is an outcome of a long struggle to raise the status of women and give them their just rights. The social movement for women’s upliftment and women’s awakening highlighted the pathetic condition of this segment of society and pointed out that women have been living in distress and subject to exploitation under male domination through ages. It is, thus, the need of the time to change their condition and improve their position.

The women’s movement popularly known as “Feminist Movement” started in the West. Consequently, Women’s Studies was initiated in the United States of America. In fact, Women’s Studies in the United States was influenced by civil rights and human rights movements. This is the reason that in the West, Women’s Studies is considered as a movement-born programme.

The women’s movement created awareness among women of their subordination and subjugation as well as their potentialities, abilities and rights. It brought about a revolution in women’s perceptions and perspectives. Women have developed a set of attitudes that are
described as modernist, forward looking and progressive. Men, too, have started modifying their age-long stereotyped thinking towards women and there has been a perceptible change for the better in women’s self esteem and social status. Feminist activism led to greater political awareness, social upliftment, economic independence and cultural illumination of women and they became more self-conscious, self-assured and self-confident. In course of time, women’s problems became the cynosure of sociological research where social, political and economic questions pertaining to women per se are subjected to theoretical and empirical inquiry through interdisciplinary feedback.

Women’s Studies in the Asian region was initiated gradually and got momentum by undertaking micro and analytical studies relating to women’s issues. In India, the pre-independence period marked the beginning of awareness of the suffering of women due to oppressive social customs. These oppressive social customs were Sati, the ill-treatment of widows, the ban on widow marriage, polygyny, child marriage, denial of property rights and education to women. All these attracted the attention of the late 19th century social reformers. Social reformers thought that by giving women access to education and by enacting progressive legislation these
social evils can be eradicated and people can become sensitive to the injustice perpetrated on women. In short, during the phase prior to Independence an awareness of the need to remove social disabilities of women was created. In Independent India, the Constitution that was adopted guaranteed equality for all. Women’s Studies in India, however, acquired a new edge, objective and sensitivity from mid-sixties, when it was realised that the formal rights granted in the Constitution and subsequent policies formulated presumably to implement them were being distorted.²

The International Women’s Decade worked as a catalyst to highlight and stimulate all aspects of women’s issues and Indian women also became a part of the worldwide awakening. The reviewers of status report on women in India presented a large body of data on different aspects of women’s lives, and identified unexpected trends in women’s situation such as declining sex ratio; declining economic participation rate and growing gap in life expectancy and mortality rates between men and women.

The leitmotif of Women’s Studies is social transformation by which we can change life-styles, life-chances and ultimately the “situation of women”.³ It provides us knowledge about women’s actual position in society and the way they struggle against hostile forces in
hostile situations for survival. It exposes the reality that women are unable to lead a dignified life in the present world. Women do not get adequate opportunity to develop their personality and utilize their potentialities to the full. This is assumed to be due to the discrimination and oppression of women. Thus, the motivating force behind Women's Studies is to improve the condition and promote the interest of women who are the "oppressed" and "exploited".

Women's Studies is defined as "the study of women with a women's perspective". It is generally assumed that the situation in which women live, the problems which they grapple with, and the way they are treated can better be understood by women themselves. The studies and the literature about women that are available and authored by males do not project the correct and real image of women and their situation. They, by and large, express biased views about women as they want to maintain their domination on this weaker segment of society. It is in consonance with the general principle of methods of social sciences that a person can better understand and analyze the problem if he himself experiences it and is involved in the concrete situation. In this perspective it is appropriate to explain Women's Studies as understanding of women in the world from
women's point of view. In scientific tradition Women's Studies may be defined as the study of situations of women with a view of improving their lot and developing their potentialities so that they may make effective contribution to social set-up and national life. It aims at transforming the situation in order to enable them to achieve honourable position and to perform determinant role in society.

Though the broad basis of Women's Studies is feminism, yet its scope is wide as it includes humanistic trends and outlook towards women and expands its horizon. It is generally assumed that feminism as well as Women's Studies are the projection of women's will to dominate men. Some males make such sarcastic remarks that women want to be men, but the fact is that feminism is concerned with humanistic values and incorporates the traits of humanism in its concept and perspective. It does not propagate the domination of women on men. In fact, it rejects the domination of males on females. Its main concern is "to restore to half of humanity its rightful place in human society", as well as "to restore the women their humanity". It preaches equality and believes that women get equal opportunities and equal rights and privileges in order to lead honourable life in the male dominated world. It is possible only when they will be free from
subjugation, subordination and domination of males. This is the reason that feminism is considered as a movement to liberate women from male subjugation. Thus, the liberation of women and the way it could be achieved come under the scope of Women’s Studies. These matters form the core of perspective which Women’s Studies wants to develop, adopt and apply to understand and study women and their place in society. Maithreyi Krishna Raj describes it as “to become aware of the situation of women, of the relation of women to the world, of the oppression and discrimination to which women have been subjected and to use this as a power to change the situation”. She treats Women’s Studies as “interdisciplinary” or “multidisciplinary” and finds that “the unity of study is women and her life”.

The significant point here is that how can one explain the situation of women because it will determine the nature of women’s studies. Maithreyi Krishna Raj conceptualizes the situation of women in terms of three important concepts: “Status”, “Power” and “Autonomy”.

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<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>POWER</th>
<th>AUTONOMY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Status occupies pivotal place in sociological tradition. Sociologists largely use the term in order to</td>
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</table>
explain social structure. The classical definition of status is given by Ralf Linton* who associates it with another concept, "role".

He says:

"A structure as distinct from the individual who occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties...a role represents the dynamic aspect of status... when (an individual) puts his rights and duties which constitutes the status into effect, he is performing a role ... role and status are quite inseparable".

Status simply signifies the position which an individual occupies in society and as such has certain rights and obligations and enjoys certain privileges that give him particular respect and honour. It has both subjective and objective component. In modern times, there are certain determinants of status which are generally known as indicators of status. A status is generally evaluated in terms of income, property, opportunities, education, and training in skills that open up chances of employment, health levels, rights and privileges. These factors determine life-style of an individual in society. Women when studied from the point of view of these indicators it is revealed that they have
lower income, lower employment, lower education, lower health and apart from these there are certain customs and practices that hamper their development, oppress and damage the physical and psychological well-being of women.

"Power" is an effective instrument to raise the status of a person. It gives more rights and privileges to enforce one's will. One of the reasons of women's subordination is that they are powerless. Consequently, they can neither resist nor enforce their own will against injustices and inequalities. The obvious result is that others exercise power over them and keep them under their control and subjugation. The exponents and champions of feminism and Women Studies express their concern to know how people get power and what makes them powerful. They also show interest to find out the instrument and the institution that provide power to them and make them more and more potential. Sometime, they cross all limits and break all rules of justice and equality in exercise of power. They exploit women for their own interests. Women's Studies tries to analyze how power is exercised, and how it becomes injurious to the life of women, how it can be restricted and checked to reasonable limits. In this attempt, Women's studies also finds out strategies to eliminate the sources of power and limit them to the
extent that it may not cause injury to women. Some of the feminists are interested to initiate struggle to achieve power because it is the means to liberate women from male subordination.

"Autonomy" is a concept, which indicates that ability of man which enables him to exercise his will and accordingly perform activities to achieve desired goals and ends. In this respect, it is considered as a form of power. Maithreyi Krishna Raj explains it as hereunder:

"The opportunity to act independently on one's own behalf and not at the behest or order of someone has the basic premise that every human individual has the right to decide her/his destiny so long as such a right does not abbreviate or abrogate the people's right".  

Autonomy is associated with the concept of liberty which is considered essential in modern age for the overall development and wellbeing of individual. It is necessary that individuals should have right to operate in the world according to their own will, perception and opinion to materialise their ambitions and desires, when we study women we find that they have less power, autonomy and liberty in society. The high degree of restrictions and taboos are imposed on them and thus, they have fewer
roles in decision-making process. The study of women in social setup and their interaction with the male world compel us to think how much power and how much autonomy women and men should have in society. At the same time, one has also to think how much and to what extent power and autonomy of people be limited in order to maintain the balance as well as the harmony between men and women. These issues are no doubt problematic and require thorough and scientific investigation. However, the studies conducted by feminists exposed that women lack autonomy and further located the areas and spheres where they have less or no autonomy at all. They are: choice in marriage, marriage dissolution, choice of career, choice of education, lifestyle and expression of sexuality etc.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Sociology of Women}

The discipline of Sociology was developed in Europe in the first half of the 19th century. After the Industrial and French revolutions, social thinkers began to think afresh in positivistic terms about the problems faced by the people. The invention of machines and the development of technology increased the comfort of the life. However, it was felt that the social life was still in traditionally structured and unable to cope with the new
situations created by science and technology. The social thinkers thought over the issue seriously and tried to develop a science of society which could study it from holistic point of view and positivistic method. The persistent efforts of social thinkers brought fruits and Comte prepared a blueprint of that science by the name of Sociology.

The main purpose of Sociology was to study society scientifically, to have correct, fruitful and utilitarian knowledge about social issues so that they may be utilized in construction and reconstruction of society. The motivating force was an overall transformation of the social setup to make it more and more beneficial to humanity.

Sociology studies human interactions and human relations. It also studies the forces that affect them and the way they are shaped and molded. But concepts and theories of Sociology could not embody the ethos of women who constitute the half of the human race and are equally significant and important. The structure of relationship and the process of interaction explained and elaborated by Sociologists with a biased view as they failed to point out how male dominated social set up develops such patterns of interactions and relationships where women are subjugated and denied their rights. In
the modern times, in the wake of humanism and feminism, it is necessary to develop such body of knowledge which could take cognizance of these issues and develop such perspectives through which overall position of women could be improved.

Sociology of women is mainly concerned, with the transformations related with women and the ways through which they can be achieved. It explains the position of women in society and points how oppressed, subjugated and subordinated, they are due to constant and consistent efforts of males to use them and utilize their services for the interests and benefit of males. It creates such conditions, which can help to remodel and restructure the entire social setup imbibing the humanitarian values of equality, liberty and fraternity as well as human rights and justice to improve the position of women.

Sociologists have always been concerned with women’s problems and issues. They have not been the first to study women’s issues, but most of the researches on women, have also been done by Sociologists. In course of time, women studies became popular in India and some women sociologist came forward and expressed their concern with women’s issues. They emphasized the need and importance of Women's Studies in modern India and
further determined the areas where researches should be conducted.

II
WOMEN AT WORK

Examining the relationship of women to economy is central to women's studies. Economy is a very important aspect of our life. It determines a person's position in society and is believed to give him/her power and dominance. Women's contribution to economy needs to be separately dealt with in view of the fact that a great deal of women's work remains invisible. From time immemorial women have played a substantial role in the economic sector of society. However, their contribution has always been designated as non-productive. The exact contribution of women to economy is only partially and erratically documented. Secondly, as the social and cultural perceptions of men and women differ, women need to be specially and specifically studied in terms of their contribution to economy and participation in total work force. Women's responsibilities are different and they encounter different types of cultural taboos. Furthermore, their child-bearing role places them in a
different and difficult situation. Thirdly, a coherent explanation is needed as to why historically women have played a subordinate role. Finally, in view of the fact that women face specific problems and issues in the working life, they, therefore, need special focus, attention and analysis.

There is a widespread belief that women in India have been economically dependent on their male relations from times immemorial. The society has perceived women to be confined to house-keeping, making no considerable economic contributions for the management and up-keep of family life. It is being argued that the modernization process has improved their employment position by providing them educational opportunities and granting them certain basic rights. However, this description of women's contribution to human society and economy is a highly misleading assessment of the historical role of women. The modernization process has inducted a considerable number of women belonging to upper and middle classes of society into the salaried class. However, the overwhelming majority of our rural women have historically played a significant role in the development of economy and society. For centuries they have been performing multiple and major economic roles both within and outside the family. These women have always worked
larger hours than men have, but their work has always remained hidden and has never been recognised nor have they been paid at par with their male counterparts.

However, the scenario has now changed considerably if not drastically. For the last so many years women’s role in social production has been the focus of intensive research and analysis. Social scientists and activists all over the globe are carrying thorough research and increasingly making public in general and women in particular aware about the contribution women make to economy. The process started with the declaration of women’s Decade (1975-1985). It was an official recognition to the significance of analyzing multiple aspects of the role of women in productive and reproductive activities. Consequently, a vast body of theoretical and empirical studies has appeared on women’s socioeconomic contributions.

In India, it was only after the report of the committee on the status of women that considerable attention was paid to women’s role in economic production. The available literature and data especially census reports purports to bring out two features of women’s participation rate:
"The lower level of participation rate of women, vis-a-vis that of men, the declining trend in women's participation rate over time\(^\text{12}\).

Table I gives an overview of the worker's population ratios in India. The lower work participation rate of women as documented by decennial census reports in this century are highly misleading and suffer from serious confusion. The women's work participation rate has been indicated to range between one fourth to one half of the male participation rate. The most misleading feature of all these census reports has been systematic exclusion of domestic work from economic activity in all census enumeration. There is a growing recognition that typical activities carried out by women are systematically excluded from labour force and national income statistics. It is difficult to accept these rates as shown in the census reports for women in an economy which is predominantly agricultural and where the incidence of poverty is still significant (around 36 to 37 %)\(^\text{13}\). Women's work tends to be disregarded in overall perception of the society and this bias informs the statistical data collected on women's activities.

Work has been so classified and defined even in post independence India that the very classifications and definitions weigh against women, e.g. the work force
## TABLE-I

### India: Worker Population Ratios by Sex and Rural-Urban Residence, 1951 to 1993-94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Source/ (NSS Round)</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Rural India</th>
<th>Urban India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 Census</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 NSS(9)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 Census</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 Census</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73 NSS(27)</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78 NSS(32)</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 Census*</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 NSS(38)</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88 NSS(43)</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90 NSS(45)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91 NSS(46)</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 Census**</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 NSS(48)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94 NSS(50)</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excludes Assam
** Excludes Jammu & Kashmir

Sources: Censuses of Population, NSSO Rounds, Government of India
participation rate (WFPR), for women declined from 27.9% to 12.7% between the two census operations in India i.e. 1961-1971. However, such a drastic variation seems to be somewhat improbable and untenable. In view of the same, some analysts have attributed the wide variation to vital ‘recording’ of the 1971 census which stipulated “type of main activity that the person returns himself as engaged in mostly”. This emphasis on main activity artificially accentuated women’s under representation as workers in view of the fact that Indian societal norms predict a woman to return herself in the primary role of housewife.¹⁴

In 1961 an adult woman was considered to be a worker if apart from household work she looked after the cattle or prepared cow-dung-cakes or sold firewood or collected grass from fields etc. However, by 1971 the stress had shifted to “a person primarily engaged in some economic activity, but at the same time does also attend to some household chores.” ¹⁵ The relevant census column in 1961 asked for the housework plus many specified additional activities whereas 1971 relevant census column asked for economic activity plus housework. Now, this shift in emphasis is of vital importance. It signified that in 1971, the emphasis was on the visible economic activity. Thus, in 1971 census planners stipulated a more rigid
definition of a worker. Therefore, while in 1961 millions of women returned themselves as engaged in some kind of economically productive activity, the same women returned themselves as housewives in 1971. Thus an unrealistic conceptualizations or definition of work can give a distorted or unrepresented picture of women’s participation rate16.

To capture women’s work in a comprehensive way the census authorities in 1990’s census introduced some major changes as here under:

a) A longer reference period has been used to capture women’s seasonal and intermittent work in agriculture and informal sectors.

b) In order to identify the status of women in the labour market correctly, the term ‘seeking work’ has been replaced by ‘availability for work if it is available’.

c) In order to reflect the earning capacity of the self employed, a distinction has been made between recipients of incomes and unpaid family workers.

d) A gender wise break up of data on ‘head of the household’ has been included for tabulation.

e) The clause ‘including unpaid work on form or family enterprise’ has been inserted in parentheses to the question, “did you work any time at all in the last year?”
in the Individual Slip that classifies the population into workers and non workers.\textsuperscript{17}

Furthermore, census enumerators were specially trained to ask probing questions to get correct information about women's work. A list of home-based activities was made available to investigators with a view to facilitate their work. They were further asked to find out whether those women who reported as not working actually looked for work or were available for work during the reference period. The results of 1991 census were carefully evaluated by scholars. However, the conclusion that emerged was that "the efforts made for improving the statistics on female workers can not be rated as successful. Though some regions and pockets showed an increase in the work force participation rates of women, the micro-data could not show a significant increase".\textsuperscript{18} Thus, it may be said that 1991 census also failed to give a correct evaluation of women's work in India.

There are methodological, operational and definitional problems regarding women's activities. For example, at the methodological level, the time reference period used in surveys tend to exclude seasonal fluctuations or intermittent employment. At the operational level, mostly census takers interview male respondents, thus leading to an underestimation of
women’s contribution. At the definitional level, the economic activities are so defined as to keep away the invisible and gender-specific activities performed by women. There are many imponderables and intangibles in all estimations and evaluations of what constitutes ‘work’. In any such evacuation, the personal prejudices and predilections do play a vital role. The definition of work will be crystallized in keeping with the perceptions of decision-makers, planners and statisticians. More often than not the lack of information or communication gap can lead to exclusion of vital activities from the purview of the definition of ‘work’.

The most disastrous and ridiculous distortion is the use of the words “Working” women and “non-working” women in current usage. Neera Desai observes, “It is as inappropriate as the terms vegetarian and non-vegetarian to distinguish between meat-eaters and non-meat eaters because everyone eats vegetarian products with or without meat. Men and women both work. The difference lies in the kind of works they do, where it is done; how it is done; for what kind of rewards and so on. If by ‘work’ we imply broadly ‘economic activity’ then women have always worked. It cannot but be otherwise. The material requirements for survival demand every one’s cooperation. According to Anthropologists, women were the
major producers of food, clothing, crafts and many different tools through most of the human history. In fact, this continues to be so in all those societies of the world where production is mainly for subsistence and not for sale.

Actually, various technological, economic and political developments have conspired into discrimination against women. The growing technological and scientific progress is introducing change at both micro economic and macro economic levels. This changes the division of labour within nation states as well as households.

In most of the countries women face unacceptable hurdles which are specifically related to their status as workers. The problems that women face are multidimensional. However, the central problems faced by women workers are unequal access to employment, education and training, and unequal pay. In addition to it, women have hardly any representation in planning and policy institutions or in international, national and local bodies where crucial decisions about work and life are arrived at.

The political, legal and social status of women has undergone a qualitative change in view of the increasing number of women working outside the household. The large-scale participation of women in paid employment is
a striking feature of contemporary social structure. At the same time, almost 90% of the female labour force is in the unorganised sector, outside the purview of the most of the labour laws. Thus massive contribution of women to economy and society and almost systematic non-recognition of these contributions needs to be analyzed and understood within the ideological/cultural framework which assigns the role of bread-winner to man. Historically, women have carried out basic functions in subsistence economy, and now, in this technological age when mostly people work in surplus and export oriented economies wherein women have somewhat lost in the technological race, they still contribute massively to overall growth of economy, however, their role is not being sufficiently and meaningfully appreciated till date.

In this connection, some of the important studies on women’s role to various economic sectors may be reviewed as hereunder. The studies indicate that though women have been on the fore-front of economic struggle and have massively contributed to agricultural, industrial and technological progress, yet their role has remained largely unrecognised. Consequently, the social status of women has not improved and although the percentage of working women has increased in some areas, yet women’s share in contemporary economy is unacceptably low. In
the modern or contemporary occupation, where the percentage of the women workers has increased, some studies try to investigate the impact of these occupations on the social status of women.

Elise Boulding in her book 'Women in the twentieth century', develops a critic both of scholarship and of the activism with regard to women and also points to possible future directions. She points out that social scientists have obfuscated the dynamics of social change in industrial society by failing to note the women sector. According to her women somehow slipped by the scholar’s eyes when developmental models were being constructed. In view of the fact that the scholars missed the women’s sector, the planners could not see her place, role and relevance in the overall context of strategies, suggestions and policy formulations. If many problems pertaining to women have arisen due to lack of resources, many more problems have also been accentuated due to an incomplete development of world perspective on the part of scholars, planners and activists.

The book is comprised of three sections or parts. The first part gives a descriptive view of women. It provides the world profile as reflected in United Nations data. It also provides a comparative view of human experience of women as nomads and settlers to set straight some of our
misconceptions about the role of urbanism in social development. A historical overview of women’s work roles has also been given in this part.

The second part spotlights on the women as producers, primarily in the third world. It tries to conceptualize the meaning of economic productivity and also underlines the role of women in that productivity. This section gives an overview of the important role of women as producers in each part of the world as well. The role of women in the complex process of production, distribution and consumption is also highlighted in this section. This section is most directly addressed to planners and policy makers.

The third part of the book brings out the role of women as actors on world scene. It gives a critical amount of the strengths and weaknesses of women’s organisations and women’s perspectives. It exhorts women to learn to think in global or trans-national terms.

Srivastava\(^{21}\) in her study tries to investigate the factors that compel married women to enter the labour market and also to find out how the employment of such women changes their behaviour and life-styles. With a view to bring it out a sample of educated working women from three different prestige levels has been selected by her. The findings of the study indicate that family
situation and the age of the children usually have little impact on women's decision to join paid jobs or withdraw from them. Most women enter employment market before their marriage and majorities of them continue their employment even after marriage and child bearing. The study finds that occupational prestige of husband is the main consideration in the choice of a wife's job. At all prestige levels wives work in occupations, which are consistent, are only slightly less prestigious than that of their husband's occupation. A wife was never found working in occupation which was much lower in rank to the occupation of her husband. A good majority of husbands and wives work in same kind of occupation.

The study finds that employment does lead to a change on various aspects of behaviour and life-styles of women. By comparing working and non-working women at different socio-economic levels, the study finds that the fertility behaviour undergoes a change when women engage in gainful employment outside the household. A working woman have less children than non-working women. The influence of employment is also felt on the family composition and the way domestic responsibilities are shared in the household. In most of the cases working women have to keep mother-in-law or some other relatives or employ some domestic help to take care of their home
and children. In the families of working women husband and wife develop greater cooperation and share domestic responsibilities. Working women are more liberal than non-working women, working women have wider social interaction and get the opportunity to make their own colleagues, while as most of the leisure time activities of the non-working women are confined within their immediate neighbourhood. Working women join professional organisations or social welfare organisations whereas non-working women are mostly members of recreational clubs. Working women compared to non-working women feel that women should have equal rights in matters of marriage and property. They are more modernistic and enjoy a high standard of living in comparison to non-working women.

Asok Mitra\textsuperscript{22} examines on the basis of 1961 census alone how female participation in the major groups of household and non-household industry in the rural and urban areas in India as a whole and in respect of each of its five political zones fared in comparison to male participation in each case. The study concludes that the mean participation sex ratio is quite low. In rural household industry it is not so unsatisfactory as in urban household industry. But in non-household industry, both in rural and urban areas, the mean sex ratios are
alarmingly low. Secondly, the zonal distribution of mean sex ratio show that the whole of northern India in comparison to Southern and Western parts of India employs very low proportion of women. Thirdly, the study compares the position of rural and urban women and finds out that in urban areas women's place was third and fourth in educational and medical services respectively, whereas in rural areas it was at the twenty fifth and tenth. Conversely, in rural areas, far more women were employed in water supply, sanitary services and plantation crops. Fourthly, the study finds that more females are engaged in household economic activities than in non-household activities. Female participation in household industry such as textiles, tobacco products and forestry which are characterized by high labour intensity and less skill is far more than in other economically significant sectors.

Lalita Devi in her study, which was conducted in Trivandrum City, attempts to examine the impact of female employment on her status within the family, office and society. The findings of the study indicate that employment has decidedly enhanced the status of women in the family. The employed women enjoy greater social and familial status than their unemployed counterparts. The study tries to examine the status of women viz; their participation in the decision-making processes, extent of
freedom in speaking etc. Respondents of the study accepted that they found their male members in the office quite co-operative. All of them were highly satisfied with their jobs. Employment helped them to realise their potential and gave them necessary confidence and assurance. It also gave them a chance to prove their worth in a male dominated society. Besides, employed women had developed a new set of attitudes in line with modern trends. Whereas unemployed women were more rooted in traditional mores and customs. Thus, the study concludes that employment plays an instrumental role in raising the status of women in the family, in the office and in the society.

Karlekar\textsuperscript{24} in her study tries to present a socio-economic profile of married working women from an under-developed community in an urban context. The sample consists of 80 sweeper women of Delhi. The study points out that employment of underprivileged women is unavoidable for maintaining the social and economic order. The contribution of women to family income is substantial and their children, husbands and other relatives also depend on them in various ways. They are engaged in major household jobs such as cooking, cleaning and childcare. The study finds that the women did not have any major role in decision-making. Only relative minor
decisions are taken by women folk. The study further finds that males are increasingly giving up scavenging jobs and females had very few chances of leaving their caste occupation. These women were hopeless about the future of their daughters as far more boys were registered in schools in comparison to girls in Balmiki community and women feared that their daughters might have to take similar assignments when they grow up.

Gulati in her study shows that women who work in the unorganised sector come from households where the parents are in casual wage labour and tend to get married to men who too are in this sector. Once married to men who don't have regular jobs, the irregularities itself introduces a certain amount of instability in their marital relationships, very often forcing on women more responsibilities than they can shoulder. This in turn makes it even more difficult for them to help their children, particularly daughters to do any better. All their aspirations and efforts are built around getting their sons out of the insecure existence hoping that they will do better.

Rarnanama ana Bambawale have tried to compare the work conditions of women in large scale, medium size and small scale industries in the cities of Bombay and Pune. The study points out that women workers have
sound welfare benefits such as maternity leave of three months and crèches attached to factory in the large scale industry. The women do not have an independent representation in the factory, but are members of the trade unions dominated by male workers. The unions generally are not interested in problems faced by women workers. Furthermore, women workers generally do not have any decision-making power regarding their salaries. The respondents interviewed in the case study indicated that an overwhelming majority of women functioned at lower and junior levels. Most of them were employed as workers on production and had little chance of any promotion whatsoever. Only a few could achieve decision-making Executive Cadre. It was also found that male subordinates do not approve of their authority and created various types of hurdles with a view to disturb the smooth functioning of the organization. Additionally, women are subjected to considerable sexual harassment and as most of the workers usually belong to lower class and less educated family background, they accept as well as expect such treatment as a part of their professional lives. A comparison of the female workers in Pune and Bombay in all the three types of factories reveals that women get better emoluments and perks in Bombay. They are well unionised and are in executive positions in the unions. In
the medium size factories women are getting minimum wages, bonus and other perks. However, there are no crèche facilities nor any subsidised transport. The greatest exploitation of women takes place in small-scale factories. Women even do not get minimum wages. Women are given employment in these factories because they cannot organise and lack strong unionising instincts. Small-scale factories have no facilities for women. They have no permanent service, no leave entitlement and no bonus. They are often employed on daily wage basis.

Cauvery and Sudha Nayak presented a study about female labour force participation in Tamil Nadu. The paper contends that female workers participation has increased from 12% in 1971 to 14% in 1981. Over these periods of time female workers have considerably shifted from the primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors. The study maintains that during 1984-85 the state of Tamil Nadu employed about 401700 women. Out of total labour force the female labour participation in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors worked out to 34.1%, 13.5% and 21.5% respectively. Between 1975-1985 an additional increase of 72.9 % has been registered in female labour employment, Similarly in the organised sector, according to the study, the participation of women between 1975-1985 has improved from 15% to 19.6%.
Sundaram\textsuperscript{28} based his study on an analysis of regional variations in work force participation of women across 14 states of India. The participation rates are based on the findings of the NSS 32nd Round Employment - Unemployment survey carried out through India.

The findings of the study indicate that women’s participation in remunerative economic activities is adversely affected by higher fertility rates and consequent child-bearings and child-rearing engagements. It so happens both in rural and urban areas. The women were running the household engaged in a host of activities which fall outside the conventionally defined boundary of economic activity. Thus, apart from too young or too old females a high percentage of women who do not figure on the Usual Status Main Activity Criterion, are simply engaged in so called “domestic Duties”. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that large burdens of child-bearing and rearing and other domestic activities must be the main factors responsible for lower Work Force Participation Rates of Women on the Main Activity Criterion. Subsequently in the context of inter-state variations in WFPRS, this would mean that states having higher GFR (general fertility rate) must be having low work force participation rates of women on the Main Activity Criterion.
Gote-Garhane in her study on construction workers tries to examine whether these lower class women are getting any benefit of democracy or modernisation. The construction workers were chosen from the city of Aurangabad. 75% of the total respondents were from schedule castes, 6% belonging to schedule tribes, 79% of the respondents were from rural origin and 97% of them were totally illiterates. 92% of the respondents were married below the age of 16 years.

The study found that these construction workers usually worked 8 to 9 hours daily at the site, their daily wages being Rs. 9. These female construction workers belonged to the socially and economically backward castes. They were totally unaware of their political, social and economic rights. They could not find time for religious and recreational activities. All of them lived in sub-human conditions.

The above observations indicate as the study points out that despite constitutional guarantees and legislative measures for granting social justice to women, they still continue to be exploited and their conditions have not changed even after four decades of independence.

Nayyar in her study on women rural workers in Haryana and Punjab finds that majority of women work in agriculture, out of which the proportion of marginal
workers is very high. The number of marginal workers is 87% and 43% in Punjab and Haryana respectively. However, the number of casual workers is relatively small. Nayyar argues that female workers have withdrawn from rural labour market due to increased agricultural output and incomes in both states. Secondly, increased mechanisation of the agriculture has led to further decline in the demand for female labour. The migrant labourers have also contributed to the decline in female labour. The demand for female labour increases during peak seasons. However, all women are not willing or available to work in agricultural sector. Many women prefer to work in animal husbandry, dairy, tailoring, spinning and weaving etc. Thus, there is a need for diversification of rural economy with more opportunities in the non-agricultural sector.

Ramu conducted his study in Bangalore's three major public sector industries chosen because of high concentration of women workers. The sample consisted of 245 single earner couples and 245 double earner couples. The findings of the study indicate that wife's economic status plays an instrumental role in domestic decision-making. Women having no economic status either use convert influence to determine the result of particular decision or submit to the domination of their husbands.
The success of such an exercise depends upon the individual behaviour patterns of spouses and other dynamics of their familial and marital affairs. The study finds that while comparing single earner and double earner spouse, it becomes clear that women in single earner families have lower bargaining capacity to share power and contribute to vital family decisions, whereas among double earner families women because of their economic resource have a greater authority in domestic decisions. Women in such families need not to adopt covert strategies to extract power from their husbands. The study points out that ultimately economic resources of women determine their quantum of power in relation to their husbands.

Jasani\(^2\) in his study points out that increasing work participation does not in itself lead to empowerment in a situation where not only does the labour market favour men over women, but the division of labour within occupations is sex-biased. The study is conducted on Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) employed at the primary health centres in Maharashtra. The study points out that equal remuneration for equal or similar work even though a very important demand in the present condition, it is not sufficient for the real empowerment. Firstly, because the subordinate position of women in the
family is extended at the work place. Thus, within the same job paying the same wage, the woman is made in actuality subordinate to man. Secondly, for the same job the society looks at the man as a better qualified person than the woman, Thirdly, the bargaining power of the women at the work place is limited due to their socio-economic background and they can ill-afford to lose their job. Fourthly, in addition to all exploitative situations that any worker encounters at the job, the woman is subjected to sexual exploitation.

The study brings out that women’s employment in the rural health services ANMS has given them badly needed financial support, in view of the fact, that most of them come from low socio-economic background. However, their job entails extreme vulnerability as they are at the lowest rung of the hierarchy and work outside in far-flung rural areas. Besides, the nature of their work does not lead to harmonious relationships with other women of the village, e.g. “hunting” women to get them sterilised is not a welcome assignment. Such an exercise, the study argues, diminishes the badly required community support in their professional and personal lives.

Sethi\textsuperscript{33} seeks to analyse the work patterns of women in relation to their participation in decision-making at different levels and assess their labour time spent in
agriculture, animal husbandry and other household activities. Four agriculture districts of Himachal pradesh - Mandi, Hamirpur, Solan and Sirmour were selected for data collection for the study. 651 women cultivators are selected for the sample out of 3101 women.

The analysis of the study highlights the dominant role of women in agricultural production and in housekeeping. Women on an average put in about 151 days of work as compared to an average of 121 days put in by men at the family farms. 70% of the women compared to 52% of the men worked for more than 100 days in a year. Thus, women's contribution to agricultural work is more than that of men in Himachal Pradesh. Mostly, women are engaged in subsistence agriculture while men are occupied in commercial agriculture. The proportion of women engaged in various aspects of cattle-care is much higher than the proportion of men. 80% of cattle-care is done by women, 98.3 of women are engaged in milking cows whereas only 14.28 % of the men are engaged in this activity. 96.9 % of women are engaged in cleaning of the cattle-sheds whereas only 16.47% of men are engaged similarly. The women are furthermore overwhelmingly engaged in domestic chores such as fetching water or fuel, removing cow-dung to the fields, cleaning and grinding grain.
However, women's dominant participation in economic activities does not give them a dominant role in decision-making, for example, only 7 to 10 percent women can take independent decisions on education and admission of children in schools, or in selecting an occupation or mate for children, or on expenditure on children's marriage etc. Men dominate women in such domains of decision making as the purchase of agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and insecticides etc. Men also decide investment of family income in agricultural activities and participation in village development activities. Thus, men wield considerable domestic power by exercising control over decisions affecting household. The study concludes that the women who are the productive and the reproductive agents, exercise exclusive control over peripheral areas of domestic life.

Tandon and Kumar in their study carried out in Gilbert Hill slum of Bombay revealed that 63% of the respondents were employed. Among employed women 47.62% were domestic maid and 22.22% were self employed. 66.67% of the employed respondents gave economic necessity as the reason for their earnings, while 33.33% were working to supplement their family income.

According to Tandon and Kumar, women play a vital role in the un-organized labour sector. Many women in the
lower socio-economic group are victims of social injustice and have no independent status. A women can hardly ever chose; she is dependent on what happens to her; and she must take meaner things because meaner things are within her reach. The condition of slum women in particular is worst than their counterparts. Their study also showed that inspite of many developmental programmes most of the socially underprivileged women are still suffering. Early marriage, having many children, illiteracy, etc. are very common among them. Majorities of the women are forced to undertake menial jobs to support their families. They have to labour for elongated hours in addition to performing their domestic duties.

Preet Rustagi\textsuperscript{35} in her article 'women employment in the un-organised sector' focuses on the rise of female participation in the un-organised sector due to economic compulsions. She points out that in a labour surplus economy like Indias with low economic avenues and increasing cost of living, females have been pushed into the labour market. Women are preferred in unorganised sector in view of the gender differentiation of wages. Though the rise in the employment of women due to economic compulsions have been breaking many existing cultural taboos of the Indian society, yet the patriarchal mode of thinking has not been significantly altered. This
has further worsened the conditions of Indian women. The female workers take up all the household chores along with income generating activities under stringent working conditions in the unorganised sector. There is no legislative protection of female worker's rights and no job security. This process has been accentuated in our times due to the ongoing economic reforms since the early 1990's. In view of the same Preet Rustagi stresses the need for labour organization of women workers.

In an essay entitled 'Analysing Women's Work Under Patriarchy' by Nirmala Benerji which appeared in a book 'From Myths to Markets: Essays on Gender' edited by Kumkum Sangri and Uma Chakravarti. She dissents from the most prevalent interpretations of women's secondary position and pay, which argue generally that greater employment opportunities can give women more independence. She rejects the analysis of neo-classical economists such as Gary Baker which refer to gender differences in qualification that make it rational for men to have greater work opportunities - but equally differs from explanations by Harry Braveman and Maria Mies which look to Marxist interpretations of economic structure. Mies's thesis that capitalism relies on 'housewifisation' is contradicted by her and she argues that the expansion of capitalism in East and South East
Asia has drawn women into the labour force rather than concentrating them as housewives. Banerjee derives solution from a thesis by Heidi Hartmann in regard to European developments. Hartmann argues that male control over women's participation in the work force and resulting low pay and worsened conditions for women did not come simply from the prior subordinate position of women in the family. Rather, the specific powers gained by male workers through the trade union movement, in fact, functioned against women in Europe, allowing them to use union regulations and powers to subordinate women both in the work place and home.

III

WOMEN IN HOME-BASED INDUSTRY
- AN OVERVIEW

One of the crucial methodological problems pertaining to women's household work is what has been called by leading scholars of women's studies as 'invisibility phenomenon'. As a matter of fact, women are engaged in a complex web of household activities and there are no readymade criteria on the basis of which women's household work can be conceptualized, defined,
classified, quantified and documented. Women's household work is actually comprised of a plethora of activities. These activities consume the time and energy of women, but owing to long-drawn-out ideological and societal moorings and predilections, these activities are not deemed to be productive or remunerative. Therefore, they do not figure in any governmental or non-governmental analysis and evaluation of work, e.g., women prepare food, clean and maintain dwelling places, reproduce and rare children, maintain social relationships, cater to common friends and relatives, care for elderly people, exchange presents on festivals and ritual occasions, extend invitations and provide hospitality, fetch water and fire wood and engage in multifaceted works concerning their husbands. Women's contributions in these and similar activities is of immense significance for the very survival of social, political, economic, moral and civilizational aspects of human existence. These activities are of foundational importance. However, these foundational activities are by their very nature impervious to quantification.

In developing or under developed countries we have survival-oriented economies. The huge population in these countries literally live from hand to mouth. Millions of workers are daily-wagers, working in what has been called
unorganised sector. Most of the employed people are under employed. In these societies both men and women undergo extra-ordinary levels of suffering and torture. However, the plight of women is greater and deeper. Much of their work is not quantified and much of it is simply not quantifiable.

Their work is seasonal, intermittent and uncertain. They predominately work as unpaid workers in informal sector such as family forms or enterprises where their activities are not even properly recorded. Besides, the household and economic activities of women are too mixed to demarcate between the two at the conceptual level. It is also not easy to capture their work even at the operational level because of complex methodological problems. Their contribution to economy simply can not be captured by available methods of investigation.

Elise Boulding in her book provides an arresting amount of women’s work. The following lines from the book merit deep consideration.

“The nature of familial constraints on women’s role as workers in every type of human society is perhaps best captured by the triple role concept of ‘breeder-feeder-producer’. From the earliest and simplest hunting and gathering folk to the most industrialised society of the twentieth century, the breeding of babies and the feeding
of humans of all ages is almost exclusively the work of the women, above and beyond other productive processes in which she is engaged. In addition, the women participates in certain producer roles, usually but always differentiated from male producer roles.

It should be clear that all three categories in the breeder-feeder-producer triad are in fact producer roles, but I am distinguishing between the first two categories, which are assigned to women only, and the third, which is divided between men and women. In the subsistence society, the producer role exists primarily to create material for domestic consumption. It is only when trading begins that sticky question about agents and measurement of production arise. Woman’s productivity is normally noticed by statisticians only when she leaves the home. Man’s production is more apt to be noticed whether he leaves the home or not”. 37

In recent years, women’s involvement in home based industry is a subject of wide interest. It has been realised that a wide range of productive activities done by women within their domestic spheres form an important component of the national economy. Besides their domestic chores, they engage themselves in different activities ranging from piece-rate work in the production of handicrafts, beedis and export garments within sub-
contracting system to raring of animals and poultry at home. It is estimated that 9 out of every 10 of India’s more than 317 million workers are in the informal sector where there is little or no protection for jobs and wages and working conditions are unregulated. A large proportion of them are women and children, who are often paid less than their male and adult colleagues, whether working at urban construction sites or in home-based workshops run by sub-contractors for large manufacturers. However the problem lies in the fact that planners/statisticians have defined women as non-workers and their economic contribution towards their families fall under the heading of housework. This has not only made women’s work invisible but also exact statistics is not available on the number of women engaged in home-based industry. Home based labour has certain common features: among them are very low wages, long and erratic working hours, fragmentation and atomisation of the work force and the absence of any form of worker’s organization. Social scientists have evinced keen interest towards women in home based industry and tried to focus on the invisibility phenomenon of women’s work.

Maria Mies in her study on the women lace makers of Narsapur has pointed out that lace making is closely connected with poverty and the pauperization of poor
peasants and artisans. The women of these classes are forced to supplement the insufficient income of their husbands by their own work. As housewives and mothers who are held responsible for the regular sustenance of the family, they get pauperized faster than the men in this process. Inspite of the fact that the men earn more, the women's income is all spent on the family, whereas men can either invest some of their income or spend it on their own recreation. She further claims that it would be more correct to call the women the regular bread winners of their families and not the men, because such families can survive only as long as their women guarantee their subsistence.

Nigar Fatima Abidi in her study on Muslim women weavers tries to study the problems faced by them in the home based textile industry. The study finds that women were engaged in weaving activity for 7-11 hours daily. Besides they had to attend various household chores. They had to care for the kids, husbands, other family members etc. They were also found activity occupied with animal husbandry, cooking and gardening as well. The women usually are considered assistants to their respective male members. Although women weavers performed major role in the textile industry, they had no important place in
family decision making and they could not spend money on their own.

Singh & Viltanan⁴² in their study presents a selection of 13 papers on “Women And Home Based Production.” The papers were deliberated upon at the conference on Women & Household held at New Delhi in January 1985. The papers tried to find out the nature of productive or income earning works done by women in their homes. All the authors of the study conquer that home based work mostly carried out by women is a common phenomenon in developing societies and merits serious sociological investigation. Unfortunately, the home based income earning work done by women mostly remains invisible. The work is not recorded in official statistics. The payment to the female worker is irregular. Besides, women themselves have accepted the overall political, social and economic norms of the male dominated society and they themselves consider the significance of their home based work as only peripheral. Therefore, the study highlights various factors which conspire to make home based work invisible for planners as well as society in general.

The papers in first section highlight significant problems such as growing informalisation of modern sector, prohibitive cost of production, exploitative nature of private contracts, lack of employment opportunities,
low wages, erratic work schedule, disorganized workforce and the lack of protective legislation etc. The other papers in the section are case studies of home based women’s work such as: beedi-rolling, garment manufacturing, fruit processing, dairying, animal husbandry and traditional handicrafts. In the second section of specific schemes and strategies aimed at improving the status of home based work and women workers have been presented. Each case description is followed by an evaluation. The study also explores ways and means of uniting home based workers and giving them greater bargaining power and making public aware of the contribution of this hidden work force.

Bhatt in her article contends that recognizing their work at the official and accounting levels can enhance the status of the women. In case of self employed women appropriate legislative, executive and judicial measures need to be taken up with a view to save them from the prevailing exploitative contract system. The study points out that in view of the exploitation of self-employed women, SEWA (Self-employed Women’s Association) emerged as the first effort by women to perceive themselves as workers. This was an integrative process as self-employed women sidelined all barriers of class and caste. The study underlines that since women are largely
responsible for the maintenance of their families, greater cash income and assets must be handled by them.

Deshpande\textsuperscript{44} in her study reports on women in the informal sector and self employed women. The study indicates that poorest women are engaged in numerous invisible occupations in the informal sector. The study highlights the problems of informal sector viz., the work unrecognized by law, health hazards, economic exploitation etc. The study also examines the impact of developing policies and modern technology on the status of self employed women. It also forwards detailed recommendations regarding women’s work.

The study conducted by Mawar\textsuperscript{45} on the tribal women of Madhya Pradesh tries to determine the status of woman in terms of her level of income, employment, education, health, her protective ability as well as her general role in family and society. The women are responsible for all domestic chores and also engaged in activities like agriculture, forest, adhoc labour etc. The present study tries to find out the roles performed by tribal women and men in various seasons, the sharing of responsibilities and the gender bias.

The study brings out that there are vital differences between the time spent on different activities and other family members. The study finds that women spend more
time on income generating activities (6.3 hrs) and household activities (2.2 hrs). In comparison to women, men spent more time on social and personal activities (3.7 hrs). Men sleep longer than women, men 9.4 hrs., and women 8.5 hrs., respectively. The study indicates that women performed multiple roles for income generation, house running and taking care of children etc. Comparatively men get far more time for leisure. The study also brings out that trebles have a gender bias in terms of the expenditure incurred on health and clothing. The study also points out that while women play a significant economic role in tribal families, they are relegated to the back corner when important decisions pertaining to families and the tribe are to be taken.

Sharma Ursula in her book on ‘women’s work, class and urban household’ has tried to explore the nature of women’s household work in a modern Indian city of Shimla and showed how it contributes to the maintenance and sometimes mobility of the household. The intent of her book has been to indicate the “enormously important and largely unrecognised input made by women in this area, work that shares the cloak of invisibility that covers so much of the work done by women”. By household work she does not mean housework alone, e.g. preparing food, cleaning the dwellings and caring for children, but many...
other type of activities which must be done if the household is to maintain itself and prosper, activities which do not relate immediately to the physical needs of members. What is important about household service work is that it entails the existence of a group sharing some degree of continuity and status security. The nature of household work is such that it can not be undertaken solely on one's own behalf but on behalf of a unit or household comprising of several members.

Sharma further advocates that contemporaneously household is a necessary reality, especially in the context of under-developed Afro-Asian countries and more specifically in India which accommodates teeming millions of people who are malnourished, shelterless, illiterate and devoid of any medi-care. However, the structure of household as it presently is; the form of authority and distribution of rewards and resources etc., should not go unchanged. Such a challenge is being launched by feminists in India and it must go on despite the fact that there are few if any alternatives to a family based household in India. Therefore, Sharma does not deem it expedient for Indian women to emphasis on sexual individualism and autonomy as is being done by Western women. However, short of advocating women's total independence of the family group, women should be ready
to question their place within it and strive for a clear recognition and categorical acknowledgement of their numerous contributions to the upkeep and maintenance of the household and to the society at large.

Meithreyi Krishna Raj & Karuna Channa in their edited book ‘Gender and the Household Domain’ bring out a series of essays by prominent scholars and researchers in Women’s Studies. These essays deal with the structural and cultural dimensions of relationships as obtaining at the intra-household level in contemporary South Asia. The volume explores two crucial themes which determine the analysis of gender vis-a-vis family structure and intra-household relations and work and production. While exploring the inter-linkages between these themes it debunks the so called Asian Model of the position of women which is erroneously postulated to be undifferentiated. It also, simultaneously acknowledges that despite great diversity and differentiation, that patterns of subordination of women are similar across all cultures. For example, Usha Kanhere in her study on Differential Socialization of Boys and Girls, has brought out that notions of appropriate work for women vary between castes. Women generally are engaged in traditional occupations or in various informal activities that entail lots of hard-work as well as low returns. On
the other hand men are generally in the formal sector. The subsistence production for the sustenance of the household is undertaken by women and girls. Both the stability and mobility of the family are guaranteed by women’s work. The lives of girls are restricted. Their movements are confined to the household or immediate neighbourhood. They are permitted social interaction only with females. Thus, gender roles are recreated and structure of the household reproduced. Similarly K.M.A. Aziz in his contribution pertaining to Gender Creation has brought out that seclusion and modesty are deemed to be characterizing virtues for women. Female sexuality is considered dangerous to men. They are expected to safeguard their honour and such an expectation is reinforced through limited social interaction, dress and covering of the body etc.

Leela Dube and Rajni Palriwala in their edited work Structure and Strategies - Women, Work and Family have brought out certain significant facets pertaining to two themes central to the analysis of gender - family structure and intra-household relations on one hand and work and production on the other. The book embodies rich ethnographic studies from Bangladesh, India, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Korea and Thailand. The articles in the book challenge the erroneous conception of
the isolable household and of a common undifferentiated Asian model of gender relations.

Haejoanj Cho in her article delineated an account of the transformation of gender role conceptualization of Chechjo Island in Korea. Chechjo society, according to Cho passes through three phases in terms of gender retaliations. The first phase relatively egalitarian and culturally and ideologically male-dominant. The second phase is termed as neither dominant by Cho. During these two phase male and female spheres of action were well demarcated; men controlling the ritual sphere and women as economic producers controlling the mundane sphere. The third phase termed as modern phase, capitalization of economy and its integration into capitalist labour and production market undermined the profitability of women's main economic activity, that of diving. In view of the fact that men earlier formed 'sacred noble class', they has gained a lead in education which facilitated their incorporation into the capitalist market through the creation of more lucrative and less strenuous occupation and jobs.

Christina Szanton in her paper examines family strategies with regard to resource allocation and investment related to gender, in the context of rapid industrialization experienced in Thai Eastern Sea Board.
She arrives at the conclusion that the gender differentiated strategies of the resource allocation change with ‘class’, and she further relates them to strategies of economic survival and mobility as expressed in male and female occupation patterns, and to changes and to continuities in kinship organization, family ideology, concept of male and female responsibilities and intra-household income control.

Stella Mascarenhas-Keys in her article examines women’s roles and autonomy necessitated by international migration among Catholic Goans. According to Stella international migration has been one of the major economic option for upper caste Catholic Goan males. In view of the fact that male members of this community have been migrating into skilled or white-collar employment, women too have been simultaneously withdrawing from agricultural activities. According to Stella, migration and long periods of absence of father’s and husband’s have resulted in the development of degree of self reliance among women. Women have control over remittances. They supervise house building and farms. They are responsible for household management and are defacto household heads.

Johanna Lessinger in her paper throws light on the implication of capitalist development and the resultant
labour market for women. She finds the processes of patriarchy and capitalism as both parallel and interacting. According to her the ideological construct of patriarchy while interacting with capitalists processes generates definite constraints on Madras women who were forced out of village life into the urban slums of Madras city and engaged themselves in petty trade. Johhana argued that even these women worked within the constraints of female honour and female seclusion. However poverty had forced these women to enter the market. While working within the ideological constraints they had no hope of upward mobility.

Jayoti Guptas in her paper also focuses on capitalist model of development as contextualizing women’s oppression in India. Her study on women members of caste, the Doms, brings out how capitalist processes of development conspire to keep the women of this caste in bonded prostitution. Where the Doms try to free themselves from caste shackles and economic bondage, they found few economic options open to them. The Doms, thus, had no option but return to debt bondage-men to agricultural labour and women to prostitution.

Marty Chen in a study on the linkages between poverty, gender and work in rural Bangladesh, places women in the context of kinship and household
organisation. She brings out the economic processes leading to pauperization of the women of rural Bangladesh. Her study points the discrimination women experience in both labour and product markets. Male control of women’s work without male support constitutes the central paradox faced by the poor women in rural Bangladesh. The paper further brings out that rural women of Bangladesh operate within the conceptual parameters of dependence on fathers, husbands, sons and brothers.

Soon-Young Yoon in her contribution to the volume gave an account of the change which have occurred in South Korea with regard to women’s work. According to Yoon these changes have been brought about and reinforced by various factors. Some of these factors can be readily cited, vis-a-vis; economic and political policies of the government, local movements, the capitalization of the rural economy, rural-urban migration etc. However, Yoon emphasizes on historically defined cultural constructs or ideology, which have significant economic implications and are integral to the structure of women’s subordination.

Yoon maintains that the ideology of the motherhood in the pre-capitalist Korea formed a significant backdrop against which the female work relationships were defined. The pre-capitalist ideology confined women in the home
and had little control over household budgets. When Korea shifted to capitalist economy, the idea of motherhood was elaborated to community leader, worker and home maker and drew women out of the house.

Hasina Hashia, in her paper, tries to present an analysis of the participation of Muslim women in the household industry in Kashmir valley. She also has attempted to highlight the factors responsible for their participation in the economy. She has conducted her study in 24 villages of Kashmir Valley and found that economic necessity was the major cause for women's entry into the industry. 75% of the women have taken up work due to this reason and the rest due to illness or death of earning members in the family. She has also tried to give a picture of the number of women involved in different crafts. She has found that in the selected villages majority of the female workforce was absorbed in traditional wool spinning activity followed by shawl making, carpet weaving and Pashmina spinning respectively. In her paper she has also highlighted that participation in any household industry depends mostly on the traditional character and popularity of a particular craft in that particular area.

A review of these studies on women in home based industry indicates that women work harder, toil
longer, and undergo greater pressures and yet their conditions are incomparably inferior to those of men. They have a lower social status and their role in deciding family matters is only marginal. However, the central and crucial anomaly of women's work is the social non-recognition as well as invisibility of their massive contribution to society, economy and polity.

A review of these studies on women at work in general and women in home-based industries in particular indicates that women are being unfairly treated in multiple situations and contexts within various sectors of work. Women work harder, toil longer and undergo greater pressures and yet their conditions are incomparably inferior to those of men. They have a lower social status and their role in deciding family matter is only marginal. However, the central and crucial anomaly of women's work is the social non-recognition as well as invisibility of their massive contribution to society, economy and polity. Women are pre-dominantly employed in domestic sector. Apart from their child-bearing and child-rearing activities, they have to engage themselves in countless chores and undergo severe strains. By the very nature of their work, they cannot organise or unionize and clamour for higher wages or equal remuneration. However, the overall social ambience dictates that unless you are a hard
cash earning member of the society you cannot claim or get appropriate social status or enjoy a dignified life. Women who work in the domestic sector get the worst of both the worlds. They have to engage into a wide variety of un-remunerative activities and in the process end up with no recognition and status. Therefore, the studies reviewed in this chapter forcefully bring out the glaring facts of social non-recognition and invisibility of women's work. The planners and policy makers of India will have to evolve new parameters within which to define work. India being predominantly an agricultural country, which is mostly unorganised and non-unionised and where women employees out number men, women's crucial economic contribution needs to be seen in keeping with the ground realities of Indian situation. The western model in which the role of industrial and commercial sector has become crucial and almost entire economy has become monetised and earning of hard cash determines the social standing of a person, cannot be replicated in India where hundreds of millions of people are engaged in domestic, agricultural and unorganised sectors. The studies recommend redefinition of work and recognition of women's economic contribution in the overall gross national product of India. The way policy makers define work and make computations thereof,
grossly violates the norms of justice in so far as women’s economic role is concerned. It is being assumed that by making women’s work academically visible, there will be a greater appreciation of women’s work at policy and planning levels. New mechanisms will be evolved whereby women’s domestic contributions can be judiciously quantified and computed so that national economic policies and programmes will be recast in a more balanced perspective wherein women get a better deal and enjoy a better social standing.

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