CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
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2.1 CONCEPT AND MAIN FEATURES OF INFORMAL SECTOR

Bangladesh like other developing countries recognises the significance of the Informal Sector as an expanding source of employment, given the failure of the rural and urban Formal Sectors (FS) to observe in additions to the labour force (ILO, 1994). Typically the bulk of entrants into the informal sector, create their own employment, in a wide array of economic activities encompassing most sectors of the nation's economy. The informal sector in Bangladesh, comprises of production and service enterprises that use simple labour intensive techniques of production.

The term 'informal sector' may be used to refer to the economic activities. The concept of informal sector has been subjected to strong criticism as it is found to be highly heterogeneous (Peattee, 1987). Two distinct schools of thought may be identified in the context of the role and function that the informal sector assumes in the development process (Natass, 1987):

1. Informal sector interpreted as a dynamic sector, and
2. Informal sector appearing as a purely residual sectors being exploited by the formal sector.

ILO in its Columbia report (1970) and Kenya report (1972) mainly referred to the following set of criteria while characterising the informal sector:

1. Condition of free entry in to the production market;
2. Dependence on traditional resources;
3. Non permanence and casualness;
4. Carried on a small scale less capitalised establishment mostly relying on household labour;

5. Easy entry;
6. Lack of formal educational qualification and low wages;
7. Forced over time and denial of basics rights;
8. Short work contract and little job security;
9. The enterprises distribute output directly to the consumer and it does not observe fixed hours of operation;
10. Small scale operation;
11. Family ownership of enterprise;
12. Reliance on indigenous resource;
13. Adoption of labour technology;
14. Unregulated and competitive markets (including the labour market).

International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports on Ghana and Kenya at the beginning of the (1970s). According to these studies, the key problem in these two countries was not unemployment, but rather the vast number of working poor struggling to produce goods being recognised (ILO. 1999 : 4). In general terms, the people working in the informal sector are independent, self-employed producers in urban areas. Some of whom employ producers in urban areas, some of whom employ family members and some of whom hire non-family workers or opportunities. Diverse terms are used to describe this economy include: Shadow, Unofficial, third, underground, gray, hidden, counter, and Parallel (Thomas, 1992).

Currently, there are two approaches to defining informal sector activity: The definition and the behavioral (Farrell, Roman and Flaming 2000, 389). The informal sector is economic activity unrecorded in official statistics such as the Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the national income accounts.
There is no universal definition of Informal Sector. Generally, we only discuss on more visible segments of economic activities as informal sector. However, there is a limitless boundary of informal sector. Moreover, it is a hidden segment of economic activity with a vast number of labour force. According to Asian Labour Update, a publication of Hong Kong based regional labour NGO, the Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), those workers' whose method of work is usually through the sale of their labour on a daily or piece rate basis or through self-employment as small producers or vendors. The informal sector is not disassociated from the formal sector. There exists a certain types of interdependence through backward or forward production linkages with formal enterprises through contract of labour or services. It is obvious that the definition of informal sector is descriptive one rather than analytical. Some have even used the word "unorganised" as synonym of "informal". One of the Indian writer, Sarath Davala has stated that it is really difficult to define the term "informal". He argues that the word "unprotected" would be more suitable to define this sector rather than as "informal" or the "unorganised".

An Indian organisation SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) defines the word "informal" in its report of the National Commission on Self-employed Women and informal sector based on the nature of the work they perform. Who are the women labourers in the informal sector? The report includes:

- Those doing manual work like agriculture, construction work and other sectors;
- Some based producers including artisans and piece rate work;
- Those engaged in processing of traditional and non-traditional areas;
- Service providers like garbage pickers and domestic helpers;
- Petty vendors and hawkers;
- All other poor labouring women in the unprotected sector.
An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report has mentioned that 'low cost, easy entry and exit' labour intensive with low technical input, small scale and its unorganised nature' are the characteristics of the informal sector.

The Labour Law (1990) has mentioned as those who are working in any establishment in less than ten person in number with the word "out of enterprise". Likewise, the Trade Union Act-1992 has mentioned the Trade Union Association registered under its article 4(2) as an association of workers working 'out of enterprises'. Though, our labour Act has not used word informal, but in our reality, it indicates those establishments which employ less than ten peoples as informal sector. It would be fair if we explained those poor who are out of planned economy as the labour force of informal sector. Though some times it defines as 'individual economy', 'unstructured', 'unremunerated, 'low-income segments' etc., experts describe it is not an 'individual' but a collection of economic activities, service providers.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

A large informal sector has serious consequences for private sector activity, economic growth and development, and the consolidation of democracy. These implications are relevant for policy makers, government officials, entrepreneurs and employees in the formal and informal sectors, trade unionists and members of international and regional organisations. This section discusses the pernicious implications of high transaction costs and sizeable informal sectors and indicates why this should be of concern to every group in society:

* Undemocratic decision-making and misguided policies
* Distorts resources allocation and lowers productivity
* Erodes competitiveness
* Lack of access to and higher costs for essential public services
* Less government revenue for public services
* Lack of information and lack of transparency invite corruption
* Weakens the credibility of political institutions and democracy
* Wastes resources and hinders growth
* Increases and reinforces poverty and inequality
* Weakens trade union power and erodes workers benefits
* In accurate contributions to international and regional organisations

Unregulated and competitive market vis-à-vis informal sector in the existence of self employment sector or as unprotected labour market as it has been evident from the different sources and studies that the women work in the informal sector is characterised by heavy burden of work, low incomes, unregulated hour of work of women and terms and conditions for the work. IS appears to be the single major sources of employment in Bangladesh. According to crude estimate (BIDS, 1998) the informal sector currently accounts for 84.5 per cent of total employment including agriculture and of total informal employment about 59 per cent in IS, is shared by agriculture sector. At present apparently a large segment of women workers are engaged in informal sector activities.¹

SIZE OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The informal sector is highly heterogeneous in nature in Bangladesh. It is extremely difficult to arrive at contribution made by this sector to total value addition although in terms of employment the size of this sector is quite evident. However, with respect to certain specific activities within this sector broad inferences concerning their contribution to value added may also be drawn while some data are available.

¹Thomas (1992) Points out that these activities are referred to as the informal, sector rather than the informal economy because they are not included in the official national income accounts. Bangladesh Employment Formation is the Non-Formal Sector. A report prepared by ILO-SAAT Under UDP Technical Support Services,1. p.3. and The Background Paler–Barriers to Participation : The Informal Sector in Emerging Democracies. pp. 4-7.
CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Estimates of the size of the informal sector in urban and rural areas in most cases cover only non-agricultural activities. Bangladesh is one of the seven countries in the world where the number of men exceeds the number of women. According to various indicators the status of women in Bangladesh is much lower than that of men. Traditional socio-cultural values and practices have reinforced the lower status of women accorded to them in society, which have limit their education and technical training and participation in over all development process.

Informal sector is highly heterogeneous in nature and it is extremely difficult to arrive any specific estimate of the informal sector. Particularly in terms of value added, around 89% of the non-agricultural work was engaged in the informal sector in 1995-96. However, productivity differentials between informal and formal sectors are substantial. The crucial question is how to improve productivity in the informal sector, which add the moment, more of supply push phenomenon in Bangladesh and grow in response to demand (ILO, 1998).

SIZE IN TERMS OF INFORMAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

In terms of share in the total work force in informal sector in Bangladesh it is overwhelmingly large. Formal employment is defined as employment in establishments employing 10 and more workers. In 1983-84 around 92 per cent of the total work force in the non-agricultural sector was engaged in this sector. It, however, decreased marginally to 89 per cent. A majority of it is engaged in trade, hotel, restaurant, transport, storage, and community and personal services sector.¹

The growth of the informal economy has become the most significant feature of today's global labour market. In the first thirty years following World War II the relation between informal and formal work had remained more or less stable. Informal work has always been a feature of colonial or under developing economies, but it has massively increased in the last ten years. The debt crisis of
the under-developing countries, the dismantling of the public sector, the
deregulation of the labour market under the structural adjustment programs of the
IMF and the World Bank, and the succession of economic and financial crises
since 1997, has pushed millions of people out of formal employment and into the
informal economy.

According to an ILO report (2) the Asian crisis took a toll of 24 million jobs in
East Asia alone, mostly in the "modern industrial sector". In Russia and in the
other successor states of the USSR, in addition to millions of unemployed
workers, there are millions still in formal employment who are not paid for
months at a time. In the absence of any serious social safety nets, their only
possibility of survival is in the informal economy in advanced industrial
economies, where the informal economy was regarded as a marginal and expected
to gradually disappear, informal work has risen together with rising
unemployment since the middle 1970s. In these economies job losses were also
casted by privatisation and deregulation of public services, by delocalisation of
production in transnational corporations and by the restructuring of enterprises.  

GENDER DISPARITY IN INFORMAL SECTOR

As mentioned above women's participation in informal sector enterprises in very
low as compared to men (BIDS, 1997). This study provides information on
women's participation in informal sector activities the enterprise level in the form
of provision of labour and other types of assistance during the preceding year, in
terms of involvement in enterprise decision making and as owners of informal
sector enterprises presenting some evidences to bring out the difference in the
indices of poverty between sexes.

2 Back ground Papers-Barriers to Participation : The Informal Sector in Emerging Democracies.(Latin
America. Research and Advocacy. p. 15)
Total population above poverty line (with consumption above 21.22 Tk.) in 1991-92 was 57.03 million of which rural population was 49.24 million and urban population was 7.79 million of the national level. The remaining population 51.63 million or 47.52 per cent were below absolute poverty line with break down for rural and urban.

It is seldom realised that the women labourers involve many simultaneous operations i.e. brick kiln, brick making and transporting, stone crashing, water carrying, husking and drying paddy, nursing children and hales keeping invariably known as a women's task. Women in the urban informal sector are either home-based, self employed or in family enterprises e.g. leather workers, laundress and vendors or "out side home" wage workers and domestic home based workers, the largest group are to be found in the lower middle to lower income categories. World Bank reports, around 65 Per cent of total employment in Dhaka City is in the informal sector. The role of working women is an important factor affecting the socio-economic development in a country. Majority of work today is in what is generally known as the unorganised or the informal sector, which does not require much training or education in activities which are traditionally assigned with women's work such as domestic services etc.

According to the report of the National Commission on Self Employed Worker and Workers in the Informal Sectors as :

a) Woman doing manual work like agriculture, construction labour and other sectors.

b) Home based producers including artisans and piece-rate workers.

c) Women engaged in processing work in traditional and non-traditional areas.

d) Petty vendors and hawker who do not hire labour except for taking the assistance of family members.
And all other labouring women, in the unprotected sector not covered in the proceeding sector as Report of the Commission on Rural Labour India defines informal sector refers:

1. A person who is living and working in rural area and angered in agricultural and/non-agricultural activities requiring manual labours getting wage of remuneration on partially or wholly, in cash or kind or both during the year. Or

2. Such own account workers who are not usually hiring in labourers but are a part of the petty production system in rural areas.

The aforesaid two definitions’ or rather, descriptions bring out the ways that production is unorganised in the sector. While organised sector (Formal Sector) characterised by the modern relations of production and is regulated and governed by laws that are meant to protect the security and the working conditions of workers and are also supported by the labour organizations that can look after their interests. Indeed a clear picture pertaining to the term "Informal Sector" is to be outlined before focusing light on the socio-economic problems of the informal women labour in Savar Thana Dhaka. Though the term "Informal Sector" is widely used, its precise meaning has remained somewhat elusive and the subject of controversy as it has been defined in different contexts and given in different meanings.

Hussen Manns (1997), thus, different countries have adopted the definition which is appropriate to their needs and the system of data collection for the same. The terms used in Bangladesh and India are ‘organised and unorganised’ though quite often researchers have used the term 'formal' and 'informal' interchangeably. In fact, the term 'informal sector' and unorganised sector are quite similar to each other though not identical.

Deepak Majmndar (1975), has brought out the distinction sharply focusing on the fact that entry into the informal sector labour market is unrestricted while that in
the formal sector labour market is restricted by artificially raised hiring standards norms and procedures.

T.S. Papolla (1980), according to him, the following are the most observed features of IS in the studies on the subject:

- Small size of operations;
- Informal structure and family ownership;
- Non-modern technology;
- lack of access to government favours;
- Competitive and protected product market;
- Unprotected labour market.

Usually, the informal sector is described in various terms such as; unremunerated sector, unorganised sector, informal income generating activities, self employed individuals, urban proletariats, individual earnings less than the legal minimum wage, and unprotected labour. As many researchers equate the informal sector with the urban poor or identity with the population living in the stumps or squatter areas ILO, (1972). The ILO, excluded mining utilities, banking and insurance from the informal sector likewise; agricultural sector was also kept in this list of five broad categories of activities such as, manufacturing, construction, transport, trade and its services were included in the informal sector.
ACCORDING TO ILO (1972), THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS MAY BE IDENTIFIED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**Large Scale Operation**
- Capital Intensive and Often Imported Technology
- Frequent Reliance on Overseas Resources
- Difficult Entry

**Formally Acquired Skill and Expatriate**

**Co-operative Ownership**

**Protected Market**

**Formal Sector**

**Informal Sector**

**Small Scale Operation**
- Easy Entry
- Reliance on Indigenous Resources
- Family Ownership of Enterprises
- Labour Intensive and Adapted Technology
- Unprotected and Competitive Market
- Skills Acquired Outside the Formal School System

*Fig 2.1: Characteristics of Formal & Informal Sectors' Activity*
Sethuraman, (1976) made a similar attempt to define the informal sector. He concentrated on five broad categories of the informal sector and suggested some criteria for identifying them they are as follows:

**Manufacturing:**

A manufacturing enterprise may be included in the informal sector if it is satisfied one or more of the following conditions:

- a. It employs 10 persons or less (including part time and casual work).
- b. It operates on an illegal basis contrary to government regulations.
- c. Members of households as the head of the enterprise work in it.
- d. It does not observe fixed hours/days of operation.
- e. It appears in semi-permanent or temporary premises or in shifting location.
- f. It does not use any electricity in the manufacturing process.
- g. It does not depend on formal financial institution for its credit needs.
- h. Its output is normally distributed direct to the final consumers.
- i. Almost all these work in it have fewer than six years of formal schooling.

**Construction:**

a) any of one (a), (c) and one above

**Trade:**

(a) any of one (a) and (c) above.

**Service:**

a) any of one (a) and (c) above

Sethuraman's suggested criteria fail to solve the identification problems. And conditions suffer from being too flexible and vague and occasionally too narrow. The characteristics proposed may be appropriate to a specific country situation, but may not be acceptable as universal attributes. It may be inferred from the above stated analysis that in developing countries the rural falling to get absorbed in the agricultural sector and formal sector, are forced to migrate to urban centre with a view to searching employment, income and livelihood. They
are mostly engaged in the retail trade like selling vegetables, repairing shops, tea stalls, and casual labour in constructions, shops and commercial establishments and households all these are known as informal sector activities. Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing metropolises of the world with an average growth rate of 6.6 per cent. In Dhaka City corporation (DCC) area alone, the present population, is estimated at 8 million. The population of Dhaka mega city was estimated at 9.8 million in 2001. Dhaka city has a number of diverse peripheral settlements. Almost all the informal enterprises owners are male however, there are only few enterprises which are owned by women. The average age is reported to be 34 years. The urban areas showing marginally higher age of 36 years as against 33 years in rural areas. Construction workers are in the higher age group. Lower age group is in the transport sector which demands physically strong workers. The distribution indicates that the informal entrepreneurs are younger than those involved in the formal sector It is expected that the entrepreneurs operating in the urban IS are more intelligent and literate compared to their friends working in the rural areas, as they are exposed to more competitive markets and unfavorable working environment. The study BBS, 2002, shows half of the entrepreneurs literate but, in the strict operational sense, it comes down to only one fifth when such educational base is taken to be above five years of schooling. The literate owners are found more in service and trading sectors. The literate entrepreneurs are in higher proportion (29% in urban clusters as expected).

It may be relevant to report that of the total entrepreneurs only one-fifth inherited their father's last occupations and there is little difference between rural and urban clusters. Most of the enterprise owners actually started their activities on their own inherited entrepreneurs are however, much higher in manufacturing and service sectors like 30-40 per cent. The informal enterprises are mainly family based. The distribution of the enterprises by the period of establishment shows that new enterprises during (1990-95) account for about two fifth while
the old ones established before (1980) just over one fifths. This distribution suggested that there has taken place significant growth in informal enterprises over time and this growth is not uniform.

In terms of sector of economy it may be divided into formal and informal sector. The term 'informal sector' may be used to refer to the economic activities which have the following characteristics: ILO adopted the informal sector as a conceptual category characterised as: non permanence and casualness; carried in a small scale, less capitalised establishment mostly relying on household labour; out side the scope of existing company law or government regulations; small scale operation; family ownership of enterprises; reliance on indigenous resources. The empirical position of the IS employment is 65 per cent of the total employment (World Bank, 2001). Workers participate extensively in IS which can be divided into three major categories (i) Agriculture include social and agro-based forestry, animal husbandry, weeding, bedding, transplantation, harvesting, dairying, sideline agriculture, semi-peasant, other crash crops, bee-keeping, fisheries, irrigation, horticulture etc. (ii) Small scale village industries include handicraft, handloom, beedi making, domestic matches, tailoring, garments unit, food processing unit, poultry farm, live stock, weaving and sericulture, etc and (iii) Construction sector includes casual work like brick breakers, earth cutting, water carrying, stone crashing work vendors, scavenger, carpenter, mason, sweeper, stone quarry labourers, brick kiln workers, building construction workers etc. and (iv) Trades, service and transportation include, petty vendors, small retail shop, street vendor, food stall, fruit and vegetable sellers, hawkers, barbers, beauty parlors, garbage cleaners, boot polish, bottle cleaners and rag pickers, domestic helper and midwives, in transportation, truck, and load carrier, rickshaw puller and tractor loaders and so on mostly employment provides to unskilled, illiterate and poorer section of the society. The target groups seeking employment in these areas of economic activities are landless workers, marginal farmers’ slum dwellers and women in general.
Fig 2.2 : Sector of Economy and its Areas (FS & IS)
Milton Santos (1972), provides us with a long list of the characteristics of the circuit economy, which can be presented in a tabular form as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Upper Circuit</th>
<th>Lower Circuit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Capital Intensive</td>
<td>Labour Intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Family Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td>Scarce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of work</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Irregular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular wages</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>Large Quantities</td>
<td>Small Quantities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices</td>
<td>Generally fixed</td>
<td>Generally Negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Non-institutional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation</td>
<td>Impersonal</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clientele</td>
<td>Through document</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuse of Goods</td>
<td>Wasted</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Aid</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Almost None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig 2.3: Informal Sectors' Upper and Lower Circuit Relationship*
Particularly in Dhaka City, the construction work in informal sector has been developing at a fast pace for more than decades which increased the availability of short term jobs in this sector. Particularly in Dhaka City, the construction work in informal sector has been developing at a fast pace for more than decades which increased the availability of short term jobs in this sector.

GENERAL FEATURE OF CONSTRUCTION SECTORS’ IN INFORMAL SECTOR

The construction sector has remained labour intensive production with low-level of mechanisation. Most of the features of the organisation of the construction sector as well as the work relations of the constructions are inherited for a centuries from a pre-industrial society.

The modern construction sector in public as well as private enterprises has been the ramification of colonial era. Some of the basic ingredients are:

a. IS industrial sector, the contractors in major construction sites, both private and public are mere finances with no understandings of the production process and labour management. They are considered as implementers of a plan by the main employer. The production in construction sector has been carried out based on subcontract;

b. Most of the job characteristics is a piece-rate basis and usually daily or hour basis. A wage worker is contracted to complete a work for certain fixed payment;

c. The wage workers, specially in small construction sites, free to choose the way the works, the order in which the work is to be completed etc;

d. The workers in big construction sites are involved in a particular task as carrying water, and carrying and breaking brick and stone, sand, earth cutting and carrying these and so on;
e. Usually the workers with or without a term of work of his own choice and move from site to site with more or less the same terms.

The level of modernisation in the construction sites of the developing countries like Bangladesh and India has remained underdeveloped and backward. Where some mechanisation has taken place which appears to be marginal. Besides, the cheap labour supply is a major cause of this low level of mechanization with retinue of labour intensive process, makes it even more difficult to integrate the construction industry/enterprises. S.N Tripathy, 2003.

The unorganised nature of the construction is directly linked to the process of production involved in this industry. In construction, unlike any other type of production, the product of labour remains stationary, while the labour moves from site to site from one employer to another this is in contrast to any other type of production where the product of labour moves, while the labour force remain stationary under the same employer. Also, the different stages of construction are undertaken according to piece-rate by different workers and they engage different groups of labours work and organised into brick and stone breaking, carrying water, sand, stone, earth carrying, masonry, carpentry, concreting, curing, plumbing, painting and electric work etc. each group of works required for work at different time depending on the stage of construction.

In big construction sites however, the opportunities for continuity of work, for all categories of labourers exit for longer duration. As a result, in big construction sites it is possible to maintain records and assure proper working conditions for its labourers. In reality, this does not take place. As these big construction sites are in a position to ensure continued employment for its workers for they use this as a weapon to maneuver and exploit the employees. This is the opportunity for continuous employment and the insecurity of work in big construction sites, moreover the system of sub-contract is a deliberate choice of the formal industrial
sector to deny recognition and responsibility towards the labour force. So long construction labourers are not organised and labour unions are not established it is not possible to change the scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Sector</th>
<th>Male(number)</th>
<th>Female(number)</th>
<th>Wage (f/m wage * 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled worker</td>
<td>2818</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled worker</td>
<td>2973</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawker</td>
<td>2049</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic service</td>
<td>2127</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4647</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1: Source: Paul-Majumder 1997.*

2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing metropolis of the world with an average growth rate of 6.6 per cent. In Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) area alone, the present population, is estimated at 8 million in an area of 276 sq. km. Dhaka city has a number of diverse peripheral settlement.

Surprisingly, the households belonging to informal entrepreneurs have the same stage of family irrespective of location. The family size is marginally lower in transport and trade sector. Most of the enterprise owners actually started their activities on their own inherited entrepreneurs are however, much higher in
manufacturing and service sectors like 30-40 per cent. Average value of assets in case of urban informal entrepreneurs Tk. 10, 681, i.e. higher by 46% than that of the rural owned by rural informal entrepreneurs. The manufacturing enterprises employ more workers averaging out of two, of whom hired hands are just about one-fifth. The informal enterprises are mainly family based. The distribution of the enterprises by the period of establishment shows that new enterprises during (1990-95) account for about two fifths while the old ones established before (1980) just over one fifths. This distribution suggested that there has taken place significant growth informal enterprises, over time and this is clear from their growth during (1980-95). Though the term “informal sector” is widely used its precise meaning has remained somewhat elusive and the subject of controversy as it has been defined in different contexts and given in different meanings. This growth is not uniform all the sectors. The fastest growth is noted in transport while declaration is absorbed in the manufacturing sector (BBS, 1994).

2.3. EXTENT AND CATEGORIES OF INFORMAL SECTOR ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH

BBS (1998), estimated that 56.8 per cent of the total workforce in the urban areas in Bangladesh is engaged in informal sector micro-enterprises (defined as less than 10 workers). Although it does not define them as informal, if indicates that 69 per cent of manufacturing establishments are in temporary establishments or are household based, constituting 44.00 per cent of the manufacturing labour force, which comprises metal works plastic processing and recycling, furniture making and most of them are construction workers in various construction fields.

More people on joining this sectors from 12 to 40 per cent in rural cluster. The inter-sectoral change activities found mostly in agriculture. To be more specific about the sectional shifts, the four major activities in urban clusters are (i) Betel leaf and Cigarettes selling (ii) Vegetables selling. (iii) Push cart pulling (iv)
Rickshaw driving etc. and rural clusters the important activities are (i) Betel leaf and Cigarettes selling (ii) Rice trading (iii) Rickshaw driving and (iv) Hair-cutting.

The most common causes of such inter sectional shifts are generally:

(a) High intensity of work
(b) Poor income
(c) Income insecurity
(d) Disliking for the work
(e) Preference for the independent work
(f) Loss of cultivated land
(g) Incurring of loses in earlier work etc.

The activities that potentially cover the informal sectors are not only heterogeneous but tend to absorb surplus labour in the economy, the steadies of labour in the informal economy needs to be further discussed. To the extent labour
in the employed by proprietors within the informal sector, it is likely to be casual in the sense that it would tend to have lower wages and fewer associated rights in employment than what its formal sector counter part enjoy, on the other hand, to the extent that such labour is used as family household labour, within the non formal sector, it is likely to be self-exploited. In many instances, the informal activity is dominantly based on the household labour and the returns to labour here are indistinguishable from capital, as the proprietor is also the worker. Moreover labour is also exported to the formal as well as the agricultural sectors from the informal sector. This means that the linkage of informal sector at least in terms of the labour force which inhabits and characterised it not only pertaining to the sector itself but critically extends back to surrounding sectors, appearing as 'casual labour' in the agriculture and organised industry.

Within the informal sector itself there is a distinction to be made at the level of output we can bring back the spirit of dualism in one important set of classifications by distinguishing between Rural Informal Activities (RIS) and the Urban Informal Sector (UIS) which can further be seen as dynamic or stationary in terms of the particular sub sectors which are located in them. Here it can be expected that the more dynamic rural informal sector activities are normally associated with demand from the agriculture sector, while the more dynamic informal sector activities are either likely to be cross sectorally linked to each other constituting a network of activities and or linked to the modern formal sector.

The demand for the output of non-formal activities is not only based with in the sector itself but it can extend through cross sectoral linkages to other sectors. These can be both vertical and horizontal linkages. Thus in case the informal sector has demand linkages, it has to be seen as an employment provider as well as an area of potential growth. In the case where the informal sector doesn't have these dynamic linkages, it must be largely as absorber of the labour force.
2.4 REASON FOR THE GROWTH OF INFORMAL SECTOR

The growth of ancillarisation and industrial employment with steady fall in incomes of households and due to the poor performance of the economy as a whole and additional factors that account for this increase in the number of women entering the informal sector. Open employment rates yet not increased over the period, the labour force was, absorbed in agriculture and in the unorganised informal segments of the non-agricultural sector, In effect this led in increase in women's employment in the informal sector.

The family environment influences women participation in IS labour market. Important factors include the earning of husband and marital status. Aspects relating to enter this sector are:

- Poor family income of the households influence women to work as paid workers in the IS.
- Divorced women also involve as paid workers and in most cases there engaged as domestic workers in the urban and rural areas.
- Land less rural women work with male workers in agriculture to support their family income.
- Women in paid sector are engaged in construction, brickfields or brick breaking and only reason is to share family income.

The process of globalisation, export oriented industrialisation and relation of industries from the developed to the developing countries also contributed for the growth of IS. With the growth of industrialisation and urbanisation, landless labourers in the absence of assured source of employment in rural areas, migrate to urban areas in search of employment.

In urban areas women are generally employed in informal sector like, weaving, hand-craft, tailoring sale of fish and vegetable and constriction related activities. Rapid growth of population and huge migration of rural poor to the urban areas in
search of work, cities and town, along with a dichotomy in urban economies in developing countries failed to generate adequate unemployment and income opportunities particularly in informal sector. Thus, the growth of IS employment emerged with the multi-dimensional coverage in Bangladesh.

2.5 CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN WAGE WORKERS

Working women in the informal sector is characterised by heavy burden of work, low incomes, long absence from home due to long and unregulated hours of work of women other than the home based ones, use of highly labour intensive technology, extreme drudgery of work and unfavourable term and conditions for the work and work-environment. Apparently the working women in the informal sector has to carry a heavy burden of work. Any activities concern to the economy called work and women engaged as such activities to get some advantage or benefit either economical or social called working women. The defining issue here is power. The ability as an individual to exercise power to decide whether other people may have a job or not is not what workers have. The term “Wage Employment” generally associated with work in exchange of wages/salaries in cash/and/or kind (Khaleda, 1992).

The working women have been afforded different positions to fill their desire and purposes to survive. The women work in the field are the depressed and deprived group. They don't have any legal rights to property. Most of them belong to the poor class. It is seldom realised that the labour of women involves many simultaneous operations i.e. brick-making and carrying, stone-breaking and bringing water, carrying, husking and drying paddy, nursing children and housekeeping invariably known as a women's task. (Dan Gullin, 2000).

The broadest definition of workers in the informal economy covers all workers in unregulated and unprotected work. This includes all work in informal enterprises as well as informal jobs (jobs that pay no benefits or provide no social protection),
thus including the self-employed in informal enterprises (for example home-based workers or street vendors) and paid workers in informal jobs (for example casual workers without fixed employers, most domestic workers, even factory workers in unregulated and unprotected work). To analyse and examine the female labour force market we need to study the importance of this phenomenon. If the size of female labour market is too small, the direction of analysis should be to investigate the causes of such limitations. In the study the wage employment market for rural women in Bangladesh takes an analysis to investigate the women who were actually engaged in wage worker to present the size of market (Islam, 1986).

This will apparently exclude the job seekers and the unemployed women from the estimate. But these categories are not quite relevant in the present context because of the following reasons. The employment of women and male wage labourers are usually on a casual basis and permanent yearly employment is negligible. Those who really want to work do not remain unemployed for the whole year but can manage work for a few days. A few women might wish to work need to earn money but they are not actually in the labour market because they don't offer themselves on the current terms of employment. They would work if one or other of the exiting conditions changed e.g. if they got work for a higher rate of remuneration or if her husband did not raise any objection etc. The importance of bringing out the number of women wage workers from such an in-depth study lies in the fact that this is not adequately revealed by general village surveys, not to speak of census data. In the villages, the employment of women is very informal and irregular. Wage employment is often subsidiary to house work is not given importance as an income earning employment. Wage employment for women is also socially degrading for the status of a family and so it is kept secret to outsiders.

Is the case study of Islam, may help to reveal the situation? In this study that one women previously worked in road building. Now she had fallen sick and can not do this heavy work of earth carrying and is engaged in cooking and post harvests crop processing in the household. She was also their relative. She is retreated from her husband and has a child, so she has to maintain herself, after wards the younger women gave details of her work experience and we found that she had been working for 10 years in various types of wage employment. After an intensive survey it is fount that 8 to 10 per cent women are out from this households to work for wages. These women come from land less households whose other earning members are mostly engaged as agricultural or non agricultural wage labourers. In my case study shows similar nature of women employment activities in informal sector.

**TRENDS IN THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN WAGE EMPLOYMENT**

That a significant percentage of women participate in wage employment may be a new phenomenon induced by recent polarisation and impoverishment. The polarisation and impoverishment during the period of (1980s) is an important factor. This is supported by the fact that most of these women mentioned economic distress as the reason why they started wage work. Islam (1986) in his subsequent section has shown that the extent of irrigation is one of the most important factors in explaining the size of female participation in wage labour worker from this view to be extended the argument that the expansion of irrigation during the mid (1980s) contributed to the increase of female participation in wage employment.

**2.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISTINCTION OF WOMEN HOUSEHOLD WORKERS**

Some indicators on the economic standing of the households which supply female wage workers are likely to influence their entry into the labour market. In rural
areas land ownership is an important variable to present and determine the economic strength of a household. It is observed that all households from which women workers come are virtually landless and 42 per cent of households do not own the land on which their homestead is situated. Among the rest, though the household is designated as the owner of the homestead land or house. In many cases these are mostly her fathers or brothers or fathers in laws' property. This means that she only can stay there but the legal right will never accrue to her. In 42 per cent cases, the father of the working women possessed no land. Nor do these households own any other productive asset for agricultural activities, and as a result, none of these families could get any land under share tenancy. Thus one of the common characteristics of these households is that when they have male earners in the family, these male heads are mostly working as a day labourers either in agriculture or in non-agricultural activities i.e. construction and construction related work near urban or suburb areas. In a few cases they have some sort of petty trading or professional business (e.g. property, fishing) as their major occupation. Female workers will come from landless group in general and labour households in particular.

Apart from land, non-land assets may play a role in generating income. Apparently that families which send out women to do wage work have productive assets. Such assets consists of poultry, goats, etc. The average value is negligible. When we compare this with the asset position of all landless and marginal (below 0.2 hector =50 decimals) land owners, the average owns assets worth Tk.1726, thus only those families which possess neither land nor any other asst, are compelled to generate income through participation of female members in the wage labour market. The demographic and economic characteristics of these women show that they do not come from any specific age or marital status group. They resemble each other only in terms of their extreme poverty having no subsistence and asset less. But some of the women from landless labour market
and the percentage of households below extreme poverty is much larger than that of households sending out women to do wage work as a day labourers.

It can be hypothesised that on the supply side absence of male workers in the household may be an important factor to push out more women to seek wage employment. Poverty is obviously one important factors on the supply side. Since most wage working women come from landless labour group, rate of wage for male workers may have negative influence on this supply. Poverty being the major push factor and demand side variables exerting important influence on the size of female participation, an expansion of demand could provide scope for enhancing the earnings of many women who may join the female wage workforce.

2.7 NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE MARKET

In rural areas for the self-employed workers the family and the firm are mostly overlapping units. In this family firm, women of the family participate according to the division of labour between the male and female members as dictated by the location of work which in turn determines the types of work allotted. Women perform work which can be done within the premises of the households.

When working in somewhere else, women try to abide by such traditional norms as far as possible. She usually seeks employment in the house of relative, close or distant. And keeping in conformity with the division of labour effective for family members. The hired women are also employed in activities which can be performed with in the household premises. This should not lead to the commonly held misconception that these women are employed as domestic servants only. This is closely linked with the view that rural women confined within the household premises do not perform any productive activity and are merely engaged in domestic work which in turn leads to the mistaken view
that hired women are also engaged in a variety of activities, most of which are related to firm production.

In terms of contribution to total days of employment, the importance of cooking is even lower than crop processing in agriculture activities that accounts for most of the employment. A small number of women are engaged in earth work and construction and construction related work. But the contribution of these activities in terms of percentage of total employment is quite large. It may be mentioned that none of the women is engaged in any agricultural operation in the field. The only work which takes them outside the household premises is earth cutting work for road and house construction organised by CARE (NGO). From this it emerges that at least some of the wage working women would face no bar against working outside the household premises. But the employer does not offer such employment to the women. The reason is not that the skills of fields operations are not known to the women because some of the operations like weeding do not require any skill or experience nor is that any intensive of physical effort. The reason is likely to lie in the unwillingness of the employers who do not gain anything by breaking the traditional norms. From the pattern of activities, another important phenomenon, which is sex wise division of work being most often the continuation of traditional norms, the employers, rather than the workers are keen to maintain the tradition.

In rural areas the terms of employment in the wage labour market are in large measure different from wage employment in the formal sector. In rural areas the nature of labour demand in various jobs such as that casual employment is the predominant mode of labour hiring for male employment. Various studies (Rahman, 1981, Muqtada, 1983) reveal this truth. Here we may identify two other forms of employment operating in the female labour market. One variant trying in between casual employment and regular year round employment is the seasonal employment where the worker continues between one to three month in
a specific type of work. The another type of employment is given on a contact basis. This may again take two forms. A specific assignment may be given to women e.g. sewing a ‘khata’ or making a net; the inputs are provided by the employer and the worker takes the job and performs in her own home in the spare time. In return she gets a fixed sum of money. This is the traditional system of the home-based production. The type of work is done in the house of the employer, where the workers come daily and gets a wage on the basis of the quantity of work done during the period. In rural areas unemployment does not take the form of open unemployment in the sense of people looking for jobs. Employment is of casual nature and is usually obtained through personal relationship or acquaintance. Those within the labour market share the inadequate amount of employment opportunity that is available. So, the relevant concept for them is the magnitude of unemployment.

The changing labour force participation rates of women and persistently lower wage payments are the issues of deep caution for the economists in recent decades. There are views presented by economist and sociologist which can be pointed out as orthodox labour market analysis, the economics of discrimination and segmented labour market theories. This assumed wages and employment are determined by demand and supply. Again demand is determined by the marginal productivity of homogenous units of labour. There will be one wage rate at which the supply and demand for labour will be in equilibrium.

In view of labour market theories, jobs are differentiated by the income they command, which in turn, is determined by the quality of labour and consequently, incomes are differentiated. Existence of wage differentials may be because of labour market imperfection. It assumes demand for labour to remain stable and therefore, differences in labour productivity on the supply side will be the main source difference in earnings.
Mincer and Polachek (1972) remark that women in general have different expectations from men and therefore women make different decisions. They expected to choose the low depreciation, occupations and hence in most cases they accumulate in adequate human capital and have lower life-time earnings as a result. As a matter of fact, the occupations preferred of selected by women informal labour are defined as less productive, less skilled and therefore, become less rewarded occupations. Stiglitz and Madden (1973) have remarked that imperfection in labour markets are responsible for wage differentials thus discrimination leading to involvement of trade union, minimum wage legislation, monopoly power etc.

Secondly, over crowding in specific jobs cancels excess support of informal labour and ultimately, results in diminishing marginal production. Thirdly, the internal labour market is controlled more by institutional rules which are not always compatible with the assumptions of competitive labour market. Reduced mobility is one of the main ways in which institutional rules isolate labourers in the internal labour market from external competition. Notwithstanding, all the discrimination and unfair deal, women play a vital role in agricultural development. Similarly, in other sectors like construction sectors and service sector informal women play a significant role in contributing to the economic well being of such households from which they originate.

Informal sector plays a vital role in a developing countries like with its abundant supply of labour. High rate of population growth, limited employment opportunity in the agricultural sector, lack of sectoral diversification within the rural economy, the cities and towns specially urban and suburb are looked upon as centres of labour absorption. They often promote a dualistic pattern of economy. They attract large of large scale, organised and formal economic activities at a limited level and on the other hand induce growth of unorganised and informal production unit that absorb none of the growing labour power.
The labour market theories to suggest a framework by means of which the nature and cause of occupational differences between the sexes can be approached drawing on the concept of the equal labour market. Marx, states that the "Forcible reduction of wages below value for labour power plays in practice to important a part of it, in fact, transforms within certain limits, the labourer’s necessary consumption fund into fund for the accumulation of capital."

In spite of Adam Smith’s concession made as early as 1776, that what he defines as the unproductive class to produce more efficiently. As Senior (1836), who declared that the only unproductive population of a country were infants, beggars, and criminals, non-market producers have yet to gain credence as legitimate contributors to the economy of a country. Since women are the major producers of non-market labour mainly through their performance of house work.

The United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA) as applied to Bangladesh and the country’s labourforce statistics both take into account only market work and provide estimates of national income which describe the outcome of the economy but fail to capture the total production of the country since it excludes the efforts of a substantial portion of the population who are mainly women and whose production of non-market goods and services enable the conventional economy of the country to function effectively. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 1992, 2000), for estimating labour force participation rates which result in sex-biased statistics which while continuing to exclude house work in corporate agricultural work as well construction related day labourers in its revised definition of economic activity. Adam Smith further conceded that the unproductive class delivered the productive class from many cares. Malthus (1820), also rising in defense of the material concept of output, and argued that the productive labour played a role in preserving the overall economy trade depression. Sharing Smith’s view on the role of government in the economy but
tempered by some echoes of Mills, Marx stated that necessary unproductive labourers, like state officials were indispensable to making the labour of productive labourers more efficacious (Marx, 1905).

V.I.Clara Zetkin, for discussing sexual matters, he was failing to appreciate the interconnections between the domestics and the workplace, between a woman’s private life and her public life. Although some of the concerns working women have are the concerns of any worker (wages, fringe benefits, safety standards), other concerns almost exclusively affect female workers (maternity leave, unequal pay for equal or comparable work, sexual harassment). In addition to these sphere of production concern. Brenner and Holmstrom noted that working women have to additional kinds of concern: those that explicitly link the sphere of production with that of production, (for example, child care; and those that all women have as women legal rights, reproductive control/freedom, violence against women).

Because of working women as both workers and women they are ideally situated to make alliance with working class men and with women who do not work. Marxist feminists are in a position first to develop revolutionary action, far from existing at the margins of the revolution women especially working women who live in both the workplace and the household appear to be at the centre of it. Marxist feminists hold out the hope that if women’s status and functions truly change in the workplace, her status and functions in the household will also change if not today, then tomorrow.

Marx and Engels and Braveman, from which we find the explanation of low wage for women inadequate, and it is my position that women as a ‘Low Wage’ category can not be explained without introducing ‘Patriarchy’ in the analysis, by which we mean the ideology of gender relations prevailing in society where man is deemed to be the provider and protector of the family the concrete
manifestation of this ideology being reflected in terms control over resources and labour other among.

CONSTRUCTION VIS-À-VIS DOMESTIC HOUSEHOLD WORKERS

Construction and domestic households are the two important informal urban sub sectors providing employment to a large majority of women unskilled workers. Though in these two sub-sectors women labour is subject to exploitation from the point of view of low wages being paid to the longer working hours and denial of leave and leisure, some differences between the two sub-sectors are worth mentioning here. The construction work is purely seasonal in nature and the labour is casual. The labour in this sector is down from surrounding areas of the city. Domestic informal women servants enjoy little more leave and leisure than the construction workers. The work in the household sectors is not as hard in the case of construction sector. The labourers maintain closer contact with the employer. The construction work is flourishing in most of the urban centers of the country. Hence two sectors are absorbing a sizeable portion of the unskilled women labour force. Absence of unionization and casual nature of the construction work are the two most important causes of exploitation of women labour.

The standard ILO classification of labourforce divides the population into those who are in the civilian labourforce and those who fall outside this definition. The employed and unemployed are covered the civilian labourforce while house wives, the inactive and children are excluded. This arbitrariness in the definition of labourforce has a significant impact in the under numeration of the female labourforce. For example, while labour participation vary between a reasonable range of 50-60% for most countries, those for females vary from less than 5% to over 59% (Khuda, 1982). In China it up to 46.4%. It is noted that housewives were not considered in that labourforce. The result was that housewives who can generate TK.150 million daily through non market activities such as water
collection, home repair or maintenance, fishing and care of livestock/poultry were excluded from the labourforce while the employed who generate less than 6 million daily from these same activities were a legitimate part of the labourforce (Hamid). The implications of this shortsightedness is the substantial underestimation of the labourforce and consequently the national income, especially of the developing countries.

Shamim Hamid (1996), in his study 'Why Women Count' estimated that male component of agricultural value added 171.40 million Taka while female component of agricultural value added 100.40 million. On the other hand evaluating non market work he finds for women specific activities such as water collection, mud-plastering house, washing clothes and cooking, the opportunity cost was estimated to be Tk. 1.75 per cent while for male specific activities such as house repair it was estimated to be Tk.3.73 female opportunity cost was therefore 47 % of male opportunity cost. (Source BIDS, WSNA Survey 1991-92). So it was observed that opportunity cost an average is 81 % of IS wage rates an 64 % for FS wage rate( both agricultural and non-agricultural sector including construction related work ). While these non-market sectors production includes 23 % to the GDP. This indicates self exploitation of the rural and urban labourforce of non-market work. This study could be more significant and potential for national economy.

ORGANISING PROBLEMS OF CONSTRUCTION LABOUR FORCE IN BANGLADESH

The unorganised nature of the construction is directly linked to the process of production involved in this industry. In Construction, unlike the other types of production, the product of labour remains stationary. While labour moves from site to site, from one employer to another. This is in contrast to any other type of production where the product of labour moves, while the labour forces remain
stationary under the same employer. Also, the different stages of construction activities are undertaken according to piece-rate by different maistries and they engage different groups of labours work is into brick and stone breaking water caring, sand and stone carrying, masonry, carpentry, earth work, curing, plumbing, painting and electrical work etc.

In big construction sites however, the opportunities for continuities of work both for masteries and all categories of labourers exist for longer duration. As a result at construction site it is possible to maintain records and ensure proper working condition for its labourers. But in reality, this does not take place. As there big construction in sites is in a position to ensure continue complement for its workers and masteries they use this as a weapon to maneuver and exploit the employees.

**CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN THE EARLY 20th CENTURY**

With the planned economic development launched during five year plan and annual development program, construction sector mainly in road, bridge, building river dams, rail way and services sector etc. Royal Commission on Labour which was instituted “to inquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings and plantations in British India, on the health efficiency and standards of living of the workers and on the relations between the employers and the and the employed and to make recommendation” acquired labour into the condition of construction labour employed a casual and construction labour in the construction railways. The number of workers employed as contract labour were not known by them. There were no provisions for having water supply, and sanitation for contract labour. Fair wages clause did not exist in public contract. The introduction of contract system was found to be the most suitable arrangement for the British, which neither wanted to manage the labour process nor be held responsible for the labour force. Economic organisation and various types of labour conglomeration on for construction activities may broadly be closeted as
public and private sectors. In public sector the constructions are undertake by various department and authorities of the government bodies. The construction activities include in its purview roads, bridges official quarters, commercial buildings, house etc.

Based on investment, the construction activities can be categorised as big, medium, and small construction. In both public and private sectors, irrespective of size of constructions, the system of subcontract which varies depending upon size of construction sectors. The principal workers as well as construction workers do not directly involve themselves in organising the labour process both in the public and private sectors. The contract system with its origin in the colonial period has provided a working method as well as an attitude in the public sector such as the developments have no responsibility towards labour or quality of constriction. Thus exploitative system of construction works continued for centuries. In public work department through there were provisions for inspection, with holding of payments by principal employers in cases of violations of contract conditions, there have never been cases of such action against contractor inspire of blatant violations of contract conditions. The contractors in the private sectors have generally not taken labour license to engage contract labour.

NATURE OF RECRUITMENT

In the construction sector, there is no difference with regard to recruitment modes between public and private sectors. The recruitment of wage labour differed according to size of construction as big medium or small. The recruitment like :

- Workers recruited from suburbs and rural areas by sub-contractors or labour contractors on certain norms and conditions by advancing loan (dadon) labourers;
- Workers directly recruited by contractor and housed in the site;
• Workers recruited from city slums or pavements market places by employers or intermediaries.

In the big construction sites the first and second types of recruitment were the most prevalent. They are housed on sites and kept moving from they need more hands at works for a few days, depend on the market place labour. In Bangladesh, the recent female labour migration towards urban areas by construction workers in the IS and garments and constructions workers in FS is new trends and deviates from the traditional system. (Malla, 1995).

Dhaka city is the most important receiving place in the history of migration of Bangladesh. Due to its political, economic and cultural importance, it has been expanding rapidly and now it has increased up to 10 million people in 2004. The expansion has taken place mostly towards the north-west region. As Savar Thana is adjacent of those region. The continuous involvement with building and road construction makes it possible to examine the female participation pattern in this construction sector\industry.

The Reconnaissance Survey 1995 was devised to provide the migratory status of female participation in the construction work carried by the female labourers. In all of the construction sites at Dhaka city and its extended parts were 332 labourers, about 55% being female. The women workers are mostly hired as coolies, and assigned the most arduous chores like carrying earth, brick and cement, crashing brick one stone, and loading and unloading construction materials. Brick breaking is almost entirely done by females for making concrete floors, pillars and roofs).

Female construction labourers are highly mobile between different construction sites and they do not want to talk during valuable working hours. Migrant
construction workers from nearest urban and rural areas in Bangladesh have triple disadvantages as:

i) They belong to poor country;

ii) Being rural they came from poor regions;

iii) And being women they are the poorest of the poor (Malla, 1995).

According to the survey about half of the temple workers (48.5%) from male headed house holds joined the construction labourforce, with the active help of their husbands (38%) or fathers, (10.5%). However, due to continuing natural, political, economical and social crises, attitudes towards the purdah system have been changing. Consequently, female migration is increasing as women become involved in out door jobs like construction works.
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