CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION
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Let me confess at the very outset that the present study does not include a large proportion of women workers in the informal sector engaged in casual labour in Bangladesh. Hence, any conclusion out of this study may be premature in terms of its final validity. However, the data lead us to conclude that the nature of employments in IS is less favourable for women workers compared to men workers. This may be due to high degree of discrimination, harassment and exploitation of women workers at work place. The entrance of women into IS is largely due to economic pressure, either as a secondary source of family income or as the primary source where there is no male earner in the family. Mainly women enter in informal sector due to poverty. They tend to migrate to a nearby city and try to search informal sector wage occupation with a minimum wage.

Due to the limitations of the FS to accommodate the growing labour force into employment the IS appears to be the single major source of employment in Bangladesh. IS currently accounts for 84.5 per cent (BBS,2001) of total employment due to inadequate attention by the development planners and policy makers concerning to mainstream economy in the country. The existing legal framework is also not very conducive to IS growth. There is no legal protection to the IS particularly to female workers who are unprotected, insecure and victims of discrimination by not getting equal remuneration etc. No definite revision has been made to regulate the IS casual jobs. Thus rest of the policies appear to be ambiguous. By and large, the IS has immense potentials for generating employment and income and consequently for poverty alleviation. By giving adequate policy support including protective legislation the IS can effectively reinforce the FS activities with the effect on generating employment and income. So, it is essential to integrate the IS with the main stream of economy expanding demand potentials, stimulating favourable structure of the IS.
Need not to emphasise that informal sector has immense potential for employment. It can generate high production and great income as it is very large and diversified sector. Thus it can play a vital role in the rural urban poverty alleviation. It is sufficiently clear that the IS will continue to be a significant component of the Bangladesh economy. From all-available evidences the male female work and wage rate difference are broadly confirmed both by ILO-BIDS survey, 1998.

In terms of the encatchment area of the workers in informal sector, it is observed that majority of the work force is drawn from domestic segments of rural economy where unskilled and mostly uneducated people are engaged in local economic activities. Their movement from domestic sector to a separate and informal work is mostly during off-season or due to negative conditions of survival in rural society. Generally the movement of labour is collective and its determinants are obviously social like family kinship, neighbourhood and village ties. Thus labour in informal sector is primarily unskilled unlike those in fisheries, poultry, (Beedi) making and other informal sector enterprises. This is the reason that they are considered as labours and not the employees.

It can be argued that the nature of employment in IS is generally unfavourable to women compared with men. Women’s participation is more frequent in semi-urban and urban areas particularly in manufacturing and construction sectors. It is found from the study that most of the female wage workers don't letter or written evidence that becomes contesting for legal rights. This has a critical importance for a large proportion of urban and semi-urban population.

A vast majority of working women in Bangladesh are employed in the urban informal sector. Most of them are 'push migrants' from the rural areas, having no rural employment options left for them. Most of wage employed women concentrate at low earnings position. Low demand for female labour, due to unequal access to labour market, factors related to their limited education and
unskilled working capacity. There is also a small scale self employed groups in IS. These activities are still running without any formal approval by the government.

If we look at the distribution of women workers in the payment structure it is found that it is the female labour, which is encountered at the lowest level of payment structure. Perhaps the important factor responsible for low payment status is the lack of education and skill as workers in the job situation. Needless to say that this situation exposes the women workforce for exploitation and harassment.

Poverty of women workers causes low rate of economic growth and unfavourable income opportunities between male and female workers. The IS workers are badly insecure and are not protected by labour laws as these laws are not properly implemented. They also work in unhealthy and unhygienic conditions. Unfavorable working hours expose them to harassment and exploitation at the work place. It is in fact true and becomes clear that the goals of development cannot be obtained without solving the stark poverty. The patriarchal social structure provides ample support to problem of low status of women. Effective legal intervention and educational developments are the only ways to improve the position of women.

The present study is a modest attempt to understand and explain the working conditions of female work force in construction and construction related economic activities in informal sector in a regional context in Bangladesh. The study is organised around certain fundamental sociological variables of family, marital status, education, income and payment structure, gender relations and status of women in a developing economy. This is a study of theoretical dialogue between the traditional forces of society and economy and modern legal state and international context of equality and human rights. These two sets of forces are systematically interacting and giving a new shape to society, economy and
culture in a developing society. Women and particularly the working women constitute an important subject of sociological study in such a context. Working women by definition is the female component of humanity engaged in productive labour that receives payment (wages) for the contribution she gives in creating the social and economic assets. In the terminology of industrial sociology is a social activity which fetches economic return and the labour invested is sold and purchased in market situation. This very naturally involves the principles of demand and supply. The productive potentials of the labour (training, education, skill and experience) depends on the marketability of its produce.

The study is organised to explore the following objectives:

i. Women participation in informal sector in Bangladesh in general and in construction activities in particular in the region of Savar Tahna, Dhaka.

ii. Examine and analyse the socio-economic background of women work force in construction and construction related activities and evaluate the social structural component determining their participation in the work force.

iii. To examine and explain the working conditions, payment structure and service support system available to the female workers.

iv. To examine and explain the inter relationship between traditional norms of recruitment, division of labour at work place, leisure and payment to the workers and modern legal provisions of rights of labour with regards to work, mode of payment and other welfare measures.

v. To examine and explain the success and failure of governmental intervention with regards to payment, harassment and exploitation of female work force.

To conduct this study empirically the universe of the study has been delimited and identified and by sampling techniques a representative sample of the
respondents from the identified universe has been taken scientifically at (9.0 per cent level of sampling). A total numbers of 200 respondents have been identified.

The analysis of socio-economic background of the sampled respondents reveal that 63.5 per cent women workers come from nuclear family. Married respondents are 42.7 per cent while unmarried workers constitute 10.6 per cent. It is important to note that more than one-fourth (26.1 per cent) respondents are widowed. The respondents who are divorced constitute more than 40.0 per cent of the total respondents and majority of women workers are 22-35 years age group. Sociological implications of such a vulnerable and weak status of women are many. This segment of women workers has several other limitations and disadvantages which exposes them to a high degree of exploitation. 68.0 per cent of them are illiterate and belong to poor family background. In the background of this grass roots information an attempt has been made to relate and explain the conditions face by these women workers in the network of their social relationships.

Table 6.1.2 indicates that the family income of 28.5 per cent workers is below 2000 Tk. per month while more than half (52.0 per cent) of the respondent’s family income is between 2000-3000 Taka. Thus majority of the respondent’s monthly income is relatively meagre and such income group belongs to the poor section of Bangladesh society. Gender is one of the determinants of payment of wages to the workers in traditional patriarchal social order. In this study it is found that 12.0 per cent female workers get less than 20 Tk. while 27.7 percent receive 20-30 Tk. less as compare to their that of male counterpart for the same work. The chi-square (table 6.2.1) shows there is significant level of confidence at 0.004 which reveals that monthly income is significantly influencing the level of satisfaction of the respondents. In the (table 6.2.4) the chi-square value 0.005 also demonstrate that the there is a highly significant impact between the various
categories of mode of income and gender base wages of the respondents. Why is this differential? Are Bangladesh labour laws different and silent to this reality? No, the situation led to the enactment of a number of legislations beginning from the year 1881, these include, inter alia the Factories Act (1881), Women's Compensation Act 1923, Trade Unions Act 1926, Trade Disputes Act 1929, Payment of Wages Act 1936 and accordingly Bangladesh Government passed Minimum Wage Ordinance 1994. Maternity Benefit Act 1939, (1961, India) and the Employment of Children Act 1938, Bangladesh Factory Act Rules 1979.

After 1947, then government in Pakistan decided to keep in force most of the pre-partition laws with some modifications and amendments there of, in the form of administrative rules to meet the changing needs. Almost the same governmental decision to allow most these laws to remain in force was taken in liberated Bangladesh in pursuance of the Adaptation of Bangladesh Laws Order (President's Order No.40) issued in early 1972. Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery Recommendation 1928 (part-B), supplements the convention ((No-26) is concerning the creation of Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Equal Values, Geneva 1950.

Labour law regulates the matters such as, labour employment, remunerations, and conditions of work, trade unions and labour management relations. They also include social laws regulating such aspects as compensation for accident caused to a worker at work place fixation of minimum wages, maternity benefits, sharing of the company's profitability the workers and so on. Most of these legal instruments regulate rights and responsibilities of the working people. Article, 25, 27, (a), (b), 28 (a) of the constitution explicitly urge for equal wages for equal work. It has also passed Minimum Wages Act in 1994. Punitive action is also proposed for making difference in the payment on sex basis. How to resolve the internal contradictions is the questions of million dollars.
In spite of so many legal provisions and organisational checks the old practice of
differential payment on the basis of gender persists particularly in informal
sector due to the poverty and illiteracy and lack of training skill of women
workers in construction and construction related activities. There is a need to
sensitise state machinery and implementation agencies to appropriate the
problems of working women.

Working women are the worst victim of ignorance subsequently due to lack of
minimum level of education skill and wage awareness. The data in table 6.1.4
show that 46.5 per cent women workers are not aware about minimum level of
wage structure which is stipulated by the government of Bangladesh. The chi-
square (table 6.3.12) demonstrate that there is a significant difference between
the level of education and their level of knowledge regarding Minimum Wage
Amount Act or wage structure which is significant at 0.002 level of confidence.
Usually women workers in informal sector particularly in construction related
economic activities don’t receive any appointment letter or any written
document for joining these work, which is the basis of their contesting for their
legal rights. To sustain the presence of these workers in economic activities in
IS, social awareness programme should be spread over in this arena. This
situation complicates the problems of female workers in informal sector as
governmental intervention in this direction is poor and the workers are not
aware of the problems of the workers. A judicious treatment to problems of the
workers is therefore difficult. Arrival of some NGOs in the welfare arena may be
the hope of future.

Gender discrimination in different spheres of traditional society is a normal
phenomenon. In this study it is found that more than 60.0 per cent female
respondents experience discrimination at work place in one or the other form.
The prominent areas of discrimination are payment, leave and overtime
provisions. 42.3 per cent workers inform that they do not get equal payment for
the same work as compare to male workers. 27.6 per cent accept that they are not to leave from the work place while 7.3 per cent complain that overtime provision is not extended to them while the male workers in the same enterprise avail the same benefits. Why this all happens? Why are women workers not treated at par with male workers? Are there biological constraints or social structural limitations responsible for this inequality? In terms of the responses of the respondents answers to this questions are like this. 30.0 per cent of them are of the view that woman is considered physically weak and biologically constraint for physical work. The majority view 74.0 per cent is that wages are determined of males and therefore, it goes in favour of males and women are automatically disadvantaged.

Gender exploitation particularly at work place in organised as well as unorganised sector of economy in developing society is a common phenomenon. There are reports and information from different organisations and agencies conducting survey and research in labour welfare sector that confirm the common man observation that exploitation of women at work place is known to almost everybody. To asses the problem of exploitation of women workers at work place in this study, it is found that 62.0 per cent sample workers (table 6.1.9) accept that they are exploited in one or the other ways by different components of the enterprise. May it be by way of assigning more work or engaging for longer working hours. 66.8 per cent workers (table 6.1.10) concede that they are sexually harassed at work place. This particularly happens with female worker under age group of 15-25 years. Who are those who exploit these women sexually? The data show that the employer (41.0 per cent), co-workers (30.0 per cent), field supervisor (7.0 per cent), cashier, (2.0 per cent) are the men in the organisation who misuse the vulnerability and weakness of women workers in the enterprise. Are the workers aware of protective legislation in this regard as stipulated by the government of Bangladesh under article 27? answer is in negative. By and large, the female workers are not aware of the various
legislations and provisions as Article-27 states categorically ‘all citizens are equal before the law, and are entitled to equal protection by the law’. Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) as ratified by Bangladesh government in 1993. Article-6 addresses suppression of trafficking and exploitation of women should be eliminated by all means. Platform For Action (PFA) 1995 identified some issues as violence against women and inadequate promotion and protection of human rights (Beijing World Conference, 1995 issues 4, 9, 12). All the provisions and act are not gender specific although punitively implied in the formal sector but in the spheres of informal sector activity these are quite neglected and invisible. Women workers are harassed in different ways by the male workers, supervisor and by the employers in the IS.

Poor status of working women shows a complex and pitiable picture in informal sector. They are generally engaged into a variety of economic activity which leads them working inside of the home. Data in table 6.1.11 reveal that 42.0 per cent female workers engaged in these economic activities due to stark poverty and 28.5 per cent are in severe crisis of employment. The highest percent is living below poverty line as 46.0 per cent (BBS, 2001) are unable to fulfill their basic needs. However, lack of marketable skill and knowledge of information and support services compel them to join these sort of jobs. Scarcity of job opportunities pushes women to a multiplicity of hazardous work. Besides, destitution, famine, landlessness, victim of floods and river erosion, death of parents or husband, second marriage, sickness of family members or husband, maladjustment etc. are some major factors which compel them to engage in such economic activities. According to table 6.1.12, 37.0 per cent women workers do the job due to heavy economic burden of the family. Large family size is another important factor for the women to engage in some productive activity.
Economic pressure is the prominent factor inducing women to participate in such activities. Data in table 6.1.13 demonstrate that as much as 80.5 per cent women are not provided by any medical care or first aid, in case of any accident at work places. The Factory Act Rules of Bangladesh, 1979 (Section-44) in the IS stated that first aid shall be accessible during all working hours and it also prescribed that all such enterprises where women workers are employed should have the provision of child care facilities. Data in table 6.13.1 show that 39.0 per cent women worker receive some medical help in the condition that to advance payment or loan to be adjusted in the subsequent months of payment. In the table 6.1.18, 62.5 per cent women have no positive comments about the environment of the working places having poor urban neighbourhoods with inadequate housing and often exposed to a range of toxic smell, which is hazardous for their health. The chi-square (table 6.2.11) shows that the value is significant at 0.01 level of confidence which indicates that the variables of monthly income and job environment of the respondents significantly impacts of various factors of job environment at work place.

Poor infrastructure, quite traditional tools and techniques exert high pressure and physical inconvenience to the workers. This leads to fatigue and torture of the workers. Level of women participation in work force depends mostly on the socials and congenial working environment of enterprises. The UN Conference of Women and Environment Re-de-Jenerio,1992 stated human development depends on the physical and socio-cultural environment with in which people are located. From the fact, it is evident that the unfavourable environment at work place hampers the productivity of workers very adversely by crippling their health which is the cause of loss of productivity of the workers. Provision of the reliable medical facilities is one obligation of the employer to its employees. According to the Factory Act 1979, when enquired about such provisions for the worker at work place in this study it has been reported by 39.0 per cent respondents that there are some arrangement provided by the employer as
medical aid to the workers while majority of the respondents (57.0 per cent) have denied the availability of such facilities to them at the work place. The figure reflects the dubious distinction between the prescription and the practice.

Gender specific issues related to work in the informal sector and they may be three categories of home based producers, self-employed, and 'wage employed', even though these remain a theoretical categories without further specification. The concentration of women in IS occupation are characterised by low wages, low capital intensiveness, low energy and using crude tools etc. should lead us to question the structural and ideological factors that have lead to such a concentration. Many of them working in this sector do have choice, and many of they have been working all though their lives yet at the ideological level, there are enmeshed in a patriarchal ideology where by the man is deemed to be the provider and protector of the family.

Women work force contributes a lot for the national economy and as such they should not remain unsecured and unprotected at any cost. They should be given equal rights and status like that of their male counterpart. No women should face any sort of harassment or violence anywhere in the state under any circumstances. This should be ensured by the concerned authority with viable practice. They should also be viable for its proper accountability. Workers in informal sector aspire for decent and secure lives, increased income and access to basic social services. The persistent expansion of informal employment pose both a challenge and an opportunity to the local, national and international labour market. The IS workers are to face numerous occupational problems, which needs to be organised in such way that their rights can be established. A separate labour department may be created which will monitor the pragmatic problem of informal sector. The department may be given power to fix wage on the basis of nature of work.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In view of these observations the following suggestion may be made for the consideration of the policy makers, planners, practitioners, scholars, government bureaucracy, NGOs, human rights activists, and the organisations interested in the development and welfare of female workers particularly in informal sector:

- The unorganised sector is characterised by traditional technology with limited and irregular income. The innovation of modern technology and improvement the situation government authority can provide subsidies to supply conducive tools and instrument which can help the IS workers to make them secure. There should be a provision for make shift-shade for the working under open sky and very odd physical conditions. This is particularly applicable to Brickfields, Road and Building construction areas, Material processing units and so forth arena.

- The payment structure in most of the enterprises in informal sector in Bangladesh is such that the wages are quite insufficient for even a very small family of the workers. There is no fix wages specified in IS. Needs of legislation interventions. The income of informal sector is found to be irregular and insecure due to seasonal and environmental fluctuations and irregularity of the jobs. This irregularity and insecurity of income in the IS can be overcome to a great extent by developing and strengthening the forward and backward linkages of IS with the FS and by the withdrawal of suppressive rules and provisions.

- Informal sector's work place needs to be shifted to authorised work places with properly built infrastructure. The work place should be well regulated by the Municipality or Pauroshava authority. Hence, the workers involved need to be equipped by conducive tools and instrument with proper training, and skills to make them enable more productive in income in the IS.
The observation of the present study shows that environment at work places is un-conducive and stringent. The terms and conditions of different jobs in the fields are greatly responsible for the low level of payment. The policy makers could hardly realise these facts. Necessary steps have to be taken for the development of the work environment and conditions at various work places. It is highly essential to take steps to increase the working women's skills and survival strength.

- It is important to follow factory laws to develop the infrastructural environment of industrial working places. Besides, it is also necessary to quick implement the project of establishing suitable infrastructure in different areas of the IS.

- Creation of favourable social environment at work places and increase of their efficiency and their stability in the working places, each of these factors is very much dependent of the social environment of the workplaces. Good cooperative relationship annexes the workers and the owner, supervisors, employers is very important for the improvement of social environment. There is a need to strengthen and organise the community life of the workers at work place.

- Provisions of the childcare will have highly positive impact on the efficiency of female employees and their participation in that work places. Childcare facilities shared therefore be enhanced at the work place.

- Secure Transport Facilities:

It is clear from the observation that providing secure and low cost transport system is very important for increasing women's participation in the labour market. Providing transport facility is not a very tough tasks. Through special act, transport facility has to be provided to the female dominated work places. Besides, government can arrange separate transport system for female workers. However, the government has already initiated separate bus services for women but it was observed that this facilities are very inadequate comparing to
the necessity. Unfortunately such facilities are not available in the away of street particularly in IS. To enhance women's participation in the labour market, government can give special attention to improve the law and order situation besides providing transport facilities.

- **Providing Legal Assistance:**
Social security of female workers will be greatly enhanced by providing them legal assistance. In order to establish legal rights, the working women as well as male workers suggests different issues that should be included in law. From this study it has become clear that female workers can not protest against specially against sexual harassment just only for lack of implementation of legal assistance. For being a less educated and financially weak female workers cannot take help of legal assistance. NGOs can play fruitful role in providing legal assistance and awareness programme in these work places. More non-government organisation should come forward to address these issues. If they are organised, the association can provide them assistance for this issues.

- **Providing Health Care:**
In any work place inhuman conditions create the most severe impact on the workers health. Maternity benefits for women workers both in paid and self-employed sectors should be extended by government or respected authority. Provisions of health facility greatly eliminate the negative impact of work conditions in the work places. In this regard, the labour law, can play the vital role to protect them. The government of Bangladesh can quite easily implement this labour law by providing incentives to the owners. In the urban primary health care project need to extend to the rural as well as to IS particularly to the female workers on priority basis. Moreover government can extend their health care facilities not only for particular target groups, in there facilities should come forward the weaker section of female wage workers in IS.

- **To sustain the existence of the workers particularly women workers in informal sector, their minimum wages structure (with maintaining minimum
level of living standard) should be ensured with providing written documents of appointment letter.

- As women labourer are doing monotonous, strenuous brick breaking in unhealthy working conditions, they should be provided with protective and conducive equipments for handling the construction materials.
- Equal pay for all types of unskilled up gradation for women should be undertaken through strong endorsement of laws.
- Such women casual labourers should be organised for uplifting theirs standards of living.
- Provisions of housing and crèche facilities must be ensured to women in all sites.
- Violation of laws by the contractors should result in cancellation of license and increased penalty.
- Unless these casual labourers are educated, organised they cannot be able to conceive their rights awakened, and can’t be emancipated from socio economic bondage.
- A legal literacy programme can make women labourers to be aware of legal process as well as movement for socio-economic change.
- Over time benefit should be given by the employers for paid workers in IS. Hours of work for construction labourers should restricted to six hours, from early morning till noon. Safety norms should be enacted as a law. In these working sites labourers should be provided toilet, fresh drinking water and other related minimum level of facilities.
- When serious accidents occur, it should be made mandatory for the principal employer to inform authorities and deposit the compensation to them.

As female, the women worker become extremely handicapped if provisions of leave particularly related with their biological makeup like (gynecological) pregnancy, child birth related issues, child care are not available to them. In
this study it has been noted that women workers in this segments of IS do not get the benefit of such leave provisions. As a consequence they suffer at health front, loose job and therefore the earning wages and income, neglect their family particularly children which is quite injurious to their physical and mental well-being. It may therefore be recommended that maternity leave, encashment of leave and insurance should be granted to women workers in informal sector. To ensure security of the women their health insurance should be considered. This includes all necessary safety equipment for personal protection. In all work-places basic facilities like toilet, fresh drinking water, transport conveyance should be made available. Hence the safety and security for all working women must be ensured. Because these working women contribute a lot for our national economy and as such they should not remain unsecured and unprotected at any cost. Necessary laws are to be enacted if necessary to ensure the safety and security of women. They should be given equal rights and status like that of their male counterpart. No women should face any sort of harassment or violence anywhere in the state under any circumstances. This should be ensured by the concerned authority of the government. They should also be viable for its proper accountability.

The emergence of economic development can not be explained without reference to formal policies of government. So the government policies should be oriented to support, to enhance large employment potentials. More intensive and pragmatic policy should be developed for the development of the workers particularly for women workers. But the reality is that mere recommendations are not sufficient for the purpose. Needs attempt to resolve the persisting problems. If proper policies and guide lines with its implementation for the IS workers are taken as initiatives to reduces the differences among FS and IS, then a positive result can be expected. Formulation of laws for IS is the prime need to eradicate problems relating maternity benefits, wage discrimination, security in work place, security in professions and sexual harassment.
CASE 1

Nilufar Begum (29 years) is a dweller of Vatpara Bastee in Savar Thana. Her Husband Zalal Mia (41 years) is a daily wage worker. Nilufar works with bricks and stones at construction site. Daily wage earning is the only source of her family's livelihood. The family has constructed bamboo hut on a water logged land in an unhealthy and hazardous environment. Nilufar came to Dhaka when her native village destroyed by floods. As they had no land in the village they move to an urban location in Dhaka in 2002 and lived for sometimes with her relatives. It is from there that the family moves in Vatpara Bastee. For livelihood she joined a construction field as a wage worker with the help of her aunt (mother's sister). Nilufar works for five to six hours every day in the field and passes rest of the time by preparing meal, washing cloths and rearing her two children. Due to economic limitations she is not able to arrange primary education for her children in Vatpara and these minor children occasionally assist her at her work place. Her husband who was seriously ill for long time has now started a small grocery shop and works for three to four hours.

Nilufar’s per day income is Tk. 90-100 while her husband also earns almost equal from the shop. This duel income places Nilufars family in a greater economic position as compare to other workers families in Vatpara Bastee. Nilufar husband is the master of the family. Through a chin-smoker and occasionally a gambler he controls over income of the family. Without bothering for children’s education and their medical and health requirements. At the work place Nilufar encounter several experiences of undignified behaviour and sexual overtones from her male colleagues. She also plays extortion money Tk.170 for last 8 months to middle man and muscleman in these areas. In terms of savings the family the family is almost at zero balance. Through not literate but she is conscious of the need of family planning and health care for children.
At social and political awareness level Nilufar is just silent and individual. The provision of minimum wages, protest against economic exploitation and political participation Nilufar is just passive and traditional. All that she dreams is an expansion and better rearing of her two children. She wants a good marriage and pucca (sustainable) house for her children. And for that she struggles hard hoping to fulfill her cherished dream.

CASE 2

Living in a rented house in Kachulia Savar Thana, Hasina Banu (32 years) has been working as a daily labour. Married with Fazal Bepari a youth of (19 years) who enter into second matrimonial bond with Renuma Sundori without her (Hasina) prior permission. Hasina completed 4 years of schooling before her marriage. She has a stepmother in her family who has a tense relationship with Hasina. After her husband second marriage it was difficult for her to continue staying to with him. So she manage a separate and independent accommodation where she lives with her two children (13 and 7 years old).

The present job she got with the help of her neighbour. Her 13 years old daughter also works as a domestic help at the retired food controller who pays him Tk.250 per month. Hasina is paid Tk. 80-90 per day in the brick field. However, she is never paid for the extra work. Her 7 years old son lives with her even in the brick fields where he roams and plays with the children of the other workers. The quality of life of Hasina’s family is subhuman and was nothing in terms of saving in the family. In terms of facilities of the workers at the work place there are no emergency arrangements once while working she suffered and injury her employer gave her Tk.150 and that was all.

Hasina is a God fearing women who performs religious worship occasionally. She is aware of the wage discrimination in the working fields on the basis of gender. She is not aware of the provisions of Minimum Wage Act and her level
of political participation is very low. She is registered voter which gives her some money on the occasion of elections as people buy and purchase poor man political conscience for money and food during the period of election. In spite of all these limiting factors Hasina is embodiment of a (typical) traditional women who live for the family and the children. She does not like that a daughter also becomes a day labourer. She is worried for her children's education and decent future.

CASE 3

Bilkis Begum (19 years) is a slum dweller of Bokterpur Bastee Savar Thana. She lives with her aunt (khalar) house when she was of (7 years) old her parents died. She did complete 4 years' schooling and got married at the age of (13 years). Her husband got married second time. Still Bilks lives with her aunty as a wage workers. Before that she was a domestic help for few months. The father of Bilkis was a rickshaw puller who died on road accident when Bilkis was 3 years old. After a few months her mother also died of chronic disease. She was married to a youth of (22 years) with Babloo Shikder. Without any permission from her, Babloo got second marriage with Sufia (21 years). Bilkis was unable to protest and for livelihood she started work as a day labourer in Roni Brickfield in Savar. Blikis came to Dhaka from Baliadangi of Faridpur District. Sometime she lives her aunt house she is a divorced woman who didn't marry again but holds a son. He is a is Rickshaw puller. Bilkis has her savings amounting daily Tk.100 to 200 on average per month. She works 7 to 8 hours a day. She once paid bribe of Tk 60 to the mediator for getting her job. Once she was suspended for not agree towards sexual relation with field supervisor. For this reason she changed the work place.

Bilkis does not have any idea about Minimum Wage Act but she is little aware of women's movement and rights. She is also aware of gender discrimination.
She gets Tk 90 to 100 only, while for the same work a male worker gets 120 to 130. She does not care for that discriminatory behaviour of the management. Bilkis suffered from serious illness twice. She paid Tk. 280 for her treatment. There is no medical facilities in her work place. Earlier she suffered from malnutrition and cold fever also she has no experience of family planning. However she has become misogynist. She desires if opportunity comes she will join any procession or long march against disparity or discrimination. She has some idea about inequality but she is not at all politically conscious. She cast vote twice. It was her memorable experience for whole life.

She is member of Mahila Kallayan Samity (Association) she used pay them to Tk.70 per month as subscription. She has a strong belief that she will get a large sum amount of money after three years with this amount she will run a small shop (grocery shop). She is yet to know how long she would work as a day labourer.

CASE 4

Jaitun (33 years) is a slum dweller of Amin Bazar Bastee in Savar Thana Dhaka. She is living with her three children. As she came from a very poor family she had been working as a day labourer in a construction field at Amin Bazar areas named Macca Enterprise. Her husband Zillur Rahman is a Rickshaw puller. He is doing this job since three and half years. Jaitun works as a day labourers and earns her for livings hood by breaking and bringing stone and carrying bricks.

The slum area where Jaitun lives with her children is very unhealthy and unhygienic. When took her interview this slum area were in undated by flood water. Flood prone area hampered her daily work. The environment of this deluged is not only hazardous to health but also risk to the children who live there. Her husband got marriage again with Halima Akhter (19 years) living in this slum but he did not take any permission from her and still wants to continue
his relation with Jaitun. She has two children Zala (8) and Bellal (6) give company when Jaitun works in these fields. Her elder son completed 4 years of schooling and the younger Bellal is reading in class two. But they are irregular in school attendance. Despite Jaitun hope her two children will be well educated and self-reliant.

In her Bastee rainy season flood water engulfs the slum but she is still struggling for better living. Working as a day labourer in Macca Enterprises she gets daily wages of Tk. 90 to 100. She was never paid for the extra work with such meagre earning from 90 to 110 Tk she lives in hardship and in subhuman condition. Jaitun twice suffered for long injury but she did not take any medical care from Macca Enterprise. She lend, Tk.50 for her treatment. She took leave thrice and lent some money for her illness during working in these fields. She had local treatment. There is no medical care and nursing facility in her work place although most of the workers working for their living at risk. But there is no hospital or clinical facility near to their working place. Jaitun has firm belief in God but she does pray regularly. She had also strong faith to Majar (Peer). Jaitun does not have much knowledge about women's issue and Minimums Wage Act but she perceives that wage discrimination is very pervasive in this working fields.

She claimed that doing same work in comparison she to male workers gets less salary than the male workers. She had also been harassed by her field supervisor and co-workers towards sex abuse. She is not conscious of any political procession or meeting but she casts vote in local membership election but where she got monetary help twice during election period. Jaitun has little savings for her children's education and livelihood. Jaitun would not take any legal against her husband for marrying without her permission. She wants her husband should be gain proper punishment for remarriage without her permission. She is still struggling to survive. Her little dream to have a pucca (sustainable) house.
She still believes that this hardship will go and her children's future will be sound and happy.

**CASE 5**

In Nabil Nirman Centre, Amin Bazar Savar Thana. Nanda Devi (42 years) is a day labourer who lives some seven kilometre away from the work site in Golar Teck Bastee in Mirpur. Nanda Devi is a widow who lost her husband in 2001. Her husband Tapos Kumar was a Rickshaw puller in Mirpur who latter joined as a construction worker. Due to chronic disease he died within three years of Nanda’s marriage. Now living with a son behind (Tapas Kumar). Her second marriage with Arun Saha came to an end within six month.

Nandan has another son (Nandan Saha) from her second husband. These children also assist the mother occasionally as a day wager. She gets Tk. 60-70 which is quite less as compare to a payment to her male counterparts. This discrimination is not unknown to Nanda but she admits that in the payment of wages difference between male and female is traditional and therefore mandatory. Nanda’s level of awareness of her legal and political rights is almost zero. As she never taken any part in political and social movement for women’s rights. She has also never protested against any discrimination. What she hopes and prays is a better job a better living for her children and the family.