CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Employment of women has continued to be a problem since the early days of industrialization. It is common in all societies, developed and developing. Today the economic activity of women has been expanding and according to the ILO statistics, one third of the world's labour force is composed of women. Since 1975, each year, ten million women joined the labour force and according to the ILO projections, during the period 1985-2000 the annual increase in the women labour force is expected to reach a level of thirteen million a year. Further, progress in the advancement of women depends very much on improving understanding of the linkages between the problems faced by women and the development of society as a whole. India is one of such countries where the problem of women labour has assumed serious dimensions. Since the problem is multidimensional, various facets of women labour have been studied in the preceding chapters. A brief summary of the main findings of this study along with suggestions are given in this Chapter.

The country can be divided into two sharply demarcated regions strikingly different patterns of female employment. In north India, the pattern of female work participation resembles that of the West Asian and North African Arab Countries, while the Central and South India have a pattern more like that of South-East Asia, where female participation
rates are very high. These original variations exist due to economic, social and occupational structure of society.

Women labour is very cheap. Poverty continues to be the root cause for the prevalence and perpetuation of women labour in India, where nearly 50 per cent of the population continues to be below the poverty line. The women's work has become necessary due to economic reasons i.e. to support the family, supplement the family income, contribute to the family coffers, to raise the family's standards of living, or in extreme cases, to earn an independent living. Death of the bread winner of the family is another reason for female participation in low paid jobs.

There are certain deriving forces and socio-cultural factors which are responsible for the employment of women on low paid jobs viz. illiteracy, lack of training and Agrarian social structure. The great divide in literacy and education in India's history came in 1951. Up to 1947, even simple literacy had progressed at a snail's pace, but after 1951 changes came. Even 40 years after independence, the situation is far from satisfactory. The march of literacy failed to keep pace with the growth of population and the total number of illiterates among males and females at the end of each census decade exceeded the corresponding number at the beginning of the decade, although the percentage increase in literacy for these years was substantial. The
rate of literacy among rural females is much lower than the rate of literacy among urban females.

The whole educational system as it is developing in India today is not considering needs of large masses of Indian women. The vocational and professional education is costly and beyond the reach of vast majority. This is the greatest adverse factor which has gone against women in getting better jobs or even any job at all. The existing education system is almost exclusively formal and relies mainly on full time institutional instruction at all stages. This has divided life into two water tight compartments - being one of full time education and no work and the other of full time work and no education. Expert bodies such as the ILO, the National Commission on Labour, All India Council for Technical Education and the Educational Commission have repeatedly emphasised the need to relate education, and particularly vocational training, to actual employment opportunities and man-power requirements.

National Policies in most Asian countries indicate that women and young girls are legally entitled to participate in training activities. However, in practice there are restrictions, such as son preference for training and the assumption that heads of households and bread winners are men. For most of the women who are already employed, doing semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, it is impossible to attend training centres as their families are dependent on their income and they have
domestic duties to attend to. In the light of this reality there is a great need for increased in-plant and on-the-job training. Majority of training schemes and programmes are urban based, making training opportunities for women in rural areas very limited. Training facilities are still inadequate to reach the depressed agrarian economies where the majority of rural women live and work. The recommendations of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (FLS) (July 1985) concerning women's vocational training call for particular attention to be paid to the vocational training of young women in all fields of occupation, giving particular emphasis to those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. They specify the need for special retraining programmes including technical training for young women in both urban as well as rural sectors, who lack qualifications and are ill-equipped to enter productive employment. In both developed as well as developing countries, the access of women and young girls to know-how is considered an extremely important feature.

During the 1984/1985 biennium, in one of its major programme areas, UNESCO is placing greater emphasis on schooling, training, technical and vocational education of girls and women. The Commonwealth Secretariat has published a tutor's manual which describes a step-by-step analysis and development of the skills required by trainers in devising a training programme. The manual also contains several
sections aimed at creating self-awareness both for trainers and trainees.

In India women workers in the organised sector constitute only about six per cent of the total women workers and the remaining 94 per cent are working in unorganised sector. Employment of women in the organised sector both in public and private sectors, has been increasing every year. Similarly in unorganised sector employment of women labour force is on increase. The actual extent of women labour may still be higher than these official statistics indicate. In the course of this study, it has become quite clear that names of many women workers working in mines, plantations and factories, etc. are never entered in the register of muster rolls. According to latest Quarterly Employment Review, the total number of women in the organised sector recorded an increase of 2.7 per cent in September, 1984 as compared to the corresponding figures of September, 1983.

Study in the preceding chapters reveals that more and more women are joining labour force. Female participation rate in unorganised sector is increasing.

As women shoulder a dual responsibility, one in regard to their work and another in regard to their families, the new role of women as 'working women' has affected her relationship with her family. It has affected marital relations, too. This study in the preceding chapters makes it clear that a large proportion of women workers are married and have to
perform dual role of wife and housekeeper. Working mothers are not able to give proper attention to their children. It is well known that the practice of 'doping' is not uncommon. Want of proper parental care increases the possibility of the children becoming delinquents. In India, there is no provision like child rearing leave and very few employers provide with creche facilities. The ILO Workers with Family responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), stipulates that all measures compatible with national conditions must be taken to enable men and women workers with family responsibilities to meet their obligations at the work place. In relation to their dependent children and other members of their immediate family who need their care and support and at the same time exercising their right to free choice of employment, their needs should be taken into account in terms of conditions of employment and in social security and community planning. Woman is quite a unique social entity, psychologically and physically. She is subject to the disability of bearing children which requires pre and post natal rest for a long period. Most girls and women in the developing world do not get enough to eat. This results in the physical deplation of the mother and a greater risk of low birth weight.

At the work place, women suffer from the biased attitude of the employers. Employers prefer male workers because they feel that as women have to take responsibility
of family members and children, they are likely to be absent more. Women are likely to be absent during pregnancy and employer has to pay maternity benefits. Men are preferred over women because of the feeling that males are more efficient than females. But the study of Labour Bureau reveals that women workers are as efficient as their male counterparts and in some jobs even more efficient than the corresponding men workers. A distinctive feature of women's work, both inside and outside the household, is that frequently they combine paid employment with multiple tasks of family responsibilities. Their two jobs lengthen their working hours and place additional stress on their mental and physical health. This results in some problems at the work place. Its impact on the welfare of the family is different and distinct from those of male workers.

'Employed' is often perceived in terms of a main or a primary line of work. Women in rural areas, who work at several activities generally have relatively long work hours, but they are not to be included as employed because they do not have a "main" line of work. The same is true in the urban informal sector or in urban family enterprises. Certain economic activities of women, such as cooking for hired help, tending farm animals, other household jobs are generally unrecorded and need further attention. The 'wages for Housework Campaign' at the Nairobi NGO Forum stressed
the need for women's household and unpaid work to be recognised and counted on par with men's work. The low status of women in the home contributes to the exploitation of women in the paid labour force.

The Approach Paper to the Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-90 provides the need for reviewing the existing training programmes, training facilities in identified critical areas of shortage, provision of vocational and technical courses, formulation of national wage policy, comprehensive legislation in respect of labour relations, possibility of organising labour welfare funds, specially for the unorganised sector, streamlining the administrative machinery for implementing the minimum wages for agricultural workers and measures to be taken to strengthen the organisation and bargaining power of agricultural labour, efforts for rehabilitation of physically handicapped and need to identify the constraints affecting implementation of the legal provisions to protect the weaker sections like bonded labour, landless agricultural labour, migrant labour, construction labour and women labour.

Women labour is an universal phenomenon. Psychological disparities between men and women are universally recognised. This study makes it clear that in all countries, the importance of women labour force has increased dramatically in recent years. According to the 1976 statistics the United States seems to have the highest female working population. In all the countries discussed in this study women have achieved
the right to enter into employment contracts and to receive remuneration provided by the employment. Only the socialist countries lack specific laws on equal pay, although the principle is acknowledged in the constitution of these countries. In almost all countries protective legislation exists although there is considerable variation in contents and scope. Most of the countries in recent years passed legislation to promote equality to access to employment for women and social welfare benefits to female industrial workers such as maternity relief, social security, education, etc. In Poland and GDR wages for female workers are determined by the same principle as for male workers. There is a form of positive discrimination with regard to wages in GDR, for mothers with at least two children under the age of sixteen receive the same pay for a working week which is shorter than that of others by three and three quarter hours. In Hungary, level of female incomes is generally lower than that of males. In Japan, wages are not based on occupational rates of pay but on an enterprises evaluation of individual attributes such as education, age and length of service. In Norway, France, Northern Ireland, the United States, Italy and in Canadian Government's federal jurisdiction, equal pay for equal work of equal value is assessed by a composite of the skill, effort, and responsibility required and the conditions under which the work is carried out. In regard to 'protective legislation', only the United States has no legislation aiming
to ensure the physical protection of women by banning them from jobs deemed too demanding or potentially injurious to their different physiological conditions. The most frequently recurring prohibitions appear to be there against underground work (Northern Ireland, India, Norway, Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Italy and parts of Canada); work involving the use of toxic substances or lead point (Northern Ireland, India, France, Norway, Belgium, Hungary), and work involving the lifting of heavy weights (India, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, the GDR, Italy, Japan, and other parts of Canada). But in France, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy and Canada, there is specific programme in hand for the abolition of such legislation because the protection of women is against the interests of female workers as it may impair their ability to compete for job.

Maternity leave is now extremely widespread, with only the United States lacking any statutory provisions. Norway is the only country which makes additional provisions for a fortnight of paternity leave to enable the father to assist with household responsibilities. The GDR seems to be most generous with provision for twenty-six weeks leave on full pay and with some flexibility based on medical assessment. In addition to the provisions for maternity leave, many countries make provision for a more extended period of child care leave for young children. In most of the countries unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, and retirement benefit are extended
to all working women equally with men.

Institutional organisations whether at national or international level play a dynamic role in improving and furthering the cause of women workers. The ILO has stressed ever since its inception in 1919, that the interests of women as workers are generally indistinguishable from those of men, and women workers should be given special attention as she has special difficulties which arise from her function in the family and from social attitudes and customs. ILO standards which became the catalyst of evolving new economic and legal norms, affecting working women are: Equality of Remuneration, Employment and Occupation, Maternity Protection, Workers with Family Responsibilities and special measures like night work and underground work.

The Charter of United Nations was the first multilateral treaty which clearly enunciated a norm of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. In December, 1975 the UN General Assembly proclaimed a 'Decade for Women' in order to place the women's issue on the international agenda. At the Nairobi Conference (July 1985) special attention was given to the three objectives of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace. During International Women's Year in 1975, UNESCO succeeded in substantially increasing its activities to improve the status of women in all its fields of competence. During the 1984/85 biennium, in one of its major programme areas, UNESCO is placing greater emphasis on schooling, training and technical and vocational
education of girls and women, as aforesaid. Stress is being laid to undertake co-ordinated action to help women enter employment and gain access to all types of jobs to make sure that their salary, promotion and social welfare facilities are the same as for men.

The Constitution of India has placed women on a footing of perfect equality with men. Articles 14, 15 and 16 form a code of equality of women with men and forbid the state from discriminating against women on the grounds of sex alone. Various laws have been made to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution not only to assure equality to women but in order to bring about equality between women and men where present inequality exists. The 'Preamble to the Constitution' declares the solemn resolution of the People of India to constitute India into Sovereign, Socialist, Democratic Republic. Again the word 'Socialist' must mean something. Even if it does not mean 'To each according to his need' it must at least mean 'equal pay for equal work'. Further, Article 39, one of the Directive Principles of State Policy provides for equal pay for equal work to both men and women. Judiciary has persistently laid emphasis on the implementation of these principles and has highlighted the role of Indian women in today's socio-economically changing society. The Supreme Court and the High Courts have laid emphasis on implementation of Directive Principles, 'equal pay for equal work', the Equal Remunerations Act and other welfare legislations. The Supreme Court in its various judgements has given great respect to
Indian womanhood, institution of family and motherhood. Any act which leads to exploitation, victimisation and harassment to women workers has been discouraged by our Highest Court of justice.

The Government of India has laid down various policies and plans from time to time for the development and welfare of women workers. The Ministry of Rural Reconstruction lays stress on the need for proper training of young women under TRYSEM. The Sixth Five Year Plan Document 1980-85 emphasised on Employment and Education of women. Report of the Working Group on Women and Development - 7th Plan Approach Paper made recommendations for the employment, education and welfare facilities of working women. Blue Print of Action Points and National Plan of Action for women lays stress on Education, Employment, Health, Care, Nutrition, facilities for working women, promotion of voluntary efforts etc. A sub-committee set up by the Department of Science and Technology looked into the occupational hazards like sonotic diseases, accidents, toxic hazards, physical hazards, respiratory diseases, etc. Personal protection, prevention against chemicals, personal hygiene and cleanliness at place, good working environment, periodic medical examination and health education are the important areas which have been of great concern to government. Blue Print of Action Points and National Plan of Action for women focuses its attention on education, non-formal part-time facilities, health care, nutrition and family planning and
literacy programmes for rural women. The child population below 6 years of working mothers in urban and rural areas is estimated to be around 20 lakhs and 166 lakhs respectively. With a view to helping the working mother discharge her duties both as a mother and worker, better family aid services like anganwadis, balwadis, creches and day care centres might be launched in a big way.


The right of women to public employment is recognised under the Constitution and Article 16 guarantees the right of equal opportunities in regard to employment of men and women without any distinction. Employment conditions of men and women are same. But Constitution recognises differences between sexes and special laws in favour of women can be made. A particular job may require a particular sex because of the sensitiveness of sex, or the peculiarities of social factors or handicaps of either sex. In such cases rule of equality cannot be enforced blindly.

Normally weekly hours under the existing labour enrolments do not exceed 48, labour unions have been advocating for reduction in the existing hours of work without loss in wages. They have suggested a forty-hours week, a five day week and eights hours a day. For commercial offices still shorter working hours are demanded as it is necessary to
Improve health and efficiency of workers. The ILO Recommendation No. 116 also states that where normal weekly hours of work are either forty-eight or less, measures for a progressive reduction of hours of work to forty a week should be taken. Women are not allowed to work during night. The term 'Night' signifies a period of at least 11 consecutive hours, including the interval between 10 P.M. and 5 A.M.

Welfare legislations provide for special health, welfare and safety provisions for women workers like, separate urinals, washing room, separate section in canteens, creches, etc. Employment of women is prohibited on heavy and dangerous machines and below ground in mines. Women are known to be particularly susceptible to certain physical stresses in the work environment such as heat and noise, and their consequences. They are more susceptible than men to the effects of vibration and tend to develop deterioration of joints more quickly. In many occupations involving a great deal of physical exertion, such as carrying heavy loads repeatedly over a period of time, women appear to have a higher incidence of low-back pain syndrome than men. A great many of the problems have to do with poor office environment design, particularly poor and unsuitable lighting. In many developing countries, industrial expansion has occurred without sufficient protective measures for workers.

The Constitution of India, ILO Conventions and Recommendations and Equal Remunerations Act, 1976 provide for 'equal
pay for equal work*. But what is meant by 'equal work' is not clear. In the absence of clarity regarding its meaning, employers are interpreting it to suit their own needs. If 'equal pay for equal work' means 'work of equal quantity' payment of different wages to men and women workers based on the work turned out by them would be perfectly justified though it may seem revolting to the protagonists of the principle of 'equal pay for equal work'. If by 'equal work', it means 'work of same nature', it may become difficult to put it in practice. No employer is going to pay higher than the quantity of the work turned out in worth. This would simply mean that the social objective of 'equal pay for equal work' will not be rooted in economic reality and it would pose all the problems of implementation.

Under the social security coverage, a small percentage of women workers can get social security benefits. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, The E.S.I. Act 1948, the Workmen's Compensation Act 1923, the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, The Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and the like are applicable only to women workers in organised sectors. Maternity Benefits and other benefits are available only to six per cent of the women labour force. The rest of 94 per cent of women labour force is not covered by any of such welfare laws. Similarly the Family Pension Schemes, Dependent Compensation and Disablement Compensation are available only to a small percentage of women labour force. The study in the preceding chapters shows that even in the
organised sector, employees in private sector, tend to circumvent the conditions of service in their own favour. Where such benefits are given, delay in payments is generally reported.

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, Beedi and the Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 and the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (R.E.C.S.) Act, 1979 provide for certain welfare facilities to the women workers working in construction and agriculture, etc. The Minimum Wages Act 1948 is also applicable to the workers working in agriculture and construction sites. However, these legislations endeavour to provide good working conditions to women workers, but still due to lack of implementation such facilities do not reach to the women labour force.

A large majority of women workers is not entitled to maternity benefits. Either they have to leave job or proceed on leave without wages. In the organised sector picture is more gloomy. Inspite of working in employer's establishment continuously for long years, they do not find any job security. So much so the benefits like sickness benefit or disablement benefits are not made available to them. The welfare facilities as provided in Factories Act, Mines Act, Plantation Act, Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, Contract Labourer (Regulation and Abolition Act), etc. sound quite satisfactory but they hardly exist in practice. This study reveals that there is a wide gap between law in statute books
and law in practice. In practice, the picture is dark and gloomy.

However, from time to time, progress of women workers has been highlighted. But, still there remains a field which has yet to receive some rays of knowledge regarding the progress of women. And that field is Trade Unions. Available information indicates that, though, women's participation in trade unions is increasing day by day, yet women's representation at national level and Central Trade Unions Federations is still disproportionate to the number of women workers. In the industrial sector unionisation among women is very weak and in the unorganised sector like construction, agriculture etc., their representation is almost non-existent. Where women are represented in unions, their interests tend to be neglected and this problem is global. One of the main factors responsible for this disproportionate participation of women in trade unions is lack of social awakening. However, some social organisations are coming up to provide help to women workers, to organise the unorganised, but the number of such bodies is very small. Trade unions exclusively for women are almost non-existent in both organised and unorganised sectors. This study in the preceding chapters reveals that there can be strong trade union movement among women workers provided they have proper leadership and encouragement from their families and society. Women workers are often discouraged from taking active part in the trade union activities. Discouragement comes from employers, male co-workers and families. All this
has resulted trade union movement as a 'male led' movement only. Stories of Municipal Street Sweepers of Pune, Women Agricultural Labourers of Mahatma Phule Agricultural University, Ahmednagar, Dalit Women and Maratha Women, etc. show that although these women are members of trade unions but their participation has no real meaning and the movement still (unintendently) to be a 'Male-led' movement. There are very few women who are acting as office bearers or holding permanent positions in the trade unions. Various trade unions like INTUC, AITUC and CITU are encouraging women workers to play effective roles and emphasis is being laid on training women workers in trade union matters also.

Most of the conclusions summarised above on the basis of analysis of reports, studies, surveys, etc., have been corroborated to a large extent by the findings of the field study which the researcher conducted.

During the course of this study, it became clear that provisions of labour welfare legislations are not being implemented. In the unorganised sector women are not given even minimum wages. There is a wide wage disparity between the wages of man and woman. However, Minimum Wage Act, 1948 is applicable to construction and agricultural labour. Yet women workers working in fields or construction sites are not getting minimum wages. They are not provided with any welfare facilities. No separate bathrooms or washing facilities are available to women workers. Although Workmen Compensation Act
covers the agricultural labour, yet there is hardly any instance where the employer has given the compensation in case of a personal injury caused by an accident arising out of and in the cause of employment. These workers have no social security coverage. Their living conditions are very dingy and unhygienic. Facilities are inadequate and insufficient. Due to ignorance and lack of social awakening, most of the women workers in unorganised sectors like agriculture and construction have not heard of trade unions. There are very few organisations to organise the unorganised workers.

In organised sector, in spite of Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, there exists a difference between the wages of men and women workers. Welfare facilities either are not available or very inadequate and insufficient. Even in big textile industries working rooms, canteens, bathrooms and toilets are very unhygienic; creche facilities are available where the number of women workers is thirty or more. In most of the cases, employers try to keep the number of women workers less than thirty so as to avoid legal requirement. Maternity benefits are given but delay in making payments is generally there. Membership and participation rate in trade unions is very less. There is no trade union exclusively of women. There are very few women holding executive posts in trade unions.

The primary reasons for non-participation or disproportionate participation of women in trade unions activities are: lack of organic unity within the rank and file of women workers,
illiteracy, ignorance, socio-cultural prejudices, lack of vision, family responsibilities and psychological insubordination.

The problem of women labour is multi-dimensional. Being a by-product of socio-economic conditions, the phenomenon of women labour does not admit of any simple and quick solution in isolation. It is with this perspective that the following suggestions are made:

I. Economic Activities Need Redefinition

There is a great need to redefine Economic Activity. The definition should clarify and classify notions such as "gainful employment", "Concept of Work", and the distinction between "Work" and "House Work", 'Employed' is often perceived in terms of a main or a primary line of work. Women, especially those in rural areas, urban informal sector or in urban family enterprises, who work at several activities, may work relatively longer hours altogether, but they may not be included as employed because they do not have a main line of work.

II. Recognition of Women's Unpaid Work

The classification of women as unpaid family labour is very important. If they are not accurately counted, women's contribution to the economic product of the nation is inadequately measured. The classification can further contribute to the hidden unemployment of women to the extent that women who would prefer and would accept a paid labour position if they could find one, are classified as unpaid family labour.
Women's household and unpaid work should be recognised and counted on par with man's work. The low status of women in home contributes to the exploitation of women in the paid labour force. Those with very little economic, social and moral backing face serious difficulties in supporting themselves as well as in bringing up their children alone. Counting their labour as part of the national product is essential to their release from poverty.

III. Home-based Workers

The number of home-based workers have increased rapidly during the past few years and this category of workers, mostly women, is not protected by labour legislation. Home-based producers may be of two types: those who are dependent on contractors for materials and markets, whilst working under the putting out system; and those who are self-employed, but nevertheless dependent on middle-men for credit and purchase of the goods produced. Employers vary from large enterprises to small family concerns. Home-based workers are found among all age groups and both sexes, but are predominantly children, young unmarried women and elderly women. There is a close link between poverty, unemployment, landlessness and home-based production. For example, rural women who have been made idle due to fragmented land holdings, have become linked through middlemen to the export garment industry, using their own machines to produce at home. Although, these women are not able to earn very much through home-based production paid for
at piece rates, their earnings constitute a major proportion of the family income. The hours of work render home-based production are irregular, ranging from part-time work of 4-5 hours, to an over-extended day of 15-16 hours during the peak season. Since home-based workers are in the majority, their cases are not included in the definition of workers as given in Factories Act and other labour legislations and are frequently not covered by labour laws, as well as welfare schemes, health and maternity benefits. Since home-based workers are invisible to society because they work within the confines of their homes, they practically do not exist in official statistics.

There is a great need to recognise and organise these home-based workers. They should be included as employed and their employment conditions should be governed by labour legislations.

IV. More Practical and Vocational Training

Female blue-collar workers are usually found in unskilled and semi-skilled occupation rather than in skilled and highly skilled, while protective legislation sometimes excludes them from certain arduous jobs where wages are relatively high. In spite of changing socio-economic reality, women's training is geared to tasks related to the family and fails to prepare them for economically viable employment or self employment. This is not disadvantageous to women only, but also for their children and family in general. As women's level of education
and vocational training affects their jobs, and income opportunities, and thus for raising the standard of living of themselves and their families, it is essential to provide them with the same access to training and employment as men. The government should provide equal opportunities for both sexes in education and training at all levels, co-ordinating educational, training and employment strategies, though formal and informal programmes to charge social attitudes to women's education, training and employment toward equality, new occupation and changing roles. There should be free and compulsory primary education. It is very essential to have integrated training programmes for rural women to accelerate their economic and social development, with special emphasis on modern methods and technology in agriculture, animal husbandry, and fisheries, cooperatives, entrepreneurship, commerce, marketing as well as health, nutrition and family planning. Training should be imparted right from the grass root level. The functional literacy programme should be expanded, specially in areas having low female literacy. Non-formal educational programmes should be introduced for girls in the age group of 15-25 years who could not complete formal schooling. Training programmes should be organised with a view to remove skill constraints and biases working against women. A fair share of stipends, hostel seats, uniforms, free books and stationary, etc. should be made available in order to facilitate rapid growth in the number
of female trainees. The programmes like universalisation of elementary education should be specially directed towards higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools. There should be free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years for both boys and girls.

V. Access to On-the-job-Training

The government should formulate policies and action programmes to promote equality in work, through opening to women the access to on-the-job-training. One of the main factors responsible for job segregation and wage differentials between men and women is absence of opportunity of on-the-job training.

VI. From Maternity to Parental Leave

Most of the employers avoid employing women because of their absence during pregnancy. Unmarried or widowed women workers are preferred even married women just to avoid responsibility of paying maternity benefits. There should be a shift from maternity leave to parental leave. According to ILO Convention No. 156 and Recommendation 165, adopted in 1981, "Parental Leave", is defined as leave of absence immediately following maternity leave. There should be provision for a leave of fixed duration, allowed to the employee-father or mother, on the occasion of childbirth after maternity leave, or in the case of adoption of a child, during the period after the child comes to the family.
VII. Child Rearing Leave

Very few countries provide for child rearing leave. Child rearing leave is very essential for the health and development of mother and child. There should be a provision for child rearing leave until the child is 3 years old, for up to two children. This leave may be paid, partially paid or unpaid.

VIII. Creche Facilities

Section 48 of the Factories Act, 1948 provides that in every factory where the number of women worker is more than thirty, employer should provide suitable and adequate creche facilities. This limit of 30 women workers should not be there. Creche should be compulsorily provided in every factory, mine, plantation and other establishments irrespective of the number of women workers employed.

IX. Social Security

There should be social security coverage in both, organised and unorganised sectors. In organised sector, in spite of applicability of many welfare legislations, women workers are not getting adequate and sufficient social security benefits. There should be effective implementation of welfare legislation in organised sector. Social security benefits should be extended to the unorganised sector also. As 94 per cent of the women labour force is in unorganised sector it is very essential to provide social security to this vast majority of workers.
provision of ESI Act, 1948, Gratuity Act, 1972 and Employees Provident Fund Act 1952 should be extended to unorganised sector also.

X. **Regulations and Abolition of Contract Labour System**

Most of the workers in construction work and agriculture are employed through contractors. Their working and employment conditions are regulated by these contractors. This leads to exploitation. It is essential that contract labour should be recruited through government agencies and their working and employment conditions should be regulated by the government. A worker who has worked for more than 240 days should be entitled to maternity benefit, sickness benefit and other welfare facilities.

A large number of women labour force is employed in agriculture. Generally they work on contract and payments are made in kind. This work on contract and payments in kind system should be abolished.

X. **Organisation of Unorganised Women Workers**

Society as a whole, and women in particular, need to become more aware of the cultural, social and economic barriers, that prevent women from participating fully in economic and social developments. Trade unions, co-operatives and women's associations should give women a chance to defend or increase their employment opportunities, to improve their conditions of work as well as to increase their productivity.
and income. Trade unions should increase women's participation at all levels, and have special programmes to promote equality of opportunity for jobs and training for women workers and leadership training for women. They should also provide women with a platform to express their needs.

The central workers organisations and particularly women organisations should promote union leadership, training among women workers. Women workers should also propagate the need to increase women representation in policy making bodies in the executive of the trade unions. There should be percentage of executive posts for women workers in a particular trade union of an establishment where 50 or more women are on roll. A separate central women workers organisation should be established to watch the interest of women workers engaged in unorganised sector, construction industry and agricultural and allied activities. Some educated workers and women advocates should take a lead in this regard.

XII. Effective Implementation and Enforcement of Existing Legislations

Existing labour legislations should be effectively implemented. There is a wide gap between law in practice and law in statute books. What is lacking is proper implementation. There should be implementing machinery at district and subdivision levels. Appointment of Agricultural Women Inspectors, Women Inspectors for factories, mines and
plantations is very essential. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 should clearly define the term 'equal work'. If by 'equal work' means 'identical work' or 'similar work', then the principle of equal pay for equal work can never be put in practice. During the course of this study, it has become very clear that term 'equal work' is interpreted as 'identical work' or 'work of similar nature' and employers are not employing men and women on the same kind of job. Unless 'equal work' means 'work of equal value', not much can be achieved regarding equality in payment of wages. The educated class of women in service have benefited from the Act. But women working in factories, at construction site and in agriculture continue to be discriminated against on the ground that their jobs are not similar to the work done by the men.

These are some of the important measures which need consideration if the principle expressed in the constitution, legislation and various policy statements for women workers is to be translated into operational reality. The main thrust of national policy and legislation during the next few decades needs to be directed towards the decisions of the International bodies like I.L.O., U.N.O. and UNESCO in order to eliminate discriminatory features against women in the labour market or the work place, and to introduce equality of opportunity and treatment between man and woman.
in employment in practice. The evolution towards new norms, concepts and values concerning the political, economic and legal rights of women will transform the labour market and the work place itself.

XIII. Need to Change Social Attitude Towards Women

Not much can be achieved unless there is a change in social attitude towards women workers and women as a whole. Women should be considered equal and not inferior to man. The number of households where the 'bread winner' is woman, is increasing day by day. Women's job at work place is not secondary and her earnings not only constitute to family income but make major part of family income.

Social attitude can be changed through media, social organisations and mass education programmes. There should be social consciousness and information programmes.

Adding to the above suggestion, the researcher submits that if we want to ameliorate the predicament of working women, we should treat them on par with men socially, culturally, economically and psychologically. There should not be any incidents of harassment molestation and criminal intimidation at work place. They should not be treated as second class citizens, weak sex and economically dependent by their male counterparts. Man should equally take up household chores and provide a working women some relief.
for family responsibilities. Women should be encouraged to participate in organizational activities and involvement in the nation's main stream. Then only women labour will be conscious to their rights and responsibility and contribute effectively in the development and progress of the country.