REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present chapter of review of literature has referred different journals and studies, conducted from time to time. It aims to include various studies related with female workers engaged in informal sector. Mainly the studies related to living conditions, working conditions, income, expenditure and social security aspects of female workers in pre-globalization and post-globalization period, are referred. Various studies, related with their health, social economic profile, decision-making power, marginalization, poor status in society, poor unionization, importance of formation of self-help groups, have also been included in this chapter. Every effort has been made to limit the reviews only towards those studies, which are relevant to the present study. These studies are presented in chronological order.

Thippaiah (1989) examined the problem of urban informal sector in Bangalore metropolitan area. He found that women workers, in urban informal sector, could be broadly grouped into the self-employed and wage-employed. Among the self-employed, there were those engaged in papad making, masala making, embroidery work, zari work, envelope making, beedi rolling, agarbati making, match sticks making, retail trading, waste paper collection and so on. The wage-employed were mostly skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, and casual workers. They were also, belonging to the category of contract workers in construction activities, industrial and commercial enterprises. Many of these women workers were entitled for piece rate basis payment and part-time, full time, domestic servants for a fixed payment. The self-employment activities, where they earned their livelihood independently or with the co-operation of family labour, constituted an overwhelming majority. A vast segment of women, in urban informal sector, was from migrant families to the city of Bangalore. Most of them were in the age group of 18-32 years and lived in slums adjoining small towns that were devoid of basic amenities. The informal sector women labourers were paid low wages and their wages were just around the subsistence level. Not only this, proper medical facilities and safety measures were not guaranteed for these women, who worked with hazardous materials such as chemicals in dyeing, or cement dust in construction.
work. Finally, the study laid stress on need for Government and local community intervention, in order to help these women to get their due rights.

**Somal (1990)** studied the economy of informal sector of Sambalpur town. The objective of the study was to examine the conditions of workers engaged as self-employed or wage workers in these enterprises. The study found that though new entrepreneurs earned a comfortable income, about $2/3^{rd}$ of the informal sector participant’s families were also engaged in these enterprises. They were poor since their per capita income was even below the poverty line. The earnings of about $1/5^{th}$ of entrepreneurs, own account workers and wage-labourers was below the minimum wage fixed by the Government of Orissa. The informal sector units had backward linkages fully through input, credit and partially through acquisition of skill and technology. Therefore, chances of greater exploitation were higher in unregulated and unorganized segment of workers. Finally, the author recommended the formation of policy at local, state and public level in a synchronized manner to cop up with the problem being faced by workers belonging to informal wing.

**Das and Tripathy (1991)** examined the problem of informal sector women labour in the tribal district of Orissa. In all, 125 households were covered, with a view to access economic conditions and work character of informal labourers. The study brought into notice that tribal women of Phul Bani, though could not enter formal sector jobs because of low education and training, they contributed a significant amount to the total family income through their engagements in informal sector activities. The study also pointed out that there were less then 50 percent of women labourers in the age group of 15-60 years, 33 percent of sample labourers were below the age of 15 years. Hardly 8 percent of women labourers had school education of up to 8-9 years. Women engaged in washing activities belonged to lower caste. An important factor determining the amount of income of the informal households was the size of landholdings. From the study, it was revealed that 38.4 percent of the workers had no land, 32 percent had a marginal land and 6.4 percent had landed property of 5 acres and above. The study further pointed out that the maid servants income was the lowest among all categories of informal workers. Most of the women belonging to this category were divorcees, widows and younger
girls. Finally, author suggested for sound policy framework for improving the socio-economic conditions of such females.

Everett and Savara (1994), made a comprehensive study with an aim to explore the reason behind vulnerable condition of females in the urban labour process. For this purpose, data of 200 females was collected in Mumbai on five groups of informal workers, who were private building sweepers, domestic workers, sub contract workers, fisher women and food makers. The aim of the study was to identify that how occupation, age, marital status and household strategy affected, different aspects of women sufferings, leading to economic hardships. Besides, it had also been examined that how overwork affected their health. Various social problems being faced by them was also the part of study. Results showed that women belonging to different occupations were facing different kind of problems. Broadly, despite of hard work put in by them, both at home and at workplace, they were ill paid. Double burden of work had bad effect on their health and their income was not sufficient to enable them to afford good diet and health. Finally, various suggestions were made to empower such women.

Jhabvala et al. (1996), made a study with an aim to analyze the economic empowerment of women workers in selected occupations that employ large number of low-income women around the world, in activities that are home based, waste recycling, street vending etc. An overview of situation of women workers in selected occupation that is home based workers was taken and obstacles faced by them were analyzed. The study found that piece rate worker used to get raw material from a trader, a contractor or an employer to make them into finished goods at home. Having no direct contact with market, these workers faced exploitations like insufficient raw material, forcing them to buy it from their own pocket. Not only this, cost of equipment, maintenance and the employer did not provide infrastructure such as electricity for producing goods. The conditions of own account home based workers were also analyzed, who were generally in direct contact with the market, buying their own raw material, selling their own finished goods. In terms of earnings and working conditions, second category was not much better of than her piece rated sisters, as they faced competition from large businesses, rarely had access to credit at exorbitant rate of interest. They used to buy raw materials in
small quantities, making it expensive for them and rarely they were able to sell their goods directly in the market, thereby falling prey to dependency on agents, contractors etc. There were rarely any social security system for these informal, invisible workers and even if some existed, most of them had no knowledge or ability to gain access to these services. Study concluded that the Government should support such organizations to upgrade the conditions of these downtrodden informal women workers.

Bhowmik (1998) analyzed the poor socio economic conditions of informal sector workers by making the study of street vendors. The study aimed at indicating the importance of these vendors for consumers, as they were integral part of urban scenario for long. Though their growing number was viewed as a problem for urban governance, they were also the solution to some of them problem of the urban poor. By providing cheaper commodities, hawkers were providing subsidy to the urban poor, something that the Government should have done. But, still they were living in very poor socio economic conditions. Findings revealed some common features in all the cities. The income of these hawkers ranged from ₹50-100 for male and ₹35-45 for female on an average per day. It was also found that the municipal authorities and the police harassed these people and bribery was the only way left for them to survive in their trade. The working conditions of these workers were very poor and most of them led a very hard life, working for more than ten hours a day. Still, their earnings were falling well below the stipulated minimum requirement given by ILO. This was not enough as corruption in the form of bribery and extortion further reduced their income. The main reason behind corruption was the fact that status of this occupation was considered illegal. Finally, the study concluded that although these hawkers created problems for pedestrians and commuters, but the solution lies not in banning hawking, but in regulating this profession by legalizing them. A broad and holistic approach is required to ease the problem.

Sethuraman (1998) found that a substantial part of employment in developing countries, is informal and consequently, the quality of such employment, in terms of income and conditions of work, tends to be below the acceptable national and international norms. The study analyzed the evidence from countries, on female
informal employment and incomes. It aimed at tracing the recent trends in female employment as well as its structure in developing countries, using aggregate data. Women participation in total labour force had risen in many countries. Share of wage employment in comparison to own account and unpaid employment, in total female employment was rising in all regions, but slowly. Women, in some countries, seemed to have benefited from globalization of the world economy, in terms of jobs, but of poor quality, due to increase in informalization. Women working in informal enterprises faced additional constraints of deprivation of legal recognition, no access to resources and markets and presence of gender bias. Relatively lower level of education among women compared to men, made them more prone to gender discrimination in terms of poor quality work and thus, wages. Main reasons of income variation were found as low schooling and skills, difference in enterprise characteristics, where they worked, poor linkages and contacts, poor access to social networks etc. To conclude, improved access to credit could help women in the informal sector to increase their incomes. Even those in wage employments could benefit from credit access because they could start their own small business. However, the positive effect of credit would remain muted unless their access to complementary resources was improved. However, these conclusions should be considered as tentative owing to deficiencies in the data used.

**Kundu (1999)** in a paper suggested that the existing database for unorganized industries clearly brings out serious gaps, anomalies and discrepancies. The aim of the paper was to observe, the changing character of informal sector, its problem and prospect in future for designing the right kind of policy environment at the macro level and launching specific schemes at the micro level. The overview of macro-data showed, decline in the share of informal manufacturing employment due to decrease in industrial base in urban areas. Moreover, changing nature of production relations, sub-contracting of jobs, ambiguity of contracts, growth of self-employed and casual workers etc. have contracted manufacturing sector and expanded jobs in tertiary sector, exposing workers to more exploitation. There was also absence of ample laws to protect these workers. Study had also pointed out that decline in growth of workforce in informal sector during late eighties, in urban areas was due to low productivity syndrome for unorganized sector in urban areas. It had
adversely affected the rate of rural to urban migration. At micro level also low production, low wage rates, underemployment, poor working and living conditions, absence of skill formation, insecurity and absence of formal registration, discouraged the informal sector. Finally, the author suggested for selective assistance to the informal sector entrepreneurs, in terms of provision of technical guidance, subsidized credit, scarce raw materials, marketing support etc. Steps must be taken to make fruits of economic liberalization of 1990s available to informal sector. Targeting of benefits via linking resale of output, to allocation of scarce raw material must be done. Moreover, efficiently organized co-operatives should be the prime concern of the support system, for promoting the informal sector along the desired lines.

Alter Chen (2000) citing data from different countries across the world, aimed to bring forth, the several dimensions of the informal sector women, in developing economies. The paper suggested that proportion of women workers in informal sector, exceeded that of men in most of the countries and women’s share of the total informal workforce, especially, outside agriculture, and was higher than men’s share. The study estimated that composition of female informal workforce varied across regions. In African countries, almost all women in informal sector, were either self-employed or family-workers, whereas in Asia, causal-workers were often found. Overall, compared to male workforce, women in informal sector were more likely to be own-account workers and less likely to be paid employees of informal enterprise. The gender-based difference in their employment status had implications for their relative earnings and poverty levels. The current pattern of growth, economic crisis, global integration of economy, although led to the expansion of female workers in informal sector, but lack of education, skill and mobility, made them less able than men to compete in market. In the era of global competitiveness, many of them came to urban areas with their families, in search of work. They were forced to work under insecure contracts, low wages and few benefits.

CSO (2000) has provided official visibility to women’s work burden, by collecting data on various household and non-household activities through the time use survey, from five selected states namely Haryana, M.P., Orissa, Tamil Nadu,
Meghalaya. The report describing SNA, extended SNA and NON-SNA activities, drew attention towards women unpaid work. It revealed that share of unpaid SNA work is significant in India (for both men and women), in terms of the number of persons engaged in it as well as in terms of time spent on such activities. In the five states, combined payment was not made for about 38 percent of the time spent on SNA activities. About 50 percent of the time spent on SNA activities by women remained unpaid, while only 33 percent of men’s time remained unpaid. Among women, this ranged from only 32 percent of unpaid time in Tamil Nadu compared to 86 percent in Haryana. The cultural difference between these two states as regard women, working outside the home, might be the cause of difference. As expected, women spent many hours on extended SNA activities that are on an average 35 hours, while men spent only 4 hours on such activities. Therefore, study suggested that more stress should be given on welfare measures related to women.

**Vimala (2000)** in a study made on domestic workers classified them into two parts that is part time and full time. Citing data from 55th round of NSSO survey, study found that demand for domestic servants in urban area had increased due to expansion in the number of working women, nuclear families etc. Some common problems faced by these servants were like deplorable wages, high level of insecurity, illiteracy and lack of marketable skills, long and unregulated working hours, no paid holidays, immense work load, no paid sick leave, no maternity benefits, health problems and social exploitation etc. The study revealed that women domestic workers belonged to the economically disadvantaged group and most of them lived in slum area or scheduled class colonies. There was no uniformity in their wage structure and their wage level was very low. Finally, it was concluded that such workers were required to be organized for protecting their rights.

**Anand (2001)** with the aim to understand the situation of construction workers, made a sectoral study of these workers in Delhi. The women construction workers were identified through the petty contractors settled in the working clusters of Delhi and 75 women construction workers were interviewed from three zones of east, west and south of Delhi. Focus group meetings of women construction workers were also held. Findings revealed that 9 out of 10 women construction workers were
illiterate. All the women workers were performing unskilled jobs, even though majority of them had long years of experience in the construction sector. Four out of five had been working in this sector for more than five years and 82.7 percent of these females, belonged to SC/ST category. Majority of them had migrated from Rajasthan, U.P., etc. 86.7 percent were in age group of 25-45 years. An examination of terms of trade showed that not only do women workers belonged to the casual worker category, they were generally treated as residual category, when there was a shortage of male workers. There was wage variation of ₹10 to ₹15 on an average, between male and female workers for the same work. More than 97 percent of these workers earned ₹1500 per month. More than the half of the women workers contributed between 11 percent to 30 percent of the family income. Findings also revealed that not even a single respondent wanted her children to continue working in the construction sector. Almost all the workers showed their inclination to upgrade their skill, in order to secure higher wages. Finally, the study urged towards the need of Government attention at local, state and national level to improve the situation of these workers.

Chikarmane, et.al (2001) in a study aimed to find socio-economic conditions of waste pickers, estimated that they retrieve paper, plastic, metal, glass, rags from garbage bins and municipal drums. They move around the city, covering the distance of up to 12 kilometers in a day, with head loads of up to 40 kilograms. On an average, a waste picker earns about ₹50 per day. The study further revealed that in waste picking, 90 percent were women. Of these, majority of women were illiterate and married, in the age group of 19-50 years. Every third women in the age group of 36-50 years was found to be either widow or divorcee. Two in every three females, combine 9 hours of hard manual work in her vocation, with another couple of hours of cooking, cleaning and related family activities. Ten percent of such females lived in undeclared slums. In the absence of, tenable employer-employee relationship, these waste pickers were not covered under any labour legislation and social security provisions.

Eapen (2001) pointed out towards the increase in women’s employment in Kerala’s informal sector. This employment was more in nature of casual and irregular, contractual labour. Moreover, though women’s earning contributed
substantially to household, still, her condition was very dismal. Women, especially of lower castes, not only, had to cope up with physical hardships that influenced their health, but they also continued to be paid much lower wages than men in the same category. The formal/informal sector dichotomy needed to be re-examined. However, it was suggested that there was no disagreement on the urgency, in term of policy initiatives to help people move faster towards secure and fuller employment. While providing those workers, who were excluded from the formal sector, with same type of assets and guiding them into newer areas of employment could be one avenue, another for wage earners could be in terms of diversifying their working conditions with acquisition of new skills. The role of decentralized planning in this context could not be under emphasized. An all round need for raising levels of output and improving the working environment in such activities were other imperatives. The cause for concern was that, the emerging employment scenario was encouraging the growth of informal working conditions and with increasingly large segments of the working population being forced to seek employment, under unfavorable terms. Thus, the share of workers in the products of development was bound to decline, more so for women, whose earning continued to remain low. Finally, the study suggested that low paid occupations for lower caste people aggravated by gender, was the syndrome, which was required to be broken.

Ghosh (2001) had taken up the case of home-based sub-contracting activities or work in very small units that did not even constitute manufacturers. The aim of the paper was to bring forth their increasing number and meager earnings. These workers often worked on piece rate basis and usually were very poorly paid. These workers mainly included poor women. They might to some extent, have substituted both self-employment and regular employment on a regular wage basis. This fact was supported by some micro-evidence relating to certain manufacturing sectors, in particular towns and cities. Both the general pressure of industrial capitalist production and the particular external pressures faced by exporting industries, operated to increase this tendency, rather than to increase a more regular and secure form of women involvement in manufacturing work. As per labour bureau, even in case of beedi industry, 90 percent of total workforce had consisted of women and children working at home. This further suggested that home-based work was already
a common manufacturing practice and that such labour practices were widespread. If the micro data combined with micro evidence, was accurate representations of ongoing trends, then the feminization of export-oriented employment at the margin, might have taken a particularly regressive form in India. However, the marginal utilization of women workers was at the lowest and poorest paid parts of the production chain and such women were therefore, effectively deprived of all the benefits, that might accrue from outside employment, except for meager nominal returns, that they received from piece-work. Finally, the author suggested for the need for social development, giving proper access to food, knowledge, good environment etc. to these women along with good governance to combat the situation.

Unni (2001a) made a study, aimed at providing the evidence of the growing informalization of the labour force in south Asian countries. Two broad components of the informal economy i.e. non-wage and wage employment were distinguished. The share of the first component had been rising, in the last two decades. Within non-wage employment, certain invisible group of workers, such as home-based workers and street vendors were vulnerable to changes in the global and local economy. The increasing casualization of the workforce was indicator of an increase in the second broad component. Within wage employment, home workers and informal workers, in the formal enterprises, were vulnerable. The low quality of employment, available to women in the informal economy was brought into notice by evidence on wages and incomes received and differentials in earnings. Finding revealed that the concept of the informal sector as defined in SNA 1993, needed to be widened to include workers, who were more invisible and vulnerable in the labour market, such as out workers, especially women. It was further found that non-wage employment was most prominent in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Its share increased during the 1980’s and 1990’s in Bangladesh and India, while it appeared to decline in Pakistan and Nepal. Within this first component, a large proportion of home-based workers and street vendors were found in India. Another large but relatively declining component of the informal economy, wage employment was more difficult to distinguish clearly due to increasing casualization of work in India and Bangladesh. Thus, process of informalization was marked by the growth of
informal employment within the formal economy. Though it was difficult to obtain the trends in this process, it was observed that a large number of employees in the formal economy were not receiving the benefits due to them, owing to existence of informal workers, in India. The quality of employment available to women workers in the informal economy was brought out by wages and incomes, they received and differentials in earnings. Overall evidence suggested that poor quality of employment was available to women, in the informal economy. The trend towards increasing feminization of the workforce in the non-agricultural sector was observed in south Asia. The links between gender, informality and labour market in South Asia were evident. However, study suggested, chances were that the informal employment, which helped many households to earn a living, would reduce the intensity of poverty.

Unni (2001b) in a study based on 1999-2000, NSSO survey aimed to bring forth the fact that preferable ‘place of work’ for women were their homes respectively. The findings of his study revealed that about one quarter of non-agricultural workers, in informal enterprises, work in their own dwelling. Within this overall picture, there were marked urban-rural and male-female differences. About 18 percent of these workers were home-based in rural areas, while only 6 percent were home-based in urban areas. Over half of the female non-agricultural workforce in informal enterprises (57 percent) worked at home, while less than one-fifth of the male non-agricultural workforce (18 percent) worked at home. A sample survey of the workforce of Ahmadabad city in western India, brought out the gender differences in the location of work. The findings from that survey showed the distribution of all male-female workers, both formal & informal across different work sites. It was found that 52 percent of all women compared to 8 percent of all men, worked at home. 18 percent of all women compared to 1 percent of all men, worked at others home. 5 percent of all women compared to 23 percent of all men, worked in the streets. 3 percent of all women compared to 5 percent of all men, worked at construction sites. 22 percent of all women compared to 58 percent of all men, worked at factories, offices or workshops. Study also found that women operated nearly 70 percent of the informal manufacturing activities, nearly 20 percent of the informal service activities and just 10 percent of the informal trading
activities. The majority of all economic activities managed or operated by women were home-based. Further, no women were running small manufacturing units outside their homes & nearly three-fourth of women traders, operated from their homes rather than on the streets.

**Usha (2001)** brought out the consequences and determinants of women work in the informal sector. Study found that women in textile sales sector were working with very lower wage than the minimum wage fixed. They were not getting any service benefits such as increments, leave, pension, provident fund and insurance. They were all coming from the lower class family and were exploited in many ways. Engagement of women in this field was very high because of less skill and easy accessibility. Wage patterns were also irregular and comparatively less than other unorganized workers like, contract, self-employed, construction workers etc. The author, to improve the conditions of these women workers engaged in textile sector, has suggested proper policy intervention.

**Bali and Unni (2002)** analyzed the position of women workers in garment industry with the aim to bring forth the sexual division. The study indicated that there was a clear sexual division of labour in the garment making process and also in the type and quality of garment contracted. Among workers engaged in stitching of ready-made garments in the local supplying chain, only ten percent of women stitched pants, while 36 percent of men did so. The majority of women stitched frocks and hosiery garments. Men were also engaged in the cutting of garments, the most specialized activity, supervision, procuring orders and marketing. Women were engaged in minor activities like cutting the loose threads, stitching the buttons and other finishing and ornamentation work. This sexual division of labour had relegated the women to the lowest categories of work resulting in lower piece rate wages and lower overall monthly income. Finally, it was suggested that government, public and women organizations should join hands together to uplift such workers. Role of SHG’s could also be very crucial in this case.

**Bhattacharya (2002)** in a study discussed some of the major issues surrounding the process of urbanization in developing countries. Contribution of rural to urban migration to urban growth and an analysis of the role of a free entry of
urban informal sector, both in migration process and in contributing to national output, was also discussed. Findings suggested that attitude needed to be changed about the informal sector, which include a large number of female workers also. These workers produced many goods and services efficiently and at lower cost. Study showed that the share of the urban labour force, engaged in informal sector activities was growing. The informal sector enjoyed a largely symbiotic relationship with formal sector and contributed significantly to national output. Lack of adequate credit facilities was a major barrier to the growth of many informal sector firms. Loan program, training, reduction of regulation among others could be used to encourage a vibrant informal sector. Management of urban system was a big challenge, but with appropriate policies & institutions, the challenge could be met. The role of the private sector, non-government organizations and community based groups in providing necessary food, cloth, shelter, health; education etc. to informal sector workers was required to change with time.

Das gupta (2002) examined the access to social protection that was being available to women workers in informal economy. Given their vulnerable status at home and at work, income generation alone might not improve their socio-economic status. Their economic empowerment was required to go along with political empowerment, which could improve their bargaining power both in the household and at work. This meant that organizing women workers in the informal economy could have beneficial impact on their work and life. If such organizations combine voice representation along with access to resources, such as credit and information, then situation of women workers would improve certainly. The study found that the women workers in the informal sector who were organized (SEWA members) were better off than their non organized counterparts: mostly in terms of access to credit and training efforts. Their access to loans for housing enabled them to buy their own homes and have health insurance. Survey also revealed that primary motive of women to join such organizations was not a desire to organize or to have voice, rather their primary motive came from more immediate and material needs, that is, mainly for credit. This brought important lessons for such organizations that when survival is at stake, organizations needs to be based around more immediate need such as access to credit and training through creation of SHG.
Dhar (2002) in a study analyzed that there was a fast increase in women work force in India, due to movement of rural women to urban areas in search of jobs. A reduction in family income due to retrenchment, educated unemployment, increase in women empowerment, living standards etc. were some factors that had led urban women to join work force. Women doing multiple roles were failing to cope up with stress and anxiety involved in work and it was taking serious tolls on their mental and physical health. Results of the study revealed that due to tough working conditions and meager income, middle-aged family women suffered from anxiety, depression, hypertension, insomnia, cardio-vascular diseases, pre matured deaths, diabetes, lower back pain, hormonal imbalances etc. The manifestation of the depression was loss of appetite, helplessness, inferiority complex, social isolation and emotional disturbances etc. Finally, the study concluded that women, with mental disorders, did not go even for professional counseling due to poor economic condition and social stigma. So, they preferred to suffer quietly. Employers, society, family and Government should offer a better, stress free environment, the necessary support and health protection.

ILO (2002) discussed that working conditions of domestic workers vary enormously in developing countries like India. Some of them were treated as members of their employer’s family, while others were exploited and subjected to conditions, which in some cases amounted to virtual slavery and forced labour. Domestic workers often had to work long or even excessive hours of work, with no rest days or compensation for overtime. They generally received low wages and had inadequate health insurance coverage. They were also exposed to physical harassment, violence, abuse and were in some cases trapped in situations, in which they were physically or legally restrained from leaving the employer’s home by means of threats or actual violence or by withholding of pay or identity document. There was strong need for proper policy framework by the government to improve their condition.

Jayaswal (2002) made a study with an aim to find the effect of domestic violence on married working females. Questionnaires were distributed among 200 married working females (low-income group) with age ranging between 15 to 45 in order to screen out women exposure to various degrees of domestic violence,
physical abuse, psychological abuse and economic abuse above all. On the basis of these questionnaires, nine groups were formed—three in each of the high exposed, medium exposed and low exposed to the domestic violence. On the selected groups, participated methods-focused group discussion, criteria scoring, matrices scoring, seasonal calendar was used to estimate the impact of domestic violence on the work output outside home, efforts of careers enhancement, mental health, aspiration, optimism and interpersonal relations with family members, neighbours and co-workers. Results of the findings showed that higher the exposure to domestic violence, higher was absenteeism, lesser or no effort for career enhancement, negative mental health, more pessimism and fatalistic and insecurity in interpersonal relationships. Study suggested an urgent need to combat the domestic violence, for which a leadership to boost the self-esteem of low paid females will be very useful to make them feel secured.

**Kaistha and Raha (2002)** in a study analyzed that although India is undergoing a period of rapid socio-economic development, in which women have begun to assert their rights and give expression to their identity, their status still remained poorly low given the hierarchical and patriarchal nature of Indian society. They remained behind men in all objective and material measures of well being, economic self-sufficiency, education, health, nutrition and power of decision-making. A very large proportion of women in India were occupied as unpaid family helpers, rather than the workers who had, tangible income resulted from their labour. Vast majority of women functioned within the shadowy realm of the informal sector and therefore, were forced to work under oppressive working conditions. Gender oppression could be felt at a plurality of sights, the home, the work place, the education and in matters of health. Even after technology changes, they were forced to work at low and discriminatory wages, overburdened with triple burden of household work, outside work and reproductive burden, thereby resulting in malnutrition, anemia and chronic ill health. Though, in last two decades, a comprehensive health plan and legal framework had come into existence for the delivery of basic amenities of work and health, implementation part remained woefully inadequate. The study concluded that lack of social security, increasing occupational health hazards, no excess to new technology, skills and information, all
combined to continue the increasing exploitation of unorganized poor women. The solution to the problem required a strong intervention on the part of Government and voluntary agencies.

Kundu (2002) in a study aimed at bringing forth the poor condition of women workers, pointed out that in India with the process of liberalization, globalization and structural adjustment policies, in the later quarter of 20th century, there was just a little change observed in the labour market between pre and post reform period. Though, in certain sectors, demand for women workers increased, but, the new economic policy instead of breaking down, ongoing traditional trends, aggravated them. This tendency had further deteriorated women’s economic, social and health conditions. Rather, they became prone to different kind of economic and sexual exploitation and several other discriminations in the labour market. Their working conditions in most of the sectors were found to be poor, unhealthy and exploitive, with employers least bothered to improve their working conditions. They were forced to work in unhygienic, unsafe conditions, with very poorly lighted up place, poor ventilated facility, on outdated machines, that were known to cause accidents. Working hours of these women were nearly 7-10 hours in a day, six days in a week, with maximum of half an hour lunch break in between. Result of continuous sitting in same posture, could be seen in the form of severe backache or other perennial body pains. In certain sectors, where women workers were in majority like in garment manufacturing units, beedi factories, agarbatti factories, where the job involved the hazardous work, even no protection measures, that is use of mask, exhaust fans etc. were taken. So, in such units breathing problems were very common. Finally, the study concluded that hardly any positive changes were visible for the women workers working in labour market in India, even after the introduction of the reform policies. They were just seen as a balancing force in family and this attitude made them difficult to become integrated as a permanent part of the work force and further made them prone to discriminatory treatment in the employment market.

Nag and Nag (2002) highlighted the fact that women constitute a significant workforce in the informal sector of the industrially developing countries. In mass production industry, traditional village and cottage industry, women were engaged
in repetitive tasks, with high postural load due to constraints of work method and working condition. The working conditions of two occupational groups of beedi making and garment industry, was analyzed. In addition to postural analysis, objective measurement included back muscle problem, musculoskeletal stresses and strains in different work postures. In beedi making activity, women used to make unique floor sitting posture, that is legs crossed, one leg crossed and the another leg vertical and bent at knee, sitting with leg extended at knee and sitting sideways with bent knee. In sewing machine operations, women maintained a constant seated position on workbench, with the body inclined forward. The result of the analysis revealed that 2/3rd of the workers suffered from persistent back pain, muscular pain etc., that may be attributed to the long hours of awkward work postures. Finally, study suggested strong policy framework by the policy makers, as regard the health status of such females was concerned.

Neetha (2002) analyzed the position of women workers in knitwear industry in Tiruppur. Study found that females were contracted in the lowest paid category of workers, receiving substantially lower wages than men do. Women were concentrated in embroidery, cleaning, finishing, tagging and packaging. They were also entering in stitching in large numbers. There was clear sexual division of labour and with the introduction of machines, this had further been augmented. The fashion masters were the most skilled and this category was exclusively reserved for male workers. Machine attendants carried out the actual process of knitting, control, adjust and monitor the process with the assistance of helpers. Female workers were mostly helpers in these units and their chance of moving from helpers to attendants was found to be nil, while the male workers got every fair chance. This very clear sexual division of labour had implications for the wages earned, security of job and the possibility for the upward mobility in the industry. Obviously, the women workers received lower wages and had limited job mobility in the hierarchy of knitwear industry. Author suggested the strong need for unionization and formation of SHG’s to improve the bargaining strength and position of these women workers.

Mitra (2002) in his study analyzed the rate of growth of employment of urban women, especially in manufacturing, services and trade. The increased rate of growth of output, in this period had not been translated into increased employment
opportunities, for urban women workers. The paper also analyzed the sector wise share of employed females, the annual average rate of growth of employment for urban women and the employment patterns. It showed an increase in the regular, but subsidiary activities of urban women workers, along with rising open unemployment rates and deteriorating working conditions in terms of lower wages and lack of non-wage remuneration. The study was based primarily on secondary employment data, pertaining to four major rounds of NSSO surveys. The compound annual average rates of growth of employment had been calculated from the absolute employment figures, for the years 1983, 1987-88, 1993-94 & 1999-2000. Findings revealed that the pattern of growth in the post liberalization era could not generate adequate employment in the urban areas. The policies of privatization and deregulation followed in India to some extent raised the output growth rate, but the further expectation that this would automatically lead to higher employment and income growth rates, failed to materialize in light of cutting down of public investment in vital urban infrastructure, as in Indian context. The study suggested that the need of the hour was to frame a broader macro economic policy based on survival of the Keynesian demand management policies, which would reinstate the extremely important role of state. Finally, in the Indian context, it had been observed that the policies of liberalization had deteriorating effects on the employment of urban females. Tendencies were developed to provide low paid, inferior working conditions to females. This pattern of feminization did not call for any celebration, but required essentially to frame a social policy to protect the rights of such women workers and provide them with better employment contracts.

Parikh (2002) observed that in low-income Indian households, for obtaining food and water, women play a very active role. The study was made in the largest state of North India, Uttar Pradesh. The aim was to reveal the amount of work involved in collecting fuel and health impact from smoke arising out of these cooking fuels. Indoor pollution exposure due to cooking in poor ventilated kitchen, threatened the health of these women. A method of mass interview was adopted on as many as 10264 females of six district of U.P. Findings of the study revealed that due to poor economic conditions, these women were unable to afford new technology in their kitchen. They were forced to carry head loads of fuel in as many
as eight trips per month. Pollutants such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulf dioxide and volatile organic such as benzene, toluene and xylene, were seen as main culprits released during fuel burning, which affected health ailments. The linkages with respiratory diseases and eye irritation were analyzed through clinical examinations. Analysis revealed prevailing respiratory diseases, where 4.2 percent females suffered from bronchitis, 1.9 percent from asthma, 2.4 percent from chest infection and 4.2 percent from eye irritation. This also posed a burden of health costs and wage loss, in addition to the lost opportunity of time to put it into a productive activity. When women lose their working days, there was economic loss that hampered the living conditions of such poor household very badly. The study concluded that such issues need strategic thinking in order to achieve sustainable solutions. Integrated approach with due concentration towards women working in informal sector, their poverty and health is the answer to many issues. Supply of clean energy source is required, which is currently unavailable or unaffordable.

Quraishy (2002) made a study with an aim to analyze the impact of new economic policies as a part of globalization, on women in developing countries. Method used for study was case study approach and in depth interview along with a traditional anthropological techniques in the tribal area of Tamil Nadu. The results of the study revealed that in developed countries, while policies had been formulated to integrate women into mainstream of development on equal terms with men, both as agents and beneficiaries, in developing countries on the other hand, the policies on women were yet to be formulated. All the economic adjustment programmes had failed to solve the problems of poverty in third world countries making women suffer the most particularly in tribal, rural and low income urban areas. In these areas, the response of macro policies to environmental degradation was very diverse, in turn creating a negative impact on women. Moreover, in India, economic adjustment programmes adversely affected women as the Indian society being patriarchal, the property rights are vested in men and did not accommodate women as owner of land thereby restricting her access to credit and other extension facility. This resulted in invisibility of the labour made by women, who in turn created a negative impact on other aspects of their lives, that is, their access to education, new skills and technology, health and health related services. Finally, the study
concluded that with the introduction of new economic policy, the status of women was reduced to a subordinate position as in majority of cases, they ended up doing redundant tasks, while rights and decision making powers were safe with men.

Rani and Unni (2002) analyzed that globalization of world economy had led to transformation of economy and social interaction, a redefinition of work and shifts in structure of the labour market. The concept and nature of work and work place had undergone a radical change. In developing country like India, only 8 percent of work force was engaged in the formal sector and with the increase in structural adjustment programmes, this percentage was likely to decline further. The issue of security of employment became crucial in this context. But, most of the informal sector workers had hardly any social security benefit. Two sources of insecurity faced by workers were identified: one from random shocks, which hit the household from time to time and other from SAP’s, which were more or less permanent. A two-fold approach to security that is basic (food, education, health and shelter) and economic (work related) was found analytically and theoretically, to demarcate the insecurity faced by the different sections of the population. Some of common insecurities were irregularities of work, insecurity of continuity and low level of skill. Due to insecurity arising from not having permanent jobs, workers often engaged in multiple activities, changing status of work etc. The insecurity faced by self-employed workers were different from casual and piece rate workers. The study concluded that in a developing economy like India, with a large informal segment, the notion of social security would require proper social protection measures to cover the basic and economic needs. Government, civil societies and member-based organizations, should work collectively for social protection of such workers.

Sen (2002) while examining occupation hazards being faced by women construction workers, made a study with an aim to assess the impact of these hurdles on these female workers and to develop suitable intervention strategies to prevent the accidents and injuries. For this purpose, various construction related sights and hazards associated with these activities were analyzed. Case study method was opted for analysis. Efforts were made to find various causes of accidents and suggestions were made out to prevent such accidents in near future. Results of the
study revealed that injuries at workplace were preventable if proper information, safety instruction and awareness was provided to these workers. Opting for proper intervention strategies were considered important, to make the whole attempt successful.

Rani and Unni (2002), in this paper aimed to bring forth the seasonal dimensions affecting many occupations in the informal sector (both urban and rural) in Ahmadabad city of India. In a survey conducted in Gujarat state, many informal sector workers reported that their work was irregular in comparison to formal sector workers. There were marked seasonal fluctuations in the supply and price of different varieties of fruits, vegetables and other fresh produce being purchased by street vendors. Also, the demand for fruits and vegetables used to rises in summer, falls during the monsoon and winter months and peaks during the major wedding and festival season. Similarly, it was found that demand for garments typically fell during the summer, rose in winter and festive season. During the monsoon season, the lack of sun and dry spells disrupted many occupations like outside construction work, screen-printing, cloth dying, laundry services, spice drying etc. Although few women, who rolled beedis, did not suspend their work during the monsoon season, but many complained that mildew grows on leaves in which tobacco is rolled. So, to earn a living it became often necessary for worker in informal employment to have two or more jobs simultaneously. There were a few measures and a little data to capture the impact of these risks and dynamics on the income and the well-being of working poor. Finally, it was suggested to take strong measures by the government to cope up with the problems being faced by such people.

UNESCAP (2002) in a study found that workers employed in the informal sector were equally affected by the economic-crisis, price increase that resulted in the rise of cost of living index. The impact was likely to be greater in the case of informal sector workers. Being poorer, they had fewer buffers available to them in the form of savings and thus they suffered from greater income uncertainty. However, the impact of crisis on the demand for informal sector products was ambiguous. Being cheaper substitutes of formal sector products, demand increased, but that of some non-essential with high-income elasticity, the demand decreased. The crisis also had a direct impact on the informal labour market. The workers, who
lost jobs in the formal sector, entered informal sector, increasing competitiveness within the sector and reducing profit margins. Data from Indonesia, Thailand and Korea highlighted the need to provide proper protection for informal sector workers, during the economic downturns, as social protection was virtually non-existent for informal sector workers. Thus, providing safety nets only for the openly unemployed would be gross injustice to the workers in the informal sector. Need was also to make this sector, providing greater access to investment funds and markets for selling output. In view of the role of the sector, leaving it unassisted in times of economic distress, would be doing a grave injustice to a large section of poor people, who rather than being dependent on the government support, were brave enough to fight their way forward, when faced by an unfavorable economic environment.

Gupta (2003) while studying a construction industry, with an aim to highlight poor conditions of female workers found that only male workers were registered as workers in the muster roll of the employer and rest of the family remained invisible to statistics, policy and social sector provisions. Working hours for all the workers were 12-14 hours, including women, who were not even on the master rolls. The day started at the 6.00 A.M for the women with their household works and a little later for men who used to start their preparatory work. The workers had an hour of rest in the afternoon. The day ended at 6.00 P.M for men and women. Where men proceeded to rest, women again began their household work such as preparation of the evening meal. Her day ended only at 10.00 P.M, when she had served the meal and cleaned the utensils etc. The double work for women at home place and workplace made her condition quite pitiable. Not only this, she was to take care of her children also in between the work. Finally, the author suggested for suitable policy measures for such females in terms of fixation of decent pay, flexible working hours and adequate social security provisions to facilitate their successful inclusion in the labour market.

Jeomal and Rani (2003) made a study, which aimed at focusing on poor informal sector workers and their insecurities and vulnerability. Globalization process has changed the structure of employment the world over. The study was conducted in Ahmadabad city. Findings revealed that out of a total labour force of
1.5 million workers, over 75 percent worked in informal sector. Insecurities faced by women workers both inside and outside the home, due to their dual responsibilities, were empirically analyzed. The decline in work force participation of women, from 34 percent in 1983 to 29.9 percent in 1999-00, could be due to discouraged worker effect. The workforce participation in rural and urban areas of Ahmadabad district was higher [58.61 percent] compared to national average. The percentage of female headed households was higher in urban areas (19.2 percent) compared to rural areas (9.4 percent). About 19 percent workers reported open unemployment and a higher proportion of women workers faced difficulty. Casual workers reported 137 days of unemployment and seasonal nature of agriculture accounted for 134 days of unemployment. But, self employed women had less open unemployment. The quality of employment in their informal economy could be judged by income earned. The annual individual income of women worker’s was ₹12, 912/- and it was lower as compared to men’s annual income of ₹16, 704/-. The literacy rate among male and female workers had wide disparity. The male literacy rate was 84.2 percent as compared to 38.2 percent as female literacy rate. About 50 percent of self-employed in rural and urban areas, reported lack of access to capital, to expand their business. Females headed households faced greater food insecurity (23 percent) in urban areas. Regarding health insecurity, 12 to 15 percent of men and women reported deterioration in their health status. Around 30.6 percent women did not receive any medical benefits. This analysis showed that women with their dual burden, low level of education, skill and access to capital, found it difficult to cope with their responsibilities. The pressure of earning an income, along with the household responsibilities, affected their health. There was a need to reform social as at workplace.

Tripathy(2003) aimed at estimating the rate of participation of women labour in various sectors, the problems of such informal women labour in rural as well as in urban areas, especially employed in construction and service sector of the economy and to suggest policy implications. The study observed that ignorance, tradition–bound attitudes, lack of skill, seasonal nature of employment, heavy physical work, lack of job security, long hours of work, lack of minimum facilities at the workplace, ill-treatment and bondage were some of the features of the
employment of women in the construction sector. Finally, it was suggested that the respective states should come forward to reduce the incidence of exploitation of these poor, unorganized women. At least minimum wage and related facilities should be provided to them to extract them out of the chains of poverty and exclusion.

Unni et al. (2003) observed that many informal sector workers, particularly in urban areas, lived in informal settlement or low-income housing and often did not have title or legal ownership rights to the house. Security of tenure was directly related to income security for people working at home, whether self employed or industrial outworkers. The amount of space that could be used for work and for storage, the cleanliness of the home and access to electricity, influence the type and amount of work that could be undertaken. In case of low income women, who lived in informal shelters on the streets, it was found that they wanted to undertake piece rate garment work at home, but no one was willing to give them this work, because of the conditions of their homes. They lacked the place to store raw material and finished products. So, in spite of having good skills needed to undertake garment work, they had to resort to work as casual labourers or as garbage pickers, living off, what they could collect and sell from garbage dumps. Some strong policy measures were needed to be taken to uplift such informal sector female workers.

Becker et.al (2004) in a study pointed out that informal economy comprised some of the most exposed as well as poor groups on labour market. The problems faced by informal wageworkers were numerous. They suffered from inadequate labour legislation, labour protection and social security schemes and had limited access to wage worker’s organizations. In addition, their incomes were low and irregular and they had a very limited bargaining power to increase salaries. The work related risks were greater, such as less secure contracts, fewer benefits and poorer working conditions for the wageworkers. Women’s share of informal economy employment, worldwide, had remained between 60 percent to 80 percent. Moreover, the number of females in the labour force was continuously on rise and women in the informal economy, most probably numbered much more than reflected in available statistics. They comprised most of the unpaid labour, were often working as home-based workers and accurate data on them at household level
was difficult to measure. But, matter of the fact is that if productive unpaid work
was performed, these women must be included in the informal economy. Another
important aspect of women’s and girl’s higher participation in the informal economy
was that they lacked the right to own and inherit property of any kind in many
countries. This obstructed the women even more from formal economy, as they did
not have any asset to lease as security for credits. Finally, the author suggested
suitable policy framework to improve the condition of these females.

National commission for women (2004) while discussing a reformatory
approach towards the status of low-income working females emphasized the
effectiveness of self-help groups. SHG is a self-governed, peer controlled, small
informal association of the poor, usually formed of socio economically homogenous
families, who get organized around saving and credit activities. The study was done
with an aim to assess the various enterprise models, of community financial
mediation, promoted by Government, Banks and NGOs. Field survey were carried
out in four districts of Rajasthan and four districts of Tamil Nadu. Initially, 100
SHGs from each district were selected at random, but due to problems encountered
during survey, only 350 SHGs in Rajasthan and 189 SHGs in Tamil Nadu covering
approximately 8000 women were covered. The study revealed that clients were not
only aware about insurance, but were also willing to pay the premium. About 58
percent of the households reported increase in assets. The number of SHGs
increased from 25247 in 2001 to 178571 in 2004. Women member increased from
1301597 to 2984132, savings from SHGs increased from Rs.81 crores to Rs.532
crores, loan received increased from Rs. 22829 crores to 159164 crores during the
period of 2001 to 2004. The scheduled caste women covered were 2.73 percent,
OBC women covered were 66.6 percent and no scheduled tribes were covered. The
activities, that SHG undertook, were making provision of drinking water, plantation
of flowers and fruit trees, cashewnut production, formation of youth clubs, AIDS
prevention groups and co-operative. The study concluded that SHG concept should
target the holistic development of women. There is need to spread relevant
information on SHGs for members and social workers. The study recommended
training for income generation activities, which could be taken up like bakery, paper
products, agarbatti, candle, chalk piece making, foot mats, leather product, catering etc. to uplift the status of poor women.

Saroj (2004) made a study with the aim to analyze the use of saving credit programmes, to uplift the socio economic status of urban poor family in Baroda city. Study compared the pre and post loan status of women and their households. A sample of 175 women loaners from 15 slums, where saving credit programmes were operational, was taken. Data was collected through interviews and other secondary sources like loan books etc. It was found that 70 percent women were in the age group 20-45 years, 32 percent were SCs, 84 percent were married, 27 percent were illiterate. Saving credit programmes had membership fees, ranging between ₹2-₹10. Upper limit for the loan was ₹7500/-, Rate of interest was 12 percent P.A., period of repayment was 12-24 months and 89.7 percent respondents were regular in repayment. The greatest effect of saving credit programmes was that there was an increase in monthly household income. 66 percent women converted their houses into permanent structures, husbands started looking after their wives during sickness and quality and quantity of the families’ meal improved. There was a drastic change in social awareness and social status of women after the programme. In the pre loan period, 52 percent did not participate in outdoor activities, but in the post loan period, the ratio of participation in outdoor activities rose to 79 percent. 82 percent of husbands were the major decision makers in the pre loan period, while in the post loan period 65 percent women shared in decision-making. 21 out of 154 women had a right on husband income in pre loan period, while in the post loan period the number increased to 81. In the pre loan period, 97 percent women had no bank account and only 3 percent had a bank account, while in the post loan period, 11 percent respondents had their individual and 9 percent had joint bank account. Not only this, there was a change in the social attitude of these women. The study concluded that saving credit programmes had a positive impact on society, especially on the low-income women and provision for such an informal source of finance must be made for urban poor.

Acharya et.al (2005) analyzed the fact that one of India’s global as well as local advantages was cheap female labour. It was found that women’s participation in the informal home based traditional crafts was far remote, from the
implementation of ILO standards regarding women’s health at work. In addition, study also demanded the critical scrutiny of ninth five-year plan (1997-2002) of India that emphasized women health and empowerment. The aim of the analysis was to link the gender inequalities, under the changing social and economic conditions and to examine the situation of women to give recommendations for development of strategies aimed at the promotion and empowerment of the female workers in coastal Orissa and elsewhere in India. Multiple methods across levels and structures were adopted, to explore various dimensions of women’s multiple identities and roles, to reflect their work coping capabilities. Findings revealed that the gender inequalities at work place and at home were a common social division. This tendency to undervalue women’s paid and unpaid labour and related health status was found to be at significant extent. Gender bias, discrimination on the part of employers, household and even the state was clearly seen. It was also found that these women were disadvantaged by their limited mobility, poor quality marketing skills, vocational education, property rights, access to credit and public information system. The study finally, concluded that at policy level, planning efforts should be directed towards maximizing the transformative potential of self-help groups, local women organizations and employers to ensure that they were responsible enough to the ILO agreements and new forms of social protection.

Chakarvarty (2005) made a study with the aim to understand the women’s relative position, in some firms within a garment manufacturing industry, in the context of expanding market opportunities in India. Study covered Hydrabad and surrounding areas. It analyzed 8 firms, during the period of 1991 to 2001 on the basis of number of workers. Percentage of women workers was 48 percent in the total work force. The study found that the women employment percentage decline in firms A & C, but firms B & D showed a constant female percentage share at two points of time. The decline in firm A was as high as 80 percent, but the total number of women working in three firms A&B&C had not declined. The study revealed that the percentage decline in women employment was much sharper in the case of technological advanced firms than in the technological backward ones. In firms considered as practicing continuous process production or those which employed three shift for production, the total earnings and monthly wage rates for male and
female workers did not differ. For all other firms, except two, irrespective of market orientation and technological status, male workers monthly earnings were more than those of female workers. The study revealed two important facts. Firstly, women workers were concentrated in low categories as helpers and grade C tailors, as well as designers and supervisors, except in firm E, where they were in higher positions. Secondly, higher posts went mainly to male workers. The percentage of male helpers varied between 30 to 50 percent in all the firms. The study, finally suggested that discrimination against women was taking place within the labour market. It was mainly due to the lack of education in general and technical education in particular, that made women less endowed and barred their entry into the industrial labour market.

Purohit (2005) analyzed the economic problems of hawkers, vendors and women engaged in home based activities, in the urban informal sector. A large section of this sector was concentrated in slums, pavements, streets and public places. The income generation activities of this sector were outside the purview of official statistics because of conceptual and methodological problems, thereby making women’s productivity as well as their status invisible. The study revealed that women were seen as supplementary earners, but they were in fact main earners of the family. Unlike the male members whose preferences were self consumption, women allocate their income for food, education, health and saving requirements. Nearly 80 percent of the women surveyed were full time workers spending 6-12 hours on their work. 55 percent of women involved themselves in domestic work for 4-5 hours. The leisure time enjoyed by them by was 1-2 hours in a day. In household activities, they got support from their children, with low participation by the husband and other family members. About 45 percent of women were forced to earn because of unemployment of male members, while another 40 percent worked to supplement their family income. 44 percent of the women surveyed, didn’t enjoy any vacation, as they were required to earn for the survival needs of the family. The study concluded that with the changing socio economic structure of the economy, there was a need to change the perception of issues and priorities regarding women’s role in society. This necessitated the effectiveness of policies and programmes for women and their work.
Hemalata (2006) observed that a vast majority of women are working in informal sector without any job security or social security. These women had become more vulnerable to physical and mental exploitation, with the advent of neo-liberal policies of globalization, liberalization, and privatization. They were prone to various health hazards being faced by informal sector workers. The work done by them was often low skilled and low paid, irregular and demanding long hours, resulting in mental tension and chronic fatigue. The wage of piece-rated worker depended on the speed of their work, making them prone to lead life full of stress. Making working hours flexible as per employer’s need further disturbed the family life of such women. A large number of women complained of frequent headaches, back pain, circulatory disorders, fatigue, emotional and mental disorders. Due to Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, public jobs got reduced, forcing these women to work in informal sector. But, they lacked basic facilities of toilets, restrooms, dining spaces etc. causing urinary tract and other diseases particularly among pregnant women. They didn’t have any child care facilities, causing anxiety and emotional strain in them. Despite of these burdens, attitude of family and society had also not undergone a change, thereby resulting such workers to bear double burden of work at home and at work place. They often forgot to have proper nutrition resulting in problem of anemia. Government and trade unions need to encourage such workers, by making appropriate policies.

Kantor et al. (2006) in a paper analyzed the challenges involved in achieving “decent work” as conceptualized by ILO, in the urban informal economy, through measuring decent work deficits among male and female workers in Surat. It assessed and contributed to existing attempts to measure decent work and then, examined the prevalence of deficits and inadequate earnings in Surat. This was done by disaggregating the analysis by structural insecurities, shaping informal work opportunities in India, specifically in gender and activity status. The results provided guidance regarding, what type of policies were most needed and for which groups, in order to achieve “decent work for all” in urban India. Among the sample taken of residents of low-income settlements in Surat, male salary workers had the lowest decent work deficits. This did not mean that they had achieved decent work, but relative to others, they were closer to this end. The worst off casual & piece rate
workers & female salary workers. Self-employed workers had more mixed results and fewer gender differences. Key areas, where improvements were needed across activity type, included pay levels, amount and regularity of days of work, excess hours of work, training and organizing the workers. Women’s pay levels particularly required attention, as most of them earned far less than published minimum wages in the state. Two particular sub-groups of women workers, on which to focus, were domestic workers and piece rate workers. For the latter, the ILO convention on homework was on the way, but needed to be enforced properly. Enforcing minimum wages for domestic workers was challenging due to the dispersion of workers and employers within private homes. Support to build and sustain organization of domestic workers was required to increase their voice and bargaining positions. Casual and female salary workers needed, some formalization of their work through access to written contracts and fair dismissal terms. This should ideally make them eligible for basic non-wage benefits, medical care, maternity benefits and paid holidays.

Khan and Khan (2006) examined the contribution of informally employed women in their household budget. The urban informal sector absorbed the women worker largely. Nature of the determinants of the contribution, in their household budget, to make survival of the families was the core of the study. Applying OLS model on 935 observations, it was found that women as head of household, women education and her ownership of assets had positive effect on contribution. The burden of the large family size, household poverty, loan availed by the household was shared by the informally employed women as these variables positively effected their contribution. Age of the women had it’s effect on women’s contribution. First, the contribution increased, then decreased by increase in the age of women. Married women and women living in nuclear families, contributed more to household budgets. The household per capita income showed negative effect on the contribution of women in household budget. The household economic vulnerability due to unemployment of husband and lower production, caused by lower education of husband, was also largely shared by the urban informally employed women. In other words, they struggled more for family survival. However, number of adult males in the household decreased the volume of contribution of women and burden
on women was relaxed. So, it was reflected in the findings that majority of women, working in informal sector, were mainly contributing in household budget due to pressure of unmet household budget. So, an increase in income and productivity of informally employed urban women might have trickle down effects on reduction of household poverty, but at the same time increased burden on women. Therefore, policy on women employment should be carefully planned. Government along with micro-finance institutions and NGO’s could play an important role in upgrading their status.

Rajeev (2006) based on a field survey, looked at the status of the contract labour, in the state of Karnataka. The study found that in order to compete effectively in a global market, the Industrial sector demand flexibility. To cope with rigidities imposed by labour laws, the new trend in employment, that is, of contractual labour increased. The study revealed that while a number of large firms paid wages above the minimum wage fixed by the state and support an increase in the minimum wage levels, a considerable number of small firms exploited the contract workers in various ways, including through the non-repayment of minimum wages. It was also found that there was an urgent need to improve the social security network and supervisory mechanism for contract labour in the state. Moreover, in-depth analysis of many enterprises revealed during field survey, that they were ready to enhance the wage levels of contract workers, provided minimum wages norms were revised accordingly. In the case of contract labour, it was observed that a collusive agreement between the contractor and the principal employer led to various corrupt practices. Being on the long side of market, labour was often victimized. Careful steps needed to be taken to curb corruption, so as to ensure that the labour class gets dues. To ensure this, primarily, it was necessary to educate labour about their rights and responsibilities. Contract labour should be able to voice their complaints to an independent authority, which in turn should take it up with the contractor. Unless such measures are taken, the benefits of liberalization will accrue only to a particular sector of the society.

Sinha (2006) highlighted the sufferings of females home based workers by using case study method. Home based working was not old-fashioned form of employment that might die out, as the economy modernized. Home based work was
on the rise, around the world. Findings revealed that the home based worker was often an exploited lot, earning below the subsistence levels. Additionally, a large number of home based workers were women-obedient, docile and invisible. It was found, these workers put long hours of work in it, that effected their health adversely, still they lacked any rights in their life. They were completely dependent on middlemen – for work, for wages, for credit and for protection during crisis. The middlemen exploited them by paying poorly or deducting from their earning in pretext of poor quality of work or even by retaining a part of her wages. She was found to be isolated, had no voice to fight for her rights and not having other avenues of work. The study concluded that need was to organize these home based workers, thereby improving their earning and working conditions. As this population contributed significantly to the national economy, they were entitled to food security, work security, income security and social security.

United Nation Economic & Social Council (2006) pointed out that women faced much more severe problems & constraints than men. Government needs to keep this fact in view while devising policies & program for informal sector women. Measures should be gender-sensitive, so that benefits also reach women. Women should be given priority in the provision of credit. Day care centers for children of poor working women, should be established through both government and NGO’s initiatives. Women should be assisted and encouraged to form groups for discussing their problems and taking collective actions. Women organization like SEWA, in India, should provide assistance to women by making them aware of their rights and by uniting them to demand higher wages. According to the study, despite of informal sector making major contributions to the economy, it was still characterized by low productivity, low wages, poor working conditions and long working hours. There was every need to increase the production and incomes of the informal sector to tackle the problem of poverty. So, individuals, especially women, involved in marginal & subsistence level activities, should be assisted in such a way that their income increase, working conditions improve and they might move out of poverty. Policy interventions to achieve this include, provision of credit, education and skills, training, improved access to physical infrastructure, extension of social protection and the strengthening of linkages with the formal sector. The committee
on poverty reduction might also be established to provide the secretariat with guidance on any further work in the area of poverty and the informal sector.

**Doane (2007)** in a study examined the relationship between home- work and persistent poverty in certain parts of South and South-east Asia. The question of inter-generational poverty in the family of home- workers and the possibility of using social protection and other related policies as a means of helping to alleviate poverty and vulnerability among home- workers, had been given due stress. Study looked at those elements that caused some home- women workers and their children to remain in a situation of persistent poverty and vulnerability. The contributing factors that allowed others to attain some degree of security, were also considered. Issues such as gender, social exclusion and economic trends were amongst the factors, that could work against the well-being of home- workers. The study had drawn analysis of two closely tide networks of home- workers in South-Asia and South-east Asia i.e. Home net South East Asia and Home net South Asia, the latter in association with the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST). Thus, coverage of a wide range of issues including an analysis of specific indigenous, local and national social protection schemes as well as the influence of such considerations on local cultures and religions was made, because they relate to the needs and coping strategies of different groups of home- workers. The home net studies indicated that the clearest connection between poverty and home- work arises, from the fact that home- work was often the only option available to these women workers, due to various gender designated responsibilities and restrictions. These workers had lack of access to important factors such as resources, information, changing patterns of demand, loss of markets, rising cost of living and production etc. Home net studies also found that the main concerns of most of the home- workers were illness and a lack of sufficient work, factors that were often closely interrelated. Finally, it had been argued that a multilayer approach was needed, building from the community and local support systems and moving through different levels of social protection.

**Kundu (2007)** analyzed the condition of domestic workers in Kolkatta. Study found that most of them were females and were hired to work in private houses. However, their work remained unrecognized as a legitimate form of activity in India. This study through a micro level approach, aimed at investigating the
conditions of work and rights of female domestic workers. It revealed that young married woman coming from distant places with higher number of children, with low and uncertain income of other family members, preferred part time domestic work to supplement their family income. Through engel’s ratio, it was identified that the standard of living of full time domestic workers was slightly better than that of part time domestic workers. Most of them were deprived of overtime pay, public holidays and timely payment of salaries. The west Bengal Government also deprived them of the benefit of the state assisted scheme of provident fund for unorganized workers. The study revealed that although Government of India planned to implement a few regulations to facilitate better working and living conditions of unorganized workers, but surprisingly the domestic workers were not the part. It was found that they were deprived of minimum defined standards even. Finally, it was concluded that these workers should get fixed daily wage, working hours should not exceed more than 8 hours a day. They should also be united to look after their interests. A micro credit programme should be developed for these workers, that could help them to earn extra income, by investing credit in any income augmented activity. This will save them from any sort of exploitation. Most importantly, these workers should be included under the state assisted scheme of provident fund.

Manjula et al.(2007) revealed that both agarbatti and garment industry were highly labour intensive, although the extent of capital used in the garment sector was much higher. However, the share of women workers in the total value of production, in both these sectors was exploitatively low, wages paid to agarbatti roller and women garment workers had been less than minimum wages. Health hazards were severe for agarbatti rollers, due to the nature of raw material and the work. The provision of social security benefits to workers in both these sectors, were meager. Thus, the urban informal women workers were found to be severely exploited in terms of both wages paid and poor working conditions. In addition, they faced harassment of varying kinds and degrees at the work place. In agarbatti industry, women were found to be involved in rolling process. Much of the value addition to the product took place after the rolling was complete. While the scent used in agarbatti was unique selling proposition of each brand, thereby meaning that capital
took much of the return. But, the labour involved in the scenting process, constituted only male workers implying that the women were completely marginalized. Similarly, in garment industry, women were involved in lower end of value chain, being restricted largely to tailoring and stitching. More skillful and high paid tasks were given to men. Moreover, strict imposition of targets and dire consequences of not meeting the target, particularly drove women workers out of the industry at young ages. In both the cases, attitude of employer was quite harsh. Provision of certain basic amenities at work place such drinking water, toilets, crèches etc. were not provided properly in both the sectors. These workers were forced to work under poor lighting, ventilation and cramped space. Monotonous and repetitive work undertaken by the workers often caused muscular problems for them. Still, the provision of social security benefits to the workers in the both the industries were found to be meager. The study finally, concluded that exploitation of these workers took alarming proportions in such industries, where majority of workers were women and most of employers were men. There was also an element of gender bias as many employers functioned with the notion that the female workers constitute the weaker sex and therefore more could be squeezed out of them at much lesser cost.

Sarkar (2007) pointed out that the process of globalization and liberalization had influenced the socio-economic institutions and the people, especially, the status of women had remained more or less unchanged. Rather, in labour market, casualization and feminization of labour, brought a few dangerous outcomes of process of liberalization and globalization. Various kinds of service sectors were emerging, where employers were finding new methods of engaging female workers, at low wages and with insecure job conditions. Women being more flexible labour, with much cheap bargaining power, were beneficial for their employer for ‘sub-contracting’, ‘home-based’ and ‘piece- meal’ jobs, where job security was temporary, with low wage and more working hours. Garments, luggage bag, making food products and several other such activities were de-skilling the already vulnerable female workers. EPZ were another category, where females faced same condition with ‘hire last and fire fast’ as prevailing norm. In rural areas, agriculture being more targeted by commercialization, marginalized families were pushing their females into contractual work, which in turn had brought extra strain to their
health and life situation. Thus, the process of feminization of poverty, which through, existed traditionally, now found new forms and dimensions. Overall, economic globalization in the form of market democracies, not only reinforced the patriarchy, it had commercialized women and their sexuality as never before. Finally, the study concluded, that in global tide of changing economy, women had been highly exploited to suit to the new market economy. Dynamics of powered distribution and gender discrepancies had taken the new forms of discriminations and victimization of women, under the name of economic empowerment.

Upadhyay (2007) carried out a study in Andhra Pradesh, with a broad objective to know the nature and quality of employment in urban informal sector and social economic conditions of workers engaged there. It was pointed out that role of government, should be that of facilitator and promoter, so that workers employed in the informal sector were able to get requisite level of protection and security to have decent work environment, enabling them to express their skills fully and as per their capabilities. This would help in raising their income and socio economic status. The study found that the exploitation of wage-workers in informal sector was higher than that of formal sector. It was also found that linkages of informal sector units with Government and other public systems, by way of regulation and utility supply were more or less non existent. Very insignificant proportion had access to electricity and institutional credit. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary survey was carried out among 130 randomly selected workers engaged in various sector of urban economy of A.P. It was found that majority of workers in the job market were migrants (86.2 percent). 33 percent of total workers in the sample were females, who were weaker than their counterparts, so far as quality of human capital was concerned. The working conditions in terms of access to paid leaves, working hours per day, medical assistance, provisions of housing facilities were found to be very pitiable. Contractual arrangements were found to be exploitative in nature, as wages were paid both in form of cash and kind and frequency of wage payment also varied substantially. In some cases, workers were not paid even their dues and this was all because of weak bargaining power of workers and lack of any institutional support. Overall socio economic conditions were much below the normal level. Many of workers were found to be indebted to
their employers, making them further prone to exploitation. As far as living conditions were concerned, they lived in unhygienic, kucha houses with poor drinking water facilities. Finally, the study concluded that informal sector had high potential for growth that had been neglected by policy makers. There was a strong need for policy, specifically for informal sector, which should be integral part of overall development strategy.

Bhasin (2008) while summarizing a part of the report of NCEUS, stated that women home workers worked for about seven days a week at their peak season, but faced a major problem of seasonality of work. In the lean season, the females received only around four hours of work per day. Home based weavers and hand paper makers reported months, with no work at all. Such seasonality of work reduced the income, earning ability of these home workers. Moreover, they were subjected to direct exploitation by the contractor, from whom they got the work, under different types of contracts. One of the more exploitative of which was piece rate work. About 79 percent of women and 63 percent of men, home workers were paid on piece rate basis. Home workers were dependent on sub contractors for work orders, raw materials and the sale of finished goods. They were also isolated from their fellow workers in the trade. This dependence on contractor, together with the isolation, undermined their ability to bargain for higher piece rate, timely payments or overtime pay. Piece rate wage, receiving home based workers, had many hidden costs like use of homes, electricity, delayed payments and arbitrary cuts in wages on the pretext of poor quality. Some, not so hidden costs were the costs of inputs such as thread for garment workers, maintenance of equipment etc. All these were often not factored into the wages, leading to extremely low net wages per day.

Das et al. (2008) aimed at finding the health status of women, the factors influencing their health status and various requirements to improve their health. Across a cross-sectional descriptive type of observational study, which was conducted in a slum area of Calcutta, random sampling method and interview method were used to collect data. Further, proportions and chi-square test was used. Results showed that 77.5 percent of these women were in the reproductive age group and none was below fourteen years. Most of them belonged to poor socio-economic status. 60 percent were in this occupation for more than 10 years and used to spend
five hours for this work daily over and above this household job. Musculoskeletal problem was their commonest health problem. Backache, stomach related problems, anemia, Chronic energy deficiency were also found on examination. Personal hygienic measures taken were far from satisfactory. A focused group discussion revealed their health and family problems, dissatisfaction about their working conditions and wages. Other needs identified were home visits for their health care, free medicines and health education. Study, finally, concluded with a suggestion for a participatory occupational health programmes for such working population.

Devdas et al. (2008) while assessing the socio economic and environmental implications of the workers engaged in waste recycling, in the city of Kanpur, laid special emphasis on the lives of this lowest group of people and discussed various possible possibilities to integrate them with the formal sector. Using primary as well as secondary data, they conducted a random sample survey on a group of waste recyclers (both male and female). The findings of their study showed, that there was a lot of scope for improvement in the management of solid waste and thereby in the conditions of the informal waste recycling sector. Stronger alliances had the potential to improve the services as well as the socio economic conditions of the waste recycling sector. In socio-economic condition, life style of waste pickers, who usually lived on substantial level and had just enough to support their day to day food requirement, had been undertaken. During lean season and at the time of health problems, these people got financial help only from small scale traders and dealers, as they were outcaste from the formal sector. In this highly illiterate sector, women workers were mostly dump pickers, who along with gender bias, faced various kinds of harassment from society, police and local authorities. They were forced to live mostly in dirty slums facing health problems like viral infections, bronchitis, respiratory, skin problems, stomach disorders, cuts and wounds etc. The study finally, strongly recommended that informal waste recycling sector, no doubt, formed an integral part of the urban system and therefore needed to be looked after at policy level and plans preparation stages. However, there were limitations in this research, that a very small sample size was selected for this study. In the absence of any prior data base pertaining to the size, socio economic conditions of the informal waste recycling sector could not be predicted accurately.
Kumar and Mukherjee (2008), while analyzing the unit level data from NSS 60th round revealed that it throws up interesting set of issues, related to demand of healthcare in India and the challenge faced in formulating public policy towards the health sector. In study, attempt had been made to investigate health-seeking behavior of the respondent of the survey. For this purpose, three avenues were explored, through which health and human development outcome might be assessed—demographic characteristics, education level of the head of the household and the expenditure pattern. It was found that the NSS data pointed toward large differences in the demand for health care, when disaggregated, according to gender and geographical locations. The intra family relationship as well as the level of education of the head of the household, exerted considerable influence on the health seeking behavior. As expected, for lower expenditure groups, financial reasons played an important role in the lack of demand for health care. Interestingly, while in rural areas, the demand for health care increased significantly with the education level of household, in the urban areas, the evidence was mixed. Moreover, in poor households, which cited financial reasons for not accessing the health care, women were more discriminated in urban than rural areas. So, while seeking that health maintenance behavior in rural and urban areas was different across demographic and socio-economic groups, the two sectors, therefore, needed to have different strategies for improving health conditions. Adequate resources were required to allocate for expanding the network of public health facilities, especially for women. To overcome the problem of financial constraints, reducing the cost of access to the formal health care system, via better quality standards, in public facilities and spreading the cost through social security programmes, is required to be looked at carefully. Age and gender increased the inequality in access to health care, which could only be addressed through mass campaigns and outreach by dedicated community health workers.

Mehrotra (2008) stressed the need for India to have a comprehensive insurance system for old age, pension, death, disability insurance, health insurance and maternity benefits, for the workers in the informal sector. In the first face of the study, it was argued that this system should be confined to those below the poverty line (BPL) in order to keep fiscal costs down. Over time, it should be expanded to
incorporate those above the poverty line (APL) as people belonging to APL category in unorganized sector, would be required to bear an increasing share of the total costs through own contributions. The aim of the paper was to lay out the case for and costs of such a BPL focused social insurance system. Paper had brought into light the social assistance programmes going on in India, which of course were meager and the social insurance was limited and fragmentary, in both cases. It mainly covered BPL persons rather than all informal sector workers. Only one third of the latter were in BPL category, whereas 2/3rd were in APL category. However, as the NCEUS had argued on the basis of NSS survey 2004-05 that 77 percent of the households, in the country lived on an amount of less than Rs.20 per day on purchasing parity terms. Therefore, the case was found to be strong for both increasing social assistance for unorganized workers and for introducing social insurance. It was particularly strong since the labour market conditions required the Government intervention to help improving the working conditions. As regards the shape of things to come, it seemed that health insurance and maternity benefit for BPL persons could be potentially insured. However, as both had been introduced in 2008-09, it remains to be seen how long it will take to be universalized even to the BPL. As regard old age pension, all BPL persons over the age of 65 years were already covered. An increasing proportion of unorganized BPL workers were likely to be covered for death/disability benefits. Finally, the study concluded that it remained to be seen that how much political commitment was there in reality, to actually implement these schemes for all BPL workers in informal sector.

Menon (2008) highlighted that patriarchal gender relations continued to manifest with the state affairs, denying women access to their equal rights as Indian citizens. While the shift to new liberal model, further reduced women status in the workplace, it was not even close to being achieved under the Nehrvian Welfare model, where India’s social softness enforced the beliefs of docility and obedience of workplace, thereby, increasing her exploitation. India’s economic softness had led to many women, being paid far below the wage rate, men were being paid. This intensification of exploitation, further get aggravated by casualization, marginalization and budgetary cuts in health and other social expenditures, implemented as the part of reforms. The inability of the Indian state to enforce
existing legislations required women to turn to civil society initiatives for support and protection. Policies to support strategies for changing gender ideology both inside as well as outside the workplace were required. As per UNDP suggestion, social mobilization complemented by economic security, especially to disadvantaged women suffering from economic deprivation and livelihood insecurity, was required to be implemented. To fulfill this purpose, combined effort of central, state and local government with voluntary organizations was required. Greater accountability in legislative decisions was also needed in implementing the labour policies, directed for women workers. As work became more casualized, labour laws were required to be redefined to offer protective measures to part-time and casual workers. Fulfillment of all these conditions demanded accountability, efficiency and transparency in the system.

Mitra (2008) analyzed the labour market situation in India over the last two decades. Given the growth profile, which had been quite robust in the recent years, the question arose that whether India had experienced pro-poor growth. The paper examined a wide range of indicators, including workers population ratio, sectoral shifts in the value-added composition and occupational structure. Growth was measured in terms of value-added employment and employment status of self-employment, regular wage employment and casual employment, unemployment rates, formal-informal division of employment and finally, the head count measure of poverty. The paper argued that there was a missing link, in terms of employment, between the rise in economic growth and the reduction in poverty, which took place during 1990’s. Though the researchers believed that this was an outcome of rising income and other positive changes taking place in the economy, the empirical evidence was not convincing. In the present decade, employment growth had picked up, but economic growth and employment generation, both seemed to be more beneficial to those located in the upper income strata than the poor. The faster employment growth in this decade, was partly because of the revival of agriculture employment, which had decelerated considerably during 1990. The other feature was, some of dynamic sectors continued to grow rapidly, generating employment opportunities. However, most of the activities in these sectors were less likely to absorb the poor, who were mostly unskilled and hence, the direct effects of growth,
on the poverty were still not spectacular. All this was comparable with the fact that the extent of decline in poverty after 1993-94, had been much less than the extent of decline between 1983 & 1993-94. The employment problem could not be explained in terms of open-unemployment rate. It was, rather, the relative size of the low productivity of informal sector that could throw light on gravity of this problem. Even within the informal sector, informal employment was on the rise, reducing the bargaining power of the labour considerably. Surprisingly, the composition of the workforce as per the status of the employment showed a major shift in favor of self-employed in 2004-05. Besides, with the exception of 2004-05, the long-term trend showed that casualisation was on the rise in the case of rural males, rural females, urban males & urban females. This casualisation became cause of exploitation for male workers and especially for the female workers. These findings were unlikely to confirm that the Indian economy had been experiencing pro-poor growth.

Barreto & Fedina (2009) observed that almost all the categories of informal sector workers in India were unprotected, didn’t have social security due to poor enactment and implementation of laws by the state. Citing examples of dalit atrocities prevention act (1991), Bonded labour act (1991), Minimum wage act authors aimed to reveal, these laws had not been respected. As far as the women wages were concerned, they corresponded to the half or 2/3 of men’s wages. To think, therefore of decent work for informal sector workers, one had to squarely confront the discrimination, that women were confronted within the term of work, wages and working conditions. Programs like National Rural Guarantee Act, could change the dynamics in countryside & give scope for unionization, preventing rural migration. They can provide for right to work, with unemployment allowance and equal wages for men and women, but findings revealed that act suffered from many ill-leakages and delays in wage payment, non-payment of statutory minimum wages, availability of work only for an average of 50 days per annum, as against provided 100 days etc. Need was to implement ILO conventions declarations on decent work of November 2008, proposing four measures to promote decent work agenda, namely by creating employment, by providing social security, by providing tripartite social dialogue and by respecting labour rights. But, since these conventions were binding on India, it hadn’t signed convention’s about, right to form union & about
right to collective bargaining. Informal sector workers, therefore must organize themselves, to form unions and with help of existing unions, should work as watchdog that all core labour rights were respected in workplace and the society.

Bhattacharya and Sudarshan (2009) revealed that a greater female work participation rate than recorded in the NSS. It indicated the undercounting and reflected the informality that surrounded women’s work. Aim of the current study was to explore the nature of women’s work force participation and to identify the key factors influencing women decisions to work, the type of work they were do, the constraints they faced, the perceived benefits and costs of engaging in paid work outside the home. In doing so, issues surrounding, the methodology and underestimation of women’s work within the urban context were also tackled. The study also suggested the need to understand the family and household context, within which labour market decisions were made. The role of family and kinship structure to determine women’s work life choices, emerged as an important factor. The study revealed that a majority of working women were part of regular, salaried workers. Out of these, 23 percent households could not survive without their income and another 42 percent said, it would manage with some difficulty. On supply side, reproduction work and domestic roles proved to be significant variables in influencing female labour force participation. Time spent on care work being high, maintaining work life balance was key-issue in understanding the well being implication of women’s work. Labour force participation rate for married women was 19 percent as compared to 43 percent in case of unmarried women. The relation of income with LFPR was not clear. The highest LFPR for women was for these from households BPL and highest earning households followed by those in the income range of ₹ 3.30 to ₹3.85 lakh per annum. Most of working women had no access to paid leaves or provident fund. Finally, the study imposed the need to understand, this changing context within which, labour market decisions were made and explored the dominant role of family and kinship structures to determine women work life choices.

Chatterjee (2009) discussed the status of women in informal sector in India and stressed the point that organization was necessary for their empowerment. It was the first the step towards voice representation, but it was not enough to be organized
unless such organization was effective, one that is truly representational of its members and their work, one that acquired bargaining powers for its members. An organization must also inform and educate its members of their rights and duties on one hand and the changes taking place within their scheme of work, on the other. The members of an NGO must understand its policy. Mere models of economic empowerment might not be enough to empower women. Moreover, empowerment might not be liberating for women, unless they were able to exercise control over the proceeds from their employment. In fact, it was necessary for economic and political empowerment to work together, if any effective change was to come about in the lives of women working in the informal economy. Religious, socio economic and traditional factors were barrier in the way of skill development of entrepreneurship of women. Therefore, steps must be taken at Government level, at NGO’s level or even at the level of local self-governing bodies to tap unrealized potential of women workers in informal sector, by providing them access to credit, training at work and access to loans for housing.

**Flora and Meurs (2009)** found that the rapid expansion in trade, capital flows and economic restructuring had led to insignificant changes in work. Jobs had shifted from advanced market economies to developing countries and from the formal to informal sector, creating new opportunities for employment, especially for women. But, women participation in paid labour and access to decent work, was particularly affected by the burden of combining reproductive and paid work. Different countries with different institutional set-up, had defined differently, the decent work , but mainly difference was not owed to gender difference, but also due to education, household structure, race, class and access to social protection and welfare support system. Due to inadequacy in data availability, current study had reviewed data on opportunities for work, fairness of income, security of work, social protection and freedom to organize. The availability of decent work in the workplace, the trends in its availability, varied significantly across countries and regions. Findings revealed that globally, female labour force participation rates remained steady from 1996-2006, at about 53 percent compared to male rates of 80 percent. Moreover, women jobs were more likely to be part-time or temporary. Wage gaps were often greater in informal sector than the formal sector and further
more, these gaps had closed during a period of wage-stagnation world-wide, so, the absolute gains for women were limited. The jobs in informal sector, that were more accessible to women, lied outside the protection of labour laws and lacked rights to social benefits. Social protection that could, particularly benefit women, had experienced a fall in many countries from mid 1980’s to 2004. An important alternative in some developing countries had been the effort, by workers themselves with support from NGO’s. Increasingly flexible labour markets had reduced worker’s rights to organize in many countries and reduced their bargaining power. Moreover, women ability to get decent work in the market economy, was closely linked to the gender roles and division of work in the households. Women did substantially more unpaid work than men. When hours in paid and unpaid work were totaled, women had longer work weeks than men and less time for leisure. Thus, workers particularly women, might end up both ‘time poor’ and ‘money poor’ which contributed to stress and undermined their well being. Much remains to be done to assure gender equality and the benefits of decent work to these women workers. In order to successfully promote social economic policies of ‘ILO’, developing a gender sensitive system, for the evaluation of gender disaggregated data on decent work on one hand and promoting the participation of women organizations and unions in implementation of social protection policies on the other, was required.

Kannan (2009) pointed out that more than 95 percent of female work force found work in the informal sector. Most of their labour was unaccounted in the national accounts because their work was mainly home-based. As the horizontal shift from rural informal economy to the urban economy gained momentum for men, agricultural work was increasingly left to women, whose labour was again largely unaccounted. Women invariably commanded lower wages than their male counterparts, even if quantity, quality and productivity of work done was identical. Study also found that even in the twenty first century, wages corresponded to the hierarchy of the hindu social order, the social group classified as other earned the highest wages, dalit and adivasi earned least, OBC’s wages were below the other. Wages were further, segmented along the axis of gender. But, women wages did not correspond to the social hierarchy reflected in the male wage rates. It was muslim
women, who earned the most followed by dalit and adivasi women, because of the fact that upper caste women did not get higher wages, because of their unwillingness to work outside the home and under an employer where dalit and adivasi women were found to be engaged in all kinds of work, including tasks that were hazardous and oppressive.

**Kumar and Li (2009)** found that changes in the urban labour markets of China and India posed two significant social protection challenges. The first related to increasing informal basis of working relationships. Given that informal work was, assuming greater importance and few newly created jobs, offered full protection as they used to, the state needed to take a more active role in ensuring that informal work was decent. The second challenge related to the role of state and non-state actors, in ensuring that workers secured the guarantees and rights they were entitled to. In India, the proportion of urban labour force, who are either self-employed or in casual work had increased gradually from 57 percent in 1994 to 61 percent in 2004. A comparison with China highlighted the difference in scale of self-employed, whereas in India, it had increased from 39 percent in 1994 to 43 percent in 2004. In China, the proportion was just 10 percent in 2004. There was no doubt that protection of social rights and guarantees against various risks, needed to be institutionalized. However, despite of government efforts, there had been limited success in enforcement, due to a combination of weak state capacity and information asymmetric in both the countries. There had been attempts to fill the gap in both the provision of social security and the enforcement of legally constituted rights, resulting from weak state capacity, especially in India, in the form of provisioning, unionization or a combo of both. But, the experience had shown that the success of unionization was highly dependent on it, being independent from the state. However, challenge was essentially securing the guarantees and rights associated with decent work and sustainable livelihoods, which could be attained by partnership of state and civil society organizations, provided any potential partnership did not unduly compromise the guarantees and rights of those, who were struggling to make a living.

**Saha (2009)** examined the working life of the self-employed workers in the urban informal sector in Mumbai, within the framework of decent work. For this
purpose, study considered street vendors, the category that included various females also, as a unit of analysis and highlighted that vendors working conditions, their social security and the collective bargaining by membership based organization, aiming to provide them with a decent working life, required attention. The study was exploratory in nature and based on the mixed methods like questionnaire, sampling and descriptive analysis etc. It found that street vendors were dependent on moneylenders, not merely for their economic activity but also for social security purposes. However, the later one shared larger proportion of the borrowing. The study illustrated that vendors were forced to borrow money at exorbitant rate of interest, which in turn led them to fall into a “debt-trap” situation. The study revealed that they were having excessive working hours, which had been continuously increasing over the years. Further, there was neither safety nor security for them at the workplace, as these people faced constant harassment from the local authorities. Hence, current working hours of the vendors and the safety and security conditions in their workplace, together with rent seeking by local authorities contributed to a deteriorating working environment along with economic deprivation. Finally, the study urged for creating cordial atmosphere in society, for these poor people.

Sanyal and Bhatacharya (2009) pointed out that traditional contradiction between wage labour and capital was overshadowed by the contradiction between capital and the surplus labour. To prove this point, petty production based family labour, home based workers, causal and regular labour had been taken into account. With in new locations, regarding relation between labour and capital, study found that earlier, where capital used to exploit wageworkers, by taking surplus value out of them, now a days, global capital, led to higher degree of casualization of waged labour, thereby reducing their wages and benefits. This led to super exploitation of labour. That is why, Marxist class politics, earlier based on exploitation of wage labour must reinvent itself to address the next greater political movement against exclusion of labour. These radical changes against capitalist globalization were visible all over the world, including India and were different from traditional peasantry movements, because they included urban petty producers also. Data collections through Dharavi resistance depicted that it was petty retailer's fight
against departmental stores and shopping malls. It also included rural resistance in Singur and Nandigram. The result indicated that forces of globalization had brought about large changes in the organization of the production economy, leading to the emergence of various new locations of labour and increasing labour capital contradictions. No doubt, it had weakened the traditional forms of working class power, but at the same time had opened up, new channels of labour activism that could confront capital from outside. In nutshell, it depicted the immense potential of these new forms of resistance against capital.

Swami Nathan (2009) found that within the large growing segment, called the unorganized economy, the dominant category was that of the self-employed, within which a significant percentage was of women-workers called “Unpaid-Family Workers.” While women’s work and women as workers suffered exclusion from protective legislation, objective of current paper was to find the impact of consecutive exclusion and inclusion of women, by referring some of the document extracted out of officially constituted commissions and committees via critical analysis of some of the arguments and recommendations of these bodies. Author had provided an overview of the dimensions of the problem of the low level and poor quality of employment in the country, with special emphasis on different categories of women’s work. Paper pointed out towards the specific effects of the labour laws relating to women. It also depicted the implications of regular expansion of unpaid labour and also of continuous denial of worker status to the women. Findings of data revealed that substantial number of women in the age group of 15-59 years had their domestic duties as their principal status, which although did not earn directly, but helped their households to earn and save income. Still labour law administration for them was ineffective. This was a question-mark on policy implementation by policy makers, which required focused approach. Finally, the author suggested change in gendered outlook by each household, effective provision of water, fuel, dependency care through public policies, universal availability of maternal benefits and childcare facilities, as suggested by sharm shakti report 1988, to cope up the situation.

Alliance of Indian waste pickers (2010) is national network of 35 organizations comprised of informal recyclers, waste pickers and itinerant buyers, working in 22 cities across India. With its first national conference in 2010 in Delhi,
it laid down that solid waste management was not about technical and managerial pathways alone, but included social pathways as well. Over 15 lakh workers across India worked as scrap and waste collectors, earning their livelihood from the collection and sale of paper, plastic, metal and glass scrap to recycling industries, thereby keeping cities clean and reducing municipal costs, contributing to good health of others, by reducing green house gases that pollute environment. A significant number of women were engaged in this population. The second national commission on labour had praised contribution of the informal sector and called for recognition and upgrading their livelihoods. Moreover, genuine support by municipal and national government should be given to them. Waste pickers demanded that every waste picker should be registered by the urban local body and they should be provided by the necessary capital and infrastructure and government scheme benefits. Report on solid waste management in cities of India, called for organizing waste picking by acknowledging informal sector waste pickers, who helped to reduce burden of urban local bodies by saving million of rupees and recycling industry must be promoted via land allotment, supply of power, tax holidays, preferential purchase of recycled products by government. Second national commission had urged to bring them in main stream by dividing zones between them with a rest room, drinking water, toilet and crèche facilities and providing them with social security.

**Eapan and Mehta (2010)** suggested that women across all sectors, specially poor and working in informal sector, should be recognized as growth agents in Indian Political economy. The public policy, aimed at removing gender discrimination, must do more into macro economic spaces. The measurement and monetary aspect of inclusiveness, over the plan period would become difficult. From a gender point of view, the generation of livelihoods and employment should be the central driving force for growth, therefore, the resources generated by including the excluded class should be provided access to education, health and social security. In the view of planners, inclusion was to be achieved through the distribution of gains, to the needy, but ILO finding revealed the weakness of the policy was in the fact that eligible women workers even failed to get maternity benefits, statutorily due to them. Thrust area of the paper was to discuss the objective that deprived women
should get due recognition, by their inclusion in the productive works, so that they should get equitable share in the benefits of development. This required correcting the existing trend of the poor quality employment generated. This was possible by bringing growth, that benefited women engaged in agriculture and non-agriculture activities to become more viable and competitive. Need of hour was also to prevent displacement, loss of livelihood and environmental degradation in the name of rapid growth. So, need was to generate such inclusive growth, which was not restricted to under paid work in social sector, but also to the generation of high quality employment. Finally, it was suggested that an employment oriented macro economic strategy, could have many direct and indirect positive effects, through the strong multiplier effects. Meeting the unmet commitments regarding equitable access to health care should be kept at priority.

**Kagad Kach Patra Kashtkari Panchayat (KKPKP) (2010)** in a survey of 1777 randomly selected women waste pickers in Pune, found that Asthma and T.B. was prevalent in as many as 10 percent and 6.4 percent respondents, respectively. Due to unhygienic working conditions, acute and chronic acidity, peptic disease was found in 10 to 15 percent of respondents. Over all, one third of respondents had at least one complaint related to menstruation due to undernourishment and lack of access to toilets and water for washing right through the day. More over, due to continuous carrying of weight, majority of these women also reported musculoskeletal problems. The study suggested for necessary health arrangements for these female waste pickers.

**Kaul (2010)** examined the living conditions of women workers and observed that they were living life far below than satisfaction. They did marry, bear children, and got old but, under these phases of life, they lived the same life. They suffered from many problems like unhygienic environment, no medical facilities, no awareness regarding laws. These workers were not included in the official statistics, their work was undocumented. They also lagged behind from the male workers in terms of level and quality of employment. These poverty ridden women were contributing substantially to the growth of city Patiala, but their working hours were long and wages were less. They were living below the main accepted standards, without adequate shelter and toilet facilities. The study further found that their
families were migrated from Haryana. Low earning of these women didn’t meet even their daily requirements. The study suggested that the need of the hour was that Government, NGO’s and common people should come forward for their betterment.

Parveen and Patil (2010) observed that workers working in informal sector, even though contributing a major share to the national development, were insecure and backward, socio–economically, educationally, politically, and in other aspects. Women were playing a dominant role in certain aspects in the informal sector, such as agriculture, construction etc. This study aimed to analyze the problems of the women construction workers and found that they were exploited, because they were socially backward, unorganized, uninformed and poor. Moreover, their work was also characterized by its casual nature, temporary relationships between employers and employees, lack of basic amenities and inadequacy of welfare facilities. The extent of unionization in the construction industry had been very low due to migratory and seasonal nature of workers, scattered location of work sights and attitude of contractors. Workers were exposed to scorching heat, rain, cold and dust molten materials etc. A large number of workers were exposed to the risks of the workplace, accidents and occupation problems. Women and children were paid wages at comparatively low wage rates as compared to men. Employers usually did not work as per various acts for construction workers just as, The Building and Other Construction Workers Act 1996, The Contract Act 1970, The Maternity Benefits Act 1961 etc. So, there was need for a unified legislation on such workers that must provide an independent enforcement authority for its enforcement at state as well as district level. Further, there was need on part of Government to enforce strict legislation pertaining to the life security of the women construction workers, such as providing safety at work place, subscribing insurance policies of the workers etc. The working hours should be fixed for 6-8 hours for these workers and social welfare fund must be established in each district, well supported by the State Government, from women welfare budget.

Geetha (2010) found that informal sector plays a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunity to a large segment of the working force in the country, especially women. Although this sector offered low remuneration, women
were compelled to enter this sector due to poverty and lack of opening in the informal sector, due to their illiteracy and lack of skill. The present study threw light on the various dimensions of socio-economic problems of women labourers in the urban informal sector, so, that appropriate policy paradigms could be formulated to improve the condition of women workers. The study was based on primary data collected with the help of a well-structured and pre-tested, interview schedule administrated to 100 women workers, who were engaged in various activities in the informal sector in urban areas. Findings revealed that women in informal sector were overburdened with work and exploited. Unless efforts were directed towards empowering these women, their socio-economic condition could not be improved. The matter of the fact was that most of women workers were illiterates and worked in informal sector, for some remuneration with no social security or welfare benefits. Economic necessity was main cause for these women to participate in market activities. Need of the time was, to recognize the urban informal sector as an integral part of development strategy. Existing laws must be amended to protect the women in informal sector from victimization. Efforts must be directed towards improving their literacy status and organizing these workers for uplifting their living standards. Moreover, efforts should be made to raise a voice against exploitation and for the fulfillment of their legitimate demands.

Alter chen and Raveendran (2011) aimed at exploring trends in urban employment in India, with a focus on urban informal employment. It provided an analysis of growing significance of four groups of urban informal workers, at the bottom of the economic pyramid in India: home-based workers, street vendors, domestic workers and waste pickers. Together these groups represented one-third of urban employment in India. The data presented were from the three rounds of the recent large sample of India’s national sample survey, 1999/2000, 2004/2005, 2009/2010. The data pointed towards significant volatility, with an upswing in self-employment between 2000 & 2005, followed by a reduction in self-employment, in the next five years. However, between 2004/05 & 2009/10, the combined share of employment for the four informal groups grew by 12 percent, to represent 41 percent of increase among male urban workers, but decreasing by 18 percent points among female urban workers. The data also showed that within the urban informal
workforce, there were important differences between women and men workers by industrial branch, employment unit, employment status and specific groups. The urban employment trends depicted that India’s urban workforce was becoming increasingly informal. By 2010, nearly half of the urban workforce was estimated to be self-employed, while wage-employment would also become more informal. Recent estimates suggested, today’s workforce was comprised of small formal salaried workforce (20 percent) of which, around two-third worked in formal offices and factories, whereas a large informal wage workforce worked in informal sector. Of these, 40 percent were engaged in self employed works, who spent around half time at home or in open public spaces. These trends, at the bottom of the economic pyramid, indicated a volatility within the Indian labour market, that was often marked by aggregate employment data. The authors argued that the data pointed towards the need for an inclusive approach towards the urban informal sector and contended that the urban informal sector in India should be treated as a part of solution to employment and poverty issues in the country.

Bala (2011), while discussing the gender dimension of labour market discrimination, found that every society had some norms and responsibilities, that were decided by the gender of a person i.e. male and female. But, it was really annoying that in Indian society, females were not treated at par with males. Despite of various constitutional provisions for equal remuneration, for equal and same type of work, females were given less remuneration. The study found that in Punjab-casual, part time and temporary type of employment, the major share comprised of females, because of the reason that they had less awareness, less unity and less bargaining power. Not only this, they were comparatively more submissive than males as they neither demanded high wages or for extra benefits. That is why, employer found it easy to employ female workers. Finally, study suggested that to upgrade the status of female, equal access must be ensured to them, at all levels, to quality education, to vocational guidance, equal wages, economic security and safe working place. Not only this, there was need to retrain the skills of female workers displaced from traditional sector, owing to the advancement of technology, so that alternative opportunities for wage/self employed females could be promoted. Last but not the least, full recognition to female workers should be given.
Belsar and Rani (2011) using 2004-05 employment-unemployment survey along with consumer-expenditure survey, estimated that the extension of minimum wages at existing level could improve the earning of 73 to 76 million low paid salaried casual workers. It also showed that if an extended minimum wage was perfectly enforced, it would substantially reduce inequality, poverty and gender pay gap, even if there were some employment facts. The paper highlighted the fact that, by providing an effective backstop for wage, a minimum wage can compress inequality and in particular reduce the distance between low paid and those in middle of wage distribution. An important effect of an extended minimum wage would be a sharp reduction in gender pay gap. Findings revealed that if all workers, received at least minimum wage, the average wages of women compared to men would increase from 84 percent to 90 percent for salaried workers and from 74 percent to 92 percent for casual workers. This effect did-not arise because women were over represented among workers with sub minimum wage, but it seemed from the fact that even among sub minimum wage workers, women were paid lower wages than their male counterparts. Lifting all wages to the mandatory minimum would eliminate inequality among the lowest paid. Finally, it was suggested that in a country like India, where the majority of wage workers had no access to social security benefits, extending minimum wage to the whole labour force would be a step towards more social justice. However, the study faced the gap because as per Keynesian argument, partial equilibrium analysis of minimum wages was unsatisfactory. In other words, even if minimum wages, forced some companies to undertake lay-offs in the short term, they could be expected to higher private consumption and creation of new jobs elsewhere in the economy, but these second round effects were ignored in the study.

Geetika et al. (2011) laid stress on the point that a phenomenon of economic development was composed of several factors, which might not necessarily have economic connotations. The contribution of human resource to economic growth of any country, could not be over emphasized, especially in a country like India, which was still reeling the pressures of its huge population and limited capital resource. The Indian economy was dichotomized having organized and unorganized sector. The widespread informal sector in the country was the major contributor to its
development, but at the same time, it was plagued by several problems, such as no proper service rules, no wage rules and no possibilities of career advancement. Another notable fact was that, as many as 94 percent of total women workers worked in informal sector, in India, but they had to face gender discrimination, which almost was inexistent in formal sector. Besides, their contribution in terms of income generation turned out to be less than their male counterparts, which meant that almost half of the population contributed, less than half to the national income. The paper aimed at understanding this lop-sided utilization of human capital and its fallouts. A small survey had been conducted in UP to find realities. The respondents were personally interviewed. Although findings could not be generalized for whole country, but similar studies conducted in other parts of country supported contention. Finally, it was recommended that merely framing policies was not sufficient, rather their execution was more important to give female workers equal treatment for equal work. Ignoring these workers meant ignoring important contributors to the national income of the country.

Gupta (2011) stated that women workers do not have choice to work, or not to work, due to desired need of income. The limited opportunities available to women were mostly low paid, low status jobs in informal sector, jobs which did not have any possibilities of betterment, advancement of efficiency or training, to enable them to enter better jobs at a later stage. In the over all state of unemployment and lack of opportunities, women hold a secondary place to men in the race of employment. It was observed that women found it difficult to enter, the structured system of organized sector. It was also found that there was no economic reason for paying lower wages, or giving only a particular type of work to women workers. Findings further, revealed that there was discrimination in wages, nature of work and availability of work on the basis of sex. Bargaining power was mostly with the employer, so exploitation was naturally, the fate of these poor workers. They come from the section of the society, which must work to earn their livelihood, which was socially, economically and traditionally backward and least privileged. There was diversity in the nature of work also. Some of them were construction workers, some were domestic servants and some other were garment workers, while some were petty traders in miscellany of goods. But, there was little variation in term of jobs,
like wage discrimination, job security, leave and other benefits about which Government and society need to rethink.

Kumar and Singh (2011) analyzed, the impact of the 2008-09 global economic recession on workers in the unorganized sector of the gem polishing and construction industries in Rajasthan. Based on a primary survey, it was found that in the initial phase of the crisis, workers trimmed their spending on the social life. This was followed by a reduction in expenditure on health and education. As the crisis persisted, they were left with little alternative, but to cut down expenditure even on essentials like food, shelter and clothing. Further, distress caused by unemployment and a drastic reduction in income increased domestic conflict, violence and depression, the result of which was experienced by women and children. The study found that the impact of crisis varied between gem polishing and construction industries and it was more severe for workers in the lowest income groups in both industries. The samples for study were selected from gem polishing industry of Jaipur and that of Construction industry from 4 adjacent districts viz Jaipur, Udaipur, Tonh and Dunparina. To improve data quality, information from household survey was verified with employers and focus group discussions were also held. Random Sampling Method was adopted and data was collected from as many as 350 households of concerned industries. Findings revealed as mentioned above, that crisis ridden families were forced to reduce even the quantity of food intake. It was finally, concluded that the only viable solution to divert the deterioration in the living standard of the workers, was their political mobilization, to exert pressure on the state, to increase budgetary allocation for social services and for relief package, at least in the short-run.

Papola (2011) while discussing relationship between India and ILO found that the concept, which the WEP (world employment program) projected as an important employment and development issue, was the informal sector. Though coined earlier by Keith Hart, the concept was popularized by the ILO employment mission to Kenya in 1972. It was seen as a useful framework for analyzing the employment problem in developing countries which, to a very large extent, were characterized by under employment, low wages and low return to work. The mission’s report saw the phenomenon as representing a vital part of Kenya’s
economy and its existence, a necessary and beneficial mechanism to cope with the
constraints imposed by the prevailing economic situation. The report advocated a
shift in government policies to actively encourage this sector, treating it as an asset
rather than a liability in development. The phenomenon had always been recognized
as ‘unorganized sector’ in India. But, there appeared to be a widespread belief that
it was transient phenomenon and no efforts to access its quantum and characteristics,
left alone formulating policies, to support its development, had been made with the
WEP. Due to its importance in developing countries, a large number of studies,
mostly in urban areas, were undertaken in India, to measure its extent, describe its
characteristics and conditions of employment and to examine its relationship with
the formal sector. It was also found that what role, it could play in development of
informal sector and its connotation. However, it remained and continued to be
largely negative, as ‘informal’ has not found a place in the official vocabulary used
for policy making. Indian policymakers still stick to the ‘unorganized.’ Though, it
had hurdled any positive policy for promoting it. It was not that the ILO had not
been presenting any current policy agenda for the ‘informal’ sector, but the Indian
policy makers refused to acknowledge the word for the reason that it was rather
intriguing. There was, however, been a revival of interest in the informal sector, as a
policy-oriented work was undertaken by the National Commission for Enterprises in
Unorganized Sector (NCEUS). It might be noted that it had to drop ‘informal sector’
from its title, probably due to the official allergy to the concept. The commission
had however, been able to dilute the futile distinction to the extent, it had mostly
talked in terms of informal employment, in the unorganized sector. Its work had
been significantly influenced by ILO, in terms of both concepts and measurements
and policies and strategies. Like the Kenya report and all subsequent advocacies by
the ILO, the NCEUS also argued for treating the informal sector, as a potent source
of productive employment and advocated having a suitable policy framework for its
healthy growth. It, however went much beyond the ILO, as far as unorganized/informal sector in India was concerned. It had made significant
advances, in analyzing different aspects of work and workers in the informal sector
and those in informal employment in formal sector. It had expanded the scope of the
concept of work beyond employment to cover self-employed. More important, it had
came out with many concrete policy recommendations for promoting the growth of
informal enterprises and improving the conditions of work and social security of workers in informal employment, including agricultural workers. These recommendations generally converged with the ILO approach, but also included operational proposals, specific to the Indian context. Some of them have found place in the Government policy agenda, but many others will have to be systematically pursued and campaigned for. For the ILO, the NCEUS report, provided a set of ideas and a policy agenda that should be studied and fruitfully propagated in other similarly placed countries.

Sankaran (2011) pointed out the manner in which rights at work were identified and articulated within both International Labour Organization and India, bore a close similarity. Despite what its mandate would suggest, the ILO (like India) had chosen to treat only selected rights as ‘fundamental’ at the expense of issues such as, those relating to conditions of work, wages and social security. These equally constituted of what it termed ‘decent work’. The paper aimed at arguing that recent developments within the ILO and India indicated the need for adopting a broader and more inclusive approach to ensure decent work for people engaged in informal sector. The ILO, since its inception, has developed an elaborate system of supervision of labour standards, through reports submitted by workers and employers organizations. The regular supervision had been the hallmark of the ILO system. Workers organizations, in particular, had been sending, their observations to ILO supervisory bodies, for reforms purpose. Before the adoption of Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Right (DFPR), the India supported the choice of rights by workers, as fundamental to the world of work. The close similarity of views between the Government of India and some of the delegates at the ILC, was apparent. The international shift from ‘command and control’ form of regulation to soft low options, closely resembled the shift that was, then taking place in Indian economy in wake of liberalization and globalization. The ILO social justice declaration of 2008, appeared to have, once again given a greater role to the state and underscored the importance of social protection and decent work. Same appeared to be the case in India as well with the unorganized workers social security act, 2008. It might well be stated that the period, would see the wheel come full circle, with both the ILO and India, accepting more state regulations, that provided
not just the means for ensuring decent work, but also ensured fair outcomes. Such a role might be inevitable for a well balanced global strategy, encompassing both the ‘rights at’ work as narrowly articulated in the DFPR and the broader range of social security, wage and social economic rights, required to address the issue of decent work in the decades ahead.

**Sinha and Sudarshan (2011)** laid stress on the fact that home based workers had a large history in South Asia, having evolved out of home-based crafts production. Workers, specially, women workers had found home based work as a way of combining work and care responsibilities with less strain on family and community norms and expectations. Data revealed that roughly half of all women workers were home-based in the region. However, the precise definition of home based worker continued to be the subject of debate, ranging from narrower definitions of home based worker, as contracted workers, to wider definition that would include self-employment and unpaid family workers. Given the paucity of macro data, several innovative methods had been used by researchers, to illustrate the conditions of work of the home-based workers. These included value chain analysis, which was a useful way of depicting the link between low paying home based worker and the often-high price of the resulting products on the international market. However, this had limitation of being focused exclusively on the market, with little attention given to the local economy. In general, researchers had used mixed methods, structured surveys, combined with qualitative methods, to develop the information based on home based workers. However, limited generalization being possible, as two national sample surveys had been conducted in India, using “place of work” as an indicator, but protocol for such surveys was still evolving. Policy framework on home based workers had tended to focus on social protection. Finally, the paper suggested that quite impressive efforts had been made to mobilize and organize home based workers, the outreach was still limited, and mobilizing was slow, because it had to simultaneously address the exploitation of the production structure as well as overcome women fears and reluctance to step outside from the patriarchal work at home.

**Vasanthi (2011)** observed that while domestic servants were covered by the legislative framework in many countries, in India, they still stood excluded from
national legislations that dealt with minimum wages, disputes settlement, conditions of work, social security and work place injuries. Objectives of the study was to draw upon the findings, of a research project of the national domestic servant movement, that was conducted between February 2010 and 2011. Forced to work under dirty, dangerous and dull environment, along with association with low skills, low wages and often precarious environment, proved that domestic work was not fulfilling the standard norms set by law in practice. Paper stresses on a strong need to distinct definition of domestic work from slavery in any form. While drawing distinction between care work and domestic work, a survey was conducted in Hyderabad on 84 percent of SC, ST and OBC category women. The survey showed that a large number of women from SC’s were engaged in pure domestic work such as cleaning, washing, where as their number were equal to that of other castes, in jobs like child care and elderly care. Workers registered with agencies enjoyed higher level of income and employment security than those employed directly. The paper concluded that the issue of domestic work, must be necessarily addressed through public policy choices, that the state makes. So far as, domestic worker was concerned, she remained unrecognized in spite of various legal strategies in terms of fixing minimum wages. Another policy implication that came into light, that wage fixation alone did not result in worker receiving the wage. More over, it did not have much impact on employment, where wage fixation led to fall in demand of the worker. Not only this, lack of proper classification of workers, deprived them of appropriate wages and social security scheme. Finally, the paper concluded with the exploring ways of reducing the gap between law and practice.

Bhuyan and Mohapatra (2012) in a paper examined the characteristics of occupational patterns of in-migrant women and non-migrant women workers in urban informal sector, in the city of Guwahati, in the northeastern part of India. The Questionnaire method was followed across 500 respondents, who provided the primary data. The analysis of data was based on percentages and cross-tabulations to explore the relationships between the demographic attributes and economic characteristics. Research findings revealed that out of 500 total respondents, more than half of the respondents migrated from neighboring and distant areas and only 8.4 percent were native to Guwahati. Out of the 458 migrant workers, 62.01 percent
of the women in the informal sector were recent immigrants, where they have migrated from the neighboring areas to find living in various informal sector jobs. About 37.99 percent of the women had migrated long back around more than 10 years and had thus found more stable job in informal sector than those, who had recently migrated. Of total migrant women, 59 percent had migrated to the city in search of better work opportunities, 25.76 percent for marriage, 11.35 percent for poverty and 4.15 percent for various other reasons like the natural calamity. Finally, paper suggested some important implications of urban unorganized sector, on the economic aspects, such as income and proportion of monthly expenses covered by income. Formation of a suitable program, to facilitate a migrant integration into urban life, would facilitate their successful inclusion in the labour market.

**Chandrika et al. (2012)** in a paper highlighted how the mass slum resettlement program, in expanding mega-cities, contributed to the reproduction of urban poverty. Chennai’s premier resettlement colony, kangi nagar, housing slum dwellers, evicted from the city, since 2000, had integrated itself into the industrial, commercial and software economies of the information technology corridor on unfavorable terms. They created swelling the supply of unskilled casual workers for local firms. This article highlighted, from the vantage point of workers, in the resettlement colony, how the restructuring processes of large formal sector companies within the economy, exploited the conditions created by the state’s slum clearance policy, to enhance the precariousness of work for residents of resettlement sites. It highlighted issues of quality of work, for casual workers in the informal sector and their role in the production, persistence and reproduction of working poverty. It, thereby, illustrated how the restructuring of urban space, by new imperatives of urban capital, including both industrial establishments and working classes, created new spatial configuration of work and poverty. The paper explored the setting up of forced resettlement, where the abundant availability of formal sector jobs were undercut by their poor quality, contributing to fluctuating employment and perpetuating the vicious cycle of “working poverty” especially for women. Formal sector jobs were strongly segmented by gender, with women placed at the most vulnerable situation. Apart from loosing jobs due to the expiration of contacts or company retrenchments, women workers in kangi nagar, voluntarily
quitted their jobs due to tough conditions, long hours and the consequent health impacts or impacts on home & children. The high rates of job change among women were thus, rarely for reasons of income. An important finding of this study was work decisions that, even at the margins of poverty, were effected by several considerations among which, total household income was most important one. Poverty precarious and employment being reproduced in kangni nagar, gave the lesson, that states reallocation policies, the restructuring of employment relations and the spatial reorganization of economic activity, was the effect neo-liberalization era.

Das (2012) examined the fact that wage differentials were present among various groups and sectors of the economy. The basic purpose of the paper was to find the structure of wage inequality and employment in India, with the 61st round (2004-05) of household survey on employment and unemployment conducted by NSSO. The study measured comprehensively different dimensions of wage inequality, as observed in the Indian labour market, by using the gini inequality index. In analyzing the structure of wage inequality, it considered public, private, formal and informal sector. It was found that wage differentials were higher among women than in men workers. Simple decompositions of wage inequality by sector revealed, that a significant part of a wage inequality was accounted for by inequality among individuals between, rather than within sectors for every type of working person. Study also found that workers in the informal sector were paid even less than one third of the formal sector wage. Finally, it was concluded that gender inequality in wage earnings was more due to ‘within’ component rather than ‘between’ component. Estimating results of wage regression model suggested that effects of education, technical skill, and experiences were main factors affecting the wage. So, it was suggested to expand these services more in order to enable deprived sectors to come to the front row.

Garg (2012) found that during the phase of globalization, opportunities for the women to be economically independent, had considerably grown. The study attempted to explore the level of gender discrimination among various types of enterprises in unorganized manufacturing sector of India, after economic reforms. The result showed that during the last two decades, though the work participation of
women had increased, yet they were largely being placed in low paid, insecure and informal jobs, while the better paid supervisory and managerial jobs were reserved for men. So, it would be quite relevant here to observe, how various types of jobs in unorganized manufacturing sector of India, had been distributed among men and women. The study was done with main objective of analyzing the various types of jobs in unorganized manufacturing sector of India. The study was based on secondary data with NSSO surveys as the source. Findings revealed that in gender-wise distribution, although share of female worker was increasing, but this increase in female share was mainly due to increase in part-time jobs. So, in case of unorganized manufacturing sector of India, the feminization of jobs was actually the feminization of part-time jobs. The women were mainly occupied in unpaid and part-time jobs, while their share in hired work and in full time jobs was very low. They had to work harder than men and to bear more burdens. It was also felt that problem of poverty could not be tackled without providing opportunities of productive employment to them. Productive employment to women would provide the necessary economic base and improve their social status. But, still women in many countries of the world were facing discriminating attitude on the ground of sex, employment and working conditions, which should be taken care of. Logic behind this is, that development can be achieved only, when half of the world’s population is recognized as equivalent to the other half.

Ministry of Women and Child development, Government of India (2012) found that the unorganized sector was large in India, accounting for 370 million workers in 1999-2000, constituting 93 percent of the total workforce and 83 percent of the non-agricultural workforce. Women accounted for 32 percent of workforce in the informal economy, including agricultural and 20 percent of the non-agricultural workforce. 118 million women workers were engaged in the unorganized sector, in India, constituting 97 percent of the total women workers in India. The informal sector in non-agricultural segment alone engaged 27 million women workers. Many of them were employed in manufacturing and construction sector. Within manufacturing, they predominated in certain industries, such as garments, textiles, food and electronics. The seasonality of work in this sector and the lack of other avenues of work, made them vulnerable to a wide range of exploitative practices.
They remained the most vulnerable and the poorest. Yet, they were economically active and contributing to the national economy. Finally, the report suggested for suitable policy measures for these women.

**Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2012)** found that a large number of women work as home-workers. About 23 percent of the non-agricultural workers were working in their own dwellings. Home-workers were on overwhelming proportion with 57 percent of the workforce as women. Home-workers refer to the gender category of workers, who carry out remunerative work within their homes or in the surroundings grounds. Women turn to be home-worker for a number of reasons. Lack of necessary qualifications and formal training, absence of childcare support, social and cultural constraints and absence of alternatives are some of the reasons. Families need cash incomes for their survival. Loss in formal employment and reduced returns from agriculture, often result in men migrating to urban centers, leaving behind women and children. With the home-work, being the only alternative available to poorest communities, it is not only confined to women, but also involved children, especially girls. Such work attract women as it gives them the opportunity, to combine work with domestic chores and is flexible. Still this fact cannot be ignored, that these women are forced to work in challenging conditions and still there earning is very meager. So, the report suggested that while designing strategies to meet challenges, it is important to retain the positive aspects of the home-work.

**Mohapatra (2012)** in a study found that informal sector constituted pivotal part of the Indian economy. More than 90 percent of workforce and about 50 percent of the national product were accounted for by the informal economy. Informal employment was generally a larger source of employment for women than for men. The informal economy in India employed, about 86 percent of the country’s workforce and 91 percent of its women workers. Many of these women workers were primary earners for their families. Their earnings were necessary for sheer survival. To find their condition, 500 women workers were interviewed in state of Orissa, including 132 rag pickers, 108 domestic workers, 79 coolies, 60 vendors, 56 beauticians, 42 construction workers and 23 garment workers. Since, sample was theoretical and could not be used for the purpose of statistical analysis, information
was also collected on the basis of unstructured interviews. Therefore, qualitative analysis had been adopted to reach conclusions. Finding revealed, that informal sector work for women was characterized by low wages, that were often insufficient to meet minimum living standards including nutrition, clubbed with long working hours and hazardous working conditions, lack of basic services such as first aid, drinking water and sanitation at the work sites. Findings also showed that poverty was a multi-dimensional concept, implying not only lack of adequate income, but a host of other factors, such as lack of choice, sense of powerlessness, vulnerability, lack of assets, insecurity and social exclusion. In light of these considerations, the study suggested that availability of education, health and healthcare must be accessible to stake holders irrespective of type of the occupation adopted by them. It was also found that highly visible percentage of women workers continued to live a life full of subsistence, compromised most of their own things in to earn livelihood for family. The most important determining factor behind this, primarily involved out of poor literacy and lack of awareness, resulting in self-exclusion from the mainstream opportunities.

Sharma (2012) while analyzing the role of women in informal sector, pointed out that informal sector was the largest employer of relatively unskilled workers. Because, skill based technological changes in production of manufactured commodities and services, had always facilitated income and employment growth for highly skilled personnel. Due to globalization, the scenario among women had been changing, because the shrinking formal sector was not able to provide employment opportunities to growing population. Present paper attempted to study on the basis of secondary data, about the changing scenario of employment among women in informal sector in India. The aim of the study was to investigate the role of informal sector in income and employment generation, after globalization in India and to bring to the focus, the contribution of women in agriculture and non-agriculture in informal sector. The study was based on secondary data collected by NSSO for 2004-05, 2009-10 and other research papers etc. Findings revealed that as many as ninety four percent of total women workers in the informal sector in India had to face gender discrimination. Still, their contribution in terms of income generation turned out to be less than their male counterpart. Informal employment
in the form of own account and unpaid work might have declined slightly, but it was still important for women in India. Finally, study demanded a new focus by Government on informal sector, in recognition of its contribution to employment and income generation. Moreover, policies relating to income generation of informal sector women needed to be inter linked with Government policies, rather than risk marginalization by adopting women specific policies.

Varshney (2012), while discussing the impact of economic crisis on informal sector, found that in late 60’s and 70’s, a large chunk of population was still suffering from poverty, and hence was forced to work outside organized activities i.e. in informal sector. The process further gained momentum in 1980’s. In 2000, it was found, in developing countries, that informal economy either lay beyond the scope of state regulation or if officially, subjected to state regulation, did not follow any rule. In other words, unorganized sector was cleverly employing substantial number of casual labour, mainly women. But, workers employed in informal sector, were at least equally effected by economic crisis. Price increase led to increase in cost of living. Having poor buffers available in form of saving due to income uncertainty, this section was worst hit. More bad impact was on those, whose products demand was likely to fall i.e. handicraft. The position of women worker in this sector was pitiable. Majority of them, being primary earners for their families, their condition became vulnerable due to irregular work, low economic status, low bargaining power, no access to credit and lack of assets etc. They were also found to be prone to gender discrimination. Study found that income generation alone might not improve the socio economic status of these informal sector women. Their economic empowerment needed to go along with their political empowerment. This could improve their bargaining power both in household and at work. Study concluded that organizing women workers in informal sector could have beneficial impact on their work as well as life. For this, intervention at the Government level and at the NGO level or at the level of local self governing bodies was necessary, so that unutilized potential of unaware women workers could be fully tapped.
Various Research Gaps:

Although various studies have been made on socio economic conditions of informal sector women in India, but, in Punjab, number of such studies is less and even more less specifically, on all the categories of informal sector women as defined NCEUS. Moreover, despite of, increasing use of time-use surveys, the approach of, so far has done surveys is very simplistic and limited, to convey right understanding of problems of such females. Not only this, no proper stress has been given to generate inclusive growth of these females via aiming at generating quality employment for them. Some studies face the limitation of the non-randomness of sampling methodology utilized, which results in extrapolation of findings of the urban informal sector activity. In some studies, it is said that the effect of improvements made to improve the conditions of informal sector females, will remain muted unless, their access to complementary resources are improved, that is why, conclusion derived by them should be considered as tentative, owing to deficiencies in data used.

As far as, legislations, related to these workers, are concerned, like Factories Act, 1948, Contract Labour Act, 1970, Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Unorganised Sector Worker’s Bill Act, 2003, 2004, 2005 respectively, they also suffer weakness of partial coverage. No proper reference, regarding the poor implementation of these acts has been made.

In present study, a sincere effort has been made to fill up these gaps.