Review of literature

There are many studies in India and abroad on construction workers and about economics and social conditions in construction sector. This review of literature aims to show the need for the study economics empowerment of construction workers and the ways to empower men construction workers in the present Indian context.

Romila Thapar, another outstanding historian of early India has given some important information regarding slavery and women workers in her various works. S.Jaiswal, (1989-90), paper have thrown light on slavery and discusses the possible connections between women’s status and their involvement in production within the framework of what she perceives as an emerging class divided society and postulates links between the kinship structure and the modes of production.

Anker, (1997), The existence of female occupations is cited in the study of 41 countries by Anker pointed out the principal reason for women’s wages being less than that of men. This implies lesser opportunities for upward mobility and greater financial pressure to survive. The same is the finding by Rubery, Smith and Fagan of the European Union. It points out that women’s jobs are low paid, precarious status with poor working conditions, inadequate social coverage and limited scope for promotion and upward mobility.

Gurumoorthy.T.R, (2000), conducted a study by pointing out that the country points to the awful conditions of women workers in the informal sector. Ignorance, traditional bound attitudes, illiteracy, lack of skills, seasonal nature of employment, heavy physical work of different types, long hours of work with limited payment, sex discrimination in wage structures, lack of guarantee of minimum wages/ comprehensive legislation/ minimum facilities; migration and disintegration of families, bondage and alienation etc are some characteristics of employment of women in this sector. But these unattractive sectors still involve many women because they search these jobs for their livelihood.

Jeemol Unni,(2001) .Informalisation of labor force in South Asian countries seem to be increasing- The study identified two broad components of the informal economy -non-wage employment and wage employment - and they show an increasing
participation of women. Though low quality of employment thus obtained are disturbing, the chances are that the informal employment is what that helps many households reduce the intensity of poverty. Declining opportunities for formal sector work has contributed to increasing number of women seeking informal sector work.

Rohini Hensman, (2001), Globalization has had a two-fold impact on the working women- growing informalisation and fragmentation of work on the one hand and expansion of opportunities on the other (Rohini Hensman, 2001). Halting and reversing this along with obtaining basic worker’s reproductive and parental rights were seen as crucial for improving women’s condition. The Government policy can play a major role in securing and supporting the rights and livelihood of all citizens. The women’s movement creates a nominal commitment on the part of the Government to women’s participation in organizational decision making in State recognized organizations.

These organizations would provide organizational space to solve problems and may provide chance for some women to develop leadership skills.

Banerjee.B. (1995), Women’s employment has been and still is characterized by high levels of occupational and sectoral segregation by sex. Hakim elucidates this through the distinction between vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. The usual trend in the employment of women is downward, gaining proportionately less than male employment in the upswings of business cycles (Banerjee, 1995)

Differences in wages due to a variety of discriminatory practices are designed to perpetuate the vertical as well as horizontal division of labour markets leading to gender based segregation and stereotyping of jobs resulting in women being concentrated in a few occupations.

Gabriel Dietrich (1995) is of the view that insecurity and lack of safety are the hallmark of the employment of women in the informal sector. Majority of the women workers are classified as marginal workers because of the irregular nature of their employment. Since they are marginal workers, they are devoid of several social security benefits such as maternity benefits, pension etc. Work security is nil as even work records are mostly non-existing.
Studies by Rani Bang and others (1990) point out that more than 50% of women are suffering from illnesses which they have learnt to ignore because of various social factors. This worsens the situation of women, ultimately taking its toll on their health. Micro level studies on specific sectors and specific industries has shown that women’s employment has increased mainly in the unorganized and informal sector activities and that they are concentrated in the lower rungs of employment. (Nirmala Banerjee; 1995)

The macro trends of urban women workers in the 1990’s are looked into by Jayati Ghosh, (2001), Unemployment and underemployment are its salient features- also unpaid unrecognized work done at home.

Ofreneo, Rosalinda Pineda, (2000), viewed that profit is made by minimizing labor costs, particularly that of women. The labor market segmentation, which means women being concentrated heavily on certain segments is linked to social norms and patriarchal ideology, which propagates that woman, are suited to such low paid jobs. These activities in conventional economic reckoning do not constitute value production. This when carried over to paid employment results in the maintenance of division of labor and low valuation of women’s labor and a low status within the hierarchy.

Dholaki. R.H. (1990), proves that wage discrimination is not due to difference in human capital or marginal productivity but due to the monopsony practices in wage elasticity of labour supply.

Like in most other developing countries across the globe, the period since 1980 has been notable for increasing participation of women in recognized paid employment and this trend has further intensified since 1990. This widespread pattern of feminization of work is essentially related to certain macro economic trends in operation in different ways in these countries. The extent and trend of female labour force participation indicate greater involvement of women in recognized and remunerative employment. (Jayati Ghosh). The studies on construction and similar informal sector work have largely come to the conclusion that there have been large-scale feminisation and casualisation during the recent years. Varghese, 1993;

Mohanan Pillai (2000) studied the effectiveness of the Welfare Funds set up in Kerala for providing social security to the unorganized sector workers through a case study of the Kerala Head Load Workers Welfare Scheme. Social and economic improvement in their living conditions is seen as the result of the implementation of such schemes. The limitation of social security coverage to the organized sector is argued by P.K.Jha. The social security in poor countries has to be integrated fully with anti poverty policies - S. Guhan.

Ghothoskar, (2003), points out that construction work is the product of a combination of historical, economic and social factors and processes, which may change with time and circumstances. It is argued that women are found to be not over represented in the construction sector due the flexibilities of work. Much employment in this sector is based on the “male bread winner” model, which does not give adequate space or freedom to women who also have other domestic responsibilities. The employer’s to ensure more work for less pay exploits this situation.

Alaka Basu (1997) studying the slum women in Delhi highlights that cultural factors are responsible for the difference between women of different communities resulting in different levels of education, employment pattern and life styles. These differences are important ramifications for the health of women and children in different places. She concludes that cultural and regional backgrounds of women therefore have a profound influence on the position of women and through this on their fertility and child mortality rates.

Atchi Reddy, (1995), studied the socio-economic conditions of women construction workers in Hyderabad by surveying twenty families, compares their working and living conditions with that of their counterparts in villages. She looks at the problems of poor workers in urban slums and analyses living conditions of female construction workers before they came to the city.

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**Rachael Kumar, (1994)**, brings to light the fact that economic changes have led to loss of employment especially in sectors that are the mainstay of female employment. The new industries have created new job opportunities. But the lack of mobility has led to a fall in the overall participation of women. However, the work participation rate of female workers in the secondary sector, as a proportion to the participation rate of male workers, is on the increase.

**Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, (1995)**, remarked that education is valuable to the freedom of a person. It has an empowerment and distributive role in providing greater literacy to the disadvantaged groups. Jejeebhoy, Shireen. J, (1997), has argued that the quality of life, especially women’s health is constrained by low levels of education and control over economic and material resources available to them in India.

**Meenakshi Thampan, (1997)**, examines some of the major linkages between culture and tradition, education and women’s health through an analysis of secondary data. Although education plays a crucial role in providing the possibilities for personal growth and independence, the importance of cultural norms, values and customs in determining the life’s choices and physical and mental well being of women cannot be denied. She concludes by arguing the need for an empowering education that is related to women’s lives and needs as well as takes account of the social conditions in which they live.

**S.Irudhaya Rajan and K.C.Zachariah, (2007)**, found that in the relatively progressive state of Kerala, there exist direct linkage between schooling and fertility and argues that fertility is affected by husband’s and wife’s schooling.

**Amartya Sen, (1999)**, The famed health status of Kerala is due to the affirmative public policies aimed at developing women’s capabilities in terms of education and increases their access to health care services. This is believed to have a positive
impact on the health care decisions and behaviour within families.

**Pravin Visaria, (1996)**, is of the view that the share of women improved in almost all states especially in Kerala. But their conditions of work deteriorated. Most of the labour laws are not reachable to the female workers in this sector. Even though, there had been studies focused on wage differentials in India, few studies have probed the Kerala situation. Still more intriguing is their health condition.

**John Strauss and Duncan Thomas, (2001)**, Health is a critical factor in the development of any region for two reasons. First, health status is a key indicator of a population’s welfare Second improving the health status of a population leads to greater economic productivity (John Strauss and Duncan Thomas)

**Panicker P G K and Soman C R, (2009)**, in reflects the Kerala scenario which is characterized by a strange combination of low mortality and high morbidity. Another dimension is the comparatively high cost of health care borne by Keralites. Further results of National Sample Survey points out that despite widespread, free and easily accessible public sector medical care institutions, private expenditure on medical care in the state has been the highest among all states or close to the top. If we are to look into the causes of this high cost of medical care, one is the exponential growth of public sector medical institutions. Increased literacy has raised the level of health consciousness among the masses and stimulated prompt response to any morbidity episode. Social reform movements have awakened the right of access to public medical care facilities. Added factor is the increased life expectancy and the proportion of aged in the population.

**Mony. K. Mathew (2010)**, identified that the Kudumbasree is one of the promoter of micro enterprises through women empowerment and creation of new self-employment opportunities. He also suggested that informal banking system for the poor could be promoted through the formation of SHGs.

**Maleeha Raghaviah (2002)** has that the micro enterprises are one of the similar units operating in 58 corporations/municipalities and 991 gram panchayats in Kerala. These enterprises aimed at eliminating poverty, provide a new meaning to the life of thousands of women involved in it and are set up through the NHGs.
Gurumoorthy, (2000), observed that the SHGs disburse micro credit to rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising and enter into entrepreneurial activities. SHGs encourage women to take active part in the social economic progress of our nation. Entrepreneurial activities are undertaken at the smaller level with minimum capital requirements. The women led SHGs have successfully demonstrated how to mobilize and manage thrift, appraise credit needs and enforce financial self discipline. SHGs have the potential to ignite socio economic revolution in rural India

Silvia M. D. Mendonca Noronha (2005) : In his thesis of ‘Migrant Construction Workers in Goa’, writes that, a significant proportion of the total migrant labour in Goa comprises construction workers from other states who came in large numbers following the construction boom in Goa in the eighties. Goa depends heavily on migrants workers for its construction activity. This paper seeks to examine the socio-economic characteristics of these workers. The causal factors (push and pull factors) leading to migration of these workers in Goa and the impact of the Goan economy.

K. Narindar Jetli (Ed., 2011) in the book, ‘India : Manpower, Employment Policy and Labour Welfare 1947 to 2007’ mentions that construction is one of the most labour intensive sector. Also, their exists large unmet demand for housing in both rural and urban areas. The National Building Organisation the urban housing shortage at 8.23 million units in 1991. Similarly in rural areas too there are such shortages. A boost to this sector is necessary to meet the housing demand, which constitute one of the basic necessities. In the process significant employment opportunities can be generated at different skill level, though largely for unskilled labour.

Darshan Sing (2010) in his study paper, ‘Working Conditions and Problems of Unorganised Sector : A Study of Construction Workers’ analysed that there are more than 20 million people engaged in various construction activities. They are born with indebtedness and poverty, their bodies are weak and they are overwhelmingly illiterate. They are not only discriminated but also exploited by the contractors / employers by taking benefit of their poor bargaining and socio-economic conditions. They are compelled to work on lower wages and unhygienic conditions without
proper facilities of housing, washing, bathing, latrines, urinals and social security measures.