

## **Chapter- III**

### **Socio-Economic Problems of Unorganized Women Labourers**

This chapter deals with the socio-economic problems faced by women labourers in the unorganized sector. It means the chapter attempts to analyze mainly the working condition and its related problems. So, the chapter started with a brief socio-economic background of Bhatiya women labourers as it is important to define their background under which they are involved in the unorganized sector of the economy. Then the chapter is attempted to analyze the working condition of women labourers engaged as domestic and construction labourers, and their burden of work inside and outside the house, i.e. the double burden of women labourers.

The term ‘working condition’ can be defined multi-dimensionally because it determines the commitment to work and domestic responsibilities (Devi, 2015). A survey in the United States used the term as mainly comprising wages, fringe benefits, health and safety, travel to and from work, steady employment, physical work environment, recruitment, relationship with supervisors, relations with fellow workers and prospects at work (Sultania, 1994). So, by the term ‘working condition’, the situation of work, the basic facilities provided by the employers like proper provision of sanitation, crèche, canteen, safe drinking water, transport, maternity benefits, medical facility, etc., and the service conditions can be included. A healthy working condition for employees has a great significance in the increase of production because it motivates them to work harder and more efficiently.

But in the unorganized sector, it is difficult to find a healthy working condition because employers are not intended to provide even the basic facilities to the employees. In this sector, women are increasingly found than in the organized sector

due to its ease of entry, but they are the most exploited ones in terms of wages. The low level of employment in higher jobs and low wage rates reflect the subjugated position of women in the economic sphere (Devi, 2015). Therefore, it is significant to understand the working situation, income level, security at the workplace and other different factors related to their work.

### **3.1. Socio-Economic Background of Women Labourers:**

Women constituting almost half of the country's total population are still not sufficiently able to make their major contribution to the development of our society. The main reason for their backwardness is the lack of awareness on the importance of the roles they perform and the belief of being inferior in comparison to their counterpart men due to the patriarchal norms. Women's role and their position in society is the result of the social structure, cultural norms and value system of Indian society, which is ruled by the ideology of 'female subordination'. The social environment plays the most significant role in the process of socialization, i.e. the development of self and formation of a human personality (Sultania, 1994).

Therefore, the socio-economic background of women labourers has been examined to reflect the socio-economic status that had brought them to the unorganized sector. The socio-economic background of women labourers is essential because it enables us to determine their living standard and quality of life. It is also important to understand the socio-economic background of women labourers belonging to the Bhatiya ethnic group in order to analyze the problems of women labourers in the unorganized sector. Hence, with a view to examining the socio-economic backgrounds, some indicators have been used to collect information such as age, marital status, educational level, family background, living conditions, etc.

**Age Distribution-** The age structure of the women labourers has been distributed into the several age groups for the study. Hence, the women labourers

surveyed for the study are found in a variety of age groups as depicted in the following table. The majority of women labourers are found within the age group of 26-45 years covering about 80% of women respondents where most of them are engaged as construction labourers.

**Table - 3.1**  
**Age Distribution of the Respondents**

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
20-25	4	6.67
26-30	11	18.33
31-35	15	25
36-40	12	20
41-45	10	16.67
46-50	8	13.33
Total	60	100

It is revealed in the above table that only 6.67% of women labourers are within the age group of 20-25 in which they are only found as domestic workers. It is from the age group of 26-30 with 18.33%, women are found to be as both the domestic and construction labourers. It is said by most of the women labourers that they engaged as construction labourers only because of the economic crisis in the family, i.e. either for the low income of the husband or in the absence of husband due to death or separation. It is also about 25% and 20% of women labourers are found under the age group of 31-35 and 36-40 respectively. Further, 16.67% of women labourers are found within 41-45 years of age group and 13.33% of women labourers under the age group of 46-50 years as shown in the above Table 3.1.

**Marital Status-** The marital status for women in a society like India is necessary to define because it has an influence on women's way of life, particularly in the economic field. In order to define the marital status of women labourers, they are

classified into four categories as the married, unmarried, widow and divorced/separated.

**Table - 3.2**  
**Marital Status of the Respondents**

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Married	38	63.33
Unmarried	0	0
Widow	9	15
Divorced/Separated	13	21.67
Total	60	100

The above table 3.2 shows that most of the women labourers are married, i.e. 63.33% followed by 21.67% of divorced or separated women labourers. It is only 15% of women labourers are found as widows, but no unmarried woman is found as a labourer between the age group of 20-50. It indicates the poor educational status and the prevalence of early marriages among women labourers.

**Educational Status-** The women labourers for the study are found as educationally backward for different factors like the poor economic condition of the household, lack of awareness about the importance of education among their parents, the belief among themselves that female education is not necessary, the early marriages, etc.

**Table - 3.3**  
**Educational Status of the Respondents**

Level of Education	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	37	61.67
Up to Class-IV	13	21.67
Up to Class-VIII	8	13.33
Up to HSLC	2	3.33
Total	60	100

The sample women labourers are educationally backward with 61.67% completely illiterates followed by 21.67% up to the primary level, i.e. Class-IV and 13.33% up to the Class VIII as shown in the above table. Though there are two women labourers are found who have completed their education up to the HSLC level, but they could not continue further studies due to their early marriage. However, such poor educational status had compelled them to enter into this unorganized sector for having flexibility in its entry than in the organized one. Further, the emergent economic crisis of their households also brought them to this realm of the unorganized sector as unskilled labourers.

**Family Structure-** The family structures of the women labourers are determined by the type and size of their family. The types of the family for the study are divided into nuclear, single-parent, joint and semi-joint types of family as it is found in the study area.

**Table - 3.4 (a)**  
**Type of Family of the Respondents**

Type of Family	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Nuclear Family	33	55
Single-Parent Family	7	11.67
Joint Family	3	5
Semi-Joint Family	17	28.33
Total	60	100

The data reveals from Table 3.4 (a) that majority of the women labourers, i.e. 55% are found in the nuclear family followed by the semi-joint family of 28.33%. It is about 11.67% of women labourers are found as leading single-parent families along with their children either due to the death of the husband or due to the

divorce/separation from the husband. And it is only 5% of the sample women labourers are found in the joint family system as shown in the Table 3.4 (a).

**Table - 3.4 (b)**  
**Size of Family of the Respondents**

Size of Family	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Small (0-4)	17	28.33
Medium (5-7)	36	60
Large (8+)	7	11.67
Total	60	100

The size of the family is defined by the number of members living together in the house. The sizes of the families are categorized as small with 0-4 members, medium with 5-7 members and large with more than eight members. Although the majority of women respondents, as shown in the above Table 3.4 (a), are found in the nuclear family, the sizes of the families are mostly falling in the medium category as it is shown in the Table 3.4 (b) that 60% of women labourers are living in families having 5-7 members. The above table also reveals that 28.33% of families are fall within the small size category followed by 11.67% in the large size family. The reason for increasing the number of large size family despite the presence of only 5% of joint families is that some of the semi-joint families are fall within the category of a large size family.

**Housing Condition-** The housing conditions of women labourers are defined by the type and number of rooms of the houses along with lighting facilities in the houses. The data reveals that all the women labourers are living in Assam type houses and the majority of them have to pay rent to the owner either for the house in which they live or for the land in which they built their houses.

**Table - 3.5 (a)**  
**Type of House of the Respondents**

Type of House	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
With Brick Walls	14	23.33
Bamboo Tin Walls with Tin Roof	29	48.33
Bamboo Walls with Tin Roof	12	20
Bamboo Mud Walls with Straw Roof	5	8.33
Total	60	100

It is shown in Table 3.5 (a) that 48.33% of women labourers are lived in houses of tin walls with tin roofs followed by 23.33% of women labourers in houses with brick walls and 20% in houses of bamboo walls with tin roofs. It is also estimated from the sample households that 8.33% of women labourers are living in houses with bamboo mud walls with straw roofs. Further, most of the women labourers found in houses with brick walls are possible mainly due to the loans provided by Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), i.e. nine out of fourteen women labourers have been benefitted by the PMAY.

**Table - 3.5 (b)**  
**Number of Room of the Respondents**

Number of Room	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
One room	37	61.67
Two rooms	17	28.33
Three rooms	6	10
More than three	0	0
Total	60	100

The second important aspect of determining the housing condition of women labourers is the number of rooms in their houses. The Table 3.5 (b) is also showing the poor living condition of the women labourers in the same way that reveals in their type

of houses. It is found that majority of women labourers, i.e. 61.67% are living in the houses having only one room followed by only 28.33% and 10% of women labourers in the houses having two and three rooms respectively. The majority of households are structured without the proper toilet facility and most of the women labourers living in a particular area have to share one or two toilets among 6-8 families.

**Table - 3.5 (c)**  
**Source of Lighting of the Respondents**

Source of Lighting	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Electricity	26	43.33
Kerosene	34	56.67
Other	0	0
Total	60	100

Moreover, the majority of women labourers, i.e. 56.67% are using kerosene in order to lighten up their houses and only 43.33% have electricity facility in their houses as shown in the Table 3.5 (c). The reason for not having electricity facility in the houses is their poor income by which they could not bear the expenditure of electricity, even the expenses on kerosene are also difficult to manage for them. Therefore, it is said by almost all the women labourers that they always try to cook as soon as possible, i.e. if it is possible before the sunset and sleep early so that the lighting expenses of the house could be reduced.

### **3.2. Women as Construction Labourer:**

Construction labourers are those unskilled persons (both men and women) engaged in various forms of building and construction activity by their physical labour. High economic vulnerability, particularly the women, their utilization in the lowest grade of jobs, unstable employment and shifting of workplaces are the main



features of construction labourers. By such kind of features, it can also be termed as casual wage labour which refers to the person casually engaged in others' farm or non-farm enterprises and receives wages in terms of the daily or periodic basis work contract. Evidence has been found from various parts of the world that construction labourers do not view their employment in a very favourable light and it is regarded almost everywhere as a low-status job (ILO, 2001). But people are associated with the construction industry due to their necessity, not because of their choice and they want better livelihood for their children.

In many countries, women are occupying a significant place by performing unskilled tasks in the construction industry where the workforce is mainly composed of men. The trend of women's participation in the construction industry has some regional differences because the rate of women's participation is higher in Asia than in other regions of the world (ILO, 2015). It is estimated that women may constitute up to 30% of the construction workforce in India. The construction industry has absorbed about 16% of India's working population by employing 31 million people with 10% skilled and 90% unskilled or semi-skilled workforce as per the report of the Indian government. Within the realm of such available unskilled labourers, women are also included covering about one-third of the workforce in the construction industry. The workforce of the construction industry can be regarded as the constructor of modern India and is playing a significant role in the economic development of the nation. Thus, women as construction labourers are the backbone of any developing society because of their increasing contribution in the present days (Sultana & Gogoi, 2019).

Women forming a significant part of the workforce are mainly employed as unskilled labourers in construction sites. Although there are some opportunities for increasing income by improving their skills, the women tend to be at low-paid unskilled jobs. They are integrated into the construction workforce at the bottom end of the industry as unskilled labourers or head-load carriers (ILO, 2001). It is because of the discrimination that deprives women of the opportunities to improve their skills. Even more, the biased attitude of male labourers towards them due to the fear of

potential competition for the position is also contributing to the women's subjugated status. Therefore, they are only seen as secondary labourers, i.e. in helping the primary male workers, despite the huge participation of women in this sector.

Further, the concept of division of labour on the basis of sex is largely prevalent in this field, despite the increasingly higher participation and contribution of women as construction labourers. The labour in the construction industry is divided into a line of gender which invariably tagged women's labour as unskilled and men's labour as a skilled one. Women are restricted to be only as a helper of male labourers and their labour are used mainly for carrying materials like sand, brick, stone, concrete, etc. Such kinds of labour are defined as unskilled and the unskilled labour is naturally paid less than the skilled labour because it has been devalued.

In this similar way, the Goalpara district is also witnessing the participation of women in the construction industry as helpers for male workers. Although the district is industrially backward, a number of women labourers mainly from the Bhatiya ethnic group are employed by many contractors at a very cheap rate for the construction of private buildings, public roads, etc. The increasing number of women's participation is making the sector more competitive and fewer chances of bargaining for wages.

### **3.3. Working Condition of Women Construction Labourers:**

The significant role of the construction industry in the development of modern India are mainly characterized by casual nature of work, unskilled job, shifting workplace, unstable earnings and lack of basic facility or security for its workforce. On the basis of these common factors of the construction industry, the working conditions of women labourers have been analyzed. Therefore, the problems related to working conditions for women construction labourers are mainly analyzed by their duration of work, income level, physical health, etc. In order to analyze the condition of work, mainly those indicators have been used which are closely related to their

nature of works, i.e. duration of work, income level and health status. For the study, 30 women labourers are selected from construction works out of the total 60 respondents and the problems related to them are-

**Duration of Work-** The regulation in the working hour is one of the oldest concerns of labour legislation which was initiated in the early 19th century. It was realized that long working hours causes different health problems for the workers. Therefore, the first International Labour Organization (ILO) convention, 1919 had fixed 48 hours per week with a maximum of 8 hours per day as the general standard of the working hour which was, further, reduced to 40 hours per week in the ILO convention of 1935. However, the working hour in Indian industry is prescribed to be 48 hours in a week by the Factories Act, 1948 which is applied to all the organized as well as the unorganized sector. But in the unorganized sector, the regulations regarding the fixed time schedule have not been maintained.

**Table - 3.6 (a)**  
**Working Hours of the Respondents in Construction Works**

Working hours	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 8 hours	0	0
8 hours	9	30
Above 8 hours	21	70
Total	30	100

Therefore, the working hours are divided into three categories for the study as depicted in the above Table 3.6 (a). It is shown in the table that the majority of women labourers, i.e. 70% are working beyond eight hours of the time limit in the construction sites. And only 30% of women labourers are found to work for eight hours a day. The data reveals that no woman is found to work for less than eight hours in a day in the construction industry. The long working hours without maintaining any regulatory norms are common in the unorganized sector. The women labourers in the

unorganized sector are often found to work beyond their stipulated time by frequently violating the legislative provisions relating to working hours.

Moreover, the women respondents also added that most of the time they work for extra hours are not given any extra remuneration. They are hardly given about Rs.50-100 for doing the extra hours of work and that is only when they have asked for the extra wages, despite the provision for providing extra wages at twice the ordinary rate under the Factories Act, 1948.

**Level of Income-** The income level for construction labourers is generally counted on a daily basis. The women employed in the construction industry are paid less than men even for the same kind of labour. The discrimination on wages hampers the growth and prosperity because it is the main source of income for most of the families of female labourers. The variation in wages for the same kind of work on the basis of gender is a barrier to social justice and has a direct impact on human development. But the competitive nature of the construction industry restricts them to bargain or raise their voice on the issue. It shows that unorganized sectors are sources for the exploitation of the ‘unorganized proletariat’ in general and women in particular (Sultania, 1994).

**Table - 3.6 (b)**

**Daily Income of the Respondents in Construction Works**

Daily Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
150-250	19	63.33
250-350	11	36.67
350-450	0	0
Above 450	0	0
Total	30	100

The above Table 3.6 (b) is showing that the majority of women’s income falls within the range of Rs.150-250 and about 36.67% of women’s daily income fall within

the range of Rs.250-350. The wages provided to the women in the construction industry are not exceeding to Rs.350, whereas wages for male labourers are started from Rs.400. Therefore, the majority of women said that they are hardly able to save money for their future needs or emergency due to such a low level of income.

Significantly, the wage rates are also not increased on the basis of work experience for women. The wage discrimination against women in the unorganized sector has created a sense of superiority among male labourers that violates the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity (Devi, 2015). In this connection, the equality of opportunity and treatment is addressed in the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and discrimination with regard to employment and occupation in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), which are the two of the eight fundamental ILO Conventions (ILO, 2018). Even the Article 39(e) of the Indian Constitution ensures equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

The problem of wages is very much prevalent in the unorganized sector because it is the main focal point for both the employers and employees where the employers try to extract the labour as much as possible at a cheap rate. But as in comparison, the male labourers get better wages than the females, so the female labourers are the main deprived part of the sector. The reason behind the deprivation of women is mainly the lack of consciousness among themselves about their importance in economic activities. It is the social norms and culture of Indian society that influence women's subordinate position in society.

**Health Problem-** The occupational health hazards, in the unorganized sector, have an adverse effect on labourers in general and women in particular. The unhygienic working environment in construction sites causes a number of health problems. But the problem of muscle pain is a common kind of health issue faced by all women construction labourers besides the problems like allergy, cough and asthma.

**Table - 3.6 (c)**  
**Health Problems of the Respondents in Construction Works**

Health Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Muscle pain	17	56.67
Muscle pain with Allergy	6	20
Muscle pain with Asthma	2	6.67
Muscle pain with Cough	5	16.67
Total	30	100

The above Table 3.6 (c) has shown that about 56.67% of women labourers are facing only the problem of muscle pain due to the heavy load of their labour. The unhealthy working environment also causes the problem of allergy, cough and asthma covering about 20%, 16.67% and 6.67% of women labourers respectively along with their problem of muscle pain. Moreover, the women labourers, who are at the reproductive age, such poor working conditions naturally causes them to physical weakness.

Further, the lack of proper toilet facilities and drinking water in construction sites is another challenge for the women labourers that affect their health. The inability to pay for health care often forces the poor labourers to continue working by neglecting their health conditions. However, the long working hours in the unhygienic working condition of construction sites, lack of nutrition due to the low income and working with the poor health condition creates more health problems for women labourers in an unorganized sector that resulting in risks of their life.

### **3.4. Women as Domestic Worker:**

The domestic workers are not a homogeneous group because they are not only varied with respect to their demographic profile like age, gender or marital status, but also for the nature of their jobs like cooking, cleaning, gardening, looking after elderly

people or children, guarding the house and beyond. Therefore, the delegates to the International Labour Conference in defining ‘domestic worker’ have supported a general formulation that draws on the common feature of domestic workers that they work for private households, instead of listing out the specific tasks or services performed by the domestic workers (ILO, 2013). This has been reflected by the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) when it defines “domestic workers” in Article 1:

- (a) The term “domestic work” means work performed in or for a household or households;
- (b) The term “domestic worker” means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship;
- (c) A person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker.

Therefore, providing services for a private household on an occupational basis is at the heart of the Convention’s definition. Further, the Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers define a domestic worker as “a person who is employed for remuneration whether in cash or kind, in any household through any agency or directly, either on a temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time basis to do the household work, but does not include any member of the family of an employer.” Thus, a domestic worker is a person who performs a variety of activities within the employer’s household.

The ILO estimates that about 52.6 million people are domestic workers around the world in 2010 and this figure is greater than the number of persons employed in large countries. It accounts for 1.7% of total employment worldwide and some 3.6% of all wage employment (ILO, 2013). The domestic work remains a heavily female-dominated sector despite 8.9 million men employed by private households as gardeners or security guards. Women constitute about 83% of all domestic workers and one in every 13 female wage workers is a domestic worker globally (ILO, 2013). It indicates that the total number of women in domestic work is larger than men in all

countries and in every region of the world. In a country like India where 73% of the female workforce is illiterate or literate but only up to the primary level, domestic work is an important source of wage employment for them. According to National Sample Survey 2011-12, there were 2,38,92,791 domestic workers in the country and it is increasing day by day which brings a huge share of women in the working population.

It is one of the oldest forms of jobs in the world without any recognition. It is considered as unskilled labour because most of the women have been traditionally capable of doing such works by their innate skills. As the women are traditionally having the capability of doing domestic works and required no specialized training or skills for that, their labour is undervalued. A significant number of women are found in domestic works like cooking, cleaning, taking care of children and elderly people, etc. The number of women domestic workers is growing continuously particularly in urban areas because it is the easiest way of livelihood in the unorganized sector. In order to fulfil the needs of the family, most of the women are found to be as domestic workers. The domestic workers have neither a fixed time schedule for work nor any minimum fixed wages. The employers often try to take the maximum number of services from domestic workers by paying them less amount of wages.

Domestic workers are one of the most invisible kinds of labourers that there are no proper laws or acts, particularly for protecting their rights. It is only in the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 of the country, they are given the status of 'labour', but does not address their specific vulnerability. It is very difficult to implement laws for them because of their scattered and decentralized nature of the labour market. In spite of that many social agencies like NGOs are actively working towards the protection of the rights of domestic workers.

But the domestic works or services have been becoming a major unorganized activity in urban areas of the country. Mostly the families falling under the middle/high-income category in which both the husband and wife are employed are



the main source of demand for domestic workers. The Global Age Watch Index, 2013 ranked India 73 out of 91 countries in elderly care which is a significant margin for improvement in this area. However, the study area of the district also has a significant number of women domestic workers. The area is witnessing a considerable number of women's participation in domestic works and they are basically belonging to the Bhatiya ethnic group of economically poor sections of the society.

### **3.5. Working Condition of Women Domestic Workers:**

The workforce in the realm of domestic works is characterized by informal employer-employee relationships and a lack of training facilities for workers where the implementation of the legal provision is also very weak because of their unregulated and scattered nature of work. Further, low literacy rates, marginalized sections of society and a large number of migrant workers, mainly dominated by women are the cornerstones of this sector. As a consequence, the large number of participation in domestic works as the major unorganized activity for women have always brought them to face challenges like the absence of fixed working hours, low wages, lack of social security and dignity. It defines the nature of the situation under which they have to work and therefore, the problems faced by women domestic workers mainly related to their condition of work have been analyzed by the indicators as in case of women construction labourers have been used. The indicators used in order to analyze the working condition of women domestic workers are the duration of work, income level and health status. So, the rest of the 30 women labourers are selected from domestic works for the study and the problems related to them are-

**Duration of Work-** The number of working hours has an important effect on both the quality of work and the life of workers. The domestic works, particularly for women, can be considered as the most invisible kind of activity in the unorganized sector which is not yet gain proper recognition for the implementation of strict laws. As a result, it has been observed that there is no specified working time-period for

them and the irregular distribution of working hours have directly affected their health. Although several initiatives have been taken by many countries since the early 19th century in providing a maximum limit on working hours, domestic workers are often excluded from such standards. Therefore, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) in its Article 10 calls for “measures towards ensuring equal treatment between domestic workers and workers generally in relation to normal hours of work, overtime compensation, periods of daily and weekly rest and paid annual leave”.

However, it has been gradually seen in many parts of our society that the concept of working hours for women in domestic works is largely depending on the contract of part-time or full-time works. The increasing need, scarcity and demand for domestic workers in many societies have brought the change on the contract of domestic workers as part-time and full-time. Thus, most of the women are found to be as part-time labourers in the study area despite the unpredictable work time depending on the employers’ demand.

**Table - 3.7 (a)**  
**Working Hours of the Respondents in Domestic Works**

Working hours	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 8 hours	23	76.67
8 hours	5	16.67
Above 8 hours	2	6.67
Total	30	100

The above table is showing that the majority of women labourers, i.e. 76.67% have the duration of work below eight hours, only 16.67% and 6.67% are found to work for eight hours and above eight hours respectively. Most of the sample women are found to be working in 2-4 private households as part-time workers on monthly basis, but out of 30, only two women are contracted as full-time workers as shown in the above Table 3.7 (a). Therefore, the women working as part-time workers in 2-4 households have to invest 2-3 hours in one household for their domestic works after

which they moved to other households. But the women working as full-time workers have to engage in employers' household works for more than eight hours depending on the unpredictable demand of the employer due to their full-time contract in that particular household.

**Level of Income-** The economic gain of the domestic workers to secure themselves and their families is the primary concern to engage within the workforce. But one of the distinct characteristics of domestic workers from other workers in the unorganized sector is that they typically earn lower wages. There is a range of mostly interlinked factors that explained the reasons for low levels of remuneration among domestic workers, such as the lower level of education or skill requirements for the job causes to their lower level of wages (ILO, 2013). It is because of the traditional concept of male breadwinner and female caregivers, where men's work determined their income/social status and women's work in the household is undervalued as caregiving/household chores. Further, domestic work involves the tasks that women have shouldered in their house and the domestic workers have not required any formal training due to such innate nature. Therefore, the domestic workers have been undervalued in the perception of domestic work and caregiving as "unproductive" work (ILO, 2013).

The Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131) has mentioned in one of their objectives to protect "disadvantaged groups of wage earners" against "unduly low wages" as domestic workers, particularly the women, can be considered as the most vulnerable group of the workforce in the unorganized sector. Moreover, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) also in its Article 11, precisely supports the minimum wage coverage for domestic workers as "each member shall take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy minimum wage coverage, where such coverage exists, and that remuneration is established without discrimination based on sex". But the enforcement of minimum wages, particularly for domestic workers, often remains far from reality and India is one of the countries where legislation for minimum wages has not been extended to domestic workers.

**Table - 3.7 (b)**  
**Monthly Income of the Respondents in Domestic Works**

Monthly income	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
500-1500	6	20
1500-2500	14	46.67
2500-3500	7	23.33
3500-4500	3	10
Above 4500	0	0
Total	30	100

The women domestic workers are generally paid on monthly basis for their labour with a lack of scope for bargaining of the wages. The financial crisis of the women's families compels them to work at low wages. It is found in the study that most of the women's monthly income falls within the range of Rs.1500-2500 and only 10% of women have a monthly income of Rs.3500-4500. Further, 20% and 23.33% of women's income are found to be fallen within the range of Rs.500-1500 and Rs.2500-3500 respectively. Most of the sample women are found to earn their income by doing domestic works in 2-4 private households as part-time workers and out of 30, only two women are found as full-time workers. The lower level of income is not sufficient for them to maintain the expenditure of their family because many of the women are the only earning member in the household. The women domestic workers often have to take financial help by borrowing money from employers and as such remain indebted towards them. Therefore, the concept of saving money among the women domestic workers could hardly be found like in the case of construction labourers.

Several related legal provisions are there to ensure a suitable income in order to live a decent life but the unorganized labourers like domestic workers are often not covered under these provisions. Even the Article 43 of the Indian Constitution lays down that the State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organization or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise,

work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.

**Health Problem-** The health of employees should be the primary concern in any economic activity because it determines the quality of the work performed by them. The constant work-loads for a longer period of time without any rest often have a negative impact on the health of the domestic workers. As most of the domestic workers are women, i.e. constituting more than about 80% of its total workforce, they also have to bear the burden of their own household works. Therefore, the women domestic workers have to constantly engage for long working hours with their employers' domestic works along with their own household chores, which have adversely affected their health. Moreover, the low level of nutrition intake and inability to get the proper health care facility because of their low income also make them physically weak.

**Table - 3.7 (c)**

**Health Problems of the Respondents in Domestic Works**

Health Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Muscle Pain	19	63.33
Allergy	0	0
Asthma	2	6.67
Cough	9	30
Total	30	100

The women engaged in domestic works are caused by a number of health-related problems. Some of the problems like muscle pain, allergy, cough, asthma are the most common kinds of occupational health hazards among the various health-related problems of women labourers. It is found in the Table 3.7 (c) that most of the women, i.e. 63.33% have the problem of muscle pain due to their constant work-loads. The table also shows that 6.67% of women are suffering from asthma problems and

about 30% are having the problem of cough because most of their domestic works are related to using water like washing, cleaning, etc. So, the women are facing problems like asthma or cough and also sometimes suffer from muscle pains, and their condition becomes more adverse during the winter seasons.

Moreover, many of the women as domestic workers are at their reproductive and childbearing age for which they have to deal with certain difficulties. As these women are employed in private households in an unorganized way, they are directly exempted from maternity protection provisions like maternity leave and income replacement in the form of maternity cash benefits. Thus, pregnancy ultimately leads to the loss of employment for domestic workers.

### **3.6. Double Burden of Women Labourers:**

The concept of 'double burden' is primarily associated with women because of their family responsibilities along with their jobs. The women working outside their household are consequently associated with the double burden of labour, i.e. one inside the home and another outside the home. Despite the increasing participation of women in the labour force all over the world, they continue to bear the majority of responsibilities at home and perform most of the 'unpaid work'. The 'unpaid work' consists of mainly domestic work that includes food preparation, dishwashing, cleaning and upkeep of a dwelling, laundry, ironing, gardening, shopping, servicing and repair of personal and household goods, childcare and care of the sick, elderly or disabled members of the household (UN, 2015). Therefore, the employed women altogether have to spend more time in doing unpaid household works and paid works than men. On average, women in most of the developing countries spend 9 hours and 20 minutes per day on paid and unpaid work, where men spend 8 hours and 7 minutes per day that is about 1 hour and 10 minutes less than the women (UN, 2015).

The term ‘double burden’ is, therefore, used for the women labourers due to their role in managing family responsibilities along with their economic activities. Traditionally, domestic works like cleaning, cooking, etc. and child-rearing are associated with women from where women could not detach themselves. Thus, the commitment to their economic activities along with the family also determines the women’s working conditions. The family responsibilities of women labourers are measured by their nature of managing household works and taking care of their children.

**Help at Household Works-** Most of the women construction labourers are found to be managing their household activities without any help from other members of the family. The following table is depicting that a few numbers of women labourers engaged in construction works are getting help from others.

**Table - 3.8 (a)**

**Respondents in Constrution Works Assisted by Others in Household Activities**

Help by others	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Self	21	70
Husband	4	13.33
Children	3	10
Other family members	2	6.67
Total	30	100

Most of the women construction labourers, i.e. 70%, have to manage their household works without any help from others in the family. It is only 30% of women labourers are assisted by their family members in the house as shown in the Table 3.8 (a). It reveals in the study that only 13.33% of women are assisted by their husband, 10% of women by their children and 6.67% of women are assisted by other family members like mother-in-law or sister-in-law in household works. Thus, it becomes

very difficult, particularly for women construction labourers, to go to their workplace after managing all the household works alone.

**Table - 3.8 (b)**

**Respondents in Domestic Works Assisted by Others in Household Activities**

Help by others	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Self	25	83.33
Husband	2	6.67
Children	2	6.67
Other family members	1	0.33
Total	30	100

In the case of domestic workers also, the majority of women have to manage their household works by own without any help from others. It is about 83.33% of women are managing their household works without help from other family members. Only 13.67% of women labourers are getting help from family members in household works. As it is shown in the Table 3.8 (b) that only four women domestic workers are assisted by their husband and children, and only one woman is assisted by other family members like in-laws.

It is revealed from the study that the majority of women labourers are doing their household works without any assistance from their family members. The scope for getting help from other family members is very less as most of the women labourers are living in a nuclear family. Moreover, their husbands don't want to do/help in the household works because of the patriarchal norm that household works are primarily associated only with the women. Although a few women are found to be assisted by their husbands, as revealed in the study, it is only because those women are the sole earning member of the family and their husbands are not working outside to earn money by depending on the women's income.



It is also revealed that the nature of work determines the matter of getting help in household works from others in the case of unorganized women labourers. It is found in the study that 30% of women construction labourers and 13.67% of women domestic workers are assisted by family members like husband, children or in-laws. It indicates that the long working hours of women construction labourers in comparison to women domestic workers who often engaged as part-time workers determine the issue of assistance from family members in household works.

Thus, there are a number of reasons in determining the assistance that women labourers are getting from their family members for household works. But the traditional concept that the association of women with household works is the primary reason for which the majority of women bear the burden of household works alone without even any help from others.

**Child Care-** Another important responsibility for women labourers is taking care of their children during working hours. As most of the women labourers are at their reproductive and childbearing age, taking care of the children is one of the crucial issues for them.

**Table - 3.9 (a)**

**Child Care of the Respondents in Construction Works**

Child care	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Bring them to workplace	20	66.67
Taken care by eldest child	3	10
Taken care by in-laws	4	13.33
Taken care by other family members	3	10
Total	30	100

It is about 66.67% of women construction labourers have brought their child to the workplace either for the reason that there is no one to take care of the child at

home or the child is not at an age to be left in the hands of other family members at home. It is found in the study that only 33.33% of children of the women are take-cared by their family members including 10% by eldest child of the women, 13.33% by the in-laws and 10% by the other family members in the house or nearby the house.

**Table - 3.9 (b)**  
**Child Care of the Respondents in Domestic Works**

Child care	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Bring them to workplace	5	16.67
Taken care by eldest child	12	40
Taken care by in-laws	8	26.67
Taken care by other family members	5	16.67
Total	30	100

It is revealed in the Table that only 16.67% of women have brought their child to the workplace and most of the children, i.e. 40%, are take-cared by the eldest child of the women at their home. It is about 26.67% and 16.67% of children are take-cared by the in-laws and other family members at their houses or nearby their houses respectively. So, about 83.34% of children of the women domestic workers are take-cared by others in the family as depicts the Table 3.9 (b). The part-time engagement and comparatively shorter working hours of the women domestic workers are making it possible to take care of their children by other family members.

However, the difference is found in the matter of child care between the women domestic and construction labourers because of the nature of their work. It is found in the study that about 66.67% of women construction labourers have brought their children to their workplace, whereas only 16.67% of women domestic workers have brought their children to the workplace. It is mainly because of the working hours that the women labourers have to spend at their workplace. It means the working hours determine the matter of care of their child whether it is taken by the women or some other family members. The day-long work schedules of women construction

labourers have compelled them to bring their children to the workplace. But it hampers the child's health at this early age because of the unhealthy working environment at construction sites. While the part-time working nature of women domestic workers for 2-3 hours in one household makes it possible for other family members to take care of the child at home.

Moreover, some other factors like the size and type of families such as nuclear, semi-joint or joint family and single-parent family, and the age of the children have also contributed in the matter of child care. It is found that women labourers living in joint or semi-joint families are getting help in order to take care of the child by other family members than the women labourers living in small-sized nuclear or single-parent families. Thus, although the nature and period of work is the main reason, the patterns of the family are also determining factors in reducing or increasing the burden of women labourers on child care.

### **3.7. Social Security Measures for Women Labourers:**

Social security means a provision under which the interests and needs of the members of society are protected. The International Labour Organization has defined it as "the security that society furnishes, through appropriate organization, against certain risks to which its members are exposed. These risks are essentially contingencies against which the individual of small means can't effectively provide by his own ability or foresight alone or even with private combination with his fellows. According to it while all state policy has some bearing on social security, it is convenient to regard social security services only such schemes as providing the citizen with benefits designed to prevent and cure disease, to support him when unable to earn and to restore him to gainful activity." It further emphasized on the importance of comprehensive social security measures, in which it proclaimed "protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provisions for old age and injury."

The extent of security at the workplace for women labourers can be identified by the provisions of various social security measures. The need for social security measures at the national level has been felt by the process of industrialization and urbanization in order to resolve various socio-economic problems. Although social security is not recognized by the constitution of India as a fundamental right, it has long-standing social development objectives enclosed in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Thus, different social security measures mainly related to unorganized women labourers are being discussed as-

### **The Employees' Compensation Act, 1923**

The social security in India was begun by the Employees' Compensation Act in 1923. The aim of the Act is to impose an obligation upon employers to pay compensation to workers for injury caused by employment activity or during employment. This Act extends to the entire country and applies to any person who is engaged in hazardous occupations including construction works. The rate of compensation in case of death is an amount equal to 50% of the monthly wages of the deceased worker multiplied by the relevant factor or an amount of Rs.1,20,000 whichever is more. In case of permanent total disablement, the compensation will be an amount equal to 60% of the monthly wages of the injured worker multiplied by the relevant factor or an amount of Rs.1,40,000 whichever is more.

### **The Trade Unions Act, 1926**

The Trade Unions Act was enacted in 1926 with the objective to provide for the registration of trade unions by conferring legal status on registered trade unions. The Act includes both the employers' and workers' organizations to be registered as trade unions. This Act is not only regulating the employee-employer relation but also the relationship between employee and employee or the employer and employer. Under this Act, 10% or one hundred workers of an establishment can form a trade union and then apply for the registration. After registration, it acquires a legal status and a

payment of minimum subscription has been laid down by the Act which is not less than one rupee per annum for rural workers, three rupees per annum for unorganized workers and twelve rupees per annum for workers in any other case. The Act also has provisions of various penalties in case of certain defaults on the part of any registered union.

### **The Payment of Wages Act, 1936**

The Payment of Wages Act came into existence in 1936 to ensure the regular payment of wages and regulate the exploitation of wage earners by prohibiting unauthorized deductions from wages. This Act applies to all establishments including the construction industry in which the employee is drawing less than Rs.18,000 per month. The Act denotes the term 'wages' as all the remuneration payable to an employed person on the fulfilment of the contract of employment and it must be paid within seven days from the date of expiry of wage period in the establishments where less than one thousand persons are employed. The Act also has laid down a list of authorized deductions of wages by specifying its condition and the total amount of deductions in any wage period should not be more than 75% of such wages.

### **The Factories Act, 1948**

The Factory Act of 1934 was amended several times and finally, it came into existence as the Factories Act of 1948. It can be applied to any establishments, employing 10 or more workers where power is used and 20 or more workers where power is not used. The states are also authorized to apply the provisions of the Act to any premises, regardless of the number of people employed. The Act has been further amended several times and the amendment of 1976 has been extended to the contract labour. This Act with the provisions of cleanliness, lighting, ventilation, etc., also provides a number of measures for the disposal of wastes and effluents, elimination of dust and fumes, control of temperature, etc. The Act provides for proper safety

measures along with the welfare measures like first aid appliances, washing facilities, canteens, rest shelters, crèches, etc.

### **The Minimum Wages Act, 1948**

The main objective of the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 is to extend the concept of social justice to the employees employed in certain establishments and to ensure protection to those workers who are vulnerable to exploitation due to a lack of bargaining power. The Act is applicable to the employment in agriculture, including horticulture, dairy farming, raising of bees and poultry, and the contract labour employed under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act including daily-rated employees. This Act provides for a provision of statutory fixation and revision of minimum rates of wages within a specified period by the Central or State Governments. The rates of minimum wages may be fixed for different employments, different classes in the same employment, for adolescents, children and apprentices, and for different localities. The minimum rates may consist of the basic rates of wages and cost of living allowance and the cash value of concessions in respect of the supply of essential commodities at concessional rates.

### **The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**

The Government of India, in order to provide maternity protection to women, has enacted the Maternity Benefit Act in 1961 which applies to all establishments including factories, mines, plantations, circus industry, shops and any other establishments employing 10 or more persons. The period of benefit is 12 weeks i.e., six weeks up to and including the day of delivery, and six weeks following that day. The rate of benefit will be average daily wages and the bonus for medical care is Rs.250 if she has not been provided with maternity benefits free of charge; the additional leave of up to six weeks with wages at the same rate is provided if there is illness arising out of pregnancy, delivery, premature delivery of a child or miscarriage; the mother of the child is given two more breaks besides the common break in order to

nurse the baby until the child attains the age of 15 months and; pregnant women during the maternity leave neither be dismissed nor be discharged from employment. Thus, the Act has proved to be useful and health-promoting to the women engaged in factories or other establishments.

### **The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970**

The aim of the Act is to provide for the abolition of contract labour wherever possible and the regulation of contract labour in establishments where the abolition is not executable. It applies to every establishment in which 20 or more workers are employed or employed on any day of the proceeding twelve months as contract labour and every contractor who employed 20 or more workers on any day of the proceeding twelve months. The contractor is the one who supplies and hires contract labour to an establishment and the Act provides for the registration and licensing by every contractor. The contractor is required to provide some basic welfare facilities like canteen, restrooms, sufficient supply of drinking water, a sufficient number of latrines and urinals, washing facilities and first-aid boxes to the contract labour.

### **The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972**

The Payment of Gratuity Act was passed by the Central Government on the recommendations of the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1971. It came into force in 1972 and provides for a scheme of compulsory payment of gratuity to employees engaged in any establishments of industrial, commercial, agricultural, oilfield, mines, railway companies, port, motor transport undertakings or otherwise for matters connected therewith. The Act confers a right on the employee to receive gratuity, payable on the termination of his/her employment after he/she has rendered service for not less than five years; or on retirement or resignation; or on death or disablement due to accident or disease. However, the completion of five years' service is not necessary for earning gratuity in case the termination of the employment is due to the death or disablement of the employee.

**The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976**

The Equal Remuneration Act came into existence with reference to Article 39 of the Indian Constitution, 1976. It aims to provide for payment of equal remuneration to men and women for the same work or work of similar nature and for the prohibition of discrimination against women in recruitment as well as in the condition of services like promotions, training and transfers. The Act defines 'same work or work of a similar nature' as any work in respect of which the requirements of skill, effort and responsibility are the same when performed under similar conditions by men and women.

**The Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996**

This Act came into existence due to the need for a special focus on persons employed in the construction industry in 1996. The main aim of the Act is to regulate the employment and conditions of services of the building or other construction workers by providing them with safe, healthy and welfare working conditions. The Act also provides certain welfare measures like temporary accommodation at or near work sites, crèches, canteens, first-aid and washing facilities. The Act further includes the provisions of fixing normal working hours, weekly paid rest, the wage for overtime, and facilities like drinking water, latrines and urinals for the building or construction workers.

**The Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008**

On the recommendation of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act came into force in 2008. By keeping in view the existence of a huge number of unorganized workers in the country, this Act was passed to cover all the workers in the unorganized sector. Although the central or state governments have implemented welfare measures for certain categories of unorganized workers like beedi workers, non-coal mine



workers, handloom weavers, fishermen, etc., a huge gap is found in the coverage of the workers in the unorganized sector. Even in the matters of labour protection and social security measures which ensures welfare and well-being of unorganized workers such as agricultural workers, construction workers, domestic workers, leather workers, handloom workers, etc., are out of the coverage of these efforts. So, this Act aims to provide for social security and welfare of all the unorganized sector workers and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

However, all these social security measures available can be applicable to all the unorganized women labourers. But the availability of these measures is out of the concern of those women labourers and they are working in the unorganized sector without any security and welfare measures. This unorganized sector compels them to work under insecure employment conditions by changing their workplace from one place to another. Thus, the lack of concern for unionization and the scattered nature of the employment is becoming the main reason for their job insecurity.

### **3.8. Findings of the Study:**

The process of urbanization has increasingly introduced the concept of engaging women as domestic and construction labourers. These two sections of women labourers fall within the two different broad groups of the unorganized sector as categorized by the Indian Ministry of Labour, i.e. the construction labourers in terms of occupation and the domestic workers in terms of service category. The study area is experiencing a considerable number of these two types of women labourers mainly belonging to a particular Muslim ethnic group. However, the unorganized sector of the economy which is characterized by unregulated nature of work with a lack of social security measures, where women's labour are not recognized, have put the women labourers within the circle of numerous socio-economic problems.

The socio-economic background of the women labourers reveals that they are from the backward and poor sections of the society scattered in the unorganized sector

of the economy. It is found in the socio-economic characteristics that women labourers between 20-50 years are distributed in a variety of age groups. The majority of women labourers are found within the age group of 26-45 years covering about 80% of women respondents where most of them are engaged as construction labourers. On the other hand, women engaged as domestic workers are found within each of the age groups, unlike the construction labourers. Although it is from the age group of 26-30, women are found to be both domestic and construction labourers, the number of women within that age group in construction works is less than in the domestic works.

Regarding the marital status of the women labourers which has a significant impact on their economic life, it is found that the majority of women are married followed by divorced/separated and widow. But no unmarried woman is found as an unorganized labourer between 20-50 years of age which reveals the existence of early marriages among the women labourers. The educational status is another reason for prevailing early marriages among the women labourers, as found in the study. The majority of women labourers, i.e. 61.67%, are illiterate and only 38.33% literates are found of which two women are found to complete their education up to the HSLC level. The poor economic condition of the household, lack of awareness about the importance of education among their parents, the belief among themselves that female education is not necessary and the concerns for girls' marriage among them as soon as possible, i.e. early marriages are the main reasons for their poor educational status. However, such poor educational status has compelled them to enter into this unorganized sector for having no rigid educational requirements in its entry like in the organized one.

The family structures of the women labourers are mainly determined by the type and size of the family in the study. It is found that the majority of women labourers are living in medium-sized nuclear families. Although most of the women labourers are found in the nuclear family, it falls within the medium-sized family, i.e. having 5-7 members. It is because the women labourers are not concern about any family planning for which the majority of women labourers have more than two

children. The poor educational status of the women labourers is the main reason for not understanding the benefits of small families. Although some of the women are aware of the advantage of family planning, they can't raise their voices over the husband on the decision of childbirth. Moreover, the early marriages among the women have also given scope to give birth to more children. Therefore, the poor educational status of the women, lack of concern regarding family planning, early marriages and also their husband's educational status have a significant role in this matter.

The housing condition of women labourers is being determined by the type and number of rooms along with the sources of lightening facility in the houses. It is found that all the women labourers are living in Assam type houses, often on a rental basis, of which only a few have their own land to live. The majority of them have to pay rent to the owner either for the house in which they live or for the land in which they built their houses. The housing condition of the women labourers reveal from the table 3.5 (a), (b) and (c) that majority of them are living in houses with tin walls and roof having only one room without any electricity facilities. It is about 23.33% of women labourers are found in houses with brick walls of which most of the women could build such houses due to the loans provided by Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Moreover, the majority of households are structured without the proper toilet facility and hence, most of the women labourers living in a particular area have to share one or two toilets among 6-8 families. The lack of electricity facilities in most of the houses and the use of kerosene is also indicating their poor economic condition. It is said by the women labourers that they always try to cook as soon as possible not only because they worked for the whole day and want to sleep early, but also to reduce the lightening expenses of the house whether it is electricity or kerosene. Thus, the housing condition of women labourers is revealing their poor living conditions in the study area.

However, the working condition of the women labourers is revealing the same kinds of problems for both the domestic and construction labourers, but the intensity

of such problems is different. The construction industry which has witnessed the increasing number of women's participation throughout the country, the study area is also not exceptional in this regard. The women are employed through the contractors at a low amount of wages. The construction industry is covered by both the male and female labour force where the women are mainly engaged in low-rated or ill-paid jobs as the helper of the male labourers. They casually get employment as construction labourers for carrying materials that are needed in the construction of buildings. In the construction industry, men receive higher wages than women and women get lower wages even for similar kinds of labour. In the study area, women labourers are getting daily wages of Rs.150 to 350, whereas the males are getting Rs.350 to 500. Thus, there is no fixed amount of wages for labourers and a huge gap is found between the wages on the basis of gender.

The women labourers engaged in domestic works or services are the most invisible kinds of labour that are often unrecognized and undervalued. The field of domestic works is mainly dominated by women folk and traditionally, they acquired the skills of doing these works by their innate qualities. This area of the labour force is different from that of construction sites where they get wages on daily basis, but here they are employed on monthly basis. Women are employed through their mutual contacts or in nearby households and provide services of domestic helps including cooking, cleaning, washing, caring of children and elderly people, etc. at employers' households. They are basically engaged for a few hours of services in the employer's households, that is, for a part-time or half-day of services, unlike the construction labourers.

As women labourers in domestic works are employed on monthly basis, if it is counted with reference to the income of construction labourers then their daily income will be 15 to 150 rupees only. And this is the main reason for the women labourers to engage in the construction industry for the whole day and even for the overtime labour. But equally a number of women labourers are engaging in domestic works because of its regular income which is not found in the construction works. Although

the income level of women labourers at the construction works are higher than at the domestic works, it also cost higher physical labour than in the domestic services. Therefore, the construction industry is composed of mainly women labourers of young and middle age, i.e. within 26-45 age groups and the domestic works are done by women from all the age groups. Further, women are not employed in the construction industry as labourers at their very early stages of young age as found in the study. They have started to engage as construction labourers because of the emergent economic crisis in their life, i.e. the separation/divorce from the husband or after the death of the husband. The inability to manage the expenditure by the low income of husband after the expansion of family has also compelled them to participate in the construction industry.

The health problems faced by both kinds of women labourers are almost the same but the intensity level is different. The women working as construction labourers have faced more physical problems than the domestic workers due to their heavy loads of work with long working hours at unhealthy working conditions. The study found that all the women construction labourers have more or less the problem of muscle pain due to their work-loads along with other health problems like allergy, cough or asthma. But the women in domestic services have considerably fewer health-related problems unlike the health problems of construction labourers. Even that, a vast amount of women's participation could be seen in such hazardous works due to its fast and higher income than in domestic works where the income comes on a regular basis, but in a slow process. But the number of women's participation in domestic works is not also very less because it absorbed the women from all ages.

The working condition of the women labourers is, further, determined by their family responsibilities. The household works and child care can be considered as the two major responsibilities for the women labourers which have a significant impact on their condition of work in the unorganized sector. Traditionally, women bear the major burden of household works all over the world. It is found that the majority of women labourers are doing their household works without even any assistance from their

family members. The husband of most of the women labourers doesn't want to do/help in the household works because of the traditional association of women with household works. It is only the women labourers, whose husbands are not working to earn money due to their idleness or for some other reasons, who are getting help in household works from their husbands. Further, the working hour of the women labourers is also determining factor of the helping hands for doing household works. It is found in the study that 30% of women construction labourers and 13.67% of women domestic workers are assisted by family members like husbands, children or in-laws. It reveals that the long working hours of women construction labourers in comparison to women domestic workers who often engaged as part-time workers determine the issue of getting help from family members in household works. However, despite the several reasons for managing household works alone, the patriarchal norm of women's association with unpaid domestic works is the major reason in this regard.

But a sharp difference is found in the matter of child care between the women domestic and construction labourers because of the nature of their work. About 66.67% of women construction labourers and 16.67% of women domestic workers have brought their children to the workplace as shown in the Table 3.9 (a) and (b). It is the working hours of the women labourers determine the fact that whether the child-care is done by the women themselves or some other family members at home. It means the long working hour for women construction labourers and the part-time contract for working as a domestic worker have determined the matter of child care. Further, the age of the child and the availability of other family members in the house are also playing a significant role in this regard. The size and type of family, such as nuclear, semi-joint or joint family and single-parent family, have an important contribution to the issue of child care. It is found that women labourers living in joint or semi-joint families are getting more help in order to take care of their children than the women labourers living in small-sized nuclear or single-parent families. Therefore, although the nature and period of work is the main reason, the patterns of the family are also determining factors in reducing or increasing the burden of women labourers on child care.

It reveals in the study that both sections of women labourers are equally contributed to the development of society, but their contributions are not valued in the male-dominated society. Women are performing a variety of economic activities outside the house and unrecognizably contributing to the family income. The unregulated and informal nature of work in the unorganized sector has double-burdened women's labour due to their engagement in economic activities outside the house and domestic activities inside the house. The women engaged as domestic and construction labourers are suppressed by their traditional status at home where the male members are taking the higher authority in the family. The women labourers are characterized by low wages, long working hours, heavy workload inside and outside the home, maltreatment by the employer and male members in the family, malnutrition, etc. The main reason for such conditions of women labourers is that the protective labour laws are not applicable in the unorganized sector. The various protective laws available for the unorganized labourers particularly for women are often not found to be properly implemented in the unorganized sector of the economy. Further, the women labourers are not properly aware of these protective laws and its benefits in their workplace. It has provided an opportunity to the employers of the unorganized sector who often try to exploit the women labourers.

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