

Role of Women in Informal Sector in India

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Abstract: Informal Sector Is The Largest Employer Of Relatively Unskilled Workers When Skill Based Technological Changes In Production Of Manufactured Commodities And Services Have Always Fascilitated Income And Employment Growth For The Highly Skilled.Due To Globalisation The Scenario Among Women Has Been Changing As The Formal Sector Is Shrinking And Unable To Provide Employment Opportunities To Growing Population Informal Sector Has An Important Role To Play. In This Background In The Present Paper An Attempt Has Been Made On The Basis Of Secondary Studies To Investigate The Changin Scenario Of Employment Among Women In Informal Sector In India.To Explore How Women Are Coming Up For Employment Oppurtunities In Informal Sector.

Key Words: Informal Sector India, Women, Agegc And Non Agr, Self Employed , Casual , Regular Employed

I. Introduction

India is a dominant force in Asia's economic growth and home to the world's second-largest workforce some 500 million people. It is estimated that less than 12 percent of the work-force in India belongs to the formal sector, leaving more than 90 percent well over 447 million people in a labour force of almost 500 million in the informal sector. The informal sector is broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned.

These units typically operate at a low level of organisation, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. The concept of the informal sector was introduced into international usage in 1972 by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in its Kenya Mission Report, which defined informality as a "way of doing things characterized by (a) ease of entry; (b) reliance on indigenous resources; (c) family ownership; (d) small scale operations; (e) labor intensive and adaptive technology; (e) skills acquired outside of the formal sector; (g) unregulated and competitive markets". Since that time, many definitions were introduced by different authors and the ILO itself. The purpose of measurement is not easy because the border between the informal and the formal sector is blurry.

The informal sector has also been termed "The non-farm economic activities" especially in relation to rural economy. This implies that there are other economic activities carried out by the peasants and farmers which are not related to the farming economic system or are being carried out in parallel with farming activities. This is a very important observation , warns us not to confuse off-farm with non-farm when discussing the informal sector because, off-farm activities are normally carried out during the time when the farming seasons are over or are at their lowest ebb and not all of the family labour can be utilized. Non-farm activities, on the other hand, are the economic activities which are carried out in parallel or in conjunction with the farming activities, based on the existing division of labour at household level. These may include trade/marketing - the buying and selling of goods; services for the family or others; production of goods for the family's own use or for sale on the markets.

Table-1: Total number of estimated population, labour force, employment, unemployment, informal employment and formal employment in India (in million).

	1983	1988	1994-	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10
Estimated population	718.21	790.00	895.05	1004.10	109.283	173.5
Labour force	308.64	333.49	391.94	406.05		487
Employed	302.75	324.29	374.45	396.76	457.46	474.9
unemployed	5.89	9.2	7.49	9.74		12.1
Formally employed	24.01	25.71	27.37	35.02	34.85	27.5
Unformally employed	278.74	298.58	347.08	361.74	422.61	447.4

Source: Various rounds of employment-unemployment survey of NSSO, Expert committee of population projection, DGE&T and for the „** National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS, 2008).

From the above table it is seen that the informal employment increases overtime along with the estimated population and labour force, while the formal employment decreases in recent years. These are represented in absolute numbers. To get a vivid picture, it is important to see the overtime changes of formal and informal employment in terms of their percentages share. From the above figure it is seen that informal employment has the higher share (more than 90%) for the entire study period. Though there was a slight increase in the percentage share of formal employment in the year 1999-2000, it has decreased again afterwards. The labour in India consists of about 487 million workers, the second largest after China. Of these over 90 percent work in unincorporated, unorganized enterprises ranging from pushcart vendors to home-based diamond and gem polishing operations.

India's Ministry of Labor, in its 2008 report, classified the unorganized labor in India into four groups.¹⁶ this classification categorized India's unorganized labour force by occupation, nature of employment, specially distressed categories and service categories. The unorganized occupational groups include small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, fishermen, those engaged in animal husbandry, beedi rolling, labeling and packing, building and construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills, and workers in oil mills. A separate category based on nature of employment includes attached agricultural labourers, bonded labourers, migrant workers, contract and casual laborers. Another separate category dedicated to distressed unorganized sector includes toddy tappers, scavengers, carriers of head loads, drivers of animal driven vehicles, loaders and unloaders. The last unorganized labor category includes service workers such as midwives, domestic workers, barbers, vegetable and fruit vendors, newspaper vendors, pavement vendors, hand cart operators, and the unorganized retail¹⁴

Informal sector is also divided into two broad categories: traditional household based informal sector and modern informal sector (Ranis and Stewart (1999)). Traditional informal sector is characterized as very small size, low capitalization, low labour productivity, static technology and household based production unit. Modern informal sector is characterized as larger in size, capital intensive and more dynamic in technology. According to Ranis and Stewart (1999), traditional informal sector produces consumer goods only, sold mainly to the low income consumer. Modern informal sector produces both consumer goods and capital goods, serves both low and middle income consumers. These goods often compete with the goods produced by the formal sector. On the one hand, the consumer goods produced by the modern informal sector, generally consumed by the sector itself and the people engaged in the formal sector. On the other hand, the intermediate products and simple capital goods produced by the modern informal sector that partly used the sectors own need and partly serve the demand of the formal sector. Thus, modern informal sectors production is complementary to and as well as competitive with the formal sector.

It is observed in most country studies that the informal sector is the largest employer of relatively unskilled workers when skill-biased technological changes in production of manufactured commodities and services have always facilitated income and employment growth for the highly skilled. In fact, the increased requirement of technical expertise in his work place has not only created an entry barrier for those who are not equipped with the same, but have also excluded many senior level workers previously considered productive at the firm level.(Card, David and John E. DiNardo (2002)), In addition, the rising skilled wage has been responsible for a lower aggregate demand for skill, with many more workers settling for contractual and irregular job market profiles generally in the domain of unorganized sector. The impact of such palpable changes is undoubtedly felt on the informal sector comprising largely of non-traded goods.

The informal sector has reached a level where it 'must be regarded and treated as part of the solution to the current economic problems of developing nations' And as the population in search of employment increases and the creation of jobs in that formal economy and other government related activity continue to fail to absorb all the additions to the labour force, the unprecedented rate of growth in the informal economy is expected to continue unabated.

II. Review of literature

This review examines the evidence from research paper based on different countries on female informal employment and incomes. It traces the recent trends in female employment as well as its structure in developing countries using aggregate data . Women participation in the labor force has risen in most countries, which is also reflected in the changing sex composition of the total labor force. Women's share in total labor force has risen. With a fall in women's participation in agriculture in most countries, an increasing number of women are turning to the non-agricultural sector for jobs, most of which are located in urban areas.

Varshney Shweta states that Rural women share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the families, maintaining the households, attending to farm operations, tending domestic animals and engaging in rural artisan work and handicrafts. But female labour engaged in such activities is usually not measured in economic terms. An implicit assumption is made that women is basically a mother and house wife; any productive work she carries out is considered socially secondary, an extension of her primary function, thus it has tended to be unnoticed, more so in case of rural women. She also discusses that a better balance has to be achieved between women and men in making decisions that affect the life and economy of rural society, through the active encouragement and involvement of women's associations and networks and the promotion of women into planning and managerial posts for the complete empowerment of women.

Anvita Gupta et al states that the women workers do not have a choice to work, or not to work, due to the desire need of income. The limited opportunities available to women are mostly low paid, low-status jobs in the informal sector; jobs which do not have any possibilities of betterment, advancement of efficiency or training, to enable them to enter better jobs at a later stage. In the overall state of unemployment and lack of opportunities, women hold a secondary place to men in the race of employment. It has been observed that women find it difficult to enter the structured system of organized sector. It is also found, that there is no economic reason for paying lower wages or giving only a particular type of work to women workers. When they work for themselves, their wages and work is quite comparable with those of male workers (For example in case of vendors). There is discrimination in wages, nature of work, availability of work, on the basis of sex. Bargaining power is mostly with the employers, so exploitation is naturally the fate of these poor workers. They come from that section of the society which must work to earn their livelihood and which is socially, economically and traditionally backward and least privileged. There is diversity in the nature of work. Some of them are construction workers, some are domestic servants, and some others are garment workers while few are petty traders in miscellany of goods. But there is little or no variation in terms of job like wage discrimination, job insecurity, leave / holidays and other benefits. Fapohunda Tinuke.M states that Employment opportunities in the formal sector are often denied women because of family responsibilities, lack of skills, social and cultural barriers; the informal sector is often the only possibility for women to get access to employment and to earn an income. Consequently women dominate the informal sector. Policies and developments affecting the informal economy thus have a distinctly gendered effect. The informal sector has a high labour-absorption capacity and there is the need to increase the level of stimulation of employment opportunities. His paper is based on a desk and literature review, a web-based research and a field survey using 150 women in the Mushin, Agege and Lagos Island Areas of Lagos Nigeria. He concludes that although the informal sector has its challenges especially for women, such as inaccessibility of credit, the women's role in the informal finance sector is significant. Partnerships must be built with the emerging associations of women to create an enabling environment which should include making credit available to women at affordable rates, with the private sector assisting government efforts to get credit to women. A more enlightened, more participatory, and more equitable form of intervention that provides a more appropriate and flexible regulatory framework is needed.

Bairagya Indrajits. Show that as trade liberalization or country's openness increases the size of the informal sector also increases in absolute terms, while the relative size of the informal sector decreases. During this study period there has been a decreasing trend in the unorganized sectors share. In spite of that decreasing trend, still it accounts for a large share (almost 60%) in total NDP. Informal employment increases overtime along with the estimated population and labour force, while the formal employment decreases in recent years. In this context, it is very important to note that though the size of unorganized sector in terms of its percentage shares in NDP decreases overtime, in terms of informal employment it is increasing overtime. In the initial years of our study period, labour income was more than 70% both in total unorganized and unorganized sectors. Still now the share of labour income remains same in the unorganized sector as it was earlier. This may be due to the fact that the informal sector uses labour intensive technology and this high labour intensity of production is the main reason for huge employment generation and, thereby increasing the labour income. But, the share of labour income decreases in the organized sector from 70% in 1980-81 to 55% in 2005-06. It can be seen that the share of labour income started decreasing significantly immediately just after liberalization (i.e., after 1991). Moreover, it shows a diminishing trend over time in the organized manufacturing sector from about 52% in 1980-81 to 30% in 2005-06. The possible reason could be that liberalization exposed all the industrial units in an inherent risk of free market competition. It increases the use of modern capital intensive technology in the organized sector thereby enhancing the share of capital income overtime which ultimately reduces the share of labour income.

Bandopadhyay, Kumar Titas (2006) has examined the impact of output subsidy given to the informal sector on urban unemployment, informal sector's employment and on the domestic factor income of a small open economy where capital is perfectly mobile among the three sectors. The simultaneous existence of urban informal sector and urban unemployment has been explained in terms of efficiency wage theory which is applicable to the low wage informal sector. Informal sector also produces traded goods and the presence of trade

union in the urban formal sector makes the formal wage endogenous. This is highly observed in many developing countries like India where handloom and handicraft products are internationally traded and the trade union activities are flourishing. Output subsidy given to the urban informal sector lowers urban unemployment and raises domestic factor income provided that the rural sector is sufficiently labour intensive.

Chaudhuri, S., D. Banerjee (2007) states the theoretical possibility that recession in the skilled sector might even raise the wage of the informal workers appears quite robust. Developing and transition countries are repositories of large unorganized and/or informal sectors that deal largely with non-traded commodities and services and in some cases tradable goods as well, the global recession may not be able to penetrate very far into these economies. They establish that a fall in the price of those commodities and services that employ white-collared workers may in fact turn out to be favorable for the purveyors of non-traded goods in general and the informal sector in particular.

The paper attempts to explore the level of gender discrimination among various types of enterprises in unorganised manufacturing sector of India after economic reforms. The results show that during the last two decades though the work participation of women has increased, yet they are largely being placed in low paid, insecure and informal jobs, while the better paid supervisory and managerial jobs are reserved for men. Yet, it remains far from being equal. So, it would be quite relevant here to observe how various types of jobs in unorganised manufacturing sector of India have been distributed among men and women.

Mulinge Munyae M & Munyae Margaret M study was on the role of social capital in the establishment and sustenance of women's micro-businesses in Butere-Mumias District. It was intended to draw the attention of policy-makers, non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the government to the importance of social capital in the management and performance of women's micro-businesses. From the results of this study, it is evident that social capital, exemplified by associations, trust, norms and networks, is extremely important in the establishment and sustenance of women's micro-businesses.

Terms

Workers (or employed): Persons who were engaged in any economic activity or who, despite their attachment to economic activity, abstained themselves from work for reason of illness, injury or other physical disability, bad weather, festivals, social or religious functions or other contingencies necessitating temporary absence from work, constituted workers. Unpaid helpers who assisted in the operation of an economic activity in the household farm or non-farm activities were also considered as workers.

Self-employed: Persons who operated their own farm or non-farm enterprises or were engaged independently in a profession or trade on own-account or with one or a few partners were treated as self-employed in household enterprises. The essential feature of the self-employed is that they have autonomy (decide how, where and when to produce) and economic independence (in respect of choice of market, scale of operation and finance) for carrying out their operation. The remuneration of the self-employed consists of a non-separable combination of two parts: a reward for their labour and profit of their enterprise. The combined remuneration is wholly determined by the revenue from sales after netting out value of purchased inputs used in production. Categories of self-employed persons: Self-employed persons were categorised as follows:

Own-account workers: those self-employed persons who operated their enterprises on their own account or with one or a few partners and who, during the reference period, by and large, ran their enterprise without hiring any labour. They could, however, have had unpaid helpers to assist them in the activity of the enterprise;

Employers: those self-employed persons who worked on their own account or with one or a few partners and, who, by and large, ran their enterprise by hiring labour; and

helpers in household enterprise: those self-employed persons (mostly family members) who were engaged in their household enterprises, working full or part time and did not receive any regular salary or wages in return for the work performed. They did not run the household enterprise on their own but assisted the related person living in the same household in running the household enterprise.

Regular wage/salaried employee: These were persons who worked in others' farm or non-farm enterprises (both household and non-household) and, in return, received salary or wages on a regular basis (i.e. not on the basis of daily or periodic renewal of work contract). This category included not only persons getting time wage but also persons receiving piece wage or salary and paid apprentices, both full time and part-time.

Casual wage labourer: A person who was casually engaged in others' farm or non-farm enterprises (both household and non-household) and, in return, received wages according to the terms of the daily or periodic work contract, was a casual wage labourer.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of informal sector in income and employment generation after globalization in india and bring to focus the contributions of women in the agriculture and non agriculture in informal sector

III. Research methodology

The study is based on secondary data collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) for 2004-05, 2009-10 through surveys on “Employment- Unemployment”.and research paper, articles etc.

Role of women in informal sector Women poised to take part in the rapidly india expanding economy. They contribute for economic development. The Indian constitution grants women equal rights with men, but strong patriarchal traditions persist, with women’s lives shaped by customs that are centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and celebrated. The overwhelming majority of women in rural areas is afflicted by problems of poverty, unemployment, underemployment. Historically , the sustained the labour of the women has been the pivot of the village eeconomic system. The status of women and the enactment of the constitutional amendments of 73rd and 74th amendments have added new dimensions to the issue of women’s empowerment by making provisions for the compulsory participation of women in local governing bodies and involvement in development activities. The amendments make provisions for reservation of not less than one-third of the total number of seats in panchayats and municipalities for women Despite such a huge contribution, her role has yet not been recognized.

In india before the globalization maximum of the women were engaged in the agriculture sector. Maximum units creates employment were the micro enterprises , which were indeed owned and operated by single individuals with or without the assistance of paid and unpaid workers, and operate under conditions of informality. They are faced with the double burden of being not only small viz., scale related disadvantages, but also informal viz., deprived of legal recognition and access to resources and markets

A recent report, Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011, notes that 48 percent of females drop out of the workforce before they reach mid-career, much higher than the regional average. The largest percent of Indian women leaving the workforce (the “leak”) happens between the junior and middle level, as opposed to between the middle and senior levels. Familiar pressure and cultural norms are most often cited as reasons for leaving in the early stages, and women often find it easier to remain at junior levels or to leave the workforce altogether.

The proportion of rural female workers having workplace in rural areas was 93 per cent and in the case of male it was nearly 83 per cent. The proportion of urban female workers having their workplace in urban areas was nearly 92 per cent and in the case of male it was nearly 85 per cent. Among the workers in informal sector residing in rural areas, nearly 95 per cent of females and 86 per cent of males had their workplace in rural areas. Among the workers in informal sector residing in the urban areas, nearly 92 per cent of females and 83 per cent of males had their workplace in urban areas. In rural areas, nearly 68 per cent of females and 21 per cent of males employed in informal sector was working in any of the following types of workplaces: (i) own dwelling, (ii) structure attached to own dwelling unit, (iii) open area adjacent to own dwelling unit and(iv) detached structure adjacent to own dwelling unit. The corresponding proportions in urban areas were nearly 52 per cent for females compared to 15 per cent of males. As its economy develops to encompass new knowledge-based industries, and as its population moves from rural to urban areas, a pivotal issue should be given greater scrutiny:

Table no 2 Proportion (per 1000) of informal sector (P & P) workers among workers (ps+ss) engaged in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors in different statuses in employment during 2004-05 and 2009-10

Status of employment	61 round						66 round					
	rural			Urban			rural			urban		
	M	FM	P	M	FM	P	M	FM	P	M	FM	P
11	945	969	952	970	961	968	921	949	928	945	963	948
12	986	975	985	984	985	984	949	921	948	970	995	971
21	960	974	969	977	973	975	928	974	955	963	975	967
11-21	948	972	958	972	966	971	922	960	935	949	967	953
31	445	263	411	466	278	429	417	274	390	427	288	402
51	808	760	800	853	693	824	748	697	740	760	623	737
11-51	792	864	816	739	654	722	742	744	442	685	613	673

Note 11- worked in household enterprises (self-employed) as own-account worker,12- worked in household enterprises (self-employed) as an employer,21- worked in household enterprises (self-employed) as helper 31-4worked as regular wage/salaried employee,51- worked as casual wage labour in other types of worksSource NSS Report No. 539: Informal Sector and Conditions of Employment in India

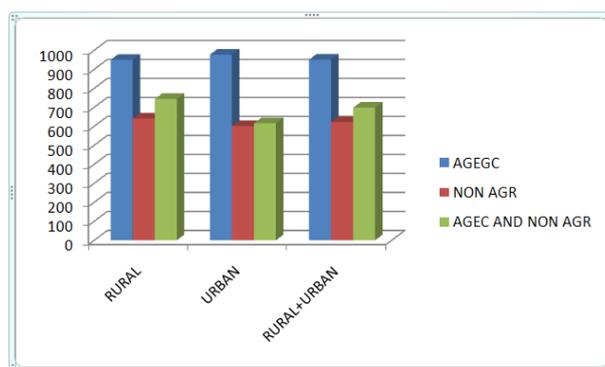
It is seen in table no.2 that, in 2004-05 among the rural male self-employed workers in AGEGC and non-agriculture sector, nearly 95 per cent were engaged in informal sector, which decreased to 92 per cent in 2009-10 and in urban areas the decrease was from 97 per cent to 95 per cent. Among the self-employed female workers in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors, in both rural and urban areas, the proportion engaged in informal sector was around 97 per cent during this period, except for rural female in 2009-10, when the proportion was 96 per cent. Among the male regular wage/salaried workers in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors, the proportion of workers engaged in informal sector decreased from 45 per cent in 2004-05 to 42 per cent in 2009-10 for rural male and from 47 per cent to 43 per cent for urban male. For the female regular wage/salaried workers in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors, the proportion of workers engaged in informal sector was around 26 to 27 per cent in rural areas and 28 to 29 per cent in urban areas. The proportion of casual labour in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors engaged in informal sector, has shown decrease in 2009-10 compared to that of 2004-05: for rural male nearly 81 per cent of the casual labour in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors was engaged in informal sector in 2004-05 which reduced to 75 per cent in 2009-10; for urban male the decrease was from 85 per cent to 76 per cent; for rural female the decrease was from 76 per cent to 70 per cent; for urban female it decreased from 69 per cent to 62 per cent.

Rural female workers were more engaged in self employed and casual workers other than regular employee. The table shown that rural female 949 per 1000 worked in household enterprises (self-employed) as own-account worker as comparatively with male worker and also 929 per 1000 in worked in household enterprises (self-employed) as an employer in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors . In AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors worked as casual wage labour in other types of works rural female engaged 697 per 1000 and rural male engaged 748 per 1000 which is comparatively low as male employment. But rural female worked as regular wage/salaried employee in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors was 274 per 1000 which was lower than other status of employment. Because of their relative lack of education and training, the tendency to channel women into certain occupations, and the continuous heavy burdens of unpaid domestic work, child-bearing and child-care, which restrict the time and energy available for income-earning activities..

Proportion (per 1000) of informal sector (P & P) workers among workers (ps+ss) in different industry groups/sections in india

Sector	RURAL FEMALE	URBAN FEMALE	RURAL+URBAN FEMALE
AGEGC	950	977	951
NON AGR	641	601	623
AGEC AND NON AGR	744	616	698

Source NSS Report No. 539: Informal Sector and Conditions of Employment in India



Among all workers in AGEGC and non-agriculture sectors, nearly 71 per cent were engaged in the informal sector (74 per cent in the rural areas and 67 per cent in the urban areas). More than 93 per cent of workers in both rural and urban areas engaged in AGEGC belonged to the informal sector. In the non-agriculture sector, nearly 71 per cent of the workers in rural areas and 67 in urban areas were engaged in the informal sector. Among self-employed in non-agriculture sector, about 92 per cent in the rural areas and 95 per cent in the urban areas worked in the informal sector. Among casual labourers engaged in works other than public works in the non-agriculture sector, nearly 73 per cent in both the rural and urban areas worked in the

informal sector. Among regular wage/salaried employees in non-agriculture sector, nearly 39 per cent in the rural areas and 40 per cent in the urban areas worked in the informal sector.

This diagram showed female in rural and urban area more worked in AGEGC sector than non AGEGC sector this data reveals that in AGEGC sector rural and urban female were employed 950 and 977 per 1000 workers and in non AGEGC sector its proportions were 641 and 601 respectively. The share of the unorganized sector in non-agricultural GDP declined from 49 percent in 1983 to 45 percent in 1999-00. The share of the unorganized sector in non-agricultural employment, however, rose from 76 percent in 1983 to 83 percent in 1999-003. The unorganized sector is thus absorbing employment at a faster rate than it is generating output compared to the organized sector. This obviously implies a decline in the labour productivity or incomes per worker that the unorganized sector has been generating over the period.

The spread of agro-industry and rural industrialization has increased the possibilities for women to access cash income through self-employment or the setting up of rural enterprises. Wage employment allows women to get out of the relative isolation of the home or their small rural communities and gain self-esteem and confidence. Data collection of women's employment in informal sector India by NSSO as well as by problems in defining what constitutes economic activity for women, particularly in the agricultural and informal sectors. The labour code then prescribed a lower salary for single women than men, and women had to resign their appointment on marriage. In some cases, the husband had to give his permission to allow his wife to continue in paid employment. Ighodalo, (1990) observes that women had to resign their appointment if they wanted to go on maternity leave. The global economic recession and the gulf between job creation and the growth in the numbers of job seekers have worsened the employment situation for women and men alike.

The new strategy of 'Integration of Women into Development' meant in most cases getting women to work in some income-generating activities, integrating women into market oriented production and thus integrating women into the world market economy. In developing nations, certain types of work, such as garment assembly, is considered to be an extension of female household roles. Although women's roles in the labor force have changed from traditional agricultural and domestic roles, to manufacturing and assembly production, the overall effect of globalization (based on the literature used in this analysis) has proven to be negative. Women also have fewer incentives to invest in market-based formal education and on-the-job training, and may avoid jobs that demand large investment in skills.³ Meanwhile, further studies have found that a significant wage gap exists between women and men even when expected factors like family and labor force experience were eliminated and look toward systemic discrimination as one of the explanations.

IV. Conclusion

The phenomenon of economic development is a composite of several factors, which may not necessarily have economic connotations; The contribution of human resource to economic growth of any country cannot be overemphasized, especially in a country like India which is still reeling under the pressures of its mammoth population and limited capital resource. Another notable fact is that as many as 94% of total women workers work in the informal sector in India but they have to face gender discrimination which is almost inexistent in formal sector. Besides, their contribution in terms of income generation turns out to be less than their male counterparts, which means almost half of the population contributes to less than half to the national income Much of female employment in india is self employment and unpaid work (infamily owned enterprises). But the share of wage employment in total female employment is rising in all regions, but very slowly. Informal employment in the form of own account and unpaid work therefore may have declined slightly, but it is still important for women in India. Many of the workers identified in engaged in petty trading, service repairs, transport and small manufacturing activities are independent, self-employed producers, some of whom employ family labour or a few additional workers. The most comprehensive set of statistics now available on aspects of employment in the informal economy relates to these self-employed workes. In the absence of direct measures of those employed in the informal economy, self-employment provides an indicator of a major component of employment in the informal economy For small scale enterprises to provide the informal sector generally, and women in particular, with opportunities to earn a viable income, they need economic and political support from government. This necessitates a new focus by governments on the informal sector in recognition of its contribution to employment and income generation. New government measures are required which give priority to the development of the informal sector, supported by the integration of informal sectoral initiatives into existing government policies. Similarly, policies relating to income generation for women need to be interlinked with general government policies rather than risk marginalisation by adopting "women specific" policieces angles in quality of employment

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