

CHAPTER 2

Chapter - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is devoted to review of literature in the unorganised sector in general and brick kiln industry in particular. The studies undertaken and the work done in the field in respect of unorganised workmen have been very few. The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour (Whitley Commission) (1931) set up by the then British Government in 1929 had far reaching effect on the Government of India in formulating a galaxy of labour legislations in the country. This Commission had recommended a uniform Labour Code, which, though not acted upon, the establishment of a permanent Tripartite Labour Organisation called Indian Labour Conference on the model of ILO in the year 1942 was an important step forward in promotion of uniformity in labour legislation. The outcome of the deliberations of Indian Labour Conference and Standing Labour Committee has however, mostly covered the organized field. Nevertheless, Whitley Commission's contribution for the decasualization of port and dock workers, who were ever casual in their employment, depending upon the arrival and departure of the vessels at the ports to load and unload cargo, was significant. In fact, the system of hiring dock workers in European and American ports was almost identical in-as-much-as the employment was casual through middlemen called dock employers who maintained large strength of casual workmen in excess of requirement, and due to erratic and fluctuating demands, there was chronic under-employment.

The Whitley Commission's recommendations were instrument in introducing the labour inspection machinery at the central and state levels, and paved the way for enactment of the existing labour laws in the country in the matter of regulation and fixation of wages, restrictions in employment of women and child labour in factories, mines and other establishments, hours of employment in railways, factories, mines etc. But the subject of unorganised workmen as such was not dealt with in the report.

The Third Five Year Plan (1964-69) which had taken cognizance of the plight of unorganised labour had mentioned "while considerable improvements had occurred in the living and working conditions of employees in large and organized industries, owing

both to state activity and trade union action, a great deal of lee-way remained to be made up in respect of the workers engaged in agriculture and unorganised industries and that their condition should become a matter of special concern to Government as well as to labour organisations”

The National Commission on Labour (Gajendragadkar Commission 1969) had devoted three separate chapters of its report on “Employment of Women and Children”, “Agricultural Labour” and “Unorganised Labour”. As stated earlier, it admitted that “unorganised labour” is a group of workers, who cannot be identified by a definition but could be described as those who have not been able to organise in pursuit of a common objective because of constraints, such as (a) casual nature of employment, (b) ignorance and illiteracy, (c) small size of establishments with low per capita investment per person employed, (d) scattered nature of establishments, and (e) superior strength of the employer operating singly or in combination. The Commission had brought within the fold of unorganised labour the ten categories of labour as explained earlier. Among its recommendations the Commission had observed that with spread of education, unorganised workers would become organized and would form themselves into unions and this process should be expedited; that more vigorous steps should be taken towards protection of workers against exploitation by middlemen and development of self help among them through cooperatives. The strength of unorganised workmen in industrial sector was estimated by the Commission as 10 millions as per 1961 census. This report was submitted more than two decades back, but no action has yet been taken for its implementation. The data have become old and inclusion of a separate category of tribal workers as “unorganised workmen” is not understood, since tribal are also employed in organized sector, particularly with reservation available for their employment in Government and Public Sector Undertakings.

B.R. Patil (1988) conducted a study in Bangalore city regard to employment of boys and girls below fifteen years who are forced to pick up jobs mostly in the unorganised sector, wherein they face problems like long hours of work, work in hazardous employment, low wages, work in unhealthy environments etc.

A study was undertaken by Indira Hirway regarding the working of the rural workers welfare scheme of Government of Gujarat. The study brings out that a Central Committee was appointed by the Government of India in the Ministry of Labour in

1980, to study the problems of unorganised workers and to make suitable recommendations to organise them. As the follow-up of the recommendations of the Committee, the Government of India launched a scheme of appointing honorary rural organizers for organizing rural workers with a view to educating them on their rights and duties and helping them in organizing themselves in cooperatives, trade unions or in other forms as may be considered necessary.

In the ILO (Geneva) Publication (1978) on “Structure and Functions of Rural Workers Organisations” it has been pointed out that the majority of world’s poor are rural workers whether they are wage earners, self-employed, subsistence owners/occupiers or landless labourers. It is now becoming increasingly recognized that the improvement of the conditions of life and work of these millions of workers is, in large measure, dependent upon the extent to which they can be mobilized both to help themselves and to contribute to national development. This was one of the reasons underlying the adoption by the International Labour Conference in June, 1975 of a Convention and Recommendation concerning Organisation of Rural Workers and their Role in Economic and Social Development. These instruments defined the term “Rural Workers”, affirmed their rights (for both employed and self-employed) to freedom of their association, set out the conditions necessary for the development of their organisations, outlined the roles that they might undertake and suggested ways and means by which their development might be furthered. The publication brought out that rural workers first and foremost are ‘workers’; that is, they obtain, food shelter and clothing for themselves and their families by their toil. It has defined rural workers as “any person engaged in agriculture or related occupation in a rural area whether as a wage earner or as a self-employed person”. However, this work is confined to rural agricultural and allied workers, who are unorganised and does not concern itself with unorganised workmen in urban areas, or even the unorganised rural workmen in handicraft and other rural occupations.

The book entitled “Organising Unorganised Labour- A study of NRI’s Labour Camps” written by Vidyut Joshi (1987) enumerates the various camps organised in four states namely, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan which revealed that after the industrialisation of the country instead of development, the differentiation between

various strata in the society has increased and the upper strata have benefited more. The trickle-down theory that the benefits will percolate to the lower strata has proved wrong.

The report of the Compact Committee appointed by Government of India (1978) on Dahanu Labour of Orissa (Inter-State Migrant Workmen), recommended enactment of a separate legislation for inter-state migrant workmen, a frame work of which was incorporated therein. Though the separate legislation, Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and conditions of services) Act was enacted in 1979, the progress of implementation was slow and tardy despite the Hon'ble Supreme Court decision in *Dr. Damodar Panda vs. State of Orissa Case etc.* (AIR 1990 SC. 1901) having given direction for giving effect to the legislation.

Saini (1983) studied that women managed alone the household tasks like work in the kitchen, care of the house, care of children, religious activities, etc. The women from farming families spent much more time in the kitchen than those of non-farming families, who were mainly the labour class women, who were either paid in cash or kind. In addition, the sowing and harvesting period required much more time of the home-makers than the slack period.

Verma and Mallik (1984) reported that the women's roles in different farming societies were different. There appeared no significant difference in terms of ladies roles falling in different farm size categories. Out of their total time schedule allotted to work Indian women spent 2.1 hours to agricultural activities, 5.03 hours to domestic work and 3.16 hours to care of dairy animals in rural areas.

In contrast to the findings of Verma and Malik (1984) Bhati (1987) found that female labour participation rate was governed by the land inequality factor in the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. Family female labour decreased with the increase in the size of holding, both of progressive and non progressive farms.

A study made by DK Lal Das (1985) highlights sex determination against female workers in unorganised construction sector of Andhra Pradesh. The study observes that development has improved the standard of living but increased economic and social disparities. Women have been displaced from employment because of new technologies. Similar views have been expressed by the Report of the National Committee on self-

employment in women as it remarked that technological changes have adversely affected the employment of women in industries.

Nirmala Banerjee (1985), in her *Women Workers in the Unorganised Sector* records the analysis of the findings of an enquiry about women workers in the unorganised sector of Calcutta's economy during 1976-77. It was a survey of a random sample of 411 female workers working in the unorganised sector of which 11 were case studies of prostitutes in certain areas of Calcutta and the other 400 were random selections from the lists of workers. Analysis of data shows that the general status of women was low in the society. This is because the fact that woman in this sample were from very poor families who worked for very low wages.

Rajamal P. Devadas, G. Ramathilagam and S. Subasree tried to find out the duration, intensity and pattern of household work, delineate the pattern of household work among the household members, and finally it arrived at estimate of monetary value of house work. The study aims at pin-pointing the appropriate methodology for valuing housework. The data for the study was collected from 100 urban and rural women.

A study conducted by Bhuyan, B. and Tripathy, S.K. (1988) in Ganjam district of Orissa pertaining to role of women in agricultural sector reveals that the tribal women are taking up the hard task of cultivation in contrast to the women of plain and coastal areas. In tribal areas men share with women in all the operations except land preparation and irrigation. Knowledge and use of fertilizer is more widespread among the farm women in plain and coastal area and less in tribal areas. The rich and higher caste women do not work in the field but only supervise the work. Women population is about the same as that of males and they play a significant role in performing different agricultural activities.

Sundari and Manimekhalai (1989) studied the problems of women workers in the unorganised handloom industries in Vengamedu village of Tamilnadu state. Handloom is the unorganised sector characterized with large number of women and child labourers along with male labourers who are engaged as a cheap source of labour power, the most common mode of wage payment is piece-rate wage under which the workers self-supervise their exploitation. The study reveals the low income, high levels

of expenditure, high rate of indebtedness are the characteristics of the women workers of this industry.

A study made by Kamalraj (1990) on women labourers in salt industry of Tamil Nadu state found that fifty percent of the cost in this industry goes to the workers' men, women and children. Men and women labourers perform the same type of work, except sapping of salt. Men workers are paid Rs. 11 and women workers Rs. 9 as daily wage. The services of women in the salt works are specially needed to supply drinking water for all the workers. Women have to walk far off places for fetch pots of drinking water. Usually they carry the salt from the ridges to the platform.

A study made by Kannon and Ilango (1990) reveals about the health hazards of women labourers in Beedi Industries of Tiruchinapalli in Tamilnadu state. The Beedi workers are more prone to allergic bronchitis and sinus problems, it may be probably due to the dust of the tobacco leaves which induces allergy. The girls are malnourished, about 60 percent of them are anemic coupled with abject poverty. They also suffer from diseases of uterus and other gynecological problems and even cancer.

Another study conducted by Sundari and Manimekhalai (1990) has brought to light that poverty illiteracy, ignorance, casual nature of employment, lack of skill to take up other work and absence of union have all resulted in the economic exploitation of women workers in the paddy processing units of Trichinapalli. Predominant sample of workers have debt ranging from Rs. 800 to Rs. 1200. In the absence of institutional facilities and lack of security, all loans have been borrowed from either professional money lenders or neighbors at high rates of interest. There is heavy concentration of women workers in this industry. Women do not have regular employment and their unemployment loss about four to six months in a year. There is no job security and there is complete denial of welfare measures such as medical and maternity benefit, crèche facilities etc.

R.N. Mathur has studied the problems of construction women workers and especially the quality of life basing upon both primary and secondary sources. The study has highlighted various socio-economic aspects of Delhi Women construction workers and has been illustrated through Census data and theoretical frame works.

Anand's (1998) study on advocating the rights of construction workers found that their work was treated as menial, non-essential and of the lowest nature in the whole process. As a result, women construction workers (WCWs) presented a dismal picture where future prospects were concerned.

Millie Nihila (1999), in a micro level study, tries to show that with the liberalisation, employment in leather tanning industry in Tamil Nadu has been increased, but quality of employment especially for women has worsened. Leather tanning industry is an export earning industry and there is a drive towards expansion of leather industry because of the adoption of export-oriented growth strategy by the government of India. But in many cases, expansion is done without formal approval of government in order to avoid labour protection laws. These illegal units as well as many legal units have employed large number of informal workers, particularly women. Almost 80 per cent of the total leather tanning work force are female informal workers employed on temporary basis. They are generally engaged in a much polluting and hazardous tanning process.

National Building Organisation sponsored five studies (1977-78) in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Poona, Madras, KALVAL (Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi, Lucknow) and surveyed 3425 workers for reviewing the living conditions of both male and female labourers. The findings of the study revealed that there was constant problems of instability and insecurity of employment for the workers. Migration of workers was because of unemployment at home, insufficient income and indebtedness, expectation of better prospects in the city was found as the main reason of migration to city. The women workers generally remain unskilled in spite of their continuous employment in construction for a number of years. The contractors also find the employment of women labourers beneficial because they perform the same type of task as men and are sometimes paid wages at a lesser rate.

In the state of Orissa women labourers migrating to different parts of the country through contractors or sardars known as dadan labourers. Several economic factors are responsible for such an exploitative dadan construction women labourers. Being landless and burdened with the heavy weight of maintaining a large family, and being deprived of job opportunities, the labourers do not dare avoiding the offer that would bring them some income. Bu it is deplorable to note that they are made to work pretty

hours in excess of the statutory work hours, not being provided with medical benefits, proper food and shelter. They are, quite often, not paid the wages that had been promised to them. In many cases, they are paid less than the agreed wages. Deprived of their wages, they are sometimes forced to board trains without the needed tickets and are caught and thrown into jails.

A study conducted by Punam Kumari (2001) in Samastipur district of northern plain of Bihar to study women's involvement in Agricultural Production and Home making, found that men dominated women in decision making independent decisions in all the three areas of agriculture, labour allocation and livestock-related decisions. However, women took independent decision in one-fourth cases in labour allocation decision. In the area of home management, one fifth of the decisions were taken by women alone whereas the situation was reverse in case of child-related decisions where men overshadowed women in taking decisions. Under the area of money related decisions half of the decisions were taken independently by men followed by joint decision-making. Role of women was found substantial in making socio-religious decisions. Significant variations were found in the role performance of men and women and amongst the women of different groups.

Another study was conducted by Mishra, SK and Lyngskor, JW (2003) in different localities and suburbs of the Greater Shillong. The study focused on time series of income, expenditure, wages, prices and cost of living of casual workers during a period of three years. It was found that the casual labourers in Shillong have no claim to ILO's Social Security (Minimum standard) Convention, 1952 (that is, medical care, sickness and maternity benefits, family benefits, unemployment benefits, employment injury, invalidity and survivors' benefits, and old age benefits). It has been observed that wages of unskilled workers have systematically lagged behind the increase in the cost of living index. Additionally, it is not unlikely that urbanization, development and rise in secondary as well as tertiary sector activities in Shillong has created more jobs for skilled casual wage workers more in proportion than that for the unskilled casual wage workers.

Studies conducted on brick kilns in India

Several recent studies have already been carried out on the brick-making sector and on the phenomenon of bondage. Based on surveys conducted in two brick-kiln operations in Haryana revealed that these kilns operate in a largely unregulated manner in the informal sector and remain outside the purview of workplace laws, with workers bound to contractors and owners by the system of advance payments. Several committees have made recommendations to improve working conditions, but few of these have been implemented. (Gupta 2003).

A study conducted in Chennai and attempted to explore the debt bondage of brick kiln sector through case study. The findings of the study revealed that there is debt bondage appears to be the fruit of numerous factors coming both from the supply (employers' constraints and motivations) and from the demand (workers' constraints and motivations). Workers are in a "mild" situation of debt bondage, have to work for long hours, and very often put their children to work as well. However, they are paid wages that are very close to the rates fixed by the government and the system of advance payment is endorsed by both workers and kiln owners and the former see it as a means to social mobility. The study suggests that because of the multiplicity of explanatory factors, only a global approach can pretend to eradicate the problem progressively, involving public authorities, employers, job brokers, NGOs and finally international organisations like the ILO. (Guérin Isabelle, Bhukuth Augendra, Parthasarthy, Venkatasubramanian G: 2007)

Aggarwal (1959) in his study on the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers in the Ghazipur village near Lucknow found that this industry employed semi-skilled and unskilled workers which included moulders or the carriers. These labourers were contacted by the employers for their recruitment. In his study lower caste Hindus outnumbered the intermediate castes while the higher castes did not take up this job. Illiteracy was common feature among them. Working conditions were far from satisfactory with unsanitary surroundings, dusty environment, excessive temperature in May and June and excessive cold in December and January, lack of lighting and the long working hours. The one-room houses provided by the employer were *Kachcha*.

Another study conducted by Gulati (1979) who analyzed through a case study

the work and family of women in the brick industry found that women are employed exclusively for carrying head loads, whereas skilled and semi-skilled work such as moulding, shaping and stocking is done by men only. As a result, women's wages, for work which is not physically less exhausting than men's, are only about half the wages earned by men. Nevertheless, women cling to the brick industry because of uncertain work opportunities elsewhere and the continuity of employment that this industry offers.

Chopra (1982) studied the bondage of brick kiln workers of Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh and came up with the findings that the majority of the labourers engaged in brick kiln industry were from the Scheduled Castes, of whom most of them were illiterate. The study also showed that half of the total numbers of workers were women.

Labour Bureau (1982) conducted a survey on brick kilns in the Union Territory of Chandigarh and came up with the findings that minimum and maximum earnings of a worker per day in the brick kilns were Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 in respect of moulders and unloaders and Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 in case of loaders. Though child labour was not observed working in any of the units, adolescents were noticed helping their parents in different jobs like moulding, loading, unloading etc. The crèche facility was not provided by any of the brick kilns because the number of women workers was not many with them.

Labour Bureau (1982) conducted a survey on brick kilns in the state of Haryana and found similar findings that the facilities like washing and bathing facility, rest shelters, crèches, medical facilities were not provided to the workers engaged in the brick kilns. There were no fixed hours of work as such. Most of the workers, being piece-rated, worked according to their convenience. They usually started work early in the morning and after taking rest in the noon hours again come to work sites in the afternoon and continued working till dusk.

Labour Bureau (1983) conducted a survey on brick kilns in the state of Punjab and revealed that no medical facility was available at the work site. However, the managements were getting the workers treated from private doctors at their dispensary in case of any emergency or when they need medical aid. Of the 52 units surveyed, only 29 units (56 per cent) had introduced provident fund in their units and only two per cent of the workers were members of the fund and that too generally clerical/ watch and ward

staff. The main reason for this very low coverage was heavy labour turn over being a seasonal industry. System of paying gratuity was reported to be in existence in all the units surveyed but the benefit was generally availed by the clerical/watch and ward staff who alone become entitled to receive the benefits.

Puri (1983) in his article based on the proceedings of the historic meeting of 4000 employers and workers representatives of the 30,000 brick kilns employing nearly 30 lakh labourers held at the Asiad Games Village in Delhi brings forth the conflicting claims of the two parties. While, the owners were sour at the lack of government support in the form of credit facilities, the allocation of coal at economical prices and the low support price for the bricks, the workers stressed for the proper implementation of labour laws.

Pandey, Sarup and Prakash (1985) examined the extent and pattern of employment of rural population through brick kiln industry. Brick-manufacturing industry provides employment to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers of about 40-55 families for 120 to 150 days in a year.

Sinha Manju's study (1987) based on a survey conducted in four brick kilns of Alipore situated at about 20 kilometers away from the main city of Calcutta in India aimed at highlighting the extent of applicability of the labour legislations relating to the women in brick kilns, and also the procedures of recruitment, working conditions, wage structures and welfare measures for these women. The main findings were that these women face exploitation. They live and work in hazardous conditions.

The surveys of the Labour Bureau, Government of India, carried out in 1988, in north Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, found out that the women workers employed in the brick kilns were mostly migrant labour brought from areas either within or outside the state of the kiln. Women do not do the work like earth digging, transportation of mud and preparation of mud mixture for moulding. Brick kilns had no fixed working hours and usually the spread over was of 11 to 12 hours a day. Most of the women in this industry were found residing in temporary hutment which were erected out in and around the kilns with the help of the material supplied by the employers. The facilities of separate kitchen, bathrooms, crèche or a latrine was non existent.

Deliege (1989) in this study highlights the particular perspective of job mobility in relation to the community of brick makers. According to the author brick-making work is carried out by a team of two workers who can be a husband-wife, father-son, brother-sister or the like. The study also explains the baking and transporting operations in the kilns and underlines that the work in brick kilns is very hard. The working conditions are harsh and workers work under the burning sun.

Mathur (1990) stresses the need of manpower planning in brick kiln industry because this industry has been facing shortage of skilled labour such as moulders and firemen. To cater to the needs of this industry and to increase productivity, it is necessary to make an assessment of the availability and the demand of manpower for operating this industry. Training is required for inculcating requisite type of skills and orient the skilled workers to newer skills.

According to Saran and Sandhwar (1990) most of the migrant labours in brick industry are treated as bonded. They are neither allowed to communicate their family members nor permitted to go back to their native places during mid season. All sorts of inhuman measures like physical and mental torture, sexual abuses and kidnapping of kids etc. are adopted by the employers. The maternity benefits are not paid and no medical assistance is provided to them for common diseases. There is no compensation paid to injured, deceased or their dependents. Living conditions of these women workers is extremely inhuman.

Upadhye-Chavan (1991) in his study provides an extensive review of studies in migration besides finding out the reasons of low living standards, poverty, indebtedness, illiteracy and unemployment of the workers in brick kilns industry.

A study conducted in Tamil Nadu by Dharmalingam (1995) reveals that the workers are underpaid, with no hope of a better future. The wage of the main workers was determined by the number of bricks made, but the wage of the co-worker was fixed by the main worker on the basis of capacity. If rain destroyed the bricks laid out, then the main worker had to forgo his wages as well as that of his co-worker. Over 70 per cent of the main workers were in debt.

D.P Singh studied women workers in brick kilns of Haryana (2005) found that the women in brick kiln industry are indebted, unprotected and exploited. They do

arduous work for long hours in unhygienic conditions. There are no security provisions for them. The owners do not implement labour welfare legislations very effectively.

Another study (Augendra Bhukuth 2005) on child labour in Southeast India found that child labour is found in the moulding process only, which is very long and hard for a single worker, or for a pair, to implement efficiently. The most productive household takes 10–12 hours per day to mould bricks. Children help their parents to use their time efficiently, in order to improve the household productivity and alleviate the difficulty of the work. Moulders sit on the ground for two continuous hours to mould bricks. As a result, their feet are often atrophied, as they take a break of only five minutes to walk along the site before returning to the same task. Child labour allows better allocation of the household time and prevents the household from falling into bondage. The study found that child labour is a means to bargaining for a higher advance. If parents are bonded, children also become bonded, thus giving the impression of a chain reaction. In the case studied, this is a light form of bondage. In this industry, workers with the help of children have the possibility to earn more money. However, they are often cheated by the brokers and the managers when the time comes to clear their account at the end of the season. Hence, labourers return home with the feeling of having repaid their debt.

A study conducted by Archana Sharma (2005) on *“Impact of Globalisation on the Women of Assam”*, in Assam reveals that a majority of female workers were in low paid occupations. The brick kilns, growing in number with the building boom in the urban areas, are posing another threat to the rural areas. These brick kilns encroach upon agricultural land. Poverty, increased prices, ever increasing consumer needs etc. lure the poor peasant to sell their agricultural land to get petty cash. In return, they not only are rendered landless but also become unemployed, because these agricultural workers are not always hired for work in the brick kilns, the type of work being very different from the work in the fields. These brick kilns also lower the fertility level of the agricultural land around.

Another study conducted by Gursharan Singh Kainth and Bandana Katyal (2007) on the socio-economic conditions of migrant labourers engaged in brick kilns in Punjab revealed that the migrant labourers in general are younger in age, illiterate, landless or land poor, belonging to socio-economically backward class. They are

generally paid lower wages than the local labour, their working conditions such as security of job, shelter, medical facilities, insurance and provident fund etc. are as good as non-existent and work for long and flexible hours under extremely bad working conditions near slavery.

Studies conducted on brick kilns in other countries:

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), which has extensively monitored and documented working conditions in brick-kilns, has noted that during 1994 national laws on bonded labour were widely violated. Debt-bondage, restrictions on freedom of movement, physical abuse, sexual harassment including rape, low wages, and a lack of medical and educational facilities are widespread and endemic in the brick-making industry. The vast majority of workers at brick-kilns are children, most of whom receive no compensation for their labour. Many started working before the age of thirteen, indicating that they were either the children or grand children of those initially given a loan. (Patil V,T., 2003)

A study conducted by (Pakistan Institute of Labour and Education and Research) PILER illustrates the debt bondage of brick kilns in Pakistan. Findings are based on rapid assessments at over 100 brick kilns in and around the urban and semi-urban areas of the districts of Hyderabad in Sindh; Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi in Panjab; and Peshawar and Haripur in NWFP during 2002. The study finds the interactions between low wages, debts and insecure shelter in perpetuating bondage for men, women and children, in an otherwise capitalist production system. As in sharecropping agriculture, payment by piece rates in kilns extracts a higher surplus via intensification of labour when low rates compel the use of family labour. (Ercelawn A, Nauman M 2002)

A study conducted by a group in the Northwest Frontier Province revealed that children that children brick makers suffered 50 percent more chronic illness, especially chest infections, than their counterparts in neighbouring villages. Moreover, children who work in brick-kilns are often psychologically traumatised, as they live in fear and witness a consistent pattern of physical violence against family members from a young age, according to a joint government- UNICEF report titled *Discover the Working Child*

Recent surveys of Pakistan's brick industry show that about 80per cent of

workers are Afghan refugees. Hundreds of thousands are working as bonded labourers in kilns in various parts of Pakistan. A large part of the kiln workforce is made up of underage children working to service their parents' debts.

Beijing (Asia News/Agencies) – Reports indicate that workers in kilns were treated worse than slaves, forced to handle hot bricks, beaten if they did not work as expected, and reportedly even buried alive to remove the bodies. The labourers were enticed with promises of a good job, they were beaten upon arrival, starved and forced to work 14-16 hours a day without pay (2007).

From the above studies it is clear that the most of the studies focused on the working conditions of the brick kiln workers. The studies highlighted the scenario of the work place. The present study will focus the working conditions of the women from the Barak Valley of Assam with a regional perspective and also explore the paid and unpaid labour and its impact on the health of women engaged in brick kiln industry.

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