

**WORKING WOMEN, CARE CHOICES AND IMPLICATIONS  
ON CHILD HEALTH: A STUDY OF GARMENT WORKERS  
IN DELHI**

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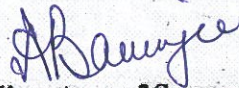
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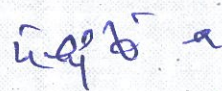
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*DEDICATED TO ALL THE MOTHERS WHO ARE STRIVING TO PROVIDE  
THE BEST CHILDHOOD FOR THEIR CHILDREN*



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## CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Child population encompasses that proportion of the total population of the country which lies in the age group of 0-6 years. India is the second most populous country in the world where 13.12 percent of her population lies in the age bracket of 0-6 years. As per the Census 2011 figures, India has recorded an aggregate child population of 158,789,287 which comprises of a rural child population of 117,585,514 and an urban child population of 41,203,773. The large and growing segment of infant population who are invariably a part of the demographic dividend calls for attention into the infant and childcare practices prevalent in our country.

‘Infant and Childcare’ as a frequently used term can be broadly defined as care of a child other than the child’s parent or guardian (**Lindberg, 2000**). It is a concept describing a range of activities, responsibilities, decisions and emotions involving both caregiver and the children’.

Infant and childcare is given mainly to children between 0-6 years of age and the type and provision of care may vary from 0-3 and 3-6 years of the child (Joshi, 2006). Again a broad distinction can be made between the type of care being provided to the child in the form of Formal Care and Informal Care. Formal arrangements include day-nurseries, kindergarten, nannies, public crèches etc. while informal includes care provided by partners, relatives, older children, neighbours etc. (**Hansen & Joshi, 1998**).

Availability and choices regarding types of childcare are constantly multiplying as more women are entering the labour market and work sphere (**J Devika, 2001**). Leading metropolitan cities in India are characterised by high standards of living which requires involvement of both men and women in economic activities to sustain living. Moreover with breaking down of joint families and nuclear families on rise it becomes difficult for working parents to be with the child/infant throughout the day thus opting for childcare facilities. The scenario is not much varied among different economic strata (**Lindberg, 2000**).

Childcare services becomes necessary for mothers who are working and requires going back to work shortly after the child is born. The type of childcare practices adopted can vary from one mother to another depending upon race, ethnicity, mother's education, type of employment, social support etc (**Pungello and Costez, 1999**). Especially in urban areas the relationship between childcare and working mothers is interesting to note as the type of care facilities change with the type of work mothers are involved in and also as childcare becomes absolutely a requirement because of the nuclear family structure and the absence of mothers from the initial years of the child's life.

While urban centres are characterised by high standards of living, there is a large section of the population who are engaged in low paid unorganised and informal sector jobs. Again these sectors are dominated by women who are not so skilled and would work at very low wages to support their family. In this context as work places are away from home, caring for one's own children and participating in the labour market becomes distinct roles as they impose competing demand on women's child (**Connelly et al. 1996**). In such circumstances it is very important to consider the childcare decisions made and choices adapted by the mother as it would directly affect the development of the child.

Informal sector in India is extensive and it employs around 86 percent of the total workforce and 91 percent of women workers which extends to both agriculture and non-agricultural sectors (NSSO, 66<sup>th</sup> Round). The availability of childcare for women engaged in these sectors which are characterised by long working hours, low irregular wages becomes a challenge and draws attention to the overall development of the child.

Women working in the informal sector who find it difficult to arrange care for their children while they are at work mainly consist of Rag-pickers, Domestic Workers, Street Vendors and Garment workers (**WIEGO, 2010**).

The readymade garment sector is one of the largest and key urban employers in India. As per the ILO report the largest manufacturing sectors in India including the National Capital Region has a work-force of a million. Garment sector is also the second largest employer of women in the country mainly in the informal sector which is characterised by contracting and sub-contracting, irregular wages, strict working hours and favouritism to hire younger workers. (**Mezzadri, 2010**). All these factor appear as extremely unfavourable for the mother to provide care for the child in which case she has to seek for alternative childcare options.

In this context the how women's work in the garment sector affects childcare choices and also how it impact the health outcome of the child draws attention and in this particular study an attempt has been made to explore these nuances in the context of women's work and childcare.

## **1.2 Review of Literature**

Literature in the context of childcare, working women, involvement of fathers and mothers in parenthood has been reviewed. Various sections have been made where the literature pertaining to different sections have been discussed in the context of the present proposal.

### **1.2.1 Childcare**

Caring for children by someone other than parents is termed as childcare. Childcare is gaining importance over the years with increased work participation rate of women and breaking down of joint family structures which calls for an alternative caregiver for the child other than the mother (**Vandell et al. 2016**). This has resulted in various forms of childcare which has emerged across the country to cater to the growing need of childcare facilities.

**Hansen and Joshi (1998)** says that a broad distinction can be made between types of childcare based on the place and also the remuneration involved with caregiving activities into Formal Childcare and Informal Childcare. While formal arrangements include day-nurseries, Kindergarten, child-minders, playgroups, nannies, pre-nurseries, prep-schools etc. informal arrangements mainly include care provided by partners, relatives, older children, friends, neighbours etc. The formal arrangements are likely to involve paid employment of the caregivers. Caregiving also varies according to the age of the child. Those who are within 0-3 years of age will likely to be cared at home by an informal or formal caregiver while those between 3-6 years of age will start visiting kindergarten and nursery schools (**Chaudry, 2000**).

Along with types of childcare, the component of childcare is an important aspect. There are various components of childcare which helps one in assessing the quality of the childcare being provided to the child. Also the components may vary according to the formal and informal setting of the childcare. The structural variables associated with quality of childcare in formal setting are mainly number of children in the setting, child to adult ratio, safety and cleanliness of the care facilities, caregivers background and education, specialized training, nutrition, supplementary nutrition and immunization, sleeping facility and pre-school education. The variables associated with caregiving in informal setting are sensitivity, responsiveness to the

infant, level of involvement, childrearing attitude, quality of activities provided for the infant, language stimulation, childrearing attitudes, motivation and commitment etc. **(Pungello et al, 1999)**

Another important aspect associated with that of childcare is childcare instability. This can be again categorised as long term instability, multiplicity and Backup arrangement **(Pilarz and Hill, 2014)**. Long term instability refers to having several caregivers over a long period of time which will have a considerable effect on the behaviour and the attitude of the child. Multiplicity refers to changing childcare practices frequently over a very short period of time and finally backup arrangements refers to the caregiving done on certain occasions and circumstances when the regular caregiver is not present. Childcare instability also in a way tries to look into how different caregivers can affect the attitude and development of the child. Thus when it comes to childcare, the type, component and instability plays a major role in deciding the quality of the care.

### **1.2.2 Women and Informal Work**

A major part of the economy of a developing country consists of small and tiny production organisations run on informal, self-employment basis. A significant part of the economic structure of the urban and industrial sectors are also found to consist of the non-organised units **(T S Papola, 1980)**. The informal economy is a major source of employment for men and women in many developing countries. It is estimated that less than 8 percent of the work-force in India belongs to the formal sector, leaving more than 92 percent, well over 350 million people in a labour force of almost 400 million, in the informal sector. In general informal employment is a larger source of employment for women than for men and within the informal economy women tend to be clustered in the most precarious and poorly remunerated forms of informal work **(Cassirer and Addati, 2001)**.

It is mainly characterised by jobs which does not require much skill or educational qualification and are easily available at times with meagre pay and absolutely no job security. For many women, the lack of public and private supports for family responsibilities means that the informal economy may offer the only paid work that provides enough flexibility, autonomy and geographic proximity to home to allow them to combine paid economic activity with family responsibilities. There are various occupational groups of informal workers important

of them are domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, waste pickers, construction workers, garment workers etc. (WIEGO, 2017)

### 1.2.3 Garment Workers in Delhi

According to the reports of ILO the largest manufacturing sector in India, including the National Capital Region have a combined workforce of a million. The garment sector is also the second largest employer of women in the country after. **Mezzadri (2015)** in the context of the garment factories in Delhi suggests that by now there is significant evidence that garment jobs are primarily ‘bad jobs’, ‘informalised’, ‘feminised’ and often characterised by harsh working conditions and low levels of social security. The National Capital region otherwise referred to as the Delhi Metropolitan Conglomerate is one of the main garment export hubs with various industrial units distributed in several Districts of the city (**Bhullar et al, 2015**). Engaged in tailoring activities since Mughal times, today it is the leading centre for ladies wear production. The production units are complex, larger factories tower over the entire cluster, which is however primarily composed of medium and smaller units, and by informal workshops. Different relations of (multiple) ownership, subcontracting and interdependence link these units together, and also with the myriad of (often informal) processing units also scattered around the main industrial areas. Moreover, the majority of garment companies are also linked to the universe of home-based production, where important production tasks take place (**Mezzadri, 2015**). Based on the specific type of product specialisation, one of the most significant non-factory based production tasks is embroidery, but also some stitching activities especially button-holing also known as ‘Kaj’ can take place in home-based or ‘home-based like’ units. Embroidery is not only decentralised around industrial areas in the NCR, but also in towns and villages in Uttar Pradesh. Women workers form an important part of the garment industries in Delhi and work as both factory workers and home workers up to a stretch of 8 hours per day. While the factory work mainly involves cutting and stitching of cloth material, home-based work is mainly characterised by Moti and Adda work. Adda-work is a particularly intricate type of embroidery, realised on a traditional Indian handloom, the adda, generally used by Muslim communities while Moti-work or beading is done by migrant women from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (**Mezzadri, 2012**).

The garment industry also portrays a very strict favouritism to younger workers with the maximum age limit of 35. This reflects on the fact that young women engaged in the garment industry working for long hours a day would definitely require to have an alternative childcare



services which are cheap and affordable. The following section of the literature focuses on how working women cope with care choices both at the national and international forum.

#### **1.2.4 Working Women and Childcare**

Working mothers, especially in urban centres need the help of childcare givers to look after the child. **J Devika (2001)** elaborates on the Indian context on how cost of childcare is increasing with the breakdown of traditional support system, the increasing burdens on mothers, the fall in family size, and the aspirations to upward mobility through education and employment across class lines. She mainly indicates how the burden of mothering has increased over the period. Following the same lines **Mirai Chatterjee (2000)** elaborated on how in the Indian Context childcare is absolutely necessary for poor working women. Childcare can be stated here as an umbrella term encompassing all facets of the life of a child. It includes physical care of the child, including nutrition and health, emotional and cognitive development. It also includes spiritual development with value-based education and followed by fun, play, recreation and exposure for their children. Further Research on the type of childcare adopted by parents/mothers (**Guillot, 2002; Hofferth et al., 1996**) has shown that high-skilled women are more likely to rely on formal childcare, whereas low-skilled women will tend to use informal childcare or no childcare at all. The type of childcare tends to vary according to the family types also. The types of families are as follows, firstly family where only the husband has a job and the wife runs the home (traditional breadwinner) Secondly a family where the wife has a less demanding job than the husband and does the larger share of housework (neo-traditional) third, a family where the jobs of both partners are equally demanding and where the housework is divided equally (egalitarian) and finally a family where the husband has a less demanding job than the wife and does the larger share of the housework (the new man).

#### International Scenario

**David Maume (2013)** somewhat elaborated on the findings of Guillot by stating that it may be premature to think that contemporary families are egalitarian because wives are working more and fathers are more involved with children. This research contends that egalitarianism is reflected in gender similarity in missing work to attend to children's needs. Drawing from two national surveys of dual earner parents, familial factors (especially children and spouse's work hours) exceeded job-related factors in determining women's sole provision of urgent childcare. Although men's egalitarian ideology was positively associated with urgent-childcare

provision, men as a whole were less likely than women to adapt their work efforts to familial demands. These findings suggest more persistent traditionalism than progress toward egalitarianism in work-family role performance. **Bowlby (2010)** puts forwards an important aspect of childcare and working mother with focus on British women. She argues that women's access to paid work in Britain has been and still is constrained by the lack of appropriate childcare provision. The first section examines the development of the social and spatial separation of home and paid work in the nineteenth century and its implications on women. The second section examines the contemporary situation and the potential contributions of geographical research to developing better childcare policies. A central theme of both sections is the importance of the interrelated constraints of time, space and social beliefs in shaping women's access to childcare and the level of their participation in paid work.

**Stewart (2011)** puts forward an interesting aspect regarding childcare where he says that the time of the day spent by mothers with their child is important in deciding the development of the child. Using data from the American Time Use Survey and focusing on mothers of pre-school-aged children, he finds that both full- and part-time employed mothers shift enriching childcare time from workdays to non-workdays. On workdays, full-time employed mothers shift enriching care time to evenings, whereas part-time employed mothers shift care time very little. The author finds no evidence that mothers working full time adjust their work schedules to spend enriching time with their children at more preferred times of day. In contrast, part-time employed mothers shift their work hours to later in the day in order to spend time with their children at more-desirable times of day. Another avenue, largely unexplored, by which maternal employment might negatively affect child development is through its effect on timing that is, the time of day at which childcare activities take place. Psychological research on circadian rhythms suggests that some times of day are likely to be better than others for parent child interactions. Thus, employment constraints may result in parents spending time with their children at times of day that are potentially less valuable for development. If this is the case, mothers may wish to adjust their schedules in order to spend time with their children at times of day when the benefits from these activities are greater.

Childcare has long been a priority issue for women's rights advocates in the United States. Provisions of the Children's Rights Convention, suggest that childcare should be viewed through a human rights framework rather than the more limited framework of domestic law.

**Davis and Powell (1998)** focussed on Children's Rights Convention, analysing the Convention's impact on childcare in ratifying countries.

The authors focus on how it is the government's responsibility to actually look into and provide for childcare facilities both in developed and developing countries to support and encourage working mothers. In this context the Article 18 of the CRC is relevant as it (Children's Rights convention) acknowledges that Parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child but squarely imposes on the state an obligation to assist parents in this sphere, particularly when parents are working.

So it can be said that In recent decades, rationales for childcare have “swung back and forth from life-long learning, school readiness and child development to employability, to women's equality, balancing work and family, reducing poverty, alleviating at-risk status and social integration” (**Doherty and Beach 2006**)

### **1.2.5 Parent's Involvement in Childcare**

In the context of gender roles in parenthood and division of labor in the household, 'motherhood' or 'mothering' occupies a far more important position than 'fathering'. Various studies both at the national and international level talks about the changing parenthood dynamics with more participation by men in the childcare activities. This has happened mainly because of the increasing work participation rate of women. But the involvement is not satisfactory as men's involvement is only limited to certain sections of childcare activities like playing and sports.

Again it is generally argued that once women and men become parents, they tend to do different things with and for their children and relate to their children in different ways. We know more about the nature and activities of mothering and fathering small children than we know about older children (**Bradley, 1985; Giveans and Robinson, 1985**). Regardless of children's age, however, mothers typically are more invested and involved in the daily lives of their children than are fathers (**Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Montemayor, 1986; Kivett, 1988**). **Ruddick (1982)** described the activities of attentive love and mothering as preserving life, fostering growth, and molding an acceptable person. Abiding, attentive, active, hands-on parenting is seen as imperative for mothers but optional for fathers (**Boulton, 1983; Daniels and Weingarten, 1988**). Researchers study the circumstances and personal characteristics that encourage fathers' involvement in parenting (**Barnett and Baruch, 1987; Crouter et al., 1987; Radin, 1988**),

but do not give similar attention to mothers' involvement. Most mothers, fathers, and researchers continue to see fathers' contributions to parenting as "helping" but never refer to mothers' contributions in this way (**LaRossa and LaRossa, 1981; Ross et al., 1983**). **Kranichfield (1987)** argued that the bonds between mothers and their children are ignored and invisible sources of women's family power.

Mothering or motherhood in India is more rooted as men are mainly considered as breadwinners and women are expected to nurture and take care of the children. The attitude, responsibility and involvement varies from urban to rural areas. Urban areas are mainly characterized by mothers who are an active part of the labour force. The nature and type of jobs vary depending on the socio-economic and religious strata these working mothers belong to. But even with being an earning member of the family when it comes to accessibility and engagement with the children mothers occupy the primary position compared to the fathers. So the question arises whether working mothers are able to invest required time with their infants or children.

Several problems which arises for working mother as pointed out by **Poduval et al (2009)** are income difficulties. If the mother works, childcare support is essential and can be quite expensive. It may actually offset the financial benefits of both the parents working. Childcare support becomes very important in the urban areas where families tends to be nuclear and both the parents are working to maintain a decent standard of living. On various occasions childcare facilities are not available due to unavailability of 'ayas' in the market which forces the mother to put the child in the daycare centers.

Couples who are residing in a joint family experiences the benefits of extended help from the in-laws. Grandparents and other nonworking family members fulfill the need for childcare—they take over the job of childcare when the mother is at work. This very important benefit (of readily available child support from the family members themselves) in joint families not only recognizes that the working mother is an important member of the family, but also provides her the necessary support to be able to perform her dual role efficiently.

Initially considered as minor players in the affair of their children, today's father are depicted as a major parental figure (**Ralph LaRossa, 1988**)

Several notions and characteristics about fatherhood has been brought to light off late first of which is the asynchrony between culture and conduct of fatherhood. While the culture of fatherhood mainly portrays the shared norms, values and beliefs surrounding men's parenting, conduct focusses on what fathers do in reality and their actual behaviour. These two concepts are not synchronized and also it is the conduct rather than the culture which is important in gauging the involvement of fathers with their children. Fathers from just being distinct breadwinners from the 1920s have emerged as the nurturer around 1966 prominently in the western countries and these traits are now being observed in the developing countries too. Again there is a strong difference between the conduct of fatherhood and that of motherhood and the difference lies along the line of engagement, accessibility and responsibility towards the child. Engagement is the time spent in one-to-one interaction with the child. Accessibility is the less intense type of interaction where the parent is doing one thing but is ready to be available to do another (for the child). Finally responsibility has to do with who is accountable for the child's welfare and care. Father's involvement with the child differs from that of mothers mainly when it comes to accessibility and responsibility where mothers are visibly more involved than the fathers giving way to 'technically present but functionally absent fathers (**Michael Lamb, 1987**).

'Marital Conflict' in fatherhood is another line of argument debated by the author where she speaks about the initial involvement of the fathers and how they withdraw themselves back and loose the excitement in childcare leading to conflict and argument among the father and the mother. Lastly the author discusses about 'fathers and guilt' based on **Garry Trudeau's (1985)** writings that a number of fathers especially in the middle class feels ambivalent and guilty about their performance about fathers.

It has also been argued in the study that the accounts employed by the new parents to excuse and justify men's parental role distance serves as the social lubricant in the 'traditionalization' process. In the concluding lines it was highlighted that it is the culture of fatherhood which has changed and definitely not the conduct. Because the change in conduct itself would break the traditional construct of fatherhood along with unequal participation in the parenting process.

**Elizabeth Francis-conolly (2003)** have talked about how parenthood is constructed in popular Magazines. According to her 'social construction refers to the process by which 'parenthood' i.e. 'Fathering' and 'Mothering' is culturally defined within social, economic and

historical contexts. The construction process is affected by the environmental and social context in which we live and varies over time and across cohorts. What comes out of the analysis of the study is that parenting is largely a mother's work and here 'fathering' or 'fatherhood' holds little significance. Husbands are largely viewed as breadwinners and whatever little role they play in parenthood is related to active play and sports. On the similar lines **Abhik (1998)** who studied the images of parenthood in Indian television commercials largely found that men's presence in the process of childcare are either negligible or completely missing thus reiterating the role of men solely as breadwinners in the family.

**Davis and Greenstein (2009)** brings in gender ideology as one of the main reasons behind the socially constructed parenthood. Gender ideologies change over time and space and consequently there is a change in the notion of parenthood too. With increasing work participation rate of women in the labour force men are becoming major players in the context of child rearing not only in the developed but also in the developing countries. But the loophole lies in the intensity with which they are participating in the childcare process.

**Craig (2006)** using dairy data compared childcare time by gender and came up with the result that fathering as a concept is gaining popular identity but the time actually given by fathers to their infant is not at par with the mother's involvement. It was expected that as a consequence of women's spending more time in the paid employment men would spend more time in the domestic labour (**Robinson, 1988**) but it was seen that changes in the sphere of workforce has been more radical than changes in the home (**Boje, 1966**). On an average men have only slightly increased the time they spend doing housework. Men's and women's contribution to housework has become more equal because women are doing much less than before and not because men are doing more (**Baxter, 2002**). Another problem lies in the fact that fathers think their childcare matches with that of their wives while the mothers tend to disagree. (**Milkie et al, 2001**) this mismatch in the perception may be because gender differences in how a childcare is performed is sometimes subtle.

**Lewis and Lamb (2003)** argues that often it is assumed that men have an important influence on their children's development but the supportive evidence is difficult to locate and summarize. The reasons put forward are firstly they appear to interact with their children less sensitively, secondly fathers have specific roles where they just stick to specific roles of just being playmates etc.



**Cazenave (1979)** talks about how all men believe that being a good father means first and foremost being a good provider. Fathers typically are involved in the day to day responsibility of providing for their children and resent any claim that they do not contribute directly to the children's welfare.

The idea of fatherhood in the Indian context is as follows

**Saraff and Srivastava (2008)** largely focussed on Indian fathers and identified Seven dimensions of the fathering roles based on primary surveys where the respondent were fathers themselves which are (a) Caretaker, (b) Surety, (c) Economic Provider, (d) Playmate and friend, (e) Role model, (f) Family head, and (g) Resource. Their findings revealed that caretaking was viewed as one of the most important attributes of an ideal father. Nevertheless, a noticeable proportion of men believed ideal fathers to be surety, economic provider, and/or role model. The study further attempted to find out whether these men viewed themselves as an ideal father and the problems faced by them in being an ideal father. The relationship of fathers' characteristics with their perception of themselves as an ideal father has also been examined.

Sharaff and Srivastava again came out with a study in 2010 looking into Pattern and Determinants of Paternal Involvement in Childcare where they analysed various aspects of paternal involvement and overall involvement in childcare. Results indicated that paternal involvement in childcare is mainly determined by the perception of individuals towards fatherhood—be it gender role expectations, or perception of the peer group, or fathering received by the individual fathers. Other socio-economic factors affecting paternal involvement have also been examined. As the importance of paternal involvement in childcare is increasingly being recognised, these findings have implications for programmers and policy makers. Interventions to bring about a positive change in the attitude of fathers may improve paternal participation.

**Sriram (2011)** attempts to explore how fathers fare in today's globalized India. Findings from a series of research studies conducted on a sample of urban Hindu middle class Gujarati families from Baroda City between the years 2001–2005 are examined to understand current beliefs on fathering and patterns of father involvement. The author also attempts to understand and convey the difficulties Indian fathers face in their endeavour to provide for children, nurture and guide them, and establish relationships with them. Emphasis is placed on

understanding how fathers cope with the situation and understanding the factors that act as barriers to optimal father involvement. Finally the author is cast to illuminate aspects of continuity in traditional ideals and behaviour, and the nature of their contextual adaptations and transformations.

Continuing with the above theme, **Sriram (2012)** discusses how the perceptions and practices associated with fathering are rapidly changing in India. Traditional Indian notions endorsed fathers' role as a provider, protector and moral guardian to children where fathers maintained a distant and authoritative role rather than a distant one. But with more middleclass women entering workforce and Indian constitution and worldwide media promoting gender equality the demand for man having knowledge, attitude and skills to share co-parenting responsibilities in increasing in dual earner families. But what is seen that the involvement is not in an elaborate manner and women still have to juggle between work and home and be the primary caregiver to children.

Another perspective taken up by **Sandhu (2012)** about fatherhood in globalizing urban India is the middle-class parent's anxiety about their child's success and future in a competitive world which tends to get fathers more involved both in the context of accessibility and engagement with their children. But this attitude of men across class and caste has not been worked upon by the author.

### **1.2.6 Child Health Outcome**

**Basu et al (1998)** puts forward an interesting but somewhat disturbing finding in their research work where the results portray that high infant mortality is associated with working mothers. They focused on this possible negative aspect of female employment: its impact on the physical welfare of the child, measured at the extreme by the level of childhood mortality. Unfortunately this unpleasant implication of female employment has not received more than passing attention in the literature even though various data analyses have found a negative association between a mother's employment status and her children's survival. So, since this lead has rarely been followed, very little is known about this association and its possible causes. This is in sharp contrast to the large and still growing interest in the positive association between maternal education and child survival.

**Shivakami (1997)**, seeks to examine the linkage between mothers work and child health. The data are from a survey of 75 working and 75 non- working women in a village in Tamil Nadu, India. The results show that the working women spend on an average 1.7 hours less than the non- working women on child care. The duration of breastfeeding also is shorter among the working women. The morbidity rates were higher for the children of working women than for the children of non-working women. Logistic regression analysis showed that the children of working women are at a significantly greater risk of morbidity even when socio-economic factors are controlled. The results, however, do not show a significant variation in morbidity.

Again when it comes to Indian working women, she has to multi-task, splitting her time between home and work. In this context there tend to be development of stress. **Kagan et al (1999)** debated about whether multiple roles protect against distress and enhance well-being (the role expansion hypothesis) or create overload and stress for employed women (role strain hypothesis). This particular idea is giving way to a recognition that the relationship between multiple role demands and well-being is mediated by a variety of **factors (Bolger et al. 1990; Noor 1994)**. Mediating factors which have been examined include: the number of children at home the subjective quality of individual work and family roles (**Barling 1990; Hughes et al. 1992; Williams and Alliger 1994**); ways of coping (**Paden and Buehler 1995**), and employer work-family policies and practices such as flexibility at work and supervisor supportiveness (**Thomas and Ganster 1995**). Less attention has been paid, however, to the impact of other potential mediators of the multiple roles and well-being relationship such as ethnicity, and particularly, cultural expectations. As incompatible role expectations are proposed to be the basis of work-family conflict (**Paden and Buehler 1995**), possible differences in the nature of role expectations across ethnic groups merit further consideration.

**Muthusamy (2006)** Discussed that the relationship between increased female work participation and mother's time with children in developing countries remains inconclusive. This paper suggests that a more detailed disaggregated analysis of various childcare activities in terms of essential and non-essential activities can explain this ambiguity. Hence, this paper looks in detail at how mother's time with children on essential and non-essential activities varies among poor women in India according to their work status, in the context of a decline in fertility and the number of extended families and a scenario where patriarchy remains prevalent. Women in the age group 15-49 who had at least one living child below 10 years in

urban slums and in rural Scheduled Caste settlements were selected for this study. While regression analysis shows that working women spend significantly less time on childcare than non-working women, a disaggregated analysis of essential activities illustrates that working women spend as much time on childcare as non-working women, except playing with children.

Especially with women working in the informal sector, lack of flexibility in the context of working hours and low wage rate puts a pressure on the care giving to the child. Due to lack of care, proper nutrition the child gets exposed to numerous diseases which invariably affects the health of the child. Thus the working mothers have an impact on the physical development and health status of the child.

### **1.3 Contextualizing the Problem**

Over the years the labour force participation rate of women has been increasing both in urban and rural areas (PLFS 2018-19). In this process the task of taking care of the child is largely getting outsourced. Women engaged in various rungs of economic activities suffer from lack of time available to spend with their children thus increasing the requirement of childcare. In this study women garment workers both at the factory and home-based level form the sample population. As discussed at length in the review of literature, garment work in the Delhi-NCR entails long working hours, low minimum wages and near absence of work benefits due to contracting and sub-contracting entrenched within the hiring process. Also the export houses prefer hiring young women. This raises the question, how do women workers manage to care for their children?

To answer the above question it is important to understand the concept and components of childcare. Childcare as a caregiving activity can be either formal or informal. Formal childcare involves remuneration and constitutes of day care centres, appointing nanny/nurse, Childcare Crèche, Kindergartens, Pre-Nursery Schools, Nursery Schools etc. Informal childcare is mainly time given to a child by his/her mother or father, family member other than the parents, grandparents, older siblings, neighbours etc. the components are not always same for both formal and informal childcare with little variation here and there. The major components of childcare are Immunization/Vaccination Regular Health Check-ups Pre-primary education Early Child Development (Playing, Teaching, Reading) etc. along with the components the quality also varies and mainly conforms under structural variables which are Number of

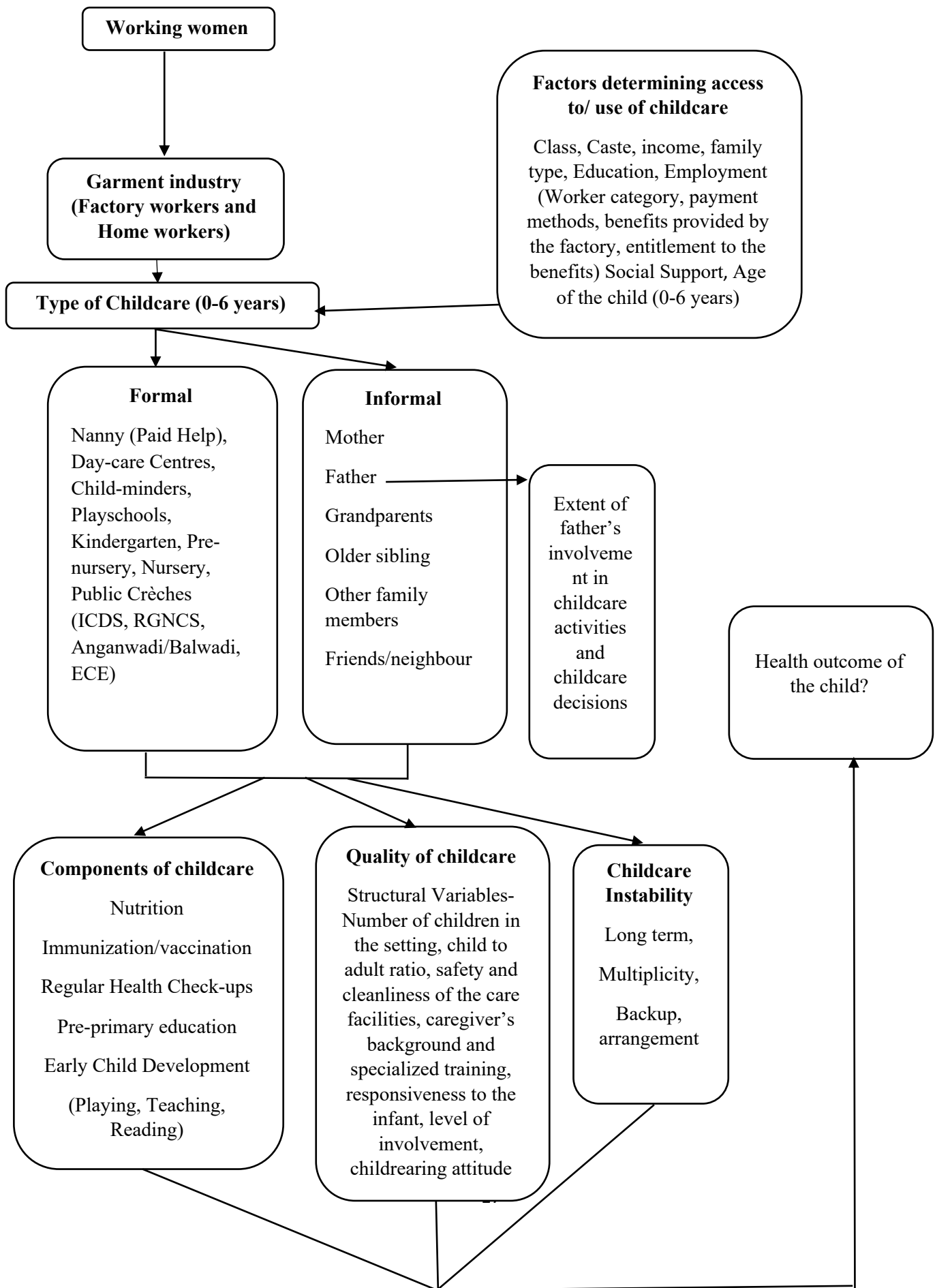
children in the setting, child to adult ratio, safety and cleanliness of the care facilities, caregiver's background and specialized training, responsiveness to the infant, level of involvement, childrearing attitude etc. Another important childcare attribute is the instability in childcare practices which can again be Long Term, Multiplicity and back-up arrangements which in the long run are expected to affect childcare practices opted by working mothers.

The childcare strategies are expected to vary among mothers who are highly skilled and not skilled, with the low skilled working mothers below poverty line opting for government subsidised creches and skilled working mothers opting for paid nanny at home or expensive playschools. The notion of parenthood also becomes important in the study at fathers involvement can be treated as quality childcare and relieve working mothers on specific occasion. In this context the concept of 'Gendered familialism becomes relevant to look into, whether care giving for children is largely a family responsibility (With no government support) and to see whether women are more involved in the process of care giving.

L. G Katz in his 'Perspective of Childcare' discusses how the type, component and quality of childcare can be assessed through four approaches. The 'Top-down approach', 'outside-in approach', 'inside-out approach' and the 'bottom's up approach'. The 'bottom's-up' approach involves the child's perception about the care services while the 'inside-out' captures the caregivers perception about childcare. In this study the 'top-down approach' which necessitates the researcher's perception and the 'outside-in approach' requiring parent's opinion have been considered to understand the different forms of childcare available and used.

Thus the main aim of the study is to gauge the working condition and associated work benefits of the mothers in the garment industry and how this impacts the type of childcare facilities opted, involvement of father and the impact on child's health.

### 1.4 Conceptual Framework





## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

1. To ascertain the characteristics of export-houses and garment work across major garment producing countries in South and East Asia.
2. To analyze the background profile of women garment workers in Delhi
3. To gauge the working conditions and work environment of women workers in the garment industry of sampled areas in Delhi.
4. To assess the childcare options available in the context of type, components and consistency of garment workers in factories and those who are sub-contracted from home.
5. To identify the major caregivers and to explore how childcare choices are affected by the working conditions among the women garment workers.
6. To measure the quality of formal childcare across factory and private crèches.
7. To assess the implications of childcare choices on the physical and health outcomes of children between 0-6 years of age.
8. To evaluate the role of the government and civil society in instilling the care choices for women workers and how far these are accessed in the sample areas.

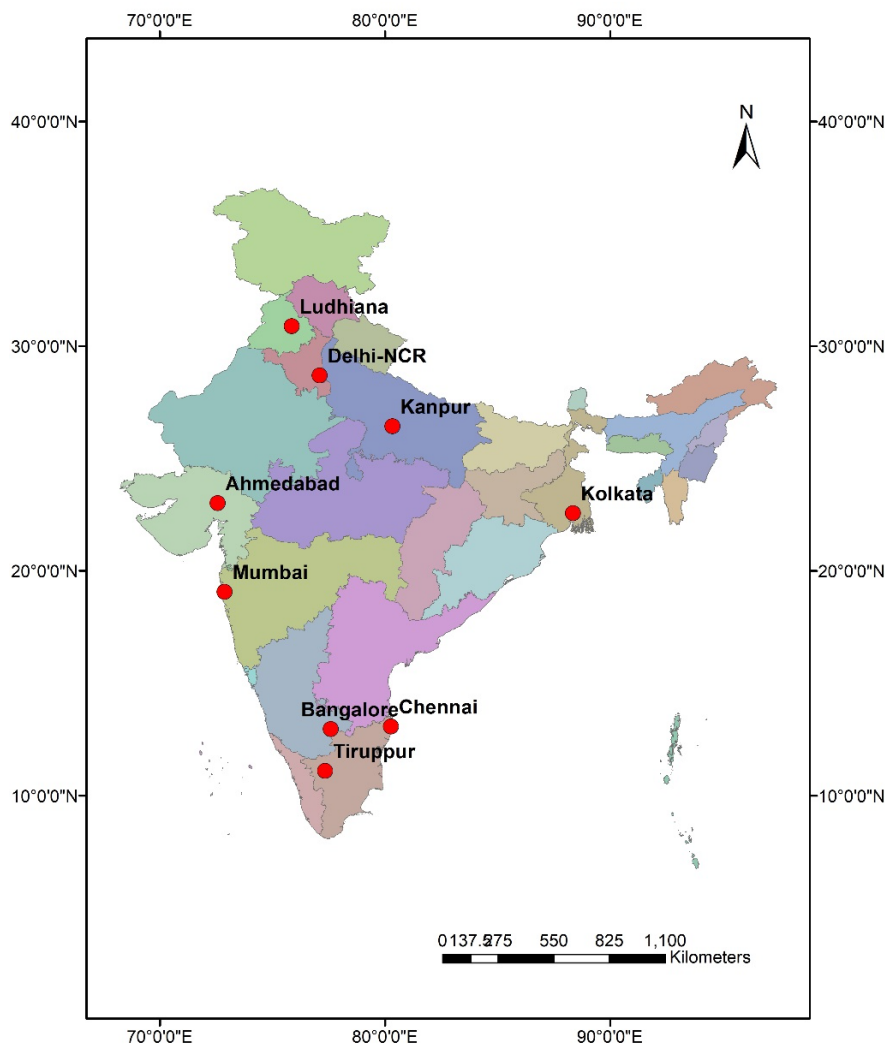
## **1.6 Research Questions**

1. How do the characteristics of export-houses and garment work vary across major garment producing countries of South and East Asia?
2. How do the socio-economic and demographic profile of working mothers differ across Delhi's Garment Industry?
3. How do the work conditions and environment of women workers vary across different units of the garment industry?
4. What are the basic characteristics of formal and informal childcare services available for garment workers?
5. Who constitutes the major caregivers and do childcare choices vary by type and consistency across factory and home-workers?
6. How do the quality of formal childcare vary across factory and private crèches?
7. What are the implications of child care choices by working mothers on the physical and health outcome of children between 0 to 6 years of age?
8. What has been the role of government and civil society and how far these have been accessed by women workers in the area under study?

## 1.7 Area of the Study

India is known for its cheap labour and giant export houses in the context of garment work. Garment factories are not ubiquitous and are found in certain pockets of the country. Although a comprehensive discussion on the distribution of garment factory across the country has been undertaken in the following chapter, a major aspect to note is that the industries in the south are female dominated while those in the north are male dominated (**Mezzadri, 2014**). This greatly impacts the benefits like maternity and childcare which are made available to the workers.

**Map 1.1: Major Garment Clusters in India (2016)**

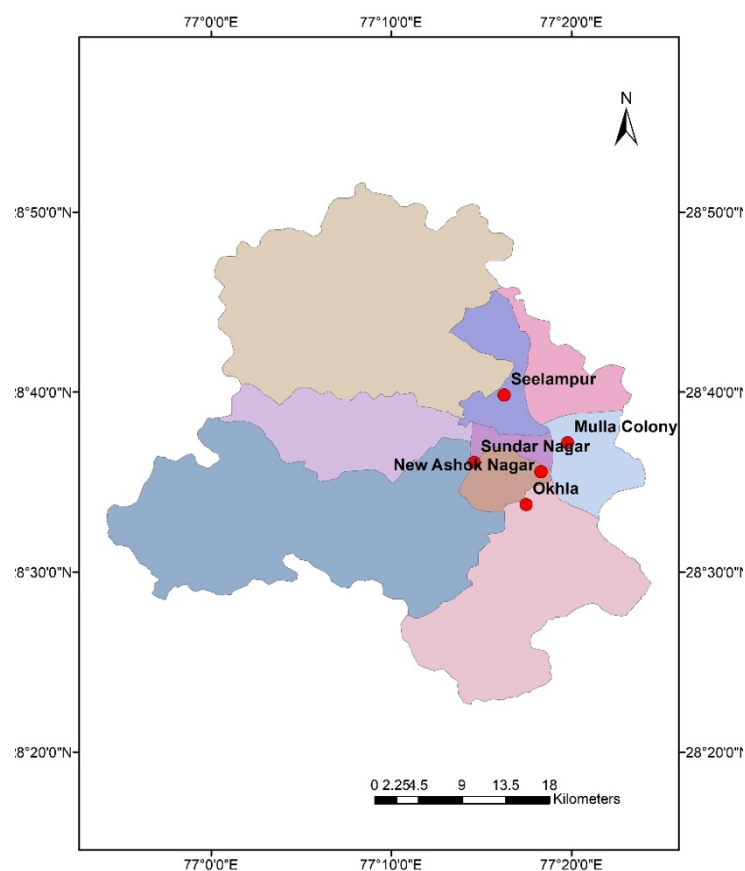


*Source: Computed through ArcGIS*

### 1.7.1 Delhi-NCR Region

The Delhi-NCR region is one of the most important centres of garment production in the country. Artisanal garment production in Delhi has a long history but modern garment industries gained prominence during the era of Multi-Fiber agreement. Okhla, within the city of Delhi emerged as the largest garment manufacturing cluster in Delhi mostly characterized by export houses producing embellished ladies wear. Since the late 1970s with the development of the National Capital Region, there has been a shift in the factories from within the city of Delhi to the NCR region mostly driven by tax incentives and low wage rates (Srivastava, 2012). Most of the large export houses have moved from the Okhla industrial region to NOIDA and Gurgaon. The remaining industries in Delhi are medium to small scale export houses and cluster mostly around phase II of the Okhla industrial area and some other areas adjacent to the city's boundary with Noida and Gurgaon.

**Map 1.2: Areas Surveyed for the Present Study (2018-2019)**



*Source: Computed through ArcGIS*

### **1.7.2 Reasons for Selecting Delhi as the Study Area**

Firstly the primary reason behind selecting Delhi as the area of study is because of the higher wage rates fixed by the state government. According to the Factories Act (1948), each state can fix its own minimum wage rate and Delhi's wage rates for its unskilled, semiskilled and skilled labourers are higher than that of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. This implies that even though the factory sizes are small, the employers are liable to provide the workers with the minimum wages fixed by the government. Thus it has been assumed that women workers in Delhi will have higher economic freedom in opting care choices for their children. Secondly, unlike the garment workers engaged in large export houses in the NCR region, women workers in Delhi do not have to travel long distances as they mostly live in areas adjacent to the factories. And finally, available literature point out that although the wage rates are high within the city, most of the export houses hire their women workers through contractors and sub-contractors thus completely cutting them off from all types of work benefits. This calls for enquiry into how the women factory workers manage with their childcare activities without the support of their workplace.

### **1.8 Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary data have been analyzed to answer the research questions of this study. The secondary data has been used to compute the third chapter, while the rest are based on the analysis of the primary data. As there is no direct data source which publishes data on garment work, creche facility in the industries and the childcare choices adopted by working mothers, data from various sources were collated to understand the existing status.

The secondary dataset are as follows

- Census of India, 2011
- National Sample Survey Reports
- Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-18), (2018-19)
- Labour Bureau Reports (2012-2013)

Primary Source: Survey data.

## **1.9 Methods Used**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for the analysis of the primary data

### Qualitative Methods

- In-Depth Interviews –Narrative Analysis
- Revised Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)

The ECERS is a classroom assessment tool designed to measure the quality of care programs for infants and toddlers by collecting data through classroom observations and a staff interview. The assessment is a 43-item rating scale organized into seven environmental subscales. The items in the first six subscales are referred to as child-related, and the items in the last subscale are referred to as parent-/staff-related. Each item is ranked from 1 to 7. A ranking of 1 describes care that does not meet custodial care needs while a ranking of 7 describes excellent, high-quality personalized care. The ECERS can be used by caregiving staff for self-assessment who is working on the quality of their classrooms or by a researcher to compare different care programs. This tool allows one to determine the areas of high quality and areas that may need additional attention. ECERS may also be used by directors and supervisors to determine action plans for working with programs, or to examine the quality of programs over time.

### Quantitative Methods

- Descriptive Statistics
- Correlation
- Body Mass index

## **1.10 Sampling Framework**

For the purpose of data collection, non-probability sampling technique has been used. Non-probability sampling is defined as a sampling technique in which the researcher selects samples based on the subjective judgment of the researcher rather than random selection. This sampling technique is adopted when the subject under study is hard to locate, like for the present study it is women garment workers having children between 0 to 6 years of age.

Non-probability sampling can be further categorised into various sub-types. For the present study, snowball non-probability sampling technique has been adopted to collect the data.

- **Snowball Sampling** - Snowball sampling helps researchers find a sample when they are difficult to locate. Researchers use this technique when the sample size is small and not easily available. This sampling system works like the referral program. Once the researchers find suitable subjects, he asks them for assistance to seek similar subjects to form a considerably good size sample.

The journey of data collection for this study started in June 2018 with an attempt of carrying out a pilot survey in the Okhla Industrial Region. While wandering through the lanes of Okhla Phase III, I stumbled upon an export house where I met my first point of reference, a fabricator<sup>1</sup> based in Harkeshnagar. She enlightened me about the concentration of export houses in Okhla Phase II and introduced me to many home-based workers residing in Harkeshnagar, Gola Kua and Tai Khand. The NGO SEWA helped me build contacts with factory workers in Mulla colony, New Ashok Nagar and Sundernagri. Finally a contractor working for a garment unit stitching jeans pants in Gandhi Nagar Market led me to explore Seelampur's vast existence of very small sweatshops. The final survey period was carried out from October 2018 to April 2019. A total of 381 garment workers were interviewed out of which 100 were home-workers and 271 were factory workers. The main criteria for selecting the sample population was that the respondents should have at least one child aged six years or below.

The major Areas of the survey are as follows

1. Okhla Industrial Area (Harkeshnagar, Gola Kuan and Tai Khand)
2. New Ashoknagar
3. Mulla Colony
4. Seelampur
4. Sundernagri

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<sup>1</sup> Fabricators are at the base of the hiring hierarchy established by the export houses in Delhi. They are mostly instrumental in helping export houses out-source their work to home-workers on a piece-rate basis. This hierarchical structure has been discussed in details in Chapter 4 of the study.

The following table will provide an overview of the total number of respondents from each area.

Area of residence	Factory Based	Home Based	Total Workers
Harkeshnagar	81	27	108
Tai Khand	35	11	46
Gola kuan	35	20	55
New Ashoknagar	42	16	58
Seelumpur	38	26	64
Mulla colony	30	0	30
Sundernagri	20	0	20

*Source: Primary Survey (2019-20)*

Most of the respondents, both home-workers and factory workers were from Harkeshnagar, an extensive slum spreading out between Okhla Phase II and Phase III. Tai Khand and Gola Kuan, extension of Harkeshnagar also harbours a considerable number of factory and home-workers. While in all the areas both home and factory workers were found, Mulla Colony and Sundernagri only exhibited factory workers in very small production enterprises. It can also be noted that almost 150 respondents working in a factory are from the Okhla Industrial Region owing to the existence of a large number of production units.

### **1.11 Chapter Design**

The study has been divided into eight chapters to cater to the objectives and answer the research questions. The scheme of the chapters are as follows

First Chapter is the **Introductory Chapter** and mainly incorporates the methodology and the conceptual framework. It begins with an introduction to the particular topic followed by a review of literature mainly to capture the type of work that had been already done in this area broadly looking into women in informal work, their childcare choices, work benefits, involvement of the father and the impact on child's health. This is followed by the conceptual framework along with formulating the objective of the study and also the research questions.

Data sources relevant for the study have been discussed along with the sampling framework and the major areas of the survey.

The second chapter entitled **‘Women Garment Workers: An Overview of World and India’** traces the causes behind the shift of garment factories from the West to the East and also explores the characteristics of garment sweatshops across the South and South-East Asian Nations. Similarity is witnessed in low wage rates, gendered division of labour, prominence of women workers, lack of collective bargaining and large scale informality. India, being one of the major South Asian garment producers exhibited similar characteristics across its major garment clusters.

In the third chapter, **‘Socio-Economic Profile of Women Workers In Informal Sector in India and Delhi’** analysis of the secondary dataset was carried out to comprehend the attributes of informal workforce of India in general and Delhi in particular. This aided in creating a potential backdrop for evaluating the primary data. The secondary dataset portrayed low work participation rate of women in the labour force, being concentrated mostly in the informal sector. There is large scale informalisation of the organised sector and majority of the workers were not entitled to any social security benefits.

The fourth chapter entitled **‘Women in the Garment Industry and their Working Condition’** analyses the general profile of the garment workers along with their work environment. Majority of the workers, both factory and home-based are migrants from UP and Bihar who have permanently settled in slums surrounding garment production units in the city. The respondents are mostly married with children and belonged to nuclear families. The dominant religion was Hinduism followed by Islam. Lastly most of the workers had primary and secondary level of education.

The fifth chapter, **‘Childcare Choices by Garment Workers’**, looks into several aspects of the availability, type and usage of childcare services. Lack of formal childcare services have pushed women garment workers to opt for unreliable informal care choices. The factories did not have any crèche facilities and the available low budget private crèches were ill-equipped and run by untrained caregivers. Multiplicity was a common characteristics for both formal and informal care choices resulting in inconsistency in care giving activities and impacting the child’s development in the long run.



In the sixth chapter entitled ‘**Assessing the Impact of Work Profile and Care Choices of Garment Workers on their Child’s Health**’ the physical and the health outcomes of the respondents’ children has been measured through various important and relevant variables. Firstly body mass index was used to identify underweight children. Vaccination status and the illness status were also looked into to capture the health status of the children. Diarrhoea, fever, dengue, measles, typhoid, jaundice and chicken pox were the reported illness by both factory and home-workers. The physical outcome was measured through the occurrence of accidental injuries. The incidents of diseases and accidents were common among factory workers mainly because of their long working hours away from home resulting in curtailed direct supervision over their children.

In the seventh chapter entitled ‘**Availability of Social Security Schemes and Policy Analysis**’, a detailed analysis of the ECCE programmes have been carried out. Lack of proper implementation has resulted in lack of knowledge among the garment workers regarding any of the prominent childcare schemes like National Crèche Scheme, Mobile Crèches, ICDS programs etc. Anganwadi was the only facility which was popular among the respondents. Majority of the home-based and factory workers stated that they knew about their nearest anganwadi and the facilities being provided there. Overall, lack of awareness regarding the available government schemes in the context of childcare services portrayed prominent fault lines between the formulation and implementation of these schemes.

In the **concluding** chapter, the results from each chapter pertaining to the research questions have been discussed in details. Synthesis of the research findings was done through analysing the constraints faced by the garment workers, impact on their child’s health and their coping mechanisms. The chapter ends with the limitations and challenges of the study and its direction for future research.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

Summing up the discussion in this chapter it can be concluded that garment workers in Delhi both at the Home-based and factory level are temporary in nature and are subjected to lack of job security and almost no work benefits. Thus this chapter forms a platform on which investigation will be carried out through primary and secondary data as to how women workers care for their children under such dire circumstances.

## CHAPTER II

# WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS: AN OVERVIEW OF WORLD AND INDIA

### 2.1 Introduction

In this particular chapter an attempt has been made to explore the ways in which the neo-liberal trade regime, which emerged in the post-globalization era, shaped the garment-producing industries in major South Asian countries. Beginning with an initial concentration of garment industries in the West, the development of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the rise and fall of General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) and multi-fibre agreement (MFA), the garment production process has become highly decentralised, giving rise to Global Garment Commodity Chains (**Standing, 2010**). Factories have, over a period to time, moved from the West to the East, to make use of the abundant supply of cheap labour which primarily allows for lower production costs and consequently creates the environment necessary for the explosion of fast fashion that we see today. Post MFA, foreign investments were heartily welcomed by Asian economies which witnessed a sudden boom in the employment rate. While the Asian economies grew, competition within and between different nations increased tremendously resulting in a large scale erosion of and disregard for labour laws. To further minimize the costs of production, factories began to prefer employing women over men but not solely because of their docile nature and nimble fingers. Women work at extremely low wages without substantial employment benefits (**WIEGO, 2012**) as compared to their male counterparts. The production process was also riddled with the rampant contracting and sub-contracting of labour which increased the level of labour informality inside formal production spaces. In this process, garment workers, now primarily women, were robbed of their basic benefits and entitlements such as healthcare, maternity benefits and childcare, thus jeopardising the health and welfare of their children and themselves. In the following sections of this chapter, an attempt has been made to weave a narrative around the history and development of the existing labour conditions in the Asian garment industries.

## 2.2 History of the Garment Industry

The map of the garment industries that is currently widely accepted at the global level is a relatively new one. The revision in the trade rules brought about by the World Trade Organization resulted in a gradual but massive shift of industries from the West to the East with the subsequent development of burgeoning export-house hubs in Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan. This is in stark contrast to the geographical spread of the industry in the preceding decades and centuries which saw the concentration of garment industries primarily in the West with the production clusters being centred around New York and within England (**Monet, 2018**).

Historical and archaeological records reveal that merchants in Ancient Babylonia produced, shipped and distributed ready-to-wear garments as early as 1400 BC (**Monet, 2018**). Around 1350 BC clothing became increasingly form-fitting and small scale industries began to produce shirt accessories like detachable collars and sleeves, hats and gloves. The evolution of garment production continued in sweatshops and cottage industries in this way until the advent of the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This century witnessed the creation of a series of important inventions which brought about lasting changes in the way clothes were produced, thereby creating a huge increase in the output level of the industry as a whole. In 1738, Englishmen Lewis Paul and John Wyatt invented the Roller Spinning Machine. This was followed by the invention of the multi-spool Spinning Wheel and Water Frame which facilitated the shifting of garment production from the cottage to the factory. The mechanisation of the production process was further strengthened by the introduction of the Power Loom in the year 1784 (**Godley, 1997**). By the end of 1880, large mills and factories, both in England and America, produced huge volumes of garments like coats, petticoats, shirts, trousers, gloves and hats. This period also coincided with the American Civil War where the need for uniforms provided an impetus for increased production. Another important breakthrough in the production process came with the invention of the Sewing Machine by Elias Howe In 1846. In several ways, the characteristics of the sewing machine have determined the structure of the clothing industry into the current era. Its low cost and portability promoted a decentralized industry based on piece-work, the utilisation of unskilled and semi-skilled labour with low capital investments (**Godley, 1997**). Following this industry-defining moment, garment factories in America and Europe experienced a boom in production like

never before. The colonies in Africa and Asia served the dual purpose of being the providers of the raw materials needed for the industry to flourish and the market where cheap factory-made products could be sold. While Europe and America dominated the production process until the latter half of the nineteenth century, the industry witnessed changes with alternating international trade regimes.

### **2.3 Emergence of General Agreement of Trade and Tariff**

The Second World War was followed by the inception of various international trading regimes. The first of these was the International Trade Organization which was conceived by the United States in collaboration with several allies to support international trade through multilateral partnerships. Despite the successful passing of the landmark Havana Charter, the ITO failed to materialise due to a lack of approval from the US Congress. **(Ford, 2002)**

A new endeavour initiated by the USA and the UK, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) came into existence on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1947. GATT was considered to be the best ancillary arrangement to cater to world trade, pending the conclusion of the Havana charter which was supposed to incorporate GATT eventually. The core principle of this new trade regime was that of tariff reduction, which was applied to all areas of the production and distribution process with the exception of agriculture and the textile and clothing industry. Thus from 1950 onwards, the following two decades witnessed an unprecedented surge in economic growth in the industrial nations of North America and Europe. During this period, the mass consumption of standardized goods rapidly became a global phenomenon, and the USA and Europe turned out to be the major exporters in this ever-expanding international market **(Reich, 1983)**. While the developed nations reaped the benefits of this new trade regime, decolonisation in Africa, Asia and Latin America during the second and third decades after GATT was introduced, resulted in an escalation in its membership. By the end of 1980, over 40 developing countries joined the institution influencing the deliberations undertaken by GATT. In this phase, GATT recognised the right of the developing countries to protect their infant industries through restrictive measures **(Narlikar, 2006)**. But the Haberler Report of 1958, which focused on the trade problems of developing countries, pointed out that protectionist policies and fluctuating commodity prices of developed countries were the primary reasons for the predicament faced by the developing countries (Dam, 1970). Following the release of the report, a consortium of developing nations persuaded GATT to link development issues with

trade in the United Nations Forum which led to the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Around the same time, Group77 was formed as a common front of developing countries so as to improve their negotiations with GATT through collective action.

UNCTAD and Group 77 were successful in getting GATT to place developing countries on an equal footing with the developed countries through waivers and the modification of the ‘Most Favoured Nation’<sup>2</sup> concept. Yet, GATT was unsuccessful in getting the developed nations to follow the new agenda, leading to the persistence of a feeling of neglect amongst the developing nations. Consequently, the following years saw a total reversal of the GATT philosophy with the trade regime under it becoming more elaborate in scope but restrictive in content. The textile and clothing industries of developing countries faced a constrictive regime where the scope to export was curtailed because imports from low-wage regions caused market disruptions in the west (**Begg et al, 2002**). Though this was initially cited as a temporary measure to enable the textile industry in the developed world to adjust to these new market forces, this system remained in position throughout GATT’s existence.

The restrictions imposed on the textile and clothing industry were not through GATT directly but through the Multi-Fibre Trade Agreement (MFA), an offshoot of the trading regime, which was strategically devised to secure the interests of the developed nations.

#### **2.4 Long-term Agreement and Consequent Development of the Multi-Fibre Agreement**

Quantitative trade restrictions on the import of textile from developing countries were first initiated in the 1930s, directed against the competitive Japanese cotton textile industry (**Chadda et al**). This encounter with Japanese products pressurised industrialised countries to protect their textile and apparel sectors. This realisation was instrumental in the exclusion of Textile and Clothing from the GATT-1947 Discipline. Following this, Japan, India and Pakistan agreed to ‘voluntary export restraint’ for cotton textile products to the United States. To further protect the textile and apparel industries of the West a ‘Short Term Agreement’ on textile was signed which was later replaced by a long term agreement (LTA) in 1962 for the

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<sup>2</sup> Most Favoured Nation- The term originated in GATT resolutions which referred to a clause where the contracting nation will identify a trading partner and engage in bi-lateral trade. MNF did not curb the seller country’s freedom but ensured that the lowest price is given to the contracting nation. ( See Vandenborre, I., & Frese, M. J. 2014)

international trade in cotton textiles. The LTA worked in favour of the developed countries promoting bi-lateral quota imposed trade and after several renegotiations, it was replaced by the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) in 1974. The MFA unlike the LTA extended quota restrictions to wool and man-made fibres in addition to cotton (**Ford, 2002**).

The MFA rendered a framework under which developed countries could impose quotas on the export of yarn, apparel and textiles from developing countries. These quotas, which were negotiated bilaterally, were specific to certain products, thus creating a heavy preference towards some fibres and in turn allowing a few exporting countries to flourish while others stagnated (**Martin, 1996**). In the process, MFA came to negate most of a developing country's exports to the European Union and the United States under the pretence of avoiding market disruptions. Like the LTA it was supposed to be a temporary measure but continued throughout the existence of GATT. By 1981, which marked the second phase of MFA, bi-lateral quota agreements covered 80 per cent of the imports of textile and apparel into the United States. Cumulatively, it can be said that MFA flouted the principles of the multilateral system through the violation of the 'most favoured nation principle', the application of quantitative restrictions and the institutionalisation of a systematic trend of discrimination against some developing countries, all to secure the interests and retain the sector dominance of a few developed nations.

## **2.5 Demise of GATT**

1980-94 saw turbulence and difficulty in GATT's industry control because of a faltering global economic environment coupled with the inability and reluctance of the trading majors to follow the rules which they had set up (**Shukla, 2000**). The United States and the European Economic Community (EEC) faced competition from the rising industrial nations of the East and kept demanding domestic market protection which increased the stress on the already fragile GATT system (**Begg et al, 2003**). The excessive bilateralism and unilateralism which were the characteristics of MFA were now blatantly reflected in GATT decisions. There were rising conflicts between the United Nation and several developing countries on the grounds that GATT's policies and practices were clearly discriminatory and protectionist. Disputes between the USA and EEC, the primary influencers of GATT's decision making, also contributed to the demise of the agreement.

## **2.6 Emergence of World Trade Organisation (WTO)**

The first breakthrough in the emergence of a successor to GATT came during the Uruguay round of ministerial meetings during which a proposal was tabled to set up a new organisation, then named as the ‘Multi-lateral Trade Organisation’. This organisation’s stated mandate was to provide solutions to the problems of revising the GATT rules. Finally, at the ministerial meeting at Morocco in 1994, GATT was dissolved and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) emerged as the new international body whose responsibility was to govern multilateral trade transactions (**Malaga & Mohanty, 2003**). In the context of the textile and clothing industry, the replacement of GATT with the WTO holds tremendous importance because of the liberalization of the quota regime. Understandably, the birth of the WTO received huge support from those who had come under the heel of GATT’s discriminatory policies and a new sense of optimism invigorated industries across the globe. The MFA, which largely imposed restrictions on the exporting countries was successively phased out. The ‘voluntary export restraints’ and the ‘quantitative restrictions’ were subverted with the introduction of ‘Agreement on Textile and Clothing’ (ATC). The stated objective was “to secure the eventual integration of the textiles and clothing sector in which trade has largely been subject to bilateral quotas negotiated under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement”. This integration continued in a phased manner from 1995 to 2005 during which each member of the agreement was to integrate products into the new system from the specific list of textile and apparel commodities. The impact of this agreement to liberalize trade by discharging all quotas on apparel trade by 2005 was nothing short of revolutionary (**Narlikar, 2006**). As part of a ripple effect, the North American and European apparel sectors experienced dramatic transformations. Production units were relocated to low-cost regions through outsourcing or direct investment, thus changing the geographies of production at the global stage. Moreover, the establishment of ATC opened the door for exporting countries in South and Southeast Asia to expand their apparel and textile exports (**Elbehri et al, 1998**). The expansion of this labour-intensive sector had a positive impact on employment generation for tightly restricted exporters like India, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka along with less restricted exporters and mature markets like Bangladesh, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong (**Yang et al, 1997**). Therefore, liberalisation and the unrestricted promotion of multilateralism in textile and clothing led to the development of global value chains thereby changing the narratives of employment of the major South Asian clothing exporters.

## **2.7 Liberalisation and Global Apparel Commodity Chain**

Globalisation and the eradication of the quota system led to the development of the global apparel commodity chain. The chain was primarily ‘buyer-driven’<sup>3</sup> with large retailers and branded manufacturers establishing decentralised production networks in a variety of exporting countries, a majority of which are classified as developing countries. These chains were organized across five levels; namely the supply of raw materials, the provision of components such as yarns and fabrics from textile companies, the production network (such as garment factories), exports channels and the marketing networks of these retailers. Large foreign retailers supplied the specifications and designs while the tiered network of contractors in the newly industrializing nations carried out the production process. South and East Asian countries emerged as the production hubs of these global commodity chains with their penchant for cheap labour, weak labour laws and accommodating governments. Retailers, footwear and fashion brands like Wal-Mart, Nike, Reebok and Gap became manufacturers without industries of their own (**Gereffi & Memedovic, 2003**). China, Taiwan, South Korea, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal etc. were the countries which benefitted the most from this new system. The apparel export sectors in these nations witnessed a boom which eventually increased both foreign returns and employment. The migration of production centres due to the decentralisation of manufacturing units towards the South and East Asian hubs altered the global garment production ecosystem. This provided these developing countries with the previously unattainable opportunity to participate in the global apparel trade as a significant player (**Nordas & Kyvik, 2004**).

## **2.8 Global Feminisation Through Flexible Labour**

This new global apparel commodity chain has resulted in the proliferation of garment export houses in South and East Asian countries. With the multiplication of employment as an immediate benefit, the growth of such industries were welcomed by most of these

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<sup>3</sup> Buyer-Driven- Large retailers and branded manufacturers are instrumental in setting up de-centralised production networks in exporting countries which are typically located in the global south. GAP, Nike and Reebok are a few examples. Profits made by these manufacturers rests on the buyer’s demand and hence cost cutting leads to the decentralisation of the production units’. (See Gereffi, G., & Memedovic, O. 2003)



industrialising economies which established free production zones<sup>4</sup>. But in the process, the rights and benefits of the workers who worked in these factories was gradually weakened. Firstly, these industries are characterised by the polarisation of work, which allow the recruitment of a wide range of workers with different levels of and kinds of skills. Secondly, labour remained the preferred choice for employers in spite of any technological advancements which were always more expensive (**Standing, 2012**). Consequently, the idea of bringing in cheap labour into the system of production, which was driven by the motive of ‘cost-cutting’, eventually mutated into an in-formalisation of work through the repeated processes of contracting and sub-contracting. These characteristics of globalised production units in developing countries saw the return of pre-modern or informal labour conditions, ultimately resulting in the erosion of the labour laws and deregulation of the labour market. Women formed the bulk of the informal labourers who are till date hired by the factories discursively through contractors and sub-contractors. **Mies (1990)** in the discussion on the new international division of labour rightly asked ‘what makes the third world women more attractive as workers to international capital?’ She answers by quoting the findings of **Rachel Grossman (1979)** who said that South and East Asian women are considered to be the most docile and pliable labour force in the world, who despite all their personal challenges show a very high degree of work productivity. **Standing (2010)** reiterated Grossman’s argument which states that women formed the majority of this flexible workforce since they are easy to control, are of docile dispositions and are very hardworking. Along these lines, it can be said that women formed the much desired ‘disposable labour force’ through their crowding in low paid sex-typed jobs in the garment factories. Women as informal labourers in these export houses are disposable not only because there is no job security but also because of the absence of health benefits, provident fund, maternity benefits, coupled with the acceptance of inhumanely long work hours and extremely low wage rates. Over the years, these export houses have flourished in these South and East Asian nations through the process of repeated cost-cutting, hiring informal labourers, mobilizing women workers at the minimum wage rates without any access to benefits. Thus it can be said that the WTO’s attempt towards liberalisation and the structural adjustment of the production process to industrialise developing countries culminated in the

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<sup>4</sup> Free Production Zones- Free production zones also known as free trade zones and exclusive economic zones are industrial zones where duties are exempted to attract foreign investments. New economic policies in the Asian countries resulted in the development of such zones to invite FDIs (See Hamada, K. 1974)

creation of a plethora of informal labourers of which women formed a notably large section. They are devoid of any work benefits and are fastened in this abyss of production and reproduction of goods.

## **2.9 Global Garment Producers**

South and South Asian nations have emerged as the largest apparel producing regions of the world. In 2014 the Asia-Pacific region accounted for 59.5 per cent of the global export of textile, garment and footwear (**ILO report, 2015**). Countries like Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Pakistan and India have experienced a boom in their production output in the neoliberal era. While China has been the world leader in garment export for many decades, India and Vietnam were also ranked among the highest in the export of garment products globally (**ILO report, 2015**). Each of these countries gradually opened up their economy, some during the GATT regime, while others did so after the advent of WTO, to benefit their local economies by bringing in foreign capital.

### **2.9.1 New Economic Reforms in Asia**

China was the first to witness this mushrooming of garment factories in the post-socialist era as European nations started to outsource their work to China which boasted of extremely cheap labour. After the formulation of GATT, quota impositions and several worker protests demanding minimum wages, China started sub-contracting their work to other emerging Asian Economies (**Ngai, 2004**). Following China, Bangladesh was the first country to bring in structural changes to their economic reforms by introducing export-oriented economic policies as early as 1975. It also had the advantage of being the 'most favoured nation' on the USA's trade list and an important bilateral partner. Thus the phasing out of MFA was not the primary factor behind Bangladesh's industrial boom (**Ahmed, 2004**). On the contrary, the Cambodian government, while trying to liberalise its trade transactions during the seventies, indirectly benefitted from the MFA. Quota hoppers like China, Japan and South Korea established large scale garment and footwear industries in Cambodia to avoid heavy tariffs and stay afloat in the global market (**Makin, 2006**). Vietnam also emerged as one of the rapidly growing garment exporters, exporting to Europe, Japan and America. Vietnam's economic restoration started with the *doi-moi* (renovation) reforms in 1986 which created multiple employment opportunities in the emerging Vietnamese garment factories. Indonesia's garment industries

flourished during the early period of the Suharto era<sup>5</sup> but the large scale textile and garment factories began to develop only during 1987 when a series of liberal policies to reduce import barriers were launched by the government (Nadvi et al, 2004). Apart from Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Pakistan have evolved into leading garment producers in South Asia. Sri-Lanka adopted the Open Economic Policy around 1977, primarily aiming to restructure the local economy in response to the changing structure of the global market (Samarasinghe, 1998). By 1995 the garment industry became the leading export-oriented industry in the island country. Pakistan too started inviting foreign investment and thus experienced significant growth in its garment industry. India's new industrial policy which promoted economic liberalisation coincided with the phasing out of the MFA in the year 1991 and resulted in the sharp rise of garment manufacturing units distributed across the industrial hubs of the country, (Hassan & Azman, 2014).

### **2.9.2 Type of Work: Factory and Home-based**

Women workers dominate the garment industry in most of the South and East Asian countries mentioned above. Although the factories are the primary units of production with hundreds of workers toiling together to meet the production quotas, cost minimisation has led to the emergence of a labyrinth of informally-employed home-based workers, finely knitted into the industrial production. Thus home workers/home-based workers can directly be linked with the structural reformation of the production process where outsourcing of low-skill factory work is being used as a tool for cost-cutting. Along these lines, the category of garment work can be broadly classified as 'factory work' and 'home-based work' (Mezzadri, 2012). Home-based work is more prominent in South Asian countries, like Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Pakistan and India, which form the last leg of the production chain as compared to the countries in South-East Asia. Here the type of work involves thread work, embroidery, stitching buttons and sequence etc. Also, this line of work is highly gendered as women constitute the majority of home-based workers. Just like the home-based workers, factory workers also face discrimination in the types of work they are hired for. Work assigned to the women in factories largely follow the gender hierarchy with women being employed in low-skill jobs. The reason behind such a disposition can be traced back to **Rachel Grossman's (1979)** concept of women

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<sup>5</sup> Suharto Era- Suharto was the Indonesian military leader who served as the second president of Indonesia for thirty one years. Often regarded as a dictator, termination of his regime resulted in liberalised economic policies and expansion of RMG industries in the country. (See Sivananthiran, A, 2009)

having ‘nimble fingers’, ‘fine eyesight’, ‘docile nature’, ‘willing to work long hours’, ‘able to undertake repetitive work’ etc. In countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia women work as operators, finishing helpers, thread cutters and button stitchers (**Ahmed, 2004**). China too portrays a similar work profile with women concentrated in the lower rungs of the factory (**Thee, 2009**). Pakistan, on the other hand, primarily engage women as home-based workers with only a few working officially in the factory set-up (**Hassan & Azman, 2014**).

### 2.9.3 Working Hours

Working hours in a factory is important especially in the context of women workers in Asian countries who are often mothers trying to fend for their families. According to the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO), Hours of Work Convention of 1919, a worker should work for a maximum of 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week. But a closer look at the data available on the working hours in the countries under discussion depicts a contradictory picture. **Elson and Pearson (2010)** state that the flexibility in the working hours and deviation from the ILO work time limit has magnified because of the formation of ‘world market factories’. They elaborate upon the phenomenon by stating that the need for greater continuity of production through greater intensity of work, has resulted in strict control of the performance of the labour force and consequently, has developed a lack of collective bargaining and accommodating attitude of women workers which has culminated in their blatant exploitation. A brief analysis of the working hours of the countries shows how none of the above-mentioned countries follows the ILO limit of 8 working hours per day.

**Table 2.1: Reporting Time, Average Working Hours and Overtime Work**

Country	Reporting Time	Working Hours	Overtime (yes/no)
Bangladesh	9 am-7 pm	10 hours	Yes
Cambodia	7.am-4pm	9 hours	Yes
Vietnam	7 am to 4 pm	9 hours	Yes
China	8 am to 7 pm	11 hours	Yes, Compulsory overtime
Sri-Lanka	7.am to 4 pm	9 hours	Yes
Indonesia	7.am to 4 pm	9 hours	Yes, Compulsory overtime

Pakistan	-----	-----	
India	9 am to 7 pm	10 hours	Yes.

*Source: Collated from data and information given in the available literatures*

The reporting time and working hours which are given in the above table have been compiled from available literature and ILO reports. While Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri-Lanka and Indonesia expect 9 hours from their workers, it is around 10 hours for Bangladesh and India. Surpassing all is China where the minimum time spent at work is around 11-12 hours. Apart from this almost every country in the region practices overtime. In the Export Promotion Zones/ Special Economic Zones of Bangladesh, China and Sri-Lanka factories provide dormitories (**Rawanpura, 2006**) for workers and thus exercise greater control over their working hours (**Thee, 2009**). Indonesia and China have something termed as ‘compulsory overtime’ where the workers are forcibly made to work for a long duration (around 13-15 hours a day) until those long working hours are considered normal (**Hardjono, 1990**). In Vietnam, workers in the sampling workshops claimed to work for longer hours than those working in the production line (**Moghadam, 1994**).

#### **2.9.4 Working Condition**

Working conditions in garment factories are infamously dehumanizing for both men and women workers. The reason behind such a condition can be traced down to local export houses not following the minimum safety standards stated by the parent company. The poor work environment in the South Asian countries has often been on the news highlighted by fatal accidents which have resulted in the loss of many innocent lives. Bangladesh, which has a sprawling garment sector has repeatedly failed to provide a safe and comfortable work-space to its workers. Lack of canteens, unclean toilet facilities and cramped working spaces inside illegal buildings are few of the day-to-day hurdles faced by workers at the factory (**Begam et al, 2010**). These deplorable working conditions resulted in the Rana Plaza Disaster in 2013 where five garment factories located in the capital city of Dhaka burnt down. Around 1132 people, mostly women workers, were killed and several were injured (**ILO report, 2013**). It made headlines in many global news channels but failed to bring about any real change in the sector (**Sikdar, 2014**). Pakistan too witnessed a deadly fire at Ali Enterprise, one of the many garment factories in the city of Karachi which cause the death of over 300 workers (New York Times, 2012). In line with Bangladesh and Pakistan, Cambodia too fails to exhibit decent work conditions. Its factories are riddled with problems of cloth debris, inadequate toilet facilities

and unsafe wiring which can be a threat to workers (**Makin, 2006**). Even though both men and women are at risk, the above-mentioned threats are not always gender-neutral. Firstly the tools, machines and factory furniture are not designed keeping women in mind. Moreover, women engaged in lower-rung jobs like fixing buttons and cutting threads are exposed to ‘snap machines’ which are quite dangerous in which fingers often get caught (**Robbins & Vickery, CCC, 2005**). Lack of proper clinics or safety protocols for on-site injuries led supervisors to negligence and dismiss these accidents (**Ahmed, 2004**). In countries like Vietnam and Indonesia, toilet visits are heavily monitored. Specifically, women workers must get toilet cards from their supervisors every time they wish to visit the restroom thus restricting their mobility during work hours. This can be very unhealthy and dangerous for menstruating and pregnant women (**Nadvi et al, 2004**). Sri Lanka, which is otherwise well-known to follow the ILO conventions regarding decent work, has a unique practice of humiliating workers who do not meet production targets. Women commonly fall prey to this exercise and are either forced to work without pay for missing the production quotas or a black flag is planted on their desks by unit supervisors (**Samarasinghe, 1998**). Additionally, the workers are also exposed to heat, stuffy and poorly ventilated factory floors, loud noise and toxic chemicals which result in multifarious health problems over time (**Robbins & Vickery, CCC, 2005**).

Thus the available literature undoubtedly points to the fact that most industries in the sector do not meet basic occupational health, safety and environmental standards. Apart from encountering uncomfortable physical surroundings, women workers often fall prey to sexual advances, harassment and violence in the factories. Sexual harassment and insecure commuting are a common phenomenon in many of the countries under discussion. In most factory spaces, women are often chased by their supervisors and fellow male workers who blatantly make sexual advances with threats of violence if they refuse to comply. Apart from this, sexual harassment in the form of verbal abuse is also quite rampant (**ILO report, 2016**) While on their way back home after serving overtime the incidence of molestation and rape increases as factories seldom provide travel assistance which incidentally is a mandatory requirement after overtime work. (**Nadvi et al, 2004**)

### 2.9.5 Wage Structure

Wages in garment factories are considerably lower and prominently gendered with a large pay gap between men and women in most Asian countries. Women are largely engaged in low paying work and their amenable character refrains them for protesting against low wage rates. The current ILO convention on wages has included a separate section on minimum wages, ‘Minimum wage fixing convention, 1970, no 131’, where it is stated that each state party should articulate a minimum wage limit to cover all groups of wage earners. The modification of minimum wages should be carried out intermittently after thorough consultations with employers and workers organisations. Also, a country’s minimum wage should be established taking into consideration numerous economic factors as well as the living wage level required to cover the basic needs of workers (food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, etc.) and their families (Anker, 2011). Exploring the following set of data gives us an idea about the monthly minimum wages in the garment factory as of 2015.

**Table 2.2: Monthly Minimum Wages in the Garment Industry (\$), 2015**

Country	Monthly Minimum Wages in the Garment Industry (lowest relevant applicable rate)
Sri-Lanka	\$66
Bangladesh	\$71
Pakistan	\$99
Cambodia	\$128
India	\$78
Vietnam	\$100
Indonesia	\$92
China	\$155

*Source: ILO compilation from official national sources, Huynh, 2015*

The minimum monthly wages among the top garment-exporting Asian economies are typically low. The ILO data depicts that by far the lowest levels of minimum wages are found in Bangladesh and Sri-Lanka where the figures range between 71 and 66 dollars respectively. Among other competitors such as India, Cambodia, Pakistan and Vietnam the minimum applicable wage rates vary from 88 to 128 dollars. China’s wage rates are considerably higher than the others where the figure rests at 155 dollars. Much credit can be given to the continuing protests against low wage rates in China resulting in the inclusion of ‘industrial upgrading’ as one of the major economic targets in China’s twelfth five-year plan (Huynh, 2015). Reiterating Elson and Pearson, wages in these world market factories are 10 times lower than that of their counterparts in developed countries and the above data set supports this statement. The ultimate cost of the products produced at these factories depends largely on the labour costs as the factories are mostly labour intensive and not machine intensive. Thus to minimise the product cost and attract continuous supply of foreign capital the factories keep the minimum wage rates considerably low. As mentioned earlier the women factory workers are always entitled to lower wages. Exclusive data on women’s wage earnings in garment factories was not available. Therefore, to trace the differences in average (male & female) wages and female minimum wages, the data of formal sector workers engaged in the Garment, Textile and footwear industry has been discussed below.

**Table 2.3: Average Nominal Monthly Wages in Garment, Textile and Footwear Industries, Various Years**

Country	Average Wage	Female Wage
Cambodia (2012)	\$96	\$95
Pakistan (2013)	\$102	\$48
India (2012)	\$120	\$80
Indonesia (2014)	\$122	\$110
Vietnam (2013)	\$182	\$170
China (2013)	\$491	\$491

Source: ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper, 2015



From the above data, it is clear that the average minimum wage rates for the garment industry combined with the textile and footwear industry are higher compared to the garment industry individually. Cambodia has the lowest wage rate while China has the highest, thanks to China's focus on industries in its twelfth five-year plan (Ngai, 2004). On the contrary, the female wage rates are lower than the average wages in all these countries except for China where wage rates separately for female workers were not provided. This clearly illustrates the gender gap in wages. High average wages in these garment countries confirm the fact that men are paid more and women are either engaged in lower-rung jobs or are blatantly discriminated against based on their gender at the factories. But this concept of a minimum wage rate is applicable only to the formal workers in almost all of the garment industries. Therefore, factories circumvent the need to follow ILO regulations by minimizing their formal workforce and subcontracting their work thus giving rise to extended production chains. As a result, permanent workers are covered by national wage regulations while informal workers are mostly left out. Women form a large chunk of the informal workers in the garment factories in several countries like China, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and thus get affected by high pay gaps in wages. To worsen the situation unavailability of data on informal workers makes a detailed comparison difficult.

#### **2.9.6 Availability and Types of Employment benefits**

All factory workers are entitled to certain benefits in lieu of being associated with a factory. But, just like minimum wages which are entitled only to workers who are directly hired by the factory, employment benefits too are exclusively meant for formal factory workers and not for those who are informally hired through sub-contractors. Even though there are international conventions and national labour laws regarding the entitlement of employment benefits, most factories deliberately avoid the provision of these benefits to minimise the overall cost of production. Some of the important benefits include

- In-house medical facilities
- Maternity leave with pay
- Crèche facilities inside the factory premises
- Nursing rooms
- Provident fund

Unfortunately, most Asian garment producers fail to provide a majority of the benefits even to their formal workers. Women are disproportionately affected by the curtailing of the benefits by factory owners. In Bangladesh, women workers who have been formally appointed in the factories do not have any job security frequently falling prey to 'hire and fire'. Those appointed informally do not have an appointment letter nor are they aware of the terms and conditions of their work (**Began et al, 2010; Rock, 2010**). Maternity leave with pay which is a basic humanitarian right is almost never provided to the workers. To compensate, the factory provides a basic sum of money for the delivery of the child (**Sikdar et al, 2014**). Child-care support in the form of crèche facilities is almost non-existent in Bangladeshi garment factories (**Ahmed, 2004**). According to Cambodian Labour Law, any enterprise employing a minimum of 100 women workers must provide them with a day-care centre or pay the cost of childcare to their women employees. Employers must also make sure that mothers are informed about their right to get paid time-off exclusively for breast-feeding (**Makin, 2006**). But on the contrary, it is observed that factories here neither have provisions for an in-house clinic or medical facilities nor do they have any arrangements for nursing rooms. This is mainly because Cambodian industry owners blatantly disregard the labour laws put forward by their Ministry of Labour (**Hall, 2000**). Vietnam had a repressive practice of issuing 'maternity registration cards' which were required to be created a year before delivering a baby by women workers. Even though this has now been removed, factories do not have the facility of a crèche and workers with small children work for long hours, at par with other employees. (**Hoang & Jones, 2012**). In Vietnamese public-sector industries, the benefits offered are only slightly better. In terms of medical care, workers can visit the hospital thrice in a year, free of charge and women are entitled to almost six months of maternity leave with 70 per cent of the working salary (**Moghadam, 1994**). In the case of Sri Lanka, the free trade zone factories allow workers to take 14 days off in a year (**Samarasinghe, 1998**). But they are less conscientious in giving their women workers full maternity leave which they are lawfully entitled to. The Factory Ordinance act of Sri Lanka covers pregnant woman workers by granting them 12 weeks of maternity leave along with two hours of milk time per day (in the absence of a crèche facility) till the child reaches the age of one, but if a crèche facility is available the feeding time is limited to 30 minutes (**Rawanpura, 2016**). Pakistan has fewer women who are factory workers and more who are at the lowest end of the production chain as home workers. Thus maternity benefits in the factories have not been explored extensively by researchers (**Hassan & Azman,**

2014). In Indonesia, the age of women workers ranges from 20 to 30 years. Amenities like childcare, family planning and medical facilities vary from one production unit to the other. But most factories do not provide any child care facilities (Thee, 2009). Chinese garment industries prefer women workers who are not married so that they can get away with no maternity benefits (Ngai, 2004). Along similar lines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka also pick women who are unmarried and highly discourage workers from getting married. Thus from the available information, it is clear that despite labour laws promoting maternity, childcare and health benefits, at the global level factories do not comply with these existing laws and policies.

### **2.9.7 Collective Bargaining**

Collective Bargaining is a fundamental right that is grounded in the ILO constitution and the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It is only through collective bargaining that employers and trade unions can establish fair wages and decent working conditions. It also forms the basis of sound labour relations with the employers (ILO, Labour Standards and Global Supply Chain, 2019). Asia's garment factories, which are notorious for forcing employees to accept long working hours, low wage rates, compulsory overtime and irregular payment methods, legally ought to promote spaces for collective bargaining for its workers. On the contrary, the scenario is very different. Trade unions, which act as important instruments through which collective bargaining happens, are either absent or present just on papers in most of these countries. Moreover, a few of the unions which do function hardly have any women workers participating thus leaving out important women's issues and demands (White, 1990). Bangladesh, which has been pioneering garment production since the early seventies, got its first independent labour union only in 1994, the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union (BIGU). But as mentioned earlier this union is mostly male-dominated with minimal participation seen from the sizable female workforce of the industry. Thus to counter the male-dominated trade unions in the country, several NGO-led organisations, like Karmajibi Nari (Working Women) and Nari Udyog Kendra (Centre for Women's Initiative) amongst others, were set up to voice women-centric demands (Rock, 2010). The Cambodian garment industry does not have any history of collective bargaining and wages. Working conditions and provisions of benefits are internally decided by employers. The Cambodian Federation of Trade Union (CAFTU) which was formed during the Vietnamese occupation was the only working union until the mid-1990s. To worsen the

situation, at present, the Ministry of Labour does not permit workers to form independent unions. What is formed in factories are nothing more than ‘paper-unions’, which never function on behalf of the workers (**Hall, 2008**). Vietnam too has had no functioning trade unions or collective bargaining processes to promote any form of dialogue between the workers and the factory heads. But, in June 2019, a constructive decision to ratify ILO’s convention to promote collective bargaining was undertaken. This convention would require governments to put into effect legal and institutional steps to promote collective bargaining and provide necessary protection against discrimination by employers. This would likely result in better working conditions and higher productivity of the workers (**Barrie, 2019**). Formation of trade unions in Sri-Lanka has been summarily discouraged by the managers of factories in the free trade zones. Instead of unions, workers councils were set-up where workers and supervisors could have a dialogue to resolve issues or raise concerns. But workers are not convinced with such kinds of arrangements and complain about the lack of improvement in working conditions (**Samarasinghe, 1998**). Indonesia, on the other hand, has developed a significant approach towards encouraging collective bargaining since the fall of the government led by President Suharto. Sadly, trade unionists continue to encounter several difficulties in trying to exercise their rights. This discontinuity is due to the state’s failure to uphold the law. Besides, the participation of women in these collective bargaining processes is imperceptible implying a lack of assertion to uphold the basic rights of women workers (**Ford, 2018**). Pakistan, as has been discussed earlier, has fewer women working directly in factories so women’s participation in trade unions is almost negligible. The existing trade unions are male-dominated and women’s workplace issues are hardly discussed. Moreover, the trade unions are not instrumental enough in executing beneficial deals with the management (**Hassan & Azman, 2014**). China doesn’t have a very strong history of active trade union dealings in garment factories either. Though China is party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it does not adhere to the clause of ‘rights to form trade union’. Also, there is a lot of control exercised over the existing trade unions with the requirement of mandatory reporting to the national hierarchy, i.e. the Chinese Communist Party (**Kane, CCC, 2015**). Additionally, in the context of collective bargaining, there are many international stakeholders like the Asia Floor Wage Association, the ILO Better Work, Clean Clothes Campaign and IndustriALL who are trying to implement collective bargaining practices in these industries while also keeping a track of every company’s adherence to these rules (**ILO, 2017**).

### 2.9.8 Government Policies

Government policies and ordinances can be effective in protecting worker's rights, ensuring the provision of a living wage, ensuring safe working conditions as well as the provision of employment benefits. Several ILO conventions have also been introduced to target poor working conditions and bring about a positive change in existing labour standards. But for many Asian countries the government initiatives are either not implemented, leading to poor working conditions at the factory level, or governments have chosen not to ratify the ILO conventions. For example, the Bangladeshi government has several acts, like 'Payment of Wages Act', 'Maternity Benefit Act', 'Minimum Wages Ordinance', 'The Factories Act', which were introduced to safeguard workers against unfair labour practices. However, the continuing growth of the garment industries, the unwillingness of BGMEA to adhere to these laws and ultimately the failure by a weak Bangladeshi state to enforce these laws has resulted in the abysmal working conditions seen in the country today (**Ahmed, 2004; Rock 2010**). In Cambodia, the garment manufacturers association (GMAC) largely tends to ignore the Ministry of Labour and does not follow the labour laws which has led to a very weak and almost non-functioning Cambodian Labour Organisation (CLO). The Asian Floor Wage Association (AFWA), an ILO initiative urged the government to stop the practice of victimisation of union leaders by factory owners and instead pushed them to work towards the increment of wage rates by allowing unions and labour NGOs in Cambodia to negotiate and bargain for a 'living wage'. Along the same lines, the Indonesian government not only failed to meet its commitment to AFWA to pay a living wage but also failed to enforce the payment of minimum wages (**Ford and Gillan, 2017**). The textile and garment industries of Vietnam too are riddled with very low wage rates which have led to numerous strikes by workers demanding the correction of existing payment practices. The government though, since *doi-moi*, has tried to introduce several schemes for their benefit. The enterprises provide dormitories for their workers and their families along with government-subsidised housing. There is a pension plan for workers who are directly hired by the industries along with several bonuses for the international New Year, the Chinese New Year, International women's day and Mayday. The government has also ensured that maternity benefits, such as leave during pregnancy, are provided to factory workers (**Moghadam, 1994**). Sri-Lankan industries are known to abide by all the labour laws and regulations put forth by ILO and the government except for those factories which are located in the Export Promotion Zones. These factories are

not directly under state jurisdiction thus resulting in average to poor working conditions. But with the Factory Ordinance Act of 1956 and its new amendment in 1985, the Maternity Benefits Ordinance was launched by the government which included the provision of maternity benefits and crèche provisions in large factories (**Rawanpura, 2011**). In Pakistan, the government actively supported the Gender Promotion Program (GENPROM) by the UNDP to include more women in the apparel industry. This is expected to increase the participation of women workers in the industry and eventually lead to the provision of maternity benefits and crèche facilities which are largely missing in Pakistani factories (**Hassan & Azman**). In the case of China, the government has not done much to improve the erosion of labour laws. Local governments compete to grab foreign investment resulting in the negligence of labour laws. Moreover, the dormitory labour regime which was introduced by the Chinese government to attract migrant workers from rural areas resulted in a lengthening of the working hours and absolute control of labour time and living space now residing with the employer (**Ngai, 2004**).

## **2.10 Characteristics of Garment Industries: India**

From the above discussion, it is evident that India has emerged as one of the prominent garment producers in Asia. While a few of the characteristics of the production process and wage rates have been discussed, the following section presents a magnified overview of the production process in the country.

### **2.10.1 History and the Emergence of the Readymade Garment Industries**

The history of textiles in India dates back to the use of dyes and printing blocks around 3000 BC. The assortment of fibres in India along with its intricate weaving traditions attracted buyers from all around the world but British colonisation destroyed the existing industries by extracting raw materials and subsequently flooding the Indian market with cheap machine-made finished products. Post-independence, India worked towards building up its textile capabilities, diversifying its production base and emerging once again as an important player in the world market (**Chandra, 2006**).

The Indian textile sector contributes about 14 per cent to industrial production and 27 per cent to the country's foreign exchange. The sector employs over 45 million people, second only to agriculture in terms of numbers employed. Ready Made Garment (RMG) production centres became one of the largest urban employers in India (**ILO Report, 2015**). But it can be said that while India has been an active exporter of textile over the decades, the emergence and

prominence of the RMG sector is relatively recent. India's rise as a garment power can be traced back to the post-liberalisation production revolution which resulted in several changes in the economic growth trajectories of developing countries. Among the various aspects of this new policy, a shift from import-substituting to export-oriented industrialisation was adopted by most newly developing countries including India. Within this new economic paradigm, openness to global production and trade became the top priority for the achievement of industrial development (**Mezzadri, 2010**). This resulted in the large scale proliferation of garment export houses in several pockets of the country.

### **2.10.2 Spatial Distribution of the Garment Industries**

With export-oriented garment factories spread across the country, India has progressively integrated herself into the global garment supply chain. The garment production for export in India is carried out in several production centres scattered among different corners of the country and each of these centres/clusters specialises in a particular product and has a definite social composition of labourers (**Mezzadri, 2014**). The prominent garment clusters in the country include Delhi, Gurgaon and Noida (which is collectively termed as the National Capital Region or NCR), Ludhiana and Kanpur in North India, Kolkata in East India, Mumbai and Gujarat in Western India and Chennai, Bengaluru and Tirupur in South India (**ILO, 2016**). Each of these clusters specialises in different garment commodities and has its own historical trajectories of entry into garment production and export. While the cluster in the North (primarily consisting of the NCR region) has capitalised on their craft legacy specialising in embellished products for niche or high-end markets, the Southern clusters (comprising of Tirupur, Chennai and Bengaluru) have taken advantage of their close location to cotton-growing areas to pursue volume-based production of basic clothing items for export. (**Mezzadri & Srivastava, 2015**). Moreover, for industries in the North, the production chains are extended to the non-factory realm where the production process takes place in small informal units around main industrial areas. These small informal units employ a large array of informal workers. On the contrary, the southern industrial areas are characterised by large firms specialising in the production of menswear or outerwear. This particular type of product specialization results in the expansion of in-house production and curtails the length of production chains by reducing the decentralisation of industrial tasks outside the factory unit (**Mezzadri, 2010**).

### **2.10.3 Labour Characteristics**

The method of recruitment varies considerably between the northern and southern production clusters. While most of the workers in the South are directly hired by the company (except for Tirupur in Tamil Nadu where contracting and sub-contracting in the garment industries are quite common), personal connections and contractors are instrumental in hiring a bulk of the workers in the North (**ILO Report, 2017**). Contracting and sub-contracting generate informal labourers in formal production spaces thus barring them from availing existing employment benefits. Hiring through contractors also serves the purpose of bringing down production costs as informal labourers often receive lower wages than those who are directly employed by the company (**ILO Report, 2017**). In India, the informal labourers either work in factories in which case they are predominantly male migrants from impoverished backgrounds and marginalised communities in rural areas or are home-based workers, predominantly women, working either from their homes or small production units around the factory (**Mezzadri, 2017**). Almost all contract workers are subjected to the insecurity of work, lack of a proper contract and proof of employment, delayed payment and absence of social security and other benefits (**Verite, 2010; Chan, 2013**). When it comes to gender differentials in factory recruitment of workers, India does not portray the dominance of women which is otherwise a common characteristic in most of the South and East Asian garment countries. Although the North is extensively dominated by male factory workers, in the South, Bengaluru is an exception with more than 90 per cent of the workers being women (**Chakravarty, 2007**).

### **2.10.4 Average Working Hours in Garment Industries across the Country**

The 1948 Factories Act stipulates that a worker will work a maximum of 48 hours in a week which accounts for 8 hours per day and 6 days a week. But excessive overtime work is very common in the Indian garment industry, especially during the peak season. Also in many garment clusters, overtime has been normalised and workers have no choice but to adhere to such circumstances or face termination. An ILO study points out that the situation is at its worst in the NCR region where the hours are extended to 9 hours as opposed to the average 8 hours a day. The condition in the South is relatively better where overtime occurs only during the peak season of the production process. Also, the workers are given a specific quota for the day and failure to meet the target requires them to work overtime. Tirupur is the only place where overtime is restricted to fifteen hours a month (**Ganguly, 2013**).



### **2.10.5 Average Wages in Garment Industries across the Country**

The wage structure in the Indian garment industry is quite perplexing to understand and the reasons can be associated with the Minimum Wage Act of 1948 which states that both Central and the State Governments have the right to set minimum wages depending on the region under question. This implies that there are no standard minimum wages which can be applied across the country, instead there exists an array of different ‘minimum wages’ varying across states, provinces and industries, and further varied across occupations and different skill levels within the same industry (**Ganguly, 2013**). India has one of the lowest minimum monthly wages (\$78) among the major garment exporting countries of the world (**ILO, 2015; AFWA, 2016**). Even though the minimum wages have increased in the country over the past two decades as shown in the study conducted by the Worker’s Rights Consortium, 2013, the magnitude of the increase has been moderate and does not substantially benefit workers en masse. While existing minimum wage levels are not at par with required ‘living wages’, many garment workers aren’t even able to secure minimum wages in the industry. Infringement on minimum wages was strikingly high with 50.7 per cent of worker’s wages not being at par with the existing minimum wages norm; the situation is even more skewed with female garment workers where the percentage is as high as 74 (**Cogwil et al, 2016**). Moreover one can see that there is a variation in non-compliance across the clusters with it being considerably high in the NCR region (amidst all workers in Delhi and unskilled workers in Gurgaon and Noida) compared to that of Tirupur (**Ganguly, 2013; Mezzadri and Srivastava, 2015**). Non-compliance to minimum wage recommendations gives rise to ‘prevailing wages’ which tend to be lower than that of the state/centre set minimum wages. The minimum wages also tend to vary across the country. In a study undertaken by the Society of Labour Development, **Ganguly (2013)** points out the differences in prevailing wages in the three major garment producing clusters in the country. Tirupur had the highest prevailing wages followed by NCR and Bengaluru. Besides the garment clusters, wage differentials can also depend on multifarious factors like status of employment (formal, informal), education, work experience, caste and gender. Discrepancies exist when it comes to overtime wages which are often not provided on time or are not paid at the stipulated rate.

### **2.10.6 Collective Bargaining**

Unionisation in the garment sector remains miserably low at less than 5 per cent of the total workforce. The lack of participation of garment workers’ unions is mostly the result of a lack

of awareness of unions amongst workers (**Fair Wear Foundation, 2016**). The probable reasons are firstly the inadequacies of the Trade Union Act, 1926 where several restrictions like ‘unions may be formed only if there are 100 workers’, ‘employers need not recognise existing trade unions’ were imposed. Secondly, the fragmented nature of production and employment of workers through a convoluted system of repeated contracting makes union formation almost impossible (**Mani, 2011**). Moreover, the existing workforce in the garment sector is largely composed of migrants or women workers who are considered particularly challenging to unionise (**Mezzadri & Srivastava, 2015**). Thirdly, there are instances of ‘union-busting activities’ by the management through actual physical intimidation, police violence and dismissal of workers associated with unions thus profoundly dissuading the formation of new unions. **Mezzadri et al (2015)** put forth an example of such a scenario in a study conducted in NCR where half of the workers surveyed chose not to join unions because they feared the consequences that might follow. In line with minimum wages, collective bargaining also varies largely across different garment sectors in India. The situation is very poor in the NCR region owing to the extended production chains and aggressive resistance by employers and contractors against any form of unionisation (**Mezzadri, 2016**). While conditions are slightly better in Tirupur with its definite history of labour unions. Garment workers in Bengaluru too have restrictions on collective bargaining but are doing better than those employed in the NCR (**Ganguly, 2013; Fair Wear Foundation, 2016**).

#### **2.10.7 Availability of Social Security and Other Work Benefits**

Several schemes and benefits have been formulated by the government, but its proper administration has not been successfully carried out at the factory level. The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 (ESI) is a medical insurance and sickness benefit scheme available for all, in factories having more than 10 workers. Similarly, under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 (EPF) both the worker and the employer are supposed to contribute 12 per cent of the worker’s salary, and the worker is entitled to a lump sum at the end of his/her tenure. This is applicable for both contract and permanent workers. In spite of the above-mentioned benefits being mandated by law, access to these provisions for workers remains very limited. The law also directs that maternity benefits should be provided in the form of paid maternity leave for 12 weeks accompanied by medical bonuses. Following other parameters, the degree of non-compliance varies across the garment clusters. In the NCR region, maternity benefit is given only for a month and that too without any pay. While in the

south, Bengaluru grants maternity leave for one and a half months with pay and Tirupur gives maternity leave for two months with pay. In the NCR, permanent factory workers generally get yearly bonuses while in the South, certain festival bonuses are common along with an annual bonus of 8.3 per cent. When it comes to benefits for mothers having small children up to 6 years of age the provisions are not adequate across the country. The Maternity Benefits Act of 1961 provides for two nursing breaks of 15 minutes each and preferably access to a crèche at the factory (Swaminathan, 1998). The factories in the southern clusters, which are dominated by women, still provide crèche facilities but in the North availability of crèche facilities are a rare occurrence.

### **2.10.8 Incidences of Violence and Harassment**

Violence and harassment are common phenomena in garment factories. While violence is often used as a tool by employers to force both male and female workers to work overtime and meet high production quotas, female workers are particularly subjected to specific physical, verbal and sexual harassment. The perpetrators, in most cases, are the contractors, sub-contractors and factory supervisors who are the direct supervisors of these women workers. They easily get away with such acts because they have significant power over the victims who do not retaliate and are always fearful that any complaint would result in the loss of their jobs. According to a study carried out by ILO among factory workers in Bengaluru and NCR, only one-fifth of the total workers surveyed reported that they have never personally encountered or heard about any threats or abuses in the factory and one-fifth of the women workers reported that they have experienced sexual violence and harassment (ILO, 2015).

### **2.11 Conclusion**

Summing up the analysis in this chapter it can be inferred that trade liberalisation in the neo-liberal era has indeed expanded manufacturing sector and brought in the required employment opportunities to boost the economy of the South and South Asian countries but at the cost of dissipating labour laws. Women who form the major chunk in the industries are poorly paid and are denied of various employment benefits. Lack of crèches in most of the industries force women to look for unsafe and unhealthy alternatives consequently jeopardizing their children's future. Thus it can be concluded that the above discussion on various facets of garment industries both at the world and the India level provides important insights for delving deeper into the topic under study. Encapsulation of the working conditions of women along with the

availability of employment benefits in garment factories around the world will help in comprehending, analysing and questioning factory worker's care choices in the following discourse of the study.

## CHAPTER III

# **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WOMEN WORKERS IN INFORMAL SECTOR IN INDIA AND DELHI**

### **3.1 Introduction**

With a large and young population of 1.37 billion persons (UN report, 2019), employment generation remains a crucial goal of the planning process for India. Economic liberalisation in the early 90s boosted India's industrial sector, which resulted in the mushrooming of several small, medium and large manufacturing industries. While this boom did induce employment growth, insurance and other benefits associated with these jobs stayed fragile, pushing workers beyond the ambit of the basic job security that one is entitled to. Women form a large section of the workers employed in these burgeoning industries, but they are not guaranteed any tangible job security nor do they receive any other employment benefits. The reason being that they are employed on a largely informal basis even in formal production enterprises. In this chapter an attempt has been made to explore and present the available secondary data on women workers in the manufacturing industry, focussing on those employed in general and garment industries in particular, in order to develop an overview of the working conditions and benefits available to them and how these circumstances and realities shape their child care decisions. This, in turn, would help to understand the current scenario and to provide context to the primary data showcased in the following chapters.

The major datasets used for this chapter are Census of India (2011), Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-18 & 2018-19) and Labour Bureau (2012-2013).

### **3.2 Working Population in Urban India**

Several sample surveys, along with the census, collect and publish data on the Working Population in the country. The employment and unemployment surveys undertaken by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) are the primary sources of statistics on the labour force of India. Recently, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), an offshoot of NSSO, was set up to collect data on Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) at regular intervals, unlike the quinquennial rounds of NSSO.

In these sample surveys, LFPR and WPR are the two major indicators which have been collected across different demographic, social and religious categories to capture a nuanced picture of the working population in India.

In the PLFS reports, LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force in a given population including those currently working as well as those available for work.

WPR, on the other hand, is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population thus exclusively including people who are working at Usual Activity Status, Current Weekly Status (CWS) and Current Daily Status (CDS)<sup>6</sup>.

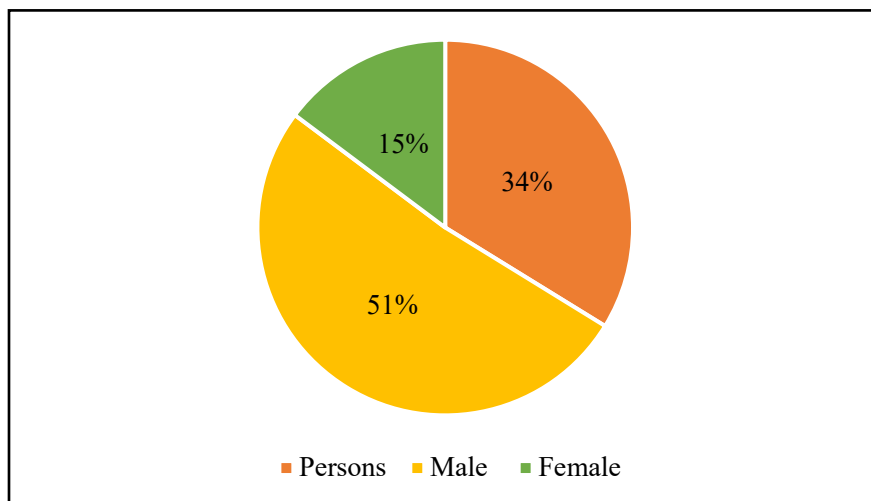
In this section, LFPR and WPR in the Usual Activity Status, along with census data for urban workers in India, have been analysed to get an understanding of women's participation in the labour market and also to capture the gap between the presence of male and female workers in the labour force.

Industrial pockets in India are mostly located near major urban centres thus attracting workers from within these and peripheral states. Both men and women migrate to seize such employment opportunities but a look at the available secondary data from the above mentioned sources shows that the number of male workers in India is far higher than that of their female colleagues. The pie-chart in fig 3.1 computed with the help of census data shows the percentage of total urban workers (Male, Female and total persons) in India. Female workers constitute only about 15 percent of the total working population.

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<sup>6</sup> "In the labour force surveys the 'activity status' of a person is decided on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during a specified reference period. The activity status stated on the basis of the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey is known as the usual activity status of the person, that is determined on the basis of a reference period of the 7 days preceding the date of the survey, is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person and the activity status determined for each day of the reference week is known as the current daily status of the person"-PLFS Report, 2017-18

**Fig 3.1: Percentage of Total Urban Workers in India, (Census-2011)**



*Source: Census 2011*

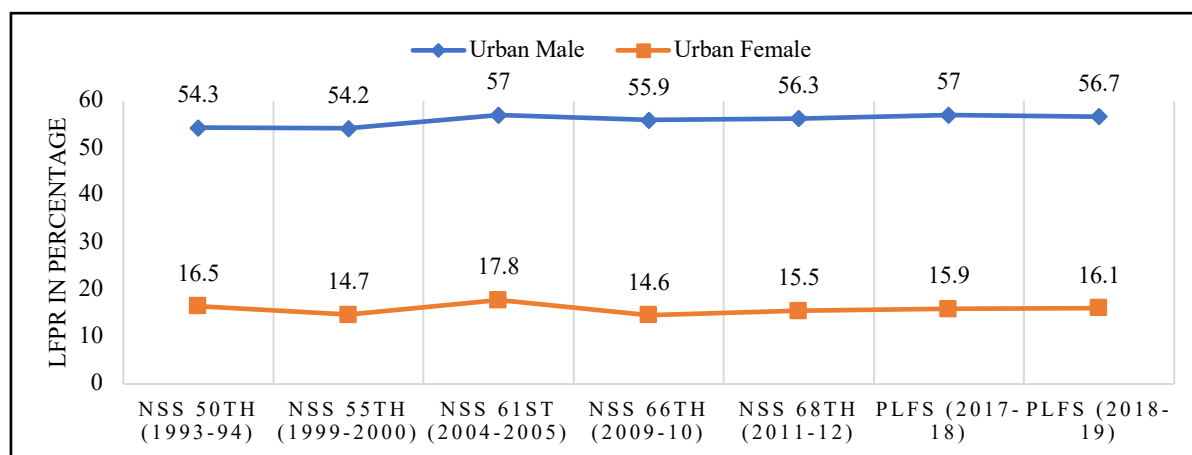
### **3.2.1 Labour Force Participation Rate**

As mentioned earlier, LFPR includes those currently working and those available for work. The line graph in fig 3.2 showing LFPR across different NSS rounds, including the latest PLFS data, depicts a similar trend. The proportion of urban male workers in the labour force has continuously fluctuated between 54 and 57 percent, which is considerably high when juxtaposed against the urban female labour force. The female LFPR in urban areas has been wavering between 14 to 18 percent. Having fewer women in the labour force is not a statistic exclusive to urban areas. Rural areas too have more men than women participating in the labour force. According to **PLFS (2018-19)**, in rural areas 55.1 percent males and 19.7 percent females participated in the labour force. This begs the question of whether or not the LFPR in India is truly this low, and, if so, then what are the probable reasons behind it? Are the numbers of women workers in urban and rural areas underreported because of the hidden and invisible nature of their employment?

Scholars have time and again tried tracing the reasons behind such a low level of female LFPR. While several positive rationales have been put forth, such as late entry into the labour force due to increasing education among women or female aspiration for well-paying jobs and rising household income (**Mahapatro, 2013**), there are others who have cited social norms resulting in gender differences at the workplace, lack of employment opportunities, wage differentials among men and women, occupational segregation and concentration of women in certain

sectors as the primary factors resulting in low LFPR among women (Borker, 2013; Sudarshan & Bhattacharya, 2009).

**Fig 3.2: Percentage of Population in the Labour Force, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

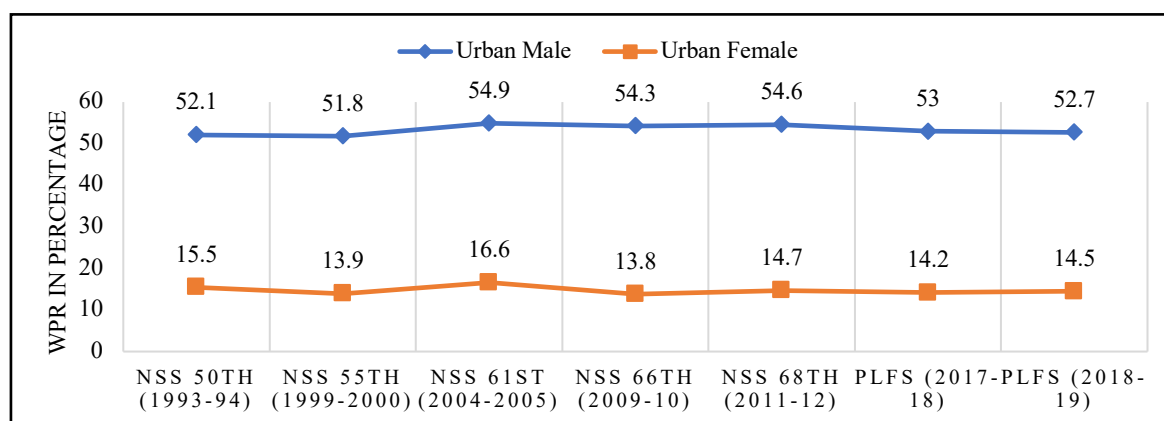
### 3.2.2 Worker Population Ratio

WPR includes labourers who are already working; a key indicator when measuring the working population of the country. When compared with LFPR data, one can see that both the male and female population percentages are low, indicating that there is more labour in the economy compared to the work available. Plenty of workers but not enough work. The WPR has remained between 52.1 and 52.7 percent between 1994 and 2019 for the male population while for females the percentage has reduced from 15.5 to 14.5 in the same period. While the reasons can be positive as formerly discussed, like women moving out of the labour force into educational institutes or families having higher per capita income acting as disincentives for women to join the labour force. Alternatively, invisible work in the informal sector can also lead to a lowering of the WPR.

In a primary survey conducted in Delhi it was seen that the female work participation rate was actually higher than the data provided by NSSO suggesting that women are heavily represented in the informal sector of the economy (Sudarshan & Bhattacharya, 2009). Moreover, women from poorer sections of society, mostly migrants, having need-based economic participation are either factory out-workers or contractually hired and consequently unrepresented in these sample surveys. Thus it can be inferred that low LFPR among rural and urban women is indicative of informality surrounding women's work.



**Fig 3.3: Workers Population Ratio, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

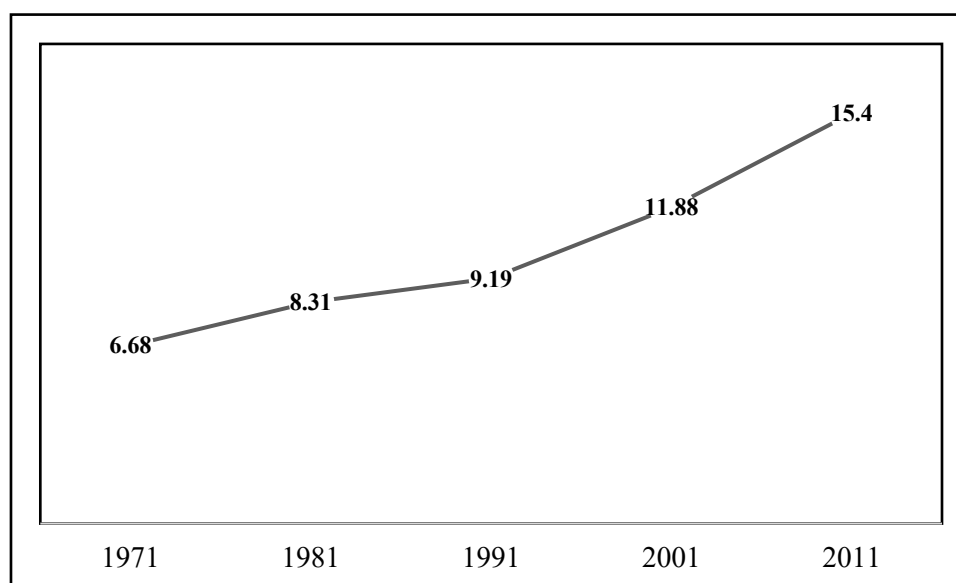
A prominent characteristic of both the graphs shown in fig 3.2 and 3.3 is that there is a rise in the female LFPR and WPR from NSS 55<sup>th</sup> round (1999-2000) to NSS 61<sup>st</sup> round (2004-2005). LFPR rose from 14.7 to 17.8 percent while the WPR rose from 13.9 to 16.6 percent. While the possible demographic explanation could be a population surge adding more labour to the economy, **Himanshu (2011)** stresses on the ‘income effect’ in explaining the surge. Every household has a minimum level of living and if the income generated by the household falls below this level then they tend to push their reserve labour force, which largely include women, children and older people in the household, into work. This mainly happens when there is a bad monsoon or crop failure thus pushing people towards non-agricultural activities both in urban and rural areas. An alternative term - ‘distress employment’ can also be used in the above case when there are suddenly more women in the labour force. This phenomena is also instrumental in creating excess labour which finds its way into the informal sector of the economy.

### 3.2.3 Labour Force Participation, Census 2011

Census collects data on the male and female main and marginal workers in the workforce. Work Participation Rate is an important indicator which can be defined as the percentage of total workers to the total population. The following graph on the Work Participation Rate of

Urban women in India illustrates the near constant percentage rise, which is quite different from the earlier NSS results and the recent PLFS results where LFPR and WPR had shown a decline in recent years. **Venkatanarayana and Naik (2013)** explain the increase with two arguments; Firstly, that the growth in the total workforce is higher than the growth in population and secondly that unlike NSS, census data has shown a spike mainly because of the increase of both main and marginal workers in the non-agricultural sector. Over the years the census has witnessed a growing proportion of female workers in the non-agricultural sector both in rural and urban India, but the pattern of the workforce is moving towards the unorganised and informal sector (**Unni & Rani, 2008**). This raises concern over the quality of female employment in the non-agricultural sector. The commonality between these two datasets is the component of informality associated with women in the labour force both in urban and rural areas as well as the glaring gap in the percentage of male and female workers in the workforce.

**Fig: 3.4: Work Participation Rate, Census 2011**



*Source: Census, 2011*

Thus it can be inferred that the prominent gap between male and female LFPR and WPR is indicative of the idleness of women in the labour force as indicated by Census, NSS and PLFS data. The scenario stems from various socio-demographic short-comings prevalent across the country. In this context, the matter of concern is the crowding of women's labour as an informal workforce and the failure of the state to provide them with benefits and security.

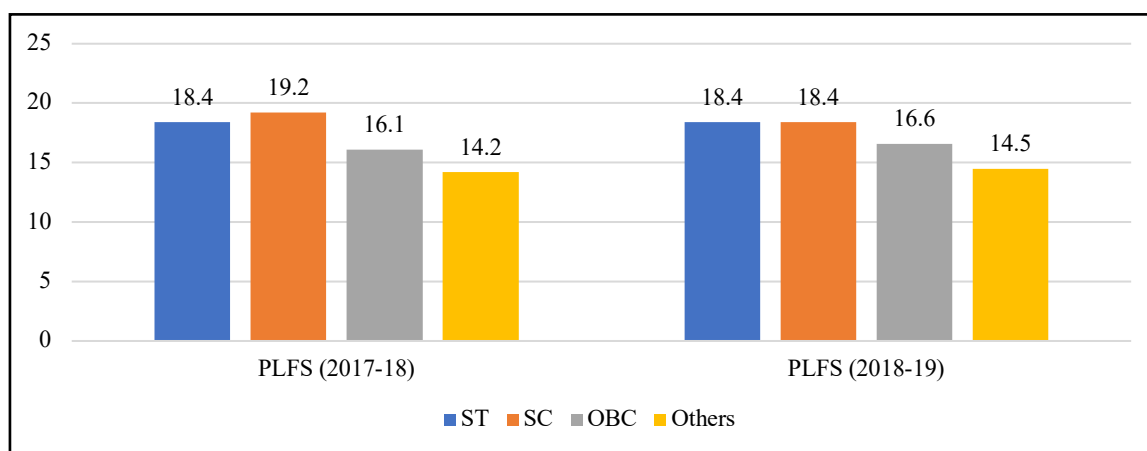
### 3.3 Characteristics of Female Urban Workforce

The female urban workforce is heterogeneous and their ‘availability’ in the workforce is often regulated by social, economic and religious factors. This section looks into the different characteristics of the urban workforce with the help of relevant data, and tries to ascertain the causes behind such heterogeneity.

#### 3.3.1 Labour Force Participation Rate

Fig 3.5 shows the LFPR across different social groups over the two PLFS surveys. The number of women belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the labour force was higher in 2017-18 at 19.2 and 18.4 percent respectively, while being relatively low for women belonging to Other Backward Castes (OBC) and others at 16.1 and 14.2 percent respectively. The most recent **PLFS survey data (2018-19)** shows that while there has been a fall in the participation rate among SC women to 18.4, women belonging to the OBC and Others category have shown a subtle rise.

**Fig 3.5: LFPR of Urban Women According to Their Social Status, (2017-2019)**

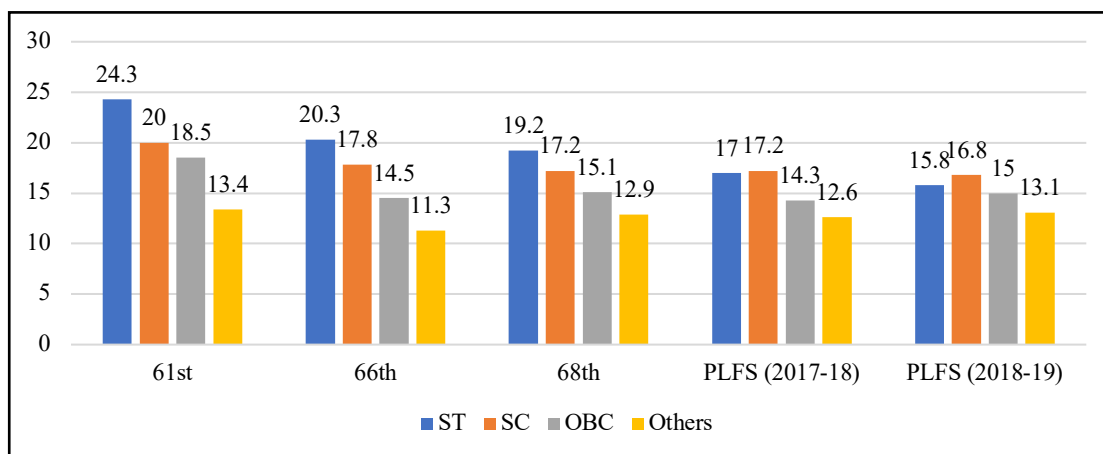


*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

#### 3.3.2 Worker Population Ratio by Social Groups

The WPR across different social groups is lower than that of the LFPR because this only includes working women. Data across various rounds of NSS and PLFS has been used to compute the graph in fig 3.6 and it can be seen that the WPR of women belonging to the ST and SC categories has gone down over the years from 24.3 percent and 20 percent in the NSS 61<sup>st</sup> round to 15.8 percent to 16.8 percent in PLFS (2018-19) respectively. The WPR of women belonging to the other category remained low compared to the other social groups.

**Fig: 3.6 Worker Population Ratio According to Social Groups, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

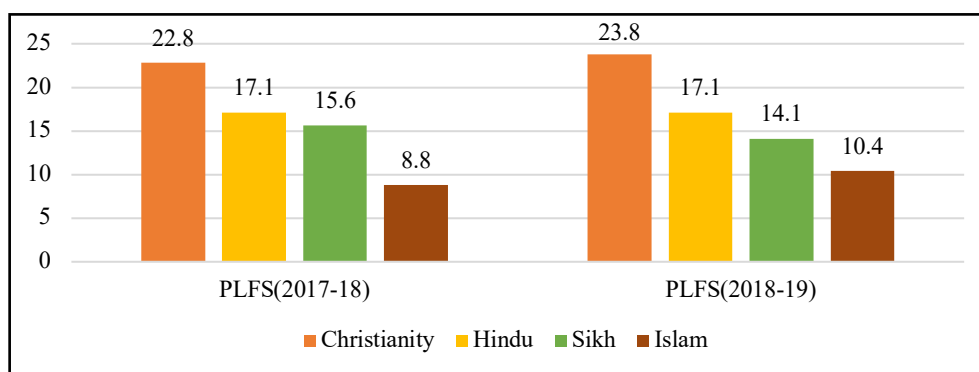
It is clear from the graphs in fig 3.5 and 3.6 that women belonging to the SC, ST and OBC category dominate the labour market compared to those of the ‘Others’ category which mainly comprises women belonging to the ‘General Category’ or from ‘Higher Castes’. Due to India’s persistent and rigid caste system, SC and ST women are primarily associated with the lower strata of the socio-economic ladder, forcing them to participate in the labour market to support their family. These low-skilled and poorly-educated women are ready to take up jobs in unorganised and informal labour markets devoid of any labour protection laws (**Sengupta & Das, 2014**). ‘Distress employment’, which has been discussed earlier, is similarly applicable to these women. In contrast, women from the ‘Other’ category have better household income and are relatively better skilled and educated thus restricting their early and large scale entry into the labour market (**Bhalla & Kaur**). But when one compares the WPR of the NSS 61<sup>st</sup> round with the recent PLFS data, it is clear that the overall percentage of women across social categories has declined. This again brings us back to the possibility of large scale informalisation of women’s work both in the organized and unorganized sector (**Standing, 2013**). A parallel possibility can also be the ‘male education effect’ (**Bhalla & Kaur**) where higher LFPR of skilled men leads to lower LFPR for urban women.

### **3.3.3 Worker Population Ratio by Religious Groups**

In tune with the variation in social groups, LFPR and WPR of women varies greatly across religions. The graph in fig 3.7 indicates that Christian women are the most common in the labour force and their participation rate has increased by 1 percent over the two PLFS surveys.

There has been a fall in the percentage of Sikh women while the percentage of Hindus has remained constant. Muslim women, on the other hand, have the lowest LFPR even though there has been a rise in their overall percentage from 2017-18 to 2018-19.

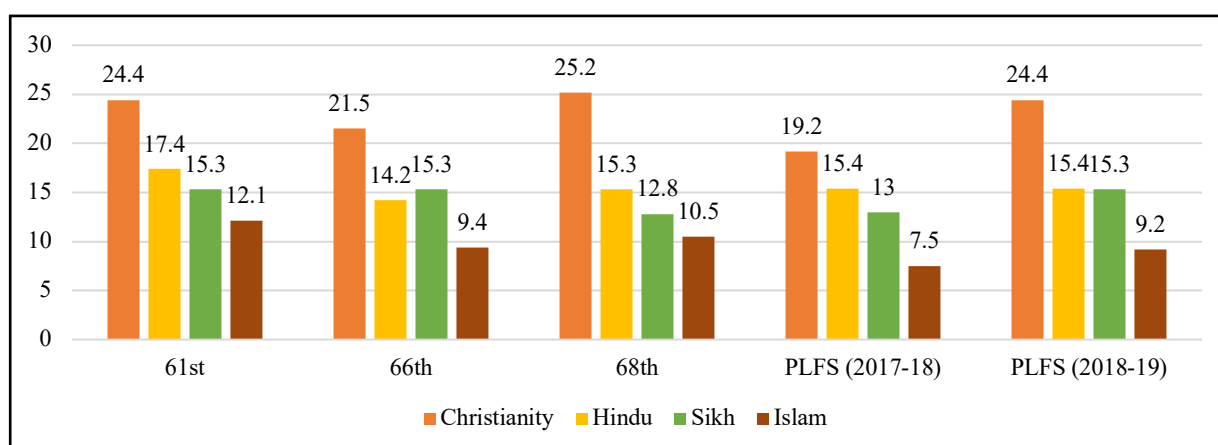
**Fig 3.7: LFPR of Women by Religious Groups, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

The WPR too illustrates a similar trend with Christian women having the highest percentage over the last decade with 24.4 percent WPR recorded in 2004-05. Their numbers have remained almost constant over the years with only slight fluctuations. Christians are followed by Hindus and Sikhs whose work participation rate has also shown minor fluctuations over the NSS and PLFS years. Just like the LFPR, Muslim women have the lowest WPR which stands at 9.2 percent in the recent employment and unemployment survey (2018-19).

**Fig 3.8: WPR of Urban Women According to Religious Groups, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

Figures 3.7 and 3.8 pertaining to religious distribution of women both in the workforce and labour force reiterates how gender discrimination super-imposed on caste and religion is instrumental in accentuating the exclusion of women from the labour force. The higher percentage of Christian women in the labour force can be explained by the importance of different customs and women's agency in a particular religion (**Sengupta & Das, 2014**). In Christianity, while women are relatively free in the context of acquiring education and being economically independent, women belonging to well-to-do Hindu and Sikh household might not be able to exercise the same agency due to the subdued position of women and their strict adherence to their gender roles which have been constructed by society (**Das, 2003**). For Muslim women, low educational access coupled with poor market access act as an axis of exclusion in the Indian Labour Market. In Islam, strictures against the mobility of women affect their educational aspirations and consequently their participation in the labour force, but this again is region-specific in the Indian context (**Mahrotra & Parida, 2007**). In North India, both Hindu and Muslim woman have limited access to labour markets compared to the southern counterparts. Another possible explanation behind the low participation rate of Muslim women is their crowding in home-based work compared to outdoor farm and non-farm activities undertaken by women of other religions (**Sengupta and Das, 2014**).

The analysis of the available data provided valuable insights about women in the labour force across rural/urban, social and religious categories, which has aided in the further analysis of women in the manufacturing industry, specifically the apparel industry.

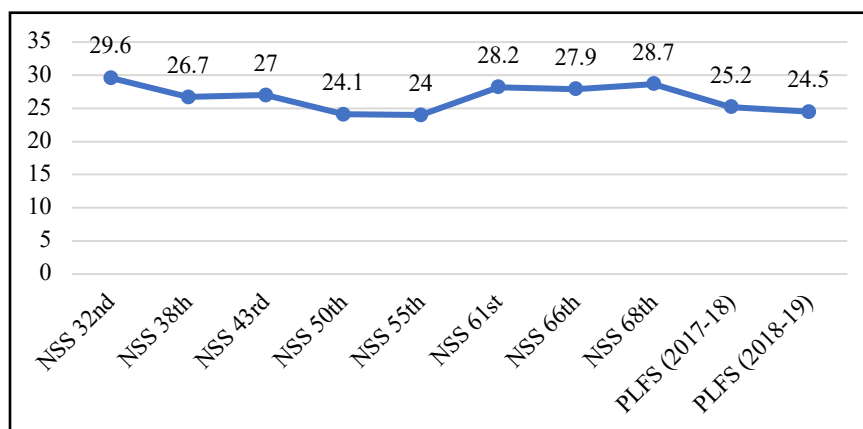
### **LFPR in the Manufacturing Sector:**

In the context of women in the manufacturing sector, **Mahrotra and Parida (2007)** elaborate upon how structural factors can contribute towards determining the overall LFPR of women at the macro level. Structural factors result in a U-shaped curve when it comes to women's participation in the labour force. While low-income and high-income countries tend to have higher percentages of women in the labour force, middle income countries like India have lower percentages of women in the workforce as the economy is in a transitional state. Mechanisation of agriculture tends to push women out of agriculture thereby increasing their participation in manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities.

A look at the percentage distribution of female urban workers in manufacturing shows a fluctuating trend. While the percentage was high in the 32<sup>nd</sup> round of NSS (1950-51) at 29.6,

this declined over the consecutive quinquennial rounds. NSS 55<sup>th</sup> round (1999-2000) witnessed the lowest participation over the last four decades at 24 percent. The following years of NSS saw a considerable rise in the number of female urban workers in manufacturing (2009-10 and 2011-12) and again a fall in the data released by the recent PLFS survey.

**Fig 3.9: Percentage Distribution of Female Urban Workers in Manufacturing in Usual Status (ps+ss), (2017-2019)**



*Source: PLFS (2017-18), PLFS (2018-19)*

Women workers and their employment in the manufacturing sector are sensitive to global economic crises and economic downturns. This results in the cyclical fluctuations of female employment. Moreover good and bad agricultural performance over the year decreases and increases women’s participation in the manufacturing sector (**Sen and Dasgupta, 2014**)

### **3.4 Informal Sector and Informalisation of the Formal Sector**

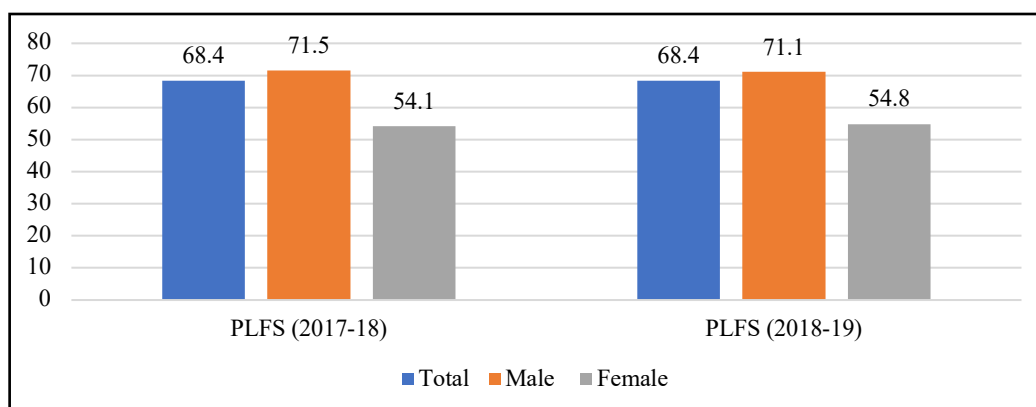
Along with our organised sector, we have an equally extensive and thriving unorganised sector. The terms ‘unorganised’ and ‘informal’ will be interchangeably used in this and the following sections, as both include work that is unaccounted for, with no security or employment benefits. India’s economic reforms in the last decade of the twentieth century boosted the growth of the organised sector but it was also instrumental in assisting the multiplication of informal enterprises. As **Chen (2012)** points out, several developing countries including India never came to the ‘Lewis Turning Point’ where small scale productions along with casual jobs were absorbed into the modern capitalist economy. On the contrary, the informal economy turned out to be a permanent feature of capitalist neo-liberal development. Just like the organised sector, the unorganised sector contributes to the overall development of the country. This

narrative becomes relevant in the present study as women form an important part of the informal sector economy. Informality of work not only exists in the unorganised sector but has now become an integral part of the formal or organised sector too with subcontracting and outsourcing of work. Thus, even if women are engaged in the formal sector, their employment might be informal in nature.

### 3.4.1 Informal Workers in the Non-agricultural Sector

The graph in fig 3.8 depicts male, female and total informal workers in the non-agricultural sector in India between the years 2017 and 2019. 68.4 percent of the workers belonging to the usual status (ps+ss) are engaged in the informal sector which is fairly high. While the total number of workers has remained the same over the two surveys, there has been a fall in the percentage of informal male workers from 72.5 to 72.1 percent while the share of female workers have risen from 54.1 to 54.8 percent. This is striking when the values are compared to LFPR which is only 16.1 percent for women. The data clearly reiterates **Cassirer et al's (2007)** argument that the informal economy is an important source of employment for women and they tend to crowd around poorly remunerated forms of informal work

**Fig 3.9: Informal Workers in the Non-Agricultural Sector, (2017-2019)**



*Source: PLFS (2017-18), PLFS (2018-19)*

Moreover, informalisation of formal work is a common phenomenon both in urban and rural areas and arises out of the formal economy's cost-cutting mechanism (**Losby, 2002**). Out-



workers or home-based workers, as they are commonly referred to, are largely harboured by manufacturing industries thus reducing direct employment to a large extent.

### **3.4.2 Formal Years of Schooling.**

Years of schooling is an important factor in deciding where in the labour force women are placed and the quality or kind of work in which they are likely to be engaged. With higher educational qualifications, women tend to opt for high-paying jobs mostly in the formal sector which comes with social security and benefits. PLFS (2017-18) data shows that formal years of schooling among the female workforce of our country is very low. While the urban areas have slightly better numbers, the overall scenario is indeed appalling. Formal years of schooling is highest among the 15-29 years age group at 9.3 percent, while for the 15-59 age group, it is at 8.7 percent in urban areas. In rural areas, the values are lower at 9.2 percent and 8.1 percent respectively. While the percentages are definitely not promising, they imply that most working women lack formal years of schooling and are ineligible for secured jobs in the formal sector. Thus, to sustain themselves they are more than willing to take up petty jobs and end up in the complex and murky world of informality, in both the formal and informal sectors. This phenomena completely excludes most working women from receiving any kind of work benefits, which will be discussed broadly in the following section.

### **3.5 Status of Social Security Benefits**

'The basic idea of social security is to use social means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability to deprivation' in order to ensure sustainable human development over time (**Dreze and Sen, 1999**). Social security can thus be said to be an instrument of protection against numerous structures of dominance and exigencies resulting from different forms of deprivation among the workers (**Vijay, 2005**). Thus the availability and effectiveness of social security benefits act as an important determinant of the worker's quality of life.

Over the years, India has made considerable progress in the provision of security benefits to workers engaged both in tertiary and the secondary sectors. The first concrete attempt to provide any sort of assistance to workers was made by the British government in 1923 through the 'Workmen's Compensation Act'. This act was not implemented properly and did not bring about significant material or structural changes to workers' lives. A more detailed and objective scheme was introduced post-independence through the 'Employee's State Insurance Act' (1948) enforcing compulsory state insurance to provide certain benefits in the event of sickness

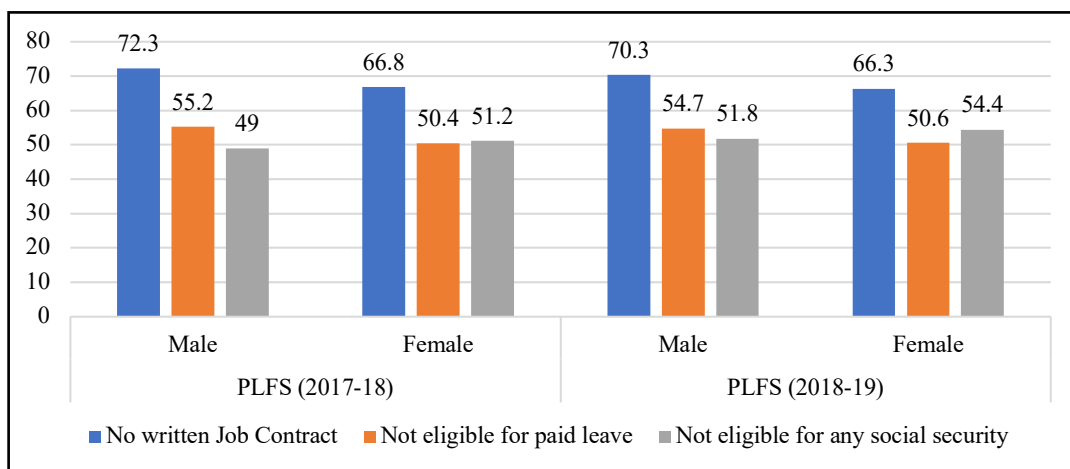
and workplace injury to the workers. The sickness and medical benefits were also extended to the worker's family members in most states in the country. There is also a clause of disability and dependent benefits in the act which makes the employer liable to support disabled members (if any) and children of the worker's family (**Chander, 2010**)

The country made further progress by introducing the Employees Provident Fund Act in 1952 which mainly focussed on the provision of security after the age of retirement and security to the worker's dependent family members after the worker's death (**Chander, 2010**).

While the above schemes were worthy of praise, they do have a few shortcomings. The biggest of them all is that both the ESI Act and the EPF Act do not include small and seasonal production establishments. Also, they do not extend protection to workers who are informally hired by the employer through contractors and subcontractors. This leaves out a large gamut of workers which comprises our Indian labour force. Lastly, there is no provision or mention of crèche or childcare facilities in these seasonal production establishments, only the clause of disabled and dependent benefits act is remotely applicable in the context of the provision of childcare facilities.

In the graph in fig 3.10, computed with the two rounds of PLFS data, type of job contract, eligibility of paid leave and availability of social securities like maternity benefit, sickness benefit, medical benefit, PF and gratuity have been cumulatively analysed to gather information on the existing status of these industrial establishments. PLFS data over the two consecutive years have been compared and the following multiple bar graph depicts that almost 65 to 70 percent of both male and female workers are working without any written job contract. There has been only a negligible decrease in the percentage over the two years thus reiterating how these workplaces are riddled with informality. As **Parida (2010)** said, the most pressing problem in Indian industries is establishing the relationship between the employer and the employee. If the employer can successfully evade this then he/she is not accountable in providing any security benefits!

**Fig 3.10: Availability of Social Security Benefits, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**

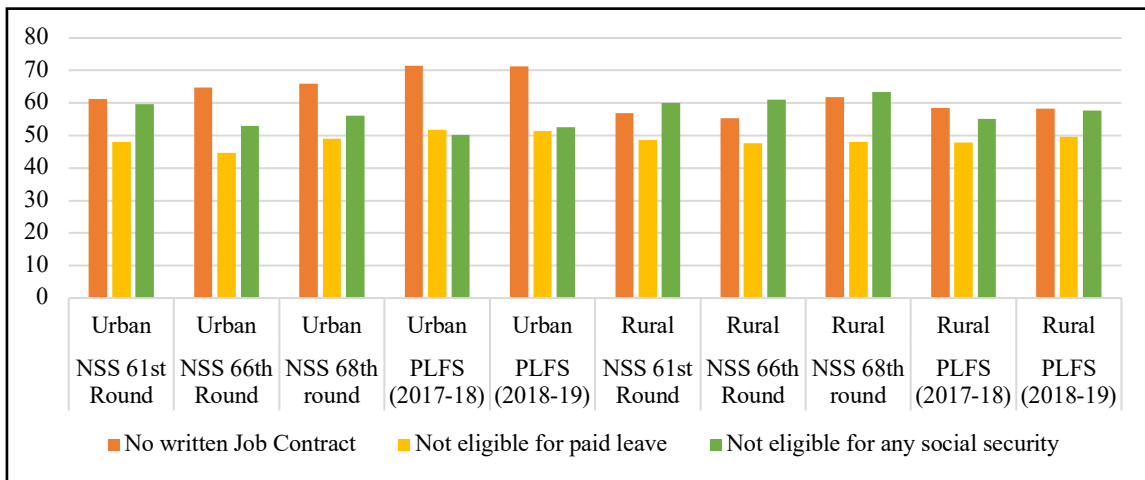


*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

The percentage of workers not eligible for paid leave is also high, ranging between 50 to 55 percent for both male and female workers. This not only implies that workers are not getting any leave pertaining to sickness, injury or pregnancy, but that they are also exposed to the risk of termination if they ask for unpaid leave as most of them do not have a written job contract (**Messadri, 2012**). Lastly, one can see from the graph that the percentage of female workers not eligible for any social security benefits is slightly higher than that of their male counterparts leading one to question the influence of gender bias existing over informality (**Papola, 2003**). Does this mean that informal women are more susceptible to exclusion than informal men?

Graph No. 3.11 shows the availability of social security benefits for both urban and rural women over the different rounds of NSSO and PLFS in an attempt to capture the trend. It is clear from the graph, that the percentage of women with no written job contract is higher in urban areas when compared to that of rural areas especially in the last two rounds of the PLFS survey where the number spiked up to 72 percent. On a similar note, the data illustrates that more urban women are ineligible for paid leave in comparison to rural women over several rounds of NSSO and PLFS data. Even though the latest PLFS data portrays a slim difference with the urban percentage being 51.3 and 49.5 for rural and urban areas respectively, it is indicative of more and more women in the informal labour market.

**Fig 3.11: Availability of Social Security Benefits for Urban and Rural Women, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

Lastly, the numbers on women eligible for social security benefit does not follow the regular pattern of the data set with more rural women exposed to being ‘not eligible for any social security benefits’ rather than urban women. The latest PLFS data shows that 52 percent of urban women and 57 percent of rural women do not receive any social security benefits. While the reasons behind the urban-rural differentials might be varied, the fact that over 50 percent of women workers are ineligible for any social security benefit is a serious cause of concern.

### 3.6 Women Workers in Delhi’s Apparel Industries

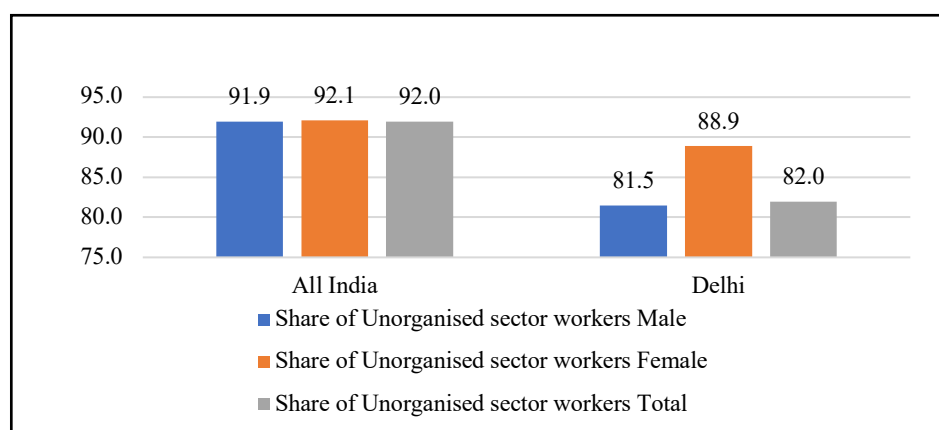
This section looks into the apparel/garment industry in Delhi. As discussed in the second chapter, Delhi is one of the major garment producing centres in the country. It is the second largest producer after the southern cluster which includes the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu belt. The garment industries in Delhi are also found in clusters spread across the NCR region harbouring both factory and home-based workers. Even though the labour force is predominantly male, women are equally important in the production process. The following datasets give us an overview of the apparel industries in Delhi.

#### 3.6.2 Apparel Workers in the Unorganised Sector

Graph No. 3.12 computed with unit level PLFS (2017-18) data is very relevant to our present discussion. The graph shows the share of male, female and total apparel workers in the unorganised sector for both India and Delhi. The unorganised sector is very similar to the

informal sector where the work done is mostly unaccounted for with no social security benefits. At the India level a staggering 92 percent of all the male and female workers engaged in the garment industry participate in the unorganised sector. This is alarming as it also implies that most workers are hired through middlemen without any written job contract which makes them ineligible for any work benefits.

**Fig 3.12: Apparel Workers in Unorganised Sector, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

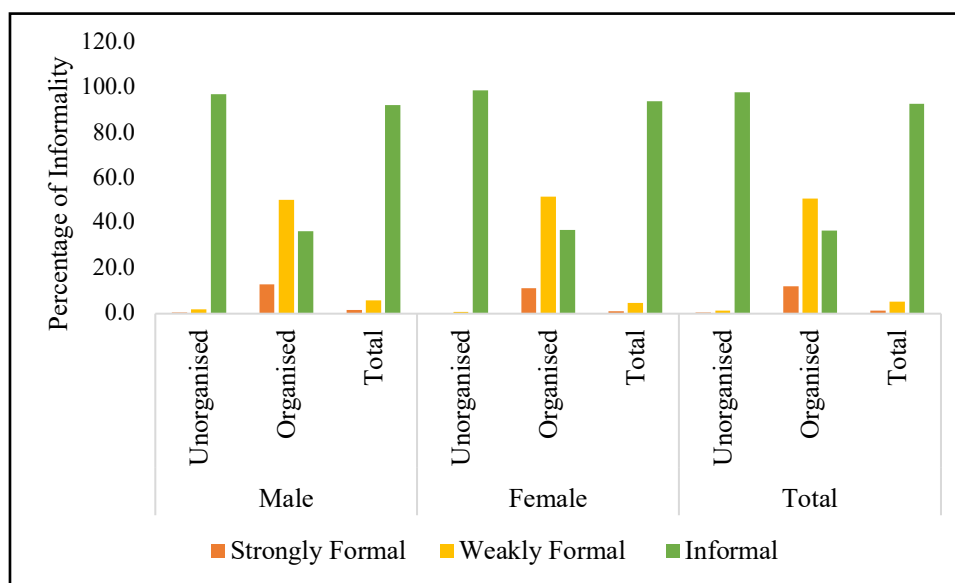
For the state of Delhi the picture is slightly different. While the male and the total population in the unorganised sector is relatively low at 81.5 and 82 percent respectively, for women the value shoots up to 88.9 percent. One probable reason can be that for industries in the North, the production chains are extended to the non-factory realm where the production process takes place in small informal units around main industrial areas. These small informal units employ a large array of informal workers who are primarily women. This is also the reason why we have a low turnout of women in these industries as most of them prefer home-based work for multifarious reasons which will be addressed later (Messadri, 2010).

### 3.6.3 Informality in the Unorganised and Organised sector

Informality and lack of security are common characteristics of the unorganised sector but not so common for the organised sector. With the advent of the neo-liberal era, outsourcing of industrial activities, mostly represented by cost-cutting techniques, have led to the development of informal pockets in the formal sectors (Kabra, 2003). This is extremely relevant, especially in the context of India, as our garment export units have multiplied considerably since the dissolution of the MFA with the primary motto being the need to reduce the cost of production

and survive the stiff competition. Fig 3.13 and fig 3.14 has been computed to capture the share of informality in the apparel industry for the male, female and total populations.

**Fig 3.13: Share of Informality in Apparel Sector: India, (2017-2019)**



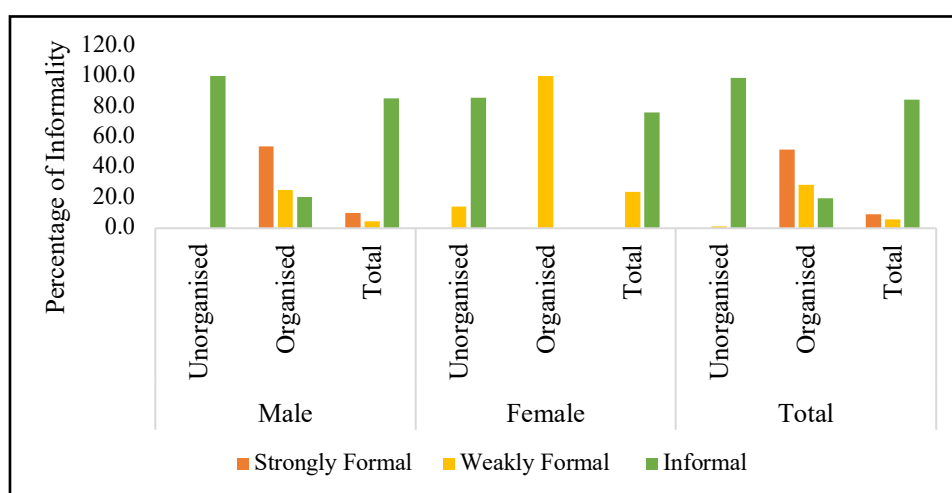
*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

At the India level, one can see that in the unorganised sector of these garment industries, male, female and total population show a very high level of informality. This is not unanticipated but one should note that for women it is higher at 99.1 percent and for men it is at 97 percent. When it comes to the organised sector, the share of informality which should have been imperceptible is, in reality, quite high for both male and female workers (36.7 and 37 percent respectively). It is also important to note that the percentage of workers working in a strongly formal setting in the organised sector is only 13 and 11.2 percent for male and female workers respectively. Consequently, if both the organised and unorganised sectors are taken into consideration, it is seen that the nature of work available is largely informal, hence jeopardizing the applicability of the social security benefit schemes in the garment sector. Also, the higher informality of women's work impacts their economic stability and their children's upbringing (**Papola, 2010**).

Graph no. 3.14 shows the share of informality in the apparel sector in the context of Delhi. Here too, the unorganised sector is mostly informal in nature for both male and female workers.

The organised sector for male workers has around 20.8 percent of informality, while for female workers there is no informality in the organised sector. The whole sector is weakly formal which also implies higher probability of indirect hiring of garment workers (Hensman, 2001). The unorganised sector also shows 13 percent weak formality which might be suggestive of the increasing incidence of subletting of work by larger establishments to the expanding small-scale establishments.

**Fig 3.14: Share of Informality in Apparel Sector: Delhi (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

An aggregated view of the available data surely points out the dominance of several levels of informality, present in both the organised and the unorganised sector of the apparel industry. This analysis again brings us to the question of applicability of the social security benefits (largely meant for registered workers) when it comes to informal workers, especially women, as they have higher levels of informality surrounding their work.

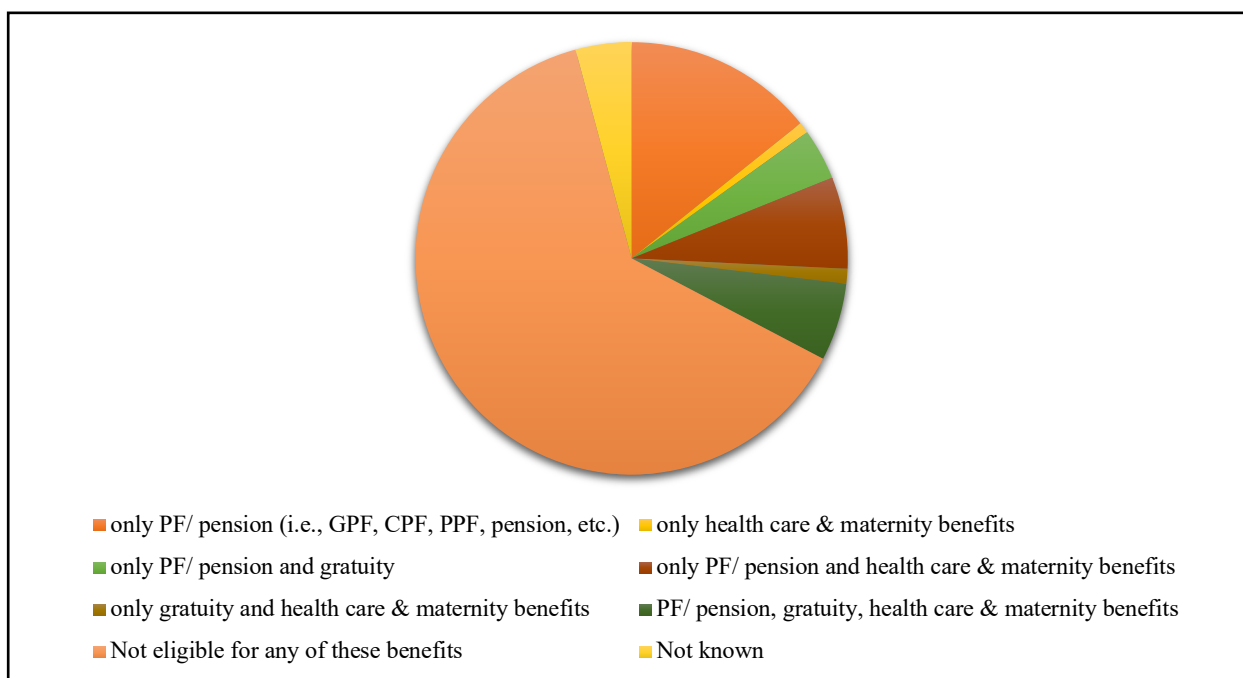
### **3.6.4 Social Security Benefits**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, availability of social security benefits to all workers is impossible given the organisational structure of our economy. The last analysis clearly highlights the concentration of workers in informal employment which apart from characterising the unorganised sector is now forming an integral part of the organised sector too.

In the following section, the social security benefits available to female workers in the apparel sector has been inspected. A very large fragment of total women apparel workers, almost 63

percent are not entitled to any kind of security benefits. This is followed by 4.2 percent of women whose data was not available. Thus one can roughly assume that almost 67 percent of the women workers engaged in the garment industries are placed outside the ambit of any social security benefits.

**Fig 3.15: Social Security Available to Female Wage Earners in the Apparel Sector, (2017-2019)**



*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

This scenario is not very conducive for the 33 percent who are eligible for the social security benefits as most of them are not entitled to all the available benefits. Only 14 percent of all women workers in the apparel sector are entitled to receiving Provident funds while it is 1 percent for those getting only healthcare and maternity benefits. The percentages are equally low for those getting only PF and gratuity (4 percent), only PF, healthcare and maternity benefits (7 percent) and only gratuity, healthcare and maternity benefits (1 percent). It is shocking to note that only 6 percent of all the women workers in the garment industry are eligible to receive all social security benefits starting from PF, gratuity, healthcare and maternity benefits.

Hence the above data in fig 3.15 rationalizes that most women garment workers are not protected by social security benefits. The data also highlights the non-applicability and erosion



of labour laws in our country. Aligning with the above unit level data from PLFS (2017-18) the following table lists out figures from the labour bureau pertaining to the maternity benefit act. The data is available up to 2011 and around 8234 establishments were covered by this act which is fairly low. Out of the meagre number of establishments covered, only 1869 production units were actually submitting financial returns which is not only very nominal but is also indicative of the poor accountability of the factories and the relaxed attitude of auditing bodies.

Out of the 6261 women employed in the establishments which did submit returns in 2011, only 8 had claimed maternity benefit during that year. All the claims were accepted during that year but none of them were paid the benefit during the given period of time. The data from the previous years' portray exactly the same trend where all the claims were accepted but none of the workers were actually given the benefit.

While the interpretation of the following data is distressing, one must take cognizance of the fact that entitlement to a certain type of benefit does not ensure availability of the benefit. While workers apply for benefits and their claims do get accepted, it either takes a long time to reach the claimant or most likely it does not reach her at all. This brings us back to the previous pie-chart showing 'social security available to female wage earners in the apparel industry'. Around 33 percent of the total female garment workers qualify for different combinations of social security benefits. But, does that necessarily mean that they are actually receiving the benefits? Just like the data collected by the Labour Bureau, possibilities of the benefits actually reaching the workers is very slim.

The above analysis compels one to question the applicability and relevance of our social security schemes where a large chunk of workers, especially women, are completely left out of its coverage. While the reasons can be manifold, starting from the economy's acceptance of rising informality to the cost cutting mechanism of the export oriented production units (Mehta, 2010), it is imperative that the schemes are strongly implemented covering women workers from every sector of the economy.

**Table 3.1: Status of Availability of Maternity Benefit, (2013)**

Year	No. of establishments covered under the maternity benefit act	No. of establishments submitting returns	Average daily no. of women employed in establishments submitting returns	No. of women who claimed maternity benefit during the year	No. of claims accepted and paid either fully or partially during the year	
					Accepted	Paid
2006	7665	1643	4948	3	3	0
2007	7808	1869	5663	5	5	0
2008	7936	1493	5065	3	3	0
2009	8014	1622	4862	7	7	0
2010	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
2011	8234	1869	6261	8	8	0

*Source: Labour Bureau, 2013*

In the study area of Delhi, the available data restates the same gloomy picture when it comes to the dissemination of social security benefits. 46.6 percent of women workers in the garment industries of Delhi are not entitled to any kind of benefits while there is no information for the remaining 53.4 percent of women workers. It is important to note that social security questions are only asked to wage workers (PLFS report) who are a part of relatively big establishments. The lack of availability of any type of social security strongly indicates the heightened incidence of contracting and subletting of work in the garment industries of Delhi. Women workers, as it is clear from the available data, are not getting any benefits and are getting negatively impacted by these invisible labour laws.

The discussion surrounding social security benefits compels one to look at the wage structure of women workers in the apparel sector. Are the wages high enough to compensate for non-

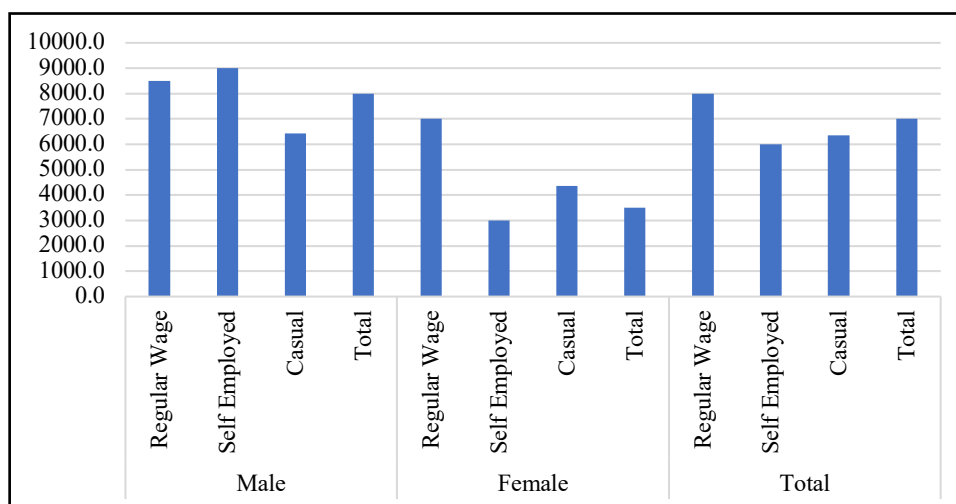
existent social security benefits? The following graph is computed to show the monthly earnings of male and female wage workers in Delhi.

### 3.6.5 Monthly Earnings of Apparel Sector Workers

According to the Minimum Wages Act, wages can vary across states. While it is higher in Delhi, the wages are considerably lower in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, explaining the large scale shift of the garment industry base to these two states. While the revised minimum wage rate in Delhi for the year 2019 is 14,842 rupees per month, the minimum wage rate for states belonging to region 1 does not fall below 8,000 rupees per month (Kabra, 2011). The following bar graph in fig no 3.16 representing 2017-18 PLFS data has a different story to narrate.

Male and female wage rates for apparel workers in both organised and unorganised sectors at the India level has been shown through the graph. Male workers having regular wages and those who are engaged in casual activities have an average earning of 8,000 rupees and 6,000 rupees per month respectively. Self-employed here mainly includes contractors, sub-contractors and fabricators who provide workers to the factories and earn the most in the group, around 9000 rupees every month (Papola, 2010). On the contrary, for female workers the monthly earning drops down to 3,000 rupees per month for self-employed workers as they mainly include home-based workers working at a piece rate system with very low remuneration. The regular wage workers earn the highest at 8,000 rupees per

**Fig 3.16: Monthly Earnings of Women Workers in the Apparel Sector, (2017-2019)**



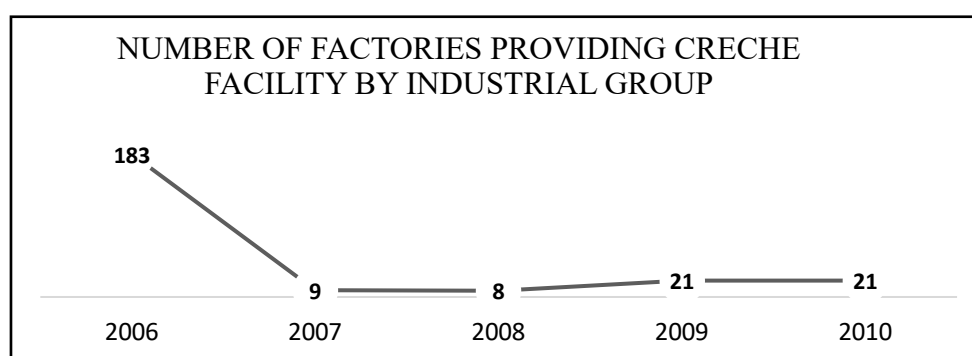
Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)

month, while casual workers are making around 4,500 rupees per month. There is a clear cut gender based division when it comes to monthly earnings of apparel workers especially in the northern belt because of the prevalence of male workers in the industry. Also, one has to note that when it comes to the minimum wage rate, there is no demarcation between men and women in each state, everyone is supposed to be receiving the same money, but the gender hierarchy is very apparent through the PLFS data. This brings one back to the question of whether or not wages are high enough to compensate for the missing social security benefits and according to the analysed data the answer is clearly no.

### 3.6.6. Availability of Crèche Facilities

Social security schemes are not available for all the workers, be it in the apparel sector or otherwise. The social security schemes do not include crèche facilities. Neither the ESI Act, nor the EPF Act incorporate crèche facilities as an important component of the social security benefits. A look at the age group of women working in the industries would reveal a concentration of women in their late twenties and early thirties which is indicative of the fact that most of them would have young children who would require crèche facilities at the establishment. A look at the following data in fig 3.17 from the labour bureau pertaining to the availability

**Fig 3.17: Factories Providing Crèche Facilities, (2013)**



*Source: Labour Bureau, 2013*

of crèche facilities depicts a rather sombre image. While the number of establishments providing crèche facilities were relatively high at 183 in the year 2006, the numbers have fallen to 9, 8 and 21 in the consecutive years. While the factories having more than 50 women of child bearing age should have a crèche facility, it is applicable only when the workers are directly hired by the employer. As most women have no written job contract, it is impossible

to establish the employer and employee relationship and these establishments get away without providing workers with any kind of crèche facilities or day-care units.

### **3.7 Impact on Care-Choices**

The above analysis starting from the LFPR and WPR of women workers, socio-religious characteristics along with level of informalisation and social security benefits have helped in understanding the economic position of women in industries in general and the garment industry in particular. Unreliability of social security benefits along with the absence of childcare facilities at the workplace will definitely have a direct bearing on the child's upbringing and overall development. For a country like India which has a huge demographic dividend, nurturing the young population would result in developing human resources in the coming decades.

Absence of any sort of child care and social security support for informally appointed women in the manufacturing establishment (90 percent of urban women work in the informal sector) compels one to explore their child care choices along with their coping mechanism in this uncertain economy. Also with their minimal wages they cannot reach out to expensive and formal crèche facilities. Most manage with makeshift arrangements which often impact the health of the child. This aspect of the selection of the care choices along with the impact on child's health will be further explored in the next chapter through the analysis of the primary data.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

From the earlier analysis of data in this chapter, it can be concluded that women form a considerable part of both the urban and rural workforce. While their numbers are lower compared to their male counterparts, their contribution is equally important for the growth of our economy. The data clearly states that we have low WPR and high levels of informality both in the organised and unorganised sectors making workers vulnerable. Most workers, especially women, do not have access to any social security benefits. The existing acts do not consider the availability of crèche facilities as a crucial component of work benefits. Lastly, most women workers in the apparel sector are not given any written job contract and also face gender disparity in the wage structure. Although their LFPR and WPR are largely regulated by caste and religion on certain occasions, it is of critical importance that policy level interventions are

necessary to include all workers irrespective of their gender or the formal and informal nature of their jobs in the ambit of social security benefits.

## CHAPTER IV

# WOMEN IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY AND THEIR WORKING CONDITION

### 4.1 Introduction

The number of women workers in the Garment factories of Delhi has been rising over the past few years even though their numbers are still under-represented in the medium to large-scale factories in the Delhi-NCR region (Srivastava, 2012). This had led to an understanding of garment work mostly in the context of male workers. Women workers, their position and experiences in the garment sector and how it impacts their families and lives of their children has not been adequately covered in the available literature.

Hence, following from the arguments raised in the second chapter in the context of women and garment work in Delhi, this chapter investigates primary data for a better understanding of the characteristics of garment work and the attributes of the workers. Data pertaining to 100 home-based workers and 281 factory-based workers have been analysed through descriptive statistics to capture the similarities and dissimilarities associated with their background and their work environment.

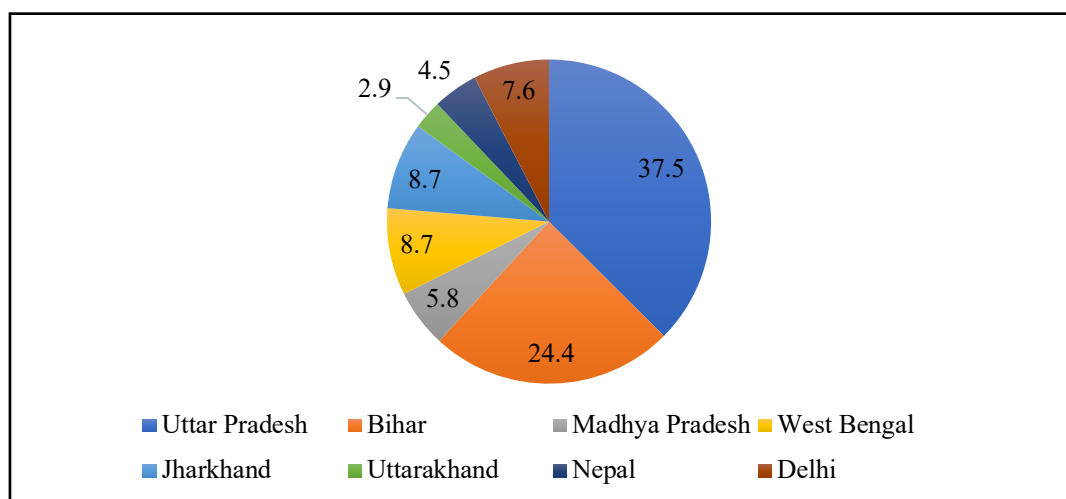
### 4.2 Profiling Garment Workers

The Garment workers involved across the different layers of the production process exhibit varied social and demographic characteristics. Women workers, both home-based and factory-based ones, are mostly migrants coming from the peripheral states around Delhi and belong to different social and religious groups. Variables like 'educational statuses', 'reasons for moving to Delhi' and 'reasons behind working in the garment factory' have been further analysed to understand their socio-economic status. Heterogeneity in factory and non-factory spheres illustrates the differences in the type of work, wage rates, working hours and work benefits that these workers receive. These background characteristics are instrumental in shaping the upbringing and care choices adopted by the garment workers. To understand better the reasons and implications of this, a thorough profiling of the sample population has been done to provide a stable platform on which the consequent chapters will be based.

#### 4.2.1 State and Place of Origin

Export based garment manufacturing centres in India portray a strong north-south divide in the context of male and female workers. The South is characterised by a feminised factory labour landscape while the north has a masculine factory labour landscape (Mezzadri, 2015). In tune with the findings from various literature sources, the primary survey results showcase a dominance of men in the Delhi-NCR region with women workers forming only a very small segment of the workforce. Apart from being a minority in the factories, they are also migrants who have travelled from neighbouring states in hope of finding better work. Eventually, they have been embedded in a labyrinth of informal production spaces.

**Fig 4.1: State of Origin: Percentage of Home Based and Factory Workers, (2018-2019)**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

Around 37.5 percent of women workers in factory and home-based settings are from Uttar Pradesh. Satellite centres<sup>7</sup> like Bareilly, Agra and Lucknow act as a labour pool for Delhi's export houses as they generate many skilled workers, trained in embroidery and handwork (Mezzadri, 2016). Bihar, a state otherwise famous for its skilled 'Darzis', a traditional tailoring caste, contributes about 24 percent of the workers of the sample population. West Bengal with its own garment history and Jharkhand with its rising reserve of labour contribute about 8.7 percent each. There is also a marginal presence of migrants from other states like Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. 4.5 percent of the total workers are from neighbouring Nepal,

<sup>7</sup> 'Large factories in the Delhi-NCR region outsource their home-based work to cities like Bareilly, Agra and Lucknow. These are termed as satellite production centres'-Mezzadri, 2016



because of the porous international borders. They are mostly unskilled and are found working as sub-contracted labourers in small to medium sized export houses.

**Table 4.1: Place of Origin: Home Based and Factory Workers, 2018-2019**

	Total	Percentage
Rural	261	68.5
Urban	120	31.5

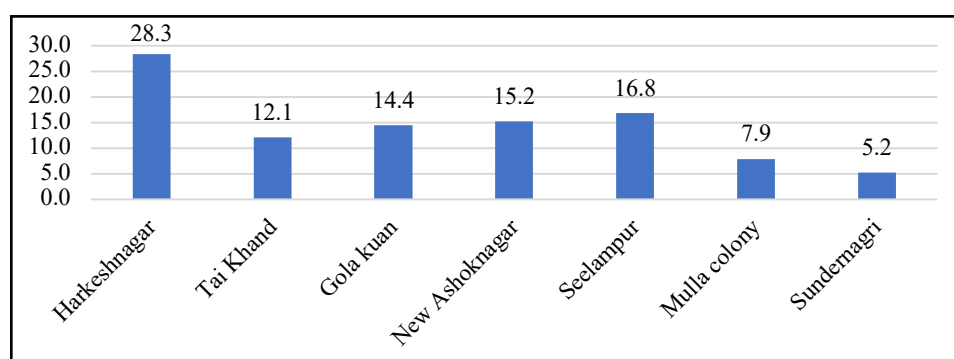
*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Although the state of origin is an important identity of the workers, their place of origin too is a key characteristic which helps define their socio-economic background. 68.5 percent of the total respondents are from rural areas while 31.5 percent are from urban areas. While both urban and rural areas are riddled with rising unemployment levels, overrepresentation of women from rural areas indicates their desperate migration in search of jobs.

#### 4.2.2 Place of Residence

Delhi, over the past few years, has witnessed a massive shift of many industries<sup>8</sup> to the peripheral areas of Gurgaon and Noida. Large garment export houses have moved away from the main city, except for the Okhla industrial region and a few areas bordering Noida. The primary data depicts that Women Workers, both home-based and factory are scattered around these industrial pockets of Delhi. Sprawling slums have proliferated around the industrial centres of Okhla Phase 2, Okhla Phase 3, New Ashok Nagar and Seelampur, harbouring a majority of the workers working in the industries and in home-based set ups.

**Fig 4.2: Place of Residence: Percentage of Home Based and Factory Workers, (2018-2019)**



<sup>8</sup> Large Scale industries employing more than 500 workers have shifted out from the Okhla industrial region to NOIDA and Gurgaon over the last fifteen years to insulate themselves from rising labour wages, pollution issues and strict labour laws.

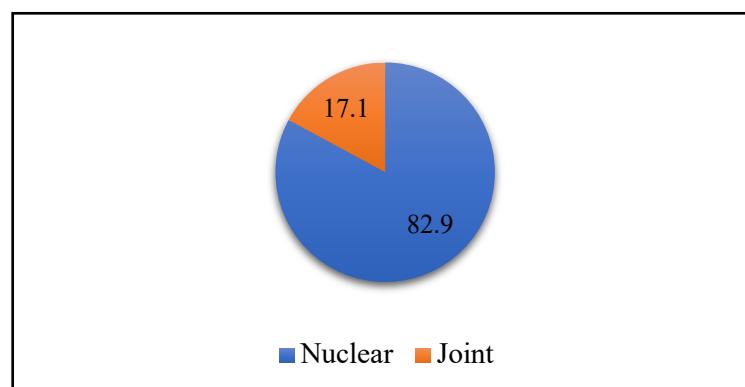
*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Harkesh Nagar, Taikhand and Gola Kuan form a continuous stretch of slum area wedged between Okhla Phase 2 and Phase 3. Harkesh Nagar is the biggest of the three slums and contributes about 28.3 percent of all respondents. Gola Kuan and Tai khand shelter around 14 and 12 percent of our respondents respectively. Seelampur in Shahdra, New Ashok Nagar, Mulla Colony and Sunder Nagri lying across the Yamuna River, closer to the Delhi-Noida border, are important centres of garment production in Delhi. Apart from having small factories aptly befitting the definition of sweatshops as defined by **Mezzadri and Srivastava (2015)**, New-Ashok Nagar, Sunder Nagri and Mulla Colony also have SEWA centres which employ many women workers in their RUAAB unit. These factory areas are flanked by slums and provide lodging to 16.8 percent of the workers around Seelampur, 15 percent in New Ashok Nagar, 7.9 in Mulla Colony and 5.2 around Sunder Nagri.

#### **4.2.3 Family Type and Number of Family Members**

As a majority of the respondents are migrant workers, they tend to exhibit nuclear family characteristics because it is the able and young who migrate and not the old and fragile (**Kabeer, 1997**). The pie-chart in fig 4.3 shows that 82.9 percent of the workers live in nuclear families and only 17.1 percent as part of joint-families. Workers who are originally from Delhi or from nearby states like Uttarakhand or Western Uttar Pradesh live in joint families and enjoy family support in various spheres especially when it comes to childcare. On the contrary, nuclear families, who have both parents working, find alternate childcare options a necessity and hard to arrange. The data also exhibits that 62 factory-based workers are from joint families while only 3 are found amongst home-based workers.

**Fig 4.3: Family Type: Percentage of Home-based and Factory Workers, (2018-2019)**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Migrants with nuclear families do miss out on the advantages a joint family structure has to offer, but many enjoy the freedom their nuclear family status allows them, developing agency within their own close knit families.

**Table 4.2: Average Number of the Members in the Family, (2018-2019)**

	Mean no of family members	Min	Maximum
Home based	3.98	3	6
Factory Based	4	3	6

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Considering the numbers of family members, the maximum and minimum number is 3 and 6 for both home-based and factory-based workers. The mean number of family members of home-based workers is 3.98 which is marginally lower than that of factory based workers which is 4. This characteristic can be correlated with the higher number of joint families witnessed in the case of factory-based workers than that of the home-based workers.

#### **4.2.4 Age, Marital Status and Parity of the Child**

Female garment workers across the South and East Asian regions are preferred young for their high levels of energy, good eye sight and docile nature (**Mies, 1998**). India is no exception to the rule. In the given table 4.3, minimum, maximum and the mean age for both home and factory workers are shown. The age-range is higher for home workers and relatively lower for factory workers. The mean age for home workers is 32.1 years while that of factory workers is 28.6 years. This data strongly renders the importance of young workers in the factory set-up. Women above the age of forty are rare in export houses. Home-based work, on the other hand, is more flexible and allows older women to be a part of these production spaces.

**Table 4.3: Mean Age of the Garment Workers, (2018-2019)**

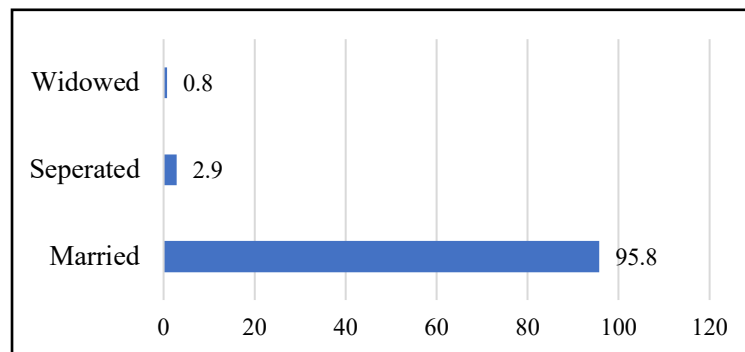
Type of Work	Maximum	Minimum	Mean age
Home Based	45	23	32.1
Factory Based	38	21	28.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

While being young is essential in the factory set-up, being married is also very important as it brings an element of social security in the work place. 95.8 percent of the respondents are married with children. 2.9 percent of the sample population are separated from their husbands

and most of them are reluctant to openly talk about it. Lastly, a very slim percentage of workers are widowed becoming the exception in the context of the nuptial characteristics of the respondents.

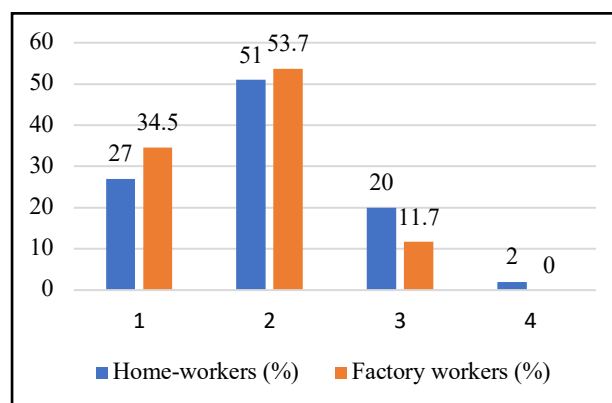
**Fig 4.4: Marital Status of the Garment Workers (in Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Parity of children among the respondents ranges between one and four. Home-based workers and factory workers depict varying attributes when it comes to child parity. Approximately 34 and 53 percent of the respondents working in factories have one and two children respectively, while it is marginally lower at 27 and 51 percent for home-based workers. But, there is a stark difference when it comes to higher parity of children. 20 percent of the home-based workers have three children while it is only 11.7 percent for the factory-based workers. The highest parity in the dataset is four. Factory workers have no respondents with four children while 2 percent of the home-based workers have four children.

**Fig 4.5: Parity of Children per Worker (in Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

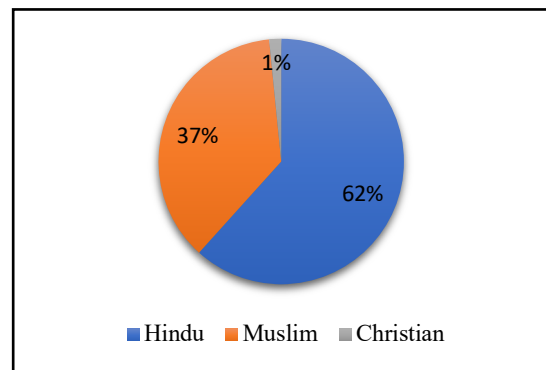
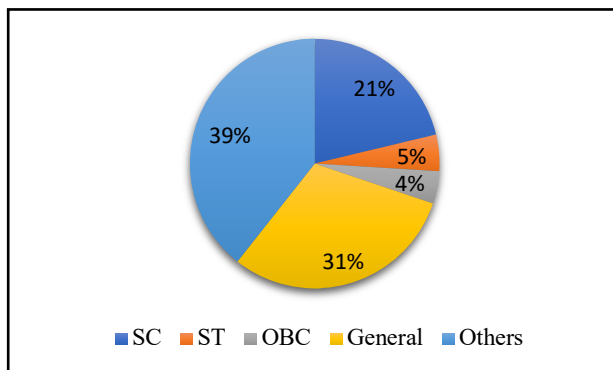
#### 4.2.5 Caste and Religion

The sample population comes from a diverse range of caste and religious backgrounds. The question pertaining to caste on several occasions was met with apprehension by the respondents. Many were reluctant to reveal their position in the Indian purity-pollution social scale. With much difficulty, data for the fig 4.6 was collected showing that 21 percent of the respondents belong to scheduled castes (SC) while 5 and 4 percent belong to scheduled tribes (ST) and other backward castes (OBC) respectively. Respondents belonging to the general category comprised 31 percent of this set, becoming the largest among all the caste groups. 39 percent of the respondents have been categorised as ‘others’ who either did not specify their caste or belonged to religious categories other than Hindus.

Several studies point out that the work participation rates among SC, ST and OBC women are higher than those belonging to the general category, but the data does not conform with this idea as it showcases higher numbers of women from the general category than from the SC, ST and OBC categories combined.

**Fig 4.6: Caste of Garment Workers.**

**Fig 4.7: Religion of Garment Workers, (2018-19)**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

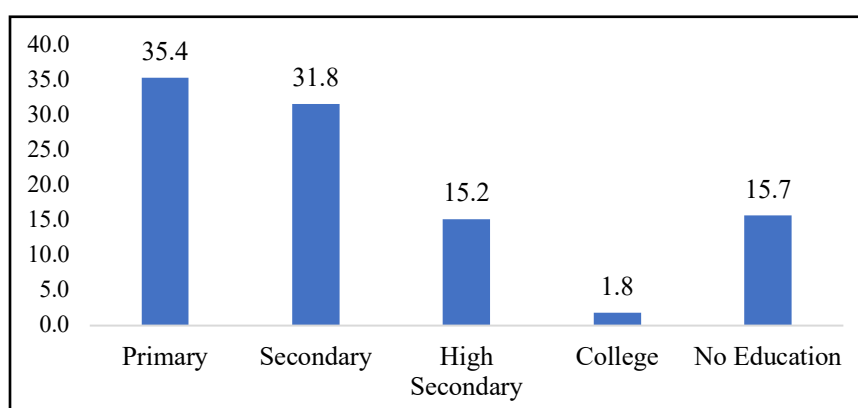
The second pie-chart in fig 4.7 depicts the religious backgrounds of the respondents. 62 percent of the workers are Hindu, while 37 percent of them are Muslims. Only a negligible percentage of the population follow Christianity. The data on religion too contests the available literature on garment workers in the NCR region, which states that Muslims are over-represented both in factory and non-factory realms (Mezzadri, 2012). This disparity may be seen because most

studies around the NCR region on garment industries have focused on male workers as compared to the present survey which centres upon female workers.

#### 4.2.6 Educational Qualification

Education is an important variable in determining the levels of economic stability one enjoys. The bar graph in fig 4.8 depicts the educational qualifications of the respondents. 15.7 percent of the sample population has no education at all, while 35.4 percent of the sampled workers have completed primary education. The number of women having completed secondary education is around 32 percent. The clustering of workers in the ‘no education’, ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ categories indicates their lack of skill and awareness alongside their readiness to commit to menial jobs.

**Fig 4.8: Educational Qualification of Garment Workers (in Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

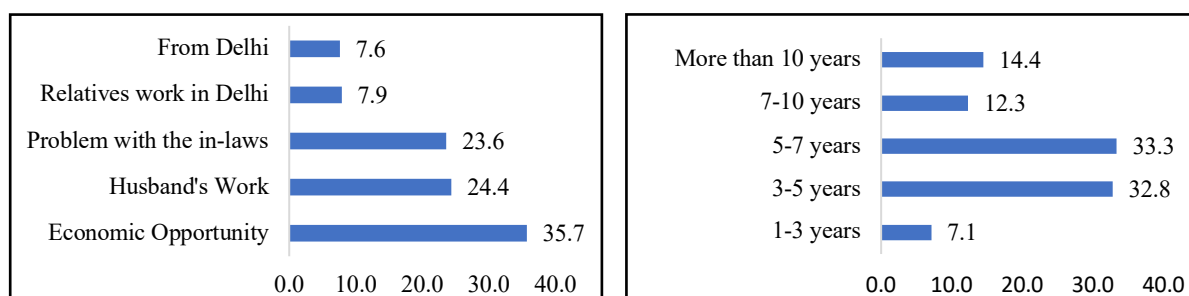
Women having completed higher secondary education and college education is about 15.2 and 1.8 percent respectively. While education is an important aspect to consider when determining the type and quality of work one can access, the primary data points out a few exceptions. The 1.8 percent of women who have completed college education were largely Muslims from Delhi residing in Mulla Colony. They work in very small factory set-ups employing almost only women on a contractual basis. Their argument against finding a more lucrative alternative to their present jobs was that their orthodox families only allowed them to work only with women and only in the close vicinity of their residential area.

#### 4.2.7 Reasons for Leaving the Place of Origin and Duration of Stay in the City

As discussed earlier in the chapter, around 92 percent of the respondents are migrants who have moved to Delhi from the neighbouring states around the capital. Multifarious factors have forced them to move out of their villages and hometowns. While many have been residing in Delhi for several years now, some are new migrants still adjusting to the rhythm of this bustling city. Fig 4.9 and fig 4.10 show the reasons why they chose to leave their homes as well as the reasons for the duration of their stay in the city of Delhi.

7.6 percent of the respondents are from the city of Delhi and have been living in the city for several years, especially in Mulla colony, Harkesh Nagar and New Ashok Nagar. 35.7 percent of the sample population cited ‘economic opportunity’ as the main reason for migrating. This was followed by ‘husband’s work’ at 24.4 percent. The following section will reveal that many of their husbands work in the same or similar garment factories which led to the migration of their spouses and their children. Another interesting reason specified by 23.6 percent of the respondents was ‘problem with the in-laws’ which forced many to migrate to the city. Lastly, 7.9 percent of the respondents stated that their ‘relatives work in Delhi’ resulting in a series of chain migration and clustering of people from the same region in specific locations. Eg- New Ashok Nagar (West Bengal, Uttarakhand and UP), Seelampur (Bihar and UP), Mulla Colony (Delhi) etc.

**Fig 4.9: Reasons for Leaving the Place of Origin      Fig 4.10: Duration of Stay in Delhi  
(2018-2019)**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Most of these migrant workers have lived in the city for 3 to 7 years accounting for 66 percent of the total respondents and are involved in a variety of work, either in home-based or the factory settings. New migrants who have in the city for 1 to 3 years comprise only 7.1 percent of the total sample, and are mostly young women working in garment export houses. 12.3

percent of the respondents have lived in the city for 7 to 10 years and 14.4 percent of those sampled have resided in the city for more than 10 years. The last category includes women who have not migrated but are originally from Delhi. Even though most of them have lived in Delhi for a considerable number of years, they exhibit the characteristics of circular migration, going back to the village during the harvest season and coming back to the city when work is available.

### 4.3 Characteristics of the Spouse

As 96 percent of our respondents are married, it is important to analyse the characteristics of their spouses to gain a better understanding of their social, economic and demographic backgrounds. Husband’s age, educational qualifications, occupation and total income have been evaluated in the following section.

#### 4.3.1 Mean Age of the Husband

Mean age of the respondent’s husbands is higher than that of the respondents. For home based workers, the mean age of their husbands is around 37 years which is in tune with the average age of women home-based workers. Husbands of the factory-based workers show a lower mean age at 33 years. This can be associated with garment factories preferring younger women and consequently their spouses are younger too.

**Table 4.4: Mean Age of the Respondent’s Husband, 2018-2019**

Respondent's husband	Maximum	Minimum	Mean age
Home Based	50	26	36.8
Factory Based	48	23	33

*Source: Primary survey 2018-19*

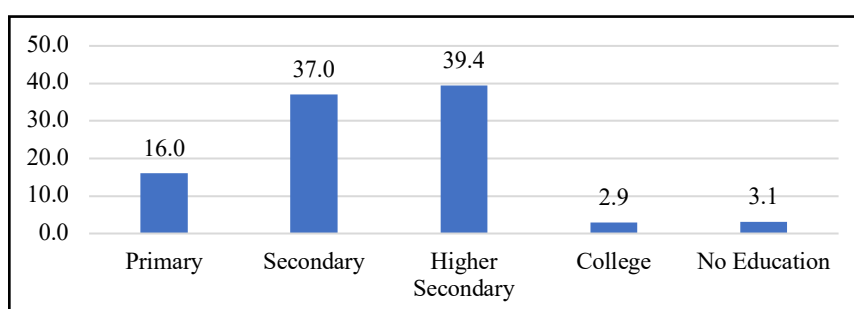
#### 4.3.2 Educational Level of the Husband

Compared to the respondents, their husbands usually have higher numbers of years of schooling. Around 75 percent of the spouses have completed secondary and higher secondary levels. The percentage of these having completed only ‘primary education’ and ‘no education’ is also very low at 16 and 3.1 percent respectively. This data reiterates the existing gap between



male and female educational levels with men benefitting from greater access to education than that of women from similar backgrounds. Lastly, only 2.9 percent of husbands have attended college which is marginally higher than that of the women workers. The low percentages for men and women in college education indicates firstly a lack of educational infrastructure and secondly high drop-out rates due to economic instability and demand for jobs.

**Fig 4.11: Husband’s Education Among Home Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

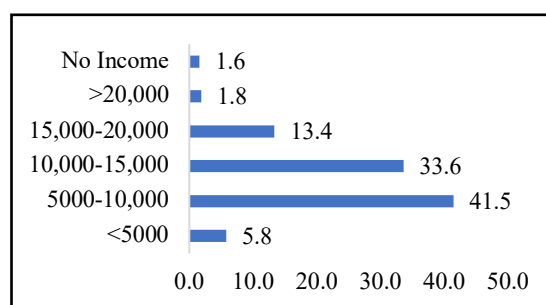
### 4.3.3 Husband’s Occupation and Total Income

Husbands of the respondents are involved in different types of work. Jobs like ‘mechanics, plumber, house-help, government job, driver etc.’ have been categorised as ‘others’ as they had very few observations each. A majority of husbands (38.8 percent) work in factories other than garment factories. Following this category who are employed as ‘other factory workers’, we have ‘garment factory workers’ who account for about 27.3 percent. 9.2 percent of them work in shops, mainly grocery stores, and garment and hardware shops. A negligible percentage of the spouses, 2.6 and 2.4 percent are ‘daily wage labourers’ and ‘security guards’ respectively. Finally 3.9 percent of the respondents’ husbands did not work at all.

**Fig 4.12 Husband's Occupation, 2018-2019**



**Fig 4.13 Husband's Income, 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Income of the spouses also varied and ranges between less than 5000 rupees to more than 20,000 rupees. Even-though many are working in factories, wages vary according to the work done and the total number of hours invested. Around 5.8 percent of the spouses earn less than 5000 rupees per month. Daily wage labourers are the ones who earn the least among the sample population. Around 75 percent of them earn between 5000 to 15000 rupees and most of them are engaged in different types of factories. 13.4 percent have income between 15000 to 20,000 rupees, mostly consisting of higher level garment factory workers and security guards. A marginal section earns above 20,000 rupees and 1.6 percent of the spouses have no income at all.

#### **4.4 Characteristics of Garment Work**

The garment industries in Delhi are primarily export-based, specializing in embellished and embroidered women's clothing. The production processes are scattered and highly stratified with different kinds of work executed at different levels. In the following section, an attempt has been made to capture the respondents' understanding and experience of the garment industry and the work in which they are engaged.

##### **4.4.1 Type of Work: Home-Based and Factory-Based**

Cost minimisation is of utmost importance for export-based garment factories in Delhi. This has led to rampant outsourcing of work, and given rise to a pool of informal labour which live in the vicinity of the industrial clusters. **Mezzadri (2010), Srivastava (2012), and Kabeer (2008)** state that garment work in the Delhi-NCR region is undertaken by two broad categories of workers; home-workers or home-based workers and factory workers. Home-based workers are always informally employed and carry out their work from within the confines of their homes. They are not entitled to any type of work benefits and survive on meagre payments on

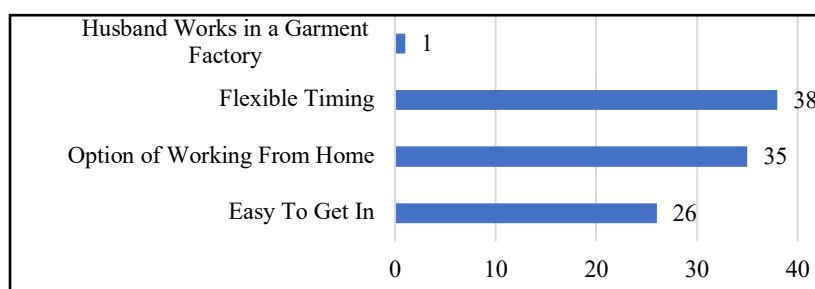
a piece-rate basis. Factory workers, on the other hand, are both formally and informally employed and work inside the factory premises. The primary data exhibits a glaring prominence of women informally hired in the factories of Delhi. These export houses tend to employ women through contractors and sub-contractors to save on work benefits and other provisions for which they are otherwise liable to provide to permanent or contractual employees.

The sample size of home-based workers in this study is 100, while for factory workers, it is 271. Several variables have been compared and discussed pertaining to the work characteristics of home-based and factory workers in the following analysis.

#### 4.4.2 Reasons for Working in the Garment Sector

Several reasons have been stated by home-based workers and factory workers when asked ‘why they chose to work in the garment sector?’ 38 percent of home-workers said that ‘flexible timing’ is one of the most conducive aspects of home-based work where workers have the freedom to work in their own free time. The second reason cited by the respondents was the ‘option of working from home’. 35 percent of respondents said that working from home helps them manage household chores while simultaneously allowing them to be economically independent. 26 percent of respondents said that ‘it was easy to get into’ the garment sector. This point reiterates the multiplicity of out-sourced factory work which generates the demand and recruitment of home-based workers on a large scale. Finally, 1 percent of the workers stated that it was their husband’s work in the garment industry which led them to start working in the same sector. Around 54 percent of home-based workers used to work in the garment factories and were forced to shift mostly due to reasons such as ‘having a child’ or ‘sacking by the company based on unstated reasons’.

**Fig 4.14 Reasons for Working in the Garment Industry: Home-based Workers (in Percentage), 2018-2019**

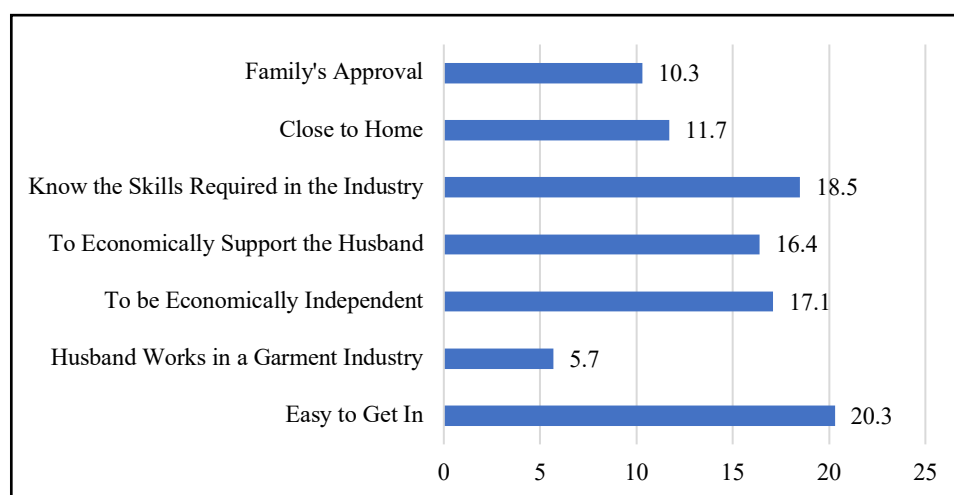


*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

A thorough discussion with factory workers during the survey revealed many additional factors from those stated by the home-workers in the context of ‘why they are working in the garment sector’. 18.5 percent of the respondents stated that they know the skill required to work in the factory. These women are trained in embroidery and *adda* work. 17.1 percent of the women stated that they ‘wanted to be economically independent’ and 16.4 percent said that they ‘wanted to economically support the husband’. Around 11.7 percent of factory workers said that the factories were close to their homes, entailing almost negligible to zero travel cost. ‘Family’s approval’ was cited by 10.3 percent of the respondents, primarily Muslim women working in women-dominated industrial set-ups of Mulla Colony.

While the reasons cited were different, there are areas of commonality between the factory and home-workers. 20.3 percent of factory workers stated that it was ‘easy to get into the factories’ and 5.7 percent mentioned that ‘husband’s work in the garment industry’ had been the driving force for them to join the sector.

**Fig 4.15 Reasons for Working in the Garment Industry: Factory-Based Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



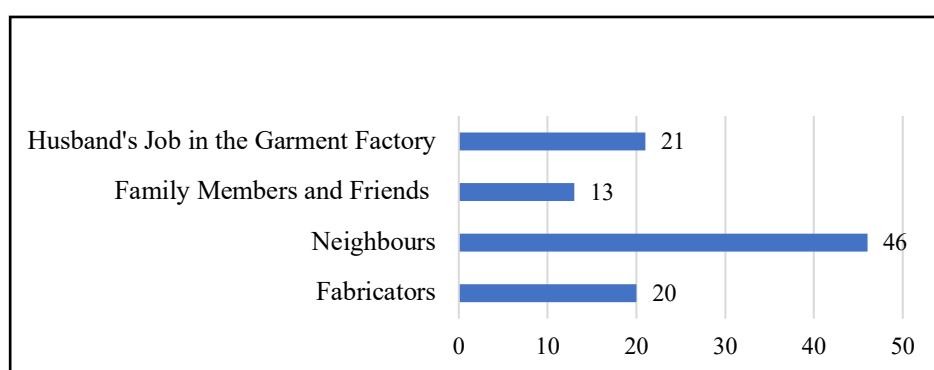
*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

#### **4.4.3 Agency Through Which Workers Entered the Garment Sector**

There are several avenues through which workers enter the garment sector. For factories, vacancies are released through gate notices following which the workers themselves approach contractors and sub-contractors for work. In home-based settings workers, they approach fabricators who provide them work on a piece-rate basis.

Both factory workers and home-based workers had overlapping narratives as to how they entered the sector with a few exceptions. 21 percent of home-workers and 7.5 percent of factory workers stated that they were introduced to garment work through their husbands who work in garment factories. 13 percent and 16.7 percent of home and factory workers cited family members and friends being instrumental in suggesting garment work. Graph No 4.16 and 4.17 also exhibit neighbours as an active factor as to how the respondents started working in this sector, 46 percent for the home-workers and 24.6 percent for the factory workers. Finally fabricators contributed 20 percent for the home-workers and factory-based workers respectively.

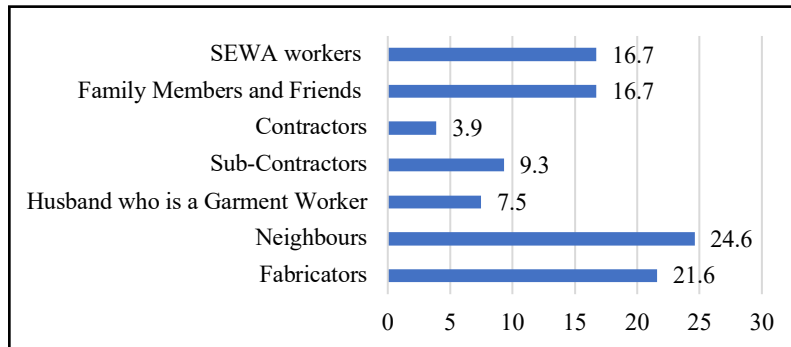
**Fig 4.16: Agency Through which Home-Based Workers Entered the Garment Sector (in Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Factory workers cited a few more reasons for how they entered the factory spaces. 9.3 percent of the respondents said that interactions with sub-contractors gave them the opportunity while 3.9 percent cited contractors as their point of reference. Apart from factories, SEWA, a non-profit NGO catering to informal women workers, has several small scale garment production units under the name of RUAAB in the city. Around 16.7 percent of factory workers were made familiar with garment work by SEWA workers who permanently recruit women and give them essential training on garment work.

**Fig 4.17: Agency Through which Factory-Based workers entered the Garment Sector (in Percentage), 2018-2019**



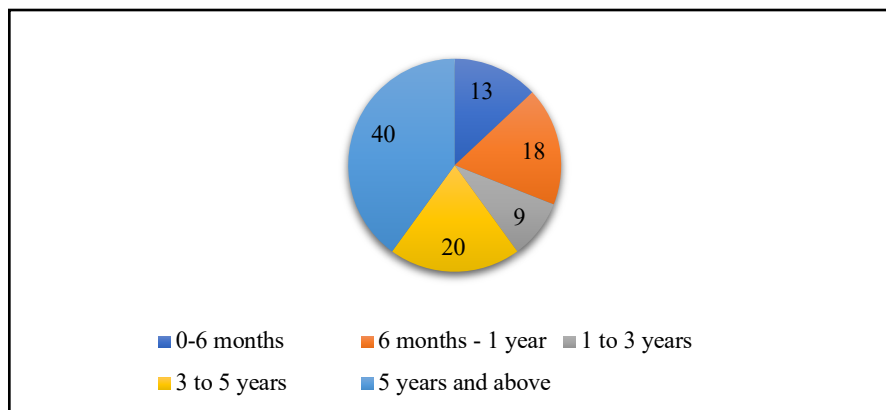
*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

#### 4.4.4 Duration of Work in the Garment Industry

The garment sector in Delhi depends on a temporary workforce. While many workers have been part of the sector for a long time, their stay in a particular enterprise is generally short-lived. Home-based workers, unlike their factory-based counterparts, tend to continue working under one fabricator or a sub-contractor for a long period of time but sometimes these home-workers too are replaced by the recruiting party in order to lower the piece-rate of a given type of work.

Fig No 4.18: portrays the percentage of women according how long they have been working as home-based workers. 13 percent of the total number of home-based workers have been working between 0-6 months, followed by 18 percent between 6 months to a year. 9 and 20 percent of workers have worked between 1-3 and 3-5 years respectively.

**Fig 4.18: Duration of Workers in Home-Based Work (in Percentage), 2018-2019**

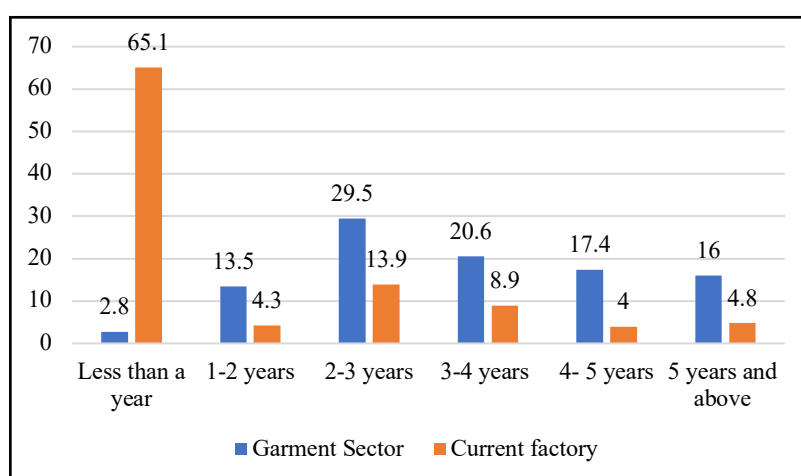


*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Around 40 percent of respondents, comprising the largest share, have been working as home-workers for more than five years. According to these workers, they have worked under several recruiters over the years and have experienced an initial drop in the piece-rate, every time they were re-hired.

Most industries employ a core workforce consisting of more skilled workers compared to the rest. Permanent workers continue for many years in a particular factory while the others who are contractually hired last for less than a year. The multiple bar graph below compares the total working time span of factory workers in the garment sector and the present factory enterprise.

**Fig 4.19: Duration of Work in the Garment Sector and the Current Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

The first category represents the percentage of factory women in the ‘garment sector’ and the ‘current factory’ for a period of less than a year. While only 2.8 percent of workers have been engaged in the ‘garment sector’ for less than a year, for the ‘current factory’ it is 65.1 percent. Total percentages of women in different years increase when only ‘garment sector’ is taken into the account. 29.5 percent and 20.6 percent of factory workers have been working in the garment sector for 2-3 and 3-4 years respectively, while 17.4 percent and 16 percent have been working for 4-5 years and more.

This data clearly reiterates the uncertainty of workers in a particular factory along with the popularity of the ‘hire and fire’ rule most of these enterprises follow. Also the percentages of

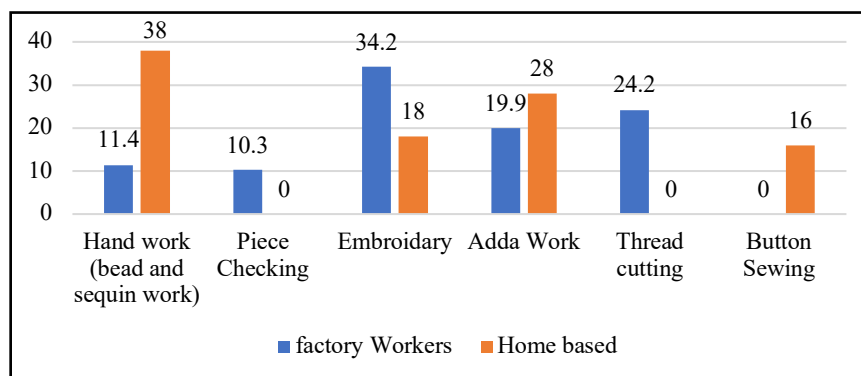
workers in the ‘current factory’ for 1-2 years, 2-3 years, 3-4 years, etc. are very low at 4.3 percent, 13.9 percent and 8.9 percent respectively. This is mainly because casual employment is higher in small factories, workshops and export-oriented enterprises which form the bulk of the garment sector in Delhi-NCR region.

#### 4.4.5 Types of Activities Undertaken by Home-Based and Factory-Based Workers

An important area where home-based work and factory work vary is in the type of activities undertaken by these workers. In this study, bead and sequin work have been categorised as ‘hand-work’ in tune with the nomenclature used by the workers and recruiters. *Adda* work has been separated from handwork based on differential wages which has otherwise been clubbed as one category by **Mezzadri (2015)**. Piece-checking, thread-cutting and button-sewing are classified as separate categories of work, again based on the terminologies used by the respondents.

38 percent of home-workers are engaged in hand-work which involves attaching beads and sequin on ladies garments. Muslim workers are mainly trained in *Adda* work, comprising about 28 percent of all the home-workers. Embroidery and button-sewing are common too, at 18 and 16 percent respectively. Apart from these, occasionally home-work also includes braiding of threads and attaching tassels onto specific pieces of clothing. A visible variation in the type of work can also be noted among different industrial pockets. Home-workers in Seelampur specialise in *Adda* work while workers in Harkesh Nagar are involved in hand work and button sewing.

**Fig 4.20: Types of Activities Undertaken by Factory and Home-Based Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19



Factory workers specialise in embroidery and thread-cutting stand at 34 and 24 percent respectively. This is followed by *adda* work, hand work and piece-checking. Activities like thread-cutting and piece-checking are specific to industrial set-ups and are completely absent from home-based activities. Even though there is a significant presence of thread-cutters in the primary data, it does not fully conform to **Srivastava (2014)** who states that 58 percent of all women workers in the Delhi-NCR region are thread-cutters.

#### 4.4.6 Type of Recruitment of the Garment Workers

There is a considerable difference among garment workers, be it factory-based or home-based, in the context of how they have been hired to work. The garment sector has an intricate network of contractors, sub-contractors and fabricators which generates different pathways through which workers are hired. Often the use of in-house<sup>9</sup> contractors is covert in nature, where workers are uncertain about who they are actually work for (**Kabeer, 2010**).

There is a three tier system of middlemen between the factories and the workers. After several conversations and discussions with the workers and recruiters, the following table has been constructed to depict my interpretation of the hierarchy embedded within garment work.

**Table 4.5: Three Tier System of Recruitment in the Garment Export Houses in Delhi, 2018-2019**

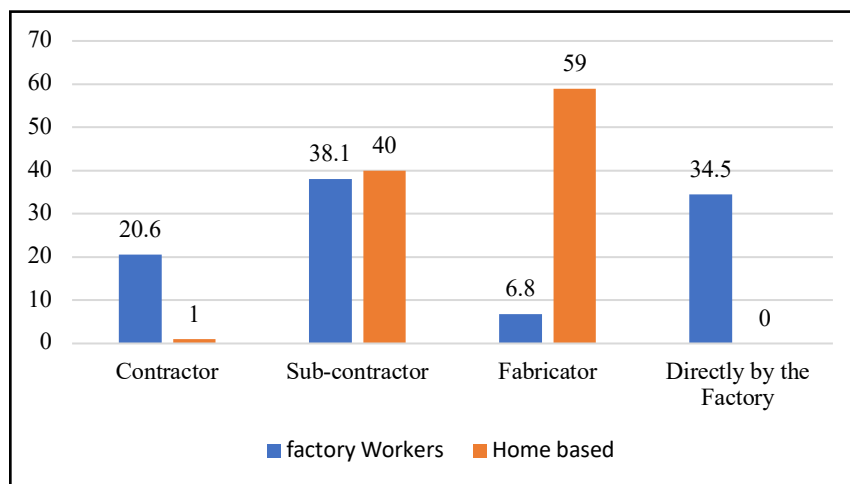
Hiring Type	Characteristics	
<b>Contractors</b>	They are registered and are either permanently employed by the factory or hired on a part time basis. All the contractors interviewed were men.	Contractors pocket around 10 percent or more of the wages of the workers.
<b>Sub-contractors</b>	Contractors who are not registered are categorised as ‘sub-contractors’. They are almost never directly hired by the industries. They primarily work for registered contractors	

<sup>9</sup> Srivastava, 2012, based on a primary survey of garment workers in Delhi categorises contractors as in-house contractors and hired contractors. In-house contractors are permanent employees of the factory. Their salaries depend on the number of contractual workers they can arrange for the factory to subsidise the production cost. On the other hand hired contractors are arranged by the factories during the peak season to cater to the rising production quota.

	to recruit both home-based and factory workers. All the sub-contractors interviewed were men.
<b>Fabricators</b>	Fabricators are instrumental in providing home-based workers to the factory through contractors and subcontractors. They are mostly garment workers who have retired with an extensive social circle. All the fabricators interviewed were women.

*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

**Fig 4.21: Type of Recruitment: Home-Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

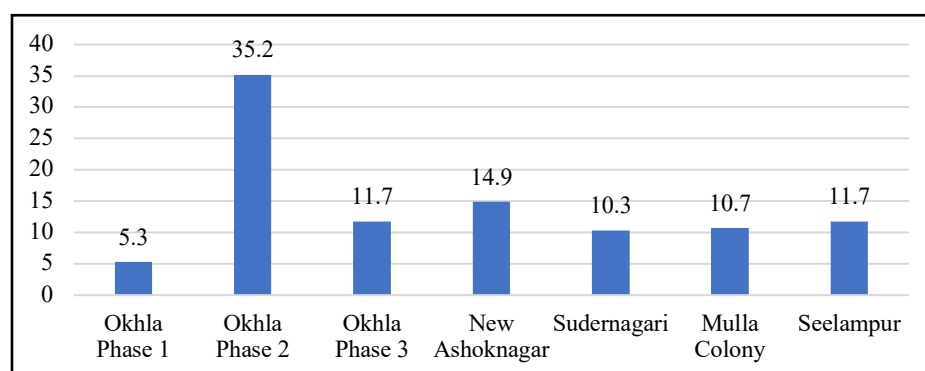
Home-based workers are always hired informally by contractors, sub-contractors and fabricators as the very basis of home-based work is to out-source factory work at a considerably cheaper rate. The graph in fig 4.21 depicts the differences in the type of recruitment when it comes to factory and home-based workers. 59 percent of the home-workers are hired by fabricators, 40 percent by sub-contractors and only 1 percent by contractors. Thus it is evident from the data that home-workers are mostly subjected to the third tier of the hiring process and

consequently receive the lowest wages. Factory workers, on the other hand, are mostly hired by sub-contractors (38 percent) and contractors (20.6 percent). Fabricators form a marginal portion having hired 6 percent of the factory workers. 34.5 percent of all the factory workers have been directly hired by the factories. This might come across as a hopeful number but it is only because the sample population has around 17 percent of workers working with SEWA where women are always hired directly through the factory.

#### 4.4.7 Area of the Factory, Size of the Factory and its Distance from the Residence of the Workers

Garment export houses are found in clusters within specific areas of the city. One of the most prominent area is the Okhla suburban region, adjacent to the Okhla Barrage close to the Uttar Pradesh - Delhi border. The Okhla Industrial Area has three phases with Phase II known for its crowding of garment export houses having various sizes and differing capacities of production. Around 35 percent of the respondents work in the Okhla Phase II industrial unit. Phase I and Phase III on the other hand are known for electrical, paper and ancillary industries and hence have fewer number of export houses. But, the three phases of the Okhla Industrial region cumulatively contribute about a little over 50 percent of the factory workers. New Ashok Nagar, bordering NOIDA is another important area which harbours small to medium-sized garment export houses, contributing to 14.9 percent of the workers. The head-office of SEWA-RUAAB is also located fifteen minutes away from the New Ashok Nagar metro station.

**Fig 4.22: Area of the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



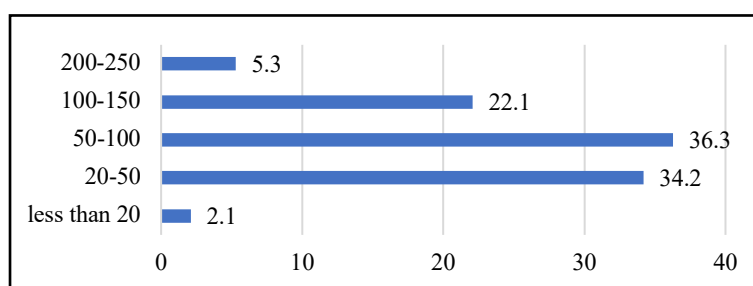
*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Seelampur, located in East Delhi, has many garment producing units, resembling sweatshops with deplorable working conditions. This area has a mix of export houses and production units

catering to nearby local markets, the closest being ‘Gandhi Nagar Market’ famous for its cheap denim pants. 11.7 percent of the respondents are from Seelampur. Finally the last two areas, Sunder Nagri in North- East Delhi and Mulla colony in Ghazipur both have SEWA production centres and sub-contractor run sweat-shops which contribute about 10 percent each of factory workers.

The Delhi-NCR region tends to employ less women workers in their garment factories. Except for a few enterprises, most evade large-scale direct or indirect hiring of female workers in comparison to their male counterparts. This is because the labour laws pertaining to women necessitate the factories to provide women workers with security and transportation, if they are made to work till late in the night. Industries of the sampled area within the city exhibits similar traits with a predominance of male workers over female workers.

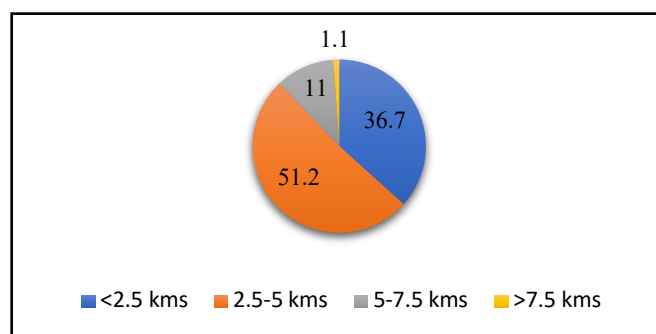
**Fig 4.23: Number of Women Workers in the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

34 percent of the factories surveyed had up to fifty women workers and 36 percent had up to a hundred women workers. The respondents failed to give an exact figure for their own industry because of large scale fluctuations in the number of women every now and then. Some of the very small scale units having less than 20 workers were mostly women dominated and consisted of SEWA units and contractor-run units in Mulla Colony and Harkesh Nagar. 2.1 percent of the respondents are from very small production enterprises and 5.3 percent are from medium-sized enterprises. Of all the sample areas of the study, only the Okhla industrial region and New-Ashok Nagar had medium sized factories employing an average of 500 to 550 workers out of which only a meagre section of the population were women.

**Fig 4.24: Distance of the Factory from the Respondent's Place of Residence, (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

In relation to the total number of women workers in the factory, the areas from which coming to the factory is also of considerable significance. A majority of the production units prefer women coming from nearby colonies and settlements. In this way, the factory can impose overtime work on the women without being liable to provide them with transportation. The pie-chart in fig 4.24 gives an overview of the distance between the factory and the workers' residences. 36.7 percent of the workers reside within a 2.5 km of the factory location and 51.2 percent reside within a 2.5 to 5 km radius of the factory. So a bulk of the workers reside within a 5 km radius of the factory. This is applicable to most of the industrial pockets like Okhla, New Ashok Nagar, Seelampur and Mulla Colony which have extensive slums in the periphery, sheltering many of the factory workers. 11 percent of the workers live within a 5 to 7.5 km radius and only 1 percent are coming from beyond 7.5 km. SEWA workers are not always from the vicinity and tend to travel longer distances because of SEWA's labour friendly policies.

#### **4.4.8 Wage Structure: Home-Based and Factory Work**

'Wage', an important aspect of garment work, differs across factories and home-based settings. The echelons of the industry established through the three tier system of contractors, sub-contractors and fabricators is an innate characteristic of the industry. The commissions and shares appropriated by these middlemen leave workers with only a meagre amount money. To add to this dilemma, there is a strong sexual division of labour where women mostly perform low-level jobs like thread-cutting and hand-work which ensures that they receive only the lowest of the available wages. The 'wage structure' in this context includes mode of payment, interval of payment and actual wage and it varies largely between factory and home based worker

**Table 4.6: Wage Structure: Home-Workers, 2018-2019**

Mode of Payment	Percentage of Women
Cash	64.8
Account Transfer	35.2
Interval of Payment	Percentage of Women
Monthly	75.8
Fortnightly	24.2
Wages (in Rupees)	Percentages of Women
3000	3.2
4000	32.4
6000	37.7
7000	20.6
8000	6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Table 4.6 represents the wage structure of factory workers of the industrial clusters in Delhi. 64.8 percent of workers receive their salary in cash which reflects their ambiguous association with the industries. Only 35.2 percent of the workers, mostly permanent employees have an official salary account. When it comes to the interval of the payment, 75.8 percent respondents stated that they receive monthly wages while 24.2 percent draw wages fortnightly. Actual wages are diversified across the industries based on the areas in which they work, and within an industry based on the type of work being undertaken by the worker.

In 2019, the Delhi government fixed minimum wage rates for unskilled workers at 14,842 rupees, semi-skilled workers at 16,341 rupees and skilled workers at 18,797 rupees (labour commissioner report, 2020). The data collected exhibits a mismatch between what the workers receive vis-à-vis what they are entitled to receive. Wages are as low as 3000 rupees for workers engaged in thread-cutting and as high as 8000 rupees for those who are doing *adda* work were reported. Women in embroidery and hand-work receive wages between 5000 to 7000 rupees. Such low wage rates can be attributed to the three tier system of contracting and sub-contracting factories employ to insulate themselves against high production costs.

**Table 4.7: Wage Structure: Factory-Workers, 2018-2019**

Mode of Payment	Percentage of Women
Cash	87
Account Transfer	13
Interval of payment	Percentage of Women
Bi-weekly	76
Weekly	24
Wages (in rupees)	Percentage of Women
1000-2000	4
2000-3000	55
3000-4000	36
4000 and above	5

*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

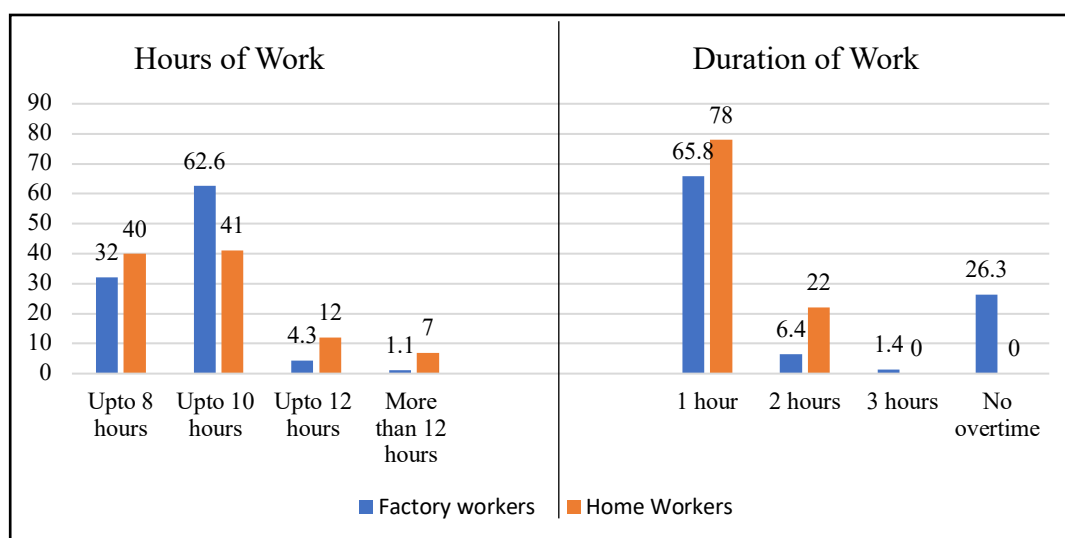
Home-based workers are subjected to the lowest wage rates and mostly receive their salaries on a piece rate basis. 87 percent of respondents receive their salaries in cash while 13 percent get it transferred to a personal bank account. The transfer of salaries to a bank account is otherwise rare and depends on the rapport a worker shares with her fabricator. Cash payments are done on a weekly or bi-weekly basis while account transfers take up to a month or more. Wages are exceptionally low, coming nowhere near the rates fixed by the state government. This is mainly because remuneration depends on the number of items finished and hence the salaries range between 1000 rupees to around 4500 rupees. The fabricator and sub-contractors also collectively work together to keep the wage rates at a bare minimum.

#### **4.4.9 Working Hours and Overtime: Home-Based and Factory Work**

Working hours in tune with wage rates tend to vary across industries and home-based work. There is a regular practice of extracting more work from contractual workers by imposing heavy production quotas on them. During peak periods, which in Delhi is between October and February, working hours in export houses automatically lengthens to meet production deadlines. Many home-based workers, though timings are flexible, work for several hours to complete pieces and to earn more money. 32 percent of factory workers stated that they work for 8 hours in a day while 62.6 percent said that they work for 10 hours a day. A very small

percentage work for 12 hours and more. On the contrary, with home-based workers, around 20 percent work for 12 hours or more in a day.

**Fig 4.25 Total Hours of Work and Overtime: Home-Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

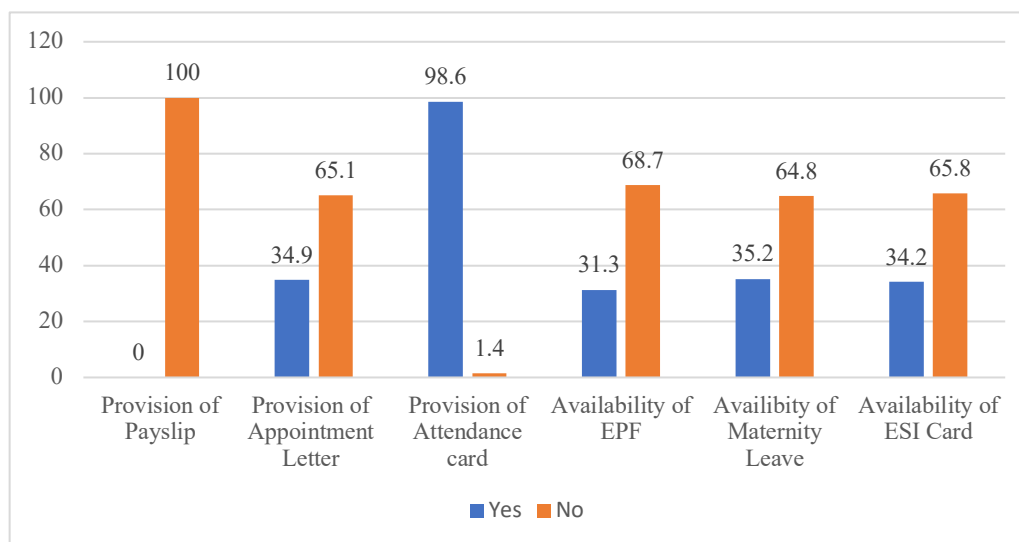
Overtime work for factory workers is a grey area. Many workers are not aware that they are doing overtime work especially during the peak production season. Overtime rates are not fixed and workers are regularly made to stay back beyond their stipulated work hours. 65.8 percent of factory workers regularly partake in overtime work. 7.8 percent are engaged in 2 hours or more overtime while 26.3 percent stated that they do not have to do any overtime work. The last category of workers include permanent employees and SEWA workers for whom the factory rules are relatively mellow. The idea of overtime work does not apply to home-workers as they are not in a factory set-up. Data was collected on the basis of ‘how many extra hours do they invest to get more work done’ to which 78 percent said that every day they work for an hour extra which can be equated with overtime work. 22 percent said that they spend two extra hours to make more money.



#### 4.4.10 Work Benefits: Factory Workers

Workers in a formal setting, i.e. factory workers are entitled to receive work benefits in the form of provident fund, maternity leave and health security. Contracting and sub-contracting of work allows factories to cushion themselves against such liabilities. In the second chapter, a thorough analysis has been done based on PLFS data on how informal workers are left out of the ambit of all possible work benefits. The primary data showcases an identical scenario. Six variables have been considered to gauge the availability of work benefits among factory workers.

**Fig 4.26: Availability of Work Benefits for Factory Workers, (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

None of the workers receive any payslips with their wages, be it temporary or permanent and are consequently not aware of their salary break-up. Surprisingly most of them had no knowledge of what payslips are when asked during the survey. 65 percent of factory workers did not receive an appointment letter when they joined an enterprise thus rendering them vulnerable to termination at any point of time. Only permanent workers had received appointment letters, otherwise ‘word of mouth’ is what works in factories. Several studies state that often contractual workers are made to sign a paper when they join, which is nothing other than their resignation letter, and the same is used at a convenient time (Chan 2009, Srivastava 2012, Kabeer 1997). Attendance cards or registers are often used to track the workers’ regularity hence 98 percent of respondents said that their attendance was taken every day at work. Employees Provident Fund is received by 31 percent of the respondent while 68 percent

stated otherwise. Maternity leave, an important benefit is only available to 35 percent of factory workers while 64.8 percent said that they are not entitled to any maternity benefits or leave. It was also noticed that few of the factories in Seelampur and New Ashok Nagar provided maternity leave without pay to their informal workers instead of out-rightly giving them a release notice. Lastly, the Employer’s State Insurance Card for free health benefits catering to workers drawing salaries below seven thousand rupees was available to only 34.2 percent of the workers in the factory.

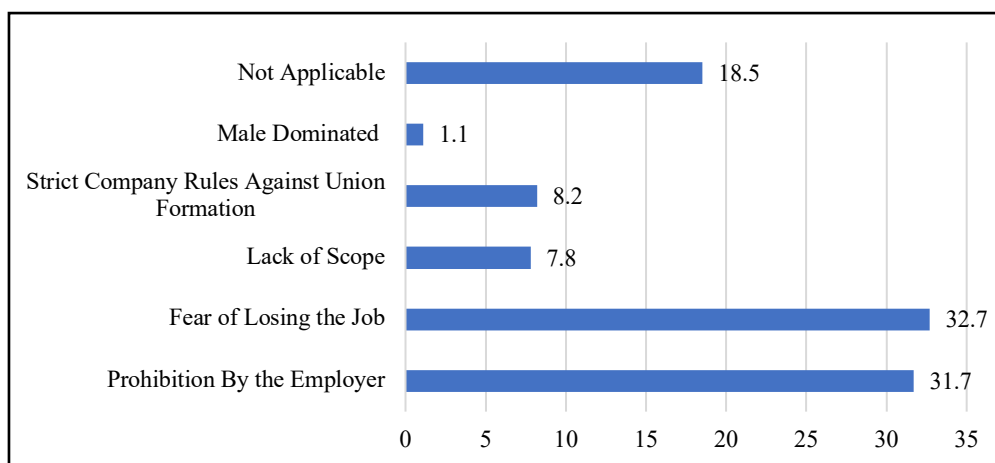
While many were aware of the available benefits, several informal workers had to be explained what these benefits are and had to be told why and how they are entitled to them thus portraying a sombre reality of factory workers.

#### 4.4.11 Existence of Labour Organisations in the Factories of Delhi

Collective bargaining through labour organisations and unions are a fundamental right rooted in the ILO constitution. It is only through collective bargaining that employers and trade unions can establish fair wages and decent working conditions. It also forms the basis of sound labour relations with the employers (ILO, labour standards and global supply chain, 2019).

Export houses in Delhi do not support formation of labour unions in the factory. Moreover, as most workers are temporary in nature, they are, on several occasions, strongly advised against any form of unionisation. According to the primary dataset around 81.5 percent of the workers said that there are no unions of any form in the factory and listed several reasons which has been depicted in the following graph.

**Fig 4.27: Reasons for Not Having a Union in the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19

Around 32.7 percent of factory workers cited ‘fear of losing the job’ as the primary reason for not having any unions in the factory. The narrative of union formation equalling to job loss is well circulated by both the contractors and factory managers to keep the workers in check. About 31.7 percent of workers recounted ‘prohibition by the employer’ as the primary reason why workers are clearly informed by their employers that union formation is illegal within and outside the factory. Reasons like ‘lack of scope for women’ and ‘strict company rules against union formation’ was also specified by 7.8 percent and 8.2 percent of the factory workers respectively. 1.1 percent said that unions and labour organisations are male dominated and are not spaces where women could participate or voice their opinions.

A lack of unions in majority of the small and medium sized export houses in Delhi fails to create a conducive environment where employees and their employers can negotiate on the availability of work benefits, extent of informality and minimum wage rates. Women workers are most affected by the lack of labour organisation and this is reflected in the ambiguity of their work, and the unavailability of health, maternity and childcare benefits.

A small proportion of factory workers, 18.5 percent said ‘yes’ to the presence of a union and claimed to be an active participant in the decision making processes. All these women are working with SEWA RUAAB, an organisation which actively supports collective bargaining and encourages workers to voice their thoughts to promote and strive for better work conditions.

#### **4.4.12 Sexual Harassment Experienced by Women Workers in the Factory**

Women factory workers go through multiple levels of hardship. Sexual harassment at the workplace is one of these hardships. Harassment is common in medium sized factories lining Okhla, New Ashok Nagar and Seelampur, characterised by the unfavourable sex ratio of the workers. Women working in smaller enterprises do not report incidents of harassment as these production units are mostly dominated by female workers.

**Table 4.8: Sexual Harassment at the Workplace: Factory Workers, 2018-2019**

<b>Experienced Sexual Harassment at the work place</b>	<b>Percentage of women</b>
Yes	44.5
No	55.8
Type of Sexual Harassment	Percentage of women
Verbal	38.6
Physical	5.8

*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

Workers experiencing sexual harassment do not speak up for fear of losing their jobs. 44.5 percent of the workers stated that they have experienced sexual harassment at work. Harassment reported by women were either verbal or physical in nature. 38.6 percent reported verbal form of sexual harassment like use of sexual connotations within a conversation. 5.8 percent reported being physically harassed, including instances of inappropriate touching and groping. According to the workers, the middlemen might use abusive and derogatory language once in a while but never make physical advances. On the contrary, it is often the factory managers who physically harass women workers.

Most women who have been victims of sexual harassment have stayed quiet and haven't reported the incident to anybody. This is mainly because of the absence of labour organisations within the factory spaces along with a lack of awareness among women workers regarding whom to approach. Many have internalised the experiences and consider them as part and parcel of their working life.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Encapsulating the data analysis in this chapter it can be said that women in the garment sector hail from the neighbouring states of Delhi, mostly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and come from different religious and social categories. Both Home-based and factory workers mostly belong

to nuclear families and have a relatively small family size. Though the type of work varies across home-based and factory settings but workers from both categories are victims of 'recruitment hierarchy' which impact their wage structure and work benefits. Majority of the factory workers fall outside the ambit of work benefits as they are contractually hired, and lack of a trade union in almost all the factories suppress all forms of collective bargaining. To add to the unfavourable work conditions, women factory workers are sexually harassed in the factory spaces and they have nobody to share their grievances with. Thus it can be concluded that an attempt has been made in this chapter to provide a backdrop to gauge the different childcare choices adopted by garment workers which will be discussed in the upcoming chapters.

## CHAPTER V

# CHILDCARE CHOICES BY GARMENT WORKERS

### 5.1 Introduction

Caring for children by someone other than their parents is termed as childcare. Childcare is an important service which should be made available to working mothers across different categories of employment. Women workers of the global north are fortified against the uncertainties surrounding work benefits while those of the global south are exposed to it. Women in developing countries are largely employed informally and face two major obstacles when it comes to childcare services. Firstly, the dearth of quality childcare services for children between 0-6 years and, secondly, the prohibitive cost of these services, where and when they do exist (Moussie, 2020). Childcare as a service encompasses several attributes like early childhood education, care-giving, medical attention and nutrition, thus contributing to the holistic development of a child. According to a 2019 UNICEF report, millions of children across lower and middle income countries lack access to quality childcare. Some of the statistics available are a cause of severe concern. A few of them are cited below:

*“In 76 low and middle income countries (LICs and MICs), one in every five children under the age of 5 (around 45 million) lack adult supervision for at least an hour in a given week.*

*In 67 LICs and MICs, around 57 million children aged 3 to 5 (69 per cent) did not attend an early childhood education programme.*

*In LICs and MICs, 43 per cent of children under age 5 i.e. an estimated 250 million risk suboptimal development due to poverty and stunting.” UNICEF, 2019*

The 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal emphasised the need for childcare and early childhood development (ECD) programmes. ECD is an umbrella term for a variety of interventions aimed at young children and their carers/families, which include health and nutrition, childcare, education and parental support. ECD programmes are particularly important to promote early childhood development among vulnerable children. Taking

‘vulnerability’ as the point of reference, children of informally employed workers occupying the lower reaches of the economic strata are exposed to an ambiguous upbringing and are in dire need of viable ECD programmes. It has also been pointed out that investments in ECD programmes would result in the formation of robust human resource thus aiding in economic growth.

A thorough analysis of the primary data in the last chapter illustrates that almost 90 percent of the respondents involved in factory work are informally employed and hence not entitled to any work benefits. Additionally, most industries in Delhi do not have any crèche provisions within the factory premises. In this particular chapter, an attempt has been made to explore the multiplicity and type of childcare choices adopted by women garment workers, working both in the factory and at home-based settings based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through the primary survey.

## **5.2 Theoretical Constructs for Understanding Childcare**

Many researchers have tried to establish the importance and role of childcare in a child’s upbringing. A few of the theories have been discussed below and have also been used in the study as guiding constructs.

### **5.2.1 John Bowlby- Attachment Theory**

The Attachment Theory originated in the 1930s and 1940s when a number of clinicians observed the negative impacts of maternal separations early in life. John Bowlby was among many others who observed this effect. His work showed that ‘separated children experienced intense feelings of mental pain, anguish and withdrawal’ (Holmes, 1993). Bowlby (1969) stated that maternal sensitivity encouraged children to form a secure attachment with the mother. He also suggested that this attachment is unique to the infant-mother pair and served as a basis of the development of ancillary relationships in the future. Ainsworth (1979), following Bowlby’s argument, proposed the concept of a ‘secure base’ where attachment ties the infant to the mother, and that the mother also forms a secure base through which the infant explores the world.

While Bowlby’s attachment theory provides us with valuable insights in the context of childcare, a major critique of his work is his ignoring of the role of other family members, including that of fathers (Keller and Chaudhary, 2016). When asked about the role of fathers, Bowlby had said that, ‘A child doesn’t need two mothers’ (Newland and Coyl, 2010). It was

only his son, Richard Bowlby, who proposed a dual primary attachment figure acknowledging the role of fathers in forming attachment.

The attachment theory establishes the prominence of mothers in a child's upbringing. But in the context of the present study, an attempt has been made to capture the involvement of the father and other family members and determine their role in raising the child, while these mothers are at work.

### **5.2.2 Jay Belsky- Ecology of Childcare on Child Development**

Belsky, who has made significant contribution to the research on childcare, originally stated that there was no difference in the upbringing of the child between those raised in day-care and those raised within homes. He strongly argued that formal childcare services neither benefit nor harm the intellectual development of children. He also contested the attachment theory by stating that day-care does not disrupt the child's emotional bond with his/her mother. But, following further research, he altered his stance pertaining to the effects of day-care on young children. **Belsky and Steinberg (1978)** suggested that children belonging to economically disadvantaged backgrounds who attended poorly equipped care-centres tended to suffer from negative effects during their upbringing. **Belsky (1988)**, after a decade, changed his often-used nomenclature 'effects of day-care' to 'ecology of day-care' and stated that the characteristics and settings of the day-care had an important impact on the lived experiences of the child. **Belsky and Rovaine (1988)** also found that prolonged non-parental care in the first year of life was associated with patterns of insecure attachment.

With reference to Belsky's 'ecology of day-care', an attempt has been made in this chapter to capture the characteristics and settings of the formal child-care options accessed by women garment workers through the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – (Revised). This particular qualitative tool will give us an idea about the social and environmental settings in which these children are growing up.

### **5.2.3 Charles M. Super and Sara Harkness- The Developmental Niche**

Super and Harkness believe in the concept of 'The Development Niche', when it comes to childcare choices or practices across the world. The Development niche suggests that culture shapes child development through three major components. Firstly, the 'physical and social settings', which can vary according to the parents' cultural belief systems. Infants in the Kokwet rural community in Kenya slept with their mothers through the day and night, while



an infant in urban USA slept in his own bed (**Super and Harkness, 1986**). The second component pertains to the ‘Customs of Care’ where certain childcare behaviours are integrated into a larger cultural context. Like, in India, a family’s socio-economic conditions, religious beliefs and cultural norms play a crucial role in influencing parenting and child rearing practices (**Isaac et al, 2014**). Finally, the psychology of the caretakers, shaped again by their cultural background, tends to impact the upbringing of the child across different societies.

Following the arguments established by Super and Harkness, I have tried to delineate development niches according to the type and multiplicity of childcare practices in the present study.

### **5.3 Child’s Age and The Need for Childcare**

Families are increasingly transitioning from joint to nuclear definitions in urban areas due to male and female mobility through education and employment across class lines (**J. Devika, 2008**). This leads to the breakdown of the traditional support system and puts the burden of childcare on working mothers, especially those who have children under the age of six. Along these lines, the lack of egalitarian family structures further holds mothers accountable for childcare. In this context, the need for childcare becomes a necessity and should be approached through the lens of a human rights framework (**Diner, 2010**), where the government is responsible for providing effective childcare services and supporting women engaged in different strata of the workforce (**Davis et al, 2003**).

### **5.4 Childcare Options Available for Mothers**

Childcare as mentioned above is a working woman’s right and needs to be addressed both by the employer and the government. While western countries have seen restructuring and strengthening of formal childcare services, the same has not been the case in developing countries. With scarce subsidised formal childcare services, more and more women resort to informal care options to meet their care needs.

#### **5.4.1 Formal Childcare**

Formal childcare mainly involves caring for the child by trained caregivers. In the context of the present study it can be said that viable formal childcare options are limited to factory crèches, few makeshift private crèches, *anganwadis* and government run primary schools. *Anganwadis* and primary schools cater only to children between the ages of three to six years,

thus leaving those belonging to ages zero to three outside the ambit of public care services. Garment workers lack the monetary calibre to enrol their children in high end private crèches and private schools and constantly and desperately seek out affordable care services.

“Of course we need subsidised childcare facilities! I work here for 12 hours and my husband is not at home through the day. I have three small children and there is nobody to take care of them” -----*Mamta, Theme Export, Phase II*

To further add to the dilemma of ‘finding affordable childcare’, it is observed that women’s informal position in the labour market in general and in garment factories in particular makes them ineligible for any form of work benefits, including crèche facilities in the factories. Apart from the ICDS programs, governmental efforts towards providing for an all-encompassing concrete childcare services have been lukewarm. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme (a major initiative of the central government to provide free childcare services to working mothers) hasn’t reached every part of the country and its ineffectiveness is perfectly illustrated by the fact that respondents of the present study were completely unaware of the existence of this program.

#### **5.4.2 Informal Childcare**

Informal childcare choices are very important for women garment workers, for whom balancing childcare and work is a constant struggle. A lack of subsidized formal care options force working mothers to rely on their social networks, banking on family members and neighbours for childcare. Grandparents are a boon in this regard but an increasing number of nuclear families has resulted in the collapse of this traditional support system, thereby pressurising women to rely more on older children and neighbours. While informal childcare is definitely a valuable option, it does not incorporate all the required aspects of childcare, such as immunization, education and nutrition, thus not ensuring the holistic development of the child. Moreover, an increasing dependence on neighbours for care services is often not the most reliable option and one can always question its safety. While informal childcare services do help to create bonds and promote the socio-emotional development of a child, it is equally important for the state to adopt the ‘crowding out hypothesis’ (**Parsen, 1956**) through the expansion of childcare arrangements to reduce the dependence on informal childcare options.

## 5.5 Factory Crèche

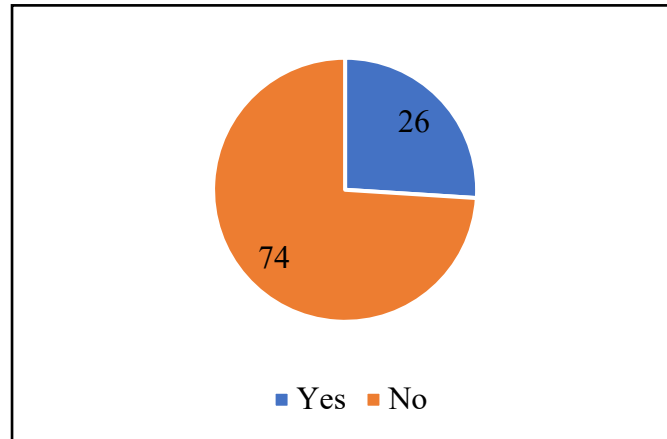
The factories act of 1948 along with various other pieces of legislation have mandated the provision of crèche facilities at the workplace where the employer is required to provide space and support for their employees' children. According to The Factories Act 1948, section 48 Crèches-----

(1) "In every factory wherein more than thirty women workers are ordinarily employed there shall be provided and maintained a suitable room or rooms for the use of children under the age of six years of such women."

(2) "Such rooms shall provide adequate accommodation, shall be adequately lighted and ventilated, shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and shall be under the charge of a women trained in the care of children and infants."

The **Delhi Factory Rules (1950)** largely reiterates the provisions of The Factories Act. Rule 73 under sub-section (3) of section 48 requires any factory within its statutory boundary to have a functioning crèche facility if the number of women workers is more than thirty. Even though the factory rules incorporate care provisions, the primary data, depicted through the following pie-chart, shows that 74 percent of the sampled factory workers did not have any crèche facilities within or outside the factory premises. Only 26 percent of the respondents, a majority being SEWA workers, acknowledged the presence of crèches within the factory premises. At this point, it is important to mention that Self Employed Women's Association, popularly known as SEWA, employs informal women workers with full work benefits. Their garment production unit under the name of RUAAB has workshops scattered in and around Delhi. 20 percent of the factory workers interviewed were engaged in RUAAB units and had crèche facilities within the workshop. On the contrary, very few of the export houses/private industries had even make-shift childcare facilities available to working mothers.

**Fig 5.1: Crèches Present in the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



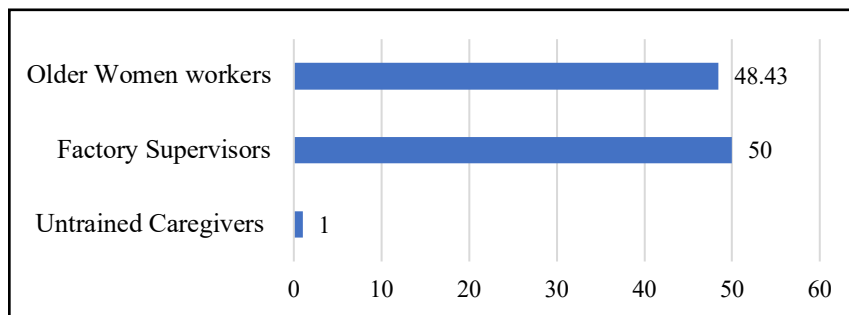
*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

Export houses are able to bypass rules laid down by central and state governments because of the strong informal nature of the industry where almost every woman worker is informally employed.

#### **5.5.1 Supervision of Factory Crèches**

Availability of crèche facilities becomes significant only if this is combined with the presence of trained caregivers. Section 48 of the Factories Act of 1948 states that “children in factory crèches shall be placed under the charge of women trained in the care of children and infants”. In contrast to the existing regulations, it is evident from the following bar graph that none of the manufacturing units which have crèche facilities employ trained caregivers. Of the small number of factories which have caregiving facilities, 50 percent are monitored by factory supervisors who are women, 48 percent by older women workers and finally 1 percent by untrained caregivers. Hence, the lack of trained caregivers defeats the entire purpose of having a crèche facility and also reconfirms lackadaisical attitude of factory owners to childcare.

**Fig 5.2: Supervision of Factory Crèches (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

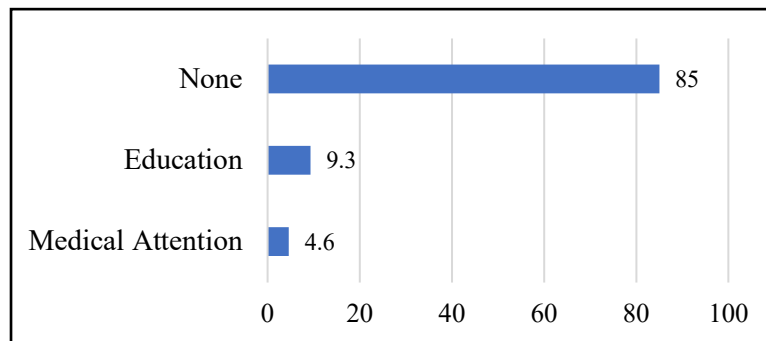


*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### 5.5.2 Facilities Provided in the Crèches

Public crèches in India are not developed enough to meet all the needs of an infant. Proper implementation is only restricted to the government sector and larger establishments. Child care provisions have eroded with the liberalisation and privatisation of companies (Swaminathan, 1993) which explains the unavailability of proper facilities in factory crèches. Along with the lack of trained caregivers, 85 percent of industries which have crèches do not provide any type of facilities.

**Fig 5.3: Facilities Provided in the Crèche (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

The Factories Act of 1948 specifies that the state government should make sure that free milk, refreshments, age appropriate toys, learning tools and first aid kits should be provided to the children in the factory crèches (Comelo, 2012). The above graph shows that only 9 percent of crèches sampled have the provision of learning tools like books and toys which inculcate the habit of learning and encouraging some form of educational activity. Lastly, medical attention and the availability of first aid kits are seen in only a meagre 4.6 percent of factory crèches.

### **5.5.3 Mean Number of Children in Factory Crèches**

The total number of children in factory crèches studied here ranges between 2 to 7 with the average being 4.64 in each crèche. The low turnout of children emphasizes the lack of assurance and unavailability of facilities. Many respondents justified that it was safer to leave her child at home or with the neighbour than to leave her in a room situated in the other end of the factory. SEWA workers mostly brought their children to work as they were allowed to work either with their child (if the child is below three years) or in the same vicinity (three to six years).

### **5.5.4 Location of Factory Crèches**

All the manufacturing units having childcare provisions had their crèches within the factory premises. Amongst these, the crèche was equivalent to a small room with a few mattresses placed on the ground. In the export houses, this room was in one corner of the factory space and mothers were not allowed to interact with their child except during lunch breaks. SEWA/RUAAB, on the contrary, with their relatively small teams, had their care rooms placed right next to where the women would work thus allowing frequent mother-child interaction.

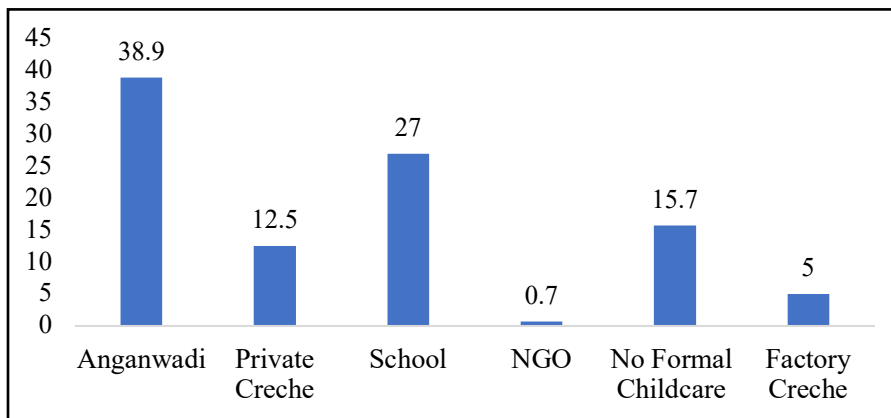
## **5.6 Formal Childcare Choices and its Characteristics**

Unavailability of crèche facilities in their workplace often pushes factory workers to look for alternative formal childcare options. The following section discusses the characteristics of the formal childcare options that factory workers resort to through their type, cost and consistency.

### **5.6.1 Types of Formal Childcare**

Affordable formal childcare facilities available to factory workers are not many. Their limited income compels them to bank mostly on government facilities. 37 percent of the respondents stated that they send their children to an anganwadi closest to their residential area. Anganwadis, an initiative under the ICDS program is beneficial to children as it provides education, meals and medical attention. Along with anganwadis, government schools also act as formal care centres providing education and mid-day meals. 27 percent of the respondents picked schools as their formal childcare option. While an anganwadi and government primary schools are viable and modest options, they do not cater to children below the age of three.

**Fig 5.4: Types of Formal Childcare Options (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

Garment workers having very young children either resort to informal care or look for low-cost private crèches which largely function within the perimeter of the slum in which they live. 12.5 percent of the respondents availed childcare facilities from such private crèches.

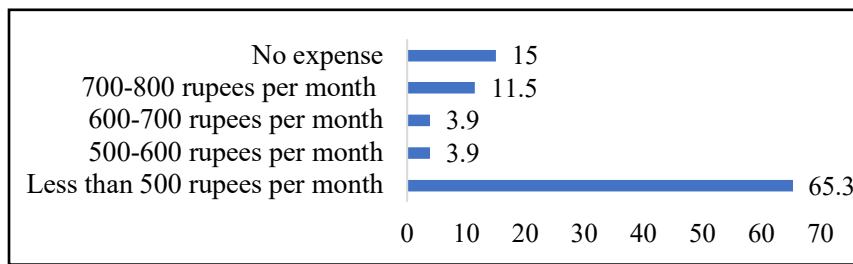
“I leave my child with my neighbour. She is an old lady who takes care of many children in my locality whose parents are working. We pay her a little. We do not have the money to send our kids to private crèches” ----*Ranju Devi, Span India, Phase III*

Around 15 percent of the respondents coming from joint family units with very young children cited that they had not used any formal childcare options at all. Factory crèches only formed 5 percent of all the formal care choices. A few respondents also mentioned some NGOs which acted as potential day care centres.

### **5.6.2 Cost of Formal Childcare**

As a majority of the mothers depend on government day care facilities like schools and anganwadis, the monthly cost of formal childcare for around 65 percent of the respondents was below 500 rupees. Most of the women workers couldn't account for the expenditure, and essentially cited books and stationery as the major items on which their money was spent. 15 percent of the respondents, primarily from joint family backgrounds did not incur any expense on formal care services. Local private crèches were used by many factory workers having small children where the cost would typically range between six hundred to eight hundred rupees per month. The low cost of these private care centres can be attributed only to the physical supervision of the child without any meals, medical attention and learning activities.

**Fig 5.5: Cost of Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

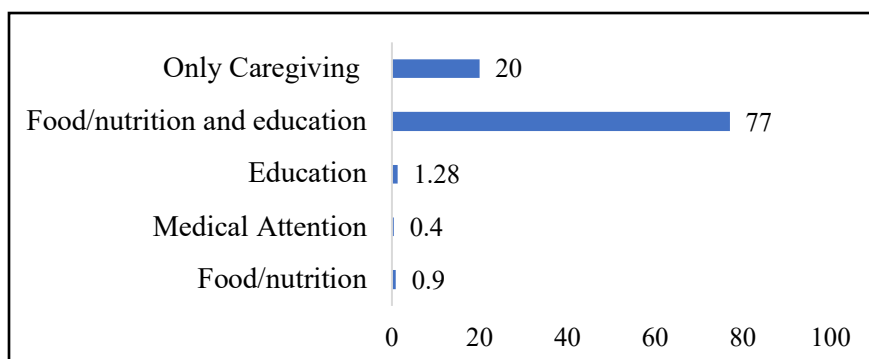


*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### 5.6.3 Facilities Provided by the Formal Childcare Services

A day care centre or an established crèche facility should cater to the physical and emotional needs of a child by providing proper nutrition, medical attention and basic learning activities (Hansen et al, 2006). Most government care units like *anganwadis* and primary schools do provide basic education through age-appropriate learning activities and nutrition through mid-day meals. *Anganwadis* also provide medical attention through timely vaccination, distribution of iron, calcium and vitamin-C tablets. 77 percent of the respondents said that their care centres (mostly government as pointed out by the previous graph) provide meals once a day and basic education to their children. 20 percent of the respondents, mostly those who enrolled their children into private crèches or factory crèches, cited caregiving as the only facility available. A few of the respondents, mostly garment workers who availed of factory crèche facilities, also pointed out that their care centres provided education and sometimes medical attention.

**Fig 5.6: Facilities Provided by the Formal Childcare Services, (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



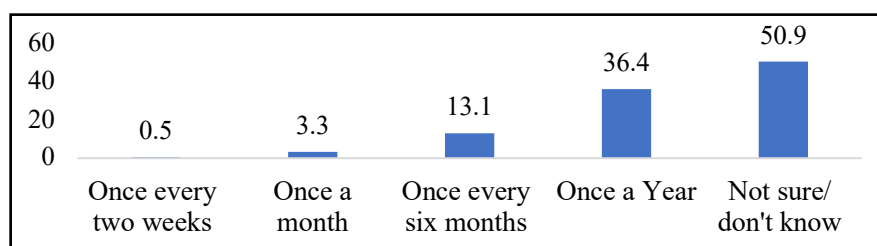
*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*



### 5.6.4 Frequency of Change in Formal Childcare

A perusal of formal childcare options of women garment factory workers do not exhibit multiplicity in their choices. Almost half of the respondents, 50.9 percent said that they were not sure about the changing their child care choice, thus indirectly implying a long term association with their current day care facility. Around 36.4 percent of the factory workers surveyed stated that their frequency of change was once a year, while 13 percent stated that their frequency of change was once every six months. A very small percentage of respondents stated frequency of change being as often as once a month and once every two weeks. Thus it can be established that the frequency of change in formal childcare choices among factory workers is relatively low with only a meagre percentage opting for periodic change. Tentative reasons behind the low level of multiplicity can be because of their

**Fig 5.7: Frequency of Change: Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

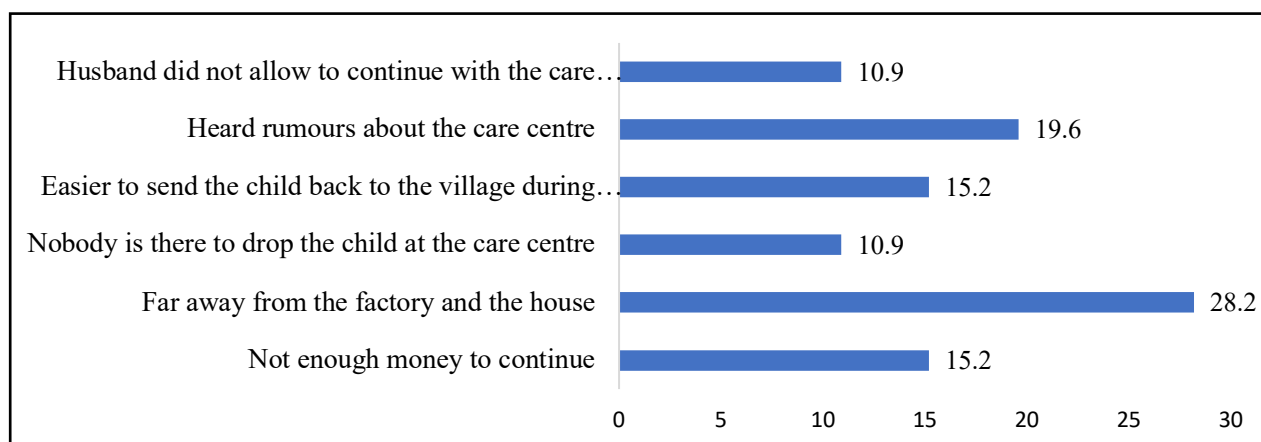
heavy dependence on government care options. It is convenient for working mothers to locate and rely upon a nearby *anganwadi* or a government school as these are relatively safe and fairly subsidized along with the provision of nutrition, education and medical attention. Also, with their bare salaries, they wouldn't be able to afford private crèches except for the makeshift ones which have come up in and around their residential areas. These small care centres are affordable for these mothers but do not provide anything to the children apart from physical supervision. Furthermore, rumours about mistreatment of children in these crèches also acts as a tentative explanation behind why only a small percentage of respondents chose to change their childcare every month or every fortnight.

### 5.6.5 Reasons behind the Change in Formal Childcare

Several reasons were cited by the respondents who chose to change their formal childcare facility in the last one year. A majority of the workers said that because the day care centre was

far away from the factory and the house, they had to look for a viable alternative in close proximity. This was mainly in the context of public care centres like anganwadis and

**Fig 5.8: Reasons Behind the Change in Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

government schools. Almost 20 percent of the respondents said that rumours pertaining to care practices in private centres compelled them to discontinue with the service.

“The day-care owner would feed sleeping pills to my son so that he would sleep throughout the day! It was a horrifying experience. I took my elder daughter out of school, she is looking after my son now.” - *Vimla, Harkeshnagar*

Many also stated that they did not have enough money to continue with the private care crèches and that it was always more convenient to simply send their children back to the village if they were still very young or every year during the peak season.

“Every year we send our kids back to the village during the peak season. It is easier to manage everything that way. I don’t trust the Mohalla Crèches, god knows what goes on in there!” – *Kamla, Seelumpur*

A few of the mothers also pointed out that there usually there is nobody in the family to drop their children off to a day care centre as both husband and wife left early for work. This makes leaving their child with the neighbour the most feasible option. Lastly, around 11 percent of

the respondents said that their husbands asked them not to continue with the private care centre and to instead use the money on household expenses.

### **5.7 Evaluation of Child Care Programmes through Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale---Revised (ECERS-R)**

Belsky's theory on the ecology of childcare tries to capture how the immediate physical and social surroundings of a child tend to impact the nature of its upbringing. As discussed before, it is important to critically analyse the quality of the formal care choices adopted by mothers belonging to lower economic strata of society. Taking a cue from Belsky's argument, an attempt has been made in this section to assess the quality of the private and factory crèche facilities available to women garment workers. The quality of childcare arrangements can be evaluated on the nature of the day care, the curriculum used, the quality of play materials, learning tools and safety parameters (Blau, 1999). Considering the above attributes, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale –Revised (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005) has been used as an assessment tool to capture the quality of the formal care centres. This particular tool assesses care centres serving children through two and a half to five years of age through a 43-item rating scale organized into seven environmental subscales.

#### **Location of the Care Centres**

Three different types of formal care options have been used for rating. The first is a private day care centre in Harkeshnagar, which is located around half a kilometre away from Okhla phase II. Harkeshnagar is a hub of garment export houses in the Okhla industrial region. It is run by an old lady and her daughter. When it comes to factory crèche's, most of the export houses did not have any facilities either inside or outside of their premises. Out of the negligible number of factory crèche's, an onsite crèche facility in Okhla Phase-III was selected, as it provided more amenities than the others. Finally the care centre of SEWA-RUAAB's largest manufacturing unit in New Ashok Nagar was selected to be juxtaposed with the other two care facilities. The details of the care centres are given in the following table.

**Table 5.1: Description of Childcare Programmes: An Evaluation, 2018-2019**

Name	Nature of the Care Centre /Programme	Teachers/Supervisors/Trained caregivers/Helpers	Tools Used	Age-Group	Number of Children
Private Crèche	Offsite	1 Supervisor 1 Helper	ECERS-R	2 years 8 months to 4 years	6
Factory Crèche: Phase III	Onsite	1 Factory supervisor 1 Factory Worker	ECERS-R	3 years to 4 years 3 months	5
Factory Crèche: SEWA-RUAAB	Onsite	1	ECERS-R	2.5 years to 4 years	6

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### **Assessment of Quality**

The National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (Ministry of Women and child Development, 2013) recommends that every child care centre, be it private or public, should have certain non-negotiable base standards. The National commission of Protection of child's Rights (NCPCR) has created regulatory guidelines for private day care centres and play schools (2017) which directs the promotion of preschool education for children between 3 to 6 years. In this section, a detailed description of the above three programs in the context of their physical layout, teacher's activity and interpersonal relations has been carried out through the ECERS-R assessment to have a clear idea regarding whether the guidelines have been met. And if they haven't, then to find out the extent of the lacunae present.

### **Private Day Care Centre (offsite) – ECERS-R**

This private day care centre in Harkeshnagar was run by an elderly woman and her daughter. It catered to children between the ages of two and six. The total number of children enrolled were 7 and all of them were present during the days of observation. The required data collection took eight hours over a period of three days as a full day observation was not allowed. The observation time was seven hours with an extra one hour involving interaction with the crèche supervisors and a parent of a child. The youngest child in the program was 2.5 years old while the oldest was 5 years old.

***Space and Furnishing*** – This sub-scale received an average score of 1 as shown in table 5.2. Even though the indoor space was sufficient for all the infants, there was lack of adequate light and ventilation in the room. The space was otherwise clean and well-maintained with a small dustbin in the corner of the room. Instead of cribs, mattresses were laid down on one side of the room on which the children could rest. There was lack of ‘colour’ and ‘softness’ in the room due to the plain white walls and grey mattresses. A few worn soft toys and balls were stacked in one corner of the room for the children to play with. There was no sink or diaper changing station within the room.

**Table 5.2: ECERS-R Score for the Private Day Care Centre (Offsite: 1) 2018-2019**

Serial No	Subscale	Average Score
1	Space and Furnishing	1.00
2	Personal Care	2.50
3	Language-Reasoning	1.00
4	Activities	1.00
5	Interaction	1.52
6	Program Structure	1.00
7	Parent and Staff	2.00

**Average Score: 1.43**

***Personal Care*** – This subscale received a score of 2.5. The interpersonal dynamics such as greeting and departing were not very strong. The parents, mostly mothers, would hand over their children along with food for the day. If the child was reluctant to leave the mother, the helper cajoled the child and took him/her inside the room. Once, there was an elaborate conversation, where the mother requested the supervisor to monitor her child as he was

suffering from diarrhoea. Apart from the above incident, there were generally no interactions between the parents and the supervisor except for a basic exchange of pleasantries.

After being dropped off, the children stayed in the room and started playing with the soft toys and balls. Even though there was a small courtyard just outside the room, the children were not allowed to go outside and play. Lunch was served by 12.30 pm and the menu differed for every child as their food came from their respective homes. Most of the children ate lunch on their own except for the youngest one who was fed by the helper. Lunch was very simple for all the children and consisted mainly of dal, sabzi, roti/rice. The helper did not wash her hands before serving food to the children. After lunch, the curtains were drawn and the mattresses laid out. The supervisor sang a few songs and put the children to sleep.

***Language-Reasoning-*** The average sub-score on this scale is 1 which is quite poor as the supervisor and her helper did not facilitate any language development by engaging individually with the children. There were interactions during lunch where the helper urged the kids to finish their food, the supervisor sang a song to help the kids fall asleep, and finally, in the evening, she told them a story right before they were picked up by their parents. To monitor the children, both the supervisor and her helper were occasionally loud and rude. Finally, the lack of books and print materials for the children further lowered the score.

***Activities-*** There were hardly any organised activities for the children so the average score was 1. The supervisor and the helper were busy either in the kitchen or in the courtyard, checking on the children at regular intervals. After naptime, pieces of paper/old newspaper and some crayons were given to the children. While the older ones started scribbling on the papers, the younger children started tearing the newspapers into small pieces. On one wall was a chart stuck with photographs of fruits and flowers. The supervisor sat with the children in the evening and asked them to identify the photos.

***Interaction-*** This sub-scale received an average score of 1.52. There were two adults for seven children but it was observed that individual personalised attention was not given to the children. Staff and child interactions were limited and repetitive as mentioned above. This inadvertently led to snatching of toys and fighting amongst the children who were eventually disciplined with a loud scream from the helper. The supervisor, at the end of the day, made sure to remind the mothers to cut the fingernails of their respective children so that nobody got hurt.

***Programme Structure*** – The program lacked proper structure and hence the score for this subscale was only 1. This particular care centre provided the bare minimum of facilities to the children without the provision of food, print materials or scheduled activities. The helper and the supervisor were often absent from the room, thus not ensuring round-the-clock supervision to the children. Finally, the children were never taken outside the room and were restricted to play, interact, eat and sleep within those four walls. The lack of provisions and the carefree attitude of the supervisor and her helper also explained the very low cost of this private care centre which was around 800 rupees per month.

***Parent and Staff***- This subscale received a slightly higher score as the supervisor and the helper updated the mothers about the behaviour of each child during the day. They were friendly with the mothers, who repeatedly thanked the staff for keeping their child safe through the day. Both the supervisor and the helper were familiar with the children and waved to them while they were leaving and the children waved back. On the down side, the mother-daughter duo were neither trained caregivers nor trained teachers which made their care centre merely an inferior substitute to proper formal childcare services available otherwise.

### **Factory Crèche: Okhla Phase III –ECERS-R (onsite)**

A majority of the export houses in the Okhla Industrial region do not have any creche provisions within their factory premises. Out of the few which have this such facilities, the best one in Okhla Phase III was considered for this analysis. The crèche was located within the factory premises, a few rooms away from the main production area. The crèche was managed by female factory supervisors and senior women factory workers. A total of 5 children were enrolled here and all of them were present on the day of observation. The observation time was 6 hours and was completed in a single day as permission to continue observation for more days was not given by the factory manager. The observation time was 5 hours 30 minutes, while half an hour was taken to interact with the caregivers. The youngest child was 3 years old while the oldest child was 6 years old.

**Table 5.3 ECERS-R Score for a Factory Crèche in Okhla (Onsite: 1) 2018-2019**

Serial No	Subscale	Average Score
1	Space and Furnishing	1.50
2	Personal Care	2.00
3	Language-Reasoning	1.00
4	Activities	0.51
5	Interaction	0.42
6	Program Structure	0.51
7	Parent and Staff	2.00

**Average score - 1.13**

**Space and Furnishing** - The room was spacious with sufficient sunlight and ventilation. The subscale received an average score of 1.5. The floor of the room was carpeted with mattresses stacked in the corner of the room. The walls were painted with bright colours with popular cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck which added an element of warmth and friendliness to the room. A cupboard in the corner of the room contained some toys and diapers. The mattresses did not appear to be very clean and had several stains on them. A very small bathroom and kitchen was attached to this room. There was no option of outdoor playtime for the children.

**Personal Care** - This subscale received a score of 2. A mother would bring her child to the factory and the child would be dropped off at the crèche before the mother started work. There were no incidents of crying and the children willingly entered the room and were happy to play with the toys kept there for them. While milk and baby food were available in the crèche, solid food like dal, rice and roti had to be provided by the mother. Interaction between the parent and the supervisor was brief and mainly consisted of formal pleasantries. After the mothers left, the children settled down and got busy playing with toys or with each other. Surprisingly, the female factory supervisor and the senior worker in charge of the crèche would check on the children only after long intervals. The children were left alone in the room for very long durations alone with only this researcher sitting and observing them.

Lunch was served at around 1pm by the senior worker and consisted mainly of a combination of milk, baby food and the food sent from each child's house. All of them ate on their own



except for a three year old who had to be fed. During lunch the factory supervisor came, observed everything and stayed back to put the children to sleep with a song. After the children fell asleep the senior worker and the factory supervisor left the room.

**Language-Reasoning-** The score for this subscale is 1. This is because neither of the caregivers was involved in productive one-on-one interactions with the children. Their only interaction was being present during lunch time and before napping when the children were asked to finish their food and go to sleep. Around 3 pm, I was asked to leave the factory premises and could not further observe the interactions between the caregivers and the children.

**Activities-** There was absolutely no activities planned for the children. They were given some soft toys, LEGO or jigsaw puzzles to play with. Apart from these, there were no colouring books, story books or printed material for the children. The caregivers hardly got involved with the children and did not play any games during the period of observation. The youngest of the group, a three year old, had nothing to do and nobody to play with and thus ended up napping intermittently throughout the day. A few of older kids quizzed each other about the figurines drawn on the wall. For the above reasons this subscale got a low score of 0.51.

**Interaction-** For five children there were two adult caregivers. Even though the child and caregiver ratio was low, individual children did not receive any personalised attention from the caregivers during the course of the day. The caregivers were mostly absent from the crèche room and this often led to fighting, pushing and a tug of war amongst the children with no-one around to ameliorate the situation. Usually the children would interact with each other after they got bored with their toys. Due to the very meagre participation of the caregivers, this subscale received a score of 0.42.

**Programme Structure-** This particular factory provided the bare minimum through its factory crèche. A lack of proper structure and planning pertaining to caregiving, constructive interactions or engaging activities resulted in a low subscale score of 0.51. The caregivers were very aloof and the children lacked even intermittent supervision. Though the room was bright and airy, prolonged observation did expose the major impediments present in this program.

**Parent and Staff-** This particular sub-scale has a relatively higher score because of the cordial relationship the staff and the working mothers shared, as they are a part of the same institution. The senior female worker who was one of the caregivers allowed the mothers to come and peep

into the crèche room while their children were asleep. She also gave the mothers feedback about their children’s behaviour during the crèche time. But overall, it can be said that this program definitely lacked concrete structure with its untrained caregivers failing to provide the required care to these workers’ children.

**Factory Crèche: SEWA RUAAB, ECERS-R (Onsite: 2)**

Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) has its garment producing units under the name of SEWA RUAAB which is scattered around the outskirts of the city. All the production centres, starting from Harkeshnagar, Mulla colony, Sundarnagri and New Ashok Nagar had crèche facilities for working mothers. The quality of the crèches varied from one centre to another in terms of space and facilities provided. For this analysis, the day crèche of New Ashok Nagar production unit, which is also the SEWA-RUAAB headquarters had been taken for the analysis. 7 children were enrolled in the crèche and there was full attendance on the days of observation. The total observation time was 9 hours which was spread over four days. The organisation was flexible with the idea of this lengthy observation and was happy to allow even more days but all the criteria were met in four days. The youngest child was two years old while the oldest was 6 years old.

**Table 5.4 ECERS-R Score for a Factory Crèche of SEWA-RUAAB (Onsite: 2), 2018-2019**

Serial No	Subscale	Average Score
1	Space and Furnishing	2.57
2	Personal Care	2.5
3	Language-Reasoning	3
4	Activities	3
5	Interaction	2.8
6	Programme Structure	2.8
7	Parent and Staff	3

**Average score: 2.81**

**Space and Furnishing-** The subscale received an average score of 2.57. The room allocated for the crèche facility was airy, bright and big enough for children. There were no cots but clean mattresses were laid out on a carpeted floor. The walls were vibrant with Hindi and

English alphabet charts along with pictures of fruits and animals. Soft toys and games like abacus, jigsaw puzzles, and LEGO sets were neatly arranged in the corner of the room. There was an open cabinet beside the toy station which had many books, colouring sheets and crayons. A small kitchen and a bathroom were attached to this main room, both of which looked neat and clean. A small cabinet beside the toilet contained diapers and a first aid box. While the room was cosy and warm, this was the only space available to the children during the day, as there was no option of outdoor playtime for the children.

***Personal Care-*** Each child would come to the factory along with his/her mother in the morning and would be dropped off at the crèche before their mother started work. All the children were happy to enter the room and ran straight to the toy station. Baby food and milk were given by the crèche but solid meals like dal, rice and vegetables were packed and dropped off by the mothers. An old retired garment worker was hired by the production unit to be the primary caregiver of the crèche. She seemed to enjoy her role and greeted the children with open arms in the morning. Throughout the day the children continued to play with the toys, some pulled out books and started reading. The caregiver organised a few activities to engage the children before lunch. Lunch was served by 1 pm. Most of the children ate on their own. A few of the very small ones were visited by their mothers who breastfed them and ate their own lunch in the crèche itself. After lunch the caregiver sang the children to sleep.

***Language-Reasoning-*** The score for this sub-scale was 3. This centre had different types of books, both in Hindi and English, which were displayed in an open cabinet which the children had access to throughout the day. Children who were more than two years old were brought together for circle time. This was followed with a few rhymes with voice modulations and actions by the care-giver. The circle time was used to facilitate language learning through storytelling and experience-sharing. The children were also familiarised with their surroundings and observed, through the window, the sun, the trees and listened to different types of sounds. They were also asked to look at the wall, read out the alphabets and identify the pictures associated with each alphabet. While the caregiver tried her best to involve every children, individualised attention was not given because of high caregiver-child ratio.

***Activities-*** Several activities were planned by the caregiver and hence the subscale received an average score of 3. The day started with a circle time activity where all children were asked to share an important experience of their previous day. This was followed by a rhyme activity and

a storytelling session. After this, the children were given books to read. Many of them pulled out colouring sheets from the book cabinet and started colouring. Two of the youngest children were busy crumpling and playing with newspapers. They also did a small activity around counting with help of the abacus. Finally, before leaving the crèche, a small prayer was said and the children were reunited with their mothers.

***Interaction-*** The score for this sub-scale was 2.8. For seven children, there was only one caregiver which forced her to split her time between the children. The children did not get personalised attention even though the caregiver tried her best to cater to every child's needs through the course of the day. The caregiver was alert and supervised the children properly. She assisted the children in every activity and was gentle but firm when they got into fights. The caregiver was also sympathetic and listened to each child with great enthusiasm. Lastly, all the children were encouraged to communicate with each other politely, to share things and to play together.

***Programme Structure-*** The overall score received by this sub-scale is 2.8. There was a proper structure to the program with activities, games and playtime organised by the caregiver. The activities could have been executed better if there were two or more caregivers in charge of the crèche. The major drawback of the program was the unavailability of lunch and snacks. Even though milk and baby food were available, the caregiver did not give the children any milk and fed them with the food given by their mothers. Lastly, the staff member was not a trained caregiver and was hired only because she volunteered for the job.

***Parent and Staff-*** The relationships between the parents and the staff member were very cordial and the subscale received a score of 3. The mothers were allowed to visit the child during lunch. Those who had very young babies were allowed to breastfeed, eat lunch and sometimes even work in the same space. The mothers were given feedback about their child's behaviour during the day. But, often their conversations drifted away from the child's wellbeing to gossip. The mothers did not seem too inquisitive about the behaviour and activities performed by their children through the day. Finally, when it came to skill development of the staff, it was seen that the organisation had not taken any initiatives to train this caregiver so that she could supervise the activities with greater efficiency.

## **Strength and Limitations of the Programmes**

The above discussion distinctly points out the variations in the facilities provided by the above three programmes. While the first two care centres have done poorly with very low ECERS-R score, the SEWA facility did relatively better with an overall score of 2.81. Even then, it can be stated that on a seven point scale, a highest score of 2.81 is very unsatisfactory. The strengths and limitations of the programs have been clubbed together based on the sub-sections of the assessment tool as shown in table 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 respectively to get a better understanding of their overall performances.

**Table 5.5: Strengths of the Programmes, 2018-2019**

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Space and Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indoor space was large and organised</li><li>• Drawings on the wall made the spaces more attractive except for OF:1</li></ul>
Personal Care Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children were welcomed by the caregivers</li><li>• Departure time was smooth</li><li>• Meal time schedule was appropriate and followed diligently by the caregivers</li><li>• Post lunch nap time was relaxing for the children</li></ul>
Language Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caregiver was responsive to cues of children only in Offsite:1 and Onsite:2</li><li>• Recited songs and rhymes</li></ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dramatic play, storytelling and counting were encouraged in Onsite:2</li></ul>
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caregiver facilitated peer interaction in Onsite:2</li></ul>
Programme Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The caregiver-children ratio was appropriate in Offsite:1 and Onsite:1</li></ul>

- Transition from one activity to another activity was smooth in Onsite:2

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Parents and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was sharing of child related information between parents and caregivers</li> </ul>
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*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Table 5.5: Limitations of the Programmes, 2018-19**

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Space and Furnishings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of outdoor space</li> <li>• No provisions for children with special needs in any of the programmes.</li> <li>• Lack of Ventilation and light (Offsite:1)</li> </ul>
Personal Care Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of hand washing both by the students and the teachers.</li> <li>• Caregivers were absent intermittently through the course of the day ( Offsite:1 and Onsite:1)</li> </ul>
Language Reasoning	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books were not available (Offsite:1, Onsite:1)</li> <li>• No outdoor activities were conducted</li> <li>• Lack of structured activities pertaining to intellectual and gross motor development (Offsite:1, Onsite:1)</li> </ul>
Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregivers were sometimes rude and indifferent towards the children (Offsite:1, Onsite:1)</li> </ul>
Programme Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes lacked a concrete structure involving teaching, games, playtime and interaction</li> </ul>
Parents and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregivers were not trained in early childhood care</li> </ul>

- 
- Caregivers were unfamiliar with key developmental indicators.

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

## **5.8 Characteristics of Informal Childcare**

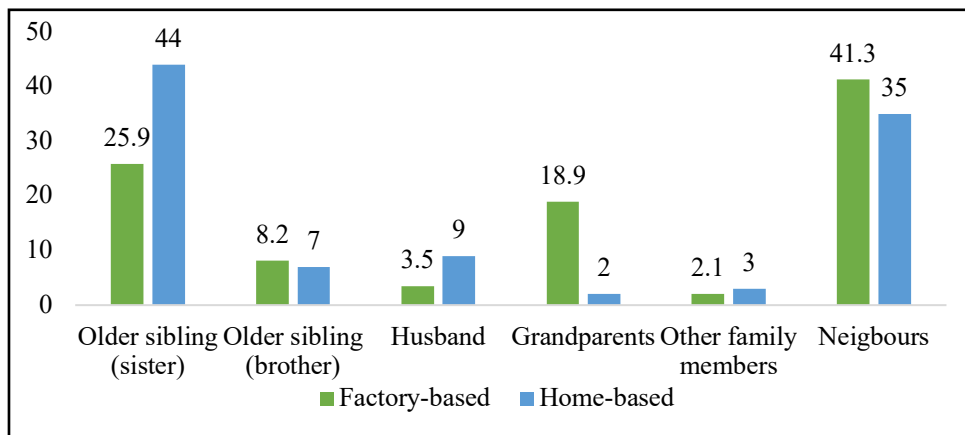
Informal childcare options are a crucial necessity for both factory and home-based workers. The above discussion clearly reflects the lack of affordable and accessible childcare facilities inside or outside the factory premises. Moreover, inadequate care provisions by the government have led a majority of women workers in India to opt for informal childcare options (**Krishnaraj, 1999**). In the present study, it has been seen that while formal childcare options provide support for a certain period of time, mothers invariably steer back to informal childcare alternatives.

### **5.8.1 Types of Informal Childcare**

There are multiple informal care options that are used by women garment workers to provide care for their children and to indirectly sustain themselves in the job market. The following bar graph showcases the different types of informal childcare generally opted for by women garment workers. Leaving their children in the care of older siblings (sisters) and neighbours is the most commonly used form of informal childcare. Around 44 percent of home-based workers and 25 percent of factory workers use their oldest female child to babysit the younger ones. This invariably leads to a girl child to drop out of the school. Compared to older female siblings, male siblings participate as babysitters only 7 and 8.2 percent of the time for home-based and factory workers respectively. Neighbours, another major component of informal childcare, participate as babysitters 41 and 35 percent of the time for both factory based and home-based workers. While factory workers bank on their neighbours for full supervision, for home-workers, it is mostly intermittent in nature.

‘I don’t think we can reap much benefit from the existing childcare services as they hardly cater to women like us. But yes if you have a supportive neighbour, or older child then factory work becomes easier. One can work throughout the day, even overtime!’ **Rubina, factory worker, Mulla Colony.**

**Fig 5.9: Types of Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

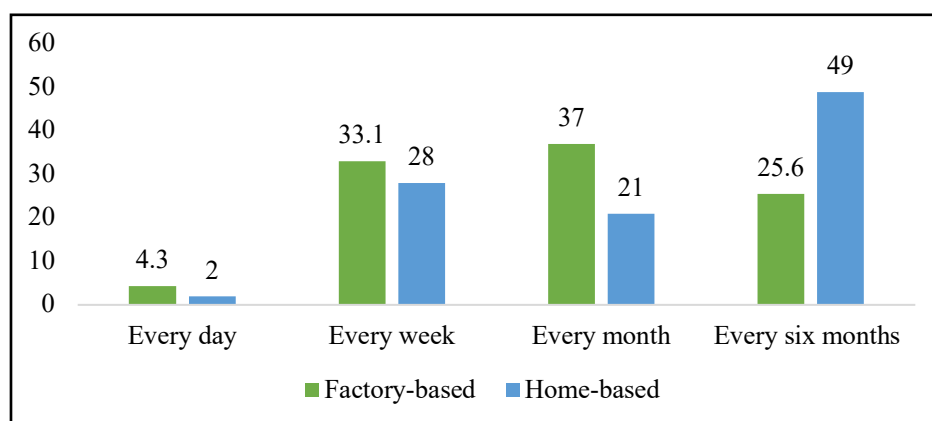
A majority of garment workers in this study lived in nuclear family set-ups which cancelled out the contribution of grandparents towards child rearing activities. Hence, only 18.9 percent of factory workers cited grandparents as their primary source of informal care, while it was as low as 2 percent for home-based workers. Husbands too contributed insignificantly to informal care as most of them were employed as it takes two incomes to run the household. Lastly, only a small percentage of ‘other family members’ formed a source of informal childcare owing to the nuclear family structure of the majority of these workers.

### **5.8.2 Multiplicity in Informal Childcare**

Informal childcare choices depict increased levels of multiplicity compared to formal care choices. Both factory and home-based workers changed their informal caregivers, sometime every day, every week, every month to even every six months. Home-based workers generally tended to show less multiplicity in their choices with 49 percent of the respondents stating that they had changed their informal care giver only once in the last six months. This is because of their flexible work timings, where they often able to supervise their children without any help. 28 and 21 percent of them made changes every month and every week respectively, and a negligible 2 percent of respondents said that they changed their caregivers every day. On the contrary, factory workers frequently swap between one caregiver to another mainly because of their rigid work timings. 4.3 percent of the respondents cited that they engaged different caregivers for their children almost every day, while around 33 and 37 percent changed their informal care options almost every week and every month respectively. Only 25 percent specified changing that caregiver every six months.



**Fig 5.10: Frequency of Change: Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

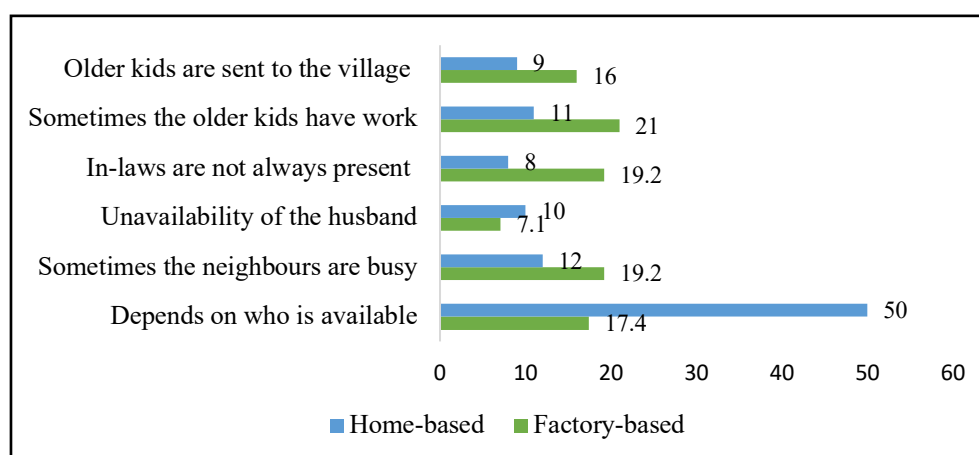


*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### 5.8.3 Causes Behind Multiplicity of Informal Childcare Choices.

Multifarious reasons were pointed out by the workers working at the factory and home level. 50 percent of home-based workers cited that it ‘depends on who is available’ as the main reason behind their frequent change in childcare service. This predominantly implies that the flexible nature of their job allows them to negotiate with their neighbours to temporarily look after their young children during a certain time of the day. On the other hand, a factory worker does not get the time to negotiate and often depends on older kids, in-laws, or trustworthy neighbours to look after her young children. The fig no 5.11 portrays the higher percentage of factory workers citing reasons like ‘older kids are sent to the village’, ‘older kids have work’, ‘neighbours are busy’ and ‘in-laws are not always present’ as primary causes behind their informal childcare change.

**Fig 5.11: Reasons Behind Frequent Change in Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

Fig No 5.11 also depicts how sending older kids back to their villages during the cropping season is a common practice among garment workers resulting in their children dropping out of school. Often older female children are given home-based work by their mothers and are left behind at a neighbour's place with the younger child. If the in-laws do not stay with a family, they are often brought in to the city during the peak season to look after the young child and sent away during the lean period. Neighbours, who are major contributors of informal childcare, mainly consist of older people and unemployed women living in the vicinity of the respondent. On several occasions, the lack of such neighbours compelled both factory and home workers to seek out viable alternatives. A small percentage of the workers also mentioned the unavailability of husbands as a reason behind their change in informal childcare.

### **5.9 Involvement of the Father in Childcare**

When it comes to the involvement of the father in childcare activities, there were mixed responses from factory and home-workers. The following data depicts that husbands were more supportive to their wives who were factory workers than to those who were home workers. 25 percent of home workers stated that there was no involvement of the father in childcare or child rearing activities, while the response from factory workers in this context was only 6 percent.

‘My husband only gives me money, that too a meagre amount. He never takes care of our children. I do not complain much. At the end of the day, I am the mother and I have to take care of my children, nobody else will do it for me.’ *Sunita, home worker, Gola Kuan*

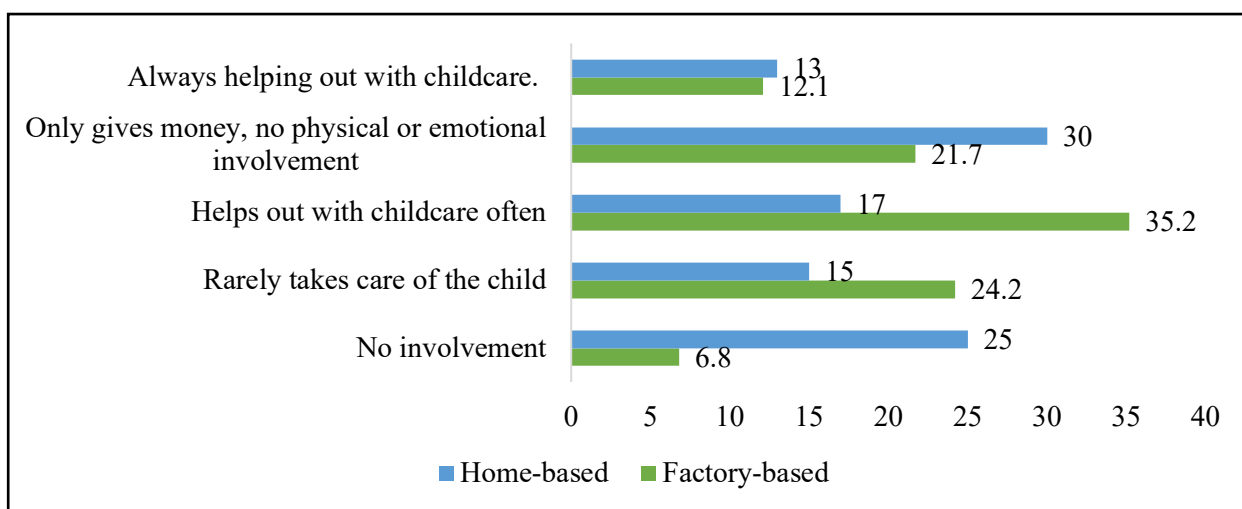
Along similar lines, 30 percent of home-based workers pointed out that each of their husbands ‘only gives money and does not have any physical or emotional involvement.’ On the contrary, 35 percent of the factory workers cited that their husbands often helped out with daily childcare routines.

‘It does feel nice to have a supporting husband. Other women around me are not so lucky. My husband is very attached to my children. He plays with them a lot whenever he is home. The only problem is that he drinks too much.’ *Mamta, home-worker, New Ashok Nagar*

Few of the women workers who cited that there was no involvement of the father were either separated or widowed. While some women showed remorse, the others coped with the situation with a positive attitude just like the following excerpt from a conversation with a factory worker from Seelampur.

‘I am happy to be a single mother. It has been two years since my husband left me for another woman. But I am independent and earning enough for my child and myself. I am his mother and his father, both.’ *Radha, Factory worker, Seelampur.*

**Fig 5.12: Father’s Involvement in Taking Care of the Child (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



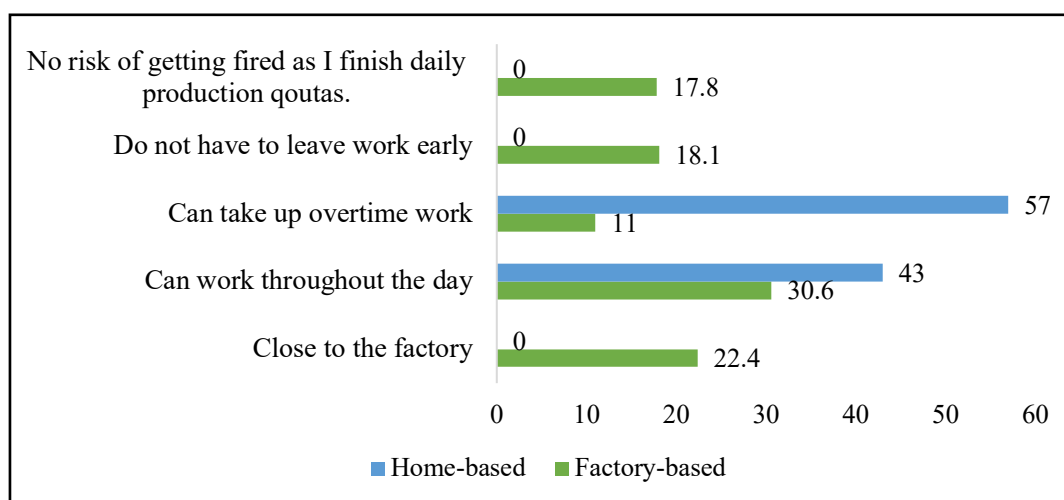
*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### 5.10 Benefits of the Existing Childcare

Childcare, both formal and informal, benefits both factory and home-workers in more than one way. The respondents cited several advantages gained due to their existing childcare services. Factory workers exclusively stated that because of their childcare services, firstly, they were

able to finish their daily production quotas which lowered the risk of getting fired. Secondly, they did not have to leave their jobs early, and finally, most of the formal childcare services adopted by these workers were close to the factory.

**Fig 5.13: Benefits of the Existing Childcare Services (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

Of all the home-based workers who opted for childcare services, around 57 percent stated that they could take up overtime work during the course of the day which eventually helped them earn extra money. 43 percent of the home-workers also stated that childcare services allowed them to work through the day without any hindrances. These reasons were reiterated by the factory workers who associated dependable childcare with the completion of overtime work.

### 5.11 Conclusion

Summarizing the analysis in this chapter, it can be deduced that both factory and home workers depend heavily on informal and formal childcare services. The formal care services are exhaustive and workers resort mostly to the *anganwadis*, government schools and mohalla crèches available in their locality. Very few factories cater to the needs of the workers' children by providing creche facilities within the factory unit. The ECERS-R scale used to review the quality of the care facilities at the factory and private level exhibits mediocre performances by the programmes, thus exposing the lacunae present in their care provisions. Multiplicity was witnessed both in formal and informal childcare choices. Informal care choices showed more multiplicity compared to formal care choices mostly because they were less structured and

flexible in nature. The father's involvement in child rearing differed from one respondent to another from being very supportive to not being involved at all. Lastly, the benefits of the existing childcare cited by the workers mainly revolved around working overtime, finishing production quotas and lowered risk of getting fired. Thus it can be concluded that this chapter provides valuable insights into the context of childcare facilities used by women garment workers which will help in answering queries addressed in the following chapter pertaining to the child health scenario of the workers.

## CHAPTER VI

# ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF WORK PROFILE AND CARE CHOICES OF GARMENT WORKERS ON THEIR CHILD'S HEALTH

### 6.1 Introduction

“To grow and develop optimally, a child needs to receive nurturing care. This implies that a child enjoys adequate nutrition and good health, feels safe and secure and has proper access to education and opportunities of learning.” **WHO Report, 2019**

India's child population, according to the latest **Census (2011)** is 158.8 million which forms around 13 percent of our total population. This clearly indicates a vast potential for a demographic dividend but only if they grow up to be healthy and skilled. Early Childhood Care and Development programmes form an integral part of the proper upbringing of a child through the provision of day care, healthcare, immunization drives, nutrition and education. While India's Integrated Child Development Services include important aspects, like health and nutrition of pregnant mothers and pre-school education for children, it lacks concrete subsidised day care schemes for urban working mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Affordable, reliable and accessible childcare services can help children enjoy better childhoods and also results in a positive impact on every child's physical and mental wellbeing. However, a lack of government child care services forces working mothers to resort to private, formal and informal services to look after their children while they are away at work. This is applicable to women garment workers of Delhi for whom the daily balancing of childcare and work is a challenging task. In the previous chapter, the type and quality of childcare was assessed and the results portrayed an uncertainty associated with informal childcare and the prevalence of sub-standard characteristics of the formal ones. This, in turn, provides a concrete platform for further analysis pertaining to a child's health status given the care environment in which they are being brought up.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to gauge the impact of the childcare services on children’s health by focussing on the health status of the respondent’s children by analysing their physical attributes, incidents of illness and accidents.

## 6.2 Basic Attributes of the Children

Children in India suffer from the highest levels of wasting, stunting and being underweight in the world and the ICDS programme has not been able to tackle the problem efficiently in any state (Arnold, 2007). Malnourishment resulting in underweight children is very common in families belonging from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and this can lead to reduced long term physical and cognitive development and may impact their productivity later in life (Pathak and Singh, 2011). When it comes to women garment workers, the primary actors of the present study, it is seen that they are clustered around low income and educational levels which exposes their children to varying degrees of malnourishment. Adding to this predicament, the long working hours of factory workers and a lack of dependable child-care facilities exacerbates this problem. Hence, in this section, mean age, sex, height and weight have been analysed firstly, to capture the incidence of underweight children and secondly, to gauge the variance between factory and home-workers.

### 6.2.1 Mean Age of the Respondent’s Children

Most of the respondents reported having more than one child and data was collected separately for each child. The following table gives an overview of the mean age of the children of both factory and home workers. While the age category taken for the analysis is 0-6 years, the mean age of the factory workers’ first child was 4.24 years while that of her second child was 2.25 years. For home-based workers, the mean age of the first child was slightly higher at 4.69 years while that of the second child was marginally lower at 2.13 years. These nominal changes are not significant, but give us an overview of the average age of the first and second child which is roughly 4.5 years and 2 years respectively.

**Table 6.1: Mean Age and Sex of the Respondent’s Children, 2018-2019**

	<b>Factory Based</b>	<b>Home-Based</b>
Mean age of the first child	4.24 years	4.69 years
Mean age of the second child	2.25 years	2.13
Sex of the first child	Male-61.6 percent	Male- 55 percent

	Female- 38.4 percent	Female- 45 percent
Sex of the second child	Male- 66.6 percent	Male- 56.2 percent
	Female- 33 percent	Female- 43.7 percent

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

### **6.2.1 Sex of the Respondent's Child**

In the context of the sex of the respondent's child, the findings clearly show higher number of male children for both factory and home-workers. Around 61 percent of factory workers and 55 percent of home workers stated that their first child was male while only 38 percent and 45 percent stated having a first-born female child respectively. This pattern is reiterated in the case of their second child too.

### **6.2.3 Body Mass Index**

Body mass index (BMI) is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters. It screens for weight categories and mainly identifies children and adults who are underweight, normal or overweight according to the following BMI percentile category.

BMI Percentile <5: Underweight

BMI Percentile >5 and <85: Healthy Weight

BMI Percentile >85 and <95: Overweight

BMI Percentile > 95: Obesity

For the calculation of Body Mass Index, first, age-wise height and weight data pertaining to the first and second child was collected. Second, the average height and weight for each age-sex category was calculated and finally the BMI and the BMI percentile were computed through the BMI calculator. The value of BMI Percentile helps identify the categories of children who are underweight and are thus at high risk of getting malnourished, stunted and wasted in the long run.

Table 6.2 shows the BMI percentile of the first child of the surveyed factory workers along with other variables such as their height, weight, sex and calculated BMI. The values are given separately for male and female children across age categories. The highlighted sections of the BMI percentile column show underweight children. Both boy and girl children aged 2 and 3 years were mostly underweight with a very low BMI value. While the BMI percentile value



increased for boys with advancing age, the incidence of being underweight continued among girls up to the age of 5 years. Only those who were six years old had a healthy BMI percentile.

**Table 6.2: Body Mass Index of the Children of Factory Workers (1<sup>st</sup> Child), 2018-2019**

Age	Boy Child				Girl Child			
	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile
2	83	9	13.1	0.1	80.5	8.3	12.8	0.1
3	87.5	10	13.1	0.2	85.8	9.4	12.8	0.1
4	97.3	13	13.7	5.2	94.2	12	13.4	2.2
5	102.5	14.5	13.8	9.7	100	13	13.0	0.9
6	105	15	13.6	7.5	103	14.9	14	16.4

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Table 6.3 shows data pertaining to the second child of the surveyed factory workers and it is observed that the phenomena of being underweight is only associated with 2 year olds. The mean height and weight of both girls and boys were below average and resulted in a considerably low BMI percentile. Children across the ages of 3 and 4 did not show any anomalies and belonged to the healthy weight category according to BMI values.

**Table 6.3: Body Mass Index of the Children of Factory Workers (2<sup>nd</sup> Child), 2018-2019**

Age	Boy Child				Girl Child			
	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile
2	79.6	8	12.6	0.1	81.5	8.5	12.8	0.1
3	94	12.5	14.1	6.9	90	11.5	14.2	7.6
4	100	14	14	9.7	98	13.5	14.1	10.9

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Unlike the children of the factory workers, the calculated BMI percentile in table 6.4 showed that the first born children of the home workers were not underweight in any of the given age

categories. Height and weight were normal across all age-groups and the BMI percentile ranged between 5 and 85 indicating healthy weight of the children.

**Table 6.4: Body Mass Index of the Children of Home Workers (1<sup>st</sup> Child), 2018-2019**

Age	Boy Child				Girl Child			
	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile
2	85.5	11	15	14.7	83.5	10.8	15.5	24.8
3	93	13	15	28.1	90	12	14.8	21.5
4	97	14.5	15.4	53.6	95	13	14.4	20
5	104	16.5	15.3	53.2	102	16	15.4	56.7
6	111	18	14.6	31.9	108	17	14.6	30.9

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

Finally the calculated BMI percentile for the home workers' 2<sup>nd</sup> child in table 6.5 again showed incidence of low weight, especially among very young children. The BMI for 2 year old boys and girls were below the 5 percentile level indicating that they were underweight for their age. While the respondents did not report any 2<sup>nd</sup> boy child in the age 3 category, girl children in this age group were also underweight. Only 4 year old children appeared to exhibit healthy weight with a BMI percentile above 5.

**Table 6.5: Body Mass Index of children of Home Workers (2<sup>nd</sup> Child), 2018-19**

Age	Boy Child				Girl Child			
	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile	Height (in cms)	Weight (in Kg)	Calculated BMI (kg/m)	BMI Percentile
2	80	8.5	13.3	0.3	75.5	7.5	13.2	0.2
3	----- -	----- -	-----		83	9.5	13.8	2.9
4	97	14	14.9	35.6	93	12.5	14.5	21.5

*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

The above analysis clearly highlights the prevalence of underweight children among factory and home workers, even though the occurrence is higher among factory workers. The reasons behind this prevalence were multifarious and stemmed from each mother's care practices and time invested in her work. For respondents working in a factory, long working hours along with prolonged absence from the home hampered their ability to have an earnest oversight in their child's regular activities ranging from food consumption, safety and constructive playtime. A majority of the factory workers relied upon neighbours, formal care services like *anganwadis*, school, local private day-care centres and infrequently on factory crèches which did not always guarantee quality care provisions. Moreover, the earlier data showcased that older female children were often engaged in caregiving activities and this might explain the consistently low BMI percentile values for the factory workers' first born daughters. For the factory workers' second child, the incidence of being underweight was restricted to 2 year old children, both for boys as well as girls. The probable reason for this might be the mother's hasty return to the labour market thus leaving the child with alternate care-services.

Home-workers on the other hand by definition worked largely from within their homes and were able to supervise their children directly or indirectly throughout the day. Though home-workers also depend upon informal care services, they still had better surveillance over their children's nutritional intake and safety. This explains the lower number of underweight children amongst home-workers. Finally, it can be concluded that almost all the respondents where in the low income bracket and were unable to provide their children with the required nutrients. Those enrolled in *anganwadis* and government schools were entitled to mid-day meals but according to the above data, their provisions mostly included cereals and pulses, and often failed to cater to a child's complete nutritional needs. The mothers too adhered to pulses, roti and rice with negligible intake of fruits, vegetable, milk or eggs. This cumulatively impacted the nutritional status of the respondents' children thus making them highly susceptible to being underweight.

### **6.3 Vaccination Status**

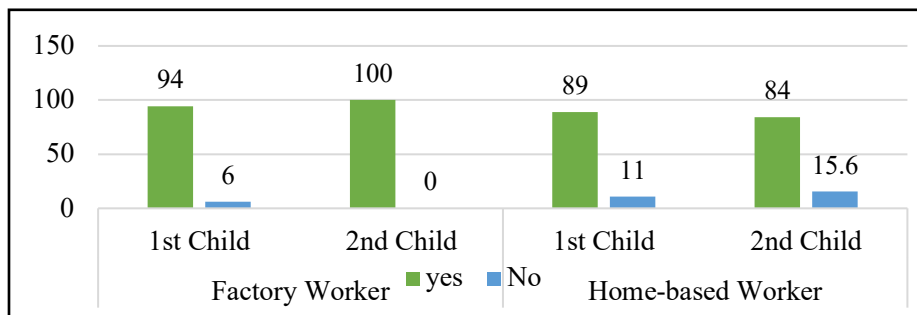
Vaccines have been highly efficient in substantially decreasing or eliminating the occurrences of many common as well as virulent diseases (Kimmel et al, 2007). Globally, vaccination curbs around 3 million deaths every year from diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and measles (UNICEF, 2011). In India, a large proportion of infant deaths, along with children

having high morbidity rate, can be prevented if they receive complete immunization (**Dixit et al, 2013**). The Indian government has adopted the WHO immunization schedule of providing free immunization to children between the ages of 0-6 years. But, even with the free immunization campaign, children belonging to the lower-economic strata of society in urban areas and those from rural areas do not follow the given immunization schedule, (**Bhattacharya et al, 2012**). Determinants of child immunization can be at the individual, household and community level where variables like the mother's age, parity of children, education, wealth quintile, place of residence and accessibility and availability of health facilities are used to gauge the level of participation in the available vaccine programmes (**Ahmed, 2002**). In the context of the present study, vaccination status has been measured through 'whether the child has a vaccination card' and also 'whether or not the vaccination card is complete according to his/her age'.

### **6.3.1 Possession of a Vaccination Card**

Vaccination cards are useful documents which contain information about a child's age, vaccine dates and dosage. It helps parents and vaccine providers keep track of the number of vaccines received by a particular child. It also reflects the awareness a parent possesses regarding the health of his/her child. When asked about the possession of a vaccination card for their child, a majority of the respondents said that they own one. For factory workers, 94 and 100 percent said, 'Yes' for their first and second child respectively while a negligible proportion said, 'No'. For home-based workers, the percentage of women saying, 'Yes' to a vaccination card was marginally low compared to the factory workers. Also 11 percent of the first-born children and 15.6 percent of the second-born children of home workers did not have a vaccination card at all. The reason behind the lower percentage of vaccination cards among home workers was the lack of exposure to these schemes which was caused by a paucity of information about the importance of immunization. Factory workers leaving the house for work met other women and they exchanged important information and hence were more aware and informed. On the contrary, workers working from home lacked the exposure and often missed out on valuable information pertaining to their child's health and other aspects of well-being.

**Fig 6.1: Possession of a Vaccination Card (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

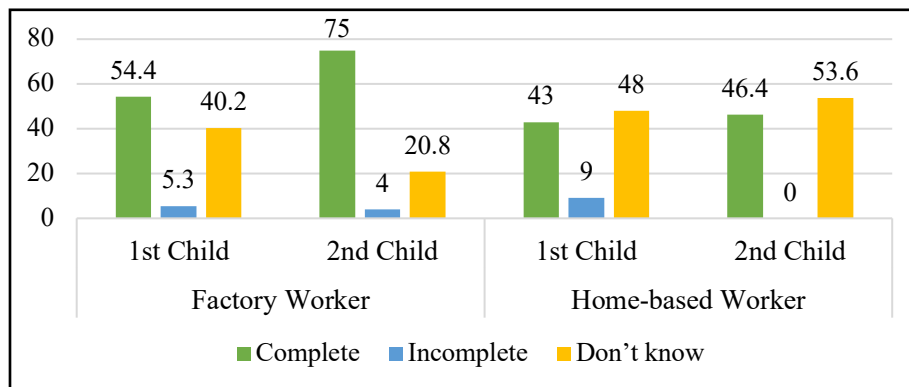


*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

### 6.3.2 Status of the Vaccination Card

While a majority of the factory workers had a vaccination card for their children, not all were cognizant about whether or not the card was up-to-date in accordance their child’s age or not. 54 percent of the surveyed factory workers’ first born child had a completed vaccination card while for their second born child, the value was 75 percent. For home-workers, the percentage was relatively lower, and the reason was mainly a lack of awareness regarding immunization programs as they worked from home. Apart from ‘yes’ and ‘no’, many respondents, both factory and home-workers, stated that they didn’t know whether the card was updated or not. Again the percentage was higher among home workers than amongst factory workers. Finally, for the case of factory workers and home-workers, the percentage of children having immunization cards was higher among the second born child than that of the first born child. This can probably be because mothers, who missed out on certain vaccinations for the first child, had become keen to get the same vaccinations for their second child. Also, visits from Asha workers in anganwadis, educated mothers of the importance of vaccination which might have led to these mothers becoming more active in the case of their second child.

**Fig 6.2: Status of the Vaccination Card (In Percentage), 2018-19**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

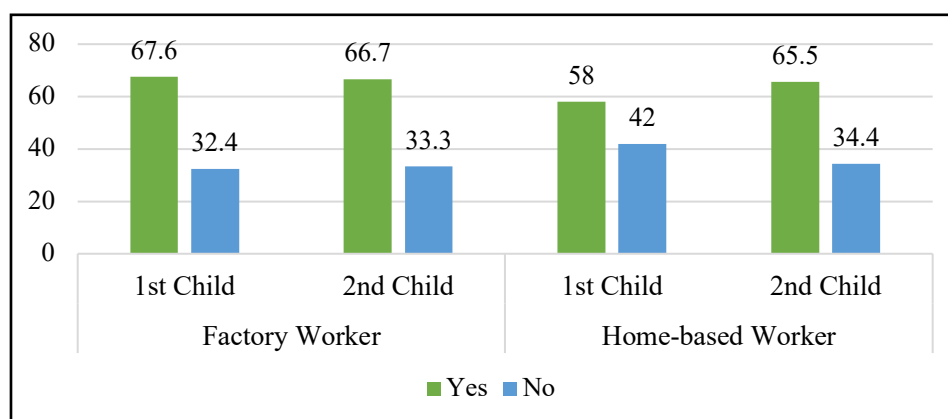
## 6.4 Illness Status

Children are more susceptible to illness because of their underdeveloped immune systems and higher exposure to germs and infection (**Burton et al, 2009**). While cold, cough and diarrhoea are common among children and can be easily treated easily, diseases like chicken pox, rubella, whooping cough, influenza and hepatitis B can be extremely serious and can considerably impact a child's health. To strengthen a child's immune system, it is important to provide them with timely immunization and proper nutrition. In the context of the present study, the former analysis in this chapter shows that female children of factory-based workers and young children of both factory and home-based workers tended to be underweight. Moreover, 100 percent vaccination had not been done for most of the children belonging to the factory-based and home-based households. This increased a child's vulnerability to a variety of diseases. In this section, the occurrence, types and duration of illnesses have been explored to capture the variation in susceptibility between the children of factory-based and home-based workers.

### 6.4.1 Occurrence of Illness

Bar graph No. 6.3 shows the occurrence of illness of a respondent's child in the last six months. Almost 67 percent of the factory-based workers stated that both their first and second born children had suffered from a disease in the last six months.

**Fig 6.3: Occurrence of Illness in the last Six Months (In Percentage), 2018-19**



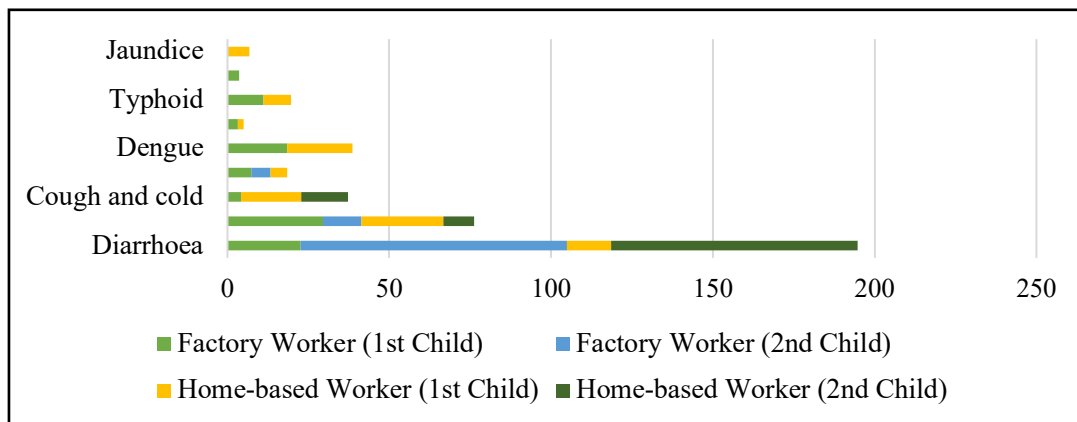
*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

33 percent of the factory-based workers did not report the occurrence of any disease. In contrast to the factory workers, home-based workers reported only marginally lower percentages of their children falling prey to disease in the last six months. Subsequently, children with no incidence disease in the last six months were higher among home-based workers. The greater incidence of diseases in factory workers implied poor health conditions of their children mostly because a considerable percentage of them were underweight. Also, because the factory workers were away from home due to their long working hours, a thorough monitoring of their child’s nutritional intake, health and symptoms of diseases, was often not possible. The home workers on the other hand had better and prolonged supervision especially when it came to their child’s daily nutritional intake and health oversight.

#### **6.4.2 Types of Illness**

The respondents recounted several diseases that had impacted their children in the past few months. The following graph documents the different types of diseases experienced by the first born and second born children of the factory and home based worker. The most commonly reported disease was diarrhoea, which mainly affected the second born child of the respondents. 82 percent and 76 percent of the factory and home worker’s children suffered from diarrhoea respectively.

**Fig 6.4: Types of Illness (In Percentage), 2018-19**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

The high percentage among factory workers’ children might be due to the frequent change of water source due to the multiplicity in their formal and informal childcare choices. It could also be because of a lack of adequate supervision (as discussed earlier) which might have led to children putting dirty or inedible things in their mouth. Fever was the second-most common disease experienced by these children, being more common in first-born children than second born ones. The common cold/cough and measles were also common, found mostly in the first born children of both factory and home workers. Serious diseases like Dengue, Hepatitis, Jaundice, Typhoid and Chicken Pox were also exclusively found in the first born children of both home and factory workers. This is probably due to the fact that a mother’s attention tended to move away from her first child when the second child was born as they would require extra care and this in turn increased the older child’s vulnerability. Also, under certain circumstances the older child is asked to babysit the younger child which might exhaust the first born and in the process lower their immunity.

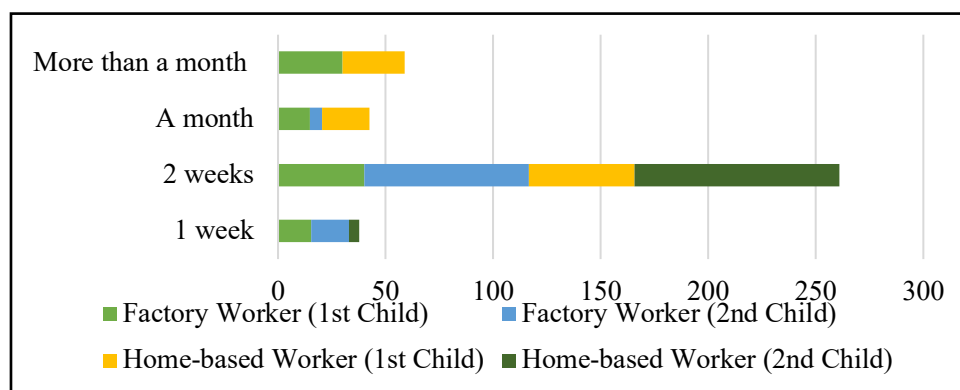
### **6.4.3 Duration of Illness**

The duration of illness varied from one child to another. Those suffering from serious diseases like Dengue, Hepatitis, Typhoid, Chicken Pox and Jaundice had a longer recovery period and hence the first-born children of both factory and home workers encountered a longer duration of illness sometimes spanning over a month or more. On the contrary, children who suffered



from diarrhoea, colds and fever recovered over a shorter period of time; a maximum of a week or two.

**Fig 6.5: Duration of Illness (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

On several occasions, delayed medical attention resulted in a prolonged duration of suffering and increased the recovery period. It is important to mention here that the respondents were not always able to recall the names of the diseases and could only identify them once a few names were suggested to them.

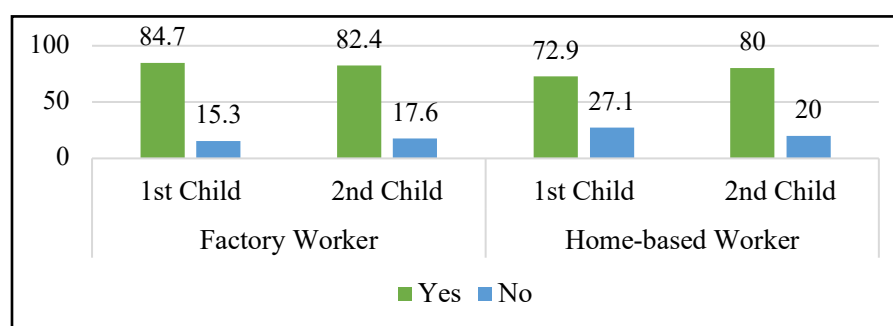
### 6.5 Treatment Status

The timely treatment of any disease amongst infants and children can save lives. It is very important that the parents of a sick child seek medical help to diagnose and treat diseases at the earliest. In urban areas, apart from private clinics, one has the option of going to public health centres, mohalla clinics or government hospitals to treat one's child. Promptness with regard to a child's treatment also depends on the concern and awareness of the parents. Industrial workers in the city often avoid hospital visits to treat their babies and use home remedies instead, which do not cure the illness and also increase the risk of mortality. Children of garment workers, according to the prior analysis, exhibit a variety of diseases which require immediate medical attention. The following section tries to gauge the involvement of either the mother or both parents in seeking medical help for their ailing child through 'visits to the doctor' and 'sourcing of medical advice'. Their reluctance in consulting a doctor and the causes behind such a mind-set is assessed through 'reasons for not seeking any medical advice'.

### 6.5.1 Visits to the Doctor

While a majority of the respondents reported taking their sick children to the doctor, around 15 to 17 percent of the surveyed factory workers and 20 to 27 percent of the surveyed home-based workers stated that they had not visited the doctor to treat their child. This indifference towards the medical treatment emanated from the mothers' education levels which were generally low, with 70 percent of the respondent having completed school only up to the secondary level. Moreover, factory workers tend to be better informed than home workers which urged them to opt for medical treatment and not depend solely upon home remedies.

**Fig 6.6: Visit to the Doctor for the Treatment of the Illness (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

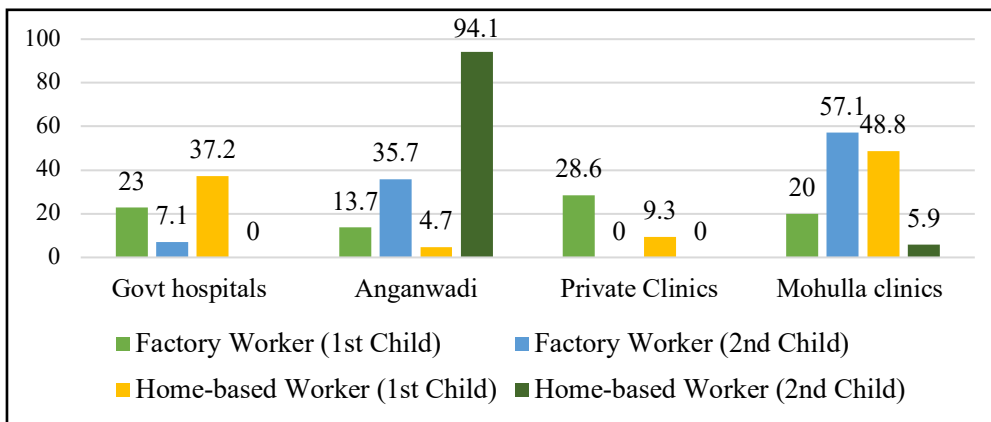


*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

### 6.5.2 Sourcing of Medical Advice

Respondents who reported seeking medical help for their children stated multifarious avenues as sources of treatment. Government hospitals, *Anganwadis*, private clinics and Mohalla clinics came up as most popular options for the respondents. Factory workers and home workers largely preferred *Anganwadis* and Mohalla clinics as is evident from the following graph. 94.1 percent of the home workers reported going to *Anganwadis* to treat their second born children while for factory workers a similar preference was seen towards Mohalla clinics. Government hospitals were the preferred option but only when the disease was severe. 23 percent of factory workers and 37 percent of home workers took their first born children to a public hospital for treatment. Private clinics, where the treatment is not free, was accessed only by factory workers thanks to their higher purchasing power.

**Fig 6.7: Sources of Medical Advice (In Percentage), 2018-2019**



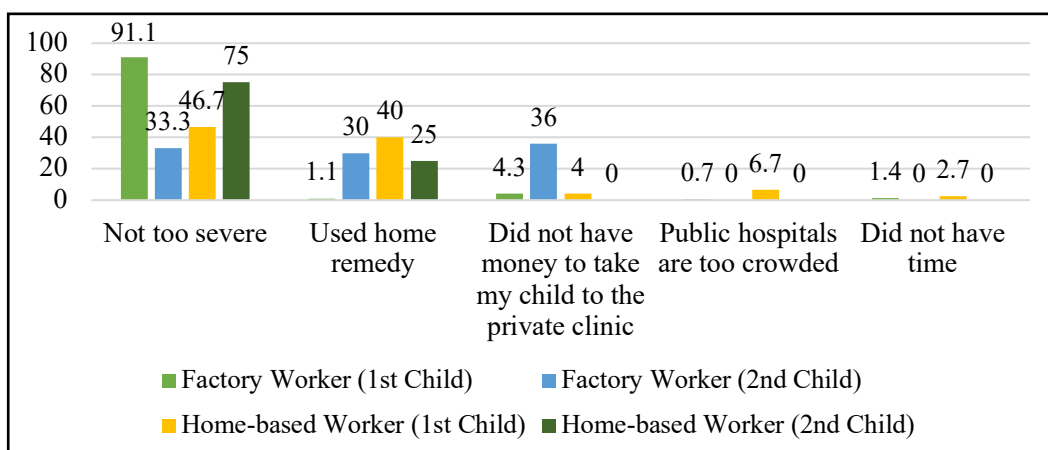
Source: Primary survey, 2018-19

Surprisingly, factory workers, a few of whom had ESI (Employers State Insurance) membership, did not mention ESI hospitals as an option for treatment. When asked about it, many cited long queues, a tedious application process and delayed treatment as severe deterrents. Many factory workers stated that it was better to go to a private clinic or Mohalla clinic rather than waiting endlessly for free treatment.

### 6.5.3 Reasons for Not Seeking Medical Advice

Garment workers who had not taken their children to doctors when sick cited several reasons behind this action. A majority of them mentioned that the illness was not severe enough to require treatment from a doctor. This argument was given mostly by mothers whose children had suffered from diarrhoea, cough/cold or seasonal fever. When they were told that diarrhoea was the major cause of under-five child mortality, many were surprised, as for them, it is a simple condition which can be treated with ‘boiled rice water’.

**Fig 6.8: Reasons Cited for not Seeking Medical Advice (in percentage), 2018-19**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

The second most popular reason cited by factory and home worker for not seeking medical help was 'use of home remedies'. A few of the respondents also stated that they did not have enough money to take the child to a private clinic, among which 37 percent were factory workers with a second child. Finally, a very low proportion of respondents stated that often public hospitals were too crowded and they did not have enough time to wait in government hospitals to get their children treated.

## **6.6 Incidence of Accidents**

Accidental injuries are a major health problem in children and are mostly associated with working mothers and unsupervised toddlers (**Mohammed et al, 2013**). Children between the ages of 0-4 years are most susceptible to accidents within the confined space of their homes while those who are older are more likely to get injured outside the home. For young kids, it is important that a caregiver is present in the same room to monitor the child in order avoid accidents like falls, burns, choking, cuts and lacerations (**Hossien, 2009**). A mother's knowledge and practices can be highly instrumental in bringing down the rate of accidents among toddlers (**Thien et al, 2005**). Many developing countries are facing a tremendous increase in the number of accidents amongst their young. **Shreshtha (2006)** pointed out that burn injuries were very common among toddlers, especially girls in developing regions of the world. In the context of the present study, it is observed that children of both factory and home workers are at risk of suffering accidental injuries as unhindered supervision of children is not possible by mothers who belong to either of the two work-category. In this section of the chapter an attempt has been made to capture the severity and extent of the accidents and the attitude of mothers towards the accident, using 'types of accidents', 'supervision during the accident' and 'treatment of the child'. Lastly, the impact of the mothers' working hours on the incidence of accidents has been analysed to see if a relationship exists or not.

25 percent of home workers and 27 percent of factory workers reported that their first born had met with an accident while they were at work in the last year. The percentage was almost negligible in the case of the second child where only 1 percent of home workers reported incidence of accidents while it was zero in the case of factory workers.

### 6.6.1 Types of Accidents

The following graph depicts the different causes behind accidental injuries among the children of garment workers. The victims in most cases were the first born children of factory and home workers. The most common type of accident encountered were burns, where the child burnt himself/herself either by touching the stove, hot utensils or boiling water. This is common when older children are left alone to supervise younger children and they try to manage the kitchen while the mother is away. The second most recurrent accident among factory workers' children was 'breaking a bone'. Many respondents stated that while they were away at work their children either fell or slipped and broke a bone. Home-workers though did not report any incidents of 'broken bones'.

'Yes I want the government to give us free childcare services. I was working in the factory when my son broke his leg a few months back. There is nobody to help me. You cannot be in two places at the same time, can you?' *Neelema, factory worker, Tai-khand*

Getting cut with a sharp knife or a pair of scissors was another common accident, stated by the respondents. This incident was more frequent among home workers where children had easy access to sharp objects which were otherwise being used by the mothers.

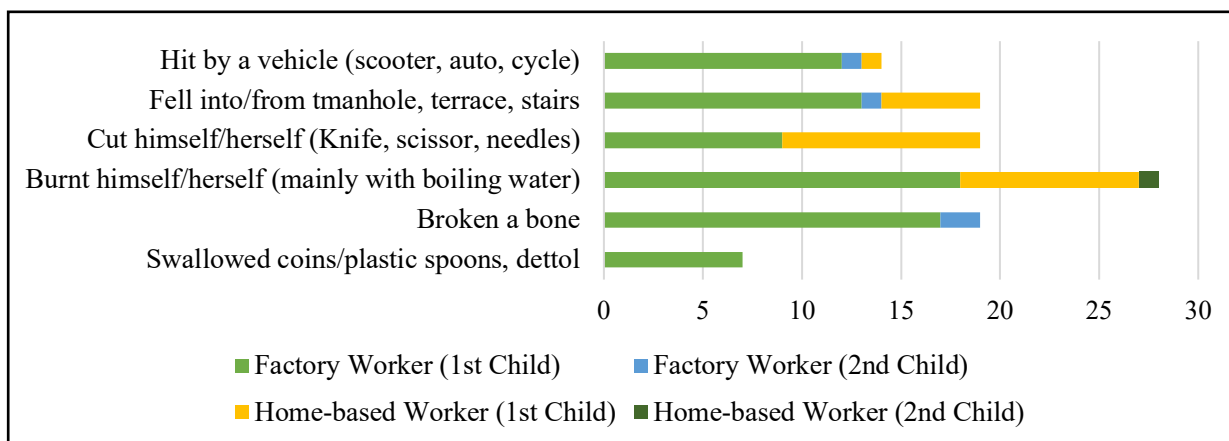
'Small accidents happen quite often. Look around me, I have to work with scissors and needles, my child is always trying to play with them. I am unable to look out for her all the time' *Fariha Begum, home-worker, Seelumpur*

Accidents due to getting hit by a vehicle and falling from a terrace, or down a flight of stairs or into an open manhole were mostly reported by factory workers. The plausible reason is the multiplicity of formal and informal care choices. Children left with a neighbour were often left unmonitored throughout the day and allowed to play by themselves or wander around in the adjoining alleys and streets.

'It happened a year ago. I was in the factory when my line supervisor called me and told me that my son has fallen off the roof of the house. I ran back to my house. My neighbours had

already rescued him by then. Luckily he was caught in some wires!'. **Mumtaz, factory worker, Mulla Colony**

**Fig 6.9: Type of Accidents Met by the Children, 2018-2019**



Source: Primary survey, 2018-19

While the home workers were expected to keep a better check on the mobility of their children, quite a few reported that their child had gotten hit by a vehicle as it was not feasible to monitor the child every minute.

‘The other day, I had gone outside to talk to my fabricator. It had hardly been 10 minutes that Gunni slipped out of the house and got hit by a bicycle. I wish I had somebody helping me to look after her’ **Gauri, home-worker, Harkeshnagar**

Lastly, ingestion of inedible things like coins, plastic spoons and Dettol was frequently witnessed among the children of factory workers.

‘My two year old swallowed Dettol a few months ago. I had asked my neighbour to look after her. I had to take her to the hospital immediately. She almost died’ **Minni, factory worker, New Ashok Nagar**

This brings us to Hossien’s argument where he states that toddlers are very curious and tend to explore and touch things around them. Hence, it was important for the caregiver to be in the

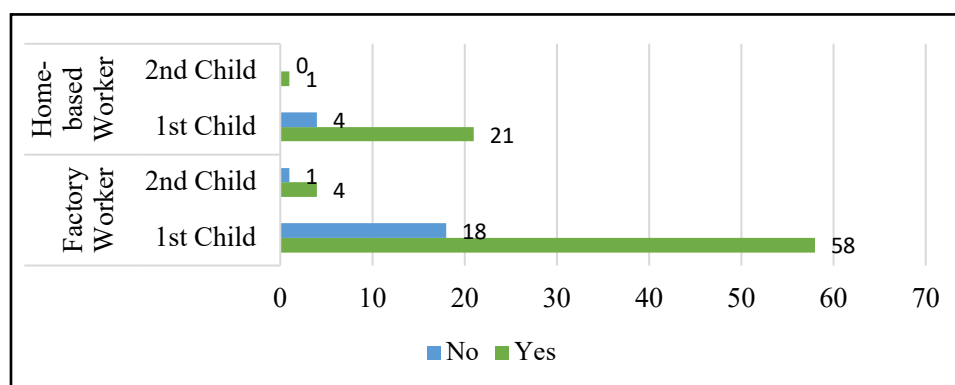
same room as the child to avoid mishaps like swallowing inedible things, getting cut or burnt and falling and hurting oneself.

### 6.6.2 Person Accompanying the Child

While accidental injuries are common among children of garment workers, it is often the case that accidents happen when a child is under the supervision of someone apart from the mother. It can be a neighbour, an older sibling, grandparents, private care services, *anganwadi* workers or school teachers. This occurrence can be attributed to the divided attention a child receives when left under informal care services, especially that of a neighbour.

‘I had left my child with my neighbour when the incident took place. He fell off the roof of her house. She says that he was playing in the courtyard when she went to the kitchen to make lunch. I really do not know what actually happened. I cannot blame her as she is doing me a big favour by looking after my son when I am in the factory. I am grateful that my son is safe.’ *Mumtaz, factory worker, Mulla Colony.*

**Fig 6.10: Whether the Child was Alone During the Time of the Accident, 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

58 percent of the factory workers and 21 percent of the home based workers reported that accidents took place when the child was left under somebody else’s care. Whereas only 18 percent and 4 percent of factory and home workers mentioned that their child was completely alone with no physical supervision when an accident took place.

‘I try not to leave my child alone. But the other day I had to go to my fabricator’s house to get more thread. I must have gone for 30 minutes. When I came back my 4 year old girl had

already burnt her hand trying to pour hot milk into a glass'. *Rekha, homemaker, Harkeshnagar*

While supervision and physical monitoring of the child is important, it cannot be discontinuous in nature as that would expose children to the risk of accidental injuries. Even though it might be difficult to arrange round the clock supervision (except for private and factory crèches) it would ensure improved supervision and reduce the exposure to accidents.

### **6.6.3 Mother's Working Hours and Child Accidents: A Correlation Analysis**

The above facts portray the incidence of accidents being more frequent among factory workers than home-based workers. This has much to do with factory workers being away from their homes due to their long working hours. As the non-probability data based on purposive sampling used in this study does not allow statistical models to be used, **Pearson's Correlation** has been run among two variables, 'working hours of a factory worker' and 'whether the first child had met with an accident when the mother was away at work'. Pearson's value of  $r$  i.e. the correlation co-efficient varies from +1 and -1. +1 being perfect positive and -1 is perfect negative. A value of zero indicates no relationship between the correlated variables.

The  $r$  value of .157 signify moderate positive correlation. This indicates that with increasing working hours of the mother, the accidents among their first born children will also increase. The two-tailed significance value in this analysis is .009 which implies that the correlation is significant.



**Table 6.6: Working Hours and Child’s Accidents: Results of the Correlation Analysis, 2018-19**

		Working hours	Child met with an accident when you were at work
Working hours	Pearson Correlation	1	.157**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	281	279
Child met with an accident when you were at work	Pearson Correlation	.157**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	279	279
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Primary survey, 2018-19

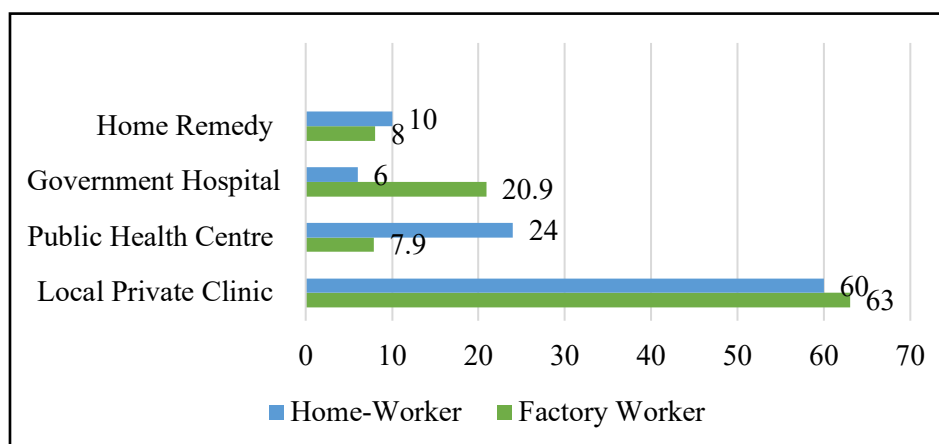
While it is important that both factory and home workers continue to participate in the labour market and add to a family earnings, it is the government’s responsibility to make affordable and accessible childcare available to them by strengthening existing programs and introducing stricter laws for factory crèches. This would not only bring down the incident of accidental injuries but also reduce the percentage of underweight and sick children.

#### 6.6.4 Treatment Status

Around 90 percent of the home workers and factory workers reported taking their injured children immediately to a doctor. The subsequent bar graph illustrates the type of medical help opted by the mothers whose children had met with an accident. The data used to compute the following graph considers the first born of both factory and home workers, as accidental injuries were encountered mainly by these older children. It can be seen that the primary preference of both factory and home-worker was to take their injured child to the nearest local private clinic. 63 percent of the factory workers and 60 percent of the home-workers cited a preference towards taking their child to a private clinic. The reasons for opting for private clinics were mainly the severity of the disease, trust in the abilities of private doctors and the annoyance of long waiting periods at government health centres. When children suffered minor

injuries, they were mainly taken to the nearest public health centre as stated by 24 percent and 7.9 percent of home and factory workers respectively.

**Fig 6.11: Source of Medical Advice, 2018-2019**



*Source: Primary survey, 2018-19*

20.9 percent of factory workers took their children to a government hospital especially when the injuries were severe like serious burns, bone fractures, dislocations or getting hit by a vehicle. Medical centres like ‘Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya’, ‘Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital’, ‘Govind Ballabh Panth Hospital’ and ‘Safdarjung Hospital’ were some of the few that were mentioned by the respondents. Lastly, a very small percentage of respondents cited the use of home-remedy as a quick fix to such injuries. Home remedies were sought out only when the injuries were not too severe, like mild burns, bruises and cuts, which could be easily treated at home.

When the incidence of illness and accidents were juxtaposed, it was evident that the respondents were far more pro-active in seeking medical help when their child met with an accident compared to when they were ill. As an explanation for this behaviour many stated that the burden of running the household and caring for a child fell solely on them which made it difficult to juggle everything single-handedly. This compelled them to try home remedies first before opting for professional medical advice for their sick children. Lastly, a few respondents stated that if they had money and time they would have provided their children with the best possible medical treatment for every illness.

### 6.6.5 Aftermath of an Accident

Of all the children who had had an accident, 78 percent were either left alone or left under the supervision of a neighbour or an older sibling, while their mothers worked to sustain the family. When questioned, a majority of the respondents cited that they had ‘no other choice’ as there was a dearth of formal care centres for their children.

‘You tell us what should we do? There are no government schemes for poor women like us. My child has recovered now. I had no choice but to get back to work. I have to help my husband feed our family.’ *Rita Devi, factory worker, New Ashoknagar*

‘I almost lost my daughter when she swallowed Dettol. We took her to Chacha Nehru and by God’s grace, she is alive today. I still leave her with the same neighbour when I go for work. I have no other alternative, cannot take her with me as my factory does not have any creche facility.’ *Minni, factory worker, New Ashok Nagar*

‘His broken leg has healed but I have no choice but to leave him with my elder daughter when I go to the factory. My elder daughter is also a child, merely seven years old but I have no other option. You see the factory I work at has no childcare unit. So I am left with no other alternative.’ *Neelema, factory worker, Tai-khand*

From the above narratives, it is clear that there is a lacuna present between the requirements of garment workers and the availability of childcare services. A very high dependence on informal childcare does not guarantee safety, availability of undivided attention, timely food and education for the child. While private crèches have proliferated in different pockets of the city, a lack of affordable and subsidised childcare units for women workers belonging to a certain economic segment forces the respondents to bank almost exclusively on informal care options. This, in turn, impacts the physical, mental and emotional development of children in the long run.

### 6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, characteristics of child’s health have been investigated using a variety of important variables. Firstly, with the help of the Body Mass Index percentile, underweight children were identified and their concentration was seen mostly among first born female

children of factory workers. Regarding vaccination status, it was seen that complete vaccination cards were frequently found with factory workers rather than home-workers probably because factory workers had greater exposure and awareness, resulting from several social interactions through work. But, even with higher levels of immunization, the occurrence of illness was high among the children of factory workers when compared to their home-based counterparts. This was attributed to their long working hours away from home with little time spent with their children.

Many of the home-based and factory workers reported not taking their child to clinics because the illness was not severe enough and could have been treated with potent home remedies. Many also cited that they neither had the time nor the money to get medical advice for their ailing children.

Accidental injuries were another frequently witnessed health issue suffered by several children. Quite a few respondents reported accidents like falling, burning, swallowing substances, etc. Incidents of accidents were more common among the children of factory workers than that of home-workers which implies the uncertainty associated with their everyday caregiving. Leaving home for work compels a factory worker to arrange for a caregiver for her child. While many go to school or the *anganwadi*, those below three years of age are either put into local low-quality crèches or simply left with neighbours or an older siblings. This invariably increases the risk of the child meeting an accident and missing out on proper nutrition and education.

Hence, it is clear from the above discussion that for the working poor, the root of the problem does not lie with the mother's work but with the lack of childcare infrastructure in urban areas. While garment workers toil hard to support their families and provide the best opportunities for their children, they lose out due to the lack of concrete government policies which should aid their daring endeavours. This chapter necessitates the evaluation of the existing policies and government programmes pertaining to childcare meant for women involved in the informal sector which has been taken up in detail in the last chapter of this study.

## CHAPTER VII

# AVAILABILITY OF SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES AND POLICY ANALYSIS

### 7.1 Introduction

India, which has 164 million children between the ages of 0 and 6 years, constitutes about 20 percent of the world's child population. Their optimal development is critical as they form the much-lauded potential demographic dividend of our country. Yet, research indicates that 38.4 percent children under 5 years in India are stunted and 21 percent are wasted (**World Bank, 2018**). This reiterates why it is crucial for the government to invest in Early Childhood Development (ECD). The National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education was formulated by the Indian government to optimise the development and active learning capacities of all children under the age of six (**Gupta, 2017**). But, like many developing countries, in India too, the ECCE programme was not planned nor implemented while keeping in mind the issues specific to the urban poor living in slums and peri-urban settlements resulting in an increasing percentage of urban under five children being left out of the ambit of early childhood development programs (**Nair and Radhakrishnan, 2004**).

Based on the analysis of the previous chapters, an attempt has been made to evaluate various government schemes pertaining to childcare and early childhood development, looking at their characteristics and applicability towards those residing in the urban slums. The perception of the respondents, both home and factory workers have been taken into account to gauge how well-informed they are about these schemes. Employer's and factory owner's opinions about the relevant government schemes meant to benefit their workers have also been assessed and finally a few reforms and policy level interventions have been suggested to make the existing schemes more inclusive in nature.

## 7.2 Importance of Early Childhood Development

The conception of Early Childhood Development (ECD) has been getting attention from researchers and policymakers from all parts of the world. United Nations declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959 advocated that every child needs special care and legal protection, before and after birth (**UN General Assembly, 1989**). The ‘UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’ sanctioned that children have a right to survival, protection, participation and development (**UN General Assembly, 1989**). Following this, the 1990 ‘World Conference on Education for All’ at Jomtien, Thailand, mandated for the expansion of early childhood development services especially for those belonging to lower socio-economic backgrounds based on the presumption that ‘learning begins at birth’. The above commitments were reiterated in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 at the ‘World Education Forum’.

The World Bank, the World Health Organisation, UNESCO and UNICEF have stressed the significance of ECD in improving the physical and social well-being of young children. Largely, ECD incorporates a combination of the following services.

- School-based nursery education for children aged between 3 to 6 years, by trained teachers. This should have a proper curricular programme and is most likely to be publicly funded.
- Part-time community-based pre-school or playgroups supervised by local women in church halls or other community facilities.
- Centre-based childcare for children between the ages of 0 to 3 years and 3 to 6 years facilitated by trained caregivers to cover the working hours of working mothers.
- Provision of supplementary feeding programs, home visits by health workers for health monitoring, vaccinations and treatment.

The proponents of ECD argue that the benefits of ECD programs are multifarious and should prepare children for school, would enable children to socialise with their peers and provide childcare for working mothers which would enable them to raise and nurture their children better.

Although global focus on ECD has intensified over the past decades through its inclusion in UN Sustainable Developmental Goals, approximately 250 million children below the age of five years in low and middle income countries are at risk of not accomplishing their developmental potential (**Britto et al, 2017**). The reasons can be attributed to the lack of proper planning and efficient implementation by regional governing bodies.

This study showcases that the provision of centre based childcare, the impact on mother's working hours and the holistic development of the child which are integral parts of the ECD program have not been made available for working mothers in the garment sector. Through the course of the chapter, India's policies on dissemination of education and childcare have been reviewed against the backdrop of the respondents' awareness and understanding of these programs.

### **7.3 Early Childhood Care and Education in India**

“Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is considered to be the best investment a country can make to promote human resource development and gender equality. For children who are below the poverty line, ECCE plays an important role in compensating and combatting educational inequalities.” (**UNICEF, 2019**).

The formulation of ECCE services in any country is closely linked to the changing role of women. With increasing maternal employment, ECCE programs become mandatory ways to support a mother's participation in the labour market (**Melhuish & Petrogiannis, 2006**). In the context of India, it is seen that the female labour force participation has increased over the years (**PLFS 2018-19**) and 90 percent of these women are engaged in the informal sector (**Census, 2011**), mostly falling below the poverty line. They are devoid of any social security benefits and are in the dire need of quality ECCE programs.

From 1951 onwards, ECCE in its holistic form became an integral part of India's child welfare initiatives. ECCE was incorporated in policies, plans, constitutional amendments and various other schemes in India. The most significant of these are the National Policy for Children (1974), Integrated Child Development Services (1975), National Policy of Education (1986), District Primary Education Programme and the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

The National Policy on ECCE, 2013 (through the Ministry of Women and Child Development) was adopted by the government of India to ‘reinforce the commitment to promote inclusive

and equitable opportunities for encouraging optimal development for all children under the age of 6' (**MOWCD Report, 2013**). This was applicable across public and private crèches, play-schools, day-care centres, anganwadis, balwadis etc.

With the government supporting public-private partnership, many franchises emerged under the ECCE framework which were owned exclusively by private proprietors thus primarily catering to wealthy consumers. With the advent of privatisation, the implementation of ECCE guidelines became faulty in public sector enterprises. In the context of the quality of early childhood education, it was noticed that the approach undertaken in the public sector had been minimalist in nature and wasn't likely to pay any remittances in the future. This necessitates the provision of key learning conditions for children through basic infrastructure and trained teachers (**Kaul and Sanker, 2009**). Adding to this difficulty, it was observed that only a handful of public day care centres were available and these weren't always accessible to the needy and poor population. In the process, the most vulnerable children were left out from receiving the multi-dimensional benefits of the ECCE program.

#### **7.4 Integrated Child Development Programme in India: Gauging Success in Urban Areas**

The Integrated Child Development Scheme was launched by the Government of India in 1975 and focussed on three population groups, children (0-6 years old), women in the reproductive age group and adolescent girls. The ICDS was envisioned as a way to achieve the Millennium Development Goal related to the eradication of malnutrition. Initially, the scheme was introduced on a pilot basis, eventually expanding to 5659 projects with around 7 lakhs anganwadi centres in all the states and union territories by 2006 (**Kaul and Sanker, 2009**). The programme was mainly targeted towards covering rural and tribal populations. The urban component was very small with only a few ICDS projects in slums and under-developed areas of Indian cities. This resulted in an apparent mismatch with urban areas having 31 percent of the country's total population and only 13 percent of the ICDS projects resulting in limited the ICDS services for the urban poor (**Kaul and Sanker, 2009**). Even though the elementary function of the ICDS was to provide health, nutrition and pre-school services to children, an insignificant number of the ICDS centres started providing crèche facilities for younger children.



While the ICDS has been India's flagship child-focussed programme, several shortcomings were identified in the agenda and the outreach of the programme. Firstly, the focus of the nutritional wellbeing of children in the programme had been on 3 to 6 year olds instead on the first three years of life. Secondly, a single anganwadi worker, who was not very well educated and lacked proper skills, was expected to undertake all health, care and educational responsibilities of all children in a block. To ease the burden of these cumbersome duties, many anganwadi workers neglected pre-school education as it was the most time and effort intensive activity. Lastly, the biggest problem of the ICDS program was that it provided its important network of services mostly to the rural poor thereby leaving out a majority of the urban population. Presently, with a few scattered anganwadis in the city, the ICDS program is said to cover only 1.5 million children out of the 6 million living in urban slums.

### **7.5 Mobile Crèches: Who are the Beneficiaries?**

Mobile Crèches were developed in 1969 primarily to provide childcare to the children of migrant daily wage labourers working at construction sites in Delhi. Crèches were set up close to building sites with the fundamental aim of providing all-encompassing (immunization, nutrition, education) childcare to children between the ages of 0 and 12 years (**Bridgeland, 1972**). Over the years, the organisation spread across state borders and now runs crèches for migrant workers in Pune and Mumbai. Within Delhi, Mobile Crèches currently operates 19 care centres at construction sites, provides training to caregivers at 18 construction sites and empowers communities at eight urban settlements (**Murphy, 2008**). The focus of the Mobile Crèche as an organisation was to internalise the main objectives of the ECCE programme and make them available for the children of daily wage workers.

The Mobile Crèches demonstrates some noteworthy practices. Firstly, through the provision of a safe environment for children living and growing up in deprived and dangerous conditions. Secondly, catering to the children's cognitive stimulation, nutrition and health requirements. Thirdly, stimulating community engagement and spreading awareness about key issues pertinent to parenting, health, nutrition, education and child development. And finally, conducting daily activities like storytelling, dancing, singing and playing games. Thus it can be said that the Mobile Crèches working with the construction industry serves as a perfect advertisement for setting up public-private partnerships to ensure the provision of basic services to migrant populations in vulnerable settings.

But Mobile Crèches are not something that benefit the actors of the present study. From the above analysis it is clear that these crèches, even though fully functional and inclusive cater primarily to children of a certain fragment of daily wage labourers; construction workers. Over the years, the components of the mobile crèche program has expanded to educating older children and involving parents in care activities and awareness programs. But, its expansion in the area of industrial workers, street vendors and domestic workers has not been witnessed. This has limited the scope of mobile crèches. Despite mobile crèches being a potent source of childcare it does not in any way help the female garment workers working across the Industrial units of Delhi.

### **7.6 Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme and its Accessibility**

The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2006 to provide child care facilities to poor working mothers both in urban and rural areas at a subsidised rate. Consecutively, it was renamed the National Crèche scheme and is under the jurisdiction of the MOWCD.

The major objective of the scheme was to provide care facilities which were not simply ‘custodial in nature’ but would aid in the holistic development of a child. The primary objectives of the scheme were to provide day-care facilities for children, to improve nutrition and health status of the children, and to provide age-appropriate stimulation and learning. Services of the program included the provision of supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring, regular health check-ups and immunization.

This scheme had pan-India coverage with approximately 23,000 functional crèches (2015) spread across the country. The target group for the program consisted of children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years. There were certain rules laid out for the functioning of the crèches: Children should not be more than twenty five in number, and forty percent of these should be below the age of three; the crèches should be located in a safe and secure place with proper ventilation and adequate daylight; clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities and the provision of nutritious food thrice a day were stated as mandatory criteria. Other services which were an integral part of this scheme were regular health check-ups, growth monitoring, and the provision of a first-aid box and play materials. Trained caregivers were employed to

make sure that the care centre provided necessary services for the comprehensive development of every child.

Timings were kept flexible based on the need of the working mothers. As mentioned before, this scheme was subsidised for children in need, but was not completely free. Those falling below the poverty line had to pay rupees 20 per child per month while the fees increased to 100 and 200 rupees per month if both parents were working and fell within a certain income bracket.

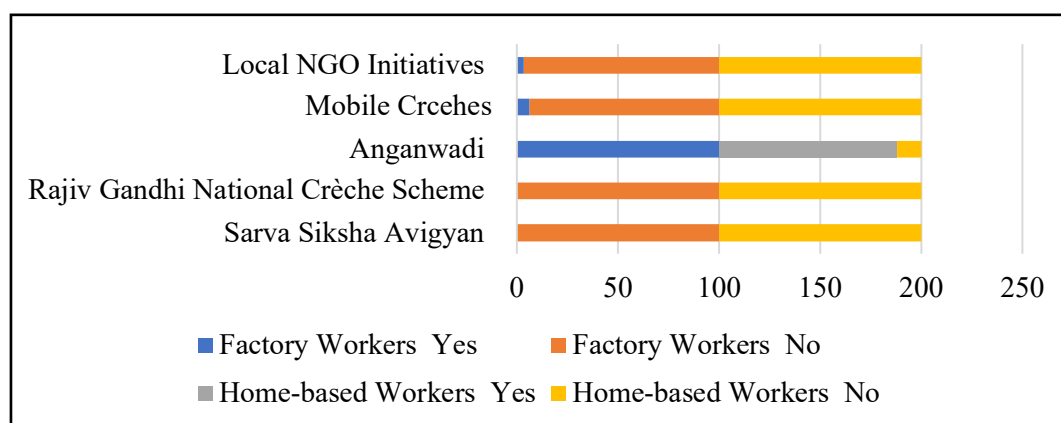
The widespread implementation of this scheme probably resulted in the empowerment of poor working mothers and also provided them with the impetus to continue participating in the labour market. But over the years, the total number of functional crèches under this scheme showed a steady decline and there were numerous reasons behind these falling numbers. Initially, a central sector scheme, where the centre undertook ninety percent of its funding, the Rajiv Gandhi Crèche scheme was changed to a centrally sponsored scheme in 2017, along with a revision of its funding structure. Under the revised scheme, the funding was sourced from the central government, state governments and non-government organisations which resulted in a drop of the central government's funding share from ninety to sixty percent (**Pavithra, 2020**). The participation of state governments was lukewarm. A majority of these state governments were not keen on implementing the scheme with the same rigour as earlier. This resulted in a sixty percent decline in the total number of crèches along with the total number of beneficiaries. As of the 2019 data given by MOWCD, there were only 7930 functional crèches across the country with states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Delhi being completely devoid of any crèches under this scheme. Lastly, it was observed that the addresses of these crèches were unavailable to the public in parts of the country again resulting in a lower number of beneficiaries.

### **7.7 Respondent's Take on the Available Government Schemes**

The above discussion focusses on the efforts and initiatives undertaken by our government to implement a comprehensive early childhood care and education program through various schemes and programs both in rural and urban areas. After analysing the available programs, it was observed that rural areas had better coverage (ICDS, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and National Creche Scheme) as compared to urban areas, thus leaving most of the urban poor out of the scope of subsidised care provisions.

Fig no 7.1 depicts the respondents’ awareness regarding the different ECCE programs available for them. A simple question: ‘Have you heard about the following programs or not?’ was asked to all the respondents and their answers reflected their level of understanding for these programmes.

**Fig 7.1 Awareness Regarding Early Childhood Development and Crèche Programmes (In Percentage), 2018-19**



*Source: Primary Survey, 2018-19*

All the respondents including factory and home-workers were completely unaware of the Rajiv Gandhi Creche Scheme and Sarva Siksha Avigyan. Their lack of awareness was justified as no functional creches under this scheme were recorded to have been operational in the Delhi-NCR Region.

‘No, I have not heard about any of the programmes you are talking about. Are you a part of these programmes? Why are you asking us so many questions? I will only answer if you promise to help us’. ***Gita, Harkeshnagar, home-worker***

The anganwadi was the only facility that was known by all the respondents. Almost ninety percent of the respondents said that they knew about the location of their nearest anganwadi along with the facilities that were being provided there. Many of the respondents sent their toddlers to the local anganwadis while they were away at work.

‘The Anganwadi is by the government. I know that but I am not aware of the other schemes. Are you from the government? Why don’t you talk to the government people and try to fix the problem we are in.’ **Mumtaz, Mulla colony, Factory worker**

Only 6.2 percent of the respondents had heard about Mobile Crèches before and knew it was meant for daily wage labourers at construction sites.

‘Mobile Creches are not for workers in the factory, they are for construction workers. Maybe an educated girl like you can speak to them and ask them to make some arrangements for factory workers too. So what do you say, will you speak to them?’  
**Farsana Begum, Gola Kuan, Factory Worker**

Lack of knowledge about the available government schemes designed especially to cater to poor working women portrays prominent fault lines between the formulation and implementation of these schemes. The credible beneficiaries of these schemes were completely oblivious to even the mere existence of these schemes.

When the clause of mandatory crèche facilities in a factory with more than thirty women was brought up with the respondents, many were surprised, sarcastic and enraged.

‘I have worked in many factories over the past five years. I have not come across any factory having a crèche facility, are you sure it is mandatory for the factories?’ **Palak Rani, Seelumpur, Factory worker**

‘Crèches in factories? They have not fired us till now, that is enough. We do not expect factories to give us crèche facilities!’ **Nila Devi, New Ashok Nagar, Factory Worker**

‘First the government should do something for us. We are poor and that is why we are always neglected. We want free childcare or increase our wage rates!’ **Salma, Gola Kuan, Factory Worker**

In the context of awareness among women garment workers regarding the availability of various government schemes the above discussion and narrative analysis distinctly exhibits the

respondents' lack of cognisance. Their repeated enquiry of whether the surveyor belonged to the government or whether she was ready to speak to the government on their behalf portrayed a conspicuous gap between the working urban poor and the state government responsible for implementing and advertising the schemes.

### **7.8 Employers' Take on the Available Government Schemes**

Garment industries in Delhi have a three tier recruitment system (discussed in chapter 4) ranging from a fabricator to a contractor. Rarely are female workers hired directly by the factory manager. This is done in order to avoid the provision of employment benefits like maternity leave, ESI cards and crèche facilities. Employers from every strata of the system were interviewed to understand their perspectives about government schemes and programmes pertaining to childcare facilities. Firstly, the most important issue of provision of a crèche being made mandatory in production units having more than thirty women by the Factories Act and Delhi Factory rules was brought up for a discussion with a sub-contractor, contractor and factory manager.

The sub-contractor had a nonchalant approach towards the clause of factories requiring the provision of childcare facilities. His answer was diplomatic and mainly sought to safeguard the factories which are his main source of income.

‘Madam, I am just doing my work here. Who am I to say whether the factory should have a crèche or not? These women have managed their child’s upbringing for so many years, they will manage in the future too.’ *Sub-Contractor, Harkeshnagar*

The contractor interviewed had a license and was employed by an export house in Okhla Phase I. He was well aware of the National Crèche Scheme and strongly argued against the Factories Act which requires an Industry to have a day care unit.

‘The Government should open free day-care for these workers. It is the government’s responsibility and not that of the factory owners.’ *Contractor, Seelumpur*

Contrary to the contractor, the factory manager seemed restrained and cited very high production costs as the major deterrent in hiring workers directly and thus not giving them work benefits. He also tried to establish the positive role of the production centre in creating jobs even if it was at an informal level.

‘Our hands are tied. We also have to make a profit and run the industry, we cannot afford to provide childcare centres or crèches. On the positive side, we are helping these migrant women with jobs and basic wages’. *Factory manager, Okhla Phase II*

When they were asked about ICDS programmes like Anganwadi and National Crèche Scheme, the fabricator and the sub-contractor were not aware of such programs but the contractor and the factory manager were well-versed with these schemes. The contractor who had an aggressive way of speaking blamed the government for not providing anything for the workers and dumping all these responsibilities on private factory owners. He was also of the opinion that the questions being asked of him about the factory crèches were irrelevant if the surveyor already knew about the existing government schemes. The surveyor should have known that it was solely the ruling party’s responsibility to cater to its peoples’ needs.

One fabricator, who outsources low quality factory work to home-workers, was of the opinion that garment workers should move out of the factory and work from home. According to her, a home-worker’s pay was not bad and ‘working from home’ would allow them to care for their children without having to depend on formal childcare services.

When she was told that a home-worker also needs childcare, her response was that of bewilderment as she could not associate the requirement of childcare with that of home-workers.

‘I was a home-worker once, look where I am right now. Home-work is not so bad, many women prefer to work from home and they do not mind the piece-rate payment. I do not understand why you think they need childcare. They are sitting at home only’.  
*Fabricator, Harkeshnagar*

From the above analysis, it is evident that the recruiters, working at different phases of the recruitment process, did not view the availability of childcare as something important to be provided to their workers. Most of them were of the opinion that since informal women workers, both factory and home-based, have been managing their work and child-rearing activities without any provision from the employer so far they should continue to do so. Of the very few of this group who acknowledged the requirement of childcare for garment workers, cited it being solely the responsibility of the government and not of the recruiting body.

This argument reflects how ‘childcare needs’ have been looked at through a lens of insignificance across the different rungs of the recruitment system revealing the lackadaisical attitude of the production houses in totality.

### **7.9 Analysis of the Available Schemes**

Early Childhood Development as discussed above is extremely important in order to have a healthy and skilled population in the future. Every government should invest in Early Childhood Care and Education keeping in mind its most vulnerable communities. Our government has formulated several policies and implemented various programs to bring all the children of the country between the ages of 0 and 6 years under the umbrella of ECCE. The major schemes available for young children are ICDS, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and the National Crèche Scheme. A thorough analysis of the above schemes showcased some impediments which need to be addressed.

Firstly, most of these programmes were targeted towards the rural populations thus leaving out the urban needy. Anganwadis which are a part of the ICDS programme and the National Crèche Scheme had a majority of their centres stationed in villages. Only a few were found in the urban slums.

Secondly, the childcare component of ECCE was not covered by these schemes. The only childcare centric programme was the National Crèche Scheme whose performance over the years has deteriorated with the falling number of functional crèches. Adding to this problem, many states have been completely devoid of crèche facilities under this scheme, thus subjecting its pan India availability to severe ambiguity. For ICDS, anganwadis cater partially to childcare needs for a few hours in a day but only for children who are more than three years old hence restricting its reach to very young children.



Thirdly, Mobile Creches which have succeeded in providing care and education to children of the urban poor started as a cooperative and were not regulated by the government. It has been successful in a few pockets of the country but the problem lies with the fact that it is only available to children of the migrant construction workers. This leaves out a vast majority of informal women industrial workers, as well as street vendors and domestic workers, from becoming beneficiaries of these mobile crèches.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that, while the formulation of policies is crucial, their grass root level implementation is even more so. Even though the ICDS and National Crèche Scheme were landmark programs devised by the government to promote ECCE, the improper implementation of the programmes has doomed the very purpose for which it was formulated. Additionally, the discrepancy between the state and the central government has often led to the ineffectiveness of these programmes in urban areas.

#### **7.10 Impact of COVID-19 on Garment Workers**

The lockdown which was caused due to the outbreak of the worldwide global Corona virus pandemic had the greatest impact on workers engaged in the lowest strung of the economy. India witnessed a large scale reverse migration with lakhs of daily wage migrant labourers moving back to their hometown and villages days after the announcement of nationwide curfew. With the country's economy coming to a halt and industries shutting down, it was evident that the garment workers who were interviewed earlier for the purpose of this study would be severely impacted.

Utilising the contacts and data which were collected earlier, a telephonic survey was conducted from August 2021 to September 2021 to understand their lived experiences during the time of the pandemic. A total of 15 women were interviewed over two to three sessions to understand their difficult journey through the pandemic. An attempt was made to reach out to more women who were previously interviewed but majority of them did not respond. Most of the respondents interviewed earlier were not circular migrants and had been living in Delhi for some time now. The advent of the pandemic and a sudden lockdown came as a rude shock and forced them to leave the city which had harboured and fed them for the last few years.

Table 7.1 based on the telephonic survey depicts information on their work status, alternative source of income, shift in residential base and childcare options etc. Out of the 15 respondents,

9 were former factory workers and 6 were former home-based worker. All 15 respondents lost their jobs the day lockdown was announced. Many stayed in the city for the first few months but lack of work and food compelled them to move back to their villages.

‘I lost my job the day lockdown was announced. There was no question of going back to the factory as it was shut. Also there was no guarantee of getting the job back as I was hired by a sub-contractor. I had to start all over again after the lockdown.’ ***Gita, Harkeshnagar, Factory Worker***

‘Orders stopped coming with the lockdown! Factories were shut. For the first few weeks we finished our pending orders, but never got paid for them.’ ***Ruksaar, Seelampur, Home Worker***

**Table 7.1: Impact of COVID-19 on Garment Workers: Some Facts**

No. of respondents surveyed	Total-15 Factory worker- 9 Home-based worker-6
No of respondents who had lost their jobs	Total-15
No of respondents having an alternate source of income	Husbands had their jobs-2 No source of income- 13
No of respondents who had shifted their residential base	Stayed in the city -4 Moved back to the village during the first lockdown-13
No of respondents who lost a family member due to Covid19	Lost a distant family member- 3 Lost an immediate family member -4
No. of respondents who got Covid19	Factory Worker-3 Home-worker- None
Source of childcare during Covid19	Due to lack of work, the child was always with the respondents

Source: Primary Survey 2021

Only 2 out of the 15 respondents reported having an alternate source of income as their husbands were working for a local NGO and were involved in the distribution of masks and sanitizers. The rest had no source of income whatsoever and largely depended on government rations and food distribution points which were set up in different areas.

‘We had no source of income during the lockdown. Both husband and I used to work in garment industries in Okhla Phase-2. With the shutting of the industries we were out of jobs. We would locate food distribution points and stand in the queue for long hours to get one meal a day. It was very difficult, the lockdown months.’ *Vimla, Gola Kuan, Factory Worker*

Withstanding all the difficulties, only 4 of the respondents continued staying in the city while the rest moved back to their villages during the first lockdown. Many cited that it was the most feasible thing to do to stay alive and feed one’s family.

‘We decided to move to our village during the lockdown as I had assurance of getting rice and dal twice a day to feed my children. With no work it was very difficult to survive in the city.’ *Gauri, New-Ashoknagar, Home-Worker.*

3 of the respondents lost distant family members while 4 of them lost immediate family members especially during the second wave of the pandemic. 3 of the factory workers also reported to have been tested positive for COVID-19 while the others stated that they had symptoms but never got tested to avoid going to the quarantine centres.

‘I lost my husband during the pandemic. He fell sick on our way back to the village. Died few days after reaching his house. Now I am the only one left to look after my three kids. I have decided not to go back to the city and stay here in Azizpur’. *Neelam, Mulla Colony, Factory Worker.*

‘We stayed in the city, my husband was distributing masks for a local NGO and so we had meagre income to survive the lockdown. I think I too got the disease, had cough and cold, lost my sense of smell. But I refrained from testing as I did not want to leave my family and go to a quarantine centre’. *Asha, Home-Worker, Harkeshnagar*

When asked about childcare choices adopted during the pandemic, most women reported that the children were always with them as they were jobless and at home all the time. Many also pointed out that they were not prioritizing childcare as they felt it was not important enough.

### **7.11 Policy Implications**

In accordance with the gaps in the policy implementations, the following measures have been suggested which could help increase the number of beneficiaries and effectiveness of the existing programmes.

- The care component of ECCE should be emphasized further and all the existing programmes pertaining to early childhood development should introduce a component of either subsidised or free day care centres for working mothers falling under the poverty line.
- Children of deprived urban settlements should be a priority group along with their rural counterparts in all the ECCE programmes introduced by the government.
- ICDS coverage should be spread evenly across the country in both urban and rural areas along with the introduction of feasible and accessible childcare programs and crèche provisions for children up to the age of six years.
- The central government should make sure that each state has their full allotment of subsidised day care centres operational under the National Crèche Scheme. This would enable innumerable women to continue participating in the labour market with ease.
- Mobile crèches should expand their beneficiaries and include informal women workers from all spheres of economic activity to ensure availability of well-equipped care facilities for all urban children who are at risk.
- Crèche facilities should be made compulsory in every industries, both for formal and informal workforces. The Central and State governments should make sure that the clauses pertaining to factory creches in the Factories Act and the Delhi Factory Rules should be rightfully implemented to preserve labour laws and help workers access their fundamental work benefits they are entitled too. `

- Girl children from urban slums are at a greater risk of malnutrition, unscientific health practices and school drop-outs as they are often used for informal supervision of their younger siblings. Special programs to safe-guard the health and academic interests of the girl child should be formulated and implemented by state or central governments.

### **7.12 Conclusion**

A detailed analysis of the ECCE programmes in this chapter uncovered some of major problems associated with the implementation of the programs. Proper planning is required by both central and state governments in order to increase the number of beneficiaries among the urban poor and spread awareness amongst them regarding the existing programmes. Lastly, it can be concluded that childcare which is an important component of ECCE should be prioritized mainly in urban areas so as to promote the holistic development of children and to allow mothers to continue working and financially supporting their families.

## CHAPTER VIII

# CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Introduction

In this particular chapter an attempt has been made to discuss, analyse and synthesise the major findings of the current study. In this context, the previous chapters provides valuable insights in stringing the narratives together and to bring a closure to the overall discussion. The chapter starts with elaborating on the key findings of each research question and is followed by a comprehensive synthesis of all the research findings. This helps one to juxtapose the different anecdotes of the present study and understand the direction of the argument. The chapter ends with study limitations and directions for future research thus opening up channels to continue the existing study under different academic perspective.

### 8.2 Key Findings

The major findings of individual chapters pertaining to each of the research questions have been discussed in this section.

#### **Research Question 1: How do the characteristics of export-houses and garment work vary across major garment producing countries of South and East Asia?**

The second chapter has extensively covered the distribution and the characteristics of garment export houses across the garment giants of South and South East Asia. With the replacement of GATT with WTO, trade in the early nineties became liberalised across the world. It resulted in the decentralisation of garment production and large companies of the west set up their manufacturing unit in the South Asian and the South-East Asian countries to tap their cheap labour. While the size of the export houses and the outputs produced varied, there was a great deal of similarity when it came to the existing labour laws and working conditions.

Cost minimization had led to dissipating labour laws and informal labour working at a very low wage rate was a common characteristic across countries like India, Sri-Lanka, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. Working conditions were poor with dilapidated buildings and cramped factory spaces. Majority of the workers were informally hired and hence were not

entitled to any kind of work benefits. Labour was heavily gendered in the context of wage rates and work benefits. Young and unmarried women were mostly preferred by the industries and they often encountered verbal and sexual abuse. All workers were subjected to long working hours with mandatory overtime work during the peak season.

Union formation and effective functioning was heavily discouraged by the factories and most of the governments showed lukewarm interest towards the strict implementation of labour laws and collective bargaining.

Thus with the intention to trace the differences in the characteristics of export houses across the major garment producing countries, the analysis of the available literature revealed the striking similarities between the age rates, work benefits, working hours and the position of women workers.

### **Research Question 2: How do the socio-economic and demographic profile of working mothers differ across Delhi's Garment Industry?**

A thorough analysis of literature in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter show that garment work is largely associated with informality hence inhibiting the workers from getting any work benefits in India as well as in other garment producing countries of South Asia. Analysis of the secondary dataset was carried out in Chapter 3 to comprehend the attributes of informal workforce of India in general and Delhi in particular. This also helped in creating a potential backdrop for evaluating the primary data. The secondary dataset portrayed low work participation rate of women in the labour force, being concentrated mostly in the informal sector. There was large scale informalisation of the organised sector and majority of the workers were not entitled to any social security benefits.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, general profile of the garment workers has been analysed along with their work environment. Almost all the women workers, both factory and home-based are migrants from UP and Bihar who have now permanently settled in slums surrounding garment production units in the border of the city. The respondents were mostly married, had two kids and belonged to nuclear families. The dominant religion was Hinduism followed by Islam. Lastly most of the workers had primary and secondary level of education.

### **Research Question 3: How do the work conditions and environment of women workers vary across different units of the garment industry?**

In chapter 4 the third research question has also been answered. The export houses in Delhi can be identified with its small production units with women ranging mostly from twenty to hundred in number. Relatively larger factories were found in Okhla Industrial Area employing up to 250 women workers. Nearly all the women were informally hired following the three-tier hiring system. Along with the factory workers, a large base of home-workers constantly catered to the export houses by carrying out low-skilled job from their homes. Informal nature of the respondents' work barred them from availing any type of work benefits. Wage structure was very low and women worked up to 10 hours a day with additional overtime work being fairly common. While the above points generally exhibit the character of the garment factories in Delhi, work environment varied relatively across home-based work, export houses and SEWA production units. Home-based workers did not have to meet strict production quotas and they got piece –rate payment for their work which mainly consisted of hand-work, embroidery, adda-work and button-sewing. Even though factory workers were entitled to comparably higher wage rates, they were required to meet daily production quotas, undertake overtime work and experienced verbal and physical sexual harassment at work. When juxtaposed with factory and home-workers, SEWA workers had a better work environment. All the workers were members of the organization and were entitled to work benefits like timely payment, Provident Fund and factory crèches. There was no form of abuse or sexual harassment and overtime work was optional.

In chapter 5 the garment workers' childcare choices have been comprehensively discussed and the following research questions have been answered through the analysis in the chapter.

**Research Question 4: What are the basic characteristics of formal and informal childcare services available for garment workers?**

Childcare services can either be formal or informal in nature. Lack of formal childcare often results in increased dependence on informal care services. In the context of the present study it is seen that both formal and informal care constitute important components of care services adopted by women garment workers. While formal care services mainly consisted of factory crèches, private crèches, anganwadis and government schools, informal caregivers were multifarious, ranging from the neighbour, grand-parents, other family members, spouse to older siblings.



Factories Act of 1948, under Section 48 states that crèches are mandatory in production units having more than 30 women workers. The data on the other hand reveal that 74 percent of the respondents work in factories lacking crèche facilities and those who have care services are mostly make-shift in nature with no provision of education, food, medical attention and trained caregivers. Anganwadi is the only facility which caters to the nutritional, medical and educational requirements of the children belonging to three to six years of age. Private creches, which too are ill-equipped are run by untrained caregiver who primarily engage in child-minding and do not provide food, medical attention or any form of learning activities. Many workers with no formal care facilities arranged informal care services through engaging their older child, neighbour, husband or the in-laws.

Multiplicity is a common characteristic for both formal and informal care-choices. The frequency of change is higher among informal care choices as they are cost-free and flexible. Garment workers reported changing their informal childcare almost every week depending on who is available to look after her child. On the contrary change in formal childcare was slow, every six months to a year mainly because of the lack of effective formal care options and the structure and norm associated with most of the formal care services available for women garment workers.

**Research Question 5: Who forms the major caregivers and do childcare choices vary by type and consistency across factory and home-workers?**

There was a strong propensity among the workers to opt for informal care than formal care. Most of the factory workers and home workers used informal care services for their children. According to the collected data, neighbours and older siblings were the most common informal care givers and are extensively used by the working mothers. Many respondents cited that informal care services are more dependable and reliable and enables them to work throughout the day.

Childcare choices do vary by type and consistency across factory and home workers. Factory workers mostly opted for formal care choices like factory crèches and private day care centers while home workers restricted themselves to anganwadis and government primary schools. In addition to this, the factory workers changed their childcare choices more often than that of the home-workers. The change in consistency and type was less prevalent among home-workers as they had the flexibility of working from their houses and had indirect supervision over their

children throughout the day. On the contrary factory workers, because of the nature of their work had to arrange childcare on a daily basis to make sure that their children are well taken care of.

**Research Question 6: How do the quality of formal childcare vary across factory and private crèches?**

In the present study, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised was used to assess the quality of the formal care centres accessed by garment workers. Three different formal care options were used for rating and they were marked on several sub-scales like space and furnishing, personal care, language-reasoning, activities, interaction and programme structure. Their average score ranged from 1.13 to 2.81 on a scale of zero to seven which is indicative of their poor quality care provisions.

The factory crèche of SEWA-RUAAB performed the best out of the three with a score of 2.81. It provided well ventilated room with clean mattresses. There were toys like abacus and jigsaw puzzles to enhance the children's cognitive development and books to boost learning outcomes. Even though the caregiver was not trained, she seemed eager to listen to the children, tell stories and engage in conversations with them. In general the crèche was understaffed with no provision of food, structured learning activities or medical attention which led to the overall low score of the program.

A private day care centre in Harkeshnagar was second in the line with a score of 1.43. This care centre was run by an elderly woman and her daughter who were not professionally trained as caregivers. The room serving as a care-centre was big and ventilated but lacked clean mattresses, age-appropriate toys and books. Provision of food, basic medication and methodical learning through various activities were completely absent. The room was not very clean and there was no option for the children to have any outdoor activities. On several occasions the caregivers were rude to the children with intermittent phases of screaming and shouting. After the observation it was evident that this care centre was only involved in child minding and did not provide any of the facilities that a day care centre is entitled to provide.

Lastly a factory crèche in Okhla Phase III was observed and it received the lowest score of 1.13. The crèche was located within the factory premises and was managed by a female supervisor and a senior factory worker both of whom were untrained in caregiving activities.

The room was spacious and well ventilated with colourful paintings on the wall but the mattresses for the children did not appear to be too clean and had several stain marks on them. There was no option of outdoor playtime along with no arrangement of food or learning activities. The caregivers were very indifferent and would leave the children alone for long hours. They were also reluctant to co-operate with the survey and I was asked to leave by the caregivers on detailed enquiry.

Formal care-choices were mostly used by garment workers engaged in factories. The above three care services were best among the very few which were available for the women workers. Majority of the factories lacked crèche services. Only production units of SEWA and a few factories in Okhla Phase III had make-shift crèches to cater to the worker's children. Formal private crèche facilities used by factory workers were mainly those available within their residential area. Their numbers were few and the services were just limited to child minding.

**Research Question 7: What are the implications of child care choices by working mothers on the physical and health outcome of children between 0-6 years of age?**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter the physical and the health outcome of the respondents' children has been measured through various important and relevant variables. Firstly, Body Mass Index was used to screen weight categories and identify children who are underweight. The results showed that the all first-born girl child (across age categories of two to five years) of the factory workers were underweight. Incidents of underweight were higher among the home-based workers' second born children but the overall percentage across different age categories were lower than that of the factory workers. The reasons behind this prevalence were multifarious and stemmed from the mother's care practices and time invested in her work. For respondents working in a factory, long working hours along with prolonged absence from home deterred them from having an earnest oversight on their child's regular activities ranging from food consumption, safety and constructive playtime. Majority of the factory workers relied upon neighbours, formal care services like anganwadi, school, local private day-care centres and infrequently on factory crèches which do not always guarantee quality care provisions. Moreover the earlier data (Chapter-5) showcased older female children used in caregiving activities and this might explain the consistent low BMI percentile values for the factory workers first born daughters.

Home-workers on the other hand generally worked from their home spaces and were able to supervise their children directly or indirectly throughout the day. Though home-workers also

depended on informal care services, they still had better surveillance over their child's nutritional intake and safety. This explains the lower number of underweight children seen among home-workers.

Vaccination status and illness status were also looked into to capture the health status and outcome of the infants. Both home-workers and factory workers agreed on having vaccination cards for their children which were complete. The percentage of completed vaccination card were higher among factory workers than that of the home-workers. This was mainly because home-workers engaged in less social interaction and were often unaware of the ongoing immunization programs. On the contrary, the occurrence of illness was more among the children of factory workers than that of the home-workers. The greater incident of occurrence of diseases in factory workers implied poor health condition of their children mostly because a considerable percentage of them were underweight. Also because the factory workers were away from home due to their long working hours, thorough monitoring of their child's nutritional intake, health and symptoms of diseases were often not possible. The home workers on the other hand have better and prolonged supervision especially when it came to their child's daily nutritional intake and health oversight.

Diarrhoea, fever, dengue, measles, typhoid, jaundice and chicken pox were the reported illnesses by both factory and home workers. Factory workers were more pro-active in taking their sick child to the private clinic, Mohulla clinic or the government hospital while the home-workers mostly resorted to home-remedies and preferred anganwadis over other medical centres.

The physical outcome was measured through the occurrence of accidental injuries. Quite a few respondents reported of accidents like falling, burning, swallowing injurious substances etc. Incidents of accidents were more common among the children of factory workers than that of the home-workers which majorly implied the uncertainty associated with their everyday caregiving. Leaving home for work compelled a factory worker to arrange for a caregiver for her child. While many went to school and nearby anganwadis, those below three years of age were either put into local low-quality crèches or just simply left with the neighbours or older sibling. A positive correlation was established between the mother's 'working hours' and the 'occurrence of accidents' and the result showed that increasing hours of mothers' work, the chances of her child meeting with an accident increased. It was also observed that 78 percent

of the children who had met with an accidental injury were left alone in the future on account of the absence of reliable formal/informal childcare options.

Hence it could be seen that both factory and home-work impact child health in different capacity. The lack of supervision by mothers working in the factory and from home can be addressed through the provision of subsidised and all-encompassing (nutrition, education and health) crèche facilities by the government.

**Research Question 8: What has been the role of government and civil society and how far has it been accessed by women workers in the area under study?**

A detailed analysis of the ECCE programmes in chapter 8 uncovered some of the major problems associated with the implementation of the programs. The most important early childhood program undertaken by the government has been the Integrated Child Development Services. While it has been widely implemented in rural areas, its urban component has remained small. Creche facilities were only present in the form of anganwadis catering to children belonging to the age-group of three to six years.

Another important enterprising program, Mobile crèches, started in 1969 to provide childcare to the children of migrant daily wage labourers. While the mobile crèches developed some noteworthy practices pertaining to health and nutrition, they were only restricted to migrant workers working at construction sites.

The most important programme introduced by the government was the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme which aimed to provide crèche facilities on a subsidised scale at a pan India level to all working women. The major objectives of the scheme were to provide day-care facilities for children, improve nutrition and health status of the children, and provide age-appropriate stimulation and learning. Services included supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring, health check-up and immunization. But it was noticed this scheme was not applied across all the states and over the years the total number of crèches showed a considerable decline. Many states are completely devoid of any crèches under this scheme, including Delhi.

Anganwadi was the only facility that was popular among the respondents. Almost ninety percent of the respondents said that they knew about the location of their nearest anganwadi along with the facilities that are being provided there. All the respondents including factory and home-workers were completely unaware of Rajiv Gandhi Crèche Scheme. Only 6 percent

of the respondents had heard about Mobile Crèches and knew that it was meant for daily wage labourers at construction sites. Thus it can be said that lack of knowledge about the available government schemes designed especially to cater to poor working women portrays prominent fault lines between the formulation and implementation of these schemes.

Proper planning is required by both the central and the state government to increase the number of beneficiaries among urban poor and spread awareness among them regarding the existing programmes.

### **8.3 Synthesis of the Research Findings**

Different aspects of garment work, women garment workers and their childcare choices have been thoroughly analysed in the present study and the findings can be synthesised under the following categories.

#### **8.3.1 Constraints Faced by the Garment Workers**

According to the primary data around 90 percent of the women garment workers interviewed for the present study were informally employed and were subjected to the diabolical ‘hire and fire’ rule. They worked at meagre wage rates and were not entitled to any kind of work benefits. Labour was considerably gendered in the existing export houses which resulted in piece-rate payments, very high per day production quota and compulsory overtime explicitly for women workers. Paucity of collective bargaining in the factory premises resulted in the continuity of the vicious cycle of informality, low pay, lack of work benefits and poor working conditions. Crèche facility, which has been made mandatory by the Factories Act, 1948 for enterprises having more than thirty women was rarely available to the women garment workers. In addition to the existing crisis, many respondents working in the factory recounted that they often fell prey to verbal sexual abuse by their male supervisors and other male co-workers.

#### **8.3.2 Impact on Child’s Health**

Women garment workers heavily depended on both informal and formal care choices that they could afford. The factory workers changed their care choices on a frequent basis and opted for formal care (private crèche facility, factory crèche, anganwadi and government schools) on most occasions. On the contrary home-workers mostly depended on informal caregivers for

their children. The analysis in chapter five clearly pointed out that the quality of the formal care facilities were poor and did not contribute to the holistic development of a child. Along similar lines, informal care services only provided physical supervision of a child and often the supervision itself was not accurately executed. This resulted in incidents of illness and accidental injuries which could have been otherwise avoided if the children were subjected to better care and structured crèche facilities.

### **8.3.3 Coping Mechanism Adopted by Women Garment Workers**

The garment workers resorted to several coping mechanisms trying to balance their work and childcare. Most factory workers chose overtime work to earn extra money while others maintained rapport with their hiring party (contractor/subcontractor/fabricator) and were consistently compliant with the draconian rules of the work place. Instances of sending children back to their villages during the peak production season were very common mostly among factory workers. On several occasions both factory and home workers forced their older girl child to look after the younger sibling. Home workers often encouraged their children (especially girls) to undertake home-based work so that the family can earn additional money. Lastly many factory workers avoided getting pregnant so that they are not dismissed from their work and those who got pregnant shifted from factory to home-based work because of flexible timings.

## **8.4 Study Limitations and Challenges**

In this research an attempt has been made to collect, analyse and present detailed aspects of female garment workers and their childcare choices. However some challenges have been faced by the researcher during the phase of data collection and consequently the study has some limitations which are as follows.

- The main actors of the present study, women garment workers in Delhi having children up to the age of six were not particularly easy to locate. Hence instead of stratified random sampling, non-probability snow-ball sampling technique was adopted to locate and interview the sample population.
- Relatively small sample size along with non-probability sampling method used in this study did not allow statistical modelling and hence quantitative analysis was restricted

to simple techniques like cross tabulations, correlation, body mass index etc. A considerable emphasis was given to qualitative analysis.

- While a lot of work has been done in the context of garment workers in India, childcare choices by women garment workers in Delhi has not been researched which led to the unavailability of the focal point of reference for the present study.
- Majority of the factories were strongly against allowing any kind of survey within their premises so in most cases one had to depend on the in-depth interviews of the factory workers to gauge the working condition inside the factory premises. Those who allowed factory visit, did not permit any photographs to be taken.
- Most of the factory heads or owners along with few government personals were reluctant to answer questions and nobody from that strata could be interviewed to understand their perspective on informal form of work and informal labour.
- Lastly the garment workers were often hesitant, ignorant and impolite with their answers. Their husbands too would dismiss an ongoing interview, question the interviewer's motive. This would in turn create difficulties in interviewing women from the same neighbourhood in the future.

### **8.5 Directions for Future Research**

The present study provide three major directions for future research. In this study the impact of formal and informal care choices on the physical and health outcome has been measured, a further study can be conducted to capture the impact of formal childcare on the cognitive development of the garment workers' children. Secondly data pertaining to accidental injuries, their cause, effect and impact on the children who are left behind when mothers are at work can be analysed thoroughly to understand the causal relationship between different care choices and accidents. Finally a comparative study can be made between the qualities of different types of formal care options accessed by informally employed factory workers and those who are employed in the formal sector to understand the extent of lacunae present between the haves and the have-nots.



## **8.6 Conclusion**

From the above discussion it can be concluded that each and every garment worker who were interviewed should be applauded for their never-ending hard work to balance work and childcare. Even with limited availability of resources, these women are actively participating in the labour force, contributing to our growing economy and simultaneously raising their child. It is our government's responsibility to adopt ardent measures to make sure these women who form the very base of our economy are provided with subsidised, affordable and good quality childcare so that our country can reap the demographic dividend in the future. It is also important that the state government is pro-active in implementing the factory rules associated with work benefits and also to make sure that it is applicable to both formal and informal workforce. This would not only result in the empowerment of women workers but also result in increased female labour force participation in the future.

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## APPENDICES

### Percentage of Population in the Labour Force (2017-2019)

Different Rounds of NSS and PLFS	Percentage of Population in the Labour Force	
	Urban Male	Urban Female
NSS 50 <sup>th</sup> (1993-94)	54.3	16.5
NSS 55 <sup>th</sup> (1999-2000)	54.2	14.7
NSS 61 <sup>st</sup> (2004-05)	57	17.8
NSS 66 <sup>th</sup> (2009-10)	55.9	14.6
NSS 68 <sup>th</sup> (2011-12)	56.3	15.5
PLFS (2017-18)	57	15.9
PLFS (2018-19)	56.7	16.1

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

### Workers Population Ratio (2017-2019)

Different Rounds of NSS and PLFS	Percentage of Population in the Labour Force	
	Urban Male	Urban Female
NSS 50 <sup>th</sup> (1993-94)	52.1	15.5
NSS 55 <sup>th</sup> (1999-2000)	51.8	13.9
NSS 61 <sup>st</sup> (2004-05)	54.9	16.6
NSS 66 <sup>th</sup> (2009-10)	54.3	13.8

NSS 68 <sup>th</sup> (2011-12)	54.6	14.7
PLFS (2017-18)	53	14.2
PLFS (2018-19)	52.7	14.5

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**LFPR of Urban Women According to their Social Status (2017-2019)**

<b>Social Groups</b>	<b>PLFS (2017-18)</b>	<b>PLFS (2018-19)</b>
ST	18.4	18.4
SC	19.2	18.4
OBC	16.1	16.6
Others	14.2	14.5

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Worker Population Ratio According to Social Groups (2017-2019)**

<b>Different Rounds of NSS and PLFS</b>	<b>ST</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>OBC</b>	<b>Others</b>
NSS 61 <sup>st</sup> (2004-05)	24.3	20	18.5	13.4
NSS 66 <sup>th</sup> (2009-10)	20.3	17.8	14.5	11.3
NSS 68 <sup>th</sup> (2011-12)	19.2	17.2	15.1	12.9
PLFS (2017-18)	17	17.2	14.3	12.6
PLFS (2018-19)	15.8	16.8	15	13.1

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**LFPR of Women by Religious Groups (2017-2019)**

<b>Religious Groups</b>	<b>PLFS (2017-18)</b>	<b>PLFS (2018-19)</b>
Christianity	22.8	23.8
Hindu	17.1	17.1
Sikh	15.6	14.1
Islam	8.8	10.4

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**WPR of Urban Women According to Religious Groups (2017-2019)**



Different Rounds of NSS and PLFS	Christianity	Hindu	Sikh	Islam
61st	24.4	17.4	15.3	12.1
66th	21.5	14.2	15.3	9.4
68th	25.2	15.3	12.8	10.5
PLFS (2017-18)	19.2	15.4	13	7.5
PLFS (2018-19)	24.4	15.4	15.3	9.2

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Percentage Distribution of Female Urban Workers in Manufacturing in Usual Status**

**(ps+ss), (2017-2019)**

Different Rounds of NSS and PLFS	Percentage of Female Urban Workers
NSS 32 <sup>nd</sup>	29.6
NSS 38 <sup>th</sup>	26.7
NSS 43 <sup>rd</sup>	27
NSS 50 <sup>th</sup>	24.1
NSS 55 <sup>th</sup>	24
NSS 61 <sup>st</sup>	28.2
NSS 66 <sup>th</sup>	27.9
NSS 68 <sup>th</sup>	28.7
PLFS (2017-18)	25.2
PLFS (2018-19)	24.5

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Informal Workers in the Non-Agricultural Sector (2017-2019)**

<b>Different Rounds of PLFS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
PLFS (2017-18)	68.4	71.5	54.1
PLFS (2018-19)	68.4	71.1	54.8

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Availability of Social Security Benefits (2017-2019)**

	PLFS (2017-18)		PLFS (2018-19)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No written Job Contract	72.3	66.8	70.3	66.3
Not eligible for paid leave	55.2	50.4	54.7	50.6
Not eligible for any social security	49	51.2	51.8	54.4

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Availability of Social Security Benefits for Urban and Rural Women (2017-2019)**

	NSS 61st Round	NSS 66th Round	NSS 68th round	PLFS (2017-18)	PLFS (2018-19)	NSS 61st Round	NSS 66th Round	NSS 68th round	PLFS (2017-18)	PLFS (2018-19)
	Urban					Rural				
No written Job Contract	61.2	64.8	65.9	71.4	71.2	56.8	55.3	61.9	58.5	58.2
Not eligible for paid leave	48	44.7	49.1	51.8	51.3	48.7	47.6	48.1	47.9	49.5
Not eligible for any social security	59.6	53	56	50.1	52.6	60	61	63.4	55.1	57.7

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Apparel Workers in Unorganised Sector, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**

	Share of Unorganised sector workers		
	Male	Female	Total
All India	91.9	92.1	92.0
Delhi	81.5	88.9	82.0

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Share of Informality in Apparel Sector: India, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**

			Strongly Formal	Weakly Formal	Informal
			All India	Male	Unorganised
Organised	13.0	50.4			36.7
Total	1.6	5.9			92.5
Female	Unorganised	0.2		0.7	99.1
	Organised	11.2		51.8	37.0
	Total	1.0		4.8	94.2
Total	Unorganised	0.4		1.5	98.1
	Organised	12.3		50.9	36.8
	Total	1.4		5.5	93.2

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Share of Informality in Apparel Sector: Delhi, In Percentage, (2017-2019)**

			Strongly Formal	Weakly Formal	Informal
			Delhi	Male	Unorganised
Organised	53.9	25.4			20.8
Total	10.0	4.7			85.3
Female	Unorganised	0.0		14.3	85.7
	Organised	0.0		100.0	0.0
	Total	0.0		23.8	76.2
Total	Unorganised	0.0		1.1	98.9
	Organised	51.6		28.5	19.9
	Total	9.3		6.0	84.7

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Social Security Available to Female Wage Earners in the Apparel Sector, In Percentage,**

**(2017-2019)**

<b>Type of Social Security Available to Female Wage Earners in the Apparel Sector (all India)</b>	<b>Share</b>
Only PF/ pension (i.e., GPF, CPF, PPF, pension, etc.)	14.3
Only health care & maternity benefits	.8
Only PF/ pension and gratuity	3.8
Only PF/ pension and health care & maternity benefits	6.9
Only gratuity and health care & maternity benefits	1.1
PF/ pension, gratuity, health care & maternity benefits	5.8
Not eligible for any of these benefits	63.1
Not known	4.2
Total	100

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**Monthly Earnings of Women Workers in the Apparel Sector: India, (2017-2019)**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Type of Worker</b>	<b>Monthly Earnings (Median)</b>
Male	Regular Wage	8500.0
	Self Employed	9000.0
	Casual	6428.6
	Total	8000.0
Female	Regular Wage	7000.0
	Self Employed	3000.0
	Casual	4371.4
	Total	3500.0
Total	Regular Wage	8000.0
	Self Employed	6000.0
	Casual	6342.9
	Total	7000.0

*Source: Periodic Labour Force survey (2017-18) & (2018-19)*

**State of Origin: Percentage of Home Based and Factory Workers (2018-19)**

State of Origin	Percentage of Workers	Total Workers
Uttar Pradesh	37.5	143
Bihar	24.4	93
Madhya Pradesh	5.8	22
West Bengal	8.7	33
Jharkhand	8.7	33
Uttarakhand	2.9	11
Nepal	4.5	17
Delhi	7.6	29

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Place of Residence: Percentage of Home-Based and Factory Workers, (2018-2019)**

Area of Residence	Percentage of workers	Total Workers	Factory Based	Home Based
Harkeshnagar	28.3	108	81	27
Tai Khand	12.1	46	35	11
Gola kuan	14.4	55	35	20
New Ashoknagar	15.2	58	42	16
Seelampur	16.8	64	38	26
Mulla colony	7.9	30	30	0
Sundernagri	5.2	20	20	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Family Type: Percentage of Home-Based and Factory Workers, (2018-2019)**

Family Type	percentage	Total Workers	Factory based	Home Based
Nuclear	82.9	316	219	97
Joint	17.1	65	62	3

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Marital Status of the Garment Workers (In Percentage), 2018-19**

Marital Status	Percentage	Total	Home	Factory
Married	95.8	365	94	273
Separated	2.9	11	6	5
widowed	0.8	3	0	3

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Parity of Children per Worker (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Child Parity	Home-workers (%)	Factory workers (%)
1	27	34.5
2	51	53.7
3	20	11.7
4	2	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Caste of the Garment Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Caste	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
SC	21.3	81	54	27
ST	4.7	18	11	7
OBC	4.2	16	14	2
General	30.4	116	86	30
Others	39.4	150	116	34

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Religion of the Garment Workers (in Percentage), 2018-2019**

Religion	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
Hindu	61.7	235	167	68
Muslim	36.7	140	108	32
Christian	1.6	6	6	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Educational Qualification of the Garment Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Education	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
Primary	35.4	135	89	46
Secondary	31.8	121	101	20
High Secondary	15.2	58	56	2
College	1.8	7	7	0
No Education	15.7	60	28	32

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons for Leaving the Place of Origin (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Reason for leaving the place of Origin	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
Economic Opportunity	35.7	136	87	49
Husband's Work	24.4	93	75	18
Problem with the in-laws	23.6	90	60	30
Relatives work in Delhi	7.9	30	30	0
From Delhi	7.6	29	29	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Duration of Stay in Delhi (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Duration of Stay in Delhi	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
1-3 years	7.1	27	15	12
3-5 years	32.8	125	105	20
5-7 years	33.3	127	99	28
7-10 years	12.3	47	25	22
More than 10 years	14.4	55	37	18

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*



**Husband's Education Among Home Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage),**

**2018-2019**

Education of the respondent's husband	Percentage	Total	Factory based	Home-based
Primary	16.0	61	42	19
Secondary	37.0	141	99	42
High Secondary	39.4	150	119	31
College	2.9	11	11	0
No Education	3.1	12	10	2

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Husband's Occupation (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Husband's Occupation	Percentage	total	Factory based	Home based
Garment Factory Worker	27.3	104	73	31
Daily Wage Labourer	2.6	10	4	6
Works in a shop	9.2	35	28	7
Other Factory workers	38.8	148	119	29
Security Guard	2.4	9	9	0
Doesn't Work	3.9	15	9	6
Others	15.5	59	38	21

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Husband's Income (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Husband's income	Percentage	total	Factory based	Home based
<5000	5.8	22	14	8
5000-10,000	41.5	158	124	34
10,000-15,000	33.6	128	97	31
15,000-20,000	13.4	51	34	17
>20,000	1.8	7	3	4
No Income	1.6	6	2	4

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons for Working in the Garment Industry: Home-based Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Why Garment Factory (Home based)	
Easy To Get In	26
Option of Working From Home	35
Flexible Timing	38
Husband Works in a Garment Factory	1

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons for Working in the Garment Industry: Factory Based Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Why Garment Factory (Factory Based)	
Easy to Get In	20.3
Husband Works in a Garment industry	5.7
To be Economically Independent	17.1
To Economically Support the Husband	16.4
Know the Skills Required in the Industry	18.5
Close to Home	11.7
Family's Approval	10.3

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Agency Through Which Home-Based Workers Entered the Garment Sector (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Agency through which the Home-Based Worker Entered the Garment Sector	
Fabricators	20
Neighbours	46
Family members and friends	13
Husband's job in the garment factory	21

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Agency Through which Factory-Based Workers Entered the Garment Sector (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Agency through which the Factory-Based Worker Entered the Garment Sector	
Fabricators	21.6
Neighbours	24.6
Husband who is a Garment Worker	7.5
Sub-contractors	9.3
Contractors	3.9
Family Members and Friends	16.7
SEWA Workers	16.7

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Duration of Workers in Home-Based Work (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Duration of work	Home -Based work
0-6 months	13
6 months - 1 year	18
1 to 3 years	9
3 to 5 years	20
5 years and above	40

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Duration of Work in the Garment Sector and the Current Factory (In Percentage),**

**2018-2019**

Duration of work	Garment Sector	Current factory
Less than a year	2.8	65.1
1-2 years	13.5	4.3
2-3 years	29.5	13.9
3-4 years	20.6	8.9
4- 5 years	17.4	4
5 years and above	16	4.8

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Types of Activities Undertaken by Factory and Home-Based Workers (In Percentage),**

**2018-2019**

Type of Work	Factory Workers	Home-Based
Hand work (bead and sequin work)	11.4	38
Piece Checking	10.3	0
Embroidary	34.2	18
Adda Work	19.9	28
Thread Cutting	24.2	0
Button Sewing	0	16

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Type of Recruitment: Home-Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Hired Type	factory Workers	Home based
Contractor	20.6	1
sub-contractor	38.1	40
Fabricator	6.8	59
Directly by the Factory	34.5	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Area of the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Area of the Factory	Percentage
Okhla Phase 1	5.3
Okhla Phase 2	35.2
Okhla Phase 3	11.7
New Ashoknagar	14.9
Sudernagari	10.3
Mulla Colony	10.7
Seelumpur	11.7

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Number of Women Workers in the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Women Workers in the Factory	Percentage
less than 20	2.1
20-50	34.2
50-100	36.3
100-150	22.1
200-250	5.3

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Distance of the Factory from the Respondent's Place of Residence (In Percentage),**

**2018-2019**

Distance from Home	Percentage
<2.5 kms	36.7
2.5-5 kms	51.2
5-7.5 kms	11
>7.5 kms	1.1

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Total Hours of Work and Overtime: Home-Based and Factory Workers (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Working Hours	Factory Workers	Home Workers
Upto 8 hours	32	40
Upto 10 hours	62.6	41
Upto 12 hours	4.3	12
More than 12 hours	1.1	7
Overtime Work	Factory workers	Home Workers
1 hour	65.8	78
2 hours	6.4	22
3 hours	1.4	0
No overtime	26.3	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Availability of Work Benefits for Factory Workers, (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

	Yes	No
Provision of Payslip	0	100
Provision of Appointment Letter	34.9	65.1
Provision of attendance card	98.6	1.4
Availability of EPF	31.3	68.7
Availability of Maternity Leave	35.2	64.8
Availability of ESI Card	34.2	65.8

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons for Not Having a Union in the Factory (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Reasons Behind Not Having a Trade Union	Percentage of women
Prohibition by the Employer	31.7
Fear of Losing the Job	32.7
Lack of Scope	7.8
Strict Company Rules Against Union Formation	8.2
Male Dominated	1.1
Not Applicable	18.5

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Supervision of Factory Crèches (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Who Looks After the Child in the Factory Creche	Percentage	Total
Untrained Caregivers	1	1
Factory Supervisors	50	32
Older Women workers	48.43	31

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Facilities Provided in the Crèche (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Facilities provided in the factory creche	Percentage	Total
Medical Attention	4.6	3
Education	9.3	6
None	85	55

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Types of Formal Childcare Options (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Types of Formal Childcare	Percentage	Total
Anganwadi	38.9	109
Private Creche	12.5	35
School	27	76
NGO	0.7	2
No Formal Childcare	15.7	44
Factory Creche	5	14

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Cost of Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Cost of Formal Childcare	Percentage	Total
Less than 500 rupees per month	65.3	181
500-600 rupees per month	3.9	11
600-700 rupees per month	3.9	11
700-800 rupees per month	11.5	32
No expense	15	42

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Facilities Provided by the Formal Childcare Services (In Percentage) 2018-2019**

Facilities Provided by the Caregivers	Percentage	Total
Food/nutrition	0.9	2
Medical Attention	0.4	1
Education	1.28	3
Food/nutrition and education	77	181
Only Caregiving	20	47

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*



**Frequency of Change: Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Frequency of Change : Formal Childcare (In Percentage)	Percentage	Total
Once every two weeks	0.5	1
Once a month	3.3	7
Once every six months	13.1	28
Once a Year	36.4	78
Not sure/ don't know	50.9	109

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons Behind the Change in Formal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Reasons behind change in formal childcare	Percentage	Total
Not enough money to continue	15.2	7
Far away from the factory and the house	28.2	13
Nobody is there to drop the child at the care centre	10.9	5
Easier to send the child back to the village during the peak season	15.2	7
Heard rumours about the care centre	19.6	9
Husband did not allow to continue with the care centre	10.9	5

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Types of Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Alternate Informal Childcare	Factory-based	Home-based
Older sibling (sister)	25.9	44
Older sibling (brother)	8.2	7
Husband	3.5	9
Grandparents	18.9	2
Other family members	2.1	3
Neighbours	41.3	35

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Frequency of Change: Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Frequency of Change: Informal Childcare	Factory-based	Home-based
Every day	4.3	2
Every week	33.1	28
Every month	37	21
Every six months	25.6	49

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons Behind Frequent Change in Informal Childcare (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Reasons Behind Frequent Change in Informal Childcare	Factory-based	Home-based
Depends on who is available	17.4	50
Sometimes the neighbours are busy	19.2	12
Unavailability of the husband	7.1	10
In-laws are not always present	19.2	8
Sometimes the older kids have work	21	11
Older kids are sent to the village	16	9

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Father's Involvement in Taking Care of the Child (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Fathers involvement in taking care of the child	Factory-based	Home-based
No involvement	6.8	25
Rarely takes care of the child	24.2	15
Helps out with childcare often	35.2	17
Only gives money, no physical or emotional involvement	21.7	30
Always helping out with childcare.	12.1	13

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Benefits of the Existing Childcare Services (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Benefits of the existing childcare	Factory-based	Home-based
Close to the factory	22.4	0
Can work throughout the day	30.6	43
Can take up overtime work	11	57
Do not have to leave work early	18.1	0
No risk of getting fired as I finish daily production quotas.	17.8	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Possession of a Vaccination Card (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Vaccination card	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	1st Child	2nd Child	1st Child	2nd Child
yes	94	100	89	84
No	6	0	11	15.6

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Status of the Vaccination Card (In Percentage), 2018-19**

Completion of the vaccination card	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	1st Child	2nd Child	1st Child	2nd Child
Complete	54.4	75	43	46.4
Incomplete	5.3	4	9	0
Don't know	40.2	20.8	48	53.6

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Occurrence of Illness in the last Six Months (In Percentage), 2018-19**

Illness in the last six months	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	1st Child	2nd Child	1st Child	2nd Child
Yes	67.6	66.7	58	65.5
No	32.4	33.3	42	34.4

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### **Types of Illness (In Percentage), 2018-19**

Illness Type	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)
Diarrhoea	22.6	82.4	13.6	76.2
Fever	29.5	11.8	25.4	9.5
Cough and cold	4.2	0	18.5	14.5
Measles	7.4	5.9	5.1	0
Dengue	18.4	0	20.3	0
Hepatitis	3.2	0	1.7	0
Typhoid	11.1	0	8.5	0
Chicken Pox	3.7	0	0	0
Jaundice	0	0	6.8	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### **Duration of Illness (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Duration of Illness	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)
1 week	15.3	17.6	0	4.8
2 weeks	40	76.5	49.2	95.2
A month	14.7	5.9	22	0
More than a month	30	0	28.8	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

### **Visit to the Doctor for the Treatment of the Illness (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Did you seek medical Advice	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	1st Child	2nd Child	1st Child	2nd Child
Yes	84.7	82.4	72.9	80
No	15.3	17.6	27.1	20

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Sources of Medical Advice (In Percentage), 2018-2019**

Source of medical advice	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)
Govt hospitals	23	7.1	37.2	0
Anganwadi	13.7	35.7	4.7	94.1
Private Clinics	28.6	0	9.3	0
Mohulla clinics	20	57.1	48.8	5.9

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Reasons Cited for not Seeking Medical Advice (in percentage), 2018-19**

Reasons for not seeking medical advice	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)
Not too severe	91.1	33.3	46.7	75
Used home remedy	1.1	30	40	25
Did not have money to take my child to the private clinic	4.3	36	4	0
Public hospitals are too crowded	0.7	0	6.7	0
Did not have time	1.4	0	2.7	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Type of Accidents Met by the Children, 2018-2019**

Accidents	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)	(1st Child)	(2nd Child)
Swallowed coins/plastic spoons, Dettol	7	0	0	0
Broken a bone	17	2	0	0
Burnt himself/herself (mainly with boiling water)	18	0	9	1
Cut himself/herself (Knife, scissor, needles)	9	0	10	0
Fell into/from manhole, terrace, stairs	13	1	5	0
Hit by a vehicle (scooter, auto, cycle)	12	1	1	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Whether the Child was Alone During the Time of the Accident, 2018-2019**

Whether child was alone	Factory Worker		Home-based Worker	
	1st Child	2nd Child	1st Child	2nd Child
Yes	58	4	21	1
No	18	1	4	0

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Source of Medical Advice, 2018-2019**

Whether the child was taken to the doctor	Factory Worker	Home-Worker
Local Private Clinic	63	60
Public Health Centre	7.9	24
Government Hospital	20.9	6
Home Remedy	8	10

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*

**Awareness Regarding Early Childhood Development and Crèche Programmes (In Percentage), 2018-19**

	Factory Workers		Home-based Workers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sarva Siksha Avigyan	0	100	0	100
Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme	0	100	0	100
Anganwadi	100	0	88	12
Mobile Crcehes	6.2	93.8	0	100
Local NGO Initiatives	3.5	96.5	0	100

*Source: Primary Survey 2018-19*