

WOMEN LABOURERS AND LABOUR RIGHTS IN SURAT'S DIAMOND AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES

Asst. Prof. Ghata Sabhaya

Bhagwan Mahavir College of Legal Education (BMCLE),

Bhagwan Mahavir University, Surat

1. Abstract

Surat has developed into one of the top industrial cities in India, supported significantly by the diamond cutting and textile industries. However, despite their immense contribution, women workers in these fields continue to experience several issues related to job security, pay, working conditions, and protection of labor rights. The current research reviews the socio-economic status of women workers in the diamond cutting and textile industries of Surat and investigates the implications of labor law and welfare policies in keeping with their rights. The research reveals the gap between the law and its implementation, concentrating on gender pay gap, health and safety conditions in the workplace, social security, maternity situation, and dignity at work.

This research uses qualitative and descriptive methodology underpinned by a thorough literature review of various relevant materials including government papers and legislation on labour rights, academic articles and policy documents and reports on women employed in the industry in Surat. It further discusses the interpretation of the gathered data in order to understand what working conditions for women involved in informal and official labour are like, as well as what institutions exist to protect their labour rights.

The analysis of findings reveals that even though legislation includes some protective measures, the majority of female workers do not get appropriate benefits, especially women engaged in informal, house-based or contract work. Negative working conditions are characterized by low payment rates, long working hours, minimum social security coverage, and poor knowledge of their rights.

Keywords: Women Labourers, Labour Rights, Diamond Industry, Textile Industry, Surat, Gender Equality

2. Introduction

The rapid industrialization of Surat has transformed the city into one of India's most significant manufacturing centres. Along with economic growth, it has generated employment opportunities for thousands of workers from different parts of Gujarat and neighbouring states. Women constitute an important part of this workforce, particularly in labour-intensive processes that require patience, precision, and repetitive manual skills. Employers often consider women suitable for tasks such as embroidery, thread cutting, quality inspection, packaging, sorting, grading, and polishing because these activities demand attention to detail rather than heavy physical labour. However, despite their significant contribution to industrial production, women workers continue to occupy a relatively disadvantaged position within the labour market. Their participation remains concentrated in low-paid occupations with limited opportunities for skill development, promotion, or long-term employment security¹.

The textile industry in Surat has expanded rapidly over the past few decades and has become one of the largest producers of synthetic fabrics in India. Women are employed in different stages of textile production, including weaving support, garment finishing, embroidery, dyeing assistance, packing, and quality control. A considerable number of women also work from their homes, undertaking embroidery, stitching, beadwork, and finishing assignments supplied by contractors. Home-based work allows women to balance domestic responsibilities with income-generating activities, but it often results in long working hours and extremely low wages. Since most home-based workers are not officially recognized as employees, they remain outside the scope of labour regulations and social security schemes. Payments are generally made on a piece-rate basis, leaving workers vulnerable to fluctuations in demand and arbitrary deductions by contractors².

Similarly, the diamond industry has established Surat as the global centre for diamond cutting and polishing. Although men dominate highly skilled cutting operations, women are actively engaged in sorting, grading, polishing, cleaning, packaging, and quality inspection. These activities require concentration and fine motor skills, making women valuable contributors to the production process. Nevertheless, women frequently receive lower wages than male workers engaged in similar production chains. Their work is often viewed as supplementary rather than essential, despite its direct impact on the quality and market value

¹ Martha Alter Chen, *Women and Employment in India: A Review of the Literature*, UNDP, 1995.

² Renana Jhabvala and R. K. A. Subrahmanya (eds.), *The Unorganized Sector: Work Security and Social Protection*, Sage Publications, 2000.

of finished diamonds. The absence of formal recognition limits their access to promotions, technical training, and decision-making positions within factories.

Migration has played a crucial role in shaping the female workforce in Surat. Women migrate either independently or with their families from rural districts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Bihar in search of employment opportunities. Economic hardship, declining agricultural income, debt, and limited local employment encourage migration to industrial cities like Surat. For many families, women's earnings provide essential support for household expenses, children's education, healthcare, and debt repayment. However, migrant women often face additional challenges because they are unfamiliar with local languages, labour regulations, and available welfare schemes. Their dependence on contractors or employers for accommodation and employment further weakens their bargaining power and increases their vulnerability to exploitation.

Working conditions remain a matter of concern in both the textile and diamond industries. Many women spend eight to twelve hours each day performing repetitive tasks in environments that may expose them to dust, chemical fumes, excessive heat, poor ventilation, and continuous noise. Prolonged sitting or standing, repetitive hand movements, and inadequate ergonomic arrangements frequently result in musculoskeletal disorders, eye strain, headaches, and chronic fatigue. Women employed in dyeing or chemical processing units may also face health risks due to exposure to hazardous substances without adequate protective equipment. Although occupational safety regulations exist, their implementation varies considerably across organized and unorganized establishments. Small workshops and subcontracting units often operate with limited monitoring, making compliance with safety standards inconsistent³.

The challenge of balancing paid employment with unpaid domestic responsibilities places an additional burden on women workers. Even after completing long shifts in factories or workshops, many women remain responsible for cooking, cleaning, childcare, elder care, and other household duties. This "double burden" leaves little time for rest, education, or skill enhancement. The unequal distribution of household responsibilities also affects women's career advancement because they may be unable to work overtime, attend training

³ T. S. Papola and Partha Pratim Sahu, *Growth and Structure of Employment in India: Long-Term and Post-Reform Performance and the Emerging Challenge*, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, 2012.

programmes, or accept promotions requiring longer working hours. As a result, gender inequalities within households continue to influence women's experiences in the labour market.

Labour rights are intended to ensure fair treatment, safe working conditions, and social protection for all workers. In India, several labour laws provide safeguards relating to minimum wages, equal remuneration, occupational safety, maternity benefits, social security, and protection from workplace discrimination and harassment. The Code on Wages, the Code on Social Security, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, and the Maternity Benefit Act seek to improve working conditions and guarantee basic rights. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act also provides a legal framework to protect women from harassment in professional settings. However, the effectiveness of these legal provisions largely depends on proper implementation, employer compliance, and workers' awareness of their rights⁴.

A major challenge faced by women labourers is the prevalence of informal employment. Many women are employed through contractors, subcontractors, or temporary arrangements without written contracts or official employment records. Such arrangements make it difficult to establish employer accountability when labour rights are violated. Workers engaged informally often do not receive provident fund contributions, health insurance, paid leave, maternity benefits, or compensation for workplace injuries. During periods of economic slowdown or reduced production, temporary workers are frequently the first to lose their jobs without receiving adequate notice or compensation. This employment insecurity contributes to financial instability and increases dependence on irregular sources of income⁵.

Another important issue is wage inequality. Although legal provisions support equal pay for equal work, differences in earnings between men and women continue to exist in many workplaces. Women are often concentrated in lower-paying tasks, while technical, supervisory, and managerial positions remain dominated by men. Piece-rate payment systems further complicate wage determination because earnings depend on production targets that may be influenced by factors beyond workers' control, such as raw material availability or machine breakdowns. Limited transparency in wage calculations and the absence of written employment agreements reduce women's ability to question unfair payment practices.

⁴ S. Madheswaran and P. K. R. Nair, *Labour Market and Social Security in India: Issues and Challenges*, Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2013.

⁵ Renana Jhabvala and R. K. A. Subrahmanya (eds.), *The Unorganized Sector: Work Security and Social Protection*, Sage Publications, 2000.

Awareness of labour rights among women workers is generally limited, particularly among migrants and those with lower educational backgrounds. Many workers are unaware of the benefits available under government welfare programmes or the procedures for filing complaints regarding unpaid wages, unsafe working conditions, or workplace harassment. Fear of losing employment, social stigma, financial dependence, and lack of legal support discourage women from reporting violations. In some cases, workers accept unfavourable conditions because they perceive them as unavoidable due to limited employment alternatives. Strengthening legal literacy through awareness campaigns, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and community-based programmes can improve workers' understanding of their rights and available support systems.

3. Literature Review

Research on women labourers and their rights in the industrial sector in India has grown significantly in the last decade, as concerns about gender equality, safety at the workplace, social security, and decent work conditions have increased. However, studies on female employees in Surat's diamond and textile industries are still relatively few in number. Most literature on the subject has focused on the gender issue, participation in the labour market, informal employment, occupational health, wage differences, and implementation of labour law in India. A review of these studies indicates what has been done in this area of study, as well as highlights the important gaps in research that prove the need for this study.

A systematic literature review has been performed on the topic of female labour force participation in Surat City by Neha Raval, Tanvi Tarpara, and Krishna Desai (2024). With the help of this literature review, it has been found that the involvement of women in the labour market is affected by various factors, such as education, responsibility towards the family, social norms and conditions, and employment possibilities. As established by the authors of the research, even though Surat has seen enormous growth in its textile and diamond industries, women still have some difficulties in finding stable employment positions. This review also states the need for conducting region-specific research about women working in Surat instead of relying only on the labour statistics. The research identifies important gaps regarding women in Surat, which indicates the necessity of further studies⁶.

⁶ Martha Alter Chen, *Women and Employment in India: A Review of the Literature* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 1995).

In 2025, Gautamkumar P. Kanani conducted research on the socio-economic condition of workers in diamond industry of Surat. This research was based on primary information that highlighted the socio-economic status of workers in this industry. It gave information regarding workers' earnings, education, living conditions, savings and employment status. This research concluded by saying that though Surat has established itself as a hub of diamond processing, the workers in this industry are not financially secure because of changing demand in the global market, irregular income and lack of employee protection laws. This research also underlined that the majority of workers are not financially secure, especially those who are working at a low level in the industry. The basic aim of the study was to point the importance of improving the welfare of workers in this regard.

Ritu Sharma (2026) conducted research on how the working environment can determine the well-being and empowerment of young employees working in the textile industry in Gujarat. The study, which utilized qualitative interviews to gather its data, concluded that the experience of working women is influenced not only through pay but also varies according to different aspects of work such as workplace atmosphere, work-related behaviour of supervisors, health status, and the chances of self-improvement. The research findings indicate that positive employment has a favourable effect on women's self-confidence and finally contributes to their financial independence whereas negative working conditions lead to poor health and well-being. The researcher points out that promotion of workers' welfare should be seen as a fundamental principle of industrial management instead of being considered a legal obligation. The study is important for understanding how employment affects women's overall empowerment⁷.

In their research, Sheth, Viramgami, Thakor, Lohra, and Mohanan (2026) examined the different forms of occupational health issues that women in informal labor experience in India. They concluded that women working in informal employment have many health concerns, including musculoskeletal problems; issues with the respiratory system; eye strain; tiredness; and mental stress caused due to poor working conditions and the repetitiveness of their work. They noted that the lack of access to health facilities, social security, and occupational safety measures impacts women workers' susceptibility to health issues. Their results are especially pertinent for those women who work in the garments and diamonds sectors in Surat, which are areas with long working hours and repetitive work processes.

⁷ Ritu Sharma, [*Complete title of study*], [Publication details], 2026.

Madhvi Kumari (2026) examined the concept of decent work from the perspective of women in informal employment in India's labour market. Despite the fact that the study primarily concerned domestic workers, it also offered the insight on various related issues related to women in informal jobs in terms of not only insecure work, absence of written contracts, low pay, gender discrimination, and poor enforcement of labour laws. It was concluded that one needs to remember that legal changes will not bring about any improvement in working conditions without enforcement mechanisms and awareness of workers. These conclusions can be applied to women involved in contract and home-based work in Surat's industrial branch.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To conduct a study of the social and economic conditions of women workers employed in the diamond and textile industries in Surat.
- To review the working conditions, wages, and occupational safety of women workers in Surat.
- To assess the level of awareness and execution of the labour rights enjoyed by women workers.
- To identify the main barriers faced by women workers in realising their legal rights and claiming social security benefits.
- To suggest possible measures for the advancement of labour rights and improving the working conditions of women workers in Surat.

5. Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the system that forms the basis of the study conducted to reach the study goals. It provides a description of the research methods used in the study, the types of data sources used, data collection methods employed, as well as the methods applied for data analysis. The present research is among those that attempt to explore the conditions of women workers and investigate the level of protection provided by labour rights to them in Surat's diamond and textile industries. The study is based upon the qualitative and descriptive research design and appears to be concerned with the available information, legislation, and policies related to the social conditions of women employees.

The study adopts a **descriptive research design** because it focuses on describing and analysing the existing conditions of women labourers rather than testing a specific hypothesis.

Descriptive research is appropriate for examining social and economic issues such as employment patterns, working conditions, wage structures, occupational health, and labour rights. It enables the researcher to present a comprehensive understanding of the realities experienced by women workers in Surat's diamond and textile industries. The study also follows a qualitative approach by interpreting information collected from various reliable sources to understand the nature of labour rights and the challenges faced by women in the workplace.

This research is based on secondary data which has been gathered from various sources that are authentic and dependable – namely, books, articles from journals that are peer-reviewed, publications from the government, including the Ministry of Labor and Employment, documents of the Gujarat Government, archives of the Labour Bureau, reports, and results of the National Sample Survey (NSS), Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS), and Census of India plus documentation from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and National Commission for Women, along with relevant journals, research papers from universities, policy papers, and conference papers from reliable online databases. Furthermore, new publications on women's employment and labor rights, industrialization, health and safety issues, and labor issues related to diamond and textile industries have also been consulted.

One of the significant components of this research study is the literature review. Past research conducted by local and international scholars has been studied to understand the information regarding female workers, labor regulations, employment in industries, informal employment, wage disparity, occupational safety, and social protection. In addition, the literature review reveals the gap in research: that there are few studies focusing on female workers within Surat's diamond and textile sector. By studying the previous literature, the study ensures to have a solid framework without repeating previous research.

The study area is **Surat city in Gujarat**, which is internationally known for its diamond cutting and polishing industry and is also one of India's largest textile manufacturing centres. These industries have attracted a large workforce from different parts of Gujarat and other states. Women play an important role in several production processes such as embroidery, finishing, packaging, quality inspection, thread cutting, sorting, grading, and other labour-intensive activities. The concentration of industrial activities and the substantial participation of women workers make Surat an appropriate location for studying labour rights and workplace conditions.

The location of the research is Surat city in Gujarat, whose diamond cutting and polishing sector is known worldwide, besides being one of the most significant textile manufacturing centres in India. These industries have attracted thousands of workers from various parts of Gujarat and other Indian states. Women workers are involved in a large number of processes such as embroidery, finishing, packaging, quality check, thread cutting, grading, etc. The high concentration of industries and women workers makes Surat an apt location to conduct research concerning labour rights and working conditions.

This study analyzes various key dimensions of women's employment such as their socio-economic profile, opportunities for employment, wage conditions, working hours, health and safety conditions, job security, maternity benefit and access to social security schemes, discrimination and access to welfare schemes, legal literacy and their level of dignity at the workplace.

The emphasis of the analysis is laid on examining the implementation of labor laws and determining the gap between the legal provisions and practice at the workplace. It also looks into the practices of women working in informal, contractual, and at-home work, where labor rights are weakly protected.

The study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyse the information that has been collected. The data from different secondary sources are analysed appropriately according to the research objectives. Relevant facts and findings are categorised under different topics so that there is smooth discussion. Comparative analysis is applied when needed so as to highlight the similarities and differences between women's experiences in diamond industry and that in textile industry.

The research adheres to ethical research principles. As only secondary sources are consulted in the study, it assures there has been no collection of personal information from a person. The utmost care has been taken to utilize authentic and reliable information sources while providing proper attribution to the acknowledged authors. All the information presented has been interpreted without bias or distortion. The research also ensures the avoidance of plagiarism through presenting the literature under review and findings in one's own language guaranteeing academic integrity.

While this study implies an elaborate depiction of female laborers and labor rights, it is somewhat limited. Firstly, it is solely based on secondary data, with no direct contact whatsoever with women laborers, employers, labor officials, and representatives of trade

unions. Thus, the outcomes depend entirely on the availability and quality of the published data. Moreover, since the working conditions may differ in various factories and workshops in the diamond and textile industries, it could be difficult to generalize the discoveries and extend them to the entire industry. However, the report manages to make valuable observations because it analyses a great number of reputable sources and gives a general understanding of labor conditions for women.

The approach employed in this study is suitable for accomplishing its research aims as it includes a thorough study of literature, reports from government, labour policies and scholarly research about the conditions of female workers in the industrial economy of Surat. In studying the labour rights together with socio-economic conditions and problems in the working environment, the research will provide a rich insight into the problems of female labourers. The results obtained will contribute to scholarly research and give the necessary groundwork for public offices, employers, labour officials and social organizations aimed at improving the situation of labourer welfare and the implementation of laws.

6. Research Hypothesis

H₁: Significant relationship exists among working conditions of women laborers and implementation of labor rights in the diamond and textile industries of Surat.

H₂: Labor rights awareness among women laborers is directly proportional to social security and other benefits which they avail.

H₃: Women laborers' wages, job security, and working conditions have been adversely impacted by discriminatory practices based on gender.

H₄: Proper implementation of labor laws will positively impact the social and economic well-being of women laborers in the diamond and textile industry in Surat.

7. Analysis and Findings

The analysis of women labourers in Surat's diamond and textile industries reveals that women play a significant yet often overlooked role in the industrial growth of the city. Surat's reputation as a global centre for diamond processing and a major textile manufacturing hub has been built through the combined efforts of skilled and semi-skilled workers, among whom women form an important segment. Their contribution can be observed in various production activities, including diamond sorting, grading, polishing support, quality inspection,

packaging, embroidery, stitching, thread cutting, finishing, and other labour-intensive tasks. However, despite their involvement in essential stages of production, women workers continue to experience several economic and social challenges that limit their ability to achieve secure employment and improved living conditions.

One of the major findings of the study is that women workers are highly concentrated in informal and low-paid employment arrangements. A significant number of women in Surat's industrial sectors are employed through contractors, subcontractors, or small production units where formal employment systems are often absent. Many workers do not receive written appointment letters, employment records, or clear information regarding their rights and benefits. This informal nature of employment creates uncertainty and makes women more vulnerable to exploitation. Without formal recognition, workers often remain excluded from social security schemes, health benefits, paid leave, maternity protection, and retirement-related provisions. The absence of employment security also reduces their ability to negotiate better wages or challenge unfair workplace practices.

The study further indicates that wage inequality remains a major concern among women labourers. Although women contribute significantly to industrial productivity, their earnings are often lower compared to male workers. This difference is influenced by occupational segregation, where women are commonly assigned tasks considered less skilled despite requiring patience, accuracy, and specialized abilities. In the diamond industry, women frequently perform sorting, checking, and finishing activities that directly influence the quality of the final product. Similarly, in the textile sector, women contribute to detailed work such as embroidery and garment finishing. However, their work is often undervalued because it is associated with traditional perceptions of women's labour. The findings suggest that transparent wage structures and recognition of women's skills are necessary to reduce income disparities.

Another important observation is that women workers face difficulties in balancing employment responsibilities with household duties. Most women employed in Surat's industries continue to carry the primary responsibility for domestic activities, including cooking, childcare, and family care. This creates a double burden where women manage both paid and unpaid work simultaneously. Long working hours, combined with household responsibilities, affect their health, personal development, and opportunities for career

advancement. Many women are unable to participate in skill development programmes or seek higher positions because of limited time and family obligations.

The findings also highlight concerns regarding workplace safety and health conditions. Women working in diamond and textile units are exposed to various occupational risks, including dust, chemical substances, repetitive physical movements, poor ventilation, eye strain, and long periods of sitting or standing. In smaller workplaces and informal units, safety measures are often inadequate. Lack of protective equipment, insufficient medical facilities, and limited awareness about occupational health increase the possibility of work-related health problems. The study shows that improving workplace infrastructure and ensuring regular health monitoring are essential steps toward protecting women workers.

8. Conclusion

The research paper entitled "Women Workers and Their Rights in the Diamond and Textile Industries of Surat" shows how important women workers are in two major industries of India. Heritage City of Surat is well-known around the globe as one of the major hubs for diamond cutting and textile manufacturing, which greatly depend on millions of women working in handicraft, workshops and industries. Women are involved in different types of jobs that require attention, skills and resolution. However, these jobs are not always appreciated in the context of industrial development and labour rights discourse. This research highlights that despite the numerous jobs available for women, industrial development did not guarantee proper working conditions and protection of their rights. Industrial progress should be followed by social progress.

According to the evidence, female workers are still confronted with various socio-economic problems despite their active role in the workforce. The majority of women occupy positions in low-paid and demanding jobs that at the same time do not provide chances for career development and skills acquisition. The employment is mainly informal or contractual, which denies them access to different social security schemes and other benefits enforced by law. The labor gender gap, lack of stability of employment, lack of written contracts, and limited bargaining power are among the major issues. Besides, women have to take care of their households while working, which creates an additional challenge for them in their attempt to create a balance between work and home. Hence, it is quite evident that employment does not equal financial independence or social empowerment. It is therefore crucial to improve the quality of work.

This study points to the fact that the labour rights enshrined in Indian labour legislation are sometimes not fully realised in the workplace. The laws that constrain the employers in a range of ways from setting minimum wages to ensuring occupational safety, maternity benefits, equal pay, social security, and dignified work place have an important role to play in the protection of the labour. Nevertheless, the rights provided under these laws do not always benefit all women workers, especially those working in the informal economy, home based or subcontracted workers. In many instances, women are not aware of their rights, while inadequate implementation and monitoring of the laws render such legislation weak. Therefore, improving enforcement of the laws and awareness of the workers becomes crucial.

The problem of occupational health and safety in the workplace also became very significant. The working conditions in textile manufacturing (where women are often employed) expose them to elements such as dust, loud noise, heat, and other mechanisms that can have negative effects on health over time. There are also similarities with the women working in diamond processing who have to do their job repetitively and that may lead to serious issues with their eyesight, muscle pain, etc. The findings of the research indicate that the proper provision with safe working environment and protective gear, as well as good ventilation, regular health check-ups, and ergonomic workplace arrangement, can lead to an increase of productivity and well-being of the workers. Thus, it is necessary to treat investments into occupational health as an important aspect of sustainable progress in industry rather than just an unnecessary expense.

A critical finding is that gender inequality in industrial work continues to exist in the industry. People may assume the existence of women in the industrial workplace; however, the reality is that women hold underpaid positions that require no advanced skills or specific technical education. It is lack of access to vocational training, cultural stereotypes, and family duties that do not let women move up the career ladder. Solving these problems may be possible only with the participation of all interested parties.

This research suggests that knowledge is valuable to protect workers' rights. Women who are aware of the laws and procedures governing workplace rights can easily demand justice for their rights violations. Many female workers do not get the required information due to education barriers, a lack of organised representation, or absence of communication from their employers and government authorities. Women need organized initiatives that raise their

awareness about workers' rights and laws so that they can act confidently and wisely in jobs, as well as support themselves in understanding their employment rights.

The results of the study highlight the significance of social security in enhancing the living standards of women workers. Availability of health insurance, provident fund, maternity benefits, pension schemes, child care services, and paid time off contributes to financial security and contributes to the women's position in moments of illnesses, pregnancy, or in the unstable economic situation. Extending social security coverage for unorganized and contractual workers would substantially boost the degree of women's protection working in Surat's industries. In addition, by optimizing administrative procedures and raising awareness of the governmental assistance programs more people will become involved.

9. Suggestions and Recommendations

The working conditions of women labourers in Surat's diamond and textile industries require comprehensive attention from government authorities, industrial stakeholders, labour organizations, and society. Although women contribute significantly to the growth and sustainability of these industries, many continue to experience challenges related to employment insecurity, low wages, poor workplace facilities, limited awareness of labour rights, and inadequate social protection. Improving their situation requires a balanced approach that addresses economic, social, legal, and institutional factors. The following suggestions and recommendations focus on creating a more inclusive and fair working environment where women workers can participate in industrial development with dignity, security, and equal opportunities.

One of the most important recommendations is the effective implementation of existing labour laws and welfare provisions. India has developed several legal frameworks to protect workers, including provisions related to minimum wages, workplace safety, maternity benefits, equal remuneration, and social security. However, the major challenge lies in the gap between legal provisions and their actual implementation, especially in informal sectors. In Surat's diamond and textile industries, a large number of women workers are employed through contractors, small units, and home-based production systems where monitoring is limited. Government labour departments should strengthen inspection mechanisms to ensure that employers follow labour regulations. Regular inspections should not only focus on large factories but also include small workshops, subcontracting units, and informal workplaces

where women are often concentrated. Strict action should be taken against employers who violate wage standards, deny statutory benefits, or provide unsafe working conditions.

Formal recognition of women workers should be considered a priority area for improving labour rights. Many women involved in textile finishing, embroidery, packaging, diamond sorting, and polishing activities remain invisible in official employment records because they work through informal arrangements. Without proper recognition, they are unable to access benefits such as health insurance, pension schemes, paid leave, maternity protection, and workplace compensation. Employers should maintain transparent employment records and provide written contracts that clearly mention wages, working hours, job responsibilities, and available benefits. Registration of informal and home-based women workers through government-supported databases can help ensure that they are included in welfare schemes and labour protection programmes.

Improving wage equality is another significant area requiring immediate attention. Women workers often receive lower wages compared to men, even when they perform tasks requiring similar levels of skill, concentration, and responsibility. In both diamond and textile industries, women are frequently assigned low-paid activities despite their contribution to product quality and efficiency. Employers should ensure strict compliance with equal pay principles and develop transparent wage structures based on skills, experience, and productivity rather than gender. Wage payments should be documented, timely, and free from unfair deductions. Skill-based wage systems can encourage women workers to improve their abilities while also providing better income opportunities.

Skill development and vocational training programmes can play an important role in improving the economic position of women labourers. Many women enter industrial employment with limited educational qualifications and remain restricted to basic tasks throughout their careers. Providing training in advanced textile techniques, modern diamond processing methods, digital skills, machine operation, quality management, and entrepreneurship can create opportunities for career advancement. Government agencies, industry associations, and educational institutions should collaborate to organize accessible training programmes near workers' communities. Special attention should be given to migrant women and those from economically weaker backgrounds so that lack of education does not prevent them from developing professional skills.

Workplace safety and health protection must become a central concern in Surat's industrial sectors. Women working in diamond and textile units often face health problems due to repetitive work, poor ventilation, dust exposure, chemical contact, long sitting hours, and inadequate workplace facilities. Employers should provide safe working environments with proper lighting, ventilation systems, protective equipment, clean drinking water, hygienic sanitation facilities, and regular health check-ups. Awareness programmes regarding occupational health risks should be organized regularly so that workers understand preventive measures and can report unsafe conditions. Special attention should be given to women's health needs, including maternity care, menstrual hygiene facilities, and protection from workplace-related health hazards.

Social security coverage for women workers should be expanded to reduce economic vulnerability. A large number of women employed in informal sectors do not have access to insurance, pensions, medical support, or financial assistance during emergencies. Government agencies should simplify registration procedures for social security schemes and ensure that information reaches workers at the local level. Mobile registration camps, awareness drives, and assistance centres in industrial areas can help women workers enroll in welfare programmes. Employers should also contribute towards social security benefits for workers who are engaged regularly, even if they are hired through contractors.

The issue of workplace harassment and gender discrimination requires stronger preventive measures. Women working in industrial environments may face harassment, unequal treatment, verbal abuse, or discrimination based on gender and social background. Many hesitate to report such incidents due to fear of losing employment or social consequences. Every workplace, regardless of size, should have clear mechanisms for preventing and addressing harassment. Employers should establish complaint committees as required by law and ensure that workers know how to access these systems. Training programmes on workplace behaviour, gender sensitivity, and respectful communication should be conducted for both employers and employees to create a safer environment for women.

Improving awareness of labour rights among women workers is essential for ensuring that legal protections become meaningful in practice. Many women are unaware of minimum wage regulations, maternity benefits, social security schemes, complaint procedures, and workplace safety rights. Awareness campaigns should be conducted in local languages through community organizations, labour unions, government departments, and non-governmental

organizations. These programmes should provide practical information about workers' rights and explain the steps available when rights are violated. Legal support centres can also assist women workers in addressing disputes related to wages, harassment, or unfair employment practices.

The role of trade unions and worker organizations should be strengthened to improve collective representation of women labourers. Individual women workers often have limited bargaining power when negotiating wages or workplace conditions. Collective organizations can provide a platform for workers to raise concerns and demand fair treatment. However, women's participation in unions remains limited due to social responsibilities, lack of awareness, and restricted mobility. Labour organizations should encourage greater involvement of women in leadership roles and create programmes specifically addressing women's workplace issues. A stronger female presence within worker organizations can ensure that policies and negotiations consider the unique challenges faced by women labourers.

Providing childcare facilities near workplaces can significantly improve women's participation and retention in industrial employment. Many women leave jobs or reduce working hours because they are responsible for caring for young children. Affordable childcare services, workplace creches, and flexible working arrangements can reduce this burden and allow women to continue employment without compromising family responsibilities. Industries with large numbers of women employees should consider childcare facilities as an essential welfare measure rather than an additional benefit. Such initiatives would not only support women workers but also improve productivity and employee satisfaction.

Transportation and workplace accessibility are also important factors affecting women's employment. Many women travel long distances to industrial areas, often facing safety concerns during early morning or late evening hours. Employers and local authorities should work together to provide safe transportation options for women workers. Better public transport connectivity, workplace security measures, and safe commuting arrangements can encourage more women to participate in formal employment. This is particularly important for migrant women who may face additional challenges while navigating unfamiliar urban environments.

There is also a need to promote greater representation of women in supervisory and managerial positions within diamond and textile industries. Although women contribute significantly at the production level, they are rarely seen in decision-making roles. Providing leadership training, career development opportunities, and equal promotion policies can help

women move beyond traditional low-level positions. Industries should evaluate employees based on ability, performance, and experience rather than gender-based assumptions. Greater representation of women in higher positions can also create a more supportive environment for female workers.

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