

# The Socio-Economic Analysis of Women Labourers in Ballari Garment Industry: A Sociological Perspective

Dr. Ashwini. S<sup>1</sup>, Balkish Banu.K<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Guide Assistant professor Department of studies in Sociology VSK University Ballari-Karnataka.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar Department of studies in Sociology VSK University Ballari-Karnataka.

## Abstract

Indian garment industry has done commanding and tremendous break through regarding employment opportunities for all sections of the society. Availability of cheap and skilled labor is a vital issue in the rapid growth of the garment industry. Today, majority of women are placed in the garment sector only. The hard work and exploitation of millions of workers have played a vital role in earning highest cash reserve ratio through export to any country. At present, garment sector is providing the highest number of employment opportunities in the formal manufacturing sector. It is found that more than 75% of female workers have been involved in this sector. It has completely become a more popular sector irrespective of any educational background. However, garment workers are facing numerous problems; especially women have been victimized for various kinds of harassment at home as well as at working place. The inappropriate work environment has become common in the garment industry today. This paper is the result of a study conducted in Ballari, Karnataka. According to the study the family background working atmosphere and earning wages and timing of work in hours is exploiting and unhealthy; especially for the female workers.

**Key words:** Garments, Industry, Labour, socio-economic

## Introduction

The garment industry is relatively new to India but has become a vital contributor to economic growth, particularly through increased exports. Momentum in the industry was gained following the lifting of restrictions by major importing countries like the USA and EU. The majority of the workforce in the garment sector comprises female workers, which adds to their vulnerability. Labor-intensive nature of the industry has led to a significant portion of workers being employed from low socio-economic backgrounds. Poor working conditions are reported in the garment sector, with studies indicating relatively low wages, lack of union representation, and occupational health disorders among workers. The industry has witnessed significant migration from rural to urban areas, with workers seeking employment opportunities in garment units. Ballari, in Karnataka, is home to a large number of garment industries, employing thousands of workers. However, reports suggest that welfare facilities and wages provided by these companies are below standard levels compared to other states like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Non-payment or delayed payment of wages is a recurring issue in the Indian garment

sector. Despite efforts to protect employees in the unorganized sector, including the garment industry, through legislation, such as recent laws, workers continue to face challenges in accessing their rights and benefits. The paper aims to shed light on the socio-economic status of women workers in the garment industry in Ballari, highlighting the specific challenges and disparities they face in terms of wages, working conditions, and access to welfare facilities. In summary, the garment industry in India, while contributing significantly to economic growth and employment generation, is plagued by various challenges, including poor working conditions, low wages, and lack of adequate regulation and enforcement. The focus on Ballari provides insight into the localized issues faced by garment workers in specific regions, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve the socio-economic status and well-being of workers in the industry.

### Review of literature

There has been time throughout the history over the whole world when women were thought to be secondary citizens, unproductive beings though women always had innate qualities of being productive. This notion has been beautifully brought out by Shamim Hamid (1, 1994) in her article „Non-market Work and National Income:. There have been a very few modern sectors for other industries. Hence, it has taken a long time for Bangladesh to reach the state of an industrial nation particularly with regard to garment industry.

**1. Bergmann, B. (1987)** Said in „Women's Roles in the Economy Teaching the issues that in every society, women generally have been considered to do household work and do child care and this notion has changed to some extent recently. Johnston, H. (433, 2009) in „Relationships of Exclusion and Cohesion with Health: The Case of Bangladesh“ viewed that under the multi-fiber Arrangement (1974-2004) Bangladesh experienced a huge growth of RMG. Traditionally Bangladeshi women were under the traditional barriers of purdah which prevented them from entering the formal sectors. But their growing poverty, declining agricultural sector forced the women to join the garment industry. As it is same the Muslim women's more over working in Indian garment industry.

**2. Amin. S. and Pebley, A. R. (1994)** Said in „Gender Inequality within Households: The Impact of a Women Development Programme in 36 Bangladeshi Villages“ that patriarchy and Class have been the dominant systems in Bangladesh where women are dominated by the men. Men control income, property, and women labour. Religion, kinship, and political systems excluded women from public life. But the women workers are now capable to take decision by their own .

**3. Mohinuddin and Singh: (1996)** Conducted a study on problems of women workers in readymade garments in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The main objective of study was to ascertain their working conditions, job opportunities, income patterns, wages and nature of work. Four hundred respondents, 200 each from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka state were selected as a sample of the study. Semi structure interview schedules, case study and observations were the mode of data collection. The findings revealed that the working conditions and the other facilities were stated to be satisfactory only for those who were working with units/centers established under any Government scheme, whereas, those who were working in the unorganized sector, the working conditions were voiced as “unsatisfactory.” The main problems cited were (i) payment in irregular installments (ii) employer's bad treatment.

**4. Firdous Azim: (2005)** Said in Feminist Struggles in Bangladesh that women in Bangladesh had been subordinates, and in such a position that they were subservient. . Women always had been indoor and

barred from studies, jobs, social activities, etc. They were even considered as secondary and subordinate citizens. As a result they faced discrimination, violence in the families, society. They also faced dowry-death, acid-throwing on the faces, being stoned to death, and so on. They needed to be lifted up from all such oppressions by doing jobs. Hence, garment factory has been a rescue factor for them to extend job opportunities for them. She also mentions the women's joining the garment industry in the 1990s that rescued them from many oppressions. However, she also mentions that women were paid less from their jobs but now a days this assumption is lacking behind and the many women's are very skill based workers in the garments.

**5. Siddiqi: (2009)** Views that the export of garment industry products brings the largest part of foreign income for Bangladesh. It proves to be true if the escalating of foreign investment is viewed which was just 2.4 million in 1986, but in 2008 it is more than 1000 million. Presently, European companies, mainly from UK, contribute one third of foreign direct investment. Ahmed (2004) says that about 100 different types of apparels are now exported to 50 countries around the world. Abdullah (1998) in her paper "Poverty and Reforms in Bangladesh" felt that Bangladesh has made considerable progress towards implementing economic reforms along the lines recommended by the major bilateral donors. According to this thought our Indian industry should invest more money for the development of garment sectors.

### Objectives:

1. To identify the family particulars of garment industry labourers at Ballari city.
2. To know the earning wages of garment labourers in Ballari.
3. To find out the factors that affect their socio-economic conditions.

### Methodology

This current study has been conducted in the selected garment factories of Ballari, Karnataka. A total number of 50 garment workers have been interviewed with a scheduled questionnaire. Samples were selected using simple random technique. Both the primary and secondary data has been used for this study to analyse the data.

### Analysis

Garment work is often driven by economic necessity, as many workers come from backgrounds of acute poverty and destitution. With limited employment opportunities in other sectors, garment work becomes a crucial source of income for these individuals and their families. Landlessness and lack of other assets contribute to the economic vulnerability of garment workers, leaving them dependent on dominant groups within the industry for employment and livelihood. Familial circumstances play a significant role in workers' decisions to enter the garment industry. While some may be driven by familial obligations and the desire to support their families, others may have experienced desertion by husbands or lack of support within their families. Lack of means of support within the family, such as unemployment or economic instability, can further compel individuals to seek employment in the garment industry as a means of survival. While a significant portion of workers have completed primary and secondary education, socio-economic factors such as early marriage or the need to support their families often force them to leave school prematurely. A substantial proportion of workers cite lack of educational qualifications for jobs in other sectors as a reason for choosing garment work, highlighting the impact of

limited educational opportunities on employment prospects. A significant percentage of workers report low monthly incomes and minimal or no bonuses, indicating the exploitative nature of the industry and the absence of adequate compensation for labor. Workers express concerns about job insecurity, fearing repercussions such as job loss if they take leave or fall sick for an extended period. This fear is compounded by the lack of alternative employment options. Workers, particularly women, face heavy workloads with long hours and minimal breaks. The absence of night shifts for women further limits their opportunities for flexible working arrangements, contributing to dissatisfaction and stress among workers. The garment industry in Ballari fails to provide adequate job safety and security for its workers. Concerns about job security, workload, and limited opportunities for advancement contribute to a sense of insecurity and dissatisfaction among workers. Finally in conclusion, the socio-economic factors outlined above underscore the challenges faced by garment workers in Ballari city, including poverty, lack of educational opportunities, job insecurity, and poor working conditions. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive interventions aimed at improving wages, ensuring job security, providing access to education and skill development, and promoting better working conditions in the garment industry.

### **Recommendations:**

- \*There should be equal access to jobs, trainings, skills, equal pay for equal work, work should be unionized with collective bargaining facilities so that the workers can negotiate with the management for more benefits, better wages and work Conditions.
- Inequity in pay should be removed on the basis of gender. There should be equal pay for equal work should be put in place. Policy makers, Unions and Employers should identify those issues and must sensitize on them.
- Training should be designed to meet the constrains of female workers. Women workers should be trained about the basic as well as specialized skills of doing work.
- The women in the garment industries should get the benefits of maternity and child care. There should be light work and rest periods between works especially for pregnant women. The medical practitioner in the factory premises should take care of the minor cuts, injury, and major problem.

### **Suggestions:**

Regularly long working hours and overtime hours create many problems in their families and health, so working hours should be minimized by increasing regular salary. And to provide housing and transportation facilities by the respective owner.

- \*To increase the present wage.
- To save a portion of their salary in the account created by the owner
- To prevent noise pollution in the working place and need to ensure proper medical facilities
- To determine a target based bonus system as well as other incentives such as leaves, health benefit.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals significant differences in the nature and conditions of work, income of women labourers in work place. The study outlines the worse conditions of work that women face, due to their low educational qualifications and skills the women workers has less access to better working conditions, promotions, leave facilities, occupational safety, The survey tries to highlight. Some of the best practices with respect to women workers so that the employers in the organizations could bring

about some changes in work conditions and increase the income of the employers and provision of the trade union by this implements we can develop the garment labourers socio-economic status in the society.

## References

1. Pore (1993): In the Report of socio-economic condition of women workers in Garment Industry pune.
2. Mohinuddin and Singh (1996): In a book “A study on problems of women workers in Readymade Garments Industry in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.”
3. Singh p.(1999): A study on subcontracted units and women workers in the Garment Industry Ahmadabad.
4. South Asian Research and Development Initiative (1999): A survey which examined the working condition for women in Garment Industry Delhi.
5. Afsar, R. (1999). Poverty, Female Labor Migration and Health Risks: A Case Study of Female Garment Factory Workers in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
6. Surati (2001): In a book “A study on work related problems of women workers in Textile Industry.”
7. Ahluwalia & Wahiduddin Mahmud.(2004).Economic Transformation and Social Development in Bangladesh. Economic and Political Weekly, 39(36), 4009-4011.
8. Deccan Herald Ammo’s Death Stripes Garment Industry of Halo 2007.
9. Chaudhry, N. J., and Ullah, M. H. (2010). Socio-Economic Conditions of Female Garment Workers in Chittagong Metropolitan Area- An Empirical Study. Journal of Business and Technology (Dhaka).
10. Naranaya shetty (2009-2013) : A case study of garment workers and Domestic workers in Karnataka
11. Ahmed, N., and Nathan, D. (2014). Improving Wages and Working Conditions in the Bangladeshi Garment Sector: the Role of Horizontal and Vertical Relations.
12. Karnataka Survey Report -2014-15
13. The Hand Book of Karnataka 2014-15
14. Economic Survey Report 2014-15
15. Ramanjaniah. BK and Dr.C.Somashekhar (2018): Women workers in garment industries a sociological study in Bangalore city. Journal of applied research.