

The Plight and Problems of Women Workers in Unorganized Sector with Focus on Coimbatore

Dr. S. Jayachitra

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administrationm Texcity Arts and Science College,
Coimbatore. Tamil Nadu. India.

ABSTRACT

The research study on the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector with focus on Coimbatore plays a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunities for women workers and more work satisfaction. In India, women constitute nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in the domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in an urban economy. the problem they encounter include low wages, exploitation, limited job security, lack of social protection, unsafe working conditions, discrimination and the burden of balancing work and family responsibilities. The study brings to light the plight of women workers in Coimbatore to identify their problems and rectify it. The objectives of the study are to study the socio-economic conditions of women workers in unorganized sector: To analyze the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector. Research methodology on a well structural interview schedule was prepared for collecting the primary data and the secondary data on various articles, journals and websites. A probability random sampling method on 60 respondents was collected from various destinations involves descriptive analysis of the women work related satisfaction.

Keywords: Unorganized Sectors, Plight, Destination, Harassment, Problems

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘unorganized labor’ stands for scattered and fragmented workforces working individually sometimes loosely associated, in various occupations. Unorganized labor is not formally cohesive in any recognized association and union with defined ideology, goals, and areas of specialization. In India, women constitute nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in the domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in an urban economy. Unorganized sector always plays a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunities to a large segment of the workforce in India. Near about 92% of the total employment in the Indian economy during the period 1999-2000 was accounted for by the unorganized/informal sector. A large number of women from rural areas migrate to cities and towns all over India to work in Unorganized Sector. Most of these women and girls are illiterate and unskilled. They work in inhumane conditions in cities as their living standard is extremely poor. It is a recognized fact that there is still no society in the world in which Women in Unorganized Sector enjoy the same opportunities as men. The Un-organized sector includes:

- construction companies,
- hotel management,
- domestic work,

- farming,
- plantation harbors,
- fishermen,
- taxi drivers,
- and many more.

These are jobs that are not registered and have no fixed terms and conditions of employment. An unorganized sector is defined as a sector that is not established with the government and does not have definite and consistent employment conditions. There are no government laws and regulations enforced in this industry. It is simple to enter such a sector because no affiliation or certification is required.

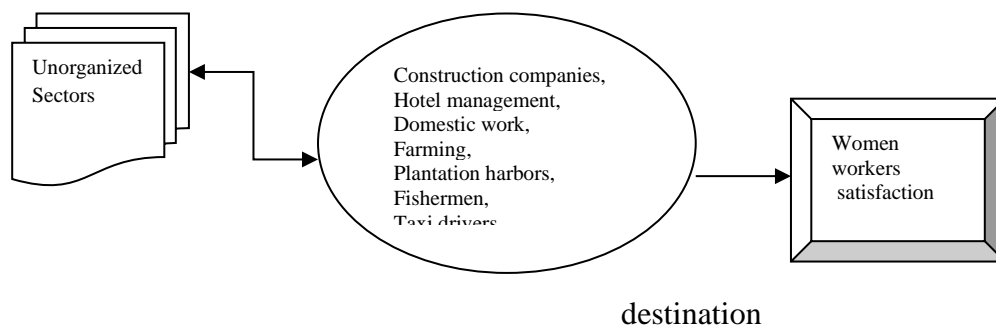
Legal Frameworks available for Women in the Unorganized Sector

Constitutional rights and duties enumerated in Part III and IV of the Constitution of India are pivotal to the demand for protection of laws of women workers. Some little legislation, which is directly applicable for women workers, such as,

- The Maternity Benefit Act,
- The Equal Remuneration Act,
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), etc.

The Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of laws: Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex. The Equal Remuneration Act guarantees women equal treatment relative to similarly situated men in the workplace. Under this law, no discrimination is permissible in recruitment and service conditions except where the employment of women is prohibited or restricted by the law. Many studies find that women workers earn lower wages than men workers. The wage differentials between female and male agricultural workers are based on a pre-assumed gender character. Employers and contractors offer simply lower wages to women, regardless of their performance of the job. In the given situation of social and economic neglect, women have no better options. Studies indicate that on average, women’s pay is around 30 percent lower than that of men across all sectors and fields of employment. Employers divide the kind of work to be done between men and women and technically evade the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

The Unorganized Sector Workers Act, 2008 defines unorganized sector workers as those who are home-based, self-employed or wage workers in an enterprise with less than 10 employees. This Act mandates the Central government to formulate a health and maternity benefit scheme for workers covered by it.



Problems faced by Women in Unorganized Sector:

- 1. Lack of education:** Illiteracy is the biggest problem because they do not get time to educate themselves. In childhood, they have to start working early which do not allow them to go to school.
- 2. Insufficient skill & knowledge:** Majority of female do not have proper training and skills aligned to their task. This results in excessive stress and inefficient working.
- 3. The exploitation of female labor:** the Female worker is more vulnerable to exploitation by the employer. They can be easily threatened with their job for indecent favors. They are also subjected to severe forms of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 4. Insecure job:** Absence of strong legislation controlling the unorganized sector makes the job highly insecure in this sector.
- 5. The non-sympathetic attitude of employer:** Temporary nature of employment in this sector does not allow the bond between the employee and employer to establish and become strong.
- 6. Extreme work pressure:** women are overworked; they work twice as many hours as worked by their male counterpart. In the agriculture sector, the condition is the worst. When measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and the total time spent, it is greater than men as per one study in the Himalayas which found that on a one-hectare farm, a pair of bullocks' works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year.
- 7. Irregular wages payment:** There is a lack of controlled processes in the unorganized sector which results in an untimely payment of wages to the workers. When it comes to payment to women, it is even worst.
- 8. Wage discrimination:** Women do not get similar payment to the male for the same work.

The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 safeguards the interests of workers by providing fixation of minimum wages mainly focusing on the unorganized sector and in specified occupations (called scheduled employments) (Section 2 g). The act binds the employers to pay their workers the minimum wages fixed under the Act from time to time (Section 12). Owing to their jurisdiction the Central and the State Governments fix, revise, review and enforce the payment of minimum wages without any discrimination of gender (Section 3). With effect from November 2009, the National Floor Level Minimum Wage has been increased to Rs 100 from Rs 80 (in September 2007). Several states have fixed higher Minimum wages than those prescribed by Central Government for highly skilled, skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled workers engaged in Scheduled employments.

Literature review

Gupta and Prakash (2019) found that women workers endure long working hours, low wages, lack of job security, and limited access to basic facilities such as restrooms and protective gear. Manju (2017) stated that the relation between nation's prosperity and women condition can be understood by the famous quote given by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women." India is a traditional country and there is diversity in religions, culture and customs. Role of the women in India mostly is household and limited to domestic issues. Female workers form the largest segment of India's unorganized workforce. Majority of women work in unorganized sectors for low wages due to low level of skills, illiteracy, ignorance and surplus labour and thus face high level of exploitation. The social and economic profile of female worker is greatly affected by the nature of industrial sector where they work. Dr. Sukhwinder Singh (2021) stated that the term 'unorganised' is frequently used in the Indian context to refer to the large number of women and men working in various occupations. Home -

based work (e.g., rolling papads and beedis), self-employment (e.g., selling vegetables), employment in household enterprises, small units, on land as agricultural workers, labour on construction sites and domestic work. The present study was designed with objective to identify the problem that women face as unorganized labour and to bring to light the plight of female workers in India. For this purpose 100 women stone crushers between the age range of 15 and 50 were selected from Patiala district. A self designed interview schedule was used to collect data and it was found that majority of the women are working in pathetic conditions and have low work satisfaction. They are not even allowed to take their decisions and are not aware of any help groups for their rights. S. Monisha (2017) Unorganised or Informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy .Around 52% of Unorganised Workers are engaged in agriculture & allied sector and they constitute more than 90% of the labour work force unorganised workers also contributes 50% to GDP (according to National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector) ,of these at least 120 million are women . The employment of women is high in the unorganized Sector such as part time helper in household, construction setting, tanneries, match and beedi industries etc. Women working in unorganized sector are not included in the ofcial statistics and their work is not documented and considered as wage work, unskilled work etc., Low productivity compared to formal sector, Lower wages to workers, Poor working conditions, Excessive seasonality of employment, Absence of social security measures etc are some of characteristics of unorganised Sector. Women has dual responsibility in balancing their home and work. Women in unorganised sector face numerous problems.The objective of this paper is to identify the living condition, Working condition, Economic position of working women in unorganized sector. This paper attempts to nd out the problems faced by women in unorganised sector. This paper also examines awareness on social security measures and schemes available for women in unorganised sector.

Scope of the study

The research study is the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector with focus on Coimbatore. These are jobs that are not registered and have no fixed terms and conditions of employment.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the socio economic conditions of women workers in unorganized sector
2. To analyze the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector

Research Methodology

The research study is the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector with focus on Coimbatore. A well structural interview schedule was prepared for collecting the primary data and the secondary data on various articles, journals and websites. A probability random sampling method on 60 respondents was collected from various destinations involves descriptive analysis of the women work related satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Table No-1 Women workers in unorganized sector

Destination	Respondents	Percentage
Construction companies	10	17
Hotel management	20	33
Domestic work	5	8
Farming	6	10
Plantation harbors	4	7
Fishermen	10	17
Taxi drivers	5	8
Total	60	100
Harassment of women workers		
Sexual harassment	30	50
Financial harassment	20	33
Caste harassment	10	17
Total	60	100
Problems		
Lack of education	5	8
Insufficient skill & knowledge	15	25
Insecure job	25	42
Irregular wages payment	5	8
Extreme work pressure	10	17
Total	60	100

Source: Primary sectors

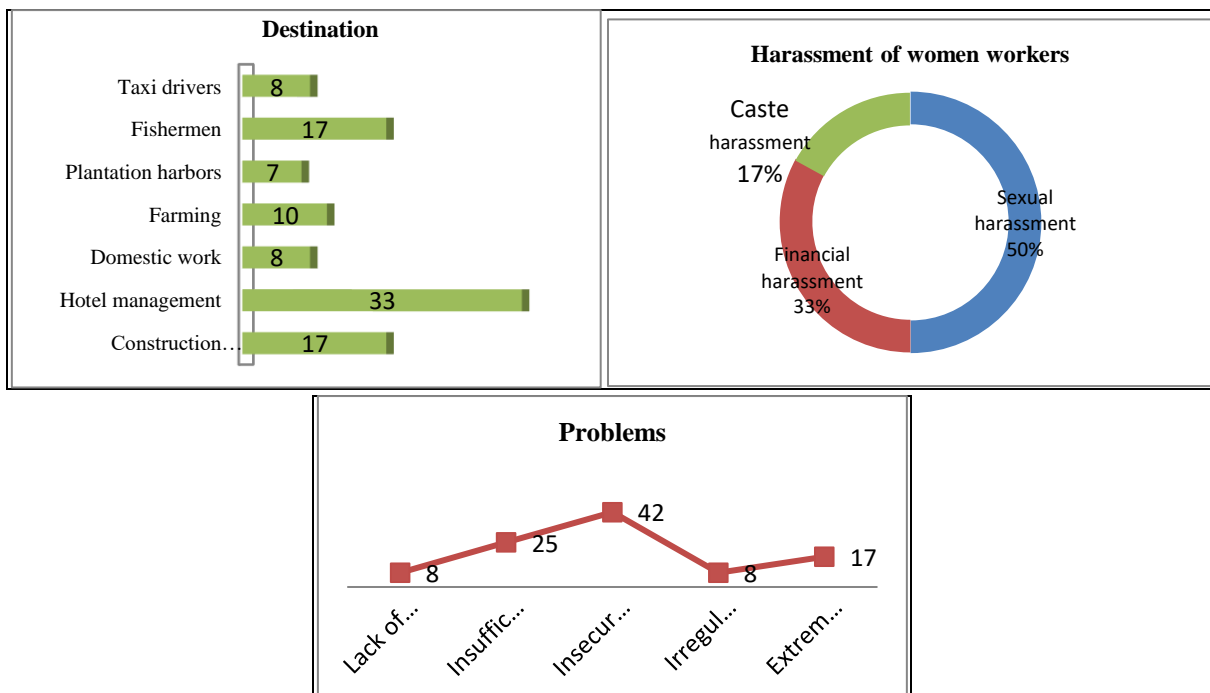


Table No-2 Reliability test on Women workers in unorganized sector

Women workers in unorganized sector	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Comment
Plight and problems		
Low Wages,	0.864	Good
Exploitation,	0.846	Good
Limited Job Security,	0.867	Good
Lack Of Social Protection,	0.823	Good
Unsafe Working Conditions, Discrimination	0.803	Good
Burden Of Balancing Work And	0.852	Good
Family Responsibilities.	0.813	Good

The reliability test is highly internal consistency which is more than 0.8. Hence the reliability of the question is proved i.e., the questionnaire is reliable for the purpose of data analysis.

Conclusion

The present study examine the plight and problems faced by women workers in unorganized sector with focus on Coimbatore plays a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunities for women workers. Majority (33%) of the women workers is in unorganized sectors on hotel management destination, and they faced Sexual harassment (50%) at work place. Their main problems were insecure job (42%) in their work place. The study is essential to provide better working conditions and social security benefits for women working in the unorganized sectors to improve their quality of life.

Suggestion

1. To enhance the employability of female workers, the Government is providing training to them through a network of Women Industrial Training institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes.
2. Government has taken various steps to improve women’s participation in the labour force and quality of their employment. A number of protective provisions have been incorporated in the labour laws for equal opportunity and congenial work environment for women workers.
3. Minimum working hours and wages should be fixed by the government.
4. To help self-employed people, the government can provide loans.
5. Basic services such as education, health, and food should be taken care of by the government.

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