

WOMEN IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR -PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES

Mr. Chandrashekhara M, Research Scholar, Dept of Sociology, Davangere University, Davangere
Dr. Jyoti K, Assistant Professor & Research Guide, Dept of Sociology, Davangere University
Davangere

ABSTRACT:

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 unorganised labour and to bring to light the plight of female workers in India. 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. Women working in the informal sector are not included in the official statistics and their work is undocumented and considered as disguised wage work, unskilled, low paying and does not provide benefits to the worker. India was one of the first countries in the world to give women the right to vote. The Indian constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and guarantees equal rights for men and women. Despite the advances women have made in many societies, women's concerns are still given second priority almost everywhere. They continue to face discrimination and marginalization both subtle and blatant and do not share equally in the fruits of development. Their contribution is not given due credit. Women workers in unorganized sector lag behind the males in terms of level and quality of employment.

Key Words: Unorganized, Construction, Marginalization, Discrimination.

INTRODUCTION:

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, domestic work, and many other forms of casual or temporary employment are examples of these forms. In the recent years pattern of employment has been changed drastically. Women are making strides in all walks of life these days. They even infiltrate male-dominated fields. This woman has broken free from the confinement of four walls and the traditional domestic duties of the household that she has been performing since time immemorial. Between 1971 and 2011, the labour force increased by 301.3 million (about 1.7 times), but females outnumbered males by 3.8 times, compared to 1.2 times for males. In India, women make up nearly one-third of the workforce. In 2011, women made up 149.9 million, or 31% of the total workforce of 481.7 million. Despite accounting for one-third of the labour force in India, women account for less than one-fifth of employees in the organised sector (Kurian, 2007).

Women work primarily for economic independence, economic necessity (because some women are qualified to work), a sense of accomplishment, and to provide service to society. Most Indian women, in general, engage in "productive work" only out of economic necessity (Mohapatra, 2015). This explains why female participation rates are so high in economically disadvantaged communities. Typically, upper-class women are confined to their homes. Rural women have a higher

rate of labour force participation (27%) than urban women (10 percent). Because of the widespread reluctance to employ women in regular jobs and provide them with good working conditions, women frequently seek temporary and standby jobs. Census 2011 describes the variations in men's and women's labor-force participation rates by state and region, as well as the distribution of workers among the major occupational categories. The macro overview of the occupational structure of female labour participation in India reveals that the primary sector continues to employ the majority of women. Women's employment in agriculture is much more concentrated than men's; nearly 66% of employed women work in agriculture, compared to 50% of employed men.

DEFINITION OF UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

Although, it is difficult to give a concise and holistic definition of unorganized labour. Unorganized labour stands for scattered and fragmented workforces working individually sometimes loosely associated, in various occupations. Unorganized labour is not formally cohesive in any recognized association and union with defined ideology, goals and areas of specialization. The unorganized sector of the economy in India is the largest sector in term of employment of the workforce. It consists of agriculture and such related activities as forestry, livestock and fishing as well as non-agriculture.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The study conducted by Unni, (1989) concluded that female workers had to bear the work burden the most and they remained still the most disadvantaged class of workers. They put in at least 12-14 hours of work every day but their economic activities were not fully recognized, counted and included in the national product, though women's work included many activities which lead to the economic gain of the household.

Saran and Sandhewar (1990) studied the problems of women workers engaged in unorganized sector. It was revealed by their study that the women were exploited, low paid, worked for long hours i.e. 14-16 hours in case of migrants and 8-10 hours in case of local workers. There prevailed mass illiteracy, belonged to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes and indebtedness was common. Further, rebuking, cheating, threatening, beating and sexual abuses were a common feature reported by women working in unorganized sector.

Sultania, (1994) conducted a study at micro-level in the major parts of Jaipur city on the women workers engaged as contract laborers. The main analysis was based on the causes of inequality of women contract laborers and its impact. The characteristics, profile and recruitment were also dealt with. It was projected that construction was the main industry employing labour on contract basis. The women workers there experienced sexual and socio-economic exploitation. They were illiterate, earning fewer wages, experienced male dominance, worked for 10-12 hours daily had no medical or leave facilities and were under pitiable state of affairs.

Anand, (1998) analyzed the characteristics of the construction workers, predominantly migrant workers and the intervention strategies adopted to facilitate the reach out services to these women workers along with awareness of their rights and utilization. He suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned.

Srinivasan, (2000) studied the conceptual issues of the unorganized sector along with profile of women's employment and its trend. He concluded that employment for the unorganized women workers moved to the sectors where these women had no say at all and away from the legal protection. Non-farm employment hailed as the panacea for surplus-labour in agricultural sector which could not pick up in

rural India and the women were most affected.

WOMEN IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

The term unorganized sector was first used by Hart in 1971 who described the unorganized sector as that part of urban labour force, which falls outside the organized labour market. In the unorganized sector, work situations are not in official record and working conditions are not protected by law. So, the problems of female workers in unorganized sector are not properly known. It has been pointed out by Hart that one of the major problems is that working conditions are worst. Due to population growth and urban migration, the active labour force was growing at a much faster rate than availability of jobs in the organized sector. The focus of development policies was gradually shifting from pure economic to growth with equity and the eradication of poverty. Interest was, thus generated in sectors outside the organized economy that was providing a livelihood to a large section of the poor. Hence, the concept of the unorganized sector was born. In defining the unorganized sector, self-employed with or without family labour and microenterprises with less than five workers, is also included.

OBJECTIVES:

To analyse the problem faced by women workers in unorganized sector.

To define the different categories of women workers in India.

To suggest measures for overcoming the problems of women workers in unorganized sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is descriptive on secondary data. So secondary sources have been used for data collection. In this regard, data is collected and reviewed from various reports. Journals, books and official websites relevant to are of the present enquiry. Different methods were used for collecting data on the unorganized sector working women.

CATEGORIES OF WOMEN WORKERS IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR

1. DOMESTIC WORKERS:

A study of domestic workers in Delhi (Neetha 2004) shows that although domestic work has brought higher incomes to many women and their families it is still far from decent work being characterized by long working hours, low wages and hardly any social security. Domestic workers are more vulnerable than other kinds of workers because they are not officially classified as workers at all and are therefore not covered by laws that apply to workers.

2. VENDORS:

This is the most scattered category, which includes women engaged in selling different types of commodities, like broomsticks, cane baskets, utensils, petty cosmetics, bangles, vegetables and those running roadside tea stalls, etc. Nearly 40% of total vendors are women and 30% of these women are the sole earning members in their families.

3. BEAUTICIANS:

A large number of women are employed as beauticians. A large portion of the beauty saloons/parlours fall under the unorganized sector and are characterized by informal employment.

4. CONSTRUCTION LABOURERS:

The construction industry provides direct employment to at least 30 million workers in India (but recent expansions has resulted in a higher number: trade unions estimate that there were roughly 40 million migrant construction workers in India in 2008. Women work mainly as unskilled workers.

5. GARMENT WORKERS:

The garment industry is a subsector of the textile industry and also generates many jobs for migrant workers. India's readymade garment exports increased significantly as a share of total exports. The women work as helpers to male/female tailors (called as masters). These workers include those involved in knitting clothes/woollens.

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

A large number of women from rural areas migrate to cities and towns all over India. Most of these women and girls are illiterate and unskilled. They work in inhuman 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 workers enjoy the same opportunities as men. The women unorganized sector are facing so many problems:

NON SYMPATHIC 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.

1. EXPLOITATION OF THE FEMALE LABOUR:

Female worker are more vulnerable to exploitation by employer. They can be easily threatened of their job for indecent favours

2. 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 school.

3. INSUFFICIENT SKILL & KNOWLEDGE:

Majority of female do not have proper training and skills aligned to their task. This result is excessive stress and inefficient working.

4. INSECURE JOB:

Absence of strong legislation controlling the unorganized sector makes the job highly insecure in this sector.

5. EXTREME WORK PRESSURE:

Female are overworked, they work twice as many hours as worked by their male counterpart. In agriculture sector the condition is the worst.

6. PHYSICAL PROBLEMS:

The working conditions are not healthy. Work place is not ergonomically designed. This results into workers facing fatigue resulting physical problems. Female workers are mostly on such tasks where they need to remain in one position such as agriculture. This results on to saviour problems such as backache and knee-ach.

7. IRREGULAR WAGES PAYMENT:

There is lack of controlled processes in unorganized sector which results in to untimely payment of wages to the workers. When it comes to payment to female, it is even worst.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Women workers should be educated and make them aware about their rights and legislative provisions.
- It is very much essential to create awareness among women workers about the institutional support available to them to protect their rights.
- A separate women grievance cell headed by a woman should be established in every organization sector and in case of unorganized sector women to form self-help groups for their

protection.

- Since women workers lack in skill, skill development programs should be provided to them to enhance their skill level.
- There should be proper regulation of unorganized sector industries, which ensure job security, healthy work environment and at least minimum wages, maternity and child care benefits.
- Any kind of exploitation including sexual harassment of women workers is to be prevented and stringent action needs to be taken against the wrong doer.

CONCLUSION:

The unorganized sector is larger in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The female participation in this sector is more than male. Women worker face grave problems. Their condition is highly unpredictable and have constraints related to their work such as insecurity, wage discrimination, absence of medical and accidental care, lack of continuity etc. this is due to their seasonal intermittent nature of work, low level irregular patterns of earning and employment, absence of employer-employee relationship and weak administrative structure. It is also clear that self- awareness and education are the magic wands which will fuel the revolution.

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