

Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Workers in Unorganised Sector in Mettur Taluk

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ABSTRACT

In this article mainly focused on an unorganized worker is a home-based worker or a self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganized sector. Objectives of the article points out that, socio-economic conditions, wage discrimination, problems faced by them as an informal worker. The questionnaire had totally 50 samples were collected in 2024-2025 by using random sampling method. In this article has been discussed about Un organized women laborers doesn't have any union, job security, equal wage for equal work, constant work place, hygiene working area, etc. In India, we have fundamental rights, legislative and judicial assurance and protection. Even though the constitutional provisions and legislation give more rights and concentration on unorganized women labor, those are not reached to them due to their ignorance and illiteracy. Unorganized women workers are socially and economically lower people. In this article, have been also discussed about their wage discrimination with men counterpart workers in the working field.

KEYWORDS: Women, unorganized, informal, wage, discrimination, labor, employment.

INTRODUCTION

In India, informal sector is often called as unorganized sector and the workers of this sector are called as unorganized workers. Unorganized laborers contribution to Indian economy is very high. The sector is marked by low incomes, unstable and irregular employment and lack of protection either from legislation or trade unions. The unorganized sector uses mainly labor intensive and indigenous technology. The workers in unorganized sector, are so scattered that the implementation of the legislation is very inadequate and ineffective. But the contributions made by the unorganized sector to the national income, is very substantial as compared to that of the organized sector. It adds more than 60 percentages to the national income while the contribution of the organized sector is almost half of that depending on the industry.

A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged women of our society are concentrated in informal economic activities. Many of these women workers are primary earners for their families for sheer survival. Low income women workers, especially in the informal sector form one of the most vulnerable groups in the work force. The reasons for their vulnerability are, irregular work, low economic status, Wage discrimination, little or no bargaining power, lack of control over earnings, need to balance paid work with child care and household work, little or no access to institutional credit, training and information, and lack of assets.

Government initiatives to promote unorganized workers in India include The e-shram portal for the registration of Unorganized Workers across the Country, Pradhan Mantri shram yogi maan-dhan is a government scheme meant for old age protection and social security of Unorganized workers and Aam Admi Beema Yojana has been implementing some social security measures for certain occupational groups.

Mettur Taluk is situated in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. Which area is famous for Stanly Reservoir, Electrical power and Industrial availability. It is attracted by tourists. Due to this, more informal working opportunity are present. In this location, more women labors working in small and large scale industries, petrol bunks, small food makes process, agricultural lands, house maid, etc. The working women are belonging to age between 20 years to 70 years.

Majorly married women are involving in all the informal work but unmarried women are engaged as contract labors in industrial sector, hospitals, etc. because they are suffered by certain improperness in social security measures. Those women workers are not eligible for paid, sick or annual leave or any social security benefits given by employer.

In Mettur taluk, 4 units of chemplast, SISCO AND JSW Steel limited and SIDCO companies are located and give high range of formal and informal employment. Some of the women labors getting paid maternity leave for 90 days. Remaining are have unpaid maternal leave and no support from the employer. They are not paid as men. In other words, women labors are pushed into low waged work by employer. Some places both men and women are worked in a same field but not paid equally. This is often happened to agricultural labors.

Totally, 50 samples were collected from the Respondents in Mettur Taluk by using the method of Convenient Random Sample. According to this samples, women in this region are working in unorganized sector for support their family financially due to their poverty. They are the most sufferers of Covid-19 Pandemic. Most of them, lost their valuable person who contribute financially for their family.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the socio-Economic Back ground of women workers in the study area.
2. To study the causes of wage discrimination in the work place.
3. Find out the problems faced by them.

Material and methods

This article is designed to understand the socio-economic conditions of women, wage discrimination and some common problems faced by them. Therefore, this article will be designed after reviewing the relevant literature and suggestions given by researchers.

Statistical tools like addition, simple average, and simple percentage are used. The questionnaire had totally 50 samples were collected in 2024-2025 by using random sampling method. Data were collected from kullamudaiyanur, savadiur, karumalaikoodal, kunjandiyur and vanavasi in Mettur taluk in Salem district Tamil Nadu. Next discussed review of literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R.Gopalasundhar (2020), the seasonal nature of agriculture and low productivity reduce demand for female labor and as a result, forced idleness is higher among women than men. Women's productivity in

agriculture also suffers from uneconomic holdings and subsistence nature of agriculture in which the family consumes the produce.

Tahani H. Alqahtani A healthy work-life balance assumes great significance for working women particularly in the context in which both, the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for women. In this literature review, several studies related to the subject have revealed that women usually face role conflict more than men. Work-family conflict occurs when an individual experiences incompatible demands between family and work roles, causing participation in both roles to become more difficult.

Manju (2017) has studied on Women in unorganized sector - Problems & issues in India. The main objective of the study is to analyze the problem faced by women workers in unorganized sector and to define the different categories of women workers in India. She states, that Lack of education, Insufficient skill & knowledge, Exploitation of the female labor, Insecure job, No sympathy attitude of employer, Extreme work pressure, Irregular wages payment, Wage discrimination, Seasonal employment, Physical problems etc. are the problems of women worker in unorganized sector.

Nadia Ahad, Pratibha J Mishra (2017) Published a journal as, India has all along followed a practice policy in the matter of labor policy. He was discussed about India has evolved in response to specific needs of situation to suit requirements of planned economic development and social justice and a two-fold objective namely maintaining industrial peace and promoting the welfare of labor.

Patel & Pitroda, 2016, Women play a major role in the manufacturing industry, comprising of garment factories, handlooms, handicrafts, food items production, SHG activities, leather work, weaving, saw mills, oil mills, beedi rolling etc. Despite their huge participation, they are only seen as secondary and support workers, and not as mainstream workers. Contractors discriminate against male and female workers, by paying the latter lesser wages, even though they perform the same amount of work as their counterparts.

C. Tholkappian, Kulandhaivelu (2014), focused on unorganized women workers in India in this connection unorganized labor is not formerly cohesive in any recognized association and union with defined ideology, goals and areas of specialization. The tradition of social security architecture for the vulnerable strata of the society has been seriously challenged and curtailed due to the heavy pressure from the global financial institutions. This is because of huge privatization. So, this is the phase to ensure the nation free from all kinds of exploitation and injustice as per him.

Dr. Kamini B. Dashora (2013) has studied on Problems Faced by Working Women in India. He stated that Sexual harassment has now become a major social problem with the widespread entry of women in to the labor force. They also observed that mental harassment is also a major problem faced by the working women. Discrimination at Workplace, Safety of Working Women While Travelling is also the major problem faced by working women. They concluded that a fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

Dr. C. Gnanadesigan and R. J. Yuvnesh Kumar (2024) "Plight of women workers in unorganized sector – a conceptual study" in this article findings highlight the adverse working conditions these women endure, characterized by long hours, minimal benefits, lack of social security, and limited access to healthcare and education. Moreover, the study delves into the intersectional nature of gender-based discrimination, elucidating how factors such as caste, class, and religion exacerbate the vulnerabilities faced by these women. Recognizing the importance of addressing these challenges, the study suggests policy interventions aimed at improving the lives of women in the unorganized sector. These include

initiatives to raise minimum wages, strengthen labour rights, provide social protection measures, promote skill development programs, and foster gender equality in the workplace. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers can strive towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society, where women in the unorganized sector can enjoy better working conditions, economic empowerment, and social well-being.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this phase all the samples were discussed in different aspects. Statistical tools like addition, simple average, and simple percentage are used. Data were collected from kullamudaiyanur, savadiur, karumalaikoodal, kunjandiyur and vanavasi in Mettur taluk.

Table – 1 Age of the respondents

S.no	Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	0-20	0	0
2	21-40	24	48
3	41-60	24	48
4	61- 80	2	4
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Age composition of the respondents was examined in the Table-1. which clearly shows that women in age between 21 to 60 are engaged in informal work. Out of 50 samples, 2 women are aged above 60 years who are still working for daily needs.

Table – 2 Education Status

S.no	Education	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Primary school	19	38
2	High school	12	24
3	Higher secondary	06	12
4	Degree	13	26
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 2 clearly shows that more people in this study area are illiterate. And 19 of them are not even crossed their primary school. Only 13 women were completed their bachelor degree. Even though they are literate they are in a position of underemployed.

Table – 3 Cost of living

S.no	Cost of living/month	Numberof respondents	Percentage
1	< -8000	12	24
2	8001-10000	21	42
3	10001-15000	10	20

4	15001- >	07	14
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

As per the table-3, 24 percent of respondents spent below Rs.8000 for their basic needs per month. 42 percent of people spent the amount upto Rs.10000. The second category is slightly better than before. Third and fourth categories are much better than others.

Table – 4 Occupations

S.no	Occupation	Number of Respondents	percentage
1	Landless Farmer	08	16
2	Landed Farmer/Self employed	09	18
3	Shop Owner	06	12
4	Contact employee	14	28
5	Services in hotel, bakery, retail shops, etc.	13	26
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 clearly shows that major women are engaged in contract works and services like hotel or bakery employee, etc. Only 8 percent of women working as landless former. In this article those landless farmers are aged above 40 years.

Table – 5 Income of the Respondents

S.no	Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	below-5000	2	04
2	5001-10000	21	42
3	10001-15000	17	34
4	15001- above	10	20
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table - 5 shows that 20 percent of people earn the income as basic standard of living condition. But others not have the same. Some of the seasonal workers getting just Rs.5000 only. Those women completely depend on her behalf for basic monthly needs.

Table – 6 Reason for doing this job

S.no	Reasons for working	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	To support family financially	22	44
2	Family situation forced me to do job	15	30

3	For getting more income	03	06
4	I want to become independent	0	0
5	Poverty	02	04
6	Easy job	02	04
7	Self-Interest	06	12
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table-6 shows that 30 percent of women are working in informal sector is only because of their family situation forced them to do work and earn money for raising their family. Surely 2 women in this survey are belongs to poverty line. Remaining are for earn more money for full fill their desire.

Table – 7 Extra wages

S.no	Extra wages	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Bonus and medical facility only	19	38
2	Bonus, Provident Fund, Health insurance, Medical facility	14	28
3	Bonus only	17	34
Total		50	100

The above table 7 in below shows that all the labors in all the field or working condition are getting motivation from employer in term of bonus, provident fund, health insurance and medical facility.

Source: Primary data

Table – 8 Problems in work place

S.no	Problems in work place	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Wage discrimination	13	26
2	Health Problem	23	46
3	Physically Abuse	06	12
4	Disputes	08	16
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table-8 shows that 46 percent and 26 percent respondents are told that health problem and Wage discrimination are faced by them respectively. 12 percent of respondents felt badly about they are physically abused by employer and opposite gender that who are their co-workers.

Table – 9 Maternal supports

S.no	Maternity support	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Paid leave	14	28
2	Unpaid leave	19	38

3	No support	17	34
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table – 9 shows that 28 percent of respondents have paid leave. Which means half of their full salary will be given for 90 days only. Then 38 percent of respondents have no payment when their maternal leave but they can continue the same position at the time of re-joining. Remaining 34 percent have no support from the employer.

Table – 10 Analysis of women labors in unorganized sector in Mettur taluk

S.no	category	Socio-economic condition	Problems in Work place	Wage Discrimination
1	Agriculture/landless labor	Very low	Low wage	yes
2	Agriculture/self employed	low	Controversy	No
3.	Industries – Contract labors	low	Low wage, Physically abused	Yes
4.	Self employed	high	Disputes, no morality	No
5	Services, Construction workers	low	Low wage, physically abused, health issues	yes

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly explains that all the categorized women labors are faced wage discrimination except who are self employed in non Agricultural Field. And their socio-economic conditions are low. Unorganized sector plays a crucial role to maximize the employment and standard of living. But, there is a presence in Wage Discrimination, which has the indirect meaning of labor exploitation.

CONCLUSION

Working and living condition are inseparable for the women working in the unorganized sector. Poor infrastructure and lack of basic services result in poor working Condition. Improvements in working condition are very much required for the women workers of the unorganized sector. This can be achieved through better infrastructure and better basic services to all the unorganized workers, especially women. Legislations enacted during the last three decades are out of reach for most women workers because they are not beneficiaries of these legislations. Therefore, there is a need for an integrated approach of all the agencies, joint functionaries consisting of government, concerned departments, management, labor unions, local bodies, voluntary organizations and women's organizations for proper implementation of those policies for all round development of the women working in the unorganized sector.

Unorganized women workers in Tamil Nadu face numerous challenges that perpetuate their poverty and vulnerability. With limited access to education and economic opportunities, they are forced to work in unskilled, low-paying jobs with long hours and no job security. Wage discrimination, poor living conditions, and lack of access to basic amenities further exacerbate their struggles. Moreover, these women often lack awareness about their rights, making them susceptible to exploitation. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach that includes creating awareness, providing education and

economic opportunities, and implementing policies that protect their rights and improve their working conditions.

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