

Women Workers in Unorganized Sector

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Abstract

Women constitute a significant part of the workforce in India, but they lag behind men in terms of work participation and quality of employment. In recent years, gender has emerged as an increasingly important focus of attention in discourse in and around the labour law, gradually moving from the margin to the mainstream of labour law debate. A number of reasons account for gender's increased prominence in legal and political discourse. As the labour force has been 'feminized' and women have ceased to be secondary/peripheral workers. The male norm around which labour law has been structured has become both less persuasive and more problematic. As a consequence, analyses of gender inequality have become progressively more sophisticated, implicating core aspects of traditional labour law frameworks (for e.g., employment protection provision or collective bargaining practices) in the creation of adverse distributional effects for women. Meanwhile, economic restructuring and the 'feminization' of labour have repositioned certain features of working life typically associated with women are low level of payment, flexible working practices, no job security, etc.. Finally, against the background of these developments, the rhetoric and reality of globalization has brought into relief the ubiquity and extent of women's economic exploitation worldwide, compelling an examination of its particular manifestations in different contexts and the role of law and institutions in its production.

The present study focuses on Scenario of Unorganised Workers, Socio-economic conditions of women workers in unorganized sector, Central and State government Social security measures and schemes for unorganized sector workers, the major difference between the organized and unorganized sectors, total workers in India, share of labour input in unorganised sector and labour force in the informal sector based on secondary data.

Keywords: Unorganised sector, Women workers, Domestic workers, Wage differentiation, Formal and Informal sector, Organised sector.

Introduction

Women in our society had only a secondary status and the economic dependence of women upon men are the primary reasons which has pushed them into the background and resulted into their secondary status both within and outside the family. In spite of the fact that the women have proved their mettle in every walk of life, their contribution is not given due credit in most cases. In India women constitutes nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in urban economy. Yet their economic status is still low as it reflects from the census data, particularly of those who are engaged in the informal sector of urban economy. It is found that among all the categories in the informal sector, domestic servants' income is the lowest and the problems are many. They are engaged in household tasks, which include washing utensils, floor cleaning, washing of clothes, cooking as well as some outdoor tasks such as purchase of vegetables, etc. Most of them live in slums; lead a monotonous life without any colour, struggle everyday for their survival and face numerous problems in day to day life like long working hours, insecurity of job, low status at home and outside. Women workers contribute significantly to national development by performing remunerated/paid and unpaid work. They also struggle to combine their roles to look after their families. In many a case, they are at disadvantage as their workplace is in people's private homes, outside the arena of labour inspectors. Women household workers have a double burden as there is a great demand for their skills as care-givers and service workers outside the home but they also work as home maker inside the home doing the same work which is unpaid.

Methodology

The study is based on the primary as well as secondary data. Primary data was collected from the women workers in the unorganized sector by the interview, observation method, questionnaire method regarding their socio-economic factors. Secondary data has been collected from journals, magazines, news, articles, books, internet, annual reports and statistical abstracts.

Scenario of Unorganised Workers

Unorganized sector always play a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunities to a large segment of the workforce in India. Nearly about 92% of the total employment in the Indian economy during the period of 1999-2000 was accounted by the

unorganized/informal sector (NSSO). In most of the states the share of informal workers is approximately same as the national average. In karnataka, 89% of male workers and 94% of female workers were comes under unorganized sector. According to studies (1999) due to steady decline in the growth of the formal sector a larger section of the growing labour force is being absorbed in informal sector, resulting in a progressive increase in employment in that sector. Generally, major section of the informal workers are either absorbed in the agricultural sector or in traditional crafts, village and cottage industries or they migrate to cities to do the different types of informal jobs like rickshaw puller, weight carrier, waiters in different restaurants, street vendors etc. The proportion of the women in the country's workforce has increased during the last three decades. In 2001, the workforce participation rate of women in the urban area is 11.55%. Almost 80% of that workforce is working in unorganized sector. A large number of urban informal labour forces among the women are engaged in domestic work.

Then majority of women in India were doing home-based work, self employed, employed in household enterprises, in small units, agricultural workers, as labourers on construction sites, as domestic workers, and in many other forms of temporary employment, in rural as well as urban areas. As women in a vulnerable and impoverished sector, they face the additional inequalities of gender. These translate into many tangibles of unequal wages, no maternity benefits, sexual harassment, poor nutrition and ill- health, etc. The unpaid contribution of many of the activities associated with household maintenance, provisioning and reproduction which are typically performed by women or female children tends to be ignored in calculations of labour. As women are found in a vulnerable and impoverished sector, they face the additional inequalities of gender.

The stigma attached to the domestic work has long been ingrained in the mindset of the Indian society. Domestic work is seen as menial and impure occupation traditionally performed by the people, mostly women and children, whose lives are still dominated by a caste system that assigned the people his/her place in the society. Domestic work has a long history in India for both men and women working in others home as servants. The affluent had servants; mostly men with loyalty, obligation and patronage which bring the salient aspects of this relationship. Both in the urban and rural contexts, the nature of work and workers have been rapidly changing. Now the sector primarily comprises of women domestic workers who are not recognized as workers

while their work is undervalued. It is also undervalued because it is often performed by poor, migrant women from lower castes. All these contribute to the inferior status of their work, both in their own minds and in society. Domestic work, however, is still undervalued. It is looked as unskilled because most women have traditionally been considered capable of doing a work, and the skills they are taught by other women in the home are perceived to be innate. Domestic work includes mental, manual and emotional aspects, including care work that is necessary to maintain people and communities. Domestic work is thus viewed as reproductive work that creates not only labour units but also people and social relations.

In this context, it is important to note that who does the domestic work as this reflects the relations between genders, races and classes. The employer-employee relationship is a complex one and is viewed as one of the domination, dependence and inequality. Also, this is an area of work where the employer and the employees are mostly females. As home is the site of work, relations between employer and employee are often not only limited to their work but still over as larger supportive systems. Domestic workers in India took access to sufficient and effective statutory measures and institutional mechanisms for their protection. Steps have been taken by the government both at the national and state levels to protect their rights. Nevertheless, the few labour laws enacted by the central and state governments addressing workers face the challenge of implementation. This is aggravated by the discriminating attitude of many employers against the workers, including caste prejudices. As a result, those who carry out domestic work are largely ignored in working sectors often socially excluded and economically exploited. On the other hand, the government recognizes the prominent role of migrant domestic workers as a source of foreign exchange in the Indian economy and a solution to the country's unemployment issues. Compared to their local counterparts, a higher degree of regulation is exerted by the government in the process of their deployment. But despite efforts by the government, Indian domestic workers within and outside the country remain vulnerable to all forms of exploitation from the moment they enter the recruitment process till they enter the workplace.

The life of unorganized sector workers is very tough and crucial sometimes. Social workers and educationists have been for a long time concerned more with women empowerment and have contributed a great deal in focusing attention of the people to the importance of several factors which should be taken care in helping women to develop fully. The supremacy of male is

reflected in all the acts in the family but women's autonomy is essential to rectify this imbalance and attain gender equality. The workers in an organized sector have legal protection in terms of job security, wages or in working conditions. The urgency of extending social security to the unorganized sector brings up the issues involved in providing social security to their unorganized workers. The role of women in rural development covers such aspects like labour migration, decision making role and socio-economic characteristics of women in male dominated households. The activities covered are agriculture, fisheries, beedi rolling and many others. Nature of women's workforce participation influence women decision to work, the type of work they do, the constraints they face, and the perceived benefits and costs of engaging in paid work outside home. Most working women do not have access to paid leave or provident fund. This reflects the informal structures within which women work.

Unorganised sector plays a very vital and dominant role in our country. Its contribution to our economy is wide and important as well. But in this sector, workers are not getting any benefits from central and state government. As though the govt creates so many social security schemes for unorganized sector workers, these sector workers are lagging behind from such benefits. Some of the unorganized sector workers are agricultural labourers, street vendors, cloth merchants, construction workers, beedi and cigarette workers, fishermen's, poultry farmers, home-based workers, domestic workers, tailors, handicrafts, handloom workers, agarabatti workers, self employed workers, plantation workers, brick workers, etc. These sector workers are not having any security for their life, low level income/wages, wage differentiation, no training facilities, long working hours, unskilled workers, low level of work participation, no job security, etc., are the major problems of unorganized sector workers.

Socio-economic conditions of women workers in unorganized sector:

The social and economic profile of female worker is greatly affected by the nature of industrial sector where they work. Inadequate facilities, stressful, unhygienic and unsafe working environment affects their social life. At the same time underplayed and uncertainty in employment puts their economic status in difficult situation. The relation between the nation's prosperity and women condition can be best 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". Women find a biggest source of employment opportunities in the unorganized sector.

Most of the women work for fewer wages because of illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and less or no skills. Most of the women of the unorganized sector work as helpers in educational institutions, hospitals, hotels, tobacco industries, factories, offices, super markets, shops, etc. They also work as street vendors, construction workers, maids in households, maids in hotels and canteen, cleaners and sweepers in the institutions, etc.

The organized sector of employment may provide only 20% to economic development of the country but women in unorganized sector provide more than 40% to the economic development of the country by satisfying the needs of day to day activities of the country's population. Unorganized sector provides opportunities to generate employment and earn money to socially backward women in the city. The women labourers from in and around the city engage themselves in this sector for the generation of income. Though the unorganized sector provides low income to the women labourers, it is being the source for the living of the women labourers. The research has been undertaken to learn the socio-economic status of women labourers in the unorganized sector.

Central and State government Social security measures and schemes for unorganized sector workers:

- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.
- National Family Benefit Scheme.
- Janani Suraksha Yojana.
- Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme.
- Handicraft Artisans' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme.
- Pension to Master craft persons.
- National Scheme for Welfare of Fishermen and Training and Extension.
- Janshree Bima Yojana.
- Aam Admi Bima Yojana.
- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana.
- Mahila samriddhi yojana.
- New swarnima special scheme for women
- Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana
- Pradhana Mantri Mudra Yojana
- Pradhana Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)

Following are the major difference between the organized and unorganized sectors:

Sl.No	Organised sector	Sl.No	Unorganised sector
1.	It comprises enterprises where the term of employment is regular and the job is assured.	1.	It comprises small units where the jobs are not regular and hence the job is not assured.
2.	Companies are registered by the government and have to follow the rules and regulations.	2.	Companies are outside the control of government, they have the rules and regulations but these are not followed.
3.	Employees in organized sector have fixed working hours and also they are paid if they work overtime.	3.	Workers in the unorganized sectors are paid lower wages which are not regular. There is no provision for payment if they work overtime.
4.	Employees in the organized sector get social security benefits such as pension, PF, paid leaves, sick leave, etc.	4.	But the workers in unorganized sectors do not get any benefits from the state and central government, although the schemes are framed.
5.	Workers in the organized sectors are paid a fixed salary.	5.	Workers in the unorganized sectors are not paid a fixed salary.

Table No.1: Total Workers in India

Population/ Workers	Persons		Male	Female
Population		1210569573	613121843	587447730
Workers	Total	481743311	331865930	149877381
Percentage of workers		39.79	53.26	25.51
Population		833463448	427632643	405830805
Workers	Rural	348597535	226763068	121834467
Percentage of workers		41.83	53.03	30.02
Population		377106125	195489200	181616925
Workers	Urban	133145776	105102862	28042914
Percentage of workers		35.31	53.76	15.44

Source: Indian Labour Year Book, 2011, GoI and Office of the Registrar General, India

Table No.1 reveals that the total Percentage of workers is 39.79%, out of which male workers are more than the female workers. In rural area male workers constitute of 53.03% and female

workers about 30.02%. In urban area also male workers are more than the female workers i.e., 53.76% and only 15.44% belongs to female category. The study concludes that female workers participation is lower than the male workers in both rural and urban areas.

Table No.2: Share of Labour Input in Unorganised sector (%)

Sl. No.	Categories/ Description	Share of Unorganised sector
1	Agriculture and forestry	99.9
2	Fishing	98.7
3	Mining	64.4
4	Manufacturing	87.7
5	Electricity, Gas, Water supply	12.4
6	Construction	92.4
7	Wholesale and Retail trade	98.3
8	Hotel and Restaurants	96.7
9	Transport, Storage and Communication	82.2
10	Financial Intermediation	32.4
11	Real estate, renting and business activities	81.4
12	Public Administration and Defense etc.,	2.6
13	Education	37.9
14	Health and social work	55.1
15	Other community, Social and Personal services	92.5
16	Private households with employed persons	94.0
17	Extra territorial organizations and bodies	87.8
	Grand Total	94.0

Source: NCEUS

Table No.2 shows the Share of Labour Input in Unorganised sector. Agriculture and Forestry stays in the first position than the other sectors i.e., 99.9%. Since Indian economy is based on agrarian economy so, most of the unorganized sector workers are depending on the agriculture only. The next place is shared by Fishing activity is about 98.7% and Wholesale and Retail trade contributes about 98.3% .The lowest contribution/ share to unorganized sector is through Public administration and Defense.

Table No.3: Ststistical Profile of Ballari district:

Sl.No	Particulars	Total population	Male	Female	In %
1	Population	24,52,595	12,36,954	12,15,641	100%
2	Sex ratio	-	1000	973	-

3	Total workers	11,16,880	7,03,258	4,13,622	45.5%
4	Main workers	9,69,388	6,41,681	3,27,707	86.8%
5	Marginal workers	1,47,492	61,577	85,915	13.2%
6	Marginal workers (3-6 months)	1,32,610	54,471	78,139	89.9%
7	Marginal workers (less than 3 months)	14,882	7,106	7,776	10.1%
8	Total agriculturists	2,58,080	1,80,732	77,348	23.1%
9	Agricultural labourers	4,06,092	1,75,992	2,30,100	36.4%
10	Home-based workers	22,832	13,331	9,501	2.0%
11	Total other workers	4,29,876	3,33,203	96,673	38.5%
12	Literacy rate	14,21,621	8,13,440	6,08,181	67.4%

Source: Ballari district at a glance 2017-2018

It is clearly shows the statistical information of Ballari district in Table No.3. The total population of Ballari district is about 24,52,595, in that male population is little bit more than the female. The sex ratio for 1,000 male population is about 973 female population. The literacy rate of male population is 8,13,440 its more than the female literacy i.e., 6,08,181. In Ballari district the main workers are about 9,69,388, out of which male constitutes higher than the female workers. Total Agricultural labourers are about 4,06,092, among them male labourers are about 1,75,992 and female workers are about 2,30,100. It is clear that in Ballari district women agricultural workers are more than men workers. Home-based workers are in least number i.e., only 2%.

Table No.4: Labour Force in the Informal Sector

Year	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Employment (million)			Percentage share	
		Formal	Informal	Total	Formal	Informal
2004-05	Actual	32.79	368.35	401.13	8.17	91.83
2006-07	Actual	33.87	393.06	426.93	7.93	92.07
2011-12	9	34.54	453.13	487.67	7.08	92.92
2013-14	7	34.18	442.18	476.36	7.18	92.82

2015-16	5	33.83	431.04	465.23	7.27	92.73
2016-17	9	33.93	521.96	555.9	6.1	93.09
2018-19	7	33.08	490.46	523.54	6.32	93.68
2020-21	5	32.26	461.05	493.31	6.54	93.46

Source: Centre right India, women in unorganized sector, by Zoya Khan May 28, 2013.

In the table 4 gives an account estimated labour force in the informal sector is. In 2004-05 formal sector comprised only 8.17% and informal sector share was 91.83%. The highest labour force of informal sector is in the year 2018-19 i.e., 93.68%, the lowest is in the year 2004-05 i.e., 91.83%. The formal sector contributes highest in the year 2004-05 is about 8.17% and lowest constitutes in the year 2016-17 is about 6.1%. In the year 2020-21 it is estimated that in formal sector 6.54% and in informal sector about 93.46% and GDP growth rate is about 5%.

Conclusion:

The informal sector is important not just as a source of employment but also for the production of goods and services. In many countries the contribution of informal enterprises to gross value added (GVA) is substantial. Informal sector is a major provider of employment for low income groups and it contributes a significant share of GDP. Much of the recent rise in informal employment is due to the decline in, formal employment or to the informalization of previously formal employment relationships. Informal enterprises includes not only survival but also stable enterprises, informal employment includes self - employment and wage employment. Evidences show that a large majority of women in developing countries are in informal employment. So, union government and state governments should launch most appropriate policies and programmes to improve the unorganized sector workers socio-economic conditions. Authorities often need to reform wage policies specially for women workers.

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