



## IMPACT ON QUALITY OF WORKLIFE FACED BY WOMEN LABOURS IN UNORGANISED SECTOR WITH SPECIAL CONTEXT TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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### Abstract

One of the fastest growing trends in the world over the past two decades has been increase in the number of women fully employed outside the house. Projections made for 21st century indicate that women will account for one half of the total workforce and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the labour force growth. Women will fill two out of every three newly created jobs. Research has been undertaken to establish the extent to which women in India experience stress due to dual roles. A vast majority of India's labor force is in unorganized sector. Women were exploited to a greater degree as they were paid less compared to men for similar nature of work and hours spent on work. The conditions of work in the unorganized sector were unsatisfactory and the problems confronted by them were acute. And that their illiteracy, poverty and indebtedness forced them to work for lower wages and under unjust conditions.

### Introduction

An Unorganized Sector is defined as the sector where elements of the Organized Sectors are absent. In the absence of the analytical definition, the unorganized sector becomes synonymous with the unregulated poorly skilled and low-paid workers. "The unorganized Sector consists of all private enterprises having less than ten total workers, operating on a proprietary or partnership basis." - **By National Commission on Enterprises in the unorganized/Informal Sector in 2004.**

The most important features of unorganized sector are that most of the women labourers are appointed as contract labourers. Studies conducted in several parts of the country indicate the awful conditions of the women workers in this sector. They continue to face discrimination and marginalization both subtle and blatant and do not share the fruits of development equally. Ignorance, traditional bound attitudes, illiteracy, lack of skills, seasonal nature of employment, heavy physical work of different types, lack of job security, lack of a comprehensive legislation to cover these workers in unorganized sector and competition in employment are resultant deprivation of real wage. Wages in the unorganized sector are arbitrarily fixed, often without regard to the minimum wage legislations, which adversely affect the income of the wage workers in general, and women workers in particular. In the informal sector, wage workers constituted 36% and the remaining 64% were self-employed. Average wage of men and women workers are Rs. 75 and Rs. 45 respectively which is much less than the wage of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) i.e. Rs.100. Another dimension of this wage result shows the existence of gender bias in unorganized sector in terms of wage level.

The major problems they face are poverty, lack of access to education and inadequate healthcare facilities. Living in abject poverty, most workers in the unorganized sector barely manage a subsistence existence. The rising costs of private healthcare and the systematic dismantling of the public health system in these times of liberalization are a major reason for the huge indebtedness of households in the unorganized sector. There is a pressing need to provide insurance, especially health insurance cover to the workers. Several factors responsible for their plight are indifferent attitude of the employers towards women workers, their weak bargaining power and in many cases the women workers themselves being unaware of their rights. From the close study, it can be easily estimated that the women working in unorganized sector are living a life far below from satisfaction.

**The Ministry of Labour, Government of India**, has categorized the unorganized labour force under four groups in terms of occupation, nature of employment, especially distressed categories and service categories.

#### 1. In terms of Occupation

Small and marginal farmers, share croppers landless agricultural labourers, fishermen, beedi rolling, labours engaged in animal husbandry, labelling and packaging, building and construction workers, weavers, leather workers, artisans, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, leather workers, workers in saw mills, oil mills etc.

#### 2. In terms of Nature of Employment:

Agricultural labourers, migrant workers, bonded labourers contract and casual labourers are listed under this.

#### 3. In terms of especially distressed category:

Toddy tappers, Scavengers, Carriers of head loads, Drivers of animal driven vehicles, Loaders and un-loaders come under this category.

#### 4. In terms of Service categories: Midwives, Barbers, Fishermen and women, Domestic workers, Vegetable and fruit vendors, News paper vendors etc.

### **The major characteristics of the unorganized workers**

- The unorganized labours are overwhelming in terms of number range and they are omnipresent throughout India.
- The unorganized sector suffers from excessive seasonality of employment, majority of the unorganized workers do not have stable durable avenues of employment. Even those who appear to be visibly employed are not gainfully and substantially employed, indicating the existence of disguised unemployment.
- The workplace is scattered and fragmented.
- There is no formal employer – employee relationship
- In rural areas, the unorganized labour force is stratified on caste and community considerations. In urban areas while such considerations are less, it cannot be said that it is altogether absent but the unorganized workers in urban areas are basically migrant workers from rural areas.
- Workers in the unorganized sector are subject to indebtedness and bondage as their meagre income cannot meet their livelihood needs.
- The unorganized workers are subject to exploitation by the rest of the society. They work in poor working conditions especially wages much below that in the formal sector, even for closely comparable jobs, i.e., where labour productivity are no different. The work status is of inferior quality and inferior terms of employment, both remuneration and employment.
- Primitive production technologies and feudal production relations are prevailing in the unorganized sector, and they do not permit or encourage the workmen to imbibe and assimilate higher technologies and better production relations. Large scale ignorance and illiteracy and limited exposure to the outside world are also responsible for such poor absorption.
- The unorganized workers do not get sufficient attention from the trade unions.
- Inadequate and ineffective labour laws and poor standards relating to the unorganized sector.

### **Problems in Unorganized Sector**

**I. Problems of the workforce-** 90% of workforce is in vast informal sector, lack of awareness of workplace hazards, lack of implementation of Health & Safety legislation, no occupational safety/services, living areas close to work areas, extended work hours, exploitation, no Trade/Labour Union.

- **II. Problems of women workers and ‘beedi’ workers-** Desperately poor wages, child labour, >50% women Deplorable social conditions, fraudulent contractors, disease causing environments.
- **III. Problems faced by Govt. -** Problem of definition and identification, scattered nature of sector, workforce uneducated about the benefits of organized sector, employers avoid any form of regulation, unorganized sectors contribute to almost 60% of GDP (apart from providing livelihood to population).
- **IV. Problems from the Organized Sector-** Unfair competition (Walmart, Reliance), financial aid not available to the unorganised sector easily to compete. loss of employment Legal “bullying”, buyer preference for the “cleaner” retail stores.

### **Key Labour Issues**

- Lack of quality employment or under employment
- Lack of employment
- Large in Number
- Seasonality of work
- Work Place
- Working Environment
- Caste and Class Difference
- Poor Skill and Technology
- Lack of Political Support
- Inadequacy of laws and legislation
- Low wage rate
- Gender discrimination in wage
- Gender specific work
- Lack of security
- Indebtedness
- Bonded labour (Dadan)
- Social security and measures

### Work life Balance

The research work by *Susi.S and Jawaharrani.K (2010)* explains how work-life balance and employee engagement becomes a visible benchmark among high performing organizations. The study indicated, many family-friendly organizations feel the need for work-life balance which includes recruitment and retention of valuable work force, reduced absenteeism, reduced employee stress, health benefits, job satisfaction, and better life balance. The study suggested that an effectiveness of work-life balance policies and practices must incorporate the effects of workplace culture and supervisor support of employee's efforts to balance work and family responsibilities.

### Women in Agriculture

The condition of women agriculture labour in rural areas is no better. Most of them do not have year round employment. They suffer vital disadvantages compared to men in their search for employment opportunities, lower real wages, increased uncertainties and irregularities of employment. There are legal provisions to protect their rights. Such working conditions are a hurdle in their overall development leading to under performance and not allowing them to raise their productive capacity in that very profession also.

### Women in Fisheries

There are hardly any authentic statistics available on the number of women involved in fisheries-related work, though it is well known that women play important roles in the sector.

Women engage in a wide range of activities in the fisheries and in fishing communities all around the world:

- as workers in seafood processing plants
- as caregivers of the family and in maintaining social networks and the culture of the community
- as workers in non-fisheries sectors to supplement the household income, and the often erratic returns from the fisher
- as members of fishworker movements and fishers' organizations
- as workers (paid and unpaid) within the fisheries, in pre- and post-harvest activities, including liaison work with institutions and agencies . In many countries, it is mostly women who are engaged in inland fishing and aquaculture.

### Women in Construction

Women occupy an extremely dis-advantaged position in the society. This is because they are women and are occupied in mostly exploited areas in the society. Women particularly in construction suffer from various dis advantages relating to their working lives such as lack of job security, social security benefits, extended long hours, unsatisfactory working conditions and health hazards. The benefits of labour law have not covered these woman workers in many crucial areas especially in health, maternity and social security.

In the construction field, the chance of getting exploited and dominated is more because of the dependence of female workers on male workers. The works done by these female workers are : breaking stone, digging, mortar mixing and carrying load. There is also a concern among women workers of having no balance between successful career and family lives. The paper highlights the suggestions to create a better path for women participation and retention in this male-dominated zone.

### Share of women labour input in unorganised sector (%)

- Agriculture 9.9
- Fishing 98.7
- Manufacturing 87.7
- Construction 92.4
- Wholesale and Retail 98.3
- Hotels & Restaurants 96.7

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic and psychological conditions on their quality of worklife.
2. To study the living conditions of women labours.
3. To study the problems faced by women labours.

### Hypothesis

#### $H_0$ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant different between physically drained when returned home after work and their age group.

### H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis)

There is significant difference between the physically drained when returned home after work and their age group.

### Data Analysis

**Table – 1 Age Group**

S.No.	Particulars	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	20 – 30	42	38
2	30 – 40	34	30
3	Above 40	34	30
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 1, it is inferred as 38% of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 – 30 years, 30% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 – 40 years and 30% of the respondents belong to the age group of Above 40 years.

**Table – 2 Level of Experience**

S.NO.	PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Below 2 years	63	57
2	2 – 5 years	41	37
3	Above 5 years	6	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 2, it is inferred as 57% of the respondents fall under the category of below 2yrs, 37% of the respondents fall under the category of 2 – 5 yrs and 5% of the respondents fall under the category of Above 5 Yrs.

**Table – 3 Worklife Balance**

S.No	Particulars	No. Of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	STRONGLY AGREE	75	68
2	AGREE	8	7
3	NEUTRAL	21	19
4	DISAGREE	4	3
5	STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 3, it is inferred as 68% of the respondents strongly agree with the Work life Balance and the rest should be educated about the time and need to spend along with their family and children.

**Table – 4 Physically Drained When Returned Home**

S.No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	STRONGLY AGREE	87	79
2	AGREE	11	9
3	NEUTRAL	1	1
4	DISAGREE	8	7
5	STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 4, it is inferred as 79% of the respondents strongly agree, 1% of the respondents feel neutral that they get physically drained when returning home and it was found that the respondents preferred going to beach, temples and watching TV to manage their stress level.

**Table – 5 Management Arranges Alternate Source of Job**

S.No	Particulars	No. Of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	STRONGLY AGREE	16	14
2	AGREE	59	53
3	NETURAL	12	10
4	DISAGREE	4	3
5	STRONGLY DISAGREE	19	17
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 5, it is inferred as 53% of the respondents agree, 3% of the respondents disagree that Management arranges alternate source of job. The respondents feel that the management have to arrange alternate job when there is no work for women in the construction industry.

**Table – 6 Skilled Job Are Given To Male Workers**

S.No	Particulars	No.of Respondents	Percentage(%)
1	STRONGLY AGREE	75	68
2	AGREE	17	15
3	NETURAL	6	5
4	DISAGREE	2	1
5	STRONGLY DISAGREE	10	9
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table 6, it is inferred as 68% of the respondents strongly agree, 1% of the respondents disagree that skilled job are given to male workers, the respondents argue that even they have got equal skills as of male workers and to be treated with equality.

**Table – 7,Physically Drained When Returned Home To Their Age Group Tool Applied: Chi – Square Test**

Degree of freedom	Chi-square (O-E)2/E	Level of significance	Tabulated value
Rows (3-1) = 2 Column (5-1) =4 Degree of Freedom = 8	12.9282	5%	15.1

The above table shows that with 8 degree of freedom, at 5% level of significance, the calculated value is less than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis is accepted, therefore it states that age groups of the respondents are independent from getting physically drained from work.

**Table-8,One way Anova is used to find the differences between role conflict and workplace issues. ANOVA for (Work place issues) Work family conflict, working hour, working condition, Living condition and Role Conflict**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Wfctotal	Between Groups	13496.161	2	6748.080	68.292	.000**
	Within Groups	50295.712	509	98.813		
	Total	63791.873	511			
Workinghourtotal	Between Groups	2529.843	2	1264.921	22.674	.000**
	Within Groups	28395.515	509	55.787		
	Total	30925.357	511			
Wrkgcondntot	Between Groups	9949.422	2	4974.711	35.546	.000**
	Within Groups	71234.445	509	139.950		
	Total	81183.867	511			
Livingconditiontotal	Between Groups	543.107	2	271.553	9.167	.000**
	Within Groups	15077.768	509	29.622		
	Total	15620.875	511			

\*\* .Significant at the 0 .01 level

\* .Significant at the 0.05 level

NS- Not significant

Table shows that F-values were found to be significant for the (Work place issues) work family conflict (WFC; F= 68.292), working hour (WH; F=22.674), working condition (WC; F= 35.546), living condition (LC; F= 9.167). The results thus showed (Hypothesis No.--) that there were significant differences among working women workers with low, average and high work family conflict, working hour, working condition and living condition(work place issues) on the dimensions of InterRoleDistance, Role Stagnation, Role Overload, Role inadequacy and Role Conflict.



### **Conclusion**

Varied reasons could be assigned for the existing deplorable state of affairs of women in unorganized sector. Besides lack of organization in terms of forming trade unions among female workers, adverse impact of technological growth on women labour, absence of purposeful human resource development policy on improving women's employability through training and ineffective enforcement of safeguards to protect female workers, particularly in terms of their working conditions etc are few of the major causes leading to pitiable condition of women workers. Under these existing conditions it would not be out of context to say that the government should make efforts to improve their working conditions in terms of occupational safety, working hours, payment of adequate wages to them so that the women workers engaged in unorganized sector of employment may have mandatory decent and dignified work .

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