

## **Occupational Health Hazards of Women Tailors in Valliyur Block, Tirunelveli District**

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### **Abstract**

*Women entrepreneurs face lots of problems at start-up as well as during operating stage like, non-availability of finance, restricted mobility freedom and having to perform dual role, one at home and other at work. Technological advancement and information technology explosion have reduced the problem of women entrepreneurs. In this study an attempt has been made to study the employment condition, demand and supply and occupation hazards / diseases of the women tailors in Valliyur block. Tirunelveli District. The study found that women tailors have been affected by back pain, skin diseases, eye problem, urinary infection and respiratory diseases. Preventive measures be followed to increase in productivity. This will contribute to productivity, protection from occupational health problem, physical and mental well-being.*

**Key Words:** Women Tailors, Health Hazards, Demand. Supply and Employment

### **Introduction**

Indian textile and clothing industry is the second largest in the world. The Indian textiles and clothing sector is expected to grow at 10.01 per cent in the next 10 years from the current value of INR 3.92 lakh crores in 2012 to INR 10.54 lakh crores in 2021-22. The demand for domestic consumption for home textiles and garments is expected to increase rapidly. In fact, the garments sub estimated to increase by seven times INR 51,400 crores in 2012-13 to INR 3.70 lakh crores in 2021-22. The Indian textile sub-sector has traditionally been contributing significantly to the economy and supply manpower as well as to the structural changes in the manufacturing sector (Anand, 2018).

Women entrepreneurs face lots of problems at start-up as well as during operating stage like, non-availability of finance, restricted mobility freedom and having to perform dual

role one at home and other at work. Technological advancement and information technology explosion have reduced the problem of women entrepreneurs. Along with technological revolution, societal attitude must change the attitude of the society and provide women with democratic and entrepreneurial platform. Woman with a business in hand is surely considered to be a noteworthy person in any society. She may have self-confidence, courage in making any decision depending or believing the income she earns. In these circumstances this study was undertaken.

### **Statement of Problem**

In this study an attempt has been made to study the employment condition, demand and supply and occupation hazards / diseases of the women tailors in Vallyur block. Tirunelveli district. Valliyur is one of important block involved in manufacturing readymade cloths. The cloths are sent all over India and also exported. It provides employment for more than 10,000 workers mostly hailing from nearby village for more than 10 years. Now-a-days 3000 workers are employed in garment works of which 1500 are women workers. Further health related problems like vision impairmal, respiratory issues and skin related problems prevent among them. Also, they are exposed to high level of repetitive task and stitching. Most of them reported high job strain. In this juncture, the researcher took the study on occupational health hazards of women tailors in Valliyur block, Tirunelveli district.

### **Review of Literature**

Balogun, et al., (2015) in their study reveals that tailors constitute a major part of the artisan group in the informal sector. They are exposed to several hazards in their workplaces but no occupational health services are provided for them. This study aims to determine workplace hazards, health problems, accidents and injuries among tailors in order to assess their needs for occupational health services. A community-based descriptive cross sectional study was carried out. All tailors in one of the wards of Ibadan North Local Government Area participated in study. A questionnaire was used to collect information on socio-demographic and occupational characteristics, workplace hazards, health problems, accidents and injuries. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 with descriptive statistics and chi-square test at 5% level of significance. A total of 186 tailors were interviewed. Their mean age was  $27 \pm 10.5$  years. Most of the respondents (81.2%) had at least secondary education. The most common workplace hazards were physical, noise (85.4%);

chemical, dust (75.9%); mechanical, sharp edged objects (95.1%), biological, insect bite (100%); and psychosocial, low income (74%). Reported health problems were musculoskeletal pain (66.7%) and low back pain (63.3%). The most common work related accident was needle /pin prick (95.5%) and most common injury were cuts and lacerations (73.9%). Job grade was significantly associated with work related accidents and injuries with apprentices being mostly affected. Occupational health services for tailors should include health education on postures to reduce musculoskeletal disorders and interventions to reduce workplace accidents.

Bhavini B. Patil et al., (2020) in their paper reveals that tailoring industry is one of common small scale service sector where women, belonging to the low income groups are employed in large numbers. As per the Tailoring Workers Forum, the members include those who are working as tailors, embroidery workers and self employed tailors. The aim of this paper is to assess tailors work organization, work space, extent of bodily discomfort and ergonomic risk factors experienced by the women working in tailoring unit. The data was collected from 30 women tailors by using self structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed by five point likert scale. The results revealed that fifty three per cent have work experience of less than 5 years, 66.7 per cent of them work 7-8 hours in a day, 60 per cent of them work along with others. Half of the workers had sufficient space to work, 70 per cent disagreed that they could maintain good posture at work. All the respondents have experienced pain in lower leg and foot at the end of the day followed by head, forearm, wrist and hand, palm and fingers (96.7 %), neck, shoulder, upper leg (93.33 %), knee (73.33 %) and lower back (63.33 %). Pain relieving techniques adopted by respondents mainly was application of pain relieving balm and absenteeism from work was also a means of pain relieving techniques.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the demand and supply factors involved in the employment of women.
2. To study the occupational hazards of women tailors.

### **Methodology**

The subjects selected for the study is women tailors working in small scale tailoring units and self employed women tailors. The cross sectional study was carried out and 120

respondents were selected from Valliyur block, Tirunelveli district. The interview schedule was used to collect information regarding worker demand and supply factors and health hazards. Data analysis was done with the help of SPSS software. The period of study has been restricted to one year from January 2021 to December 2021. The data collected were classified and analyzed by using the techniques like multiple regression and percentages.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Demand Factors in the Women Employment**

The demand factors in the women employment in tailoring are expressed by workers are classified in the following table.

**Table: 1 - Demand Factors in the Women Employment**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Forced by Husband / Father	20	16.67
Better Wages	22	18.33
Easy work	28	23.33
After knowing the backwardness of the family	50	41.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Primary Data.

It is clear from the above table that 41.67 per cent of women tailors expressed that after knowing the backwardness of the family, 23.33 per cent of them expressed that they for its easy, 18.33 per cent of them started that for better wages and the remaining 16.67 per cent of them opined that they are the forced by the family. Hence, the backwardness of the family in the study area prompted to this profession.

### **Supply Factors in the Women Employment**

The employers select the workers on the basis on the criteria like experience, age, proper tailoring training and qualification. The following table: 2 show the supply factor in the women employment in readymade garments work.

**Table: 2 - Supply Factors in the Women Employment**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Experience	28	23.33

Proper Training	34	28.33
Completing Diploma Courses	45	37.50
Same Village	13	10.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Primary Data.

It is evident from the table: 2 that, 37.50 per cent of the respondents selected the profession for completion of diploma courses. Training, experience and proximity to the place of living were the other major factors behind the selections.

### Occupational Hazards

Occupational disease is a disease common among workers engaged in a particular occupation. They are caused by the conditions of that occupation. They are slow and generally cumulative in their effects. Some time occupational diseases are serious enough which might cause even death.

Because of their continuous work, the workers often complain of 'back pain'. Another major ailment for the tailoring workers is eye problem. They also complain about skin diseases, urinal infection and respiratory disease. The problems from the point of view of the readymade garments women workers engaged in tailoring work in the study area are listed and weights are assigned to analyze the problem. The weights assigned are given below in the table: 3.

1 – Rank = 5 points

2 – Rank = 4 points

3 – Rank = 3 points

4 – Rank = 2 points

5 – Rank = 1 point

Ranking the problems while readymade garments women workers working in the units.

### Calculation of Garrett Mean Score

Garrett Ranking Technique (Garrett E. Henry, 1969) was employed and find out the influencing factor. The formula for calculating Garrett Ranking Technique was

$$\text{Present Position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

where,

$R_{ij}$  – Rank given for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  reason by  $j^{\text{th}}$  respondents

$N_j$  – Number of factors ranked by  $j^{\text{th}}$  respondents

Following Table: 4 shows the Garrett mean score of each problem.

**Table: 3 - Garrett Mean Score - Problems Faced by Women Tailors**

Problems	Garrett Ranking Mean Score	Rank
Back Pain	27.31	I
Skin Diseases	20.07	IV
Eye Problem	22.22	II
Urinal Infection	19.78	V
Respiratory Disease	20.62	III

Source: Primary Data.

It is inferred from the above Table: 3 back pain is the main problem which constitutes 27.31 per cent. Second one is eye problem which constitutes 22.22 per cent. Respiratory disease is another problem that has been faced by the women tailors which constitutes 20.62 per cent. Skin disease and urinal infection is the least problem faced by the women tailors.

### Suggestions

**From the analysis the following suggestion are made to resolve the**

- Adequate arrangements must be made for the supply of credit facility at concession rate for the women tailors in view of their growing needs.
- Creating provision of micro credit system and enterprise credit system to the women tailors at local level is the need of the hour.
- As the pace of work, working arrangements and pauses are human tailored each worker must have an understanding of her own work and learn new skills through interpersonal enrichment.

### Conclusion

The study highlighted some of the important issues that may affect their productivity and health in future. The problem can be resolved by following healthy and appropriate work culture among the women workers.

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