

WOMEN IN UNORGANISED SECTOR –NUTRITION AND HEALTH ISSUES OF FEMALE GARMENTS WORKERS OF TUMKUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The garment industry plays a vital role in providing employment to rural, less educated females and the economic liberalization that has occurred in India in the last three decades has significantly altered traditional. The large scale movement across categories of employment confirms the proposition regarding volatility in women's employment. In one phase when casual work came under pressure, many women seem to have taken to self employment. In the second phase, when obviously self employment did not offer adequate opportunities, there was a movement towards regular wage employment. Nevertheless, it bears underlining that the rise in numbers and proportions of domestic workers has not been able to offset declines in other sectors of employment and it would be a mistake to think that the expansion in demand for and supply of women domestic workers can work as a lever to raise the female work participation rates in any significant or meaningful manner.

Thus, expansion of a female friendly sector may result only in the absorption of a given set of women. For instance, the growth of domestic work in the city though has provided employment opportunities for a number of women, for many this does not appear as a choice at all. Thus to increase women's participation in the labour market there needs to be a more balanced growth of different sectors and occupations and the expansion of manufacturing sector in this context is crucial. 1. Introduction 2. Objectives 3. Methodology 4. Stress level management and decision making process 5. Imbalance diet practice and challenges 6. Medical facilities and affordability 7. Family support and co-ordination 8. Orientation and awareness programmes 9. Suggestion and conclusion .

Female garment workers, who are the major workforce behind this sector, must be recognized properly and concrete ideas and their implementation should come to lessen the plight of them. Unless and until the basic rights of the poor female garment workers are ensured, it may not be expected that this sector will achieve its desired goal. If the recommended measures are implemented in the RMG sector then it may improve the present situation and the workers and owners may achieve their goal. The print media had written many reports and the TV channels had aired many pathetic stories on their low wages, unfriendly working environment, health issues, nutrition, insurance, etc. but feeble measures have been taken so far to address these problems.

Key words- Women's Employment, Nutrition, Health illness. Labour market, Domestic work, Working Environment, Workforce, Insurance,

I. Introduction

The garment industry is one of the oldest and largest export industries. The industry exemplifies the challenges associated with global manufacturing: low wages, "flexible" contracts and sweatshop conditions. Informal garment and textile workers often experience isolation, invisibility and lack of power, especially those who produce from their homes. The large scale movement across categories of employment confirms the proposition regarding volatility in women's employment. In one phase when casual work came under pressure, many women seem to have taken to self-employment. In the second phase, when obviously self-employment did not offer adequate opportunities, there was a movement towards regular wage employment. Nevertheless, it bears underlining that the rise in numbers and proportions of domestic workers has not been able to offset declines in other sectors of employment and it would be a mistake to think that the expansion in demand for and supply of women domestic workers can work as a lever to raise the female work participation rates in any significant or meaningful manner.

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II. Objectives

- To understand the decision making ability of female garment workers
- To assess the nutritional health status of women working garments
- To know the impact of working stress on the female garment workers
- To identify possible solutions to the issue concerning stress level management

III. Review of literature

Aarthi Gunnupuri – 2016 Bangalore Female garment workers A study of occupational health and safety in the garment industry by Cividep, a Bangalore-based non-profit focused on worker's rights and corporate accountability, concluded that the city's garment workers often suffer from "respiratory illnesses, tuberculosis, ergonomic issues like back pain, mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, and reproductive health issues, such as white discharge, irregular periods and excessive bleeding."

Phu Huyah (2015), " Employment, Wages and Working Conditions in Asia's Garment Sector: Finding new drivers of Competitiveness", Asia is the garment manufacturing hub in the world, many countries are producing garment products, but the wages are very low across the region, in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh having low wage rate in the region, the average wage rate being \$ 119 - \$ 145 or a range of two-fifth to one half of china's wage rate, these various wage rates impacted on Industrial Disputes in the region, fighting for better wages. International apparel brands are accepting and extending support to review and increase minimum wages to safeguard the workers living standard, reduce conflict of Industries and enhance of jobs opportunities. Wang (2012) examines the effect of asymmetric knowledge about the minimum wage and its interaction with the level of the minimum wage standard in developing countries. The focus of his research is on three

main aspects: first the general impact of minimum wage on wages under common knowledge conditions, second how the design with different levels of minimum wage helps explain the impacts of different wage floors on the labour market and third the behavioural study of workers and firms under asymmetric information suggests different welfare results whether information is complete to workers or not. Wang concludes that wages are higher when the minimum wage is set to a higher level; moreover when the introduction of minimum wage is common knowledge then firms increase the wage even beyond the minimum; instead when workers do not know about minimum wage the level is set at the minimum.

Swasti Health Resource Centre (Swasti) an NGO, funded by Walmart Foundation has since 2012 provided such trainings to nearly 12,000 women across 30 factories (not necessarily in the garment sector). Avani Bhadra, was a machine operator, at Welspun, when she enrolled for the 'Women in Factories' training program. Enriched with better communication, decision and leadership skills and a boost of self-confidence, she was promoted to a master trainer role and is a role model for her community. The program has also sensitized the workforce about gender equality.

Between 2011 and 2013, Cividep participated in the Garment Sector Roundtable, which regularly initiated dialogue between representatives of major brands, manufacturers, government, trade unions, NGOs and independent researchers on contentious issues. Consequently, a program was started to help women become supervisors and an investigative study on labour shortage in the garment industry was launched. Since then, women are slowly entering supervisory roles. Cividep sensitizes factory managers and supervisors about women's issues. It also advises factories in starting functional anti-harassment committees and operating complaint hotlines that workers can call anonymously.

IV. Methodology

This small study is focused upon the Female garment workers based on the Primary and secondary source of data and tools of observation method.

V. Wages in the Tumakuru Garment Industry:

The largest employment providing Industry for the less educated and untrained youths, whether there are male or female, female are most dominant in this Industry, there are occupying 80 per cent of the jobs in the Garment Readymade of cloths, wages in the Karnataka Industry are very low compared to other industries in the state, Garment Industrialists are exploiting women workers through providing less wages and taken hard

work from them, except skilled workers tailors in the Industry remaining women workers are unskilled and they does not have the adequate skilled and trainings, for the research purpose undertook survey in the Tumakuru District Garment Industry, below table shows the details of the wages in the Tumakuru District Garment Industry.

Table: 1 Wage rates in the Tumakuru Garment Industries

Wage Rates at different Garment Industry	Unskilled Women Workers(pm)	Semi-Skilled Women Workers	Skilled Women Workers
Tumakuru Taluk MAF Cloth Pvt.Ltd – 2	Less than Rs .5000	₹6000 – 7000	₹8000 – 9000
Tiptur Taluk MAF Cloth Pvt.Ltd – 3	Less than Rs. 5000	₹5500 – 6000	₹7000 – 8000
Madhugiri Taluk Pragathi Exports	Less than Rs. 5000	₹5000 – 6000	₹6000 – 6500

Primary Source

Wages in the Karnataka Garment Industry are not equal, vary from Industry to Industry from Place to Place, some of the Big Corporate Garment Industries offering attractive wages and other Social Security Benefits and allowances to their workers, we can perfectly visible unequal work allocation for the male and female workers, male workers are dominant in the higher hierarchy of works in the Garment Industry, manually hard works so male workers are paying higher salaries than the female workers, but female workers are at large numbers, they concentrated in the low profile works, most of the female workers are tailors, khaja and button, Ironing works, Hemming works, feeding helpers, helpers, quality checkers, finishing cloths, layers, readymade cloth packers etc. these female workers, who are new entered in the unskilled works they are getting less than ₹5000 in all the three Garment Industries of Tumakuru District. In Semi-skilled women workers are paying ₹6000 to ₹7000 and Skilled Women Workers Rs. 8000 to 9000 salary slab in the MAF-Tumakuru and MAF-Tiptur Taluk and Semi-skilled women workers Rs.5500 to Rs.6000 and Skilled Women Workers Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8000in the Pragathi Exports-Madhugiri and highly skilled women workers who are newly entered are Semi-Skilled Women Workers paying Rs 5000 to Rs. 6000 in the MAF-Tumakuru and MAF-Tiptur Garment Industries and in the Pragathi Exports Garment

Industries Skilled Women Workers paying ₹6000-6500. So wages in the Tumakuru District Garment Industries are low compared to national average wages for the unorganized sector of the economy and even in Garment Industries, hence many Industries are extending their units to Tumakuru District to acquire benefits from low wages.

VI. Stress level management and decision making process

The nature of one's environment of job is an important part of life as Job Satisfaction influences one's general life satisfaction. Job Satisfaction, thus, is the result of various attitudes possessed by an employee. In a narrow sense, these attitudes are related to the job under condition with such specific factors such as wages. Supervisors of employment, conditions of work, social relation on the job, prompt settlement of grievances and fair treatment by employer. However, more comprehensive approach requires that many factors are to be included before a complete understanding of job satisfaction can be obtained. Such factors as employee's age, health temperature, desire and level of aspiration should be considered. Further his family relationship, Social status, recreational outlets, activity in the organizations etc. Contribute ultimately to job satisfaction.

Textile and apparel sector being second largest industry after agriculture, plays a very important role in the Indian economy in terms of its share in employment, value added and export earnings. Garment industry is providing one of the basic needs of people and maintained sustained growth for improving quality of life. Its vast potential for creation of employment opportunities on the agricultural, readymade garment exports comprises nearly 40% of the total exports. Because job satisfaction is important to organizations, it is beneficial to research the sources of job satisfaction. That happy worker is a productive worker. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors age, gender, income, performance, productivity. Rapid developments in international competition have obliged textile enterprises to take new approaches in order to gain a competitive advantage. The limits of acceptable quality levels for the enterprises have fallen back down to critical points due to the effects of liberal policies in international markets.

The quality of a product or service is judged. Quality does not apply only to the product or service itself; it also applies to the people, processes, and organizational environment associated with it. For example, the quality of a university is judged not only by the quality of staff and course offerings, but also by the efficiency and accuracy of processing paperwork. Different factors contribute to the evaluation, such as the atmosphere of the environment or the perceived prestige of the product. For example, a hospital patient may

receive average health care, but a very friendly staff may leave the impression of high quality.

VII. Imbalance diet practice and challenges

Women's participation in the labour force shows the importance and contribution of women to economic productivity, hence, the need for occupational health and safety policies covering women workers. In the light of many research studies conducted for women workers and their work conditions, there is a need for policy and advocacy work towards protection of their health as well as provision of good labour conditions. This is even more pressing with the feminization of the labour force in the country.

For instance, women workers in the electronics and garment industries are subjected to extended and intensified work manifesting in the phenomenon called work intensification. In the case of women migrant workers, they are subjected to sexual and physical abuses, and maltreatment from their employers. Additionally, women workers face double hazards from both their work and household responsibilities, thus, increasing their vulnerability to occupational illnesses.

The textile establishments mostly employing women workers showed high concentration of cotton dust in the work area, high level of noise in the weaving areas, toxic chemicals being used during bleaching, dyeing, printing and finishing processes, and a large number of accidents. In a similar study, it was found that women in the garment industry were exposed to extreme heat, dust from textile fibers, and ergonomic hazards.

Unfortunately, this work schedule for call centre workers had been documented to cause negative impact on health such as sleep disorders, eating disturbances, and gastrointestinal diseases, mental disorders, and cardiovascular diseases. The occupational health risks such as graveyard shifts, long working hours, period of break time, very cool temperatures in work areas, irrational behaviour of customers and high work stress. Majority of these workers experienced sleeping problems, eye strain, overall fatigue, headaches, chest and back pains, voice problems and mental stress. It is a common practice in garment establishments to pay workers by piece rate. The women workers in the garment establishments received below minimum wage per day for the piece-rate done for the day. The experiences of women in the workplace as shown above give us a perspective on their working conditions.

VIII. Medical facilities and affordability

Factory management tend to think that workers' health or medical are social responsibilities. They need to be sensitised about the economic impacts of the issue. Local service providers also often don't understand how to work with factories to provide the services and products. The end result is that appropriate medical services are not available for garment workers. The feasibility of rolling out health insurance in the garments sector on the basis of the willingness of workers to pay for this insurance and attitude of the garment factory management to contribute to the scheme.

Insurance is not enough to cover sexual health related issues of women because if it as opted for insurance, lots of questions will be raised - who will pay the premium, how will the dividends be paid to the garment workers. More should be done to aware female workers about menstrual hygiene. If owners invest money in the health sector for their workers, they will get the returns of it in due time as their workers will be healthy and productivity will increase. While the owner should take the major share of responsibility, little amount could be taken as premium from the workers.

Health insurance will work only if the garment workers are made aware about reproductive and sexual health. If they don't know why it is important for them to avail the health service, they will never opt for it. Garment workers need to produce 150 to 200 pieces of clothes every hour. Because of the pressure they work under, they cannot think of proper water intake and the damage that they do to their kidneys. The workers have to struggle to meet all the expenses with their meagre salary. So in terms of paying instalments for the insurance, the owners should take the entire responsibility.

IX. Family support and co-ordination

Women's participation in garment production is critically important. Women are not only a cheap labour source for these ateliers, but they also help to mediate the familial relations— including social networks of family, kinship, and neighbourhood—upon which the survival of ateliers in the very volatile market of the garment industry depends.

Household chores and childcare cause women to have looser relations with formal productive activities than men. Their reproductive roles, which result in women entering and exiting the labour market, and the values attached to them, make women very suitable for this type of in formalized production. "Women have emerged as very desirable employees in

these circumstance because their relationship to the labour market has traditionally displayed the characteristics of flexibility so much wanted in the current conjuncture” .In almost every society, women are seen by policy makers as an untapped pool of labour, which can be easily pulled in and pushed out of the labour market .

Although there are considerable power inequalities between young and old women, the lack of economic autonomy and authority in the household is mitigated as women manipulate the affections of sons and husbands. Women do this, in part, by taking care of them when they are children and then later when they are husbands. Because they are socially ridiculed if they perform household duties, men are obligated to have women care for them, and since domestic chores and child-care are the primary social responsibilities of women , women do not ask for much “help” from their husbands. As mothers and wives, women gain status as they age and by keeping husbands’ and sons’ affections, which they transfer into security and power in the household. Power also comes from being “respectable” mothers and wives.

X. Orientation and awareness programmes

Predominantly young women and girls as apprentices in factories and mills, who are then forced to work long hours in unsafe conditions and whose pay is sometimes withheld until the end of the "apprenticeship" which can last up to three years. The families of the girls use these lump sums as dowry payments. The programme is working at community, workplace and policy level to improve awareness of rights, women workers' voice and legislation to protect these young women workers. Implementation of human rights and ILO labour standards in the garment and sportswear supply chain, especially those of freedom of association and freedom from discrimination, and strives to make consumers aware of the conditions in which their clothes and sports shoes are made and the role of women workers in the production process.

Health is critical to the wellbeing of a person, and it is a basic human right. It also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and save more. The importance of this issue is increasingly recognized by forward-looking businesses and governments in emerging markets. A growing body of evidence suggests that investing in women’s employment to achieve a more even share of women at all levels of an organization can bring real business benefits.

XI. Suggestion

The risk of capital flight in garment manufacture is real and ever present and this is the leverage that is used to great effect by suppliers of garments within the global garment commodity chain. The power imbalance at the workplace is supplemented by the patriarchal context of wider society. Women are a powerful economic force. For a country's growth, they make important contributions as entrepreneurs and employees. And they support development more broadly, through the care and attention they bring to the welfare of their families. Most successful economic zone management approaches that also support women economic empowerment operate along three dimensions—fair employment and working conditions for female employees, equal access to opportunities for professional advancement, and investment opportunities for female entrepreneurs.

Enhanced economic participation by women, currently underrepresented in the formal labour force in the majority of developing countries, can contribute to overall economic growth. When women are free to seek an education or work outside the home, they become more able to contribute to their own development and that of their families, communities, and societies.

XII. Summary and conclusions

Women are also discriminated against once they decide to start, or already have, families. As women's incomes rise and they expand their control over household spending decisions, their household resource allocation differs from that of men for example, women dedicate higher monetary amounts to family health and nutrition, and to children's education. Over the longer term, such shifts may reduce infant, maternal, and overall mortality rates.

Some employers will only hire unmarried women with no children and some make each woman sign a document that they agree not to have children during their term of employment. Compulsory testing during the recruitment phase are all too common. In some garment factories, women applicants are asked if they are married or are planning to have children. Pregnant women or those who refuse to be tested are simply not hired. Women who become pregnant during their employment may try to hide it, often resulting in birth defects and other childcare issues. The harassment that pregnant workers encounter includes verbal abuse, higher production quotas, longer work hours and more difficult tasks, such as shifts requiring standing instead of sitting.

Healthy people are productive people. There is no alternative but to keep the people sound physically and mentally to ensure efficient manpower for the country. The large number of population will be active, productive and will make contribution for the society as well as for the country if they can afford and/or will avail of the opportunity of healthcare to keep them free from illness and diseases.

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