



DEFIES OF WORKING WOMEN IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR: A PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERPRETIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Women have much strength, and their major problems are not internal, personal deficiencies. Instead, the problems are primarily societal ones, such as sexism and racism. Equality of gender has been the prime concern across all ages of movements pertaining to justice for women. Women empowerment needs multimodal strategies. The present research paper is based on psycho social interpretive research with an outcome of major issues concerned to working women in unorganized sector. The present research have been identified by census data and national sample survey on working population, rate of urbanization, female participation in unorganized sector and rural-urban continuum status etc. to analyzed the socio-economic status of the working women involved in unorganized sector and defies faced by them in respect of their rights to dignity with the remedies in relations with their working legal safeguarded. A number of important and relevant studies have been reviewed and recommended for short out the problems of working women in unorganized sector in order to catch the global labour challenges.

Introduction

Women work mainly for economic independence, for economic necessity, as some women are qualified enough to work, for a sense of achievement and to provide service to the society. Most Indian women by and large undertake “productive work” only under economic compulsion. This is the reason for high female participation rates in economically under privileged communities. Usually upper class women are limited to homes. Work participation rate is found to be higher among rural women than the urban women. We will find that women usually go in for temporary and standby jobs because of the prevalent hesitancy to employ women in regular jobs and providing them with good working conditions. The employment of women is high in the unorganized sector such as part time helpers in households, construction center, tanneries (setting, parting and drying), match and beedi industries etc. An estimate by the World Bank shows that 90% of the women working in the informal sector are not included in the official statistics and their work is undocumented and considered as disguised wage work, unskilled, low paying and do not provide benefits to the workers. Statistics show that vast majority of Indians work in Agriculture where 55% of the population is female agricultural workers and 30% of the men are labourers and not cultivators. Women’s economic participation can be mentioned in the field of production of goods and services accounted in the national income statistics. However, female work participation has always been low at 26% compared to 52% of men. The problem is that women have always been at work; only the definitions of work and work plan have never been defined or realistic to include their contribution to the economy and the society.

One of the most common problems faced by a woman is the dual role; she had to play on the domestic front and the shop floor. Particularly the married working women with the small children found that dual responsibility a source of great mental and physical strain. For them the working hours were long 8 hours at the place of employment and at least 4 hours at home. Usually husbands and sometimes even in-laws did not extend any help in the household chores. Again after all this hard work, tragedy was that working women couldn’t claim independent economic assets. Most of the salary earners had to surrender their pay pockets to their husbands in the case of married women and to their parents in the case of unmarried girls. They were allowed to hold back only a small amount for spending on transport and tea.

Psycho-Social Conditions of Working Women

Looking to the future, rapid changes in the fabric of work and the workforce pose unknown, and possibly increased, risks of job stress. Discussions on issues pertaining to women working in unorganized sector have largely addressed the common biological and reproductive factors. However, women’s well being is apparently beyond biological factors and reproduction. The issues such as workload, stress, migration, and nutrition are equally important. The gender perspective into the unorganized sector addresses well being across the life cycle and in domains of both



social psychological and mental health. The gender based violence is not only a gross violation of human rights but directly contributes to the growing burden of disability caused by poor mental health. Hence need of hour is to discuss the association of these factors with mental health of women. The World Health Organization estimated that depression will become the second most important cause of disease burden in the world by the year of 2020. Women in world in developed and developing countries such as India alike are almost twice affected and experience depression along with two other causes of disease burden estimated for the same year are violence and self inflicted injuries especially for women's conditions.

Femininity considerations in vigor promotion and healthcare have to highlight the mental health risk and the socio-economic and cultural determinants of mental health. Apparently, economic independence, physical, sexual and emotional safety and security are primarily needed for good mental health. Unluckily, same are supposedly denied to some women by virtue of their status as women. Considering the demands of modern work, a survey of European Union members found that 'the proportion of workers who complain from organizational constrains, which are in particular conductive to stress, is higher than the proportion of workers complaining from physical constrains (UFILWC 1992)'. A similar study shows that one half of working women reported a high work place, three fourth of the poor possibilities of promotion and one third reported a poor fit between their education and their jobs.

Violence against women is like an endemic in society. A strong inverse relationship exists between social position and physical and mental health outcomes. Adverse health outcomes are two to two and a half times higher amongst people in the most disadvantaged social position compared with those in the highest. The link between mental health and low income amongst urban women has also been documented in Mumbai, Olinda and Santiago (Blue Jaswal 1995). Socioeconomic circumstances, social support and health related behaviours all have independent effects on health, but cluster together and are mutually reinforcing. Women in better jobs than their husbands were also found to be at risk of poor mental health, a feature that is not unique to India. Counts et.(1992) found that where women have a higher economic status they are seen as having sufficient power to change traditional gender roles, and it is at this point that violence is at its highest. An interesting finding was that higher levels of education of both the women and her husband acted as a protective buffer against poor mental health, suggesting the important part education could play in reducing violence against women and thereby, mental disorder.

As we know that work life has been associated both with psycho social problems and psychological well-being. Certain working environment characteristics appear to increase an employee's susceptibility to the problems. Defies of working women impose a significant economic burder on society at large, employers, and individuals. Psycho Social problems are frequent among female employee in unorganized sector in India. It is common observation that quality of leadership, collaboration with co-workers was significantly associated with these problems.

Studies Interpretations

In Andhra Pradesh, (Mies 1986) found that the work day of an woman agricultural labourer during the agricultural season lasts for 15 hours, from 4 am to 8 pm, with an hour's rest in between. Her male counterpart works for seven to eight hours, from 5 am to 10 am or 11 am and from 3 pm to 5 pm. Another study on time and energy spent by men and women on agricultural work (Batliwala 1982) found that 53 percent of the total human hours per household are contributed by women as compared to 31 percent by men. The remaining contribution comes from children. **The linking of agricultural activities to male dominance is described by Roy Burman (Menon 1991).** The anxiety of man to monopolize his skill in plough culture is reflected in the taboo that is observed almost all over India, against the women's handling the plough. In many societies, she is not even allowed to touch it. Several organisations have conducted survey research on SHW that were widely disseminated. Survey by Sakshi (Delhi) throws up some worrying data where 80 % ofrespondants revealed that SHW exists, 49% had encountered SHW, 41% had experienced SHW, 53% women and men did not have equal opportunities, 53% were treated unfairly by supervisors, employers and coworkers, 58% had not heard of the Supreme Court's directive of 1997 and only 20 % of organizations had implemented Vishakha guidelines. Dalal, 2003). Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development study shows that awareness and implementation of the Supreme Court's guidelines is very low and there is need to spread awareness on the same. Study of Samhita (Kolkata) throwing light on the processual



dimensions of Bhanvari Devi Case has alarmed the state and civil society of the enormity and gravity of the menace called SHW (SCWSD & ICHRL, 2003).

A study conducted on the topic of “women workers in informal sector in Aligarh city” (Saba Anjum 2006) pointed out that 74 % of women workers reported to domestic violence after job time. The main reasons were money, extra marital affairs of husband and husband’s bad habit of gambling and drinking.

According to Desai (1984) conducted a study on “Economic Opportunities in Women”, had been managed the dual roles of homemaker and worker, poses serious problems without working women in large cities, particularly with young mothers who often get no help of supportive services such as day care, community creche, foster day care etc. Their difficulties got further eventuated when they had to commute from long distances. Under these circumstances the traditional pattern of mutual help by in-laws, friends, neighbours had been found extremely helpful whenever possible. However, it was not always available. Desai also reveals in his study long workplace become very difficult for working mothers. Tension arises when they reached their home in late by some reason.

Madula Sherwani (1984) in her studies on “Why more Women entering Work Force” has observed Indian women still operate under creation limitation and hardship. One of the most common problems faced by a woman was the dual role; she had to play on the domestic front and the shop floor. Particularly the married working women with the small children found that dual responsibility a source of great mental and physical strain. For them the working hours were long 8 hours at the place of employment and at least 4 hours at home. Usually husbands and sometimes even in-laws did not extend any help in the household chores. Again after all this hard work, tragedy was that working women couldn’t claim independent economic assets. Most of the salary earners had to surrender their pay pockets to their husbands in the case of married women and to their parents in the case of unmarried girls. They were allowed to hold back only a small amount for spending on transport and tea.

A study carried out by Coker (2003) to find out mental health status of working women found good social support was associated with significantly reduced risk of a range of adverse mental health outcomes and further that higher levels of emotional support can modify the effect of intimate partner violence on health. The study suggested that interventions to increase emotional and social support to women victims of violence might reduce the negative consequence of mental and physical health.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore how female in unorganized sector experience their psychosocial working conditions. This is an important research area due to the fact that prerequisites are of relevance for both employee and employer and outcomes such as well-being and health. This is also important that services in public sector organizations are of great importance for employment and regional and local development of nation. The analysis uncovers a rather gloomy picture of what it is like to be a female worker in public human service. The demanding psycho-social working conditions involving conflicting demands and insufficient social support that the female worker experience can negatively influence a personal work life balance and possibilities for recovery which in turn increases the risk of ill health. So the right based services should be provided including all the legal measures for their safety and security.

After interpretations of important studies, it is observed that the working women in unorganized sector are ill treated and discriminated in several ways. The studies also reiterated that working women facing defies very much in their lives. Male dominated society always hinders the opportunity of female part in their life discourse. The study also highlights important factors affecting domestic female workers who are engaged in unorganized sector. First recommended to the above challenges is take up the views of experts for the basic anomalistic which are poor causes for implementation of the legal measures. The finding of the study shows in qualitative as well as quantitative outputs recommends immediate policy formulation and for policy planning for unorganized sector’s female employee. In gender discrimination protective policies implementation from central government as well as



States/ UTs governments should be initiated. Protesting against exploitation is only one of the strategies. What is needed is social awareness and indoctrination of values system through community participation as on concluding ethic.

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