Role, Problems and Challenges of Women Workers in Unorganized Sector

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Abstract

Unorganized sector comprises of major part of Indian Economy. In unorganized sector, those enterprises and employments are involved which are unregistered under any legal provision. More than 90% man power contributes in unorganized sector globally. In, Indian scenario, 86% of human resource is employed in unorganized sector. 91% of women workers in unorganized sector are rendering their services. This study focuses on presenting real picture of current conditions of women workers in India who are involved in different kinds of unorganized occupations. This paper throws light on their role, nature of work, living standards and their problems which they are facing frequently in unorganized sector. This paper outlines the acts and schemes by Indian government framed for empowerment of women economically and to prevent them from exploitation.

Key Words: Unorganized Sector, Women Workers, Exploitation, Problems, Empowerment.

Introduction

Our Indian constitution assures equality of men and women. Besides of so many efforts from past years, female section of society is deprived in compared to male section. They are not given first priority in social and economic decisions in her own family. According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, women are involved in doing 67% work of world; still they are socially and economically deprived. They are receiving only 10% of the universal income and have 1% part in global assets. This discrimination also persists in their work place in unorganized sector. In informal sector, women workers don’t get same wages for same nature of work for same hours done by men. They are exploited at workplace. They are some acts i.e. The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008, Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act, 2010 etc. but due to their improper implementation, women workers are forced to work and live in miserable conditions in unorganized sector.
Unorganized Sector: An Overview

The National Commission For Enterprises in the unorganized sector (NCEUS), government of India defined the unorganized sector which consists all unincorporated enterprises owned by individuals or households less than 10 total workers involved in sale or production of goods and service on proprietary and partnership. (Report on conditions of work of work and promotions of livelihood in the unorganized sector Academic foundation, 1 Jan. 2008 P.1774)

The unorganized sector lacks all features of organized sector. It can be notified by the salient features i.e. seasonal employment, no employer and employee relations, no well-defined rights and lack of social security. Domestic paid workers, street vendor, construction laborers, agricultural laborers and home based workers are engaged in unorganized sector.

Nature of Unorganized Sector:

a) No restriction on entry and exit.
b) Autarchy and resilience.
c) Ownership is in family hands in unorganized sector.
d) It may be legal or illegal.
e) Ignorance of government towards this sector.
f) No record of income.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data. So secondary sources have been used for data collection. In this regard, data is collected and reviewed from various reports, journals, books and official websites relevant to area of the present enquiry.

Objective of the Study

This paper has an attempt:

a) To study the role of women workers in unorganized sector.
b) To understand the nature of work of women workers in unorganized sector.
c) To describe the present working conditions of women worker.
d) To outline the problems of women workers in different industries of unorganized sector.
e) To outline some act and laws of government to prevent women workers from exploitation.
f) To find out the measures to empower the women in unorganized sector.

Role of Women Worker

In unorganized sector 96 % of women are employed. In the unorganized sector, women workers in construction industry brick making, domestic paid works, household industries etc. In rural informal sector women workers are involved in agriculture, dairy, fisheries etc. (Dr. Vandana Dave 2012).

They are working in very risky and insecure work conditions. They are not benefited with adequate wage and medical facilities. They are exploited in many ways .They are no proper laws
for making their working conditions better and to prevent them health hazards. Local factors fixed their wages, working hours (Jenna.N, n.d)

Women work for long hours without proper safety and security; they don’t get proper overtime for extra hours and leave. There is no social security for women workers in unorganized sector. (National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganized Sector, NCEUS, 2004, para 1.4 g.h.i.)

The main concerns are highlighted in study of commission tour:

1. Lack of concern of government towards women workers.
2. How women are still unnoticed at all level (Bhatt. E. 1998)

**Review of Literature**

**Dave (2012)** attempted to explain the socio-economic conditions of women workers, nature of work, working conditions, their wages prejudices on ground of gender and other problems faced in working unorganized sector. She conducted this study on 350 women worker who were involved in construction work, agriculture area and domestic paid workers. She found in her study that most of the migrated women were working in construction industry. They are exploited in great extent. They were not paid fairly for doing same work in comparison of men and for same hours of work. The main causes of their problem were illiteracy and poverty.

**Vasudev and Romica (2012)** administered a study on women workers in organized sector and unorganized sector. They tried to find out the status of women worker in their family, their participation in financial decision and in home responsibilities.

Usha P.E., defines the impact and key factors of women workers in unorganized sector in their study. It is found in study that in textile sales sector, women works are getting very less wages than minimum fixed wages for their work. They are divested form service advantages i.e. increment, pension, P.F. and insurance. They belong to lower class and they face exploitation in different manners.

**Unni (1989)** inferred by their study that women workers bear more work but still they are most underprivileged section of the workers. They work for 12 to 14 hours daily but still their work are not counted as economic activity. Their work is not a part of National Product.

**Saran and Sandhewar (1990)** explained the problem of female worker employed in unorganized sector. Study disclosed the fact that women workers are facing problem of exploitation, low wages, and long working hour’s i.e. migrant worker for 14-16 hours and local workers work for 8-10 hours. Some factors such as illiteracy, socially backward classes and obligations are usual. They were struggling with many problems reprimand, fraud, menacing, assault and sexual exploitation in unorganized sector.

**Sultania (1994)** carried a micro level on women workers involved as contract laborers They analyzed the features, description, contracting, reasons of inequality and its impact on women. They found that women worker are sexually, socially, economically exploited in construction industry .The feature of illiteracy, lower wages, men’s supremacy, long working hours i.e. 10-12 hours per day, absence of medical and leave benefits were found present.
Anand (1998) examined the attributes of migrant women construction workers and taken interference strategy to smoothen the services and make them aware about their rights and usage. According to Anand, NGO and other organization are very crucial units in creating awareness, unionism and cooperativeness for raising better wages and their working conditions.

Srinivasan (2000) focused on women’s occupation and its trend in their study. He came to the conclusion that in unorganized sector, women workers had not right to raise voice and there is no legal support.

Singh (2002) concluded after study on domestic paid workers of Ranchi district, that due to ignorance and lack of education, they are deprived and exploited. There were also loopholes in recruitment system. They were not getting proper wages, medical facilities and leaves. They were not professional trained. They were unaware about alternative income sources. Bargaining powers was also lacking in domestic workers. Fatalism and credulity were all around them. It is reported in the study, the large no of dependent as a cause of their lower living standard and indebtedness.

Jyoti Bharat (2008) focused on social economic conditions of female domestic workers. It described the pitiable living conditions of them. She applied two stage random sampling. She taken slum ass first And index women as a second stage study. For secondary data collection, she used Urban Local bodies for database. The recommendations of study are beneficial for enhancement of working living circumstances.

Das Kabita, Das B.K. Mohanty, Subhransubala (2012) conducted his study to know intensity of social security of women workers in unorganized sector in Odisha. They selected Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Cuttack district for his sample survey. They enquired 1000 random selected women from each district about measures of taken by government of Odisha, The findings showed lack of social security measures in unorganized sector.

Ramesh P Babu (2012) conducted study on 'Rethinking Social Protection of India’s working poor in the organized sector’. The main concern of social security low wages, lower working and living conditions, seasonal employment, absence of social security were the features of their study.

Geetha K.T. (2010) focused on socio economic study of women workers in urban organized sector. In his study primary data collected through interview schedule which is conducted on 100 women. Study concludes that women workers were overwhelmed with work and deprived in unorganized sector. The study endorsed for preparing policies for improving working and living situation of working women in unorganized sector.

Problems and Challenges of Women Workers in Unorganized Sector

1. There is no sustainability of employment of women workers in unorganized sector.
2. They are not getting proper training in unorganized sector.
3. Women belonging to lower caste and communities face more disparity in social terms.
4. They don’t get right to raise their voice and interrupt in financial decision in their own family.
5. Exploitation is the main problem of female workers in unorganized sector.
6. In unorganized sector women are exempted from maternity benefit and child care facilities.
7. Women workers frequently face discrimination due to gender inequality
8. In unorganized sector women workers do not have benefit of minimum wage act or factories Act.

Acts and Programs for Women in Unorganized Sector

Government of India has formulated some act and programs for women workers in unorganized sector-

1. **Domestic workers and social security Act, 2010:** Women and child are more vulnerable exploitation so government has formulated this act for providing them better working conditions including registration.
2. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** MGNREGA has played a remarkable role in employment of women workers in organized sector. It has created better working conditions same wage to women and men.
3. **Unorganized sector workers Act 2008:** The workers felicitation center (WFC) is responsible for implementing the act. Under this act, various schemes are
   a) Janani Suraksha Yojna
   b) National Family Benefit Scheme
   c) Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojna
4. **Cooperative intervention:** Cooperative provides employment and opportunities provided to women worker for earning income. Corporative tries to make balance in individual need and communing needs by empowering them.

Measures for empowerment of women in unorganized sector:

1. Providing basic education to women so that they become aware about the schemes and facilities about the schemes for them.
2. Make women aware of technical and financial assistance available to women entrepreneurs, and to encourage them through concessions and incentives.
3. A trade Union should be formed among women workers.
4. Adequate training should be provided to women workers
5. There should be proper guidelines for recruitment process working hours and for health hazards.
6. A supervisory body should be established to monitor the proper implemented of legislation and provision related to women workers
7. There is need of more effective poverty alleviation program.
8. Co-operative should be promoted because they are important role in improving the socio-economic conditions of women workers
9. Government should focus on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.
Conclusion

Women workers have dual responsibility of home and work. There are various reasons for pitable conditions of women in unorganized sector i.e. gender discrimination, poverty, lack of basic knowledge, ignorance of government, inadequate laws which are failing to prevent them.

For the betterment of women in unorganized sector, government need to prepare statistics records of employed women. On the basis of this record government has to prepare programs for educating women for their rights. Central and state government had launched many schemes for providing support to women but there are not sufficient to overcome the problems of women workers. There is need of effective implementation of these schemes and laws for empowering the women workers.

References


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