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AN ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF WOMEN WORKERS IN GARMENT FACTORY: A CASE OF BANGALORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

The Garment industry is highly labour intensive, providing employment to a large number of workers. It has been reported that major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore have been the major centers of garment production. In Chennai and Tirupur, the percentage of women workers is higher than that of men workers. Garments are produced in variety of ways under diverse labour conditions, using variety of materials for different markets — global and domestic, different technologies are applied. Production takes place under different systems of social relations. It has wide range of job contracts, different modes of payments and sub-contracting chains. Accurate data on the size, structure and distribution of garment workers and their characteristics is not available. Women are increasingly vulnerable to all kind of risks, discrimination, deprivations, not to speak of sexual harassment in work situations. Compliance of government measures is very poor. Compensation, in case of loss of life or any part of the body due to accidents to which the work place have become increasingly prone to, is almost always inadequate and takes inordinately long time to settle the claims. It is one thing to assume rather conveniently that unorganized workers are poor, illiterate; least unionized, and generally engage themselves in high risk low paid poor quality manual and menial jobs How do they carry on their work in actual work situation? How do they actually cope with discrimination, deprivations of one kind or another and miscarriage of justice to mention but a few which have become an inevitable inescapable part of life of these workers.

KEY WORD: Garment women, Socio Economic, Evaluation.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The garment industry is highly labour intensive, providing employment to a large number of workers. It has been reported that major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore have been the major centers of garment production. In Chennai and Tirupur, the percentage of women workers is higher than that of men workers. Garments are produced in variety of ways under diverse labour conditions, using variety of materials for different markets — global and domestic, different technologies are applied. Production takes place under different systems of social relations.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has wide range of job contracts, different modes of payments and sub-contracting chains. Accurate data on the size, structure and distribution of garment workers and their characteristics is not available. Women are increasingly vulnerable to all kind of risks, discrimination, deprivations, not to speak of sexual harassment in work situations. It has been reported time and again that benefits under the government schemes rarely reach the workers largely due to the apathy of the officials concerned and the workers do not know how to go about

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securing the benefits and services. Compliance of government measures is very poor. Compensation, in case of loss of life or any part of the body due to accidents to which the work place have become increasingly prone to, is almost always inadequate and takes inordinately long time to settle the claims.

It is one thing to assume rather conveniently that unorganized workers are poor, illiterate; least unionized, and generally engage themselves in high risk low paid poor quality manual and menial jobs. But it is entirely another thing to know exactly who these workers are. Where do they come from? How do they carry on their work in actual work situation? How do they actually cope with discrimination, deprivations of one kind or another and miscarriage of justice to mention but a few which have become an inevitable inescapable part of life of these workers.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
The proposed research work consists of the following objectives.
❖ To study investment expenditure and economic condition of women workers in common life.
❖ To study standard of living of working women in industries.
❖ To study about the economic benefits derived by working women in their work place of industries.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:
The present study has been framed the following hypothesis based on the objectives of the study:
❖ The wage earnings of women workers in industries are satisfactory.
❖ The job satisfaction is based on necessary of women workers.
❖ The standard of living of working women is not at expected level.
❖ Economic benefits received by working women in industries are satisfactory.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:
The present study is based on Simple Random sampling method. The study is based on primary and secondary sources. The sample consist of women respondents from different industrial area of Bangalore city . Total of 2000 samples have been selected for the study. In order to get more meaningful and useful respondents the tested questionnaire was used as a schedule and entries were made by the interview respondents answered the questions.

The secondary data compilation also taken into consideration from Government reports, labour magazines, labour chronicle, labour review, Government Bulletins, State Government Publication, I.L.O. Study also considered apart from prepare articles Economic Times, Political and Economic weekly, National Sample Survey estimates committee reports have been fully utilized to explore the working women's problems. The respondents were also asked the questions to indicate their level of satisfaction.

1.6 Result Discussion
1.6.1 Religious Composition
An important aspect of socio-economic background of the sample is religious composition. Expectedly 95.8 per cent of the workers are Hindus, followed by 3 per cent of Muslims and 1.2 per cent of Christians, less than 1 per cent of Sikhs and others. Given the high proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the garment industry high percentage of Hindus is understandable. Low percentage of Muslims and Christians shows that people from these religions explore job opportunities in diverse occupations, including skilled jobs. Lack of employment in villages and adverse living conditions in the countryside push the vast mass of agricultural labourers into towns and cities. It shows in the Table -1

Table –1.1 Religious Compositions

Religion	Workers	Percent
Hindu	1916	95.8
Muslim	59	3.0

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Christian	23	1.2
Sikh	1	0.1
Jain	1	0.1
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.3 CASTE COMPOSITON OF THE SAMPLE WORKERS

Caste has become an indispensible reference frame-work in describing the size, structure, occupation and distribution of any occupational group and garment workers are no exception. In Indian society caste determines the social status of a person but also one's life choices and chances of success in not only profession and career but also general life situations. Frequency distribution of caste reveals that garment workers come from almost all sections of Karnataka society majority being SC, ST and Backward Castes though. Caste has also become the basis of social mobilization for common collective action. So much so, emergence of caste-based associations has threatened to supplant the secular workers oriented trade unions:

Caste distribution of sample garment workers among other things reveals the sample of workers when asked to report the name of the caste to which they belong they have mentioned a large number of castes and sub castes.

1.6.4 Karnataka Government classification of castes

It can be found in the Table-2 that SC/ST/Cat-I together constitute 34% per cent and Cat-IIA, Cat-IIB, Cat-IIIA and Cat-IIIB together comprises of 63.4 per cent, followed by 2.6 per cent of workers who reported to belong to 'Other' castes. This caste composition among other things reveals two things: firstly, bulk of the workers is migrant labourers who have been apparently pushed out of their villages. Secondly, majority of the Backward Castes i.e., IIA, IIB, IIIA and III B are predominantly peasants, small and marginal farmers who may have found employment in garment industry.Its shows in the Table -2

Table – 2: Caste Composition

Caste	Workers	Percent
SC	432	21.6
ST	112	5.6
Cat-1	135	6.8
II A	341	17.1
II B	62	3.1
IIIA	713	35.7
III B	149	7.5
Others	56	2.8
Total	2000	100.0

Age composition is another aspect of garment workers. Among other things age, determines the productivity of the worker. Higher the percentage of young workers greater is the productivity and economic viability of the factory. Young workers being in the age bracket of 21 to 30 years constitute majority of the sample. Young workers are generally willing and able to move out in search of work and this has been reflected in the age composition of the sample garment workers.

1.6.4 Age composition of the Worker

It can be shows in the below table -4 that a maximum of 54.5 per cent of the sample is in the age group of 21 to 30 years. Nearly 15.6 per cent is in the age group of 31 to 35 years, followed by 14.7 per cent in the age group of 16 to 20 years. On the whole garment workers represent a high

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proportion of young workers. This also shows that employers prefer young workers to middle aged and elder people

Table-4: Age composition of the Worker.

Age Range	Worker	Per cent
16 - 20	294	14.7
21 - 30	1088	54.5
31 - 35	311	15.6
36 - 40	189	9.5
41 -45	77	3.9
46 - 50	36	1.8
50+	5	0.3
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.5 Marital status of the Worker

Marital status is another aspect of the garment workers examined in this chapter. Expectedly, more than half of the sample i.e., as many as 54.2 per cent are married and live with their families. About 41.8 per cent is unmarried workers followed by the least 3.4 per cent being widowed workers. Divorce rate is less than **1** per cent of the sample population. This gives us the impression that divorce is almost exclusively an urban phenomenon and that it seems to be high among educated middle, upper middle class population. Lesser the education and income, lower is the rate of divorce and vice-versa. Faced with lack of alternatives women in the poor families reconcile with situations that beset them. This gives the impression that unstable families and increasing divorce rate has become essentially an urban social problem

Table-5: Marital status of the Worker.

Marital status	Worker	Per cent
Married	1083	54.2
Unmarried	835	41.8
Divorced	14	0.7
Widowed	68	3.4
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.6 Educational Composition of the Workers

Education is another aspect of the garment workers examined here. The majority workers are illiterate in the unorganised sector though less education coupled with lack of technical skills inevitably pushes them into low-paid poor quality jobs - the characteristic feature of labour in the unorganised sector. Over the years, however, education has been extended to weaker sections as a means of their empowerment. As a result, literacy rate has increased among those sections of population who have traditionally been denied access to education- the SC's and ST's and other backward classes.

This has got reflected in the education compositions of the sample population. It can be seen in the Table-6, that the percentage of illiterates is 6.8 per cent. The percentage of workers who have studied upto 9th standard is as many as 39.5 per cent and about 43 per cent have completed SSLC, followed by a far less 18.5 per cent have studied PUC and the least 2.2 per cent are graduates. On the whole it shows that 50 per cent are educated beyond SSLC. The fact that there is a least percentage of illiterates goes to show that the majority of garment workers are able to read, write and understand things that happen around them. Being educated is one thing and having technical knowledge and skills is another thing. The

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latter enhances their chances of getting a good job. Skill development and capacity building in workers of the unorganized sector would go along with in improving their life standards.

Table-6: Educational Composition of the Workers.

Level of Education	Workers	Per cent
Non-Literate	136	6.8
Up to 4th Std	78	3.9
5th-9th Std	513	25.7
SSLC	860	43.0
Pre-University	369	18.5
Under Graduate	44	2.2
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.7 Size of the household family

It can be found from the Table-7 that as many as 82.1 per cent of the sample reported to be having their family members less than 3 but not more than 5. Rising cost of living is generally not accompanied by corresponding increase in the wages and other benefits of the unorganized labour. Expectedly, small family has become predominant. An increase in the wage depends upon and is determined by the bargaining capacity of workers. With no unions to support, garment workers are at the mercy of the employers. The average size -of the family of the garment worker is 2 to 3 members, mostly wife and husband with one or two children.

Table-7: Size of the household.

Family size	Frequency	Per cent
1 - 2	202	10.1
3 - 5	1642	82.1
6 - 8	156	7.8
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.8 No of dependants of the Worker

The other aspect closely connected with family life of the worker is the number of dependents. More dependents would make the life of the workers miserable. The limited income does not allow them to look after the dependents. As a result, the number of dependents ranges between 1-5 members, though as many as 66.5 per cent reported 2 members while as few as 14.7 per cent reported no dependents. Keeping with the requirements of urban life not only the size of the family is small but the number of dependents is less. This goes to show that garment workers do their best to adjust to the kind of life that exists in the city.

Table-8: No of dependants of the Worker.

No of dependents	Workers	Per cent
No dependents	294	14.7
1 - 2	1330	66.5
3 - 5	374	18.7
6+	2	0.1
Total	2000	100.0

Major chunk of labour force in garment industry in particular and unorganised sector in general is female workers. Female labour participation has been an issue of extensive research. Women participation in labour force in India has been flat or even declining..

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1.6.9 Gender composition.

An overwhelming majority 72.8 per cent of 2000 sample of garment workers is women and only 27.3 per cent are men. As already discussed being economically poor women they have become increasingly vulnerable to discrimination, ill treatment, verbal abuse and even sexual harassment. Its shows in the table 9

Table-9: Gender composition.

Gender of the Worker	Workers	Per cent
Male	545	27.3
Female	1455	72.8
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.10 Place of living

Another aspect of the living conditions of garment workers examined in the survey is the place in which they live. A maximum number of workers i.e., 82.9 per cent reported to have been living in and around Bengaluru city. To reach the workplace from the place of living they depend upon public transport and other means of transport like walking the distance, by bicycle, by two-wheeler etc. Given the difficulties in travelling by public transport, majority of garment workers prefer to live near the workplace. At least 16.7 per cent of the sample reported to be living outside Bengaluru and less than 1 per cent of the sample live in slums.

Table-10: Place of living.

Place of living	Frequency	Per cent
In Bengaluru	1658	82.9
Outside Bengaluru	333	16.7
In Slums	9	0.5
Total	2000	100.0

Another aspect that reflects on the economic condition of the worker is the type of house in which they live. It is widely believed that majority of garment workers being rural migrants; they tend to live in cheap rented houses. As many as 71.1 per cent of the sample reported to be living in rented houses and only 28.9 per cent reported to be living in own houses. The fact that more than 25 per cent of the sample own houses in Bengaluru city goes to show that economically garment workers are not as bad as other workers like construction workers, beedi workers, agarbhathi workers to mention a few. Housing conditions form an important and integral part of economic conditions of the workers. Quality of life is often determined by and depends upon the type of house in which people live.

It can be seen in the **Table — 11(b)** that an overwhelming majority of the sample reported to be living in pakka houses like tiled houses, R.C.0 buildings. Only as few as 13.6 per cent of the sample reported to be living in kacha houses. With regard to the toilet facilities, large majority of 91.6 per cent reported that the houses in which they live have toilet facilities and only a least of 8.4 per cent reported that they do not have toilet facilities. Safe drinking water has been a perennial problem in urban situations. Apart from steady depletion of ground water resources and many tanks in and around Bengaluru city getting increasingly dried providing safe drinking water to the rapidly growing population of Bengaluru city has become a major challenge. Lack of safe drinking water facilities often causes spread of epidemic diseases and water-borne diseases. Quality of life of people is often influenced by the access to and the availability of safe drinking water. It can be seen in the Table-12(b) that little more than half i.e., 52:7 per cent of the sample reported to have water tap connections in their house, while as many as 47.3 per cent of the sample reported to be dependent upon street taps. This goes to show that nearly 50 per cent of the sample is deprived of safe regular drinking water at home.

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Table-11(a): Type of amenities and hospitality of Garment Workers

Type of ownership	Frequency	Per cent
Own	578	28.9
Rented	1422	71.1
Tot.1	2000	100.0

Table-11(b): Workers perception of houses in which they live.

Type of House	Frequency	Per cent
Kutcha House	271	13.6
Pakka House	594	29.7
Tiled House	261	13.1
Concrete (RCC) House	874	43.7
Total	2000	100.0

Table-12(a): Workers' perception of toilets at home.

Does the house have toilet	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	1832	91.6
No	168	8.4
Total	2000	100.0

Table-12(b): Workers' perception of source of drinking water.

Source of drinking water	Frequency	Per cent
Tap in the house	1054	52.7
Street Tap	946	47.3
Total	2000	100.0

1.6.11 Possession of movable things.

With regard to economic conditions two principal aspects have been considered namely material possessions including consumer durables. Movable consumer durables that they use at home have been considered. It can be seen from the table that a maximum of 91.8 per cent of the sample reported to have T.V sets. Similarly, nearly 50 per cent reported to have a cooking gas connection. Barring these two facilities an overwhelming majority reported not owning other consumer durable items like D.V.D players, scooters, refrigerators, cots, furniture and gold. Seen in this way, majority of the workers maybe spending major portion of their earnings on recurring needs like food, shelter, clothing, education to their children, medical expenses etc.

Table-16: Possession of movable things.

Items	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Fan	1019	51	981	49.1
TV	1836	91.8	164	8.2
DVD	341	17.1	1659	83
Bicycle	240	12	1760	88
Scooter/Bike	451	22.6	1549	77.5
Cell Phone	138	6.9	1862	93.1
Refrigerator	90	4.5	1910	95.5
Cot	724	36.2	1276	63.8
Diwan	332	16.6	1668	83.4
Sofa	110	5.5	1890	94.5
Cooking Gas	980	49	1020	51

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Tailoring Machine	58	2.9	1942	97.1
Almirah	430	21.5	1570	78.5
Gold	153	7.7	1847	92.4

Another aspect with which to assess the economic condition is land. The sample is evenly divided, in the sense 50 per cent reported to own land while the other 50 per cent reported not owning any land. Of the people who reported owning land 57.8 per cent own upto 2 acres, followed by 26.7 per cent own upto 5 acres while only 10 per cent own less than 1 acre, and a least of 4 per cent own upto 10 acres. This goes to show that majority of the sample owning land are small and middle farmers. Given the irregular and erratic rainfall, lack of access to institutional credit and the steady deterioration in the quality of soil, small and middle farmers find agriculture increasingly unviable. Naturally majority of villagers coming from this section migrate to towns and cities in search of jobs. In cities they frequently do find jobs, jobs which require no skills or semi-skills and they end up working in low quality, less paid and even underpaid jobs. Migrant population lives on border lines of poverty, starvation and deprivations that go with this. Malnutrition and under-nutrition becomes an inevitable part of the lot of unorganized workers.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The conclusions are mixed. Barring payment of wages, workers in garment industry hardly get any fringe benefits. A plethora of legislations and government schemes exists to ensure that workers are provided with minimum benefits of welfare and well-being like paid-leave, maternity benefit, medical and educational facilities. There is a need, therefore, to sensitize all the stake holders: employers, government officials and trade unions towards the plight of the unorganized workers in general and garment industry in particular. Gender sensitization needs to be created. For this educational, research institutions, NGO's and trade unions must carry on a sustained campaign through seminars, workshops and street plays.

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