



ISSN: 2249-894X
 IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)
 UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514
 VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 8 | MAY - 2019



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE WOMEN HOME-BASED WORKERS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT:

Women are equal to men in all fields and the population of women is almost half of the total population of India. Women work equally for men and earn and run their families without the support of anyone. Various legislative enactments were made to save and protect women from crimes like dowry death, infanticide, and give the concept of

women empowerment. The great majority of women in India do home-based work, are self-employed, employed in household enterprises. Home-based work provides employment opportunities for women who face constraints in working outside the home, either because of family responsibilities or because of norms that limit women's mobility. This study made an attempt to find the issues and challenges faced by the women home based workers in Kanyakumari district.

KEYWORDS: Women, Home-Based Work, Self-Employed, Empowerment, Issues and Challenges.

INTRODUCTION :

In India, almost 94% of total women workers are engaged in informal sector, of which about 20% work in the urban centers. Majority of women workers in informal sector come from those sections of the society which need income at any cost. Nearly 50 per cent of these women workers are sole supporters of their families. Another startling fact is that out of all women workers a mere

7.5% are availing the membership of authentic registered trade unions. Yet another fact to cause concern is that women have to work, unpaid, even outside home, for some 5-8 hours to help their other family members. This fact has to be considered alongside the fact that an average woman has to work at home for some 7-8 doing household, chores including upbringing the children. Most of the women workers have lack of proper training. They are very few options to avail as far as gainful jobs are concerned. The quite contributors to the effortless

movement of the social carriage, the women workers engaged in informal sector are poor, perhaps poorest amongst poor, uneducated and weak.¹ The great majority of women in India do home-based work, are self-employed, employed in household enterprises. While women are growing in education and employment, many women are choosing to be in the informal sector. Various reasons may be attributed to their lack of education, poverty and unemployment. The more we say that the status of women is growing, but the conditions of women informal workers are

¹ Anvita Gupta, Geetika, Tripti Singh (2011), Working Women in Informal Sector in India, A saga of Lopsided utilization of Human Capital, international conference on economics and Finance research, vol 4, pp 534-538

more unethical. Many of them live below the poverty line, and socio-economic conditions may not rise. Informal women workers earn less than 200 rupees a day. Their occupation is not a permanent one; they will lose their income if they are ill, and so the economic condition of the women in the business of borrowing is very worse. Informal workers can be divided into self-employed and wage workers. Women are more involved in self-employed home-based work.

In particular, in the district of Kanyakumari, where many women choose to live their lives, home based work. Most of the women involved in this work are poor, middle class and backward community. Until fifty years ago, the kings of Travancore and the aristocrats in the area had abused the woman of the society. But untouchability was eradicated by the struggle of many good people and also the plight of women is high in Kanyakumari district. Women are progressing in business and work. However, his economic position has not changed much and also their life has various issues and challenges. Hence, an attempt is made to analyse the issues and challenges faced as a woman and also in their work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the personal profile of home based workers in Kanyakumari district.
2. To examine the issues and challenges confronted by the home-based workers.
3. To determine and compare the issues and challenges of women home based workers based on locality, Religion, Age, Education, Married status and poverty line.
4. To provide suggestions to find solution of the problem.

HYPOTHESES

- Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on locality.
Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on religion
Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on age.
Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on education.
Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on married status.
Ho: There is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on poverty.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Informal economy

The informal economy is the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state. The concept originally applied to self-employment in small unregistered enterprises.

Informal workers (unorganized workers)

Informal workers are those workers unprotected with a known employer.

Informal self-employment

It includes, employers, own account workers, business/farms, unpaid contributing family workers, informal producers' co-operatives members.

Informal wage employment

This comprises employees without formal contracts or employed by formal or informal enterprises or by households.

Home based workers or Industrial out workers

Home workers engaged in a task such as stitch garments, lace-making, wall hangings, roll hand-made cigarettes or incense sticks, prepare snack foods, produce pottery electronics or household manufacturing in or around their homes.

Self-employed home based workers

Workers assume that all the risks of being independent operators. They buy their own raw materials, supplies and equipments, and pay utility and transport costs. They sell their finished goods mainly to local customers but sometimes to international market. Most do not hire others but may have unpaid family members working with them.

Sub-contracted home based workers

Home workers are contracted by individual entrepreneurs or firms, often through an intermediary. They are usually given the raw materials and paid piece rate, but cover many cost of production: workplace, equipment, supplies, utilities and transport. They typically do not sell finished goods.

METHODOLOGY

250 samples were taken from the population of 2567. Simple random sampling technique is used to select respondents in Kanyakumari district. Primary data was collected from the respondents directly through Interview Schedule. The secondary data is collected from the published information from books, journals and internet. The statistical tools and techniques used in the analysis are Percentage analysis, Weighted Average Method, F-test and t-test.

PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE HOME-BASED WORKERS**Table 1: Locality wise Distribution of Home-based Workers**

S.No	Locality	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	101	40.4
2	Urban	149	59.6
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the Table 1 that 59.6 per cent of the respondents were from urban area and 40.4 per cent of the women respondents were from rural area.

Table 2: Religion wise category of Women Workers

S.No	Religion	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Hindu	126	50.4
2	Christians	116	46.4
3	Muslims	8	3.2
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

It is found from the above Table 2, 50.4 per cent of the workers followed Hindu religion, 46.4 per cent were Christians and 3.2 percent were Muslims.

Table 3: Age of Home-based Workers

S.No	Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Below 25 Yrs	7	2.8
2	Between 25-40 Yrs	74	29.6
3	Between 41-50 Yrs	91	36.4
4	Between 51-60 Yrs	58	23.2
5	Above 60 Yrs	20	8.0
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 3 reveals that out of 250 respondents, 91 workers (36.4%) belong to the age group of 41-50, 74 workers (29.6%) belong to the age group of 25-40, 58 workers (23.2%) belong to the age group of 51-60, 20 workers (8%) belong to above 60 years of age and the remaining 7 workers (2.8%) were less than 25 years of age.

Table 4: Education Level wise Category of Home based workers

S.No	Education Level	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	34	13.6
2	Primary School	53	21.2
3	Middle School	47	18.8
4	High School	72	28.8
5	Above High School	44	17.6
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

The above Table 4 reveals that out of 250 respondents, 28.8 per cent of the respondents have completed up to the level of high school, 21.2 per cent of the respondents who have completed primary education, 18.8 per cent of the sample respondents were studied up to middle school, 17.6 per cent of the respondents completed above high schools and 13.6 per cent of the population are uneducated.

Table 5: Married Status of Home based workers

S.No	Married Status	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Married	198	79.2
2	Unmarried	21	8.4
3	Divorced	7	2.8
4	Widows	24	9.6
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 5 seems that 79.2 per cent of the women respondents are married, 9.6 per cent are widow, 8.4 per cent are unmarried and 2.8 per cent are divorced.

Table 6: Family size of Home based workers

S.No	Size of Family (Number of members)	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Below 3	89	35.6
2	3-5	121	48.4
3	Above 5	40	16
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

The Table 6 revealed that 48.4 per cent of the respondents in the study area had a family size of between 3 to 5 members, 35.6 per cent had a family size of below 3 members. Only 16 per cent of the respondents had above 5 members in their family.

Table 7: Poverty Status of Home based workers

S.No	Poverty Status	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Below Poverty Line	138	55.2
2	Above Poverty Line	112	44.8
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

The above Table 7 illustrate 55.2 per cent of respondents said they were below poverty line and the remaining 44.8 per cent were above the poverty line.

Table 8: Monthly Income of Women Workers

S.No	Monthly Income	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Below Rs.5,000	169	67.6
2	Between Rs.5000-10000	49	19.6
3	Between Rs.10001-15000	14	5.6
4	Above Rs.15000	18	7.2
Total		250	100

Source: Primary data

It was found from the Table 8 that 67.6 per cent of the respondents in the study area earned an amount of below Rs.5000 and 19.6 per cent earned Rs.5000 to Rs.10000. 5.6 per cent of the respondents' monthly income ranged between Rs.10001 and Rs.15000 and only 7.2 per cent respondents' income was above Rs.15000.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE HOME WORKERS

The problems and challenges faced by a woman in the family and where they work are very high. The government has devised many schemes for the protection of women, but they are often worthless. Women face many challenges including low and fluctuating income, difficult working condition, lack of legal protection, fear of harassment by authorities, working condition, poor remunerative policies, lack of social protection etc.

Table 9
Ranking – Issues and challenges faced by the Home workers

S.No.	Issues and challenges	Weighted Average Score	Rank
1	No equal income	62.13	II
2	Fear of losing work	43.47	XI
3	Lack of availability of raw material	48.73	X
4	No access to regular work	42.33	XII
5	Domestic violence	40.53	XIV
6	Time-double burden of work and home care	60.27	III
7	No access to markets	42.20	XIII
8	Restrictions imposed by religion, culture	34.13	XVII
9	Difficult working condition	49.33	VIII
10	No credit or loan facilities	55.87	IV
11	Personal legal issues	37.60	XV
12	Isolated in homes	37.33	XVI
13	Exploitation by middlemen	52.53	VI
14	Long working hours	52.27	VII
15	Unprotected by labour law	48.80	IX
16	No awareness on credit facility or loan	53.4	V
17	No stability in profits or gains	64.47	I

Source: Primary data

From the above Table 9 shows the important issues and challenges faced by the home based workers. The main important 10 issues and challenges faced by the women home based workers in the study area are No stability in profits or gains, No equal income compare to men, Double burden of work and home care, No credit or loan facilities, No awareness on credit or loan facility, Exploitation by middlemen, Long working hours, Difficult working condition, Unprotected by labour law and Lack of availability of raw material.

Statistic – Issues and Challenges of Home Workers

Table 10: Statistic – Issues and Challenges of Home workers

S.No	Statistic – Issues and Challenges Score	Value
1	Total Sample – N	250
2	Mean	49.87
3	Standard Deviation	9.44
4	Minimum Score	17
5	Maximum Score	73
6	33.33 percentile	47
7	66.66 percentile	54

It could be observed from the table 10, that static on issues and challenges faced by home based workers are ranges between 17 and 73 with an average of 49.87 and standard deviation is 9.44, 33.33 percentile is 47 and 66.66 percentile is 54.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home Workers based on Locality

Table 11
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Locality

S.No	Locality	N	Mean	S.D	t value	Remarks
1	Urban	149	50.41	9.48	1.09 p>0.05	Not Significant
2	Rural	101	49.08	9.37		
Total		250	49.87	9.44		

It is clear from the above table that the table value of t at 5% level of significance is 1.96. The calculated value (1.09) is numerically less than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on locality.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home Workers based on Religion

Table 12
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Religion

S.No	Religion	N	Mean	SD	Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F Value
1	Hindu	126	50.81	8.51	Between Groups	2	112.10	1.25 p>0.05
2	Christian	116	48.9	10.27				
3	Muslim	8	49.2	10.6				
Total		250	49.87	9.44	Within Groups	247		

It is obvious from the table that the table value of F at 5% level of significance for (3,247) degree of freedom is 3.09. Calculated value (1.25) of F is less than the table value. So the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on religion.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home Workers based on Age

Table 13
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Age

S.No	Age	N	Mean	SD	Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F Value
1	Below 25 Yrs	7	31.0	12.4	Between Groups	4	989.85	13.28* p<0.05
2	Between 25-40 Yrs	74	50.86	8.5				
3	Between 41-50 Yrs	91	47.60	7.9				
4	Between 51-60 Yrs	58	53.6	10.0	Within Groups	245	74.51	
5	Above 60 Yrs	20	52.3	5.5				
Total		250	49.87	9.44				

* indicates the values is significant at 0.05 level

It is obvious from the table that the table value of F at 5% level of significance for (4,245) degree of freedom is 2.46. Calculated value (13.28) of F is greater than the table value. So the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on age.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Education

Table 14
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Education

S.No	Education	N	Mean	SD	Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F Value
1	Illiterate	34	49.5	13.7	Between Groups	4	505.87	6.138* p<0.05
2	Primary Level	53	53.7	8.08				
3	Middle Level	47	52.0	9.35	Within Groups	245	82.41	
4	High School	72	46.24	6.78				
5	Degree	44	49.0	8.66				
Total		250	49.87	9.44				

* indicates the values is significant at 0.05 level

It is obvious from the table that the table value of F at 5% level of significance for (4,245) degree of freedom is 2.46. Calculated value (6.138) of F is greater than the table value. So the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on education.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Married Status

Table 15
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Married Status

S.No	Married Status	N	Mean	SD	Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F Value
1	Married	198	49.59	13.7	Between Groups	3	994.62	12.72* p<0.05
2	Unmarried	21	42.10	13.7				
3	Divorced	7	60.86	6.4	Within Groups	246	78.18	
4	Widow	24	55.83	5.0				
Total		250	49.87	9.44				

* indicates the values is significant at 0.05 level

It is obvious from the table that the table value of F at 5% level of significance for (3,246) degree of freedom is 2.70. Calculated value (12.72) of F is greater than the table value. So the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on marital status.

Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home workers based on Poverty

Table 16
Comparison of Issues and Challenges of Home Makers based on Poverty

S.No	Poverty Status	N	Mean	S.D	t value	Remarks
1	Below Poverty Line	138	52.08	8.07	4.27* p<0.05	Significant at 0.05 level
2	Above Poverty Line	112	47.15	10.3		
Total		250	49.87	9.44		

* indicates the values is significant at 0.05 level

It is clear from the above table that the table value of t at 5% level of significance is 1.96. The calculated value (4.27) is numerically greater than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is

rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in issues and challenges faced by home workers based on poverty.

SUGGESTIONS

1. In Kanyakumari district, every caste has every occupation. Most of the women who work as home based work make their caste work. The business of pot making, basket making etc., by women home based workers are ruined. Therefore, the government should take in to account the requirements of women in such a work to encourage them. Therefore, such a work can be seen as immortal.
2. Essential for home based workers is the availability of raw materials. Therefore, the law should provide for the availability of raw materials without restrictions.
3. Sellers directly go and get the goods from the women home-based workers, they receive little amount of money for that. They say it is the canonical price and the women workers don't even know they are cheating by the sellers. The government must purchase such goods from women home-based workers and pay reasonable price for it.
4. The house is the place to do business. So many houses are less affordable. Government need to help those set facilities that they can do business.
5. To advance women's home based work, government need to open up shops for them to provide goods or raw materials for half rate.
6. Credit facilities for women street vendors and home based workers should be facilitated to easily available at all financial institutions.

CONCLUSION

Women are facing so many issues and challenges in every stages of their life. It is very difficult for women who leave home to come home safely. Many women want to earn for their family living at home. But still there are many struggles in their work and life. It is very difficult for women to overcome problems. But with great courage, they have begun to face life's problems. However, the government and also men must try to do their best to help them progress. I hope this research will help bring about the transformation I can make as a woman.

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