



# Workers in the Unorganized Sector: A Gender Study

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Labor has a gender dimension. Only male labor has been considered as labor in the society. But there is no denying that women are engaged in labor. Labor is considered as a factor of acquisition. Unearned labor is not considered labor by society. Women's work and effort is predominantly non-earning. For this reason, their labor is not considered as an economic indicator. But today times have changed and women have entered the economic field of work for the prosperity of their family life. The number of both male and female workers is high. At present, whether in the villages or in the cities, in every step of life, women are found to be working more than men. And a large number of migrant women are working as wage laborers. These workers are at the feet of development. Workers play a very important role in the smooth running of economic activities. That means it is impossible to imagine a world without workers. Hence labor is the mainstay of growth and expansion of the economic sector. "The sector of labor in an economy is divided into primary sector, secondary sector, and tertiary sector. The first sector includes agriculture and agriculturists, the second sector includes industry and small industries and the third sector includes occupations in the service sector. Including these three sectors, the economic sector or the labor sector is again divided into two types. Those two types of labor sectors are organized sector and unorganized sector".<sup>1</sup> Organized sector is the sector which operates within the framework of constitution and government act, provides job security, has unorganized labor and adopts modern technology in production. A sector with opposite characteristics is the unorganized sector. Here more workers are hired for less wages. There is discrimination in wages based on gender caste category. Vocational service facilities will not be available. Act does not fall within the framework of law. There is inferior technology and workers are unorganized and unaware of government schemes.<sup>2</sup> In developing countries

including India, people are mostly employed in the unorganized sector. Thus the proportion of women among the workers is high. So then

## **Who are unorganized sector workers?**

Construction workers, agricultural laborer's, rag pickers, housekeepers, hawkers, cobblers, rickshaw pullers, midday workers, brick bearers, laborers, forest workers, beedi workers, agarbatti workers, garment workers, rice mill workers, fishermen, potters, blacksmithing, puttingty, etc. workers are considered unorganized sector workers.

## **What is unorganized sector?**

Unorganized sector is a manufacturing unit or industry with low skill level and no labor unions, without any facilities for wage discrimination on the basis of gender caste class, employing workers at low wages and without any legal framework.

## **Meaning and definition of unorganized sector**

“As the word unorganized suggests, there is no organization here. This means that the workers working in this sector do not have any financial security. So here the money from their labor will be final.”<sup>3</sup>

“Dr. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (OAEUS) headed by Arjan Sen Gupta defines unorganized workers as a sector of workers who do not receive any social security and employment benefits from employers.

IL O. Non-traditional sector activity is thus understood. "It is the activity of the working poor who are not recognized, recorded, protected or regulated by the government.”<sup>4</sup>

The 1974 report Towards Equality, which shed light on women workers in unorganized sectors, defined “unorganized or informal units of production that do not follow service rules that provide job security, are outside the framework of government-made service laws and regulations, and do not have labor unions, and the workers employed there as unorganized workers.”<sup>5</sup> Unorganized Workers in the sector are highly exploited. They call the workers who cannot express their opinions and solve problems because they are not included in the government framework as flexible labour. Workers are defined as unorganized sector who are unable to fulfill their interests in the work.

## Reasons to work in the unorganized sector

“The workers in the unorganized sector are bedridden in daily life. They are such a part of life that one cannot perform daily tasks without them. Their service from early morning to late evening is not only necessary but also indispensable. As soon as Chumu Chumu Belagu Milk Hudaga gives the package, the newspaper comes and falls on the day the paper boy throws it. By now, the sound of women and men selling fruit in pushcarts can be heard. In the meantime, she rushes to work to clean the house, dishes and clothes,”<sup>6</sup> After completing the daily rituals, she prepares meals for the family, with a bundle of firewood on her head and a bottle of water in her hand, and some farm or construction labor. Women who go to sakka, women who throw rags on the street, blacksmithing, pottery, fishing, etc., who do many jobs, whether it is bitter cold, rain, or scorching sun, are forced to work in rural areas or urban areas for livelihood. His life is thus a street journey. The main reason for this is poverty.

## Poverty

India is known as a nation of villages. Without the prosperity of the villages, the state will not develop, the state will not develop, the country will not be secure, because if we look at the condition of our country, it becomes clear that India has not come out of poverty. This index has been prepared by comparing the poverty rate in our country India with the data of National Family Health Survey-5 report 2019-20. In this report it is clear that many people work in the unorganized sector as a result of poverty in our country. States with such poor “Bihar is here per cent. The report says that 51.91% percent of people are poor. And Bihar ranks first among the most backward states in the country. Then in Jharkhand, 42.16% percent people join the ranks of the poor. And percentage of poor in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh. It is 30.40%. Then in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Odisha more than 29%”<sup>7</sup> percent of people are poor, the report said. And Kerala has the least number of poor people in the country. If you look at the list of the richest people in India, each of them is rich and has enough money to buy a country. But if you look at the extent of poverty in India, it is a matter of concern. This situation is not exclusive to Karnataka. If we look at the districts where there are poor people in Karnataka itself, that is, the most backward welfare districts of Karnataka with regional inequality, Yadgiri district has the percentage of poor people. With 41.67% percent, it ranks first in Karnataka. It is followed by Raichur district. % of the

district 32.19% percent people are poor and in Koppal 24.6% percent and in Bellary percent. 23.4% percent. In Kalaburagi district 21.8% per cent and in Bidar per cent. 19.42% percent people are poor. And Kittur in Vijayapura district of Karnataka. 22.4% percent, Gadag district percent. 20.27% percent in Bagalkote district. With 20.23% per cent, people and Bengaluru at 2.31% per cent among the districts with the lowest number of poor people in the state.”<sup>8</sup> But Karnataka has the highest number of poor people, according to Niti Aayog data. And “153 taluks in the state are Hindu and 66 taluks are still poor. Another 131 taluks are suffering from hunger.”<sup>9</sup> All these figures reveal a picture of the reality of poverty. As well as this poverty, thousands of men and women work for a living in the unorganized sector, where migration is also rampant. A large number of women are working in this migrant and unorganized sector. Poverty is one reason for this.

### **Ignorance and illiteracy**

Women in India have traditionally been deprived of literacy. In our heritage, only men can learn as much as they want, wherever they want, but it was considered dangerous for women to get education from the point of view of social security. Education was not given for reason. Now in current years education is given first priority. However, women in rural areas are still deprived of education. There is an attitude among the villagers that she works as a helper to her parents, or a younger sister who stays at home, or takes care of them, or goes home twice as much as the girls have learned. In the lower class families, parents are not educated and they are not inclined to educate their children as a result women are illiterate than men and waged work is mainly important for working in the unorganized sector. A large number of women and men do not complete their education beyond pre-primary, making them forced to work without alternative means. But women garment workers working in the unorganized sector are educated but their education is not easy to get government jobs and they have to suffer a lot in the field of work to maintain their families. “According to the 2011 census, the number of illiterates in our country is 28.28 crore. Among the total workers of the country (48.19crore), their proportion is 58.68% percent. Half of the country's total workers are illiterate.”<sup>10</sup>

**Caste System:** Even though Indian culture advocates unity in diversity, the stigma of caste is an insidious scourge. Even in the twenty-first century, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are deprived of economic privileges to a large extent. Most of them do not even have

their own land. Among the total laborers of the country, the number of landless daily wage laborers is 14.42 crore. Among the total workers, their proportion is 30% percent. And "71% of Dalits in rural areas are landless, 82% own less than 1 acre of land. Similarly, 39% of Adivasis own no land while 48% own less than 1 acre of land."<sup>11</sup> In Karnataka, women accounted for 40.33% of the population of landless laborers in 2011. 59.39% in 2011 among Dalit women. The percentage of women among tribals is 56.63% percent in 2011. This means that they depend on wages to survive. The poorest workers or the poorest sections of the society have to work as daily wage workers i.e. construction workers, farmers, civil servants, housework etc. But the Dalits feel segregated and discriminated against the upper castes in terms of cleanliness and impurity in the context of purchasing, consumption and distribution of consumer products such as milk, vegetables and other commodities. Even though this kind of alternative country celebrated the 75th anniversary of independence, equality has not been achieved by abolishing the caste system, so how can they achieve development? Women are employed in this sector to a greater extent than men without other means. And most notably, the increase in the number of emigrants goes to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Hindus. It is clear from the census data that the proportion of women in this migration is equal to the proportion of men. But among the migrants coming to the city, the proportion of women among daily wage workers is higher than the proportion of men can be considered as an indicator of the condition of the people. Not only that, women face more physical dangers than men. Women from families who migrate to the city work as laborers in building construction, cotton mills, brick making, stone breaking, beedi building, street sweeping, dyeing clothes, blowing wick making etc. However, women also get sick. Heavy lifting during work such as building construction causes uterine slippage, back pain, miscarriage, exposure to carbon monoxide gas released during dyeing of clothes and chemical fumes in electronic factories, drinking smokestack dust, and enduring the smell of chemical fertilizers cause lung damage. Thus many problems have to be experienced. But the living conditions are poor such that the migrant workers live in small plastic-covered shacks or working buildings attached to the wall of the compound. Life inside this shack does not mean that no one can stretch their legs. The life of men is somehow good but the condition of women is very miserable, not to mention the violence women face for daily chores (toilet, bathing). Thus, migrant workers have to be victims of exploitation, assault,



sexual harassment etc. in their daily life. However, all of them in the unorganized sector, women are carrying their life amid many problems.

## **Agricultural predominance**

India is more agricultural than any other country in the world and as the saying goes, Meti Vidya is better than Koti Vidya, people here are dependent on agriculture. In today's context, agriculture adopts new technology and gets better yield. But the agriculture sector cannot be complete without human hands. While men did sowing, spreading manure, sprinkling oil, watering, women did the work of weeding, planting and harvesting. A large proportion of these jobs are done by women rather than men. They do most of the work themselves. "According to a research done in 2015, it is known that 98 million women are working in the field of agriculture in India."<sup>12</sup> Importantly, India is a country of villages, so it is clear that there are so many women working in this field. Generally, girls are not forced to work in places other than where they live because the restriction on their movement means that they are engaged in low-wage, low-skilled, seasonal jobs that are expected to be continuous labor available in the place where they live. Due to factors such as lack of education and poverty and lack of land are working in this sector of unorganized sector.

## **Globalization**

It is a glaring fact that instead of creating jobs, globalization has taken away jobs. Thus globalization has invaded people's lives as a precursor to development. On the other hand, it has created anxiety by hurting people's self-esteem.

Due to the impact of globalisation, all the lands that are developed are owned by the real estate and the farmers are going to work in the cities without work. And according to statistics, 89.5 percent of rural women were engaged in non-agricultural work and earning wages for their living. Today there are no opportunities to work in agricultural land. Those who work when there is no land are inevitably doing different jobs in the unorganized sector today. At present the country is progressing and in order to give it a new shape, the government acquires land from its heirs for road development, expansion of towns/cities and industries. However, the compensation amount is not received on time and inevitably women have to resort to wage work along with men. Or need to do some other small business. If this is the reason, due to the threat of modern machines in the present

agriculture, all the agricultural work done by humans is done by machines, but they have to work as wage laborers in the unorganized sector as an alternative. Most of the men and women who are educated due to recent globalization impact are mostly private companies semi-government others Working in the sector. Even in this women are mostly doing the work. But they are not bound by the rules of the government, they can be uprooted in any case and someone else can be taken to that place. It is clear that globalization has taken away jobs instead of getting jobs.

## **Wage discrimination of unorganized sector workers**

In a male dominated society, women are working as well as men. But they have not got the same status as men. According to an estimate by the National Commission, 94 percent of women workers work in rural and urban unorganized sectors. But there is discrimination in wages (wage) based on gender caste category. For example, construction workers, agricultural laborers, garment workers, incense workers, beedi workers etc. have been discriminating by paying Rs 400/500 to men who work from morning to evening, but Rs 300/200 to women who work equally.

## **Characteristics of unorganized sector workers**

The characteristics of unorganized sector workers can be seen as follows.

1. The unorganized sector is generally a low wage and low earning sector.
2. These workers are not getting any kind of legal protection, job security and other facilities such as insurance, medical facility, pension, accident compensation, maternity allowance.
3. Temporary employment, ignorance and illiteracy, scattered staff, unorganized unskilled, itinerant nature, weaker sections, unaware of their rights, low social status, malnutrition, low efficiency, migration tendency and unsettled who do not join together to protect their interests.
4. Workers in the unorganized sector are not organized through trade unions. Although some of the self-employed are organized, the union does not participate in the movement while insisting on the demand of the government. There are only male members. Women are involved only to the extent of counting fingers. Men know little about organization but women do not know about it.

5. Most of the occupations in the unorganized sector are day laborers and casual workers.
6. The self-employed in the unorganized sector face the problem of low capital and they tend to get financing from non-banking sources.

## **Labor issues in the unorganized sector**

Everyone has to work for living, unorganized sector with no skill, no education, easy job. Female workers are facing many problems than male workers working in this sector.

1. There is discrimination in payment of wages between male and female wage earners in this sector.
2. Even though women worked more than men, they were paid less. This discrimination continues even today.
3. There is no job security and no social security benefits due to the large number of daily wage workers.
4. There are no minimum civil facilities like toilet, drinking water system or any other facilities in the places where women work.
5. When women work, there are many types of problems from men such as sexual stimulation, mental violence, neediness, etc., where there are women. Persuasion through speech. Women have to work in the midst of problems such as working in unhealthy environment, oppression by their superiors who are mostly men.
6. Women outnumber men in some occupations in the unorganized sector. Wanting to live a self-sufficient life, the household situation, maintenance of husband and children, women join various jobs to meet all the necessities of life. Owners who capitalize on this work more and pay less. If they oppose this, they will give a gatepass and give work to those who are waiting for work in front of the gate. Men take care of other work than this. But women weigh everything and inevitably suffer pains and do the work.
7. Women suffer more than men in the unorganized sector due to many such problems.

## **Gender Atrocities in the Unorganized Sector**

Our India is a country known for its culture. Even though it is a country where everyone lives with equality, atrocities are rampant everywhere starting from home.



Violation of each other and of each other has many faces, men oppressing men, superiors oppressing inferiors, but while violence prevails in organized circles within the bounds of law, in unorganized circles, violence takes place in many ways. In particular, violence is committed against women because she is a woman or because she is weak.

**Atrocities means:-** Humiliation, humiliation, infliction of physical, mental suffering. Further, subjecting an individual or a group or a society to some kind of serious problem physically or mentally can be termed as atrocity or violence. Murder, extortion, robbery, intimidation, coercion, abuse, beating, kidnapping, financial and sexual exploitation, incitement to racial hatred, disturbing the peace of mind of others etc. Still, the atrocities against women are characterized by harassment, violence, dowry, abduction, brutal violence, rape and assault. Some cases of such unorganized sector are identified as follows.

1. If the female children in the workplaces do not behave as their contractor says, they are dismissed from work or given hard work, withholding wages, so she must get under his control. No matter how self-respecting a girl works like that for a couple of days, without getting wages, she has to fall into his trap at the end. Because she can't find any other way out of work.
2. "Some factories have made provisions for work and have recruited women to work. Their managers have to complete all the work assigned by them on time or else they will not even go to urinate until the work is done. Can't drink water, can't eat. If you don't finish, you can't go to the bus in the evening. No matter how long it takes to finish, if you don't go home at the right time, it means harassment from your family. There are words that suspect her, like where did she go? Women in ready-made garments face various forms of violence if they speak about their superiors or managers."<sup>13</sup>
3. Female garment workers are given pills that delay their periods without them even realizing it. All these owners are doing such work for their profit.
4. If the female agricultural laborers do not go to the village Gowda's work at the appointed time, the Gowda will speak ill of the women or abuse them by asking them to come when something is lacking.
5. Women who go to work as laborers are subjected to many kinds of insults or verbal incitement by the male workers or harassing her when she comes to associate with another male. But no matter how hard the same men did, whoever does not talk about

him does not bother him. But atrocities have been committed by men because of women. However, there are many other cases of such atrocities.

## **Acts relating to unorganized sector**

The unorganized workers are living a life of misery and barbarism. A number of Acts have been enacted to protect their status and interest and improve their working conditions.

1. Minimum Wages Act-1948
2. Contract Labor Act or Contractual Labor Act-1970
3. Equal Pay Act-1976

According to this act, equal pay (wage) should be given to women and men for equal work. It states that there should be no discrimination in wages (wages) on the grounds of being a woman or a man.

4. Workmen's Compensation Act-1923
5. Building Construction and Other Construction Workers Act-1996

In Karnataka in 2007 the State Government constituted the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. This board will be reconstituted in 2019. Beneficiaries registered through this board have provided many facilities to women and provided educational assistance to their children.

6. Social Security of Unorganized Workers Act-2008

Accordingly, the State of Karnataka has framed the Workers' Social Security Rules, 2009. Under this scheme, 43 categories of workers of unorganized sector have been identified and many schemes have been implemented. In which the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYAA) provides a psychological pension of Rs 3000 to unorganized sector workers after completing 60 years. Pension facility provided.

“Registration of 2,85,714 workers of 11 unorganized categories under Ambedkar Marmika Sahayadhan Yojana. In 272 accident cases a total of Rs. 13 crore accident compensation distribution. ESI and EPF donation under Ashadeep Yojana was addressed to a total of 343 candidates belonging to PJ/P group and the owner paid Rs. 45.62 lakhs and a total of 148 candidates of P.J./P.Section who are undergoing apprentice training and paid by the owner Rs. 51.95 Lakhs including the stipend making a total of Rs. 97.58 Lakhs to be

reimbursed to employers Registration of around 80 lakh laborers in the state so far on e-Shram portal.”<sup>14</sup>

The Karnataka State Unorganized Workers Social Security Board continues to provide assistance to workers in this sector even today. Women are given the same privileges as men. At present facilities are given to unorganized workers in the form of subsidy.

## Footnotes

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