

Socio-Economic Condition of Sales Girls in Textile Shops - A Case Study of Kollam District

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Abstract: Kerala, which has achieved commendable social development, stands behind in the matter of ensuring better conditions of work for women. It is reported that women forms only 15% of total number employed. It is also indicated that a majority of them work in the unorganized sector, where wages and working conditions are very poor. The present study was carried out to find out the wage .employment and working condition of sales girls in Kollam city. The wage rate, employment level and problems of sales girls were traced, analyzed and discussed in the preceding chapters. Though all of these issues are worthy of investigation, the presence study has isolated some of them and examined them from an Economic and social perspective. The wage discrimination and problems relating to employment are mainly studied in the present worth.

Key words: Recruitment, Income disparity, Job satisfaction.

Introduction

Women as a group constitute an important part of the labor force of the Indian economy. But the constitutional guarantees of equality of opportunity of work for men and women have not been realized at all. Even today despite a number of programs carried out by different organization, women, form no more than a safety value for labor market in India She has already established her hall mark in almost every field of human life. Her career, now-a-days.is not confined only to the service sector, but it also includes political power play and social reformation and activism in such areas which were taboos for her in the not very distant past. She has thus come to the limelight of all activities. There is no denying the fact that they play a vital role in the process of development.

Employment of women in itself is a modern phenomenon in Indian society. Successful performance of her occupational role depends, together with other factors, upon modernization of her family role too. The present study is to analyze the wage, employment and working condition of women workers especially “ sales girls the textile shops”.

Significance of Study

Many reports and research studies revealed deterioration in the work status and working conditions of women all over the world. As per the latest information, women form only 13% of the work force in Kerala. In such a bleak scenario, one would expect discrimination against women in terms of wages and condition of work too. Recently there is an uptrend in the employment of women as sales girls everywhere. In the context, it would be worthwhile to explore the work scenario of sales girls so as to shed light on the relative economic status of working women in the state. The present study which focuses on the wages and working conditions of sales women is a humble attempt in this area.

Objectives of Study

1. To throw light on the wages, working condition and employment of sales girls in Kollam city.
2. To assess the degree of discrimination against the women workers.

Data Source and Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data . Kollam city is taken as the sampling unit. Primary date collected from the sales girls and sales men with the help of a structured questionnaire which was prepared in time with the objectives. The sample size is 75. Out of that 50 were women’s and 25 men. The secondary data was collected from statistical publications, published papers, books, dissertations and other unpublished and other unpublished studies. This study is developed namely on the discussion with the informants in the study area. Table 1 shows the increased concentration of female workers in the UOS. It is seen that the share of female workers employed in the unorganized sector 95.8% as compared to 89.8% of males.

Table 1

Distribution of workers in the organized and unorganized sectors, 2011 (in million)

Sector	SEX		Total
	Male	Female	
Organized sector	45.82	27.06	72.88(15.8)
Unorganized sector	167.67	219.67	387.34(84.2)
Total working population	213.94	246.28	460.22

Socio-Economics Condition of Sales Girls in Kollam City- An Analysis

Salesmanship is the part and parcel of modern marketing and sales girls performing a pivotal role in this scenario. The sales girls can succeed only if they possess four important qualities. They are:-

1. Physical traits : It includes health, breath, posture voice and appearance.
2. social traits: It includes courtesy, good manners, effective speech, ability to contact and communicate
3. Mental traits: It includes alertness, imagination, initiative, observations, and self confidence
4. Character traits: It includes honesty, integrity, enthusiasm, determination and persistence

Recently a new trend has emerged in the marketing to employ more sales girls. Women in the textile sector are a large segment of the work force in recent times. Super markets, margin free shops, medical stores, textiles and trade fair, offer sample opportunities to the sales girls. Labor market is exploiting women as a malleable resource. They work us sales girls in the rapidly growing number of stores which cater to the fancies to the modern generation. No reliable data of this sector is available. Data for analyzing the wage, employment and working conditions of sales women in the textile shops, the researcher directly interviewed 50 sales girls and 25 sales men who are working in the textile shops in kollam district. Let us summarize the results of the survey conducted.

Recruitment and selection process

The recruitment sources of the sales girls include advertisements on journals and entertainment medias like television and internet, through labour contractors, or through personal relations the person has in this specified structure. During the selection process the following qualities of the individual are considered:- Performance in the interview, Education qualification, Experience, Age, Appearance, Communication skill, Personality, Accessibility to the organization. Of all the above qualities the primary concern is given to experience, age and appearance.

Age-wise break-up of respondents

Age is an important factor in this analysis, because most of the business firms prefers young women as sales girls in their shows.

Table-2 Age structure of sales girls

Sl.No	Age	Respondents	Percentage
1	Below -20	7	14
2	20-25	21	42
3	25-30	17	34
4	30-40	5	10
5	Above-40	0	0
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the age distribution of sales women only 10% of sales girls have an age above 30. Most of the sales women belong to the age group of 20-25. No one have an age above 40. It can be inferred from the above observation that young girls are generally preferred for this job.

Age Structure of Sales Men

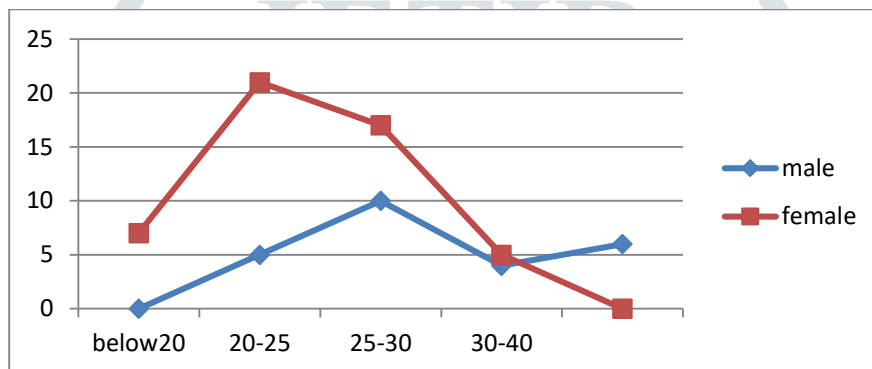
25 sales men, who are selected for the interview, can be included in the following age groups as shown in the chart

Table 3 Age structure of sales men

Sl.No	Age	Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 20	-	-
2	20-25	5	20
3	25-30	10	40
4	30-40	4	16
5	Above-40	6	24
	Total	25	100

From the table, the researcher analysis that majority of the sales men belong to the age group of 25-30, i.e . 53%. No one have an age below 20. A comparison of age structure of male and female workers shows that owners prefer to employ girls belonging to younger age groups, but in the matter of men, they prefer persons belonging to higher age.

Age structure of sales males and females



Education wise break-up of respondents

The successful handling of my occupational role requires the occupant of the occupational position to have requisite qualifications formed as well as informal along with other qualities. If the occupant is not equipped with these qualifications, it becomes difficult for him to play his occupational role effectively. This is very true in the case of sales girls. Let us find the educational status of sales girls

Table-4 Educational status of sales girls

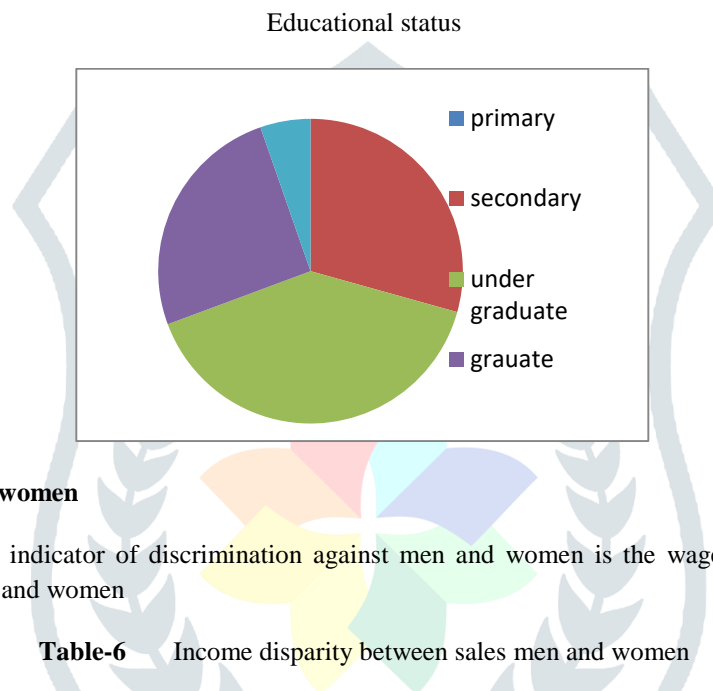
Sl No	Education	Respondents	Percentage
1	Primary	-	-
2	Secondary	10	20
3	Under graduate	20	40
4	graduate	16	32
5	Post graduate	4	8
	Total	50	100

It can be inferred from the above observations that most of the sales girls have a better education status and large number of the educated girls are attracted to this field, irrespective of there qualifications. This situation arises because of the existence of massive unemployment in our country, coupled with faculty educational system.

Table-5 Educational status of sales men

Sl.No.	Education	Respondents	Percentage
1	primary	-	-
2	Secondary	12	48
3	Under graduate	10	40
4	Graduate	3	12
5	Post graduate	-	-
	Total	25	100

From this analysis the researcher finds that the educational sales women outweigh the educational sales men. The educational qualification of women is much better than that of men. In the group of sales men only 12% were graduate and no one have post-graduation



Wage rate between men and women

One of the important indicator of discrimination against men and women is the wage rate. Now let us examine the income disparity between men and women

Table-6 Income disparity between sales men and women

Monthly Income	No of salesman	%	No of saleswomen	%
Below 800	-	-	8	16
800-1000	-	-	15	30
1000-2000	11	44	17	34
Above 2000	14	56	10	20
Total	25	100	50	100

From the table it can be seen that above 100% of men get income more than 1000, whereas only 54% gets more than 1000 in the case of sales girls.

For the majority of women engage in paid economic activity but the fact being that female paid less than men for their work. Gender-based wage disparities exist across all sectors and all occupations. There is enough evidence that women are paid less than men for same work. Discrimination exists not only in terms of wages, but also in terms of access to employment. Often women are found accelerated in occupations where the wage rates as well as working conditions are poor and substandard.

Material status of sales girls

The following table shows the classification of respondents according to material status.

Table-7 Material status of salesgirls

SI.No.	Marital Status	Respondents	%
1	Unmarried	28	56
2	Married	12	24
3	Divorced	7	14
4	Widow	3	6
	Total	50	100

Job- Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an important element affecting the performance of a worker the more one is likely to exert oneself to play the role effectively. If the sales girls are satisfied with their job then only they can actively engage in the sales of the product. The following table clearly reveal element of the satisfaction among the sales girls.

From this analysis, the researcher found that most of the sales girls are not satisfied with this job because their earnings are relatively lower compared to their educational status. The following table shows the satisfaction of sales girls towards the job.

Table-8 Satisfaction level of sales girls

SI.NO	Satisfaction level	Respondents	%
1	To a greater extent	10	20
2	To some extent	16	32
3	Not at all	24	48
	Total	50	100

From the above table 20% of the sales girls are fully satisfied, 32% are satisfied to some extent. But another 48% are not at all satisfied. 20% of the sales girls are satisfied because they get comparatively high remuneration than others.



Exploitation of Female Workers

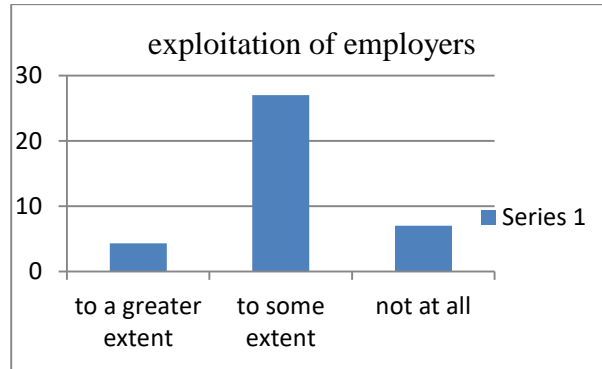
Sales girls are paid low wages and they are not being paid according to their qualification and work. Those who are not well educated are satisfied with their low earnings and they may not be feeling the degree of exploitation.

The below table shows the degree of exploitation of employers towards sales girls.

Table-9 Exploitation of employers towards sales girls

SI.NO	Response	No of respondents	%
1	To a greater extent	16	32
2	To some extent	27	54
3	Not at all	7	14
	Total	50	100

The above table shows 32% of the sales girls believe that they are being exploited 54% believe they are exploited 54% believe they are exploited to some extent 14% believe that they are not being exploited.



Conclusion

In Kollam district, the role of salesgirls is significant, particularly in the retail sector. These women are employed in various types of establishments, ranging from small local shops to larger retail chains and department stores. Here are some key points about salesgirls in Kollam district: Sales girls working in Employment Sectors such as

Retail Stores (clothing, jewellery, and general merchandise stores) Supermarkets, Showrooms: (electronics, automobile, and furniture showrooms.) Typically, they work in shifts, covering store hours which may extend into the evenings and weekends. Wages can vary based on the type of store and experience, but often fall within the lower income bracket. Employment can be precarious, with many positions being part-time or temporary. Important challenges faced by the workers are Long Hours, Low Pay: Salesgirls often face long working hours, which can be physically demanding. Despite their hard work, the pay is generally low, with limited opportunities for significant wage increases. Opportunities for advancement within the retail sector can be limited, leading to a lack of long-term career prospects. Social impacts are salesgirls contribute to the local economy by supporting retail businesses. Employment provides these women with financial independence and contributes to their social empowerment. Working in sales helps them develop valuable skills such as communication, sales techniques, and customer service. Overall, salesgirls in Kollam district play a crucial role in the retail economy, facing various challenges but also gaining opportunities for personal and professional growth.

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