

A STUDY ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF UNORGANIZED TEXTILE WOMEN WORKERS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

S.Thangam, Dr.M.Radha

**Research Scholar, Ph.D, Research Department of Economics Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women Udumalpet, Tamilnadu, India.

**Head of Department, Associate Professor, Research Department of Economics, Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women, Udumalpet Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract

Since independence Indian society is essentially a male dominated society, in which the ascribed status of women has been very low. Illiteracy and generally backwardness of women are still continuing. Education and health of women are neglected to some extent. The textile industry face many problems relate to inadequate infrastructure, obsolete machinery, lack of trained manpower, decentralized and fragmented nature of the industry, besides the inflexible labour laws. Based on the challenges and problems the researchers had taken up the study to give suggestions to new entrepreneurs in that field. A similar approach is given by NCEUS (2007), It stated that "Unorganized workers consists of those working in the unorganized enterprises or households, excluding regular workers with social security benefits, and the workers in the formal sector without any employment and social security benefits provided by the employers". According to the NSSO report (2009-2010) out of 46.5 crore employed persons, 2.8 crore are from organized sector and rest 43.7 crore from unorganized sector. The unorganized sector consists of handlooms, power looms and handicrafts. The major sub segments of the textile industry are cotton, blended, silk, wool and manmade. The unorganized women workers are not getting any service benefits such as the social security benefits like life and medical insurance, health care, maternity benefits, and old age pension, PF, ESI etc. which are available to the workers in the organized sector under the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948; the Employees Provident Funds and Other Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and the Factories Act, 1948 etc.

Keywords: Women, Textile Unorganized sector, Issues and Challenges.

Introduction

On the whole, India's economic outlook is far brighter than it was in 2013. Government officials and industry experts claim that this year, India will witness an increase in the employment rate, particularly in the banking sector. The banking sector has come up with ambitious hiring plans for both officers and administrative staff and as per industry reports, state-run banks are expected to hire as many as 55,000 officers and clerical staff this year. In addition, the employment rate in the IT sector is expected to rise, with an increase in the demand for outsourcing in the US and other developed countries. With significant growth in the banking and IT sector, there is bound to be a positive spillover effect in other sectors too, including hospitality and retail.

Indian textile industry is one of the largest industries in India. It is the second largest industry in terms of providing employment opportunities to more than 35 million people in the country. Indian Textile industry contributes to 7 per cent of industrial output in terms of value, 2 per cent of India's GDP and to 15 per cent of country's export earnings.

The Indian textile industry is one the largest and oldest sectors in the country and among the most important in the economy in terms of output, investment and employment. The sector employs nearly 35 million people and after agriculture, is the second-highest employer in the country. Its importance is underlined by the fact that it accounts for around 4% of Gross Domestic Product, 14% of industrial production, 9% of excise collections, 18% of employment in the industrial sector, and 16% of the country's total exports earnings. With direct linkages to the rural economy and the agriculture sector, it has been estimated that one of every six households in the country depends on this sector, either directly or indirectly, for its livelihood.

Coimbatore has 141 mills constituting 46 to 52% of Cotton Mills in the State. Textile industry sprang in Coimbatore because the climate was suitable for spinning cotton. The fact is that people who started these mills did not know that there was some relationship between climate and spinning. The explanation is to be found not in economic terms but also in the socio-cultural setups of the community in Coimbatore at that time. Although the Textile Mills are found all over the district, the greater concentration is in the immediate vicinity of Coimbatore city. The salubrious climate of Coimbatore is also ideally suited for spinning. Above all it was the pioneering zeal of a few entrepreneurs that have contributed in large measure to the flourishing of the industry. The location of the industry in the midst of a vast rural population and the low level skill required for cotton spinning were also responsible for the growth of textile industry in Coimbatore. As on 1st January 2000 there were 805 cotton mills in India, Tamil Nadu with 303 mills, and Coimbatore with 102 mills constituting 33.66% of Cotton Mills in the State.

Women in Unorganized Textile Industry

Today the unorganized or the informal sector account for more than 90 per cent of the work force in the country and almost 50 per cent of the national income evolves from this sector. Ever since the initiation of the liberalization policies in the early nineties, in formalization of jobs has become a matter of concern. Growing competition combined with increased market opportunities and limited resources have led to the emergence of an informal economy. The predominance of the informal sector has led to a situation of the benefits of economic growth being concentrated among few with a growing proportion of the population living as working poor. Though the Government changed its policy strategy to that of inclusive and sustainable growth in the last decade, the fundamental issues leading to growing in formalization are yet to be targeted.

Women constitute nearly a third of the workforce in India. In 2011, out of a total workforce of 481.7 million, 149.9 million or 31 per cent are women. The present study of women workers is based on analysis of Census data. It describes the variations in work participation rate of men and women by States and regions and the distribution of workers among the principal occupational categories.

The problems often faced by the textile industries and especially the textile units experienced it lot. Therefore, this study attempts to find out the measures taken by the textile units regarding the problems and also at what extent government support was there for garments units and how could avoid or over come from these problems in future and find the measures or remedies for the problems which could be eradicate in future. Hence, the topic "A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women in Unorganized Textile Industry" has been for this study.

Issues in Textile Industry

The main problems and difficulties faced by the Textile industry relate to raw material availability, pricing, subsidiary and ancillary industries like processing units, labour, taxation and other law-enforcing agencies.

Raw Material availability:

Raw material availability is a vital area for any industry, whereas uncertainty prevailing in India with respect to the major raw materials, namely, cotton and yarn, etc., the undue and frequent price fluctuations, the mismatch between supply and demand, lack of proper forecasting of political decisions and other commitments

Pricing:

Compared to other countries the production costs are much higher and the India exporters find it difficult to compete with other countries. For example, in Bangladesh they are able to quote prices that are lower by 17 percent, thus securing very good export orders. In Coimbatore, the knitting, processing and finishing units are scattered all over, whereas other countries are run under one-roof.

Fuel:

Compared to other countries, the higher fuel cost in India mainly Tamilnadu is a major drawback. The duties and taxes on petroleum products are also higher in India especially in Tamil Nadu.

Processing units:

Processing units are located at different places; lately discharge of effluents has proved another problem. The government is well aware of the situation that existed for over four decades, and all of a sudden industrial units were put under pressure. While the units are tiny in nature they are asked to have effluent treatment plants.

Labour:

Unlike other countries labour has become a very sensitive area to handle here. Skilled labour in the basic, requirement. Some big industries spend huge time and money on training, but unfortunately there is no assurance or binding on the part of trained labour to continue to work in one place.

Taxation and other laws:

The bureaucracy in India, particularly the customs and excise, income tax, foreign trade, etc., is in general not happy with any business community, particularly exporters. The rules and regulations and policies of one ministry are contradictory to those of another.

Challenges Facing Textile Industry

Globally, India is the third largest producer of raw cotton. Indian producers use roller ginning instead of saw ginning to open cotton as it yield lesser levels, thus produce better quality cottons. Although by far, India has the best textile industry, it is also facing numerous challenges. The industry in itself has structural weakness, lackness in infrastructure, rupee appreciation, rising cotton and power cost, frequent power cuts, and high cost of logistics. These can be addressed through a higher value, higher volume supplier; achieving higher production rate and quality level with the latest technology, and automation of spinning process that can save a considerable amount of labor cost.

- The Indian Textile Sector is losing to competition because of lack of FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) with the EU and the USA.

- The small scale of business is making it difficult for textile manufacturers to compete on cost with players from outside.
- India is facing huge competition from other countries in Ready-made Garment (RMG) Exports, particularly cotton. And while the world of fashion is moving towards “Blends”, India is not making many blended apparel items. So on the one side our traditional items are facing competition, and on the other side we are behind in Product Diversification.
- Textile imports from Vietnam and Bangladesh are cheaper for buyers across the world. Suggest remedies to the above challenges.

Review of Literature

National Commission for Enterprises in the (2007), studied “Unorganized Sector, Report on Condition of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganized Sector In India, the situation of women is even worse than most of the developing countries of the globe today. Even after 68 years of its freedom despite the progress the war on inequality, discrimination, violence and also lack of empowerment is continuing. In addition to that there are various other manifestations of women’s poverty in India which include hunger and malnutrition, ill-health; increasing morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and their social discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream. This is mainly due to lower level of education among the women workers that are so crucial in determining the quality of employment and the ability to secure reasonable wages. Low level of education creates vulnerability at two levels. It first denies access to “good jobs” in organized sector. Secondly, it confines the workers to mostly manual jobs. Especially, women workers in rural areas are the worst victims of this double disadvantage. Hence, illiteracy coupled with extremely low level of education denies having access to better and possibly remunerative jobs and that it confines to casual manual labour.

Beevi (2014), conducted a study on “**women workers in the textile sectors**. Traditionally women workers are habituated to work in an unorganized working environment and most of the time they are underpaid. Being in the productive income generation field for a long period of time, they are denied their rights to earn more and right to engage in skilled workforce of the organization. The situation is not different in the textile sector as well. Though the sector is organized but it employs unorganized women workers mostly in sales job. This is more relevant in the industry as they do not possess much skill to work in a factory neither the employers are willing to invest in manpower training. Cost is also an important factor. As most of the unorganized workers are underpaid, that is added upto the profit of the organization. The study reveals that the women unorganized workers are apparently happy with their job though they are underpaid. This is because of the facilities that the organization is providing other than the regular wages. Continuous work pressure and seasonal demand for the job is also another area of concern faced by the women workers.

Objectives

- To identify the major issues and challenges faced by the Unorganized Textile Industry.
- To analyze the socio-economic and the issues faced women Unorganized Textile Industry.

Methodology

This study has conducted in Coimbatore city. It’s based on the Primary data was collected 25 samples in unorganized through the convenient sampling method. keeping in view the major objectives and context of the study. The primary data through the questionnaire with the component of demographic and functional variables. The results were analyzed using simple percentage method. The total samples was taken for the research data collection as respondents.

Socio – Economic Profile of the Sample Respondents

Social class refers to the social position an individual occupies in a society. Individual and society are inseparable and have mutual influence on each other. Thus, in all societies, sociological conditions of people differ, based on factors such as sex, age, religion, community, nativity etc. An attempt is made in the study to examine the socio-economic status of unorganized women workers belonging to selected Textile industrial units in Coimbatore. Variables such as age, religion, marital status, nature of the family, educational qualification, monthly income of the respondents, are covered in this section. The results presented in all the tables were estimated from the primary data collected from the respondents.

Age Composition

A population “bulge” in the working age groups, however large the total population, is seen as an inevitable advantage characterized as a demographic dividend. The demographic advantage is that India is and, for some time, will remain one of the youngest countries in the world (Chandrasekar and Jayati Ghosh, 2006). The highest 40 per cent of women workers in both age groups between 15-30, 31-45 and the next age group covers 20 per cent fall under the category of 46-60 years age group. Age Composition by the women workers of the Textile industry units in Coimbatore is explained in the Table.

Table 1: Age Composition of the Respondents

AGE	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
15-30	10	40
31-45	10	40
46-60	5	20

Source: Primary Data

Religion

According to the Census of India 2011, Hinduism accounts for 80 per cent of the population of India. The second largest religion is Christian at about nearly 19 per cent of the population and the remaining are the Muslims. The sample of women workers consists of mixed religious groups of population majority of 60 per cent were Hindus, while remaining very meager were Christians 40 per cent women employed in the Textile industry units.

Table 2: Religion of the Respondents

RELIGION	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
HINDU	15	60
CHRISTIANS	10	40

Source: Primary Data

Marital status

The marital status of a worker decides the quality of work one does. This may be because of the fact that a worker who is married may have a chance of doing many workers out of the working hours. This will in a way effect in his working style and working quality. The major 64 per cent of married women workers and unmarried women workers 32 per cent in the units and the remaining 4 per cent were working in the Textile Industry units.

Table 3: Marital status of the Respondents

Marital status	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
UNMARRIED	8	32
MARRIED	16	64
WIDOW	1	4

Source: Primary Data

Education Qualification

Education is a double-edged blade, which can eliminate the efforts of socio-economic inequalities and improve the socio-economic life style of the people. Education is an important tool for vertical mobility in the social life. But unfortunately most of them suffer from illiteracy. Education is a significant attribute and an asset to an individual. In the present era, education is necessary to obtain gainful, productive and remunerative employment. The data reveals that nearly half of the women workers were illiterate and the remaining half of the women workers were having the education level of primary (40 per cent), Middle level(40 per cent) and illiterate level (20 per cent) respectively in the Textile working units in Coimbatore.

Table 4: Education Qualification of the Respondents

Education Qualification	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
ILLITERATE	5	20
PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL	10	40
MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL	10	40

Source: Primary Data

Monthly Income

Every worker must know about their monthly income. Monthly income of the women workers of the Textile industries in Coimbatore is grouped into four categories viz., up to Rs. 1000, to 4000 is analyzed in the Table. The data reveals that the monthly income of the women workers. Out of the women workers, 40 per cent of the women workers came under the income group of Rs.1000-4000, remaining 20 per cent of the women workers received above 4000 as monthly income in Textile industry in Coimbatore.

Table 5: Monthly income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
1000-2000	5	20
2001-4000	10	40
ABOVE 4000	10	40

Source: Primary Data

Nature of family

A Conjugal family includes only the husband, the wife, and unmarried children who are not of age. The most common form of this family is regularly referred to as a nuclear family. A Consanguine family consists of a parent and his or her children, and other people. The nature of the family is grouped into three categories viz., Individual, Nuclear family and joint family analyzed in table. It is clear from the table that more than two-third of the women workers come under the nuclear family system, 36 per cent of the women workers belongs to joint family system and remaining 4 per cent of women workers are come under the category of individual category of (Unmarried /Divorced).

Table 6: Nature of family of the Respondents

Nature of family	NO.OF RESPONDENTS N=25	PERCENTAGE 100%
NUCLEAR FAMILY	15	60
JOINT FAMILY	9	36
INDIVIDUAL	1	4

Source: Primary Data

Conclusion:

The analysis of issues and challenges of unorganized Textile Unit is a complex process because this involves human beings whose behavior is subject to swing. The study reveals that textile units facing problems such as, labour related problems, electricity, dyeing, hike of yarn price and high taxes. It is further revealed that the production capacity is very low due to lack of training, skills, experience, and low educated employees. Therefore both Government and Proprietors should take necessary steps and measures to avoid above problems and develop the Garments textile units. There is an immense future for Textile units in upcoming years.

Women in the textile sales sector are working with very low wages. It is lower than the minimum wage fixed. They are not getting any service benefits such as increment, leave, pension P.F, ESI insurance. They are being exploited in many ways. They are all coming from the lower class family of the city suburbs. They are very much unorganized. No trade union is working in this field. Women in the textile sale sector are very insecure and they are being exploited very much. Their future in the field is also very bleak. They have to quit the job after a certain age. After that they are not getting any other job. Indian Government is already taking a number of measures to protect and develop the Indian cotton textiles trade.

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