



A study of Working Conditions of Female Workers in Informal Sector

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Abstract

The economic discrimination proved by low women work and participation rate reinforces additional discriminations and continues the inferiority of women. The position of country is very low in HDI and women in this development index occupy far lower positions (HDI Index, 2015). From the working women participation ratio amongst organized and unorganized sectors, India, ranked 120th among 131 nations (World Bank report (2017)). The average rate of WFP in developed countries is more than 50-55% whereas it accounts for developing countries like India only ¼. Although, India has emerged as one of the fastest growing countries of the world but still country has not attained equality amongst the economic status of working women with their male counterparts.

Keywords: Women Empowerment in India

INTRODUCTION

India constitutes a total population of 1324.17 million; out of this, 652.88 million are females and 697.16 million are males. Although, women account for half of the world's population but their participation in national economy from the producers and consumers point of view is very limited eventually limiting the development of country. Even the passage of more than six decades of Independence, the status of women in country has not shown any marked rise. The work force participation rate (WFPR), a principal economic indicator has demonstrated wide unbridged gap between males and females. According to World Bank estimates the women's WFPR in India has fallen from more than 26% in 2005 to 20.3% in 2019 which is far behind the neighboring countries viz., Bangladesh (30.5%) and Sri Lanka (33.7%) (Kumar 2021). Women receive one-tenth of their income and own less than one-



hundredth of their property. In Indian culture, women are considered as comparatively inefficient in terms of work over men. They are often considered as made for the performance of household works *viz.*, taking care of family, child bearing, devoting time in nurturing children and caring for her family irrespective men are regarded as the prime achiever and the bread winner of the family. Women are taken as a secondary party often indulged for performing family's subsidiary works and society at large. In household work, women are considered as someone's dignity and it has always been considered as duty of woman either of wife, mother, daughter or sister or sometime hire-maids to perform household works at no pay expectance.

During recent years, several studies were conducted by various researchers and IT professionals across the country. A similar research study demonstrated direct relationship of work-life balance with working hours. The findings further revealed that women working for longer hours are comparatively more sensitive to experience conflict over the employees working for relatively lesser number of hours and concluded that a wide gap in the work-life conflict between females who worked for small duration (eight hours) over the women working for longer hours (ten hours per day) (Aishwarya&Ramasundaram, 2011). Despite of this, certain research studies across country on dual performance and dilemmas faced by working women at different workplaces reported that conflict is purely psychological and arose from the push and pull factors between the demands emerging from the domestic and occupational roles and opined the non-significant influence of factors *viz.*, caste, income, education and occupation on role-conflict. Among the problems faced by working women, studies have reported work overload, burden of domestic chores, problems of coping with both the roles simultaneously and role conflict as major issues.

Objectives

To know the participation of working women in different sectors.

Significance

Women based investigations are a kind of multidisciplinary phenomenon because of the feminist approach. Although the same has taken central stage in political, social, economic, sociological legal and psychological perspectives but it has fascinated a scarce attention in

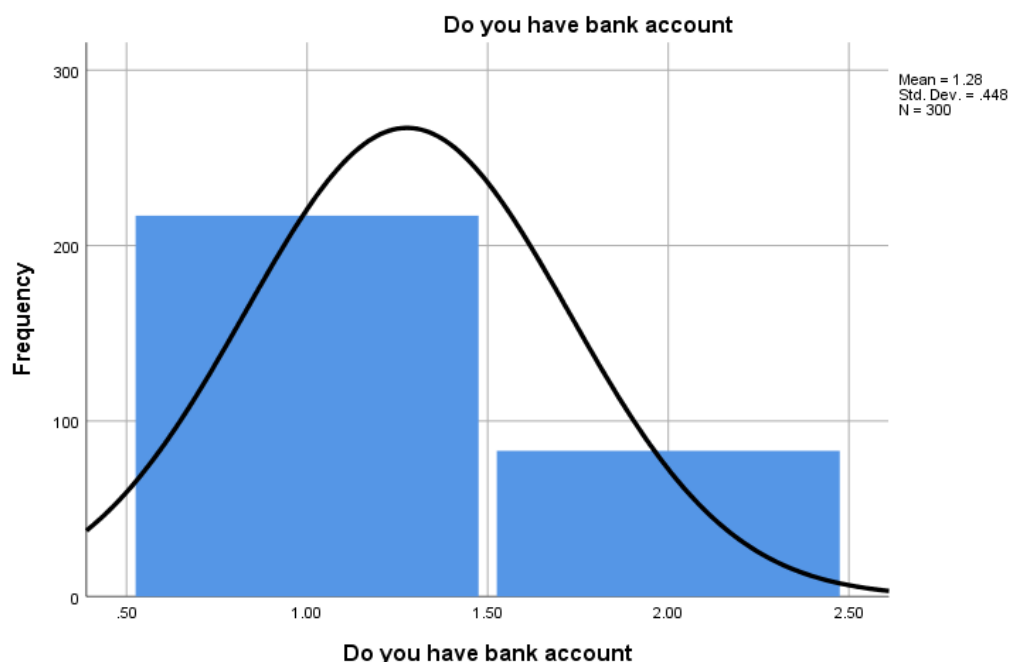


public administration disciplines. Therefore, it was need of hour to analyse the participation of women at diverse workplaces of the State based up on the primary and secondary data sources and in this context, efforts were made in the form of systematically collation and analysis of data pertaining to the trend of women participation at work place in the district of Moga,

Sangrur and Mansa of Punjab State. The study straightway demonstrated scarce active involvement and participation of women in the formal and non-formal sector across majority of the studied areas of Punjab. The study further implied engagement of partial participation in the favour of men. Women are concentrated around low-productivity, low wage professions. They further bear a disproportionate share of house and care responsibilities and consequently face fixed cost associated with market work. The study has correspondingly tried to deliberate the influence of women on work and life balance issues. It was observed that interactive planning along organizational environments can effectively alter and forward the transition of a nation of stakeholders. The principal connotation of investigation revolves around generation of empirical evidences pertaining to the positive and negative influence of women working at different workplaces. The results of investigation can further be admirable for the decision makers for working out the current status of working women across different sectors and for formulating the appropriate strategies and measures in order to provide an effective system of working environment where women can participate in efficient and effective manner.

Saving and investment detail

Do you have bank account		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	217	72.3	72.3	72.3
	No	83	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

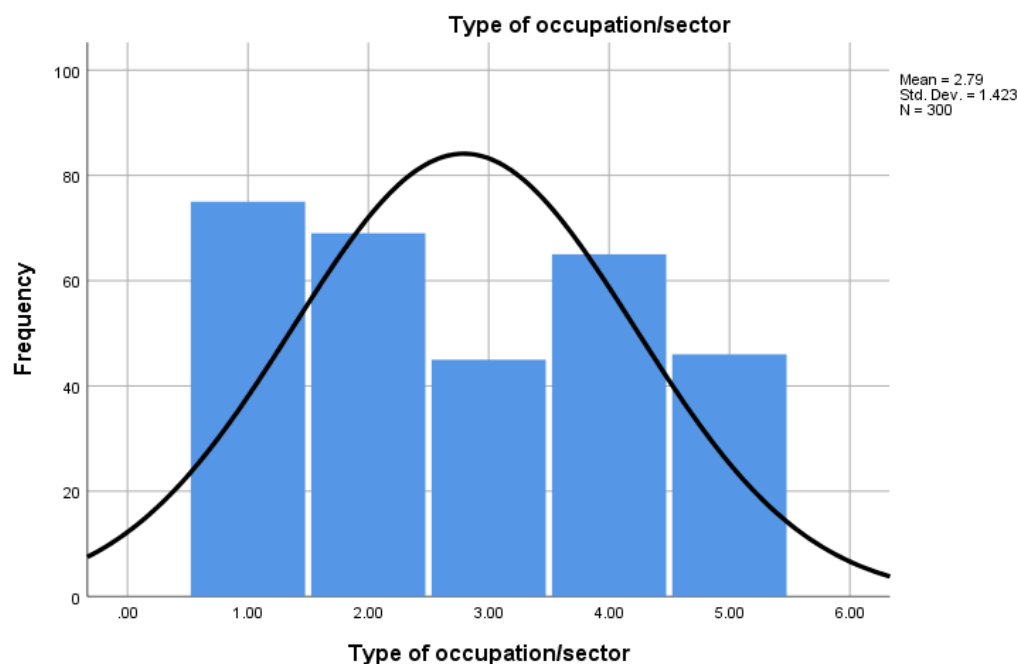


Based on our investigation, we discovered the information included in the graph and table above, which indicates that the sample data consists of around 300 respondents. It was asked about "Do you have bank account" and 217(72.33%) respondents responded as Yes, whereas 83(27.67%) respondents responded as No

Thus the socio-economic status of women workers in our districts is estimated by using the data collected through the primary research. A survey was conducted and a well-structured schedule was used for extensive research on the socio-economic status of women workers under study. The analysis of the data collected is as follows:

Working profile of the respondent:

Type of occupation/sector		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agriculture & allied activities	75	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Service (Private and government)	69	23.0	23.0	48.0
	Self-business	45	15.0	15.0	63.0
	Daily wager	65	21.7	21.7	84.7
	Others(specify)	46	15.3	15.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	



Based on our investigation, we discovered the information included in the graph and table above, which indicates that the sample data consists of around 300 respondents. "Type of occupation/sector" 75(25%) respondents responded Agriculture & allied activities, 69(23%) respondents responded Service (Private and government), 45(15%) respondents responded Self-business and 65(21.67%) respondents responded Daily wager and 46(15.33%) respondents responded Others(specify).

Working Conditions of Female Workers in Informal Sector

Hundreds of millions of women in developing countries work in worse working conditions. They are exposed to risk at work and more susceptible than their male counterparts to the effect of various pollutants in the working environment. As a result, a large number of women face serious health and safety risks. The vast majority work in agriculture and are regularly exposed to severe weather, pointed instruments, hefty loads, and, increasingly, harmful chemicals and motorised machinery. These issues may have an irreparable physical, psychological, and moral influence on female employees' health and well-being.

In urban informal sector, most of the female workers work in less lighting, dirty places, very hot or cold and less ventilated environment. They have not any basic facilities like clean drinking water, toilets, first aid etc. at their working places. Majority of them always carry



heavy loads and adopt uncomfortable positions, which give them aches and pains. They have to face many types of exploitation like low wages, long hours of work, physically hurt, denied other basic needs and payment not on time etc. They work beyond their physical capacity due to various reasons like no other alternative, for more wages, satisfaction of the employers etc. Due to urgent needs, they have taken some amount in advance from their employers and their wages adjust against their debt.

So, they work as bondage labour. They don't get any social security (i.e. compensation, leave with pay, maternity benefits, child care facilities, free medical treatment etc.) from their employers. Moreover, they have not any awareness regarding laws, welfare schemes and Government policies for female workers. The large proportion of them has not membership of any labour union. To greater or lesser extent, the risk of occupational hazards is present in different employment. The type of working conditions of particular occupation and activity mainly depend upon its nature. The following are the specific working conditions and problems of construction, domestic and self-employed female workers:

Outside of agricultural, manufacturing, and service industries, which together employ more than 80% of female employees, the construction industry employs a considerable and steadily rising share of female workers. Female construction workers are among the greatest sufferers of prejudice and hardship among informal sector employees. Working on construction sites is a challenging job. Females perform in a variety of menial jobs that, although unseen, are inescapable in the construction industry. They are mostly head-load labourers who transport bricks, cement, sand, and water from one location to another, as well as clean up, concreting, and earthwork, often at considerable heights along dangerously perched wooden beams or buildings. This puts them at danger of accidents, as well as physical and emotional exhaustion.

They are also at danger of dying as a result of a workplace catastrophe. However, they get no remuneration in return. Almost majority of them are subjected to mistreatment and harassment by contractors. In terms of vocabulary and gestures, there is an oblique reference to sexual harassment. Females who work as casual labourers endure not just job instability but also lower pay than their male colleagues. Permanency of employment benefits are only accessible to workers who can develop a long-term working connection with their company.

There is no credible estimate of the number of domestic employees in the United States. They are active in houses all throughout the nation, even in the most remote and refractory locations,



while being more apparent in metropolitan areas. There are no specific skills required for this job. Domestic workers are mostly from rural regions and are very impoverished, illiterate, and uneducated. There is no social security system on which domestic employees may rely. They work long hours and undertake a variety of jobs, yet they do not get the bare minimum of decent treatment or enough social security. They also face the danger of being sexually harassed or exploited.

The self-employed are not a homogenous group of people. Employers, who hire employees on a more or less regular basis, own account workers, who do not hire workers on a regular basis, and unpaid family caregivers are split into three categories. Their marginal position is superior to that of other employees. One of the touted benefits of female self-employment is the ability to work at their own speed and convenience. Their employment is not subject to the whims of their bosses. In India, a considerable number of women work for themselves doing things like sewing, knitting, weaving, embroidery, street vending, and so on. Beauty salons, shops, retail commerce, and other professional services are also available.

CONCLUSION

India has a very low participation rate for women, which means that they make very little money for the country as a whole. Because of cultural and methodological reasons, it is clear that women aren't given the credit they deserve. Women aren't making as much money as they used to because they aren't in the labour force as much. If there are countries where labour force surveys (or population censuses) haven't included women in the labour force, they undervalue how important they are.

According to a 2005 UNIFEM report, women are more probable than men to work in non-agricultural informal jobs, such as owning their own businesses, taking care of their families, and contributing to their families' businesses without getting paid. While men are more likely to work as employers and wage earners, women are more likely to work for them (ibid).

It's thought that about 94 percent of the women who work aren't in an organised or formal job. Only 6 percent are in an organised or formal job. This figure comes from the "National Commission on Self-Employed Women in 1988. So it's not a stretch to say that the unorganised sector in India is the women's sector."



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