



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Home Science

WORKING WOMEN ISSUES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

India is a traditional country and there is blend in religions, traditions and customs. In India women's role is mostly household based and limited to domestic issues. The economic participation of Women in the field of production of possessions and services are accounted in the national income statistics yet, the work participation of female has always been low at 26% when compared to 52% of men. Women always take dual responsibility and play a pivotal role in making the decisions especially working women. Women's contribution in work is considered in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent into work environment, is greater than non-working women. Thus women play a major role of working women and homemaker. Women working in unorganized sectors faces many problems related to their nature of work are quite different from other professions as they work for long hours with low wages. The above reasons have made the investigator to study the reasons for working, various health problems faced by women working in unorganized sectors, and to identify the preventive ways for it. The study was done by using a questionnaire which was collected from 30 selected women working in unorganized sector in Chennai. Data indicated that majority of women working in unorganized sector faced problems due to knee pain, swelling of legs and arms, skin problems, and mental stress due to insecure job, no proper work time and low wages.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Employment and Social Outlook "Trends for Women 2018" Global snapshot, the global women's labour force participation rate at 48.5% in 2018 is still 26.5% points below the rate of their male counterparts, whereas the global unemployment rate of women for 2018 at 6% is approximately 0.8% points higher than the rate for men. In total, this means that for every ten men in a job, only 6 women are in employment. The term *unorganized worker* means a home-based worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganized sector and includes a worker in the organized sector who is not covered by any Acts mentioned in Schedule II of the Unorganized Workers Social Act 2008. National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) says that fifty two percent of unorganized workers (UW) are engaged in agriculture & allied sector and they represent more than 90 percent of the labour work force. UW also contributes 50 percent to Gross domestic product. So it is of utmost importance to look into the dilemma of this poverty-stricken and downtrodden class of India. According to statistics of Ministry of Labour (2008), UW is classified into four groups by their occupation, nature of employment, service and special category. In all the regions, women either work for poor wages or not paid. Rao and Suryanarayana (2013) consider that with the entry of younger women in the export processing zones, market segmentation is being accentuated; female dominated jobs are being devalued, degraded and least paid. Though this does not augur well for women development, it has not deterred women from contributing to family survival, and studies do not want which highlight that it is women who settle down in the labour market as flower and fruit vendors, domestic servants and allow the men to find suitable job leisurely or improve their skill. Achieving the right balance between too much and too little stress has become an integral challenge of life. The lifestyle and preventive approach of developing positive health includes actions in main areas like relaxation, diet and exercise to reduce stress (Vikas, 2001). The study on the "Issues and health problems of middle aged women working in unorganized sector" selected to bring of the birds eye view of their problems and the same is been discussed below:

The objectives of the study are to

1. Find out the personal profile of the selected women working in unorganized sectors.
2. Identify the reason for stress among the selected working women in unorganized sectors.
3. Understand the health issues of women working in

unorganized sectors.

Methodology

An Ex post facto research design was used for the study. Using purposive sampling technique 30 middle aged women (40–55years) working in unorganized sectors residing in kakathoppu in Chennai city was selected.

Selection of Tool

The main tool used for collecting the data was questionnaire. The questionnaire is one where list of questions are properly selected and arranged pertaining to the investigation (Gupta, 1993) comprehensive in nature was designed to elicit required information. Pilot study was conducted to test reliability and validity of the tool. Data were analyzed using percentage analysis. The results are presented below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic profile of the selected subjects reveals the personal data of selected subjects as educational qualification, income, marital status, occupation and type of house which was analysed and presented in table 1

Table 1: Personal profile of the selected respondents

Personal profile	Frequency (N=30)	Percent
Educational qualifications		
Illiterates	24	80.00
1 st to 5 th standard	4	13.00
5 th to 8 th standard	2	7.00
Income		
Below Rs. 5000	16	53.00
Rs 5000 – 8000	14	47.00
Marital Status		
Married	17	57.00
Widows	10	33.00
Living Separately	3	10.00
Occupation		
House maids	11	37.00
Construction workers	4	13.00
Fruit/Vegetable Vendors	15	50.00
Type of House		
Own	3	10.00
Rental	27	90.00

Educational Qualifications:

Eighty percent of the selected samples were found to be illiterate, while 13 percent of the selected samples were educated up to 5th standard and rest of the samples has studied up to 8th standard

Income:

Fifty three percent of the selected middle aged women had income below Rs.5000 per month and forty seven percent of the respondent's had an income between Rs 5000 to Rs.8000 per month.

Marital Status:

Fifty seven percent of the selected respondents were married and living as a family whereas 43 per cent of women were single earners, 10 percent were living separately and 33 percent of them were widows.

Occupation:

It is observed that in general 50% of the selected subjects were working as fruit and vegetables vendors. Nearly 37% of the middle aged women were house maid and rest of them were working in constructions as helpers.

Type of house:

From the table 90 percent of the respondents were residing in rental house and remaining 10% of them were in own house.

Table 2- Reasons for Stress

Reasons for Stress	Frequency (N=30)	Percent
Insecure job	26	87.00
Non sympathetic attitude of employer	27	90.00
Lack of education	30	100.00
Insufficient skill & knowledge	17	57.00
Exploitation of the female labour	19	63.00
No Proper working time	30	100.00
No proper Income to satisfy the needs of the family members	30	100.00
Extreme work pressure	30	100.00
Irregular wages	29	97.00
Death of Husband	12	40.00
Seasonal employment	18	60.00
No proper toilet facilities at workplace	27	90.00
Distance to workplace	24	80.00
Marriage of children	19	63.00

Table 2 exhibits the reasons for stress of selected middle aged women working in unorganized sectors. In general cent percent of the selected respondents seemed to have faced stress due to "lack of education", "No proper working time", "No proper Income to satisfy the needs of the family members" and "Extreme work pressure". Majority (97 percent) of the selected respondents seemed to have experienced stress due to "Irregular wages" followed by "Non sympathetic attitude of employer" and "No proper toilet facilities at workplace" (90 percent). About (87 percent) of the selected respondents' reason for stress was "insecure job" followed by "Distance to workplace" (80 percent), "Exploitation of the female labour" and "Marriage of children" (63 percent), "Seasonal employment" (60 percent), "Insufficient skill & knowledge" (57 percent) and "Death of Husband" (40 percent). According to Chatterjee (2009), the reasons for vulnerability of the unorganised women workers are irregular work, low economic status, little or no bargaining power, lack of control over earnings, need to balance paid work with care for children and home, little or no access to institutional credit, training and information, and lack of assets.

Table 3- Health problems of women working in unorganized sectors

Health problems	Frequency (N =30)	Percentage
Fatigue	30	100.00
Weight loss	30	100.00
Change of appetite	28	93.00
Shortness of breath	30	100.00
Cough	28	93.00
Neck pain	30	100.00
Joint/ Knee pain	30	100.00
Swelling in legs	30	100.00
Giddiness	26	87.00
Headache	30	100.00
cold	23	77.00
Back Pain	30	100.00
Skin Problem	30	100.00
Menstrual Problem	27	90.00

Table 3 shows the health problems faced due to stress by the selected middle aged women. It is evident from the table that all have fatigue, weight loss, shortness of breath, neck pain, Joint/Knee pain, Swelling in legs, Headache, Back pain and Skin Problem followed by change of appetite & cough (93 percent), Mensural problem (90 percent), giddiness (87 percent) and cold (77 percent). The impact of work and environment on women was studied and found a strong relationship between women's health and work life (Kotwal et al., 2008). Sengupta (2010) observed that the tasks performed by women are usually those that require them to be in one position for long periods of time, which affects their reproductive health.

CONCLUSION:

It is inferred from the study that majority of women working in unorganized sector were married and illiterate whose monthly income was below Rs. 5000. It is noted that cent percent of the selected respondents seemed to have faced stress due to "lack of education", "No proper working time", "No proper Income to satisfy the needs of the family members" and "Extreme work pressure and faced health problems like Fatigue, weight loss, Shortness of breath, Neck pain, Joint/Knee pain, Swelling, Headache, Back pain and Skin Problem. Majority of the women working in unorganized sectors were extremely stressed. According to Kumar & A.K. Shiv, (2006) women workers in the unorganised sector have little or no social security. Absence of protection against occupational and health hazards is creating vulnerable situations for women workers in the unorganised sector. Unorganised workers in India face three major threats to human security: poor health, shrinking livelihoods and muted voice. Health is among the leading causes of both impoverishment and vulnerability of workers in the unorganised sector. To perform their roles fruitfully, they are in need of providing more consideration and protection to their health through distress. At this juncture, they are in need of well planned life styles programs to reduce stress and make themselves healthy.

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