

**A STUDY ON THE SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC
WORKERS IN PALAYAMKOTAI MUNICIPAL CITY CORPORATION
TIRUNELVELI**

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ABSTRACT

Women workers in the informal economy consist of the most affected working sectors in society. They come from a marginalised population who's legal, economic and political status limit their ability to demand or access their rights. These women include domestic workers whose social and economic contributions to society are invisible to the public, the law and policies of the country. They face challenges because their work is not considered 'real' work so that their rights to minimum standards of decent work are continually violated. As a result, this research attempts to look at these challenges through studies into the profile of domestic workers, their burdens and vulnerabilities in work place, efforts of the government to address the issues and efforts of domestic workers and partner organisations to organise them. This research will cover issues related to minimum standards of decent work, including definition, terms and condition of domestic work, live-in and live-out arrangements, wages, leaves and social security. The unique feature of their workplace, which is the home of their employer, makes them vulnerable to abuses and exploitation. This is because the State would always be reluctant to consider a home a workplace that they can regulate. The lack of capacity, support and unity as an organised sector make the challenges they face doubly difficult.

Key words: Women workers. government, Financial performance, organisations

Introduction

A domestic worker is someone who works within the employer's household. Domestic workers perform a variety of household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to cleaning and household maintenance, known as housekeeping. Responsibilities may also include cooking, doing laundry and ironing, food shopping and other household errands. Some domestic workers live within the household where they work in order to take care of elderly. Yes, millions of women, men and children - India's large force of domestic workers, or 'servants', as most people call them - remain unseen, undervalued and denied rights that all workers deserve.

The maids or domestic workers are excluded from labour laws. The exclusion is just a short distance to abuse: long hours, bad pay, inhuman treatment, physical and sexual harassment. Domestic workers in India are routinely harassed and exploited by their employers, despite several steps taken by the government to improve their lot.

It is often led to confrontations and, occasionally, firings. Household workers have no government protections, no minimum-wage guarantees, no health benefits, no paid holidays and, usually, no days off. Hindered by traditional prejudices against their lowcaste status, many domestic workers say they have been forced to the sidelines as the middle and upper classes prospered during the country's decade long boom.

They are challenging deep-rooted prejudices about caste, class and labour, and calling on India's government to extend to domestic workers the rights, benefits and protections afforded to workers in other fields. Therefore there is a compulsory necessity to design a module in seeking and advocating the solutions for the women domestic workers which could be materialized with a systematic research.

Review

“Economics of Cotton Handloom Industry in India” is the study of P.C.Mahapatrol conducted in the state of Orissa. He examined the relevance of the handloom industry to the economy of the Orissa state and scrutinized the general characteristics of the industry. Output and

employment aspects of the industry, income of the weaving households and their economic conditions have been analyzed. The major problems facing the industry such as marketing, finance and supply of yam were highlighted. In addition, the study also evaluated the efficacy of various policies adopted by the Government for the development of the handloom industry in Orissa.

John D.K.Sundar Singh (1987) has made a comparative analysis of co-operative and private sectors on the cost structure, profit, physical output, productivity, sales, wages and reinvestment. It has been found that master weavers have produced 87.80 per cent of handloom products and the cooperatives have produced only 12.20 per cent of the products. The production of fine varieties of saree by the weavers was relatively low, compared to production of coarse varieties. The weavers in the co-operative sector got better wages than the weavers working under master weavers. Consequently, the master weavers earned greater profit than the co-operatives.

Amrik Singh Sudan, (1997) in his book titled 'Marketing Management of Handloom Products in Jammu & Kashmir,' has made a detailed analysis of marketing management of handloom products of J&K State Handloom Development Corporation and observed that the handloom products lacked quality control, testing and inspection. He has suggested to establish data banks to assess customers' preferences and speedy disposal of looms/sales rebates for strengthening the handloom marketing, apart from improving finishing operations and measures for incorporating variety of designs

K.Renganathan and P.V.Veeraragavan (1985) analysed the sectoral costs of mill sector, powerloom sector and handloom sector. They observed that the fabrics produced in handlooms are costlier on the average by 20 percent than those of powerlooms due to higher conversion cost consequent to low labour productivity

"Impact of Handloom Co-operatives on the Socio-economic Conditions of Weavers in Visakhapatnam District by K. Rama Mohana Rao² is an attempt in the direction of conducting district level studies. The main objective of the study is to measure the impact of primary handloom weaver's co-operative societies on the socio-economic conditions of weavers in the Visakhapatnam district, by choosing 250 weavers who are members of cooperative societies. The

author analyzed the impact of the social life of the weavers with the help of the factors such as improvement in social status, better household facilities to children, ability to spend on family members, entertainment, confidence in future and participation in local associations

Objectives

The study has the following objectives.

- (i) To study the economic, demographic profile of women domestic workers in palayamkottai
- (ii) To study the social status of Women domestic workers in palayamkottai Municipal city Corporation- palayamkottai
- (iii) To examine the work related issues, problems faced by the women domestic workers.

Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the objectives of the studies the following null Hypothesis was formed.

1. There is no significant relationship between the age of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
2. There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the respondents and their level satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The study covers the analysis of different dimension with varied nature of Socio-Economic status (Housing and Environment Sanitation, Assets, Financial Assistance, House hold monthly income and Expenditure, Occupational Background, Working Condition, and issues and Problems Faced) by Women Domestic Workers in Tiruchirappalli Municipal Corporation. And Examines Economic Status, Working Condition, Sources of Financial Assistance Generated, Management of Income & Expenditure, and the Problems related to work and family.

Sampling

A sample of 50 respondents was selected for the study by using stratified random sampling method. The sample respondents for the study was stratified into 10 respondents each

from five handloom weavers namely palayamkottai, ktc nager, samathanapuram, melapalayam, v.m sathram

Limitation of the study

- The study is limited to palayamkottai only and so the result may vary in other regions.
- The data collected from the respondents are subject to change.
- The information will be collected valid until there is no technical change or any innovation

ANNUAL INCOME

The income of the weavers' families determines the standards of living and financial status. Individuals with higher income will naturally have the capacity to spend on various goods and services to have a better life. In the study area, all the weavers are dependent on weaving as their lone activity for their livelihood.

Level of awareness towards organic products Vs Size of the family of consumers

Range of income	workers under MWS	workers under Co-operative Societies	Independent workers	TOTAL
Below Rs.25,000	4.7778	5.0000	4.7778	5.0000
Rs.25,001to50,000	3.7556	4.0000	3.7556	4.0000
Rs.50,001to75,000	3.5111	3.2667	3.5111	3.2667
Rs.75,001to1,00,000	3.4222	2.6667	3.4222	2.6667
Above rs. 1,00,000	4.7778	5.0000	4.7778	5.0000
Total	3.7556	4.0000	3.7556	4.0000
	4.7778	5.0000	4.7778	5.0000

Source: Computed Data

The above table shows the following results.

Since the 'p' value is less than 0.05 in case of the size of the family of the workers and the level of awareness towards Handloom weavers is good for the environment, advertising,

economical, offer and discounts, suppliers and queries and complaints”, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between size of the family of the consumers and level of awareness towards organic products “Organic farming Handloom weavers is good for the environment, advertising, economical, offer and discounts, suppliers and queries and complaints”.

Level of satisfaction towards workers among different monthly income of consumers

Consumers of different monthly income have different level of satisfaction towards organic products. In order to find out the significant difference in level of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers in Palayamkottai, ‘ANOVA’ test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, “**There is no significant difference in level of satisfaction towards Handloom weavers among different monthly income of consumers in Palayamkottai**”. The result of ANOVA is presented.

Level of satisfaction towards Handloom weavers among different monthly income of consumers

Particulars	Monthly Income (Mean Score)				F Statistics
	Below Rs.15000	Rs.15001- 20000	Rs.20001- 30000	Above Rs.30000	
Quality	5.0000	4.7778	5.0000	5.0000	4.187*
Quantity	4.0000	3.7556	4.0000	4.0000	4.187*
Price	3.2667	3.5111	3.2667	3.2667	4.023*
Availability of products	3.2639	3.4222	2.6667	2.6667	0.658
Taste	4.9306	4.7778	5.0000	5.0000	4.023*
Health fitness	4.0000	3.9028	3.7556	4.0000	0.658

Source: Computed data

*-Significant at five per cent level

the mean score of satisfaction towards Handloom weavers among different monthly income of consumers along with its respective ‘F’ statistics. The important satisfaction towards organic products among the consumers who are earning monthly income of below Rs.15000 are

quality and health fitness and their respective mean scores are 5.0000 and 4.9000 among the consumers who are earning monthly income between Rs.15001-20000, quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 5.0000 and 4.8333. The important satisfaction towards organic products among the consumers who belong to the monthly income between Rs.20001-30000 are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.9306 and 4.5000, among the consumers who belong to the monthly income of above Rs.30000, quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.7778 and 4.4222. Regarding the level of satisfaction towards organic products, the significant difference among the different monthly income of consumers, is identified in the case of quality, quantity, availability of products and taste, since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ranking of major problems faced in buying Handloom weavers

Sl. No	Major problems faced in buying organic products	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Only consumers with higher income can workers	6194	41.29	V
2.	weavers is too expensive	9432	62.88	I
3.	There is no consumption awareness about workers	7253	48.35	IV
4.	workers is only available in limited stores/ markets	7781	51.87	III
5.	Buying workers is highly inconvenient	8919	59.46	II
6.	workers does not possess much of difference with non organic foods	5165	34.43	VI

Source: Computed Data

It is observed that workers is too expensive' has been ranked as the first major problem faced in buying organic products, 'buying workers is highly inconvenient' has been ranked as second, organic food is only 'available in limited stores/markets' has been placed in third position, there is 'no consumption awareness about workers is ranked as fourth followed by only

consumers with higher income can buy workers has been ranked as fifth position and Handloom does not possess much of difference with non Handloom ranked as last position.

Ranking of future prospects of Handloom

Sl. No	Future prospects of organic products	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Improve the marketing channels for Handloom	7688	51.94	V
2.	Ensure regular supply of Handloom	8034	52.20	IV
3.	Ensure food safety	8388	57.72	I
4.	Educate people about the benefits of Handloom	6940	51.25	VI
5.	Improve health of consumers	8034	53.56	III
6.	Ensure good quality	8388	55.92	II
7.	Good opportunities to ensure food security and nutrition	6940	46.26	VII
8.	Ensure food availability	6039	40.26	VIII
9.	Ensure the sustainable marketing of Handloom	5676	37.84	IX

Source: Primary Data

It is observed from the that 'Ensure food safety' has been ranked as the first future prospects of organic products,' Handloom ensure good quality' as second, improve health of consumers placed in third position, 'ensure regular supply' of organic products as fourth followed by 'improve the marketing channels' for Handloom as fifth position, 'educate people about the benefits' of Handloom as sixth position, 'good opportunities to ensure food security and nutrition' as seventh position, 'ensure food availability' as eighth position and ensure the sustainable marketing of Handloom products as last position

Findings of ranking of major problems faced in buying Handloom

- It is found that the idea “Handloom is too expensive” has been ranked as the first major problem faced in buying organic products; ‘buying Handloom is highly inconvenient’ has been ranked as second; and ‘Handloom is only available in limited stores/markets’ placed in third position and ‘Handloom does not possess much of difference with non Handloom s’ is ranked as the last position.

Findings of Level of Satisfaction

- There are 47% of the women domestic workers are using tap water supply as free dominant sources of drinking water almost in the all the zones followed by Tube well (21%). The least 15% of the women domestic workers reports open well as the source of drinking water. There are 17% of the WDWs reported that they use of multiple sources of drinking water by means of water supplied through lorry’s and water tanks..
 - Fire wood is the fuel commonly used for cooking as preferred 39% of the women domestic workers. Kerosene 37%, cow dung cake 16%, Gas 4% and Electric stove etc., are the other type of fuel used for cooking.
 - The weavers who have Artisan Credit Cards or NABARD sponsored Handloom Weaver Groups are eligible to avail credit. Only one member from the family is eligible for subsidy under this scheme and extendable credit is limited upto Rs. 15,000 per annum, in case of groups the subsidy will be limited to individual loan of Rs. 15,000 per weaver. The loan taken by the weavers will be repaid fully (100 per cent) in the form of installments as fixed by bankers without any default and the interest charges to these loans is 3 per cent.
- Telephone/ mobile: cell phone is an important communication device. It is considered asset in the domestic workers. Maximum 57% (257) of the WDWs have cell phones. So it is ranked as fourth. Cell phone is a basic necessity of people. Furniture and chairs: Maximum of the 45% (204) of the WDWs have furniture and chairs in their houses. It is ranked fifth. Jewels: Indian tradition gold ornaments is getting important place of the family functions. Every marriage and family functions priority is given to gold ornaments. Maximum 34% (152) of the respondents have gold ornaments, so it is ranked as sixth.

Conclusion

- The calculated value is $X^2 = 8.085$ and $(0.44 > 0.05)$. Hence, the calculated value is less than the table value. Therefore, research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a significant association between place of work of the respondents and their overall opinion about working conditions. The work environment is having influences of place of work. So that the researcher having hypothesis between size of the family and overall opinion about their major expenses. It is understood that place of work plays important role in working conditions of women domestic workers.
- The calculated value is $F = 0.410$, $(P = 0.746)$; the calculated value is less than the table value $(0.746 < 0.05)$. So that research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a difference between age of the respondents and overall perception about their monthly house hold income and expenses. Age is the major factor which influences expenses of household. So that researcher analyses through one way ANOVA is done and found that difference between age of the respondents
- The calculated value is $F = 4.222$, $(P = 0.005)$; the calculated value is less than the table value $(0.005 < 0.05)$. So that research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. It is found that there is a difference between marital status of the respondents and their overall opinion about major expenses. Marital status is the factor which influences expenses of house hold. Purchasing behaviour may different of the married people and unmarried people. So that researcher analysis through one way ANOVA .

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