

Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Workers in Unorganised Sector in Prayagraj

Mr. Manish Kumar Tiwari^a, Dr Enid Masih^b

- a. Research Scholar, Department of Business Studies Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj – 211007, U.P., India
- b. Professor, Department of Business Studies Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj – 211007, U.P., India Email: enid.masih@shiats.edu.in

Abstract

A person working in the unorganised sector, whether from home, as a sole proprietor, or for pay, is the primary topic of this article. The article's goals highlight the socioeconomic circumstances, wage discrimination, and issues they encounter as an informal worker. Using a random selection procedure, 50 samples were obtained for the questionnaire in 2025. This article has covered a lot of ground, including the fact that unorganised women workers do not have access to union representation, job security, fair pay for equal effort, a consistent work environment, clean working conditions, etc. We are guaranteed and protected by our laws and courts in India, and we also have basic rights. Unorganised women workers are oblivious and uneducated; therefore they do not receive the additional rights and attention granted by the constitution and laws. Women who work for unorganised businesses are at a social and economic disadvantage. Wage discrimination against women in comparison to males in the workforce is another topic covered in this article.

KEYWORDS: Women, unorganized, informal, wage, discrimination, labor, employment.

1. Introduction

These employees are known as "unorganised workers" in India, a term that describes both the informal sector and the unorganised sector more generally. The contribution of India's unorganised workers to the country's GDP is substantial. Working conditions in this industry are characterised by low wages, precarious and irregular employment, and a lack of legal or union protections. Traditional methods and technologies that rely on human labour predominate in the informal economy. The dispersed nature of the unorganised sector's workforce renders the legislation's execution woefully weak and ineffectual. In contrast to the organised sector, the unorganised sector makes a huge contribution to the country's GDP. It contributes about 60% to the GDP, with the organised sector accounting for about 50% (depending on the industry) of that total.

The majority of our society's economically and socially disadvantaged women work in informal sectors. For basic necessities, many of these working women are the main breadwinners in their families.

A particularly vulnerable segment of the labour force consists of low-income women who work, disproportionately, in the informal economy. Many factors contribute to their precarious financial situation, including irregular work schedules, low income, wage discrimination, weak bargaining position, inability to manage one's own earnings, juggling paid employment with caregiving

responsibilities, limited access to formal credit, education, and resources, and a dearth of assets.

In an effort to rally India's disorganised workforce, the government has launched programmes such as The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan, an initiative by the government to ensure the retirement and social security of unorganised workers, and the Aam Admi Beema Yojana, which has been enforcing certain social security measures for specific occupational groups, are all part of the e-shram portal.

In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, we will find Prayagraj City. The region is well-known for the industrial accessibility, commercial hub and tourists flock to it. As a result, there are more opportunities for casual jobs. There are a lot of women working as housemaids, in small and large-scale companies, in petrol bunks, on agricultural areas, and in small food manufacturing processes in this area. The working ladies' range in age from twenty to seventy.

Due to some unfair social security policies, unmarried women are forced to work as contract labourers in the industrial sector, hospitals, etc., whereas married women predominate in all forms of informal work. Employers do not have to pay these women anything, and they do not qualify for paid time off, sick days, or social security benefits.

A large number of people, both officially and informally employed, find work in the Prayagraj city. A portion of the working women are eligible for a 90-day paid maternity leave. The remaining employees are not supported by their employers and have unpaid maternal leave. Their pay is lower than that of males. To rephrase, employers force women to work at poor wages. Despite working in the same field, men and women in some regions do not receive equal pay. Agricultural labourers frequently experience this.

The Respondents in Prayagraj City were surveyed using a Convenient Random Sample technique, with a total of 50 samples obtained. In order to help alleviate their families' financial hardships, the women in this region are reportedly forced to work in the unorganised economy. As a result of the COVID pandemic, they have suffered the most. A large portion of their population saw the death of a breadwinner.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-Economic Background of women workers in the study area.
2. To study the causes of wage discrimination in the workplace.
3. To study the challenges faced by the women workers in unorganised sector.

2. Review of literature

According to R. Gopalasundhar (2020), forced idleness is more common among women than males due to the seasonal nature of agriculture and low production, which diminish the demand for female labour. The subsistence character of farming, where the family eats the products, and the lack of economic holdings further reduce women's productivity in agriculture.

Muhammad Tahani Alqahtani (2021) In light of the many difficulties women have faced in the home and on the job, striking a good work-life balance is more important than ever for working women. Several research on the topic have shown that women typically experience role conflict at a higher rate than men, according to this literature review. When a person's expectations for their work and family lives are at odds with one another, it can lead to work-family conflict.

Concerning women in India's unorganised economy, Manju (2017) conducted research. Identifying the various types of women workers in India and studying the challenges they encounter are the

primary goals of this research. According to her, women who work in the unorganised sector face a number of challenges, including: a lack of education, inadequate skills and knowledge, exploitation of female labour, job insecurity, an employer's lack of sympathy, extreme work pressure, irregular wage payment, wage discrimination, seasonal employment, physical problems, and more.

In 2017, Nadia Ahad and Pratibha J. Mishra Published a journal article stating that, with regard to labour policy, India has consistently adhered to a practice policy. He went on to say that India has changed throughout time to meet the demands of planned economic growth and social justice, with a dual purpose of fostering industrial harmony and improving workers' conditions.

In 2016, Patel and Pitroda found The manufacturing sector, which includes factories that make clothing, food, tools, leather, weaving, sawmills, oil mills, beedi rolling, and other similar operations, is largely staffed by women. They are not considered mainstay employees, despite their significant contributions. Even when they put in the same amount of time and effort as their male colleagues, contractors pay female workers less.

C. Tholkappian and Kulandhaivelu (2014) zeroed in on India's unorganised female workforce. Workers who are not part of a formal union or association do not have a common ideology, objectives, or areas of expertise. The global financial institutions have put tremendous pressure on countries to abandon their long-established social security systems, which have been designed to protect the most vulnerable members of society. Reason being: massive privatisation. This, then, is the time, in his view, to make sure the country is free from injustice and exploitation of any type.

The Challenges Encountered by Indian Working Women was the subject of research by Dr. Kamini B. Dashora (2013). He said that as more and more women are working outside the home, sexual harassment has grown into a big societal issue. Mental harassment is another serious issue that they found among working women. Prejudice in the Workplace, Protection of Working Women However, working women also face the significant challenge of travelling. The group came to the conclusion that employers, policymakers, family members, and the general public all need to adjust their attitudes.

The findings of the article "Plight of women workers in unorganised sector - a conceptual study" by Dr. C. Gnanadesigan and R. J. Yuvnesh Kumar (2024) shed light on the horrific working conditions that women in this industry face. These conditions include long hours, little pay, no social security, and restricted access to healthcare and education. In addition, the study explores the complex relationship between gender-based discrimination and other characteristics, namely how caste, class, and religion worsen the challenges that these women encounter. The research acknowledges the significance of these problems and proposes legislative remedies to help women in the informal economy. Minimum wage increases, worker protections, social safety nets, programmes to help people acquire new skills, and initiatives to promote gender parity in the workplace are all part of this category. Better working circumstances, economic empowerment, and social well-being for women in the unorganised sector can be achieved if lawmakers work towards a more inclusive and fair society by executing these suggestions.

3.Research Design

The goal of this study piece is to have a better understanding of women's socioeconomic status, wage inequality, and other frequent issues. As a result, the research literature and expert recommendations will be consulted in the development of this article. Percentage, Average, and overall descriptive statistics are some of the statistical tools employed. Using a random sampling procedure, 50 samples were obtained in October 2025 for the questionnaire. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, was the site of the data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

In this phase all the samples were discussed in different aspects. Statistical tools like addition, simple average, and simple percentage are used. Data were collected from Prayagraj City.

Table 1 Age of the respondents

S.no	Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	20-40	32	48
2	41-60	13	48
3	61-80	3	4
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Age composition of the respondents was examined in Table-1. which clearly shows that women in age between 20 to 80 are engaged in informal work. Out of 50 samples, 3 women are aged above 60 years who are still working for daily needs.

Table 2 Education Status

S.no	Education	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Primary school	14	28
2	High school	20	40
3	Higher secondary	12	24
4	Degree	4	8
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 demonstrates that the percentage of illiterate people in this research region is higher than the national average. Of those, fourteen have not even completed elementary school. Just four women managed to finish their bachelor's degrees. Literate as they are, they find themselves underemployed.

Table 3 Cost of living

S.no	Cost of living/month	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	< -8000	9	18
2	8001-10000	24	48
3	10001-15000	13	26
4	15001- >	4	8
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that 18% of people surveyed reported monthly expenses for necessities below Rs.8000. Nearly half (48%) of those who spent up to Rs. 100,000 did so. Compared to the first, the second category is marginally superior. Out of all the categories, the third and fourth are the best.

Table 4 Occupations

S.no	Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Landless Farmer	08	16
2	Landed Farmer/Self employed	09	18
3	Shop Owner	06	12
4	Contact employee	14	28
5	Services in hotels, bakeries, retail shops etc.	13	26
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 clearly shows that major women are engaged in contract works and services like hotel or bakery employee, etc. Only 8 percent of women working as landless former. In this article those landless farmers are aged above 40 years.

Table 5 Income of the Respondents

S.no	Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	below-5000	2	04
2	5001-10000	21	42
3	10001-15000	17	34
4	15001- above	10	20
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table - 5 shows that 20 percent of people earn the income as basic standard of living condition. But others not have the same. Some of the seasonal workers getting just Rs.5000 only. Those women completely depend on her behalf for basic monthly needs.

Table 6 Reason for doing this job

S.no	Reasons for working	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	To support family financially	22	44
2	Family situation forced me to do job	15	30
3	For getting more income	03	06
4	Poverty	02	04
5	Easy job	02	04
6	Self-Interest	06	12
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 6 shows that 30 percent of women are working in informal sector is only because of their family situation forced them to do work and earn money for raising their family. Surely 2 women in this survey belong to poverty line. Remaining are to earn more money to full fill their desire.

Table 7 **Extra wages**

S.no	Extra wages	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Bonus and medical facility only	19	38
2	Bonus, Provident Fund, Health insurance, medical facility	14	28
3	Bonus only	17	34
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

The above table7 shows that all the labors in all fields or working conditions are getting motivation from employers in terms of bonuses, provident funds, health insurance and medical facility.

Table 8 **Problems in workplace**

S.no	Problems in workplace	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Wage discrimination	13	26
2	Health Problem	23	46
3	Physically Abuse	06	12
4	Disputes	08	16
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 8 shows that 46 percent and 26 percent respondents are told that health problem and Wage discrimination are faced by them respectively. 12 percent of respondents felt badly about they are physically abused by employer and opposite gender that who are their co-workers.

Table 9 **Maternal supports**

S.no	Maternity support	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Paid leave	14	28
2	Unpaid leave	19	38
3	No support	17	34
Total		50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 9 shows that 28 percent of respondents have paid leave. Which means half of their full salary will be given for 90 days only. Then 38 percent of respondents have no payment when their maternal leave but they can continue the same position at the time of re-joining. Remaining 34 percent have

no support from the employer.

Table 10 Analysis of women labors in unorganized sector in Prayagraj city

S.no	Category	Socio-economic condition	Problems in Work place	Wage Discrimination
1	Agriculture/landless labor	Very low	Low wage	yes
2	Agriculture/self employed	low	Controversy	No
3.	Industries – Contract labors	low	Low wage, Physically abused	Yes
4.	Self employed	high	Disputes, no morality	No
5	Services, Construction workers	low	Low wage, Physically abused, health issues	yes

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly explains that all the categorized women labors are faced wage discrimination except who are self-employed in non-Agricultural Field. And their socio-economic conditions are low. Unorganized sector plays a crucial role in maximizing employment and standard of living. But there is a presence in Wage Discrimination, which has the indirect meaning of labor exploitation.

5. Conclusion

The employment and living conditions of women in the unorganised economy are closely related. The working conditions are terrible because of the inadequate infrastructure and the absence of basic services. The women who labour in the informal economy really need better working conditions. Improving infrastructure and providing basic services to all unorganised workers, particularly women, can accomplish this. Since most women workers do not qualify as beneficiaries of laws passed in the last 30 years, these laws remain out of reach for them. To ensure the policies are properly implemented and women working in the unorganised sector can experience all-around development, there must be a coordinated effort among various agencies and joint functionaries, including government, relevant departments, management, labour unions, local bodies, voluntary organisations, and women's organisations.

Many obstacles keep the poor and vulnerable women who work for unorganised organisations in Tamil Nadu in a precarious position. They have little choice but to work in low-skilled occupations for long hours for poor wages because they lack economic and educational alternatives. Their problems are made worse by wage discrimination, substandard housing, and limited access to essential services. In addition, many women are prone to exploitation because they are unaware of their rights. A combination of raising public awareness, improving their access to education and economic possibilities, and enacting legislation to safeguard their rights and enhance their working conditions is necessary to solve these problems.

Reference

1. S.N.Tripathy(2003). **“Women in informal sector”**.Discovery publishing house.
ISBN 8171416241,978817146240: 108 pages.
2. Kamini, R.Dhashora (2013), **“The challenges faced by Indian working women”**. Research Gate.
3. **Ministry of labor and employment**. <https://labour.gov.in>.
4. C.Tholkappian, kulandhaivelu (2014), **“Organized and unorganized women workers in India”**. International Journal: Academia.edu.
5. Tahani alqahtani (2020). **“ work life of women employees”** abdn.ac.uk.(pp.37-42).
6. Patel, R. & Pitroda, J. (2016). **“The Role of Women in Construction Industry: An Indian Perspective”**. Indian Journal of Technical Education (IJTE).
7. Nadia ahad,Pratibha J Mishra (2017). **“ Plight of women workers in unorganized sector of Baster District of Chhattisgarh”**. Journal: SHRAM
8. D'souza, Asha. (2010). **"Moving towards decent work for domestic workers Child domestic work A violation of human rights."** D'souza's report addresses the rights and working conditions of domestic workers, including child domestic workers, and advocates for policies promoting decent work and protecting human rights in this sector.
9. Dr. C. Gnanadesigan and R. J. Yuvnesh Kumar (2024) **“Plight of women workers in unorganized sector – a conceptual study”** Futuristic Trends in Management e-ISBN: 978-93-5747-895-3 IIP Series, Volume 3, Book 24, Chapter 15