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USE OF ICT FOR ENHANCING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: REVOLUTIONARY INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATION 122 – 127

Ajinkya S. Naphade, Piya P. More and Sudip N. Kambli

RECENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 128 – 134

Draksha Safdar Khan

IMPACT OF ONLINE PROMOTIONAL OFFERS ON E-BUYING: FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE 135 – 140

Krishnan Ramchandran and Dr. Ramraj T. Nadar

A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON ADOPTION OF MOBILE BANKING AMONG CUSTOMERS IN MUMBAI 141 – 144

Milind A. Bhuvra

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND APPAREL INDUSTRY 145 – 147

Puja Ahuja

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF MOBILE PHONES IN THE LIVES OF TEENAGERS/COLLEGE STUDENTS 148 – 150

Rajesh Rajan Nair

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RCH PROGRAM IN EMPOWERING RURAL HEALTH: A STUDY ON PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES BY PRIMARY HEALTH CENTERS IN MULANTHURUTHY BLOCK 151 – 153

Anjana G Nair and Dr Ajith P S

ISSUES & CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WORK FORCE IN UNORGANISED SECTOR 154 – 157

Dr. Sumathi Gopal

INTERNET BANKING & ITS IMPLICATIONS ON STUDENTS -A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO MUMBAI REGION 158 – 161

Prof. Swati Shetty

COMPARISON OF POWER, MUSCULAR STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE AMONG THE DISTRICT AND TAHSIL LEVEL OF SCHOOL MALE ATHLETES 162 - 165

Uday N. Manjre


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ISSUES & CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WORK FORCE IN UNORGANISED SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The unorganized women workers are living below the poverty line without adequate facilities and having very low income that does not meet their daily needs of life. Unorganized women workers means & includes home-based works likes rolling papad and beedis, self-employment programs likes selling vegetables, employment in household enterprises and small units, agricultural workers, labour on construction sites, domestic work, handicrafts, khadi and village industries, handloom weaving and sericulture etc. The women workers are employed mainly in the field of construction sector as a worker and comparatively more opportunities are there due to redevelopment process & improvement in the infrastructure policy in Maharashtra. They work hard in constructing building, bridges, mall etc. to make their life better and reach their children in quality education and healthy food without acquiring any special skill and training. The study focused on the job satisfaction of women and the data were collected from 100 respondents and also from various books, reports, journals and websites. This study will reveal that whether women are satisfied with the facilities including wages, ESI, EPF, leave with wages etc. at work place given by the employer for the women staff

Keywords: Unorganized; Women; Job Satisfaction; Legal Compliance & wages

INTRODUCTION

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. According to the information provided by the office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, As per Census 2011, the total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural labourers. Of the remaining female workers, 8.5 million are in household Industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers.

As per Census 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent as compared to 25.63 per cent in 2001. The Work Participation Rate of Women has reduced marginally in 2011 but there is an improvement from 22.27 per cent in 1991 and 19.67 per cent in 1981. The work participation rate for women in rural areas is 15.44 per cent as compared to 30.02 per cent in the urban areas.

In so far as the organized sector is concerned, in March, 2014 women workers constituted 20.5 percent of total employment in organized sector in the country which is higher by 0.1 percent as compared to the preceding year. As per the last Employment Review by Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T), on 31st March, 2011, about 59.54 lakh women workers were employed in the organized sector (Public and Private Sector). Of this, nearly 32.14 lakh women were employed in community, social and personal service sector.

The Indian constitution prima facie provides equal rights for men and women on paper. In spite of law & legislation being passed still women are given second priority in all the sectors especially in unorganized sector in terms of level and quality of employment compared to males. Majority of the rural women workers continue to labour because of many severe problems like Poverty, lack of access to education and inadequate health facilities etc. They are made to work for long hours and wages paid to them are not according to their work. In Mumbai, unorganized women workers constitute the mainly in the field of construction sector as worker. They worked hard to make their life better and reach their children in quality education and healthy food without acquiring any special skill and training.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR

According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), 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 social security benefits provided the employees. A number of Acts such as the Workmen's Compensation Act (1923), the Industrial Disputes Act (1947), the Employees State Insurance Act (1948), the Minimum Wages Act (1948), the Maternity Benefit Act (1961), the Contract Labour Act (1970), the Payment of Gratuity Act (1972), The Building and Construction Workers Act (1996) etc. are there to help unorganized workers to attain different kinds of social security and welfare benefits. Though it has been argued that the above Acts are directly and indirectly applicable to the workers in the unorganized sector also but it is not implemented properly in the case of unorganized workers. At present, only 10% of India's 470 million workforce is employed in the unorganized sector. In

other words, 90% of India's workers do not have the privileges like social security and workplace benefits enjoyed by their counterparts who are formally employed.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In India our informal economy is not transitory. The unorganized women workers are living below the minimum accepted standards without adequate shelter and toilet facilities. The low earning of these women cannot meet with their daily needs. They do marry, bear children, and get old but under these phases of life, they live the same life. They live under unhygienic environment which results dangerous diseases. They work more than men as they have to play a dual role working both in and outside the home. No doubt, there are some laws to protect women and prevent exploitation like the Interstate Migrant Workmen Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act 1979, The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 and Maternity Benefit Act 1961 etc. but these laws are not practically and strictly implemented. Many women workers are there in the field of construction and often they do not get support from the employer. So this study mainly focused on the problems of women in the construction site they are poor and with lower education by understanding their working conditions and job satisfaction and also to find out whether they were satisfied or not. Despite efforts made by the Government make in India, Skill India, Swayam program, Insolvency code, etc. should work in coordination with one another to ensure progress amongst workforce.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. Vandana Dave (2012) made an attempt to understand the socioeconomic condition of women labourers, nature of their work, their working conditions, wage pattern, wage discrimination and other difficulties faced by them at their work place. It was carried out with 350 respondents including women construction workers, agriculture labourers and domestic helpers working in the unorganized sector. The results showed that majority of the migrant women were engaged in the construction industry and were only employed in unskilled and low paying jobs as coolies, laborers and helpers and women were exploited to a greater degree as they were paid less compared to men for similar nature of work and hours spent on work. The conditions of work in the unorganized sector were unsatisfactory and the problems confronted by them were acute. And that their illiteracy, poverty and indebtedness forced them to work for lower wages and under unjust conditions.

Anthony P. D'souza (2013) focused the status and contribution of unorganized sector focused more on the challenges and problems faced by the youth in selecting job as self-employment. It is found that larger number of workers was getting their livelihood from this sector and entrepreneur plays a vital role in bringing up unorganized sector at the better position in the country. Vasudev and Romica (2012) conducted a study amongst working women of the organized and unorganized sector for understand their status within the family by looking at their involvement in key decision making areas including distribution of household duties and money related decisions.

(REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 11, 2004) bring out the consequences and determinants of women's work in the unorganized sector. It is revealed that women in the construction sector are working with very lower wages than the minimum wage fixed. They are not getting any service benefits such as increment, leave, pension, P.F and insurance. They are all coming from the lower class family and are exploited in many ways.

OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight the unorganized sector in the context of construction site.
2. To understand the women problems in the unorganized sector especially in construction site.
3. To specify the problems of women relating to wage structure, social security and their job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE STUDY

Construction industry is one of the main livelihoods of the poor and uneducated women. Women workers in the construction site in Mumbai, Thane & Navi Mumbai areas were the respondents of this study. The primary data were collected from 100 respondents and also from various books, reports, journals and websites.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This is clear from the study that the women engaged in construction site is comparatively higher than the other works because of easy accessibility and also no need for particular skill. But compare to men women also face some sort of inequality in wages. This revealed that most of the women were dissatisfied with the facilities at work place given by the employer like special facilities for the women staff and staying or hostel facility etc but there is no time for refreshment because of continuous working hours without shift. Respondents are

said that they had less work load during monsoon, etc. and less breaking time at that time. The main points of the study were noted the below table.

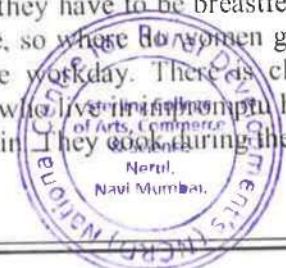
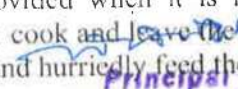
Opinion	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
Wages	0	5	25	55	15
Facilities at workplace	0	4	4	50	42
Working Hours	7	30	0	33	30
ESI Facilities	0	0	100	0	0
Working conditions at Monsoon Season	0	2	0	68	30
Break time including lunch	6	44	5	23	22
Bonus	0	12	0	48	40
Safety measures	0	2	0	29	69
Medical Facilities	0	0	0	30	70
Weekly Off with wages	0	0	0	50	50
Overtime Facility	3	2	0	45	50
Crèche Facility	0	0	0	50	50

Note: HS – Highly Satisfied, S – Satisfied, NO – No Opinion, D – Dissatisfied, HD – Highly Dissatisfied

FINDINGS

It is clear from the study that the 55% of the workers were dissatisfied & 15% were highly dissatisfied on the wage pattern in the construction company 50% of the employees were not satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the employer & 42% were highly dissatisfied with the facilities provided to them in the work place. Though the statutory requirement for the employee regarding the bonus, medical, ESI facilities & leave with wages have been advocated by the government but the employer failed to provide these statutory requirements to the workers working in a construction industry. They were not provided with the safety measures as required by law. In contrast, sales women faced some problems like seasonal work load, low wages compared to men, less break time and continuous working hours. So the poor women consider it has their livelihood and still continue with the job just like an addition to the family income for better life. One of the special problems of construction workers is that they are practically bonded labourers. Contractors bring workers and their families from distant states. This ensures that the workforce is totally dependent on the contractor for survival. Many of these workers cannot speak the local language and are unable to communicate their problems to local authorities or trade union persons or social workers. Many construction labourers die in accidents but the contractors and builders cover up these cases. They send the bodies back to their native place and claim that the deaths were because of liquor consumption. They had neither ration cards nor electoral identity cards. Constantly relocating homes from worksite to worksite and living in impromptu housing without clean water and sanitation was extremely difficult. This affected their health and that of their families. Childcare, they said, is a special problem, as children are particularly vulnerable to accidents on the worksites. Children cannot be educated because of the constant relocation. Sexual harassment and non-payment of wages are major problems.

A major problem of construction workers is the lack of proper employment venues. To find work, they are forced to stand in the open and wait for contractors to offer them casual daily work. When workers stand in the naka (crossing) shopkeepers and businessmen object and complain to the police. Police do not take the side of workers. **Kantabhai, a women worker working in construction sit at Thane**, narrated that in the construction sector many women work right through pregnancy and even deliver children at the worksite or naka. They do not go to hospitals because they are ill treated there. They get neither maternity leave nor maternity benefits. As a result of living in poor conditions, infections and diseases of the reproductive tract are common and leucorrhoea is a big problem. The health of all the women is affected; they are weak and most say that they have lost a few children. Childcare was a special problem. She has seen women take babies up to top floors of tall buildings and tie the paalna (cloth cradle) there. They cannot leave the babies at home or even on a crèche on the ground floor (if there is one) because they have to be breastfed. Women feed their babies hiding from the contractor. There are no toilets on any site, so where do women go? There is no place to bathe in privacy and clean oneself of the dust and dirt of the workday. There is clean water provided when it is needed for construction but not for drinking. Women who live in impromptu housing cannot cook and leave the food lying in their huts because cats and dogs can get in. They cook during the lunch break and hurriedly feed the family.

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CONCLUSION

Women workers have to perform dual role of both outside employment with or without violent working conditions and also manage their home. They are also having same productivity and efficiency like men even when they faced discrimination in wages and poor working conditions and insecurity. Both the central and state governments have formulated certain specific schemes to support unorganized workers but which fail in meeting the real needs and requirements of the unorganized labour force. This study deals with the problems and satisfaction level of sales women in the construction site and found that their working conditions and wage patterns were comparatively higher than other unorganized work like contract, agriculture, self employed, household units, etc. Engagement of women in this field was high because of no skill and easy accessibility even some sort of inequality is there when compared to men. This revealed that most of the women were dissatisfied with the facilities at work place and in continuous working hours and lack of work or less work during monsoon.

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