



Research Paper

The Role of Women in Indian Garments

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ABSTRACT

Garment manufacturing means sewing, cutting, making, processing, repairing, finishing, assembling, dyeing, altering a garment's design, causing another person to alter a garment's design, affixing a label to a garment, or otherwise preparing any garment or any article of wearing apparel or accessories designed or intended to be worn by any individual, including, but not limited to, clothing, hats, gloves, handbags, hosiery, ties, scarfs, and belts. The Garment Industry of Coimbatore is an Rs -one lakh industry. Almost 33 % of its knitwear production and about 20% of its woven garment production, both by volume, enters export markets. Overall, about 25 % of the volume of its garment production goes into export markets, leaving 75 % for domestic consumption.

KEYWORDS: Women employees, Garment industry, Coimbatore.

I. INTRODUCTION

Global garment industries are catching the attention of economists, industrialist and social scientist as they are providing employment to innumerable unemployed across the globe. Economic development is a primary goal of the any national economic policy and Textile and Garment (T.G) industries contributes positively to the growth of economies. By providing jobs to millions garment industries are providing livelihood to the unemployed at the global level. The global T&G industry has expanded over the years with increased consumption, especially from western countries. The global fashion market is ever flexible and has changed a lot from previous producing lines. Clothes are produced in bulk and at all the times of year at cheaper rates. Along with production of fashionable garments at cheaper rates the multinational corporations in the western countries almost all T&G factories are located in less developed economies. The Indian textile industry consists of mainly of small scale, non-integrated spinning, weaving, finishing and apparel making enterprises. T&G industries offer opportunities including entry level jobs for unskilled labour in developing nations. The annual growth rate of the garment sector reached 10.9% during the last 11-year period i.e., from 2001-2012 (Keane J. William te Velde D. 2008). India stands as the global second largest populated country with 1.25 billion in 2014 and people employed in textile and cotton industries were 8 million in 2013. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPIC) estimated that in value terms, the size of the Indian textile market was Rs. 16,92,952 crores in 2007 and the exports being India standing at second rank stood at US\$ 3,733 million after China US\$ 14,412 bn. Indian exports over the last years starting from 2015 to 2017 have shown a continuous rise and the change in 2017 over 2016 stood at 12.05. Indian readymade garment industry is providing jobs to more than 3 million people and the majority is from low socio-economic status covering both men and women (Roy S. 2009). They are the 2 backbone of the garment industry that contributes 11% to India's exports and over 5% to GDP. But the workers like tailors, helpers, store managers packers, trimmers and button fixers only getting minimum wage.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the socio-economic and demographic background of the women workers in the garment industries.
- To examine about problems and challenges faced by women employees in the workplace

he textile and apparel industry is one of the largest and most important sectors of the Indian economy. It employs over 45 million people, of which over 60% are women. Women play a vital role in the industry, working in all aspects of the value chain, from raw material production to garment manufacturing and retail. Women in the textile and apparel industry face a number of challenges, including low wages, long working hours, and poor working conditions. However, they also have opportunities for economic empowerment and social mobility. The industry has the potential to provide women with a good livelihood and a chance to improve their lives.

Here are some of the key challenges faced by women in the textile and apparel industry in India:

- **Low wages:** Women in the textile and apparel industry earn significantly lower wages than men. According to a 2018 report by the International Labour Organization, women in the industry earn on average 77% of the wages of men.
- **Long working hours:** Women in the textile and apparel industry often work long hours, sometimes up to 12 hours a day. This can lead to fatigue, health problems, and difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities.
- **Poor working conditions:** Women in the textile and apparel industry often work in poor working conditions, such as factories with poor ventilation and lighting. This can lead to health problems, such as respiratory infections and eye strain.
- **Harassment and abuse:** Women in the textile and apparel industry are also vulnerable to harassment and abuse from their employers and co-workers. This can make it difficult for them to work in a safe and productive environment.

Despite these challenges, women in the textile and apparel industry also have opportunities for economic empowerment and social mobility. The industry provides women with a chance to earn a living and support their families. It also provides women with opportunities to learn new skills and develop their careers.

The Indian government has taken some steps to address the challenges faced by women in the textile and apparel industry. These include

- **Passing legislation to improve working conditions:** The government has passed legislation to improve working conditions in the textile and apparel industry, such as the Factories Act and the Minimum Wages Act.
- **Providing financial assistance:** The government provides financial assistance to women working in the textile and apparel industry through schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- **Promoting women's entrepreneurship:** The government promotes women's entrepreneurship in the textile and apparel industry through schemes such as the Stand Up India scheme.

These initiatives have helped to improve the lives of women working in the textile and apparel industry. However, more needs to be done to address the challenges they face. The government, industry, and civil society need to work together to create a more equitable and inclusive industry that benefits all workers, including women.

Here are some of the things that can be done to improve the situation of women in the textile and apparel industry in India:

- **Enforcement of labor laws:** The government needs to enforce labor laws to ensure that women workers are paid fair wages and have safe working conditions.
- **Training and skill development:** The government and industry need to provide training and skill development programs for women workers to help them improve their skills and advance their careers.
- **Support for women entrepreneurs:** The government needs to provide financial and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs in the textile and apparel industry.
- **Ending harassment and abuse:** The government and industry need to take steps to end harassment and abuse of women workers in the textile and apparel industry.

By taking these steps, the government, industry, and civil society can create a more equitable and inclusive textile and apparel industry that benefits all workers, including women.

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Imbalance diet practice and challenges

Women's participation in the labour force shows the importance and contribution of women to economic productivity, hence, the need for occupational health and safety policies covering women workers. In the light of many research studies conducted for women workers and their work conditions, there is a need for policy and advocacy work towards protection of their health as well as provision of good labour conditions. This is even more pressing with the feminization of the labour force in the country. For instance, women workers in the electronics and garment industries are subjected to extended and intensified work manifesting in the phenomenon called work intensification. In the case of women migrant workers, they are subjected to sexual and physical abuses, and maltreatment from their employers. Additionally, women workers face double hazards from both their work and household responsibilities, thus, increasing their vulnerability to occupational illnesses. The textile establishments mostly employing women workers showed high concentration of cotton dust in the work area, high level of noise in the weaving areas, toxic chemicals being used during bleaching, dyeing, printing and finishing processes, and a large number of accidents. In a similar study, it was found that women in the garment industry were exposed to extreme heat, dust from textile fibers, and ergonomic hazards.

Medical facilities and affordability

Factory management tend to think that workers' health or medical are social responsibilities. They need to be sensitised about the economic impacts of the issue. Local service providers also often don't understand how to work with factories to provide the services and products. The end result is that appropriate medical services are not available for garment workers. The feasibility of rolling out health insurance in the garments sector on the basis of the willingness of workers to pay for this insurance and attitude of the garment factory management to contribute to the scheme. Insurance is not enough to cover sexual health related issues of women because if it is opted for insurance, lots of questions will be raised - who will pay the premium, how will the dividends be paid to the garment workers. More should be done to aware female workers about menstrual hygiene. If owners invest money in the health sector for their workers, they will get the returns of it in due time as their workers will be healthy and productivity will increase. While the owner should take the major share of responsibility, little amount could be taken as premium from the workers. Health insurance will work only if the garment workers are made aware about reproductive and sexual health. If they don't know why it is important for them to avail the health service, they will never opt for it. Garment workers need to produce 150 to 200 pieces of clothes every hour.

Because of the pressure they work under, they cannot think of proper water intake and the damage that they do to their kidneys. The workers have to struggle to meet all the expenses with their meagre salary. So in terms of paying instalments for the insurance, the owners should take the entire responsibility. IX.

Family support and co-ordination

Women's participation in garment production is critically important. Women are not only a cheap labour source for these ateliers, but they also help to mediate the familial relations— including social networks of family, kinship, and neighbourhood—upon which the survival of ateliers in the very volatile market of the garment industry depends. Household chores and childcare cause women to have looser relations with formal productive activities than men. Their reproductive roles, which result in women entering and exiting the labour market, and the values attached to them, make women very suitable for this type of in formalized production. “Women have emerged as very desirable employees in these circumstances because their relationship to the labour market has traditionally displayed the characteristics of flexibility so much wanted in the current conjuncture” .In almost every society, women are seen by policy makers as an untapped pool of labour, which can be easily pulled in and pushed out of the labour market . Although there are considerable power inequalities between young and old women, the lack of economic autonomy and authority in the household is mitigated as women manipulate the affections of sons and husbands. Women do this, in part, by taking care of them when they are children and then later when they are husbands. Because they are socially ridiculed if they perform household duties, men are obligated to have women care for them, and since domestic chores and child-care are the primary social responsibilities of women , women do not ask for much “help” from their husbands. As mothers and wives, women gain status as they age and by keeping husbands' and sons' affections, which they transfer into security and power in the household. Power also comes from being “respectable” mothers and wives.

X. Orientation and awareness programmes

Predominantly young women and girls as apprentices in factories and mills, who are then forced to work long hours in unsafe conditions and whose pay is sometimes withheld until the end of the "apprenticeship" which can last up to three years. The families of the girls use these lump sums as dowry payments. The programme is working at community, workplace and policy level to improve awareness of rights, women workers' voice and legislation to protect these young women workers. Implementation of human rights and ILO labour standards in the garment and sportswear supply chain, especially those of freedom of association and freedom from discrimination, and strives to make consumers aware of the conditions in which their clothes and sports shoes are made and the role of women workers in the production process. Health is critical to the wellbeing of a person, and it is a basic human right. It also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and save more. The importance of this issue is increasingly recognized by forward-looking businesses and governments in emerging markets. A growing body of evidence suggests that investing in women's employment to achieve a more even share of women at all levels of an organization can bring real business benefits

II. Conclusion:

This study identified a number of issues among female employees in the Coimbatore district, including workload, working conditions, time management, and surroundings. As a result, it's important to offer working women workers the right therapy and training programmes to help them manage their stress levels and careers. In order for the institution to be able to act on the concerns of the working staffs in the garment sector, management can set up some hangouts with employees and by scheduling staff meetings regularly, at least twice a month. The current study shows that women have the worse working conditions due to their lower educational attainment and abilities, which also limits their access to improved working conditions, promotions, leave benefits, occupational safety, etc. Numerous issues, such as low pay, low piece rate pay, failure to pay overtime allowance, a highly controlled, stressful, and repeatable work environment, a lack of access to benefits like health insurance, irregular work volume, etc., are faced by this group of women workers. A adequate living wage cannot be made out of the earnings given to garment workers. In the current climate of fierce competition, staff retention is crucial. The decision of an employee to quit or stay in an organisation is influenced by factors including training and development, recognition and reward for good performance, a competitive salary package, etc. When creating a retention policy, the importance of other factors shouldn't be underestimated. Some employers will only hire unmarried women with no children and some make each woman sign a document that they agree not to have children during their term of employment. Compulsory testing during the recruitment phase are all too common. In some garment factories, women applicants are asked if they are married or are planning to have children. Pregnant women or those who refuse to be tested are simply not hired. Women who become pregnant during their employment may try to hide it, often resulting in birth defects and other childcare issues.

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