



WOMEN EMPLOYEE RIGHTS: A STUDY IN GARMENT INDUSTRIES, TIRUPUR

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Abstract

The garment industry is one of the oldest and largest export industries. The garment industry is, and has historically been, one of the most female-dominated industries in the world. Informal garment and textile workers often experience isolation, invisibility and lack of power, especially those who produce from their homes. The purpose of this study is to know the level of awareness regarding women employees rights. The women employees are not fully aware of their entitled rights. This study also find out the extent of labour right practices in garment industries.

Keywords: *Labour Rights, Garment Industries And Women Employees.*

Introduction

The Garment industry is one of India's largest foreign exchange earning industry. It occupies a unique place in our country. It has been estimated that India has 30,000 ready made garment manufacturing units and around three million people are working in this industry. Tirupur is a textile town of Tamilnadu. It is famous for cotton knitted garments. Tirupur is one of the largest foreign exchange earning tones in India. The garment industry is, and has historically been, one of the most female-dominated industries in the world. Today, more than 70% of garment workers in Tirupur are women exporters. The exploitation of women workers has allowed garmrnt companies to make huge profits while denying the workers who produce their clothes the most basic rights.

Review of Literature

According to WHO (1948) "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity". But Bangladeshi garment workers are unable to maintain any of the health condition prescribed by the WHO.

Unni (1989) concluded that female workers had to bear the work burden the most and they remained still the most disadvantaged class of workers. They put in at least 12-14 hours of work every day but their economic activities were not fully recognized, counted and included in the national product, though women's work included many activities which lead to the economic gain of the household.

Majumder and Khatun (1997) found that 70 per cent of the female garments workers travelled by bus experienced bad behaviour by conductors and drivers; hence, the workers are willing to pay more for safe and secure transport facilities.

Paul-Majumder (1998) the rate of miscarriage among garments workers is very high and most of them experience abortions more than once. He found that female garments workers face an embargo on having babies because of fear of loosing the job. Although having a baby is a human right but they are denied of it.

Khan (2001) found that discrimination and irregularity in wages and earning below the minimum wages, female workers employed in the export oriented garment industry contribute about 46 percent to their family income. The hands of factory owners are strengthened by the fact that poor unskilled women have few alternatives and even fewer better employment opportunities in any case. Employers prefer female workers not only because they are cheaper and abundantly available, but also because they are more vulnerable, docile and manageable to male workers. They accept without protest the flexible terms of employment and are also seen to be less likely to be organized and susceptible to "anti management propaganda from outside"

Bheda (2004) argued that most of the health problems that the garment workers suffered arose from the occupational hazards including long working hours, absence of leave facilities, congested and over-crowded working conditions, absence of health facilities and safety measures, absence of staff amenities, lack of safe drinking water.

Statement of the Problem

Now-a-days women are playing a vital role in earning even net national product of the country through their income. This study is undertaken to study about how the women are utilizing their rights properly especially in garment industry. The reason to choose the industry is that the women participation in the industry is 70,000 especially in Tirupur. Hence, a study is

undertaken to analyze about the women's rights in garment industry in the area of Tirupur. This study is undertaken to make an analysis of how women are working in their working area and also regarding the facilities provided in the working environment such as crèche facilities, ventilation facilities and payment benefits, work enrichment opportunities.

Objective of the study

The objective of the present study is to find out the level of awareness among the women employees and Socio-economic factors among the women employees in Garment industry, Tirupur.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted on the basis of descriptive research. The researcher obtained the primary data through direct communication with targeted group of sample respondents. The researcher used schedule method of data collection. In this study, the employees have selected by using non probability convenience sample method. The employees were from various departments are included in the sample Totally 200 sample respondents are selected.

Data analysis

It was found that 60% of the employees are belonging to the age group of 23 –37 years, 69.5% of the employees are married, 67.0% of the employees have school level education, 61.5% of the employees are with Nuclear family, 55% of the employees have 3-4 family members, 68.5% of the employees are got Rs 5001-10000 as their wage/salary per month.

Level of awareness regarding their rights

The level of awareness regarding their rights are analyzed by using mean value. The following table shows their level of awareness.

TABLE. 1 Mean Value of Level of Awareness

S. No.	LEVEL OF AWARENESS	MEAN
1	Provision of written employment contract	1.64
2	Itemized wage slip	1.43
3	Minimum wages	1.33
4	Extra wage for over time	1.50
5	Provision for bonus	2.10
6	Absence for forced work	1.90
7	Non-discrimination of wages based on gender	1.45
8	Equal opportunity in promotion	1.38
9	Provision of good working condition	1.30
10	Provident fund facilities	1.38
11	Medical facilities	1.60
12	Maternity facilities	1.90
13	Crèche facilities	2.22
14	Freedom to from and join the union	1.75
15	Treatment with dignity	1.58
16	Leave facilities	1.88

The above table shows Creche facility is having the highest mean value (2.22). It means the women employees are more aware of Creche facility. The second highest mean value factor (2.10) is provision for bonus. Provision of good working condition, minimum wages and provident fund facilities has the lowest man value i.e., 1.30, 1.33 and 1.38 respectively. It means the women employees are not much aware of the above facilities.

Suggestions

Based on the above finding the following suggestions were made.

- Majority of the respondents got only Rs. 5000-10000 as their wage/salary per month. Due to the increase in the cost of living, it is difficult to manage their family with their salary. So, the management of Garment Company may consider increasing the wage/salary for their employees.
- Most of the women employees are not aware of their rights. They are not much aware of provision of written employee contract, itemized wage slip, minimum wages, nondiscrimination of wages based on gender, equal opportunity in



promotion, provision of good working conditions, provident fund facilities, medical facilities, maternity facilities, freedom to form and join the union, treatment with dignity and leave facilities. So, the women employee must be aware of their rights. So the companies should provide itemized wage slip to their employees to know the details of their wages/salary.

- Even though the company provides creches facility, it is not equipped with necessary provisions. So, they must arrange necessary provisions in creches room.

Conclusion

Nowadays a good number of women employees are working in garment companies actively but some of the companies do not provide the necessary provisions, wages, facilities and suitable environment to them. So the management should try to address the above said problems.

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