
Women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector of Punjab**Reetika Dadhech****Abstract:**

Unorganized sector plays a very important role in Indian economy. More than 90% man power is from unorganized sector and among this 91% are of women workers. This study focuses upon the women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector of Punjab. This paper throws light on the role, nature of work, problems of women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector of Punjab. In this paper the acts and schemes of Indian government launched for welfare of women workers is analyzed and the gaps in implementation of schemes are discussed.

Key Words: Unorganized Sector, Women Workers, Exploitation, Problems, Empowerment.

Punjab Manufacturing Sector:

Punjab has an agricultural economy. But the recent studies have shown that agricultural production of Punjab is decreasing day by day due to this agriculture is lacking in providing employment. Due to this for sustaining the economic development it has become need of the era to focus upon more industrial development in Punjab. But due to some factors like remoteness, lack of minerals, sensitive border area etc. it is difficult to establish large and huge industries in Punjab. This is the reason that investors are more interested in establishing Small Scale Industries. Maximum output among small scale industries comes from manufacturing sector and due to less capital investment and some other factors like cost, cheap labor, less technological advancement etc. unorganized industrial units are mushrooming in the state. Most of the manufacturing units are from MSME sector. There are nearly 194000 MSME and among those 281894 unorganized manufacturing units are present in state. Food, textiles, metals, engineering and transport sectors dominates the manufacturing sector of Punjab. 70 per cent of manufacturing output comes from these units (Kumar, 2005).

Major Industrial Cities of Punjab:

Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, Amritsar, Bathinda, Faridkot, Batala, Rajpura, Mandi Gobindgarh, Mohali, Firozpur, Ropar, sangrur, Moga, Malerkotla and Khana are major industrialized cities. Large share of state's GDP comes from these cities.

Unorganized Sector:

The unorganized sector is where there is no permanent employer-employee relationships exist. This sector lacks social protection. These workers are contractual

and migrant and home based workers and casual in nature. These workers are mostly semi skilled or unskilled. According to [National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector](#) (in their Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganized Sector) defined the sector as consisting of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale or production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers. The characteristic features of this sector are :Ease of entry, smaller scale of operation, local ownership, uncertain legal status, labor-intensive and operating using lower technology based methods, flexible pricing, less sophisticated packing, absence of a brand name, unavailability of good storage facilities and an effective distribution network, inadequate access to government schemes, finance and government aid, lower entry barriers for employees, a higher proportion of migrants with a lower rate of compensation. Employees of enterprises belonging to the unorganized sector have lower job security and poorer chances of growth, and no leaves and paid holidays, they have lower protection against employers indulging in unfair or illegal practices. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unorganised_sector_India).

Half of the GDP of India comes from unorganized sector. According to National Survey Report 93% of labor force comes from unorganized sector . The estimated workforce of the country is 47.41 crore of which 82.7 per cent is in the unorganized sector, as per NSSO survey for 2004-05, the total employment in both organized and unorganized sector in the country was of the order of 45.9 crore out of which around 43.30 crore (94.34 per cent) was in the unorganized sector. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) survey result for 2011-12 so there is an increase in the number of the unorganized workers of about 0.37 crore during this period. Unorganized sector comprising of relatively small units and less investment has been mushrooming in the state over the years. The table below shows total number of unorganized manufacturing units in 1994 – 1995 to yr. 2005-2006. The total number of units in yr.1994-95 was 251518 which increased to 281894 in yr. 2005-2006

Number of Enterprises and Employment in Unorganized Manufacturing Sector in Punjab by type of Enterprise

YEAR	Type of Enterprise	Number of Enterprises			Employment		
		Rural	Urban	Combined	Rural	Urban	Combined
1994-95	OAMEs	111331	71472	182803	165979	139159	305138
	NDMEs	15922	38439	54361	37058	110876	147934
	DMEs	1972	12382	14354	25776	85802	111578
	All enterprises	129225	122292	251518	228813	335838	564651

2000-01	OAMEs	166102	90627	256729	224507	128860	353367
	NDMEs	17849	46211	64060	48531	149935	198466
	DMEs	2674	17132	19806	59626	133254	192880
	All enterprises	186625	153970	340595	332664	412049	744713
2005-06	OAMEs 128006 82281 210287 177827 124602 302429						
	NDMEs	15234	43433	58667	36101	146575	182676
	DMEs	2696	10244	12940	19456	82020	101476
	All enterprises	145936	135958	281894	233384	353324	586581

Role of women in unorganized manufacturing sector:

Women participation in Indian economy is one third. Statistics has shown that most of the women workers are employed in unorganized sector. This sector demands less skilled labor, cheap wages and more working hours. Due to these reasons women are more preferred in these sectors. Most of the women working in these sectors comes from poor families they lacks in education, awareness, have less access to outer world and are not allowed to move to other places for doing job. They have dual responsibility of their families along with their job. According to World

Bank's report women's contribution in wage earning for their families is significant. .

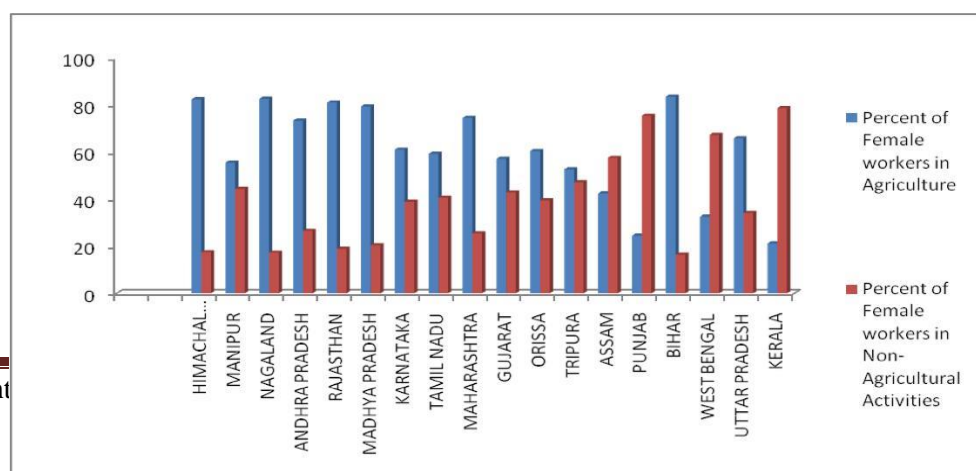
Women head 10.57 per cent of urban households (NSSO, 1996-97) and thirty five percent of households below poverty line (Alternate Economic Survey, 1999). Poorest families depend upon the earning of women. Infact, some of the families below poverty line were completely headed by women. Due to all these reasons ,lack of skills and knowledge and due to some social and personal obligations women are bound to work at cheap wages and under poor working conditions. The World Bank in its annual report in 1989 observed that 35 per cent of Indian households below the poverty line were headed by women and in most cases, were dependent exclusively on female income. The report observed that women's contribution is significant in families with low economic status. The poorest families thus depend on women's economic productivity. Earlier in Punjab more women were employed in agriculture sector. But due to unpredictable and poor conditions of agriculture sector the inclination labor force is increasing from agriculture to industrial sector.

State-wise Women Participation in Agricultural & Non – Agricultural Activities

State	Total Female Workers	Percent of Female workers in Agriculture	Percent of Female workers in Non-Agricultural Activities
HIMACHAL PRADESH	630521	82.47	17.53

MANIPUR	229137	55.59	44.41
NAGALAND	279166	82.66	17.34
ANDHRA PRADESH	9585381	73.44	26.56
RAJASTHAN	4595570	81.07	18.93
MADHYA PRADESH	5046293	79.45	20.55
KARNATAKA	5467914	61.11	38.89
TAMIL NADU	7454473	59.30	40.70
MAHARASHTRA	10331758	74.53	25.47
GUJARAT	3544508	57.12	42.88
ORISSA	1584529	60.47	39.53
TRIPURA	170238	52.78	47.22
ASSAM	1265065	42.47	57.53
PUNJAB	1409704	24.51	75.49
BIHAR	3541857	83.56	16.44
WEST BENGAL	3528612	32.62	67.38
UTTAR PRADESH	4999389	65.87	34.13
KERALA	1776280	21.27	78.73

State-wise trend of Women Participation in Agricultural & Non – Agricultural Activities



The analysis of different rounds of the NSSO survey shows that the percentage share of female workers is increasing over the period. The percentage share of female workers has increased from 31.05 per cent in 1994-95 to 37.98 per cent in 2005-06. This increase is mainly due to the increased share of female workers in the OAMEs i.e. from 39.22 per cent in 1994-95 to 50.50 per cent in 2005-06. The main reason for this increasing share of female workers in OAMEs is its home based and traditional nature. Table below shows gender wise distribution of employment in unorganized sector. From the table it could be easily seen the share of female workers in urban unorganized manufacturing sector of Punjab has increased from 6.77 per cent in 1994-95 to 15.09 percent in 2005-06. Employment of female workers is great in the sectors of manufacturing of chemicals & chemical products, manufacturing of agro foods and manufacturing of textiles.

Gender wise Distribution of Employment in Unorganized Manufacturing Sector of Punjab (Urban)

Industry	1994-95		2000-01		2005-06	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agro Foods	94.6	5.84	97.22	2.79	96.68	3.32
Textiles	85.61	14.39	80.99	19.04	86.31	13.69
Wearing Apparel	0	0	75.05	24.95	67.43	32.57
Leather	76.67	23.33	72.29	27.71	94.60	5.40
Wood	92.36	7.64	95.64	4.31	97.47	2.53
Papers/Paper Product	87.78	12.22	93.46	6.54	91.41	8.59
Chemicals	99.23	0.77	99.85	0.15	67.52	32.48
Rubber/Plastic	84.92	15.08	96.63	3.37	97.41	2.59
Non -metals	84.53	15.47	65.38	34.64	93.75	6.25
Metals	97.88	2.12	99.24	0.76	90.75	9.25
Machinery	99.09	0.91	99.35	0.65	99.51	0.49
N.E.C.	94.35	5.65	91.61	8.39	77.52	22.48
All	93.27	6.77	89.18	10.82	84.91	15.09

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the role of women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector

2. To find out the working conditions of women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector

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3. To study the causes of discrimination in wages of women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector
 4. To study living conditions of women workers.
 5. To trace out the basic problems faced by women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector
 6. To find out various welfare schemes available for women workers in unorganized manufacturing sector
 7. To find out the status of implementation of welfare schemes for women workers in unorganized sector.
 8. To find out if any gap exists in the implementation of welfare schemes and the reasons for poor implementation

Methodology: For the study secondary data was collected by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) for 1994 to 2012. NSSO data is available for 23 sub-sectors of National Industrial Classification. The data is further divided into various states and rural-urban areas. The data is classified into three types of enterprises Own Account Manufacturing Enterprises (OAMEs), Non-directory Manufacturing Enterprises (NDMEs), Directory Manufacturing Enterprises (DMEs). OAMEs are those enterprises which have no hired workers on a fairly regular basis. NDMEs are the enterprises which have less than six workers including household workers and DMEs have six or more workers with at least one hired worker but not registered under the Factory Act 1948 (NSSO, 2002). For analyzing the data, simple averages and annual compound growth rates have been used through various survey reports of NSSO on “Employment- Unemployment”, workers in organized and unorganized sectors, percentage of women working in unorganized and organized sectors and report on percentage of women working in agriculture and non agriculture sectors. Other than this various research paper, articles and some other statistical reports were thoroughly studied.

Challenges faced by women workers in unorganized sector:

Bonded labor: Bonded labor is high among migrant labor in which labor if needed loan take it from the employer but the wages are less so that the labor remains in perpetual bondage. Evidence revealed by Ministry of Labor and Employment, the bonded 304 laborers are from the lowest segment of migrant laborers and child laborers.

No maternity benefit and child care facilities: Women are not provided maternity leave and are bound to either work during pregnancy or leave the work. Leaving work is the last and less opted option for women as this will increase financial burden on their families so women have to work even if they are pregnant. This leads to poor health condition of women leading to increase in mortality or maternity rate. Sometimes women are working from the second day of delivering baby. This proves very harmful for both the health of baby and mother. Women even are not provided with creche facility at the workplace so that they can take care of their children while working.

No minimum wage act or factories Act: Employers don't recognize the workers or deny them any additional benefits. Studies have shown that workers are paid at piece-rate wage system. Minimum piece-rate wage are fixed and generally are not as per government regulations and are often lower than the minimum wage. Apart from that, payment of wages are delayed and deduction in wages if poor quality work is delivered which is actually sometimes not.

Gender discrimination and inequality: Women workers though delivering same amount of work or even more of it are not paid equally as of male workers. They face discrimination in working hours and wages. Employer don't recognize the workers or to deny them any additional benefits. Available studies show that the home workers are paid piece-rate wage for the work delivered. Contractors fix the minimum piece-rate wage, which is often lower than the minimum wage. Apart from that, studies also show that there are cases of delayed payments and arbitrary cuts in wages on the rejection of poor quality which is actually not.

Risky and insecure work conditions: Physical environment is very important at work place. Physical conditions at workplace involve space and height of workplace, illumination, ventilation, humidity, temperature and cleanliness. Studies conducted by National Commission for Unorganized Sector especially in leather tanning industries and textile including handlooms, workers are exposed to pathetic working conditions. Surveys conducted by Labor Bureau have shown that workers are cramped in tiny , humid and suffocated rooms. In leather tanning industries workers worked for long hours with their bare feet soaked in chemicals and animal waste. In the unorganized sector, piece rate system is prevalent causing workers to pay for any mistake in terms of money deduction from the wages as penalty.

Long working hours and no overtime: In handloom sectors, Women are working continuously for 12-15 hours a day and the daily wages depends upon the working hours. Labor bureau investigated and found the same situation in some unorganized manufacturing sectors where workers were starting the day from 6 am and continue till late evening. Apart from that, casual, sick leave for workers were not provided by the employers. The National Sample Survey Organization's 61st round observed that in unorganized sector workers work for 7 days a week despite the order from labor regulations to provide at least one day off per week and that should be with wages.

Sexually exploitation: According to National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganized Sector, NCEUS, 2004 women workers are sexually exploited at workplace. They are working for late hours in night and no security measures are provided to them. Due to lack of knowledge, awareness and fear of being dismissed from the job women workers often don't complaint about sexual exploitation.

No separate toilet and washroom facilities and poor sanitation: It is also common for the women migrant workers to sleep on the floor at the workplace, The conditions are unhygienic as equipments, unfinished products etc. all are placed on the same floor .Industries employing large number of women workers but don't provide separate toilets and washing facilities. This leads to insecure working conditions and also makes the workers vulnerable to diseases. HIV AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, silicosis, respiratory problems, tuberculosis, arthritis leukemia and other reproductive

problems are more prevalent among women working in unorganized sector.

Large employment of contract and casual labor: In present scenario women workers are not employed on regular basis instead contractual and casual employment is more.

No recognition of worker unions: In unorganized sector worker unions are not recognized and if unions are existing then their participation is negligible. The reason is women are not given much importance due to male dominance and are not aware about their rights.

Workers in unorganized sectors are not provided with the following social security benefits also like:

1. Payment of gratuity Act 1971
2. Workmen compensation Act 1923
3. Maternity benefit Act 1971
4. Employees state insurance Act 1948
5. Employee provident fund and the miscellaneous provisions act 1952

The implementation of these acts legally is necessary in the organized sector but for unorganized sector only recommendations are there no legal foundation is required. The enforcement machinery also is not effective enough to implement these acts. According to the Report of National Commission for Enterprises in unorganized Sector, it was noted that the provision of paid maternity leave seems to be very rare in unorganized sector

Dual Responsibility of Women: Women workers has to play dual role, they are earning for their families and are managing their home too. In Indian society's norms and psychology only women should take do the household work and take care of children, men are free from all these responsibilities. According to the Report of National commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (2007), the working time spent by women are nearly 35 hours a week in care of children, old and the sick at home and household maintenance. Which is very high in compare to working time of men. Men share very less responsibility for these works. The economic condition forces many women to be available for additional work to augment family income. According to statistical data women are facing huge stress and health issues than men and this dual responsibility is worsening this condition even more.

Government's role in protecting the rights of workers: Government

launches various laws, rules and schemes etc. for the protection of workers from unorganized sector. These are discussed below:

The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2013: It has included women workers in its provisions. Under this act women can complaint about any verbal or physical harassment if occur at workplace.

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (Amended in 1987) Under this act men and women are entitled for equal wages for similar kind of work. It also states that there should be no discrimination while recruiting men and women workers.

A National Floor Level Minimum Wage was envisaged by the National Commission on Rural Labor in 1991. National Floor Level Minimum Wages currently stand at Rs. 160 per day

The Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008, has been passed to safeguard the interests of unorganized workers by providing a minimum level of social protection that would enable them to endure income and health related shocks resulting in dignified lives. The National Board which was constituted in 2009 under this Act has recommended social security schemes such as:

Rashtriya Swasthiya Bima Yojana providing health insurance, Jana

Shree Bima Yojana providing death and disability insurance

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY-Maternity support scheme) and Janani Suraksha Yojana

Rashtriya Swasthiya Bima Yojana providing health insurance, Jana

Shree Bima Yojana providing death and disability insurance

Aam Admi Bima Yojana’,

National Old Age Pension Scheme

Health Insurance Scheme

Other than this various acts which are legally applicable to organized sector are also recommended for unorganized sector by the government. The acts are mentioned below:

The Minimum Wages Act, 1948

Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act, 1976,

Payment of Wages Act, 1936,

Employees State Insurance Act, 1948,

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961,

Personal Injuries (compensation Insurance) Act, 1963,

Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972,

Workmen’s Compensation Act, 1923,

Plantation Labor Act, 1948,

Employees Provident Fund and Misc. Provisions Act, 1976,

Inter-state Migrant Workmen (RECS) Act, 1979

Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

However, these acts are only recommended for informal sector and there is no legal obligation of implication of these acts on unorganized sector. Other than acts some schemes has also been launched by government for the welfare of workers:

Social Insurance Schemes:

The 'Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008', protects the interest of unorganized workers by formulating social security schemes in the area of health care, insurance cover and old age pension etc. The two major schemes are Janshree Bima Yojana (JBY), 2000; it provides life protection to person between 18-60 years old, living below poverty line in rural areas. The second scheme is the Universal Health Insurance Schemes (UHIS), 2004 assures hospital care to poor persons and families. There are number of welfare funds providing social security to the workers in the unorganized sector. The Welfare funds are utilized to implement welfare schemes in the areas of housing, health & medical care,

education to the

children and recreational facilities to workers. Moreover, the welfare fund model has successfully been implemented by various States for various categories of workers. Punjab has welfare funds for construction workers, truck drivers, footwear workers, handloom and silk weaving workers. In addition to the Central Government's program and schemes for social security, State Governments have also launched social security program. Like Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, 1979

Public Initiatives:

Several public institutions are also providing social security benefits. Among these, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has played a major role in promoting social security through the formation of cooperatives.

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA): It provides need based services to the women and charge very minimal. SEWA introduced various insurance scheme for its members, SEWA also works as a nodal agency to get cover under various policies from different insurance companies. The risk covered includes medical benefit up to Rs.1000/-, maternity benefit of Rs.300/-, in case of natural or accidental death including disablement payment up to Rs.10,000/- of the member or her husband. The total coverage of SEWA social security scheme is about 50,000 women.

Working Women Forum (WWF): This organization trains women from the poorer communities and make them skilled as healthcare cadres. These health care skilled workers of WWF have served a population of about 1 million in 720 slums and 340 villages. This organization also provides Health Insurance under which maternity benefits and reimbursement of hospital expenses are covered.

Gaps in Implementation: Despite of various Labor laws, welfare schemes etc. the condition of women workers in unorganized sectors is still poor. Because of temporary employer-employee relationship these laws cannot be effectively implemented. Most of the Indian labor laws use number filters or wage filters like: The Factories Act for health, safety, welfare and other aspects of workers requires an establishment with minimum 10 workers with power connection and the provisions for crèche is with the establishment having minimum 30 or more number of employed women. Rest room is mandatory only if the number of employees is 150 or more. Canteen is mandatory number of employees is 250 or more. The provisions for ambulance, Para-medical staff is mandatory only if employee strength is 500 or more. Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous provisions Act, 1952 requires minimum 20 number of employees. For Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 the establishment requires minimum 10 employees. But nearly 97% of unorganized sector units employ less than 10 workers, they gets easily escaped from these laws. The only law which has been enforced to some extent in this sector is Minimum Wages Act. The unorganized sector is not properly unionized, hence this sector lacks bargaining power and also most of the workforce from this sector is recruited through contractors and not directly by employers. This gives more power to contractors and the wages fixed by them are supposed to be accepted by workers. The wages mostly are below minimum wages. In this condition actual employers can easily escape themselves from minimum wages act. The workers from unorganized sector are under skilled or semi skilled. The opportunities of development and learning new skills in this sector are very less and especially women are not much aware about the available opportunities due to these reasons

they cannot find better

job somewhere else and are compelled to do job under the poor conditions. The women workers are illiterate, they are not aware about their rights. They fear of raising their voice against unfair practices. They don't have proper knowledge about various welfare schemes of government. All these reasons, lack of government enthusiasm to implement the rules and certain other gaps leads to negligible improvement in poor conditions of women workers in unorganized sectors.

CONCLUSION:

From the above study it was concluded that the condition of women worker in unorganized sector is very poor. Very few laws exist for the welfare of women workers and the existing laws are paralyzed in nature with lots of loop holes that they even can't assure minimum security of women workers. For improving the conditions women empowerment is necessary and this can be only possible when more and more women would be educated and aware about their rights. For this purpose government, NGOs take some serious steps and should launch awareness programs and some vocational courses. The redressal of women harassment cases should be done speedily and a separate body should be made to listen to the complaints of women workers. Unorganized sector should be given full opportunities as of organized sector. Until and unless women are not empowered, loop holes of laws are not removed and government does not show dedication for the implementation of laws conditions of women workers cannot be improved

SUGGESTIONS:

Women workers should be made aware about their rights of employment. Knowledge should be given about the various government schemes launched for the upliftment of unorganized workers through campaigns and some other promotional programs.

Government should launch some programs to upgrade the skills of workers and develop them according to industrial demand.

Contractors should be brought under certain government regulations for recruiting the workforce and strict actions should be taken if laws are not followed.

Employers should also be made responsible to provide the same facilities to the contractual or casual labor as they provide to regular employees.

The number filter for the employment laws should be removed so that no organization can escape from implementation of these laws.

Rules for safety and security of women workers should be strictly implemented. A separate government body should be made to listen to the complaints of women workers.

There should be provision for payment of allowance to migrant workers until they don't get a job.

The social security acts made for workers of organized sectors should be equally implemented for the workers of unorganized sector.

Strict action should be taken if women are discriminated on the basis of gender at workplace.

From the study it was found that there is no proper record of unorganized workers. So, it is suggested that proper record of workers from the unorganized sector should be maintained. So that welfare schemes could be planned accordingly.

In the premises where women workers are working a lady inspector should be appointed so that if any mishappening occurs to any women worker it can be directly and speedily reported. This will ensure the safety of women workers

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