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# Women Workers in Unorganized Sector: A Study of Patiala City

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**Abstract:** *The term 'unorganised' is frequently used in the Indian context to refer to the large number of women and men working in various occupations. Home-based work (e.g., rolling papads and beedis), self-employment (e.g., selling vegetables), employment in household enterprises, small units, on land as agricultural workers, labour on construction sites and domestic work. The present study was designed with objective to identify the problem that women face as unorganised labour and to bring to light the plight of female workers in India. For this purpose 100 women stone crushers between the age range of 15 and 50 were selected from Patiala district. A self designed interview schedule was used to collect data and it was found that majority of the women are working in pathetic conditions and have low work satisfaction. They are not even allowed to take their decisions and are not aware of any help groups for their rights.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term 'unorganised' is frequently used in the Indian context to refer to the large number of women and men working in various occupations. Home-based work (e.g., rolling papads and beedis), self-employment (e.g., selling vegetables), employment in household enterprises, small units, on land as agricultural workers, labour on construction sites, domestic work, and many other forms of casual or temporary employment are examples of these forms. In the recent years pattern of employment has been changed drastically.

Women are making strides in all walks of life these days. They even infiltrate male-dominated fields. This woman has broken free from the confinement of four walls and the traditional domestic duties of the household that she has been performing since time immemorial. Between 1971 and 2011, the labour force increased by 301.3 million (about 1.7 times), but females outnumbered males by 3.8 times, compared to 1.2 times for males. In India, women make up nearly one-third of the workforce. In 2011, women made up 149.9 million, or 31% of the total workforce of 481.7 million. Despite accounting for one-third of the labour force in India, women account for less than one-fifth of employees in the organised sector (Kurian, 2007).

Female wage earners frequently face a double burden of work in that they are expected to continue in their traditional role as housewives as well. Many of their



socially valued activities, such as child care, have no economic value in national income accounting. Ironically, she is sometimes admired for her multifaceted role, but more often than not, she is accused of not adhering to the traditional and unquestionable societal code of conduct that has been established for her (Tiwari, 2016).

Women work primarily for economic independence, economic necessity (because some women are qualified to work), a sense of accomplishment, and to provide service to society. Most Indian women, in general, engage in "productive work" only out of economic necessity (Mohapatra, 2015). This explains why female participation rates are so high in economically disadvantaged communities. Typically, upper-class women are confined to their homes. Rural women have a higher rate of labour force participation (27%) than urban women (10 percent). Because of the widespread reluctance to employ women in regular jobs and provide them with good working conditions, women frequently seek temporary and standby jobs.

Census 2011 describes the variations in men's and women's labor-force participation rates by state and region, as well as the distribution of workers among the major occupational categories. The macro overview of the occupational structure of female labour participation in India reveals that the primary sector continues to employ the majority of women. Women's employment in agriculture is much more concentrated than men's; nearly 66% of employed women work in agriculture, compared to 50% of employed men.

#### **Characteristics of the unorganised workers:**

- Unorganized labour is massive in terms of numbers, and as a result, it is omnipresent throughout India.
- Because the unorganised sector suffers from excessive seasonality of employment, the majority of unorganised workers do not have stable and long-term employment opportunities.
- The workplace is dispersed and disjointed.
- There is no formal employer-employee relationship in place.

The unorganised labour force in rural areas is highly stratified based on caste and community considerations. While such considerations are much less prevalent in urban areas, they cannot be completely eliminated because the majority of unorganised workers in urban areas are migrant workers from rural areas (Monisha & Rani, 2016).

Today's "working women" contribute to the household's and society's economic well-being. The adage "A free race cannot be born of slave mothers" is apt for an independent India. In today's world of globalisation and liberalisation, this civilization has yet to witness the true power of women carving picture perfect. In terms of the impact of technology, there is a shift from a subsistence to a market economy, which has a significant negative impact on women. Women labourers have frequently been displaced by men in areas where technology has been introduced in areas where women worked. The most common human rights violation in the world today is violence against women and girls.



Women are forced to work outside for pitiful wages and with no social security because of economic necessity. In the workplace, women are frequently subjected to sexual harassment. Their inability to work long hours prevents them from advancing in their careers. According to the International Labour Organization, women account for: i) 50% of the world's population; ii) 30% of the labour force; iii) 60% of all working hours; iv) 10% of global income; and v) less than 1% of global property (Mohapatra, 2015).

### **Objectives**

To identify the problem that women face in unorganised labour.

To bring to light the plight of female workers in India.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The present study was conducted in Patiala city of Punjab. In the present study purposive sampling method was used. Only those respondents were taken who voluntarily agreed to participate. The sample comprised of 100 rural women working as stone crusher between the age range of 15 to 55 years old. The following measures were used:

1. Socio demographic profile consisting of 12 items was developed. It constitutes items related to the educational status, family type, family affluence level and annual income etc.
2. Interview schedule was framed with open ended items to explore the satisfaction, social security in unorganized sector and awareness related to rights of the workers.

### **Design & procedure**

The present study involves descriptive analysis of the work related satisfaction, facilities provided by the employer and awareness related to rights of the workers. Qualitative data was collected from respondents through Focus Group Discussion. Prior to the commencement of the study written consent was sought from the respondents. All the respondents were explained the objectives of the study and were assured to maintain confidentiality. After seeking the written consent from the respondents questionnaires were administered. Focus Group Discussion were carried on to explore and understand the various challenges faced by the workers in unorganised sectors.

## **3. RESULTS**

Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents (N= 100)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>	15 – 25 yrs	25	25
	26 – 35 yrs	25	25
	36 – 45 yrs	25	25
	46 and above	25	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



<b>Educational Status</b>	Illiterate	97	97
	Primary	2	2
	Middle	1	1
	High	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Type</b>	Joint	14	14
	Nuclear	86	86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Level of Affluence</b>	Low	19	19
	Medium	81	81
	High	---	---
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	2	2
	Married	98	98
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Perusal of **Table 1** shows that all the respondents (100%) falls between the age range of 15 to 50 years with average age of 24 years. Further the table shows 98% of the respondents are married and 2% are unmarried. Demographic profile gives a clear picture of illiteracy among the respondents as 97 % of them never went to school for any formal education. The qualification level of only 1% of the respondents is upto middle school. It further shows that 86 % belongs to nuclear family and 14% to joint family. The demographic profile of the respondents clearly states their educational level and economic status is not much satisfactory which further underlines the need for improvement in their working conditions.

Table 2: Decision Making in the Family (N= 100)

<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Husband	55	55
Self	13	13
Both	28	28
Son	2	2
Mother in law	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the decision making ability among the respondents and their family members. It shows that majority of the female workers (87%) are not able to take decision regarding their employment as they became economically independent and started earning as a means of livelihood, probably due to lack of family support. As they are not equipped with any other resource to become economically self-reliant and were thus motivated to continue with this work only.



Table 3: Facilities at workplace (N= 100)

S. No.	Responses	N	%
1	Light	76	76
2	Kitchen	3	3
3	Water	42	42
4	Toilets	5	5
5	Washing facilities	1	1
6	First- aid	-	-
7	Vehicle for emergency travel	-	-
8	Free transport to city for shopping	-	-

The cursory glance of the **Table 3** shows that majority of the respondents have lighting facility at their workplace followed by water. Only few have toilets followed by kitchen and least have washing facility. No one have transport, first aid and vehicle for emergency travel

Table: 4 Satisfaction Level from work (N= 100)

Level	N	%
<b>Not satisfied</b>	50	50
<b>Average satisfaction</b>	40	40
<b>Highly satisfied</b>	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4** shows the satisfaction level of the respondents engaged in the work of stone crushing. The distribution of the table shows that 50% of the respondents are not satisfied with their work while 40% have average satisfaction with this work. Only few i.e. 10% are highly satisfied. As they have freedom of working hours, how much they want to work, value for work and not having any proficiency in any other profession. Thus, majority of the workers are either not satisfied or have average satisfaction with work.

Table 5 Risks of accidents in stone breaking

Level	N	%
<b>Low</b>	50	50
<b>Average</b>	40	40
<b>High</b>	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5** Shows the level of risks of accidents in stone breaking. It shows that half of the respondents stated low risk of accidents in their work while 40 % says there is average risk taking in this sector. Only few i.e. 10% states having high risk of accidents.



Table 6: Awareness about Social security and welfare legislations (N=120)

Category	N	%
Yes	-	-
No	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6** shows the distribution on the basis of level of awareness **Social security and welfare legislations**. The table shows that all the workers are not aware of any welfare board or intermediaries. The probable reason for this is that all the respondents get work in the centers located in local area. They have no direct marketing experiences. Since most of the women are in the unorganized sector or work through middlemen, they do not make much money compared to an actual selling price of their product.

### Focus group Discussion

To discuss the determinants of challenges faced by women working in unorganized sector, it is imperative to focus on recognition of the broader, economic and social challenges that their lives and constrain their opportunities to better life.

### Focus group discussion

With the respondents revealed many underlying issues that influence their overall work related satisfaction and issues. There are stressors specific to unorganized sector such as low educational level, reduced social network, isolation, poor connectedness, limited access to healthcare services, financial dependence, and neglectful attitude of society. The identification of these factors may support the understanding of reasons that contributes to poor work life of people belonging to this community. Respondents revealed that they were not given due consideration in educational institutions or in society.

Furthermore, they reveal in order to make both ends meet we have to work for hours amidst sun and clouds. We are not equipped with modern settings or facilities both at workplace and at home. This leads to extreme isolation and less satisfaction. Furthermore they revealed that due to lack of work opportunities we are engaged in this work as we are not trained to do any other task. To change the scenario in the social context their cultural and socio- economic factors should be taken into consideration. Our policies should shift their focus to make all inclusive society and work for people engaged in unorganized sector to earn money.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study examined the work satisfaction, and challenges of female stone crushers. Stone crushing is a time-consuming and labour-intensive work. Because of the low remuneration, it is an economically unviable alternative for many people. It is obvious from the debate that women working especially in unorganised sector have a poor level of job satisfaction when it comes to the current status of their income. The workers are mostly dissatisfied with their earnings and concerned about their future needs.





## **SUGGESTIONS**

Skill development programmes should be designed specifically for women workers based on their needs and issues.

It is important to aware women workers about the legislative and administrative support available to them to protect their rights.

Efforts shall be made to change social outlook towards women in general and women workers in particular.

Law is needed to protect the rights of women workers.

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