

# An analysis of the relationship between problems of working women and their socio-economic conditions in Tiruppur city

Dr. P. Kanakarani

*Assistant Professor of Economics, Sri Sarada College for Women (Autonomous), India*

kanaga03@yahoo.com

## Abstract

**Objectives:** To capture problems faced by working women in their work place and their socio-economic status both in organised and unorganised sectors in the study area.

**Methods/ Statistical Analysis:** This study is based on primary data collected from working women in both organised and unorganised sectors. For the analysis purpose, problems of working women in this study have been categorised into five groups. To find out the causes for problems faced by working women in the work place, their socio-economic factors viz age group, education and income of the respondents are related with their nature of problems by using chi square test.

**Findings:** Despite the sector in which women are working, still they are victims of multiple forms of oppression. Poor working conditions, physical problem and lack of monetary benefits are associated with the women working in unorganised sector whereas mental problem is mainly associated with organised sector. The physical problem and sexual harassment are observed in both organised and unorganised sector but the percentage is more in organised sector. In terms of socio-economic conditions the mental problems, physical problems and sexual harassment are associated with age group on the other side lack of monetary benefits and poor working conditions are associated with income of the respondents. It is also observed that sexual harassment is more among the working women who are completed higher education which indicates the institutional failure in implementing women's safety and their rights. Thus mere increasing the literacy rate alone would not increase the women's participation in labour force and also it is required improving the working conditions by implementation of standard wage rate and regulation of working hours in unorganised sector.

**Application/ Improvements:** The findings of this study helpful to the policy makers to locate the nature of problems faced by working women and designing and implementing the welfare policies accordingly.

**Keywords:** Working Women, Problems, Socio-economic conditions, and Tiruppur City.

## 1. Introduction

The structure of Indian economy is undergoing major changes due to globalisation, liberalisation, urbanisation, and industrialisation. This in turn, leads to challenges to the family organisation which is the basic institution of the society. This changing environment forces woman to take extra-familial roles that is i. status role in work situation as employee and ii. Role orientation in corporate life [1]. At all the level women are entering that is in both organised and unorganised sector. Of these unorganised sector has emerged as one of the most dynamic and active segment in the developing economy and also it creates opportunities for women to enter at large. At the same time workers in this sector are given less importance and particularly women those who are working in informal sector are facing a vicious chain of struggles, hurdles and many other problems.

## 2. Statement of the problem

Women have not been treated equal to men from all over the world. Women are doing dual role as unpaid home maker in their family and paid worker in labour market. Now a day's women are forced in to labour market not only to produce consumption goods and they play an equal role in their home to meet their financial responsibilities. Women's work in their home has never been valued in monetary terms in our society. On the other side their work in labour market has been undervalued or marginalised. This study aims to find out the problems of faced by women in their work place both in organised and unorganised sector.

### 3. Research methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. A structured interview schedule was prepared to cover the variables given in the hypothesis. Most of the constructs and related variables were taken directly from the literature reviewed and certain variables are taken into consideration after discussion with field experts. There are 120 working women are interviewed from both organised and unorganised sector in Tiruppur city, Tamil Nadu, India. This study includes the following categories of women workers in unorganised sector are domestic workers, construction workers, and garments worker, workers in textile units and labours in agro based industries. On the other side, organised sector includes working women in textile industries, schools, hospitals and shopping malls. The collected data were presented for interpretation and analysis with the help of statistical tools like percentage, chi square and mean.

### 4. Limitations of the study

There are certain limitations have been observed by the researcher. This study failed to give importance for the some of the suggestions given in the existing research papers. While collecting information's from the respondents chances are there for bias and their reluctant behaviour may influence in this research findings. This study analysed problems of working women with only few selected socio-economic factors.

### 5. Analysis and interpretation of data

Labour market is an economy consists of two main sectors which have been labelled as organised or formal and unorganised or informal sectors. The former is characterised by large firms with a degree of market power to all firms, good quality of working condition, with skilled employees, high wage rate, stable employment and standard administrative rules. Whereas the later sector is characterised by small peripheral firm, required low skilled labours, low wage rate, unstable employment and unregulated working environment.

The unorganised sector in the developing economy includes not only majority of the labour force and also majority of the women labourers. Women are still disadvantaged in the labour market irrespective of sector in which they are working. For instance in organised sector women are facing problems like mental stress, physical problems, sexual harassment and poor working environment. Whereas in unorganised sector, the problems emerge in terms of low wage rate, unregulated working hours, poor working environment, lack of job securities, sexual harassment, etc,. Women are deprived in the labour market because of their socio-economic status.

### 6. Classification of problems faced by working women in the study area

Working women in general are discriminated at various levels in their work place both organised and unorganised sector. For the analysis purpose their problems are classified as:

#### 1. Mental stress

The mental stress includes the following problems faced by working women in the study area. Women are mentally stressed in their work place when their efficiency is always been suspected and internal politics in work place. The married working women are facing psychological problems and mental stress in their family life because if they are working with male co-workers. Most of working women are not getting suitable job for their qualifications. It also includes issues that, male co-workers cannot mentally accept the superiority of women in the work place. And multiple tasks given by the employer to the women worker is also caused mental stress.

#### 2. Physical problems

Women's health status is important not only for themselves and also for welfare of their family members. This study includes working women's physical problems like allergies due to their work, injuries while working and other health problems because of their work.

**3. Sexual harassment**

Women workers are exposed more risk in terms of sexual harassment and exploitation in their work place [2]. In this study, to gather information's regarding the sexual harassment of women at their work place the following information's are collected. They are, behaviours of male co-workers with women workers like request for sexual favours, sending or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters and cartoons.

**4. Poor working condition**

Women are preferred in unorganised sector because of low wages than their male counterparts [3]. Working women in unorganised sector do not have safety measures and standard wage policies. For instance women in textiles industries are injured during their work and also their maternity leave is only 90 days without remuneration [4]. Thus, in the present study the problem of poor working condition is associated with absence of infrastructure facilities like transport, sanitary facilities for women workers and absence of safety measures like unsecured work place and unregulated working hours. It also includes internal committee for complaints/employers interest in solving women workers problem.

**5. Absence monetary benefits**

Majority of the women entering into labour force during crisis or distress and withdraw when their financial conditions of the household becomes better [5]. According to World Bank Report (1991) Indian Women make up one-third of their family financial responsibilities [6]. More number of women in India is entering into unorganised sector because of their lack of education which forced them to enter in to low paid job [7]. The workers in unorganised sector are not able utilise the institutional facilities in case of their financial crisis. In such a situation they are trapped into money lenders or from their employers. This study also gathered information's from the respondents regarding sources of debt, bonus for festivals, salary advance and increase in wage rate as shown in Figure 1. Collected information's based on the above factors are related with their socio-economic variables viz. age group of the working women, educational status and with annual income of the women workers.

Figure 1. Problems faced by women in their work place

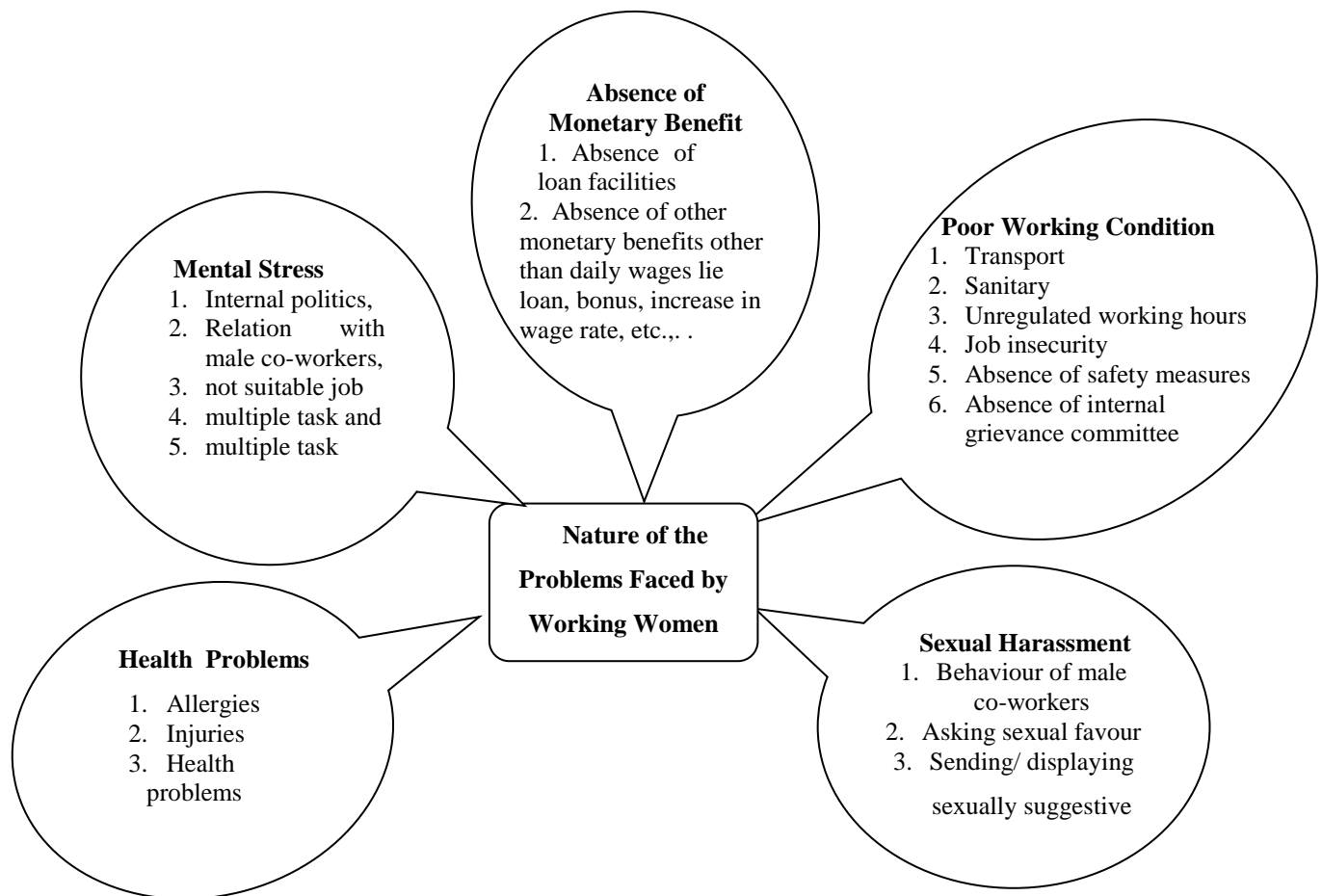


Table 1. An analysis of sectors-wise problems of working women

Sector	Nature of Problems					
	Mental Stress	Physical problems	Sexual Harassment	Poor working conditions	Absence of monetary benefits	Colum total
Organised	26	7	8	12	7	60
	(21.67)	(5.83)	(8.33)	(10.00)	(5.83)	(50.00)
Unorganised	7	10	3	18	22	60
	(5.83)	(8.33)	(2.50)	(15)	(18.33)	(50.00)
Row Total	33	17	11	30	29	120
	(27.50)	(14.17)	(9.17)	(25)	(24.17)	(100)

Source: Primary data, 2018; Figures in brackets shows percentage to total

Table 1 shows that in the organised sector majority of the women employees are facing the problems of mental harassment (21.67%) followed by poor working conditions (10%). On the other side majority of the women employees in unorganised sector are facing the problems of the absence of monetary benefits (18.33%) and poor working conditions (15%). It could be observed from the above table that in organised sector women’s issues are related to mental harassment and poor working conditions whereas in unorganised sector it relates to absence of monetary benefits and poor working conditions.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test

Factor	Computed value	Table value significant at 1 %	Table value significant at 5 %	D.F	Inference
Sector	8.03	13.28	9.49	4	H <sub>0</sub> : Accepted

Table 2 shows that the computed value is less than table value at both 5% and 1% level of significant therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected. Which means there is no significant difference between natures of the problem faced by working women irrespective of the sector in which they are working.

Table 3. Relationship between natures of the problems faced by working women and their age groups

Age group	Nature of Problems					
	Mental Stress	Physical Problems	Sexual Harassment	Poor working conditions	Absence Monetary Benefits	Colum Total
Up to 30	8(6.67)	5(4.17)	6(5.00)	6(5.00)	5(4.17)	30(25.0)
31 – 40	13(10.83)	7(5.83)	3(2.50)	6(5.00)	4(3.33)	33(27.50)
41 – 50	9(7.50)	2(1.67)	2(1.67)	9(7.50)	6(5.00)	28(23.33)
51 – 60	2(1.67)	1(0.83)		7(5.83)	11(9.17)	21(17.50)
61 and above	1(0.83)	2(1.67)		2(1.67)	3(2.50)	8(6.67)
Row Total	33(27.50)	17(14.17)	11(9.17)	30(25.00)	29(24.17)	120(100)

Source: Primary data 2018; Figures in brackets shows percentage to total

Table 3 relates the nature of the women employee’s problems and their age group. It is observed from Table 2, majority of the working women that is 27.30% are between the age group of 31-40 particularly they are suffered by mental problems (10.83%) and physical problems (5.83%). About 25% of the working women are below the age group of 30 and between the age group of 41-50.

Table 4. Chi-Square test

Factor	Computed value	Table value significant at 1 %	Table value significant at 5 %	D.F	Remarks
Sector	28.25	20.09	15.51	8	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected

Table 4 reveals that the computed value of chi square test is greater than table value both at 5% and 1% level of significant in the 8 degrees of freedom. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted with the conclusion that, in the nature of the working women’s problem is closely associated with their age group.

Table 5. Relationship between nature of the problems and level of education

Education Status	Nature of Problems					Colum Total
	Mental Stress	Physical Problems	Sexual Harassment	Poor working conditions	Absence of monetary benefits	
Never been to school	2(1.67)	5(4.17)	1(0.83)	6(5.00)	10(8.33)	24(20.00)
Primary	5(4.17)	4(3.33)	1(0.83)	13(10.83)	9(7.50)	32(26.67)
Higher secondary	8(6.67)	3(2.50)	2(1.67)	7(5.83)	7(5.83)	27(22.50)
Degree/diploma	13(10.83)	3(2.50)	5(4.17)	4(3.33)	3(2.50)	28(23.33)
Post graduate	5(4.17)	2(1.67)	2(1.67)	0(0.00)	00.00	9(7.50)
Row Total	33(27.50)	17(14.17)	11(9.17)	30(25.00)	29(24.17)	120(100)

Source: Primary data 2018; Figures in brackets shows percentage to total

The level of education is also place a vital role in empowering women. It is generally assumed that level of education would raise the status of women in the society. In India, female literacy rate always lower than male literacy rate but economic participation women ranked 127<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> respectively [8]. Sexual harassment is an emerging problem at all levels of educational institutions. Therefore this study aims to relate women’s education level and nature of problems they are facing as shown in Table 5.

Women employees those who are completed higher education are facing the problem of mental stress (15%) followed by sexual harassment (5.84%) whereas majority of the illiterate working women are facing the problem of absence of monetary benefits (7.80%). There are about 26.67% of women are completed primary level of education and majority of them are reported the problems of poor working conditions and absence of monetary benefits.

Table 6. Chi square test

Factors Related	Computed value	Table value significant at 1 % level	Table value significant at 1 % level	D.F	Inference
Level of Education	32.98	20.09	15.51	8	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected

Table 7. Relation between nature of problems faced by working women and their annual income

Annual income	Nature of Problems					Colum Total
	Mental Stress	Physical Problems	Sexual Harassment	Poor working conditions	Absence of monetary benefits	
Up to 60,000	3(2.50)	3(2.50)	2(1.67)	11(9.17)	14(11.67)	33(27.50)
60,001 to 1,20,000	6(5)	8(6.67)	3(2.50)	12(10.00)	11(9.17)	40(33.33)
1,20,001 to 1,80,000	7(5.83)	4(3.33)	1 (0.83)	5(4.17)	4(3.33)	21(17.50)
1,80,001 to 2,40,000	4(3.33)	2(1.67)	4(3.33)	2(1.67)	-	12(10)
2,40,001 and above	13(10.83)	-	1(0.83)	-	-	14(11.67)
Row Total	33(27.50)	17(14.17)	11(9.17)	30(25.00)	29(24.17)	120(100)

Source: Primary data 2018; Figures in brackets shows percentage to total

The computed value is greater than Table 6 value at 5% and 1% level of significant with 8 degrees of freedom. Therefore it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between level of women's education and nature of problems faced by women in their work place.

Table 7 shows that the relationship between nature of problems faced by working women and their annual income. Out of 120 respondents surveyed, majority (33.33%) of the respondents income ranges between ₹60,001 to ₹1,20,000 that is an average of ₹85,208.56. In this income group about 10% and 9.17% are reported that they are in the poor working environment and absence of monetary benefits. About 27.50 percent of them are in the income group of less than ₹60,000/- with an average of ₹53,250.35. And about 17.50% of the working women are in the income group of ₹1,20,001- ₹1,80,000 and their average income is around Rs. 1,41,765.07. It is observed that in this income group majority (5.83%) of them are working with problem of mental stress.

Table 8 shows that the computed value of chi square is greater than the critical value both at 5 percent and 1% level of significant in the 8 degrees of freedom. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected and alternated hypothesis is accepted and it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between economic status and nature of their problems. The analysis, it is inferred that working women at all levels are facing problems in their work place and which is closely associated with their socio-economic factors viz., age group, level of education and their income.

Table 8. Chi square test

Factors Related	Computed value	Table value significant at 1 % level	Table value significant at 5 % level	D.F	Inference
Income	70.28	20.09	15.51	8	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected

Mental problems, physical problems and sexual harassments are closely associated with their age group particularly in the age groups of less than 30 and between the age group of 31-40. Majority of the working women between the age group of 41 and above are reported that, poor working environment and absence of monetary benefits are their main issues. The mental problems and sexual harassments are also closely associated with the level of education. These problems are more among the working women those, who are qualified with higher education. The working women those who are never been to school and below secondary level of education are reported that their problems are associated with poor working environment and absence of monetary benefits. The income group-wise analysis shows that sexual harassment problem spreads at all levels particularly it is more in the income group of ₹1,80,001 to 2,40,000. And the problems of poor working conditions and absence of monetary benefits are more in the income groups of less than ₹60,000 and ₹60,001 to ₹1,20,000.

## 7. Conclusion

Women workers, both in organised and unorganised sector, face serious problems like sexual harassment, job insecurity, health problems, mental stress, wage discrimination, absence of safety measures, unhealthy working environment, etc.,. Women should be empowered about their rights and nature of problems in their working environment and empower them to utilise grievance redressal cell. To improve the status of working women in unorganised sector, policy reforms and institutional changes are required.

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