

## Work Profile of Women Workers Engaged in Unorganized Sector of Punjab

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**ABSTRACT** The study was conducted in three blocks and six wards of Ludhiana district of Punjab. Seven villages and eight localities were randomly selected from selected blocks and wards. A sample of 200 women (100 rural and 100 urban) was selected randomly according to the availability of workers in unorganized sector. The data were collected with the help of interview schedule. Work profile of the women workers was studied in terms of their type of job, work related characteristics, union membership and availability of facilities. Maximum number (seventy-eight per cent) of urban workers were migrant labour whereas in the rural areas only twenty per cent was recorded. Highest number of rural and urban workers was involved in the domestic work. On the other hand, in rural areas very few numbers of women were involved in construction work and agriculture in urban areas. Majority of them received their own wages at workplace and they were working for maximum days, that is, more than 26 days in a month. None of the respondents was the member of any union. Health check-ups and crèche facility for their children were not provided to them at the workplace. None of them were issued any job cards from their employer/contractor. So there is a need to create awareness among women workers regarding importance and benefits of job cards during any mishappening.

### INTRODUCTION

Indian society has got a significant role in the increasing number of women workers in the unorganized sector. The majority of economically active women in India are engaged in the agriculture and non- agricultural labor force in the unorganized sector including all those women, that is, rag-picker, construction workers, home-based workers, domestic workers or helpers, street vendors or seller, casual or temporary workers who work without any legal or social protection (Gothoskar 2003). As per the latest estimation of a sub-committee of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), the contribution of unorganized sector to GDP is about 50 per cent (NCEUS 2008). Around 28 million workers work in the rural sector and an estimated six crores are in urban areas. On an average, unorganized sector workers do not earn more than Rs 30-50 per day. Some may appear to earn more but the work is often seasonal and the total earnings amount to roughly the same after long hours of work. This is particularly the case for self-employed persons such as vendors, rag pickers, and petty traders, who make their services available from the early hours of the morning to late at night, in all types of hostile working condi-

tions (Moghe 2007). In fact 97 per cent of the enterprises employ less than five workers who do not come under applicability limits of major labour laws. Exploitation of the workers is common and the majority of them with high unemployment are forced to work with no other alternative but as a means of survival. Hence the present study was an attempt to analyze the work profile of the rural and urban women workers engaged in unorganized sector.

### Objectives

1. To study the type of job women workers involved in.
2. To study their work-related characteristics.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in three blocks and six wards of Ludhiana district of Punjab. Seven villages and eight localities were randomly selected from selected blocks and wards. A sample of 200 women (100 rural and 100 urban) was selected randomly according to the availability of workers in unorganized sector. Data for the study was collected by interviewing the women workers such as the type and nature of job, monthly income, distance of place of work from

their home, mode of conveyance, work experience, facility of crèche and membership of unions, using the help of pre-tested interview schedule. The collected data were analysed by using frequency and percentages.

## RESULTS

Keeping in view the present study, the results have been reported under the following sub-headings:

### 1. Type of Job

A look at the Table 1 indicates that domestic work was the type of work in which majority of the rural and urban women workers were involved to earn their livelihood followed by the petty trading. Data in Table 1 reveals that 53.00 per cent rural and 42.00 per cent urban women were involved in domestic work followed by petty traders with 19.00 per cent rural and 27.00 per cent urban respondents. Almost same percentages (13.00 per cent) of urban respondents were indulged in construction work and garment stitching, whereas, 13.00 per cent and 8.00 per cent of rural women were doing the agriculture work and garment stitching. Lowest percentage of rural women was recorded in construction work and urban women in agriculture.

**Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to the involvement in different types of job (n=200)**

Type of job	Rural	Urban	Total
	( $n_1=100$ )	( $n_2=100$ )	
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Construction	7 (07.00)	13 (13.00)	20 (10.00)
Domestic	53 (53.00)	42 (42.00)	95 (47.50)
Garments stitching	8 (8.00)	13 (13.00)	21 (10.50)
Petty trader	19 (19.00)	27 (27.00)	46 (23.00)
Agriculture	13 (13.00)	5 (05.00)	18 (09.00)

## 2. Work Related Characteristics

### 2.1 Basic Work Characteristics

Data in Table 2 indicates that 60.00 per cent and 55.00 per cent of the respondents started their work in the age between 24-36 years in both rural and urban category respectively. About 98.00 per cent of the respondents did not receive any training in both the categories, that is, rural and urban. Data in Table 2 reveals that about 43.00 per cent of the respondents had

worked for 10 - 20 years followed by 38.00 per cent of those who worked for less than one year to ten years.

Majority (92.00 per cent) of the respondents did not have any change in their employment since they were working whereas only 8.00 per cent of respondents were shifted from other work to their present nature of job (Table 2). Overall, 82.00 per cent of respondents worked both the time, that is, morning and evening, while, about 16.50 per cent had been working only in the morning hours. About 91.00 per cent of the rural and urban respondents reported that they received their own wages for the work, while husband had the power of receiving the wages of 8.00 per cent of the rural and urban respondents.

Majority (73.00 per cent) of the rural and urban respondents lived at a distance of less than 5 kms and few at a distance of above 5 km from the workplace. Further, majority of the rural and urban respondents, that is, 85.50 per cent came by walking to the workplace. However, 7.50 per cent rural and 4.00 per cent of urban respondents used auto rickshaw and private bus while coming to workplace.

### 2.2 Working Hours and Working Days

Table 3 shows that around 9.00 per cent of construction workers were doing work for 8-10 hours per day whereas about 40.00 per cent domestic workers were doing work for 2-7 hours per day in both rural and urban categories. Most of the garment stitchers spent 5-8 hours for their work in rural category, 8-11 hours per day in urban category followed by 22.00 per cent petty traders who spent 6-12 hours per day for their work in rural and urban category. As far as agriculture workers were concerned 7.50 per cent of them were spending 6-9 hours at workplace per day.

Table 3 shows that about 10 per cent of construction workers, 46.5 per cent of domestic workers, 9 per cent of garment stitchers, 20 per cent of petty traders, 8.5 per cent of agriculture workers, worked for maximum number of days, that is, 26-30 days per month in both rural and urban categories.

### 2.3 Monthly Income and Mode of Payment

Table 4 shows that 6.00 per cent of construction workers earned monthly income between

**Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their work related characteristics (n=200)**

Work characteristics	Category	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> =100)	Urban (n <sub>2</sub> =100)	Total
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
<i>Age of Starting Work</i>				
	12 - 24	17 (17.00)	36 (36.00)	53 (26.50)
	24 - 36	60 (60.00)	55 (55.00)	115 (57.50)
	36 - 48	20 (20.00)	7 (07.00)	27 (13.50)
	> 48	3 (03.00)	2 (02.00)	5 (02.50)
<i>Training Received</i>				
		1 (01.00)	3 (03.00)	4 (02.00)
<i>Employment Years</i>				
	<1 - 10	37 (37.00)	39 (39.00)	76 (38.00)
	10 - 20	41 (41.00)	45 (45.00)	86 (43.00)
	20 - 30	17 (17.00)	10 (10.00)	27 (13.50)
	30 - 40	5 (05.00)	6 (06.00)	11 (05.50)
<i>Employment Change</i>				
		3 (03.00)	13 (13.00)	16 (8.00)
<i>Time of Working</i>				
	Morning	25 (25.00)	8 (08.00)	33 (16.50)
	Evening	-	3 (03.00)	3 (01.50)
	Both	75 (75.00)	89 (89.00)	164 (82.00)
<i>Recipient of Wages</i>				
	Self	92 (92.00)	90 (90.00)	182 (91.00)
	Husband	8 (08.00)	8 (08.00)	16 (08.00)
	Parents	-	-	-
	Others	-	2 (02.00)	2 (01.00)
<i>Distance of Workplace From Residence (Kms)</i>				
	1 - 5	74 (74.00)	72 (72.00)	146 (73.00)
	5 - 10	5 (05.00)	7 (07.00)	12 (06.00)
	10 - 15	13 (13.00)	-	13 (06.50)
<i>Mode of Conveyance*</i>				
	Company bus	-	-	-
	Private bus	7 (07.00)	1 (01.00)	8 (04.00)
	Cycle	1 (01.00)	2 (02.00)	3 (01.50)
	Auto rickshaw	12 (12.00)	3 (03.00)	15 (07.50)
	Walking	80 (80.00)	91 (91.00)	171 (85.50)
	Others	-	3 (03.00)	3 (01.50)

\*Multiple Responses

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the working hours and working days (n=200)**

Work profile	Category	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> =100)	Urban (n <sub>2</sub> =100)	Total
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
<i>Working Hours (Hours/day)</i>				
Construction	6-8	-	2 (02.00)	2 (01.00)
	8-10	7 (07.00)	11 (11.00)	18 (09.00)
Domestic	2-7	46 (46.00)	33 (33.00)	79 (39.50)
	7-12	7 (07.00)	9 (09.00)	16 (08.00)
Garments stitching	5-8	8 (08.00)	6 (06.00)	14 (07.00)
	8-11	-	7 (07.00)	7 (03.50)
Petty trader	6-12	19 (19.00)	25 (25.00)	44 (22.00)
	12-18	-	-	-
	18-24	-	2 (02.00)	2 (01.00)
Agriculture	6-9	10 (10.00)	5 (05.00)	15 (07.50)
	9-12	3 (03.00)	-	3 (01.50)
<i>Working Days (Days/month)</i>				
Construction	21-25	1 (01.00)	-	1 (00.50)
	26-30	6 (06.00)	13 (13.00)	19 (09.50)
Domestic	21-25	2 (02.00)	-	2 (01.00)
	26-30	51 (51.00)	42 (42.00)	93 (46.50)
Garments stitching	21-25	1 (01.00)	2 (02.00)	3 (01.50)
	26-30	7 (07.00)	11 (11.00)	18 (09.00)
Petty trader	21-25	4 (04.00)	2 (02.00)	6 (03.00)
	26-30	15 (15.00)	25 (25.00)	40 (20.00)
Agriculture	21-25	1 (01.00)	-	1 (00.50)
	26-30	12 (12.00)	5 (05.00)	17 (08.50)

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the monthly income and mode of payment (n=200)**

Work profile	Category	Rural ( $n_1=100$ )	Urban ( $n_2=100$ )	Total
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
<i>Monthly Income (Rs.)</i>				
Construction	2000-3100	2 (02.00)	6 (06.00)	8 (04.00)
	3100-4200	5 (05.00)	7 (07.00)	12 (06.00)
Domestic	<1000	25 (25.00)	3 (03.00)	28 (14.00)
	1000-2000	22 (22.00)	10 (10.00)	32 (16.00)
	2000-3000	5 (05.00)	17 (17.00)	22 (11.00)
	3000-4000	-	8 (08.00)	8 (04.00)
	>4000	-	4 (04.00)	4 (02.00)
Garments stitching	1500-3500	8 (08.00)	9 (09.00)	17 (08.50)
	3500-5500	-	4 (04.00)	4 (02.00)
Petty trader	1500-4000	6 (06.00)	17 (17.00)	23 (11.50)
	4000-6500	13 (13.00)	10 (10.00)	23 (11.50)
Agriculture	2700-3600	7 (07.00)	1 (01.00)	8 (04.00)
	3600-4500	6 (06.00)	4 (04.00)	10 (05.00)
<i>Mode of Payment</i>				
	Cash	99 (99.00)	100 (100.00)	199 (99.50)
	Cheque	-	-	-
	No payment	1 (01.00)	-	1 (00.50)

3100-4200. Twenty-five per cent of rural domestic workers were earning less than Rs. 1000 per month whereas 17.00 per cent of urban domestic workers earned between Rs. 2000-3000 per month.

Four per cent of urban women workers were earning monthly income of between Rs. 3000-4000 and two per cent of them earned more than Rs. 4000 per month. About 9.00 per cent garment stitching workers earned Rs. 1500-3500 per month whereas same percentage, that is, 11.50 per cent of petty traders were earning income between Rs.1500-4000 and Rs. 4000-6500; only five per cent of agriculture workers had a income between Rs. 3600-4500 per month in rural and urban categories.

Data in the Table 4 reveals that almost all the respondents, that is, 99.50 per cent received the payment in cash and none of them was paid in cheque mode. One respondent in rural area was given no payment in cash but food and other necessary items were given.

#### 2.4 Reasons for Joining the Job

A look at the Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents (95.00 per cent) stated that economic necessity as reason for joining their job while 55.00 per cent and 44.00 per cent worked due to inflation (rising prices of consumable goods) and family pressure respectively.

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to their reasons for joining the job (n=200)**

Reasons*	Rural ( $n_1=100$ )	Urban ( $n_2=100$ )	Total
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Economic necessity	97 (97.00)	93 (93.00)	190 (95.00)
Personal interest	8 (08.00)	18 (18.00)	26 (13.00)
Family pressure	35 (35.00)	53 (53.00)	88 (44.00)
Friends/Relatives working	10 (10.00)	7 (07.00)	17 (08.50)
Inflation	64 (64.00)	46 (46.00)	110 (55.00)
Untimely death in family	9 (09.00)	41 (41.00)	50 (25.00)
Others	9 (09.00)	4 (04.00)	13 (06.50)

\* Multiple Responses

#### 2.5 Punishment on Job

In Table 6 it is indicated that majority of the respondents (76.50 per cent) got punishment from their employers in case of negligence. Scolding was the form of punishment which was given to the majority of the respondents, that is, 85.00 per cent in case of negligence to both rural and urban women workers at workplace. Around 15.00 per cent of the respondents experienced termination from the job as punishment in which on the spot termination was received by the majority of respondents and pre-notice was given to around 26.00 per cent of respondents in both the categories.

**Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to the punishment on job (n=200)**

<i>Punishment</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>(n<sub>1</sub>=100)</i>	<i>(n<sub>2</sub>=100)</i>	
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
Punishment on job Form	79 (79.00)	74 (74.00)	153 (76.50)
A cut in salary	-	5 (06.76)	5 (03.27)
Scolding	69 (87.34)	61 (82.43)	130 (84.97)
Termination	10 (12.66)	13 (17.56)	23 (15.03)
On the spot termination	6 (60.00)	11 (84.62)	17 (73.91)
Pre-notice is given	4 (40.00)	2 (15.38)	6 (26.09)

### 3. Union Membership Status

None of the respondent in rural and urban category was the member of any union and had any participation in the activities of the union in both rural and urban category (Table 7). Majority of the respondents reported that they did not have the knowledge of any union as while others did not get time and some were not interested to join any union. The findings of the study were in line with the findings of the Sharan (2005) who revealed that women workers had low participation in trade union activities.

**Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their status of union membership (n=200)**

<i>Union membership</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>(n<sub>1</sub>=100)</i>	<i>(n<sub>2</sub>=100)</i>	
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
Member of a Union	-	-	-
Active Participation in Union	-	-	-
Reason for Not Joining Union*			
No time	4 (04.00)	14 (14.00)	18 (09.00)
No knowledge	100 (100.00)	96 (96.00)	196 (98.00)
Not interested	5 (05.00)	6 (06.00)	11 (05.50)

\*Multiple Responses

### 4. Availability of facilities at workplace

Table 8 reveals that almost same percentage, that is, 72.00 per cent and 73.00 per cent of the respondents of rural and urban category got maximum of one to two days leave without any cut in the pay leave from their work in case of illness, accident and emergency.

None of the respondent in rural and urban category was provided any job cards by their employers/ contractors in unorganized sector.

A critical look at the Table 8 shows that more than 50.00 per cent of the respondents stated that they got money from the employers in emergency or if need arises. Almost half number of respondents in rural and urban category received bonus / gifts either casually or on occasion from their employers.

**Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to the availability of facilities at workplace (n=200)**

<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>(n=100)</i>	<i>(n=100)</i>	
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
<i>Provision of Leave*</i>			
Illness	70 (70.00)	74 (74.00)	144 (72.00)
Accident	72 (72.00)	74 (74.00)	146 (73.00)
Emergency	71 (71.00)	74 (74.00)	145 (72.50)
<i>Provision of Job Cards</i>	-	-	-
<i>Get Money in Emergency</i>	50 (50.00)	52 (52.00)	102 (51.00)
<i>Bonus/ Gifts</i>	57 (57.00)	43 (43.00)	100 (50.00)
<i>Food at Work*</i>	49 (49.00)	56 (56.00)	105 (52.50)
Breakfast	18 (36.73)	4 (07.14)	22 (20.95)
Lunch	36 (73.47)	7 (12.50)	43 (40.95)
Tea and snacks	49(100.00)	56(100.00)	105(100.00)
Dinner	9 (18.37)	-	9 (08.57)
<i>Availability of Time to Feed the Child</i>	-	13 (13.00)	13 (06.50)
<i>Crèche Facility</i>	-	-	-
<i>Health Check-up</i>	-	-	-

\*Multiple Responses

Table 8 explained that about 53.00 per cent of the respondents were given food at the workplace and 47.00 per cent were not given anything to eat interim their work in rural and urban category. About 94.00 per cent of rural and urban respondents reported that they did not get the time to feed their child at the workplace. It was interesting to know that 100.00 per cent of respondents reported that crèche facility was not provided to them by any of the employer. The finding was supported by Srivastava (2001) and Sandhu (2002) who revealed that there was no crèche facility for children of women workers at workplace. It was found in the Table 8 that 100.00 per cent of respondents reported that no health checkup facility was provided by employers at the workplace.

### CONCLUSION

All the women workers reported that there was no crèche facility for their children at workplace. Job cards were not issued to women work-

ers by either contractor/ employers. None of the respondent was member of any union due to lack of their knowledge.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to provide them crèche facility to take care for their children while at work and to create awareness among women workers regarding importance and benefits of job cards during any mishappening at workplace. They should be made aware regarding various benefits of trade unions.

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