



THE NEED OF INCLUSIVE GROWTH FROM THE ANGLE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

Dr.Naseem Ahmad Khan* Ms.Shadan Sammer Ali
Sr.Asst.Professor Department of Social Work, AMU, Aligarh.
Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, AMU, Aligarh.

Abstract

Domestic workers, in particular women domestic workers are a constantly growing section of workers in the informal sector of urban India. The last three decades have seen a sharp increase in their numbers, especially in contrast to male domestic workers (Neetha2004) .and Unorganized or informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy. More than 90 per cent of workforce and about 50 per cent of the national product are accounted for by the informal economy. A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in the informal economic activities [GOI, 2012]. Informal employment is generally a larger source of employment for women than for men in the developing world. The informal economy in India employs about 86 per cent of the country's work force and 91 per cent of its women workers. The constitution of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector in September 20, 2004, was one of the first steps taken by UPA Government, in pursuance of its Common Minimum Programme that committed itself "to ensure the welfare and well-being of all workers, particularly those in the unorganized sector who constitute 93% of our workforce". Although the Indian economy experienced a reasonably high growth rate till then, this was not seen as inclusive enough by the majority of the population. Low income women workers, especially in the informal sector form one of the most vulnerable groups in the Indian economy. Given their vulnerable status at home and at work, income generation alone may not improve the socio-economic status of women attached to the informal sector. Their economic empowerment needs to go along with political empowerment, which could improve their bargaining power both in household and at work. This means that organizing women workers in the informal economy could have beneficial impacts on their work and their life if such organization combines voices representation along with access to resources such as credit and information- a holistic strategy that provides political empowerment allied with economic empowerment. The present study aims at understanding the degree of vulnerability of the women workers in informal sector with special reference to the domestic workers as one of the large population under the category of the unorganized sector who are away from the almost all the welfare benefits, this paper tries to find out the ways to make them part of the inclusive growth.

Keywords – Informal Sector, Women Domestic Workers, Inclusive Growth.

Introduction

A great majority of people in the developing nations are under the line of poverty. They are deprived of adequate access to the basic needs of life such health, education, housing, food, security, employment, justice and equality. Issues of sustainable livelihood, social and political participation of the vulnerable groups exists as the major problem in the developing nations. Governments have failed to guarantee people's right in the implementation level. People who belong to the vulnerable groups are unable to acquire and use their rights(Chatterjee&Sheoran2007).Quality of employment has been one of the main concerns in labour market studies in developing countries. In India, the reported status of a worker as "employed does not necessarily imply a reasonable level of earnings; nor does it reflect the status of living of workers. Many studies has further explain that women in unorganized sectors are doubly vulnerable who are in need of special assistance. This paper tries to bring into notice the issues of the domestic workers (unorganized sector) and why they are not getting fruits of development and why they are excluded in inclusive growth.

Women in unorganized Sector

The term 'unorganized' is often used in the Indian context to Refer to the vast numbers of women and men engaged in different forms of employment. These forms include home-based work (e.g. rolling papads andbeedis), 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.

The major characteristics of the unorganized workers

- The unorganized labour is overwhelming in terms of its number range and therefore they are omnipresent throughout India.
- As the unorganized sector suffers from cycles of excessive seasonality of employment, majority of the unorganized workers does not have stable durable avenues of employment. Even those who appear to be visibly employed are not gainfully and substantially employed, indicating the existence of disguised unemployment.
- The workplace is scattered and fragmented.



- There is no formal employer – employee relationship
- In rural areas, the unorganized labour force is highly stratified on caste and community considerations. In urban areas while such considerations are much less, it cannot be said that it is altogether absent as the bulk of the unorganized workers in urban areas are basically migrant workers from rural areas.
- Workers in the unorganized sector are usually subject to indebtedness and bondage as their meagre income cannot meet with their livelihood needs.
- The unorganized workers are subject to exploitation significantly by the rest of the society. They receive poor working conditions especially wages much below that in the formal sector, even for closely comparable jobs, i.e., where labour productivity are no different. The work status is of inferior quality of work and inferior terms of employment, both remuneration and employment.
- Primitive production technologies and feudal production relations are rampant in the unorganized sector, and they do not permit or encourage the workmen to imbibe and assimilate higher technologies and better production relations. Large scale ignorance and illiteracy and limited exposure to the outside world are also responsible for such poor absorption.
- The unorganized workers do not receive sufficient attention from the trade unions.
- Inadequate and ineffective labour laws and standards relating to the unorganized sector.

The unorganized sector is physically more visible in India. The informal sector has not only offered the possibility of work to the unemployed, but has permitted survival of many households with wage earners. Some division of labour exists between formal and informal sectors on the basis of gender. It has been suggested that women tend to stay within the informal sector because of the flexibility of working arrangements and diversity of opportunities. Women in our society have so far had only a secondary status and the economic dependence of women upon men is one of the primary reasons which has pushed them into the background and resulted into their secondary status both within and outside the family (Wadhwa 1976). In spite of the fact that the women have proved their mettle in every walk of life, their contribution is not given due credit in most cases. In India women constitute nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in urban economy. Yet, their economic status is still low as it reflects from the census data, particularly of those who are engaged in the informal sector of urban economy (Tripathy and Das 1991). It is found that among all categories in the informal sector, domestic servants' income is the lowest and the problems are many (Sundaram 1996). They are engaged in household tasks, which include washing utensils, floor cleaning, washing of clothes, cooking as well as some outdoor tasks such as purchase of vegetables etc. Most of them live in slums; lead monotonous life without any color, struggle every day for their survival and face numerous problems in day to- day life like long hours of work, insecurity of job, low status at home and outside (Gathia 1983). Women workers contribute significantly to national development by performing remunerated/paid and unremunerated/unpaid work. They also struggle to combine their roles to look after their families. In many- a –case, they are at disadvantage as their workplace Policies and Condition of Domestic worker.

Domestic workers and their issues

Women workers in the informal economy consist of the most vulnerable working segments in society. They came from a marginalized population who's legal, economic and political status limit their ability to demand their rights. These women include domestic workers whose social and economic contributions to society are invisible to the public, the law and policies of the country. They face challenges because their work is not considered rural works that their rights to minimum standards of decent work are continually violated. The unique feature of their work place, which is the home of their employer, makes them vulnerable to abuses and exploitation.

With the rise of the middle class in India, domestic work has emerged as an important new occupation for migrant women and girls. Some 20 million people (mainly women and girls) migrate for domestic work to Mumbai, Delhi and other large cities from the eastern states of Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam and Mizoram (Social Alert quoted in SCF 2005). Roughly 20% of these workers are under the age of 14. A study of domestic workers in Delhi (Neetha 2004)[8] shows that although domestic work has brought higher incomes to many women and their families it is still far from decent work being characterized by long working hours, low wages and hardly any social security. Domestic workers are more vulnerable than other kinds of workers because they are not officially classified as workers at all and are therefore not covered by laws that apply to workers. Many of the domestic workers work over long time periods but have little or no savings for their old age. They are not entitled to any old-age pensions, gratuity or bonus. They have no medical insurance and all expenses of illness, hospitalization of self and family are borne by the worker. Neither do they have any coverage for childbirth, injury at work place or loans to build houses or other social responsibilities. Such loans or grants, as all other benefits, depend on their relation with the employer and the employer's goodwill. No data is available on older domestic workers. Though domestic



workers have been included in the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Steps have been taken by the government both at the national and state levels to protect their rights. Nevertheless, the few labour laws enacted by the national and state governments addressing domestic workers face the challenge of implementation. This is aggravated by the discriminating attitude of many employers against the domestic workers, including caste prejudices. As a result those who carry out domestic work are largely ignored working sectors often specially excluded and economically exploited.

Exclusion of Domestic Workers in Legislations

Domestic workers are excluded from labour welfare laws. Early judgments do not consider them as 'workmen' under the Trade Unions Act of 1926 those engaged in personal service, (WIEGO). Most other labour laws in the country hold the same position that they are not applicable because the household and the home are perceived as a non 'industry' entity (Reference of Supreme Court Decision 1978). As such domestic workers are currently not within the scope of most labour laws. They cannot demand rights for their decent working conditions, minimum wages, social security, hours of work, weekly offs paid leaves or medical benefits among others.

None of the Act meant for promotion of workers rights included domestic workers in its coverage. Attempts to bring in a national legislation for domestic worker regulation have been made over the years but have yet to meet its success (Reference of Supreme Court Decision 1978). Several states have also made efforts to enact their own labour legislation on domestic workers with some success in other states (ibid).

After much lobbying, domestic workers were brought within the ambit of the 2008 Unorganized Workers Social Security Act. Although the rules under this act have still to be framed, the fact is that this law does not provide for any enforceable or justifiable social security entitlement for unorganized workers. The only legal entitlement in the entire act is the right of all unorganized sector workers above fourteen years of age to register themselves and receive a "smart" identity card. It has been argued by many that the name of the act itself is a misnomer because it does not guarantee anything other than the formation of advisory boards at the central and state levels. There are no provisions for penalizing employers or bureaucrats who violate the provisions of the act.

The National Commission for Women has attempted to address some of the concerns through the 2008 Domestic Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill, and it has held a few consultations. The proposal includes a compulsory registration procedure for all domestic workers, both part-time and full-time, a welfare fund to which workers and employers will contribute, the registration of service providers (placement agencies), and the regulation of working conditions, and fines and imprisonment for the violation of the provisions of the bill. Interestingly, it grants powers of inspection to any registered trade union. A similar proposal has also been drafted by the National Campaign Committee for Unorganized Workers and Nirmala Niketan, which is entitled the 2008 Domestic Workers (Regulation of Employment, Conditions of Work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill.

Inclusive Growth

Meaning of inclusion: According to Verma (2011) "The 'inclusive growth' as a strategy of economic development received attention owing to a rising concern that the benefits of economic growth have not been equitably shared. Growth is inclusive when it creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them". Apart from addressing the issue of inequality, the inclusive growth may also make the poverty reduction efforts more effective by explicitly creating productive economic opportunities for the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. The inclusive growth by encompassing the hitherto excluded population can bring in several other benefits as well to the economy. The concept "Inclusion" should be seen as a process of including the excluded as agents whose participation is essential in the very design of the development process, and not simply as welfare targets of development programmes (Planning Commission, 2007).

Who are in need of Inclusion?

In India there are multiple socio-economic disadvantages that members of particular groups experience, which limits their access to service sector provisions like health, healthcare and education. Basing upon the earlier derived findings (Chatterjee & Sheoran 2007) as regards to the fact that 'vulnerable groups are disadvantaged as compared to others mainly on account of their reduced access to medical services and the underlying determinants of health (safe and portable drinking water, nutrition, housing and sanitation). Many studies found that the domestic workers are the disadvantaged group in terms of access to welfare services like health, education etc because of many interrelated reasons, like miss work, working hours, lack of financial support, in short all the socio-economic and physical barriers comes in their way of getting benefits.



According to a study by Mohapatra.K.K(2012) the domestic workers are most vulnerable in terms of poor living and working conditions which led them excluded in many wake of life. So there is an urgent need of their inclusion in more holistic manner.

Suggestion

Awareness generation: it is required to make them aware of their rights, and the policies available to them, and also to make the employer sensitive towards the issues of the domestic labourers.

Accessibility of resources: Government should make the basic facilities like Health care services, safe drinking water, descent living condition etc available to them. In short the physical and socio-economic barriers should reduce so that the fruit of actual growth could reach to everyone for a sustainable and just society.

Fixed Minimum wages: fixed minimum wages should be made available to them

Organization of the domestic workers: The domestic worker need to empower in India so, the policy makers should provide special assistance to them. Their economic empowerment needs to go along with political empowerment, which could improve their bargaining power both in household and at work. This means that organizing domestic women workers in the informal economy could have beneficial impacts on their work and their life if such organization combines voices representation along with access to resources such as credit and information- a holistic strategy that provides political empowerment allied with economic empowerment.

Thus it is **suggestive** that to bring the inclusive growth in real terms through inclusion of the most vulnerable section of the society e.g. domestic workers.

Conclusion

Inclusive growth is necessary for sustainable development through equitable distribution of wealth and prosperity. Achieving inclusive growth is the biggest challenge in a country like India. The challenge is to take the levels of growth to all section of the society and to all parts of the country and this growth being all pervasive and all encompassing in every sense of the word. It ought to be truly inclusive. All sections of society must get the benefits of this growth in full measure and then be able to take this growth forward by participating fully and wholeheartedly but there are large population of our country are out of this perspective of inclusive growth especially the workers of unorganized sector and specifically the women in this sector.

Unorganized sector work is characterized by low wages that are often insufficient to meet minimum living standards including nutrition, long working hours, and hazardous working conditions, lack of basic services such as first aid, drinking water and sanitation at the work sites. Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept implying not only lack of adequate income, but a host of other facts such as lack of choice, sense of powerlessness, vulnerability, and lack of assets, insecurity and social exclusion. We analyze that a highly visible percentage of women workers continue to live a life full of subsistence, compromises and most of their own access in terms of right to life is subsidized. The most important determining factor to such in access and denial primarily evolves out of poor literacy and lack of awareness resulting in self-exclusion from the mainstream opportunities.

References

1. Mohapatra.K. K (2012)“Women Workers in Informal Sector in India: Understanding the Occupational Vulnerability” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 2 No. 21*; retrieved from www.ijhssnet.com.
2. Report of the Committee on Unorganized Sector Statistics, National Statistical Commission, GOI, 2012.
3. A Statistical Picture, Employment Sector, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2002).
4. NSSO 61st (2004-05) Round Survey on employment-unemployment, NCEUS reports on Definitional and Statistical issues relating to the informal economy (NCEUS 2008).
5. Chatterjee Chandrima & Sheoran Gunjan (2007), *Vulnerable Groups in India*, Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes, Mumbai.
6. Annual Report to the People on Employment, GOI, Ministry of Labour and Employment, 1 July 2010.
7. Report of the Committee on Unorganized Sector Statistics, National Statistical Commission, GOI, February 2012.
8. Neetha, N. (2004). Making of Female Breadwinners Migration and Social Networking of Women Domestic in Delhi. *Economic and Political Weekly* April 24, 2004 pp1681-1688.
9. Chen, M. 2007. Skills, Employability and Social Inclusion: Women In The Construction Industry. Harvard University, WIEGO Network.