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Research Article

WOMEN EMPLOYEE RIGHTS IN GARMENT INDUSTRY, TIRUPUR

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Abstract

Women are playing a vital role in earning even net national product of the country through their income. This study is undertaken to study about how the women are utilizing their rights properly especially in garment industry. The reason to choose the industry is that the women participation in the industry is 70,000 especially in Tirupur. This research is undertaken to analyze about the women's rights in garment industry in the area of Tirupur. This study is undertaken to make an analysis of how women are working in their working area and also regarding the facilities provided in the working environment such as crèche facilities, ventilation facilities and payment benefits, work enrichment opportunities. The prime objective of the present study is to evaluate the Women Employee Rights in garment industry in Tirupur. The study was conducted on the basis of descriptive research. The employees have been selected by using non-probability convenience sample method from various departments. Totally 200 sample respondents were selected and analysed using t-Test, Chi-Square test and Garrett's ranking method.

Keywords: women rights; non-discrimination; welfare facilities; monetary benefits

Introduction

Garment Industry

The Indian textile industry is one of the oldest industries in India. Spinning and weaving were the earliest crafts of premature man. Later when technology improved machines for spinning and weaving were introduced, these inventions changed this industry from household to mill industry. This has a glorious past in India (Tewari, 2008)

Women Employee Rights

The factories Act, 1948 came into force on the 1st day of April, 1949. Its object is to regulate the conditions of work in manufacturing establishments which come within the definition of the term 'factory' as used in the Act. Various measures have taken regarding Safety, Welfare, Employment of women, Maternity benefit, Creche, Harassment, Employment, Working conditions, Child labour, Living wages, Working hours and Discrimination (Werhane *et al.*, 2008)

Review of Literature

Sharma and Verma (2008) has shown that "there is direct link between a country's attitude toward women and its progress socially and economically. Ekore (2008) found workers in an organization, irrespective of their gender, are classified into management/senior employees and others. Guo (2009) discussed the harmful effects the policy of different retirement ages for men and women made on women's equal employment rights. Mahmud (2009)

showed harassment by male colleagues or by management in the workplace is very common for the female workers in the garment industries. Wenjie (2009) established gender quality board and the Gender Equality Ombudsman system to investigate and punish violations of laws against gender discrimination. Nahar *et al.* (2010) found that work pattern in the garment factory severely affected worker's health, as they were restrained in a closed environment. Hazardous conditions of work range from the exposure to lint dust in an apparel factory to exposure to toxic chemicals in the recycling of electronic waste. It is also evident from the study of Mehta (2012) that the musculoskeletal disorders are the most common work related problems. Govindappa (2012) found that sixty one respondents suffered from breathing difficulties, 43 from allergic squeezing coming out of cotton dust. Bharara *et al.* (2012) revealed that sampled population had incidences of abrasion of skin, fall, slips, trips, crushing and pinching of body parts, boils in hands and feet, burns, sprains, cuts and bleeding and eye injury/hurt being more frequent occurring injuries during work. Srinivasan *et al.* (2013) identified that most of the respondents (90 percent) had heat, stress, noise and dust related problem, further vibration and stress are prevalent in the work place and majority of the respondents had the problems of lighting, radiation, renal, liver and occupational cancers are less due to work.

Statement of the Problem

This study is undertaken to study about how the women are utilizing their rights properly especially in garment industry. The reason to choose the industry is that the women participation in the industry is 70,000 especially in Tirupur. Hence, this study is undertaken to analyze about the women's rights in garment industry in the area of Tirupur and to make an analysis of how women are working in their working area and also regarding the facilities provided in the working environment such as crèche facilities, ventilation facilities and payment benefits, work enrichment opportunities.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the women employee rights and to find out the level of awareness and the level of agreement among the women employees

Research Methodology

The study was conducted on the basis of descriptive research. Both primary and secondary data were used. In

this study, the employees were selected by using non probability convenience sample method. Totally 200 sample respondents were selected. Both the primary and secondary data were presented in the form of tables and these tables were systematically analyzed with the aid of some statistical techniques like Percentage analysis, t-Test, Chi-Square test and Garrett's ranking method.

Limitations of the Study

The management did not allow the researcher to collect information at their work place. This study was carried out in textile industry only. The sample size was limited to 200.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collection from primary sources have been analyzed and interpreted, the result come from interpretation was taking into consideration for the purpose of the making findings and suggestions. The opinions collected from employees are analyzed with the important factors like age, sex, education, marital status, income, family size, experience, distance to the study unit were taken as independent variable

Table 1: Shows demographic profile of respondents to the survey (n = 200)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 23	53	26.5
	23- 37	120	60
	> 37	27	13.5
Marital Status	Single	61	30.5
	Married	139	69.5
Education	Illiterate	49	24.5
	School Level	134	67.0
	College level	17	8.5
Type of family	Nuclear family	124	62.0
	Joint family	76	38.0
Family members	Up to 2 Members	16	8.0
	3-4 Members	110	55.0
	Above 4 Members	74	37.0
Income group	Less than 5000	56	28
	5001-10000	137	68.5
	Above 10000	07	3.5
Designation	Accountant	04	2.0
	Checker	19	9.5
	Cutter	06	3.0
	Helper	12	6.0
	Packers	17	8.5
	Power tapers	21	10.5
	Quality	02	1.0
Experience	Tailor	119	59.5
	Up to2 years	19	9.5
	2-10 years	154	77.0
Department	Above 10 years	27	13.5
	Accounts	04	2.0
	Production	196	98.0

Table 2: Mean Value of Level of Awareness

S.N.	Level of Awareness	Mean
1	Provision of written employment contract	1.64
2	Itemized wage slip	1.43
3	Minimum wages	1.33
4	Extra wage for over time	1.50
5	Provision for bonus	2.10
6	Absence for forced work	1.90
7	Non-discrimination of wages based on gender	1.45
8	Equal opportunity in promotion	1.38
9	Provision of good working condition	1.30
10	Provident fund facilities	1.38
11	Medical facilities	1.60
12	Maternity facilities	1.90
13	Crèche facilities	2.22
14	Freedom to from and join the union	1.75
15	Treatment with dignity	1.58
16	Leave facilities	1.88

Table 3: Mean Value of Level of Agreement

S.N.	Level Of Agreement	Mean
1	Provision of written employment contract	1.71
2	Provision of Itemized wage slip	1.96
3	Wages are paid in time	2.18
4	Wage are paid without any undue deductions	2.42
5	Provident of fund	2.88
6	Provision of bonus	2.64
7	Provision of eligible leave facilities	2.24
8	Provision of extra wages for overtime work	1.76
9	Good working condition	1.67
10	Provision of protective and safety equipment's like masks, coats, cap, gloves	2.22
11	Employees are not forced to work beyond the work time	2.58
12	Employees are not forced to work for the superior	2.56
13	Employees are not allowed to work near cotton opener	2.48
14	Adequate rest break is provided during the work schedule	2.52
15	Job security	2.38
16	Not forced to work near dangerous machines	2.62
17	There is no discrimination in wages between male & female workers	2.90
18	Women work related problems are solved properly	2.64
19	Women workers are being provided with all eligible facilities like maternity leave and medical facilities	2.41
20	There is always equality of opportunity	2.73
21	The organization facilitates work life balance	3.04
22	Treatment with dignity	1.86
23	I never faced any verbal abuse from my superior	2.24
24	I never faced any physical abuse from my superior	2.32
25	The workers are not forced to stay late at the work place	2.18
26	I have never forced to work overtime without pay	2.10
27	The organization provides equal pay for equal work	2.44
28	There is no sexual harassment at the work place	3.06
29	I find the work place is safe for women employee	2.70
30	Provision for crèche facilities	3.34

Chi-Square Test**Table 4:** Association between type of family and level of agreement

Type of family	Agreement			Total	Chi-Square Value	Significant
	Low	Medium	High			
Nuclear family	23 (18.70%) [45.10%]	63 (51.20%) [63.60%]	37 (30.10%) [74.00%]	123 (100.00%) [61.50%]	9.285	0.01
Joint family	28 (36.40%) [54.90%]	36 (46.80%) [36.40%]	13 (16.90%) [26.00%]	77 (100.00%) [38.50%]		
Total	51	99	50	200		

$$\chi^2 = 9.285 \text{ at } p \text{ value } 0.01$$

Table 5: Levene's T-Test (Marital Status and Level of Awareness Independent Samples Test)

Level of awareness	Levene's t- Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
	F	Sig.	t
Provision of written employment contract	0.003	0.954	1.859
Itemized wage slip	38.459	0.00	4.32
Minimum wages	3.222	0.074	0.476
Extra wages for over time	5.722	0.018	2.753
Provision of bonus	0.038	0.845	1.869
Absence of forced work	0.026	0.872	3.217
Nondiscrimination of wages based on gender	2.34	0.128	0.725
Equal opportunity in promotion	0.583	0.446	0.499
Provision of good working conditions	17.941	0.00	2.193
Provident fund facilities	3.206	0.075	1.19
Medical facilities	0.358	0.55	0.205
Maternity facilities	0.607	0.437	1.359
Creche facilities	0.08	0.778	2.409
Freedom to form and join the union	14.424	0.00	0.052
Treatment with dignity	1.455	0.229	1.426
Leave facilities	7.371	0.007	3.747

Table 6: Shows Garrett's Ranking Method

Factor/value	I (75)	II (60)	III (50)	IV (40)	V (20)	Total	Mean score	Rank
Creche's facility	18 (1350)	24 (1440)	41 (2050)	52 (2080)	65 (1300)	8220 (200)	41.1	IV
Maternity benefits	5 (375)	23 (1380)	34 (1700)	91 (3640)	47 (940)	8035 (200)	40.18	V
Non-discrimination	4 (300)	61 (3660)	70 (3500)	30 (1200)	35 (700)	9360 (200)	46.8	III
Safework place	123 (9225)	26 (1560)	15 (750)	14 (560)	22 (440)	12535 (200)	62.68	I
Fair treatment	50 (3750)	66 (3960)	40 (2000)	13 (520)	31 (620)	10850 (200)	54.25	II

Findings

- 60% of the employees are belonging to the age group of 23 –37years.
- 69.5% of the employees are married and 30.5% of the employees are unmarried.
- 67.0% of the employees have school level education.
- 61.5% of the employees are committed with Nuclear family.
- 55% of the employees have 3-4 family members.
- 68.5% of the employees are got Rs.5001-10000 as their wage/salary per month.
- 2.0% of the females are accountants, 9.5% of the workers are checkers, 30% of the workers are cutter, 6.0% of the workers are helpers, 8.5% of the workers are packers, 10.5% of the workers are power tappers, 1.0% of the respondents are quality checkers and 59.5% of the workers are tailors.
- 98.0% of the workers are working in production department and only 2% of the workers are working in accounts department.
- 77.0% of the employees are having experience of 2-10 years, 13.5% of the employees have experience above 10 years and 9.5% of the employees have experience below 2 years.
- Creche facility is having the highest Mean Value (2.22) hence, the women employees are more aware of Creche facility. The second highest mean Value factor (2.10) is provision for bonus. Provision of good working condition is having the lowest mean value (1.30) hence, the women employees are least aware of this factor.
- Provision Creche facility is having the highest mean value (3.34) hence, the women employees are more aware of Creche facility.

- The provision of good working condition is having the lowest mean Value (1.67) hence, the women employees are least aware of this factor.
- Majority of respondents felt that Safe work place is the major important rights for women employees.

Suggestions

- Majority of the respondents got only Rs. 5000-10000 as their wage/salary per month. Due to the increase in the cost of living, it is difficult to manage their family with their salary. So, the management of Garment Company may consider increasing the wage/salary for their employees.
- Most of the women employees are not aware of their rights. They are not much aware of provision of written employee contract, itemized wage slip, minimum wages, nondiscrimination of wages based on gender, equal opportunity in promotion, provision of good working conditions, provident fund facilities, medical facilities, maternity facilities, freedom to form and join the union, treatment with dignity and leave facilities. So, the women employee must be aware of their rights.
- The companies should provide itemized wage slip to their employees to know the details of their wages/salary.
- The management must provide written employment contract, i.e., provide the appointment order to the employees.
- The employees are not provided with extra wages for overtime work. So, the management of garment mills must provide extra wages for their overtime work.
- Even though the company provides crèche facility, it is not equipped with necessary provisions. So, they must arrange necessary provisions in creche room.

- Majority of the women employees felt that safe work place is the most important for them. So, the companies must ensure the work place is safe for women employees.
- Complaint box may be kept so that the problems of the women employees can be noticed by the management and suitable actions may be taken to rectify their problems.
- A women counselor should be appointed and they should take care of the problems of the women employees.

Conclusion

Women are working in all spheres of the world but they are not allowed to participant actively in social, economic and political spheres of decision making. This condition needs to be changed and women should be encouraged to participant in all levels of management. Though women are working in all the departments of our selected companies, they are not aware of their entitled rights. Hence management should create awareness among the women employees regarding their rights through various programs.

Nowadays a good number of women employees are working in garment companies actively but some of the companies do not provide the necessary provisions, wages, facilities and suitable environment to them. So the management should try to address the above said problems. Women should be treated equally with men and care should be taken by the companies to ensure that women are not suppressed, oppressed and violated.

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