



## STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA

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### **Introduction:**

The unorganized sector is characterized by the several factors such as wage discrimination, no limit for minimum wages, long hours of work, lack of jobs security, and lack of legislative cover, lack of minimum facilities at work place, heavy physical work, and ill treatment, sexual harassment and exploitation by the employers.

### **Wage discrimination:**

In agricultural greater involvement of women than the man is found. During survey of the study area, the woman workers reported differential wage distribution in agricultural sector. It is also observed that in agricultural sector of both men and women is of the same quality but they do not earn equal wages in farm operations.

### **Greater involvement of rural woman in agriculture:**

In small industrial unit also woman workers are paid lesser wages than the male workers for the same work. The producers mostly engage woman workers for such jobs as it reduces the cost of production.

### **Equal pay: A matter of survival:**

The wage discrimination is found in the entire unorganized sector as women are regarded inferior to man in every respect. However, their family and social circumstances compel them to work on much lower wages in the unorganized sector.

The need of the hour is to support in whichever way possible and to stop discrimination, violence and atrocities being committed against woman. There is a need to recognize the immense contribution that the women are making to our agricultural economy. These steps are mandatory for the freedom and establishment of equal rights and opportunities for rural woman.

### **No limit for minimum wages:**

In agriculture sector, the wages vary from woman to woman and farm place to place. Thus the woman agricultural laboures in the district earn differential wages by negotiating contacts with the land owners. Their wages are low and they are denied all human considerations. In agriculture sector, there is no limit for minimum wages. They are usually paid less on the ground of being less productive and they always remain at mercy of landlords.

### **Long hours of work:**

For most woman living in rural and remote parts of India, the day beings as an early as 3.00 am. The flour for the day's meals needs grinding, livestock need to be fed, breakfast needs to be cooked, and water needs to be carried from wells, rivers and streams. In agriculture sector woman typically work more hours of work per day than men. They perform agricultural operations and allied activities 7 to 8 hours a day. In addition, they also spend 6 to 8 hours in household activities. They also said that in the peak season. They spend 9 to 10



hours per day on farm activities. Rural woman form the backbone of the agricultural labour force across much of the developing world.

**Lack of health facilities at work place:**

Minimum facilities to workers at work place are not provided in unorganized sector. In agricultural sector, woman work under miserable conditions. They are not provided minimum facilities at the workplace. Their working conditions fields are very poor in terms of their hard labour. It is a fact that they work in such situations, which are not bearable. Most of the home based working woman work under miserable conditions. These women work at their homes mostly situated in slum areas with open drains and on municipal amenities. These women accept work at home on piece rate basis to earn their livelihood. The domestic women workers are also not provided minimum required facilities for their work. Rural woman and girls who become domestics in families of their own communities are no more than slaves while at work.

A demand for social security for the unorganized sector workers must include childcare provisions from the point of view of women workers. Provisions aimed at ensuring protection and promotion of nutritional needs of mother and child must be included such as time breaks for nursing once the mother rejoins work. For woman workers their own health and ability to work is usually the only resource they regard because their health and nutrition needs from the least priority within the family. Woman in the poorest households are the least likely to receive medical attention.

**Lack of job security:**

As the nature of employment of woman workers employed in unorganized sector if casual or on the daily wages or at piece rate, there is no job security for them. Almost all women in this sector face insecurity of job. Women working as domestic servants, sweepers, scavengers etc., face insecurity of job extremely. In some cases women generally loss jobs for about to six months in a year. Job insecurity is faced by women workers in sector such as agriculture, small manufacturing units, domestic services etc. self-employed woman, who are part time workers also loss jobs for a few months in a year. Woman workers are not guaranteed year long employment; unemployment benefits are to be made available to all workers equally irrespective of the employment status of any other family member.

**Lack of legislative cover:**

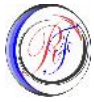
There are no rule and regulations in the unorganized sector. Even the legal rights are ignored. Agricultural women workers work in unorganized in practice. The migrant women workers work in unorganized sector without legal protection.

**Heavy physical work:**

Women working in unorganized sector face complicated situations as they play dual roles and perform responsibilities of work place and of their families, these roles result in heavy workload on the working woman.

Most of woman workers in agriculture sector are given heavy physical work which they do from early morning till late evening. The entire family work is also their responsibility.

**Exploitation, sexual harassment and ill treatment:**



The big farmers exploit schedule caste and backward caste woman workers. Several cases of rebuking, cheating ill treatment, threatening and beating were reported by agricultural woman workers.

**Lack of safe working places:**

For young girls and woman coolies who work in unorganized sector under hazardous conditions like building constructions, bricklins agriculture fields, Small cottage industries, truck loading and unloading, road side micro business, house and stall maids etc. have no security at their work spots. There is no security for the lives of woman in unorganized woman sector. They are forced to work under odd and unsafe working places.

**Lack of landownership for rural woman:**

Rural woman are particularly vulnerable to poverty. According to the World Bank, 75 per cent of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas. While women work on the land, they often do not hold formal and clear land titles. Less than two per cent of land in the developing world is owned by woman, according to the international fund for agricultural development. A lack of rights over land makes woman extremely vulnerable to eviction and negatively affects their economic options.

**Lack of social security:**

In India woman constitute almost half of the total workforce. However, over 96 per cent of woman work in the informal unorganized sector workers. Women workers whether paid or unpaid woman workers are recognized as unorganized sector workers. Woman workers, paid or unpaid should be eligible for social security entitlement.”

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