

**PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,  
LOYOLA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), CHENNAI- 600034**

**ICSSR SPONSORED NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
WOMEN WORKERS IN UNORGANIZED SECTOR: HEALTH &  
WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup>& 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

“It’s important for women to work; they need to keep their independence, to keep earning and being challenged. A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with bricks, others have thrown at her”

It is need of an hour to join hands and work for the unorganised sectors especially for the women workers. So the PG & Research Department of Social Work has organised two day National conference on **“Women Workers in Unorganised Sector: Health & Working Conditions”** sponsored by ICSSR

The day commenced with Inauguration session with the thamizh thai vazhthu followed by welcome address by Prof.Simon Joseph and dynamics of conference was presented by Prof.Vallery Patric. Deputy principal Dr.Fatima Vasanth gave a speech on the importance and various dimensions of the national conference.





## Session-I

Inaugural Address was delivered by **Tmt. V. Amuthavalli, IAS**, working as Commissioner of Social Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu belongs to 2005 batch IAS. She hails from Madurai, a temple town in southern Tamil Nadu and had completed post-graduation in agriculture and business administration. She has served the government of Tamil Nadu in various capacities such as district magistrate in Cuddalore, Joint Secretary in Municipal Administration and Water Supply. Managing Director in Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women and Project Director, World Bank funded Pudhu Vazhu Project, implementing various welfare schemes for women in rural areas. Her hobbies are reading and writing and she has authored 44 Tamil Novels highlighting social issues like widows remarriage, adoption of orphan children, women literary and women empowerment.

Tmt. V. Amuthavalli, IAS during her session quoted some statistics related to women such as in India 50% of the population is women among which 30% of women come to the workforce. They do 60% of work, 10% of total income is earned by women and only 1% of the property owned by women.

She also insisted the students to be aware about the economic principles, minimum wages act, unemployment, under employment, and physical working conditions of the unorganised women workers.



Thiru. Chaitanya Prakash Audichiya is a labour law and human rights adviser and associated with numerous trade unions, social organisations and non-profit organisations all across the India for uplift the condition of the working community especially in the informal sector. Mr. Audichiya has an experience of working with private, public and government sector such as in Patodia Group, Gas Authority of India Ltd and the ministry of labour (Govt of India) as Labour welfare officer, HR executive and assistant labour commissioner. He has a degree in law with a specialisation in labour laws and human rights. He has various publications on child labour and agriculture labour. Mr. Audichiya is actively involved in several national and international trade unions, non-profits and social and educational institutions as adviser and consultant. He is associated with organisations like Pune municipal corporation workers union, Maharashtra rajyakamgar union, labour start organisation, building and wood workers international, santulan, all india insurance companies pensioners association, NCC-CL and Bandhua Mukti Morcha, etc.

Presently he is associated with an organisation called environs trust also, whose mission is to evolve innovative and evidence based solutions to the problems of community development that respond to the diversity and complexity of specific eco-systems and socio-political-cultural environments.

Mr. Audichiya addressed the gathering, he mentioned about the special provisions by the Indian Constitution. He stated some articles of the Indian Constitution such as. Article 15 (3) Prohibiting the state from discriminating any citizen. And Article 23 Right against exploitation. Sir also stated about bonded labour how it's still prevailing in remote areas and is not addressed properly. He concluded his speech by saying "Laws being enforced, should be educated to women workers effectively."



## Session-II

**Mrs. Malini Saravanan**, working with The New Indian Express Group, heading corporate HR department, as a deputy general manager (Human Resources). Ma'am has been awarded "Pride of Tamil Nadu Award- For women leadership" by Dr.R.L.Bhatia, World HRD Congress in Chennai during December 2017. And also has been awarded as the, "Best Chapter Contributor" in ISTD Southern Regional Conference, Bangalore during January 2017. Her interest, Ma'am is passionate about HR profession and addressing students.

She spoke about the **Social Security Measures in Unorganized sector**

India is one of the lowest female participation in work force ranking 120 position among 131 countries. She quoted that India's GDP –where 7.6%, in that unorganized sector alone contribute more than 60% of our Country's GDP

She clarified the difference between organised and unorganised sector and emphasised where the differences can occur in various areas such as Job Security, Wages, specific living and working area, safety precautions, trade union and basic rights of the employees.

**The following act were also discussed**

1. The sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013
2. The Employees Compensation Act, 1923
3. The Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952
4. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
5. The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972
6. The Minimum Wages Act, 1948



### SESSION- III

#### Policy Framework for Protection of Women in Employment,

Thiru. Joseph Sagayaraj, Manager, HR, ONGC, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Karaikal Asset. He has a total experience of 18 years in the field. His area of experience comprises of Talent Acquisition, Talent Management, Learning and Development, Employee Engagement, CSR, Employee Relation. He has also been awarded the Chairman's Young Executive Manager Award in the year 2011 and also numerous awards. His interests are doing social services in the area of creation and generation of awareness on employment opportunities and educating labour of their rights.

The essence of this session was, Sir mentioned Indian constitution has provided certain acts for the protection of women in the work place. He also stated some articles of the Indian Constitution such as, Article-39: Equality of women. Article-42: Maternity benefits. The also enlightened us about the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. Also explaining about The **Factories Act, 1948** which serves to assist in formulating national policies in India with respect to occupational, safety and health in factories. It deals with various problems concerning safety, health, efficiency and well-being of the persons at work places. He also mentioned about The Equal remuneration Act, 1976. Also fair wage policy, protection of women against harassment at ONGC, Karaikal. He also stated how women empowerment is emerging at ONGC, Karaikal.



## Session-IV

### **Tmt. Radha Ramabhadran, HR- Intimate fashions spoke on, “Women workers in unorganised sector in India: their health and working conditions”.**

Tmt. Radha has done her MBA and PGDP in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations. She has also got 27 years of experience. Starting her career as accounts assistant in a stock and share broking firm, working for couple of other companies and the later joined Intimate Fashions part of the MAS Holdings group in 1998. Grew in the organisation across ranks and exposed to various manufacturing and process excellence concepts.

Currently heading the people pillar of the 4000+ organisation. She is also a certified Six Sigma black belt and certified lead auditor for ISO. Her passion is to create and nurture culture of excellence in the organisation through inspired, engaged and empowered team. Tmt. Radha highlighted upon the unorganised sector and its characteristics like self-ownership, lack of labour intensive, less investments. Work force distribution of women in unorganised sector was stratified into 34% in manufacturing and service, 56% in agricultural and 10%



in construction labour sectors respectively from the whole count of 94% of women in unorganised sector. Major concerns of women in these sectors include; insecurities in job, non-sympathetic attitude towards labours, wage irregularities, wage discrimination, etc.,

Intimate Fashions incorporated in February



1997 makes ladies intimate and swim wears, uses lean manufacturing process, 8% of the energy used are generated by their own solar plants. Employed 3500 employees, which is 95% of their employees, impacting 2500 families which includes 30 especially abled, and 120 embedded persons, without a source view of caring, safe, happy, friendly and loving. The

work schedule is shift based, food regulated and monitored by nutritionist and revised by doctor check-up and crèche for children of the women workers and more. The session as whole was centred around, “How organized is the unorganized sector”. The law and act reinforcement, the regulatory and services provided abiding governmental norms and policies which restricts and enable the women in these sectors as a whole.

## Session-V

**“Current trends in the employee in plantation sector”** by Thiru. P.M. Saravanan, Additional Commissioner of Labour (Administration), Chennai, Government of Tamil Nadu. He also holds the position of Chief Inspector of Plantations, Government of Tamil Nadu. Thiru. P.M. Saravanan threw light on The Plantations Labour Act, 1951 giving a summary about the act. The act provides for the welfare of plantations labour and regulates the conditions of work in plantations. It also applies to any land used as plantations which measures 5 hectares or more in which 15 or more persons are working. The State Governments are free to declare any plantation land less than 5 hectares or less than 15 persons to be covered by the Act. It applies to all the plantation workers whose monthly wages does not exceed Rs.750/- per month. Thiru. P.M.Saravanan also spoke about the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 as it is outcome of customary obligations, forced labour, beggar or indebtedness under which a debtor agrees to render service. He explained that the Plantation labour act 1951 which has 57 welfare boards providing benefits to the society. He insisted that Medical facilities are provided to the people through garden and group hospital under the guidance of two Assistant surgeon’s. If plantation is registered under this act they need to provide Canteen, worker committee, crèches, recreational facilities, educational facilities for worker’s children, housing, weekly holidays, sickness, maternity benefits and advisory committee etc.

Thus the day came to an end by enlightening the participants on Women Workers in unorganised sector.





## Day- 2

**Day- 2 started with the recap of Day -1 by the Student convenor.**

### Session-VI

**“Gender disparity and Equal Remuneration Act”**, by Tmt. Chandrika, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer (Recruitment & Training), I.R.P.S., Southern Railways. Tmt. Chandrika is the Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, Headquarters Southern Railways, Chennai. She joined railways on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1981 with 37 years of experience. She started her speech by greeting all the organizers, faculties and students. She highly stressed on the term embracing and connected that term with mother i.e mothers should be embraced. She figured out the female character in Mahabharata Panjali to understand how women are portrayed negatively in the epic and continued by saying love and affection should flow from women. She said 50% of women are residing in India where most of them are working in unorganized sector. There are three types of working women- women going for work to meet their needs, independence workforce, and self-realization/ actualization purpose. Women are in the secondary status in terms of employment. She stated an example by sharing her experience where she saw a woman standing in a bus stand holding a grocery bag, her face looked as tired as it was dusk. The speaker put forward her thoughts that the lady was mentally disturbed by lot of worries that include when she would reach her home, what food to be cooked for the family members, thinking of her abusive husband and so on.

Tmt. Chandrika mentioned the amendment acts for women and said not all woman are aware of it. She said all these amendments are there to protect women from various issues. Example. Visaka vs state of Rajasthan, Indian Supreme Court case to enforce the fundamental rights of working women. Mainly to protect women from sexual exploitation. According to her, Supreme Court shows directions but its fails in the implementation of law. Supreme Court should change/revise the basics of law. She mentioned the concept of preponderance of probabilities for taking decisions. She also gave her suggestions such as

- Fulfilling the needs/requirements of women in unorganized sector
- To make women aware of the opportunities and trainings given by the government

- Availability of training centers in villages
- Sex education should be made compulsory in educational institutions.
- Government should take of women's health as most of the women are not concerned about their own health
- Health care packages should be there for women suffering from occupational disease e.g.: cottage industries, agricultural laborers, mining and so on.
- Free legal aid help should be provided
- Free education for girls (Higher secondary level)
- Women centered trade union should be encouraged

She also mentioned the problems faced by women in unorganized sector such as heavy work, irregular payment, no job security, poor working environment etc.

Finally questions and answers session where the speaker was asked questions related to railway recruitment, she answered that railway recruitment board (RRB) and railway recruitment cell (RRC) are there for job opportunities. Secondly social workers might get a post of welfare inspector but it mainly focus on the welfare of the employees. Thirdly, about southern railway hospital, she said medical department on contract basis is notified and exams have been conducted according to the categories. Fourthly, there is gender disparity where number of women in railways is less whereas 90% are men employees, fifthly, there is a specific area of recruitment to solve the issues faced by persons with disabilities and finally regarding women's safety, she suggested that every compartment should be fixed with surveillance camera.



## Session-VII

### **“Prevention on occupational Health Hazards of Workers,”**

The resource person is Dr. Manivelan, Nodal Officer, Government of Tamil Nadu, DMS. Dr. Manivelan stated that India has one of the lowest female participation in workforce ranking 120<sup>th</sup> position among 131 countries. He also told that Manufacturing and service sectors are ignorant and their employees are bound to disparities. Woman working in unorganised sectors should be given incentives and provided a safe and conducive environment. Most of the organised workers is being diverted to unorganised workers for lower wages and unemployment. Comprehensive self-importance of women in all industries, as unless women take part in all workforce then only the GDP will improve. Lack of safety provisions in Indian Legislation and policies for anyone in the unorganised workforce. The unorganised workers are bound to accept the situation because of the following factors such as, Poverty, Unemployment, Cultural factors, and Work place close to residence. Suggestions given were promoting education, a time tested development strategy may not succeed. Promoting female friendly work place policies such as generous maternity leave. And finally Dr. Manivelan summed up the session saying unorganised sector workers must be guided and monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.



## Session-VIII

### “Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women Workers in Unorganised Sectors”, by Isabel, Executive Director, MCCSS.

Tmt. Isabel is currently the Executive Secretary of Madras Christian Council of Social Services. Tmt. Isabel, her contributions are in numerous in the field of Counselling and Social Services equally her achievements which she had achieved are a lot in number. Her area of interests are networking, organising programmes, lobbying, working with children, youth and helping individuals in distress. In her session she stated saying 85% of the working population work in unorganised sectors out of which 12M are women. She also highlighted a study on Sexual Harassment at work place in India 2011-2012 conducted by OXAM India, found that top three industries are unsafe for women labourers' i.e 29%. Tmt. Isabel stated some of the problems faced by women they are, lack of education, insufficient skills and education, female workers are more vulnerable to exploitation at work, extreme work pressure, and irregular wages. Some of the suggestions which Tmt.Isabel gave are, Programs to enhance life skills, awareness about rights and legislative provisions, comprehensive care, mass media to be used to create and spread awareness, separate grievance to be headed by women in handling women related problems, and last but not the least making amendments in Labour laws. Indeed it was a very interactive session where the resource person gave all input related to harassment with different case studies. She said that sometimes even the word harassment is misused by women for fulfilling their own needs and for getting promotion to.



## **Session-IX**

### **“Labour Law Reforms & its Impact on employment Opportunity” by Thiru. C. P.Audichya,**

Sir gave some suggestions, recommendations for a better outcome. He said skill development programmes can be conducted in order to enhance the skills of the women workers. Also Women workers should be educated about their rights, schemes, laws etc, and it is very essential to create awareness about the legal provisions. We have all enactment in which has been passed in parliament houses whereas it should be implemented in an effective manner. Safety measures should be given to the workers. Free education for girls up to matriculation level should be give and sex education should be compulsory and inclusive in education sector. Women centred trade union is to be made up. Unorganised workers need to be guided and monitored by the labour department.



## Valediction

To conclude Knowledge is not only learning it is also sharing. So the inputs session of the two day conference has enhanced our understanding at all levels in unorganised sectors. Yes, we are looking for a change for the betterment of the women workers in the unorganised sector.

***“Every Achievement, big or small, begins in your minds”***

Hope this conference will create an impact among the participants and they will be the changing agent of the society.



