

Health Problems of Migrant Women Labourers: A Study of SAS Nagar (Mohali)

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Abstract – Health issues has been extremely common among women especially in developing countries, where they have been suffering from multiple health issues related to sanitation, contraception and occupational health, reproductive health and so on. The present paper focuses on the migrant women who come from different states within India in search of work along with their families. The research paper deals with current health issues faced by migrant women workers working in urban areas as well as villages. The main objective of the study is to identify the health issues and exploitation faced by migrant women labourers at workplace, through the sample of 40 respondents from migrant women workers working in District Mohali (Punjab), using snow boll sampling as the universe cannot be identified. The nature of the study will be descriptive. Migrant women workers have a different set of needs which requires special attention for solving their occupational and health issues.

Keywords: Occupational Health, Reproductive Health, Migrant Women, Labourers.

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INTRODUCTION

In India the condition of women is deplorable especially women migrant labourers. These are one of the most ignored and underprivileged groups of population. They have no voice to fight for their rights. After 71 years of independence this group of population (migrant women labourers) still living in abject, poverty, exploitation, social discrimination, sexual harassment, unsafe and unhygienic environment, problems related to reproductive and occupational health.

Health is considered as a basic human right and it is also an essential element of sustainable development, so being healthy is necessary condition for women migrant labourers to work accurately. But migrant women labourers who came from different states of India in search of work, face many challenges not only related to social-economic and cultural aspects but in health also. Women migrant labourers facing many challenges related to health like issues related to reproductive health, spacing of children, contraceptive, effects of their work on their health and no toilet facility etc.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

Women migrants faced many challenges when they migrate from their native place to destination place, such as social problems, irregular work, and late payment of wages, exploitation and issues related to

reproductive and occupational health. The following challenges which are faced by women migrants' labourers at workplace are described:

(i) Poor working conditions

Women migrant labourers have to work in very poor working and living conditions. These women can't bargain for their rights which leads to their exploitation. Women labourers in unorganized sector do not reap the benefits of minimum wages act or the factory act etc. Contractors do not provide any safety equipment such a masks, helmets etc.

(ii) Wage discrimination:

In unorganised sector women are paid lower than men. Even the availability of work is irregular. When these women find work, they work for long hours for low wages, and at times do not get wages in accordance to their work.

(iii) Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is another problem which is faced by majority of migrant women labourers at their workplace and outside the sites. Most women suffer the pain and trauma in silence but they do not complain because they need work to earn money and sometimes they do not share these harassment experiences to anyone because of society's fear.

(iv) Child care facilities:

In unorganised sector women do not have any child care facilities (crèches). Mostly women who are living in nuclear family do not have not any option but to give up their work which further decline their economic condition.

(v) Health problems:

Migrant women labourers faced many health problems related to reproductive and occupational health. Even women bear a triple burden of work e.g. Reproductive, productive and domestic work. These women have poor nutrition status, anemia, domestic responsibilities, lack of basic facilities like water facilities, toilet facilities etc. leads their life to worse health condition. Women labourers in unorganized sector suffered from gynecological problem, miscarriages, and premature deliveries etc. which affect their working life also.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R. Rasheeda Banu and S. Sampath (2018) in this study '**Working conditions and Issues of women workers in an unorganised sector-special reference to construction sector of Thuraiyur Taluk, Tiruchirappalli**' focuses on health issues of construction worker in Thuraiyur Taluk, Tiruchirappalli. The study reveals that mostly women construction workers affected from urinary tract infection and 66% women suffered from musculoskeletal problems. Mostly women construction labourers have an allergic to dust.

P. A. Ansari (2016) in his study '**Inclusion of Migrants: Some Innovative Practices in India**' focuses on problems like identity crisis, child education, and health problems faced by internal migrants in India. The author states that women migrants are the most vulnerable group among migrants who face more violence. The author gives suggestions that capacity building programmes should be organized by government to increase their confidence and working skill.

Nahid sultan (2014) in the article '**Health problems among women building construction workers**' focuses on the construction labourers problems. The author observed that among 134 women construction labourers (71%) majority of women were brick breakers and 28% were weight carrier. Author observed that mostly women labourers suffered from respiratory problems, backache, continuously and headache because of their work.

Dave (2012) focuses on the socio-economic conditions of women migrant workers, nature of work, working conditions, wage discrimination and other problems faced in working unorganized sector. She conducted this study on 350 women migrant workers who were involved in construction work,

agriculture area and domestic paid workers. The study reveals that most of the migrated women were working in construction industry. They are exploited in great extent. They were not paid fairly for doing same work in comparison of men and for same hours of work. The main causes of their problem were illiteracy and poverty.

Jyoti Bharat (2008) focused on social economic conditions of female domestic workers. It described the pitiable living conditions of them. She applied two stage random sampling. She taken slum as first And index women as a second stage study. For secondary data collection, she used Urban Local bodies for database. The recommendations of study are beneficial for enhancement of working living circumstances.

A.D. Mishra (1994) in his study '**Problems and Prospects of Working Women in Urban India** focuses on the problems faced by women as a worker and as a housewife. Most of time there are not anyone to take care of their small children because of this they leave their work which effects on their economic conditions and it increases stress among them. The author suggesting that perception of society should change through the sharing of responsibility.

INFERENCES FROM REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Above review of literature reveals that migration experiences varies for different categories of women migrants. Women migrant labourers face various problems such as urinary tract infection, skin allergy, backache, headache, low wages, poor living and working conditions etc.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

Women workers in unorganised sector are facing various problems related to health like reproductive health issues, health issues related to unorganized work, low wages, and irregular payment of wages, poor working conditions and unhealthy working environment. Present study is based on challenges and problems related to women health which is came due to their unorganized work.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Migrant women workers in unorganised sector facing several problem and challenges related to social, economic, and health. The researcher is keen to understand the challenges related to health of migrant women workers in unorganized sector. The findings of the study will be useful to identify the challenges faced by women migrant worker working near by construction sites of Kurali-Siswan road, Mullanpur/UT boundary SAS Nagar (District Mohali) which will be useful to government and NGOs

workers for improvement of health status of migrant women labourers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio-economic problems faced by women migrant workers.
2. To find the problems of women migrant workers in the light of their work and work environment.
3. To assess the health challenges face by women migrant worker in SAS Nagar, Mohali.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted from construction sites near by Kurali-Siswan road, Mullanpur/UT boundary SAS Nagar. A sample of 40 respondents was taken using snow ball sampling technique, as universe of the study was not identified. Descriptive research design is used in the present study.

DATA COLLECTION

The primary data were collected from women migrant workers working in unorganised sector of construction sites of Kurali-Siswan road, Mullanpur/UT boundary SAS Nagar by using an interview schedule. The secondary data was collected from books, relevant websites, newspapers and journals.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Women migrant worker in unorganised sector who were available and willing to answer the schedule, were included for the study. Among the migrant women workers, construction workers agricultural labourers, vendors, domestic workers and cleaners were selected for the study.

MAIN FINDINGS

In this study researcher finds that mostly the women migrants' labourers (96%) belong to the age group of 20-45 years, which are more active and productive age group. Among the sample selected for the study, mostly women (96%) are belonging to Hindu religion. 85% women labourers are from schedule caste. It means the women migrants of schedule caste are the backbone of unorganised sector. The sampled data showed that 92% women are married and were living in their families. Majority of women labourers are illiterate which is one of the most distressing feature among these workers while 30% women migrants' workers had reached primary schooling level. This shows that educational level of women migrant labourers is very low. According to the study

only 25% respondents had two children, while 36% had more than four children and there were not proper spacing between children which shows low rate of contraceptive use. Only 30% women were users of contraceptives. Most respondents (75%) have been treated in private clinic and government hospitals while others have taken medicine from medical stores and home remedies. 40% respondents working till the last date of delivery and only 30% women migrant labourers do not consume proper meal and iron and folic acid during pregnancy. Mostly migrant women labourers do not go for regular checkup during pregnancy which shows ignorance towards their reproductive health. Majority of women expressed that their husband consume alcohol and they face domestic violence also. It was found that most of the respondents suffered from back pain, eyes problems, urinary tract infection, skin disease, continuously head ache and menstrual problems etc. Most of the disease were because of bad working and living environment of migrant women labourers.

CONCLUSION

As women migrant labourers are deprived and denied of their rights. They face lots of challenges related to social, economic, cultural and health. They do not have basic facilities such as water, shelter, proper food, washing and toilet facilities. They are not aware about their rights. This study revealed that these labourers not even take benefits of government schemes like janani suraksha yojana because of their incomplete documents. Hence, necessary steps should be taken by keeping focus on the health of women migrant labourers by government and NGOs.

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