

Problems of Working Women in Export Garment Factories in Faisalabad–Pakistan

M. ASGHAR CHEEMA AND SUMAIRA YASMEEN

Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad–38040, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The present study narrates the problems of working women in export garment factories in Faisalabad city. The data was collected from a sample of 150 female workers by using a well-designed interviewing schedule. The present study was conducted in three garment factories located in Faisalabad i.e. Masood Textile (Pvt.) Ltd., Noorani Garments and Awais Textile Ltd. Majority of the purposively selected respondents were facing the problems of bad behavior of supervisors, harassment, mental torture by family members, pick and drop, rest room and food arrangement etc. It is suggested that both Government and factory owners should solve the problems of working women.

Key Words: Working women; Garment; Faisalabad

INTRODUCTION

Women and especially working women, strive to earn their bread and butter for themselves and for their families. People outside start them in a way as to some animal from zoo has escaped in a society and an awkward scene takes place. Every one gazing at them, passing teasing remarks and even following them to their destinies, making their lives even more harder and these poor creatures feel it difficult to survive among the inconsiderate male members of the society.

The Chairman of the Peace, Justice and Human Rights Commission of the Church of Pakistan said in a message on the event of the international women's day that "without the progress of women, society could not be put on the road to prosperity (Dawn, 2000).

Working women have to carry the extra load of work physically and psychologically. In spite of all hindrance, Pakistani woman is fully aware of the situational demand for work and she is motivated to work for the improvement of herself, her family and ultimately her country.

Participation by women in the labour force has been increasing steadily. Since 1950, the majority of the women tend to be clustered in a small number of occupations, like sales, services and clerical jobs. In general, women in the labour force have been underpaid and under employed and have faced discrimination. Major reason for low women wages is that the majority of women are not unionized (International Encyclopedia of Sociology, 2002).

Factories are one of the sectors where a lot of women work. Working women are mainly facing three types of harassments at work places; namely mental harassment, physical harassment and sexual harassment (Brohi, 2002).

It is hoped that the study would be helpful in

revealing certain factors with regard to female participation which would help policy makers and social workers to improve their overall profile.

This study was designed keeping in view the following objectives.

1. To investigate the nature of work that women are performing in export garments factories located in Faisalabad city.
2. To study the attitudes of family members-in-laws, boss, colleagues, and friends towards the working women.
3. To study the level of satisfaction of working women in export garment factories.
4. To suggest measures to solve the problems of women working in garment factories.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to study the problems of working women in export garments factories in Faisalabad city. One hundred and fifty working women were selected through purposive sampling technique from three factories. The universe of the present study was working women in export garments factories located in Faisalabad city. A list of textile factories/units, where females were working, was obtained from Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. From the list, three textile factories (Masood Textile Mills Ltd., Norrani Garments and Awais Textile) were selected purposively for the purpose of data collection. The data was collected from a sample of 150 female workers by using a well-designed questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was intended to find out the problems of working women in export garments factories located in Faisalabad city.

Table I. Distribution of the respondents with regard to the job security

Job security	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	85	56.7
No	65	43.3
Total	150	100.0

Table II. Distribution of the respondents according to promotion and job security on the basis of sexual favor

Job security	Frequency	Percentage
To some extent	85	56.7
To great extent	3	2.0
Not at all	62	41.3
Total	150	100.0

Table III. Distribution of the respondents according to this assumption that females working outside their home are sexually promiscuous

Job security	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	6.0
Agree	70	46.7
Disagree	50	33.3
Neutral	21	14.0
Total	150	100.0

Table I shows that majority (56.7%) of the respondents felt that their job was secure, while to 43.3% of the respondents says their job was not secure. To them, the owners of the factories changed the workers without any reason. Sometime if a worker took more than two leaves, the owner of the factory would fire that worker and hire another one. Sometimes, workers who misbehaved with their supervisor were sent laid off permanently.

Table II shows that a majority of the respondents (56.7%) agreed to some extent that they were offered job

Table IV. Distribution of the Respondents with Regard to "Face Harassment in the Factory

Forms of harassment	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
Sexist remarks	61	40.7	89	59.3
Cat calls	117	78.0	33	22.0
Gestures	117	78.0	33	22.0
Unwanted sexual overtures	18	12.0	12.0	88.0

promotion on the basis of sexual favor. About 41% of the respondents did not agree with this statement. To them, their supervisors were very strict and male workers were behaving with females within limits.

Table III indicates that 6.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that if females are working outside their home they are sexually promiscuous, while 46.7% of them agreed with the above statement. Above 33.3% of the respondents were disagreed with above statement. To them, sexist behavior of a male mostly depends on female's will while 14.0% of the respondents were found neutral in this case.

Table IV reveals that, in the factories, 40.7% of the respondents reported "harassment" in the form of sexist remarks. Seventy eight per cent of the respondents mentioned "harassment" in the form of catcalls while same per cent of the respondents felt "harassment" in the form of gestures. To 12% of the respondents, they felt harassment in the form of unwanted sexual overtures.

CONCLUSION

Based on study findings it was concluded that majority of the respondents felt that their job was not secure. The owners of the factories changed the workers without any reason. Sometime, workers who misbehaved with their supervisor were sent laid off permanently. Mostly factory workers agreed that they were offered job promotion on the basis of Sexual favor. Mostly factory women agreed with this assumption that females "working outside their home are sexually promiscuous. It is also concluded that mostly respondents face harassment in the form of catcalls and Gestures.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Through mass media, seminars, positive change in the attitude of the society members towards working women may be expected.
2. Bad behavior of supervisor should be noticed by the owners of the factories.
3. There should be lady supervisors in the factory with females working in it.
4. Women who could not work outside their home easily, Govt. should provide them such opportunities at their own doors to increase their family income.
5. Supervisor of the unit in the factory must impose the same rules and regulations on workers.

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