

# **An Econometric Analysis of Working Conditions and Problems of Home Based Women Workers in Coimbatore City**

**Dr. G Jayanthi\*, Baranipriya A\*\*, Sreeanandan\*\*\***

## **Abstract**

Home based work is becoming an essential part of the economic transformation process. Its growth is significantly associated with globalization of industry and the continuous search for cheaper labour and more efficient means of production. The number of home based workers in the informal sector is escalating rapidly for various reasons. This study examines working conditions of home-based women workers living in Coimbatore city and also highlights the problems faced by the women home based workers. The study findings indicated that women home based workers were getting low wages, lack of social security measures, facing work related problems and living in the most vulnerable working conditions. Thus the government should take some remedial measures to improve their living conditions.

**Key Words:** Home Based Workers, Working condition, Problems, Coimbatore.

## **Introduction**

Home based work is generally performed at home. Though it is a type of work that is varied from other work such as child care and cleaning that are performed at homes. Home-based work or homework is one of the oldest professions and has a long history in South Asia. In the globalized world, home-based work has become a constant and profitable production way for the firms. It is also beneficial for women as they don't have to go out and can combine their unpaid (care responsibilities) and paid work (home-based work) while remaining at home.

Home-based workers covers a major share of the workforce in old key industries such as garments, leather, carpet making as well as in new enterprises e.g., assembling shoes & microelectronics and weaving. They are found in the developed countries as well as in the developing countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India etc.

International Labour Organization (ILO) defines, 'Any person working in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer for remuneration which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used "Home-based workers do not have the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker under national laws, regulations or court decisions. Both employees and employers may be regarded as home workers'.

## **Types of Home Based Work**

There are two basic types of home-based workers.

### **➤ Self-employed Home-Based Workers**

Self-employed home-based workers buy their own raw materials, supplies, and equipment, and pay utility and transport costs. They sell their own finished products, mostly to local customers and markets but rarely to international markets. Most do not hire outside workers but may have unpaid family members to work with them.

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\* Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore-641 014,

\*\*Research Scholar, Department of Economics, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore-641 014

\*\*\*Research Scholar, Department of Economics, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore-641 014

### ➤ Sub-contracted Home-Based Workers

Sub- Contracted home based workers otherwise called home workers. They are contracted by an individual entrepreneur or a firm, often through an intermediary. Usually they given the raw materials and paid per piece. Sub-contracted workers do not sell the finished goods.

Both types are impacted by irregular or cancelled work orders, an unreliable supply of raw materials, delayed payments and rejected goods. Larger economic trends such as fluctuating demand and increases in input prices affect both groups, particularly the self employed. (Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing, WIEGO)

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Women workers in the unorganized sector consist of the most susceptible working segments in society and they were generally paid less and work in a very poor and through their number is growing rapidly and they are contributing to the market needs. Due to lack of professional quality, educational and skills for quality production they work mostly outside the formal economy and they are facing various problems like gender discrimination, exploitation of intermediaries and low piece rates. Since Home based work is one of the neglected sectors of informal economy and there is a lack of data and information on this subject with concerned agencies of government of Tamil Nadu particularly in Coimbatore District. Hence it is an important to study the working conditions and problems of home based women workers working in the unorganized sector.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyze the Working Conditions of home based women workers.
- To identify the Problems faced by the Home based Women Workers in Coimbatore city.

### **Methodology**

Out of 32 Districts in Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore District is selected for the study, since Coimbatore is a major city in Indian State of Tamil Nadu. It is the second largest city in the state and 16th largest urban agglomeration in India. As there is a lack of data on number of home based women workers in Coimbatore, it has been decided to select one ward from the 100 wards of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation (CMC). After the selection of a ward a preliminary survey was conducted to identify the number of households involved in this type of work. By keeping in mind the finance and time factors and also to have an in depth study, the researcher collected the information from 450 home-based women workers through well- structured interview schedule. For this purpose snow-ball sampling technique were used to collect the data. The analysis was done by using statistical tools such as Garrett Ranking technique and Logistic Regression Model.

### **Working Conditions of Home Based Women Workers**

Home-based workers generally work at home for a certain wage without any social security protection. For them, home is their workplace, so the hazards of the workplace and work activities are health risk for the workers. The home-based workers are still invisible and they working for long hours concurrently receive low wages. There are many problems faced by home-based women workers, such as the absence of written employment agreements, long working hours, no social security measures, income security, and work safety, and no maternal protection. The condition is still experienced and faced by them. So that home-based workers are in a vulnerable position and close to the poverty line, and the basic rights of workers are not protected, secured and fulfilled. A great challenge for home based worker is where the home has become multiple functions both as a workplace and as a dwelling. Sometimes, the work place and living room are not separated. This may cause threat to both home based workers and family members (Dewanti et al., 2018).

### **Logistic Regression Model: Theoretical Framework of the Model**

In this analysis, an attempt has been made to analyse the factors influencing the satisfaction level of working conditions of Home Based women Workers, the Logistic Regression has been adopted because it is

suitable technique for analysing dichotomous nature of working conditions i.e. Satisfied Home based workers and Not satisfied Home based workers. In this study, the dependent variable is whether the Home based women workers are satisfied can be given a value (1) and the Home based women workers those who are not satisfied can be give a value (0). The selected independent variables are the Age, Educational qualification, Wealth of household (Type of house was taken as a proxy for wealth. Here wealth is taken as an explanatory variable because wealth plays an important role in influencing the working conditions of home based workers), Years of experience, Nature of work, Family support, Mode of getting raw materials and health issues.

Using the above mentioned eight variables, the Logistic Regression model is used in this study. It is specified as follows.

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$$\ln\left[\frac{P}{1-P}\right] = \alpha + \beta_i X_i + u ; \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, 8$$

Where Ln = Natural logarithm

P = Probability of home based women workers those who are satisfied in working conditions.

$\ln\left[\frac{P}{1-P}\right]$  = The log odds ratio of home based women workers those who are satisfied in working conditions.  $\alpha$  = a coefficient on the constant term.

$\beta_i$  = are the coefficients of the eight independent variables.

$X_i$  = are the independent variables

And  $u_i$  = Error term

Using SPSS Statistical package results have been estimated. The results are interpreted with the help of odds ratio. i.e. , instead of the actual coefficient, as the interpretation of odds ratio is more intuitive. It would be mean that for a unit change in the independent variable there would be a corresponding change in the odds ratio.

The result of the analysis of estimated logistic regression model for the satisfaction level of working conditions of home based workers in the selected study area presented in table 1. This analysis has been carried out for the entire sample of 450 observations collected from Coimbatore city, in the state of Tamil Nadu. For the total study area, the selected independent variables are eight in number to carry out the analysis.

Table 1: Logistic Regression Results

Independent Variable	B	S.E	Wald	Sig	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I for EXP(B)	
						Lower	Upper
Age	.238	.198	1.444	.230	1.268	.861	1.868
Education	.841	.205	16.768	.000	2.318	1.550	3.467
Wealth	-.816	.178	21.017	.000	.442	.312	.627
Experience	-.550	.145	14.359	.000	.577	.434	.767
Nature	-1.504	.559	7.236	.007	.222	.074	.665
Family Support	2.626	.561	21.930	.000	13.820	4.604	41.481
Raw Materials	-.931	.234	15.820	.000	.394	.249	.624
Health Issues	-1.156	.180	41.472	.000	.315	.221	.447
Constant	5.175	1.501	11.881	.001	176.771		

Source: Primary Data

The wealth status is turned out be statistically significant at 5 percent level of chi-square value with expected negative sign. The odds ratio of variable indicate that the household having thatched and tiled house is 44.2 percent more likely to chance of increase the satisfaction level (Because in our analysis 214 respondents are living in tiled house).

The Work experience of the respondent, Nature of work of the respondent, Mode of getting raw materials of the respondent and Health issues of the respondent are turned out to be statistically significant at 5 percent level of chi square value with expected negative sign. The odds ratio of Work experience (57.7), Nature of work (22.2), Mode of getting raw materials (39.4) and Health issues (31.5) indicates that a 1 percent increase in Work experience, Nature of work, Mode of getting raw materials and Health issues will leads to 57.7, 22.2, 39.4, 31.5 percent decrease in the satisfaction level of the working conditions in the study area.

Education is statistically significant at 5 percent level of chi square value with unexpected positive sign. The odds ratio of the variable indicates that, the education level of the respondent is 2.32 percent is more likely to chances of increase the working conditions than their counterparts. Hence, the education level of the respondents increases then the satisfaction level of the working conditions will also increases in the study area. It might be, the most of the respondents studied only primary & secondary and it is the reason for choosing home based work.

The family support of the respondents is statistically significant at 5 percent level of chi square value with expected positive sign. The odds ratio of family support suggests that it is the key factor that influencing the satisfaction level of working conditions. It indicates that 1 percent increase in family support leads to 1382 percent increase in satisfaction level of working conditions. It means that, family support is the most predominant factor for the Home based women workers those who are satisfied in working conditions.

**Problems faced by the Home Based Women Workers**

Women workers in India are faced with lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other countries (Barati et al., 2014). In this regard,home based women workers face Work related problems, Psychological health related problems and Physical health related problems (Patel and Pandya, 2017).

Garrett Ranking technique was used to estimate the problems faced by the home based women workers. The orders of value given by the respondents were converted in to rank by using the formula. To discover the most significant factor which influences the respondent, Garrett's ranking technique was used. As per this method, respondents have been asked to give the rank for all factors and the outcomes of such ranking have been converted into score value with the help of the following formula:

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where

R<sub>ij</sub> = Rank given for the i<sup>th</sup> variable by j<sup>th</sup> respondents

N<sub>j</sub> = Number of variable ranked by j<sup>th</sup> respondents

Table 2: Problems Faced by Women Home based workers

Reasons	Garrett Score	Rank
Heavy work	27037	3
Occupational hazards	23332	5
Low & irregular wages	30476	1
Lack of social securities	27404	2
Congested environment	22158	6
Lack of family support	20371	8
Exploitation of intermediaries	24747	4
Lack of child and old age care	20628	7
Lack of recreation and entertainment	17333	9
No frequent order	16797	10

Source: Primary Data

Most of the respondents complaint about low & irregular wages was the main problem faced by home based women workers so it was ranked as the first. A social security measure was the second problem. Home based women workers working for long hours because they have to manage the domestic work come home based work, so heavy work was ranked as third. The next problem faced by them was exploitation of intermediaries. Some of the workers who has involved in separation of cloth were facing occupational hazards so it was ranked as fifth. Nearly ten percentages of the respondents wereliving in a very congested environment; hencethis was ranked as 6thproblem. Some of them told that they don't have enough time to take care of their children so it was ranked as 7th problem, then lack of family support ranked as 8thand lack of recreation and entertainment & no frequent order placed as 9th and 10th accordingly.

### Conclusion

Home based work is an important source of informal work, especially for women. The study concluded that Women's informal work is uncounted in official statistics and home based women workers belong to low socio- economic segment of the society and their working condition is not satisfactory one. They live in a very poor and unhealthy environment. The study identified some of the major problems faced by home based women workers like low wages, social security measures, heavy work etc. To overcome these problems government should take some measures on registration on Home Based workers, Minimum Wages Act and Social security measure to safeguard the Home Based Women Workers.

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