Impact of Covid-19 on women workers in garment industries – Issues and challenges in selected garment industries in Chennai

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Abstract

Indian economy after globalization has undergone tremendous changes entails huge development in industrial sector especially manufacturing and service industries have contributed extensively in economic development. The inevitable lock down and sluggishness in global economy made huge adverse impact medium and large scale business operations as the whole activities depends on global trade. The Covid-19 is the disaster to decelerate the all the activities of human across the world. The aftermath restrictions in work premises with adequate apprehension have extensively generated distress. The study undertaken with 100 garment workers to study about the impact of Covid-19 on their job, health and other socio-economic situation. The study reveals the huge repercussions made on their health, job profile and socio-economic circumstances of their family.

Key words: garment, COVID, Lockdown

Introduction

Indian economy after globalization has undergone tremendous changes entails huge development in industrial sector especially manufacturing and service industries have contributed extensively in economic development. Further, important component of employment generation sources of blue collar and white collar jobs, contributing to export and also ensure equitable development across the Nation. Transnational competition, influence, business activities have made drastic changes in human resources polices and its operations in garment industries as export oriented garment industries extensively get influenced by the transnational trade atmosphere as well as the fluctuations in trade. The Covid-19 has made extensive repercussions on trade, labour marker operations, livelihood etc. The intensity of repercussions has been manifold in labour intensive industries especially garment industries which largely depends on the international order and the trade fluctuations. The Covid-19 entails lock down and aftermath restrictions have endure huge vulnerability of the garment workers who already suffering with manifold issues in the garment factories. The inevitable lock down and sluggishness in global economy made huge adverse impact medium and large scale business operations as the whole activities depends on global trade. The Covid-19 is the disaster to decelerate the all the activities of human across the world. The intensity of the consequences manifested into various operations of all the industrial activities which replicated in medium and large scale industries as well. But, during the extraordinary situation like Covid-19 the intensity of changes and implications in operations of the company seems vital. Thus, in this juncture it is the modest attempt to review the determinants, challenges, influences in organizational culture of medium and large industries during post Covid -19 period in order to review the perceptions of employees to revitalize the operations and quality of the service with conducive work environment.

Women Garment industries workers and Covid-19 repercussions

Garment industries is the essential and significant component of Indian economy especially provides huge employment opportunities for women thereby empower women. Despite the significant bottlenecks already existed the Covid-19 has made huge repercussions on women employment, job profile, occupational health hazards, remuneration, health deterioration, protective measures, work environment changes, economic conditions of the household etc. The garment industries is the important industries which generates employment opportunities to huge number of women and ensure redistribution of wealth thereby ensure economic development. The adverse consequences of Covid-19   made drastic changes and results in deterioration of the economic activities. Further, huge human resources actively involved in production process which ensure distribution of wealth which is the significant component for effective demand operation entails equitable distribution of wealth and percolated the development form the macro level economic policies to the micro level persons. Thus, the study would analyze impact of Covid-19 on women garment workers at ground level in order to enrich the preparedness to combat the constraints like that in future, improvising the mitigation polices and enable to conceive amicable policy measures to revitalize the women worker's situation in garment industries to enable conducive environment for women workers in garment industries.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the perception of the selected women garment employees on impact of Covid -19 on health and protective measures
- To map out the obstacles and challenges of the women employees in the garment industries

Data source and methodology

The present study have conducted among 100 women garment workers located across Chennai city , with a purpose to examine the impact of Covid-19 and the protective measures to ensure the health of the selected garment industrial workers after Covid-19 protocol period as per the guidelines given by WHO. The study was conducted in Chennai. The required samples for the study have collected with the women workers in Guindy and Ambattur industrial estates. The collected data was coded and fed into computers using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) as software for data analysis. The statistical tool like descriptive Analysis, Multinominol Regression were used for proving the hypothesis and predicting the basis of investigation.

Analysis

Logistic regression analysis was used to identify the relationships between dependent variable (health and protective measures under Covid -19 protocol) and independent variables (Protective measures, medical care etc). The logistic regression model is shown as the following form:

$$\ln(p/1-p) = \beta o + \beta i X i$$

The multinomial logistic regression model used is generally effective where the dependent variable is composed of a polytomous category having multiple choices. The multinomial logistic regression model with a baseline category would be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Log } (\pi i/ \pi I) = \alpha i + \beta i x, \; i = 1,\ldots,I-1.$$

The logistic model uses the baseline-category logits with a predictor x. This multinomial logistic regression model can be a useful tool for modeling where the dependent variable is a discrete set of more than two choices (Agresti, 1996). The multinomial logistic regression model used in this study estimates the significance of various protective measures on safer occupational environment and health of women garment workers.

Results

The outcome of the study indicates that about 18 percent of the selected garment employees stated that their annual household income below 1 lakh, and 47.4 percent reported an annual household revenue between 1 to 2 lakhs. Major proportion of the garment employees selected for the study purpose (58%) were between the ages of 25 and 45. Most (90.3%) indicated a worst victim of Covid-19 and yet to recover from the damage, nearly 90.5 percent got enough awareness on health and safety measures available during Covid-19 protocol as the media and government provide adequate sensitiveness, 78 percent satisfied with the sanitation facilities provided for women during Covid-19 period at work premises, 67 percent had confronted mental torture during lockdown and aftermath activities of Covid -19, almost 73 percent and 76 percent have underwent significant depression and health deterioration respectively, 67 percent satisfied with the medical aid during emergency. The final model specification of was statistically significant ($\chi2 = 85.817$; $p < 0.0001$).

Results of the Multinomial Logistic Regression in the Final Model showing attributors of protective measures and health during Covid -19 protocal period (Final model included only significant variables at .05 level)

Variables	Coefficient	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Health and protective measures during Covid 19 protocol period	2.074	12.340	1.348	1	0.005	0.091
Sanitizers and mask provision	0.804	4.657	0.827	1	0.002	1.770
Adequate distance	0.019	1.328	2.371	1	0.001	1.168
Periodical health check up	0.143	3.984	3.093	1	0.003	0.173
Adequate ventilation and respiratory protection	0.056	3.298	2.315	1	0.063	0.009
Medical aid during emergency	0.008	0.027	1.603	1	0.003	0.865
Proper cleaning and adequate sanitation of the work premises	0.005	0.007	2.002	1	0.002	0.824
Huge depression and panic during Covid-19	0.002	1.248	1.361	1	0.005	1.296

Discussion

The result of the multinomial Logistic regression examination indicates the proximity of the model with the empirical verification used for the estimation. The -2 Log Likelihood value and Nagelkerke R^2 were 71.29 and 0.519 respectively, indicating improvement of model fit with inclusion of the above variables and a combined effect of the variables in predicting probability of occurrence. Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test indicated that the obtained model did not differ significantly from null model or expected fit ($\chi^2 = 6.511$, $p = 0.21$). The explanatory variables used in the final equation collectively accounted for 82% for the explained variables for character framing ($R^2 = 0.829$). This study used predictors such as Sanitizers and mask provision, Adequate distance, Periodical health checkup, Adequate ventilation and respiratory protection, Medical aid during emergency, Proper cleaning and adequate sanitation of the work premises, Huge depression and panic during Covid-19. Results showed Sanitizers and mask provision, Adequate distance, Periodical health checkup was around 90 percent and that only 10 percent of the variables have lesser significance like recreation activities. The multinomial logistic regression model provided sufficient evidence that independent variables was meticulously associated with an health and protective measures during covid-19 protocol which eventually preserve the health staus of women despite the fact they have been tremendously affected by the Covid-19. The multinomial logistic regression using a classification method for the dependent variable would provide a more satisfactory solution compared to other analysis techniques because it not only requires strict assumptions, but enables a direct interpretation of the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable.

Conclusion

The examination of the health and protective measures during Covid -19 and its consequences on women garment workers in the selected companies located in Chennai indicated that the provision of the protective measures and the amenities have strong influence on the health of women workers in the garment industries during Covid-19 protocol period which gradually decelerate the psychological depression and panic generated by Covid-19 havoc. However, significant portion   also stated that existing protective measures are good but still it need to enhance in more effective way to inhibit the health hazardous to the women workers as the Covid-19 suffocation entails huge repercussions on health eventually affected the productivity of the women. hence, they need adequate rest, medical attention, financial incentives, medical insurance along with the protective measures provided under covid-19 protocol delegated by the Government. However, it is also essential to note that women workers garment industries   need to enhance the collective bargaining power and demand for their legitimate rights thereby ensure the healthier and wealthier work environment.

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