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School of Service Learning – SSL Report of Rural and Urban Intervention

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PROBLEM FACED BY A UNORGANIZED WORKER

– Ms. Geetha

Definition:

Unorganized worker means a home-based worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganized sector and includes a worker in the organized sector who is not covered by any of the Acts mentioned in Schedule II to this Act.

Introduction:

In India, around 44 crore people work as unorganized workers in the unorganized sector. The unorganized sector faces many difficulties like employment opportunities, employer- employee relationship, low wages etc. Many unorganized workers live in slum areas and their living condition is very poor in terms of hygiene, etc.

There are many statutes and laws for the unorganized workers, but they are still not provided with social security benefits. Social security provides protection for the unorganized sector. The need for social security is a fundamental human right and it should be provided to all citizens. Social security provided to the unorganized sector is not recognized and efforts should be taken by the government. The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008 aims in providing a framework for welfare schemes for the unorganized sector.

Major problems faced by Unorganized Workers:

In India, 90% of the workforces are engaged in unorganized sector. As being the weaker section in the society, they deal with many problems. Even though the unorganized sector contributes to the economy, they are faced with many challenges. They are:

High level of insecurities in jobs:

Unorganized workers depend on various jobs due to insecurity of work. Factors like climate change, locations etc. affect the employment opportunities for unorganized workers. For example, agricultural sector in India is highly irregular and unassured. This is because of the availability of work to them. They are

engaged only for 3 months in a year and the remaining 9 months they are either unemployed or they search for alternative jobs to sustain from starvation.

Minimum wages:

Section 2(h) of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 defines the term 'Wages'. It means remuneration capable of being expressed in terms of money which would if the terms of the contract of employment express or implied were fulfilled be payable to a person employed in respect of his employment or of work done in such employment and includes house rent allowance. Even though the act defines the term, the workers are not paid minimum wages in most cases.

Long working hours:

In the Unorganized sector, long working hours are beyond the labour and regulatory norms which is standard in India. In the other unorganized sectors, the working hours are fixed from 12- 15 hours and their wages depend on the hours their work for their employer.

Work hazards, occupational safety and living conditions:

Unorganized workers are exposed to dangerous working conditions which affects their health conditions. They face many health problems because they have low nutrition and their excessive physical activities. Due to their low income, they are unable to pay for their medical expenses. Workers who work in firework factories, tobacco factories, and matchstick factories are prone to respiratory diseases because of inhaling the tobacco dust, fire powder etc.

Women and children are unprotected:

Art 39(d) of the Constitution of India talks about equal pay for equal work. This means that all workers should be given equal wages irrespective of their sex. Wages given to men are more than the wages given to women and children for their equal hours of work. Many children are forced to work in households, dhabas, and tea shops for low wages. Women experience many physical and mental problems and they are not aware of their rights.

Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008:

The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008 was passed by the Parliament of India on December 30, 2008. This act aims to provide social security and welfare to the unorganized sector. This act is applicable to whole of India, specifically for the unorganized sector.

National Child Labour Policy:

On 14th August 1987, the National Child Labour Policy was approved by the cabinet. The main objective of this policy was to eliminate child labour in hazardous working sectors. In this scheme, the target group was for children aged below 14 years and who worked in places where children were affected with health problems.

Conclusion:

Unorganized workers in India face many problems like low wages, cruel treatment by employers, poor living condition, etc. Social security is one of the important subject that should be recognized by the government to reduce poverty in the country.

My role and responsibilities:

Let the unorganized know about the rights in the best possible way and use all their rights in the productive way. And help them in the best possible way.

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMENS AND DOMESTIC WORKERS

-Sr. Valarmathi

Definition:

A domestic worker is any individual, whether employed directly or indirectly, involved in domestic work including cooking, cleaning, gardening, caretaking of children, elderly or sick persons, driving vehicles, laundry, and being a watch-man. Domestic work only qualifies the nature of work and does not impose situational limitations, such as household premises.

Introduction:

Domestic workers are amongst the most exploited classes of workers. Approximately, 4.75 million people in India are engaged as domestic workers. With a growing urban middle class, the demand for domestic workers is only increasing. One of the biggest challenges for domestic workers is the lack of economic security, which the nature of their employment subjects them to. In the event of any illness, injury, or economic needs of their family, they are left at the mercy of their employers, who offer them aid only as a favour.

Problems of domestic workers:

The problems faced by domestic workers today are wide and diverse. In order to ensure effective safeguards against them, we should have a complete understanding of the vulnerabilities of the workers and their problems. Ideally, domestic workers should be awarded economic benefits on a subjective analysis of their skill, like in the case of highly skilled individuals. In such a scenario, the problems faced by them can also be dealt with in a subjective manner through litigation. In India, due to a slow and overburdened judiciary, litigation is of little realistic help.

First, the lack of collective bargaining, coupled with a large supply of workers, has resulted in low wages for domestic workers which solely benefits the relatively well-off employer at the cost of the vulnerable domestic workers. Most domestic workers are paid deplorable wages despite long working hours.

Secondly, there is a lack of skill development in domestic workers. To appropriately address their plight, we must take into account the effect of technological inventions on their livelihoods.

Thirdly, domestic workers in India often face abuse in the workplace. In India, people belonging to the lower strata of the society, generally, have little awareness about the rights and remedies available to them.

Fourthly, domestic workers in India are usually subjected to discrimination. In India, the concept of domestic workers, especially live-in domestic workers, reflects the vestiges of caste and class discrimination. Employing servants reinforces discriminatory behaviour.

Fifthly, domestic workers lack any form of social security. Like most workers in the informal sectors, part-time and live-in domestic workers have little or no access to basic social security, such as healthcare benefits, unemployment protection, or maternity benefits.

Legislative analysis of existing Indian laws:

The plight of the informal sector workers has largely been ignored by the Indian Legislature. There is a lack of adequate legislations to regulate the service conditions of domestic workers. This part attempts to give a comprehensive analysis of bills and legislations that have attempted to provide some protection to domestic workers.

A. Early Attempts: The earliest attempt to have a national law regulating the services of domestic workers dates back to the Domestic Worker (Conditions of Service) Bill, 1959 and the House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill, 1989.⁴⁶ However, these bills never sparked any important discourse and were never enacted.

▪ **B. Expanding Existing Legislations:**

- Minimum Wages Act, 1948

- Sexual Harassment Act, 2013
- Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948

C. Special Statutes:

- Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008
- State Legislations
- Judicial Attempts
- Legislations in the Pipeline



Conclusion:

In the long run, substantial changes in the policies of the Government vis-a-vis domestic workers are required. The intense competition among domestic workers¹⁸⁵ ought to be tempered and regulated. Otherwise, any regulation to formalise the sector is rendered moot. The problems faced by domestic workers cannot be tackled in isolation. They are a part of larger issues and must be addressed as such. The specific legal provisions discussed in this paper for domestic workers must go hand in hand with other socio-economic welfare measures.

PROBLEMS OF MIGRANTS AND OUR REPOSES

-Rev.Fr. Arul Henry William S.J.

Introduction:

The problems of migrant workers have become very important in many developing countries of the world. The process of theorization of migration began in the 19th century. It has been discussed by many researchers, who have emphasized social and cultural, distant and economic factors as causes of migration.

Migration of labour started in India during the period of British colonial rule. It was aimed at meeting the requirements of capitalist's development both in India and abroad. The labour was moved from the hinterland to the sites of mining, plantation and manufacture. It was recruited from the rural areas and regulated in such a manner that women and children remained in the villages while males migrated to the modern sector. (Gill, 1998).

Determinants of Migration:

Generally, there are two basic factors of migration: i) Distance ii) Duration. From the distance point of view, migration can be classified under four categories: i) Rural to Rural ii) Rural to Urban iii) Urban to Rural iv) Urban to Urban. Besides, migration can be divided into following categories: i) Intra-district, ii) Inter-district iii) Intra-state iv) Inter-state v) National and International. From the duration point of view migration can be studied under three categories: i) Casual-temporary ii) Periodic- seasonal iii) Permanent.

Status of Migrant labour in India:

The National Commission on Rural Labour in India (NCRL, 1991} estimates more than 10million circular migrants in the rural areas alone. These include an estimated 4.5 million interstate migrants and 6 million intra-state migrants. The Commission pointed out that there are large number of seasonally migrant workers in the agriculture and plantations, brick kilns, quarries, 9 construction sites and fish processing. The problem of seasonal migrant workers in the sugar

industry and other agro-based industries is not a new phenomenon in India. There are more than 500 sugar factories in India. (Datt, Sundharam, 2008)

The average crushing season of the sugar factories varies from 116 to 165 days. In Maharashtra state, there are 10 lakh handloom and power loom workers, 8 lakh workers who are engaged in building and construction sectors. In the Western Maharashtra state, sugar factories engage near about six lakh seasonal migrant workers from drought prone areas of the state. Loans and advances to migrant workers are adjusted 10 through them. Expenses and transportation or other costs etc are deducted from their payments in the few months.

Quality of life and labour standards for migrant labour:

After independence, many labour laws have enacted by the government of India. Besides, the government also adopted various labour policies in order to improve wages and working conditions of workers in the organized and unorganized sectors. We need to discuss about the quality of life and labour standards for the migrant workers in India. In terms of wage policy in India, it has been observed that male and female migrant workers get lower wages than minimum wages. They do not get minimum, wages stipulated under the minimum wages Act, 1948. Long and flexible working hours, combined with low wages are reported in the case of most seasonally migrant workers in India.

(Singh and Iyer 1995, Krishnaiah, 1977, Salve, 1990). There is no fixed time of work for migrant workers; they work more than 12 hours a day instead of 8 hours a day. Therefore, it should be noted that **'the principle of equal pay for equal work'** is not also strictly adhered to the fixation of wage rates for contract basis male and female seasonal migrant workers as per the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976.

Social security for migrant labour:

The ILO is constitutionally bound to promote social security programmes and measures providing basic income to all in need of protection. Social security systems provide nine types of benefits as defined in the in the social security (minimum standards) convention, 1952(102) namely, medical care, sickness and maternity, medical care, sickness and maternity benefits, family benefits,

unemployment benefits, employment injury, invalidity and survivor's benefits, oldage benefits. Therefore, social security is the very foundation of a decent society, it is the primary source of social legitimacy.(Mishra,2001)

Conclusion:

The real issue is how to extend human rights to all segments of the labour market. There are many groups of workers in the unorganized sector or informal economy, like migrant workers in agriculture, building and road construction, brick kilns, sugar factories and others, for whom decent work is a very distant goal..

Therefore, the government of India should ratify all the relevant international covenants that respect the dignity of labour, especially important ILO Conventions No.87.the freedom of association and protection of the right to organize convention, and the ILO convention 98, the right to organize and 16 collective bargaining convention. Workers, whether industrial workers or employed with the government should have an inalienable right resort to strike. Uniform labour standards in the context of unorganized sector workers, like migrant workers, should be implemented in rural and urban areas of India. It is necessary to protect migrant and other workers in the unorganized sector by International labour standards.



Outreach: 2019-2020 (2nd Dec 2019 – 6th Dec 2019)

In the end of November 2019, first year students of Post Graduate of various department have been called to come to LSS hall to speak about the Outreach programme which was planned to happen in December of the same year, which eventually happened in smooth full manner. During the meeting there were lot of dignitaries from our college as well as speaking on the rights of all us and the problems faced by the peoples living in various villages across Tamil Nadu and what all can be the possible remedies to solve their problems & we were also explained about the activities what was planned for us once reached the location(Allambadi), since it was a 6days camp they mentioned the things that all necessary for our stay in the camp and the outreach trip was from 2nd December 2019-7th December 2019 to Allambadi small village in the district of Villupuram, Tamil Nadu.

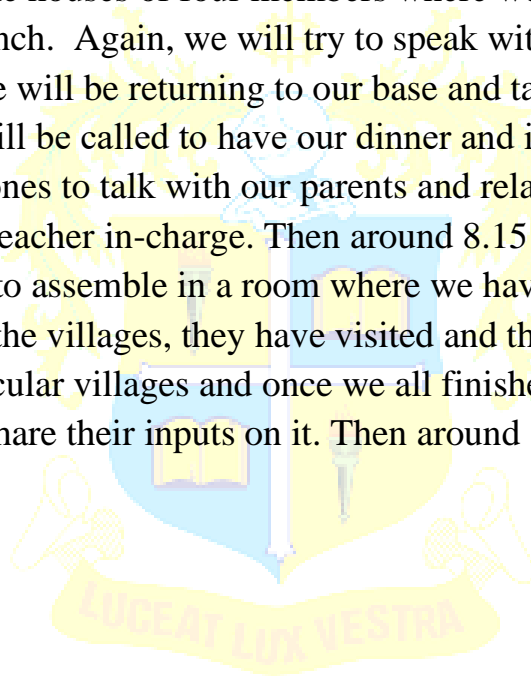
Day 1:Allambadi (Chennai to Allambadi)

As planned earlier, on 2nd December 2019, our outreach programme began by travelling to our designated place from our college via bus which was pre booked for the trip. Around 8 am we started from our college reached the location by 11-11.30 am, then we were given some time till evening to take rest and in the evening, they explained us about the villages nearby which will we visiting in turns. We were around some 70 students and we were being divided into 4 different groups for taking care of our day-to-day activities during our stay in that place like (kitchen department, pray service, photography and discipline). During the meet there were several dignitaries from that place along with four members of four different villages who will be travelling along with us during the day, in that meet they also explained us about the work which we will doing. During the day time, we will be involved in some kind off field work & speak with peoples who reside there regarding problems faced by them and in the evening, we should come and share our experience with other groups regarding things which we saw and learnt from the village members.

Day 2: Thanikalampattu

On the next day, as planned in the meeting previous night we were taken to a village called Thanikalampattu. And the best part of visiting all these villages even though short duration only but still the travelling time taken to travel from the place where we stayed and in that kind of atmosphere were fresh air coming on your face travelling together in tempos got reminded of my childhood days.

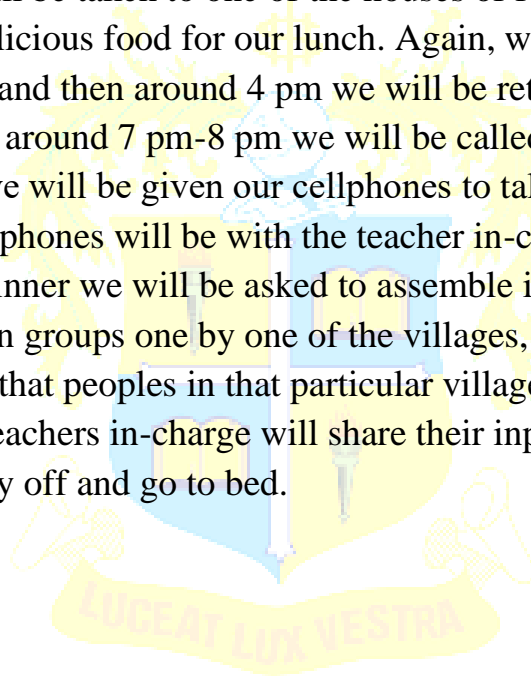
And once we reached Thanikalampattu, we were taken to fields by the in-charge and we were asked to do some field work then after working for some 1 to 1.30 hrs. We will be asked to indulge in conversation with peoples in that particular area and ask various problems faced by them. After a brief conversation with peoples over there we will be taken to one of the houses of four members where we will be offered with a delicious food for our lunch. Again, we will try to speak with few of the persons there and then around 4 pm we will be returning to our base and take rest till evening and around 7 pm-8 pm we will be called to have our dinner and it's also the time when we will be given our cellphones to talk with our parents and relatives rest of the time phones will be with the teacher in-charge. Then around 8.15 pm, after finishing our dinner we will be asked to assemble in a room where we have to share our experience in groups one by one of the villages, they have visited and the main problems faced by that peoples in that particular villages and once we all finished sharing our experience teachers in-charge will share their inputs on it. Then around 10.30 we will call the day off and go to bed.



Day 3: Pilrampattu

It was third of our outreach programme and our team was allotted punctuality department for the day which is responsible for everyone to be on time from getting ready morning prayer services to taking their food sessions in time and so on. Today our team was assigned to go yet another small but beautiful village called as Pilrampattu with around 500 houses.

Once we reached Pilrampattu, we were taken to fields by the in-charge and we were asked to do some field work then after working for some 1 to 1.30 hrs. Then as a routine procedure we will be asked to indulge in conversation with peoples in that particular area and ask various problems faced by them. After a brief conversation with peoples over there we will be taken to one of the houses of four members where we will be offered with a delicious food for our lunch. Again, we will try to speak with few of the persons there and then around 4 pm we will be returning to our base and take rest till evening and around 7 pm-8 pm we will be called to have our dinner and it's also the time when we will be given our cellphones to talk with our parents and relatives rest of the time phones will be with the teacher in-charge. Then around 8.15 pm, after finishing our dinner we will be asked to assemble in a room where we have to share our experience in groups one by one of the villages, they have visited and the main problems faced by that peoples in that particular villages and once we all finished sharing our experience teachers in-charge will share their inputs on it. Then around 10.30 we will call the day off and go to bed.



Day 4: Melvazhai

It was day four of our outreach programme and our team was allotted again with the kitchen department for the day which is responsible for taking caring of whether food is prepared on time and to serve to everyone in the allotted time & inform all once the food was ready. Today our team was assigned to go yet another small but beautiful village called Melvazhai filled with full of small mountains around it. As our routine task we were asked to do field work for 1.30 -2 hrs. Once our task was finished again, we were taken to one of the house, where we were given with delicious lunch. After the lunch, we as usual divided ourself in small groups and went to ask the problems faced by the peoples in that area. That session will go on for some 30-45 minutes and after that session we started back to our base.

Once we reached our base, we were given time till evening to take rest and after that as usual were been called to have our dinner. Then, for a change today instead of doing our routine work(i.e) presenting about the village we visited our groups were asked to do a small model presentation of one of the villages, of our choice with the things that are available within our base like small stones, sticks, plastics, etc... So, our team did model presentation on Thanikalampattu and other teams on remaining other three villages, once all of us were ready with our model presentation our teacher in-charges will come and evaluate it. So, we were given some 45-60 minutes to prepare our model and then our teachers visited team wise starting from ours and going on and at last after seeing all the presentation they announce the results based on they build the model and they went on to present about it and teachers made an announcement regarding the skirt which each group as to present in front of village people on the penultimate day of our outreach based on any topic with social message in it. Then after that we were asked to clean up the place for the next days prayer service, once everything was cleaned up properly, we were asked to return to our rooms, & finish our works and go to sleep.

Day 5: Penultimate day

It was fifth day of our outreach programme and today was special day for all of us because today we have to do the field work within our base where we lived the reason for this being today evening, we have been asked to put up a skirt program in front of village members of Thanikalampattu one skirt per group based on any topic with social message in it. So, we were asked to work only for 1-1.30 hrs then were given time to practice for the skit. Around 11.30-12 pm we are being asked to present it first in front of teachers so that if any corrections have to be made, they will be correcting us before doing in front of village members. So, as instructed each team practiced during the given time and when the respective team was called, they will perform and after that other team will go and perform. Eventually our team was also called we performed it and at end of the skirt teachers recommended to do few corrections. Then we all departed for lunch so that we can finish it fast and so that we can practice one more time before the final programme in evening.

It went on smooth, after some time we were asked to get ready to go village where we will be performing. It around 4pm we started from our base in trips and reached the village. Once we reached the village, we were in roads inviting all the peoples in the village by going from streets to streets for watching our programme by using slogans, signing song and so on. It was around 6-6.30pm when slowly people started to assemble in place where we were going to put up the skirt and around 7pm we started off the event with first team starting it and followed by other teams. In middle of each skirt there will be special event like dance, singing or speech. So, as soon as first team skirt was over there was a dance program then after the second team one of our teachers sung a song and at end another teacher of us gave a speech. Then once the event was finished, we have been appreciated by the peoples over there and then we started back to our base. Then once again in our base all our teacher in-charge appreciated everyone for doing skirt well in such a short period of time. Then we were being given few instructions on bus timings and all since it was our penultimate day of our outreach and tomorrow, we shall be returning back to our houses. After the short meeting we have been asked to finish our works and go to sleep.

Day 6: Last Day(Allambadi to Chennai)

As said to us previous night by teachers that today we all will be retuning back to our houses. As usual we all got up in morning went for prayer service and once it was over, we were asked to have our breakfast and get ready to leave. It was one hour before trip our mobile phone was handed to over to us back and we started to take photos with our friends, in- charge teachers and with peoples around us because those will remain one of our cherished moments in our future time. It was totally a new experience for many of us even though many of us are from village but many of us shifted to cities because of work or for our studies so we were not experienced to this type of work before and the most important thing the dedication, love and care which is shown by the people over in village cant be so easily found with cities people and off course dedication towards their works can be seen in cities also but that loving & caring nature for other peoples was something special about the people in all the villages we visited. Even tough they all had lot problems in each of the villages still the way they treated and cared for all of us is something to bow for and there all lot of things to learnt from the peoples over there which be very useful like dedication, be happy with whatever they have to mention a few. I strongly agree that it will be remembered as one of the most cherished moments during my college life. As said by scholars “This to shall pass”, time all also flew away and the time came it was around 11.30-12pm when we have to start back to our homes. The buses arrived around 11.30-12 pm we started to arrange the luggages in front few seats of bus so that we can occupy the rest of the seats and take some rest during the travelling as it was some 2.30-3 hrs journey. Then around 3.30-4 pm we all reached our college from there all departed to their respective homes. This how our beautiful outreach programme ended.