

Name: Megha Shree

Supervisor Name: Prof. Shakti Kak

Title: Access to Justice for Migrant Women Workers: A Case Study of Electronics Manufacturing in NCR

Department: Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia

ABSTRACT

Over the years, women's participation in industrial and service sector has increased in developing countries as well as in India as a result of shift from traditional agriculture sector. In particular, electronics manufacturing has shown a huge potential to create new employment opportunities. In view of this, the main objective of the present study is to explore the access to justice by women workers especially migrants in electronics manufacturing industry. The study has adopted 'Decent Work' framework of ILO to examine the objectives. This study is based on household level secondary data of National Sample Survey (Government of India) and field survey conducted among 50 employers and 100 migrant women workers in electronics firms situated in the National Capital Regions (Noida).

This research is based on an inter-disciplinary perspective to examine the women workers' rights at the workplace in the electronics industry. There is a dearth of studies related to migrant women employed in this modern sector. The study provides important insights, which can help in improving the employment conditions of women workers in the overall manufacturing industries and contribute to the future policy making.

The study results shows preference of young (15–29 years) and single (unmarried, divorced/separated or widows/deserted) women in the industry. There is presence of high number of migrant workers in the industry, who are mainly migrated from poor states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh for employment reason. Most of the employers and workers were unaware about the maintenance of a separate registers for migrant workers that is required under Interstate Migrant Workmen Act, 1979. There is high prevalence of

literate or skilled women workers in the industry. Only skilled workers were recruited through internal promotions and from contractors. None of the employers provided any formal training to women workers at company's cost after joining. There is also existence of apprenticeship in the industry but firms use the Apprenticeship Act for their profit motive. Although women worked at permanent status, but most of them were hired for short duration and without any written job contract. Women were concentrated at lower level jobs and hardly any of them were given promotion or any other type of skill training. There was gap in the salaries of male and female workers. The workers were unsatisfied with insufficient working space at workplace and complained about several health problems. Verbal abuse is common but in the absence of any sexual harassment committee at the workplace, their complaints were not addressed. Non-eligibility of social security among female were higher than male. Only few female were aware about the union presence compared to male. The education level or skill emerges as the most important indicator for access to justice and occupational segregation confirms a women's concentration at bottom and in low skilled jobs.

Higher level of skill training is necessary for the improvement of women's working condition in the job market. The government should act positively regarding social security provisions such as making provision of universal social security benefits to all workers. There is an urgent need to stop the misuse of Apprenticeship Act by firms for their profit motive. Awareness and proper coordination among the stakeholders (workers, employers and state) for implementation of various welfare Acts for workers. There is need to modify old Interstate Migrant Act, 1979 based on the present scenario.