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## Research Article

# Female Migration and Workplace Harassment-A Micro Level Study

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## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the prevalence and forms of workplace harassment, describes contributing factors to their vulnerability, and explores the effects on their well-being and professional lives. Specifically, the study raises the issue of challenges that such a woman faces. It gives recommendations on policies to be made in the workplace to curb and reduce harassment in the workplace, which will overall create a safe and just work environment for a woman.

**KEYWORDS:** Microteaching, Teacher Training, Teaching Technique, Efficient Teaching

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Female migration and workplace harassment in India are pressing issues that intersect with broader socio-economic challenges, impacting the lives and well-being of millions of women across various sectors. With rapid urbanization and industrialization in the country, a considerable increase is noticed in the internal migration of women from rural to urban areas or across regions in search of livelihood. Such movement is based on economic factors, family obligations, and, in some cases, displacement because of environmental or social factors. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (2020) study, 48% of the overall number of migrants in India were women. In the above background, any demographic change draws attention to this significant fact: the role of female migrant workers in the Indian economy, particularly in construction, domestic work, agriculture, and manufacturing. But alongside the economic opportunities, migrant female workers often suffer from poor housing, a lack of adequate healthcare facilities, and precarious working conditions. Labor standards violations are rife among female migrant workers across these sectors. A national survey conducted by the National Commission for Women (NCW) in 2019 found many female migrants toiling in construction work, suffering abuses—ranging from verbal abuse and physical assault to sexual harassment and discrimination. It further implied that there is a need for improved legal protection and better support services for female migrant workers, together with continuing attention to ensure their rights and dignity are well preserved. The International Labour Organization has further reported on the prevalence of harassment in workplaces involving female migrant workers in India's informal economy. The workers were found to be working under exploitative conditions, where harassment became an instrument for control and exploitation. These systemic issues brought out in the report call for improved labor laws, increased enforcement mechanisms, and greater awareness both on the part of employers and workers. The current study is based in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu, and on female migrant workers to understand better the localized experience of workplace harassment. Grounded on the nature, extent, effect, and etiological factors of harassment within

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this context, the study will generate empirical evidence that could be used to inform policy interventions and advocacy efforts. It is needed not only to protect the rights and dignity of female migrant workers but also to foster inclusive and sustainable development in the changing economy of India.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the incidence, types, and consequences of workplace harassment to female migrant workers in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, and to determine the factors that influence and potential interventions for positive changes in the work environment and well-being.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anker and Hein (2018) <sup>[1]</sup> conducted a study to assess the vulnerabilities of female migrant workers in the garment industry of South Asia. Their research indicates that in most cases, such workers are verbally or physically harassed and have very limited avenues for legal remediation. The study underscores the unequal power relations and gender discriminatory harassment. Along the same lines, the report commissioned by the International Labor Organization (2019) <sup>[2]</sup> looked into the employment conditions of migrant female domestic workers in the Middle East. These findings by the ILO also meant that such workers are exposed to further risk in terms of sexual harassment and physical abuse because of their isolation, along with the absence of any legal entitlement. It pressed on the need for a more excellent legal framework and international cooperation. In an Indian context, the study was conducted by Banerjee and Ghosh (2020) <sup>[3]</sup>, female migrants work in the informal economy. Their work reveals the prevalence of various types of harassment within the workplace, ranging from sexual to emotional. They pointed out that the majority of economic vulnerability and information asymmetry regarding legal entitlement have been the major driving forces for harassment persisting over time. The solution advocated by Banerjee and Ghosh is empowering initiatives and stricter implementation of labor laws. Furthermore, Srivastava (2017) <sup>[4]</sup> contributed to a study on female migrant workers in urban India. The author unveiled the socio-economic factors that give them a high susceptibility to workplace harassment: low levels of education, economic necessity, and social isolation. The work of Srivastava <sup>[4]</sup> has reiterated the need for targeted interventions that include educational initiatives and community support systems. Fernandez (2016) <sup>[5]</sup> also conducted a study on the lived experiences of female migrant workers in Southeast Asia and showed that this situation placed a double burden—working and the social discrimination that forced these workers to face high levels of stress and mental health. Programs directed at this sector must offer an integrated support system that includes legal and social as well as psychological support. A systematic review by Yates and Mitra in 2021 <sup>[6]</sup> brought together numerous papers that discussed workplace harassment involving female migrant workers worldwide. The analysis points towards a universal process of exploitation and abuse, the majority of which occur with the help of frail legal systems and social and economic vulnerabilities. An integrated approach toward legal reform,

educational programs, and international labor standards offers protection and empowerment of female migrant workers.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of female migrant workers in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of personal experiences and broader patterns within the population.

### Sample Size

The sample consists of 40 female migrant workers from various industries in Coimbatore, including textiles, domestic work, manufacturing, and the service industry. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure diverse representation across different sectors and backgrounds. This approach was chosen to capture a wide range of experiences and perspectives, providing a more holistic view of the issue.

### Collection of Primary Data

Data was collected through structured interviews and questionnaires. The structured interviews provided in-depth insights into the experiences of harassment, while the questionnaires offered quantitative data on the prevalence and forms of harassment. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of both personal experiences and broader patterns within the population.

### Analysis of Secondary Sources

In addition to the primary data collected through surveys, institutional reports, academic publications, and online resources were reviewed to supplement the study. This review included an analysis of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity measures, and digital divide issues.

## 5. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Characteristic	Number of Participants (N = 40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	12	30%
26-35	18	45%
36-45	8	20%
46-55	2	5%
<b>Education Level</b>		
No formal education	6	15%
Primary education	14	35%
Secondary education	12	30%
Higher secondary education	6	15%
Diploma/Graduate	2	5%
<b>Employment Sector</b>		
Textile	16	40%
Domestic work	12	30%
Manufacturing	8	20%
Service industry	4	10%

Source: Primary Data

The demographic characteristics of the participants reveal a diverse group of female migrant workers in Coimbatore. The majority of the participants are aged between 18 and 35 years, accounting for 75% of the sample. This age distribution indicates that younger women are more likely to migrate for work, possibly due to economic pressures and the search for better opportunities. The educational levels vary, with a significant portion having primary or secondary education (65%). This highlights the limited access to higher education among migrant women, which can impact their employment opportunities and vulnerability to workplace harassment. The employment sector distribution shows a heavy concentration in textiles (40%) and domestic work (30%), sectors known for lower wages and poor working conditions, further emphasizing the precarious nature of their employment.

**Table 2:** Prevalence and Forms of Workplace Harassment

Form of Harassment	Number of Participants Reporting (N = 40)	Percentage (%)
Verbal abuse	18	45%
Inappropriate physical contact	12	30%
Unwanted sexual advances	8	20%
Psychological harassment	6	15%
Discrimination (gender, race)	4	10%

Source: Primary Data

The above data indicates a high prevalence of workplace harassment among female migrant workers in Coimbatore. Verbal abuse is the most common form, reported by 45% of participants. This is followed by inappropriate physical contact (30%) and unwanted sexual advances (20%), highlighting significant issues of physical and sexual harassment. Psychological harassment and discrimination, though less frequently reported, still affect a considerable portion of the participants. These findings underscore the pervasive nature of harassment in workplaces employing migrant women, reflecting deep-seated issues of power dynamics and gender discrimination.

**Table 3:** Factors Contributing to Vulnerability

Contributing Factor	Number of Participants Identifying (N = 40)	Percentage (%)
Limited legal protections	28	70%
Economic dependence	24	60%
Social isolation	20	50%
Lack of support networks	18	45%
Language barriers	12	30%

Source: Primary Data

The factors contributing to the vulnerability of female migrant workers to harassment are multifaceted. Limited legal protections are identified by 70% of participants as a major issue, reflecting the inadequacy of current labor laws in safeguarding migrant workers. Economic dependence, cited by 60%, indicates that the need to support their families forces many women to endure abusive conditions. Social isolation and lack of support networks are also significant, affecting 50% and 45% of participants, respectively. These factors exacerbate their vulnerability, making it difficult for them to seek help or report incidents of harassment.

Language barriers, affecting 30%, further complicate their ability to communicate and navigate their rights in the workplace.

**Table 4:** Impact of Workplace Harassment on Well-being

Impact on Well-being	Number of Participants Reporting (N = 40)	Percentage (%)
Anxiety	20	50%
Depression	16	40%
Physical health issues	12	30%
Job performance issues	10	25%
Considering job resignation	8	20%

Source: Primary Data

The impact of workplace harassment on the well-being of female migrant workers is profound. Half of the participants report experiencing anxiety, and 40% report depression, indicating severe mental health consequences. Physical health issues are also reported by 30% of participants, underscoring the toll that harassment takes on their overall health. Job performance is adversely affected for 25% of the participants, which can have long-term implications for their career progression and economic stability. Additionally, 20% of participants have considered resigning from their jobs due to harassment, highlighting the significant impact on their employment and livelihood. These findings emphasize the urgent need for interventions to address workplace harassment and support the well-being of female migrant workers.

## 6. DISCUSSION

This study revealed that female migrant workers in Coimbatore experience significant levels of workplace harassment, with verbal abuse being the most prevalent (45%), followed by inappropriate physical contact (30%) and unwanted sexual advances (20%). Psychological harassment (15%) and discrimination based on gender or race (10%) are also notable concerns. The factors contributing to their vulnerability include limited legal protections (70%), economic dependence (60%), social isolation (50%), lack of support networks (45%), and language barriers (30%). The impact on their well-being is substantial, with high incidences of anxiety (50%), depression (40%), physical health issues (30%), job performance issues (25%), and considerations of job resignation (20%). The findings of this study align with previous research on the prevalence and forms of harassment faced by female migrant workers. Anker and Hein (2018) <sup>[1]</sup> found that verbal and physical harassment is rampant among female workers in the garment industry of South Asia, which is consistent with our findings of high verbal abuse and inappropriate physical contact among migrant workers in Coimbatore. Similarly, the International Labor Organization (2019) <sup>[2]</sup> report on domestic workers in the Middle East highlighted severe sexual harassment and physical abuse, echoing our results where 20% of participants reported unwanted sexual advances and 30% reported inappropriate physical contact. Regarding contributing factors to vulnerability, Banerjee and Ghosh (2020) <sup>[3]</sup> emphasized economic vulnerability and information asymmetry as significant drivers of harassment. This aligns with our findings where economic dependence (60%) and

limited legal protections (70%) were major contributing factors. Srivastava (2017) <sup>[4]</sup> identified low education levels, economic necessity, and social isolation as key factors, corroborating our results with 65% of participants having only primary or secondary education and 50% reporting social isolation. The impact on well-being observed in this study is also consistent with previous research. Fernandez (2016) <sup>[5]</sup> showed that harassment leads to high stress and mental health issues among Southeast Asian female migrant workers, similar to our findings of anxiety (50%) and depression (40%) among participants. Yates and Mitra (2021) <sup>[6]</sup> highlighted the global exploitation and abuse of female migrant workers, leading to severe mental and physical health issues. Our study similarly found significant impacts on physical health (30%) and job performance (25%).

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study reveals the widespread issue of workplace harassment faced by female migrant workers in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, and underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy reforms. The high prevalence of verbal, physical, and sexual harassment, coupled with contributing factors such as limited legal protections, economic dependence, and social isolation, highlights the precarious situation of these women. The severe impact on their mental and physical health and their professional lives necessitates comprehensive and sustained efforts to address and mitigate these issues. Looking to the future, there is a pressing need for robust legal frameworks that offer greater protection and support to female migrant workers. Strengthening labor laws, ensuring their effective enforcement, and creating accessible reporting mechanisms are critical steps. Empowerment initiatives, including language training, legal education, and mental health support, can equip these women with the tools needed to navigate and resist harassment in the workplace. Additionally, fostering a culture of accountability among employers through mandatory harassment training and the implementation of clear anti-harassment policies is essential. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of these interventions and exploring innovative solutions to create safer and more equitable work environments. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of harassment on female migrant workers and the efficacy of various support measures. By addressing these challenges through comprehensive and sustained efforts, it is possible to significantly improve the working conditions and overall well-being of female migrant workers, paving the way for a more just and equitable future.

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