

Women Machinists in Garment Factories and Social Success: The Case Study of Garment Factories in Katunayake Free Trade Zone, Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Sri Lanka has several Free Trade Zones (FTZ) which contain different manufacturing operations including garments. According to the World Bank, an FTZ is a "fenced-in industrial estate specializing in manufacturing for export and offering their resident firms free-trade conditions and a liberal regulatory environment" (World Bank, 1992).

The economy of Sri Lanka heavily depends on the garment manufacturing industry and mainly contributes to the national income, employability rate, foreign exchange, and direct investments, etc. Further as indirect sources, they contribute to maintaining the value of Rupee, Infrastructure which is developed through these Free Trade Zone. According to the Sri Lanka Export Development Board, in 2019 apparel exports were valued at US\$ 2,098.28 million. The major markets are the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Netherland, Canada, India, France, and Australia. Sri Lanka exports garments such as casual wear, fashion wear, intimate wear, swimwear, sportswear, uniform, and workwear, and children's wear. Further in Sri Lanka there are mainly 3 FTZs named Katunayake, Biyagama, and Koggala. Beyond these, there are 3 other mini export processing zones in Mirigama, Malwatte, and Wathupitiwala.

Problem statement

In the garment industry sector, the bottom layer of the operational work comprises of a majority of women workers due to the easy management of working conditions required by the female workers, less impact from union actions, less wage rates compared to male workers, and other reasons. According to the Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association, in Sri Lanka, approximately 300000 women are working in the garment sector resulting in an inflow of over \$502 billion in revenue in 2018. Thus, it is important to study whether the women workers who provide a major contribution to the Sri Lankan economy have social success in their lives.

Research Problem

Have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life?

Objectives

To identify whether the life of a garment factory woman is a social success or a failure.

Significance of the study

In Sri Lankan society, there is a perception that the women in garment factories do not have a successful social life. Society has a mindset that the women in garment factories come from rural villages intending to achieve success in their lives but end up with an unsuccessful life. Though the perception is that, it may be different from the real situation. So, the researcher intends to study whether the women in the garment factories have a successful or unsuccessful life concerning social factors. The study will uncover the experiences of how the garment workers start their work-life in FTZ moving from their rural villages, how they face difficulties by being a garment worker, how they process with their day-to-day work life, and how they perceive their success or failure in life. Thus, the study will contribute to confirming or rejecting the social perception of women machinists in garment factories in FTZ in Sri Lanka.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study explores the extent of success of women working in garment factories in Sri Lanka concerning social aspects of their life. The literature review covers the previous studies that had paid attention to garment workers and their lives.

Free Trade Zones

As to Hakimian (2011), FTZs are initiated with the main objective of attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and generating a diversified industrial base to promote manufactured exports and achieve long-term economic diversification and growth.

Katunayake FTZ

Katunayake FTZ manufactures products with the exclusive intention of exporting with the investments of the foreign parties facilitating a range of free trade incentives namely tax holidays, use of subsidized land and buildings, reduced customs duties, and unrestricted duty-free import of machinery and raw materials (Hewamanne, 2008).

Preference for Women as Workers

In the garment industry in Sri Lanka (70) % of the employees are women (Marcus). By referring to the views and findings one can get an idea of why the majority is women, (Barnes, Wendy D.; Kozar, Joy M.; 2018). Women can be hired at a lower amount of wage, cost-effective due to the lower level of educational qualifications. Women are often perceived to be more easily exploitable as compared to men, and it is precisely this segment of the female population receiving the most severe abuse and

discrimination in the apparel industry. (Ahmed (2004), viewed the favorable angle of these garments as follows. For those who came from poverty or were beset by a sudden catastrophe, the garment factory has increased their employment options. It is better than working as a domestic servant, prostitute, or home-based piece worker.

Personal Social Success and Unsuccess

According to Vykopalová (2013), the way of satisfying the basic existential and social needs and of setting the standard of living means the social success corresponds again with behaviour and depends on the economic level of that individual work as an essential socialization factor including elements of self-fulfilment and social interaction and is a means of obtaining social status, usually associated with some external and internal reward. The absence of interpersonal social contact generates feelings of anonymity, increasing the chances of criminal or delinquent behavior which leads to personal social success. Individuals face social needs satisfaction through social networks. A feeling of safety is closely connected with integration into society, a safe future, the absence of health risks, or basic subsistence needs. Lower standard of living, higher unemployment, and lower chance of social integration, indicates an increase in negative social phenomena while being socially unsuccessful. Also, Vykopalová (2013), mentioned negative economic situations bring along a series of social impacts such as unemployment, poverty, or deprivation which strengthens the incidence of crime, homelessness, and other negative social phenomena while being socially unsuccessful.

Starting and Adapting to Career Life

Literature represents many ways as to how these women started their career life as garment women machinists in FTS. The recruitment process is mainly through word of mouth. The use of formal ways of advertising in newspapers and posters is very little. Rather they pass the message to the existing workers and so they will inform their neighbors, friends, and sisters (Amin, Diamond, Newby, & Naved, 1998).

According to Schlegel (1995), starting a career life as a garment worker is the first step towards the creation of adolescence and this process contains activities such as the social and personal management of sexuality, the influence of peers, and social organizations, and the acquisition of work skills. However, O'Donnell & Williamson (2017), view how the leading firms in global supply chains use their dominant position to place pressure on suppliers in developing countries to deliver products under tight timeframes and at minimal costs. Such pressures are then passed onto labor and can result in low wages, work intensification, and health and safety problems. (Reinecke et al., 2018; Wright and Kaine, 2015).

Social Interaction

When focusing on how the women in garment factories interact with society, Amin et al (1998) elaborate that they enjoy a quality life after they migrate to cities. As to Hewamanne (2008), when the new workers interact with society, they can observe rapid changes in their social, moral, and cognitive circumstances and attitudes. Through exposure to new social network and new lifestyles, women gain self-confidence and a sense of modernity. (Standing, 1989). Amin et al (1998), also comment that within the society, they are with a good self-image, have a higher quality of life compared to others in the villages as a result of having a better income and being able to operate sophisticated machines that are of high technological nature.

Role in Family and Employment

Many scholars have commented on how these women interact with the family, in relation to contexts of many different countries. Concerning family power, the benefits of garment factory work for women in Bangladesh seem to be uneven at best. (Kibria, 1995). In the Sri Lankan context, most of the women in these garments take an exclusive effort to become a success in their lives with successful family life and these women workers try to make their children educated (Amin et al, 1998).

According to Barnes, Wendy D.; Kozar, Joy M.; (2018), getting pregnant is somewhat difficult when being a garment employer. Sadullah, M. Niaz; Fahema Talukder (2019), also able to conclude a recommendation within his writings on providing childcare facilities. The results suggest that measures that promote wellbeing practices improve provisions for childcare at the workplace and increase the share of women in a leadership position at the workplace which is likely to improve worker well-being further.

Health

When we focus on the health conditions of the women machinist workers in garment factories, they are suffering from damages to eyes, ears, and lungs, and various body pains. Though there are Industrial safety standards set by the Sri Lankan Board of Investment, they are not implemented (Hewamanne, 2008). Harrington (2004), has stated in his findings in the U.S., the reasons for these health issues are as follows. Complaints regarding conditions include restricted toilet access, poor ventilation, headaches, back pain, deteriorating vision, and being yelled at, publicly humiliated, or slapped. Health concerns stem from the repetitiveness and high speeds of the labor process, where each worker performs one small operation hundreds or thousands of times per day.

Sexual Aspects

When we focus on the sexual aspects of the women workers' lives, as to the research findings at Katunayake FTZ, there is a negative attitude in society for women machinists. Thus, FTZ's are called "ganika puraya" (city of prostitutes). The women faced sexual harassment and the formation of exploitative sexual relationships. (Hewamanne, 2008). There are situations where even single workers are concerned about pregnancy when they find themselves with irregular menstruation. This may be as a result of women workers working with young men for long hours without the supervision of their family members. (Hewamanne, 2008).

Garment workers get into the informal economy like the sex industry to earn their source of revenue. As to Harrington, (2004), even employees who are still working in the garments work extra hours to boost their incomes through the other informal sector. They do work as domestics in private homes, preparing goods that are sold from street stalls, and sex work. The incapability of other informal-sector jobs to fulfill women's requirements has resulted in the growth of the sex industry. The women do those informal earnings without even considering the limits of the law, and face harassment, evictions, and potential penalties.

Through the previous studies, there are findings for both ends in terms of success and failure in the life of women workers in garment factories. This study explores the lives of women in

Katunayake FTZ to understand 'whether the women machinists in garment factories achieved success in their life socially'.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter intends to address the research design and the ultimate procedures adopted in understating "have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life".

Research Design

Philosophical Foundation

This study investigates a qualitative approach that is associated with the philosophy of Interpretivism. Interpretivism is the philosophical assumption to be chosen, where the truth is believed to exist within the researcher in studying whether the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka have achieved social success in life, in the context of a Katunayake FTZ. Therefore, the social actors for this research project are the women machinists in Katunayake FTZ with different perceptions, attitudes, and values regarding their life. Hence the researcher plays the role of understanding the

subjective reality of the social actors in identifying whether the life of a garment factory woman is a social success or a failure.

Type of the Study

This research project adopts a descriptive research design where different views, perceptions, and ideas of the social factors are taken into consideration in concluding understanding have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life.

Research Approach

The study adopts an inductive approach as the research approach. In this place, it analyses whether the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka have achieved social success in life in the context of Katunayake FTZ.

Research Choice

This research uses more descriptive, in-depth, and unbiased data which have been collected adopting a qualitative approach to the research.

Research Strategy

The adopted strategy for the research project is the case study method, in which it collects information about a specific object, event, or activity, such as a business unit or organization (Saunders et al., 2009). This research project is of particular interest to the researcher to attain a rich interpretation of the context on having the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieve social success in life.

Research Setting

This research study is conducted in a natural environment to identify whether the life of a garment factory woman is a social success or a failure.

Time of the Study

In this research, it was decided to collect data only once in a period. Therefore, it is combined with the cross-sectional study.

Population and Sampling

Unit of Analysis

Here, the unit of analysis is individual participants. Individual women machinists in garment factories are the focus of this research.

Population

Thus the population of the research is all the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka. There are mainly 3 FTZ in Sri Lanka named Katunayake, Biyagama and Koggala and the study will be carried out in the Katunayake FTZ.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this research is convenience sampling which comes under the non-probability sampling where the sample is selected from the population which is convenient to the researcher. Those 12 women machinists will be selected from the Katunayake FTZ.

Collection of Data

Data Collection Methods

In this research context, the researcher has selected the interview method to identify the ideas and views of the women machinist, to get feedback, to build confidence and faith with the garment women to succeed in the research. Along with that, it will also have benefited in building a rapport with the participant and also help in getting real answers for the questions raised in the interview. As the study deals with knowing the ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and suggestions of the participants, building fewer formal relationships with garment women would be useful in collecting data.

Secondary data were collected through documentary analysis. As this topic was extensively discussed by different authors and researchers previously in the local context as well as international context, a worthy collection of data was gathered through research articles, journals, books, and other sources that were published on garment women's in zones.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The thematic analysis would be followed as the data analysis technique. This is comprehensively used in the qualitative approach to research in which it identifies and analyses themes and patterns within the collected data. This would be useful in the analysis of data because it enables the comparison and link between different concepts that will be revealed by the garment-women participants.

For the process of data analysis to explore 'have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life', data has been collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, participant facial and body expression observations, and documentary analysis. Under this section, the focus is drawn on discussing the interview process that is directed to collect reliable data and through those interviews, how the transcripts will have developed. Apart from the interview

process, attention was also drawn to discussing how the details about nonverbal expressions will be documented.

Reflexivity

The reflexivity statement declares the researcher's attempt to be as open as possible about the sources according to the view of the researcher who conducts the study. The researcher has conducted the research project on "Have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life in the context of the Free Trade Zones in Sri Lanka", by standing on the belief that the majority of the women in Katunayake FTZ does not have successful lives.

Ethical Consideration

Make certain that the privacy of the participants will be protected and highly respect the confidentiality of the information they provide. And make certain that the information they share will only be used for academic purposes. Participants have the right to decide whether they participate or not in the data collection. At the same time, the researcher is entitled to provide motives for conducting the research study.

Summary

This section provides a brief sight by summarizing the methodology fragment in the study. The study is conducted as a qualitative research using the collection of data by the interview method. The interview strategy was adopted through an inductive approach in a natural setting using a sample of 12 respondents who were selected from convenient sampling to represent the whole population.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter intends to present the data analysis of the issue on "Have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life". Women machinists in the Katunayake FTZ is the sample. This chapter gives a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from women machinists working at the Katunayake FTZ. Relevant data to carry out the research project were collected through semi-structured interviews and examination of secondary data sources. In conducting interviews, a pre-prepared interview guide was used. Thus, this chapter mainly covers the data analyzing process, under which the interview process is discussed and the process of developing transcripts, and the process of documentation of observations.

The Interview Process and the Development of Transcripts

Table 1 - Details of the participants.

	Renuka	Malkanthi	Dhewika	Shanika	Meena	Kanthi	Prasadi
From	Kurunagal	Balangod	Bandarawel	Kalutara	Kilinochc	Kurunegal	Mathale
	a	a	a		hi	a	
Age	30	33	20	30	30	33	30
Nationality	Sinhala	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Sinhala
Religion	Buddhist	Buddhist	Hindu	Buddhist	Hindu	Buddhist	Buddhis t
Duration of service	5 years	11 years	6 months	4 years	9 years	7 years	13 years
Married	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Divorced	Yes
Education up to	Ol	Not mentione d.	Grade 10	AL (3S)	OL	Grade 10	OL
Siblings	Younger Sister, elder brother	Younger Sister, younger brother	Elder sister , younger sister	Younger brother	Younger brother,3 elder brother, younger sister	Younger sister and	Elder sister , younger brother
Live with Boarding place	Alone	With younger sister	Alone	With husband	Alone	With daughter	With husband
Basic salary	23 000	21010	20 000	21000	20 800	24000	22 000

Working Shifts	6.30 a.m-6.00 pm	6.00 am - 2.00 pm	6.00 am -2.00 pm	6.00 am - 6.30 pm	7.30 am - 7.45 a.m-	7.30am-7.30pm
		2.00 pm – 10.00 pm	2.00 pm – 10.00 pm	2.00 pm – 10.00 pm	6.30 pm - 5.30 pm	

In the process of conducting interviews, the researcher visited their boarding places. Before the interviews, the researcher tried to build some sort of a rapport with the women machinists in these boarding places. This was done by politely talking with them highlighting that their privacy will not get damaged with the interviews. The researcher made sure that there is no considerable gap between them and her as being an undergraduate and women machinists as young women. The researcher rejected the chairs that were given sat on their beds and discussed with them. It was also mentioned that the participant could persist anonymous for the interview if they have any reluctance in revealing their name and that they had the possibility of suspending the interview any time they wanted. Further assurances about the confidentiality of data were given to the participant. At the same time, the consent to record the interview from all the participants was taken as it is not ethical to voice record their opinions without the consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted on the 10th of January Sunday, 2020 because on Sundays most of the women were available in boarding places.

Interviews from them were conducted in Sinhala which is their native and familiar language. Further, consent from all the participants was granted to voice record the interviews. Great support was given by all the participants by sharing their ideas. The interview guide was prepared as all the questions were raised according to the sequence in the interview guide that was concentrated on research objectives. (Appendix 1) Additional questions were raised to gain further insights by probing and to continue the flow of the interview. Out of the interview guide, some questions were asked so as to cross-check the answers given by the participants. Once interviews were concluded, by listening back to the voice records and referring to the points noted down, transcripts were developed in the Sinhala Language as all the interviews were conducted in Sinhala medium.

Use of Secondary Documents

In this research project journals, research papers, and other online data sources were considered and were used to ground theory in data.

Data Analysis Method

For the research project, semi-structured interviews, participant facial and body expression observations, and secondary documentary analysis were used as the data collection methods. To analyze the data that have been gathered through these means, thematic analysis was taken into concern.

As per Braun and Clake (2006), thematic analysis was conducted in six-phases. As the first step, the researcher became familiar with data by listening to the voice records over and over again and reading the transcripts developed. In this step, an initial idea of the overall data was developed along with the nonverbal expressions that were noted down. Then by going through the transcripts again, areas that were relevant to each research question were emphasized. As the interview guide was organized aligned with the research questions, segment-wise relevance to the research questions could be found. Those areas were emphasized separately to identify which segment directs to which research question.

Then as the next step, only search for themes started. Under this, segments under each research question were listed down and emphasized and then analyzed to find out themes through identifying what factors are repeatedly stated and observed. The researcher also tried to find out the patterns within the data collected from the women machinists and the facts collected from observing participants' facial and body expressions.

After identifying the themes and patterns, a review of each research question was done by identifying the sub-themes. While some major themes were identified, sub-themes could also be identified. In reviewing themes, some themes were removed from the lists as there was insufficient data to support the theme.

Then the themes were defined and meaningful names were given to both main themes and sub-themes as the final step of identifying the themes and patterns within the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and participant's nonverbal expressions.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Themes were listed following the research objective and research questions by analyzing the data, which were collected through semi-structured interviews and nonverbal expressions gathered through observations. This section comprises an initial commentary on the findings and a detailed discussion concerning the literature combining the researcher's view on the themes that emerged.

Under this section, each of these emerged themes is discussed with the use of quotations from the relevant research participants. Facts and ideas presented by them will be extracted to support the themes. According to the research objective, the life of the women machinists before they joined the garment industry was a life of caring for the family as a daughter, mother, and as a sibling, social

view on a woman machinist and social satisfaction gained by working as a woman machinist is the main discussion point.

The life of the women machinists before they joined the garment industry With the interviews it was noticed that beyond the financial difficulties, there are women who have faced many problems even such as terrorism and they have lost their family members. Meena has shared her ideas on how she spent her life before arriving at the Katunayake zone as below.

"One of our elder brothers (chutte aiya) died. My mother's mother died. Uncles died. Many people died. Now terrorism era is over. Now it's good."

(30-year-old Tamil woman from Kilinochchi)

With the interview with Dhewika, she was able to point out why she stopped education due to their financial difficulties though they were willing to engage in their education even further. She had the fullest intention to complete her studies, but she was unable to do so since she is the breadwinner of her family at a younger age.

"We are so poor. We had many difficulties. Mother and father were even unable to support. That's why. I had the desire to do the studies. I have looked for it several times. In the end, I gave up. Otherwise, I was planning to do O L s."

(20-year-old Tamil woman from Bandarawela)

Literature represents many ways as to how these women started their career life as garment women machinists in FTZs. The recruitment process is mainly through word of mouth. The use of formal ways of advertising in newspapers and posters is very low. Rather they pass the message to the existing workers and they will inform their neighbours, friends, and sisters (Amin et al,1998). Accordingly, women have come to FTZ with the help of neighbours and 2 women have come with their husbands. Beyond that, another way of admitting to the FTZ was revealed. Meena presents her ideas as below.

"We came here through the support of the army. Persons from the factory came to Kilinochchi. Personnel from the Human Resources section came there. I worked in XY. They came near our houses in Kilinochchi to select us."

(30-year-old Tamil woman from Kilinochchi)

According to her, HR departments of factories visit rural villages and they recruit employees. Meena further says that though the number of recruited employees was high she is the only one who has remained for 9 years at the garment factory.

Caring For The Family of A Women Machinist As A Daughter, Mother, And As A Sibling

Caring of Parents

Many scholars have commented on how women machinists take care of their parents. At the same time, it represents that most of these women send a considerable amount of their salary to their families.

According to the findings of Kibria (1995), since women machinists are taking care of their expenses, they have no obligation to give to their families. But according to some scholars, some women teenagers come exclusively to take care of their families.

Maduwanthi takes care of her parents. Her parents are poor villagers who engage in farming as their earning source. When she gets her salary on the 10th of each month, she sends money to her parents. She has built a house for the parents with the savings she had by working in the garment factory for 5 years. When we consider how often these participants go back to their families; they prefer to go to the village after they receive their salary on 10th of every month.

"Younger Sister and elder sister is there. Both of them are married.so I send money to them.10th is the day that we get our salary. When I get my salary

I visit home. On the salary week, Saturday and Sunday are holidays for us." "Father is doing farming. He is not well these days. Even for my mother, she has done an operation on her eye. My brother is with them. In a house near to mine. Mother and father live in the house built by me."

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Kurunagela)

However, in contrast to that Ahmed (2004), was able to bring into the discussion how employed teenagers maintain relationships with their families. According to him, the young unmarried girls from poor rural families who had left their villages had more control over money, like they are wealthy persons. They had exited the parent-child obligation characteristic of Bengali culture.

Kanthi had lost her mother at the age of 4 years when her mother delivered her younger sister. Thereafter her father married another woman and with that, she has faced many unfavourable conditions. Later her father had died. Due to the unfair actions and giving priority to the son when allocating property to the second marriage's son, she does not have contact with the brother and she has completely disregarded that family relationship.

Caring of Children

In the Sri Lankan context, most of the women in garment factories take an exclusive effort to become successful in their lives with successful family life and those women workers try to make their children educated (Amin et al, 1998).

Kantheni is a single parent and her husband left her with a one and half month baby. Now she looks after her daughter using her earnings. Due to the working shifts, she is missing her daughter. However being 12 years old, her daughter cooks her meals, goes to school and comes back by herself alone. Kantheni explains as follows.

"She cooks her meals alone. Some days if I get up in the morning, I cook. If not she cooks for herself. She knows. When she comes after school she cooks by herself and eats."

In contrast, Malkantheni has commented that her 13-year-old son is in a good school with her parents in the village. They educate the son by sending him for tuition classes. She is with the intention of going back to the village after resigning from the job when it is closer to her son's G.C.E. Ordinary Level examinations.

Caring of Siblings

Those who are from villages manage their wage by minimizing non-essential expenses and sending their wages to their siblings for educational purposes and their parents (Amin et al, 1998).

Maduwantheni has played a significant role by helping her siblings while building a house and becoming financially stable.

"I helped at her wedding financially. I have helped for most of the things, to build a house for her. To take electricity supply, and for other things, I have helped her."

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Kurunegala)

Shanika has also looked after her siblings. She even cares about her husband's siblings as she explains below.

"He has a younger sister and younger brother. Have an elder sister. I take care of them also. One of the sisters is small. Going to school. So I give school stationery items. Brother is doing a job. So I take care of both sides."

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Kaluthara)

Social View on A Woman Machinist

Attitudes of Villagers

Amin et al (1998), commented that within the society, they are with a good self-image, higher quality of life compared to others in the villages as a result of having a better income and being able to operate sophisticated machines that are of high technological nature.

Shanika also mentioned that when she went to the village she was warmly welcomed by the villagers. They come and talk with her and the villagers are with a positive attitude towards her.

“We have things as so. We go after a long time. Most of the time we visit in 2 to 3 months. Therefore, when everyone sees, they come and talk asking “when will you go back again, after a long time” and so on”.

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Kaluthara)

How Girls Get into the Wrong Path

There is a general view within the society that women machinists are not behaving well. There are situations where women have a concern about pregnancy when they are with irregular menstruation and it leads to creating stories. This may be as a result of women workers working with young men for long hours without the supervision of their family members. (Hewamanne, 2008).

Malkanathi has explained how these girls tend to go on the wrong path while working in the zone as follows.

“When working in a garment, society views it with a bad feeling. The view sight differs because of the reason that there are many incidents in the FTZ. Lots of small girls tend to do wrong things. Many girls go into the wrong path. 17, 18 years old girls get into the wrong path. Without knowing anything they develop affairs with married men even with children. They waste their life. Within the factory, many such cases happen. (She gets into thinking and waits a while with silence and again started speaking in a sad mood) as soon as they get into the factory, they find a boyfriend. Then everything happens and the girl resigns from the factory. Then we get to know that the boy is previously married. That's how most of the things get ended up.”

(33-year-old Sinhala woman from Balangoda with a 13-year-old son)

Educational Sessions Conducted for Women Machinists by the Feminists' Activists

The researcher has found out from the interviews that there are educational sessions for the newly recruited women sponsored by the factories to prevent them from going through the wrong path.

According to Hewamanne (2008), she speaks that feminists' activists conduct workshops for women workers when they time that those feminists' activists don't have work and when they are free. Garment women called them "tharabaru ganu".

Shanika views these sessions as effective efforts with her experiences as follows.

"Yes, there are many programs. Have many things. I think that is why there is a reduction in the wrong view among society. Now 90% of the time is for the good side. When new girls come to the factory they conduct those programs and they teach how the things are happening in the society."

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Kaluthara)

At the same time, Prasadi views this in a more moderate viewpoint and she tells that though there are programs such as this, the ones who used to go on the wrong path can't be stopped through these sessions as follows.

"Yes, they do conduct. But not monthly. It's like 2 sessions per year, however, though the ones who listen to those sessions will listen. But others will go in the wrong path."

(30-year-old Sinhala women from Mathale)

Social Satisfaction gained by Working as a Woman Machinist

Ahmed (2004), found that for those who came from poverty or were beset by a sudden catastrophe, the garment factory has increased their employment options. It is better than working as a domestic servant, prostitute, or home-based worker. A similar view was presented by Prasadi.

"When the time I came here I was not married, but I had a relationship. We are so poor. Mother and father did daily earning jobs to feed us. Not only me, but even my brother is also there. I developed a situation for them to have a better life. At the same time, I made my gold jewellery and bought furniture. And with my husband, we both got together and put up a house. Have done many things."

(30-year-old Sinhala woman from Mathale)

According to these analyses upon different themes, some responses are confirming the existing literature while some of the responses are disagreeing with the existing literature.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter contains the conclusion on "Have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life: concerning the context of Katunayaka Free Trade Zone. Accordingly, this chapter begins with the research problem, research objectives, the findings theoretical contribution and limitations of the study, and areas for future research.

Katunayaka Free Trade Zone was identified as the case site for research as the researcher found a problem considering the social success in the lives of the women machinists in garment factories. Thus, the interest was drawn to focusing on the life of the women machinists before they joined the garment industry, caring for the family by a women machinist as a daughter, mother, and as a sibling, social view on a woman machinist and social satisfaction gained by working as a woman machinist followed by research objective to identify whether the life of a garment factory woman is a social success or a failure.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at boarding places in Katunayake FTZ, and transcripts were developed. Further, a field notebook was maintained to take down notes on nonverbal expressions and important facts. All the gathered data were analyzed coded and thematically analysed and through that several themes emerged and they were discussed with the use of relevant theoretical underpinnings in the context of Katunayaka FTZ. Through the themes, multiple findings have emerged as the output of the research study.

Research Questions and Major Findings

Have the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka achieved social success in life in the context of Katunayaka FTZ; in answering this question, the analysis brought forward the following major findings.

The Life of the Women Machinists Before They Joined The Garment Industry

Most of the women machinists were faced with many difficulties with their families before they arrived at the industry zone. Some women machinists have lost their parents and some women looked after their children alone due to their husband's departure. When considering the level of education these women have completed grade 10 at school and they have stopped further education due to financial difficulties. Most of the women except for one woman have come to the FTZ with a known relationship. These known parties are neighbors of these women, friends, or elders living in their villages.

The recruitment process is mainly through word of mouth. The use of formal way procedure of advertising in newspapers and posters lies at a lower level. Rather they pass the message to the existing workers and they inform their neighbors, friends, and sisters (Amin et al, 1998).

The researcher has noticed another way that these women are made aware of the zone. According to Meena HR departments of factories are visiting rural villages and they recruit employees. Meena further says that though the number of recruited employees was high she is the only one who has remained for 9 years at the garment factory.

Caring For The Family Of a Woman Machinist As A Daughter, Mother, and As A Sibling

Apart from the woman who has lost her parents, all the rest send money to their parents. Most of the time this amount is more than half of the salary of the women. According to the findings of Kibria (1995), as a woman machinist is bearing her expenses, she has no obligation to provide for her family. Disagreeing with this view, all the women machinists send money to their parents. Some women send money to their siblings who are engaged in school education. On the 10th of each month, they receive their salary, and on the same day, they send money to their families. In addition to that, some women machinists visit their families once a month to be with their parents and siblings. Some of the factories give a holiday on the day after the 10th of every month thus women visit their families. Beyond that, there is a woman machinist who has built houses on their own and looked after their parents allowing them to live in those houses. The above findings prove that women machinists in garment factories in the Katunayake FTZ in Sri Lanka have achieved success in family life which leads to social success.

Social View on A Women Machinist

The women machinists have maintained a good relationship with the people in their villages. Amin et al (1998), commented that within the society, they are with a good self-image, higher quality of life compared to others in the villages as a result of having a better income and being able to operate sophisticated machines that are in high technological nature. Agreeing with the above researchers, most of the women machinists mentioned that they are warmly welcomed by their villagers when they visit their families.

In the modern context, as to the participants, the social view on the women machinist is a good one and this disagrees with the findings of Hewamanne. At the same time, none of the participants knows about women who are engaged within the sex industry in the zone as an income-earning source. These findings support the point that there is a positive social view on women machinists in society, they have achieved social success. These findings prove that women machinists have achieved social success.

Satisfaction for A Women Machinist as a Garment Woman

Most of the participants were happy with their occupation. Some women have a view that all the jobs are equal and the conditions and allowances are the same with every job. In comparing with government jobs, the only difference is that government jobs contain a pension scheme and garment jobs contain a fund. But few of the employees like to shift for another job if they get a better salary. Other than that they don't have any reason to shift to another job upon the working conditions and they are fully satisfied with the current job.

In the Sri Lankan context, most of the women in these garments take an exclusive effort to become successful in their lives with successful family life and those women workers try to make their

children educated (Amin et al, 1998). Agreeing with this literature women machinists take their best effort to make their children well educated. Sometimes these women are single as their husbands have left them but they are with great courage to win their life by giving a better life to their children.

With the above findings, it can be concluded that women machinists in garment factories in the Katunayake FTZ in Sri Lanka have achieved social success in life.

Contribution to Existing Knowledge

This study was conducted to discuss the social success in the life of the women machinists in garment factories in Sri Lanka and this section discusses the contribution made by the study to the existing literature.

Amin et al (1998) had discussed in their literature that the recruitment process in the garment factories is mainly through word of mouth. They pass the message to the existing workers and so they will inform their neighbours, friends, and sisters. The use of formal ways of advertising in newspapers and posters is very little. Agreeing with existing literature, four participants have come to factories in the Free Trade Zone with the help of neighbours and two women have come with their husbands. However, a novel finding is that the Human Resource departments of the factories are visiting rural villages and they recruit employees.

At the same time, Amin et al (1998) had commented that within the society, women machinists are with a good self-image, higher quality of life compared to others in the villages as a result of having a better income and being able to operate sophisticated machines that are high in technological nature. Agreeing with this view according to the findings, the women machinists have been welcomed by the villagers on their return home. Agreeing with research findings Standing (1999) also gives a positive view on this social interaction. Schlegel (1995) has mentioned that starting career life as a garment worker is the first step towards the creation of adolescence and this process contains activities such as the social and personal management of sexuality, the influence of peers, and social organizations, and the acquisition of work skills.

Confirming this literature, the researcher found that the participants get adapted to the new environment without much of a delay.

As to the findings of Horgan (2001), it says that without considering the stage of their pregnancies, women are required to work similar hours as other women workers, including periods of compulsory overtime. In contrast, the research findings highlight that after 7 months of pregnancy women are not given heavy work, they are not given to sew, but they have to do minor work such as cutting the extra threads in the final products. Thus this research contributes to the existing literature with a novel finding.

Limitations of the Study

This research study has several limitations. One such limitation is that when conducting the interviews women might have revealed only part of their stories. Another limitation is it has 12 women, machinists. Also, the time available for conducting the research was a limitation since the time was restricted to one academic semester which lasts for only 3 months. The researcher may not have found certain relevant literature and that too is a limitation of my study.

Areas for Further Research Work

This research intended to study the social success of women in garment factories in Sri

Lankan FTZ's; the case study of Katunayake FTZ. Expanding the research to other FTZ's in Sri Lanka can be one of the future research. Also studying the lives of women in garment factories situation outside FTZ's is another possible study.

Further, the researcher suggest carrying out researches in an in-depth manner to understand the level of social success of women machinists in the garment industry in Sri Lanka.

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