

UGC Sponsored National Seminar on “Unorganized Sector Workers”

Report

The inaugural function of UGC sponsored national Seminar on “Unorganized sector workers” organized by the Department of Economics, Bharathidasan University took place on 17.02.2015 at 10.30 a.m. in the BUTP Auditorium, located at University’s Khajamalai Campus. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Martin Patrick, Professor and Director, Rural Academy for Management Studies, Ernakulam, Kerala. In his address he spoke on the topic, “Unorganised Sector Workers: An Overview” and brought to light the other key issues revolving around the seminar themes, such as conceptual issues in the unorganized sector, role of unorganized sector, problems and challenges of unorganized sector, etc. On the basis of data available with him he told that in India, more than 90 per cent of workforce and about 50 per cent of the national product are accounted for by the informal economy. Different criterion used to demarcate organized and unorganized sectors were discussed by him.

It was discussed that there is no reliable agency and lack of reliable statistics on the size, distribution and economic contribution of this sector which has been a major constraint in providing a realistic understanding of the significance of the Indian economy, leading to its neglect in development planning.

The security of workers in the sector was discussed as it is becoming a sensitive issue in the new era where the employees with informal jobs generally do not enjoy employment security (no protection against arbitrary dismissal) work security (no protection against accidents and illness at the work place) and social security (maternity and health care benefits, pension, etc.) and therefore any one or more of these characteristics can be used for identifying informal employment. According to estimates of 2004-05, the share of Informal Sector Workers by type of sectors is highest in agriculture which is around 97.65 per cent, while the total share of Informal Sector Workers by type of sectors is 86.32 per cent in reference year.

He discussed on key problems of the unorganized workers like unorganized workers in organized sector and their sufferings and working conditions. In his speech he classified them on the basis of wage and self-employed workers. This was further classified into regular and

casual workers. They are all suffering from especially on the following grounds which were discussed in the seminar.

- Low wage
- Poor working conditions
- Casualization
- Contract nature of work.

The special issue discussed by him was on Gender discrimination where he discussed on feminization and other related sensitive issues which are predominant in the current social setup. Some of the important points of this issue are as follows:

- Women workers in the unorganized sector, are predominantly concentrated in manufacturing, about 48 per cent.
- Among the unorganized workers in the organized sector, both men and women are concentrated in the manufacturing sector.

In the seminar three technical sessions were conducted where 62 papers were presented. At BUTP auditorium, the first technical session was held between 11:30 am and 01:00 pm. The session was chaired by Dr. Martin Patrick. Every paper presenter was given a time of 10 minutes.

The important topics discussed were, “Human rights of Unorganised Workers with Special Reference to Interstate Migrant Workers”, “The Role of Women Empowerment in Unorganised Sector: A Special Reference to Garments Factory Workers in Tumkur”, “Women Workers in Unorganised Sector in Karnataka: A Special Reference to Bangalore City”. Among these papers most important dimensions of unorganized sector were discussed.

After lunch break technical session III and IV were conducted at BUTP auditorium and the Department of Economics simultaneously between 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. Technical Session III was Chaired by Dr. S.Iyyampallai, Professor of Economics and Chair of School of Economics and Commerce, Bharathidasan University. Technical Session IV was Chaired by Dr. K. Prakasam, Assistant Professor of Economics, Annamalai University. The important topics

presented were, “An unorganized sector: Gender Inequality and Discrimination - A Special Reference to Rural Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India”, “A Study of Earnings of Workers in Urban Unorganised Sector in Tiruchirappalli City” and “Quality of Employment and Status of Rural Poor under MGNREGP in Tamil Nadu with Special Reference to Villupuram and Salem districts”. Most important dimensions were discussed in these papers.

The valedictory function started around 4.00 pm and ended by 5.00 pm Dr. R. Mangaleswaran, Syndicate Member, Bharathidasan University, delivered the Valedictory Address. He brought to light very pertinent issues regarding the unorganised workers like discrimination based on gender, corruption in government, etc. The overall seminar concept and feedback were discussed and finalized.

Organising Secretary of the Seminar, Dr. N. Prasanna Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Bharathidasan University, proposed the Vote of Thanks and reported that overall, around 65 research papers were presented during the one day seminar including the special addresses related to the unorganized sector workers which was the main objective of this seminar. The selected papers would be published in an edited book with ISBN and important suggestions arrived at will also be included in the book.