

# PROBLEMS OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AT TIRUPATTUR

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## Abstract

The construction industry is the second largest absorber of the bulk of the Indian labour force in the unorganized sector. Construction is one of the principal industries in all countries. Almost all development projects and programmes in the field of health, education, food, production and transport, require construction work and in many cases. The present study reveals the physical problems, psychological problems, economic problems, educational level, work environment, habits and welfare measures of the construction workers. The outcome of this research will be useful for Social Workers, General Public, Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Policy Makers.

**Keyword:** Problems of Construction labours, Problems of Unorganized labours, etc.,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Construction worker in our country is still unorganized, socially, economically, educationally backward and under employed. Construction worker means workers who are involving in the process of construction. Different group of workers do different types of works in the construction site. The present study focus on a group of workers who work with the mixture (Concrete) of cement, sand, water and granite metals to build moldings to houses, buildings, bridges, etc., This category of construction worker suffers more than other construction workers. Because there is no regulated time for work, every day the work place is changing, irregular leisure time, insufficient employment, unregulated wages, etc., the study covers such construction workers and their physical, psychological, economic problems and welfare measurers.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Construction is one of the principal industries in all countries. It is an industry that has its own unique characteristics, and contributes almost all developmental programmes. Almost all development projects and programmes in the field of health, education, food production and transport, require construction work and in many cases, this component of the development process is by far the costliest. Hence, it is true to say that construction industry underpins development and provides the brick and mortar of progress (Vaijayanta, 1998).

Construction workers may be broadly classified as skilled and unskilled. Usually, couples are found to be working on the same worksite. Most of the workers in his sector are employed on a casual basis. Unstable employment/earnings and shifting of workplaces are the basic characteristics of work for construction workers. Employment in construction is usually interspersed with periods of unemployment in construction is usually interspersed with periods of unemployment of varying duration, mainly due to

fluctuating requirements of labour force on each worksite. The nature of work is such that there are no holidays. Surveys reveal that female workers do not in general get minimum wages. Though skilled workers secure jobs directly from employers, unskilled workers by and large, are engaged through intermediaries who introduce the workers to contractors on a commission basis. The payment of wages is routed through the intermediaries who usually enroll workers by offering loans. These loans are then recovered by manipulating the wages of the workers, with the result that the worker hardly gets out of the clutches of the intermediaries (Ministry of Labour, 2002).

The construction workers constitute the second largest category of workers in the unorganized sector. There are more than 17.62 million building and other construction workers in India as per estimates of National Sample Survey. A large number of multi-national and local company employing lakhs of workers in construction and allied activities like white washing, painting, plumbing and fixing of electrical fixtures (Planning Commission, 2002).

Construction workers are coming under the classification of unorganized sector. The unorganised sector workers suffer from cycles of excessive seasonality of employment, no formal employer-employee relationship and lack of social security protection. Several legislations are directly or indirectly applicable to the workers in the unorganised sector. The Government has launched Schemes for people living below or marginally above the poverty line, which also include the workers in the unorganised sector (Ministry of Labour, 2008).

The living conditions of construction workers in our country are very poor and inhuman as they are living in Kuchha and Semi-Pucca houses without any proper arrangements of lighting in night. These workers are living either in their own houses or in the huts, jhuggies (the labour colonies on worksites were a series of huts called jhuggis) or houses provided to them by their employers. These huts or houses are also not having the doors to protect the workers. The small pieces of waste material of building are put up on the doors of these huts or jhuggies of the construction labourers. These workers are facing numerous problems in their day to day life. For instances: there are no proper arrangements for waste disposal system, sewerage supply, environmental pollution, entertainment and recreation facilities, sickness facilities, non-availability of health, medical, education institutions, lack of good quality of food and nutritional level (Abdul Majid, 2000).

Daily wages differ according to status of the workers and work efficiency. Daily wages is highly associated with skill status. Per day net average earnings of Construction Workers is very minimum only. Majority of the Construction Workers are migratory in nature and they have to depend on the 'Mesthiri' or labour agents to confirm their job availability and for that they have to pay. As they need to remit money to their native places for survival they do not bargain effectively for higher wages rather they are more concerned to get their jobs regularly (Nirupam Gope & Bagchi 2008).

Labour laws of the construction industry are at par with other categories of labour employed in various industry groups. However some laws are directly relevance to construction labour, namely

- Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition ) Act, 1970
- Inter-State Migrant Labour (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979

- Building and Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996
- Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996.

There are many witnesses which express that the problem is not inadequate laws, but that laws are not implemented in the construction industry (Vaijayanta, 1998).

Though the construction workers have given a lot of protection and rights, but in the real life they are facing difficulties in meeting basic needs and guidance. From the review of literature the researcher is able to collect many facts regarding the problems of the workers. The existing literatures helps the researcher to study about the problems related to health, economic, education, work environment, working conditions and so on.

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

**General Objective:** To study the problems of Construction Workers at Tirupattur

#### Specific Objectives

- To study the physical problems of construction workers
- To study the psychological problems of construction workers
- To study the economical problems of construction workers

#### Methodology

This particular study follows the quantitative methods and descriptive design. An interview schedule was prepared based on the objectives of the study. Direct personal interview technique is used to collect data from the construction workers. Field of the study is Tirupattur. The collected data were primary and field source. Data were collected from hundred respondents who have been identified by convenient sampling technique. Data collection is taken place for four days which is from 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

#### Main Findings

Construction industry is not providing the basic facilities and safety measures to the workers in the site. Particularly, the group of workers working with the mixture (Concrete) of sand, cement, water and granite metals to build moldings to buildings, houses, bridges, etc., the construction workers face problem in every day with regarding to physique, mind and economics. The main findings are given below.

- 70.0 percent of the construction workers are living at town (Urban)
- 82 percent of the construction workers get employment two to four days in a week.
  - Average minimum working hours in a day is 4.91 hours
  - Average maximum working hours in a day is 11.12 hours

- 28 percent of the construction workers are getting less than ½ an hour for rest during the work which includes lunch time also
- 62 percent of the construction workers never get lunch during the work, but they will be paid Rs. 50 – Rs.60 for lunch which will be added with the wage.
- 74 percent of the construction workers are affected physically due to the nature of the work.
  - 60 percent of the workers suffer due to body pain
  - 46 percent of the workers suffer due to chest pain
  - 32 percent of the workers suffer due to injury
  - 28 percent of the workers suffer due to eye problem
  - 18 percent of the workers suffer due to skin problem
- 52 percent of the construction workers have unfavorable habits such as drinking (26%), Smoking (32%), Pan Consuming (12%), Tobacco consuming (10%), Betel leaves chewing (4%)
- 86 percent of the population is suffering from the psychological problem due to the nature of the work. Lack of work availability (54%), height of the work place (40%), change of work time every day (30%), change of work place, every day (26%), lack of toilet facilities (6%), work under the compulsion (18%), lack of transport facilities (10%)
- 42 percent of the workers are living at the hut house
- Average minimum wage of the workers is Rs.145/-
- Average maximum wage of the workers is Rs.250/-
- 64 percent of the workers have no saving habit
- 84 percent of the workers have loans in which 80 percent of the workers have loan from private sector
  - 44 percent of the workers have taken loan to meet the daily needs of the family
  - 60 percent of the workers pay more than Rs.8 as interest for their loan (for per month for per hundred)
- 80 percent of the workers have not registered them in the Tamilnadu Construction Workers Welfare Board
- 94 percent of the workers do not aware about Tamilnadu Construction Workers Welfare Board

## CONCLUSION

Moreover, the unorganized labour class is being neglected from all concerns not only by the governments but the Non-Governmental Organizations also such as they are taking into consideration their actual requirements in daily life. The construction workers need to be brought out from helplessness. Several issues like health, education, economic, work environment and skill upgradation need to be tackled as welfare activities. The laws and the so-called development programmes launched by the government have not achieved the desired success to ameliorate the position of the construction workers. Majority of construction workers are leading their life below poverty line due to various causes. Struggles for better wages, and better working conditions cannot yield result only by formatting of trade unions or cooperatives. Thus viable, workable solutions must be evolved. Non-Governmental Organisations can play an active role in developing demonstrative model of intervention which can be adopted by the governmental agencies and the construction employers.

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