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ISSUES OF UNORGANIZED WOMEN LABOURERS WITH REFERENCE TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN ARUPPUKOTTAI TALUK

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Abstract

After agriculture, construction is the second largest industry in India. Construction industry is the backbone of a country as it creates the infrastructure necessary for economic and industrial growth. In India, it employs large number of skilled, semiskilled as well as unskilled workforce due to its huge demand. The workforce employed in the construction industry has to face several hardships at the work since it is one of the hazardous occupations. Due to the lack of alternatives the women from lower socio-economic backgrounds having a low level of education and illiteracy, are forced to work in the unorganized sector. Nowadays, women's participation in the unorganized sector in increasing domestic work, agriculture work, street vending and construction work etc. Even though the women workers work for more hours, they are paid very less. It affects their personal and social life. Data was collected from to construction workers with special reference to Aruppukottai Taluk, Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu.

Key Words: Unorganized Sector, Problems of Women Labours, Construction Industry, Low Wages, Working hours, Social life, employment.

I. INTRODUCTION

A construction sector refers to a part of the construction industry. This industry involves building, repairing and maintaining infrastructure and real estate projects. This includes residential, commercial or industrial construction along with civil engineering projects such as bridges, roads and dams. The industry encompasses a wide range of activities, including design, planning, management, financing, contracting and maintaining construction projects. The construction industry directly impacts employment and economic growth, as it helps create jobs and generate revenue for many other industries.

While the industry holds vital importance for employment and economic growth, it is also very vulnerable to fluctuations as the demand for construction has a close relationship with macroeconomic conditions. Recently, technological advancements and an increasing focus on

sustainability have also had a significant impact on the industry, leading to the development of new construction practices and materials. The construction industry remains vital for the growth and progress of modern societies.

Unorganized sector

The unorganized sector, also known as the informal sector, refers to economic activities that are not registered or regulated by the government. This sector operates outside the formal economy and is characterized by a lack of formalization, regulation, and social protection.

Unorganized sector covers 92% of the total work force in India. About 50% of the construction industrial workers belonged to unorganized sector. Consisting of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale or production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers.

Amongst the characteristic features of this sector are ease of entry, smaller scale of operation, local ownership, uncertain legal status, labour - intensive and operating using lower technology based methods, flexible pricing, less sophisticated packing, absence of a brand name, unavailability of goods storage facilities and an effective distribution networks, inadequate access to government schemes, finance and government aid, lower entry barriers for employees, a higher proportion of migrants with a lower rate of compensation. Employees of enterprises belonging to the unorganized sector have lower job security and poorer chances of growth, and no leave or paid holidays, they have lower protection against employers indulging in unfair or legal practices.

Overview of Construction Sector in India

The construction industry in India is one of the largest and fastest -growing sectors, contributing significantly to the country's GDP.

Key Segments

1. **Residential Construction:** Includes apartments, houses, and villas.
2. **Commercial Construction:** Includes offices, retail spaces, and hotels.
3. **Infrastructure Construction:** Includes roads, highways, bridges, airports, and ports.
4. **Industrial Construction:** Includes factories, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities.

Growth Drivers

1. **Urbanization:** Increasing demand for housing and infrastructure in urban areas.
2. **Government Initiatives:** Investments in infrastructure development, such as Smart Cities Mission and Bharatmala pariyojana.
3. **Economic Growth:** Growing economy and increasing disposable incomes driving demand for residential and commercial spaces.

Challenges

1. **Regulatory Framework:** Complex and time-consuming regulatory processes.
2. **Labor Shortages:** Shortage of skilled labor, leading to increased costs and project delays.
3. **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Inadequate infrastructure, such as transportation and logistics, hindering construction activities.

Opportunities

1. **Affordable Housing:** Growing demand for affordable housing, driven by government initiatives and increasing urbanization.
2. **Sustainable Construction:** Increasing focus on sustainable and green construction practices, driven by government regulations and consumer demand.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Government investments in infrastructure development, such as roads, highways, and airports.

Key Players

1. **Larsen and Toubro (L&T):** One of India's largest construction companies, with a diverse portfolio of projects.

2. **DLF Limited:** A leading real estate developer, with a focus on residential and commercial projects.
3. **Hindustan Construction Company (HCC):** A major construction company, with expertise in infrastructure and industrial projects.

Women workers

Women's work is a field of labour assumed to be solely the realm of women and associated with specific stereotypical jobs considered as uniquely feminine or domestic duties throughout history. It is most commonly used in reference to the unpaid labor typically performed by that of a mother or wife to upkeep the home and children. Women's work is generally unpaid or paid less than "men's work" and is not as highly valued as "men's work". Much of women's work is not included in official statistics on labour, making much of the work that women typically do virtually invisible.

In recently released economic survey for FY 2023-24, women's participation in India's labour force has surged dramatically, reflected a significant leap in gender equality and empowerment. The female labour force participation rate (LFPR) soared to 37% in 2022-23, up from a mere 23.3% in 2017-18 – an impressive shift largely driven by rural women, who dominate in agriculture-related roles.

Issues of Women Construction Workers

1. Construction wage discrimination is one of the most major problems for women construction workers. They have been considered as the weaker sex and so the wage rate is less than men.
2. Women are engaged in a lesser number of activities and most of them are engaged in unskilled works. Given an increasing number of women construction workers in the market, they face employment scarcity. The livelihood insecurity is even Andhra University, Visakhapatnam 87 more in the case of aged women. The contractor (or) broker usually prefers younger construction women workers not only for their physical fitness but also has a motive for sexual harassment.
3. Women construction workers face sexual abuse from contractors, brokers, and co-workers. The take chance of the helpless situation of the women in getting a daily construction work or threatening wage deduction. Women thus have not only livelihood insecurity but also sexual harassment. Due to this insecurity women construction workers prefer to work in groups which in turn magnifies the problem of work scarcity. Other than sexual abuse, women construction workers also have to bear with misbehavior and other abuses from the contractors.
4. The women have to do additional activities other than the work described in the case of household workers. But for the additional works she performs, she does not enjoy any construction wage benefits. On the other hand, it becomes a burden for her as she is investing time and energy.

II. Review of literature:

A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research.

Kalpna devi and Kiran (2013), Construction industry provides job opportunity to large number of skilled as well as unskilled workforce. The workforces employed in the industry have to face several difficulties at the work place. Several issues related to health, job stress, and injuries at work place are the major concern of the research among researchers. The present study is review of past research work related to the women work force employed in construction industry in India. The major focus of the study is to identify the key factors related to the status of female worker in the industry. Women work as unskilled labour and face several other difficulties in comparison to males. Sexual harassment, gender biasness, wage discrimination are the major factor due to which the working environment becomes difficult for them in the industry and women are remains at same level of skill even after working few numbers of years.

Azadeh Barati et al, India is a traditional country and there is diversity in religions, culture and customs. Role of the women in India mostly is household and limited to domestic issues. In some

cases, women can find employment as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. The present study investigated to identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges & problems faced by women workers. Further the study try to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women.

Devi et al (2015) The authors tried to judge the working conditions of the people working in various organizations. Under present globalized working environment, it is important to make the employees The present study is a critical examination of the selected cases exist in the literature on the musculoskeletal disorders among the workers performing similar types of works in different industry, and answer the question level of musculoskeletal disorders among the workers engaged in these industries are same or not.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to assess the level of issues faced by the women construction labours with special reference to Aruppukottai Taluk, Virudhunagar District in Tamil Nadu.

B. Objectives

To recognize the problems faced women construction workers in the study area.

To analyze the socio-economic status of women construction workers in the study area.

C. Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive design for this study. The researcher is interested in studying about women construction Labours. The research purpose is to describe the issues faced by the women construction workers. The Universe for this research was taken from the Aruppukottai Taluk, Virudhunagar District in Tamil Nadu. In this study the researcher adopted the purposive sampling method. The Universe is 60. The total Universe was taken for the research data collection as respondents. The researcher has collected data by well-structured interview schedule.

Table 1: Problems faced Women Construction Workers

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Health Issues		
Urinary infection	10	16.67%
Respiration	6	10%
Skin disease	4	6.67%
Illiteracy	15	25%
Low wages	11	18.33%
Old age	5	8.33%
Exploitation	9	15%
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data

Among 20 Construction workers, 16.67% have urinary infection, 10% have respiration problems and 6.67% have a skin disease. 25% of women workers are illiterate. Maximum number of women construction workers 18.33% get low wages as compared to unskilled men workers. About their low wages, literacy level and exploitation incidents which can be attributed to their poor mental and physical health and family problems altogether.

Table 2: Socio-economic status of women construction workers (N-60)

S. No	Socio – Economic Conditions		
	VARIABLES	No. of Respondents (N=60)	Percentage
1.	Age		-100%
	18-23	20	33.33
	24-29	22	36.66
	30-35	10	16.66
	36-41	5	8.33
	Above 42	3	5
2.	Religion		
	Hindu	30	50
	Muslim	12	20

	Christians	15	30
3.	Marital Status		
	Unmarried	3	5
	Married	50	83.33
	Widowed	7	11.66
4.	Educational Qualification		
	Illiterate	35	58.33
	Primary	20	33.33
	Secondary	5	8.33
5.	Income (monthly)		
	1000-2000	18	30
	2001-4000	17	28.33
	Above 4000	25	41.66
6.	Type of family		
	Nuclear family	45	75
	Joint family	15	25

Source: Primary Data

In the current study the concentration of the women workers was in the age group of 24-29 years. Majority of respondent the Hindu women workers (50%) (Muslim 20%) (Christians 30%). In the study 83.33% percent of women workers were married. 5% of at unmarried and then 11.66% widow. When the educational status of the respondents is analyzed, it is noted that out of 60 respondents. It is 33.33% respondents are educated primary level and the remaining 8.33% of respondents are categorized into secondary level and Majority of the 58.33% of respondent are illiterate. It is noted that 60 respondents having family income of Rs.1,000 to 2,000/- (30%), Rs.2,001 to 4,000/- (28.33%), above Rs.4,000/- (41.66%). With regard to the two types of the family, most of the respondents are living in nuclear family (75%) and (25%) are joint families in nature.

Conclusion

The Indian Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity related to work, equal rights for livelihood, equal pay for equal work etc., but these are not effectively implemented. The unorganized sector is fast expanding while the organized sector is shrinking. Women in the construction sector is not easy, within the industry they have to face several adverse situations such as sexual harassment, wage discriminations, injuries and deceases are the major factors. Although perceived as a male-dominated industry, a recent ministry of labour and employment data shows that 49% of construction workers are women. The construction industry in India is expected to continue growth, driven by government initiatives, urbanization, and economic growth. However, the industry will need to address challenges such as regulatory frameworks, labor shortages, and infrastructure deficiencies to achieve its full potential.

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