

A Study On Awareness Of Construction Labour With Reference To Social Safety

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Abstract

Introduction: "Familiarity is the norm now, rather than an exception, in the construction industry during the developing world". The major source of employment in India is in the construction industry. About 45 million of people are working.

Objectives: The arrival of industrialization and present developments, the workers involved in construction industry are sufferers of different occupational complaints and psychosocial stresses, the wages are not enough to meet this contingences, against the government providing several social safety schemes to meet contingences and welfare of labour, but in training these schemes are not access to bulk of labours.

Methods and Statical analysis: In contradiction of this the researcher made an effort to identify the perception of construction labour on availability, lags in implementation of various social safety schemes. To test this, opinion survey will be conducted with sample size of 90 in Kanchipuram district of Tamilnadu. The data will be analyzed with the help of statistical package for social knowledges and the results will be offered.

Findings: The practical problems in implementation of social safety will be given importance and expressive measure will be recommended for effective functioning of social safety for construction workers.

Key Words: construction industry, social safety, Informality, contingences.

1.Introduction

The Indian Economy is categorized by the existence of an enormous majority of informal or unorganized labour employment. But satirically workers of this sector are amongst the poorest and most unprotected section of the society. They work lengthy hours for their low wages. They are engaged in several economic activities for existence. Most of them have no fixed employer- employee relationship. They do not have access to work and income safety, food safety and have no basic social safety like, health care, child care, insurance and pension, and they do not receive equal payment. According to the National Council for Enterprises in Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) over 70% of workers live on Rs.400/- per day. To talk the problems of these workers in an orderly manner Parliament has passed legislation, called, Social Safety for Unorganized Workers Act, 2008. But the problem is that more than five years since then have passed but the Central Government has not expressed and informed a minimum social safety package for all workers in the unorganized sector.

1.1 Unorganized Labour

The first National Commission on Labour (1966-69) has defined unorganised labour as those who have not been able to arrange themselves in chase of common objectives on account of constraints like casual nature of employment, unawareness and illiteracy, small and distributed scope of formations and the position of power trained over them by employers because of the nature of the industry.

1.2 Social Safety

Social safety, according to Lord Beveridge, "is an attack on five giants, viz., want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness." The concept of social safety is basically associated to the high principles of human dignity and social justice. In a current welfare state wide-ranging social safety schemes take care of persons from "womb to tomb". It is one of the pillars on which the structure of the welfare state rests. Social safety programs are now more and more being accepted as helpful and important instruments for the protection and stability of the labour force. It is primarily an instrument of social and economic justice as it works for horizontal and vertical redistribution of income in society. It is a dynamic thought the contents of which change with social economic and political system gaining in a given country at a given time. It is a wise investment which yields good dividends in the lengthy run.

According to the promises of the Government of India, right of workers to social safety has been recognized as unchallengeable and, therefore, must accumulate to every worker under any system of labour law or labour policy. Provision of social guard is preserved in Articles 36 (the promotion of welfare of the people), 38 (certain principles of policy), 41 (right to work, education and public assistance in certain cases), 44 (just and human conditions of work and motherhood relief) and 41 (living wage etc.) of the Constitution of India as a part of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Important social safety, poverty mitigation and social welfare measures are being implemented by various Departments of State Governments and by civil society organizations. The Department of Labour, Government of India, has categorized the unorganized labour force under four groups in terms of Occupation, nature of employment, especially worried categories and service categories. As per the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), 30 million workers in India are continually on the move (migrant labour) and 29.74 million women workforce has been added in the labour market from the year 2010 onwards. All the more every day 16000 Indians turn 75 years and they are expected to live another average of 15 years. Unfortunately only 12% of the Indians save for old age. The tragedy is that the existing social safety legislations cover only 9% of the total work force of 649 million in India.

1.3 Construction Industry

"Familiarity is now the norm, rather than the exclusion, in the construction industry throughout much of the developing world" (Wells 2007). The construction industry is a major source of employment worldwide, uncertainly the second largest after agriculture, and generally the primary one in city areas, sometimes economic sectors such as production or services may present higher records in official statistics, but in fact both construction and agriculture bulge together a large variety of different economic activities. Building construction (both new build and maintenance) are particularly labour-intensive activities, producing many jobs per unit of investment both on and off the building site, this construction industry makes a main positive contribution to the economy of all countries. The output of the industry worldwide is estimated at around Rs 14,000 corer per annum. The industry produces employment for more than 1500 lakhs people worldwide. The requirement of large numbers of jobs at comparatively low investment cost per job invested is mainly important in the developing countries, where the construction industry plays a main role in struggling the high levels of unemployment and in interesting surplus labour from the rural areas. Construction offers much needed work chances for some of the poorest and most marginalized sections of society, in India the third largest employee base and 55 million workers are working in construction industry, obviously large in numbers, mostly refugee, unhappily undocumented and almost totally mistreated by the system at large. Where the recent study on Conditions of Work and Promotions of Livelihood in the Unorganized Sector Report' says the world's second fastest increasing economy is being largely driven by workers in this construction sector. Where it is impartment to initiate social safety for this section of the workforce, whose working conditions, compensation and living standards are far worse than their counterparts in the organized sector, though their involvement to the economy is much greater.

2. Review of Literature

Das (2007) in his study widely acknowledged that networks play an important role in the process of migration of construction labour; it is found that there exists a network between contractors and the labourers he brings along from remote villages and in some circumstances skilled labourers act as bridges between contractors and rural villagers. Singh (2007) in his study contended that poverty, indebtedness, unemployment, famines and conflicts „push“ rural people out of the hinterland in search of employment and a better standard of living „pulls“ a large number of rural masses to the urban construction labour market. Ramanujam (2004) states that Unorganised workers are vulnerable to games played by unscrupulous people, including public authorities who are out to exploit them. Vulnerabilities further aggravate their miseries, there by placing them in a vicious circle. This adversely affects the growth trends and employment generation and also marginalises them further. Unorganized (informal) sector is a very important segment of the Indian economy and its importance has been on the ascent mainly because of the increasing casualization of work of existing organised workers and lack of employment opportunities Dong et al. in his study, observed that working in the construction industry is associated with a high risk of accidents and might result in death, malignant diseases like cancer of the lung and stomach might be present. Baruah B (2008) in his study Identified that the female construction workers were getting opportunities, and suggested training and certification for providing skilled women with quality employment opportunities. John CP (2004) states that the large gap between the rich and the poor and the organized and unorganized sector has led many countries to provide social and economic safety to the workers, who are poor and underprivileged. Denzil Fernandes and Bino Paul G.D.(2011) their study examined the networks among construction workers and said that in order to survive in the place of destination a migrant worker develops his social capital by having a network of relations comprising family members, relatives, friends, fellow villagers and locals. The friendship network among migrant construction workers ranged from very close-Knit highly cohesive networks to loosely knit less cohesive ones. Johri and Pandey stated that, the extension of social safety to the unorganized sector was not merely a matter of extension of the existing organized sector schemes to new groups, but it involved the development of a different and more diversified set of schemes. Rao and Deo Based on their study of the building industry in Pune observed that self-help organizations might guarantee the minimum standards of social and economic safety to workers in non-traditional and informal sectors of the society.

3. Materials and Methods:

The research design

Access to social safety has become an essential human right to which every human being is at right as a member of the society. So the right of social safety has been accepted as undeniable and, therefore, must accrue to every worker under any system of labour law or labour policy. The government provides many social safety arrangements to the informal sector workers.

However, in reality today, the construction workers don't have access to important social safety services, because of illiteracy/ Low level of education, migration, un-trade unionization, less legal knowledge, ineffective implementation mechanism, and lack of awareness of various social safety schemes being implemented by the government. So it is important to know the perception of the workers on many social safety schemes and their implementation of social safety for construction workers.

Therefore, the research questions addressed in this study are-

- The employees have positive opinion on social safety schemes implemented by the government.
- They are satisfied with the existing social safety schemes being provided for construction workers.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The present study mainly attentions on the worker's awareness towards social safety schemes in unorganized sector in Tamilnadu with special reference to construction workers. The objectives of the study are:

- To study the socio-economic background of the construction workers
- To examine the different social safety arrangements available to workers working in the building construction industry in Tamilnadu and Kanchipuram district in specific.
- To bring forth the opinions of the construction workers on various social safety measures and their implementation.
- To look at the association between the various social safety schemes with various demographic variables, and
- To put out certain conclusion and suggestions based on the results that have been arrived

3.2 Hypothesis

The study is conducted by applying the following hypothesis:

- That the construction workers are highly satisfied with the social safety measures implemented by the government.
- There is important association between worker's demographic factors and their awareness towards social safety schemes.

3.3 Scope of the Study

Though there are many dimensions of social safety measures for the study purpose, on perusal of literature it is found that social safety measures such as Medical care, sickness benefit, maternity benefit, employment injury benefit, old age benefit, invalidity benefit, survivors benefit, unemployment benefit, family benefit, insurance schemes, pension schemes, and welfare funds, are most commonly used by various authors in their studies. Therefore, the above variables are taken in to consideration for the purpose of the study.

3.4 Methodology

The study is supported out through primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data will be collected through survey method. Survey is conducted using well framed questionnaire, in the 5 point rating scale. Simple random sampling will be applied for selecting the sample. The questionnaire includes of both optional type and Statements in 5 point scale. The responses of these sections are found from the construction workers in the Kanchipuram district of Tamilnadu. The size of sample is 90. The researcher selected major towns in Kanchipuram district like Meedavakkam, Otiyampakam, Perumpakam and Chittallapakkam and where the hectic construction activities are taking place. The Secondary data are collected from Journals, Magazines, Publications, Reports, Books, Dailies, Periodicals, Articles, Research Papers, Websites, government reports, Manuals and Brochures.

4. Results and discussion

In this study the scholars test the internal consistency of the data before to continue for further data analysis. The most frequently used statistic for testing the reliability is Cronbach's coefficient alpha. From the table 1, The Reliability Statistics, is 0.724, which means that our measuring is very consistent.

Table-1 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
.768	9

Source: primary data

The data offered in the below table discloses the Demographic profile of the respondents in the study area. In the past, women were confined to home only while men earned. The technologically and

scientifically complicated modern world opened wide vistas for women also as they have become an assessable, challenging force with men in almost all walks of life. Because of the financial problems in the family life and the earnings of men were not adequate to meet family expenses and the illiteracy in women complete them to go as a labour in construction industry. Keeping diversity in view, the researcher has deemed it fit to record the perceptions of the respondents according to their gender in relation to the influence of opinions on Social safety benefits. From the above table it is decided that majority of the respondents are male with 76% and the remaining 24% are female students.

Table: 2 Socio-economic background of the sample respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	58	64
Female	32	36
Total	90	100
Age		
15-25	25	28
26-35	43	48
36-45	13	14
46-55	7	8
Above 55	2	2
Total	90	100
Job change		
Changed	30	33.5
Un-changed	60	66.7
Total	90	100
Workers types		
Skilled	25	28
Un-skilled	65	72
Total	90	100
Social status		
Higher caste	6	7
Other caste	4	4
Other backward class	47	52
Schedule caste	18	20
Schedule tribe	15	17
Total	90	100
Educational qualification		
Illiterate	55	61.1
Below 10 th	12	13.3
Intermediate	15	16.7
Graduate	8	7.9
Total	90	100

Source: primary data

The above table designates the distribution of Educational Course, in which the respondents studying are considered in the sample. For the ease of analysis, the researcher has sorted the respondents into four categories according to their qualification viz., it is observed from the data that a majority (61.1 percent) of the respondents are illiterate, while 13 percent respondents studied 10th class; similarly, 16 percent respondents are Intermediate, followed by 7 percent respondents are graduates.

Age is the time of life when a person becomes capable to accept certain civil and legal duties. Age influences the perceptions of people. In order to record the perceptions of the respondents according to their age, the collected data are sorted into feasible age-groups as presented in below

table. Table (2) exemplifies the Age-wise distribution of the respondents. It is evident from the above data that a majority (28 percent) of the respondents is above 15-24 years of age, while 48 percent of the respondents fall between 25-34 years of age group, whereas the remaining 14 respondents' age group is in between 35-44 years, and 8 percent are 45-55 years of age. The above table states that the majority of respondents 66.7 percent are working in the construction sector since working, remaining 33.3 percent respondents are changed from their job to construction sector. It is to be addressed that the majority workers 72 percent are un-skilled and the remaining 28 percent are skilled respondents. Finally it is to be addressed that 63 percent respondents are other backward class people.

Table-3 Mean, Std. Deviation and Chi-square analysis of the study variables

Study variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Chi-square	Df	Asymp sig
Employment injury compensation	2.0111	.31780	60.034	130.067 ^a	2	.000
Employee provident fund	2.0444	.36446	53.216	115.467 ^a	2	.000
Retirement benefits	2.0333	.18051	106.863	78.400 ^b	1	.000
Death benefits to nominees	2.1889	.39361	52.726	34.844 ^b	1	.000
Health benefits	2.0222	.14823	129.423	82.178 ^b	1	.000
Maternity allowance	2.0000	.21200	89.499	156.800 ^a	2	.000
Scholarship & cash awards	2.1000	.30168	66.038	57.600 ^b	1	.000
Skill up gradation	2.0333	.40916	47.145	101.400 ^a	2	.000
Marriage assistance	2.100	.39803	50.053	102600 ^a	2	.000
Employee state insurance	1.8556	.43862	40.134	86.867 ^a	2	.000

a). 0 cells (0.0%) have estimated frequencies less than 5. The minimum estimated cell frequency is 30.0.

b). 0 cells (0.0%) have estimated frequencies less than 5. The minimum estimated cell frequency is 45.0.

The table -3 depicts the Average scores and standard deviations of each and every dimension related to social safety. The average Score of Death Benefits to Nominees (2.189) is greater than the remaining dimensions which suggest that the workers who were working in the construction are opined more confident on this dimension than the remaining benefits. Further, this score is below 3, which also reveals that respondents are more dissatisfied, whereas for the dimension Implementation of employee's state insurance scheme (1.855) the score is less than the remaining, which suggests that for this aspect, respondents are nearer to very dissatisfied.

The study has tested the validity of the Hypothesis in the intensive research work and the various dimensions of social safety are showing high significant levels and their coefficients are also highly significant at 0.05 per cent. So in this study of the Researcher, hypothesis of H0: That the contraction workers are highly contented with the social safety measures implemented by the government was rejected. And it is said that the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the adequacy of social safety schemes implemented by the government, finally it is concluded that the Govt has to provide more social safety schemes with effective implementation. Influence of age on the factors of social safety benefits: In this research the age of employees and their perceptions are identified differently through the comparison of mean values and the results are presented below.

Table-4 ANOVA

		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	sig
Employment injury compensation	Between groups	.389	4	.097	.961	.433
	Within groups	8.600	85	.101		
	Total	8.989	89			
Employee provident fund	Between groups	.113	4	.028	.205	.935
	Within groups	11.709	85	.138		
	Total	11.822	89			

Retirement benefits	Between groups	.064	4	.016	.477	.753
	Within groups	2.836	85	.033		
	Total	2.900	89			
Employee state insurance	Between groups	.389	4	.097	.617	.652
	Within groups	13.400	85	.158		
	Total	13.789	89			
Health benefits	Between groups	.028	4	.007	.312	.869
	Within groups	1.927	85	.023		
	Total	1.956	89			
Maternity allowance	Between groups	.406	4	.102	2.401	.056
	Within groups	3.594	85	.042		
	Total	4.000	89			
Scholarship & cash awards	Between groups	.047	4	.012	.125	.973
	Within groups	8.053	85	.095		
	Total	8.100	89			
Skill up gradation	Between groups	.290	4	.072	.422	.793
	Within groups	14.610	85	.172		
	Total	14.900	89			
Marriage assistance	Between groups	.200	4	.050	.306	.873
	Within groups	13.900	85	.064		
	Total	14.100	89			
Death benefits to nominees	Between groups	.651	4	.163	.840	.504
	Within groups	16.471	85	.194		
	Total	17.122	89			

Source: primary data

From the table -4 it is found that on the basis of age, employees differ in their opinions on social safety benefits which are providing to the construction labour. It is clear that the only one variable is significant i.e. Maternity Allowance ($p=0.056$); the age is significantly influencing the opinion of the respondents with respect to maternity benefit only, apart from other social safety schemes, the respondents similarly opined and the influence of demographic factor age is not significant. The study has tested the validity of the Hypothesis in the exhaustive research work to appreciate the impact of demographic factors on respondents opinions, from the above table the demographic factors i.e. age is negatively influencing the respondents, so in the hypothesis, there is important association between worker's demographic factors and their awareness towards social safety arrangements rejected, and said that the age is not a influencing factor towards the opinions of respondents.

5. Findings from the study

- ✓ Majority of construction labour belongs to backward communities and on the other hand the majority of them have been migrating year after year, yet they do not get pleasure from employment rights to the same contractor / owner.
- ✓ Out of total 90 sample workers 63.00 per cent were from backward community and only 37.00 percent general households involved in house construction activity in the study area. Observation further denotes that all castes community persons were engaged in construction field.
- ✓ Functional aspects of the construction industry in the study area suggest that the construction industry concerted in the hands of private contractors and builders.
- ✓ The construction industry is seasonal in nature and runs 8 to 9 months in a year. It required manual labour and hard work is prime.

- ✓ Out of 90 sample construction worker households, 27 (30%) workers were under the category of skilled workers and 63(70%) under the category of unskilled workers
- ✓ It is noticed that majority respondents 55 (61.1 %) are illiterates, and sixteen per cent respondents are qualified intermediate.
- ✓ Out of 90 respondents 24 percent are females and 76 percent are male. The participation of women is increasing because of unemployment of men and to meet contingences of family life.
- ✓ It is observed that out of 90 respondents only 4.4 percent of respondents agreed that they got Employment Injury compensation and a large amount 94.4 per cent of respondents are failed to get the employment injury compensation.
- ✓ It is noticed that the program of skill upgradation was failed in execution, and majority of respondents (75) disagree with the statement of skill development programme.
- ✓ Out of 90 respondents 86.2 (81) percent are highly dissatisfied with the implantation of the scheme of Scholarship & Cash Awards to building and other contraction labour.
- ✓ It is noticed that 73 out of 90 respondents are dissatisfied with the effective implementation of employee state insurance scheme for construction labour, and the remaining portion of respondents said that they don't know the scheme of ESI.
- ✓ It is observed that the rate of Employment Injury compensation was very low and only 4.3 percent of respondents are getting the employment injury compensation. Whereas 86.2 percent from out of 90 respondents opined that they didn't get any injury compensation.

Suggestions and conclusion

- ❖ The nature of the construction industry in the study area is fragmented and unorganized. It should be organized and labour centralized.
- ❖ The literacy percentage in the study area was found to be low. To improve the literacy percentage, the special attention to be given. The implementation of adult education campaign is essential in the study area and creation of night schools with all facilities on the field sites will result in increasing / improving of literacy rate.
- ❖ The number of women workers engaged in house construction activity is considerable, but they are only engaged in coolie type of unskilled work. They must get effort to engage themselves in skilled job.
- ❖ Most of the women workers were ignorant about maternity benefits, child care benefits and health care benefits. So they must be made aware about all of these benefits by Municipal Councils.
- ❖ The steps should be taken for providing social safety schemes to female workers. Facilities like crèches, drinking water, rest rooms and bathrooms should be available on sites. The coverage of general health insurance should be given.
- ❖ No social safety schemes were implemented by the owners or contractors, so it is the need of time to implement. Social safety arrangements may be provided by the Government and give the assurance of work to the employees.
- ❖ Government should make mandatory to all the construction sector players to follow all the Government rules and regulations regarding protection and conservation of environment.
- ❖ Contributory Pension Scheme should be introduced in the construction sector and workmen's contribution should be collected per week or on the payment day.
- ❖ The scheme of Contributory Provident Fund (C.P.F.) and LIC and pension schemes should be implemented effectively for construction labour.

Finally it is to be noticed that the present study contributed perceptions of construction workers towards the ridden complexities, lags in implementation and access to the social safety measures. And the more powerless among the construction workers (such as the poor, the disabled, the infirm, the chronically sick and those without family support) may be identified and special safety arrangements may be recommended for them on priority basis.

Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited to selected town in Kanchipuram district of Tamilnadu. The sample size is limited to 90 workers. The data are collected from construction workers only. The women number is low compare to men. The variables and factors involved in the study are made compact to give more stylishness to the research. So, any generalization of the results obtained in the study may not hold well other than the study area.

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