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MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN THE UNORGANIZED SECTOR OF SURAT CITY– A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The construction industry in India is the sector providing largest number of employment opportunities after the agricultural sector in which 31 million persons get employment. Surat city is known for its textile and diamond industries. In the matter of employment, the construction sector also plays a significant role. According to the Surat City Development Plan (2006-12), the share of the construction sector in total employment was 7.10%. According to one estimate, 60% to 80% of the population of Surat has migrated from outside (Shah, 1997, Das, 1994). Availability of employment has attracted a large number of people to Surat from the states like Maharashtra, M.P, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh etc. The present study is focused on the migrant construction workers who are mainly working in the unorganized sector in Surat city. The construction sector play a significant role in providing employment but the conditions of the migrant workers is not good. They should be provided proper accommodations facilities with basic amenities at the working sites by the contractors or by other authorities. There are statistically significant differences found in the levels of education, working days in a month by gender and by type of work.

KEY WORDS: Migrant, Unorganised Sector, Construction Workers, Contractors, Employment.

JEL Classification: J11, J23, J31, J71, L74, O15

1. INTRODUCTION

The construction sector is a major employment driver, being the second largest employer in the country, next only to agriculture. This is because of the chain of backward and forward linkages that the sector has with other sector of the economy. This sector has contributed around 8 percent of the nation's GDP (at Constant Prices) in the last five years (2006-07 to 2010-11). The construction industry is the sector providing largest number of employment opportunities after the agricultural sector in which 31 million persons get employment. The employment in the construction sector is basically characterized by the skilled, semiskilled and unskilled workers. The workers who are semiskilled and unskilled are mainly unorganized and have migrated especially in the states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka etc.

In this study an attempt is made to focus on the condition of migrant construction workers of Surat city. However, it is essential to know at the outset about migration in India, Gujarat and Surat city. According to 2001 census, the percentage of migrant population increased to 30.6%. If we consider the total number of migrants, these figures were 49 million, 201 million, 226 million and 309 million according to 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses respectively.

Gujarat is one of the leading states among the western states of India. The state is presently on top position as far as urbanization rate is concerned. The share of urban population was 25.76% in 1961 which increased to 42.58% in 2011.

Surat city is famous for its textile industry and diamond industry. In the matter of employment, the construction sector also plays a significant role. Due to higher industrial development in city, the percentage of the migrant population in the total population was found to be higher.

According to the Surat City Development Plan (2006-12), the share of the construction sector in total employment was 7.10% and more than half (55.85%) of the population of Surat city is migrant population.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dileep Kumar M. (2013) had undertaken a study on the problems of construction labourers in Pune, Maharashtra in India. The study concluded that the condition of the workers in the construction industry is very much deplorable. Neither the law nor the contractors are showing mercy to this socially and economically poor segment of the population.

A Study was undertaken by **Self Employment Women's Association [SEWA] (2000)** on Construction workers in Ahmadabad City. The results showed that, almost all the women workers were engaged in unskilled jobs, 60% of the male workers were occupied in this work from one generation to the next while 40% had joined this work for the first time - The average daily wages of the female workers were found to be substantially lower than the male workers. The average daily income of the female worker was Rs. 60, as against Rs. 128 for the male workers, who earned more than double of the women workers.

Poongodi, R. (2012) had studied the socio-economic conditions of female construction workers of Thurairur taluka of Tiruchirpalli district of Tamil Nadu. The main conclusions of the study were most of the workers are unskilled, minimum wage act and other laws are not made applicable for them, they face a lot of uncertainty in getting work and get lower wages, face discrimination in wages and there is absence of implementation of the labour security acts.

3. OBJECTIVES

(1) To study the socio-economic background of selected migrant construction workers.
(2) To focus on the issues related to migration in this sector.
(3) To examine the issues of discrimination in various aspects like daily wages etc.
(4) To examine the social security provided by the employers of migrant construction workers.

4. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the different aspects between male and female workers.
2. There is no significant difference in the different aspects between unskilled and semiskilled workers.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is an integral part of a study. The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The analytical part has been done on the basis of the primary data collected through questionnaires.

Sources of Data:-

In the present Study both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data were collected through structured questionnaires. We have decided to select 150 migrant construction workers who are working in the unorganized sector by the convenience sampling technique. Out of the total selected workers, it was decided to select 100 unskilled and 50 semiskilled workers. Among the 100 unskilled workers, the male and female workers ratio was kept to be equal. The structured questionnaires were filled up during March, 2013 to September, 2013 by personal interviews at the construction working sites. The secondary data have been collected through the various government publications, reports and websites.

Analytical techniques:-

The collected primary data have been analyzed by using SPPS software. The simple frequency tables have been used to arrive at some generalized primary results. Moreover, for testing the formulated hypotheses, the chi square test was used for examining the association between the categorical variables. The t-test and ANOVA test have been used in the case of normally distributed ratio or scale data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks tests have been applied to check the normality of the ratio and scale data. In the case of non-normally distributed data, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis Chi-square test have been used.

6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

The frequency and percentage distributions of the background characteristics of the migrant construction workers are tabulated in Annexure-1, 2 and 3 and are analyzed as follows;

6.1 AGE, CASTE, RELIGION AND MARITAL STATUS (Annexure-1, sr.nos. 1 to 4)

The age distribution of the workers shows that a majority of the migrant workers belong to the age group of 21 years to 40 years (76.6%). In the case of religion followed by the workers, 96.7% are found to be followers of Hindu religion. The distribution of workers according to their caste implies that the highest (43.3%) of the migrant workers belong to the S.T. category followed by Open category (23.3%). In the selected sample of migrant workers, about 78% workers are married and 20% are unmarried.

6.2 EDUCATIONAL STATUS (Annexure-1, sr.no. 5)

It is widely accepted that the education level has positive impact on earning capacity of person. In the selected sample, majority of the workers found to be Illiterate (54.0%). And in the case of literate workers, the maximum level of education is upto secondary level. About 28.0% of the workers were educated up to the primary level and 18.0% had secondary level education. So, it can be said that the level of education among the migrant construction workers is not satisfactory.

- **MALE AND FEMALE EDUCATION LEVELS** (Annexure-2, sr.no. 1)

Among the male workers, about 40.0% were illiterate and 60.0% were literate. These figures were 82.0% and 18.0% respectively for female workers. Hence, the level of education is found to be higher among the male workers than among the female workers. The chi-square test also supported this result. The value of chi square was found to be 25.143 with the significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.01 (0.000<0.01). Therefore, it has been concluded that the difference in the education level between male and female workers is statistically significant.

- **SEMISKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS EDUCATION LEVEL** (Annexure-3, sr.no. 1)

The education level of the workers also found to be varying according to the type of workers such as semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Out of the total semiskilled workers, 36.0% were illiterate, on the other hand about 63.0% of the unskilled workers were found to be illiterate. Hence, the level of education was found to be relatively higher among the semiskilled workers than among the unskilled workers. The chi square test also suggested that the difference in the level of education according to the type of workers is statistically significant. The value of chi square was found to be 10.381 with its significance value of 0.006, which is less than 0.01.

6.3 TYPES OF MIGRATION AND NATIVE PLACES (Annexure-1, sr.nos. 6 and 7)

In our study it was found that majority of workers had migrated on temporary and seasonal basis i.e. 45.3% for each category. Temporary migration shows that the contractor hired the workers from the different places for specific work. When the work is over, the workers leave for their native place. Only 9.3% workers had permanently shifted to Surat city for doing construction work.

About 77.3% of workers had migrated from other states of India followed by 22.0% migrants from the other districts of the Gujarat state and only 0.7% worker migrated from other areas of Surat district. Out of the total 116 other states workers, majority had migrated from Rajasthan (28), Uttar Pradesh (24), Chhattisgarh (22) and Madhya Pradesh (20). In the case of the migrant workers of other districts of Gujarat, out of the total 33 workers, majority came from Dahod-Godhra and Panchmahal (18).

- **MIGRATION TYPES AMONG THE MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS** (Annexure-2, sr.no. 2)

The collected data show that there is no significant difference in the type of migration between the male and female workers. Out of the total male workers, the proportions of the seasonal, permanent and temporary migrants were 45.0%, 13.0% and 42.0% respectively, while in the case of female workers, these proportions were 46.0%, 2.0% and 52.0% respectively. So, only for the permanent migrant workers, the relative proportion of the males was found to

be higher than the females. Although, the result of chi square test suggested that there is no statistically significant association exists between the type of migration among the male and female workers at 0.05% significance level. The value of chi square was reported to be 5.064 with significance level of 0.079, which is greater than 0.05.

6.4 CAUSES OF MIGRATION (Annexure-1, sr.no. 8)

We have asked the close ended question on why they have migrated. We have put six reasons for migration like bad economic condition, for high earning, family reasons, for time pass, not getting employment at native place and other reasons. The workers gave the multiple responses to this question. Hence, the researchers have used the multiple response analysis technique. Out of the total 297 responses for reasons for migration, the highest 38.7% fell in the category of "bad economic condition", followed by 26.9% in the category of "due to not getting other jobs" and 25.6% for "higher income earnings."

6.5 STATUS OF CONSTRUCTION WORK, TYPE OF WORK, WORKING HOURS AND WORKING DAYS

(Annexure-1, sr.nos. 9 to 11)

There are two types of workers such as Non-Naka Workers (Permanent Workers) and Naka Workers (Casual Workers) working in the construction sector. Among the selected workers, 111 (74.0%) were permanent workers and 39 (26.0%) were casual workers.

The classification of average working hours of construction workers indicates that the majority of workers spend on an average 8 to 10 hours (71.3%) at the working site and only 18.0% workers got work daily. Other workers could not get the work daily. So, we can say that the very large number of workers could not get work regularly.

- **WORKING HOURS AND WORKING DAYS BY THE GENDER OF WORKERS** (Annexure-2, sr.nos. 3 and 4)

The classification of the working hours in a day by the gender of the workers shows that the workers who work for more than 10 hours in a day are found to be relatively higher among the male workers (14.0%) than among the female workers (2.0%). However in the case of working hours of 8 to 10, the proportion of female workers was found to be relatively higher than male workers (i.e. 80.0% for male and 67.0% for female). Although, the chi square test result suggests that there is no significant association between genderwise averages working hours in a day. The value of this test statistic is found to be 5.917 with the significant value of 0.116, which is greater than 0.05.

The chi square test also supported the finding that the association between the working days among the male and female workers is statistically significant. The chi square value was found to be 47.384 with its associated probability value of 0.000, which is less than 0.01. Hence, at 99% of confidence level we can say that there is association between the genderwise working days.

- **WORKING HOURS AND WORKING DAYS BY THE TYPE OF WORKERS** (Annexure-3, sr.no. 2 and 3)

The relative proportion of the semiskilled workers who were doing more than 8 hours work in a day was found to be higher than the unskilled workers i.e. about 89.0% in the semiskilled workers and 78.0% in the unskilled workers. However, this difference found to be not statistically significant according the chi square test because the value of chi square was found to be 5.282 and its significance value is 0.152, which is greater than 0.05.

However, in the case of working day in a month, the proportion of semiskilled workers who get the daily work was found to be relatively higher than that in the unskilled workers. These proportions were 34.05 % and 10.0% respectively. Besides, the proportion of the workers who could not get the work for more than 5 days were reported to be higher in the unskilled (63.3%) workers than in the semiskilled workers (32.2%). Hence, one can say that the semiskilled workers are in a better position in the matter of getting the constant employment than the unskilled workers.

6.6 ACCOMMODATION FACILITY PROVIDED BY THE OWNER TO THE MIGRANT WORKERS (Annexure-1, sr.no. 12)

Only 12.0% of the workers migrated permanently to Surat city. Out of the selected construction workers, a majority 110 (73.3%) stayed at the construction site after migration. The workers who lived in owned house, on rent and other (Stayed on the side of the public road) were found to be 3.3%, 11.3% and 12.0% respectively. If we focus on the type of residence, a majority 103 (68.7%) of the workers have tent type of house followed by the semi-pucca (14.7%) and kutchcha house (10.0%).

6.7 BASIC AMENITIES AT RESIDENT (Annexure-1, sr.no. 13)

The researchers have found that, excepting water and bathroom, the percentages of other facilities were not satisfactory. The facilities such as light, water, bathroom, toilet and sanitation were provided to 65.6%, 97.2%, 82.0%, 57.4% and 32.8% of the workers respectively. During the field survey, it was also found that the facilities of bathroom and toilet are not provided to each family separately. The contractor or owners had built a few units of bathroom and toilet for collective use.

6.8 WAGE RATES AND INCOME OF WORKERS (Annexure-1, sr.nos. 14 and 15)

The attempt is made to know the daily wage of the construction workers and to compare it with the minimum wages announced by the government for each category of workers. If we considered all workers, the average wage rate is found to be Rs. 302.13 with standard deviation of Rs.117.69. The minimum wage rate was found to be Rs. 130 and the maximum was Rs. 700.

We have calculated the monthly income of the workers on the basis of average days of working in a month and per day wage rate. The average annual income of the workers was found to be Rs. 61,524. The minimum annual income is found to be Rs.18,000 and the maximum was Rs. 1,57,500.

- **WAGE RATES OF MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS** (Annexure-2, sr.no. 5)

The average wage rate of the male workers is reported to be Rs. 250.20 and for female it was Rs.240.20. To examine the wage differentiation is by using the independent samples t-test, it is essential the normally distributed data. Therefore first of all an attempt was made to check the normality of data on wage rate by using the Kolmogorov-smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test. The result of this test suggests that, the data on wage rates found to be not normally distributed. Therefore, the Mann Whitney U test is used for comparing the average mean ranks of the male and female workers' wage rates. The results of this test show that, the mean ranks of the male and female workers reported to be 52.68 and 48.32, respectively. The value of Mann Whitney U test is 1141.00 and its associate probability value is 0.434, which is greater than 0.05. Hence, we can say that the difference in the wage rate between male and female workers is not statistically significant.

WAGE RATES OF UNSKILLED AND SEMISKIILED WORKERS

(Annexure-3, sr.no. 4)

The average wage rates of the unskilled and semiskilled workers were found to be Rs. 245.20 and Rs.416.00, respectively. The results of this test suggest that the mean rank of the unskilled and semiskilled workers were respectively 55.9 and 114.66. So, the mean rank of the semiskilled workers is higher than that of the unskilled workers which implies that the average wage rate of semiskilled workers is higher than that of the unskilled workers. The value of Mann Whitney u test is 542.00 with significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, one can say that the difference in the mean wage rates of the unskilled and semiskilled workers is statistically significant.

6.9 SAVINGS AND DEBT OF THE WORKERS (Annexure-1, sr.nos. 16 and 17)

Out of the total workers, a majority (65.6%) of the workers saved less than Rs. 4000 per month. 18.0% of workers saved more than Rs. 4000 per month. However those workers, who had saved from their income, generally put the savings amount with contractors. When they leave for their native place, the saved amount is collected from the contractors. As far as the debt of the workers is concerned, about 40.0% said that they had taken debt in the past.

6.10 NON-MONETARY BENEFITS

(Annexure-1, sr.no. 18)

About 37.3% of workers said that the contractor had not given any type of non-monetary benefits to them. The non monetary benefits like medical facility, income related benefits, accident cover, safety instruments had been reported to be received by 5.5%, 1.8%, 63.6% and 67.3% of the workers respectively.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that a very high proportion of the workers fall in the young age group. The S.C. and S.T. category of workers were found to be more in this sector. The male workers and semiskilled workers were found to be more literate than the female and unskilled workers respectively.

The migrants from the states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra are found to be more than those from the other states. Among the migrants from the other districts of Gujarat, majority of workers came from Dahod, Godhara and Panchmahal. Bad economic condition and lack employment opportunities at the native place were the major reasons for migration. The basic amenities in houses were also found to be not satisfactory at the working place.

Majority of workers were work for 8 to 10 hours in a day. However, in the matter of consistency in employment, they faced uncertainty in getting the work daily. This uncertainty was found to be higher for the female workers and for the unskilled workers.

The average wage rate of the workers implies that the workers get more than minimum wage rate act. However, the minimum value of the wage rate clearly indicates that the wage rate of some of the workers is less than the minimum wage rate act.

There were several laws existing in practice like Regulation and Abolition Act-1970 for contract labour, Equal Remuneration Act-1976 for equal wages for equal work, Unorganized Worker's Social Security Act-2008 etc... But the effective implementation of these laws is possible only through collective efforts of the government and non-government organizations. As a part of corporate social

responsibility, the contractors and the builders should also provide the better quality of living to the migrant workers.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix-1 Socio-Economic Profile of Migrant Construction Workers in Surat City

Sr.no	Variables	Reported Answers
1	**Age Distribution**	Less than 20 Yrs (14.7%), 21 Yrs to 30 Yrs (47.3%), 31 Yrs to 40 Yrs (29.3%), More than 41 Yrs (8.3%)
2	**Religion**	Hindu (96.7%), Muslim (2.0%), Christian (1.3%)
3	**Caste**	S.T. (43.3%), S.C. (19.3%), SEBC (12.7%), Open (23.3%), Others (1.3%)
4	**Marital Status**	Married (78.0%), Unmarried (20.0%), Widow (2.0%)
5	**Education Level**	Illiterate (54.0%), Upto Primary (28.0%), Upto Secondary (18.0%)
6	**Type of Migration**	Seasonal (45.3%), Permanent (9.3%), Temporary (45.3%)
7	**Native Place**	Surat District (0.7%), Other District of Gujarat (22.0%), Other State (77.3%)
8	**Reasons for Migration**	Bad economic condition (77.2%), Higher earnings (51.0%), Family reasons (10.7%), Time pass (4.7%), not getting other work (53.7%)
9	**Status Work**	Non-Naka Workers (74.0%), Naka Workers (26.0%)
10	**Working Hours**	Less than 4 hours (1.3%), 4 to 8 hours (17.3%), 8 to 10 hours (71.3%), More than 10 hours (10.0%)
11	**No. of days not getting work**	Daily get the work (18.0%), 1 to 5 days (29.3%), 6 to 9 days (22.0%), 10 to 14 days (21.3%), More Than 15 days (9.3%)
12	**Type of House at Working Place**	Kutchcha (10.0%), Pucca (14.7), Mixed (6.0%), Tent (69.4%)
13	**Basic Amenities at Working Place**	Electricity (65.6%), Water (97.5%), Bathroom (82.0%), Toilet (57.4%), Sanitation (32.8%)
14	**Average Wage Rate**	Unskilled (245 Rs.) Semiskilled (416 Rs.) Male (250 Rs.) Female (240 Rs.)
15	**Annual Income (Rs.)**	< 36000 (12.0%), 36001 to 60000 (48.0%), 60001 to 85000 (24.0%), 85001 to 110000 (11.3%), > 110000 (4.7%)
16	**Saving Behavior**	Yes save (84.7%) **Monthly Saving:** NA (15.3%), < Rs. 2000 (313%), Rs. 2001 to 4000 (35.3%), Rs. 4001 to 6000 (16.0%), > Rs. 6000 (2.0%)
17	**Debt Status**	Yes taken (40.0%) **Amount of Debt:** NA (60.0%), <Rs. 5000 (15.33%), Rs. 5001 to 15000 (10.7%), > Rs.15000 (14.0%)
18	**Non-Monetary Benefits**	No any benefits (62.7%), Medical (5.5%), Income related (1.8%), Accident Cover (63.6%), Safety Instrument (67.3%), Others (1.8%)

Appendix-2 Test of Significance of Difference in various aspects between Male and Female Workers

Sr. No.	Variables	Sub Variables	Reported Answer		Statistical Test X²/Mann Whitney U test		
			Male	Female	Value	Significance Value	Null Hypothesis
1	**Education**	Illiterate	40.0%	82.0%	25.41	0.000	Rejected
		Primary	34.0%	16.0%			
		Secondary and others	26.0%	2.0%			
2	**Type of Migration**	Seasonal	45.0%	46.0%	5.06	0.079	Not Rejected
		Permanent	13.0%	2.0%			
		Temporary	42.0%	52.0%			
3	**Working Hours (Per Day)**	Less than 4 Hours	1.0%	2.0%	5.92	0.116	Not Rejected
		4 to 8 Hours	18.0%	16.0%			
		8 to 10 Hours	67.0%	80.0%			
		More than 10 Hours	14.0%	2.0%			
4	**Working Days in Months**	Daily Got the Work	23.0%	8.0%	47.38	0.000	Rejected
		Less than 10 Days	64.0%	26.0%			
		11 to 15 Days	8.0%	48.0%			
		More than 15 Days	5.0%	18.0%			
5	**Wage Rates (Unskilled Workers)**	Less than 200	26.0%	28.0%	1141.00*	0.434	Not Rejected
		201 to 250	40.0%	54.0%			
		251 to 300	32.0%	18.0%			
		301 to 350	2.0%	0.0%			

Source: *Calculated by Researchers, Note: * indicates the Mann Whitney U test result*

Appendix-3 Test of Significance of Difference in various aspects between Unskilled and Semiskilled Workers

Sr. No.	Variables	Sub Variables	Reported Answer		Statistical Test X²/Mann Whitney U test		
			UW	SW	Value	Significance Value	Null Hypothesis
1	**Education**	Illiterate	63.0%	36.0%	10.38	0.006	Rejected
		Primary	24.0%	36.0%			
		Secondary and others	13.0%	28.0%			
2	**Working Hours (Per Day)**	Less than 4 Hours	1.0%	2.0%	5.28	0.152	Not Rejected
		4 to 8 Hours	21.0%	10.0%			
		8 to 10 Hours	71.0%	72.0%			
		More than 10 Hours	7.0%	16.0%			
3	**Working Days in Months**	Daily Got the Work	10.0%	34.0%	19.90	0.001	Rejected
		Less than 10 Days	50.0%	54.0%			
		11 to 15 Days	28.0%	8.0%			
		More than 15 Days	12.0%	4.0%			
4	**Wage Rates (Rs.)**	Less than 200	27.0%	8.0%	542.0*	0.000	Rejected
		201 to 250	47.0%	2.0%			
		251 to 300	25.0%	24.0%			
		301 to 350	1.0%	4.0%			
		More than 350	0.0%	62.0%			

Source: *Calculated by the Researchers,*

Note: ** indicates the Mann Whitney U test result, UW= Unskilled Workers, SW= Semiskilled Workers*