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## WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF GULBARGA CITY

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### **Abstract:**

*Women-in order to analyse their working conditions within sector and area development respectively. It is as- assumed that women face problems and discrimination in both sector and area development, and that they may be most profoundly affected in the latter. The various aspects of discrimination and the problems women face...Although women's experience of working in management has been studied extensively, the particular challenges they face in this role within male-dominated professions merits further attention. The present paper discussed on the nature of work of women in the Construction Industry. Further, on the basis of different studies conducted on the women in Construction, the present study analysed the problems of the women Construction workers.*

**Keywords:** *unorganized Sector, Building construction worker, construction Sector, wage discrimination, insecurity*

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### **Introduction:**

The Construction sector has the largest number of unorganised workers in India. They are the backbone of our nation. Both men and women are integral part of the society. Women join as unskilled workers and remain unskilled till the end of their working life span. Construction Sector comes under Unorganized Sector of country. The term Unorganized workers has been defined as those workers who have not been able to organize themselves in pursuit of their common interest due to certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishment etc., The researcher concentrated only on the women workers who are working in the construction sector and how they are facing difficulties in the work place. Majority of the women construction workers are facing lots of difficulties like absence of social security, low

wages, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, etc., Construction workers are unskilled and illiterate workers which make them very vulnerable to exploitation. Being part of an unorganised and fragmented sector their bargaining power is low and they cannot easily fight against injustice. They are often not paid minimum wages and even the agreed wages are not paid in time. Moreover, their working time and hours are not well regulated and they do not get paid when they work over time. The working conditions and facilities provided at the sites are far from satisfactory. Most of the companies do not even provide safety belts, protection eye wears, hand gloves, shoes or helmets to their workers. The living conditions are no way better than the working conditions. Construction workers live with their family in temporary shelters built on the construction site.

The present study is made to know about the condition of women

workers working in the unorganised sector in general, by making a research study on the problem of women construction workers living in Gulbarga city in particular.

#### **Significance of the study:**

It is emphasized that apart from the general problems of the unorganised sector workers, construction works are generally will take place at the outskirts of the city and hence, there are no facilities for the women to stay secure and safe, as they are living in temporary stay. Further, the construction sites will move from one place to another and hence, the education of the children and environmental variations are also the problems of these workers.

Hence, the present study needed to intervene the condition of the women construction workers and it is proved be an important in exploring different problems and to suggest suitable solution to the problem of the women construction workers in Gulbarga city.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- 1) To investigate into the various condition of the women construction workers.
- 2) To probe into the work life of the women construction workers.

#### **Methodology:**

The study was begun with the literature research. The researcher has collected primary and secondary information data to study the present problem. After studying collection of primary data is an important steps in every research study. The research scholar collected the primary data through interview schedules. The survey method is one of the most popular data collection method in social sciences. The present study adopted survey method for the collection of primary data. The interview schedule was addressed to the women construction workers working in different areas of the Gulbarga study.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Dhanalakshmi(1988) pointed out some general issues concerning women

in labour markets. The issues include the segregation of women into certain occupation, wage differentials between men and women for the same job, low and falling work participation rates of women etc., She made an attempt to study the domestic servants in tiruvantapuram city. The socio economic conditions of domestic servants and the need of the servants in the city has been studied.

Gisban and Graham (1986) stated that overseas workers have become a major element in the economy of the Philippines. Recruitment of such workers has become a formal Govt. policy. Classical theories of migration cannot be applied to these situations. An improved theory of the incorporation of migrant labour into national economics must examine sites of incorporation and control over incorporation. An examination of the case of phillipino contract construction workers reveals international construction as a site of migrant labour incorporation and overt state action as a mode of control over incorporation. This development suggested that a new role of utilisation of migrant labour is appearing in the international economy.

Arunachalam(1997) has an opinion that the issues of informal sector are common to the developing countries, but have to be understood in the context where informal system of work are promoted and encouraged among the working poor. The character of this sector is connected to highly exploitive irregular conditions and wage discriminations.

Eraydin and Erendil(1999) writes on interview data collected in 1988 from 428 women workers and 24 women Entrepreneurs who owned frames in the Istanbul,Turkey, construction industries are used to investigate the processes of industrial restructuring. Particular attention is drawn to changes in womens attitude to work and in their responses to working consition, which

have important consequences for the industry itself.

#### Unorganised sector in Karnataka:

The unorganised sector in India comprises roughly of 92% of the population in the working age group. Of the 376million workers in 2000, only 8% were in organised sector, and had access to statutory social security benefits. The remaining work force has been socially excluded and suffered from persistent deprivation associated with general low standards of living and social insecurity. The unorganised sector makes a significant contribution to national wealth, at , workers in the sector do not have access to sufficient and reliable

social security. Although the unorganised workers have some access to risk management , mechanism such as micro-finance, their access to statutory benefit like healthcare, old aged pensions , etc., has been quite poor. These workers adopt informal strategies such as borrowing , sale of assets etc., which are very expensive and their continued dependence on such strategies only renders them vulnerable(Rajashekar) etc., The employment of women in public and private sector in different industries on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001 is shown in the following table.

**Table No 1.1. Employment of women in public and private sector in Karnataka and India (In Thousand)**

Nature of Industries	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2001				31 <sup>st</sup> March 2002			
	Public Sector		Private sector		Public Sector		Private sector	
	India	Karantaka	India	Karantaka	India	Karantaka	India	Karantaka
Agriculture , forestry, Hunting ,and Fishing	48.34	3.02	464.44	7.78		3.0		7.8
Mining and Quarrying	55.57	1.14	8.4	0.51		1.0		0.4
Manufacturing	93.0	7.27	937.02	252.8		6.7		254.6
Electricity, Gas and Water	44.71	3.29	1.32	0.03		3.3		---
Construction	63.24	354	4.04	0.27		0.9		3.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade and Hotels	17.4	0.9	29.36	2.43		0.9		3.0
Transport, Communic atios& Storage	174.89	13.04	8.06	0.79		13.3		1.0
Financing, Real Estate & business service	184.84	20.16	60.2	7.77		19.3		9.6

Community, Social & Personal Service	2177.23	201.74	577.27	41.84		204.6		43.9
Total	2859.21	254.55	2090.1	314.23		255.5		320.5

Source: Quarterly Employment Review, January – March 2001&2002, New Delhi Ministry

### Women construction:

The construction industry has several features that distinguish it from most other industries so far as the status and welfare of the workers is concerned. The majority of the construction sites are of temporary nature, since most structures require little attention of construction workers once construction is complete. These factors, making for mobility of labour in the construction industry, rises special problem on sites, where temporary arrangements must suffice for the provision of welfare amenities. The desirable and practicable amenities would be different according to the duration of the individual work sites, which may widely vary from one another. Some works may be completed in a matter of days, some may last for weeks or months and a few large sites may last for several years.

With the growth in construction industry the job in market sector has always developed. Apart from the job market it is also important to understand the socio-economic background of the workers, work history profile, situation that has led them to house construction activities as they present form of livelihood and their living conditions. Workers are exploited because they are illiterate socially backward, unskilled, unorganised, uninformed and poor (NCL,2002). Construction labour are labours who are migrate from different region and status leaving their native village in search of daily jobs. These people in general are

nomadic in their lives and usually do not return to their birth place. Most of the construction labourers migrates to cities and metros are from poor families and are illiterates. Their lack of education and skill make their choice very limited. When they come to big cities, they have to face number of problems because of their inexperience and lack of skills. They become easy victim of exploitation and have to work for their day to day sustenance (saxena 2009).

Beside the probe discussed above, the construction workers have no social security and benefit in terms of labour welfare and provision. They do not have provision like pension and insurance schemes, maternity leave, accident and death claims, concession loans and financial aid for children's education and medical needs. The Govt. has given the right to get registered to these workers.

The process of getting registered is not easy and workers friendly. Hence, once registered they are entitled to a number of benefits like pension after the age of 50, concession loan for house, group insurance, financial aid for dependent, children's education etc.,

### Women Construction worker:

Women are also playing an important role in construction works. In case of women construction workers the problem at work sites are more, as they have to look after husband, elders and children. Further, there are temporary in which they are living which shows the lack of social security and privacy

**Analysis , Interpretation and Discussion of the present problems:****Table no 1.2: Religion of the respondents**

particular	Residential Worker		Commercial construction worker		Public Utility construction worker		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Hindu	94	47.0	109	54.5	58	58.0	261	52.2
Muslim	77	38.5	68	34.0	29	29.0	174	34.8
Christian	7	3.5	3	1.5	---	---	10	2.0
Buddhist	22	11.0	17	8.5	13	13.0	52	10.0
Jainism	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---
Any Others	---	---	3	1.5	---	---	3	0.6
Total	200	100	200	100	100	100	500	100

The above table made it clear that of the respondents workers working in residential construction work , 94(47.0%) are Hindus, followed by 77(38.5%) are Muslims, about 22(11.0%) of the respondents are Buddhists , about 7(3.5%) of the respondents are Christians and from Jainism and no respondents are there from religions other than stated above. As expressed by the respondents working in construction commercial workers, 109(54.5%) are Hindus by religion. About 68(34.0%) are Muslims, followed by 17(8.5%) who are Buddhists , Christians and other religions are about 3(1.5%) each and none of the respondents are from Jain religion. It is noted that 58(58.0%) respondents working in public utility works are

Hindus, followed by 29(29.0%) are Muslims, about 13(13.0%) are Buddhists and none of the respondents belong to Christian , Jainism and any other religions.

It is revealed that out of total 500(100%), respondents from residential, commercial and public utility construction workers, 261(52.2%) are Hindus followed by 174(34.8%) are Muslims, about 52(10.4%) are belonging to Buddhism , and only 3(0.6%) of the respondents are from other religions and there are no workers belonging to Jainism . Comparatively Hindus and Muslims are constituting all the respondents and only a few respondents are from other religions such as Sikh, Buddhist,and Jain.

**Caste wise distribution of the respondents:****Table No. 1.3 Caste wise distribution of the respondents**

particular	Residential Worker		Commercial construction worker		Public Utility construction worker		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Scheduled caste	43	21.5	52	26.0	24	24.0	119	23.8
Scheduled Tribe	18	9.0	16	8.0	11	11.0	45	9.0
OBC	112	56.0	101	50.0	53	53.0	266	53.2
Others	27	13.0	31	15.5	12	12.0	70	14.0
Total	200	100	200	100	100	100	500	100

Like religion, the castes of the respondents also play an important role in determining the culture, social

practices and conventions in the society. Hence the information of the caste of the respondents is collected and present in

the following table The caste of the respondents working in residential construction worker shows that majority i.e., 112(56.0%) are from the other backward caste, followed by 43(21.5%) are from Scheduled caste, about 27(13.5%) are from other castes and only about 18(9.0%) are of Scheduled tribes. As revealed by the respondents working in commercial building constructions, 101(50.5%) are from other backward caste followed by about 52(26.0%) are from Scheduled caste, about 31(15.5%) are from other caste and the remaining 16(8.0%) are from Scheduled tribes.

It is surprising to note from the above table that 53(53.0%) of the respondents working in public utility works are from other backward caste followed by 24(24.0%) are from Scheduled caste, about 12(12.0%) are from other communities and the remaining 11(11.0%) are from Scheduled tribes

respectably. To sum up , of all the respondents, 266(53.2%) are from other backward class(OBC) followed by 119(23.8%) are Scheduled caste, about 70(14.0%) are from other castes and the remaining only 45(9.0%) are from Scheduled tribes. Compared to the respondents from other groups, majority of the women construction workers are from other backward classes.

#### **Construction work Experience:**

To a great extent, construction work is unskilled. But it is noted that construction work is risky, as women have to work on the multi-storied buildings , there is also risk of high power electricity , electricity cables, problem of falling, etc., In this respect, to a greater extent, there is need for more number of years of experience is needed for the women construction workers.

**Table No. Construction work experience**

particular	Residential Worker		Commercial construction worker		Public Utility construction worker		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Below 5 years	60	30.0	74	37.0	57	57.0	191	38.2
6-10 years	103	51.5	97	48.5	32	32.0	232	46.4
11-20 years	29	14.5	27	13.5	11	11.0	67	13.4
Above 20 Years	08	4.0	2	1.0	--	--	10	2.0
Total	200	100	200	100	100	100	500	100

It is noted from the above table ,that as expressed by respondents working in residential construction work, 103(51.5%) have the construction work experience between 6 to 10 years followed by 60(30.0%) have the work experience below 5 years, about 29(14.5%) have the work experience between 11 to 20 years, only 8(4.0%) of the respondents are having the construction work experience of more than 20 years. Among the respondents from commercial building construction workers, 97(48.5%) are having the

experience of between 6 to 10 years, followed by about 74(37.0%) have the experience below 5 years, 27(13.5%) have the work experience 11 to 2 years and the remaining 2 (1.0%) have more than 20 years of construction work experience.

Of the Respondents working in public Utility construction work experience 57 (57.0%) respondents have the work experience below 5 years, followed by 32(32.0%) are having between 6 to 10 years of experience, about 11(11.0%) have 11 years to 20

years of experience, and none of the respondents have more than 20 years of construction work experience. Of all the women construction workers covered under the presents study, 232 (46.4%) are by having the work experience between 6 to 10 years followed 191 (38.2%) have the experience below 5 years, about 67( 13.4%) have the work experience between 11 to 12 years the reaming 10(2.0%) Of the Respondents have construction work experience of more than 20 years. An overwhelming majority of the Respondents are having the work experience below 10 years, it shows that after considerable number of experience, many of the women construction workers may be choosing other kind of occupations.

**Suggestion:**

- 1) Create awareness on the right of women construction workers and set up mechanism of redressal.
- 2) Provide extra leisure time for feeding mother construction workers in the work place.
- 3) Suggested to formulate self employments training and financial assistance to the women construction workers to start their own employment and to empower them.
- 4) Provide mid-day meal facilities for feeding mother construction workers.

**Findings:**

Women construction workers are unskilled and illiterate worker, which make them very vulnerable to exploitation. Being part of an unorganized and fragmented sector their bargaining power is low and they can't easily fight against injustice. They are often not paid mini um wage and even the agreed wages are not paid in time. Moreover, their working time and hours are not well regulated and they do not get paid when they work overtime. The working condition and the facilities provided at the sites are fer from satisfactory. Most of the companies do

not even provide safety belt, protection eye wear, hand gloves, shoes or helmets to their workers.

**Conclusion:**

In India, women constitute almost half of the total workforce. However, over 96 per cent of women work in the informal sector constitutes 93 percent of the workforce of the population of India .Moreover these worker contributed 62percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) AND 50 percentto the national income . This sector include worker employed in a wide range of economic activities, from street vendors and casual workers in a tea –shop to agriculture worker small and marginal farmers to bidi workers, construction workers, salt pan workers and sub-contracted and temporary workers of factories. However, unlike workers in the formal sectors, they do not have access to regular incomes or welfare benefits making them extremely vulnerable to change and insecurity .Service so that they cannot claim at the time of termination of service or completion of work or if they resign benefits like gratuity, etc. The women workers are grossly discriminated against and although they do the same work as men, are not paid equal wages for equally skilled workers across industries or wage discrimination, No medical care. The present paper discussed on the nature of work of women in the Construction Industry. Further, on the basis of different studies conducted on the women in Construction, the present study analysed the problems of the women Construction workers. *The International Labour Organisation says that women represent:*

1. 50% of the population
2. 30% of the labour force
3. Perform 60% of all working hours
4. Receive 10% of the world's income
5. Own less than 1% of the world's property

Women's economic participation can be mentioned in the field of production of

goods and services accounted in the national income statistics. However, female work participation has always been low at 26% compared to 52% of men. The problem is that women have always been at work; only the definitions of work and work plan have never been defined or realistic to include their contribution to the economy and the society.

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