

Research Article

Labouring Brick by Brick: An Investigative Study of Female Migrant Construction Workers in Mysore City, Karnataka, India

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ABSTRACT

Various Indian census data shows rural to urban migration has been noticeably increasing, especially since 1971. Migration has a history of time immemorial; migration has both positive and negative consequences. It has a large impact on living standards, income and employment of the migrants and has increased nowadays because of industrialization, globalization and the privatization, rural to urban migration is a very common phenomenon today. People migrate to cities in searching up better employment and other opportunities. One of the major issues in case of migration system India is the seasonal nature of migration. Poverty unemployment and under-employment of the parents are the major social reasons forcing women to do some odd jobs to supplement the meager family income. Migrant's construction workers are being paid very low while compared to the local workers. Mediators heavily exploit the workers. The socio-economic conditions of female migrant's workers are very pathetic. This paper is based on the study conducted in Mysore to find out the plight of the migrant female construction workers in Mysore, south Karnataka and this paper concludes that the level of socio-economic development of the construction workers is the need of the hour.

Keywords: Migration, health, wage, education, construction, female

INTRODUCTION

"The construction sector is the biggest employer, but the workers are the most neglected. First, the unions had the power to register them, but somehow that was withdrawn. A lot of NGOs and unions come to me regarding this," Sinha (2010).

In all human society irrespective of its simplicity and complexity and no matter how small or big, no matter how advanced or traditional there exists some sort of simple or complex emigrational issues. Migrant community is very vital because it can set the destiny of the any society, country, any type of development or any kind of achievement, etc. According to recent Census of 2011, 308 million persons were migrants based on place of last residence, which constitute about 30% of the population. According to the 1991 census, the estimated workforce in India is around 295,832,100. The construction industry only employs around 5,543,000 of the total workforce (KBOCWB, 2009). There is an unending increase in their numbers all over the country. It is quite remarked that migration as an area of research study is not new, Nowadays, there searchers are being paid more focused on the increased mobility of women from one part to the world another various studies have proven that in India migration is highly seasonal and circular in nature this migration is due to different push and pull factors, pull factors includes various financial and work opportunities while push factors include poverty, natural disasters, etc. People normally take decision to more from one place to another after weighing risks and benefits and other direct and indirect factors. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2008), migration also largely depends on possible benefits from the migration, knowledge about new places, travel, destination and return. Studies found that poverty under wage, unskill are many reasons in causing migration in India due to the lack of good opportunities in rural part. Poverty, big households illiterates are the major issues behind rural urban migration of female members. Some other factors like agricultural failure, absence of values and ethnics counts a lot (Kundur, 2001).

Pandit *et al.* (2011) writes “Construction workers are one of such migratory group. They may not be pure migratory workers but they have maximum mobility because of the nature of their work” It is found reported that construction industry has provided employment to more than 35 million migrant workers in India. It is found that both skilled and unskilled migrants can found suitable places in these unorganized sectors, upward mobility with better wage structure is quite possible in construction sector. Experts have studied role of education on migration and found that migrants would be more educated then non-migrants with special reference to place of origin and destination, who migrates from rural areas finally will be settled in highly reasonable jobs like construction work, daily wages, labour, hotel and restaurant, etc. exploitation of migrant workers is also a serious issue, people migrates because of good earning. However, in urban centre they would be severely exploited in terms of wage, working conditions and other facilities (Prasad, 2003).

While explaining socio-economic status of female construction workers, Tiwari *et al.* (2012) writes, “The socio-economic status of the workers showed that they were poor. They are daily wage earners and maintain their family with small income with difficulty. It was noted that most of them were literate. They were addicted to alcohol, smoking *bidi*, and cigarette. They did not consume adequate amount of nutritious food. In most of the cases it was found that they lived in *kacha* houses. A good proportion of workers cook their food in the same room in which they live” (Tiwari *et al.*, 2012). A country like India, where there is abundance of not only natural resources but also labour, skill, population, and opportunities. Public Private Partnership (PPP) can definitely serve its purpose through the channeled and regulated activities for ensuring inclusive development of the migrants.

With the transformation to market economy, new kinds of pressure have emerged on women especially among the poor to contribute to family income or to provide for themselves. Countries like India witnessed for rapid urbanization. The increase of poverty, family disintegration, migration and population displacement, erosion of social safety nets, deterioration in health and education services also caused rural people becoming poorer and forced them to urban area looking for job avenues. This paper deals about the plight of female migrant construction workers in Mysore city, India.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objectives of the study are

1. To study about extinct, problems and other issues of the female migrant construction workers in Mysore.
2. To provide policy suggestions

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Primary data has been collected through survey method with a pre tested interview schedule, focus group discussion. Secondary data about the programmes and their coverage, etc. has also been collected through published sources.

a) Study area

This study has been conducted in the selected upcoming layouts in Mysore, districts of Karnataka, India.

b) Sampling Design

A total of 75 female migrant workers have been surveyed in Mysore district.

1. Research Components

The proposed research study consists of two major components:

- a) Survey
- b) Interview and Consultation

2. Analysis of Data

The quantitative data has been analyzed using SPSS software.

RESULT

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Migrant workers on Type of Work

Category	Count	%	X ²	p
Helper	55	73.3	3.120	0.00
Mason	2	2.6		
Others	18	24.0		
Total	75	100.0		

Source: Primary data

Table 2: Distribution of the Migrant workers by the type of Employment

Type of employment	Count	%	X ²	p
Long-term employee(without contract)	29	38.6	2.111	0.00
Causal labour (piece wage)	24	32.0		
Casual labour (daily wages)	22	29.3		
Total	75	100.0		

Table3: Reasons for Migration

Reason	Count	%	X ²	p
Poverty/drought	45	60.0	1.789	0.00
Additional Income	12	16.0		
Big house holds	12	16.0		
Unemployment	6	8.0		
Total	75	100.0		

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Table 4: Schooling

Education	Count	%	X²	p
No Schooling	39	52.3	4.290	0.00
Lower primary	18	24.0		
Upper primary	12	16.3		
PUC/Degree	6	8.0		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 5: Monthly Income

Earning in rupees	Count	%	X²	p
1000–1500	34	45.3	2.901	0.00
1500–2500	19	25.3		
2500–3000	10	13.3		
Above -3000	12	16.0		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 6: Health Problems

Problems	Count	%	X²	p
Asthma	32	42.6	2.911	0.00
Skin Problem	23	29.3		
Back/Knee Pain	15	20.0		
Others	5	6.6		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 7: Difficulties felt by the Construction Workers

Difficulties	Count	%	X²	p
Heavy load of work	33	44.0	3.891	00
Sexual Harassment	17	22.6		
No off/rest/torches	20	26.6		
Other	5	3.7		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 8: Working Hours

Difficulties	Count	%	X²	p
More than 10 hours	53	70.6	3.125	0.00
More than 6 hours	12	16.0		
5–7 hours	10	13.3		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 9: Safety Measurement

Safety	Count	%	X²	p
Full safety measures	13	17.3	3.790	0.00
Semi Protection	12	16.0		
No safety	50	66.6		
Total	75	100.0		

Table 10: Beneficiary of the Government Programmes

Schemes	Count	%	X²	p
BPL card/housing/loan	18	24.0	2.098	0.00
Free medical care	9	12.0		
Free health insurance	5	3.7		
Old aged pension scheme	12	16.0		
No such benefits obtained	31	41.3		
Total	75	100.0		

DISCUSSION

This study is found that long house of work, injuries are most common among the workers they even not provided any protective measures (Table-6). The weak implementation of labour's law is also a major issue; workers have been hired for contracts by the mediators. It is found that migrants have been most preferred in this sector as they can be hired or fired at any time without assigning any reasons. More over migrants who are working have poor bargaining power and low legislative protection. Migrant's workers are being paid very low when compared to the local workers. Mediators are exploiting the workers like anything. The living conditions of migrant's workers is very pathetic. Sometime they seem that they have been completely isolation from the local population which is a clear cut

violation of inter-state violation of 1979. Workers have to stay on the work sides or in temporarily built run down houses without any sanitation. Construction sector of Karnataka is undergoing drastic changes in recent years—creation of new layouts construction of houses is fast increasing. People who construct houses normally entrust the work to a contractor or in some rare cases he hires workers as a daily laborer. If a labour hired by the contractor or the subcontractor will be always lower which is against minimum wage act. Weekly payment is most common here. Less opportunities, unemployment, drought and unfinished rural development programmes are the main reasons behind rural migration to urban areas. Poverty is a social evil in which a section of the society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities of the life. Further, it is observed that the basically households especially those belonging to the lower economic strata of the society cannot survive unless even female in the family also work. Female labour, therefore, it is an inevitable consequence of the economic forces operating at a family level. In India basically poor people forces their children to go to the work because augmentation of their income is essential for the survival of the family. The urban poor and rural marginalized and landless poor family sends their female member for wage earning.

CONCLUSION

The plight of migrant construction workers is quite pathetic. The urban anti-poverty programme should be threefold: poverty reduction, construction of productive assets and promoting mainstream employment subsequently. We strongly believe that an Act needs to include this long-term focus of the programme, as the strategies use of surplus manpower for sustainable development has to be an important component of any new programme. Government should target poverty as a vital point embeds with migration problem. Policies and programmes should be implemented in a decentralized manner and there should be enough scope for grass root level development of the poor women. This kind of programme should be more suited to the local conditions and norms. Government should bring equal wage policy strictly in all unorganized sectors soon for speed inclusion.

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REPORT

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