

International Conference on

*Multidisciplinary Research in Global Challenges and
Perspectives of Sustainable Development*

on 21th December 2019 at St. Jerome's College, Anandhanadarkudy,
Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India

Problems of Women Construction Workers in Kovilpatti

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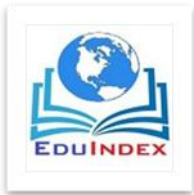
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Abstract

The female labour force constitutes one third of the rural workers in India. Women workers face serious problems and constraints related to work such as lack of continuity, insecurity, wage discrimination, unhealthy job relationship, absence of medical and accident care etc. The exploitation of female labourers in rural religious happens both. Harassment is a serious problem of women construction workers. They faced different health hazard physical problem and adverse outcomes. Construction industry is the major source of employment for workers in the unorganized sector. The aim of this study is to describe the problems faced by the women construction workers in Kovilpatti city. A sample of 100 women construction workers were taken for study and the problems and prospects were evaluated with the help of an Interview Schedule. The collected data were tabulated and analysed with the help of SPSS. Statistical tools like percentage analysis, reliability analysis and factor analysis were applied. The result depicts the plight of women in the construction sector. It is suggested that regular employment and an assurance of social security will help them to overcome poverty and will give a dignified life.

Key Words: Construction Workers, Female Labour, Problems, Unorganised, Women



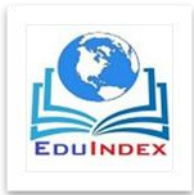
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INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of women in the labor market signifies an important trend regarding women's employment. Most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Construction Sector comes under Unorganized Sector of country. The Construction sector has the largest number of unorganized workers in India. The construction industry is typically a male dominated industry and presents a major challenge for equal opportunities for women. The participation of women in the building sector is an exception rather than a rule. In most countries of the world the building industry is almost exclusively the domain of men. In India a large number of women are actively involved in the construction process itself. In spite of their large numbers, women construction workers are seen as secondary/ temporary workers with seldom any opportunities for training, upward mobility, wage guarantees, fringe benefits or social protections. The unorganized sector is characterized by the presence of factors viz. long hours of work, wage discrimination of men and women, lack of job security, no minimum wages, lack of minimum facilities at work place, ill-treatment, heavy physical work and sexual exploitation etc. Most of the domestic workers and construction workers are primarily women who have migrated from rural areas for economic gain. Kalpana 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's are remains at same level of skill even after working few number of years. Kumar M. Dileep (2012) conducted a study on Inimitable Issues of Construction Workers: Case Study. Construction workers are available everywhere in all countries. The percentage of construction workers is more in developing countries like India



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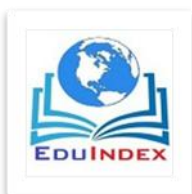
as employment intensity is much higher in lower income countries than higher income ones. This study was conducted in 82 construction sites. Migrated construction workers faced some major problems like poor health condition, arduous working life, harassment, inadequate and unequal wage structure, long working hours, poor housing facilities, atrocities on women workers, lack of safety measures and proper education for children of construction workers. The study stressed on the need to create awareness of all labour rights and recommended proper intervention programme as well as proper implementation of labour law for this sector. The present study which is conducted among fifty women construction workers from Kovilpatty results with the following.

Socio Economic Status

Socio-economic status is defined as the position of an individual on a social-economic scale that measures factors such as education, income, type of occupation, place of residence and, in some populations and so on. Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Here the variables like age, education, residential status, monthly income, marital status, size of the family, Earning members of the family and house ownership.

Table 1 Socio Economic Status

Items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age wise Classification			
15 to 25	8	16.0	16.0
26 to 35	17	34.0	50.0
36 to 45	13	26.0	76.0
Above 45	12	24.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Education wise classification			
Illiterate	19	38.0	38.0
Primary	14	28.0	66.0
Middle	7	14.0	80.0



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Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India

SSLC	5	10.0	90.0
HSC	5	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Residential status			
Village	29	58.0	58.0
Town	12	24.0	82.0
City	9	18.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Monthly Income Status (Rs)			
Below 10000	5	10.0	10.0
10000 - 20000	10	20.0	30.0
20000 - 30000	19	38.0	68.0
Above 30000	16	32.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Marital status			
Married	22	44.0	44.0
Unmarried	6	12.0	56.0
Widow	12	24.0	80.0
Separated	10	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Family Size			
2-4	10	20.0	20.0
5-7	27	54.0	74.0
Above 7	13	26.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Earning members of the family			
One	6	12.0	12.0
Two	31	62.0	74.0



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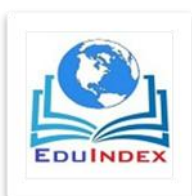
Three	11	22.0	96.0
More than Three	2	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Housing Ownership			
Owned	32	64.0	64.0
Rented	18	36.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Survey

It is seen from the above table that 22 percent consist of males and 78 percent female, 61 percent within the age group of 15-20 and 39 percent between 20 and 25. With regards to the educational level, 57 percent are studying Under Graduation, 38 percent are studying Post Graduation and the remaining 5 percent are doing Master of Philosophy. Out of them, 41 percent belong to Science Major, 38 percent belong to Arts Major and 21 percent belong to Commerce Major. With regards to the monthly income of the family, 20 percent have the capacity of earning between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 10000, 58 percent between Rs. 10001 and Rs. 20000 and 22 percent between Rs. 20001 and Rs. 30000. Individually, the sample respondents have the capacity of earning the maximum of Rs. 4000 (45%), 53 percent between Rs. 4001 and Rs. 8000 and the rest 2 percent between Rs. 8001 and Rs. 12000. Out of the sample respondents, 7 percent married and 93 percent unmarried, 16 percent have the membership in the family to the maximum of 3, 73 percent between 4-6 family members, 8 percent between 7-9 family members and 3 percent above 9 members, 18 percent living in joint family while 82 percent living in nuclear family. Three percent of the sample respondents have single earning member in the family, 64 percent have two earning members in the family, 23 percent have three earning members in the family and 10 percent have four earning members in the family, 52 percent live in owned houses, 38 percent live in rented houses and 10 percent live in leasehold houses.

Table 2 Employment Status of Students

Items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Work Experience in Years			



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Multidisciplinary Research in Global Challenges and Perspectives of Sustainable Development

on 21th December 2019 at St. Jerome's College, Anandhanadarkudy,
Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India

Less than 2	14	28.0	28.0
2 - 4	17	34.0	62.0
More than 4	19	38.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Sufficiency of Amount			
Fully	8	16.0	16.0
Partially	29	58.0	74.0
Not enough	13	26.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	
Type of Work			
Water Feeding	4	8.0	8.0
Material Supply	3	6.0	14.0
Cement Mixing	6	12.0	26.0
Mall Mixing	2	4.0	30.0
Stone Shaping	7	14.0	44.0
Slab Pouring	4	8.0	52.0
Load Carrying	6	12.0	64.0
Breaking Stones	7	14.0	78.0
Digging	2	4.0	82.0
Concreting	4	8.0	90.0
Leveling	1	2.0	92.0
Plastering	1	2.0	94.0



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Mason Work	2	4.0	98.0
Supervision	1	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: Primary Survey

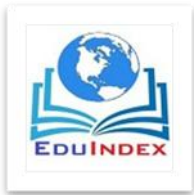
Out of the sample group, 28 percent have the maximum experience of two years, 34 percent between 2 and 4 years and 38 percent have the work experience of more than four years. Regarding the sufficiency of earning, 16 percent feel that the amount is fully enough for them, 58 percent have expressed that it meets only partial needs of them and for 26 percent the amount is not enough. Among the sample respondents, 8 percent involved in Water Feeding, Material Supply (6%), Cement Mixing (12%), Mall Mixing (4%), Stone Shaping (14%), Slab Pouring (8%), Load Carrying (12%), Breaking Stones (14%), Digging (4%), Concreting (8%), Leveling (2%), Plastering (2%), Mason Work (4%) and Supervision (2%). Hence it is observed that though women are involved in all types of job, the wages are sufficient only to 16 percent of the sample respondents.

Problems of Construction Women Workers

The exploitation of female laborers in construction sector happens both horizontally and vertically. The main reason for women to enter the construction sector is lack of education and lack of quality education system in Indian society. Illiteracy is the major problem because they do not get time to educate themselves. And low income of the family is the compelling factor for the women common to choose for seeking jobs in unorganized sectors to increase the family earning to sustain livelihood. Unemployment and temporary work are more common among women. Work related factors, most women workers do not have any social security or access to health care benefits.

Table 3 Reliability Statistics for the Problems of Women Construction Workers

Item-Total Statistics



**International Conference on
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Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India

Problems	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Hard Work	49.46	154.702	.883	.883
Low Income	50.32	162.753	.491	.896
High Working Hours	50.12	159.087	.707	.889
Exploitation	50.00	159.265	.607	.892
Sexual Harassment	51.22	169.032	.295	.904
Lack of basic Facilities	49.92	160.810	.486	.897
Hazard Working Condition	50.38	159.955	.526	.895
Insecurity Job	50.84	164.545	.475	.897
Dangerous Working Condition	50.44	161.068	.477	.897
Health Problems	50.14	160.000	.520	.896
Wage Discrimination	49.38	154.444	.854	.884
Absence of Child Care Facility	50.40	161.837	.503	.896
Lack of Seniority	50.02	159.122	.526	.895
No Respect	49.70	156.092	.726	.888
Heavy Physical Work	49.46	155.315	.810	.885
Reliability Statistics				
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items			
.899	15			

There are fifteen problems identified as the problems faced by the sample women construction workers. It is noted from the Reliability Statistics that all the statements are reliable as the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.899 which is comparatively high and the correlation is also positive for all the fifteen problems taken for study. The correlation is high for the problems Hard Work (0.883), Wage Discrimination (0.854) and Heavy Physical Work (0.810) and is low for the problem Sexual Harassment (0.295).

Table 4 ANOVA for Reliability Statistics



International Conference on

Multidisciplinary Research in Global Challenges and Perspectives of Sustainable Development

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Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People		595.233	49	12.148	10.754	.000
Within People	Between Items	183.840	14	13.131		
	Residual	837.627	686	1.221		
	Total	1021.467	700	1.459		
Total		1616.700	749	2.158		
Grand Mean = 3.58						

Source: Derived

It is known from the ANOVA test that the mean square Between People is 12.148 and Between Items is 13.131. The F value is 10.754 and is statistically significant as the p value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The grand Mean is 3.58 and so it is stated that all the statements taken for analysis are statistically significant and can be used for further analysis.

Table 5 Sampling Adequacy Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.780
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	444.728
	df	105
	Sig.	.000

The Sampling Adequacy Test is conducted with the help of KMO and Bartlett's Test. As per the test, the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.780 which is sufficient for further analysis. The value of chi square is 444.728 for degrees of freedom of 105 and the test is statistically significant as the p value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05.



International Conference on

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Table 6 Factor Analysis for the Problems of Women Construction Workers

Rotated Component Matrix^a			
	Problems		
	Health	Insecurity	Hazardous
Dangerous working condition	.830	.030	.056
Health Problems	.746	.133	.107
Exploitation	.741	.300	.098
Hard Work	.690	.531	.339
Low Income	.086	.819	.050
No Respect	.527	.658	.125
Absence of child care facility	.052	.638	.276
Wage Discrimination	.507	.606	.430
Unsecured job	.304	.599	-.014
Heavy Physical Work	.538	.558	.382
Sexual Harassment	.120	-.162	.747
Lack of Basic Facilities	.017	.337	.700
Hazardous Working Condition	-.014	.412	.675
Lack of Seniority	.414	.064	.605
Long Working Hours	.383	.429	.520
% of Variance	23.524	22.905	18.032
Cumulative %	23.524	46.428	64.461
% to total	36	36	28
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			

Health Problem: The four problems filtered under this component are Dangerous



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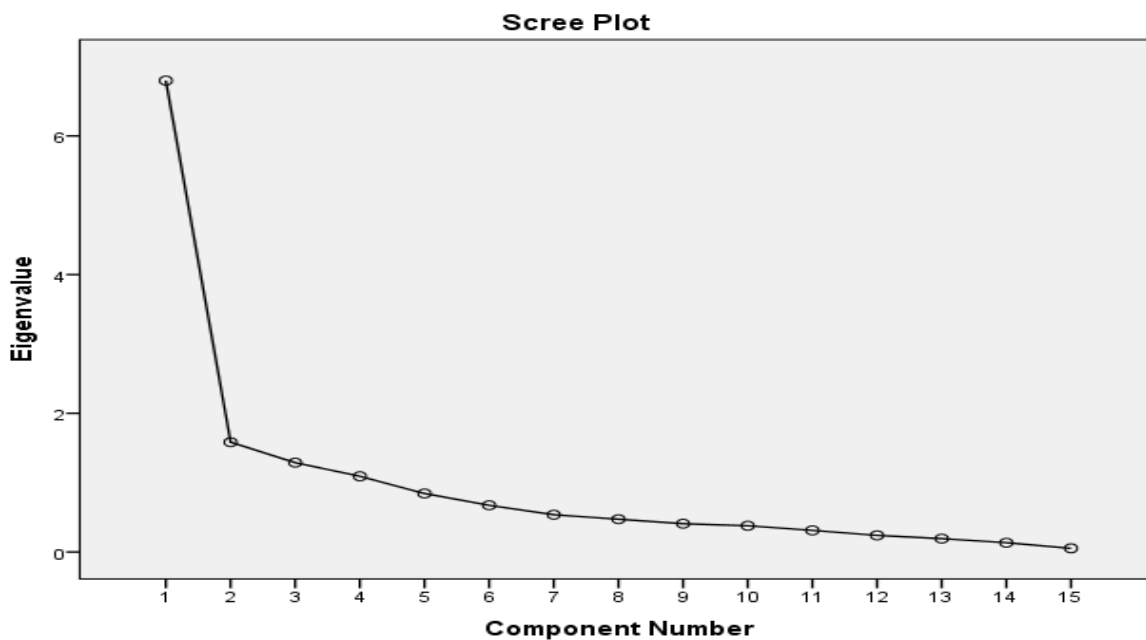
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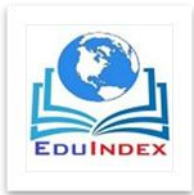
working condition (.830), Health Problems (.746), Exploitation (.741) and Hard Work (.690). This factor has a variance of 23.524 percent and form 36 percent out of total.

Insecurity Problem: The six problems filtered under this component are Low Income (.819), No Respect (.658), Absence of child care facility (.638), Wage Discrimination (.606), unsecured job (.599) and Heavy Physical Work (.558). This factor has a variance of 22.905 percent and form 36 percent out of total.

Hazardous Problem: The five problems filtered under this component are Sexual Harassment (.747), Lack of Basic Facilities (.700), Hazardous Working Condition (.675), Lack of Seniority (.605) and Long Working Hours (.520). This factor has a variance of **18.032** percent and form 28 percent out of total.

The scree plot explains that there is a single problem which has the eigen value of more than one and other 14 problems are having values less than one.





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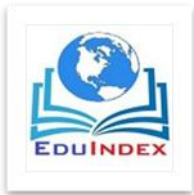
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CONCLUSION

Construction industry is an integral part of a country's infrastructure and industrial development. But, it is typically a male dominated industry and presents a major challenge for equal opportunities for women. In developing countries like India, women constitute more of unskilled workforce at sites and their presence in managerial positions is very minimal. In Construction industry, the women workers do not have a choice to work, or not to work, due to dire need of income. The limited opportunities available to women are mostly low paid, low status jobs in the informal sector; jobs which do not have any possibilities of betterment, advancement of efficiency or training, to enable them to enter better jobs at a later stage. In the overall state of unemployment and lack of opportunities, women hold a secondary place to men in the race of employment. The main problems faced by the women construction are categorized as Health Problem, Insecurity Problem and Hazardous Problem. To resolve these issues and for more number of women to be included and retained in the construction industry, they need to be supported and properly trained through legal as well as social interventions so that associated social customs are also addressed. Hence it is strongly recommended that mere framing of policies and Acts may not serve the purpose. Work has to be done at the grass root level with proper feedback system in place to ensure that policies of equal treatment for equal work are actually giving results.

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