

A STUDY OF WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN RAJKOT CITY WITH REFERENCE TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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Abstract

Construction sector has been playing an important role in the process of the development of Indian economy. It absorbs most numbers of unorganised workers after the agriculture sector. From the view point of employment, this sector has attracted policy makers and research scholar to discuss the problems and opportunities in it. Women workers are indivisible part of construction sector. The proportion of Women workers has increased with 6% in rural area and 2% in urban area from 1977 to 2011-12. The present study is based on the primary data and data were collected by scheduling method of survey from the different areas of Rajkot City. The researcher has tried to examine the awareness of social security and social welfare schemes of government and it has been tried to examine whether the gender discrimination prevails or not. The status of health and occupations hazards were also considered in this analysis. It is found that more than 82.5% Women workers are unaware about any kind of social security or welfare schemes and those who have knowledge know very little of them. The share of Women monthly income is found at 43.20% in total family income. They are engaged in low skilled works and are paid less than male workers. This study shows that despite of availability of various schemes and programmes of the government, equality and justice is still not ensured for the Women workers.

Keywords: Women workers, social security and social welfare, equality and justice



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1. Introduction

Now a days Women walk with men in every step of advancement. Veds of hinduism have given a great place to them in the society. It is said in Munusmriti that the divinity exists where women are honoured. Breaking the walls of orthodox and rigid structure and questionable codes of conduct of the society, women play their role at workplace as well as at households. Unfortunately, they are not treated what they are deserved for. Women comprise half of Indian population and account for nearly 1/3rd of the total workforce. (SARDI, 1999) The status of woman worker is changed after the independence and especially after the post-reform era in India. Women work-force participation has increased from 19% to 27% in 2011, however this value reached to 34% 1999. Yet this figures are very lower than that are for men. The

considerable numbers of women workers are engaged in construction works. The most part of women construction workers are unorganised so that they face socio-economic insecurities. Moreover, they face more problems than man such as lower wages, wage discrimination, exploitation, and unhealthy working relations. Therefore the Government's role becomes very important to protect and promote them through social security and welfare schemes.

2. Social Security and Social Welfare

To safeguard the interests of workers, the Government has initiated various social security and social welfare schemes. Social security is one of the main pillars of development. The concept of social security has been evolved at the different course of time. It protects the persons from the uncertainty and risk of socio-economic life. The Beveridge report argued that there were 'five giants' that were stalking the land and that should be tackled. They are want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. . ILO defines it as "the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner." (ILO) "The security of an income to take place of the earnings when they are interrupted by unemployment by sickness or accident to provide for retirement through age, to provide against the loss of support by the death of another person and meet exceptional expenditure, such as those connected with birth, death and marriage. (Gupta, 1986) According to Dreze and Sen, "The basic idea of social security is to use social means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability to deprivation."¹ Robson defines "Social Security is a way of ensuring freedom from want of or poverty which is one of the formidable obstacles in the way of progress Social Security implies insurance against those misfortunes to which an individual remains exposed even when the condition of society as whole improves."²

3. Need for Social Security and Social Welfare

Each person on this earth has right to live with the dignity. Social security and welfare programmes ensures that a person can live with socio-economic freedom. The terms 'social security' and 'social welfare' are considered as the same in meaning. But they are different in meaning. The former is the policy oriented decisions taken by the authority to protect people from socio-economic insecurities, while the later indicates a fair treatment to all with the equality and empowerment. Instead of being different in concepts, both concepts are strongly

¹ Dreze and Sen, 'Public Action For Social Security' in E. Ahmed, Jean Dreze, John Hills and Anartya Sen (eds.) 'Social Security in Developing Countries,' 1999, Oxford University Press: New Delhi, p.5.

² W.A Robson's 'Social Security,' London, p.428.

inter-related with each other. Social welfare can be achieved through social security measures. The concept of social security and social welfare is as old as the human civilisation is. Human being has been always seeking the ways to reduce uncertainties of life.

4. Status of Social Security and Social Welfare for Women in India

Women workers are playing a vital role in process of industrialisation. They are mostly engaged in low skilled works and are exploited physically and economically. The construction sector in India is inherited with gender biases. They are, being casual labourers, receiving low wages. (Kakad, Technology and Development, 2002) Therefore, it becomes very important for the Government to step into providing protection should make promotional efforts through social security and welfare schemes.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) formulated some basic rights of women such as The Right to Equal Pay, ILO Convention No. 100, The Right to Equal Treatment, ILO Convention No. 111, The Right to Equal Training and Career Opportunities, ILO Convention No. 142, The Right to Maternity Protection, ILO Convention No. 3, Maternity Protection, 1919, ILO Convention No. 103, The Right to Combine Work and Domestic Responsibilities, ILO Convention No. 156, The Right to Paid Work, ILO Convention No. 168, Employment Promotion and Protection, 1988, ILO Convention No. 158, The Right to Safe & Healthy Work Environment Free from Sexual Harassment, Resolution on Equal Opportunity and Equal Treatment for men and Women in Employment, 1985. (Chakravarti, 2005) These rights are comprehensive in nature to protect the interests of women workers. The Government of India has also ensured the basic rights indicated by the ILO. The Minimum Wage Act, 1948, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, The Contract Labour (Regulation and Prohibition) Act, 1970, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1996, The Building and Other Construction Workers Cess Act, 1996, Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008 are the major legal provisions for women construction workers. Apart from these acts, there are also other laws to safeguard the interests of women workers such as Industrial Dispute Act 1947, The Factories Act 1948, The Employees State Insurance Act 1948, The Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1962, The Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act, 1963, The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, etc. The Central and State governments have also implemented different welfare schemes such as Indira Gandhi National Old age Pension Scheme 1995, National

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Family Welfare Scheme 1995, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana 2008, Atal Pension Scheme 2015, Shramik Annapurn Yojana, 2017 (Gujarat Government), Vatsalya Maa Amrutam Yojana, 2018 (Gujarat Government), Janshri Bima Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana etc.

In the Indian constitution, Article 23 and 24 which are under the heading 'Fundamental Right' and Article 39 clauses (e) and (u) and Article 45, which are under the heading 'Directive Principles' of State Policy are covering the rights of women. (Chakravarti, 2005)

5. Review of Literature

Ravikumar (2013), Rai & Sarkar (2012) and SEWA (2000) found most women workers were illiterate and faced harassment at home as well as at workplace. They were paid less than men. Women intended to work as mason and they were ready to get training. He said women could be a good competitor if they were given proper training. (Datey, 2005) and (Ravi Kumar, 2013) Women workers in unorganized sector were suffering from some problems of insecurity of job, economic and physical exploitation. Their work could not enable them to give better life to their children (Benarji, 1985). C. P. John (2004) argues to provide social security to the construction workers. Kakad (2002) reveals women worker being unskilled and wide gender gap in construction industry. Further she put emphasise on effective implementation of the Building and Other Construction Workers Act. Dave (2012) the main reason for the wage discrimination as the inability of women to do tough and heavy works.

A study by Naagarajan (2010) explains long working hours, wage discrimination based on gender, high casualization of labour etc were found in this study. Around two-fifth of the workers affected from occupational hazards. The study of Pandit and *et al* (2011) focused on the health status of women construction workers. The results of this study shows high illiteracy and poor health conditions of women workers and around 20% of women had child at the age less than 18 years.

6. Objectives of the Study

The followings are the objectives of the study.

1. To examine the status of awareness among women construction workers about the social security and social welfare schemes in Rajkot City.
2. To examine the gender discrimination in wage payments and in awareness and accessibility of social security and social welfare provisions.
3. To examine educational and health status of women construction workers in Rajkot City.

7. Hypothesis

The Hypothesis of this study are as following:

1. H0: There is no significant relationship between gender and awareness of social security and social welfare schemes.
2. H0: There is no significant relationship between gender and level of wages
3. H0: There is no significant relationship between education and health problems

8. Methodology

8.1 Sample Units

This paper includes the study of construction industry and especially women construction workers in Rajkot City as sample units

8.2 Number of Samples

Total of 50 women and 50 men construction workers have been selected with the convenient sampling method.

8.3 Data Collection

Since the study is based on primary data, scheduling method of data collection is used for this study.

8.4 Variables

Variables of this study are as follows:

1. Independent Variables: Gender, Education, Experience
2. Dependent Variables: Awareness of Social security and social welfare, Wages, Health status, Injuries.

8.5 Tools and Techniques

The researcher has used descriptive statistics for scale variables and frequencies for nominal variables. To check the relationship between gender and awareness of different schemes and between education and health issues Chi-Square Test is applied. To check whether there is relationship between gender and wages Independence Sample t-test is applied.

9. Results and Findings of the Study

The Results of the study are as follows:

9.1 Status of Awareness of Social Security and Social Welfare Schemes

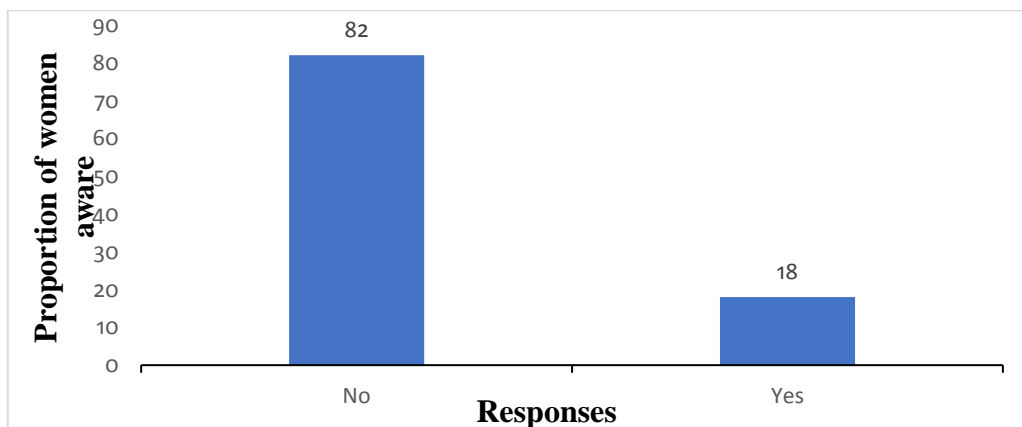
Each person has right to live with dignity. Social security and social welfare schemes protects the persons from the contingences of life. Women workers know very little about the social security and welfare schemes as well as about labour laws. **Table 9.1.1** and **Chart 9.1.1** show that 82% of the women workers are unaware about any kind of provisions of government or

about their fundamental rights. Only 18% workers are aware about the social security, welfare or labour laws.

Table 9.1.1- Knowledge about the Social Security, labour Laws and Social Welfare Schemes

Knowledge about the Social Security, labour Laws and Social Welfare Schemes					
				Cumulative	
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	No	41	82.0	82.0	82.0
	Yes	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Chart-9.1.1 Knowledge about the Social Security, labour Laws and Social Welfare Schemes



The Chi-Square Test results shows men and women workers have same level of awareness.³ Those 18% who are aware about any kind of schemes or laws have knowledge of very less numbers of schemes or laws. Only 4% of them knows about The Minimum Wage Act, 1947 and The Equal Wage Act, 1976. No one knows about The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1996 and The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.

³ See Calculation-1 in Appendix

9.2 Employment and Wage Conditions

Women construction workers are engaged in low skilled works. 90% of women found doing labour works such as loading and unloading bricks, mixing the concrete, helper to the masons, carrying load etc.

Table 9.1.2 Reasons for joining Construction Industry

Reasons	% of Positive Response
Poverty	4.0
Having no other option	16.0
Family occupation	14.0
Own Choice	8.0
Marriage	58.0
Total	100.0

Pie-chart-9.1.1 Reasons for joining Construction Industry

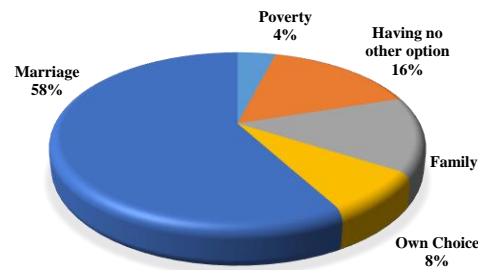
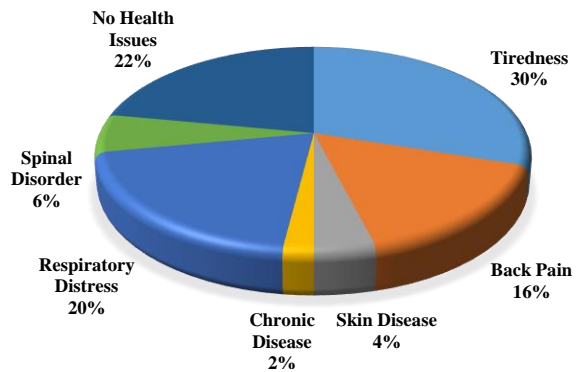


Table 9.1.2 and Pie-chart 9.1.2 reveals that 58% of women have joined construction works because of marriage, 16% had no other option, 14% having family occupation and 8% joined at their own choice. The results of the data reveals that apparent gender discrimination. Women are paid 38.68% less than the payment of men.

Chart-9.3.1 Type of Health Issues



Average Monthly income of women workers found at Rs. 6800 and Rs. 11090 of men. Moreover, women workers accounts for only 42.04% in total family income while men accounts for 75.15%. The less contribution in family income may lead to have weak participation in financial decisions of the family. About 38.5% women cannot spend from their own earned income and they have to give the whole amount to her husband or parents.

9.3 Effect of the Nature of Work on Health Status

As it is fact that the construction industry is dangerous for health. It is a dynamic and hazardous industry (Kines, 2002). The results of the study found all respondents believe that their work affects negatively to their health. Level of education does not help them to reduce their health issues arises from the nature of work. **Table-9.3.1** and **Pie-chart-9.3.1** show that 42.5% of

women face tiredness followed by 27.5% back pain, 15% respiratory distress, 5% skin problems, 5% spinal Disorder and 2.5% chronic diseases.

Table.9.3.1 Type of Health Issues

Health Issue	% of Positive Responce
Tiredness	30
Back Pain	16
Skin Disease	4
Chronic Disease	2
Respiratory Distress	20
Spinal Disorder	6
No Health Issues	22
Total	100

The construction industry is hazardous. The happening of injury is common in this field. 70% of women workers have suffered from different injuries of which 40% injuries happened due to falling from the heights and 25.5% happened due to improper use of equipment.

This reveals lack of availability of safety instruments and lack of training. No female workers found to have received training before or after joining the work. Only 14.3% of women workers

who have suffered from any kind of injuries have not compensated. About 97% women work during the pregnancy of which only 44% are allowed to take rest. Almost all women take their children at the work place and 90% of them do not have chreches at the work place.

All these results show there is intensive hardships in construction works. The work affects badly to their health.

10. Suggestions

Women construction workers have equal rights regarding to wages, working conditions, access of health treatments, financial decision power etc. Most of the results found undesirable. Lack of awareness of social security and welfare schemes, wage discrimination, lack of having proper health treatments, low education, work burden during pregnancy etc are the common findings of this study.

The Centre and the State Governments along with the Constitutional provisions have been trying to protect the interests of unorganised women workers. Somehow information does not reach the targeted population. The effective implementation and proper administration is required to increase awareness and to ensure accessibility of the benefits of social security and welfare schemes.

Improvements in education is an important tool to increase awareness. Girl child education is necessary. Wages of women workers 38.68% less than that is of men. The equality should be ensured by the government and local institution as well as NGOs too. Safety standards should be improved to reduce occurrence of injuries.

11. Conclusion

The construction sector provides employment to the mass. It is a source of bread and butter for millions. Despite of this the labour class which is the indivisible part of this industry, suffers a lot. Lack of awareness of their fundamental rights and of Government's provisions make them vulnerable. Women workers face more problems and experience more insecurities as compare to men in this industry. Low wages, less numbers of days of employment, lack of awareness, high illiteracy, hazardous working condition, exploitation are the common issues with women workers to be taken in to consideration while formulating labour policy. The role of policy makers becomes very important in protecting the interests of women construction workers.

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Appendix

1. Calculation-1 Hypothesis Testing with Chi-Square Test

Ho: There is no significant relationship between gender and awareness of social security and social welfare schemes.

Result of the test:

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
	.932	1	0.334

Here, asymptotic significance is 0.334 which is > 0.05. Therefore Ho is accepted.

2. Calculation-2 Hypothesis Testing with Chi-Square Test

Ho: There is no significant relationship between education and health problems.

Result of the test:

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
	6.67	3	0.083

Here, asymptotic significance is 0.083 which is > 0.05. Therefore Ho is accepted.

3. Calculation-3 Hypothesis Testing with Independent Sample T-test

Ho: H0: There is no significant relationship between gender and level of wages.

Result of test:

Group Statistics					
	Gender of the respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Monthly Income of Respondent	Male	50	11090.00	2465.455	348.668
	Female	50	6786.00	1465.941	207.315

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Monthly Income of Respondent	Equal variances assumed	10.855	.001	10.610	98	.000	4304.000	405.646	3499.008	5108.992
	Equal variances not assumed			10.610	79.798	.000	4304.000	405.646	3496.706	5111.294

Here, significant value of T test is 0.000 which is < 0.05. Therefore Ho is rejected.