

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Construction industry plays a major role in the economic growth of a nation and occupies a pivotal position in the nation's development plans. They are the backbone of the economy as they create establishments for industrial growth. India's construction industry employs a work force of nearly 32 million and its market size is worth about Rs. 2, 48,000 crores. It is the second largest contributor in the GDP after the agricultural sector. The contribution of construction to the GDP at factor cost in 2006-07 was Rs 1, 96,555 crore (XI Five Year Plan, 2007-12, vol II). The share of construction in GDP has increased from 6.1 percent in 2002-03 to 6.9 percent in 2006-07. Also Construction sector is viewed as a service industry. It generates substantial employment and provides growth impetus to other manufacturing sectors like cement, bitumen, iron and steel, chemicals, bricks, paints, tiles etc. whose combined value is Rs. 1, 92,000 crores annually. The construction industry today is a whirlpool of opportunities and advancements progressing at a very fast speed. It is vital because of the desperate need for infrastructure development. The level of a country's development is reflected by its infrastructure. Combining in itself the potential for employment and providing the critical infrastructure for practically every economic activity, construction industry should be able to play a decisive role in the development of the nation. Apart from providing employment to the local people, it is the venue for employment for the migrant from different regions and states leaving their native villages in search of daily job. These labourers are engaged in huge industrial constructions, residential flat constructions and city beautification works. These construction labourers, as a part of unorganized work force remain the most exploited ones even after six decades of independence. In the recent past the trend shows that all big cities of country have become the centres to recruit casual labourers as construction labourers to cities and urban areas. Most of the construction labourers who migrate to cities and metros are from poor families and are illiterate. 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 skill. They become easy victim of exploitation and have to work.

The existing labour laws applicable to construction workers are based on inspection, prosecution, fines, etc. However, legal processes are so time consuming that the aggrieved worker may be out of employment or employed elsewhere by the time redressal materializes. He/ she cannot leave his/ her worksite, forgoing his/ her daily wages to go elsewhere to pursue complaints against violation of laws. The existing laws do not give adequate protection to workers against victimization.

The current study on “Poverty among the Construction Workers in the Informal sector: A comparative analysis” is an attempt to find out whether the migrants absorbed in the construction activities could lead a ‘decent life’ with basic amenities available to them. Further the study made an attempt on finding out whether compared to the non-migrant construction workers (who constitute the control group), the migrant construction workers are economically better off or not. The study has the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio-economic and demographic profile of the sample respondents.
2. To assess the work atmosphere of the respondents.
3. To estimate the inequalities in the income / expenditure / assets distribution of the sample households.
4. To estimate the prevalence of poverty among the selected construction workers.
5. To know the awareness of the construction workers on the availability of social security measures and
6. To construct quality of life index for the migrant and non- migrant construction workers.

The following hypothesis were tested in the study

HYPOTHESES:

The hypotheses tested in the study are

1. Inequality prevails in the income / expenditure / assets distribution among the respondents.
2. Construction worker met with hazardous accidents.
3. Construction workers are not aware of the availability of social securities.
4. Migrant construction workers are 'extremely poor' compared to the non-migrant construction workers.

In the globalizing economy, it is the construction workers who are constructing the new economic zones, the IT cities, the call centers and mega malls that are creating new forms of wealth to day. It is they who are laying the cables for a rapidly expanding countrywide telecommunications network. Yet, these workers, who are creating the bare of the new economy, live in a time warp, trapped in low skilled, low paid and insecure 'working condition'. Hence this study will bring out the environment under which the construction workers live and work and how they could be promoted to lead a healthy life

Data collected was primary in nature. Data was collected from the selected respondents by administering a pre tested interview schedule (Annexure I) which covers details on the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents, their work status, skill acquisition, problems, health hazards, etc.

4.1 GENERAL HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

In the selected sample 96 percent of the migrants and 74 percent of the non-migrants are males. Among the non-migrants about one-fourth are females.

Among both migrant and non-migrant respondents, Hindus constituted a major proportion with 86 and 88 percent respectively.

The findings reveal that BC's and MBC's together constituted a greater percent of 48 among the migrant and 68 among the non-migrant households. GC's and SC's constituted a smaller percentage.

- *Predominance of nuclear family system is evinced in this study also. About 84 percent of the migrant households and 92 percent of non-migrant households are from nuclear family.
- Small family norms are followed in the current sample. The average size of the family of the migrant households is 4 and among the non-migrants households is 3.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The data reveals that people enter into construction work at an early age. Average of the migrant construction workers was 29 and of the non-migrants was 34. Migrants at a younger age work in construction activities.

Mostly construction workers are either illiterate or have lower level of education. The education wise details reveal that 16 percent of the respondents are completely illiterate not knowing how to read and write and another 16 percent just know how to read and write without any formal education. Majority of 30 percent had done middle school and another 20 percent high school level education.

Marital status is not a phenomenon in entering into construction work. In the study 53 percent are married and 47 percent are unmarried.

4.3 WORK DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Among the migrant respondents 42 percent are engaged in centering works, 40 percent in mason works and 18 percent in load carrying and mixing mortar works. In the case of non-migrants 42 percent are doing mason work, 38 percent in load carrying and mixing mortar work and 20 percent in centering works.

People enter into construction activities because of their families, friends and relatives. For 54 percent of the migrants, friends were the instrumental factor to enter into construction works. In the case of the non-migrants, 36 percent of the respondents entered in to the construction activity as their family members are in it

There was a great disparity in the average years of experience of the respondents in the construction work between the migrant and non-migrant respondents. The average years of experience of the migrant respondent is about 7 years and for the non-migrants 12 years.

Mostly the respondents are either skilled or semi-skilled. 40 percent of the migrants are skilled and 34 percent are semi skilled and another 26 percent are new to the work. In the case of the non-migrant respondents majority of 66 percent are skilled and 30 percent are semi skilled and only 4 percent are unskilled.

An enquiry in to the source which helps the respondents to acquire skill reveals that 84 percent of migrant respondents had acquired skill after entering in to the construction works. About 18 percent of the respondents acquired skill from their family members who are in the construction activities.

About 98 percent of the migrants were hired either through the contractor or sub contractor. In the case of the non-migrants 50 percent are hired by the contractor and 38 percent by the sub contractors. The respondents who were hired by the owners directly were 2 percent in the case of the migrants and 12 percent in the case of the non-migrants.

The migrants work for 6 to 7 days in a week. In the case of the non-migrants it is different. While 30 percent could get work for 3 to 5 days, 36 percent could get work for 6 days and 34 percent work all the days in a week.

Compared to the non-migrants, the migrants work for more days in a month. While 72 percent of the migrants work for 26-30 days, it was 58 percent in the case of non-migrants.

In the case of migrants only 14 percent are paid daily and 84 percent get weekly payment. In the case of the non-migrants while 46 percent get the payment daily, 54 percent get weekly payment.

Migrants stay nearer to the worksite. All the migrants stay within 10 kms from the work site. Non-migrants mostly come from far off places While 6 percent have

their houses 20 kms apart from the work place, for 30 percent the distance between the work place and house was from 10 to 20 kms, for 64 percent within 10 kms.

About 76 percent of the migrant respondents are staying within the construction premises itself. Among the remaining respondents 8 percent come by walk, 6 percent through arranged vehicles, 8 percent by moped and 2 percent by bicycle. In the case of the non-migrant respondents their major mode of transport are moped (50 percent) and bus (22 percent).

4.4 WORK ATMOSPHERE

For the opinion on 'work atmosphere' the migrant workers disagreed on the conducive work atmosphere (score = -0.52). The non-migrants were neutral on the same (score = 0.06). Similarly both migrant and non-migrant workers disagreed that they had partial treatment in the work place (score = -0.58 and -0.42) and had wage discrimination (score = -0.32 and -0.38). While non-migrant workers agreed that they had too much of work (score = 0.68), the migrant workers were neutral (score = 0.04) on this aspect. Similarly the construction workers disagreed that the co-workers are hostile towards them (score = -0.38 and -0.38). For sexual harassment, the respondents replied in 'neutral' (score = 0 and 0). Both the migrant and non-migrants construction workers are neutral on their opinion on the various conditions related to work atmosphere.

The workers are satisfied with the working conditions. While 71 percent of the workers consider the working condition to be either good (59 percent) or very good (12 percent) 17 reported it to be average. For 12 percent of the workers the working conditions were either poor (10 percent) or very poor (2 percent).

About 82 percent of the respondents stated that they have no health hazards and only 18 percent met with health related problems.

Among the 18 percent respondents who had met with health hazards, for 9 percent it was the 'wound' they had while doing the construction work and for another 9 percent it was the 'body pain' they had because of the work.

Among the sample respondents, 9 percent of the construction workers met with accidents in which 5 percent are among the migrants and 4 percent among the non-migrant respondents. On enquiring about the type of accidents, 4 percent of the migrants and 3 percent of the non-migrants had fracture and one percent each had wound.

The workers who had fracture were away from the work for more than one month. The respondents who had wound were away from the work for less than 15 days.

4.5 AWARENESS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

None of the workers are aware of the existence of 'trade union' and 'union benefits' they could avail. Similarly none are aware of 'children education facilities', 'welfare activities', 'pension benefit' and 'crisis support'. Only 54 percent of the respondents are aware of the 'accidents benefit's and 26 percent on 'insurance' and 6 percent on compensation benefits.

4.6 AVAILABILITY OF BASIC AMENITIES

Among the respondents about 25 percent of migrant construction workers and 22 percent of non-migrant construction workers are in their own houses. Among the migrants, 52 percent live in single room houses, 14 percent are in houses in 2 rooms, 18 percent in 3 and 6 percent in 4 room houses. In the case of the non-migrants 42 percent live in a single room house, 40 percent in 2 rooms 16 in 3 rooms, and 2 percent in 4 room houses.

While 60 percent of the migrant construction workers live in houses in which the walls are made of leaves, 40 percent live in house with brick walls. This is because the migrants are always in 'move' and they do not have permanent shelter. The floors are 'cement type' for all the migrant construction workers. For 62 percent of the migrants the roofs are made of leaves, for 34 percent cement sheets and for 4 percent only the houses have concrete roofs. In the case of the non-migrants construction workers, 82 percent live in houses with brick walls and 16 percent with leaves. For 88 percent of the non-migrants the floors are made of cement and for 79 percent the roofs are cement sheets.

While 90 percent of the migrants and 88 percent of the non-migrants have electricity in their houses. 10 percent of the migrants and 12 percent of the non-migrants use kerosene.

For 14 percent of the migrants and 22 percent of the non-migrants, drinking water is available within the premise. For 68 percent of the migrants and non-migrants each, it is nearer to their house. For 18 percent of migrants and 10 percent of the non-migrants it is away from the house.

While 88 percent of the migrants and 92 percent of the non-migrants have bathroom facilities, for 12 percent of the migrants and 6 percent of non-migrants it is not available and away from the house. For 24 percent of respondents, the bathroom facilities is within the house. For 72 percent of the migrants and for 62 percent of non-migrants it is within the compound but outside the house.

For 8 percent of migrants and 20 percent of the non-migrants latrine facilities are available within the house. For 24 percent of the migrants and 8 percent of the non-migrants it is within the compound but outside the house. For a majority of 70 percent, 34 from migrant and 36 percent from non-migrants they do not have latrine facilities and they have to use public latrine.

As far as drainage facilities are concerned 18 percent of the migrants and 52 percent of the non-migrants have open drainages near the house and 82 percent of the migrant and 48 percent of the non-migrant do not have drainage facilities in their houses.

4.7. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

The average total monthly income of the non-migrant construction worker households (Rs 15,000) exceeded that of the migrant construction workers households (Rs 11594).

The data on the average monthly per capita income of the household reveals that the non-migrant construction workers households have greater per capita income of Rs 3196 against the migrant construction workers household income of Rs 2848.

None of the households have their per capita income less than Rs 700. As per the NSSO norms all the households of the current study are above the poverty line.

The average monthly expenditure of the non-migrants households was Rs 13,361 exceeding that of the migrant households (Rs 7,104).

The average monthly per capita expenditure of the non-migrant household (Rs 2,163) exceeds that of the migrant household (Rs 3,826).

Compared to the migrants, non-migrants possess assets in a larger measure. Among the migrants, a majority of 52 percent own fans. The other assets are owned by less than 50 percent of the migrants. In the case of non-migrants, all own fans and phones. About 60 to 80 percent own mixies and TV'S. Since all do not possess 'ration cards', they could not avail 'TV' and 'gas stove' given by the government.

The monetary value of the assets possessed by the non-migrant construction workers (Rs 2, 95,253) was much higher than that of the migrant construction workers (Rs 1, 41,948). For 50 percent of the non-migrant construction workers, the value of assets possessed by them exceeded Rs 1, 00,000. This is the case only for 22 percent of the migrant construction workers.

In the study sample only 24 percent of the migrant and 34 percent of the non-migrant households have savings. The average saving of the migrants and non-migrants construction workers were Rs 10,980 and Rs 13,080 respectively. The major reason for savings was for meeting 'future needs'. This was stated by 92 percent of the migrants and 47 percent of the non-migrants.

The debt position of the sample households reveals that among the migrants 22 percent and among the non-migrants 48 percent have debt. On enquiry, it was found that the major source of borrowing among the migrants were friends and relatives (55 percent). In the case of non-migrants, 54 percent had borrowed from commercial banks. The average debt burden of the migrant was Rs 7,500 and for the non-migrant was Rs 11,130.

About 82 percent of the migrants had borrowed at the rate of interest of 1 to 5 percent and in the case of non-migrants this percentages were 54percent

For meeting day-to-day expenses 29 percent of the migrants and 9 percent of the non-migrants have borrowed.

4.8 INEQUALITY

The calculated Gini- co-efficient of inequality for per capita income is 0.28 for the households of both the migrant and non-migrant construction workers. Compared to the migrant households, there is higher level of inequality in the per capita expenditure among the non-migrant households. The Gini- co-efficient of inequality for the non-migrant household is 0.4191 and for the migrant households 0.249. In the case of the possession of assets both migrant and non-migrant households exhibit higher level of inequality. For migrant households it was as high as 0.8484 and for non-migrant household 0.7528. The analysis reveals that in the possession of assets, higher inequality prevails among both the migrant and non-migrant construction workers.

4.9 MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY

The average annual per capita income of the non-migrant construction workers was Rs 38,347, exceeding the average annual per capita income of the migrant construction workers (Rs 34,171). The analysis reflects that the non-migrant construction workers are in better position in income status compared to the migrant construction workers.

The study estimated that 34 percent of the migrant construction worker and 26 per cent of the non-migrant construction worker households are either 'marginally poor' or 'vulnerable'. They are in the borderline and could be shifted to below poverty line at any time. Two percent of the migrant construction workers household fell under 'extremely poor' category. In the case of both the migrant and non-migrant construction workers 22 percent each come under 'high income' category.

None of the non- migrant construction workers fell under poverty category. In the case of migrant households the intensity of poverty is less with the Head count ratio taking the value of 0.02 and poverty gap ratio 0.005.

The findings reveal that none of the households satisfy the minimum percapita calorie intake of 2100 per day. Nutrition wise all the households fall under poverty line.

4.10 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

The findings reveals that, taking the quality of life index, which included food intake, income, expenditure, shelter, occupation and literacy level, 96 percent of the migrants construction workers fall under 'extremely poor' (4 percent) or 'poor' (92 percent) category. Only 4 percent of the migrant construction workers are 'marginally poor' implying that they too are in the borderline of falling under the 'poverty' group. In the case of non-migrant construction workers all fall under either 'poor' (94 percent) or 'extremely poor' (6 percent) category.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the findings of the study reveal that there is a very high incidence of pecuniary poverty (in terms of consumption expenditure per capita per month on food items or for that matter in terms of per capita income per month) both between the migrant and non-migrant construction workers. In addition to income poverty, there is a huge incidence of non-pecuniary poverty among these workers in the form of non-availability of basic minimum services like housing, sanitation, health facilities, safe drinking water and toilet facilities. In respect of social security it is revealed that the main concern of the workers is for assured employment. Workers in the construction sector are involved only in unskilled work. Their potential as masons is still untapped. Legislation could be enacted in India to make it mandatory for the contractors to offer informal training to construction workers in government sites. These positive steps will enhance the resource potential among construction workers and empower them leading to the growth of the families and the advancement of the nation.

SUGGESTIONS

- i. Like organized sector workers, the construction workers in the informal sector also need different types of social securities. However among various types of social securities their topmost priority is for assured reasonable level of income in terms of assured employment. As far as the provision for social

securities are concerned the topmost priority of the Urban Local Body and the State and the Central Government should be to arrange for assured employment opportunities to the workers.

- ii. Appropriate measures are to be taken by the Urban Local Body to provide the basic minimum services, especially by making provision for safe drinking water for all, subsidized housing, toilet and electricity facilities for the urban poor and also to create more health facilities especially for the poor.
- iii. In order to check the flow of migration of rural poor to urban areas measures should be taken to create non-farm employment opportunities in the rural areas itself and also to provide public goods like educational, health and other amenities in rural areas.
- iv. A very little attention has been paid to the health of the construction workers so far in our country. There is a need for comprehensive studies, to address the health problems of this largest, poorly organized industrial workforce.