



SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITION OF WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN THANE DISTRICT, MUMBAI MAHARASHTRA



Prof. Dr. Shrirang D. Kuduk

Associate Professor and Head Dept. of Economics, Satish Pradhan Dnyanasadhana College, Thane.

ABSTRACT

Financial independence is a key factor in improving the status of women in India. It is emphasized that the participation of women's work is important to enhance their social and economic status as well as to improve their decisive role in domestic decision making. Health is an important determinant of employment in construction, and it is these deteriorating factors that take workers, especially women, into consideration when they are simultaneously engaged in economic and non-economic activities. This study seeks to understand the socio-economic status of women construction workers and with special emphasis on identifying problems related to women's work in Thane district.

KEYWORD : Female Construction Workers, Socio-Economic Condition, Women Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

India is the second most populous country in the world with 30 million construction workers; about half are women. The employment of women in construction comes in the service sector which is of unorganized category. Both men and women work in this field. Half of the total construction workers are women. Women workers are particularly unskilled, casual and manual laborers. They are mainly involved in transporting bricks, cement, sand and water and digging earth, mixing cement and quarrying stones. The construction sector provides employment to 7% of the total global employment. According to a Government of India report, the construction industry employs about 35 million people and builds assets worth more than over rupees 250,000 million annually. In India, it is the largest employer of unorganized workers in the agricultural sector. The construction sector in India contributed rupees 2,071,350 million to the GDP in 2014-15, an increase of 11.7% over the previous year and the share of the sector in the GDP increased from 6.2% in 2013-14 to 6.5%. About 18% of India's working population relies heavily on the construction industry for their livelihood, and the Indian construction industry employs about 35 million people and generates more than 250,000 million in assets annually.

The construction industry in India today is facing the problem of labor shortage. The number of skilled workers in the construction sector has been gradually declining from 16.14% in 2005 to 10.21% in 2014 while the proportion of unskilled workers has increased from 73.29% in 2005 to 80.15% in 2014. The most vulnerable sector in the unorganized sector because they do not have enough job opportunities and

income. In Maharashtra, the structural transformation of women's activities has really taken place in the state as the primary sector has lost its importance and the tertiary sector is taking its place. The feature of employment of women in Maharashtra is their high proportion in the service sector. In Maharashtra, women's labor force increased by 1.36% in 2010 and 25.3% of them are involved in construction. Thane is one of the waste developing areas and Mumbai is one of the most urbanized districts in Maharashtra. Due to geographical, political and economic conditions, 49% of the people are mainly engaged in construction work. The construction sector saw a 2.2% increase in the 19.6 per cent growth in the female labor force.

Statement of the Problem:

Women construction workers face various socio-economic problems and many health problems related to work. Women workers are mainly unskilled casual manual workers. They are working on the construction site to dig bricks, cement, sand, water, earth, mix cement and break stones. Women are given general tasks, including carrying materials around the site. They are rarely found in male-dominated skills occupations such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrical wiring. There is wage inequality between male and female workers. Women workers are paid less.

The risk in construction is very high, especially for women workers who have to carry heavy loads on their heads. Accidents with simple injuries occur almost daily, while fatal accidents occur intermittently. The main cause of accidents is falling from a great height, falling heavy objects or falling ladders. Long working hours, lack of proper nutrition, lack of safe drinking water are some of the occupational hazards that prevent women from working long hours. Security risks, health risks, low wages, poor working conditions are some of the problems facing women workers. They are not aware of the legal rights that the government has given them. The purpose of this study is to analyze the socio-economic status of women construction workers in Thane district and with special emphasis on health risks and other work related issues.

Objectives of the Study:

Following are the particular objectives of the study:

1. To check the socio-economic profile of women workers in Thane district.
2. To investigate the working conditions and occupational health hazards of women workers.
3. List the problems faced by women workers in the family and community.

Methodology:

The study relies on both primary and secondary data. Preliminary data was collected randomly from 50 women workers of Thane Municipality. A systematic schedule was used to gather information on socio-economic status, problems in the workplace, and health hazards for workers. During the lunch break, workers are met directly from their place of work and their work status is monitored. Secondary data were obtained from various sources such as ILO, Economic Review, government reports, journals and books. Simple percentage analysis and regression analysis were used to interpret the data.

Table 1.1 Age wise Distribution of the Respondent

Sr. No	Age	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	25 – 35	01	02.00
2.	35 – 40	08	16.00
3.	40 – 45	10	20.00
4.	45 – 50	15	30.00
5.	50 – 55	11	22.00
6.	Above 55	05	10.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table describes about the age wise distribution of the workers and it was observed that female workers are classified in to six groups and it was observed that the young generation are not

interested to work in construction filed only 1 (2.00%) women which is between 25-35 years of age is working in this construction filed, 8 (16.00%) of the female workers between 35 – 40 years of age are working in construction field, 10 (20.00%) of the women workers are between 40 – 45 years of age are working in this construction field, 15 (30.00%) of the women workers between 45 – 50 years of age are working in construction field, 11 (22.00%) of women workers between 50 – 55 years of age are working in construction field and remaining 5 (10.00%) of the women workers above 55 years of age are working in construction filed. The study observed that most of the women workers between 45 – 50 years of age are working in construction filed at study area.

Table 1.2 Marital Status of the Women Respondent

Sr. No	Marital Status	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Married	36	72.00
2.	Unmarried	05	10.00
3.	Divorced	02	04.00
4.	Widow	07	14.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.2 describes about the marital status of the respondent and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 36 (72.00%) of the respondent are married respondent and they are living with their husband and children's/family, 5 (10.00%) of the respondents are unmarried women workers, 7 (14.00%) of the women respondents are widow women workers their husband were also working in the same filed but some of them are died in accident and some of them are died due to diseases and remaining only 2 (4.00%) of the women workers are divorced women workers, they left their husbands due to personal problems.

Table 1.3 Education wise Distribution of the Women Respondent

Sr. No	Educational Status	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	14	28.00
2.	Primary	26	52.00
3.	Secondary	10	20.00
4.	Graduation	00	00.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Education is an important factor in determining one's economic as well as social status in one's life. In this case, we are looking at whether the workers are well educated. The above table 1.3 describes about the education wise distribution of the respondent and it was observed that 14 (28.00%) of the women workers are illiterate workers, they never went to school in their entire life, 26 (52.00%) of the women workers are having primary education and remaining 10 (20.00%) of the women workers are having secondary level education. The majority of the women workers are having primary level of education. Poor educational conditions and the absence of bargaining power have led to low wages and income problems for workers, lack of education means that the level of awareness of rights among workers is very low.

Table 1.3 Monthly Income wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Income	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	5000 – 8000	12	24.00
2.	8000 – 10000	15	30.00
3.	10000 – 12000	13	26.00
4.	12000 – 14000	04	08.00
5.	Above 14000	06	12.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Construction workers are wage earners and their wages are fixed in nature. Daily wages are paid either every Saturday or after work are completed. The above table 1.3 describes about the monthly income of the women workers in construction field and it was observed that out of 50 women respondent 12 (24.00%) of the respondents are having between 5000 – 8000 rupees monthly income, 15 (30.00%) of the women workers are having between 8000 – 10000 rupees monthly income, 13 (26.00%) of the women workers are having between 10000 – 12000 rupees of income, 4 (8.00%) of the women respondents are having between 12000 – 14000 rupees of monthly income and remaining 6 (12.00%) of the women workers are having above 14000 rupees of monthly income.

Table 1.4 Monthly Expenditure wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Income	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	2000 – 2500	05	10.00
2.	2500 – 4000	12	24.00
3.	4000 – 5000	14	28.00
5.	Above 5000	19	38.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.4 describes about the monthly expenditure wise distribution of the women workers and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 5 (10.00%) of the respondents monthly expenditure is between 2000 – 2500 rupees, 12 (24.00%) of the women workers monthly expenditure is between 2500 – 4000 rupees, 14 (28.00%) of the women workers monthly expenditure is between 4000 – 5000 rupees and remaining 19 (38.00%) of the women workers monthly expenditure is above 5000 rupees.

Table 1.5 Seasonal Employability

Sr. No	Seasonal Employability	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Yes	22	44.00
2.	No	28	56.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

There are many jobs of a seasonal nature. In this case, the availability of construction works. The availability of construction work appears to be limited in the rainy season while the availability of jobs continues in the summer and winter seasons. Table 1.5 above shows the seasonality of construction work and it was found that 28 (56.00%) per cent of the workers expressed that the employment was not seasonal while 22 (44.00%) per cent of the workers expressed that the work was of seasonal nature. It is noticed that they are ready to go for other work during the off season like working in the factory, sewing etc.

Table 1.6 Working Hours wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Working Hours	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	< 8 Hours	7	14.00
2.	8 Hours	32	64.00
3.	> 8 Hours	11	22.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Every work has a schedule. Generally, the maximum hours are considered to be eight hours but it is not prevalent in the unorganized sector. Working hours can be classified as less than three-eight hours, eight hours and above eight hours. The classification according to the daily working hours of the workers is displayed in table 1.6. The above table describes that 7 (14.00%) women workers are working less than 8 hours at work place of the construction filed, 32 (64.00%) of the women workers are working 8 hours at their working place in construction field and remaining 11 (22.00%) of the women workers are working more than 8 hours at their working place in construction field, this is because of their extra income source or work load.

Table 1.7 Occupation wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Type of Work	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Sand	04	08.00
2.	Stone	08	16.00
3.	Concrete	22	44.00
5.	All Above	16	32.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.7 describes about the occupation wise distribution of the women workers and it was observed that out of 50 workers 4 (8.00%) women workers are engaged in sand work, 8 (16.00%) of the women workers are engaged in carrying stone work, 22 (44.00%) of the women workers are engaged in concrete work and remaining 16 (32.00%) of the women workers are engaged in all type of above work like carrying stones, sand work and concrete work.

Table 1.8 Saving Habit wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Saving Habit (Rupees)	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Nothing	06	12.00
2.	100 – 500	10	20.00
3.	500 – 1000	18	36.00
4.	1000 – 1500	11	22.00
5.	Above 1500	05	10.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The habit of saving in the life of every person allocated from income in anticipation of future benefits and needs is essential. The above table 1.8 describes about the after monthly income what is the saving habit of the women workers and it was observed that out of 50 women workers 6 (12.00%) women workers are not having the saving habit 10 (20.00%) of the women workers are having the saving habit of rupees 100 – 500 from their monthly income, 18 (36.00%) of the women workers are having the saving habit of rupees 500 – 1000 rupees from their monthly income, 11 (22.00%) of the women workers are having the saving habit of rupees 1000 – 1500 rupees from their monthly income and remaining only 5 (10.00%) of the women workers are having the saving habit of above 1500 rupees from their monthly income. Most workers use their wages for family expenses. So the retail tendency to consume them is very high and the retail tendency to save almost zero.

Table 1.9 Problem of Construction Workers wise Distribution

Sr. No	Problem	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Health Problem	50	100.00
2.	Financial Problem	42	84.00
3.	Family Problem	46	92.00
4.	Other	24	48.00

Source: Primary Data

There are many problems facing construction workers. These problems are classified into two categories health problems and financial problems, the above table 1.9 describes about the problems faces by the construction women workers wise distribution and it was observed that almost all 50 (100.00%) women workers are facing health related problems, 42 (84.00%) of the women workers are facing financial related problem, 46 (92.00%) of the women workers are facing different family related problems and remaining 24 (48.00%) of the women workers are facing other problems.

Table 1.10 Health Related Problem wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Health Problem	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Muscle Pain	26	52.00
2.	Allergy	08	16.00
3.	Asthma and Breathing	04	08.00
4.	Cough	04	08.00
5.	All Above	08	16.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

For women, work in the construction sector is very risky and they are facing many problems in the workplace. Health issues are a big problem for women workers because they are physically poor. The above table 1.10 describes about the various health related problems faced by the women workers and it was observed that out of 50 women workers 26 (52.00%) of the women workers are facing muscle pain problems, 8 (16.00%) of the women workers are facing different allergy related health problem, 4 (8.00%) of the women workers are facing asthma and breathing related health problem another 4 (8.00%) of the women workers are facing cough related health problem and remaining 8 (16.00) of the women are facing all above health related problem. If all workforces suffer from health-related problems, productivity will be significantly affected.

Table 1.11 Medical Insurance wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Medical Insurance	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Yes	15	30.00
2.	No	35	70.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The provision of adequate social protection for workers engaged in the informal sector is emerging as an important strategic consideration around the world. Healthy and unhygienic workplaces are major factors for health insecurity. The absence of adequate protection mechanisms developed by the state or employer increased the risks to workers. We know that work in the construction industry is so risky that there should be a need to take out medical insurance. The above table 1.11 describes about the medical insurance wise distribution of the women workers and it was observe that out of 50 women workers 15 (30.00%) of the women workers are having their medical insurance and most of the women workers that is 35 (70.00%) of the women workers are not having the medical insurance. Construction is extremely risky, although health is an important determinant of their jobs, many of them do not take out any health insurance policy because they are not aware of health insurance.

Table 1.12 Wages wise Distribution of the Women Workers

Sr. No	Wages Per Day (in Rupees)	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	400	10	20.00
2.	450	14	28.00
3.	500	08	16.00
4.	550	04	08.00
5.	600	10	20.00
6.	650	04	08.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The daily wage paid to the workers varies from place to place and from place to place. The above table 1.12 describes about the daily wages wise distribution of the women workers and it was observed that 10 (20.00%) of the women workers received 400 rupees per day, 14 (28.00%) of the women workers were received 450 rupees wages per day, 8 (16.00%) of the women workers were received 500 rupees of wages

per day, 4 (8.00%) of the women workers were received 550 rupees of wages per day, 10 (20.00%) of the women workers were received 600 rupees of wages per day and remaining 4 (8.00%) of the women workers were received 650 rupees of wages per day.

CONCLUSION:

The construction industry in India stands as a significant contributor to development as it creates investment opportunities in various related sectors. The construction industry accounts for seven percent of the world's total employment. Women's employment has been considered as a central vehicle for improving the status of women. It can be emphasized that about 50 per cent male and 14 per cent female populations is working. The provision of adequate social protection for workers engaged in the informal sector is leading to the emergence of important policy considerations around the world, especially for women; In this context, the study sought to examine the question of social protection for the informal sector through an analysis of working conditions, employment security, and so on Thane District. It should be recognized that workers must have good working conditions, minimum wages and minimum social security. The main problems facing them are lack of security, no security for their lives in the workplace. Other problems plaguing them are health and financial problems. While the welfare board for construction workers is working, many are unaware of the scheme and the members of the board are not aware of the benefits. Workers need security for their lives and the reason to get the most out of their work is to support their families and children. There is scope for in-depth study in the future to know the working conditions of women construction workers.

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