



Brick Industry as a Means of Employment and Income Generation with Special Reference to Barpeta District of Assam

KEYWORDS

Brick Industry, Workers, Employment, Income

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ABSTRACT

Bricks are one of the most important building materials in India. Indian brick industry is highly a labour intensive industry. It provides employment opportunities to a large number of unemployed persons both local and migrant. The economy of Barpeta district mainly depends on Agriculture. Traditional Handicraft, Wood Craft, Pottery is also an occupation for a sustainable part of population. Though the district is not industrially developed, yet a sufficient number of brick industries have been set up in different parts of the district. In this paper, an attempt is made to study how these industries are providing employment opportunities to unemployed persons and also helping them in generating some income with the help of which they can maintain their families.

Introduction:

Brick making industry is one of the important industries of India in the unorganized sector mainly confined to rural and semi urban areas. The brick kiln sector is next to the agricultural sector in terms of employment to rural and semi urban workforce. Brick industry in India provides employment to more than 8 million workers. The industry is highly labour intensive. Apart from providing employment opportunities to the local workers, the industry also provides employment to a large number of migrant workers including both men and women.

G.C. Mathur (1990) in his paper "Employment potential of brick industry" stated that brick industry in India employed about 3 million rural people on a seasonal basis. Brick industry offered employment opportunities for the unemployed. A shortage of skilled labour impeded the development of the brick industry. So, to increase the industry's productivity, training facilities for unskilled labour were necessary. However, it was recommended that brick manufacturers' associations organised themselves to undertake manpower planning and that welfare laws relating to industry were enforced.

S.K Roy (2012) in his paper "Socio-Economic conditions of women workers in some selected Brick kilns in West Bengal: An empirical study with special reference to Nadia district" tries to analyze the socio-economic conditions of women workers working in brick industry. The author states that brick industry is a labour intensive industry. It provides employment opportunities to millions of workers. Large portion of the workers are women. But the women workers do not get the same status which the men workers enjoy. Women are exploited in a number of way. The paper is an attempt to study the socio-economic conditions of the women workers.

Objective of undertaking the study:

The basic objective of this paper is to study how the brick industries in Barpeta district are providing employment opportunities to the unemployed and helping them in generating some income.

Methodology:

The study is carried out taking both primary and secondary

information. For collecting the data, a structured questionnaire is prepared and the required data is collected by visiting 3 brick industries randomly from Mandia Block of Barpeta district of Assam. From these 3 industries, 90 workers are interviewed, 30 from each. However, some secondary information from books, articles, magazines, newspapers, and internet are also used.

Results and discussion:

Table 1: Total number of male and female workers engaged in the selected 3 brick industries:

	Male	Female	Total
Industry 1	190	110	300
Industry 2	160	90	250
Industry 3	150	70	220
Total	500	270	770

Source: Field survey

After conducting the survey in all the 3 industries, it is found that total 770 workers are getting employment opportunities. Out of them, 500 are male and remaining 270 are female.

Table 2: Engagement of the selected 90 workers in different types of works:

Types of work	Workers	% of workers
Raw brick making	37	41.1
Carrying of raw bricks for sun drying	23	25.6
Firing the bricks	19	21.1
Carrying of ready bricks into trucks for selling in the market	11	12.2
Total	90	100

Source: Field survey

The survey shows the distribution of the selected 90 workers in different types of works in brick industry. 41.1% are engaged in raw brick making, 25.6% are engaged in carrying of raw bricks for sun drying, 21.1% are engaged in firing of bricks and remaining 12.2% are engaged in carrying the ready bricks into trucks for selling them in the market.

All the tasks except firing the bricks are performed by the workers within Assam. They may be local or migrate from the other districts, but are from the same state. Some of them come from nearby towns and villages within BARPETA district and some come from other districts such as Nalbari, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Odulguri etc. But the workers engaged in firing the bricks are from other state such as Bihar, West Bengal etc.

Mode of payment to the workers:

The survey shows that payments to the workers are made on the basis of piece rate system. Workers who are involved in raw brick making are paid Rs. 410 - Rs. 450 per 1000 raw bricks.

Workers who are involved in carrying of raw bricks for sun drying are paid Rs. 260 - Rs. 280 per 1000 bricks.

Those who are involved in firing the bricks are paid Rs. 700 - Rs. 750 per 1000 bricks.

Again, those who are involved in carrying the ready bricks into trucks for selling in the market are paid Rs. 150 - Rs. 160 per 1000 bricks. Payments to the all categories of workers are made on weekly basis.

The survey shows that the wages the workers are getting are not uniform among all the industries. Wages differ from one industry to another industry. The owners of the industry do not follow the Government rate. As a result, the wages differ from industry to industry.

In brick industry, it is also seen that the entire family work as one unit in the field. Generally, women are engaged in such types of work which do not require any skill. They work as unskilled labour. They help their male partner in preparing the raw bricks, carrying the ready bricks into trucks etc. But their payments are combined with the payments of male partners. Payments to the women are not provided separately.

Health and living condition of the workers:

Working hours of the workers in brick industry is found to be very long. They work up to 9-10 hours in a day. Because of continuous working in the field, they suffer from various health related problems such as back pain, fever, headache, eye problem, skin problem, respiratory disorders and so on.

Again after conducting the survey it is also found that the workers live in a very unhygienic environment. Generally, owner of the industry provides small huts for the migrant workers where they live along with their whole families. But in such types of huts, the owner does not provide even the basic facilities like facilities of electricity, proper drinking water, separate kitchen, bathrooms etc.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that brick industry is highly a labour intensive industry. It is providing employment opportunities to a large number of unemployed persons. Though the industry is providing employment opportunities to a large number of unemployed persons and helping them in generating income, but workers are still lagging behind in some areas. Their health condition is deteriorating; their living condition is not at all impressive etc. So the government as well as the NGOs must pay attention for the well being of labour class.

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