

## Status of Women in Construction Industry: A Case Study Analysis



### Social Science

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### ABSTRACT

*Construction industry is one of the informal industries and which gives maximum GDP to our country next to agriculture. The contribution of construction industry to the national economy is increasing every year. The growth of the construction industry in India depends upon three important factors. The first one is population explosion and the second one is the process of urbanization. The third one is the implementation of the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) policy by the Government of India. The LPG policy lures many multinational companies establish their concerns in India. So these three factors are contributing for the rapid growth of construction industry in India. To carry out the construction work the human power are very essential and among the human power the women also play very crucial role. Among the total construction workers in India, more than half are females and they are employed in the unskilled works. The present paper deals about the working status and problems of women construction workers in Salem city and case study method adopted to collect the data from the respondents.*

### Introduction

Construction industry is one of the booming industries in India. In the globalizing economy, this industry provides essential infrastructural facilities to the country such as building the roads and highways, constructing airports, ports, railway bridges, flyovers, underground tunnels, IT parks, the call centres and the like. These infrastructural facilities could attract the foreigners and multinational companies to invest money to start their own business in India. Similarly India is marching towards more urbanized society in the recent past. The level of urbanization increased from 27.81 per cent in 2001 census to 31.16 per cent in 2011 census and on the other hand the proportion of rural population declined from 72.19 per cent to 68.84 per cent in the respective census. This urbanization process would satisfy the residential requirements of the urbanites in the limited existing areas and this in turn influence to construct apartments and multistoried buildings. Similarly in order to fulfill the daily needs and other essential goods, the shopping complexes as well as malls are the order of the existence in the urban areas. The population growth, a rise in disposable income and along with these the process of industrialization and urbanization are forces the construction industry to boom alarmingly.

Today the construction industry employs about 31 million people and creates assets worth over Rs 200,000 million (India Infra Guru, 2008; GOI, 2008a) annually in India. It is the largest employer of unorganized labour next to agricultural sector in India (Laskar and Murty, 2004). The contribution of construction sector in India to the GDP at factor cost in 2006–07 was Rs. 1,965,550 million, registering an increase of 10.7% from the previous year and the share of construction in GDP has increased from 6.1% in 2002–03 to 6.9% in 2006–07 (GOI, 2008). Around 16% of the India's working population depends on building construction for its livelihood and the Indian construction industry today employs about 31million people and creates assets worth over Rs. 200,000 million (India Infra Guru, 2008; GOI, 2008a) annually. The construction equipment industry's revenues are estimated to reach US\$ 22.7 billion by 2020 from US\$ 5.1 billion in the Financial Year 2012. The total construction market in India for Fiscal year ending March 2014 was \$157 billion, an increase of \$4 billion over Fiscal year 2013. Infrastructure accounts for 49 per cent, housing and real estate for 42 per cent and industrial projects for 9 per cent.

Human resources are the essential aspects of the construc-

tion industry to carry out all the necessary work. Similar to male workers, the women workers are also play their role for the success of the construction industry. Women constitute half of the construction workers in India as semi-skilled / skilled jobs in other industries but in the construction industry, women are employed mostly as unskilled labourers (GOI. 2008a). They perform various unskilled jobs in the industry like cleaning building sites, carrying bricks, gravel, mortar and water up to the skilled carpenters and masons, irrespective of the number of years they worked, they are not upgraded from unskilled to skilled as males (Jhabvala & Kanbur, 2002; Baruah, 2008). The present paper deals about the status of women workers after joining the construction industry in Salem city with following objectives.

### Objectives

To study the socio-economic conditions of the women construction workers in Salem City

To assess the problems of the women construction workers in the day-to-day life.

To suggest the measures to improve the status of women construction workers.

### Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and based on primary data. The primary data obtained from the respondents through case study and the researchers have obtained the case histories of three women construction workers in Salem city.

### Profile of Salem City

Salem is a city which is head quarters of Salem District. Salem is the sixth largest city in Tamilnadu by population. The city is located at 11.66° N 78.14° E at an average elevation of 278 m. The town was constituted as a municipality in 1869, and was upgraded to a special grade municipality in 1979 and to a municipal corporation on 1 April 1994. The Salem municipal corporation has 60 wards. As per provision reports of Census of India, the literacy rate of the city is 84.42 % and the sex ratio is 987. Salem had 215,747 households and a total of 332,147 workers: 1,599 farmers, 3,040 agricultural laborers, 32,597 in household industries, 278,892 other workers.

### Results

Case one and she is 41 years old female. She has completed

seventh standard. She is a married woman and her husband works in an export company. When she is 23 years old she got married and her husband is relation to her. Due to poverty she is going to construction work in order to help her husband to run the family. She has three daughters. Her daughters are going to school and studying 10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively. She is a member in construction workers' association. She is paying yearly membership fee of Rs. 50/- to the association. She tells that the association is providing Rs.2000/- for the marriage ceremony of the member, Rs.1000/- for those who passed 12<sup>th</sup> standard and Rs.500/- for those who passed 10<sup>th</sup> standard. She has not able to get regular job in the construction field. However her husband gets regular monthly salary. Due to her nature of work she does not able to spend adequate time with her children regularly. After completing her day's work in the construction site she has able to find time only to cook. She has not able to find time to speak with her children. Because every day she has go to work early morning and return back the home late at night. Due to her poor attention, the children do not attend the classes regularly. Her earning and her husband's salary are not enough to meet the needs of their children. She has no savings because she has no regular job. The contractors also do not give salary at time. She is able to find free time only at Sunday. Every Sunday she visits her relatives' house.

Case two and she is a 53 old woman and she has no education. She has a daughter and a son. Her husband died on a road accident. Both her daughter and son got married. Both are completed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> standard respectively. Before her husband's death both went to construction work daily and she still continues the same work even after death of her husband. Her daily wages are enough for the day to day life and the extra amount she used to give her daughter and grandchildren. She is working under contractor for a long time and the contractor also gave salary regularly. She works for 5 days in a week and gets Rs.1000/- every week. She has a good communication with the contractor. Her grandchildren are so kind enough with her. She used to spend her free time with the grandchildren. She mentioned that her work does not affect the personal life. She is social with her relatives. She does not member in any workers' association. She revealed that joining of workers' association will affect her work. Her only aim is go to work regularly.

Case three and she is a 37 years old woman. She failed in ninth standard. Her mother does not allow the respondents to continue the studies and she asked her to come with the construction work. She got married at the age of 21 years. It is a love marriage. Her husband is working as a carpenter. She has two sons. Both are studying in a matriculation school and doing 7<sup>th</sup> standard and 5<sup>th</sup> standard respectively. Both of them have no time to take care of their sons but her father in law and mother in law take care of their sons. Her sons are going to tuition in the evening time. They get everything for the future of their sons. Both her father in law and mother in law are very kind with their children. Her wages are enough to run the family happily. By her wages she is developing her family. She saves money through postal office saving system. She has no opinion about savings but the postal officer compelled her to save money in this system. Through this system she saves 250 rupees for a month. She has no plan for her savings. She gets job up to six days in a week regularly and sometimes she has no work due to poor weather condition and insufficient goods. The contractor has not given the salary regularly at the weekends. She has good communication with the contractor. Her husband consumes alcohol but he taken care of her

family. Due to her work she was unable to attend her relative's functions regularly. It makes her feel bad.

### Conclusion

The employment in the construction industry has improved the status of the women workers particularly their contribution in the family expenditure. Similarly their income also enables them to save some money for the welfare of the family as well as children. At the same time the women construction workers face some problems in rearing their children as well as spending time with their children. Among the three respondents, one respondent mentioned that she couldn't able to check whether their children are attending the school regularly. So it is concluded that the government come forward to organize the time management orientation programme to the construction workers. Likewise the government should come forward to organize some amount of counseling programme to the wards of the women construction workers. Because such type of counseling programme enable the children to understand the necessity of the participation of their mother's in economic activity by doing the construction work.

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