

QUALITY OF LIFE OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS: CASE STUDY FROM MUMBAI

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Introduction:

Mumbai is the financial and cultural capital of India. People from different parts of the country come to Mumbai in search of jobs. The city offers ample opportunities of employment in several fields. Unskilled construction workers are mostly the migrants in the city. They leave their families and come to Mumbai to earn more in this city. At present, large numbers of such workers are working in different construction project like real estate, metro, construction of roads and over bridge etc. They do not have any permanent job, as they are working in daily basis or in contact basis. The continuous heavy work in the construction sites make the workers physically weak. Poor economic conditions and low educational level are also responsible for low quality of life. The unbalanced income and expenditure create many socio-economic problems in their life.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of the research paper are

- To assess the socio-economic condition of the construction workers.
- To find out the educational status of the unskilled construction workers in metro city like Mumbai.
- To study the living condition of the construction workers.
- To suggest some development plan for the construction workers in Mumbai.

METHODOLOGY:

The research is mainly based on the primary data. The secondary data has been collected from the different sources like Government and Non-governmental institution. Field study is the most important step for qualitative and quantitative data

acquisitions. The researcher also visited different construction sites in Mumbai to get a proper view of the lifestyle of construction workers in Mumbai. Questionnaires, interviews, participants observations were the different methods employed for the collection of data.

Construction Industry In Mumbai:

Mumbai is the metro city, new infrastructure are being on a mass scale, malls and high-rising buildings, metro and mono rail are springing up overnight. The whole construction industry is at its boom. But it is not always boom for poor and low class who are building this new India. Expanding and fast growing construction sector and in general lack of greater employment opportunity elsewhere has drawn large number of workers in the construction sector. In Mumbai alone, approximately one million men and women are working in this sector. The construction industry is the single largest employer of migrant workers. They usually belong to the poorest section of the society. Education level is also very low. Being a migrant they do not get most of the basic government facilities. The researcher tries to analyse the quality of life of construction workers in Mumbai.

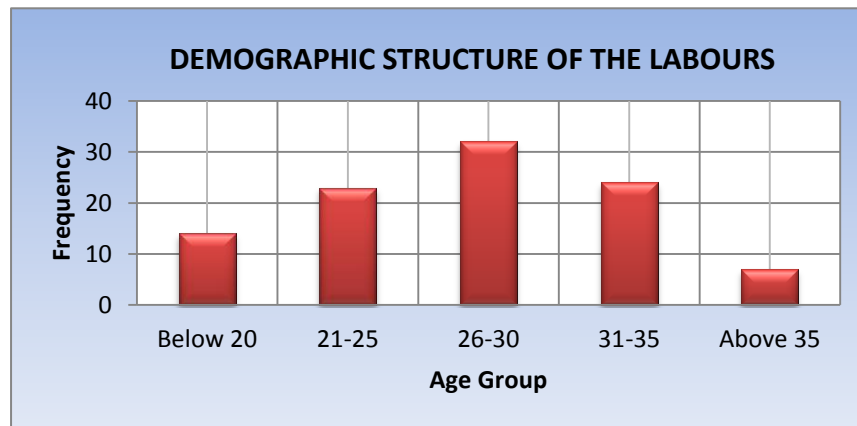
Survey Report:

Researcher visited different construction sites in Mumbai to portrait the quality of life of construction workers. The researcher has taken the interview of 100 construction workers in different parts of Mumbai.

Demographic Structure:

14% workers are below 20 years. Some of them are below 15 also. We can consider them as the child labour. In the time of questionnaire session they always tried to hide their age. 23% are belongs to 21 to 25 age group. 32% is 26 to 30age group and

24% is 30 to 35 age group. Majority of the workers belong to middle age group 26 to



30 (Fig 01).

Figure: 01

Literacy Level:

Educational status of the respondents has been found frustrating in all the construction sites. Most of the workers have to leave native place is one of the important factor because of which migrant construction workers are mostly deprived of education. Fig 02, shows the level of education of the respondents in the all construction sites under study.

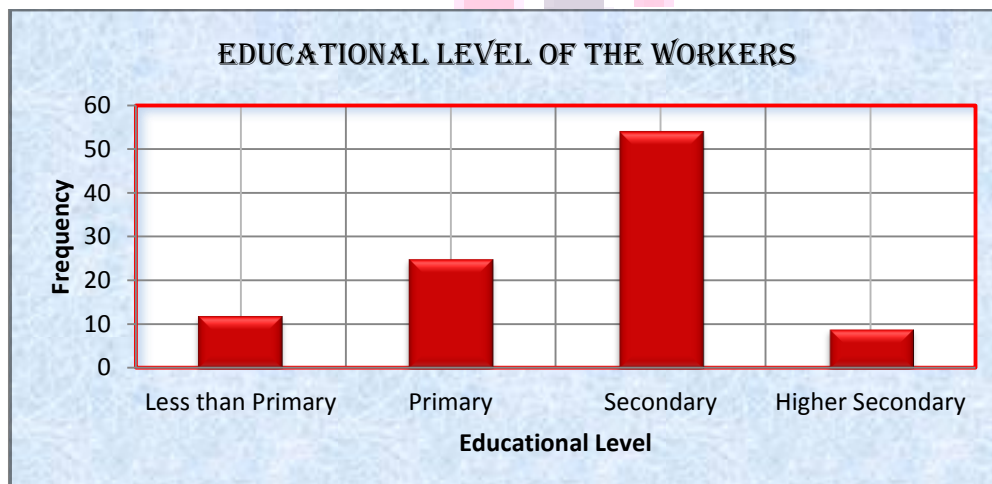


Figure: 02

Economic Standard Of living:

Levels of income and wealth are the key determinants of individual's wellbeing. Some of the areas it is observed that daily wages of the workers are very low and management also not provide them some basic facilities. Some of the respondent also complained that they do not have any provident fund facility because management do not want to make the workers permanent. Overall it is observed that awareness about

economic entitlements is low among the construction workers. Most of the workers have very low level of awareness about the concept of gratuity. But in some areas mainly in the metro rail construction workers are getting some facilities. Management provide them lunch and transport facilities are also given. But in some other small project management do not take any responsibilities of the construction workers. On an overall scale it may be concluded that the unskilled construction workers are by compulsion moving towards providing the minimum basic requirement. On the whole it is encouraging but still far away from being satisfactory.

The expenditure pattern of the construction workers are maximum in food and house rent. But in some big project management provide them the food and house rent. Some workers stated that a large amount they spent in mobile phone because they call and talk to their family very frequently. But they always try to save maximum money which they can send to their family.

Working Conditions:

The workers at the construction site have to report at 8 am and they have to work till 5pm with an hour lunch break. In some project workers are working 12 hours a day. From 8am to 8 pm. But some project workers have shift duty, they have to work at night also. The night shifts workers are also working 12 hours. In other construction sites workers have to bring the food from home. It was observed safe drinking water also not available in the construction sites.

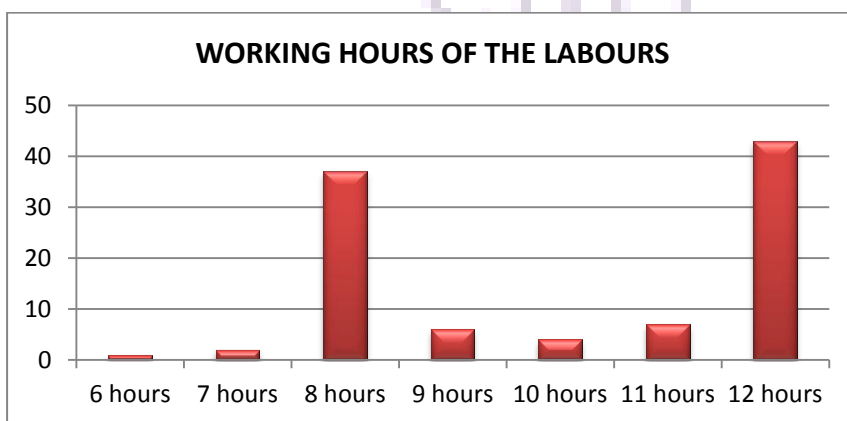


Figure: 03

The construction workers are working on the daily basis. Therefore they do not have any provision of leave. Generally, they have the concept of no work no pay.

Management also do not provide them any medical leave. But some of the projects in Mumbai management provide medical and other facilities also.

86% worker does not get any bonus in the time of diwali or any other festivals. Most of the workers are dissatisfied with this attitude of the management. But 14% workers stated they sometimes get bonus in the occasion of diwali. The amount of the bonus is very low and it is not in regular basis.

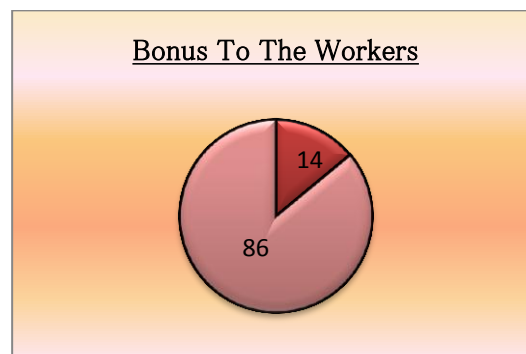


Fig: 04

Living Conditions:

Living conditions of the workers are not satisfactory. 8-10 workers are living in a small room. Sometimes construction workers are living in the construction sites with their families. They do not get the safe and clean drinking water. Sometimes they have to travel a long distance for the drinking water purpose. Most of the children of the workers are suffering from different water borne disease. Some of the workers have to pay the rent of their house. Management do not provide them any bed cot, the workers have to arrange everything. Their daily wages are low and high rent of the house in Mumbai, also create dissatisfaction among the workers. Researcher observations states that the bathrooms are very badly maintained in the construction areas. There is a common bathroom and sometimes workers do not use them at all. Most of them do not have doors. There is no maintenance. There are neither taps nor septic tanks. Sometimes they are using the public toilet.

Health Provisions:

Primary survey tells us that most of the construction workers are not satisfied with the existing medical facilities. The researcher found that due to heavy work more than 12 hours in a day causes many physical problems like back and neck pain, gastro, anaemia, hypertension, skin problem etc.

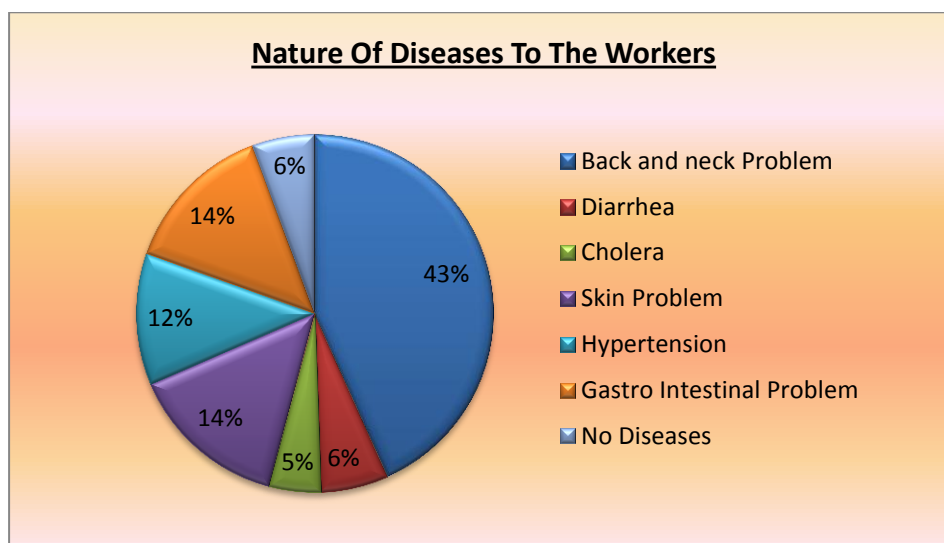


Figure: 05

Dietary Pattern:

Both poor nutrition and excess of it leads to disease development. The level of nutrition attained by construction workers in the different parts of the city is very low. Poor nutrition makes them more vulnerable to infectious diseases. The staple food is rice or chapati. Generally, the construction workers take meal two times a day. Midday meal they carry with them or provide by the management, mostly rice with vegetables which they take during the Tiffin break. Majority of them take tea without milk. They again take rice at their dinner. They are mostly non-vegetarians. Many workers are addicted to alcohol and smoking. They smoke tobacco frequently mainly during the working hours. There is a lack of protein in their diet. Most people survive on vegetables and rice, which form their daily intake. Overall we can say that their diet is insufficient.

Construction workers are unskilled and illiterate workers, which make them very vulnerable to exploitation. Being part of an unorganised and fragmented sector their bargaining power is low and they can't easily fight against injustice. They do not have fixed working time. Sometimes they are working more than twelve hours. Therefore unsettled life and heavy work pressure decrease the quality of life of construction workers.

Recommendations:

The main advantage of the construction industry is that it generates employment opportunities. It absorbs rural and unskilled labour, it provides opportunity to seasonal workers, the industry also absorbs large scale of women workers. The construction industry is characterised by the predominance of migratory and unskilled workers.

The construction workers are entirely on contract basis. This situation also can create insecurity among the workers. The schemes for registering construction labour and providing them with a permanent registration number could be considered. This would help maintaining a databank on them. The proper maintenance of this databank will make this construction sector more organised. The reform of wages of the construction workers should be considered. Most of the projects do not have any leave facility. Sometimes they are working seven days in a week. Some construction management do not provide all the basic safety guard to the workers. Therefore workers are prone to different injury during the working hours. Proper medical facilities are also rare for the unskilled workers. The proper medical facilities should provide to all the workers. Most of the time workers are working for 10 -12 hours. Working hours for the unskilled workers should be reduced to 8 hours.

The management should reform the living conditions and provide all the basic amenities at their working and living place. Sometimes workers are working without any safety measure. Management and government should make it compulsory to wear the safety guard during the working hours. Supervisor should be appointed in every construction sites for proper security of the unskilled construction workers.

Conclusion:

The construction industry is the second largest industry of the country after agriculture. It makes a significant contribution to the national economy and provides employment to large number of people. Due to the development of technology and increase standard of living has made it possible to undertake different mega projects. We all are habituated with the modern facilities and amenities. In the city like Mumbai skyscraper increasing every day .The mass unskilled workers are behind this construction industry. In this paper researcher tries to highlights the quality of life of

the construction workers in respect to their education, living conditions, working conditions, health conditions etc.

The term quality of life is used to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies. They are making the modern India and providing us all the basic amenities. The researcher found that the workers are under the different physical, psychological and mental stress regarding their wages, leave, medical facilities and also some personal issues. The workday is long as 10-12 hours of working in humid heat. All buildings in Mumbai are built this way. As India is getting more prosperous, this section of the society is left behind. Lack of quality education, health care, awareness is creating this division. The time has now come to re-think. We have to bring them in the main stream. The researcher through this study has tried her best to put up the true picture of the construction workers and have suggested some constructive views to improve their overall quality of life.

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