

## **A Descriptive Study on Problems of Women Workers in Construction Industry at Tiruchirappalli**

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**Abstract:** *The process of globalization, export oriented industrialization and relocation of industries from the developed to developing countries lead to increase in women workers in unorganized sector. The nature of women's work ranges from wage employment or self-employment, family labour and piece rated work. The unorganized sector has no clear-cut employer-employee relationships and lacks most forms of social protection. Having no fixed employer, these workers are casual, contractual, migrant, home based, own-account workers who attempt to earn a living from whatever meager assets and skills they possess. Skilled and unskilled construction workers work with low wages. They are working under unsecured environment or work culture. They are migrating from different regions and states leaving their native villages in search of daily job and is one of the main reasons for their extreme exploitation. Construction industry is the major source of employment for workers in the unorganized sector. The aim of this study is to describe the problems faced by the women construction workers in Trichy district. The present study is descriptive in nature. The universe of the present study includes the population of women construction workers in hot spots. As the population is infinite, the researcher had used the non-probability- convenient sampling method was adopted for collecting the sample. The sample size of the present study is 50. The researcher used self-prepared questionnaire for collecting data on demographical details. For the purpose of this research work, standardized tool on Problem Checklist for Working Women by Vishwa Vijaya Singh (1997), to assess the problems of working women was used. The study gives suggestions to improve the living conditions based on the findings.*

**Keywords:** *Women, Construction Workers, Unorganized Sector, Insecurity and Problems.*

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### **I. Introduction**

National Commission on Labour (1966-69) has defined unorganized labours those who have not been able to organize themselves in pursuit of common objectives on account of constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishments and position of power enjoyed by employers because of nature of industry.<sup>[1]</sup>

The World Bank in its annual report in 1989 observed that 35 per cent of Indian households below the poverty line were headed by women and in most cases, were exclusively dependent on female income. The report observed that women's contribution is significant in families with low economic status. The poorest families thus depend on women's economic productivity.<sup>[2]</sup>

Industrialization with the introduction of newly developed technologies plays an important role for development of a country. Building construction is the basic of industrial developments. In India it is one of the fastest growing industries with an annual growth of 10%. It has wide range of activities with employment of a substantial number of workers. They are mainly working in informal/unorganised sector. In India about 340 million (92%) workers are in unorganized sector and about half of them are in construction industry. Security measures are not being provided or adopted by them while working. They are being exploited by the contractors. There is no specified time limit/frame of work for them. They had to work on an average for about 9 hours/day. Mostly they are migratory workers. At times, they are prone to injuries and accidents.

### **II. Problems Faced By Women Workforce in Unorganized Sector**

Organized sector workers are distinguished by regular salaried jobs with well-defined terms and conditions of employment, clear-cut rights and obligations and fairly comprehensive social security protection.<sup>[1]</sup> The process of globalization, export oriented industrialization and relocation of industries from the developed to developing countries lead to increase in women workers in unorganized sector. The nature of women's work ranges from wage employment or self-employment, family labour and piece rated work. The prevalence of women workers in urban unorganized sector is significant in number.<sup>[2]</sup>

The unorganized sector, on the other hand, has no such clear-cut employer-employee relationships and lacks most forms of social protection. Having no fixed employer, these workers are casual, contractual, migrant,

home based, own-account workers who attempt to earn a living from whatever meager assets and skills they possess. The unorganized sector is characterized by the presence of factors viz. long hours of work, wage discrimination of men and women, lack of job security, no minimum wages, lack of minimum facilities at work place, ill-treatment, heavy physical work and sexual exploitation etc. They are engaged in activities like domestic work, construction work, small trades like brick making, coir and basket weaving, household industries etc. In rural unorganized sector women are engaged in agricultural activities, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries etc. <sup>[3]</sup>

### **III. Women in Construction Industry**

Construction industry is the major source of employment for workers in the unorganized sector. It amounts to the second largest category and covers others allied field of activities in the civil, mechanical and electrical area also. According to the NSSO estimates, about 5.57 percentages of workers are engaged in building and other construction works in 2004-05 (economic survey: 2007-08). The distribution of informal employment as computed by NSSO employment-unemployment survey (2011-12) reveals that rural (99.92%) and urban (97.19%) female construction workers out number their male counterparts (rural male 98.55% and urban 92.17%). <sup>[2]</sup>

Nowadays, a large number of workers are engaged in the construction sector. Out of them approximately 30% are women workers. The problems faced by the women workers in construction industry are as follows – Low wages, Exploitation, Family issues, Illiteracy, Seasonal work, Nature of work, The neglect of children, Unhygienic habits, The lack of social security, Gender discrimination, Ignorance of laws, Traditional attitude, living in slum areas and Skin problems. <sup>[5]</sup>

Unlike the organized sector, there are not many legislations or programmes available for unorganized sector. Apart from the agricultural sector, the only legislations available for other common unorganized workers are 1. The unorganized sector workers social security, Act 2008 where various schemes on maternity, family benefit and health policy are proposed and 2. The domestic workers social security Act, 2010 which insists on providing better working conditions for women and children some of the other schemes which were promoted by the government ended up as failures. <sup>[4]</sup>

In the state of Tamilnadu the only comprehensive legislation enacted for the welfare of unorganized sector workers is Tamilnadu Manual Workers (Regulations of Employment and Conditions of Workers) who could register under the board and avail the schemes, under this scheme, various assistances like accident, death and funeral, disablement, marriage, maternity, children's education, spectacle and pension are covered.

### **IV. Review of Literature**

There are many scholars who have done research on women working in different sectors. However, there are very few who have done research on problems of women workers in construction industry. Here is the gist of their work.

**Anand, (1998)** analyzed the characteristics of the construction workers, predominantly migrant workers and the intervention strategies adopted to facilitate the reach out services to these women workers along with awareness of their rights and utilization. He suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned.

**Rajasekhar D., J.Y. Suchitra (2006)** conducted a study on Employment Security for The Un-organised Sector Workers in Karnataka. This study covered agriculture, construction and domestic workers of 4 districts of Karnataka. The objective of this study was to examine the requirement of employment security in unorganized sector and the problem faced by workers without employment security. It was found that inter and intra-sectoral heterogeneity among these occupational groups was the main factor for the policies aiming at ensuring their employment security. Results indicated that the same policy for all occupational groups of unorganized sector would not work as different groups have different problems

**Kumar M. Dileep (2012)** conducted a study on Inimitable Issues of Construction Workers: Case Study. Construction workers are available everywhere in all countries. The percentage of construction workers is more in developing countries like India as employment intensity is much higher in lower income countries than higher income ones. This study was conducted in 82 construction sites. Migrated construction workers faced some major problems like poor health condition, arduous working life, harassment, inadequate and unequal wage structure, long working hours, poor housing facilities, atrocities on women workers, lack of safety measures and proper education for children of construction workers. The study stressed on the need to create awareness of all labour rights and recommended proper intervention programme as well as proper implementation of labour law for this sector.

**Dave Vandana (2012)** conducted a study on Women Workers in Unorganised Sector. The study focused on female construction workers, agriculture workers and domestic workers. The objective of this study was to know the socio-economic, working and living conditions of workers. The multistage stratified random sampling technique was applied, data was collected from 350 female workers from urban and rural areas of 3 districts of Haryana namely Panipat, Kaithal and Kurukshetra. Workers faced problems like disparity in wages where female workers were paid less. Working hours were not fixed and harassment at work place was common.

**Kalpanadevi, U.V.Kiran (2013)** in their research paper titled 'Status of Female Workers in Construction Industry in India' observes that Construction industry provides job opportunity to large number of skilled as well as unskilled workforce. The workforces employed in the industry have to face several difficulties at the work place. Several issues related to health, job stress, and injuries at work place are the major concern of the research among researchers. They identify the key factors related to the status of female worker in the industry. According to them, Women work as unskilled labour and face several other difficulties in comparison to males. Sexual harassment, gender biasness, wage discrimination are the major factor due to which the working environment becomes difficult for them in the industry and women remains at same level of skill even after working few number of years.

## **V. Research Methodology**

It includes nature of problem, research objectives, hypothesis, research design and methods of data collection, etc

### **5.1. Problem Statement**

Nowadays more rural and urban women were going for construction works. The reason for such shift in occupation is reduced agricultural activities due to poor rainfall & cost hike. As the living cost in high to make ends meet women choose alternative jobs. She has to overcome at home, workplace, health problem, family problems, sexual harassment and social issues.

The researcher has noticed many construction workers in hotspots like, T.V.Kovil, Gandhi Market and Woraiyur and near Tamilnadu police academy. These women seem to be in pressure to identifying the availability of works, distance to be travelled to new workplace, insecurity about work and reaching home late in evening. This influenced the researcher to do research about such women working in construction field. So, the researcher wants to study the problems faced by the construction workers in areas of occupation, social, family and personal aspects.

### **5.2. The study objectives are**

- To find out the social-economic conditions of the women constructions workers.
- To study the problems faced by the women construction workers.
- To find out the association between the social-economic, occupational, personal and family aspects of women constructions workers.
- To suggest measures to women construction workers to manage their situations.

### **5.3. Hypotheses**

1. There is significant relation between the marital status of the respondents and the various dimension of working women checklist.
2. There is a significant relation between the type of house of respondents and overall working women checklist.
3. There is a significant relation between the age of the respondents and their level of family problem.
4. There is a significant correlations between the earning members in the respondent' family.

### **5.4. Research Design and Method Of Data Collection**

The present study is descriptive in nature which describes the problems faced by women construction workers. The universe of the present study includes the women construction workers looking for job from hot spots like Gandhi Market, Woraiyur and Marakadai. As the population is infinite, the researcher had used the non-probability sampling and adopted convenient sampling method for collecting the sample. Fifty Women construction workers were selected.

The researcher used self-prepared questionnaire for collecting data on demographical details. For the purpose of this research work, Standardized tool on **Problem Checklist for Working Women** by Vishwa Vijaya Singh (1997), to assess the problems of working women was used.

Primary data were collected from 50 respondents by using Problem Checklist for Working Women by Vishwa Vijaya Singh (1997). Secondary data from related literature, previous study, concept related to problems

of working women form books, journals & websites were collected. The collected data analyzed using percentage analysis for demographic details and statistical analysis were done to find the relationship, association between the selected dependent and independent variables in the study. Interpretation based on data analysis with a help of SPSS software was made.

## VI. Results and Discussions

**Table: 1** Sample Distribution of the Respondents

S. No.	Factors	Particulars	No. of Respondents (n:50)	Percentage
1.	Age	Up to 25 years	12	24.0
		26-35 years	14	28.0
		36-45 years	14	28.0
		Above 45 years	10	20.0
2.	Marital status	Married	31	62.0
		Unmarried	8	16.0
		Widowhood /separated	11	22.0
3.	Education	Primary	13	26.0
		Middle	3	6.0
		SSLC	13	26.0
		Secondary	12	24.0
		Illiterate	9	18.0
4.	Religion	Hindu	35	70.0
		Christian	7	14.0
		Muslim	8	16.0
5.	Residence area	Village	31	62.0
		Town	12	24.0
		City	7	14.0
6.	Monthly income	Rs.3001-5000	2	4.0
		Rs.5001-7000	32	64.0
		Rs.7001-9000	16	32.0
7.	Family type	Nuclear	21	42.0
		Joint	24	48.0
		Alone	4	8.0
		Extended	1	2.0
8.	Family members	Two	3	6.0
		Three	6	12.0
		Four	13	26.0
		Five	14	28.0
		More than 5	14	28.0
9.	Earning family members	One	9	18.0
		Two	33	66.0
		Three	5	10.0
		Four	3	6.0
10	House type	Thatched	6	12.0
		Tiled	21	42.0
		Terraced	23	46.0
11	House owned	Rented	17	34.0
		Own	33	66.0
12.	Toilet facility	Yes	22	44.0
		No	28	56.0
13	Water facility	Yes	31	62.0
		No	19	38.0
14.	Electricity facility	Yes	50	100.0

The above table shows that each of 24% of the women respondents are of 26-35 and 36-45 years of group which means that economic conditions necessitates the respondents to continue their job at this age. 62% of the respondents are married. More than half of the respondents' education is up to primary and secondary which shows that they did not give much importance to it. 70% of the respondents are Hindu. 62% of the respondents are living in village. 64% of the respondents' salary is between Rs.5001-7000. 48% of the respondents' family type is joint family. 28% of the respondents' family consists of more than 5 members. 66% of the respondents' family has two earning members. 42% of the respondents are residence in terraced house. 66% of the respondents live in own house. 56% of the respondents have no toilet facility in their home. 62% of the respondents' have water facilities in their home. 100% responders' home are electrified.

**Table: 2** Distribution Of Respondents By The Level of Their Problem In Various Dimensions Of Problem Checklist Of Working Women

S. No.	Working Women Checklist And Its Dimension	No. of Respondents (n: 39)	Percentage (%)
A	<b>Level of personal social problem</b>		
	Low level	28	56.0
	High Level	22	44.0
B	<b>Level of Family problem</b>		
	Low level	26	52.0
	High Level	24	48.0
C	<b>Level of Occupational and personal problem</b>		
	Low level	27	54.0
	High Level	23	46.0
D	<b>Level of overall Working women checklist</b>		
	Low level	28	56.0
	High Level	22	44.0

The above table shows level of problem experienced by the women construction workers. The respondents' level of problem with respect to family, social occupational and personal is low like 56%, 52% and 54% respectively.

**Table 3:** One-Way Analysis of Variance Among Marital Status of The Respondents With Regard To Various Dimensions of Problem Checklist of Working Women

S. No	Marital Status	Df	SS	MS	X	Statistical Inference
A)	<b>Personal social problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	289.912	144.956	G1=46.71 G2=42.38 G3=41.36	<b>F=4.087</b> <b>P&lt;0.05</b> <b>Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	1666.808	35.464		
B)	<b>Family problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	4878.325	2439.16	G1=41.32 G2=13.63 G3=35.64	<b>F=74.096</b> <b>P&lt;0.01</b> <b>Highly Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	1547.195	32.919		
c)	<b>Occupational and personal problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	141.351	70.676	G1=42.58 G2=37.88 G3=41.36	<b>F=3.407</b> <b>P&lt;0.05</b> <b>Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	974.969	20.744		
d)	<b>Overall Working women checklist</b>					
	Between Groups	2	8773.145	4386.572	G1=130.61 G2=93.88 G3=118.36	<b>F=24.356</b> <b>P&lt;0.01</b> <b>Highly Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	8464.775	180.102		

**G1=Married G2=Unmarried G3=Widowhood/separated**

There is significant relation between the marital status of the respondents and the overall problem checklist of working women and its dimensions.

**Table 4** One-Way Analysis Of Variance Among House Type Of The Respondents With Regard To Various Dimensions Of Problem Checklist Of Working Women

S. No	House type	Df	SS	MS	X	Statistical Inference
A)	<b>Personal social problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	55.779	27.890	G1=45.83 G2=45.81 G3=43.70	<b>F=0.690</b> <b>P&gt;0.05</b> <b>Not Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	1900.9	40.446		
B)	<b>Family problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	1172.24	586.124	G1=26.33 G2=40.71 G3=33.43	<b>F=5.244</b> <b>P&lt;0.01</b> <b>Highly Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	5253.2	111.772		
c)	<b>Occupational and personal problem</b>					
	Between Groups	2	192.001	96.001	G1=38.00 G2=43.67 G3=40.57	<b>F=4.881</b> <b>P&lt;0.05</b> <b>Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	924.319	19.666		
d)	<b>Overall Working women checklist</b>					
	Between Groups	2	2674.9	1337.49	G1=110.17 G2=130.19 G3=117.70	<b>F=4.317</b> <b>P&lt;0.05</b> <b>Significant</b>
	Within Groups	47	144562.9	309.850		

**G1=thatched G2=tiled G3=terraced**

It is seen from the table above that there is a significant relation between the type of house of respondents and the overall problem checklist of working women and its dimensions. Also there is no significant relation

between the type of house and the personal social problem checklist. There is significant relation between the type of house and the family problem and occupational and personal problem of the respondents.

**Table 5** Association between Age of the Respondents and Various Dimensions of Problem Checklist of Working Women

S. No.	Age	Level of Working women checklist		Statistical Inference
		Low	High	
1	<b>Level of Personal social problem</b>	<b>n:28</b>	<b>n:22</b>	$X^2 = 1.927$ df = 3 P > 0.05 Not Significant
	Below 25 years	5	7	
	26-35 years	9	5	
	36-45 years	9	5	
	Above 45 years	5	5	
2	<b>Level of Family problem</b>	<b>n:26</b>	<b>n:24</b>	$X^2 = 11.386$ df = 3 P < 0.05 Significant
	Below 25 years	8	4	
	26-35 years	2	12	
	36-45 years	10	4	
	Above 45 years	6	4	
3	<b>Level of Occupational and personal problem</b>	<b>n:27</b>	<b>n:23</b>	$X^2 = 2.860$ df = 3 P > 0.05 Not Significant
	Below 25 years	8	4	
	26-35 years	5	9	
	36-45 years	8	6	
	Above 45 years	6	4	
4	<b>Level of Overall Working women checklist</b>	<b>n:28</b>	<b>n:22</b>	$X^2 = 3.347$ df = 3 P > 0.05 Not Significant
	Below 25 years	8	4	
	26-35 years	5	9	
	36-45 years	9	5	
	Above 45 years	6	4	

The above table shows that there is significant association between the age of the respondents and their level of family problem. There is no significant between the dimension like personal social problem, occupational problem and personal problem and the age of the respondents.

**Table: 6** Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient of Correlation between the Respondents Total Earning Members in Family and of Problem Checklist of Working Women

S. No	Variables	Correlation Values	Statistical Inference
1	Total earning members in family and personal social problem	-0.163	P>0.05 Not Significant
2	Total earning members in family and Family problem	-0.410**	P<0.01 Highly Significant
3	Total earning members in family and occupational and personal problem	-0.301*	P<0.05 Significant
4	Total earning members in family and overall	-0.382**	P<0.01 Highly Significant

The above table shows that there is negative correlations exist between the earning members in the respondent's family. That is when the number of earning members in the family increases the family problem decreases.

## VII. Findings

- Each of less than one fourth (24%) of the women respondents are of 26-35 and 36-45 years of group which means that economic conditions necessitates the respondents to continue their job at this age.
- More than half (62%) of the respondents are married. More than half of the respondents' education is up to primary and secondary which shows that they did not give much importance to it.
- Majority (70%) of the respondents are Hindu. 62% of the respondents are living in village.
- More than half (64%) of the respondents' salary is between Rs.5001-7000.
- Nearly half (48%) of the respondents' family type is joint family.
- More than one fourth (28%) of the respondents' family consists of more than 5 members.
- Less than one half (42%) of the respondents are residence in terraced house.
- More than half (66%) of the respondents live in own house.
- More than (56%) of the respondents have no toilet facility
- Most (66%) of the respondents' family has two earning members.

There is significant relation between the marital status of the respondents and the overall problem checklist of working women and its dimensions like family problem, occupational problem and personal problem. Research hypothesis is accepted.

There is significant relation between the type of house of the respondents and the overall problem checklist of working women and its dimensions like family problem, occupational problem and personal problem. Research hypothesis is accepted.

There is no significant relation between the age of the respondents and the overall problem checklist of working women and its dimensions like family problem, occupational problem and personal problem. Research hypothesis is rejected.

There is negative correlations exist between the earning members in the respondents' family. That is when the number of earning members in the family increases the family problem decreases. Hence Research hypothesis is accepted.

### **VIII. Suggestions**

- The Government and the NGO's has to motivate the rural population on ego friendly toilets and that usage. Because most of rural form rural is do not have toilet in their home.
- Nationalist bank running self-employment training education has to must extend their services to rural area to promote more women workers in unorganized sector in self-employment training programme.
- The unorganized welfare association must to organized general health camp twice in the year as the women construction workers are in work 24X7.

### **Role of Social Worker**

- Social Worker can educate the members of the family about the problems faced by the respondents in taking upon in secured job in unorganized sector.
- The Social Worker can to register facilitate meant to form a welfare association through which secured jobs can be ensure for women in construction work. The association can approach the builders for booking the number of construction workers required.
- The Social Worker can lobby/ advocacy/liasons with the Government transport corporation for bus service exclusively for working women.

### **IX. Conclusion**

Construction sector falls under unorganized sector of an economy. Unorganized laborers refer to those workers who have not been able to organize themselves in pursuit of their common interest owing to certain constraints like casual and uncertain nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishment. They are working under unsecured environment or work culture.

The scenario only can be changed with the government intervention, by implementing the policies strictly. Strict action has to be taken against all those who harass the employees. It is very necessary to all workers to know about Government Schemes. The status of the women only can be improved when major transition in the society occurs and that can be achieved by mind set transition.

More research is required in this area to suggest solutions to existing problems and on issues like social security and positive impact of unions and labour Acts on the workers.

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