

# Analysis of Socio-economic conditions migrant labourers: A case study of construction labourers in Chennai

Suja K.

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Queen Mary's College, Chennai-4

**Abstract:** Migration is the common phenomenon in Indian sub-continent especially after new economic policy implementation. Internal migration has been heightening into indispensable level as the agrarian distress have forced the semi-skilled labour to migrate to urban areas to explore livelihood in non-farm activities. Construction industries have adopted sufficient proportion of the population. Thus, the present study assesses the socio-economic conditions of the migrant construction labourers in Chennai. The study found that the income has enhanced but not adequate level. The working environment is not conducive to meet out ILO standard. The study urged the need to improve the welfare measures to enhance the socio-economic conditions of the migrant labourers.

**Key Words:** Construction, Migration, ILO.

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

The construction industry is a universal industry celebrated for its generation of jobs at various skill and professional competence. In terms of value of its output, its worldwide market is described that the worth of the construction industries is more or less around \$1.5 Trillion. But only a small proportion of it is disseminated among its workforces. In world labour market, construction labourers are said to be over 100 million, constituting 6-7 % of the world labour force. However, the position of the construction labourers continues to be unsatisfactory and much needs to be done beginning from mapping the profile through the primary data on various features of construction labour to precise procedures for the benefit of this labour. The working and living conditions of the labourers in the construction industry have customarily been rigorously exploitative. An attempt was made to regulate conditions through the Contract Labour Act 1970 and Interstate Migrant Labourers' Act 1979. However, these failed to increase the situation, primarily, for two causes: the model of the legislation was unsuitable for construction labourers and the will to implement it was severely lacking. Among the labourers, the women labourers and the children who accompany them suffer greatly. In 1996, The Building and Other Construction Labourers [BOCW] (Regulation of Employment and Service Condition) Act 1996 was passed precisely for construction labourers. It sought to deliver basic social security and increase working conditions. The Act was based on a tripartite model in which a cess was imposed on construction, a Welfare Board was set up and the registration of labourers provided for. India's thrust on building infrastructure with indigenous and foreign investment flowing in, it is significant that the State takes initiative to protect the interest of the labourers and their family. This is possible through an appropriate tripartite arrangement which is articulated through the BOCW Act, where the State, the employer and the worker, each has a stake. With no political will to regulate the industry and indifference of the Unions towards this mobile workforce, the labourers find themselves at almost the dead end when it comes to negotiating their employment terms or accessing social security net. The multilayer construction industry also generates confusion in ascertaining the accountable partner. Currently the trend of the industry (specially the large projects) is leaning towards mechanization with few technical institutes providing this kind of training, the industry would slowly replace labourers through machines in order to increase productivity that would ensure the a steady growth in profit. Despite this diversity in possible employment forms, the argument is that working circumstances in construction locations are generally poor on account of their vulnerable situation in the society which impedes the possibility for collective bargaining, and their establishment in places where labour is specifically 'cheap to buy, plentiful and well-disciplined' Accordingly, the literature is categorized by the assertion that low wages, insufficient health and safety standards, and an absence of union representation are all defining characteristics of construction work sites where greater chunk of the migrant labourers are engaging without sufficient protective measures. As majority of the migrant construction labourers are less literate and hail from socially deprived sections of the society. The structural cultural subordination, changing labour laws heightened by globalization have powerfully defamed the quality of the migrant labourers and undervalue their labourious contribution. Under this situations present study would drive to pose some of the important questions to be probed viz whether the migrant labourers got adequate the economic benefits which they aspired for, Whether the financial

position enhanced. In brief the study would propel to map out the socio-economic conditions of the migrant construction labourers and the perceptions on the hiring process, working conditions. Migrant labourers are vulnerable to numerous methods of exploitation at all phases of the migration procedure. Migration impacts may also differ significantly across these numerous magnitudes of social and economic change. The study would be an significant tool to demonstrate the subjects confronted by the migrant construction labourers in construction industries as the globalization and urbanization compressed the concept of development but it is essential to examine whether the real benefits percolated to the migrant labourers and would enable the them to obtain their necessary share in the sphere at this juncture the study would give the clarity to the policy makers and employers to perceive the polices to protect the rights of the labourers and facilitate them to contribute in more effective way in the production procedure thereby ensure the optimum productivity in one hand and the labourers job satisfaction on the other hand.

**2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :**

- To investigate the perception of the selected migrant construction labourers on consequences of migration on socio-economic conditions across the study area.
- To assess the significance of construction works and migration on transformation in their lifestyle.

**3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY:**

The relevant data for the study from 300 migrant construction labourers across the Chennai through interview and discussions at various levels. The Method of Data collection was personal interview with the migrant construction labourers by administering the questionnaires among the construction labourers in Chennai who migrated from various parts of India. The structured questionnaire conceived to obtain the relevant information from the migrant construction labourers.

**Table.1:Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Pre-Migration</b>	1315.8	143.5	430.74
<b>Post- Migration</b>	24690	540.0	121.3

Source: computed from primary data

**Table.2:Paired Samples Correlations**

	Correlation	Sig.
<b>Pre and post Migration</b>	0.955	0.01

**Table.3 (c):Paired Differences**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
<b>Pre and post Migration</b>	1139375	4087.8	1238.6	14516	8673	9.329	300	0.001

**4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION :**

The result obtained from the empirical validation revealed that majority of the migrant construction labourers (87.2%) are male as male predominantly engaging in most labourious works even though women also contributing but majority of the construction workers migrated are engaging in big projects like construction of multistoried buildings, bridges and other massive works in which men contributed more than that of women. Almost 18 % of reported that their annual household revenue was 2 lakhs or above per annum, and 47.4 % described an annual household income between 2 to 3 lakhs. The age of the most of the migrant construction labourers (58%) are between of 31 and 50. Most (90.3%) specified a willingness to engage in construction works with full inclination. Around 76% of the migrant construction labourers opined that significant changes in revenue guaranteed after migration, nearly 87% stated that indebtedness has decreased after migration. Around 85% endorsed that the livelihood largely depends on construction works, Nearly 78% stated that the agrarian distress propelled them to migrate from their native. Almost 78% and 72% stated poor sanitation and protective measures respectively. The study utilized Paired

't'-test to the associate the means of the pre-test and the post-test. The T-value acquired from the examination of the whole mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test is 9.32. The inferences also expose that the P-value or value of significance is 0.04, at the level of 0.05. The outcome also implied that there was noteworthy difference between the overall mean scores of the pre-test and post-test at 5% level of significance, hence, results indicates that there is a significant difference is found in the wages of the migrant construction labourers between pre and post migration period.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

The nature of labour migration in India is interconnected, on the one hand, to the arrangement of (uneven) development heightened by numerous magnitudes of policy, and, on the other, to a arrangement of capitalist growth, which has implied sustained and increasing informalisation of the rural and urban economy. The present study had map out the reasons and subsequences of migration in Chennai city. As the foremost thrust of the exercise is to comprehend the various nuances of migration procedure and the consequences of the same on the deprived people. The study also introspected the to map out how far the social capital or economic sociology functions in economic activity which has not been dispensed by the previous studies sufficiently. In the same line the study also addressed the vulnerability of the migrant labourers as the asymmetric information of the labour market and the lack of awareness of the migrant labourers have pushed them into more vulnerable conditions. The migrant construction labourers neither constitutional protection nor have collective bargaining institutional power. It is also worthy to note that most of the migrant construction labourers are socially deprived sections of the society as the manifestation of institutional factors have poised the oppression in another dimension.

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