

Interstate Migrant Workers and Access to Social Security Benefits: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

According to the latest data, the construction sector is one of the second largest employment generation sectors with 71 million workers' force and Indian construction workers are listed under the unorganized sector. The Ministry of Labor and Employment launched the e-sharam portal for unorganized sector workers which helps them to get awareness about the social security schemes. It is the first database in India that covers migrant workers, gig workers, construction workers, and migrant workers. However, it is crucial to study the status of social security among migrant construction workers. The main intention of this paper is to understand the status of social security among migrant construction workers in India. The present paper focuses on the latest literature related to social security especially related to migrant workers. The methodology adopted by the researcher is the secondary data. The finding of the study reveals that workers will only know information about social security through the welfare boards, workers who work on sites, and eighty percent of workers are not conscious about social security privileges. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic condition of workers was poor and factors like education level, and monthly income were very poor, the average monthly income was less than five thousand rupees per month. A few prominent studies were conducted on comparative studies comparing their economic status before and after their migration and it was found that the economic condition has improved when they have migrated from their place to some other place for livelihood.

Keywords- Social security, Migrant construction workers, Unorganised sector, Socio-economic conditions.

Introduction

The unorganized sector is one of the vital sectors in India according to the 2011 census there are 456 million migrants in India of which 41.4 million workers are migrant workers. (Kumbhar, PKS 2023). Various push and pull factors play a significant role as reasons for migration. furthermore, some Studies have found that low wages, lack of job opportunities, family problems, debts, etc. are the push factors, whereas, more job opportunities, better wages, access to basic amenities, better quality of life, etc. are the pull factors. (Ashok and Thomas, 2014). The status of social security of migrant construction workers shows the vulnerability and inequality that they face. It is important that the researcher, policymakers, and stakeholders must identify the gap through the help to outcome from the challenges faced by the migrant workers. The challenges faced by migrant women in the construction industry were discrimination in wages as well as working hours.

Objective of the Study

- 1) To study challenges faced by migrant construction workers.
- 2) To understand the status of social security among migrant construction workers in India

Migrants Means?

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) instruments as a person who migrates from one country to another (or who has migrated from one country to another) with a view to being employed other than on his own account, and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment.

Challenges Faced by Migrant Construction Workers in India

Low wages: migrant labourers in the construction industry are classified as informal sector workers. Their primary problems in the field are poor pay relative to other industries and low pay from contractors. Low wages lead to a lack of social security, income insecurity, and lack of other civil rights (Nathan D, 1987). Push factors like unemployment in the home state and poverty were major challenge reasons for migration.

Poor working conditions- the migrant construction workers easily migrate through the influence of peer groups with little knowledge however this work demands physical involvement in work. one of the most challenging works done by the migrant workers was working in poor-condition environments. Poor ventilation, dust, and poor drinking water facility. Adequate working conditions are crucial for decent work and social security. (Bhavana, A K 2019).

Lack of awareness- most migrant workers were not aware of the government scheme as well as the social security scheme. The educational level of migrant construction workers was illiterate, or they studied up to primary school education. On this background, the workers face a lack of understanding of the scheme. The construction sector provided 10% of their contribution to the Indian GDP. This is one of the largest sector for employment this sector easily attract people towards it.

Language barrier- the migrant workers face a major challenge the language barrier which challenges them to face day-to-day life in new cities or places. In the workplace, workers face problems due to local language and lack of communication in the local level language. Employers mean contractors also discriminate in providing employment. The workers did not understand the Social Security and welfare schemes, or any other benefits and facilities provided by the government due to the language.

Research Methodology

This article is wholly based on secondary data the researcher has collected data from various sources of secondary data methods like articles, journals, government-published articles, reputed books, and newspapers.

| Unorganised workers including Migrant workers who register in the e-Shram Portal | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | Uttar Pradesh | 8,31,67,035 |
| 2 | Bihar | 2,88,53,853 |
| 3 | West Bengal | 2,61,47,092 |
| 4 | Madhya Pradesh | 1,73,62,239 |
| 5 | Maharashtra | 1,39,36,557 |
| 6 | Odisha | 1,33,64,168 |
| 7 | Rajasthan | 1,32,89,147 |

| | | |
|----|--|---------------------|
| 8 | Gujarat | 1,14,79,367 |
| 9 | Jharkhand | 92,65,660 |
| 10 | Tamil Nadu | 85,41,440 |
| 11 | Chhattisgarh | 83,68,788 |
| 12 | Andhra Pradesh | 80,39,475 |
| 13 | Karnataka | 78,14,959 |
| 14 | Assam | 70,92,664 |
| 15 | Kerala | 59,32,341 |
| 16 | Punjab | 55,51,811 |
| 17 | Haryana | 52,84,750 |
| 18 | Telangana | 42,85,764 |
| 19 | Jammu and Kashmir | 34,22,568 |
| 20 | Delhi | 33,16,737 |
| 21 | Uttarakhand | 30,00,571 |
| 22 | Himachal Pradesh | 19,47,407 |
| 23 | Tripura | 8,59,471 |
| 24 | Manipur | 4,21,964 |
| 25 | Meghalaya | 3,09,039 |
| 26 | Nagaland | 2,20,834 |
| 27 | Puducherry | 1,83,286 |
| 28 | Chandigarh | 1,76,686 |
| 29 | Arunachal Pradesh | 1,45,038 |
| 30 | The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu | 73,399 |
| 31 | Goa | 65,346 |
| 32 | Mizoram | 62,241 |
| 33 | Sikkim | 36,444 |
| 34 | Ladakh | 31,583 |
| 35 | Andaman And Nicobar Islands | 30,371 |
| 36 | Lakshadweep | 2501 |
| | Total | 29,20,82,596 |

Source- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1985030>

Inference- the above table shows that in the e-sharm portal which was launched for unorganized sector workers including migrant workers, to get benefits of social security and welfare schemes total 29.20 crore unorganized sector workers were registered in the portal. Uttar Pradesh was at the top in the list of a large number of workers registered the researcher inference that most migrant workers belong to UP state in India.

Current Scenario of social security of migrant workers in India

According to the Indian constitution articles 41,42,43 etc, directive principles state that social security is a basic right of human, and global conventions also state that social security is a human right (Srivastava, R 2020). medical benefits, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old age benefits, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity benefits, and survivor benefits these were nine types of social security benefits that were mentioned in the (Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention 1952). As per the Indian constitution Articles 14,15,19,21,21A,23, and 24 were the most crucial for social security of interstate migrant

construction workers in India. The construction work is seasonal-based and in that rainy season they reduce the demand for work and at that movement, social security affects the migrant construction workers. (Guha Thakurta, S.N 1970). Under the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act 2008 of section 5 state the central government and state government frame a social security board respectively. Illiterate and ignorance these two characteristics were prime barriers to the social security of workers and women migrant workers complained about a lack of social security during maternity and sickness also 100% of respondents did not have membership in the national or state-level welfare board. (Bhavana, A K 2019).

The migrant worker community's absence from the primary facility and lack of social security is a very severe concern. Social security and welfare facilities are vital for migrant workers, and a huge number of workers operating in this industry get benefits from these schemes. It is also more important to maintain good documentation however migrant construction workers have poor documentation which also affects their enrolment in government schemes. During the pandemic, these workers were completely abandoned from social security and welfare facilities. (Kumbhar, PKS 2023). Moreover, During the COVID-19 pandemic Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan are the states that unveiled mobile apps and portals that help to find employment also access social security for migrant workers. (NITI Aayog 2020).

Conclusion

International organizations like International Labour Organisation, and the United Nations accepted social security as a fundamental right of humans. Section 22 of UNHR states that every individual is a member of the society and has the right to social security which was recognized by the UN General Assembly in 1948. The construction sector provides its own contribution to the Indian GDP. It is also important to create awareness about social security among migrant construction workers because their contribution helps the economic development of the nation. The educational status of migrants was also important for getting the benefit of the scheme and maintaining the documents was also more crucial.

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