

## Socio-Economic conditions of women in construction industry- A study in Visakhapatnam

City A.P. India

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### Abstract

The present study is aimed to explore socio-economic problems of Visakhapatnam women workers at construction sites in working environment and to document issues like gender bias, living conditions, vulnerability and slackness, wages, their economic status by finding out their savings, loan etc. The author concentrated only on the women workers who are working in the construction sector and how they are facing problems in the work place. Majority of the women construction workers are facing lots of problems like absence of social security, low wages, gender discrimination, unhygienic conditions at work place etc. Data was collected from 160 women workers from four areas of Visakhapatnam (North, East, West, South) city. The data for this study has been collected through primary source. The primary for this study was collected with the help of the questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from the library and websites. The major findings of construction women labor facing many problems they asked government security for their jobs.

**Keywords:** Construction Industry, Unskilled workers, Social security, Environment

### Introduction

In any developing economy in the globe, majority are employed in unorganized sector only. The employment of unorganized sector is mainly are agriculture, dairy, small scale industries, animal husbandry, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts etc. The number of women in the unorganized sector is many times more than that in the organized sector because of their education, skills, family restrictions, lack of suitable employment opportunities etc. There are no strict laws to govern the unorganized sector in any economy. Hence, there is no full-fledged security of job or any common benefits to the employees. Among the unorganized industries, 95 percent of works are purely contract basis and seasonal one.

The construction industry is the largest employer in India and in the World. It is the big industry after agriculture sector. It is an integral part of a Country's infrastructure and industrial development. The contribution of the construction industry to the economic and social life of the country is significant. Along with the construction industry creates substantial employment and also develops to other sectors through backward and forward linkages. It is essential therefore, that this vital activity encouraged and helps for the healthy growth of the economy. After separation of Andhra Pradesh, the sector also recorded the highest growth rate in generation of jobs in the last two years, doubling its share in total employment in the state.

The study concentrated on the socio-economic conditions of women workers engaged in construction works in Visakhapatnam city. In order to study the socio economic conditions of women workers engaged in construction works.

**Table 1:** Age wise Structure of Women construction workers

Workers Age group	No of Workers	Percentage
Below 20	29	18.13
21-30	38	23.75
31-40	54	33.75
41-50	22	13.75
51-and above	17	10.62
Total	160	100.00

*Source:* Primary data

Table-1 depicts the age group of women construction workers in Visakhapatnam city. Construction work is painful in nature which requires hard labor and physical strength in which age plays an important role. The highest proportion of women construction workers, i.e. more than three fourth of them has recorded in 21-40 years age group. After this Age group the proportion of Women Construction workers in Age group of 41-50, 51 and above have been recorded 13.75 percent and 10.62 percent respectively. While only 18.13 percent construction workers were below 20 years age. It indicates that the women workers of the construction industry in the young and productive age groups.

**Table 2:** Marital Status of the selected women worker

Women construction workers	Marital Status				Unmarried	Total Percentage (%)
	Married (Single)	Widow	Divorced	Married (Family)		
Number	67	09	11	61	12	160
Percentage	41.87	5.63	6.88	38.12	7.5	100.00

*Source:* primary data

The marital status of women workers in construction industry in Visakhapatnam city is shown in the above table.

**Table 3:** Age at Marriage of sampled women

Women construction workers	Age at Marriage (year)				Unmarried	Total Percentage
	Below- 16	16-18	19-21	Above 21		
Number	14	48	82	04	12	160
Percentage	8.75	30.00	51.25	2.50	7.50	100.00

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the age at marriage of women workers engaged in sampled construction sites of Visakhapatnam city. Table-3 out of 160 sampled women workers, 12 are unmarried. So, the rest of 148 women workers are either married or widow or divorced. It can be said that, at one point of time 148 workers were married. Out

of 148 women workers, 14 (8.75%) percent got married within the age group of below 16 years. 48 (30.00%), 82 (51.25%) and 04 (2.50%) got married in the age group of 16-18 years, 18-21 years and above 21 years respectively as depicted in table-5.

**Table 4:** Number of Children of each women worker amongst the sample

Women workers	Number of Children				Unmarried Women workers	Total
	1	2	3	4 & Above		
Number	17	74	36	21	12	160
Percentage (%)	10.625	46.25	22.5	13.125	7.5	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts that 46 percent of women workers in the study have 2 children each, 10 percent, 23 percent and 13 percent of the women labor have one, three and four and more

children each. Total Number of women workers is 160. Here 12 women workers have been taken into consideration as they were unmarried.

**Table 5:** Family sizes of the sampled Women workers in Visakhapatnam city

Women workers	Number of Family members				Total
	1-3	3-5	5-8	8 and above	
Number	43	87	26	04	160
Percentage (%)	26.88	54.38	16.25	2.5	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above Table-5 shows that the family size of the women workers in the construction industry of Visakhapatnam city, the analysis of the above table reveals that 54 percent of the women workers of the selected sample in the city have the family size ranging from 3 to 5 each. 27 percent of the

women workers have the family members ranging from 1-3. 16 percent of women have the family size ranging from 5-8 members each. There are only 4 families have more than 8 members each.

**Table 6:** Educational Levels of the women workers in the construction industry in Visakhapatnam city is displayed

Women workers	Levels of Education					Total
	Illiterate	Just Literate	Class I-V	Class VI-VII	Class VIII & more	
Number	41	58	32	24	05	160
Percentage (%)	25.625	36.25	20.00	15.00	3.125	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table -6 depicts that, the educational levels of the women workers in construction industry in Visakhapatnam city, out of 160 sample of the research study, 26 percent of the women workers engaged in the construction works in the

city under the category of illiterate. Only 36 percent of the women workers are just literate. 20%, 15% and 3% of the women workers have studied up to class I-IV, Class VI-VII and Class VIII and more respectively.

**Table 7:** Shows that the Educational levels of children of the women workers in construction works in the Visakhapatnam city.

Women workers	Level of Education of Children					Total
	No Education	Class I-II	Class II-IV	Class IV-VII	VII and above	
Number	24	48	40	20	16	148
Percentage (%)	16.22	32.43	27.03	13.51	10.81	100.00

Source: primary data

The education levels of children of 16 percent of women workers do not have any education at all as depicted in the above table-7. The Children of 32 percent of women workers

have attained formal education (Class I-II) and the Children of Class II-IV. And only 10.81 percent are educated VII and more.

**Table 8:** Migration among the sampled construction women workers in Visakhapatnam city

Women workers	Migration				Local	Total
	Same district	Other district	Other state	total		
Number	22	77	43	142	18	160
percentage	13.75	48.125	26.875	88.75	11.75	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table-8 shows that out of 160 women workers, 142 women workers are migrate and only 18 were local residents. Due to lack of agricultural and traditional works these people are migrate and join in the construction works. So

construction industry is the second largest employer in the country. Some of them are coming from other states like Orissa, West Bengal Tamil Nadu etc.

**Table 9:** Women workers with regard to the earning members of their families.

Women workers	Earning members of the respondents family in the study					Total
	1	2	3	4	5 & above	
Number	29	74	44	09	04	160
Percentage	18.13	46.25	27.50	5.62	2.50	100.00

Source: primary data

The above table depicts that out of 160 sampled women construction workers, 46 percent and 27 percent families there are 2 and 3 working members respectively per family. 18 percent of families of women workers have 1 earning

member, and 5 percent of families have 4 earning members. Only 2.5 percent of families have 5 and above earning members.

**Table 10:** Monthly income of the women construction workers in the study

Monthly income categories (Rs)	No of workers	Percentage of Labors
Below-5000	11	6.87
5000-7000	25	15.63
7000-9000	42	26.25
9000-11000	73	45.63
Above-11000	09	5.62
Total	160	100.00

Source: Primary data

From the above table it comes to our notice that the monthly income of 45 percent of the sampled women workers attached to the construction industry under study lie between Rs 9000 to 11000. Only 26 percent of the interviewed women workers

earn monthly between Rs. 7000 to Rs. 9000/-. Recently the Labor Laws are protecting the women wages. More than 70 percent of women are getting the same wage along with men.

**Table 11:** Sources of Family Income of the construction women workers

Women workers	Sources of Family income						Total
	Agriculture works	Daily labor	Small business	Servant maid	Schools	Other type of work	
Number	07	44	37	34	26	12	160
Percentage	4.37	27.50	23.13	21.25	16.25	7.50	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts that Daily labor and small business are the major sources of livelihood of the family members of the women workers in the construction industry. The next source of family income is servant maid job (21.25). The family members are engaged in the above said activities to maintain the family for livelihood. They are to depend on

other activities, as the construction works are not available times. So, all the workers cannot depend solely on the work of construction industry, round the year. During not availability of construction works, they engage themselves either as servant maid, daily labor, small business etc.

**Table 12:** Indebtedness of construction women workers in Visakhapatnam city

Women workers	Indebted to					Total
	Contractor	Co-Workers	Relatives & Friends	Money lenders	No indebtedness	
Number	69	47	22	15	07	160
Percent	43.13	29.37	13.75	9.37	4.38	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table-12 depicts that 43 percent of the women workers are indebted to the work contractors. About 29 percent of the women workers are indebted to co-workers. Only 13 percent, 9 percent are indebted to relatives and

money lenders respectively. A meager percent (4%) of women workers are not indebted to anybody. The main reason for indebtedness to women construction workers is to perform family traditions and customs in the society.

**Table 13:** Types of demands of women workers in construction industry

Women workers	Types of demands								Total
	wage increase	Paid holiday	Safety & security	Sanitation facilities	Medical facility	Rest room	Precautionary equipment	Baby care facility	
Number	54	27	18	31	10	12	05	03	160
Percentage	33.75	16.88	11.25	19.37	6.25	7.5	3.12	1.88	100.0

*Source:* primary data

The above table-13 clearly indicates that 34 percent of the total sampled women workers demanded for increase in wages as the hike in wages may help them maintain their families. 17 percent of women are demand paid holidays in some occasions (pongal, dasara). Nearly 19 percent of women are demanded sanitation facilities for health protection purpose. 11 percent are demanding safety and security measures at work place and 3 percent are asking precautionary equipment like Helmet, hand gloves shoes and season cloths etc. 1.88 percent of women demanding baby care facilities at work site because in the nuclear families, no elders at home to look after their babies.

### Conclusion

Construction industry is an ongoing industry with the increase in the population there is an increase in the demands of the construction works proportionately in the form of houses, malls offices, apartments etc. The construction industry women workers are facing some socio-economic problems in the Visakhapatnam city. The government and real estate leaders must try and understand the situation of the women construction workers. The overall analysis of the study reveals that the construction workers are one of the poorest sections of the society, living in poverty. For better living of construction workers they should be added in government sector.

### Acknowledgement

I am thankful to The Secretary, the staff members of UGC, SERO, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, for funding this Minor Research Project.

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