

Socio-Economic Situations of Migrant Brick-Kilns Industrial Workers in Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT

Background: India is the second largest brick producing country after China accounting for more than 15 per cent of global production. Approximately one lakh brick kilns are operating in India which employs more than four million workers. Most of the workers are migrants who belong to economically backward and underdeveloped regions of the country and normally hail from poor economic class and are mostly illiterate. Brick industry is one of the unorganized industrial sector and migrant brick kiln workers are not benefitted with adequate wage and medical facilities. In this context this paper addresses the “Socio-Economic Situations of Migrant Brick-kiln Industrial Workers in Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu”. **Data and Method:** The study uses the data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data of 120 samples collected from Keerapalayam Block, Cuddalore District of Tamilnadu. The brick kiln industrial works were scattered in Cuddalore district and more number of migrant workers engaged in brick industrial works particularly in Keerapalayam Block. So, the area of the study of the present research work was restricted to the keerapalayam block and this study focused only on migrant workers engaged in brick-kiln industry. **Conclusion:** Creation of employment opportunities and other essential facilities in the place of origin will help stopping migration and save family life value. The study may be suggested that the migrant brick-kiln industrial workers may be provided equal opportunities for their overall upliftment including education and career development of their children with the help of available and innovative workers welfare policies.

Keywords: brick-kiln, economic situation, migrant, cuddalore, industrial workers

I. INTRODUCTION AND EARLIER LITERATURE

Brick-making is one of the most ancient industries. The craft is as old as the Indus Valley Civilization (2500-1500BC). Brickworks are also known as a brick factory, is a factory for the manufacturing of bricks, from clay or shale. Usually brickworks are located on clay bedrock and this is the most common material from which bricks are made, often with a quarry for clay on site. Brick-making is considered a seasonal industry, for the reason that it remains non-functional during the rainy season, normally for three to four months. Employment in brick kilns is a seasonal work; workers are engaged every year for the season. Every year, brick-kiln owners must find workers, and workers must find brick kilns where they can secure employment. This process is facilitated by brokers, or labour contractors, who act as intermediaries between the owners and the workers. Contractors obtain workers both locally and from far-off places, resulting in significant annual migration from and to source districts and states (Geetha, 2014).

Brick industry is one of the unorganized industries in India. Brick kiln in India produce around 300 billion bricks and it is the second largest brick producing country after China accounting for more than 15 per cent of global production. Brick industry in India is labor intensive industry employing millions of workers (Naik, 2017). According to Indian Brick Manufacturer Association, approximately one lakh brick kilns are operating in India which employs more than four million workers. Most of the workers are migrants who belong to economically backward and underdeveloped regions of the country and normally hail from poor economic class and are mostly illiterate. Brick kiln industrial workers were mostly seen in mixing and molding and loading and unloading sections. Workers live in the same working environment with their families. Brick kiln workers are not benefitted with adequate wage and medical facilities. Working for long hours in same position, lack of rest and improper diet due to workers get affected physiologically and psychologically. The increasing importance of the studies on migrants brick kiln industrial workers has been emphasized by a series of national and international conferences and seminars. In India, over the past two decades a number of studies have focused on one or more issues of migrant brick kiln industrial

workers (More, 2015; Naik, 2017; Patel, 2014; Athena, 2017; Ghoshal, 2008; Bhukuth, 2006; Iqpal, 2006). Keeping this view, an attempt has been made in this paper to study the economic situations of the migrant brick kiln industrial workers in Tamilnadu, which is specifically focused on the Cuddalore district.

II. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this paper are: (1) to study the socio-demographic and migrant characteristics of the brick-kiln industrial workers; (2) to understand and analyze the occupational and economic characteristics of the brick-kiln industrial workers; and (3) to make concluding remarks for improving their economic status of the migrant brick kiln industrial workers.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article titled “Socio-economic situations of Migrant Brick-Kilns industrial workers in Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu” has been based on primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data/information has been collected through interview with the selected migrant workers of the sampled brick kilns industrial workers. These apart, related books, journals, newspapers, Report of Brick Association and also different websites have been consulted to make the study of an effective one. The brick-kiln industrial works were scattered in Cuddalore district and particularly in Keerapalayam Block, more number of migrant workers engaged in brick industrial works. Cuddalore district has a large number of industries and workers. But this study focused only on migrant workers engaged in brick-kiln industry. So the area of the study of the present research work was restricted to the keerapalayam block only. However, the findings of the study can be generalized for the whole state as the characteristics of brick-kiln industry workers are similar in any part of the state. The period of study is 2015-16. Percentage analysis has been used for interpretation of the data collected from field survey.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Characteristics of the Migrant Workers

It is important to study the socio demographic aspects of the migrant workers before discussing other aspects of the respondents. *Table-1* demonstrates the personal characteristics of the migrant workers such as age, religion, community, marital status and educational status of the migrant brick-kiln industry migrant workers. The result found that there has been majority of the brick-kiln industry migrant workers engaged in 26-40 years age group (57) in both gender and less than or equal to 25 years age group was more in male gender compare female age group. It is important to understand the religiosity of the respondents so that their other characteristics will be implied and assessed very easily. It was found that majority of the migrants belonged to Hindu (72) religion followed by Christian in both gender which indicates predominant position of Hindus as it prevails at national level also. More than half of the migrant workers were SC/ST community followed by MBC community. It was interesting to found that the ratio of female MBC community is more than the SC/ST and BC community. Majority of the migrants were married (78) followed by widowed. Unmarried and married migrant were more number in male gender but widowed was more number in female gender compare to male gender category. Nearly two third of the migrants workers were illiterate (72) and only male migrant workers were studied high school and above.

Migration Characteristics

Every move of the people either in- migration or out-migration has its own reasons. *Table-2* reveals that the migrants characteristics of the brick-kiln industry workers. By the place of birth wise concern, majority of the respondents come from the within the taluk (51) and closely followed by the outside the taluk (42) and more female migrant workers are comes from the outside the taluk or near by the taluk (18). It was found that majority of the migrant workers duration of migration was less than two years (54) and one third of the migrant workers were staying 2 to 3 years in the migrant place (42). Only few of the female migrant workers (6) were staying more than 3 years in the migrant place. Nearly two third of the migrant workers were Tamil speaking migrant workers followed Telugu and Kannada speaking migrant workers but the others language speaking migrant workers know Tamil also. It was important to study the living arrangement of the migrant workers engaged in brick-kiln industry. The result found that majority of the respondents living with their family (51) followed by living alone (27) and relatives (27). More number of family members engaged with the brick-kiln works is the main reason for staying working place living with family and also interesting to note that the 12 widowed female migrant workers were staying alone in the working spot. By their shelter provider concern, majority of the migrant workers (42) staying in the brick-kiln industry land owners shelter without paying any rent followed by contractor owned house (30) with paying minimum rent and relatives homes (21) without paying any rent. No one female respondents staying with the friends and co-workers.

Economic Characteristics

Occupation is one of the economic aspects of the migrant workers, which helps to understand the nature of their economic dependency. The brick-kiln industrial works were scattered in Cuddalore district and particularly in keerapalayam block, more number of migrant workers engaged in brick industrial works. **Table-3** clearly explains the occupational details of the brick-kiln industry migrant workers. The result found that majority of the migrant workers engaged in the brick-kiln industrial works with their spouse (42.5%) followed by respondents with their children (20.0%) and respondent only (20.0%). The main reason for staying and working with family members is caring family and earning more income. By their duration of work wise concern, majority of the respondents working full days of week and particularly living alone respondents only engaged in this work full days of week followed by 40 per cent of migrant workers engaged brick-kiln industry works in less than a week.

Brick-kiln industry works are seasonal in nature. **Table-4** depicts the economic characteristics of brick-kiln industry migrant workers in Cuddalore district. The result was found that majority of the respondents (51) earning income range was Rs.5001-10000 followed by 15001 and above (30). It was interesting to found that the ratio of female migrants was more than that of male migrants in the monthly income range of 5001-10000 rupees. The overall average monthly income range of male migrants is Rs.10800 and female migrant is Rs.9500. Out of the total respondents, three-fourth of the respondent has the saving habits and only less than one-third of migrant workers are saving more than 5000 rupees per month. Majority of the migrant brick-kiln industry workers perceived that their satisfaction of current economic status was no change (57) followed will become better (33).

Chi-square for Verifying Hypothesis

Objective: There is a association between gender and their socio-economic status of the brick-kiln industry migrant workers

Framework of Analysis: χ^2 - Test of attributes is used to find out association between gender and their socio-economic status with degrees of freedom = (r - 1) (c - 1).

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \sum_j \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Here, O_{ij} = Observed frequency of ij^{th} cell

$$E_{ij} = \text{Expected frequency of } ij^{th} \text{ cell} = \frac{(i^{th} \text{ row total}) \times (j^{th} \text{ coloumn total})}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1) with c = no. of columns and
 r = no. of rows

Table 5: Chi Square analysis for Gender and their Socio-Economic Status

Perception of their Socio-Economic Status	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
It is better now	21	28.0	9	20.0	30	25.0
No change	27	36.0	30	66.7	57	47.5
No change yet but will become better	27	36.0	6	13.3	33	27.5
Total	75	100	45	100	120	100

Results and Discussion of Chi-Square Tests

Pearson Chi-Square Value = 11.543
 Degrees of Freedom = 2
 P level Significance = 0.003

Results and Discussion of Chi-Square Test

Perception of one self's Socio-Economic status is a parameter to measure the respondents' view about their past, present and future economic status. It is visible that majority of the respondents opined their economic status was no change after come over here but equal percentage of respondents opined that it is better now and in future it will be better. These results indicate that more scope is available for this type of brick-kiln industry works. Chi square value also confirms that the

significant association between gender and their socio economic status of the brick-kiln industrial work. The result found that as a work wise concern male migrants have better economic status than female migrants those who engaged in brick industrial work.

V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Migration has become an important and inevitable process in everybody's life in the modern society in terms of search of livelihood and all-round development of human beings suiting the increasing needs of the modern society. This paper discusses the socio economic situation of migrant workers engaged in Brick-kiln industry with respect to Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. The result found that there has been majority of the migrant workers engaged between age group of 26 to 40 years, belonged to Hindu religion, Scheduled Caste, married, illiterate, from the district outside the study district. The major reason for their migration was stated as better income. Nearly two third of the migrant workers were Tamil speaking migrant workers, majority of the respondents living with their family, More number of family members engaged with the brick-kiln works is the main reason for staying working place living with family. By their shelter provider concern, majority of the migrant workers staying in the brick-kiln industry land owners' shelter without paying any rent followed by contractor owned house with paying minimum rent. Majority of the respondents working full days of week especially living alone respondents, earning income range was Rs.5001-10000 and the ratio of monthly income of female migrants was more than that of male migrants. Majority of the migrant brick kiln industry workers perceived that their satisfaction of current economic status was no change. Chi square value also confirms that the significant association between gender and their socio economic status and the result found that as a work wise concern male migrants have better economic status than female migrants.

The problem of migrant brick-kiln industrial workers is huge and requires cooperation and coordination between the government and other social factors including the trade unions. A grievance cell may be constituted by the Government to study and monitor the socio-economic, psychological and health problems of the migrant brick-kiln workers as a short-term measure. Gradually, creation of employment opportunities and other essential facilities in the place of origin will help stopping migration and save family life value. It may be suggested that the migrant brick-kiln industrial workers may be provided equal opportunities for their overall upliftment including education and career development of their children with the help of available and innovative workers welfare policies.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of the Brick-Kiln Industry Migrant Workers

Personal Characteristics	Male (n=75)	Female (n=45)	Total (N=120)
Age			
<= 25 years	15	9	24
26-40 years	39	18	57
41+ years	21	18	39
Religion			
Hindu	42	30	72
Christian	33	15	48
Community			
SC/ST	42	21	63
MBC	24	18	42
BC	9	6	15
Marital Status			
Unmarried	9	6	15
Married	54	24	78
Widowed	12	15	27
Educational Status			
Illiterate	33	39	72
Primary	24	6	30
High school	18	--	18

Source: Computed from the Primary Data

Table 2: Migrant Characteristics of the Brick-Kiln Industry Workers

Migrant Characteristics	Male (n=75)	Female (n=45)	Total (N=120)
Place of Birth			
Within the Taluk	33	18	51
Outside the Taluk but within the District	24	18	42
Outside the District	18	9	27
Duration of Migration			
Less than two years	33	21	54
2-3 years	24	18	42
3+ years	18	6	24
Language Spoken			
Tamil	48	27	75
Telugu	18	9	27
Kannada	9	9	18
Living Arrangement by their Current Residence			
Living alone	15	12	27
With family	27	24	51
With relatives	18	9	27
With friends	15	--	15
Shelter Provider for Current Residence			
Land owner	24	18	42
Contractor	15	15	30
Friends	15	--	15
Co-worker	12	--	12
Relatives	9	12	21

Source: Computed from the Primary Data

Table 3: Occupational Details of the Brick Kiln Industry Migrant Workers

Category	Frequency (N=120)	Percentage
Number of Persons working in the family		
Respondent only	24	20.0
Respondent with spouse	51	42.5
Respondent, spouse & children	21	17.5
Respondent with children	24	20.0
Days of work in a week		
Less than week	48	40.0
Full days of Week	72	60.0
Timing of Work		
Day time	57	47.5
Early morning (5am to 10am) and Evening time (3pm to 8pm)	63	52.5

Source: Computed from the Primary Data

Table 4: Economic Status of the Brick-Kiln Industry Migrant Workers

Category	Male	Female	Total
Seasonal Monthly Earning			
<= 5000	9	6	15
5001-10000	27	24	51
10001-15000	21	9	30
15001 and above	18	6	24
Average Monthly Earning	10800	9500	10150
Saving Habits (per month)			
<=2000	27	15	54
2001-5000	15	12	27
5000+	12	9	21
Perception of their Socio-Economic Status			
It is better now	21	9	30
No change	27	30	57
No change yet but will become better	27	6	33

Source: Computed from the Primary Data