



## Managing Labour Issues on Road Project

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**Abstract-***The experience of road construction industry confirms that over 20% of total project cost is spent on labours. Road construction sector is rather an unorganized industry therefore the management of labour is being a big issue. The labours are not employed for the whole year due to non-working of road project in monsoon season. They face tremendous financial problems in those four to five unemployed months. The labour contractors are not aware about the minimum wages, they must pay to the labours and even if they know all these things they would try to keep themselves away from it. It would have been great if the concern authority would have had strong control on all the considerations that we have been discussing. For understanding the current situation, it is proposed to work on the above mentioned issues to highlight them at appropriate places. Data collection and its analysis is based on the response obtained through the questionnaire survey prepared.*

*This paper covers hidden aspects in Indian scenario like, to educate them about their primary constitutional labour rights, problems facing on site by migrant workers, regarding treatment on site for further opportunity, behavior with women workers, provision of social security like insurance system, medical benefits, prevent use of forced labour. Basic needs such as health problems, their children's education, staying on site facilities, food, drinking water provisions, safety precautions, market places that are unattended. Here an attempt is also made to discuss the possible solutions for it.*

**Keyword:** *road construction, labour management, questionnaire, wages.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The construction recently was highly labour intensive. Now a day's technological improvements and innovations have begun to transform road construction projects into a high tech one. This has made the road construction projects quite profit oriented, yet with high risk and with poor prospects for the labour, especially to the unskilled, and semi skilled workers.

India today has reached the stage of rapid economic growth, but 'not rapid social development'. Poverty, unemployment and inequality constitute the major problems that India faces, especially from equity and social development points of view. India's labour force is predominantly unorganized, unskilled, poorly paid, of low productivity and unprotected. Among the various sections of unorganized labour, the labour in the construction industry is a large section suffering from poor working conditions and adverse terms of work.

Migrant workers constitute a large section of construction. Road work is often carried out under hazardous conditions with high accident rates compared to the manufacturing sector. Safety consciousness is yet to percolate at the actual construction sites. There are many small firms/contractors 'less disposed towards compliance of labour laws and safety requirements'.

There are many acts and regulations applicable for the road construction projects but their implementation has been notably poor. There is also high incidence of child labour in this industry. Attention to their working conditions and welfare is of recent origin. After several attempts the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1996 was passed which provides for the establishment of construction workers' welfare board on a tri-partite basis. However, the position of the construction workers continues to be unsatisfactory and much needs to be done beginning from mapping the profile through the primary data on different aspects of construction labour to specific measures for the benefit of this labour.

### II. SCOPE OF THE PAPER

#### 1. Why there is need of this study?

##### 1.1. Mobile industry:

As we know the Indian road construction projects are mobile which does not have any specific location & its movement is changes from time to time and the fear of job insecurity makes workers very vulnerable, leading to workers becoming submissive and passive.

1.2. Organization problem:

Lack of organization has been a serious problem for these workers. Apart from the nature of the construction site in terms of its time span and locations. The employers or contractors too prefer non-unionized labour because it helps them in having control over them as per their profit motives.

1.3. Labour problem:

Due to halt of four monsoon month work, the skilled workers tend to migrate towards other industry.

1.4. Occupational problem:

Another aspect of the sufferings of the road construction workers is the prevalence of occupational diseases. Women and children suffer from a number of diseases like asthma, bronchitis, skin diseases, diseases of reproductive system like hydrosols and gynecological problems.

1.5. Children's problem:

Labours children's serving problem of their primary education, children's are forced from their family to work for their livelihood.

1.6. Food problem:

The labours do not get healthy food from the road construction site. Majority companies are not making provision of better food to their labours.

1.7. Financial problems:

The work is stopped during monsoon. Therefore, they face tremendous financial problems in those monsoon non-working months.

1.8. Labour accommodation problem:

The living conditions are no way better than the working conditions. It will not be entirely wrong to say that the situation is still worse. They are destined to live in slums where one does not get proper civic amenities.

1.9. Salary/Wages problem:

They lose in bargaining for fair wages. They are not paid minimum wages, even the agreed wages are not paid in time.

1.10. Social security problem:

There is no social security in some of the cases like medical care, sickness, unemployment, old age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity, and survivor's benefits.

1.11. Unawareness of Constitutional labour right:

Most of them are unaware of labour right recommended by Government of India or state government.

1.12. Female workers problem:

If the workers are female, the problems at work site and while commuting gets compounded and multiplied. More so if they are pregnant or having small children.

1.13. Weekly rest & paid holidays problem:

Continuous work without adequate opportunity for rest, relaxation, and recreation can have long-term negative ramifications for workers productivity, morale, and physical well-being.

1.14. Migrant people problem:

The movement of large numbers of people through and between countries to find employment has become a big issue & make them sudden provision of home is impossible.

1.15. Working Hours problem:

Their working time and hours are not well regulated. They do not get overtime rates for excess work. They work under very hazardous conditions. The working conditions and the facilities provided at the sites are far from satisfactory.

1.16. Labour safety problem:

Safety conditions and measurers are hardly met. In case of accident, there is, in general, no provision for financial and medical aid. It is up to the workers themselves to arrange for the treatment.

### III. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND PREPARATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Q. NO	Description	Ratings				
		1	2	3	4	5
I. Night Work						
1.	Measures taken by company while employing or when assigning workers to perform night work are how much satisfactory?					
2.	How is the health assessment and health advice offered before starting night work?					
3.	In case of an accident of workers, conducting night works how much satisfactory are the medical facilities provided?					
4.	How is the hourly night work rate compared with the hourly rate for work performed during the day?					

Q. NO	Description	Ratings				
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>II. Weekly Rest and Paid Holidays</b>						
5.	Rest days for workers per week, per month, and per year are how much up to level?					
6.	How is the period of employment for workers entitled to vacations?					
7.	How is absence of worker counted as part of the period of services?					
8.	How is the remuneration for workers on annual leave paid in relation to salary paid while actually working?					
9.	How is the time span between the dates upon which workers are entitled to take holidays and the day upon which they are allowed to take their leave with pay?					
<b>III. Social Security</b>						
<b>Medical Care and Sickness Benefits</b>						
10.	How much satisfactory is the insurance system for you by the company?					
11.	How much national systems provide adequate health and sickness insurance?					
12.	How is the Medical facilities provided to you by company?					
<b>Maternity Benefits</b>						
13.	How is the number of weeks leave granted to women prior to childbirth?					
14.	How are the weeks of maternity leave granted to women?					
15.	How is the daily breaks given by company for women workers while nursing their children?					
<b>IV. Migrant Workers</b>						
16.	How is the employment opportunity and treatment by company compared to local workers?					
17.	How is the remuneration as compared to local workers?					
18.	How are the working hours as compared to local workers?					
19.	How is the remuneration for overtime work as compared to local workers?					
20.	How is the treatment for young workers as compared to local workers?					
21.	How is the employment opportunity & treatment for female workers as compared to local female workers?					
22.	How is the accommodation types offered as compared to local workers?					
23.	Your opinion at social security and insurance covered by company.					
24.	Your satisfaction regarding contracting terms.					
<b>V. Bonded labour</b>						
25.	Your convenience at working situation.					
26.	Procedures have been established by company to prevent use of forced labor are how much satisfactory?					
27.	How much it affects on your work by forcing you to work?					
<b>VI. Equality of Opportunity and Treatment</b>						
28.	How much satisfactory do you find the established policies and procedures to ensure equal remuneration for males and females?					
29.	Comparison of salary for male & female workers for the same task.					
30.	Up to what extent the policies and procedures conveyed to you is understandable?					
31.	What is the extent of complaints or reports have been made by you to management at the project, local authorities, or civil society groups about discrimination or harassment based on equality of opportunity and treatment?					
32.	What extent of women and men employed with respective areas of responsibility, broken down by individual worker and gender?					
33.	Up to what level do the legal documentation clarify you?					

Q. NO	Description	Ratings				
		1	2	3	4	5
34.	How is the guidance offered by the company regarding particular job?					
<b>VII. Minimum Age and Child Labour</b>						
35.	What is the level of child labour engaged at site?					
36.	Up to what extent do you agree with the minimum employment age defined by government at the site?					
37.	Up to what extent is the record keeping for age documentation of each worker?					
<b>VIII. Wages</b>						
38.	How is the wage partially paid in the form of allowances, especially in goods or services?					
39.	How much of each worker's salary is covered by any allowances?					
40.	How much company own or manage a shop providing commodities to you?					
41.	How far other shops within reach of workers?					
42.	Up to what do you agree with deductions made from your salaries by companies?					
43.	Provision of any legal/illegal deduction from your salary.					
<b>IX. Termination and Dismissal</b>						
44.	How is the labour termination done by company under conditions?					
<b>X. Hours of Work</b>						
45.	The legal maximum number of work permitted 8 hrs per day and per week are how much effective?					
46.	The company set a maximum number of hours for all workers per day and per week are how much convenient to you?					
47.	How much are the daily and weekly working hours for the different areas of responsibility on the project site?					
48.	How is the project policy on maximum work hours effectively communicated to all workers?					
49.	The rate at which overtime is compensated is it up to the mark, and up to what extent?					
50.	How sufficient are the rest breaks are given to you per day?					
51.	Up to what level are you satisfied with the drinking water facility provided by company?					
<b>XI. Training</b>						
52.	Up to what level do you feel need of training?					
53.	Provision in the organization for any training.					
<b>XII. Other questions</b>						
54.	How much do you heard about labour constitutional rights?					
55.	You are not employed for whole year due to monsoon. How much do you face your financial problem during monsoon?					
56.	How are the facilities of organized versus unorganized workers in relation to job position, promotion, gender, marital status, age?					
57.	Up to what level you satisfied with the transport facility provided to you by the company?					
58.	How much you satisfied with the provision of toilets at your workplace?					
59.	How much you satisfied with the Working Condition in project?					
<b>XIII. Labour Safety</b>						
60.	Need of safety.					
61.	How is the provision of PPE (Personal protective equipment) and first aid requirement?					
62.	Hospitality and its corresponding expenditure provided in case of accident on site.					

Note: 1-Very poor 2-Poor 3-Good  
 4-Excellent 5-Not known/ Not performed

#### IV. DATA COLLECTION

Site selected for data collection is from Kolhapur and Sangali district of Maharashtra state. These are the busiest places and becoming crowded due to rapid agricultural, educational and industrial growth. In current project various data is collection of questionnaire survey from labours of different road construction projects. Survey data is processed as follows.

1. Data collection process
  - a. Individually visiting the site.
  - b. Personal discussion with labours with respect to questionnaire prepared.
  - c. I have selected 8 to 9 labours per site for data collection.
  - d. Total data collected is of 60 labours.

2. Data Analysis

Data is analyzed with the use of SPSS software. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) makes complex statistical computations simple and fast. SPSS is one of the most popular comprehensive statistical software packages used in the social sciences. The frequency table, Mean, Mode, Median, standard deviation and variance are calculated. One sample test is also carried out for analyzing data.

2.1. One sample test

Ques. No	No. of samples	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1.	60	4.23	1.254	0.162
2.	60	3.97	1.677	0.217
3.	60	4.27	1.205	0.156
4.	60	4.33	1.100	0.142
5.	60	2.65	0.481	0.062
6.	60	2.05	0.675	0.087
7.	60	2.00	0.638	0.082
8.	60	1.73	0.578	0.075
9.	60	1.38	0.555	0.072
10.	60	4.67	1.115	0.144
11.	60	4.27	1.561	0.202
12.	60	2.98	0.725	0.094
13.	60	3.00	0.664	0.086
14.	60	2.82	0.537	0.069
15.	60	2.73	0.634	0.082
16.	60	1.68	0.469	0.061
17.	60	1.68	0.537	0.069
18.	60	3.10	0.303	0.039
19.	60	2.33	0.475	0.061
20.	60	2.07	0.312	0.040
21.	60	2.33	0.475	0.061
22.	60	2.67	0.475	0.061
23.	60	4.87	0.724	0.093
24.	60	4.87	0.623	0.080
25.	60	3.30	0.462	0.060
26.	60	3.32	0.469	0.061
27.	60	1.35	0.481	0.062
28.	60	2.95	0.811	0.105
29.	60	1.98	0.833	0.108
30.	60	4.77	0.890	0.115
31.	60	1.42	0.561	0.072
32.	60	3.15	0.606	0.078
33.	60	4.93	0.516	0.067
34.	60	1.72	0.524	0.068
35.	60	2.72	0.640	0.083
36.	60	3.07	0.899	0.116
37.	60	3.08	0.869	0.112
38.	60	2.97	0.823	0.106
39.	60	2.27	0.578	0.075
40.	60	2.80	1.022	0.132
41.	60	3.18	0.770	0.099

Ques. No	No. of samples	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
42.	60	1.80	0.684	0.088
43.	60	4.05	1.407	0.182
44.	60	2.35	0.481	0.062
45.	60	3.35	0.481	0.062
46.	60	2.50	0.597	0.077
47.	60	2.57	0.563	0.073
48.	60	3.00	0.991	0.128
49.	60	2.98	0.701	0.090
50.	60	1.45	0.594	0.077
51.	60	3.53	0.503	0.065
52.	60	1.68	0.537	0.069
53.	60	4.58	1.169	0.151
54.	60	1.48	0.504	0.065
55.	60	1.38	0.555	0.072
56.	60	2.05	0.769	0.099
57.	60	1.58	0.497	0.064
58.	60	2.90	0.752	0.097
59.	60	3.40	0.494	0.064
60.	60	2.30	1.109	0.143
61.	60	2.00	0.803	0.104

## V. CONCLUSION

The road construction industry is second largest industry as far as employment opportunities are concerned. However, the quality of employment, in terms of wages, working conditions and social security support, is extremely poor. Workers are less educated, their skills are non-formal, their awareness of their own rights is poor, and many of them being migrants, or not organized and unionized. The condition of road construction workers in market is still worse. All these facts were highlighted in a survey undertaken.

The following issues have come up prominently while analyzing from Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS) Software are as follows,

- a. From Questionnaires analysis the most critical factor is- “work done by forcing labour” and it got highest rank 1.
- b. From Questionnaires analysis the less critical factor is- “Provision in the organization for any training” and got rank 40.
- c. Most of the workers don’t know about legal documentation and has got rank 62.
- d. The road workers do not get regular wages because they do not get regular work. Most of them earn less than the minimum wage. Their wages are decided by the agents/contractor who hires them for the builder or developer
- e. Most of the workers possess a single skill. Resultantly they do not get regular work. Having multiple skills would have given them work for more number of days in a month. They desire to obtain multiple skills but they do not have any access to such training institutions/organizations from where they can obtain multiple skills training.
- f. Lack of unionization among the road workers reduces the bargaining capacity when they negotiate with the contractor/agent for their wages.
- g. Some road sector workers do not have capacity to buy the equipment/tools necessary to work with the skill they possess.
- h. Workers do not have such credibility with banks and other financial institute to seek the loan for purchasing the costly equipment and hence most of the times they remain out of work.
- i. Workers do not have knowledge about the government other developmental schemes through which they can avail of some financial support.
- j. They face tremendous financial problem in monsoon season because of halt of road construction work.
- k. The conditions of road construction workers in and around Pune region are still worse.
- l. Labours financial condition is worst.

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