

An Analysis of Gender Inequality and Workplace Safety among Female Construction Workers in Haryana

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ABSTRACT: -

The construction sector is one of the largest sources of employment within India's informal sector, yet female's participation in it remains very low. Furthermore, female construction workers face socio-economic deprivation, job insecurity and a lack of workplace safety. This study examines the socioeconomic status, gender inequality and working conditions of female construction workers in Haryana. It focuses on their demographic characteristics, education levels, income, employment opportunities, wage disparities, health and safety, access to social security benefits, and overall quality of life. The research is based on primary data collected through structured interviews with female construction workers in Haryana, supplemented by secondary data from government reports, labour statistics, and previous studies. Descriptive and analytical research methods have been employed to assess the relationship between socio-economic factors and workplace conditions. The findings reveal that the majority of these women belong to economically and socially marginalized groups, such as Dalit and backward communities; they have low levels of education, receive irregular and lower wages compared to their male counterparts, and work in hazardous conditions with limited access to protective equipment, healthcare facilities, maternity benefits, and welfare schemes. Gender-based discrimination, job insecurity, long working hours, and a lack of awareness regarding labour rights further exacerbate their vulnerability. To improve the socioeconomic status and working conditions of female construction workers in Haryana, it is essential for the state government to formulate effective policies, improve access to social security, ensure equal pay, and enhance workplace safety.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Female construction workers, Working conditions, Wage discrimination, Haryana.

INTRODUCTION: -

Construction is one of the first professions that comes to mind when considering any field where males predominate. Women make up a very minor portion of the workforce in this field. But in contrast to previous decades, the construction sector is now booming with more women than ever before. After agriculture, construction is India's second-largest industry, and it has a considerable impact on GDP. It is a sector that employs both skilled and less trained workers. In India, women comprise around 25% of the construction industry workforce. According to a recent poll, there are 1.46 million construction workers in India, with 36 lakhs of them being women. However, women are underrepresented in management and technical roles, particularly among civil engineers, architects, structural engineers, electrical engineers,

maintenance personnel, and supervisory personnel, as only 1.4% of women hold these occupations in the construction industry. The gender bias against women who work on-site that prevails in Indian society is the cause of this difference.

Even in civil engineering degrees, where there are 4:1 more male student than female students, it is evident. However, few female students there are, only 20 percent of them choose to work in the construction sector, with the remainder choosing to pursue other careers. For a variety of reasons, it might be difficult for employers to hire women in a mostly male industry like construction or civil engineering. More women than men enter university as lecturers after finishing their civil engineering degrees and this social stigma of women results from cultural and environmental forces that contribute to the gender gap and lead to discrimination against them.



The construction industry, which is India's second-largest sector after agriculture, has a significant influence on the GDP. It now employs both skilled and unskilled workers and is growing at a rate of around 7% each year. Women comprise over 24% of the workforce in this sector, which employs over 35 million people. Approximately 65% of women work as construction laborers since their families are either already employed or have male family members who are. Regrettably, men have traditionally controlled and predominated the building industry in both India and the rest of the globe. They are told that women should not work in the construction sector. "Don't you aware that the site is not intended for ladies to perform forced work?" Young women who pursue this vocation are frequently asked, "Do you think it's safe?"

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: -

The specific objectives of this study are: -

1. To analyse the gender inequality of Haryana's female construction workers.
2. To know the working conditions of Haryana's female construction workers.
3. To research how construction workers' conditions differ by gender.
4. To give recommendations for bettering the status of female construction workers.

LITERATURE REVIEW: -

Tanwar, R. (2010) examined the working conditions of female workers in Haryana's agricultural, domestic and construction sectors. 350 female workers' data were gathering which

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110 worked in construction, 120 in agriculture and 120 in domestic work. They discovered that women were paid less than male workers for similar types of work and work hours, showing gender discrimination. The job's tenure was uncertain. They lacked sufficient drinking and sanitary amenities. The construction sector employed the majority of migrant workers, who were primarily from the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

Geetika, & et al, (2011) presented a paper on Indian women who work in the unorganized sector. "In Uttar Pradesh, 240 employees were the subject of a research, comprising 65 domestic workers, 50 construction workers, 42 sales girls, 40 minor traders and 43 garment workers." According to the study's findings, women employees were in such desperate need of revenue that they had no option but to work. The few choices that were open to female were often low paying, low status employment in the informal' sector; these jobs did not offer any opportunity for development, efficiency improvement or training that would have allowed them to eventually enter better jobs. Women trail males in the search for employment relative to the general level of unemployment and lack of opportunity.

Chawada, B. & et al (2012) conducted research on Surat City's female construction workers. The survey highlighted the fact that the majority of women working in construction were illiterate. The average daily pay for women was Rs. 120, compared to Rs. 245 for men. which was twice as many as female employees. Major health issues were 61 percent fatigue/weakness, 30 percent backache, 17.5 percent cough, 17 percent fever, 10.5 percent skin itching and 7 percent diarrhoea. Because they were unaware of this and did not have access to it, they were not even using the government medical facility. There are no different safety precautions for women and men, with the exception of two areas where women are given gloves. 6 percent of the working women admitted to smoking 'bidi' or everyday chewing tobacco. Without access to even the most basic sanitary facilities, these workers' living situation were terrible. Women had no privacy whatsoever, not even while bathing or doing their clothes.

Casey, T. (2013) highlighted the critical problem of how women in the construction sector were frequently left out of trained occupations. Labour Department took action in reaction to women's ongoing near complete exclusion from the programmes despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VII, which outlawed gender discrimination in apprenticeships. The goal of Labour Department's affirmative action obligation has not been met. Only a very small percentage of construction positions have historically been occupied by women. In 2011, women made up 2.6 percent of workers in the construction sector and an even smaller percentage worked in skilled crafts.

Kumar R. (2013) The author of the essay "Gender Discrimination Among Construction Workers with Reference to Vijayawada" discusses how women make up half of the world's population, perform two thirds of the labour, but only receive a third of the world's total income and possess less than a tenth of the resources. People who lack economic power are typically the ones who face the greatest levels of discrimination.

Devi, K. and Kiran (2013) Many qualified and unskilled workers have been given employment opportunities in their study work, "Status of Female Workers in Construction Industry in India: A Review." The workforces engaged in the sector must deal with a number

of challenges at work. The research among researchers is primarily concerned with a number of health, work-related stress, and workplace injury-related concerns. The current study is a review of earlier studies on women working in India's construction sector. The study's main objective is to pinpoint the critical elements that influence the position of female workers in the sector. Women confront a number of additional challenges compared to men since they perform unskilled labour. The main reasons why their industry's working environment is challenging for them include sexual harassment, gender prejudice and salary discrimination.

Kumar, et al, (2018) their study, titled "An Empirical Study on Socio Economic Conditions and Problems of Women Workers in the Construction Sector Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh State," was carried out to understand the socio-economic circumstances and difficulties that unorganised women workers in the Amaravati construction sector face. A practical random sample approach was employed by the researcher to carry out the investigation. This research was conducted using a survey method, which is a type of descriptive research. Following the selection of 150 samples, the validity of the women workers' problems questionnaire was examined. In this study, a questionnaire was used to gather data about how workers perceived socio-economic issues. The study's findings indicate that most workers encounter issues with lower pay, health risks, safety hazards and gender and salary discrimination.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY: -

The main data is the foundation of the investigation. A questionnaire-cum-interview schedule was used to gather the primary data. Primary Data Gathering Using Questionnaire-Cum-Interview Schedule Stratified random sampling has been used to gather primary data in order to analyze the socioeconomic status of construction workers. 152 female construction workers who were employed at various construction sites in Haryana provided the source data. These building locations have been picked from six divisions of Haryana. Ambala, Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar, Karnal, and Rohtak are these divisions.

The direct personal research approach was used to gather data from the respondents using a well-structured questionnaire. Further, for the purpose of data analysis, percentile method, Reliability test have been computed. The data from the field survey was compiled and analyzed using SPSS 20.0 and Microsoft Office Excel 2016.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS: -

1- The Gender Differentials

1.1- Category of Female Respondents

Table- 1 depicts that mostly female construction respondents (84.2 percent) belonged to scheduled caste, OBC respondents made up 16% of the total. There was not a single reply from the ST categories, and zero percent belonged to the general categories.

Table – 1 Category of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
GEN	00	00

SC	128	84.2
ST	00	00
OBC	24	15.8
Total	152	100.0

Source: Primary Data

1.2- Status of Comfortable Level with Construction Work

The table – 2 show that out of 152 females, 44 (28.9 present) female respondents feel comfortable himself in the construction works but 108 female respondents (71.1 present) do not feel comfortable himself in construction works.

Table- 2 Status of Comfortable Level with Construction Work

Comfortable with Construction work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	44	28.9
No	108	71.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.3- Level of Satisfaction with Working Condition at Work place

Table- 3 show that out of 152 females, 41 (26.9 percent) female respondents are not satisfied with working condition at work place of construction. But 111 (73.1 present) female respondents are satisfied with working condition at work place of construction.

Table- 3 Degree of Contentment with Workplace Conditions

Content with the working environment at work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	26.9
No	111	73.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.4- Satisfaction Level of job in Construction sector

Table 4 show that out of 152 females, 108 (71.1 percent) female respondents are satisfied with job in construction sector but 44 (28.9 percent) female respondents are not satisfied with job in construction sector.

Table- 4 Job Satisfaction level in Construction Work

Job Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	71.1
No	44	28.9
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.5- The Status of Equal Opportunities to Females Respondents

Table 5 show that out of 152 females, 112 (73.7 percent) female respondents says that equal

opportunities do not provide to woman which are similar provided to the men.

Table- 5 The Status of Equal Opportunities to Females Respondents

Equal Opportunities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	26.3
No	112	73.7
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.6- Status of Preference to given Females Respondents for Work

Table 6 show that out of 152 females, 109 (71.7 percent) female respondents says that the preference are not given to female for construction work but 43 (28.3 percent) female respondents says that the preference are given to female for construction work.

Table- 6 Status of Preference to given Respondents for Work

Preference for Work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	28.3
No	109	71.7
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.7- The Decision-making level of Females Respondents

Table- 7 show that out of 152 females, 111 (73.1 percent) female respondents says that they are not free for doing work and decision making of construction work but 41 (26.9 percent) female respondents says that they are free for doing work and decision making of construction work.

Table- 7 The Decision-making level of Females Respondents

Women are free for work and decision making	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	26.9
No	111	73.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.8- The Negotiate for Wages by Females Respondents

Table- 8 show that out of 152 females, 114 (75 percent) females respondents says that they cannot negotiate for wage in construction work but 38 (25 percent) female respondents says that they can negotiate for wage in construction work.

Table- 8 The Negotiate for Wages

The Negotiate for Wages	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	25
No	114	75
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.9- Status of Equal Wages

Table- 9 show that out of 152 females, 116 (76.3 percent) females respondents says that they don't get equal wage as men in construction work but 36 (23.7 percent) female respondents says that they get same wages as men in construction work.

Table- 9 Equal wage as men

Equal wage as men	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	23.7
No	116	76.3
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.10 – The Condition of Preference for Future Opportunities as Men

Table- 10 show that out of 152 females, 103 (67.8 percent) females respondents says that they don't get equal opportunities for construction work in future but 49 (32.2 percent) female respondents says that they get equal opportunities for construction work in future.

Table- 10 Preference for Future Opportunities as Men

Preference for Future Opportunities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	32.2
No	103	67.8
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.11 – Level of Participation in formation of rules and policies at workplace

Table- 11 show that out of 152 females, 108 (71.1 percent) females respondents says that they don't participate in rules and policy making at workplace but 44 (28.9 percent) female respondents says that they participate in rules and policy making at workplace.

Table- 11 Participate- level in formation of rules and policies at workplace

Participate in formation of rules and policies at workplace	Frequency	Percent
Yes	44	28.9
No	108	71.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.12 – Status of Relaxation in Working Hours

Table- 12 show that out of 152 females, 105 (69.1 percent) females respondents says that they are not given any relaxation in working hours but 47 (30.9 percent) female respondents says that they are given some relaxation in working hours.

Table- 12 The Relaxation in Working Hours

Any Relaxation in Working Hours	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	30.9
No	105	69.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.13 – Awareness level about the Rules and Regulation of Government related to Labour

Table- 13 show that out of 152 females, 110 (72.4 percent) females respondents says that they don't know about the rules and regulation related to labour formed by the Government but 42 (27.6 percent) female respondents says that they know about the rules and regulation related to labour formed by the Government.

Table- 13 Knowledge of the Government's Labor Rules and Regulations

Knowledge about the Government Rules and Regulation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	27.6
No	110	72.4
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.14 – Status of Benefits from Government Programme

Table 14 reveals that of the 152 female respondents, 96 (63.2%) claim they receive no benefits from government programs, while 56 (36.8%) claim they do.

Table- 14 Benefits from Government Programme

Benefits from Government Programme	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	36.8
No	96	63.2
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

1.15 – The Problems related to search of work

Table- 15 show that out of 152 females, 117 (76.9 percent) females respondents says that they face problems in search of construction work but 35 (23.1 percent) female respondents says that they don't face problems in finding construction work.

Table- 15 The Problems related to Search of Work

Face Problems in Search of Work	Frequency	Percent
Yes	117	76.9
No	35	23.1
Total	152	100

Source: Primary Data

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSION: -

- The largely female construction workers belong to the Scheduled caste.
- The majority of female construction workers were uncomfortable working on the field.
- The mostly female construction workers were not satisfied with working condition at work place of construction.
- Mostly female construction workers were satisfied with job in construction sector.
- The mostly female construction workers said that equal opportunities do not provide to woman which are similar provided to the men.
- The mostly female construction workers said that preference is not given to female for construction work.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they are not free for doing construction work and decision making of construction work.
- The majority of female construction workers claimed they were unable to bargain for a higher salary.
- The majority of female construction workers said that their pay is lower than that of male counterparts.
- The majority of female construction workers claimed that they would not have the same future employment options as males.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they don't participate in rules and policy making at workplace.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they are not given any relaxation in working hours.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they don't know about the rules and regulation related to labour formed by the Government.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they don't get any benefits from Government programmes.
- The mostly female construction workers said that they face problems in search of construction work.

SUGGESTIONS: -

Based on this study, in order to ensure that female construction workers have timely access to all medical services, it is recommended that the government of Haryana make specific provisions to provide free medical care in both public and private institutions. Contractors should be subject to tight regulations for the payment of salaries set by the Haryana Government, as well as the provision of hygienic facilities, clean drinking water, and decent housing for their employees. The amount of wage rates varies in different states of the country, so parity should be created in wage rate all over India. Further, the minimum wages that are fixed by the Haryana Governments are low. So, wages should be raised bi-annually and linked to the price index. The Government of Haryana should offer low-cost, collateral-free bank loans to female construction workers in order to better their financial situation. Schools, and educational programs must highlight the importance of construction work for women and young girls if they are to view it as a viable career choice. Significant women's involvement in the construction sector is crucial for the nation's general social development as well as for

reaching better growth.

The Haryana government should distribute its government and panchayat lands among female construction workers to improve their socio-economic status. Additionally, a special court staffed by female judges from Scheduled Caste (SC) & Other Backward Class (OBC) communities should be established in every district for these workers, ensuring they receive justice through the prompt resolution of their grievances regarding gender-based discrimination.

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