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**ANALYSIS ON WORKING CLASS WOMEN IN  
THE INDUSTRY**

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# Analysis on Working Class Women in the Industry

Avanish Pandey

Research Scholar, Sai Nath University, Ranchi, Jharkhand

**Abstract – The findings of the paper show that women workers are seemingly empowered socially and economically through their involvement in corporate sector. But female workers face restrictions from their male family members when they intend to join the industry, which is similar to structural violence within the household. Additionally, female workers face structural violence from the very beginning of their joining the garment industry.**

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## INTRODUCTION

There are several policies adopted by Government of India for the development of infrastructure for the country's economic development. Construction industry is the key for the success of the globalization of Indian economy. Construction sector is providing employment to 7% of total world employment. Today Indian construction industry employs about 31 million people and creates assets worth over Rs 200,000 million (India Infra Guru, 2008; GOI, 2008a) annually. In India, it is the largest employer of unorganized labour next to agricultural sector (Laskar and Murty, 2004). The contribution of construction sector in India to the GDP at factor cost in 2006–07 was Rs. 1,965,550 million, registering an increase of 10.7% from the previous year and the share of construction in GDP has increased from 6.1% in 2002–03 to 6.9% in 2006–07 (GOI, 2008). Around 16% of the India's working population depends on building construction for its livelihood and the Indian construction industry today employs about 31million people and creates assets worth over rs 200,000 million (India Infra Guru,2008; GOI,2008a)annually. However, the construction industry in India is facing a huge shortage of manpower. The strength of skilled workforce in construction has dwindled substantially from 15.34% in 1995 to 10.57% in 2005, whereas relative proportions of unskilled workers have gone up from 73.08% in 1995 to 82.45% in 2005 (GOI, 2008b). These construction labourers are one of the most vulnerable segments of the unorganized sector as there is no permanent job opportunity for them. The construction industry has an annual turnover of Rs 2,10,000 crores.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In India, most of the working women are employed in the unorganized sector, which includes agricultural labourers, workers in traditional village and cottage

industries, migrants to the cities in domestic service, day labourers, street vendors,etc.In agriculture, the most important occupation in developing countries, women play an important role in agricultural production, animal husbandry and other related activities such as storage and marketing of produce, food processing etc. Apart from these activities, they spend almost 10-12 hours per day doing household chores [2].

Women workers' inability to raise voice actually keeps women away from empowerment in terms of making their choices over their activities inside and outside the home. women are contributing directly, and the degree of women empowerment as a result of this contribution is significant issue. [Wright, 2000]. There are over 1.8 million workers employed in the garment industry of Bangladesh and 80 % of them are female workers [Ahmed and Hossain, 2009: 1-2].

The world's clothes are mostly made by women. Typically, these workers are young, with limited education and live in developing countries. It has been well documented that working conditions across garment industries are in much need of improvement. Yet these jobs are important. In their world, paid factory work can provide a better alternative than other options available such as unpaid family agriculture or domestic work. But is this work a catalyst for female empowerment or a better life for women? [3].

Recruitment Practices - The recruitment process in the construction industry is said to be of biasness towards female workers. The terms and conditions within the construction industry were generally poor irrespective of any particular gender. Through the study undertaken by Fielden et al (2001) it was reported that the industry fails to provide decent wages, pensions and other staff benefits especially at

craft level. Dainty et al (2000) found out that male managers use discriminatory recruitment practices which put many women off applying for new positions with contracting organisations. The changeable nature of the construction industry was also felt to be responsible for high levels of unemployment. It is mainly the terms and conditions of employment that make women uninterested in the industry.

Women's socio-economic empowerment is related to gender equality, the decrease of all kinds of violence against women [Abdin, 2008:1], their access to adequate income as a way to achieve long term bargaining capacity at home, in community and at the work place [Mosedale, 2005: 247]. Absar [2002], in her article titled Women Garment workers in Bangladesh, showed that female workers do not receive job contract papers during their recruitment process.

### WORKING WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY:

The development of industrialization in Europe and America from the mid eighteenth century onward brought dramatic changes. England was where the Industrial Revolution first started, and then over the next century spread to the rest of Europe and beyond. This part focuses on the nineteenth century when the most serious affects were felt on women, and consequently on society. Both men and women went from working basically on their own schedules to a schedule set by others. As industrial time developed, family time diverged increasingly. Traditional family responsibilities did not yield easily to industrial life. Women often were caught in the middle. Historians today are debating how oppressed women were and how displaced families became. Commentary at the time the industrialization process was taking place varied. Some of the most vocal detractors like Frederick Engels received more publicity then and later compared to the supporters. New studies are analyzing statistical data to arrive at a more balanced assessment, including what occurred for women.

Working class women suffered the most during this new industrial time. Women's wages were pitifully low. Single women could only make enough money to pay the rent, but not enough to buy food and clothing. So it was the aim of every girl to get married. Once married, the woman had to continue some sort of job in addition to raising their family and taking care of the house. Men did not help with the chores or children. If the men did, then they were ridiculed by being called mop rags or diddy men. Women who failed to manage adequately or spent too much could be expected to be physically abused. No one intervened unless a man beat another man's wife or there was fear that the woman would die. Mothers usually ate less than their husbands and children.

### CONCLUSION:

Prostitution was the best paying position for women in the working class. What other working class women

made in a week, prostitutes made in a day. Because of the pay scale, women worked as prostitutes for a short time to earn enough money to get married, usually with no stigma attached. Prostitution was also the form of employment for women when all else failed.

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