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## **A STUDY ON WOMEN WORKERS IN BRICK KILN INDUSTRY**

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# A Study on Women Workers in Brick Kiln Industry

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**Abstract – Women constitute half of the population and contribute much share for social and economic development of society. In spite of this fact, they are most excluded group from mainstream occupation and majority of them are engaged in the informal sector. The informal economy constitute informal (unorganized) sector and its workers plus the informal workers in the formal sector constitute the informal economy.**

**To know the problem of brick kiln workers, the study is carried out in Jhajjar district of Haryana. It is found that women play an important role in economic activity of family but this fact is not acknowledged by their family members. Women do not receive wages of work performed by them and wages are collected by their husbands. Main problem of the backwardness of women workers is low level of education. There is no facility of education at the kiln. Education can play an important role to improve the position of brick kiln workers, so the government should give more focus on education of women and the children of workers at the kiln.**

**Keywords – Women Workers, Informal Economy, Brick Kiln, Economic Development**

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## INTRODUCTION

Women constitute half of the population and contribute much share for social and economic development of society. In spite of this fact, they are most excluded group and majority of them are engaged in the informal sector. Informal sector extracts much from women and contribute less to them. International Labour Organization also justifies this statement and explains the true picture of women.

Status of women in every economic system plays an important role in economic activities in both developed and developing country. The family income in developing country is very low and it can be increased by employing women in economic activities. In India, labour activities depend on sex and age. Employing children (especially girls) and aged persons are taken as morally wrong in our society.

Employment of adults is based on gender. Males are expected to perform difficult and home away tasks. Females perform household activities and other activities which are near home and less difficult or light works. But in present social system, there has been a change in above mentioned division of labour force. Today women are playing very important and supportive role in economic activity of society and they have achieved success in different fields of economic activities. But after all these changes, their importance

in economic activity is very insignificant as compared to role of males. But good thing is that their role in economic activities is getting pace and importance over the time.

The informal economy constitutes informal (unorganized) sector and its workers plus the informal workers in the economy. The term unorganized is defined as those workers who are not able to organize themselves to pursue their common interests due to certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishment, etc. However, in order to take care of the social security and welfare of unorganized workers, two-pronged strategy, i.e. legislative and implementation of welfare scheme and programs have been followed so far.

The legislative measure include the Minimum Wage Act, 1948, the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1961, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, the Contract Labour (regulation and Abolition) Act 1970, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (regulation of employment and conditions of service) Act, 1979, the Building and Other Construction workers (regulation of employment and conditions of service) Act, 1996, etc. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) set up by the government of India in September 2014 to consider various aspects of the matter and defined the

unorganized sector in the following manner:- “The unorganized sector consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a propriety or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers.”

Table-1 shows the distribution of total employment in different segment of economy according to the NSSO employment-unemployment survey 2014-15. Total employment in both the sectors of Indian Economy was 457.5 million. Total employment in unorganized sector was 394.9 million, while employment in organized sector was only 62.6 million. Unorganized workers were 422.6 million, while organized workers were only 34.9 million. Number of unorganized workers in unorganized sector was 395.5 million. But organized workers in unorganized sector were only 1.4 million.

Table-1  
Employment of Workers

Category of sector	Unorganized workers	Organized workers	Total
Unorganized sector	395.5	1.4	394.9
Organized sector	29.1	33.45	62.6
Total	422.6	34.9	457.5

## WOMEN IN BRICK KILN INDUSTRY

Unorganized workers are in a very disadvantageous position vis-à-vis the organized sector workers but unorganized women employees, in particular, are in an extremely delicate situation. In the absence of security of employed and other forms of social security in the unorganized sector, poor woman workers become victims of the vagaries of the market system. The size and nature of the unorganized sector, including the diversity of employment and the geographically dispersed nature of work place poses real challenges. This sector is more widespread and scattered and more difficult to organize or to better one's condition. The problem is more acute for women employees in unorganized sector. In so far as the organized sector is concerned, in March 2014, women workers constituted 18.7 per cent of the total organized sector employment in the country, as computed to 18.4 per cent in the previous year.

As on March 2014, there were about 49.34 lakh women workers employed in the organized sector. Of this, nearly 28.12 lakh were employed in community, social, and personnel services sector. Plantations and factories were also important for employment of women. Women constituted only 5 per cent of the work force in the mines sector.

In India, the brick kiln industry is significant one confined mostly to rural and semiurban areas. The socio-economic condition of women employees in

brick kilns suggests that, generally, they come from the poorer sections of the society. Most of the women employees are either from the scheduled castes or backward castes earning a meager amount, which is not enough to support their families.

In all the brick kilns, abusing and rebuking the women employees in general and tribal women employees in particular is a very common phenomenon. Beating, threatening with dire consequences and other types of physical torture of women employees even in the presence of their male relations, is not uncommon in brick kilns. Most commonly, the unmarried young women employees are used as a private property by the Sardarin, Munshi, and other associates of the employer.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of present study is to investigate the role of women workers in informal economy. It further elaborates the condition of women workers in Brick Kiln industry.

For this, following objective are taken

- 1) To study the socio-economic condition of women workers in brick kiln.
- 2) To analyze the extent of unpaid women worker at kiln.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nair (2013) explained the relationship between law and unorganized sector labour. In unorganized sector most of the workers are female. Though there are many laws for unorganized sector. But these laws are not implemented completely.

Dharmalingam (2013) studied the condition of brick kiln labour in a south Indian village. The number of brick kiln in south Tamilnadu has increased in recent past years. The benefits which arise in kiln sector are not distributed equally between labour and capital.

Reena (2010) showed the need of social security in unorganized sector. Our country has 317 million working population. Of them 290 million workers are in unorganized sector, which constitute a large share in employment i.e. about 92 per cent. These workers don't have permanent income and they are not benefited from social security system.

Chopra (2010) studied condition of bonded labour in Muzaffarnagar brick kiln industry. Brick kiln labours are mainly from Muzaffarnagar and Meerut and most of them are from schedule caste (chamar). Among 340 respondents, 250 are from chamar caste, which is about 75.4 per cent. Muslim weavers are also in great number. They are 75 in total sample which is about 22.2 per cent of sample. 75 weavers are illiterate. Weaver and chamar were dependent on landlords of

that area, who mainly belongs to Gujjar, Jats, Tyagi, Pathan, Rajput and Baniya caste.

Eapen (2011) explains the condition of female workers in informal sector in Kerala. Females get employment in informal sector. Female workers work more but they are paid very less remuneration. But this unpaid share is included in real income of the family

Gupta (2013) examined the condition of brick kiln worker in North India. Workers of brick kiln industry come under unorganized sector. No labour law is applied on unorganized sector.

This is seasonal industry Neetha (2010) explained the problem faced by unpaid women worker in unorganized sector. Unpaid workers are one fourth of total unorganized sector worker. Being such a big part, they don't fall in the category of workers. Condition of workers is worst in informal sector of unpaid workers. Among unpaid workers, females are in large numbers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to definition of NCEUS, brick kiln sector is organized sector. But all workers in it are unorganized. The present study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research studies aim to describe the fact and situation as they are. Study is based on primary data and this data is collected by using interview schedule. The population size taken in study is finite because number of women worker in Jhajjar district and number of kilns in Jhajjar district are finite. The sampling used in the study is unrestricted probability sampling as every kilns in Jhajjar district have equal chances of selection. Conditions of women worker in all brick kilns are almost homogeneous, so researchers selected only one Brick Kiln in Jhajjar district (Haryana). At that Brick Kiln, there were 89 women workers, therefore, researcher have taken 89 respondents.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Age of Women Workers

**Table-2**  
**Distribution of Women Workers on the Basis of their Age Group**

Age of women workers(Years)	Number of women workers	Percentage of women workers
15-25	33	37
25-35	29	33
35-45	23	26
45-55	4	4
Total	89	100

Table-2 shows the distribution of women workers at kiln according to their age. Out of total 89 women workers, most of them are from age group of 15-25 years. Number of women workers of this age group is

33 years. In age group of 45-55 years there are only 4 women workers. Table shows that, as age group of women workers increases, their number as worker decreases. Age is main factor of productivity of labour. No women at sample kiln is above 55 years of age and 37 per cent women are in the age group of 15-25 years, 33 percent women are from age group of 25-35 years, 26 percent women are from age group of 45-55 years and only 4 percent women workers are from age group 45-55 years.

### Marital Status of Women Workers

**Table-3**  
**Distribution of Women Workers on the Basis of Marital Status**

Marital status	No. of workers	Percentage
Married	83	93.26
Unmarried	0	00.00
Widow	5	5.62
Divorced	1	1.12
Total	89	100.00

Table-3 shows the marital status of women workers at kiln. Maximum numbers of women workers are married. The numbers of married women workers are 83 and their percentage is 93 percent. In the sample, all women workers are married. In present study, the respondents below the age of 15 years are not included as they fall in category of child labour. All women worker are above the age of 15 years. Numbers of widows and divorce women workers are 5 and 1 respectively. Percentage of widow and divorce women workers is 6 and 1 respectively. So the highest women workers are married and only 1 woman worker is divorced.

### EDUCATION OF WOMEN WORKERS

Table-4 shows the distribution of women workers on basis of their educational qualification. Most of the women workers are illiterate. Number of illiterate women workers are 45. Only 1 woman worker has passed 8th standard (Middle). It is evident from table that 19 women workers have passed 5th standard (Primary). So it is evident from table that most of women workers are illiterate and only 1 percent women worker have passed 8th standard (Middle). In table-4, it is clearly shown that as the education level of women workers increases, their participation in brick kiln work decreases.

Table-4

Distribution of Women Workers on the Basis of their Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	45	50.56
Below 5 <sup>th</sup> (Primary)	24	26.97
5 <sup>th</sup> (Primary)	19	21.35
8 <sup>th</sup> (Middle)	1	1.12
Total	89	100.00

Table-5

Earning of Women Worker's Unit in a Day

Income (in Rs.)	Number of respondents	Percentage
600-700	2	2.25
700-800	24	26.97
800-900	41	46.07
900-1000	14	15.73
1000-1100	6	6.74
1100-1200	1	1.12
1200-1300	1	1.12
Total	89	100.00

Table-5 shows the earning of women worker's unit in a day. The earning of a unit is taken Rs. 600-1300. No respondents earn less than Rs. 600 at kiln. Maximum number of respondents (41) earn between Rs. 800-900. Twenty four worker's unit earn between Rs. 700-800. Only two respondents earn between Rs. 600-700. Six respondents earn between Rs. 1000- 1100 and only one respondent in each in both income level of Rs. 1100-1200 and Rs. 1200-1300 respectively. In these categories, the workers in Grader category earn low income and the workers in Loader category earn high. Table shows that 46 per cent worker earn between Rs. 800-900. Two per cent workers earn between Rs. 600-700 and only 1 per cent earns maximum income of Rs. 1200-1300.

## FINDINGS

- Most of women workers at kiln belong to age group of 15-35 years.
- 93 per cent women workers at kiln are married.
- 85 per cent women workers belong to Schedule Cast (SC) and Backward Cast (BC) category. And separately 44 per cent women workers belong to BC category.
- Majority of women workers at kiln are illiterate. Only one per cent women worker has passed middle (8th standard).
- In all three categories i.e. Moulder, Loader and Grader, majority of women (83 per cent) belong to Moulder category.
- 83 per cent workers used the equipment provided by their owner. Only 17 per cent workers used their own equipment and specifically Grader and Loader category worker used their own equipments. The equipment used by Loader category are costly than the equipments used by Grader category.
- 74 per cent women workers have bicycle, 57 per cent workers have sewing machine and 56 per cent workers have mobile. Other assets that the worker has vary from 5 to 34 per cent.
- 91 per cent women workers have no agriculture land holding and only 9 per cent women worker have agriculture land holding.
- Majority of women workers has Kachcha houses and only 33 per cent women worker have Pucca houses.
- 43 per cent women workers don't have electricity in houses at native place.

## SUGGESTIONS

- Most of women workers belong to SC, ST and BC. So information should be given to them about the policies and schemes run by government for their welfare.
- Illiteracy rate is very high among women workers. They should be given elementary education and special care should be taken for education of their children.
- Women workers should be provided good housing facility with proper sanitation and drinking water.
- They should be provided electricity facility at kiln.
- There should be compulsory bank account for every worker so that they can take proper benefit of government schemes and can save money for future purpose.
- Work at kiln is available only for seven to nine months. During remaining months they go back to their native places. There should be proper arrangement of work for remaining period so that they can get regular work.
- Most of the women workers are not satisfied with present working condition. There must be proper counseling of working condition and the problems of these workers should be solved on priority basis.



## CONCLUSION

Women constitute half of the population and contribute much share for social and economic development of society. In spite of this fact, they are most excluded group and majority of them are engaged in the informal sector. Brick Kiln Industry is one of the sectors of Informal Economy. Women workers in this industry live in poverty. At work place, they are exploited; equal pay for equal work labour law does not apply on them. . It is surprising that in spite of so many laws, women still continue to live under stress and strain. To ensure safety, security and status for our women we still have miles to go.

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