Plight of unorganized workers: An empirical study in Balasore district of Odisha

ABSTRACT

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The problems of work force in India is a growing concern as they are the major work providers and constitute about 92% of the strong Indian worker population. They live and work in difficult situation without being adequately covered by social security Acts. The present study represents work force of such category in Balasore district of Odisha. With a sample of 300 unorganized workers belonging to the categories of construction, loading unloading, fishery, brick, stone crushing and agriculture were interviewed to reveal their problems of multidimensional in nature along with demographic status. Their job satisfaction was found to be influenced by about 10 socio-economic variables and they view their job is unsecured, less remunerative along with bad working conditions leading to lead a miserable living. Sample workers are found to be devoid of minimum facilities like payment in illness, old age security, over time payment and medical support at the time of health hazards. Their reaction about the present job is very negative reflecting the degree of frustration, unhappiness and loss of aspiration in life. The unfortunate outcomes of the study show the development of tendency of laziness, migration and not to work with full of complains and searching after the ways of easy living..

Key words, unorganized worker, retirement benefit, over time, time management, job security.

India's work force comprise nearly 92 percent in the unorganized segment with the entire farm sector falling under the informal category, while only one-fifth of the non-farm workers are found in the organized segment. Estimates suggest that in the non-farm sector as we move up the income ladder, the share of the informal sector gradually declines.

A critical policy issue which is rapidly becoming a top priority for Governments all over the world is how to provide adequate social Protection for the vast majority of the population engaged in unorganised sector activities. The case for social security arrangement for the unorganised sector workers has gained prominence during the last decade in India. Social security is important for reducing social and economic inequalities and for making direct contribution to the wellbeing of the poor workers. The issue before a developing country like India is to design effective social protection measure for the unorganised sector which would serve as a guarantee against poverty and at the same time provide adequate employment opportunities. But social security for unorganised sector remains to be a relatively neglected area in terms of both research and policy in the country.

As noted earlier any vision of the future has to be rooted in the current reality and policies and processes have to be identified to bridge the gap between the current reality and the future vision. It is, therefore, essential to have an understanding of the broad employment picture as it exists today, which would also indicate the directions for improvement in future.

Some aspects of the current employment scenario are as follows.

(i) As much as 7.32 % of the labour force, in the year 1999-2000, was unemployed. In absolute terms the number of unemployed stood at 26.58 million.

(ii) Since the above estimates are on Current Daily Status basis, the number of unemployed also includes the number of those who are underemployed in terms of underutilization of the labour time.
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(iii) Among the employed, the proportion of poor is as high as in the population at large, suggesting a large proportion of workers engaged in subsistence employment.

(iv) There is about 8 % of the total employment is in organized sector. More than 90 % are engaged in informal sector activities, which is, largely outside the reach of any social security benefits and also suffers from many handicaps in form of limited access to institutional facilities and other support facilities.

(v) The educational and skill profile of the existing workforce is very poor.

As reported in Economic Survey India (2020-21, Delhi) the size of labour force in 2018-19 was estimated at about 51.8 crore persons, about 48.5 crore employed and 3.0 crore unemployed. The size of labour force increased by about 0.85 crore between 2017-18 t0 20118-19. Out of these 0.46 were from urban sector and 0.39 crore from the rural sector.

The unorganized workers in the fields of construction, loading and unloading. Brick, fishery, stone crushing and agriculture are very good in number in Odisha whose problems are multidimensional. In view of the situation the scholar conducted a study on problems of the unorganized work force in Balasore district of the state with following objectives.

Objectives

1. To ascertain relationship between demographic profile and job satisfaction of the work force.
2. To examine the working environment and problems of the workers
3. To study the attitude of the sample workers about the job that they perform.

Review of Literature.

NSSO (2000) observed that number of workers are haphazardly increasing and the strength of regular workers are decreasing. About 30% of unorganized workers are always are on move.

Nag, et.al (2001) while discussing the features of the labour process in the informal sector in the third world country state that a complete alienation of labour from capital is not possible. Taking a very specific case study of the weaving community in West Bengal, the author states that since the weavers are economically weak, the middle men known as the 'mahajan' act like a saviour who pay wages in advance if needed keeping the weavers under their control, The situation affects the weavers negatively.

Chadha and Sahu (2002) referring NSSO data state that there was a decline in the growth of the manufacturing sector within the informal sector economy with the onset of liberalization as the service sector took over

John (2004) prepared a report about craftsman of Kerala who depends on the traditional way of production techniques. The division of workforce between organized and unorganized sectors have affected the craftsman who are long been upgraded their productive activities. As the nature of the work has changed the need arises to upgrade production related matters. Since, lack of work affected the socio economic pattern of these sections of the people; the government come forward and created Welfare Fund Board. The main

objective is to invest in technology enabled productive activities which can improve the socio economic obligations of the people belong to the category.

Marjit and Kar (2005) state that the post reform phase witnessed an increase in informal wages at least in the manufacturing units which is a positive change.

Mitra (2006) argued that the main reason for low wages in the informal labour market is due to lack of skill on the part of the workers

Harris-white and Sinha (2007) stated that informal labour markets should be given the right kind of opportunity to flourish as the major part of the Indian economy is dominated by the informal labour economy.

Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt of India report (2008), aims to study the working and living Conditions of Un-organized workers engaged in Leather Industry including Footwear and other Art Works in India. This survey aimed atstudying the working and living conditions ofworkers engaged in the manufacture of Footwear and other Art workers in the unorganized sector. The workers in leather industry are exposed to various health hazards and risks and of precautionary steps are not taken at their work place. It has been notified that in unorganized sector, majority of workers are employed on temporary or on casual basis. Pay period, Wage rate all are dissatisfactory in nature. The condition of work environment is also same.

The social security Act, 2008, in which the introduction of social protection board at the country wide and state level has been mandated. It only contains social protection and security schemes in the nation, no legal obligation is binding at the part of government or the one who employs no eligibility standards; no benefit details; minimum wages and many others, were envisaged inside the Act. Essentially, the Act (2008) is eyewash which has not addressed the problems of the workers.

Kulwant Rani Gupta (2009) narrated miseries of unorganized workers face multifarious in nature confirming this sector within a comprehensive frame work of difficulty.

Dolas (2010) The author conducted a study on the socio economic conditions of Bidi workers in Solapur district. Socio economic upliftment may be achieved if the people have adequate income in their hand after meeting the necessary expenditure for survival. Sometimes, due seasonal nature of the works and agricultural uncertainty it becomes difficult for most of the workers to earn substantially. Lack of availability of work in the present area is also another detrimental factor and this often forces the labourers to move out of the place. A worker working in any specific industry should get the basic facilities along with certain basic minimum wage. Though, the government has passed the Minimum Wage Act, still it has been implemented in very few areas.

Mohanraj (2013) The author gave a detailed analysis of Indian unorganized sector with the help of a primary study. The study reveals that around 85% of the workforce is in unorganized sector and most of them are engaged in agricultural sector. This sector has seen the continuous addition of both daily wage labourers as well as household workers. Most of the workers who are comes under the category of daily wage labourers as well as the household workers are coming from women segment. Like agricultural sector, these workforces are working in other sectors as well. A typical unorganized sector neither offers any kind of security benefits nor provides any kind of proper working environment. Moreover, the differences are also huge between organized and unorganized sector. The policy intervention is needed to identify the gaps.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Balasore district of Odisha. The district Balasore is one of the coastal districts of the state and is bounded by Mayurbhanj district in north, Bhadrakh in south, Bay of Bengal in east district Keonjhar in west. The district has an area of 3806 sq.KM and 23.21 lakhs of population (2011 census). The

district accounts for 2.44 of the state territory and shares 5.83% of the state's population. There are 12 blocks,12 Tahasils, 2 subdivisions

The samples were drawn from three blocks namely Balasore Sadar, Bahananga and Basta. The selection of sample based on at least more than 5 years of experience in present job, cooperation in interview and having ideas about the unorganized work force. Altogether 300 sample @ 50 from construction, loading unloading, fishery, brick, stone crushing and agriculture were finally selected and interviewed at their work place.

Result

1. Socio- economic profile of the sample workers. The study examined the socio-economic position of the workers covering as much as 10 parameters. The position of each worker was scored as per their relative position in particulate variable. The results are presented in the table .

Table1 Socio-Economic Status of the workers

Variable	CW	LULW	FW	BW	SW	AW	Mean average	Rank
1. Education	1.22	1.74	1.16	1.26	1.20	1.00	1.26	VII
2.Caste	2.36	2.56	2.28	2.66	2.30	2.32	2.41	III
3.Family type	1.10	1.14	1.08	1.10	1.94	1.06	1.24	VIII
4.Social mobility	2.42	2.38	2.36	2.34	2.26	2.36	2.40	IV
5.Training	0.02	0.00	0.00	0,08	0.00	0.10	0.02	X
6.Use of mass media	2.82	2.48	2.98	2.46	2.94	2.16	2.64	I
7.Annual family income	2.46	1.76	2.26	2.68	2.92	2.24	2.39	V
8.Family size	1.28	1.90	0.92	2.24	2.20	2.30	1.81	VI
9.Land possession	2.32	2.20	2.28	2.42	2.96	2.62	2.47	II
10 Education of children	0.68	0.40	0.60	0.20	0.18	0.28	0.39	IX
Mean Average	1.66	1.65	1.59	1.73	1.89	1.64	1.01	
Rank	III	IV	VI	II	I	V		

(Cw Construction worker,LULW Loading unloading workers,FW Fishery worker BW brick workers SW stone worker Aw Agriculture workers)

The socio-economic status of the sample workers have been studied on ten dimensions. Out of the dimensions, the highest score is found in case of use of mass media because of use of mobile phone, land possession including land for residence, even of half hectare and caste because of inclusion of workers more from OBC and other caste being located in coastal Odisha. The other dimensions like social mobility, annual family income, family size, education the workers are much behind. The workers have scored almost very little in case of education of self and education of the children exhibiting very poor position. In other words the sample workers are very poorly positioned in socio-economic parameters.

Out of six categories of workers, the relatively better position is found with stone crushers followed by brick workers, construction workers, loading unloading workers, agriculture workers and fishery workers. It is just classification of the poorest of the poor.

2. Relation between socio-economic variables and job satisfaction.

Table2 Relationship between demographic variables and level of satisfaction

Sl.No	Variable	df	χ^2Value	Level of significance
1	Age	6	86.47	**
2	Education	6	35.99	**
3	Caste	6	71.49	**
4	Family type	2	38.50	**
5	Social mobility	4	57.50	**
6	Training	2	1.94	N.S
7	Contact developmentagency	4	13.91	**
8	Annual family income	6	18.62	**
9	Family size	6	49.16	**
10	House structure	4	34.80	**
11	Land possession	6	67.49	**

(Table value at 6df of 1% 16.812, 4df=13.277 and df 2=9.210) N.S = not significant

** Significant at 1% of probability

As observed χ^2 test the Value is significant at 1% of probability except training all other variables influence the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the workers under investigation.

II. Working Environment.The working environment of the work force is an important aspect to consider for designing welfare program for them. The study investigated as much as 14 dimensions relating to working condition of

construction worker, loading un loading workers, fisher workers, brick workers, stone crushing workers and agriculture workers. The synthesis of empirical analysis is given in table.

Table 3.Summary of working environment

Sl.No	Working variables	Observation conclusions
1	Experience in job	Average more ten years
2	Distance to working place	Within three KMS
3	Mode of transport	Walk and cycle
4	Provision of accommodation	Mostly work from home
5	Methods of entry to job	Verbal without any formal procedure
6	Regularity in payment	Mostly regular
7	Monthly wages	Rs.8-10.000
8	On the job training	Hardly or Never
9	Time management	Not followed properly
10	Advance payment	Sometimes on specific cases

11	Over time payment	Rare
12	Working climate	Not congenial
13	Physical environment	Manageable
14	Monitoring and supervision	Manageable

Observation of the table reveals that the workers have 10 years of experience or more in the work that they are performing at present. They cover about 3 Km to go to work place either by walk, cycle or bike, they stay at own home, engaged verbally, and their payment of wages are mostly regular. Their monthly wages c ranges from Rs 8000 to 10, 000, and hardly received any training and follow time management at work place. . Rarely they get advance payment and overtime wages and feel that working climate is not congenial. The physical condition and monitoring of work is somewhat manageable as expressed by the sample. On the whole in unorganized sector nothing is followed adhering to formality.

III. Problems of the workers. The study listed as much as 13 types of problems that workers are faced with. The synthesis of empirical analysis is given in table.

Table 4.Salient Findings on problem analysis

Sl.No	Variable	Salient points
1	Wage Fixation	Mostly as per Govt.rate
2	Payment on illness	Not in majority cases
3	Term of engagement	Purely temporary
4	Term of termination	Verbal
5	Seasonal effect	Not much in Odisha
6	Bargaining status	Medium level
7	Job security	Not
8	Annual increment	Not
9	Retirement benefit	Not
10	Medicare	In some cases only
11	Compensation at death	Not
12	Provident fund	Not
13	Employer-Employee relationship	Cordial

The synthesis of analysis reveals that wage are paid mostly as per Government rate of the state, No payment is paid on account of illness/accident, term of engagement is purely temporary and termination is simply verbal. The job security, annual increment, retirement benefit compensation at death while working are not there for the workers. To some extent Medicare is available while there isno provident fund nor any

other assistance at old age. The relationship between employer and employees is cordial as mentioned by the sample. The problems of unorganized workers are very grave and multidimensional.

IV. Attitude towards own work

Table 5over all reaction of the workers about working in unorganized sector

Sl.No	Statements	Average score	% Negative Expression	Rank
1	.Loss of interest	3.22	64.40	IX
2	Lack of encouragement	3.92	78.40	III
3	Lack of aspiration in life	4.06	81.20	I
4	Lack of spirit to work	3.24	64.80	VIII
5	General disliking for job	3.89	77.80	IV
6	Tendency of laziness	3.86	77.20	VI
7	Young workers work	3.88	77.60	V
8	Tendency of idleness	3.97	79.40	II
9	Tendency for easy living	3.31	66.20	VII
10	Tendency of migration	3..86	77.20	VI
	Average	3.72	74.40	

(Maximum obtainable score =5, the statements are presented in short)

The reaction of the sample against ten statements describing about the work reveal dissatisfaction to the extent of 74.40%. Among the statements, lack of aspiration tops the list followed by tendency of developing idle mind, lack of encouragement, disliking for job and complain by young workers rather than work sincerely. The succeeding factors were found to be tendency for migration to become lazy, easy living and loosing of spirit to work. The last variable was found to be lack of interest of interest in job. In other words the dissatisfaction ranges from 64.80 % to as high as 8120%.

Conclusion

The study,' light of unorganized workers: An empirical study in Balasore district of Odisha was carried out in Balasore district of Odisha with a sample of 300 workers belonging to construction, loading unloading, fishery, brick, stone crushing and agriculture lead to arrive at the following conclusions.

1. In the consideration of demographic factors the workers are found at the bottom of socio-economic ladder. Except electricity, toilet, drinking water and housing they stand at the bottom in all considerations.

2. Except training all other variables were strongly associated with job satisfaction. In other words the dissatisfaction of workers are being regulated by factors of age, education, caste, income, family size, social mobility, land possession house type etc.

3. The working condition over as much as 14 issues are found away from minimum expectation and is full of miseries compared to organized sector. .

4. In case of problems analysis except wage fixation they not stand anywhere in the service parameters like paid holidays, engagement and termination, bargaining status, job security, retirement benefit and employer employee not worker friendly

5. The attitude of the workers towards work they undertake is extremely negative and far from minimum considerations.

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