JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

# A STUDY ON SOCIO - ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN VILAVANCODE TALUK OF KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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**ABSTRACT**
*Construction workers play a crucial role in the development and infrastructure of societies worldwide. However, their socio-economic conditions often reflect a complex interplay of factors that can significantly impact their quality of life. This introduction explores the key aspects affecting construction workers, including wages, working conditions, job security, and access to social services. The objectives of the study are the socio-economic conditions of construction workers, problems faced by the construction workers and recommendations based on the analysis. This study makes use of both primary and secondary data, with a sample size of 80 respondents. This paper highlights mainly the socio-economic conditions and problems faced by the construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk, Kanyakumari District.*

***Keywords: Construction workers, Social, Economic, etc.***

## INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic conditions of construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk, Kanyakumari District, reflect a critical aspect of the region's labor landscape. These workers play a vital role in the development of infrastructure and housing, yet they often face significant challenges that impact their livelihoods and quality of life. Characterized by low wages, job insecurity, and inadequate working conditions, the construction workforce is largely composed of migrant laborers and local residents who depend on this sector for their economic survival.

In recent years, the rapid urbanization and economic development in Kanyakumari District have heightened the demand for construction workers. However, this demand has not been matched by corresponding improvements in workers' rights, safety, and social benefits. Many workers operate in hazardous environments, lacking access to essential safety equipment and health care. Furthermore, the absence of formal contracts and social security measures exacerbates their vulnerability to exploitation and poverty. Understanding the socio-economic dynamics at play is crucial for formulating effective policies and interventions aimed at improving the living and working conditions of these workers.

The construction industry in India is large as it engages 3.2 crore workers nationwide. For most of these workers, the construction industry is their principal source of employment. Construction activity is an integral part of a country’s infrastructure and industrial development. It includes hospital, schools, townships, offices, houses and other buildings, urban infrastructure (including water supply sewerage, drainage) high ways, roads, ports, railways, airports, power system, irrigation agriculture system, and telecommunications.

The construction becomes the basic input for socio – economic development of country. These workers are broadly classified as skilled and unskilled. Though child labour is prohibited, children are engaged for unskilled jobs. Most of the workers in this sector are employed on a casual basis. Unstable employment / earning and shifting of workplaces are the basic characteristics of work for construction workers.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Chinnu C.S & Sheeba P (2021**) The study titled "Socio–economic conditions of construction workers in Walajah Block (Tamil Nadu)" shows that the mainstream of construction workers are uneducated and earnings are low. In this study, a schedule of interviews was used to gather the main data. The actual data collecting for this study took place in January 2019. Following data collection, the author used a variety of tools to analyse the data (SPSS). According to their findings, only when construction workers make more than Rs.6000 do they all start saving.

**Kumar S (2019) This** study titled "Ambedkar's Economic Ideas and Contributions" highlights the economic ideas which were proposed by the father of Indian contribution Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar. His contribution in the field of public finance, agriculture economics, state management system, problems of labours, Indian caste system and economic development are discussed in this study. Economic thoughts of Baba Saheb did not gain so much of popularity in the main stream economics, the reason being that he was more popular as a 'Dalit' leader rather than a trained economist. But this does not reduce the status of his views. Thus, can be judged by their adoption at various level of India's economic development.

**Duraikutty and Seenivasan (2019)** stated that as India has the second highest population in the world, its construction industry is large as well as visible and is providing employment to 3.2 crore workers nationally. The present study analyses the changing pattern of the socio-economic condition of construction workers in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Also, the researcher attempted to find the socio – economic condition, identified the problems of construction workers and working condition and health awareness of construction workers in the study area. This study was entirely based on primary data which were collected from 80 respondents. The samples were selected purposively. The researcher identified three aspects for the study such as the socio – economic condition, working condition and health problems of construction workers in the study area.

## AREA PROFILE

The present study is restricted to the southernmost district of Tamil Nadu, in India, known as Kanyakumari district. It is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu. Even though it is smallest in terms of area, its density or population is the highest next to Chennai and stands first in literacy. In this chapter an attempt has been made to give some information about the district. Vilavancode Taluk is one of the biggest Taluk in Kanyakumari District. It is bounded with Kalkulam Taluk in the west.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio and economic conditions of building construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk.
2. To analyze the problems faced by the building construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk.
3. To give recommendation for the development of the building construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk.

## METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

The present study is based on the primary data as well as the secondary data. The primary data are collected from the building construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk, Kanyakumari District. Statistical tools are the mechanical process specially designed to facilitate the analysis of the large body of quantitative data. The aim of statistical method is to interpret the completed data for the purpose of analysis.

The present study is designed to analyze the socio–economic condition of building construction workers. The data is analyzed by percentage analysis and the problems of construction workers calculated using the weighted average method.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTREPRETATIONS

**Table 1.1**
**Age - wise classification of the Respondents**

| Age | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Below 25 | 12 | 15% |
| 26 to 45 | 42 | 53% |
| 46 to 60 | 16 | 19% |
| Above 60 | 10 | 13% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

From the above table shows the age wise classification of the respondents. It is evident from Table 1.1 that, out of 80 respondents 12(15%) respondents belonged to below 25 years, 42(53%) respondents belonged to the age group of 26 to 45 years, 16(19%) respondents belonged to the age group 46 to 60 years and 10(13%) respondents belonged to the age group of above 60 years. It indicates that most of the respondents were in between 26 to 45 years.

**Figure 1.1 Age wise classification of the Respondents**

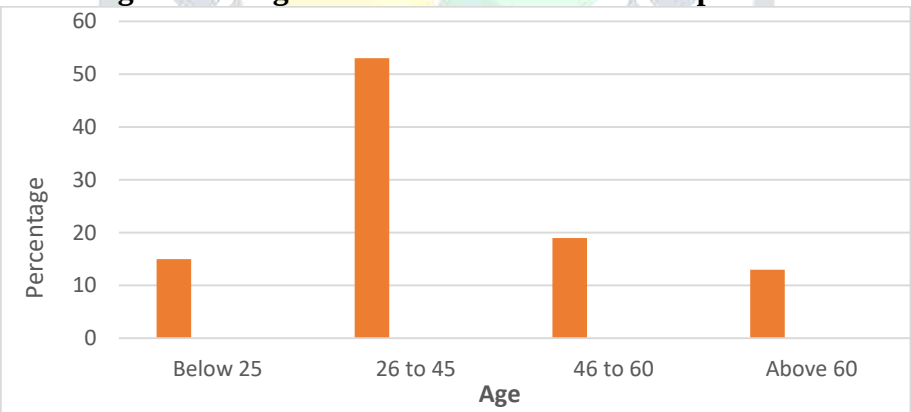



**Table 1.2**
**Gender wise classification of the Respondents**

| Gender | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 65 | 81% |
| Female | 15 | 19% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1.2 shows the classification of the respondents on the basis of gender. It is evident from the above Table 1.2 that, out of 80 construction workers 65 (81%) respondents were male and remaining 15 (19%) were females. This great difference in gender ratio itself shows the maximum involvement of male workers in construction field.

**Figure 1.2**

**Gender wise classification of the Respondents**

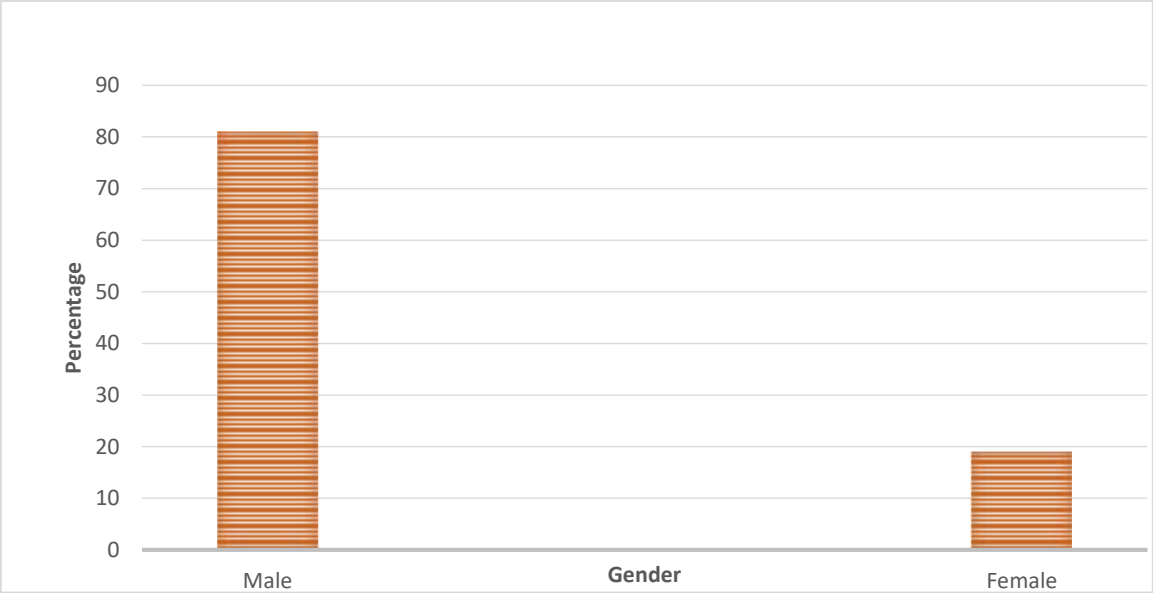



**Table 1.3**
**Marital status of the Respondents**

| Marital status | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Married | 55 | 69% |
| Unmarried | 25 | 31% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1.3 shows the marital status of the respondents. Out of 80 respondents, 55 (69%) of the respondents were married and 25 (31%) of the respondents were unmarried. It indicates that most of the respondents were married.

**Figure 1.3**
**Marital status of the Respondents**

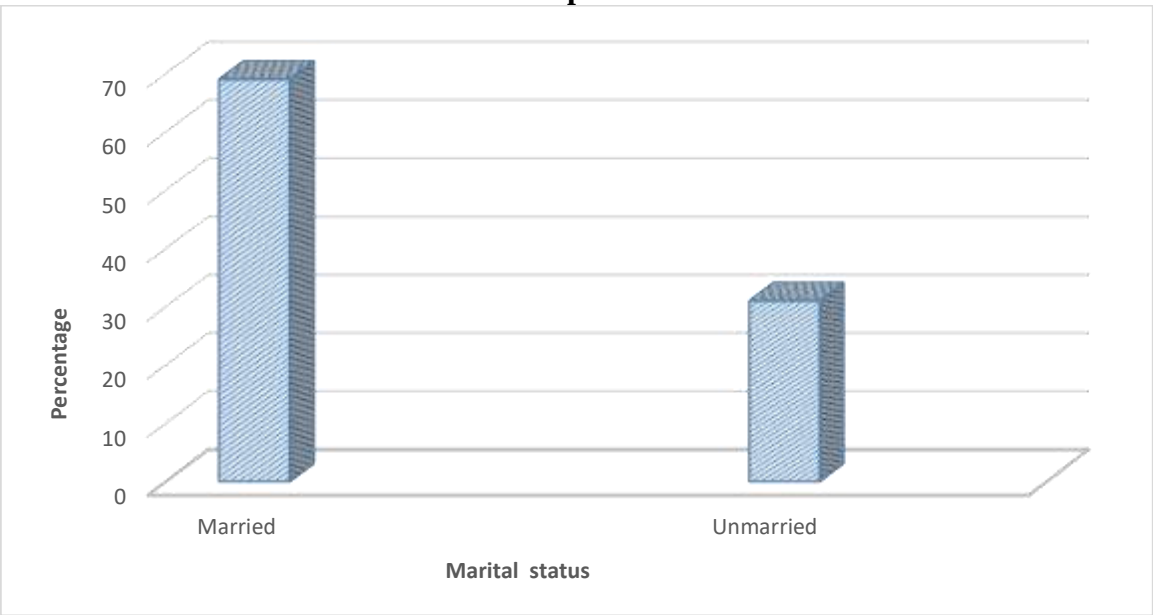


**Table 1.4**
**Educational qualification of the Respondents**

| Educational qualification | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Uneducated | 21 | 26% |
| School level | 25 | 31% |
| College level | 18 | 23% |
| Professional courses | 16 | 20% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from Table 1.4 that, out of 80 respondents, 21(26%) were uneducated, 25(31%) were school level, 18(23%) were college level and 16(20%) were professional courses. It indicates that most of the respondents who were involved in construction work have school level education.

**Figure 1.4**
**Educational qualification of the respondent**

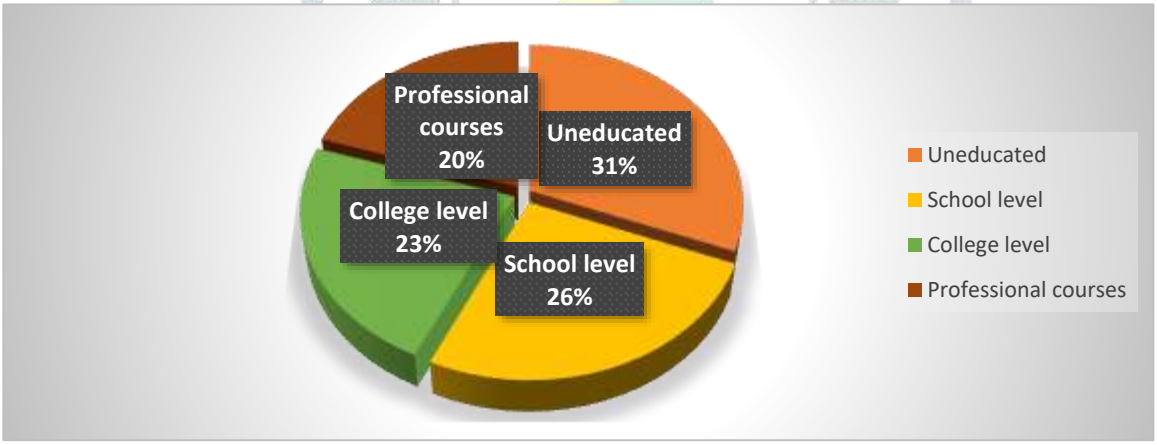



**Table 1.5**
**Number of days the respondents work in the week**

| No. of Days | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 5days | 23 | 29% |
| 6days | 31 | 39% |
| 4days | 17 | 21% |
| 7 days | 9 | 11% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source : Primary Data

The above table reveals that, 23 (29%) of the respondents were working 5 days in a week, 31 (39%) of the respondents were working 6 days in a week, 17(21%) of the respondents were working 4 days in a week and 9 (11%) of the respondents were worked 7 days in a week. This indicates that most of the respondents worked 6 days in a week.

**Figure 1.5**
**No. of days the respondents work in the week**

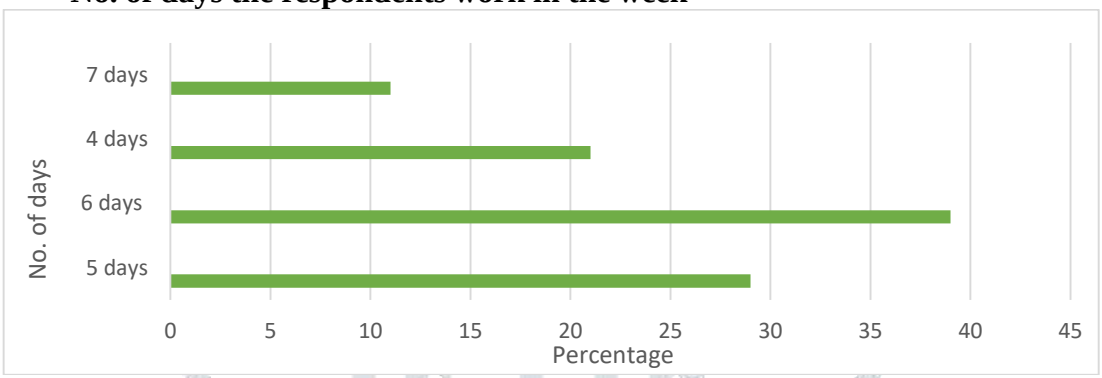



**Table 1.6**
**Working hours per day of the Respondents**

| Working Hours | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 6 hours | 10 | 13% |
| 7 hours | 11 | 14% |
| 8 hours | 50 | 62% |
| 9 hours | 9 | 11% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1.6 clearly shows that, out of 80 respondents,10(13%) of the respondents worked 6 hours in a day, 11(14%) of the respondents worked 7 hours in a day, 50(62%) of the respondents worked 8 hours in a day and 9(11%) of the respondents worked 9 hours in a day. This indicates that majority of the respondents worked 8 hours in a day.

**Figure 1.6**
**Working hours per day of the Respondents**

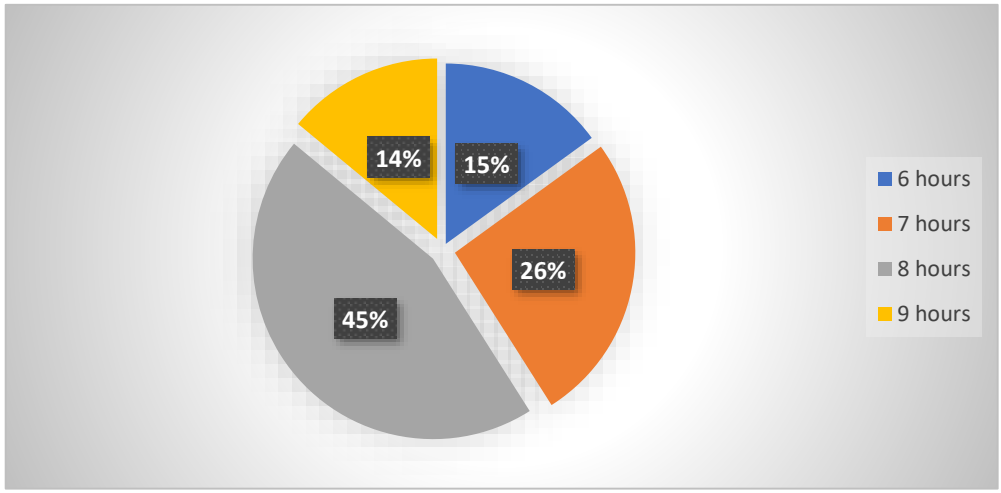



**Table 1.7**

**Wage payment of the Respondents**

| Wages | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Below ₹ 500 | 8 | 10% |
| ₹500 –₹ 600 | 12 | 15% |
| ₹ 800 – ₹1000 | 14 | 17% |
| Above ₹1000 | 46 | 58% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

It is evident from Table1.7 that, out of 80 respondents, 8(10%) of the respondents were getting below ₹500, 18(15%) of the respondents were getting ₹500 –₹600 wages per day, 14 (17%) of the respondents were getting ₹800 – ₹1000 wages per day and 46(58%) of the respondents were getting above ₹1000 wages per day. This indicates that majority of the respondents were getting above ₹1000 wages per day.

**Figure 1.7**

**Wage payment of the respondents**

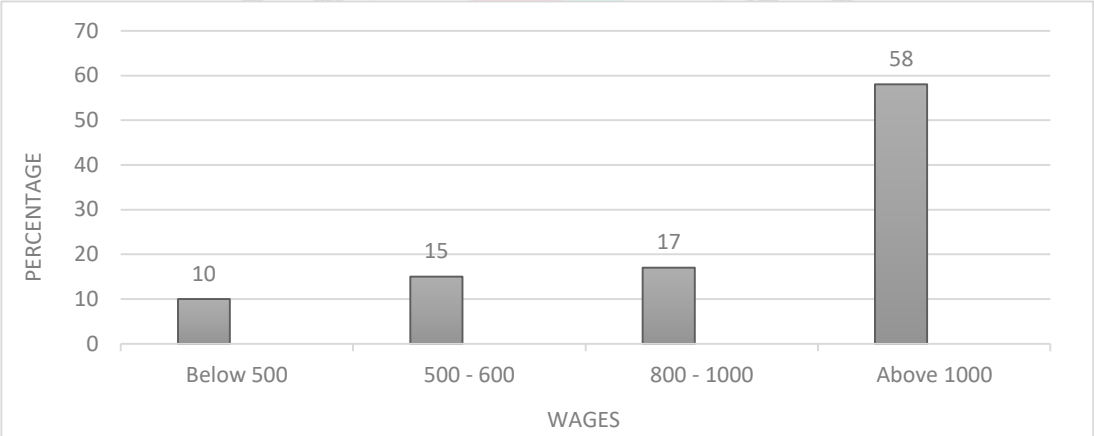



**Table 1.8**

**Average monthly savings of the Respondents**

| Monthly savings | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Below ₹10000 | 43 | 54% |
| ₹10000 – ₹15000 | 21 | 26% |
| Above ₹15000 | 16 | 20% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1.8 shows that, out of 80 respondents, 43(54%) of the respondents' monthly savings is below ₹10000, 21(26%) of the respondents' monthly savings is ₹10000– ₹15000 and 16(20%) of the respondents' monthly savings is above ₹15000. It indicates that majority of the construction workers' monthly savings is below ₹10000.

**Figure 1.8**
**Monthly savings of the Respondents**

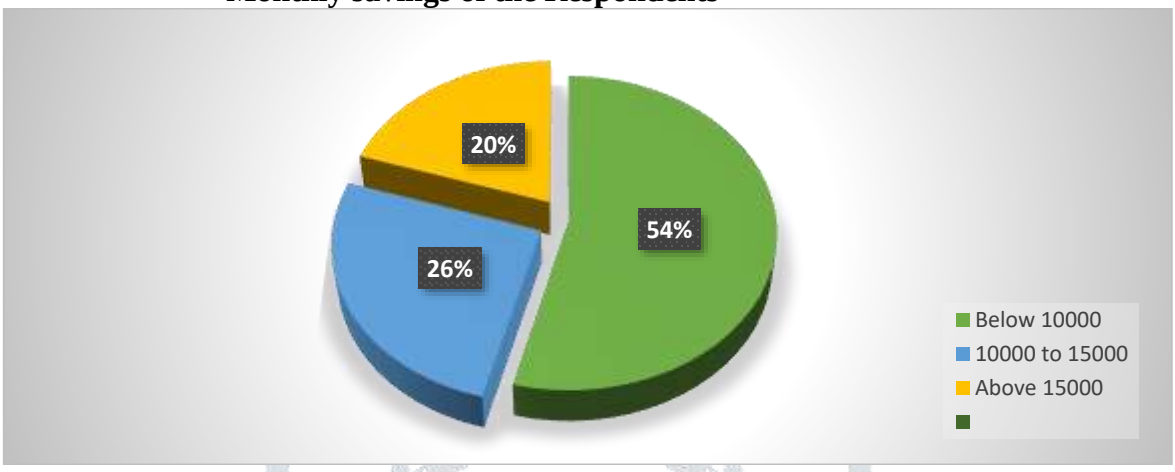



**Table 1.9**
**Types of savings of the Respondents**

| Types of savings | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Post office | 11 | 14% |
| Banks | 30 | 38% |
| No savings | 26 | 32% |
| Others | 13 | 16% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.9 shows that, out of 80 respondents, 11(14%) of the respondents saved money in the post office, 30(38%) of the respondents saved money in the banks, 26(32%) of the respondents did not save and 13(16%) of the respondents saved money in other financial institutions. It indicates that majority of the construction workers saved money in the banks.

**Figure 1.9**
**Types of saving of the Respondents**

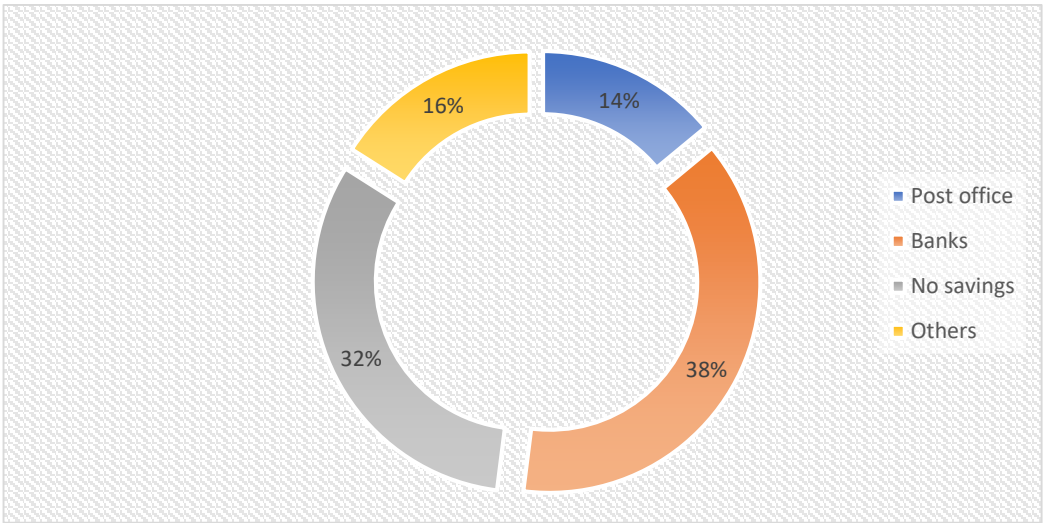


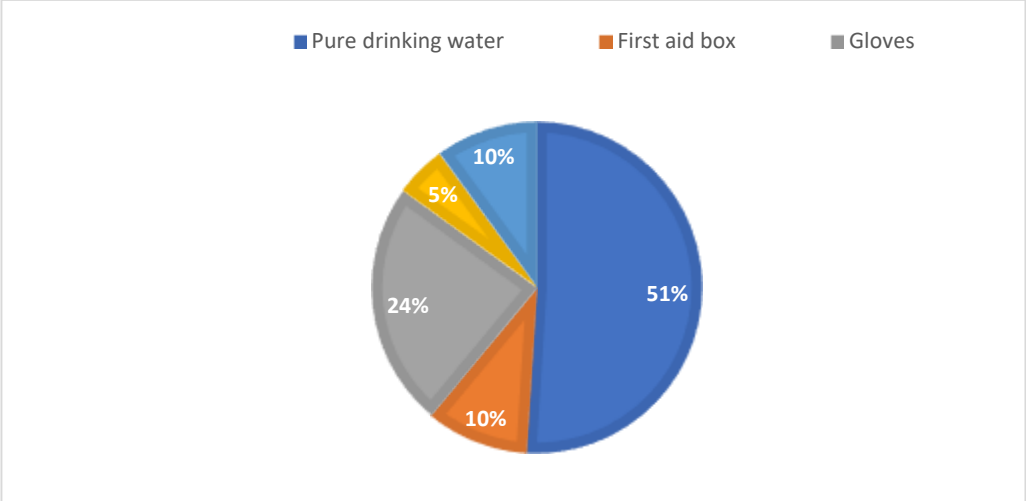
**Table 1.10**
**Facilities of worksite of the Respondents**

| Facilities | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Pure drinking water | 41 | 51% |
| First aid box | 8 | 10% |
| Gloves | 19 | 24% |
| Toilet facilities | 4 | 5% |
| Travelling facilities | 8 | 10% |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1.10 shows that, out of 80 respondents, 41(51%) of the respondents had pure drinking water facilities in their worksite, 8(10%) of the respondents had first aid box in their worksite, 19(24%) of the respondents had gloves, 4(5%) of the respondents had toilet facilities in their worksite and 8(10%) of the respondents had travelling facilities in their worksite. This indicates that most of the respondents had pure drinking water facility in their worksite.

**Figure 1.10**
**Facilities of worksite of the Respondents**




## PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Construction workers face numerous challenges that impact their safety and well-being. Common issues include hazardous working conditions, such as falls and equipment accidents, along with health risks from prolonged physical labor and exposure to harmful substances. Many workers struggle with job insecurity and low wages, often lacking essential benefits. Additionally, the demanding hours and workplace conditions contribute to fatigue and stress, highlighting the need for improved support and safety measures in the industry.

**Table 1.11**

**Computation of weighted average of building construction workers**

| S.no | Problems | Factors score | | | | | Weighted score | Mean score | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Low (1) | Low (2) | Average (3) | High (4) | Very High (5) | | | |
| 1 | Absence of social security | 60 | 72 | 57 | 36 | 19 | 236 | 47.6 | VI |
| 2 | Injuries | 135 | 84 | 36 | 26 | 12 | 293 | 58.6 | I |
| 3 | Occupational disease | 105 | 68 | 60 | 16 | 14 | 263 | 52.6 | IV |
| 4 | Noise | 50 | 68 | 72 | 32 | 18 | 240 | 48.0 | V |
| 5 | Unsafe working condition | 95 | 108 | 57 | 12 | 9 | 281 | 56.2 | II |
| 6 | Uncertain working hours | 75 | 120 | 60 | 14 | 10 | 279 | 55.8 | III |
| 7 | Non-availability of raw materials | 70 | 40 | 84 | 22 | 17 | 233 | 46.6 | VII |

The above Table 1.11 shows the different problems of the construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk. The most important problems faced by the construction workers were injuries with the mean score of 58.6. Unsafe working condition is the second important problem of the construction workers with the score of 56.2. Uncertain working hours is the third place with the mean score of 55.8. Occupational disease comes under the fourth place with the mean score of 52.6. Noise is the fifth place with the mean score of 48. Absence of social security is the sixth problem with the mean score of 47.6 and non- availability of raw materials is the least score of the above table with the mean score of 46.6. This indicates that injuries is the major problems faced by the construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk.

**SUGGESTION**

Improving the socio-economic conditions of construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk requires a comprehensive approach that addresses various aspects of their lives. Firstly, ensuring fair wages and job security is crucial. Implementing and strictly enforcing minimum wage laws will guarantee that all workers receive adequate compensation for their labor. Additionally, promoting the use of written employment contracts can provide workers with clearer terms of employment, enhancing their job security and reducing the risk of exploitation.

Secondly, enhancing working conditions is essential for the well-being of construction workers. This can be achieved by implementing and enforcing safety regulations on construction sites, which include mandatory training on safe practices. Providing access to proper protective gear and conducting regular health check-ups can significantly reduce workplace injuries and health issues, fostering a safer work environment. Access to benefits is another critical area for improvement. Facilitating the registration of construction workers with labor welfare boards can enable them to access essential benefits like health insurance and pensions. Additionally, establishing

community-driven emergency funds can provide financial support for workers facing sudden job loss or health crises, thereby enhancing their economic resilience.

Skill development and training programs are vital for empowering construction workers. By offering vocational training that enhances skills and promotes specialization, workers can increase their employability and earning potential. Collaborating with NGOs and training institutes to provide workshops will further equip workers with the necessary skills to thrive in a competitive job market.

Improving housing and living conditions is equally important. Working with local authorities to develop affordable housing options near construction sites can alleviate the challenges faced by the workers. Ensuring access to basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity in worker accommodations will also contribute to a better quality of life.

Finally, fostering social awareness and support is crucial for long-term change. Encouraging the formation of worker cooperatives or unions can empower construction workers to advocate for their rights and better working conditions. Conducting awareness campaigns about workers' rights and available resources can help workers navigate challenges and seek necessary support.

## CONCLUSION

The socio-economic conditions of construction workers in Vilavancode Taluk require urgent attention and multifaceted interventions. By focusing on fair wages, improved working conditions, and access to essential benefits, we can help to create a more stable and secure environment for these workers. Investing in skill development and vocational training is crucial for enhancing their employability and income potential, while improving housing and living conditions will significantly uplift their quality of life.

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