

UNORGANIZED WORKERS IN BANGALORE CITY - A STUDY

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Abstract: Indian Society thrives on contradictions. The field of labour is a bundle of contradictions. Even since Mark Holmstrom, an Australian Sociologist of labour introduced a dichotomy between organized labour and unorganized labour it has become a persistence source of great deal of discussion, debate and discourse among Sociologists, labour economists, social anthropologists and labour activists. The fommer has been dubbed as "labour aristocracy" who has used labour unions to gain wide range of benefits and privileges even at the cost of their less fortunate counterpart the unorganized labour.

Keywords: Unorganized Workers, Labour Creatives, Migrant Workers, Women Workers, House Booming.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Society thrives on contradictions. The field of labour is a bundle of contradictions. Even since Mark Holmstrom, an Australian Sociologist of labour introduced a dichotomy between organized labour and unorganized labour it has become a persistence source of great deal of discussion, debate and discourse among Sociologists, labour economists, social anthropologists and labour activists. The fommer has been dubbed as "labour aristocracy" who has used labour unions to gain wide range of benefits and privileges even at the cost of their less fortunate counterpart the unorganized labour. The makers of revolution have become the betrayers of revolution of the total count of the gainfully employed based on both principal and secondary workers counted by the National Sample Survey the NSS) an astounding 912 percent were in the unorganized sector in 1999-2000, increasing by rather more than a whole percentage point in 2004-200s. A large proponion of this informal unorganized sector employment is in agriculture, but non-agricultural activities still account for a substantial 40 percent.

Over half of India's national output comes from the unorganized sector While employment in the formal sector has been stagnant in the last decade, employment creation in the informal segment of the economy has been tremendous. Broad employment trends for the organized and unorganized sector is shown in table for the years 1983, 1987-88, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 hisevidentthat throughout this period an overwhelmingly large portion of the workforce in India is found to be employed in the unorganiacd vector, out of million workers in 1999-2000, it is estimated that J712 million workers (Nearly percent) are employed in the unoryanized segment of the economy whmas only 278 million worken per cem are engaged in the organiaed sector The share of unorganized employment in the economy has displayed remarkable steadiness over the years. The share of informal employment has risen from 92 per cent (Nearly 276 million out of 300 million) in 1983 to 93 percent in the 1999-2000. It is cleared that employment opportunity in the organized sector has remained more or less stagnant, showing only a marginal increase from 24 million in 1983 to 27.8 million in 1999-2000.

The near stagnancy of employment opportunity in the organized sector becomes evident, where the compound annual growth rates of employment in the organized and unorganized sector are presented. Employment in the organized sector has registered a growth of 125 percent between 1983 and 1987-88 and 1.26 percent between 1983 and 1993-94 But during the decade of the 1990s, we witness a sharp decline in employment opportunities. During this period organized employment grew by only 0.34 percent overall, the decade of the 1990s in India has been characterized by slow growth in employment opportunities. This is also true for the unorganized sector of the economy.

The stagnancy of employment opportunities in the organized sector in the 1980s has to a large extent been compensated by a significant expansion of workforce in the unorganized segment of the economy. We observe that during 1983 to 1987-SS, employment in the unorganized sector grew by 2.05 per cent while during the period of 1983 to 1993-94. the growth rate was around 2.27 percent. This fact clearly indicates that unorganized sector served as a buffer for the workforce when the employment opportunities in organized sector dwindled. However, the unorganized sector also underwent a sharp slump during the 1990s with the growth rate of employment falling to 1.25 percent.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF UNORGANIZED SECTOR

The unorganized sector workers can be categorized broadly into four categories i.e

Occupation: small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, fisherman, those engaged in animal husbandry, in beedi rolling beedi labeling and beedi packing workers in building and construction, etc.

Nature of Employment: Attached agricultural labourers, bonded labourers migrant workers, contract and casual labourers come under this category.

Specially distressed categories: Toddy tappers, scavengers, carriers of head loads, drivers of animal driven vehicles, head loaders belong to this category and

Service categories: Midwives, domestic workers, fishermen and women, barbers, vegetable and fruit vendors, newspapers vendors etc, come under this category

Agricultural labourers: rural workers engage in animal husbandry including dairy, sheep and goat keeping: rural workers engaged in other cottage and village industries including sericulture; weavers/workers engaged in carpet manufacturing; rural artisans/master craftsmen; fisherm-men: workers engaged in the collection of raw hides and skins falying and tanning and leather workers, workers engaged in the collection of tendu leaves, workers engaged in bush cutting for tendu leaf, beedi workers, workers engaged in brick-kilns: workers engaged in stone quarries; workers in preparation of forest coupes, making of tress in forests, felling of timber, loading and unloading operations relating to timber in the foresta workers engaged in khandsari units, saw mills, oil mills etc. and salt workers (Ministry of Labour, 1986, Additional categories of workers listed under the unorganized sector include midwives; domestic workers, toddy tappers, snake catchers; entertainers; washermen 12 barbers; rural medical practitioners: vendors etc (Ministry of Labour, 1986, pp 61-62).

The list is not exhaustive since it omits very important categories of workers in the unorganized sector such as head load workers (collie rickshaw pullers, auto and taxi drivers, anganavadi workers, zari workers, workers in nursing homes and many more categories of unorganized workers working in insecure, exploitative conditions, under informal contract or under self employed occupations by hiring equipment such as rickshaws, auto rickshaws and taxis.

The unorganized sector, as defined by the Central Statistical organization (cited by Sharath Davala 1994 Unprotected Labour in India. issues and concerned FES, pp 8), includes all those unincorporated enterprises and household industries (other than the organized ones) which are not regulated by any legislation and which do not maintain annual accounts or balance sheets. But this definition is of an administrative nature based on existing legal framework and omits a larger section of unorganized self employed labour.

Sharath Davala Unprotected Labour in India, issues and concerned FES pp 8 (1994) prefers to us the tem "unprotected labour' instead of unorganized labour' on the plea that organized and unorganized', cease to be homogeneous categories if labour protection is taken as the basic criterion of trade unions. But the use of the term protected labour also is subject to a similar objection. For the protection of labour, whereas unionization is one basic component, support from the State in the form of providing legislation and ensuring its effective implementation is the second component. The existence of weak unions among the organized may result in labour remaining unprotected' despite the semblance of trade union, So the classification of labour into protected and unprotected gives an impression as if protected. labour does not need any further organizational or state support, I would therefore, be proper to use the terms 'organized' and 'unorganized' and not interpret them in the administrative sense, but in the sense of organizing into trade unions. In other words, unionization becomes the differentia specification of the organized labour and all kinds of labour working in small factories or even in small, medium and large productive units working as casual, contract, bad and temporary workers who have not been effectively unionized should be classified as unorganized workers.

According to a report by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, by 2017 the number of people living in urban areas will outnumber those in rural areas. In India the percentage of people living in urban areas has increased from 18 percent in 1961 to 28.5 percent in 2004. This is estimated to increase to 32 percent by 2015. Traditionally, urban growth is associated with increased economic opportunities and economic growth, This is combined with push and pull factors that make the understanding of migration complex and multi-faceted. The push-factors are i.e, decreasing access to agricultural production options, water supply, and cultivable land. The pull-factors include the opportunities for employment in industries such as construction manufacturing in special economic zones, etc. Distressed migrants normally lack the necessary documentation and identity cards for inter-state asset building. As a result, they face difficulties in accessing formal services such a health, education and insurance, Given their informal status within the system, they are particularly vulnerable.

Most of the informal sector workers have insecure and erratic access to potable water, sanitation, and shelter, In many cases, make shin accommodation is set up next to construction sites. According to the study carried out by so far women workers in the informal sector can expect to earn between rs 50-80 per day, whereas men can earn between Rs 60-120. In many cases, entire families migrate looking for work. Perhaps the most are the children who are forced put of their childhood and have to fend for themselves, often taking care of each other, and stealing scraps of food off the roadside Many children have no access to education nor are there provisions for their care and safety during the workday.

3. FEW SEGMENT OF UNORGANIZED WORKERS

Garment Women Workers:

Research Studies on the unorganized labour have been few and far between even though they constitute major chunk of the total labour force in the country and contribute very significantly to the growth of Indian economy. Bangalore which has emerged as the hub of Communication technologies and biotechnologies, BPO (Business Process outsourcing) and KPO (Knowledge Process outsourcing) apart from bourgeoning growth of real estate sector witnessed over the years an unabated proliferation of small-scale garment manufacturing units located mostly in the outskirts of Bangalore city. A huge women labour force concentrate in these units. Women workers have been drawn from lower socio economic conditions and the majority ur them are the age group of 18 to 35 years. They have been exposed in all kinds of exploitation, economic, sexual, emotional and social to mention a few. They re not allowed to join unions and the unions in the organized sector have been responding reluctantly and as a result have the least bargaining power, What ever the management gives they have o accept. Working condition are so poor neither canteen facilities, nor rest rooms and no compensation is that they get paid in case of accidents resulting in injury to limb and even health, Labour welfare measures, ir any are hardly implemented. Due to their constant exposition to unhealthy work conditions women working in these units have become increasingly to prone to a wide range of diseases and health risk Minimum wages are hardly implemented. Labour department officials especially field-staff more than not are corrupt that they side with the management and the local police have often been hand-in-glore with the management. As a result, they are denied justice and women workers have the support of neither the family, nor the union not even the community and other agencies of civil society although there are a bewildering variety of women activist groups. Despite all those problems it is a pity that no meaningful sociological study has ever been undertaken The study proposes to seriously look into the problems of women garment workers by a drawing a sample from the total number of women workforce Depending upon the exigencies of situation and in the interest of drawing a accurate picture of women workers in depth caste studies will also be made.

Construction Workers:

Bangalore's booming industry employs hundreds of such migrant labourers from neighboring Hosur and Dharmapuri, and the drought hit districts of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur, The city also woos skilled artisans from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa, According to a conservative estimate, there are 5 lakh construction workers in the city, with 30-40 percent of them being migrant workers.

Another most visible and highly scattered workers are construction workers bulk of whom are rural migrants, Being unskilled, skilled most of them engage themselves in manual labour, Building construction, road construction like lity roads, Metro rail tracks have attracted a huge exodus women from neighboring states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Northem parts of Karnataka. They live in huis and tents put by themselves in the surrounding areas of construction

sites. Without access to safe potable drinking water and no bathroom and toilet facilities often they defecate in the open areas. Lack of mechanisms for disposable human waste often lead to contamination of soil, water, air and thus pose serious health hazards and this aspect needs to be looked into seriously. An attempt will be made in this direction apart from studying the living and working conditions.

Beedi Workers:

Beedi workers constitute another major chunk of unorganized labour in Bangalore city. The work is carried out predominantly by women most of the time at the place of their living. Being poor and socially educationally backward they live in slums or in highly congested lanes and bylanes of certain localities in Bangalore city, Bereft of basic amenities at the place of their living they are exposed to highly environmentally degraded conditions. High risk groups of alcoholic and HIV patient live in those areas. Women who involve themselves become increasingly vulnerable to a wide-range of health risks. As a result they look famish and with lack of spacing in the birth of children they suffer from reproductive health disorders. Case method will be employed to portray the predicament of these women Like construction workers and garment workers they lack unions and the established Unions have been highly vary of the beedi workers. Majority of beedi workers being women they are scattered over different localities, among much else. The study proposes to draw a sample of beedi workers as part of the total sample of the study. Participant observation method will be employed and case studies will also be made.

Agarbathi Workers:

Agarbathi is the category of the sample. Predominantly women workers who carry rolling of the stick from the raw material supply by the contractors most of them are illiterate who come from lower middle class. There are no rules regulating neither working condition nor payment of wages they get paid to stick role rupees ranging from 15 to 20 rupees per day average single women earn about 40 to 50 rupees. Most of them live in the outskirts of the city near by slums or in slums. Their living condition bisect, full dirty and unhygienic condition disserted by husband or husbands high risk alcoholic . Women struggle hard to meet both hands meretricious and undertricious, women carry wide verity of disease and disorders. They government or NGOs are not working among these women who widely scattered aver vast areas.

Head Loaders:

This is another category of the sample as no data is available on these workers, predominantly male workers have come from village, in search of livelihood as they are illiterate and uneducated before coming to Bangalore they were working in agricultural fields. Push factors frequently by lack of employment because of lack of agricultural opportunities without land and house olive. In desperate they work with lorry contractors and get paid around 2000 to 3000 rupees for one month with no medical allowance and house rent.

4. UNORGANIZED LABOUR IN BANGALORE CITY

Bangalore which has emerged as the hub of communication bio-technologies and biotechnologies. Apart from bourgeoning growth of real estate business an unheated proliferation of a wide-away of scale garment manufacturing units like garments, Agarbathi, agro and food-processing mostly in the outskirts of Bangalore city has been the most visible feature. A huge women labour force concentrate in these units not to speaker of child labour.

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working condition are poor and pathetic they get no canteen facilities. educational facilities to their children, no transport and medical facilities, Most of them at work situation have been extremely vulnerable to accidents often resulting in injury to life, limb and thus pushing their families into starvation, malnutrition and under nutrition. Benefits given to organized workers have been devised to them, Following the set-up of National Commission on labour of the N.D.A

government not only hard facts were brought out but also they became a solid base for enacting some legislation for social security and the public opinion has been veering around the welfare of the unorganized labour. This has happened in the fitness of things, for they constitute 90 percent of the total labour force.

Given unhealthy, irregular and uncertain work condition women in this unity have become increasingly prone to a wide-range of diseases and disorder that has affected not only their productivity but also discharge responsibilities to the family. Minimum wages are hardly implemented. Labour Department officials unions and other field staff more often than not are soft with management but also the local police have often been assured of and even found guilty of harassing of workers (see case studies). As a result justice : natural and social has been eluding them.

Women workers have the support of neither of the family, nor the union not even the community and other agencies of civil society although a some NGO and a host of women activist groups have stated evinling some interest in them. Despite these problems it is a pity that there are very few sociological studies in the present study a modest attempt has been made to look into the working and living conditions of garment workers on the basis of a sample drawn from the total garment workers in Bangalore city. Depending upon the exigencies of situation case studies have been made to portray the social reality of garment workers to focus on certain aspects which may be beyond the Interview schedule method.

Another most visible and highly scattered workers are construction workers bulk of whom are rural migrants. Being unskilled, semiskilled and engage themselves only in manual labour. They live a hand-to-mouth existence construction labour is involved in building, road, flyovers, no and metro rail work which have been going on in a big way. Bulk of migrant workers come from neighboring states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu. Northern parts of Karnataka. They live near the work site in huts and tents made of material like cement out covers. Without access to safe potable drinking water and, bathroom and toilet facilities, they deficate in the open areas. Lack of mechanism for disposable human-waste lead to accen mulation of that resulting in contamination of soil, water, air and thus poses serious health hazards.

Beedi workers constitute another major chunk of unorganized labour in Bangalore. The work is carried out predominantly by women most of the time at the place of their living Being poor, socially educationally backward they live in slums or in highly congested lanes and by lanes of around localities in Bangalore city. Bereft of basic amenities at the place of their living they are exposed to highly environmentally degraded areas. High risk groups of alcoholic and HIV patient live in those areas Women who involve themselves become increasingly vulnerable a wide-range of health risks. As a result the look famish and with lack of spacing in the birth of children they suffer from reproductive health disorders.

Like the two works discussed in the preceding pages they and the established unions have been loathsome in the beedi workers within their fold partly because majority of workers in ladies and that they are scattered over different localities, among else. The study proposes to draw a sample of beedi workers as part of the total sample. Participant observation method will be employed and case studies will also be made.

Two deaths in a day. A fatal fall, a couple of months ago. Another death. a life-long debilitating fracture and more. Accidents and deaths among construction labourers are becoming frequent in Bangalore. The sheer number of these workers in the state, their largely unorganized employment structure and the lack of safety measures on most of the construction sites further expose them to the dangers of serious accidents and death, while at work. The push to make the construction labourers membership in welfare board mandatory is a positive step. While there are efforts to ensure that the victim and/or his family get financial assistance after accidental injury or death, the system doesn't offer much in terms of preventive measures. The security mechanisms in place at many construction sites in the city lot to be desired. While the high-end builders and contractors try to ensure requisites like protective gear for the labourers, these measures are far from the norm in Bangalore that continues to see a huge growth in real estate activity. Construction workers, as a sector, includes brick layers, painters, masons, plumbers and all those who constitute the chain who contribute to the construction of a building. Though the Building and other Construction Workers' Act of 1996 allows for several benefits and welfare measures, the sector is still largely unorganized, due to the migratory nature of a majority of the workers.

A recent rule that all construction contractors should ensure that the labourers are enrolled as members of the Karnataka Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board -is an attempt to extend the welfare measures of the board to a larger section of the workers. KA Mohan, chairman, Bangalore working committee of the Karnataka State Construction Workers Central Union, says the welfare board has to give a compensation of Rs 1 lakh to the next of kin in case of death

or the construction worker in case of an injury which might make the worker. incapable of work. The contractors or builders also provide group insurance to workers, with the compensation being given as per the age of the worker.

Under this, a worker aged 40 and above would be given an insurance of Rs 2 lakh while for a younger worker, the compensation would be up to Rs. lakh. These benefits, though, are open only to members. The membership costs Rs 25 initially and later, Rs 10 every month. Mohan said the contractors or the union has to validate the membership letter, though the temporary nature of the construction jobs continues to pose issues of recording labour movement. The labour department estimates that there are over 20 lakh construction and building workers in the state, including migrant labourers from the northern states.

Migrant labour from other districts and states has contributed further to the unorganized nature of the sector Karnataka labour minister Bachche Gowda had recently mooted the idea of migration certificates for labourers coming in from other states in order to streamline the construction labour sector, The idea is not translated into action.

Benefits to members of the welfare board Rs 1 lakh for next of kin of dead and worker with permanent injury Group insurance to be borne by contractors builders Rs. 4,000 for women workers for maternity leave Rs. 2,000 to family in case of natural death of worker Rs. 5,000 for wedding of two children Rs. 5,000 as house loan for workers aged below 45 years, to be repaid in 15 years at 1% interest Rs. 5,000 loan to buy tools of trade All benefits available one year after enrolling as member: each get an ID card The numbers speak Estimated 50,000 members in Karnataka Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board Karnataka State Construction Workers. Central Union has about 60,000 members over 20 lakh construction workers in state 5 lakh-6 lakh workers in and around Bangalore Migrant influx mainly from UP, Orissa, Bihar and Jharkhand (as reported in Hindu- December, 11-2008.

5. CONCLUSION

Discussion in the preceding pages based entirely on already published material revealed that working class has come a long way Originated under the most inhuman conditions during the British colonial periods working class through trade union had come to achieve some legitimacy launching of public sector after independence workers had come to achieve new status supported by job security, welfare state policies, and trade union power. Ironically this did not last long. new economic policy in the context of globalization cut sharply to the size of organized working and abnormal increase in the size of the unorganized working class on the one hand and the emergence a affluent sophisticated tribe of knowledge workers who are so career oriented and individualistic that they are increasingly ambivalent of trade unions even as the trade unions became weak Against this background a study of unorganized labour

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