PART- I: ORGANIZED SECTOR

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CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES

In the last decade or so India has emerged as one of the leading developing countries in the world. Keeping in pace with the technological boom, different industries have laid their foundations and the number is on the rise in recent years. Amongst these developments, the construction industries have flourished immensely throughout the country, particularly the metro cities.

In synchronization with the nation wide increment in the number of construction industries, West Bengal, in particular Kolkata has also seen an upliftment in this area. According to Government of West Bengal Statistics (2003), there are 25 construction industries in the state employing almost 15000 people. Apart from Kolkata, they are also spread over the districts. The minimum monthly wages of a workman engaged in a construction industry is between Rs. 1600-1800. These industries are primarily related with construction of bridges, highways, and tall structures like multistoried complexes, shopping malls, business towers and large industrial complexes encompassing acres of land.

The study was performed in a large construction industry, named LT, situated in Kolkata, mostly engaged in creating large industrial and business complexes. In this unit, some of the work processes are fully mechanized while some others are partly mechanized. However the primitive practice of hard manual labour still persists and MMH is not completely avoidable in certain work processes.
The industry employed innumerable workers to carry out different MMH jobs in their project site, viz., cement bag handling, brick handling and handling various building materials. In every case they have to bring the materials to be handled from the storage area and carry them overhead before finally depositing them to the specific site of operation. However the workers, associated with cement bag handling, were chosen as the subject group for this study. As a consequence of the hugeness of the project, the work area is vast and these workers have to cover enormous distances with load to reach their destination. They got a lunch break of one hour and two breaks of short duration everyday. Workers are also provided with one day off each week and work in the general shift.

The workers, who are under the ESI benefit, get medicine, welfare and other medical assistance from the ESI. But those who are not under the ESI concerned get benefit from the general hospital. The doctor in the unit gives the first aid and medication whenever injuries occur. If case is serious then they refer the patient to the ESI Hospital. The medication and treatment cost of the worker is paid by the company from the worker's welfare fund.
PART- 2: UNORGANIZED SECTOR
UNORGANIZED SECTOR

Broadly speaking, the informal or unorganized sector is moneymaking activity unrecorded in government account books. It comprises hawkers, manual material handling workers, marginal service providers, domestic workers and family enterprises.

The informal or unorganized sector is a global phenomenon. According to ILO, this sector provides 75% of non-farm informal jobs in developing nations, 48% in North America, 51% in Latin America and 65% in Asia.

The picture has also been pretty dismal in India. Compared to a zooming India Inc., the shadowy India unincorporated is growing even faster. According to NSS figures of National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) (2006)\(^1\), 92% of total workforce of 457 million in India works in the unorganized sector. In the last two decades, over 90% of India’s new jobs have been created in the unorganized sector. About 98% of the total enterprises in the country are in this sector. It generates about 60% of the country’s GDP and accounts for two-thirds of our total savings. It is official that the informal sector has grown even faster in the wake of economic liberalization.

Noting this trend, the Planning Commission’s India Vision 2020 report asserts that the unorganized sector will play a central role in the country’s employment and economic growth. The panel underlines that this sector’s potential can be better harnessed by providing social security, cheap credit, better working conditions and enhanced skills.
Till date however all these facilities have eluded the hapless workers of the unorganized sector. They are compelled to work in miserable, unhygienic and unlivable conditions.

According to the report of NCEUS (2006)\textsuperscript{191}, the condition of workers in the unorganized sector is like a bottom less pit. The work force is completely unprotected with no minimal wages and no social security. Only a paltry 6 million of the estimated 421 million workers in this sector have any kind of pension, life or health insurance coverage. The Government of India’s ASI (1999-2000) estimates that though the number of unorganized manufacturing enterprises is 130 times more than the organized enterprises, its average value added per worker is 6 times less than that of the formal sector.

The NSS, conducted in 2005, estimates that the Indian women workforce is 148.98 million strong and around 96% of them are concentrated in the informal sector. While the growing casualization of work affects both men and women, the latter remain more likely to get the lowest paid and least stable jobs. This trend is confirmed in the home-based and domestic sectors, where conditions of work are particularly insecure and where are over-represented.

The number of enterprises in the unorganized sector is found maximum for the state of West Bengal (27.7 lakh) followed by Uttar Pradesh (22.9 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (16.1 lakh). On the other hand the number of enterprises is found lowest for Daman & Diu (1000) followed by Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1300) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2800). So far as workers are concerned the same trend is observed for unorganized sector.