Abstract

Ergonomic and Physiological evaluation of working status of women workers in unorganised brick manufacturing units of West Bengal

The profile of the construction industry involves, the migratory nature of the labour, short duration of projects and the layers and layers of subcontractors, there is no discernible and permanent employer–employee relationship in the construction sector. Because of the poverty they are compelled to over work at the cost of their body. But such practice cannot go further. We need to curb the situation not only to protect our worker population but also to make the work more human from the view point of better productivity with less human cost. It is therefore, absolute to conduct a study to obtain the Maximum Acceptable Safe Load Limit for a specific load handling mode. This will help us to optimize the national standard on safe load to be handled manually.

The Indian brick industry is an unorganised sector where a large numbers of migrant women workers are employed. A total of 135 women workers engaged in brick field activities were selected for the study. These women are migrants from different parts of eastern India like Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa and also from the neighbouring country Bangladesh. After conducting the study it was seen that, they carry a heavy load of around 50 kg on their head under heavy physiological workload. It is needless to mention that such high load is handled manually under potentially hazardous environmental conditions like, environmental temperature, humidity, inadequate illumination, high concentration of dusts, fumes and gases, and poor work terrain.

From the present investigation it was concluded that 15 kg is the Maximum Acceptable Safe Load to be carried on head by the adult women workers working in brick kilns around West Bengal. Wage fixation law, provision of toilet and safe drinking water should be implemented in the brick kilns. These will definitely take care of long term prevention from occupational health hazards and workers safety which in turn will protect the workforce from being depletion.

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