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## **Literacy and Livelihood of Women Migrant Construction Workers: An Analytical Study**

By Manjunath S.<sup>1</sup>, Shashi Kumar M.<sup>2</sup> and Minu A.<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract**

Migration is a demographic process that has been chronicled across world history. Even though various reasons have accelerated this process over the years, the dominant trend in internal migration during the 20th century has been the movement from rural to urban areas. The casual and unskilled workers who shift from one region to another, offering their services on a temporary or seasonal basis are considered migrant labourers. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed problems related to migration intensifying. Migrant labourers face hostility from local populations posing a great challenge for governments to maintain the welfare of these people. Unfavourable social, economic, and cultural conditions make their lives even worse. As a result, migrant workers are frequently deprived of their basic rights and benefits which they otherwise deserve. This results in mass exploitation of the migrant community. Hence, the present study explores the problems and challenges faced by migrant construction workers, specifically women, and their impact on various aspects of their lives. The study has been conducted among 200 women migrant construction workers in North Bangalore as per the convenience sampling method, and the collected data was analysed with the help of statistical tools such as Factor analysis, Chi-Square Analysis, one-way ANOVA, Weighted Average Rank.

*Keywords:* Migration, Literacy, Women migrants, Floating Migrant Construction Workers, Bangalore.

### **Introduction**

Millions of people belonging to poor households in India migrate from rural to urban areas along with their children to find work in the informal economy. In the city, migrants mostly engage in temporary work, which is characterized by low wages, insecure jobs, harsh recruitment regimes, and economic vulnerability. These characteristics are typical of the work environment in the informal sector. The growth rate of the construction industry across India was estimated to be 5.65% during the period 2015 to 2020, up from about 2.95 percent from the period 2010 to 2015. In January 2019, India's construction sector contributed over 2.7 trillion Indian rupees to the country's GDP. This was an all-time high contribution recorded in this the sector.

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This study explores the various challenges faced by women migrant workers with a focus on the education of their children, lack of awareness regarding beneficial social schemes, and the impact of literacy on health and hygiene. Further, the study also focuses on the children of migrant construction workers and their overall nutrition. North Bangalore has witnessed a boom in real estate as it is close to Bangalore International Airport and there are many Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The region of North Bangalore includes areas of Banaswadi, Hennur Road, Nagavara –Tanisandra Road, HBR Layout, Hebbal, Hennur, Jakkur, Jalahalli East and West, Peenya Industrial Ares, Sanjeevani Nagar, Yeshwantpur and Puttanahalli.

### **Background from selected literature**

Srivastava (2011a; 2011b; 2011c) states that the primary motive for the movement of people from one region to another are differential earning opportunities, which could stem from a discrepancy in employment opportunities or wages or both. If migration is a response to the expectation of an improvement in earning opportunities, it should lead to an increase in the income of migrants. Other beneficial changes should also follow but these changes are counteracted by the growing congestion and deteriorating conditions of public goods delivery in urban areas, which are usually the principal kind of destination areas for these workers. However, the income of migrants may not improve if migration is an involuntary response to distress and loss of income and livelihoods, or if migrants become involved in exploitative labour markets. Therefore, the expected earning differentials will not be realized.

In the construction sector, the migratory patterns within India show that women and children have always been identified as “associated” migrants since the main decision to migrate is generally made by male heads of household. As associated migrants, women are more vulnerable due to reduced economic choices and lack of social support in the new destination (Chauhan and Sharma, 2003).

In India, the scale and growth of regional disparities have been a subject of much concern and debate, particularly since the post-liberalization period. One of the indicators of such disparities is the ratio between the states with highest and lowest per capita income, which was represented by Punjab and Bihar during the period 1980–83 and Maharashtra and Bihar during the period 1997–2000. The ratio witnessed a rise from 2.6 to 3.5 over this period (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003).

Shamala (2020) discovered that a good number of workers in Bangalore city are not registered under any welfare board. Thus, they are deprived of the welfare fund that is collected from the builders and contractors as fund for their wellbeing.

Ravindranath *et al.* (2019) states that malnutrition was highly prevalent among the children of migrant workers due to parents’ misperceptions about malnutrition. Long duration of work and lack of childcare provision at the worksite are the major reasons for this. Lack of dietary diversity at home, poor hygiene and sanitation, and economic inability to seek healthcare further affect child nutritional status.

### **Significance**

The study explores the various challenges faced by the women migrant construction workers with a focus on access to children's education, awareness of beneficial social schemes, and health and hygiene practices. The objective of the survey is to understand the impact of

literacy on the livelihoods of women migrant construction workers. The research explores the risks faced by women migrant workers and their children in the construction industry in North Bangalore as this sector is an unorganized one. Being an unorganized sector, women employees work for long hours, do not have access to proper housing facilities, lack health and safety measures, and experience a high prevalence of atrocities. There us illiteracy among the children of construction labourers, inadequate compensation and poor wage and salary structures.

### **Objectives**

- To understand the challenges faced by children of women migrant construction workers in education.
- To analyze the awareness level and practices of Health and Hygiene among women migrant construction workers.

### **Hypothesis**

#### *Null hypothesis*

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between literacy of parents and children's education.

#### *Alternate hypothesis*

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant relationship between literacy and health and hygiene practices.

### **Methodology**

The study is descriptive by nature and is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various sources such as websites, books and journals. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 200 women migrant construction workers in North Bangalore as per the convenience sampling method and the collected data was analysed with the help of statistical tools such as Factor analysis, Chi Square Analysis, one-way ANOVA, and Weighted Average Rank.

### **Data analysis and Interpretation**

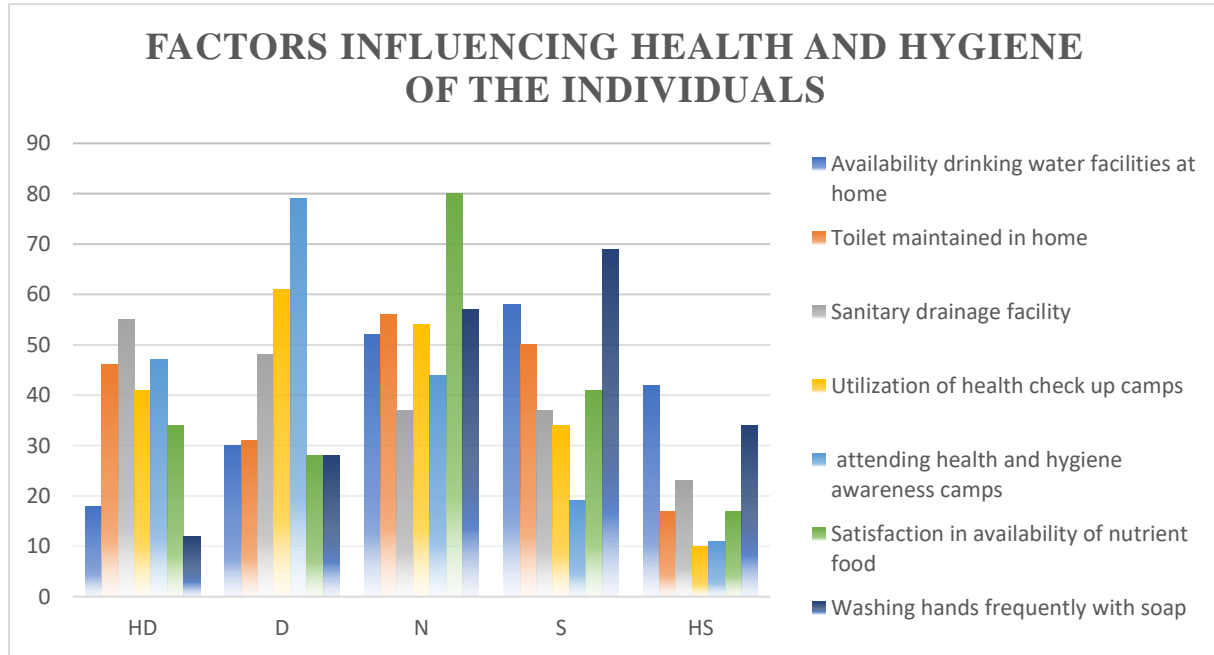
The researchers analysed the responses of 200 respondents and found that the demographic profile of the majority of respondents was between 29 to 34 years of age, having three dependent members with a monthly income ranging from Rs. 5000 to 10000, and they had migrated from rural areas.

**Table 1: Factors influencing Health and Hygiene of the individuals**

Component	HD	D	N	S	HS	Total	WAS	WA	Rank
Availability drinking water facilities at home	18	30	52	58	42	200	676	3.38	II
Toilet maintained in home	46	31	56	50	17	200	561	2.805	IV
Sanitary drainage facility	55	48	37	37	23	200	525	2.625	V
Utilization of health check-up camps	41	61	54	34	10	200	511	2.555	VI
Attending health and hygiene awareness camps	47	79	44	19	11	200	468	2.34	VII
Satisfaction in availability of nutrient food	34	28	80	41	17	200	579	2.895	III
Washing hands frequently with soap	12	28	57	69	34	200	685	3.425	I

(HS=Highly Satisfied, S=Satisfied, N=Neutral, D=Dissatisfied, HD = Highly Dissatisfied, WAS= Weighted average system, WA=Weighted Average)

**Figure 1: Bar chart factors influencing health and hygiene of the individuals**



**Interpretation**

From the above table and chart, the WMCW (Women Migrant Construction Workers) has ranked washing hands as first, drinking water second and least ranked variables are health check-up camps and health awareness camp. It is evident that the level of understanding of the

WMCW towards health and hygiene factors are very low and they need to be made aware of them.

**Table 2: Relationship between literacy of parents and children’s education**

		Do you send your children to school		Total
		Yes	No	
Education	No education	54	19	73
	Primary	40	23	63
	High School	33	15	48
	PUC/HS	14	0	14
	Degree	0	2	2
Total		141	59	200

**Table 3: Chi- Square Test**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.619 <sup>a</sup>	4	.013
N of Valid Cases	200		

3 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

**Interpretation**

The F value was found to be 12.619 and P value was .013. Since P value is < 0.05, H<sub>a1</sub> is accepted. A chi-square test was conducted to find out if there is a significant relationship between the literacy of migrant workers with children’s literacy. As the level of significance is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the literacy of parents and children’s education

**Table 4: literacy of parents and children’s education**

H <sub>01</sub>	There is no significant relationship between literacy of parents and children’s education	P<.05(Reject)
H <sub>11</sub>	There is a significant relationship between literacy of parents and children’s education	P<.05(Accept)

**Table 5: The significant relationship between literacy and health and hygiene practices ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sanitary drainage facility	Between Groups	60.049	4	15.012	9.479	.000
	Within Groups	308.826	195	1.584		
	Total	368.875	199			
Satisfaction in availability of nutrient food	Between Groups	6.999	4	1.750	1.293	.274
	Within Groups	263.796	195	1.353		
	Total	270.795	199			
Washing hands frequently with soap	Between Groups	16.879	4	4.220	3.609	.007
	Within Groups	227.996	195	1.169		
	Total	244.875	199			

Level of significance = 5% (0.05)

### Interpretation

The F value was found to be 9.479 and the P-value was .000 for the first variable. In case of the second one, F value was 1.293 and P-Value was .274. For the third variable, F value was 3.609 and P Value was .007. Since P value is < 0.05 for two variables out of three variables used for testing one-way ANOVA, therefore, H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. The result is not significant. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to know the association between literacy and health and hygiene. As the level of significance is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between literacy and health and hygiene practices.

**Table 6: relationship between literacy and health and hygiene**

H <sub>0</sub> 2	There is no significant relationship between literacy and health and hygiene practices	P>.05(Accept) P<.05(Reject)
H <sub>1</sub> 2	There is a significant relationship between literacy and health and hygiene practices	P>.05(Reject) P<.05(Accept)

**Table 7: Challenges faced by children's of WMCW in Education**

Sl.No	Statement	Components
1	School far away from the place of stay is a barrier to education	0.577
2	The poor environment at home is a barrier to education	0.751
3	Unable to access tutors is a barrier to education	0.747
4	Children handling domestic responsibility	0.514
5	Children's school facilitate a better learning environment	0.557
6	Send children's to school because of mid-day meal	0.672
7	Educating child improves the status of the family	0.662
8	Children's is sent to school to avail the benefits provided by government	0.715
9	Malnutrition is common among children at site	0.562
10	Daycare facilities for children support best practices	0.687
11	Parental support and supervision for children's	0.541
12	Child access evening tutor support facilitates	0.567

### **Interpretation**

The above table displays the challenges faced by the children of WMCW in education, wherein the access to tutors is the dominant factor while the second dominant factor is to avail the benefits provided by the government. These form two of the main barriers to education and the least dominant factor is handling domestic responsibility and second least important factor is parental support and supervision for children.

### **Conclusion**

The study has drawn attention to women migrant construction workers' children and concentrates on the problems they face in the practice of education and health and hygiene. Children of migrant construction workers who travel with their families to construction sites have inadequate access to education and remain absent and, ultimately, drop out. Evening guidance classes and parental guidance are not available for a better learning environment. The Government should create special provisions to reach out to migrant communities which form one of the most vulnerable sections of the society.



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