

LABOUR POSTS IN ALLAHABAD

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Preface

Friends,

Urbanization is on a steep rise and census 2011 data too reveals a growing urbanization trend. Agriculture as a sector has witnessed decreasing government investment and the highly hyped ambitious government scheme MNREGA too has failed to curb the rural-urban migration. Hundreds of rural men and women come to the city in search of work and better prospects for their children. This huge workforce is either unskilled or semi skilled and end up as rickshaw pullers, domestic workers or construction labour.


Construction workers constitute the largest section of the unorganized work force in India. The place where these people collect, interact and bargain with their prospective employers for the day/s is termed as *labour adda*, *labour chowk* or *labour post*. These places are generally the cross roads or road sides, mostly in the busy commercial spaces of the city and often on the target of the local police, shopkeepers and commuters as creating traffic congestion and obstruction of the normal city space.

The present study tries to capture the conditions prevalent at these unrecognized labour posts and also tries to investigate the broader reasons for migration and coping strategies of the workers. The idea is to put forward the demand for recognition and regularization of the labour posts as these are the labour stations and should be given adequate space in city planning just as fruit/vegetable market, rickshaw stand etc.

Moreover, these labour posts need to be equipped with shade, water and toilet facilities as well as crèche and health posts. Undoubtedly this work force is behind the entire shining city infrastructure and deserves to be acknowledged and provided the basic facilities. Non-provision of services is equivalent to denial of their human rights. This study is meant to provide a wholesome data and location of the labour posts in the city to the city planners and other stakeholders with a view that it would facilitate better planning on their end.

I would like to thank Ms Jyoti Awasthi for this wonderful report and also the Vigyan team which collected the data. I would also extend my heartiest gratitude for Mr. Debabrat Patra, Regional Manager Action Aid Lucknow and Mr. Aravind Kumar, Program Officer Action Aid for their continuous support and guidance.

Hope this study provides a way out to plan for the labour posts in a holistic way.



(Sandeep Khare)
Secretary

An Overview

References from key national and international legal documents highlighting the concern for the labourers including building and other construction work and the need of immediate and legal intervention and welfare measures for improving their life and working conditions:

1. It is estimated that about 8.5 million workers in the country are engaged in building and other construction works. Building and other construction workers are one of the most numerous and vulnerable segments of the unorganised labour in India. The building and other construction works are characterised by their inherent risk to the life and limb of the workers. The work is also characterised by its casual nature, temporary relationship between employer and employee, uncertain working hours, lack of basic amenities and inadequacy of welfare facilities. In the absence of adequate statutory provisions, the requisite information regarding the number and nature of accidents is also not forthcoming. In the absence of such information, it is difficult to fix responsibility or to take any corrective action.

(As quoted in 'The Statement of Objects and Reasons' in The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996)

2. In view of the circumstances explained above, it has been considered necessary to constitute Welfare Boards in every State so as to provide and monitor social security schemes and welfare measures for the benefit of building and other construction workers. For the said purpose, it has been considered appropriate to bring in a comprehensive legislation by suitably amplifying the provisions of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Bill, 1988 which was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on the 5th December, 1988. It has also been considered necessary to levy a cess on the cost of construction incurred by the employers on the building and other construction works for ensuring sufficient funds for the Welfare Boards to undertake the social security Schemes and welfare measures.

(As quoted in point no. 3 of 'The Statement of Objects and Reasons' The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996)

3. Lack of labour protection for migrant workers undermines protection generally for all workers. The many international labour standards adopted over the years by the International Labour Conference of the ILO are important for safeguarding the dignity and rights of migrant workers. In principle, all international labour standards, unless otherwise stated, are applicable to migrant workers. These standards include the eight fundamental rights conventions of the ILO identified in the 1998 ILO

Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; standards of general application, such as those addressing protection of wages and occupational safety and health, as well as the governance conventions concerning labour inspection, employment policy and tripartite consultation; and instruments containing specific provisions on migrant workers such as the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and social security instruments.

(as quoted in <http://www.ilo.org/migrant/areas/international-standards-on-labour-migration-and-protection-of-migrant-workers-rights/lang--en/index.htm> , 'International Standards for the protection of Migrant Workers' International Labour Organization.)

4. Whereas the ILO was founded in the conviction that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace;

.....Whereas economic growth is essential but not sufficient to ensure equity, social progress and the eradication of poverty, confirming the need for the ILO to promote strong social policies, justice and democratic institutions;

.....Whereas the ILO should give special attention to the problems of persons with special social needs, particularly the unemployed and migrant workers, and mobilize and encourage international, regional and national efforts aimed at resolving their problems, and promote effective policies aimed at job creation;

.....Whereas, in seeking to maintain the link between social progress and economic growth, the guarantee of fundamental principles and rights at work is of particular significance in that it enables the persons concerned, to claim freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity, their fair share of the wealth which they have helped to generate, and to achieve fully their human potential;

(as quoted in ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Eighty-sixth Session, Geneva, 18 June 1998 (Annex revised 15 June 2010) <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/thedeclaration/textdeclaration/lang--en/index.htm>)

Rationale of the Study

According to the Census 2011 provisional tables, the total count for workers in India is around 40 crores with 31.3 crores as main workers and remaining as marginal workers. Out of the main workers, largest share belongs to agriculture workers, which is counted at 176979000 or 17.6 crores. Construction workers in census form a small share of around 3.7% which is 1.15 crores¹. It is well known that agriculture workers migrate in large numbers during lean seasons to work as construction workers in the developing cities. These workers engage in semi skilled and unskilled category of construction work. With the focus of development shifting to urban centres and resulting in infrastructure boom, this is becoming the trend.

The Construction Industry accounts for about 40% of the development investment of India during the last 50 years. It contributes 5.1% to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and 78% to Gross Capital Formation. About 16% of India's Working Population depends on Construction Industry for their livelihood.²

After a decade long struggle and advocacy by unions of construction workers and various associated groups, the President of India promulgated the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Third Ordinance, 1996 (Ordinance 25 of 1996), on 10th June, 1996 and thus the construction workers were awarded their due right to protection and welfare in this country.

Seventeen years have passed, barring a few states like Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, construction workers are miles away from availing their rights. Neither the situation of their labour posts have improved nor their own conditions. The labourers still stand on road sides known commonly as labour chowks and wait for their turn to be picked up for work, many a times due to work insecurity they agree to work on half the usual daily wage. There are incidences when they come back without getting their promised wage for one reason or another and due to ignorance about any place for registering their complaints, they do not get due justice. Sometimes they come back with injuries received during work and yet do not get any medical support from either the employer or the government as neither the labour posts have any provision of First Aid kits nor do the places of rest i.e. shelter homes have any such measure available for the migrants.

It is very clear that in spite of a Law under the Constitution of India, construction workers are miles away from their dues and there is therefore a strong need to gather evidence of lack of implementation of welfare measures for construction workers as prescribed under the said Act and advocate for their proper implementation and also speeding up the process of formation of unions

¹ Data tables available on http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/economic_activity.aspx

² Speech by Vice President of Construction Workers' Federation of India at Brussels on 13th and 14th April 2007 during the 16th Congress of World Federation of Trade Unions <http://www.wftucentral.org/?p=773&language=en>

About the Study

This study was conducted in the city of Allahabad with the key objective of understanding the situation of construction workers with respect to the benefits that they are accessing under the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1996, improvement in their life and work conditions as envisaged in the Act.

Two short studies were undertaken to gather evidences in this regard:

1. Status of basic amenities provided by the government at the Labour Posts
2. Socio economic condition of the construction workers in present time and assessment of impact on their lives with the advent of the Act for their welfare.

Methodology

Under the coordination of Vigyan, the study was conducted in Allahabad. The study teams were given an orientation on the issues of construction workers, the key promises made in the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1996 and the need of the study. Besides this the questionnaire was explained to the team members and field tested before finalisation.

For the study purpose, two questionnaires were prepared one to understand the situation at labour posts and other to closely examine the socio economic situation of the labourers engaged in construction work.

The study teams administered the questionnaires in the field between August - September 2012



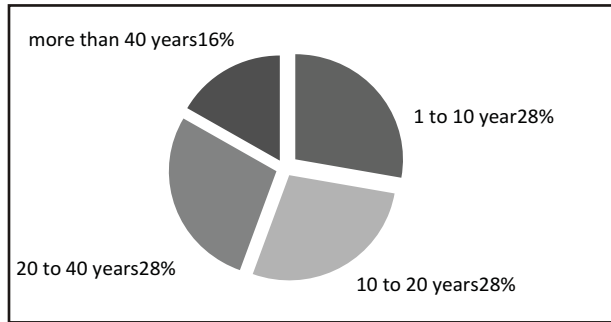
Report and Analysis

Labour Posts in Allahabad

Name and Address of the Labour Post	Name of the Ward	Age of the Post (years)	Estimated Number of Workers	
			Men	Women
1. Kareli Labour Adda Nisha Market, near Sub Inspectors' Office CRPF, Allahabad North 2, Kareli	Kareli, Ward No. 72	40 years	300	50
2. Nakkhas Kona Labour Adda, Near 8, Nakkhas Kona, Shahganj		50 years	397	3
3. Allahpur Labour Adda Bharadwajpuram Labour Chauraha, Allahpur,	Bharadwajpuram Ward No. 25	47years	330	70
4. Soobedarganj, Rajpur Labour Chauraha besides Soobedarganj Railway Crossing	Rajrup pur, Ward No. 16	15 years	400	-
5. Kandhaipur Labour Adda, Sri Baijnath Gupta, Kandhaipur Chauraha		35 years	445	5
6. Myorabad Labour Adda, Ganesh Nagar, near Hanuman Temple	Myorabad, Ward No. 27	15 years	100	50
7. Salori Labour Adda, Manasnagar, Govindpur Marg, Peeru Chauraha	Salori Ward No. 54	4 year	90	10
8. Shantipuram Labour Adda, Sec E 26, near Lal Bahadur Shastri Rajkiya Homeopathic College, Shantipuram	Shantipuram Ward No. 21	8 year	195	5
9. Teliyarganj Labour Adda, Govindpur (Railway Crossing)	Teliyarganj Ward No. 30	25 years	295	5
10. Kachehri Labour Adda, Near Post Office		40 years	430	20
11. Teliyarganj Labour Adda of Tiles workers, opposite MNIT, Allahabad	Teliyarganj Ward No. 30	8 year	70	-
12. Rajapur Labour Adda, Rajapur, near Bada Hanuman Temple	Rajapur, Ward No. 4	20 years	400	100
13. Atarsuia Labour Adda, near Bharat Petrol Pump, Atarsuia, Kalyani Devi		30 years	295	5
14. Rambagh Labour Adda, 35, Bai ka Bagh, near Popular Dharm Kaanta, Rambagh	Rambagh	50 years	525	25
15. Maheba Labour Adda, TCI Crossing, Reeve Road, Maheba		5 years	130	20
16. Sargam Labour Adda, Karchhana Road, near AD Turn, Naini		20 years	190	10
17. Cotton Mill Labour Adda, Cotton Mill Crossing, Naini		12 year	200	-
18. Jhunsi Labour Adda, Jhunsi Allahabad Highway		8 year	150	-

Age of the Labour Post

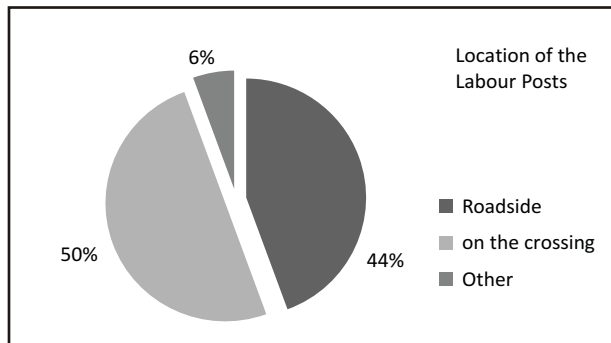
As per the study findings, there are 18 Labour Posts in Allahabad city. 28% have come up in the city within 10 years, 28% again have been in the city for 20 years, another 28% have been for



around 40 years while 16% of them have been in existence for more than 40 years. Which indicates that city has an old history of labour posts.

Location of the Labour Posts

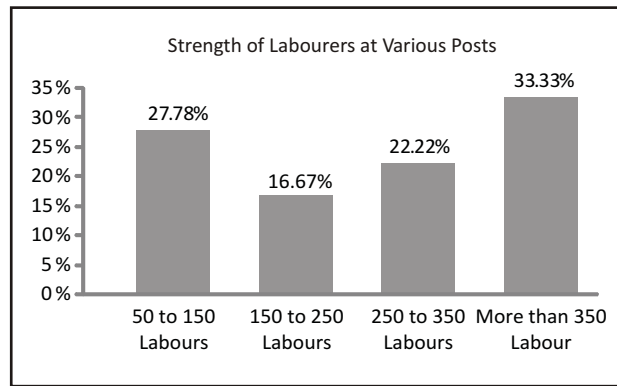
Either most of the labour posts are on roadside or on prominent crossings. None of them is on big grounds or empty patch of land. During discussion with labourers this has come up as a major concern. Since the posts do not have any recognition or place of their own as soon as the market gets open and daily business in the city



comes in full swing the labourers waiting for getting work are pushed by the moving traffic, nearby shopkeepers and even traffic regulators. There is no place for the people waiting for work to stand or sit. Many of them told that this becomes a big reason for humiliation faced by them from people other around.

Strength of Labourers at Various Posts

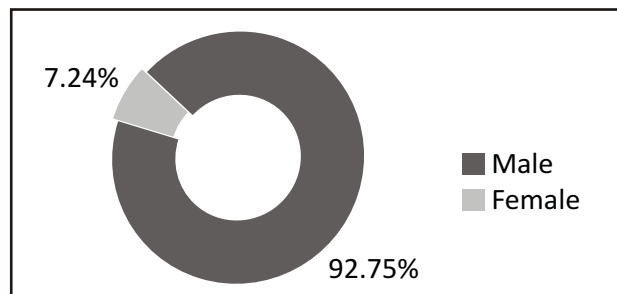
The data collected from all 18 posts in Allahabad, it is evident that there is almost an even spread of labourers across the city. Unlike various other cities where certain points are known for huge strength of labourers that often runs in thousands, this city has small posts with most of them having less than 350 labourers at a point. The new posts that have come up in about an year show small strengths. This may also indicate to the fact that infrastructure development is perhaps a recent phenomenon in Allahabad. New posts with few labourers towards the outskirts of the city points out to the fact that now the city is undergoing an expansion and these could possibly be the hotspots of



construction as well as density of labourers in near future.

Distribution of Women and Men at Labour Posts

There is a very miniscule proportion of women among the construction workers working in Allahabad. As the pie above shows only 7 percent women have been noted as working across 18 labour posts in the city.

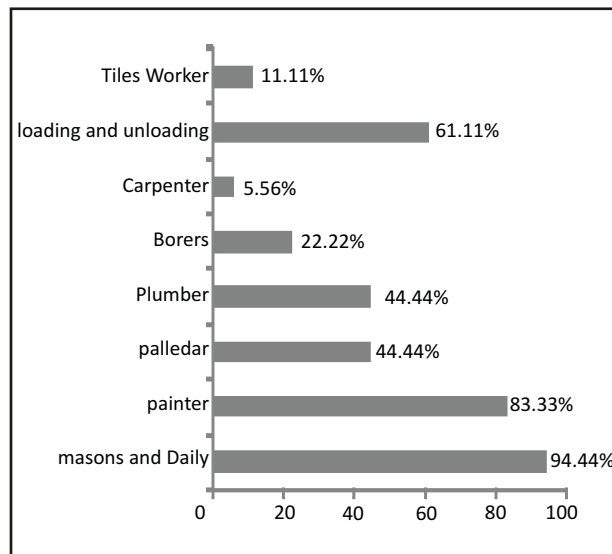


Age groups represented by the Labourers at Labour Posts

As per the study findings, all the labour posts have labourers ranging from 15 years to 65 years in age. This suggests that young adults who are still in their adolescence are joining the old ones who have already crossed their official age of retirement i.e. 60 years.

Work wise distribution of Labourers across all Labour Posts

The data collected from Allahabad labour posts regarding the nature of work that the construction workers are engaged in shows that there is a very large proportion of workers that are engaged in Masonry and daily waged labour



work (> 94 percent). Along with this, city also has a huge number of persons engaged in loading unloading work which is about 61 percent. Palledars and Plumbers also form a huge proportion (44 percent). Surprisingly proportion of painters among these labourers is also as huge as daily waged labourers and masons which comes to about 83 percent. There is another separate category of workers engaged in the work of boring related with ground water extraction. There is therefore a lot of overlap of data. When asked during the field study it was learnt that the daily waged labourers take up different kinds of work which includes basic painting work along with common unskilled

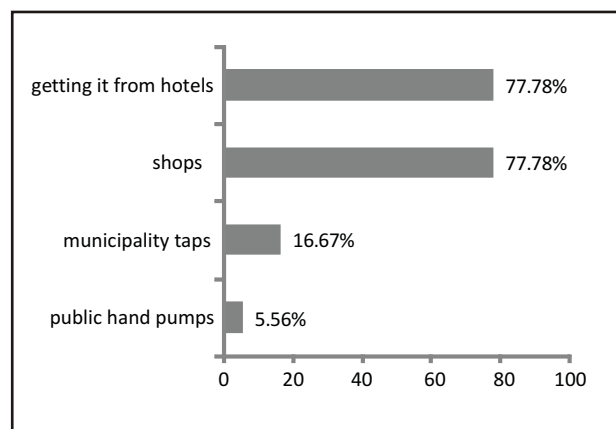
work during construction. They also work is loading unloading and head loading when they do not get construction related work. The unskilled category does not stick to only one kind of work. One reason that is apparent is that since overall the strength of such labour force is relatively less in Allahabad city as compared to what is observed in other growing cities there is a lot of multiple tasking that the workers are doing. Another observation is related with water related work like plumbing and boring. A reasonably large portion of workers are engaged in this work as well.

Availability of Basic amenities at Labour Posts

Shade - The data obtained from Allahabad shows that none of the labour posts has any provision for shade and the labourers stand out in the open braving all weather conditions. As was evident from the fact that none of the labour posts are located in any specific location of their own and are either put up on roadsides or on crossings, this can be easily understood that there is no possibility of putting up a shade for the convenience of workers.

Drinking Water

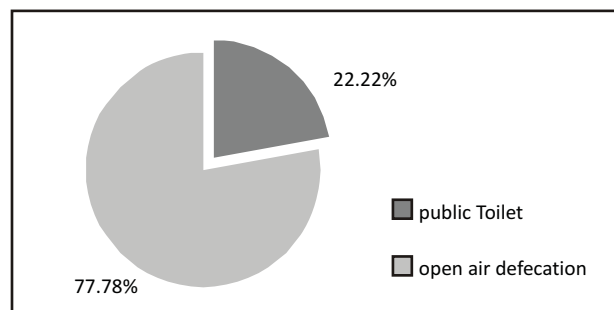
The results obtained for this query show that about 80 percent labourers standing in Allahabad city are either buying water from shops or getting it from hotels. A marginal 16 percent use municipality taps for the purpose while a miniscule 5 percent are using public hand pumps. The reason to this could be that



many of the posts have recently come up and are towards the outskirts of the city, these could be the locations that do not have any public drinking water facility. Those who are towards the main city are provided with such facility. This is also to be noted that in absence of any recognised and designated place for labour posts, these public utility services are not exclusively meant for the labourers that populate the posts. These are general standposts put up by the municipality or water supply department that have been installed for wider public use. Thus there are actually no dedicated provisions made for the labourers by either the labour department or other related departments.

Toilet Facility

General picture as obtained during the study across all 18 posts of Allahabad suggests that



more than three third population of labourers standing at these labour posts does not use any

toilet facility and goes for open air defecation. The reason could be that either they do not have any such facility nearby the labour posts or they avoid spending money for this facility and instead use open space.

Special Facilities for Women Labourers

There are no special facilities for women labourers like child crèche facility/ space for rest etc. In absence of any toilet in most of the labour posts in Allahabad, it becomes more challenging for women. Looking at the miniscule presence of women labourers one can understand that because of any special facility like personal space, crèche facility and toilet facility etc women refrain from coming to work even though they would have chosen to come and earn.

Visit by any official from District Labour Department

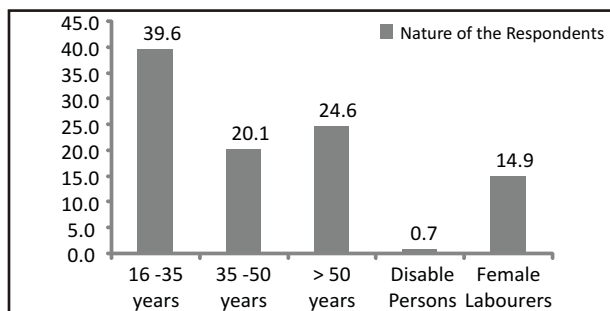
- In order to understand whether the district labour department officials have ever visited the Labour Posts to meet the labourers and also initiate any process of labour registration, the study team inquired about the same at all the labour posts. The response to this query has been in negative. In ten labour posts the labourers informed that no such visit has ever been made by any person from labour office and in two places the labourers were ignorant about the same.



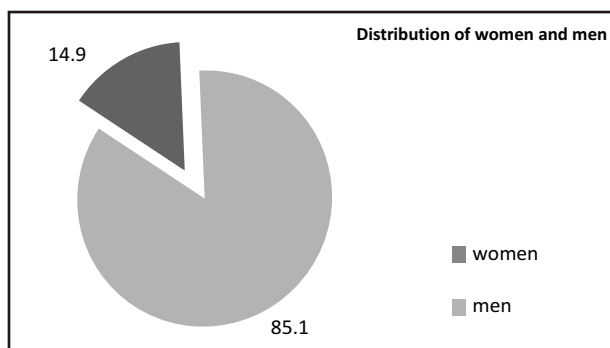
Socio Economic Profile of the Labourers standing for work across eighteen Labour Posts in Allahabad

In the second part of the study, a detailed individual questionnaire was administered to labourers across all the eighteen labour posts. The selection of these individuals was random, however efforts were made to get representation of all age groups, caste groups and purposely reach out to women labourers in order to understand their issues in depth. Thus, in all 134 individuals were covered in this section of the study. Following is a detailed analysis of the queries made to them and responses received thereof.

About the Respondents - Nature of the Respondents

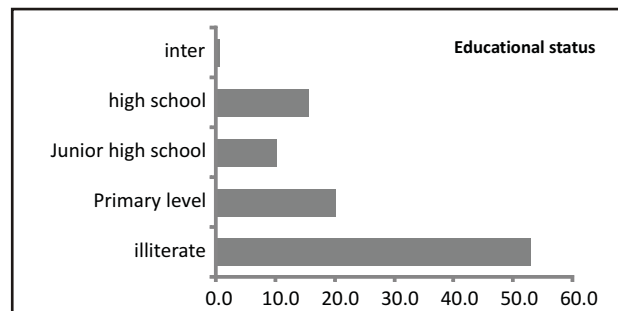


Out of the 134 individuals interviewed during the study, it was found that about 40 percent there was an equal number of people coming in age groups of 16-35 years, 35-50 years and 50 years and above. A small fraction of them were women, ten in number and there were two persons with disability also covered under the study.



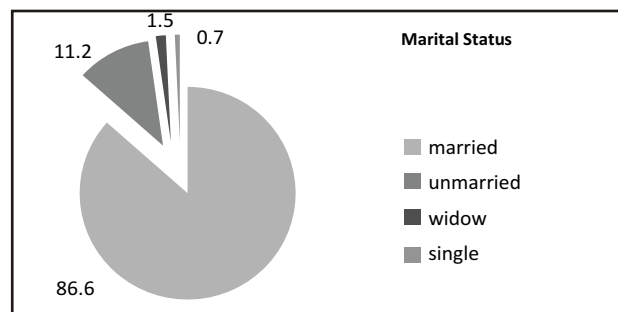
Educational Status of the respondents

More than half of the 134 respondents covered



under the study reported to have never attended the school, while next 20 percent said that they have studied till fifth standard. 15 percent and more said that they have attended school till standard ten, while less than one percent said that they could study till standard 12.

Marital Status of the respondents

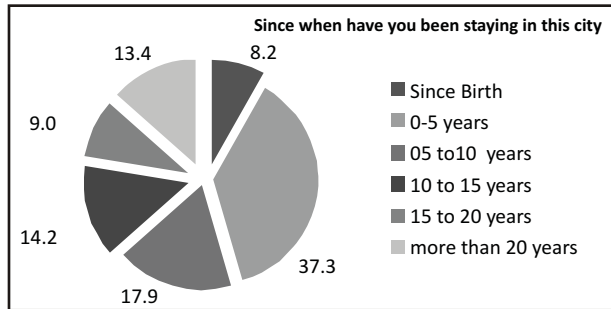


A slightly above 86 percent respondents informed during the study that they were married, 11 percent were still unmarried 1.5 percent said that they were widow and 0.7 percent said that they were living a single life. This also shows the possibility that many of the youth falling in the age group of 16- 35 years were still waiting for their marriage while almost all other age groups were with families.

Type of Labour work

Since when have you been visiting the city

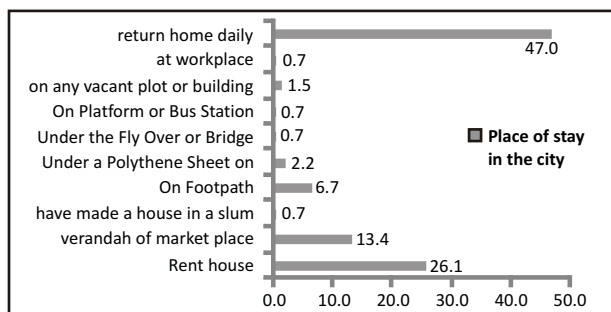
As is clear from the pie above, a larger part of the respondents (37 percent) has been visiting the city for work since past 0-5 years only. About 18



percent respondents have been coming to Allahabad for five to ten years. Fourteen percent respondents have association with this city for over ten to fifteen years while 9 percent said that they have been coming to the city for about two decades. About 13 percent respondents have been a visitor to the city for work since over two decades on one hand, on the other about 8 percent claim to have been here since birth.

Place of stay in the city

As per the information received from the respondents during the study, about 47 percent of them go back every day to their native places and therefore do not spend their night in the city. Out of the remaining respondents who have preferred to stay back, about 26 percent have

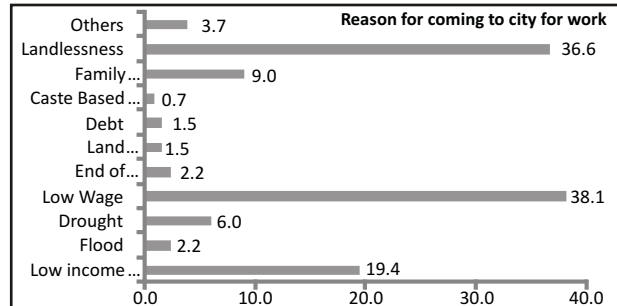


taken house on rent, about 14 percent sleep in the verandah of market place, a little above 5 percent sleep on footpath while some have taken to roadsides, spaces under the fly over, on platform

or bus station, in any vacant plot or stay at their work place. This shows that about one fourth of these workers are staying as homeless in the city.

Reasons for coming to city for work

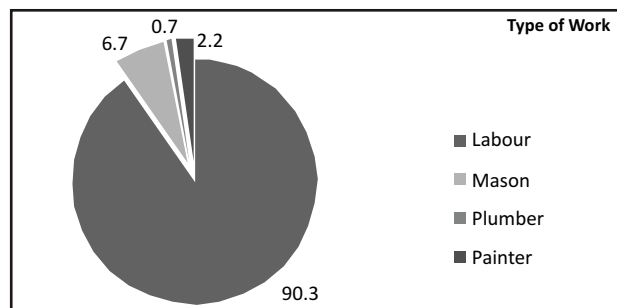
The study further tried to explore the reasons that push people to look for work in the cities. Low wage for work in rural areas and landlessness were the two main reasons because of which in



all 70 percent respondents said that they opted to come to cities for work. Low income in agriculture was also a big reason with about 38 percent respondents saying that it pushed them to see jobs outside their native place. Drought and family dispute also stood as reason for a little less than ten percent of respondents. Debt, caste based discrimination, end of traditional work and flood also listed among the reasons.

Type of Work

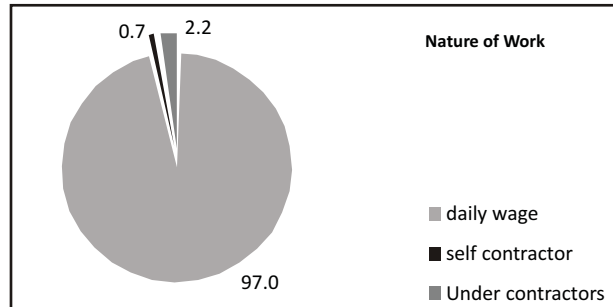
A huge majority of about 90 percent are working as daily waged labourers. Following this are Masons that form about 6.7 percent of the lot



while small fractions of the respondents were plumbers (0.7 percent) and Painters (2.2 percent).

Nature of Work

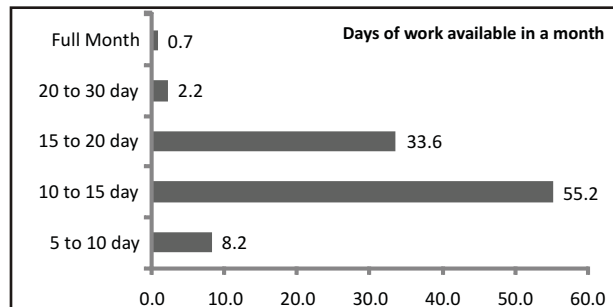
As far as nature of work done by the respondents is concerned, again a huge majority of 97 percent respondents work on daily basis. Out of the



remaining about 2.2 percent of respondents work under a contractor while only 0.7 percent themselves are contractors.

Days of work available in a month

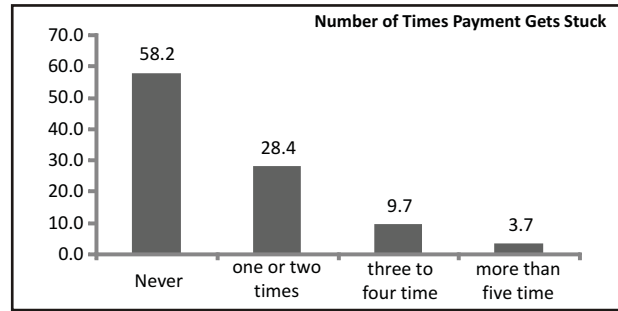
As per the responses received to this query, more than 50 percent workers get work for only 10-15



days in a month. Slightly above 30 percent say that they get work between 15-20 days a month. About 2 percent respondents claim to get work for 20-30 days and a very small fraction of 0.7 percent says that they work for full 30 days a month. On the other extreme, about 8% still get only 5-10 days of work as per their response.

How Many Times the Payment Gets Stuck

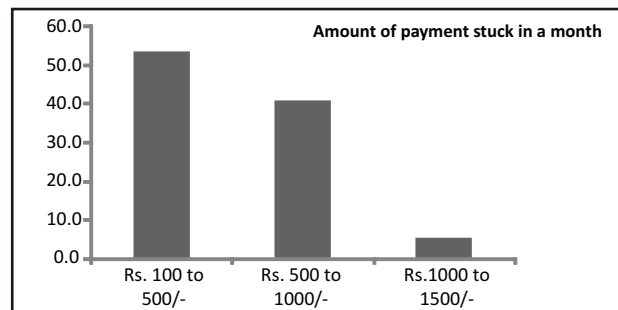
About 58 percent responded denied of having faced situation where their payment was stuck with the employer. Out of the remaining chunk, about 30 percent have faced this situation at least once or twice, less than ten percent have faced this situation between three to four times in a



month, while a small fraction of about 3 percent says that they have faced this crisis for more than 5 times.

Amount of Payment Stuck in a month

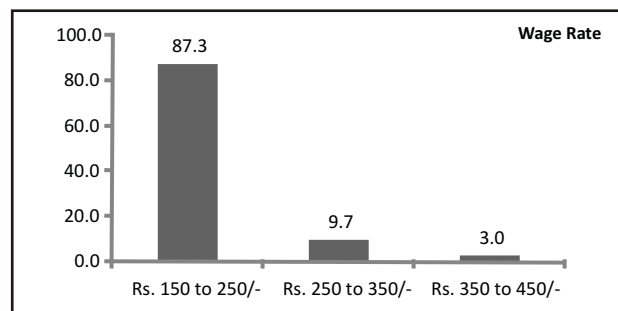
Out of the 58 percent respondents who said that more than 50 percent claim that about Rs.100-



500/- usually get stuck in this manner. 40 percent said that Rs.500-1000/- get stuck while 4 percent say that about Rs. 1000 -1500/- get stuck in a month.

Wage Rate

The tallest pillar reaching 87.3 percent mark indicates that a huge majority of these labourers

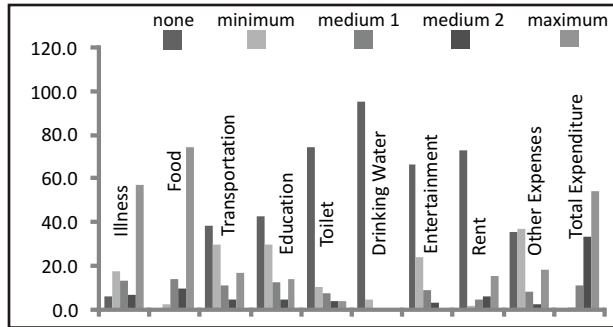


have daily wages between Rs. 150-250/- only. A small proportion of slightly above 10 percent

earns between Rs. 250-350/- and a small fraction of about 3 percent gets Rs. 350-450/- per day.

Average Monthly Expenditure made by the labourers

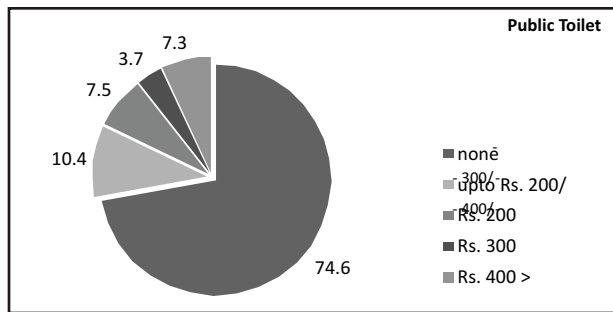
To understand the nature of overall monthly



expenditure made by the labourers in order to meet the basic needs of life, certain set of questions were asked from the respondents. The above picture is a compilation of the same.

Toilet

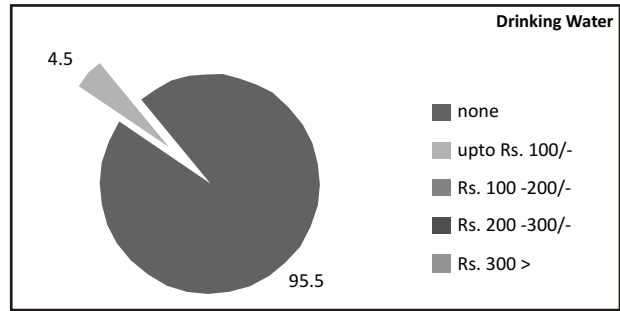
The overall picture informs that while the respondents do not spend anything on some of



the basic needs like drinking water and toilet facility with 80 percent saying that they do not spend anything on these heads, health and food are the two biggest needs where they spend quite a portion of their earning. They use public source for drinking water while for toilet, in order to avoid paying for the service or in absence of any place to go nearby, most of the respondents are opting open air defecation.

Drinking Water

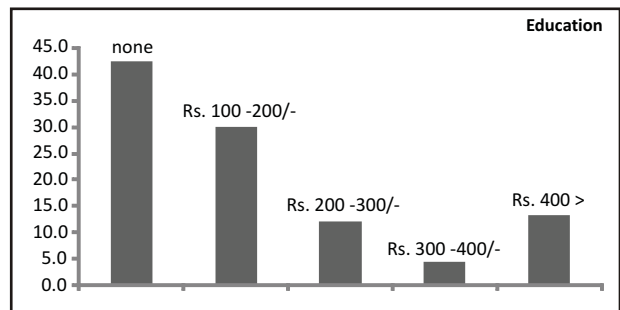
For drinking water also a miniscule proportion



of respondents (4.5 percent) spend about Rs. 100/- a month, remaining people manage to drink water from resources like public tap, shop, place of work etc but do not spend money for the purpose.

Education

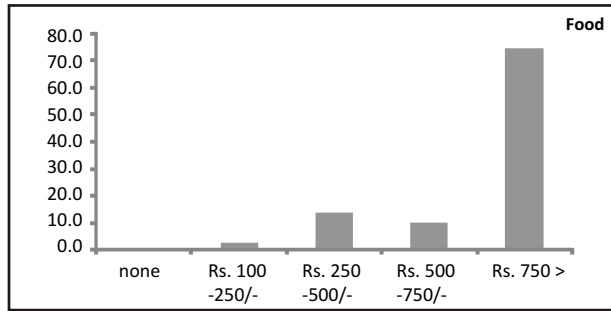
Majority of respondents (about 42 percent) inform that they do not spend any money on



education, at the same time about 12 percent are spending about Rs. 400/- per month on this head. In between there are 30 percent respondents spending between Rs. 100-200/- per month, 10 percent spending between Rs. 100-200/-, and about percent spending upto Rs. 300/- per month on education. Those who are spending money on education are probably those who are having family and supporting their children in education.

Monthly food expenditure

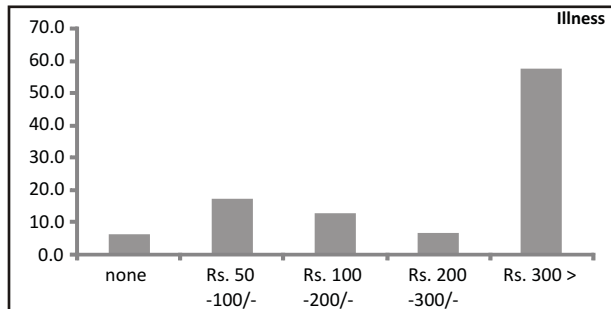
It takes the highest amount of spending where about 74 percent of the respondents saying that they spend more than Rs. 750/- per month to meet their food requirement. Very small percentage of respondents has reported spending less than Rs. 500/- as their monthly food



expense. Those who are spending more are largely the urban homeless, who buy food everyday from road side shops. Those who go back to their homes everyday are spending relatively less amount on themselves for food and are largely dependent on food at home.

Illness

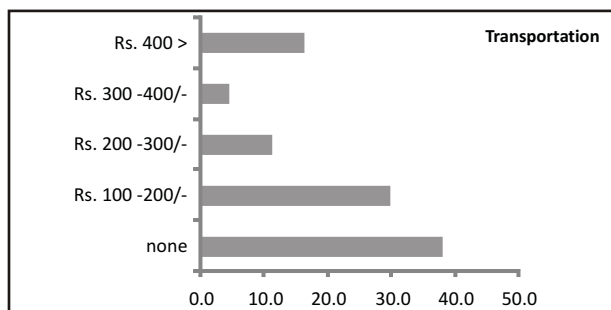
On Illness, majority (58 percent) of respondents are reportedly spending more than Rs. 300/- per



month at the same time, 6 percent respondents informed that they do not spend anything on illness. Remaining responses lie between Rs. 50-300/- in small proportions.

Transportation

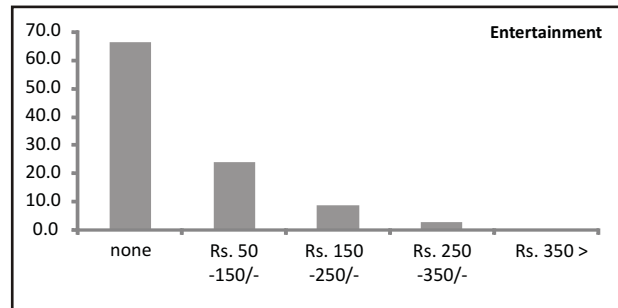
For Transportation, either a huge proportion of the respondents is paying nothing (38 percent) or



30 percent are paying between Rs. 200-300/- per month. A little more than 10 percent are paying between Rs. 300-400/- while about 16 percent respondents say that they pay more than Rs. 400/- . The reason behind this variation could be that while many respondents are not going so very often to their natives, some are going more frequently. Some are paying less as they are living in nearby villages, while many are paying more as they might be living far away from the city.

Entertainment

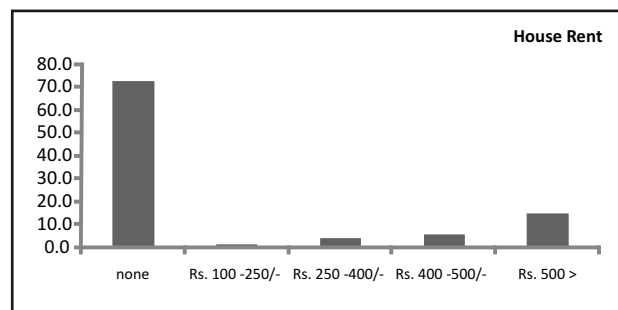
As high as 70 percent of the respondents do not spend any money for their entertainment purpose, however on the other hand, about 3



percent of the respondents spend between rs. 250-300/- per month on various means of entertainment denied spending money on any such use, while some fractions are spending money on meeting their entertainment needs.

House Rent

The picture about house rent is no different from the one for drinking water and public toilet facility. About 72 percent respondents said that they do not pay anything for rent. Either most of

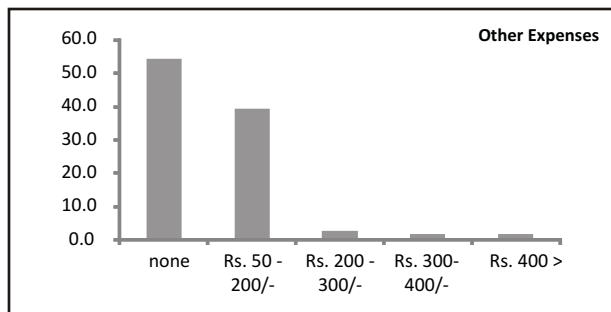


them are staying as homeless on roadsides in Allahabad or some of them are going back to their natives daily. About 15 percent respondents are spending more than Rs. 500/-, 6 percent are paying between Rs. 400-500/- and about 6 percent are paying between Rs. 100-400/-. The people who pay room rent are the ones who usually take room on rent in slum colonies either on individual or share basis, where one room is shared by 4-5 persons reducing the cost of rent for each of them.

Inquiry made about any other miscellaneous expenditure incurred by the respondents informs that more than 50 percent respondents do not spend on anything other than what has already been discussed above. They keep their expenses to minimum possible

Other Expense

The graph below representing trend on other expenses, it is very clear that more than half of

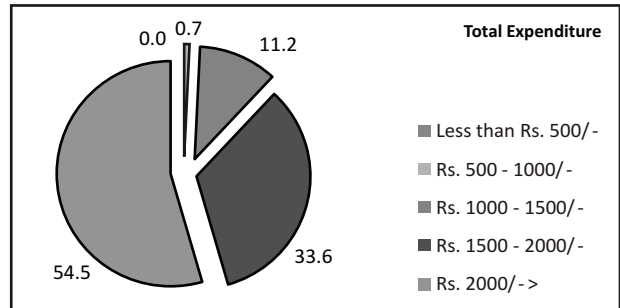


the respondents do not spend money on anything other than the above discussed basic needs. A little less than equal proportion of respondents reports spending between Rs. 50-200/- on a monthly basis on any miscellaneous expense, Spending above this is reported by marginal fractions of respondents.

Out of the 134 respondents surveyed during the study, 54.5 percent report total monthly expenditure of more than Rs. 2000/- and 33.6 percent report between rs. 1550-2000/- per month as monthly expenditure. A nominal 11.7 claimed to spend between Rs. 100-15000/- per

month on meeting their monthly domestic needs while a miniscule fraction of 0.7 percent report marginal expenditure between Rs.1000-Rs. 500/-. These ranges clearly show the responsibilities that a construction worker is bearing. Some have large families to support, while some are yet to hold their family responsibilities.

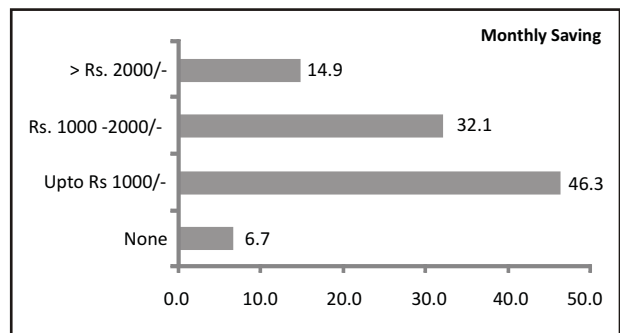
at the same time no one reports expenditure under Rs. 500/- per month. Overall total monthly expenditure as reported by the 108 respondents in the study reveals that while the largest fraction of respondents i.e. 45.8 percent is spending more than Rs. 2000/- a month on meeting their basic



family living needs, a very marginal section of less than a percent claims to spend within Rs 500.- on themselves. This probably is the section who is yet not married and does not share the expenses of their family.

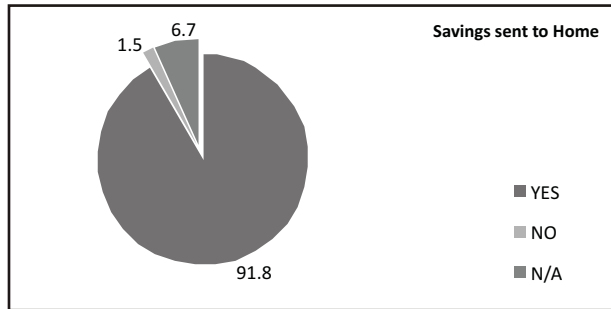
Monthly Saving

As far as overall monthly saving is seen, majority of respondents claim to save between Rs. 1000-2000/- per month after meeting all daily needs of their own and their families. This proportion is 46.3 percent as per the survey data. 32.1 percent say that they manage to save



between Rs. 1000-2000/- while a small fraction of 14.9 percent are able to save more than Rs. 2000/- as per their claims. 6.7 percent claim they do not save any money after meeting all expenses in a month.

How many respondents send their savings to their home? When this was asked during the study, a huge majority of above 83 percent said that yes they send the savings to their home,

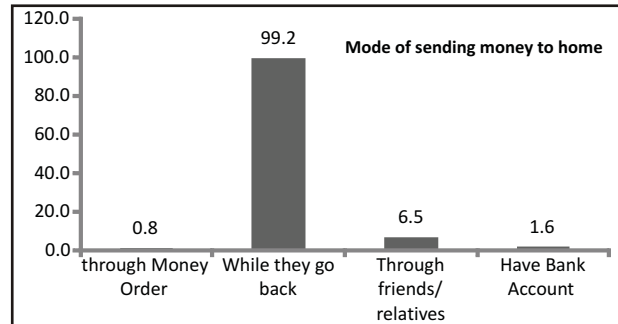


while above 9 percent said that they do not do so. 7.5 percent respondents said that it is not required. This could probably be because those who do not send are working to meet their own expenses/ either are not married or considered too small to meet family needs.

A huge majority of respondents send their savings back to their families at home with 91.8 percent admitted doing so. 6.7 percent respondents say that this does apply to them as perhaps they are living with their families in cities itself and therefore need not send any savings anywhere else. Only a very minute fraction of 1.5 percent says that they do not send their savings to their families. It could apparently be that they are still single and live their own life in cities.

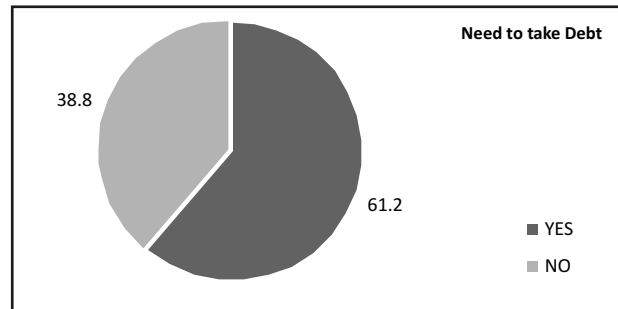
Money Order is no more a common means of sending money back to home, while 99.2 percent respondents opt themselves as the safest medium of taking money to their families at home, only 1.8 percent send it through the money order route. 6.5 percent respondents have trust on friends/ relatives and prefer to send money through them. Out of the 134 respondents

it is noteworthy fact that only 1. Percent have their bank account and transfer money through bank.



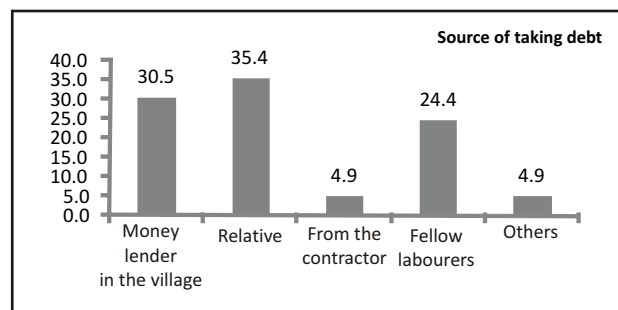
Need to Take Debt:

This query was made to lean about the burden of debt on the construction workers being covered under the study in Allahabad. Out of the 134 respondents covered under the study, 61.2



percent said that they take debts at the time of need. 36.8 percent said that they have not been in a situation of financial crisis where they were forced to take debt.

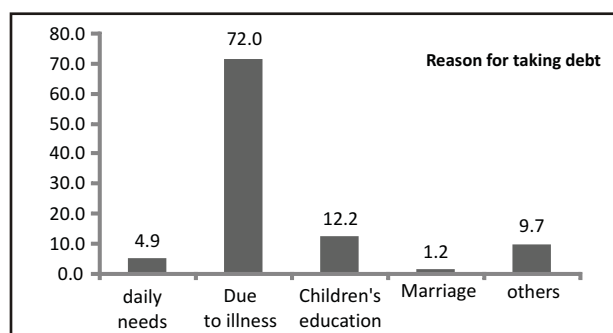
Further query was made to understand the various sources from which the respondents take debt at the time of need. As per the responses received, the sources are quite mixed in nature.



There is more or less equal dependence for such debts on moneylenders and relatives with about 30 percent going for money lenders while about 34 percent respondents asking for debt from relatives. 24.5 percent respondents ask for such debt from fellow relatives as well. A very minuscule proportion of 4.9 percent ask for debt from the contractors with whom they work. Similar proportion of respondents seeks support from debt from other sources as well.

Next query was made to the respondents with the purpose of knowing the various reasons that put them into such a situation where they have to ask for financial support from others.

The tallest bar (72 percent of the respondents) inform that they are often put into financial crisis



due to heavy spending on treatment for illness, 72 percent of them giving this as a reason for taking debt. 12.2 percent said that they take debt to meet the expenses for their children's education, 4.9 percent do so to meet the expenditure that they incur while living in the city (away from their home) while a very small percentage of 1.2 said that they took debt to meet the expenses incurred during marriage ceremony.

A Glimpse about the socio economic condition of the respondents at their native place

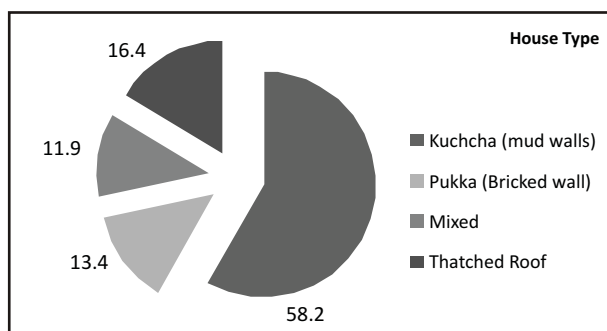
Following set of queries were made with the purpose of knowing about the life and living at the native places of these respondents. The idea was to understand about their families, status of

living, income opportunities etc. this was also to corroborate the facts behind their migration to cities in search of work.

All the 134 respondents have maintained their family ties as per the data collected during the study. Further responses throw light upon their family and its economic status.

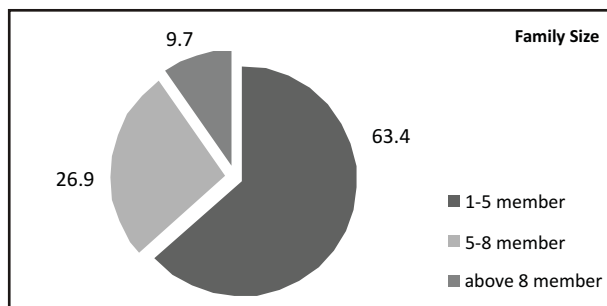
House Type at Home

More than half of the respondents out of 134 (58.2 percent) report having *kuchcha* (mud



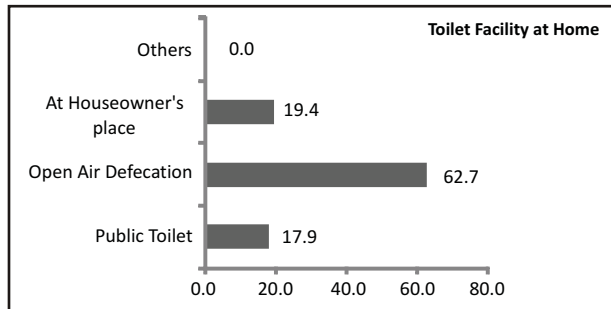
walled) house at their native place. Remaining is a mixed picture, with about 134 percent saying that they have *pukka* (bricked) house, about 11 percent saying that they have mixed or semi *pukka* house and a comparatively bigger proportion of respondents informing that they have thatched roof house at their native place.

As far as family size of the respondents is learnt, about 63 percent responded that they have a family of 1-5 members while, about 27 percent respondents said that they have 5-8 members in



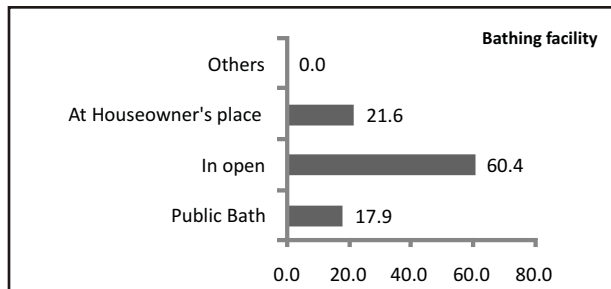
their family. Slightly less than 10 percent respondents said that they have a big sized family with more than 8 members.

Results for this query further resurrect the fact that more than half of the country's population goes for open air defecation either in absence of toilet at home or common facility or the preference to go in open space as a matter of



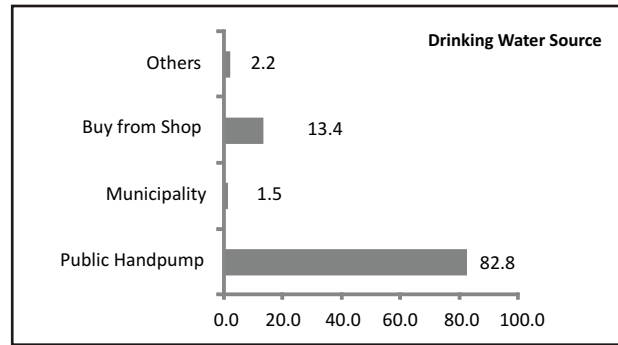
habit for a long time. Out of the 134 respondents covered under this study in Allahabad city, above 62 percent said that they go for open air defecation in their native place. 17.9 percents said that they availed public toilet while 19.4 percent said that they use the toilet space provided at their houseowner's place. These are perhaps the respondents who have taken house on rent in the city and live with their family.

Response to the query related with availability of bathing space at home, again shows a similar trend as seen in the case of toilet facility. More



than half of the respondents use open space to take bath (60.4 percent). About 18 percent use public bath and about 22 percent use the space provided by the house owner.

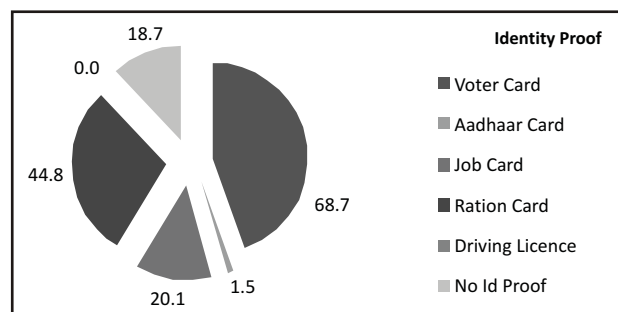
In response to the query made to the respondents asking them about the source of drinking water at their native, about 82 percent said that they use public hand pump for the purpose, a marginal



proportion of 1.5 percent said that they use municipality tap while 13.4 percent said that they have to buy water from the shops. 2.2 percent respondents said that they use other sources to get water.

Status of Proof of identification In order to find out the status of availability of identity proof of any kind with the construction workers, the respondents were asked what kind of government identity proof did they possess. The response received for this query clearly indicates that while voter card is more easily accessible to the voters, they are still not getting the ration card from the government. Above 68 percent had voter cards, while below 45 percent had ration card. Even Aadhar card had reached to a miniscule proportion of 1.8 percent respondents. Besides these, In comparison to these cards, it is noteworthy to see that only about 20 percent respondents had Job card made under NREGA scheme. None of the respondents informed that they had registration under the construction workers' act 1996 and therefore none of them possessed the labour card.

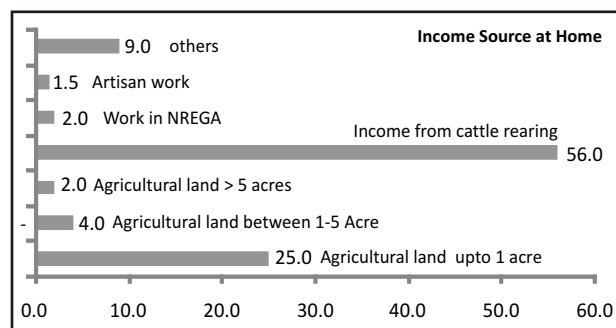
At the end of all, there were still 18.7 percent respondents who possessed none of these cards



and therefore for all practical purposes they had no official document that could give them a proof of identity and citizenship of this country.

Source of Income at Home

With the objective of getting a picture about the other sources of income at family level, the respondents were asked what all do the family members do at home for earning income. While many of them (25 percent) report to have very small agriculture farm holding of upto 1 acre,

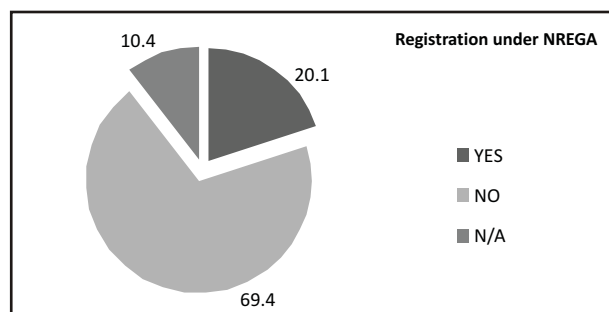


most of them (56 percent) earn from cattle rearing. Small and Medium farm holders were found to be about 6 percent for the total 134 respondents. Noteworthy again is the fact that only 2.2 percent respondents have worked under NREGA in their villages (while if one recollects from earlier query, about 20 percent of these respondents actually have NREGA card with them. A very small proportion of the respondents, 1.5 percent say that they have artisan work at home.

Utility of NREGA in the lives of poor migrant labourers

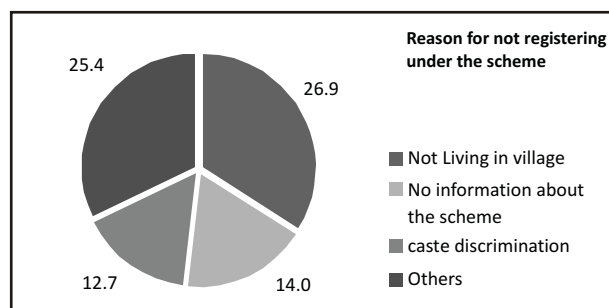
What impact has the much publicised scheme under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of the central government brought in the lives of rural poor, especially with regard to their migration for work to cities? Has it been able to reduce the number of days of income crisis and provided a better alternative to rural poor than they coming to cities in search of work? What has been the experience of the 134 respondents covered under this study? Following is the picture that emerges from the

set of questions that were asked to the respondents.



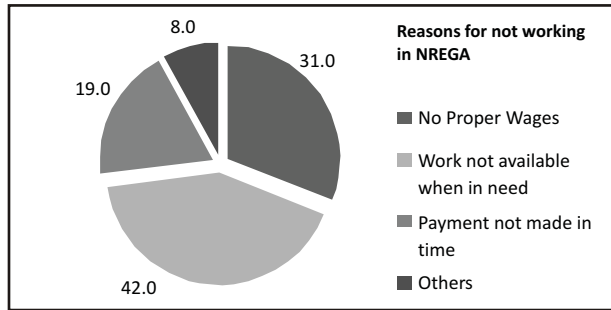
69.4 percent of them are yet not registered under NREGA while it the query is not applicable to 10.1 percent of the respondents. These are perhaps the ones living in the city with their families. Only 20.1 percent of them said that they were registered under NREGA.

What could be the possible reason of such a huge proportion of people not going for registering under NREGA and availing work benefits in their own village? In order to understand the



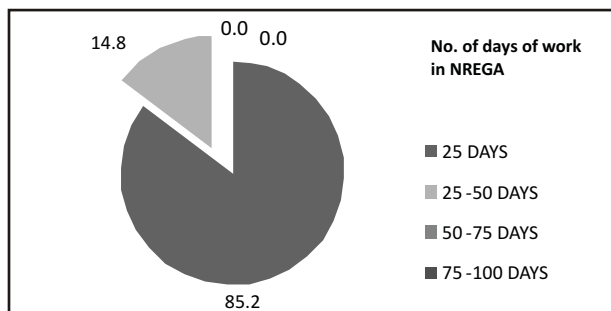
respondents were asked the same question. 26.9 percent of them said that since they do not live in village for a large part of the year they did not go for this registration. 14 percent still do not have any information about the scheme as per the response received from the respondents, while above 12 percent say that due to caste discrimination in villages, they could not get the registration under the scheme. Almost one quarter admit that there are various reasons because of which they have not got their registration under the scheme.

There is another dimension to the issue of not many people working in NREGA in villages



though the scheme is so highly promoted. This dimension is of choice. And to this, people quoted their reasons for not choosing to work under NREGA. As evident from pie here, majority (42 percent) feel that work is not available at the time when it is needed the most. Another huge chunk of respondents feel that wages are not proper in the scheme. 19 percent feel that the payment is not made in time and therefore the purpose of working in NREGA gets defeated due to the delay in getting paid. Remaining 4 percent said that there were other reasons of not working under the guarantee scheme.

The pie clearly tell sthat for those who have worked under NREGA none have worked for morwe than 50 days in a year against the 100 days of guarantee that the act gives to all beneficiaries under NREGA. While majority of the respondents have worked for upto 25 days i.e. 85.2 percent, only 14.8 percent got work between 25-50 days.

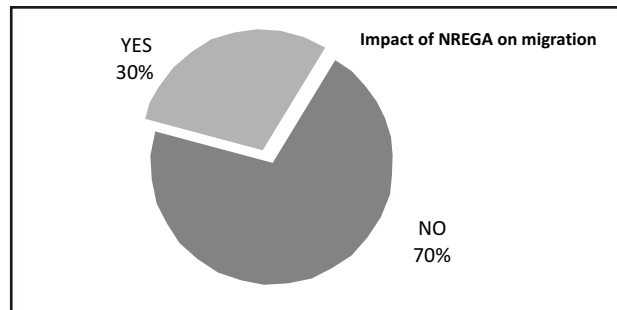


The study further tried to find out whether NREGA has put any impact on the migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of

work, and not surprising; the results are again disappointing with only about one third of the respondents saying that the scheme has definitely put some impact on migration and has checked it to some extent

How Safe is the city for a migrant worker

It is quite understandable that living life on roadsides should not be a safe option, however in



order to hear it from the people who face the severity of such a life certain queries were made during the study with them.

Where do they keep their Belongings

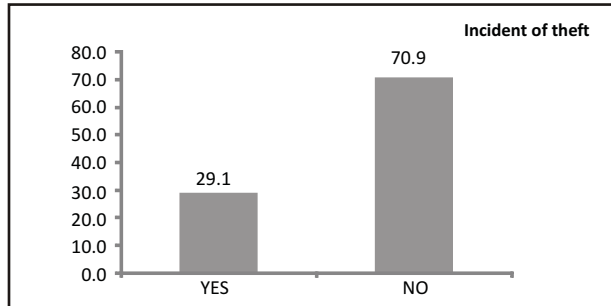
On asking about the arrangements that the migrant workers do to keep their belongings especially money, safe in absence of a home or a private space, about 89 percent respondents said that they keep the money and other belongings



with self. Others reported various places like 'in any shop' (2.2 percent, 3.7 percent keep with neighbours, 4.5 percent keep in other places and only 0.7 percent respondents keep their belongings at their work place.

Incident of theft

Have they ever faced any incident of theft where their belongings or money was stolen? In response to this query, about one third responded



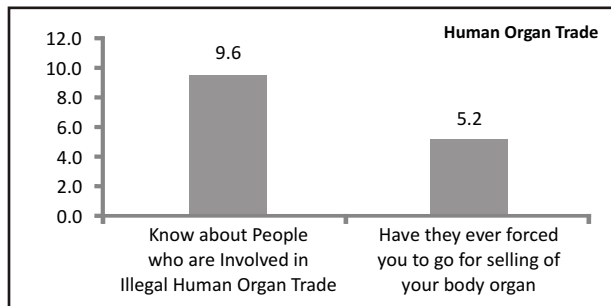
that they have faced theft of their belongings while two third still have not faced this situation.

Exposure of the migrant (construction) workers to People Engaged in Illegal and Criminal Activities

In order to understand about the vulnerability of a Homeless people living an unprotected life in open streets certain set of questions was administered to the respondents. These questions try to gauge the prevalence of human traffickers, organ trade racketeers and other miscreants who often target single and helpless poor people who under certain compelling circumstances could be more vulnerable to fall prey to them.

Exposure to People who are Involved in Illegal Human Organ Trade

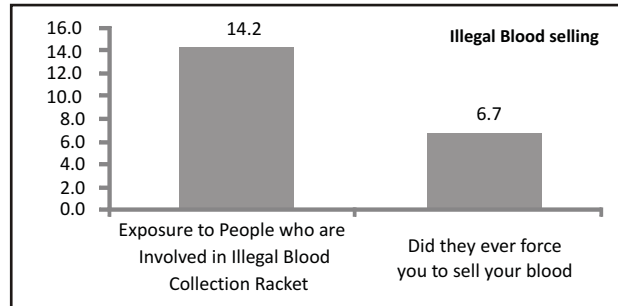
When inquired about any exposure of respondents to the racketeers involved in illegal trading of human organs, a little less than ten percent respondents said that they knew that such rackets were operational in the city while



among them, 5.2 percent said that they have been approached by such racketeers for selling of their organs.

Exposure to People who are Involved in Illegal Blood Collection Racket

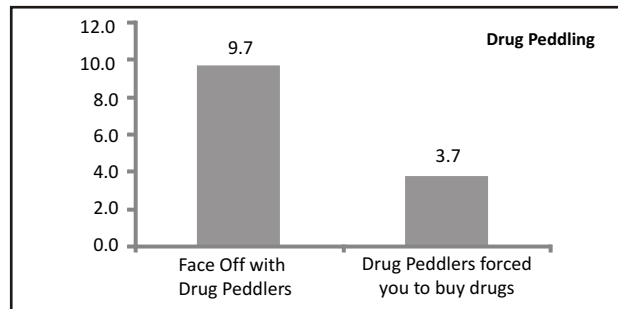
Have the respondents ever been targeted by the racketeers who target poor people and coax them towards earning easy money by selling their



blood? To this query, 14.2 percent respondents said that they know that such people roam about on the streets and target poor, however 6.7 admitted that they have been approached by such people for the purpose as well.

Face off with Drug Peddlers

Similar query was put to the respondents in order to know about their exposure to drug peddlers. About ten percent respondents said that they



have met such drug peddlers who sell drugs among people sleeping on streets, while 3.7 percent admitted that they have been approached by such people to buy drugs from them.

Police Harassment caused due to framing of Undue Charges of Criminal Activity

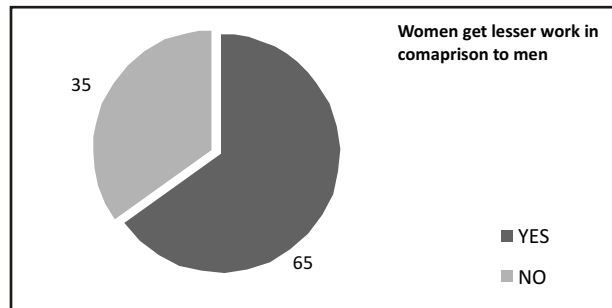
The respondents were asked whether they have ever been targeted by the police and put to harassment by framing undue charges of petty crime/ theft against them. 6.7 percent admit to such harassment while remaining said that they have yet not faced such a situation where they were harassed in the context of any crime that they never committed.

Life of Female Construction Workers

Out of the sample size of 134 respondents covered in the study in Allahabad, 20 respondents were women who were engaged in construction work in the city. The study tried to enquire about their specific issues as construction workers, if they face disparity at various levels of work and life, how do they manage the responsibility of work and family, especially their children and overall how do they manage to survive against the adversaries of life of a working woman.

Do you get lesser work as compared to your male counterparts in this labour market

65 percent women respondents agreed to the fact that they get less work when compared to the

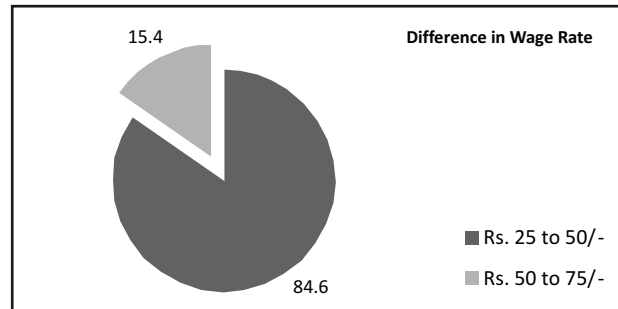


amount of work that their male counterparts in the labour market get.

Disparity in wage rate

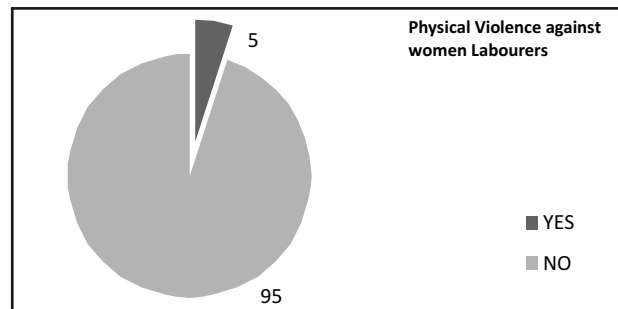
Same proportion of women informed that there is wage disparity and men get more price for the same amount of work than women. Women respondents further told that usually they get Rs. 25 50/- or rs. 50 75/- less than men per day.

Incidence of violence against women



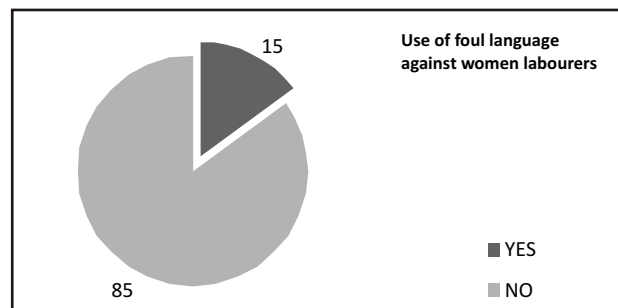
labourers

Though 95 percent of the women respondents refused in response to the query regarding incidences of violence against women labourers,



5 percent still said that women do face such violence in their work life.

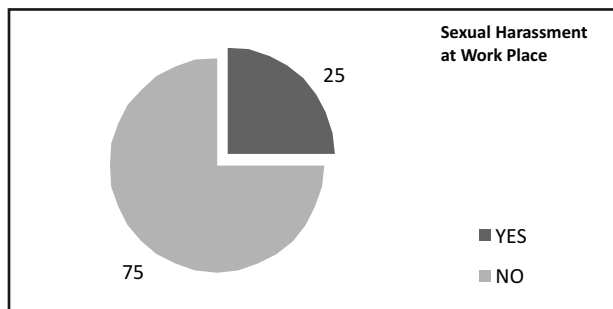
Again 15 percent women labourers say that often,



foul language is used by people around against women labourers.

Sexual harassment at work place

Further, the women labourers were asked whether they have ever seen or faced any incidence of sexual harassment at the work place. A shocking 25 percent of the respondents replied in affirmative. They agreed to the fact that such incidences do happen with women when they go for work.

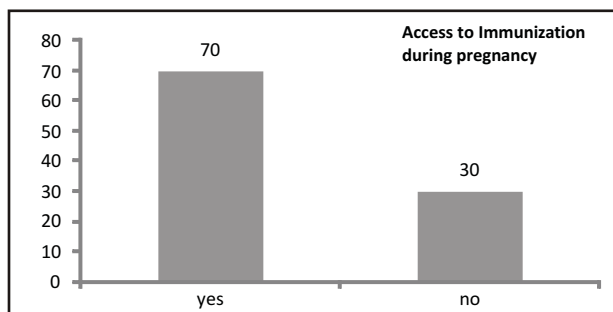


Does anybody take action against such incidence of harassment? All the women said that they do raise voice against such incidences however all of them again said that no action was ever taken against the culprit.

Status of access to health and child care services for women labourers and their children

While talking with women labourers, it was very crucial to learn about their access to essential health services at the time of pregnancy, during child birth and neo natal care. Therefore further set of questiones were posed to women in order to understand whether the mobile and working nature of their lives actually allows them to get information about the essential services that they must avail during pregnancy and safe delivery; how they take care of their children especially the neonatal care; whether their children avail the benefits of the ICDS programme and get essential nutrition and early child hood care etc.

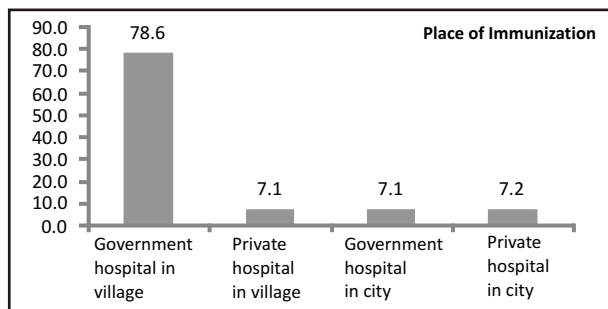
70 percent women out of the 20 interviewed



during this study reported that they had taken the compulsory three vaccines during their pregnancy while 30 percent said that they did not take the service.

Place of immunization

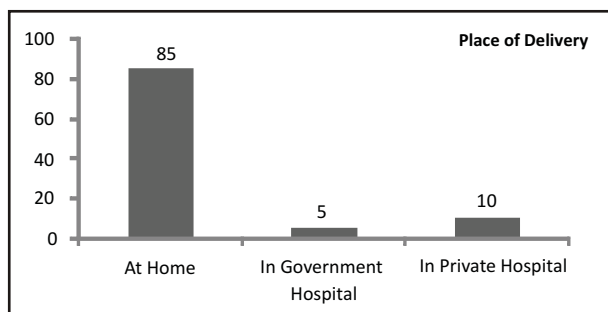
A huge majority of women have taken immunization during pregnancy at a government hospital in their village with 78.6 percent opting



for the same. Out of the remaining women, only 7.1 percent have gone for this service at a government hospital in the city and same proportion of women opted for private hospital in village and city respectively.

Place of delivery

Although the women informed that they were regularly taking course of immunization at various health centres, in a rather contrasting note

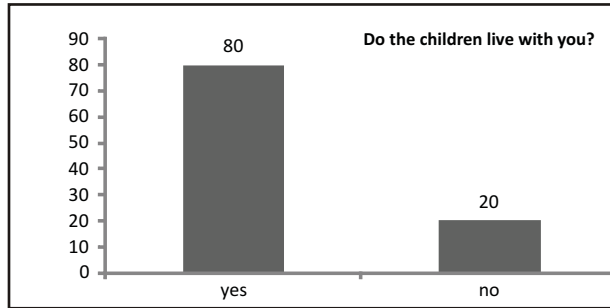


85 percent informed that they have delivered their children at home. Another ten percent said that they went to private hospital while remaining 5 percent only said that they have goe to government hospital for delivery of child.

Where do the children live?

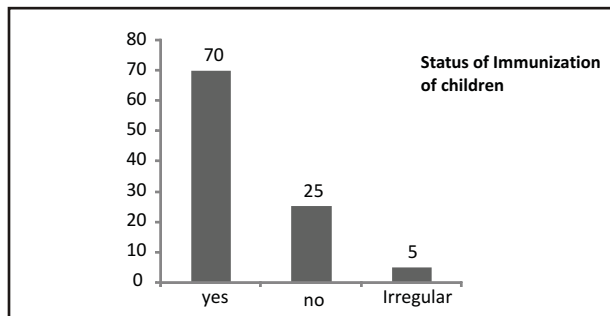
Further query was made regarding the whereabouts of their children.

80 percent women said that their children live with them. They are taking care of them as well as working as construction worker.



Immunization of children

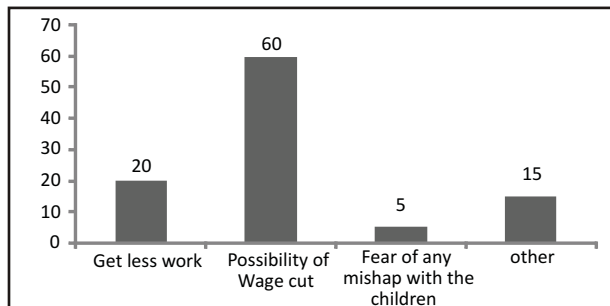
Have you given your children complete immunization? To this query 70 percent women have said that they have taken their children to complete immunization process, 5 percent said that it has been irregular in their case while



remaining 25 percent failed to provide this essential service to their children.

Impact of taking children to work site

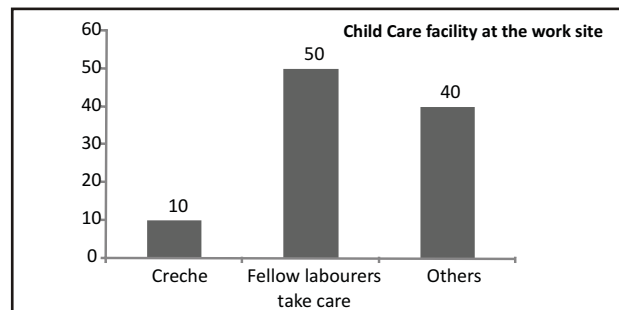
Since most of the mothers are keeping their children with them only, most of the time they have to carry their kids to the work sites. Does it put any impact on their work, this is the query that was put to them. As the graph shows, 60 percent say that there is every possibility of wage cut when they take their children to the work site. 20 percent say that they get less work as the employer does not want to employ women with



added responsibility while 5 percent women said that there is always a fear of the children meeting any accident at the work site. 15 percent said that there are several other issues that bother them when they take their child to the work site.

Child care facility at the work sites

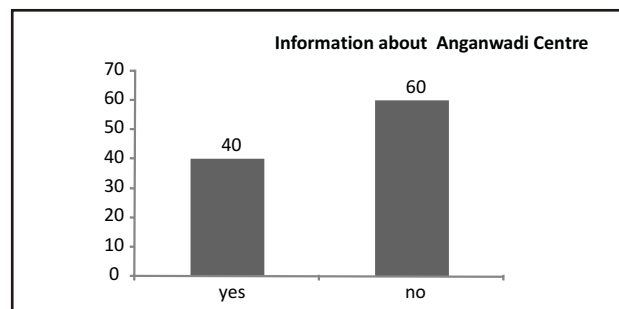
Regarding provision of any child care facility at the work site, half of the respondents said that children are taken care of by fellow labourers. Each one helps the other. 40 percent said that they



manage somehow, while only 10 percent said that there is provision of crèche facility at the work site. Noteworthy is the fact that none of them informed about any government supported facility at the work site.

Information about Anganwadi Centre

In order to know whether the women have any information about the services of Anganwadi Centre another question was put to them. 60

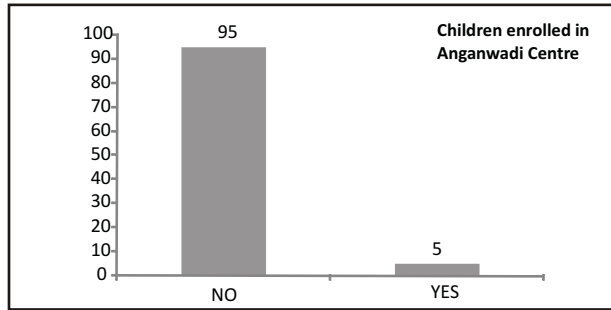


percent of the women respondents said that they have no information about anganwadi centres.

Enrollment of children in Anganwadi Centre

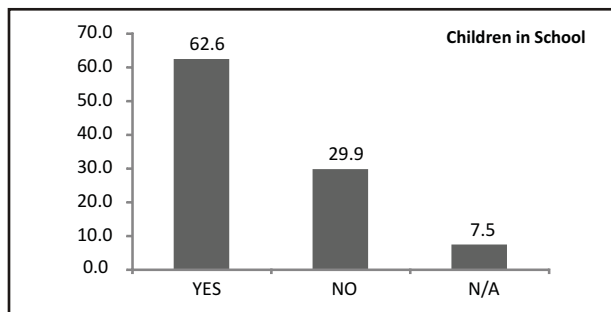
95 percent respondents said that they have not enrolled their children into anganwadi centre.

Only 5 percent women have taken this service for their children.



Enrollment of children in school

About 62 percent women respondents said that they are sending their children to school, about 30 percent are not sending their children to school

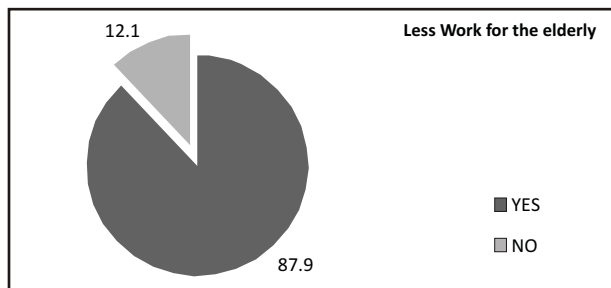


whereas the query was not applicable to 7.5 percent of the respondents.

Status of elderly Labourers

The study in the next section moves towards the elderly or labourers who report their age above 50 years. 33 such individuals were interviewed among the 134 total respondents and following learning was gathered.

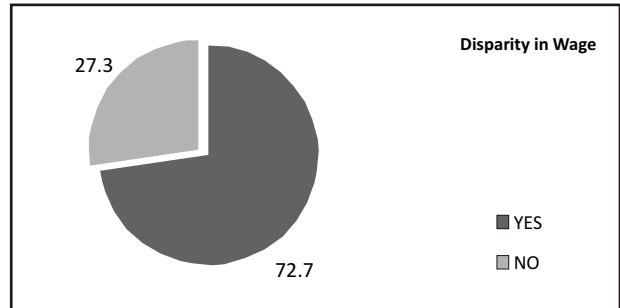
Does age limit the opportunity to get work? When this query was made to the 33 elderly



respondents, it was learnt that about 88 percent of them felt that with the aging process, the opportunity to work becomes less.

Wage disparity

The elderly informed that most of them about two



third knew that they get less wages than their younger counterparts at work.

Access to old age pension

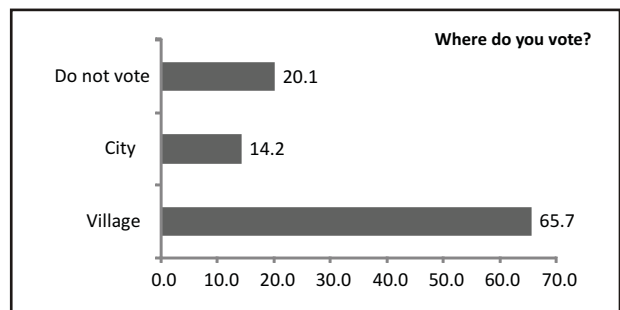
On further probing about the access of the elderly labourers to old age pension scheme of the government, it was learnt that all of them are getting the pension.

Construction Workers' access to democratic processes

Next set of questions were targeted towards understanding the access and use of various democratic processes like vote, representation of their problems by their political representative etc. This was to know how much does the democratic governance impact their lives.

Where do you cast your vote?

65.7 percent of the 134 respondents go to their

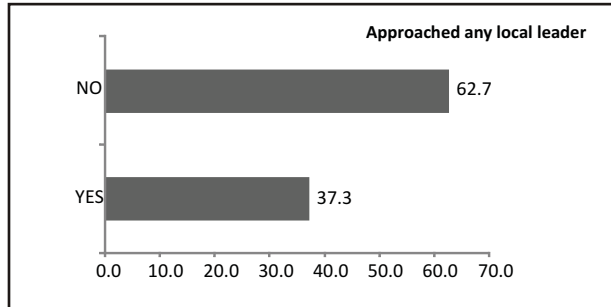


native in the village to exercise their right to vote, 14.2 percent vote in the city while still slightly

above 20 percent do not vote.

Approached any local leader

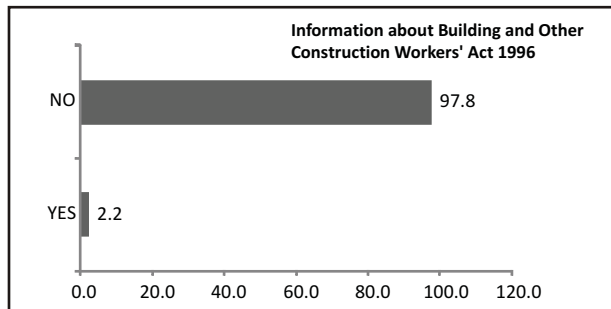
Have you ever approached any local leader in



village or in the city at the time of any crisis at work oplace or at home? When this query was raised to the construction workers, 62.7 percent said that they have never tried to reach any local leader in any problem situation. At the same time remaining 37.3 said that they did try this route to seek help. However, barring a mere 2 percent who said that they did get some support, a huge 98 percent said that nobody came to their help.

Awareness about The Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1996

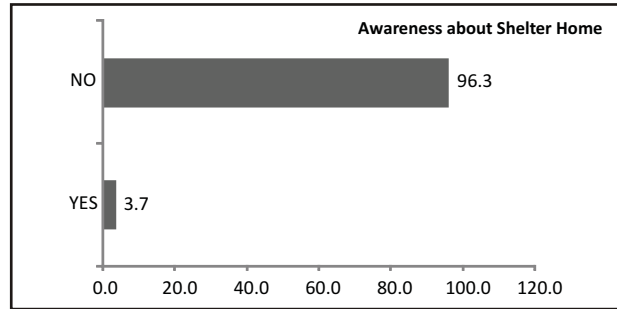
Moving ahead, the study tried to see how far the



awareness has gone among the construction workers about the exclusive act of law that is meant to bring welfare measures to the construction workers' lives. However a dismal 2.2 percent respondents had some information about the act out of the 134.

Awareness about shelter home

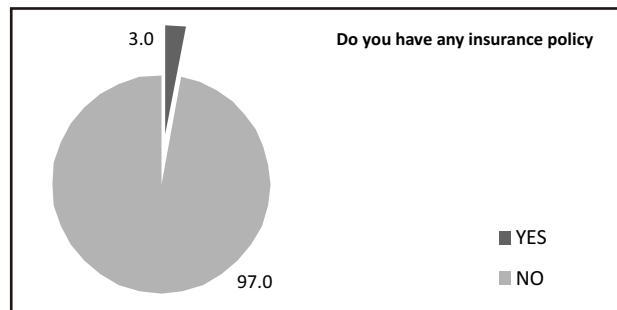
There is no awareness among the construction workers about the shelter homes that are built by



the municipal corporation for the safe stay of such migrant population while their work in the city. Only 3.7 percent of the respondents had some information about the shelter homes, remaining 96.3 percent were found unaware about such a facility in Allahabad.

Access to any life insurance policy

Only 3 percent construction workers are aware



about life insurance policies remaining 97 percent are ignorant about such a facility.

Lastly, the respondents were asked whether they have ever been approached by any labour union or group to join them or hear about their problems. None of them so far had met any such union of group, at the same time all of them wanted to know about such groups and if they get an opportunity, all were willing to join such a union so that they could work for their own betterment. All of them said that if opportunity is given, they would definitely like to devote some time towards working for fellow labourers for their welfare.

Conclusions

People young and old, come to cities to augment their family earnings. They travel daily or stay on roadsides in the city, sometimes get work, sometimes wait for it for days together, but poor don't give up. They earn, toil hard, save every penny, live a life full of hardships and denials, yet do not complain. Some have given up in life and take it as it comes; others still wait for the turn of their destiny. For some dreams are over, for few others they are yet to begin in cities.

Construction workers in Allahabad are no different than their counterparts in any other city. They all are living a life full of ignorance about their rights, entitlements, welfare programmes etc. They seem to have stopped fighting with their 'destiny'. Its only when one cajoles them about the problems in their lives and their dreams and aspirations, do they unwind and demand equality and opportunity.

There are 18 labour Posts in Allahabad city, most of them are relatively new and towards the outer of the city, however none of them has any basic facility. Men and women come there, stand for work, spend the whole day if fail to get any work and then leave for their respective places. Most of them are sleeping on roadsides in the city while some are commuting daily to their homes. There is wage disparity among men and women, even job opportunities are less for women. Women working here as construction workers are taking care of their children as well as there is no facility provided by the government for about 90 percent of the respondents covered under the study.

While majority of them have voter card (more than 60 percent), a majority is without the basic entitlement of right to food i.e. ration card. On an average a person is getting up to 15-18 days of work and the average wage rate is upto 200. After leading a very unpampered and harsh life, devoid of any entertainment or costly needs, a large majority of these workers are able to save only about rs. 1000/- a month. Almost all send their savings back to their families, barring a very miniscule few who love to spend on themselves, perhaps they are too young to be expected to help their families financially.

Women brave sexual harassment, foul language, disparity in work and wage yet support their families with equal hardships.

Yet no one has taken the information about the various government programmes to them, its been more than 17 years when the construction workers' act was passed in 1996, hardly 3 percent persons know about it but none has been registered under the act.

Government has failed, so has the voluntary organizations. There is a huge need of concerted efforts to bring the construction workers under the ambit of the law and help them get identity as workers, avail benefits that could support their life to some extent.

Recommendations

- ❖ Full implementation of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act 1996 must be made by the State of Uttar Pradesh in full swing taking special steps to undertake registration process of construction workers standing for work as casual workers at various Labour Posts in the cities (including Meerut).
- ❖ All the locations in the city that are known as Labour Chowk/ Labour Adda must be identified by the Labour Department and regularised with provision of a Hall area fitted with light and fan in running condition where workers can assemble and wait for their work opportunity. Further to this it is very necessary to provide the hall with basic services like proper drinking water, facility for toilet and washing, first aid box that should be renewed and replenished at regular intervals.
- ❖ Wages for different types of work need to be fixed by the state and must be displayed on these posts so as to eliminate any scope for bargaining by the employers/ contractors.
- ❖ Registration of construction workers should be carried out on this spot by the labour department.
- ❖ Labour Unionization Process should be facilitated by the state so that the union of these labourers can constitute their grievance committee and facilitate the complaint mechanism process.
- ❖ The state must promote awareness about the Act and its provisions specially targeting the communities that are eligible to get its benefits. For this, popular print and electronic medium of mass communication should be put to use. Besides this, information boards must be put on various locations in the city like Bus Stations, Railway Stations, Market places etc that are frequented by the working community most so that the information reaches to the targeted community in time. The information must be provided in a language and manner that is most understandable to the people targeted for the purpose.
- ❖ Special provisions for women and especially women with children as mentioned in the Act must be implemented at the work places and Labour Posts with immediate effect.
- ❖ Workers registered under the Act must be given their due benefits at the earliest so that the information reaches across the labour community and the registration processes rolls at a faster pace. The money accumulated with the state for the construction workers welfare should be realised in time.
- ❖ Effective implementation of NREGA in rural areas should be made so that rural youth get the promised hundred days of work at village level that gives them some respite from migration for work in cities.
- ❖ Services of permanent shelters with adequate basic services like drinking water, sanitation, food and first aid services must be ensured so that the construction workers leading a migrant's life in cities during their stay for work can get basic services that will ensure their human rights.
- ❖ Coordination between district labour department and Nagar Nigam of such cities is required so that migrant workers' basic rights issues are met systematically and construction workers get a dignified space in the cities that they build with their hard work.

About Vigyan Foundation ...

Vigyan Foundation is a right based non-government charitable organization which has been working with the community for the rights of the deprived and the most vulnerable sections of the society, be it children, women, slum dwellers or the homeless community. Vigyan Foundation emerged as a creative and collective response to the needs of the people so as to passionately advocate for the rights of the deprived and the most vulnerable sections of the society. Vigyan Foundation was formed in 1988, and registered as a society under the Society Registration Act, 1860.

Our objective is to create such an oppression-less, non-discriminatory society where all the citizen have access to equal rights, freedom and opportunities in ways that enable them to live safe and dignified lives and thereby get opportunities to express their creativity. The mode to achieve this is through raising collective voices in sustainable manner.

Vigyan believes in strengthening the dignity of people and enhance their capacity to raise their voice to access their basic rights through formation of community based organizations / issue based alliances to advocate for the pro-poor policies. According to this point of view Vigyan Foundation team is working in urban slums, marginalized or homeless. Our goal is to empower groups of women, children, youth and unorganized sector and to expand them in a federation for alliance building. It is our strong feeling that while working in a group it is a logical fight back for initiation of community issues. In rural areas the focal point for work is in education and health.

Through Urban resource centre, Vigyan Foundation publishes study materials for advocating different issues from time to time.



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