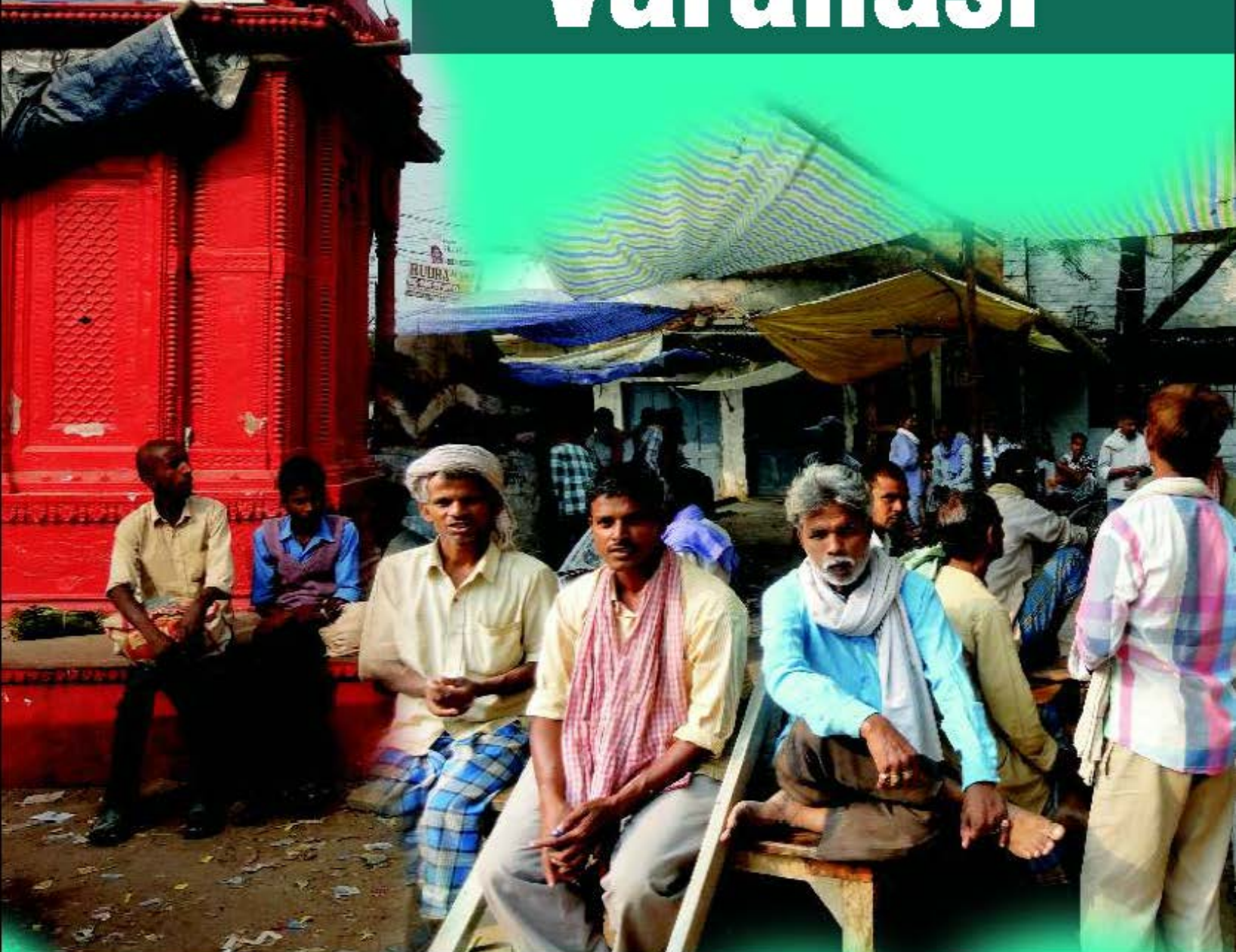


# Labour Posts in Varanasi

प्राचीन  
हनुमान मन्दिर  
राहा, दुर्गाकुन्द, वाराणसी



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## Preface

रोज़ चौराहों पर,  
सजती हैं  
मंडियां,  
श्रम की मंडियां,  
लगती हैं, बोलियां  
भूख की,  
एक अदद दूध के गिलास की  
दवा की,  
बूढ़ी माँ व पत्नी के इलाज की  
बच्चों के तन पर लिबास की  
लगती हैं बोलियां  
खून की,  
पसीने की,  
आने वाले कल की आस की  
फिर भी  
बंद है मुठियां,  
इज़्ज़त के नाम पर  
तौलती हैं आंखें  
हमारी भुजाओं के बल को  
और तय होती है रोज़ी  
मोल भाव से  
फिर भी चौराहों पर  
सजती है, मंडियां,  
श्रम की मंडियां .....

- संदीप खरे

Friends,

Urbanization is on a steep rise and census 2011 data too reveals a growing urbanization trend. 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.

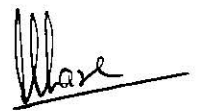
The current study of labour posts in Varanasi reveals that more than 7000 labourers commute daily to the 20 labour posts in the city of Varanasi where as many hundreds more work at project sites and others go to worksites daily from their respective homes.

Like other cities, there is no provision of basic services at any of the labour posts. Many labour posts are located on the fringes of the city and many are still in the process of development, depicting a clear cut rural impact on the labourers.

Most of the labourers come from the socially backward and Dalit community which explains their ever declining and deteriorating socio-economic conditions and lack of other secured alternates for livelihood generation. 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 Dr. Sanjay for this wonderful report and also the 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



## Introduction

### Problems of Unorganized Labours in India

India can never be claimed to be a developed country unless and until its vast majority of unorganized labourers are provided with gainful livelihood opportunities that would enable them to enjoy a decent standard of living. They not only constitute valuable productive assets but are also citizens entitled to the benefits of development.

In recent times there also has emerged a significant unorganized labour sector, referred as informal sector in developed countries. A major section of unorganized sector comprises of people belonging to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes often referred as dalits, other backward classes and minorities especially Muslims. Those are compelled to migrate for work to other cities. They suffer from “low productivity-low wage syndrome” due to their lower levels of literacy and skills, poorer organizations and socio-economic backwardness.

labour market in India can be characterized dualistic in nature. In fact there are several layers of labour market in India. The dualism is represented by the existence of a vast unorganized labour force getting practically no social security benefits while organized labour force representing only a very small section of the total labour force of the country enjoying a much higher level of wages and social security benefits. The unorganized labour comprises of significant sections of petty cultivators, agricultural labourers, contract labourers, women labourers and child labourers and the self employed. Several concepts are used to categorize Indian labour force. Broadly two categories are predominantly used. These are – the “organized labour” and the “unorganized labour”. The later is also referred to as the informal sector, a term popular with the International Labour Organization (ILO). The concepts of organized and unorganized labour must be distinguished from the overlapping concepts of organized and unorganized sectors of the economy.

The term “organized sector” covers all public sector enterprises including government and semi-government organizations. It also covers those private sector establishments where employment per unit is ten or more persons - all those establishments coming within the purview of the Factory Act. The “Unorganized Sector” covers all the rest, mainly all unincorporated enterprises and household industries (not covered under organized sector) which are not regulated by any legislation and which do not maintain formal financial records like the 'balance-sheet' and 'profit and loss statements'. Important economic features of the unorganized sector include the low level of technology used, demand and supply confined to local markets and small production catering to the needs of usually poorer sections of the society.

The term unorganized labour is also used in the context of the employment, regulation and protection of labour. The unorganized labour covers daily-wage labour, self-employed and casual labour in the entire economy. Their earnings are very low. They are either unorganized or poorly organized and do not enjoy any social security protection. It is stated here in the sense that that over 90 per cent of labour force in India is unorganized. The distinction between organized and unorganized labour in India is easier because of the glaring difference between the two.



## Brief History:

In the mid 1950s, W. Arthur Lewis developed a theoretical model of economic development based on the assumption that there was an unlimited supply of labour in most developing countries and that this vast pool of surplus labour would be absorbed as the modern industrial sector in these countries grew. It was therefore assumed that the traditional sector comprised of petty traders, small producers and a range of casual jobs would eventually be absorbed into the formal economy and disappear. This argument became less convincing since the 1970s when case studies on informal sector in various parts of the world began to reveal the highly active existence of men, women and children crowding at the bottom of the urban economy in Third World countries. So many studies have revealed the vast number of workers, in the Third World, striving hard to survive on the fruits of their Labours outside the formal sector of the economy. The formal –informal dichotomy can be regarded as a new variation on the dualism theories of the past. In the colonial era a contrast was constructed between an invasive western capitalist sector and an opposing eastern non-capitalist people's economy. In post-colonial development theory the concept of dualism was applied to the dichotomy of traditional and modern. According to this view, the rural agricultural order was still predominantly pre-capitalist while the urban-based industrial economy was described as capitalist. In the most recent phase of the dualism doctrine capitalism is the label of only the advanced segment of the urban milieu: the formal sector. The modes of production in the lower economic terrain, rather questionably labeled as non-capitalist, are characterized as the informal sector. In operationalizing these variations on dualism, the contrasts are more significant than the specific characteristics of each segment. For instance, it's entirely normal to describe the informal sector by summing up the absence of elements found in the formal sector. In the absence of a more analytical definition, the landscape of the informal sector becomes synonymous with the kaleidoscope of unregulated, poorly skilled and low-paid workers. Highlighting this chaotic assortment Keith Hart coined the term 'informal economy' in 1971. There are different terminologies used so interchangeably to signify the unorganized sector like informal sector, informal economy, and even informal labour which often highlights the most affected part of the sector, namely, the labour. “ Informal labour is a labour whose use is not governed either by state regulations or by collective agreements between workers and employers.”

Informal labour has, in different instances, been viewed as labour engaged in urban small scale enterprises, as self employment, as labour engaged in “traditional activities”, as wholly unskilled labour, and as labour whose use is not subject to any rules or norms. But none of this has any sound conceptual or empirical foundation. Informality does not imply a particular mode or location of labour use; informal labour can be in self-employment, in casual wage employment, and in regular wage employment, just as it can be in urban as well as in rural areas. There is little reason to think that informal labour must be confined to 'traditional' and 'modern' activities.

We do not need to assume that informal labour is unskilled; only need to recognize that its skills are acquired outside the formal education system. And all the more in the context of the neo-liberal economic policies of hire and fire where the organized sector itself is getting informalized through contractualization, casualisation, and outsourcing of labour, there are workers who are equally or even more educated and skilled, work better and even longer in so many of the organized sectors; but for no labour rights, wage, job or social security protection and for very dismal wages. The casual and contract labourers are under the working and living conditions that prevailed in the nineteenth century Europe.

Since the introduction of the informal sector concept, opinion has been divided as to its socio-economic impact. There are authors who positively point out the accelerated shift in livelihood

patterns away from agriculture and villages to cities and towns in the Third World since the mid-twentieth century. But even if the masses of migrants flooding into urban areas were fortunate enough to establish a foothold, the vast majority of them could gain no access to the formal sector. It was still too small to cope with the continuous influx of newcomers.

The more critical analysis of researchers, who have observed that the formal sector remained inaccessible for reasons other than the inferior quality of the new urbanites' labour, and their other defects, rejects such an optimistic view. The failure of the newcomers' efforts to find stable, decently paid and dignified work is in this alternative perception due mainly to a development strategy that, in the face of excess supply, seeks to keep the price of labour as low as possible, allows no room for collective action to reduce these people's vulnerability and refuses to provide this footloose workforce with public representation. In short, the lack of registration, organization and protection does not have its origin in the free play of social forces, but it's the deliberate product of economic interests that benefit from the state of informality in which a wide range of activities in all branches of the economy are kept, systematically and on a large scale, through evasion of labour laws and taxation.

Indeed, the informal sector is not a separate and closed circuit of work and labour. There is the interaction, between the formal and informal sectors, and dependence of the latter on the former and even its subordination to it. Now with the neo-liberal economic policies there is the widespread informalization of the formal sector through downsizing, casualisation and contractualisation. In short the capitalist leaches become richer and richer by squeezing the life blood of the working force.

### **The Indian Scenario:**

The Indian Economy is characterized by the existence of a vast majority of informal or unorganized labour employment. As per the Economic Survey 2007-08, 93% of India's workforce include the self employed and employed in unorganized sector. The Ministry of labour, Government of India, has categorized the unorganized labour force under four groups in terms of Occupation, nature of employment, specially distressed categories and service categories.

#### **1. In terms of Occupation:**

Small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, fishermen, those engaged in animal husbandry, beedi rolling, labeling and packing, building and construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills, oil mills etc. come under this category.

#### **2. In terms of Nature of Employment:**

Attached agricultural labourers, bonded labourers, migrant workers, contract and casual labourers come under this.

#### **3. In terms of Specially distressed categories:**

Toddy tappers, Scavengers, Carriers of head loads, Drivers of animal driven vehicles, Loaders and un-loaders come under this category.

#### **4. In terms of Service categories:**

Midwives, Domestic workers, Fishermen and women, Barbers, Vegetable and fruit vendors, News paper vendors etc. belong to this category.

In addition to these four categories, there exists a large section of unorganized labour force such as cobblers, Hamals, Handicraft artisans, Handloom weavers, Lady tailors, Physically handicapped self employed persons, Rickshaw pullers, Auto drivers, Sericulture workers, Carpenters, Tannery workers, Power loom workers and Urban poor.

Though the availability of statistical information on intensity and accuracy vary significantly, the extent of unorganized workers is significantly high among agricultural workers, building and other construction workers and among home based workers. According to the Economic Survey 2007-08 agricultural workers constitute the largest segment of workers in the unorganized sector (ie. 52% of the total workers).

As per the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), 30 million workers in India are constantly on the move (migrant labour) and 25.94 million women workforce has been added in the labour market from the year 2000 onwards. All the more every day 13000 Indians turn 60 years and they are expected to live another average of 17 years. Unfortunately only 10% of the Indians save for old age. The tragedy is that the existing social security legislations cover only 8% of the total work force of 459 million in India.

A report of the NSSO about the casual workers in India between 2004-05 and 2009-10 compared to that of the period between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 very clearly shows that there is significant increase in the number of casual workers and decline in the number of regular workers.

This report shows a substantial shift between 1999-00 and 2009-10 in the structure of the labour force which can be broadly divided in to self employed, regular, and casual workers. (Casual workers are employees who do not enjoy the same benefits and security as tenured employees. All daily wage employees and some categories of contract employees are casual labourers.)

All these NSSO reports are clear evidences to prove that the labour market of India has been undergoing tremendous transformations, including growth of informal sector activities, deterioration in the quality of employment (in terms of job security, terms and conditions at work), Weakening of worker organizations and collective bargaining institutions, marked decline in social security etc. To a greater extent, these transformation could be related to the ongoing globalization process and the resultant efforts on the part of employers to minimize the cost of production to the lowest levels. It is also evident that most of these outcomes are highly correlated and mutually reinforcing. A closer analysis suggests that the growing informalization of labour market has been central to most of these transformations, which inter alia highlights the utility of understanding the growth of unorganized sector in India and its implications.

Many thought that India's growth could do no wrong, and took the administrative versions and interpretations for granted. Now it comes to a point that none of these can be taken for granted. Growth is slow, inflation is structural and structure of employment is not enough to cater to the growing labour force.

### **Growing prominence of unorganized sector in India:**

Predominance of informal employment has been one of the central features of the labour market scenario in India. While the sector contributes around half of the GDP of the country, its dominance in the employment front is such that more than 90% of the total workforce has been engaged in the informal economy. As per the latest estimation of a Sub-committee of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), the contribution of unorganized sector to GDP is about 50% (NCEUS 2008).

This national level pattern of informal workers occupying around 90% of the workforce is more or less similar in the case of most of the prominent states in the country. Among the unorganized sector workers, a considerable proportion (about 65%) is engaged in agricultural sector, which in turn indicates the prominence of rural segment in the informal economy.



The growth of formal employment in the country has always been less than that of total employment, indicating a faster growth of employment in the informal sector. Available data suggests that within the formal sector also the proportion of informal / unorganized workers are on the increase. For instance, by providing a comparison of the NSSO Employment Data for 55<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Rounds (for 1999-2000 and 2004-05 respectively) the NCEUS (2007) explains that the country is currently in a state of “informalisation of the formal sector”, where the entire increase in the employment in the organized sector over this period has been informal in nature. It is widely acknowledged that the informal sector in India suffers from a low productivity syndrome, compared to the formal sector. The prominent features of the sector are lower real wages and poor working / living conditions. Further, the sector is characterized by excessive seasonality of employment (especially in the farm sector), preponderance of casual and contractual employment, atypical production organizations and work relations, absence of social security measures and welfare legislations, negation of social standards and worker rights, denial of minimum wages and so on. Poor human capital base (in terms of education, skill and training) as well as lower mobilization status of the work force further add to the vulnerability and weaken the bargaining strength of workers in the informal sector. Thus, the sector has become a competitive and low cost device to absorb labour, which cannot be absorbed elsewhere, whereas any attempt to regulate and bring it into more effective legal and institutional framework is perceived to be impairing the labour absorbing capacity of the sector.

With the advent of globalization and resultant reorganization of production chains led to a situation where production systems are becoming increasingly atypical and non-standard, involving flexible workforce, engaged in temporary and part-time employment, which is seen largely as a measure adopted by the employers to reduce labour cost in the face of stiff competition. No doubt, it obviously indicates that these flexible workers in the new informal economy are highly vulnerable in terms of job security and social protection, as they are not deriving any of the social protection measures stipulated in the existing labour legislations. The insecurities and vulnerabilities of these modern informal sector labours are on the rise, as there is a visible absence of worker mobilization and organized collective bargaining in these segments owing to a multitude of reasons.

The alarming expansion of informal sector, in recent times, has adversely affected employment and income security for the larger majority of the workforce, along with a marked reduction in the scale of social welfare / security programme.

### **The major characteristics of the unorganized workers:**

- ❖ The unorganized labour is overwhelming in terms of its number range and therefore they are omnipresent throughout India.
- ❖ As the unorganized sector suffers from cycles of excessive seasonality of employment, majority of the unorganized workers does not have stable durable avenues of employment. Even those who appear to be visibly employed are not gainfully and substantially employed, indicating the existence of disguised unemployment.
- ❖ The workplace is scattered and fragmented.
- ❖ There is no formal employer – employee relationship
- ❖ In rural areas, the unorganized labour force is highly stratified on caste and community considerations. In urban areas while such considerations are much less, it cannot be said that it is altogether absent as the bulk of the unorganized workers in urban areas are basically migrant workers from rural areas.

- ❖ Workers in the unorganized sector are usually subject to indebtedness and bondage as their meager income cannot meet with their livelihood needs.
- ❖ The unorganized workers are subject to exploitation significantly by the rest of the society. They receive poor working conditions especially wages much below that in the formal sector, even for closely comparable jobs, and where labour productivity is not different. The work status is of inferior quality of work and inferior terms of employment, both in terms of remuneration and employment.
- ❖ Primitive production technologies and feudal production relations are rampant in the unorganized sector, and they do not permit or encourage the workmen to imbibe and assimilate higher technologies and better production relations. Large scale ignorance and illiteracy and limited exposure to the outside world are also responsible for such poor absorption.
- ❖ The unorganized workers do not receive sufficient attention from the trade unions.
- ❖ Inadequate and ineffective labour laws and standards relating to the unorganized sector.

### **Social security measures:**

It is rightly true that when independent India's constitution was drafted, social security was specially included in List III to Schedule VII of the constitution and it was made as the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments. A number of directive principles of state policy relating to aspects of social security were incorporated in the Indian constitution. The initiatives in the form of Acts such as the Workmen's Compensation Act (1923), the Industrial Disputes Act (1947), the Employees State Insurance Act (1948), the Minimum Wages Act (1948), the Coal Mines Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (1948), The Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (1952), the Maternity Benefit Act (1961), the Seamen's Provident Fund Act (1966), the Contract Labour Act (1970), the Payment of Gratuity Act (1972), the Building and Construction Workers Act (1996) etc. reveal the attention given to the organized workers to attain different kinds of social security and welfare benefits. Though it has been argued that the above Acts are directly and indirectly applicable to the workers in the unorganized sector also, their contribution is very negligible to the unorganized workers. In spite of the fact that not much has been done in providing social security cover to the rural poor and the unorganized labour force, the country has made some beginning in that direction. Both the central and state governments have formulated certain specific schemes to support unorganized workers which fail in meeting with the real needs and requirements of the unorganized sector labour force.

This becomes clear even when the highly proclaimed Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MNREGA), though it is a breakthrough, doesn't have common wage in different states and limits itself only to hundred day's work for those registered worker under the Act. What about the rest of the days in a year? As per this Act, the work guarantee applies in rural areas only, what about the urban poor? Corruption and dishonesty in execution of this Act is another issue which compel rural poor to migrate to urban areas for casual work. Looking at the recent Unorganized Sectors' Social Security Act (2008), one really wonders if there is any provision for an unorganized worker in this Act other than some guidelines about the available social security schemes in the country. How can it be called an Act unless it has the legal binding and provisions of rights to work and entitlements under it? Here as per the Act nothing is mentioned about what constitutes appropriate and adequate social security for the vast mass of unorganized workers and their dependents, what eligibility criteria, if any, ought to be prescribed, what will be the scale of benefits that the workers and

their families are entitled to receive and under what conditions, what will be the funding arrangements that must be put in positions to meet the cost of social security and so on. Aren't the unorganized workers of this country entitled to receive, in this 60<sup>th</sup> year of our Republic, minimum standards of social security and labour rights, on the scale and spread adumbrated in the relevant ILO convention drawn up more than 50 years ago? Therefore, this law which does not deal with the issue of unemployment, its regulation, wages, and conditions of work and so on is not merely incomplete but dysfunctional if it proceeds to deal with social security on a standalone basis. The Act, actually, suffers from a serious lack of legislative policy and intent. Ultimately this Act is an eye wash which has neither the capacity to address nor the inbuilt provision to provide solutions to the needs of the unorganized sector. Even the provisions and procedure of the Minimum Wages Act (1948) is so vague and futile that different states of India have fixed abysmally meager wages and that too with so much of variations from state to state.

### **Building and other construction workers:**

About 25.71 million building and other construction workers are estimated in India as per estimates of National Sample Survey (2004-2005). The building and other construction workers are one of the most vulnerable segments of the unorganised sector workers in India. Their work is of temporary nature, the relationship between employer and employee is temporary, working hours are uncertain. The building and other construction works are characterized by inherent risk to the life and limb of workers. The construction workers are basically unskilled, migrant, socially backward, uneducated with low bargaining power. Provisions of labour laws like Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970; Inter-State Migrant Workmen (RECS) Act, 1979 etc. are applicable to building and other construction workers.

With a view to regularizing the wages, working conditions, safety and health, welfare measures, etc., exclusively for the building and other construction workers, the following two enactments have come on the Statute Book w.e.f. 20.8.96, initially brought in as ordinances on 3.11.95

1. The Building & Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996; and
2. The Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996.

### **Universe of the Study:**

Varanasi city was selected for the study of labour Posts and socio-economic situations of labourers. Twenty labour posts located in different parts of the city were visited. From those posts 200 labourers were randomly selected for interview, FGD (Focused Group Discussions), and case studies. Varanasi also known as Benares, or Kashi is a city on the banks of the Ganges (Ganga) in Uttar Pradesh, 320 kilometres (200 mi) southeast of the state capital, Lucknow. It is the holiest of the seven sacred cities (*Sapta Puri*) in Hinduism and Jainism, and played an important role in the development of Buddhism. Some Hindus believe that death at Varanasi brings salvation. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the oldest in India.

The name Vārāṇasī possibly originates from the names of the two rivers: Varuna, still flowing in Varanasi, and Asi, a small stream near Assi Ghat. The old city does lie on the north shores of Ganges River bounded by its two tributaries Varuna and Asi. Another speculation is that the city derives its name from the river Varuna, which was called Varanasi in olden times. This is generally disregarded



by historians. Through the ages, Varanasi has been known by many names including Kāśī or Kashi (used by pilgrims dating from Buddha's days), Kāśikā (the shining one), Avimukta ("never forsaken" by Shiva), Ānandavana (the forest of bliss), and Rudravāsa (the place where Rudra/Shiva resides).

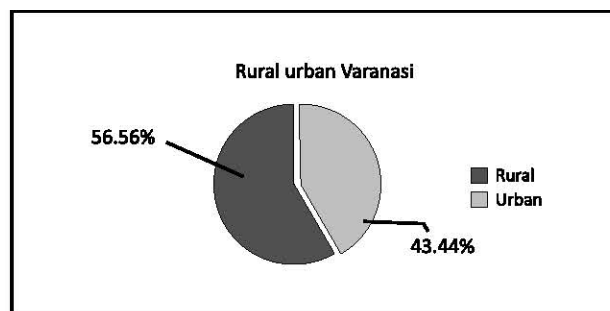
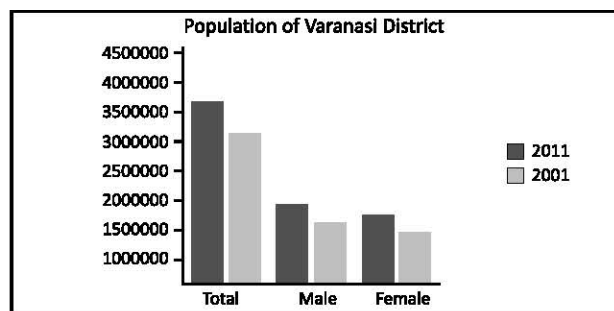
In the Rigveda, the city is referred to as Kāśī or Kashi, the luminous city as an eminent seat of learning. The name Kāśī is also mentioned in the Skanda Purana. In one verse, Shiva says, "The three worlds form one city of mine, and Kāśī is my royal palace therein."

Varanasi grew as an important industrial centre, famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works, and sculpture. During the time of Gautama Buddha (born circa 567 BC), Varanasi was the capital of the Kingdom of Kashi. Buddha is believed to have founded Buddhism here around 528 BC when he gave his first sermon, "Turning the Wheel of Law", at nearby Sarnath. The celebrated Chinese traveler Xuanzang, who visited the city around 635 AD, attested that the city was a centre of religious and artistic activities, and that it extended for about 5 kilometers along the western bank of the Ganges. Hiuen Tsiang also visited Varanasi in the 7th century; he named it "Polonisse" and wrote that the city had some 30 temples with about 30 monks. The city's religious importance continued to grow in the 8th century, when Adi Shankara established the worship of Shiva as an official sect of Varanasi.

### Demography of Varanasi District:

**Urban Population:** Out of the total population for 2011 census 43.44 percent lives in urban regions of district. Total 1,597,051 people lives in urban areas of which males are 845,331 and females are 751,720. Sex ratio in urban region is 889 and child sex ratio was 881. Child population (0-6) in urban region was 190,725 of which males and females were 101,422 and 89,303. This child population figure of Varanasi District is 12% of total urban population. Average literacy rate in Varanasi district as per census 2011 is 78.41% of which males and females are 83.30% and 72.92% literates respectively. In actual number 1,102,671 people are literate in urban area of which males and females are 619,660 and 483,011 respectively.

**Rural Population:** As per 2011 census, 56.56% population of Varanasi district lives in rural areas. Total population is 2,079,790 of which males and females are 1,076,526 and 1,003,264 respectively. Sex ratio is 932 female per 1000 male. There are 888 girls on 1000 boys. Child population in the age of 0-6 is 306,426 of which males were 162,340 and females were 144,086. The child population comprises



15.08% of total rural population. Literacy rate was 73.38% of which male and female literacy rates were 84.17 and 61.89 percent respectively. In number, 1,301,232 people were literate of which males and females were 769,456 and 531,776 respectively.

Urban Agglomerations inside Varanasi District Population		Male	Female
Varanasi (Urban Agglomeration)	1,435,113	761,060	674,053
Cities inside Varanasi District		Male	Female
Varanasi (Municipal Corporation)	1,201,815	636,860	564,955
Description	2011	2001	
Total Population (Urban and Rural)	3,676,841	3,138,671	
Male	1,921,857	1,649,187	
Female	1,754,984	1,489,484	
Population Growth	17.15%	25.14%	
Area Sq. Km	1,535	1,535	
Density/km2	2,395	2,045	
Proportion to Uttar Pradesh Population	1.84%	1.89%	
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	913	903	
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	885	919	
Average Literacy	75.60	66.12	
Male Literacy	83.78	77.87	
Female Literacy	66.69	53.05	
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	497,151	575,882	
Male Population (0-6 Age)	263,762	300,040	
Female Population (0-6 Age)	233,389	275,842	
Literates	2,403,903	1,694,405	
Male Literates	1,389,116	1,050,613	
Female Literates	1,014,787	643,792	
Child Proportion (0-6 Age)	13.52%	18.35%	
Boys Proportion (0-6 Age)	13.72%	18.19%	
Girls Proportion (0-6 Age)	13.30%	18.52%	
Description	Rural	Urban	
Population (%)	56.56 %	43.44 %	
Total Population	2,079,790	1,597,051	
Male Population	1,076,526	845,331	
Female Population	1,003,264	751,720	
Sex Ratio	932	889	
Child Sex Ratio (0-6)	888	881	
Child Population (0-6)	306,426	190,725	
Male Child(0-6)	162,340	101,422	
Female Child(0-6)	144,086	89,303	
Child Percentage (0-6)	14.73 %	11.94 %	
Male Child Percentage	15.08 %	12.00 %	
Female Child Percentage	14.36 %	11.88 %	
Literates	1,301,232	1,102,671	
Male Literates	769,456	619,660	
Female Literates	531,776	483,011	
Average Literacy	73.38 %	78.41 %	
Male Literacy	84.17 %	83.30 %	
Female Literacy	61.89 %	72.92 %	

### **Economy:**

Approximately 29% of Varanasi's population is employed. Approximately 40% of those employed work in manufacturing, 26% work in trade and commerce, 19% work in other services, 8% work in transport and communication, 4% work in agriculture, 2% work in construction and 2% are migrant workers (working for less than half the year). Among manufacturing workers, 51% work in spinning and weaving, 15% work in metal, 6% work in printing and publishing, 5% work in electrical machinery, and the rest work in a wide variety of industry sectors. Varanasi's manufacturing industry is not well developed and is dominated by small-scale industries and household production. Silk weaving is the dominant manufacturing industry in Varanasi. Weaving is typically done within the household, and most weavers are Momin Ansari Muslims. Varanasi is known throughout India for its production of very fine silk and Banarasi saris, brocades with gold and silver thread work, which are often used for weddings and special occasions. The production of silk often uses bonded child labour, though perhaps not at a higher rate than elsewhere in India. The silk weaving industry has recently been threatened by the rise of power looms and computer-generated designs and by competition from Chinese silk traders. In the metal manufacturing sector, Diesel Locomotive Works is a major employer. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, a large power equipment manufacturer, also runs a heavy equipment repair plant. Other major commodities manufactured and traded in Varanasi include hand-knotted Mirzapur carpets, rugs, dhurries, brassware, copperware, wooden and clay toys, handicrafts, gold jewellery, and musical instruments. Important agricultural products include betel leaves (for paan), langra mangoes and khoa (solidified milk). Tourism is Varanasi's second most important industry. Over 3 million domestic and 200,000 foreign tourists visit annually (as of 2005 and 2010, respectively), most commonly for religious reasons. Most domestic tourists are from Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh; most foreign tourists are from Sri Lanka and Japan. The peak tourist season falls between October and March. In total, there are around 12,000 beds available in the city, of which about one half are in inexpensive budget hotels and one third in dharamsalas. Overall, Varanasi's tourist infrastructure is not well developed.

Varanasi city is a fast growing economy a large number of Malls, multiplexes, cineplexes, multistoried buildings, apartments, towers are elevating in the city. The prominent malls and multiplexes in Varanasi are Kuber Complex, IP Mall Sagra, IP Vijaya Mall, PDR, KCM Spice, and JHV Mall in the Varanasi Cantonment area. Therefore, there is consistent need of thousands of masons, skilled and unskilled Labours to contribute in the development of the city.

In spite of important contribution of casual construction labourers in nation building they are still excluded from mainstream development discourses. Despite being one of the biggest economic sector in terms of employment generation unorganized sector largely remained neglected and very few empirical studies specially in micro setting have been conducted. Thus researcher perceived a knowledge gap and it was felt to pursue a study focused on problems of labourers in specific socio-cultural-economic and political contexts of Varanasi.

### **Research Methodology:**

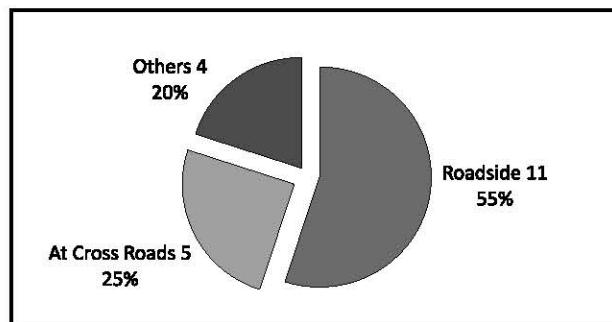
Across all the 20 labour posts interviews of 200 labourers were administered through a semi structured interview schedule comprising close and open ended questions. Respondents were selected conveniently using purposive sampling method. However efforts were made to get representation of all age groups, caste and religious groups, respondents belonging to various socio-cultural-economic and political backgrounds. Efforts were also made to study the experiences and issues of women labourers. In addition to this descriptive survey method that primarily focus on quantitative data focused group discussions and Case Study were also employed. Qualitative data generated by FGD and Case Studies helped a lot to develop deeper and comprehensive insight about the nature and problem of casual construction workers operating in Varanasi city.



Name & Address of the Labour Adda	Name of the Ward	Age of the Post (years)	Estimated Numbers Of Workers.	
			Men	Women
Gurudham	Nawabganj	20	497	3
Sonarpura	Sonarpura	35	298	2
Murgiya Tola Jolha Bajardiha	Jolha	35	150	0
Hukulganj	Hukulganj	60	290	10
Bulanala Chauk Adda	Chauk	14	395	5
Lat Bhairav Sarriya Bazar	Sarriya	45	400	0
Lohata Labour Adda	Sevapuri Block	25	150	0
Chetganj Tirmuhani	Saray Gowardhan	30	293	7
Sujabad Padav	Sujabad	20	185	15
Chaurhat Chaumuhani	Domari	20	295	5
Lohatia Labour Adda	Nakash	30	600	0
Manduadih	Manduadih	10	600	15
Aardali Bazar	Aardali Bazar	50	495	5
Badi Bazar Bunkar Mkt	Badi Bazar	35	300	0
Railway Fatak Fulwaria	Fulwaria	30	249	1
Adampura Thana Trimuhani	Adampura	30	200	0
Vinod Bazar Chauraha	Naya Mahadev	30	350	0
Sonia Pokhra	Sonia Pokhra	10	100	0
Maldhaiya Ramna	Ramna (kashi Vidyapith Block)	30	500	0
Aurangabad Saray, Lehngpura	Lehngpura	25	50	0

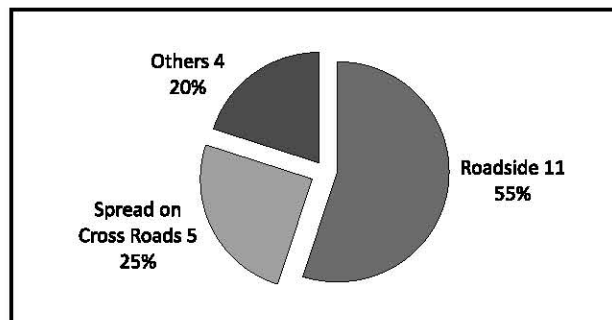
### Location of the Labor Posts:

Out of 20 labor posts studies in Varanasi, most of them were located at roadsides near prominent markets of different parts of the city. Some of



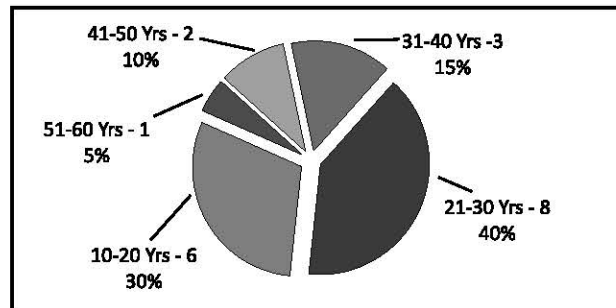
them were located at prominent cross roads, while few of them were located near temples and in narrow streets. There was not any proper place arranged for labor posts by the administration while laborers were required for every developmental work in the city. There they suffer from harassment, abuses, exploitation and discrimination.

**Pattern of Labor Posts:** Most of the labor posts were at roadside without forming any queue and



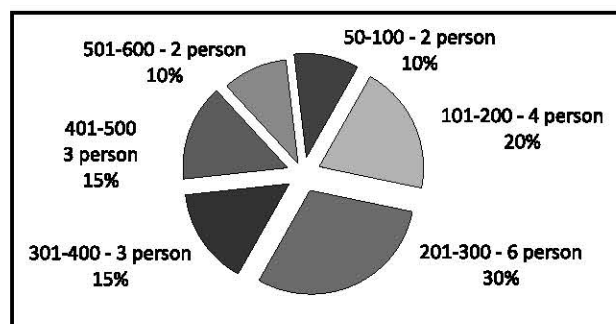
spread at crossroads. Laborers used to keep walk and busy in bargaining with customers.

**Age of Labor Posts:** Out of 20 labor posts 1 was more than half century old, 2 were 41 to 50 years old, 3 were 31 to 40 years old, 8 were 21 to 30 years old and 6 were found to be 10 to 20 years old. Varanasi city is one of the ancient cities of the world. It was famous for trade and commerce. A number of houses are more than 500 years old but the history of labor posts is



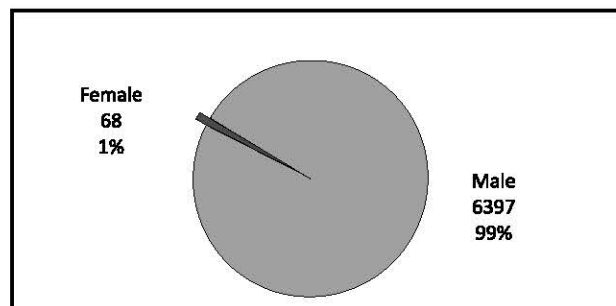
unrecorded, no one knew about older labor posts.

**Strength of Laborers at Posts:** At 2 labor posts strength of laborers was between 50 to 100, at 4 posts it was between 101 to 200, at 6 posts it was between 201 to 300, at 3 posts it was between 301



to 400, at 3 labor posts it was between 401 to 500 and 2 labor posts strength of laborer was between 501 to 615 laborers.

**Sex Ratio at Labor Posts:** Most of the labor posts were male dominated. Only 68 women

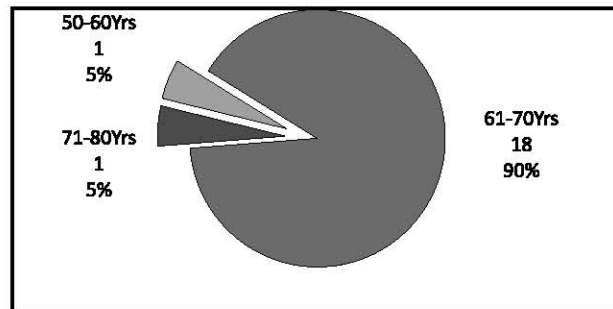


were found standing at labor posts. It doesn't mean that they don't work as daily wage laborers. Usually their jobs are arranged by their

male family members, relatives and or male coworkers.

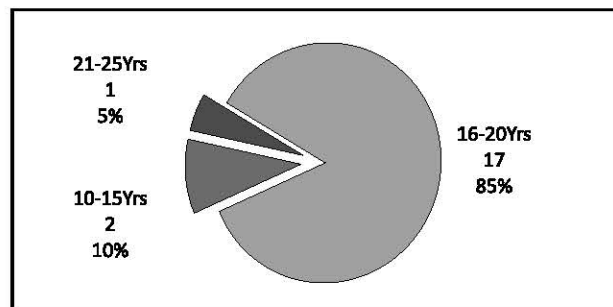
### Age of Laborers at Labor Posts:

**Maximum Age:** At one labor post the maximum age of the laborer was 71 to 80 years. On another



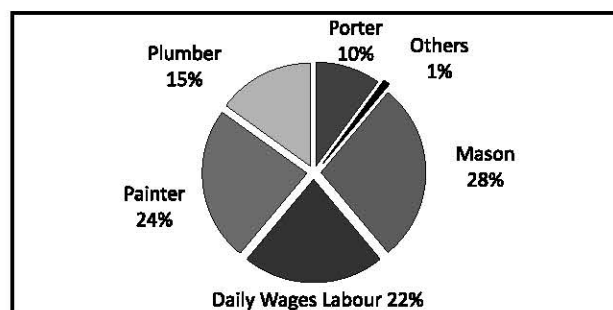
1 labor post it was 50 to 60 years and at 18 labor posts it was 61 to 70 Years.

**Minimum Age:** Minimum age of laborers at 2 labor posts was 10 to 15 years, at 17 labor posts it



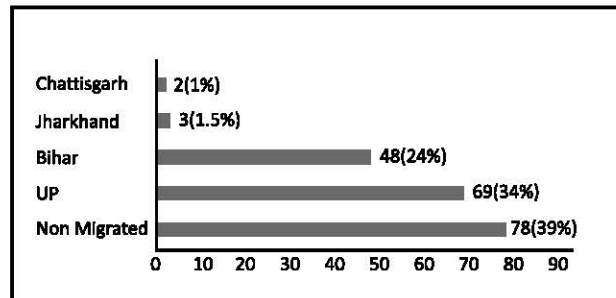
was 16 to 20 years, and at 1 labor post it was 21 to 25 years.

**Work wise distribution of Laborers across all Labor posts:** Data collected across all the labor posts about the nature of job of laborers shows



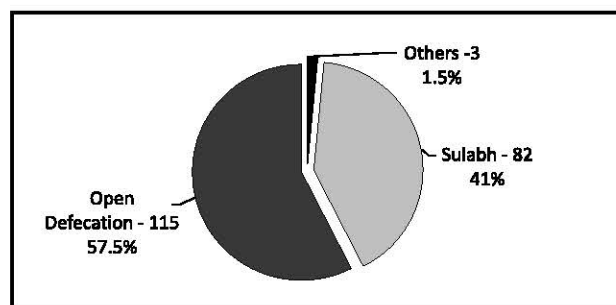
that 28 % of the respondents used to work as mason, 24% as painter, 22% as daily wage unskilled labor, 15% as plumber, 10% as porter and 1% comes in other category as their nature of work overlap.

**Status of Migration:** Out of 200 respondents 78 (39%) are resident of Varanasi. 69 (34.5%) have migrated from different rural areas of Uttar



Pradesh, 48 (24%) have migrated from Bihar, 03 (1.5%) have migrated from Jharkhand, and 02 respondents have migrated from Chhattisgarh.

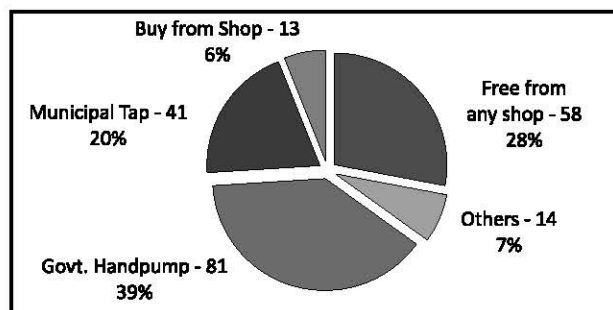
**Toilet Facilities at Labor Post:** According to 82 (41%) respondents there were facility of



Sulabh Toilet available at their labor post, 115 (57.5%) used to go in open, 3 respondents used to go on rail tracks or roads.

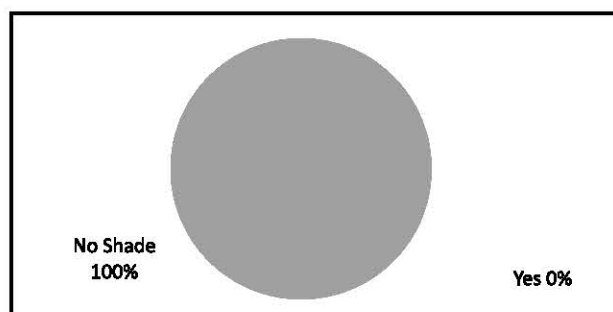
**Availability of Drinking Water at Labor Post:** Usually most of the laborers used to drink water from nearby hand pumps or municipal taps. Few of them used to buy cold water cold water venders. Whenever hand pumps and municipal taps used to become nonfunctional then laborers used to get water from other sources such as





construction sites or in free from tea shops, or buy from shops.

**Shade at Labor Posts:** All the labor posts studied were shade less, laborers used to stand in



open in every season whether it was summer, winter and rainy season.

#### Major Incidence at Labor Posts:

Survey of 20 labor posts reveals that some minor incidences such as hot talks between laborers and consumers and with shopkeepers were routine incidences common on all labor posts. Besides this some major incidences have happened on 09 labor posts. Laborers of Guridham labor posts are harassed by an anti social alcoholic man who used to abuse them and sometimes used to beat some laborers. In 2007 there happened a battle between laborers and consumers consequently police visited that place beaten a number of laborers and some laborers got serious injuries. Almost same incidence has happened at Chetganj Labor post when Police Station Officer of Chetganj Police Station came to labor post and started beating laborers standing there. There has happened mass battle between laborers and consumers

(local public) at Badi Bazar and Sonarpura Labor Posts in which a number of laborers were badly beaten and seriously injured. There are two labor posts Manduadih and Saraiya are situated at roadside there some laborers used to meet road accidents and one or two laborers succumb to death every year. Phulwariya labor post is situated near railway tracks, once a laborer went for defecation at railway track and got cut by a train during defecation.

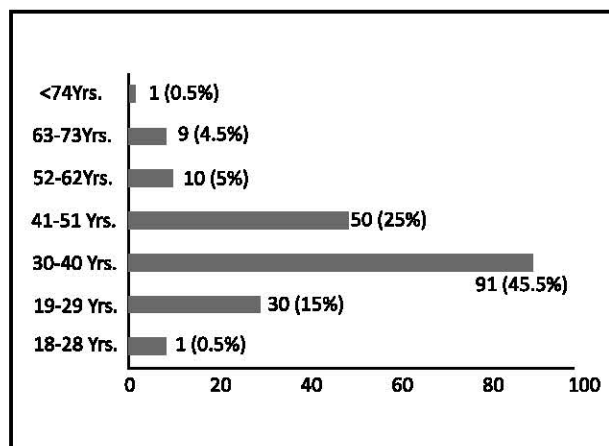
#### Socio Economic Profile of Laborers Standing at Labor Posts In Varanasi

Across all the 20 labor posts interviews of 200 laborers were administered through a semi structured interview schedule comprising close and open ended questions. Respondents were selected conveniently using random sampling method. However efforts were made to get representation of all age groups, caste and religious groups, respondents belonging to various socio-cultural-economic and political backgrounds. Efforts were also made to study the experiences and issues of women laborers.

#### Personal Description of Respondents:

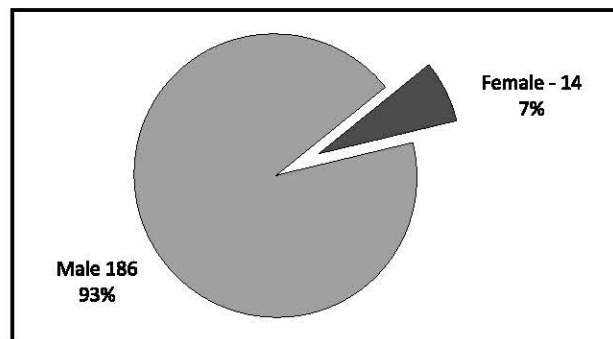
##### Age of Respondents:

Age of Respondents: Out of 200 laborers interviewed during the study, it was found that 09 (4.5%) respondents belong to the age group of 12 to 18 years. Out of this 02 were below 14 years of age. It is violation of Right to Education Act and Factory Act. 30 (15%) respondents



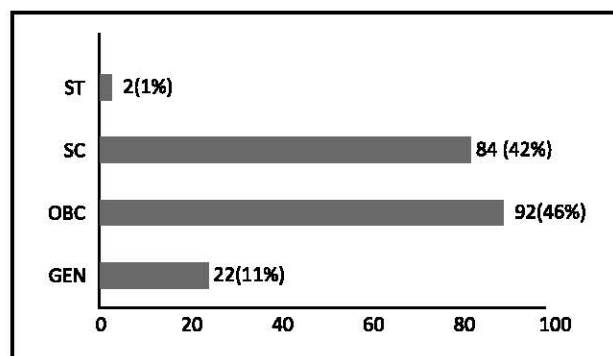
belong to the age group of 19 to 25 years. 91 (45.5%) respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 40 years. 50 (25%) respondents belong to the age group of 41 to 51 years. 10 (05%) belong to the age group of 52 to 62 years. 09 (4.5%) respondents belong to the age group of 63 to 73 years and 01 respondent is 77 years old.

**Sex of Respondents:** Out of 200 respondents 186 (93%) were male and 14 (07%) were female. It was observed that female laborers do not



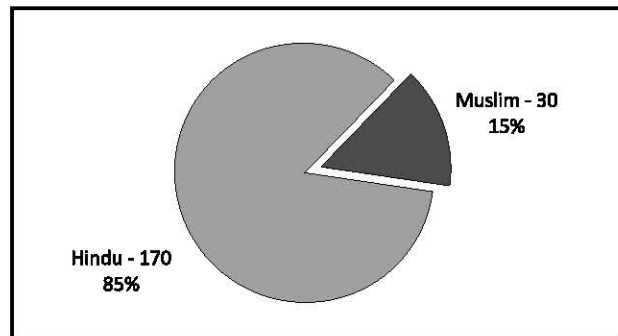
prefer to stand at labor posts. Their jobs are fixed either by their husbands, relatives or co-workers. Usually they work in bigger construction projects such as apartments, malls, shopping complexes, temples, hotels etc.

**Caste of Respondents:** 22 (11%) respondents belong to general category, 92 (46%) belong to Other Backward Classes, 84 (42%) belong to



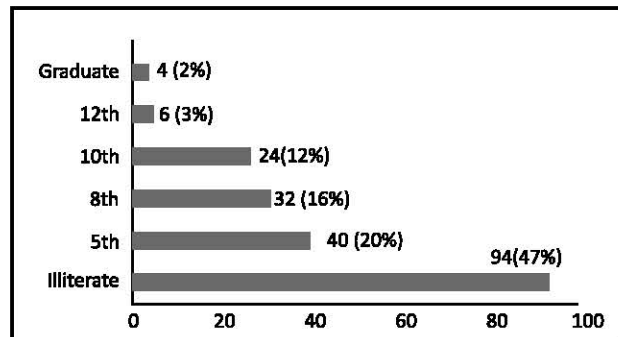
Scheduled Castes and 02 (1.0 %) respondents belong to Scheduled Tribes.

**Religion of the Respondents:** Out of 200 170



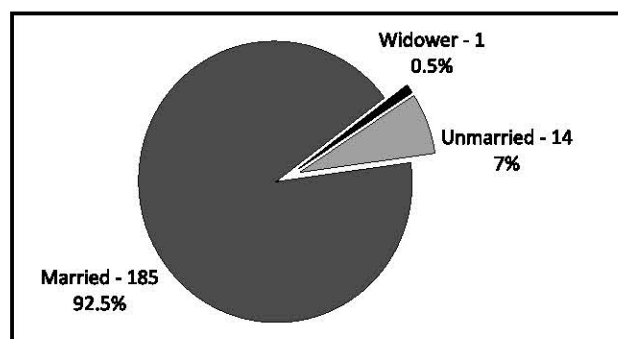
(85%) were Hindu and 30 (15%) were Muslims.

**Educational Status of the Respondents:** Out of 200 respondents 94 (47%) were illiterate, 40 (20%) were educated up to class 5<sup>th</sup>, 32 (16%)

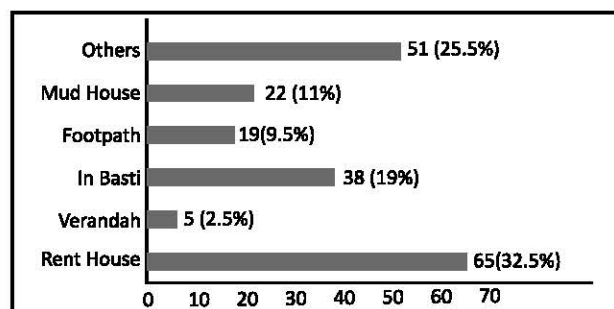


were educated up to class 8<sup>th</sup>, 24 (12%) were educated up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard, 6 (3.0%) were educated up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard and 4 (2.0%) were graduate.

**Marital Status of the Respondents:** 14 (7%) respondents were unmarried, 185 (92.5%) were married, and 01 respondent was widower. None of them were divorcee.

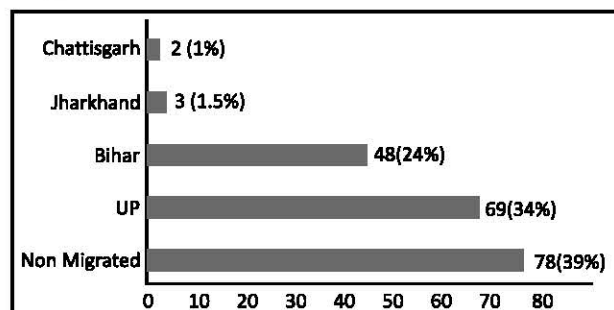


**Type of Residence:** Out of 200 respondents 65 (32.5%) resided in rented houses, 05 (2.5 %) reside in Verandah of any shop, 38 (19%) reside in Basti, 19 (9.5%) reside on foot paths, 22



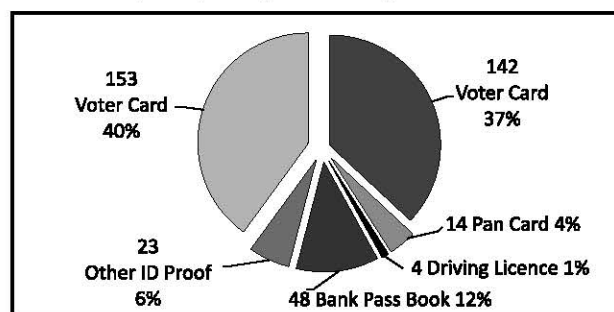
(11%) in Kachcha Houses (Mud houses) and 51 (25.5%) live in places other than mentioned above.

**Status of Migration:** Out of 200 respondents 78 (39%) are resident of Varanasi. 69 (34.5%) have migrated from different rural areas of Uttar



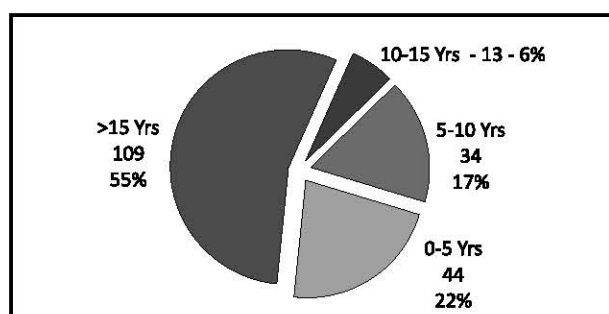
Pradesh, 48 (24%) have migrated from Bihar, 03 (1.5%) have migrated from Jharkhand, and 02 respondents have migrated from Chhattisgarh.

**Description of Identity Proof Respondents had:** 153(40%) respondents possess voter card,



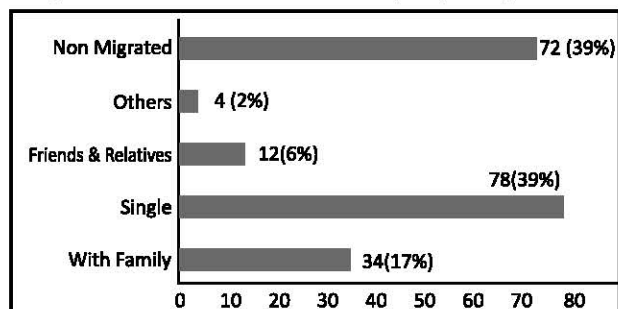
142(37%) possess ration card, 14 (4%) possess pan card, 48 (12%) possess bank pass book, and 01 respondent possesses voter card, ration card and bank pass book, 75 (37.5%) respondents had voter card and ration card, 3 had voter card, ration card and pan card and 4 respondents had driving license as identity proof. This description shows that most of the respondents possess voter card and ration cards both.

**Period of Stay in Varanasi:** 44 (22%) respondents used to stay here from up to five



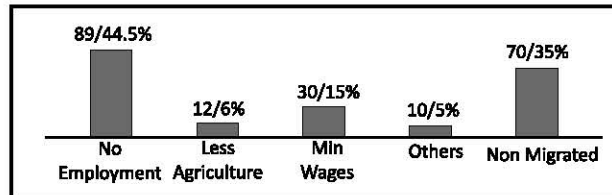
years, 34 (17%) used to stay at this place from 5 to 10 years, 13 (6.5%) respondents used to stay here from 10 to 15 years, 109 (54.5%) respondents had been living from more than 15 years.

**Migrated with whom:** 34 (17%) respondents migrated with their family members, 78 (39%) migrated on their own, 12 (6%) respondents



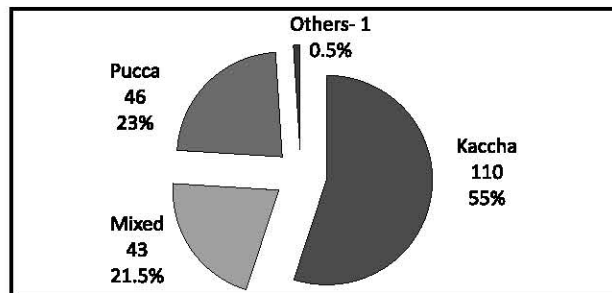
migrated with their relatives or friends, 04 respondents migrated with others while 72 (36%) respondents are born and brought up in Varanasi.

**Reason of Migration:** Out of 200 respondents 89(44.5%) migrated due to no employment opportunities in their respective villages, 12 (6%) migrated because they didn't had any



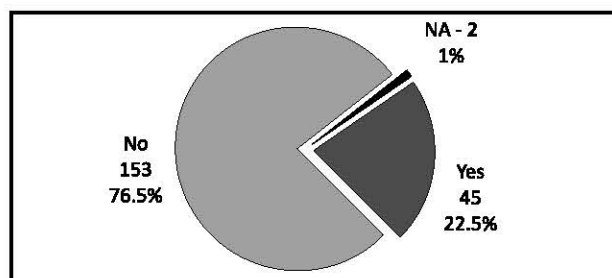
agricultural land, 30 (15%) migrated because of lesser wage rate in their villages, 10 (5%) migrated due to other reasons such as casteism, pressure of dominant castes and wanted to enjoy city life etc. 70 (35%) belong to Varanasi.

**Type of House at Native Place:** 110 (55%) respondents had Kachcha houses, 43 (21.5%) had semi concrete, 46 (23%) had concrete



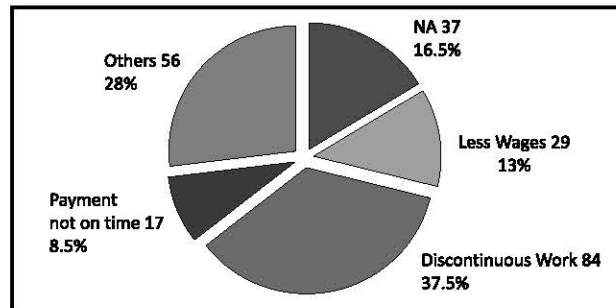
houses and 01 respondent had other than above type of house at their native place.

**Status of Registration in MGNREGA:** 45 (22.5%) respondents were registered in MGNAREGA while 153 (76.5%) respondents



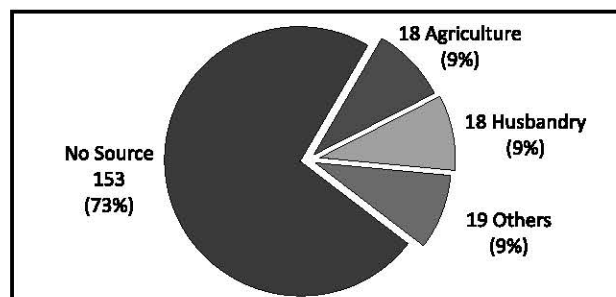
were not registered in MGNREGA, 02 respondents were residents of Varanasi City so they were not covered under this scheme.

**Reasons for not registered in MNREGA:** Out of 200 respondents 29 (13%) didn't work in MNREGA due to less wages, 84 (37.5%) due to discontinuity in work, 17 (8.5%) due to payment not on time, 56 (28%) due to other reasons, while



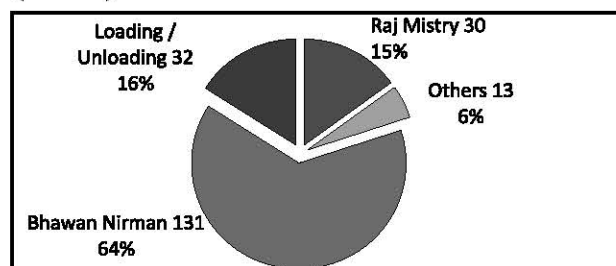
37 (18.5%) were residents of Varanasi.

**Source of Income at Native Place:** Out of 200 respondents 153 (73%) didn't had any source of income, 18 (9%) had agriculture, 18 (9%) had animal husbandry and 19 respondents had other sources of income at their native place. Some



respondents had agriculture and animal husbandry both as sources of income.

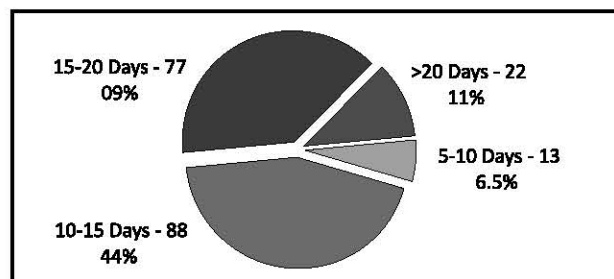
**Type of Work done:** Out of 200 respondents 131 (64%) used to work on building construction sites, 32 (16%) in loading and unloading, 30 (15%) worked as mason (raj mistry), and 13 (12.5%) used to do some other work such as





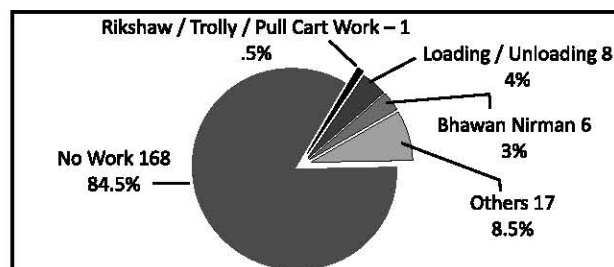
plumbing and cleaning.

**Working Days in a Month:** 13 (6.5%) respondents used to get work for 5 to 10 days, 88 (44%) for 10 to 15 days, 77 (38.5%) for 15 to 20



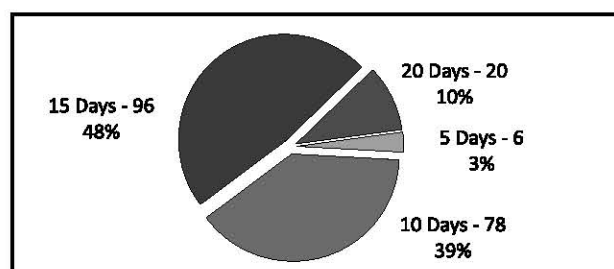
days and 22 (11%) respondents used to get work for more than 20 days.

**Description of work when there was no work:** 06 respondents rely on construction work, 08 on loading and unloading, 168 (84.5%) respondents

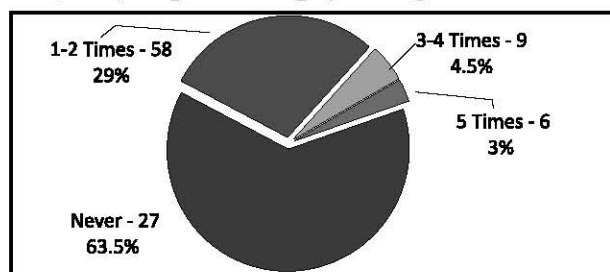


did nothing, and 17 respondents used to sell snacks or repaired cycles, 01 respondent used to pull cycle rickshaw.

**Number of days there was no work in a month:** 06 respondents did not get work for 5 days in a month, 78 (39%) respondents didn't get work for 10 days, 96 (48%) for 15 days and 20 (10%) respondents didn't get work for 20 days.

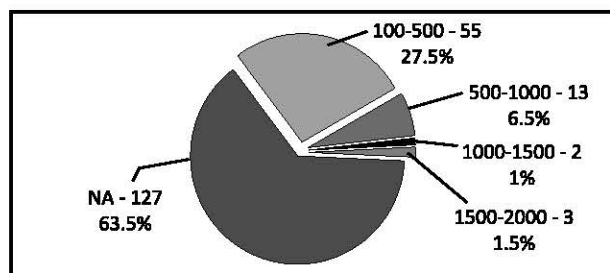


**Number of time payment got stuck:** 127 (63.5%) respondents' payment got never stuck, 58 (29%) respondents' payment got stuck for one



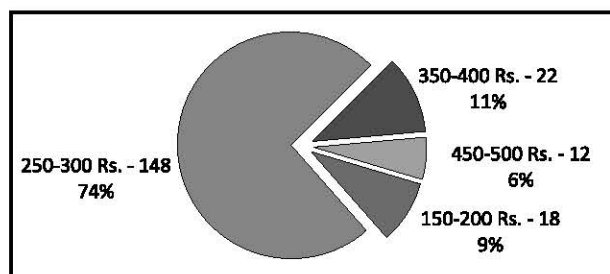
to two times, 9 respondents' payment got stuck for 3 to 4 times and 6 respondents' payment got stuck for more than 5 times.

**Amount of payment stuck in a month:** According to 55 (27.5%) respondents Rs. 100 to 500 amount in a month got stuck, Rs. 500 to 1000



amount got stuck in a month of 13 (6.5%) respondents, Rs. 1000 to 1500 amount got stuck of 2 respondents, Rs. 1500 to 2000 amount got stuck of 3 respondents while 127 (63.5%) respondents' amount never got stuck.

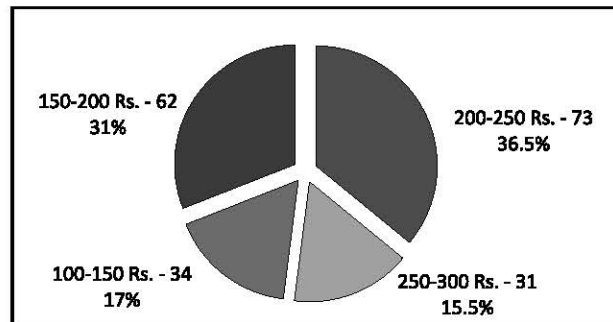
**Present Rate of Wages:** According to 18 (9.0%) respondents present wage rate was Rs. 150 to



200 per day, 148 (74%) respondents replied Rs. 250 to 300, according to 22 (11%) respondents

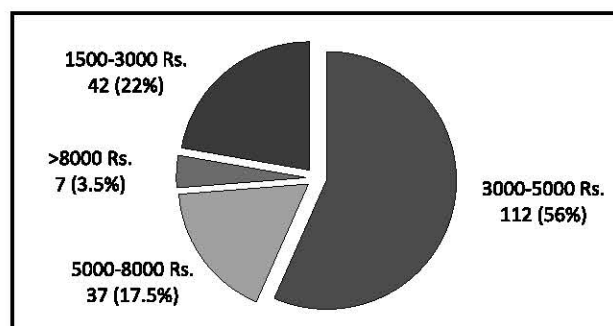
Rs.350 to 400, and according to 12 (6.0%) respondents wage rate was Rs. 450 to 500 per day.

**Minimum wages acceptable to work:** 34 (17%) respondents agreed to work at Rs. 100 to 150 wages per day, 62 (31%) respondents agreed to work on Rs. 150 to 200 wages per day, 73 (36.5%) respondents agreed to work on Rs. 200



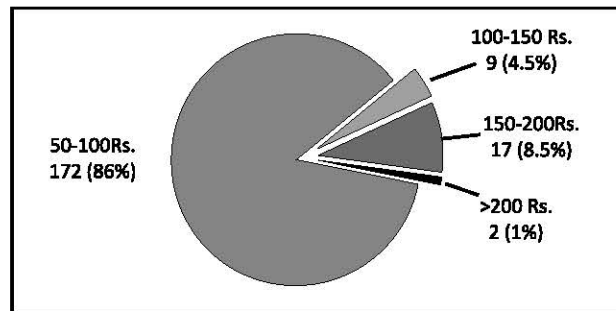
to 250 wages per day, and 31 (15.5%) respondents agreed to work on Rs. 250 to 300 wages per day.

**Monthly Income:** 44 (22%) respondents earned Rs. 1500 to 3000 in a month, 112 (56%) respondents earned Rs. 3000 to 5000 in a month,

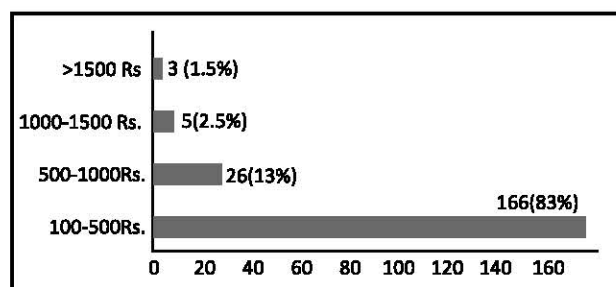


37 (18.5%) respondents earned Rs. 5000 to 8000 in a month, 07 respondents earned more than Rs. 8000 per month.

**Expenditure on Food Per Day:** According to 172 (86%) respondents they spent Rs. 50 to 100 per day on food, 09 respondents spent Rs. 100 to 150 per day, 17 (8.5 %) spent Rs. 150 to 200 per day and 02 respondent spent more than Rs. 200 per day on food.

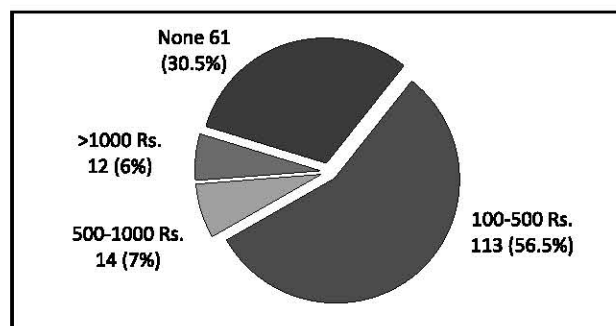


**Monthly Expenditure on Treatment of Illness:** 166 (83%) respondents spent Rs. 100 to 500 on treatment, 26 (13%) spent Rs. 500 to



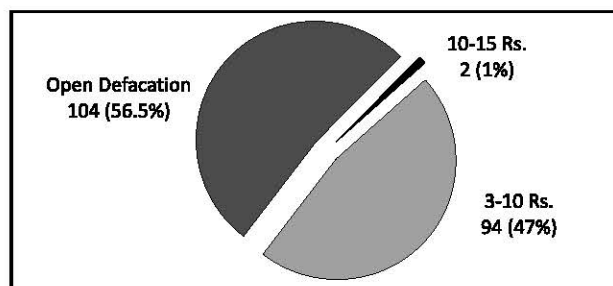
1000 on treatment, 05 respondents spent Rs. Rs. 1000 to 1500, while 03 respondents spent more than Rs. 1500 on treatment.

**Monthly Expenditure on Education:** According to 61 (30.5%) respondents their kids didn't go for schooling, 113 (56.5%) respondents



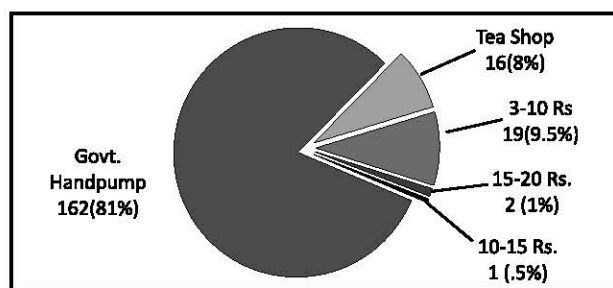
spent Rs. 100 to 500 on educations of their children, 14 (7%) respondents spent Rs. 500 to 1000 on education, and 12 respondents spent more than Rs. 1000.

**Expenditure on Toilet (defecation):** 94 (47%) respondents spent Rs. 3 to 10 per day for



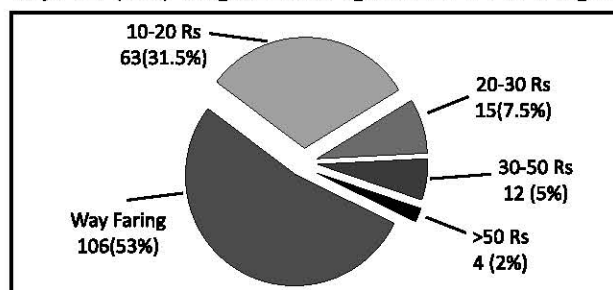
defecation, 02 respondents spent Rs. 10 to 15 per day, 104 respondents used to go for defecation in open at railway tracks, at bank of rivers, at roads.

**Expenditure on Drinking water:** 19 (9.5%) respondents spent Rs. 3 to 10 daily for drinking water, 01 respondent spent Rs. 10 to 15 daily,



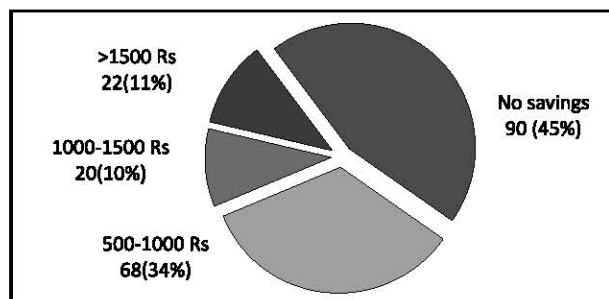
02 respondents spent Rs. 15 to 20 daily, 162 (81%) used to drink water from Nagar Nigam Hand pumps and 16 (8%) respondents used to drink water from tea shops without paying any money.

**Expenditure on Transportation:** 63 (31.5%) respondents spent Rs. 10 to 20 per day for transportation, 15 (7.5%) spent Rs. 20 to 30 per day, 12 (6%) respondents spent Rs. 30 to 50 per



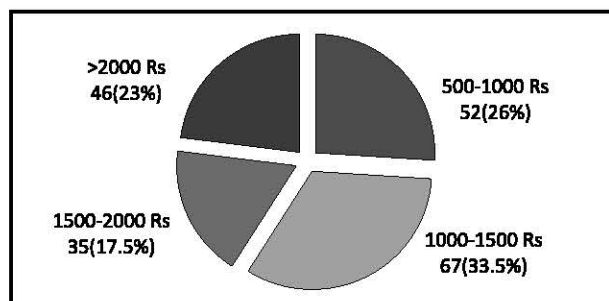
day, 4 respondents spent more than Rs. 50 and 106 (53%) respondents used to walk up to their workplace.

**Monthly Savings:** 89 (44.5%) respondents could not save any money, 69 (34.5%) respondents used to save Rs. 500 to 1000 in a



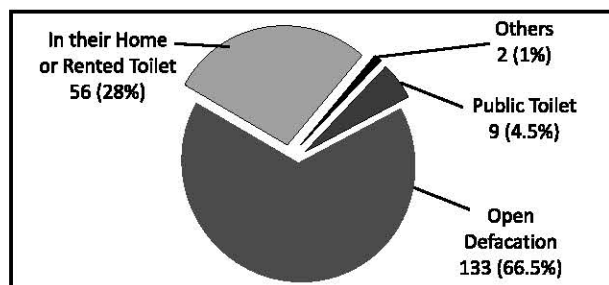
month, 20 (10%) respondents saved Rs. 1000 to 1500 per month, while 22 (11%) respondents saved more than Rs. 1500 in a month.

**Saving Sent to Home:** 52 (26%) respondents were able to send Rs. 500 to 1000 per month, 67 (33.5%) respondents sent Rs. 1000 to 1500 in a

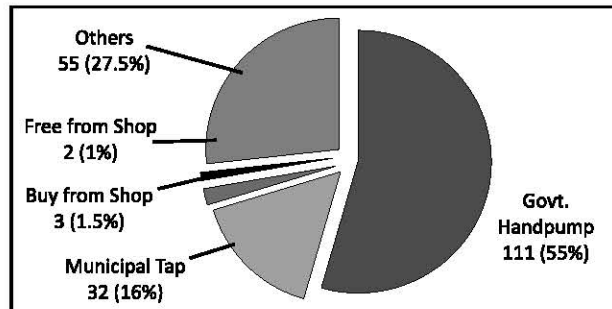


month, 35 (17.5%) sent Rs. 1500 to 2000 in a month, and 46 (23%) respondents sent more than Rs. 2000 to their home in a month.

**Place used for defecation:** 11 (5.5%) respondents used Sulabh Toilet facility for defecation, 133 (66.5%) respondents prefer defecation in open, and 56 (28%) respondents used toilet in their own home or in rented home.

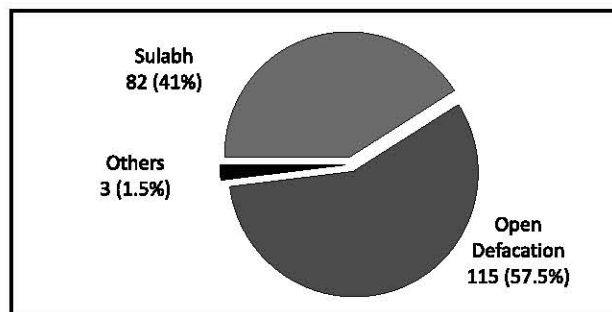


**Availability of Drinking Water:** According to 111 (55%) respondents they used government hand pumps for water, 32 (16%) get water from



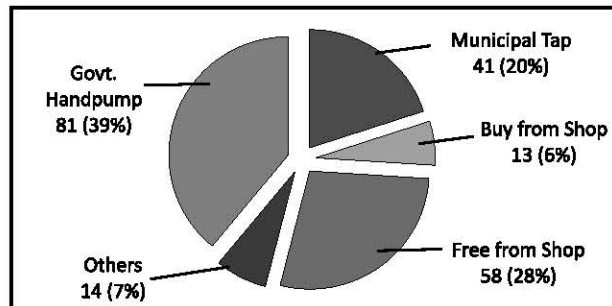
municipality taps, 3 respondents bought water from shops, 2 respondents got in free from tea shops and 55 (27.5%) respondents used water from other sources such as wells, rivers and construction sites.

**Toilet Facilities at Labor Post:** According to 82 (41%) respondents there were facility of Sulabh Toilet available at their labor post, 115



(57.5%) used to go in open, 3 respondents used to go on rail tracks or roads.

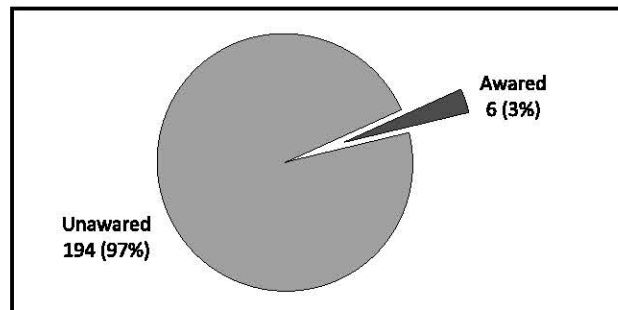
**Availability of Drinking Water at Labor Post:** Usually most of the laborers used to drink water



from nearby hand pumps or municipal taps. Few of them used to buy cold water cold water venders. Whenever hand pumps and municipal taps used to become nonfunctional then laborers used to get water from other sources such as construction sites or in free from tea shops, or buy from shops.

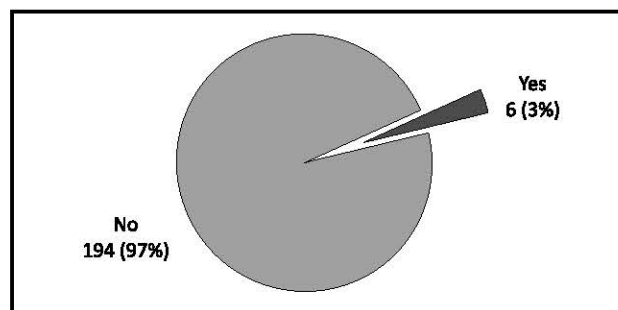
**Awareness about the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1996:**

Out of 200 respondents only 6 (3%) respondents



had information about this Act, rest 194 (97%) didn't know about this.

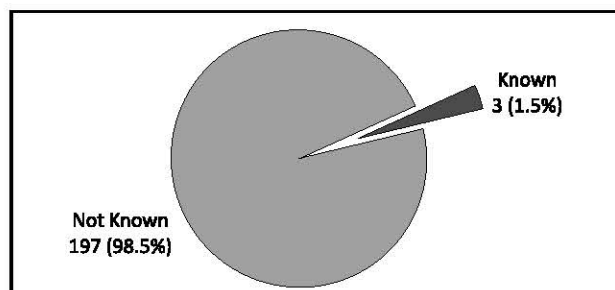
**Status of Registration under the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1996:** Out of 200 respondents only 6 (3%) respondents



were registered under this Act, rest 194 (97%) were not registered as they unaware of it.

**Information about Shelter Home:** Out of 200 respondents only 3 (1.5%) knew about shelter home, 197 (98.5%) didn't know about any shelter home in the city. During the study it was observed that most of shelter homes of Varanasi were occupied either by police, contractors or by

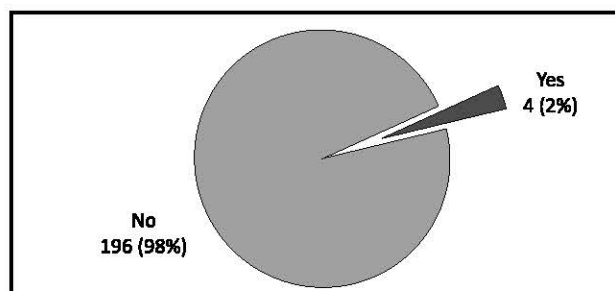




other powerful persons. That is why laborers were unaware of shelter homes.

#### Linkage with any Govt. Insurance Policy:

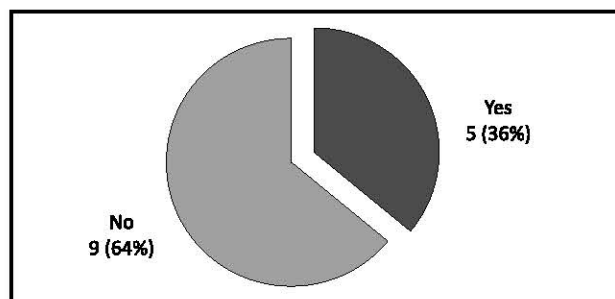
Only 4 respondents were covered with any



government insurance policy, while rest 196 (98%) respondents were not covered with any govt. policy.

#### Questions Related with Women

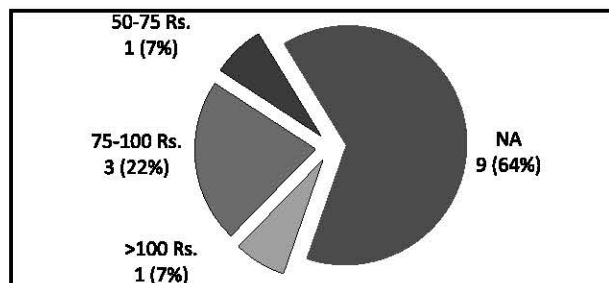
**Whether they get lesser wage than men coworkers:** Out of 14 women laborers 5 (36%) responded that they used to get lesser wage than



men, while rest 9 (64%) said that they didn't find any difference in wages.

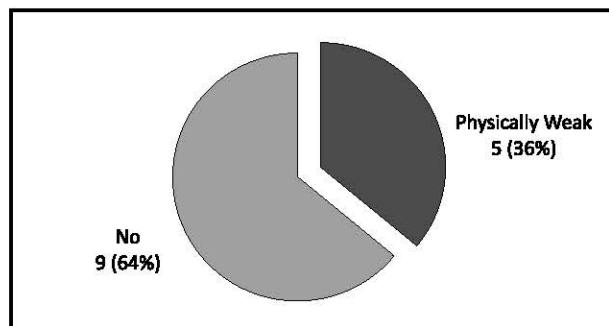
#### Disparity in Male- female Wage Rate:

According to 01 woman laborer there was difference in wage of Rs.50 to 75, according to 3 respondents difference was Rs.75 to 100,

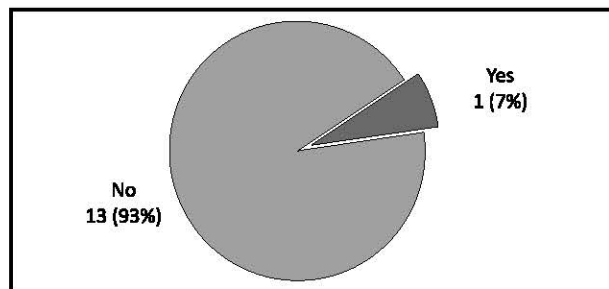


according to 1 respondent the difference was more than Rs.100. While 9 respondents found no difference in wage rate.

**Reason of Difference:** Out of 14 respondents 5 found that they were considered physically weaker than men therefore they used to get less wage.



**If they suffered from any Violence:** Out of 14 women respondents only 1 women laborer suffered from violence, rest 13 didn't suffer from



any violence.

**If taken any Action:** No action was taken by the sufferer.

**What kind of problem they face if they took their children to workplace:** None of them took their children at workplace.

## Conclusions and Observations

Lack of dignified employment opportunities, population pressure on agricultural land, low productivity in agriculture and other socio-political factors compel people especially men of rural areas to come to cities for the sake of livelihood of their family, as they (men) are supposed to be the bread winners (provider) of the family. This kind of pressure used to be on men belonging to the age group of 20 to 40 years of age as the study shows that majority of labourers belonged to this age group. They are compelled to migrate from their native places and put them in vulnerable situations in cities as they are not attuned to city life and they lack resources and the government's failure to implement schemes launched for them make them more and more vulnerable. They are also compelled to work as a casual worker as most of them are illiterate and unskilled.

Most of the labourers belong to other backward classes and scheduled castes. This clearly indicates on the socio-economic disparities persisting in rural India. Due to poverty and caste based humiliation and oppression in their villages they tend to migrate to urban centers. Data shows that majority of labourers have migrated from different villages of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and villages situated at Varanasi-Bihar borders as they don't have agricultural land and other employment opportunities at their native places. Though some of them are registered under MGNREGA but due to corruption and discontinuity they preferred to work as construction labourer in cities. Wages are fixed by bargaining and most of the labourers used to get Rs. 250 to 300 per day. Most of them used to get job for up to 15 to 20 days in a month. It means on average they earn Rs. 5000 to 6000 in a month and spend on themselves about Rs. 2000 in a month. A major part of their savings is spent on treatment of their own and their family members and on education of their kids. During the period of joblessness they used to visit their native places and just pass time with their family members because there is not any kind of jobs are available there.

Being unorganized they are prone to humiliation, harassment, exploitation, police torture and discrimination due to their socio-economic class, age and gender. As one labour stated "*desh me chori karke bhi sinajori kar sakila, par pardesh me bhichcha mange me bhi dar lagela*" (they happened to be fearless at their native places but here they are always fearful).

There are a number of labour posts in Varanasi. Study of 20 labour posts reveal that they didn't have any proper and secured place to stand. None of them have any basic facilities. All the labourers whether they are male or female used to stand in open facing difficulties of all seasons. Some of them who live in and around Varanasi used to commute daily by bicycles. Migrated labourers used to sleep in verandas of shops and Ganga ghats in free but a number of labourers sleep at some private places by paying Rs. 3 to 5 per night. Since there are no toilet facilities available at labour posts and at other public places they have to go for open defecation. There is disparity in wages among men and women. Usually women don't tend to stand on labour posts their jobs are fixed by their male counter parts. Women also suffer from humiliation, sexual harassment and double meaning comments at labour posts and at work places. Being unorganized and having weak socio-cultural support system they lack

confidence of going to police for legal action.

Majority of them have voters card and ration card as their identity proof but they cannot use their ration cards here, as that are used by their family members at their native places. Due to indifference among employees of labour department they are not registered under Building and other Construction Workers Act. While they get work for not more than 20 days in a month they are unable to save much money and whatever they could save are sent to their families.

Observations reveal that instead of registering actual construction workers (operating from labour posts) under the Act the labour department is registering farmers and other non farm workers of villages around the city through the MGNREGA job card enrollment register.

Most of them are unaware of the governmental programs concerned with their welfare. Shelters homes developed for them are used for other purposes. Therefore, there is an urgent need for intervention of civil societies and trained professional social workers. Social action strategies can be used to organize them as a labour union. As a union they can build pressure on government machineries to provide them facilities they are entitled under the Act.



## Case Studies



**Name of the labourer : Vinod Kumar**  
**labour Post : Orderly Bazar**

17 years old Vinod Kumar belongs to schedules caste is illiterate and unmarried is originally from Gonda. He used to live with his three brothers and sisters in laws and father. His mother is no more. He felt loneliness in his home as he couldn't mix up with brothers and sister in laws. His brothers also works as casual labourers they forced him to earn money and he started earning but his brothers used to snatch his whole earnings and just handed over him 10 or 20 rupees. He found himself unable to fulfill his daily needs. So he ran away from his home with his friends and came to Varanasi. Here in Varanasi he used to work with his three friends and used to earn Rs. 200 per day for fifteen to twenty days in a month. Major problem with him is that other labourers of the labour post do not let him to operate from labour post; they

harass him and used to use him for their personal work.

Since he couldn't get love and affection from his home so he rushed away from there and started working as daily wage labourer in Varanasi. Here neither he has a place to sleep nor proper arrangement for meals.

**Name of the labourer: Ram Shakal**

Ram Shakal is class 8<sup>th</sup> pass 28 years old and married. He belongs to schedules caste. He belongs to Rohania, Varanasi. In past he was a taxi driver but after he met a road accident and damaged the taxi then he had to pay some money as compensation. Since then he left the work of taxi driving and started working as daily wage labourer. His wife, two younger brothers, one sister, mother and father live with him. All the wages he earned are spent in his family. His father is handicapped and he spent Rs. 15000 on his father's treatment by borrowing money on credit from a building contractor so he has to work for him in order to pay back his money. Because he was not having any other source of income so he motivated his wife to learn stitching and now she contributes Rs. 1000 to 1500 per month. He is overburdened so he is suffering from depression which is now affecting adversely his working capacity. Due to economic difficulties his family and social condition is miserable.







**Name of the labour: Suresh Goud**

**labour Post: Orderly Bazar**

40 years old, intermediate passed, married Suresh Gaud belongs to scheduled caste. He is resident of Rajatalab, Varanasi from there he used to come to Orderly Bazar labour Post by bicycle which is about 20 kms. As he doesn't have cordial relationship with his parents so he lives in a rented house with his wife and six children. He is a mason and used to earn between Rs. 5000 to 6000 in a month but due to heavy expenditure on education of children, expenditure on treatment of sick wife and expenditure on rent of the house he is not able to save any money. He has borrowed Rs. 10000 from his land lord. He wants to quit this work and in search of any other job so that he can meet out all the expenditure. Being a well behaved person he owes respect at the labour post. He helps other masons and labourers to fix their work.

**Name of the labour: Chunnu Yadav**

**labour Post: Chetganj**

42 years old Chunnu Yadav is illiterate belongs to OBC class and married. Originally by occupation he was a farmer but when he found that by agriculture he shall not be able to fulfill his and his family member's requirements then he gave his farm on contract to another person and started working as daily wage labourer. After sometime he sold out his land to pay back the money he borrowed from someone.

Now he used to come by bicycle from Narayanpur about 20 kms. away from Varanasi city. He used to get work between 15 to 20 days in a month; he earns Rs. 150 to 180 a day. He has six children and few of them are at marriageable age but due to lack of money he finds it impossible to get them married. There is no any earning member in his family. He wants to provide better education for their children but due to lack of money he finds him unable. He is trying to keep his house on credit to marry his daughter. He is under pressure.



# *Annexure-A*

## **The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1996:**

### **Major provisions:**

Constitution of Central Advisory Committee by the Central Government, State Advisory Committee by the State Governments, appointment of registering officers and registration of establishments by the appropriate governments, registration of workers as beneficiaries by the Building and Other Construction Welfare Boards, constitution of State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Boards by the State Governments, hours of work, welfare measures and other conditions of service of building workers, safety and health measures, appointment of Director General, chief inspector and inspectors, responsibility of employers to ensure safety of the worker and prevent accidents, payment of wages and compensations.

### **Penal Provisions:**

Contravention of provisions of safety and health is punishable with imprisonment up to three months or with fine up to Rs. 2000/- or with both. Continued contravention is punishable with additional fine up to Rs. 100/- per day. Failure to give notice of commencement of construction work is punishable with imprisonment of the three month or with fine up to Rs. 2000/- or with both.

### **Implementation:**

Enforcement part of the Act is implemented by CLC in the Central sphere and State Government in the state sphere. Welfare part is implemented by the state Governments.

## **THE BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE CESS ACT, 1996:**

The Act provides for levy and collection of cess on the cost of construction incurred by employers with a view to augmenting the resources of the State Welfare Boards constituted under BOCW (RECS) Act, 1996.

### **Major provisions:**

Levy and collection of cess not exceeding 2% but not less than 1% of the cost of construction incurred by an employer (at present the rate of cess is 1%), assessment of cess.

### **Penal Provisions:**

For failure to pay the amount of cess within the specified date, prescribed authority can impose penalty not exceeding the amount of cess. Penalty with imprisonment up to 6 months or with fine up to Rs. 1000/- or with both is prescribed for furnishing false returns.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT:**

Under the Acts, some of the major obligations of the Central Government are to set- up the Central Advisory Committee u/s 3 of the BOCW Act, 1996, framing of the Model Safety Rules u/s 41 of the BOCW Act, appointment of the Director General for laying down standards of inspection and Notification for collection of cess etc.

The Central Government has constituted Central Advisory Committee on 30th June, 2000 for a period of three years and existing CAC was reconstituted on 1st September, 2009. Building and Other Construction Workers (RE&CS) Central Rules including Safety Rules were framed in 1998 and forwarded to State Governments to treat them as Model Rules, Appointment of Director General of Inspection was notified on 16.11.2005 and Notification of collection of Cess @ 1% was issued on 26.09.1996.

### **Central Advisory Committee under the Building and Other Construction Workers (RECS) Act, 1996:**

As per Section 3 of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, the Central Government shall constitute a Central Advisory Committee (CAC) to advise the Central Government on such matters arising out of the administration of this Act as may be referred to it.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS:**

Under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996, the States have to frame and notify Rules, constitute Advisory Committees/Expert Committees, appoint various authorities for registration of workers, cess collection, Inspection and Appealing Authority and constitute State Welfare Boards to frame and implement various welfare schemes in pursuance of the said Acts.

### **The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Boards:**

As per Section 18 of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, every State Government is required to constitute State Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. The Board is mandated to carry out the following functions:

- (a) provide immediate assistance to a beneficiary in case of accident
- (b) make payment of pension to the beneficiaries who have completed the age of sixty years
- (c) sanction loans and advances to the beneficiary for construction of houses.
- (d) pay premium for Group Insurance Scheme of the beneficiaries.
- (e) give financial assistance for the education of children
- (f) meet medical expenses for treatment of major ailments
- (g) make payment of maternity benefit to the female beneficiaries;  
and
- (h) make provisions and improvement of such other welfare Measures and facilities as may be prescribed.

### **The Building and other Construction Workers (RECS) Central Rules, 1998:**

In order to carry out the provisions of the Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and The Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996, the Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Central Rules, 1998 were framed by the Government. The Rules came into force on 19.11.1998. The rules apply to building and other construction work relating to any establishment in which appropriate government is the Central Government. The Central Rules defines and stipulates the following:

1. Responsibilities and duties of employers, Architects, Project Engineers and Designers, Building workers etc;
2. Constitution of Central Advisory Committee;
3. Registration of Establishments
4. Procedure for Appeal, payment of fees etc.;
5. Safety and Health measures etc.

### **THE BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE CESS RULES, 1998:**

The Rules came into force on 26.03.1998. The Central Rules provide for Levy of cess, time and manner of collection of cess, transfer of proceeds of the cess to the board, assessment, return of overpaid cess, powers of assessing officer, and penalty for non payment of cess. In fact a comprehensive Act, catering to the security needs of the unorganized sector such as Food, Nutrition, Health, Housing, Employment, Income, Life and accident, and old age remains a dream in India. Still the cries of the unorganized sector goes unattended with the governments laying red carpets for the corporate and so called investors at the expense and sacrifice of the working class.





# Annexure-B

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## 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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