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A STUDY ON UNORGANISED LABOURERS IN THE DISTRICT OF KAMRUP (METRO)

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Abstract:

Labour is the vital component amongst the four factors of production in economy. Being a labor-intensive country, the dominance of labourers is seen everywhere in Indian economy. Most of the labourers in India are belong to unorganised sector. More than half of the total population of the country is from unorganised sector which contributes a significant portion towards the National Income. Unorganised workers have always been oppressed in many terms. Despite of the significant contribution made by these workers in the growth and development of Indian economy, they are still neglected and many of them have been suffering unfairness in terms of their needs and wants, human rights, social security, and other important social aspects. Through this paper the researchers want to discuss various issues of unorganised labourers in Kamrup (Metro) district.

Key words: Unorganised labour, Factors of production, National Income etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 provided clear cut definition of unorganised worker. Where it is mentioned that an unorganised worker is a home based-worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganised sector and includes a worker in the organised sector who is not covered by any of the Acts mentioned in scheduled II of the said Act. In India, currently more than half of the population are working in informal sector. The contribution of informal sector towards the development of Indian economy cannot be overlooked as a generous portion of GDP comes from this sector. But the unorganised labourers suffer from tremendous problems starting from job security, long working hours to low rate of wages. In Assam also, the unorganised labourers have been suffering from different issues for a long period of time. Illiteracy among the unorganised labourers acting as hindrance towards their development which needs utmost attention for promoting their standard of living and work efficiency. Though government has formulated many schemes for these workers but, many times, they are not able to get the various benefits provided by the government just because of their illiteracy and ignorance. As, the economy is very much affected by the services of the unorganised sector labourers, therefore proper investigation for improving quality of their services is very much essential. For the research study the researchers have considered unorganised carpenters, unorganised masons and other unorganised labourers providing the services at the homes of users in Kamrup Metro.

About Kamrup metro:

The researchers have selected the Kamrup (Metro) district to conduct the research investigation. Kamrup Metro is a district of Assam with an area of 955km square. The population of the district is 1,253,938 out of which 647,585 male and 606,353 female. The district has four assembly constituencies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

There are numerous research studies based on the problems of unorganized labourers in all over the world. The researchers have gone through various articles, research papers to find out the research gap of earlier studies. Manohar (1983) has discussed about the problems of women workers and the exploitation faced by them in unorganized sector. Bandyopadhyay and Hillary (1985) also found that the number of women workers in Kolkata is increasing because of high rate of unemployment, falling living urban standards etc. The study of migrant women labourers is also seen in the research made by Anand (1988). He pointed out that the migrant women informal labourers from Tamil Nadu easily get job in informal sector of Delhi. Biswajit Ghosh (1988) in his study focused on the actions taken by the trade unions in organizing the unorganized labourers of Calcutta's leather and bookbinding industries. Anand (2003) also planned the policy framework needed for development of unorganised sector in India. A study made by K. Deka (2001) focused on the social security measures for the agricultural labourers of unorganised sector in Kamrup district. K.A Janardhanan (2012) in his study provided importance on framing strategies to decrease the problems of unorganised tribal labourers in Cuddalore district. Ratna Sen (2013) in his study focused on the unionization of the unorganised sector labourers to solve various problems. Gnanamanickam (2015) also made a study on the problems and prospects of unorganised workers in border road organisation in Assam

It is seen that the aforesaid studies pointed out different issues related to women unorganised labourers, problems of the unorganised labour and the policy framework needed for unorganised labour, etc., but, the researchers have not come across the various issues of unorganised labourers of Kamrup (Metro) district.

Objectives of the study:

Following are the objectives of the study-

1. To know about the income of various categories of unorganised labourers in Kamrup (Metro) district
2. To study the problems faced by these labourers in Kamrup (Metro) district

Research Questions:

The researchers have following research questions.

1. Whether there is any income difference of the unorganised labourers;
2. Whether the unorganised labourers of Kamrup (Metro) district face any problems in rendering services.

Research Methodology:

The entire research investigation is analytical and explorative in nature. The study is based on primary data.

Mode of data collection:

The researchers have collected data from the select unorganised labourers of Kamrup (Metro) district with the help of a schedule.

Population:

The population of the study consists of all the unorganised labourers of Kamrup (Metro) district.

Mode of sampling:

The Researchers used convenient sampling method for collecting data. The researchers have taken a sample size 30 unorganised labourers after conducting of pilot survey in Kamrup (Metro) district. The district has been divided into 4 assembly constituencies and sample respondents are selected from each constituency as given below.

Types of unorganised labour	Jalukbari	Dispur	Guwahati East	Guwahati West	Total
Carpenter	2	2	3	3	10
Masons	2	3	2	3	10
Other unorganised labourers	3	3	2	2	10
Total	7	8	7	8	Sample Size=30

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

AGE

i. AGE OF UNORGANISED CARPENTERS

Competency of unorganised laborer is affected by their physical fitness which is very much dependent on age.

Table No. 1
Age of unorganised carpenters

Age group	No. of Respondents
20- 30 years	3 (30%)
30-50 years	5 (50%)
Above 50 years	2 (20%)
Total	10 (100%)

Source: Field survey

The table-1 shows that majority i.e., 80% of the select respondents are in between the age group 20 to 50 years. In 20 to 50 years age, human beings are physically very active. Only 20% of the respondents are above 50 years.

Table No. 2
Age of unorganised masons

Age group	No. of Respondents
20- 30 years	5 (50%)
30-50 years	4 (40%)
Above 50 years	1 (10%)
Total	10(100%)

Source: Field survey

Similarly, masons also need more physical energy to perform the work. Therefore, table-2 shows that majority of the respondents (i.e., 90%) are the age group of 20 to 50 years and only 10% respondents are the age group of above 50 years.

Table No. 3
Age of other unorganised labour

Age group	No. of Respondents
20- 30 years	5 (50%)
30-50 years	5 (50%)
Above 50 years	0 (0%)
Total	10(100%)

Source: Field survey

From table -3 it is seen that all the other unorganised labourers of Kamrup Metro district fall in 20 to 50 years of age group. Like carpenters and masons, other unorganised labourers also have to perform laborious work which needs more physical energy.

Table 4
Community of unorganised labourers

Religion	Unorganised carpenters	Unorganised Masons	Other unorganised labourers
Hindu	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Muslim	4 (40%)	7 (70%)	5 (50%)
Others	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

Source: Field survey

Table-4 shows another remarkable fact about unorganised labourers of Kamrup Metro district. i.e., 60% of respondents of carpenters belongs to Hindu community where as 40% of them are from Muslim community. In case of masons 30% of them are Hindu and 70% of them are Muslim. When it comes to the other unorganised labourers 50% belongs to Hindu community and remaining 50% are from Muslim community. In case of carpentry related work, the dominance of Hindu labourers is seen in Kamrup Metro district. Where, a complete opposite picture is seen in case of masonry related work, where majority of the unorganised masons are belonged to Muslim community.

Table no. 5
Daily wages of unorganised labourers

Daily wages in rupees	Unorganised Carpenters	Unorganised Masons	Other unorganised labourers
Below 500	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
500-700	8 (80%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
700 and above	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

Source: Field survey

It has been observed from table-5 that majority of all the unorganised labourers (80% of unorganised carpenters, 70% of unorganised masons and 60% of other unorganised labourers) earns in between Rs. 500 to 700 as daily wage. No unorganized carpenter and mason earn below Rs. 500 as their daily wage. But a remarkable fact is observed that 30% of the other unorganised labourers earns below Rs. 500.

Skill of the unorganised labourers has direct relation with wages. If the labourers have requisite skill and expertise, they will get more work and earn more money.

Table 6
Awareness towards skill development by the unorganised labourers

Response	Unorganised Carpenters	Unorganised Masons	Other unorganised labourers
Yes	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
No	9 (90%)	8 (80%)	10 (100%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

Source: Field survey

From table-6 it is seen that majority of the unorganised carpenters (i.e.,90%) and unorganised masons (i.e.,80%) labourers are not aware about any skill development problem organized by the government. All the other unorganised labourers do not have awareness on skill development programme.

Table no.7
Educational Qualification

Education level	Unorganised carpenters	Unorganised masons	Other unorganised labourers
Nil	5 (50%)	6 (60%)	7 (70%)
Up to class viii	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)
Viii to H.S.L.C	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
H.S.L.C and above	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

Source: Field survey

Education is pivotal for all round development of unorganised labourers. It will enhance skill and efficiency in workplace. But it is found that these unorganised labourers have always been showing negligence in receiving education. Table -7 shows that majority of the unorganised labourers do not have basic education. 50% of unorganised carpenters, 60% of masons and 70% of other unorganised labourers are illiterate. They do not consider the importance of education; hence they do not show any interest to send their children at school.

6. PROBLEMS OF UNORGANISED LABOURERS

Using of Traditional tools

The unorganised labourers use traditional tools and equipment at workplace, which consumes more time as well as physical energy. This is one of the notable problem of the unorganized labourers in Kamrup District. The researchers have used Likert scale to analyse the opinions of the unorganised labourers on this aspect in following way-

Opinion	Point
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

Table No 8

Response of unorganised labourers on using traditional tools

Do you face problem in using traditional tools at workplace?	No of respondents
Strongly agree	11 (36.67%)
Agree	14 (46.67%)
Neutral	4 (13.33%)
Disagree	1 (3.33%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0%)
Total	30 (100%)

Source: Field survey

From the table-8 it is seen that majority of the respondents i.e.,83.34% are strongly agreed and agreed (36.67% and 46.67%) with the fact of facing problems in using traditional tools at workplace as it consumes more time and energy. 13.33% of them provided neutral opinion in this issue, only a few portion (i.e., 3.33%) of select respondents disagreed with the fact.

Delay in wage payment:

The problems of unorganised labourers do not only limit to using of traditional tools and services. Though they provide various services at the cost of time and energy by using traditional tools, still they do not receive their wages on regular basis. The researchers have analysed their response on wage payment by using Likert scale in previous way.

Table no. 9
Reaction of unorganised labourers towards delay in wage payment

Do you face problem in receiving daily wages on regular basis?	No of respondents
Strongly agree	6 (20%)
Agree	9 (30%)
Neutral	7 (23.33%)
Disagree	8 (26.67%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0%)
Total	30 (100%)

Source: Field survey

The unorganised labourers are very much dependent on daily wages to live their livelihood as they do not have other source of income. From table-9 it is seen that 50% of the respondents are strongly agreed and agreed with the fact that they face problem in receiving daily wages on regular basis. 23.33% of these labourers provided neutral opinion while 26.67% of them are disagreed with the statement

Table no.10
Reaction of unorganised labourers towards long working hour

Do you face problem of long working hour?	No of respondents
Strongly agree	5 (16.67%)
Agree	13(43.33%)
Neutral	8 (26.67%)
Disagree	4(13.33%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0%)
Total	30 (100%)

Source: Field survey

Apart from the above stated problems, sometimes these unorganised labourers need to work for more than 9 hours without getting additional payment for extra work. From table-10 it is seen that, 16.67% of the labourers are strongly agree and 43.33% of them are agree with the fact of facing the problem of long working hour. 26.67% provided neutral response in this regard, while 13.33% of the labourers are disagreed with the fact.

8. SAVING PATTERN OF THE UNORGANISED LABOURERS

Unorganized labourers earn very less income to make proper savings. Though most of their hard-earned money is utilized for consumption they save the remaining portion in following way-

Table no. 11
Means of saving money of unorganised labourers

Means of saving money	No. of respondents
Bank	5 (16.67%)
Post –office	3 (10%)
Other unorganised source like thrift society, money lenders	13 (43.33%)
Self	9 (30%)
Total	30 (100%)

Source: Field survey

Table-11 shows that majority 43.33% of the unorganised labourers do not have any link with bank and post office for their deposits and they keep their money in some other unorganised sources. As banks and post-offices involve huge paper work and most of the unorganised labourers are illiterate, they depend on other unorganised sources.

9. Sources of borrowing

As majority of unorganized labourers are illiterate, they find it difficult to complete the process of paperwork needed for borrowing money banks or other financial institutions. However, they also do not have sufficient collateral. Table-12 shows various sources of borrowings generally of these unorganised labourers-

Table no. 12
Sources of borrowing money of unorganised labourers

Sources of borrowing	No. of respondents
Bank	3(10%)
Post –office	2(6.67%)
Other unorganised source like thrift society, money lenders	13 (43.33%)
Friends and family	12 (3.6%)
Total	30 (100%)

Source: field survey

It has been observed from table-12 that majority of the unorganised labourers i.e., 43.33% depends on other unorganised sources for borrowing money.

Observations:

The study has given following observations in brief.

1. It is seen that most of the unorganised labourers are in the age group of 20 to 50 years of age.
2. The daily income of the majority of the labourers lies in Rs. 500-700. No unorganised carpenter and mason earn below Rs. 500 as daily wage.
3. Majority of the unorganised labourers are agreed with the fact of facing problems by using traditional tools at workplace.
4. Most of these unorganized labourers are also facing problems of long working hours as well as not receiving their daily wages on regular basis.
5. Most of them do not have any formal education
6. Majority of the labourers do not have any awareness on skill development programme.
7. Most of the unorganised labourers depend on other unorganised sources for saving their money as well as borrowing

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

The unorganised labourers have been facing many problems for a long period of time. Most of the time they face these problems because of their illiteracy and unawareness about various facts. Measures should be adopted by the government to make these labourers educate. Apart from that to enhance their workplace skill, they should be enrolled with different skill development programmes. Government should provide their supportive hands to these labourers for purchasing modern tools and equipment. There is need of for proper implementation of various laws for protecting the interest of these unorganised labourers.

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