

**ROLE ADJUSTMENT IN FAMILY AND WORK LIFE OF WOMEN
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS: A STUDY IN THE NATIONAL
CAPITAL REGION OF DELHI**

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
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CHAPTER – 9

**CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL
WORK INTERVENTION**

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CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

9.1. INTRODUCTION

This last chapter is aimed at concluding the research work by presenting the major findings of the study. This is followed by some suggestions extended for the empowerment of women construction workers. The same forms the basis for drawing up the implications of the practice of social work and in suggesting appropriate intervention. These are based on the responses of the sample respondents, views of lawyers, social activists, and social workers and also the researcher's own experiences during the research work.

The present study encompassed an in-depth study of role adjustment of women construction workers in family and work life. It aimed at providing a detailed description about the challenges faced by them in living and working conditions and the coping mechanisms used by them to meet the challenges. An attempt has also been made to critically examine the various women labour legislations in India as well as policy initiatives undertaken by the Government of India. Besides this, it has also presented grounded theory based on narrative analysis of women construction workers.

The study incorporated a quantitative analysis of the responses of women construction workers, their employers through interviews, coupled with a qualitative analysis sourced from the narratives from women construction workers employed in construction activity in Delhi NCR.

The present chapter is divided into two sections. Section-I deals with major findings of the study and Section-II presents various recommendations as well as implications for social work practice.

SECTION-I

Section-I presents the major findings of the study under the following sub sections:

- 9.2. Demographic profile of the Respondents
- 9.3. Women and Labour Laws – A Critical Analysis

9.4. Family and Work Life of Women Construction Workers – A Kaleidoscopic View of their Lives

9.5 . Family and Work Life Challenges of Women Construction Workers: Challenges and Coping Strategies

9.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

9.2.1. Demographic Profile of Women Construction Workers

In the present study the respondents were drawn from the women construction workers working in Delhi NCR. The sample consisted of 210 women construction workers and 30 employers employing these women workers.

- Age of the women construction workers is one of most important factors for migration. As the age group of 18-45 years is the reproductive and productive age.

The respondents were in the age bracket of 20 - 45 years. The maximum number of respondents (38.1%) was from the age group of 20 - 25 years, followed by 26.7 percent women whose age was 25 to 30 years and the next in number were the women construction workers in the age group of 30 to 35 years. The least number of women construction workers were 7.6 percent in the age group of 40 to 45 years. Women in the age group of 20-25 migrated to Delhi and started working at an early age. Just after their marriage they had to migrate along with their husbands to Delhi NCR.

- 65 (31.0%) respondents belonged to the SCs and STs category, followed by 28.1% from Religious minority group, 27.6% of the respondents were OBCs and 13.3% were from Upper castes. So, the study revealed that majority of the construction belonged to SC/ST category. However, respondents belonged to all categories of social groups.
- The majority 87% of the respondents were illiterate. Some of the respondents went to school for basic education, followed by 22.4% who had primary schooling and 24% were up to middle schooling. The study reported them majority of them were uneducated as the highest qualification that the researcher came across amongst

respondents was middle class and the rest 87% were illiterate who could not even read and write.

- 8.1% of the respondents were born and brought up in Delhi whereas rest of them came from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan. This shows that women workers migrate along with their children and husbands in the quest of earning livelihood. Lack of employment opportunities, agrarian distress, and growth of informal economy are some of the other reasons of migration.
- 80% of the respondents belonged to nuclear families i.e. husband, wife and their children, and followed by 20.4% in joint families i.e. a family which includes two or more families. As the respondents are migrants, so they come along with their children and husbands. 53% of the respondents had one to five members in their family.
- The average age of marriage among the respondents was twenty years. Nearly one fifth respondents (18.6%) got married before the legal age of 18 years and 26.2% were married after 18 years of age but almost all respondents got married 20 years old. After marriage, they are burdened with dual responsibility as they worked for the family and simultaneously fulfilled the demands of the supervisor at the worksite.
- As the respondents migrated to cities just after marriage, therefore, 92 women construction workers had children less than three years of age. 43.8 percent of the parents had left their children at the native place. They were being looked after by their grandparents or other relatives. The remaining children (56.2%) were living with their parents in Delhi at the time of data collection.
- More than one fifth of the children of the women construction workers were attending the school and around 71 % per cent children were not attending the school. There are no education facilities for children available on construction sites and even if a child is admitted to a government school, retention in school is a problem if the parents are migrant workers.

- Nearly one third (35.2%) of the respondents gave birth to a child at an early age of 16 – 18 years. This young age is itself considered as vulnerable for giving birth to a child while they themselves were in the category of a child. At this tender age they are not even correctly informed regarding the sexuality, personal health, hygiene and contraception. As per World Health Organization, a gap of at least 24 months should be there between first and second child. A proper gap is considered essential for the good health of mother and proper bringing up of children. Contrary to this, 37.6 per cent women had a gap of less than one year between two children, and 39 per cent had a gap of one to two years.
- Around 15.2 per cent women had a gap of 2-3 years and 8.1per cent had a gap of more than three years. Nearly 50 percent of the respondents (46.7%) worked till 8-9 months of pregnancy. Out of them 30 women continued to work till the day of their delivery. Because their living condition compelled them to work mainly because of their survival needs.
- The family income of the respondents ranged between less than 5000 to maximum monthly income of 11000 and above.

9.2.2. Profile of the Employers of Women Construction Workers

The age wise distribution of employers revealed that a majority of employers were above 36 years and below 45 years. Majority of the employers who belonged to Hindu religion were from Upper Castes and OBCs. As far as the educational qualification of the employers is concerned, a majority of the employers (36.6%) had acquired only basic education and a few 20% of the respondents studied till middle class.

9.2.3. Profile of the Respondents (Important Stakeholders)

In total, 20 stakeholders were interviewed. The data on the age distribution of the important stakeholders revealed that the average age of the respondents was 44.5 years. Out of the 20 respondents, 12 respondents were from Labour Departments and 8 were professionals working in an informal sector, were interviewed. The distribution of stakeholders according to their educational qualification revealed that maximum number of stakeholders were postgraduates (40%) followed by M.Phil (30%).

9.3. WOMEN AND LABOUR LAWS – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The history of labour legislation in India is interwoven with the history of British colonialism. In India, legislation relating to labour has grown in the twentieth century. Till the First World War, labour legislations were scanty. Many labour laws were passed soon after India achieved political Independence in 1947.

Labour is a concurrent subject in the constitution of India implying that both the Union and the State governments are competent to administer and legislate on labour matters. The need for protecting and safeguarding the interest of labour has been enshrined in fundamental rights i.e. chapter III (Articles 16, 19, 23 & 24) and in Directive Principles of State Policy i.e. chapter IV (Articles 39, 41, 42, 43, 43A & 54) of the constitution of India. The constitution of India protects right of labour to form associations and unions by enshrining it as a fundamental right. Wherein, the ideals of the welfare state are enunciated in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

A range of laws exist to enable the provision of safe working and living conditions for workers in construction industry. Yet, these laws are unfamiliar to the women workers themselves and are poorly implemented. None of the women I men had any knowledge of the legal requirements their employers are meant to comply with and assumed that their husbands or Thekedars must know. For them it was difficult to imagine that they had any legal rights at all.

The Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1996, is the central legislation concerning labour welfare in construction industry. The law makes it compulsory that any construction activity with more than 10 workers must follow the guidelines set by it. All the workers employed for construction work must be registered and must receive benefits provided by a welfare fund and must receive a welfare fund. Workers have to register with state welfare boards, for which forms must be filled and identification must be provided.

The board is meant to fix hours of work and ensure that companies provide atleast one day for rest during the week.

For any overtime work or work on an off day, the worker is entitled to twice her/his normal wage rate, which is a benefit only found in law, not in practice.

Facilities that employers are meant to ensure include-

- A regularly maintained register for workers, which is practised but these registers are kept secret
- Payment of regular wages
- Safe drinking water
- Suitable toilets connected to sewage system
- Temporary living accommodation with separate cooking, bathing, washing and lavatory facilities
- Crèche
- First aid kits
- Canteens, and
- Safety guidelines are to be provided by employers, but remain conspicuous by their absence.
- In construction industry, working conditions, living conditions and wages are well known for their complete disregard for labour laws. This industry has the layered structure; therefore, it is difficult to blame an identifiable employer.
- Women labour continue to do the head loading, picking up and throwing away the rubble from the site, assisting mistris by carrying and handling out bricks and making the cement mix and get paid less than the male worker.
- Even after three major labour legislations the Contract Labour Act 1970, the Inter State Migrant Workers Act 1979 and the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1966, the labourers in general and women labour in particular

continue to be deprived of minimum wages, maternity entitlements, crèche facility and old age pension.

- It was found that except one woman worker there was no awareness of the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act 1966 and none of the women worker was member of any trade union nor had they been approached by anyone for enrollment.
- There is no evidence of any paperwork that would confirm that women workers are paid on time and minimum wages are given.

Due to the lack of awareness about the Act and the unorganised nature of the workforce, women workers in construction industry are not in a position to negotiate collectively. Though protected by law, these workers have not been able to extract any of the benefits of the law. The government and the state need to have proper mechanisms in place to disseminate and update information about their welfare at micro and at macro level.

9.4. FAMILY AND WORK LIFE OF WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS – A KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF THEIR LIVES

9.4.1. The family life reflects upon the living conditions of women construction workers:

- The researcher found that women construction workers were either living at worksite, or away from worksite. 141 women construction workers out of 210 were living at construction sites, 89 women workers were living in semi-pucca (temporary shacks made of bricks with tin roofs) and 52 were living in Jhuggi. Nearly 33% women workers were living off site i.e. 83% were in rented Pucca houses and 17% had own houses. Workers who live away from their work sites usually visit the naka for finding work and their socio-economic conditions are slightly better off than workers staying at the worksite.

- The study found that 78.6% of the respondents lived in one room in Jhuggi, Semi-Pucca, worksite and Pucca houses. Only 21.4% lived in two rooms in semi-pucca, worksite and Pucca rented houses. Thus, it was observed that workers with nuclear families had one room accommodation in Jhuggi, semi-pucca, worksite, and Pucca houses and those with their relatives had two rooms accommodation in semi-pucca, worksite and pucca rented houses.
- More than 50% of the respondents (66.1%) had fan at their homes. Some of the respondents those who migrated from other states carried fan with them. Others approached the contractor to provide them fan. Those who lived in Jhuggis did not have fan. They had a hand fan available with them. The study shows that more than two third of the respondents (39%) did not have their own vehicle, because the working place was very close to their place of residence. Therefore, they did not require cycle. They used either public transport (bus, auto) or their own vehicle for transportation purpose. The respondents of Delhi NCR possessed their own bicycles for their mobility. Only negligible percentage (12.8%) of the respondents had cooler. Amongst construction workers cooler is considered as a luxury. The study shows that nearly about eighty percent respondents' (78.5%) husbands use mobile phones. It is very significant finding of the study that none of the women construction workers had a personal cell phone.
- A Majority of the respondents use fire woods and kerosene/Gas stove for cooking. More than half of the respondents (65.2%) use fire woods whereas 26.1% of the respondents use kerosene/Gas stove for cooking. Women workers go for collecting fire woods from nearby forest areas after coming from work site. Negligible percent (3.8%) of the respondents had separate kitchen for preparing food. Rest of the respondents had only one room where they lived and prepared food as well.
- Only 8% of the respondents had proper bed to sleep. Rest of the respondents either slept on floor or on folding bed or Charpai. Those who had migrated did not bring any kind of household furniture along with them. About 12% of the respondents

had television in their houses. 7.5% of the respondents brought second hand TVs and to very few respondents (4.4%) TV sets were provided by their employers. Nearly all (88.5%) the respondents had electricity facilities/connections in their houses and their houses were fitted with electric bulbs. Electricity is provided to those who live at worksite. Some of the respondents had got electrified their houses whereas others were having temporary supply of electricity from their neighbors as adhoc connections.

- It was observed that, the women construction workers staying in pucca houses could mostly avail water from separate individual connections. Those respondents who were staying in Kaccha/Jhuggis were facing difficulties in procuring water because these houses were illegally constructed on unauthorized land. Therefore, they lacked proper water and sanitation facilities. It was also observed that there was no separate kitchen, electricity, water, toilet and urinal facility in the Jhuggi and Kaccha houses. More than two third of the respondents (77.6%) reported that they had to get water from public water taps and tankers. They had to stand in big queues to get water. But in the summer season, when the water requirement was more, they faced scarcity in the procurement of water. One fourth (21%) of the respondents had private latrines at their place of residence. A majority of the respondent were using public lavatories. The respondents living in Jhuggis shared that they were using open space behind the slums for defecation purposes.
- Less than one fourth of the respondents (21.4%) reported that they did not have separate bathroom facility at their residence. They used to take bath at the nearby community water tap facility available in the community. Only 45 respondents were having separate bathroom at their residence. Those respondents who live at worksite shared that they took bath early in the morning before the sunrise.
- Less than two third (23.8%) of the respondents of the families earned between Rs.7000-9000 per month followed by the few (49) respondents who earned between Rs. 9000 -11000 per month. Monthly income also depends on the number of days of work available to earning members of the family. Women spend their earnings more on immediate requirements like food (22%) whereas men spend on

cigarettes, liquor, and tobacco i.e. 9% of the family income. At the same time women save money for unforeseen expenses. They keep their money in the blankets or in the quilts for meeting future contingencies.

- More than half of the respondents (75%) saved Rs. 1000 per month, 17.6% of the respondents saved more than 1000 Rs. and few of the respondents (5.7%) had nil savings. This shows that less savings forces them into indebtedness. The study revealed that more than half of the respondents (74.7%) had taken loan, and very few respondents (25%) were not in the trap of indebtedness. The main reasons for borrowing money being marriage of a daughter, husband's addiction, medical emergency, lack of employment during winter and monsoons and if rent is being not paid on time. They borrow money from moneylenders at high rate of interest. At times, they have to pay interest as well, when they could not return the money on time.
- A significant number of respondents (92.2%) sleep on ground during summers, and few respondents (7.2%) sleep on folding bed. In winters, more than half of respondents (69.8%) sleep on folding bed and 30.2% of the respondents sleep on mat. It was observed that there was no room for privacy. Also, the study also reported that the size of the family varies from five to six members. They had to manage only in one room accommodation. The availability of space is used for bedroom, kitchen and storeroom. Therefore, workers leave most of the luggage in their village. They bring only the essential stuff they need for survival.
- Nearly 89% of the respondents suffer from same kind of health problems as the nature of work for all is almost same. The common problems are hand/leg pain, stomach pain, general weakness, eye pain, headache, skin diseases and breathing trouble. The reasons for such sickness being standing for a long time, working bare feet, lack of pure drinking water, carrying load, allergy from cement and dust. One of the respondents said "***majboori me karna pdta hain ye kaam, paise ke lie kuch toh karna pdega garib log hain hum***" (we have to take up this job to earn our livelihoods as there are no other source of employment). 11% of the respondents were physically fit.

- More than two third of the respondents (71%) went to local dispensary for medical treatment. 29% of the respondents went to government hospitals for medical treatment. Respondents shared that they did not go to hospital for delivery. The child is either born at home or at worksite. Daai is called up in case of emergency. Women are looked after by their husbands or neighbors at the time of delivery. Elder siblings take care of their younger brother or sister. After few weeks, they go back to their workplace either with their new born child or looked after by their siblings at home. There is a fear of losing job and loss of wages.
- Work for all the women construction workers starts at 5a.m. and continues till 11 p.m. The effect of this busy schedule of women workers affects the young child. They lack mother's love and affection which is required for their growth and development. Older siblings who are just six-seven years old are only provided rotis and chutney. Therefore, children are severely malnourished and have a variety of deficiency diseases like anemia and vitamin D. Around 27% of the respondents also witnessed domestic violence if the household work was not performed in time. The study found that respondents did not have time for themselves.

9.4.2. Construction Sites

- The data found that nearly one third (32.9%) of the respondents entered the workforce between the age group of 26-30 years. 25.7% of the respondents started working between the age of 22-26 years and 20.5% started their work at a bit later stage i.e. between the age of 30-34 years. Thus, we see that there is no such particular age at which the women started working in construction sector. But, mostly women of age 22 to 30 years are hired at large. The study also revealed that poverty and unemployment forced them to work.
- The study found that construction work was the first engagement for a large majority of (81.4%) the respondents. For a very few number of the respondents (18.6%), it was their second job. These women left their first job as it was not of

their liking and was not paid well although earlier also they worked in the construction sector.

- 21 percent of the respondents got work through contractors. However, on the larger construction sites contractors recruit labour from distant rural areas through agents.
- From the data it is clear that about one third of (33.3%) women construction workers were in the present work since the 4 years and above, followed by 23.80% of them who were in it between three to four years. About one fifth of the respondents were in the present work for two to three years. The study also reported that the least number of women construction workers had worked for less than six months in the present work.
- A large number of respondents 43.8% of the respondents reported that they reached their worksite on foot. Nearly 30% of women construction workers used bus as a means of transport to reach the worksite. It shows that workers prefer to stay nearby their worksites in order to save their time and money in travelling.
- The study revealed that about one fourth of 23.8% of the respondents stayed within the distance of 1 - 2 kms. About one fifth 19.5 % of the respondents were staying very near (less than 1 km) to their work place. However, 24.8% respondents stayed at construction site.
- The study revealed that 58% of the women construction workers were casual labourers and 41% were contract labourers. None of them was to be in regular or temporary employment. Women labour contributes from foundation work to roofing and beyond. They help in removing over ground materials, carry water, sand, cement, mixture for foundation laying and concrete pouring, carry stone, bricks, and tools required for construction work. A majority of women construction workers (76%) were not getting weekly holidays and had to work on Sundays as well as other holidays. Around 24% women workers responded positively and viewed that they got one day off in a week in case of emergency. The researcher found that there was no provision for paid holidays and leave of

any kind. Remuneration was based on the principle that the wages would be paid according to the number of days they had really worked. If they were absent, their wages were accordingly deducted.

- From the data, it was found that nearly all (97.1%) the women construction workers were getting rest intervals varying in between 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. during the course of work. Only 2.9% women construction workers replied that they were not getting any interval.
- It was revealed that a majority (82%) of the women construction workers were doing overtime work and rest (18%) were not doing any overtime work. The women construction workers (49.8%) who were employed in private construction sites were doing overtime to meet the deadline of the work.
- The study revealed that a majority (55.2%) of women construction workers worked for 7-8 hours a day. Around 33 percent of women construction workers worked for 8-9 hours and 11.9% worked for 9-10 hours a day. Therefore, it is clear from the data that there were no fixed working hours. They were putting in additional hours of work on the demand of their employers. They virtually had no say for fear of losing their job.
- A majority of the women construction workers (42.3%) told that they got their wages weekly, 36.7 percent of women construction workers viewed that they got wages on a monthly basis, and 21 percent women received their wages on daily wages. So it could be said that wages were paid as per the wishes of employers either weekly, daily or on monthly basis. The mode of payment varied from employer to employer.
- For about 20% of the respondents reported that first aid was available and 56% of the respondents availed toilet facility. Respondents shared that they either used the toilet in the nearby area or even they were using open space for natural call. It is very significant finding of the study that none of the employer provided crèche facility to the women although some women did have small infants and toddlers.

9.5. FAMILY AND WORK LIFE CHALLENGES OF WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS: CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES

When a woman plays a multiple role in family and in work life, she also faces multiple problems in family and in work life. In family life sphere, every member has a lot of expectations from her and as the expectations increase family problems also increases. Women construction workers, who are illiterate, do not even know 3 R's i.e. reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are not aware about the government rules and regulations as well as working conditions, therefore, face multiple challenges in work life. Due to the temporary nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy women workers are helpless in pursuit of their common interest. The different challenges faced by the women construction workers, solution of the problem and coping strategies used by them in their family and work life has been given below:

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing and Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live in tents/Kuccha houses at work site or off site• Live in semi-pucca• Live in Pucca (own or rented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In summer season, use bamboo sticks as the temperature goes up and become difficult to stay inside.• In pucca houses, put the bucket on the roof leakage.• In monsoon, cover their houses in plastic sheets to protect their food, clothes, and furniture from rain.• If rent is not paid on time in Pucca house, the landlord may ask to leave. Sometimes, money is borrowed to pay house rent.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of the Dwelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of the respondents (78.6%) live in one room accommodation. • Only 21.4% live in two room houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook, eat and sleep in one room. • In summer, everyone sleep on ground. • For toilet and bath use Sulabh Sauchalaya during day time and use the open space during the night.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Mother and Child Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with small children at worksite. • School going children live at native place with their grandparents or all alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie cloth cradle (Paalna) on the back for babies under three years of age. • No exclusive breastfeeding - give heavy rotis and spicy chutneys

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty and Indebtedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women construction workers borrow money from masons, money lenders, friends or relatives at the time of need. • This in turn, force them to work under harsh conditions (working and living conditions) to pay a huge amount of interest on borrowed money. • Poverty is the main reason for working in construction industry. • Respondents shared that pay is better in construction industry than domestic work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Ab jaisa hai usi se kaam chalana pdega, hum gareeb log hai, aur koi raasta bhi nhi hai</i>" • Women workers work during pregnancy to earn money and to pay debt.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of Child Care Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with their children at construction site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children start working as domestic labour or work at Dhabas to contribute in family income.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict in Family and Work Commitments Triple burden of work on women construction workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triple burden of working at home and on the work site and also the responsibility of child rearing. She works for two square meals a day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small children are left with an elder sibling at home Small children under three years of age are with mother and are left in the dust. Release anger by using abusive words towards husband and children. Addicted to smoking to release frustrations. Bidi or tobacco help to kill instant hunger and help concentrate on their work. The hard work both at home and at workplace, poor working and living conditions and the demands of childbearing leave them in poor health.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecurity of Job - Neither job nor the work at a particular site is permanent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In rainy season, when the construction work is standstill, workers join domestic work or agricultural labourers at their native place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the construction workers got engaged with sexual activities to release tension.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation of Female Labour by Contractor or Manson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to earn livelihood. • Many respondnets were the main earning member of the family because the husband is unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minimum wages are given • Never negotiate for working conditions and conditions of work. • Join prostitution to run the family.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Education - Insufficient skills and Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as unskilled labourers in unorganised sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiteracy compels for unskilled jobs - which demands hard labour. • Work for all days; missing one day's work means giving up money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Basic Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work under the conditions available at the worksite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women workers shared that they tolerate all kinds of harassments and sufferings to earn their livelihood.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous Working Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women construction workers do not demand safety measures rather work safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to get rid of frustration, the women construction workers fall pray to smoking. • Workers work in the given situation they have to leave their children in mid of dangerous situations which is very risky for the child.

Challenge	Solution	Coping Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Sanitary Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women construction workers do not wish to loose out an supplementary, hence, they work till they could manage and work in the given conditions of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers had mosquito net for their small children. • "<i>Macchar bhaag jate hai chulhe ke dhuein se, nhi to macchar ki agarbati jala lete hain jo thekedar deta hai</i>"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregularities and inability to secure minimum wages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lack of skills and knowledge they face discrimination in wages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women construction workers do not spend too much money and cut out their own expenses. • Women workers save money for future use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability to Occupational Diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pain killers for back pain and headache . • Respondents those who were allergic to cement use polythene to cover their hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women construction workers use saari to protect themselves from dust, heat and other dust particles.

Figure 9.1 Challenges and Coping Strategies

A women construction worker burdened with balancing and managing with homes and bringing up their children, along with other concerns of health, addiction, abuse and mistreatment. She compromise with her own nutrition, recreation and rest for giving their children a future different from their own present condition. The law makes lofty ideals for the industry and city to implement, but fails miserably as its word only remains an ideal and is yet to be seen working on the ground.

SECTION – II

9.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPARING A SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION MODEL

Women labour in unorganized sector in general and women construction workers in particular face complex socio-economic demographic problems which can be reduced and controlled by multiplicity of actions, both by the government and the civil society. On the basis of the research findings, views of social workers, social activists and social workers and experience emanating from the research process, the following recommendations emerge for dealing with the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon in the short, medium and long term.

Table 9.1: Targeted Social Work Intervention Model

TARGET GROUP	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN
WOMEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS	Providing education about their rights and duties in construction industry Development of women skills	Providing opportunities for development of rights of women labour through seminars/talks Labour inspectors to check women welfare provisions on construction site Training programs for developing skills in construction industry
HUSBANDS OF WOMEN CONSTRUCTI ON WOREKRS	Sensitization of husbands of women construction workers on issues and challenges of women in construction industry Developing skills and knowledge base of husband about rights of women labour	Providing platform for expressing their concerns about problems of their wives as unskilled labour in construction industry Counseling services for husbands Forming support groups of husbands

**GENERAL
PUBLIC**

Creates awareness about women labour in construction industry as they as invisible labour force in statistics

Awareness about their rights in construction and in laws and legislations

Health camps

Street plays

Film screenings on women labour in construction industry

Talk shows on Television

Regular columns/articles/in newspaper and magazines

MEDIA

Sensitize general public about women rights and duties of women in construction industry

Conceptualize programs or talks shows where women construction workers express their issues and problems in construction industry

GOVERNMENT

Mass awareness on rights of women construction workers in construction industry

Promoting basic facility for construction workers on construction site

Promoting strict rules for implementation of labour laws in construction industry

Improving skills of women labour in construction industry

Funding and providing grant-in-aid to NGOs for awareness generation

Provision of women inspector for the supervision of welfare measures given by employers employing women labour

Giving grant-in-aids, fellowships and funding for research work

Creating more job opportunities for women workers in informal sector in general and women in construction industry in particular

Organising discussions/seminars/ National Consultations

Provisions to avail government

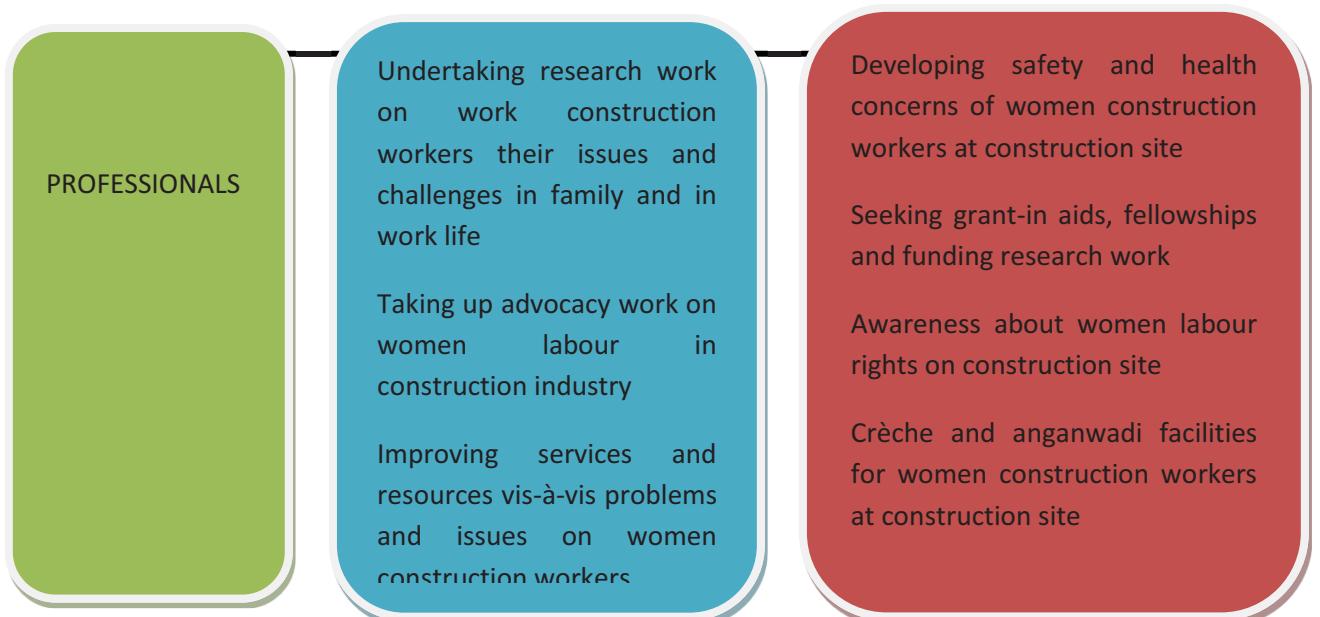


Figure 9.2: Pictorial Representation of Social Work Intervention Model

1. Awareness generation amongst construction workers

- Increasing public awareness is critical for the reducing and mitigation of the challenges and problems faced by women in unorganized sector. A large number of persons are unaware of the unsafe working conditions in which women work in this sector and the repercussions of early employment on women in particular and the society in general. There is a need to arouse awareness among the women workers, their husbands and employers of the negative consequences of women's engagement in work. Women workers and employers should be made aware of the existing laws concerning women labour and the penalties imposed for flouting them.
- The mass media has a critical role to play in communicating information about women labour. The information it conveys can have a significant influence on public policy and legislation both in terms of formulation and enforcement of laws. Initiatives should be taken to ensure that the women labour get a fair and balanced portrayal and hearing in the media. Mass media should be used for imparting regular information on regular basis and running advocacy campaigns.
- Public lectures can also be organized with more emphasis on the problems and its repercussions. Women labour should be made aware of the existing laws concerning women workers and the penalties imposed for non adherence.
- There is a need to bring consciousness among women workers so that they may become aware of their constitutional rights, which is possible with the help of radio, television, and spread of education and literacy campaigns.
- Efforts should also be undertaken by the voluntary organizations and community based organisations to involve the local public, so that they become aware of the efforts made by the government for the mitigation of the problem and enhancing the well being of the families.

2. Providing crèche and educational facilities for the children of the construction workers near worksites

Vocational training should be imparted to women to make them economically independent. To increase the interest towards vocational training, handsome incentives should be provided to women belonging to the socio-economically backward sections of society in the form of scholarships, free books, stationery, and nutritious meals.

These incentives would not only raise the education level but also provide opportunities for skill acquisition and better employment. Flexible timetables and other forms of flexibility in vocational training can also help to accommodate the needs of the women and their families. Not only the women labour should be given regular guidance but their husbands also should be given continuous advice, guidance and financial support for continuing training. This is because the poor economic conditions very often make conflicting demands between work participation and household responsibilities.

3. Promoting alternative income generation activities for the women construction workers

- Women labour in construction industry is rooted in poverty. The progressive mitigation of this problem will lead to a reduced need for the family to push their women in to labour. The income deficiency can be made up by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to the lower stratum of society by creating more jobs/livelihood options, agrarian reforms, and enforcement of minimum wages and social security.
- Self-employment schemes should be intensified. Poor families must be provided social security including medical and sickness benefits.
- Various studies have observed that the women are compelled to work only because they had to fulfill their basic needs and repay loans. These sections of society must be provided with easy and cheap loans returnable in small installments. This type of facility can alleviate the problem to a large extent because the debt is a big compulsion for the families to work.
- A large chunk of the rural population still depends on agriculture therefore it is imperative that this sector should be developed more adequately. Poor families with children should be provided free or subsidized inputs like fertilizers, insecticides, seeds etc. In rural areas, investment in better irrigation, credit and market facilities should be made available, so that rural people can get more out of their land. The dairy and fisheries development programme must be given importance. Agro based industries should be promoted to all possible extent for income generation and enhancement among the rural people.

- Rural cooperatives/Self-Help Groups should play a more vital role in giving loans, offering help in procuring raw materials and in marketing so that it could add to the rural incomes. Small scale industries could be promoted on a large scale for reducing unemployment among adults.

4. Strengthening social network and social security measures

The provision of old age pension schemes should be properly and fairly implemented. Benefits should reach genuine and deserving people. Systems of social protection provided by the state or non-state agencies must be carefully designed and implemented. Microfinance schemes, organized by civil society groups at the local level can be linked into large structures, such as banks. The state can help by providing start-up funds, and develop supportive legislations and regulatory framework.

On account of the fact that, women labour in unorganized sector is a localized phenomenon, the panchayats and municipalities can play an effective role in implementing awareness about their rights by providing local information, enhancing communication, and evolving local monitoring and mobilization.

5. Providing recreational and leisure time activities for the women construction workers

Avenues for meaningful engagement of women workers in their leisure time also need to be provided to relieve workload of family and work life. Availability of recreational centres and Mahila Sangeet can go a long way to ensure that women are engaged in other recreational activities.

6. Evolving means for better implementation of existing legislations

- The immediate need is the implementation of laws, programmes and schemes already in place for the welfare of the labourers in construction industry. The state must ensure that minimum wages are paid to the women construction workers, social security entitlements are provided through boards, and the implementation of the Building and Other Construction Workers Act 1996 is carried forward. The Act must also take into consideration the identity and the rights of citizenship for migrant workers. The current policy orientation of catering only to settle population

has to make room for this large vulnerable segment of migrant women workers. The possible ways to make migrant women construction workers visible, as a citizen with rights are registration with the Labour Boards, issue of mobile ration cards, easy admission of children to municipal schools, and Anganwadis at construction site and off site settlements specially for children below three years of age.

- The state government must activate and strengthen the law enforcement machinery to see that all the legislative measures are properly enforced. There is a need to view the violation of women labour laws as serious offences. The need of the hour is to seriously apply the provisions of legislations strictly so that the employers of the women labour must be severely punished in case of their violation of legislations. The legal system should be framed in such a way that the people violating the existing labour laws and legislations may not be spared.
- The Integrated Child Development Services, the largest schemes of the government for the under-sixes, must be universalised and made more effective for the settle women construction workers as well as migrant population and made more flexible to reach young children on the move. This will require specific outreach strategies like community health centers and Anganwadi centres.
- There is an urgent need to promote awareness regarding conditions of work and working conditions. Instructions regarding how much weight a worker must carry at a time, their rights and duties, and employer's duties towards their employees – which guarantees that the women labour is not misused and their rights and obligations are properly enforced.
- The trade unions can play a very important role in the implementation of existing laws on the minimum wages, working hours and rest intervals. Trade unions can work more effectively if they comprehend the physical and mental havoc the women construction workers have to face, and the fact that women labour reduces man's wages and man's employment.
- Non – governmental organizations can also help vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women construction workers who have their voices heard by the government and other decision makers at local, national and even international

levels. NGOs have a comparative advantage in piloting and evaluating alternative strategies and interventions at community level and have also played a vital role in advocacy for the solutions of challenges faced by workers by publishing materials in local languages.

- Community based organizations help to improve the condition of workers as they play an active role in implementing schemes, programmes, act and laws for women labour by identifying, monitoring and supporting “at risk” women and children. It is now a challenge for non - governmental organizations to address the issues of women not just on the periphery but aim at causes and consequences of structural reforms. Attempts like organizing the unorganized sector, reforms in the primary education system, microfinance for the weaker sections of society and encouraging people for community participation and ownership are some of the essential issues that NGOs would have to address at the outset because lack of such systems contribute heavily to the poor physical and mental health of women working with their small children.
- Proper housing is important for healthy growth, which in turn, is necessary for higher efficiency. Lack of proper housing not only impairs the healthy growth of children, but also brings them in contact with undesirable elements leading to anti social and delinquent behaviors. In our study, the women labourers were staying in slums, which were devoid of proper water supply, sanitation and lighting arrangement, leading to an unhealthy growth and development. Therefore, provisions should be made for housing and basic amenities.

9.7. ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE WORK AND FAMILY LIFE DOMAIN OF WOMEN CONSTRUCITON WORKERS

The role of social worker in improving the situation of women construction workers in family and work life can be seen at three levels:

1. At individual level
 - Social workers should provide guidance and counseling to the women construction workers in confronting challenges in family and work life.

- There is a necessity to encourage the women construction workers come out of the shell of self-pity and start raising their voice.
 - Social workers should encourage them to try themselves to be financially independent and stand on their own feet by not leaving any opportunities provided to them for educational, professional, social and self development.
2. At group level

Social work intervention is necessary at the family level, especially where the husband is alcoholic and drug addict or are unemployed.

- Women friendly vocational training centers can provide a safe learning environment, equitable access, and also recognition of women's rights and responsibilities at workplace. Social workers should use a multifaceted approach to prevent women exploitation, discrimination and harassment at workplace and in family.
- Awareness about early marriages, early pregnancies, child births, and breastfeeding for six months.

3. With mediators

- Voluntary agencies need to work with the families of women construction workers and provide counseling and referral services depending on their needs and requirement.
- Social workers should make systematic efforts to ensure that construction sites do not have a women labour working under hazardous conditions. This can be facilitated by conducting awareness generation activities by using participatory approach involving employers, women workers, community leaders, service providers and enforcement agencies.
- The social workers should mobilize and strengthen the press and the media to focus on the rights of the women labour in construction industry facing exploitation and discrimination, and should motivate them to focus on the issues related to women and children.

- Laws must be properly implemented to provide maternity entitlements, minimum wages, social security, child care facilities, better living and working conditions to women construction workers.
- Statistical data on women construction workers and their children should be collected properly to check invisibility and marginalization.
- Social workers and activists should work with women construction workers and their families to bring about a change from welfare-based, charitable approach to a more women – labour centered, and rights based approach.