

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Construction Industry is the second largest industry next to agriculture which provides employment to both skilled and unskilled workforce irrespective of gender. But still the condition of women in this industry is not very good. They are subject to various discrimination resulting in being a big deterrent in choosing the carrier in this industry. Various attempts have been made to study the condition of women in construction industry in India and abroad. However these studies are either addressing unskilled women workers or very few are on skilled women professionals like Engineers, Architects etc. But hardly any studies are there which address both the issues. Secondly, the view of organizations related to offering the employment to female workers has been missing from the existing published literature. This study has tried to address the issues of women workforce, both unskilled and professionals working in the construction industry in India as well the opinion of the senior executives of Construction companies about the subject. The study is based on sample survey in and around Delhi/NCR.

Representation of women workforce in the construction industry is very low throughout the world including India. At sites the representation is more of unskilled workforce and in offices women are more in administrative positions as compared to professional or technical positions. The study finds disparity between their employment status, pay and professional enhancement opportunities as compared to men in the industry. The additional care which is essential for any women worker like maternity leave, childcare leave, separate hygienic toilet etc is not available especially for unskilled women workers at the work site. Dress Code is a very insignificant thing at construction worksite however, will not only facilitate them to work comfortably, efficiently and safely at construction sites but also help in removing the discrimination among them. This way women would not be differentiated from men in appearance and would be more comfortable in working at sites.

In this industry, issues vary for women at professional level and women workers at site. Entry, retention as well as career progression become difficult for women because of in-flexible working condition at the construction site as they are home makers as well. They need to look after their family commitments and maintain the balance both at personal and professional level which sometime needs flexibility of duty timing as well as extra care from colleagues and seniors from organization. But often it either absent or very difficult to access in the construction industry. Flexible working hours, effective computerization system, re-engineering the conventional method of working and creating virtual working environment within the industry will encourage more women to join the industry. This would increase women participation both at managerial and senior levels as well as at front end workers on the construction sites.

In recent years women participation is increasing both at unskilled and professional level but the pace of growth is very slow. One of the reasons for the same is discrimination on account of gender. It may be in the form of lower wage, lack of basic facilities like toilets, rest rooms, longer and rigid job timings, no health care benefits, sexual harassment etc. This in general either reduces or kills the willingness of women to join the industry. A radical change is required in the approach and mindset of the project promoters and head of the organizations. Though the change has started but is very slow and other discriminating or behavioral problems are still in place.

To match the manpower demand and supply gap and to attract more women to be included and retained in the construction industry, they need to be supported and properly trained. Government should also look into deputing women in construction bodies and portray them as role models. This would encourage female students to take up a career in the construction industry. At present training facility (both in numbers and quality) in India is inadequate. Industry supported training programs need to be designed and conducted for women construction executives as well as labor at project sites.

It is suggested to introduce women at senior executive as well as at supervisory positions at site, to cope with the manpower shortages and forming a major component of the skilled workforce of the construction industry. On the other hand, women should be involved in decision making and

they should handle departments that handle work of women staff and workers. Once they are in responsible positions, under their authority, responsibility or accountability every women will feel protected, empowered and involved. Women can understand issues faced by other women better and can devise strategies for the same. Contractors and Builders could be given incentives and administrative directives to give jobs to trained and skilled women and to provide basic facilities like separate hygienic toilets, drinking water, mobile crèche etc. at sites.

The finding of the survey makes it clear that government and regulatory authorities require to frame strict regulations towards welfare of women workforce which will facilitate in creation of congenial environment for women to join the industry. Here, it is worth mentioning that government has already taken some initiatives for the welfare of working women irrespective of their nature of work like 26weeks maternity leave for women for two surviving children. Even organizations have to create provisions to facilitate the functioning of women workers at the construction sites and establish a system to have preference in job opportunities either through affirmative action or through normal preferences. The mindset have to change both at recruitment level and daily working level and it has to be considered that women are at par with men in all the fronts of work including construction industry.

5.2 Significant Research Contributions

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5.3 Summary of Research findings

Findings of the study is a clear picture of present condition of women in construction site and in the offices for professional women and has message for all i.e. fellow male colleagues at site and in office, supervisors and seniors, executives and recruiters as well as Government agencies, regulators and policy makers. The finding of the study also indicates the stereotypic mindset of the society where gender classification of working environment is done without looking into its long lasting impacts.

Inferences from survey on women workers

Study reveals that representation of women workforce in the construction industry is minimal. At sites the representation is more of unskilled workforce. Women workers are unskilled and unlike male labourers, women in the construction sector have virtually no chances of acquiring skills and moving up the job ladder. Even as unskilled workers, they are usually paid even less than the male counterparts. Entry into the industry is not difficult but being retained in the industry and going up the career becomes difficult. Often they face serious problems/constraints related to work, viz., lack of continuity, insecurity, wage discrimination, gender and sexual harassment, unhealthy job relationship, lower wages etc. The sites usually do not have crèche facilities nor do they have basic facilities such as separate toilets. Women faces problems on many fronts like social security addressing issues of leave, wages, work conditions, pension, housing, childcare, health benefits, maternity benefits, safety etc. This may be possible only through healthy unbiased work culture, respect to all and strong and effective legislation to protect every one's need and interest at the worksite. Findings suggest that discrimination against women is more common than exception.

Inferences from survey on women professionals

Survey results indicate that there is marginal presence of women in senior positions and at mature/older age. Women join the industry for its challenging nature, but there is strong perception that they do not get equal opportunities in the industry and they are also not able to effectively get involved in the site work. Women are not adversely affected by the loud character of the industry and do not experience significant verbal abuse but they experience sexual harassment. This is an issue that is perceived differently by men. Compared to 56% women only 39% men perceive that women face sexual harassment. This indicates that women should be at senior positions so that issues pertaining to women can be addressed. Women perceive that they can achieve top managerial positions, but men have different perception. 78% respondents had witnessed gender discrimination in the form of harassment, disrespect, lack of opportunity and mistreatment. Survey data supports that long and inflexible working hours create unfavourable working conditions for women and culture of the industry is also not suitable for women.

Literature study is supported by survey as respondents perceive that government level initiatives are required to change the face of women participation. Family support is needed so that women avail minimal leaves due to family commitments and can also travel to sites. Organizational support is needed with respect to supporting them with flexible working hours and work from home options. This would help in retaining women at the time when they need to devote time for family responsibilities and would also provide easy transition for their return. Organizations perceive that women have better capabilities for research and design activities and do not involve themselves in groupism or other disruptive activities. Thus, alongwith above discussed affirmative actions, organizations should plan complimentary work assignments as per strengths of men and women employees and lead to benefit for the organization and the industry.

The study highlights that addressing above discussed issues would bridge the skills gap in the industry and provide women equal opportunities, thus improving the work satisfaction among women. This would aid towards achieving economic and social sustainability in the society. If the recommendations are considered and adopted, in coming years we shall see more women in senior executive positions as well as at supervisory positions at site, forming a major component of the skilled workforce of the construction industry.

1.4 Scope of the Research

- The study conducted in Delhi / NCR, to study the gender biasness prevailing in construction industry in India. Women are paid less wages than men for the same job.
- The study would create awareness about motivating and training women workers for career growth and development and educating women professionals. It would also sensitize male workers and supervisors to train and accept women as efficient workforce.
- The study highlights the issue of paying equal salary to female workers like male workers and to eradicate gender discrimination.

- The research identifies the condition of women in construction industry and the factors responsible for them. It will help the government in framing the regulatory guidelines for working women on construction sites.
- The study will also motivate the construction organizations in designing and creating the facilities for women employees.
- This study also provides further scope of research in the areas like identification of new field of skills development for women worker, for making construction industry more attractive to women.
- Present study may be used to enhance the quality of working condition of women working in the construction industry. The improved working environment enable them to efficiently contribute to the growth and development of the industry.

5.5 Limitation of the research

- This study is confined to Delhi / NCR.
- Due to illiteracy and socio-economic backward background of the respondents (worker level) the response might be subdued.
- The research is more qualitative in nature which leads to limited utilization of Statistical tools and techniques.

5.6 Recommendation for the future research

The study contains some limitations which much be addressed for the future research. The survey results are derived from Delhi / NCR; similar study should be periodically conducted at country level as well as internationally to study and improve the working condition of women in construction. The result gathered may generally be limited, although the study is first one aimed at improving construction industry's environment women friendly in Delhi / NCR region to provide women space to fit in the industry. In order to improve external validity of the instrument, additional studies would be needed, with increased sample size, geographical diversity, organizational type and other associated parameters. Further research may be beneficial, if more aspects and better measures are developed, in relation to this outcome variables. It is also proposed that future research be conducted in other type of organizations such as mega big projects of government as well as private sector in construction using a similar approach. Furthermore, the more sample to be collected and analyzed at organization level in future research in India to compare with global research to study and improve the working condition of women in construction.

5.4 Summary

This chapter summarizes and draws conclusions from the study and suggests recommendations for future growth and development of women workers and ultimately the Indian construction industry .

SUMMARY

This study attempts to identify issues and challenges faced by women workers and executives in Indian construction industry. Women working at construction sites are primarily unskilled whereas skilled / educated are working at office. However gender discrimination is common to both. Many attempts have been made to check and understand the nature and reasons of gender discrimination in India and abroad and all have reached to similar conclusion in confirmation of gender discrimination. This study is based on information collected through questionnaire about women workers and executives (both blue and white collared) from construction sites and offices located in NCR (Delhi and adjoining areas). Two independent sets of questionnaire were prepared, one each for women workers and officers but got filled by both female and male respondents through convenience sampling. In addition, organizations' representatives gave their view on women workers and professionals. The findings suggest that the majority of women workers do not have basic facilities nor they have provision for health care, maternity leave etc. Both women workers and professionals feel that the presence of women on senior position will minimize the gender discrimination and generate more opportunities of growth for women. It is also observed through responses that government should make some policy to ensure minimum facilities and provision for medical care, maternity leaves and childcare for women workers.

CHAPTERIZATION DETAILS

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical concepts, statistical details and conditions of women in construction industry. It also helps in identifying the problems related to women working in Indian construction industry. Based on this research background, the research problem, aims and objectives are formulated.

Chapter 2 presents the review of the literature related to status of women workforce in construction industry in India and globally and also the issues and challenges faced by women workforce and Research Hypothesis are formulated

Chapter 3 provides discussions on the processes by which the research objectives are achieved. It examines in detail issues pertaining to the research design and methodology, data collection and analysis methods, key research activities. After discussion about research methodology the framework for synthesis of the research components and result formulation is discussed.

Chapter 4 presents empirical analysis of data through the questionnaire survey. Analysis is conducted through parametric and non-parametric statistical techniques. Hypothesis is tested, discussion on perception based data is presented and the analysis is summarized.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions and suggests recommendations to improve the working of women in the industry to contribute to strengthen the Indian Construction Industry.