

Psychosocial Conditions of Brick Kiln Workers in Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study on psychosocial conditions of brick kiln workers was conducted to comprehend People's view of the fast paced development that knocking at their doorstep with the promise of taking India forward. The relevant data was collected with the help of structured interview schedule from fifty respondents. The researcher made visits to brick kilns the fifty respondents while gathering the data. The findings of the study clearly signify that the families in brick kilns fell into debt to meet basic needs.

Keywords: Brick kiln workers, family, psychosocial conditions.

INTRODUCTION

India is the second largest producer of clay fired bricks, accounting for more than 10 percent of global production. India is estimated to have more than 100,000 brick kilns, producing about 150-200 billion bricks annually, employing about 10 million workers and consuming about 25 million tons of coal annually. India's brick sector is characterized by traditional firing technologies; environmental pollution; reliance on manual labour and low mechanization rate; dominance of small-scale brick kilns with limited financial, technical and managerial capacity; dominance of single raw material (clay) and product (solid clay brick); and lack of institutional capacity for the development of the sector

Importance of study: This research acts as an essence to analyze the brick kiln works as a psychosocial issue. This study will serve as a baseline for designing interventions and measuring the progress of implementation of ratified constitutional procedures to eliminate forced labour and worst forms of labour in Tamil Nadu.

General objective: A Study on Psycho Social Conditions of Brick kiln workers in Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District

Specific objectives

1. To study the socio-economic condition of the respondents
2. To understand their occupational background of the respondents
3. To study the livelihood conditions of the respondents
4. To elicit the rehabilitation opinion from the respondents.

Limitations of the study: During the study the researcher found all of the respondents belonged to the same community. These people to some extent answered similarly.

METHODOLOGY

Field of study: This study was conducted in Poonamallee Taluk of Tiruvallur District. Thiruvallur District was bifurcated from east while Kanchipuram District on 01-12-1997. The district Thiruvallur has an area of 3418 sqkm. distributed over 14 Panchayat Unions in 8 Taluks. The District lies in between 12-10 degree and 13-15 degree north latitude and 79 -15 degree and 18 -2

degree east longitude. Thiruvallur is a coastal district, adjacent to metro of Chennai. It is bounded on the east by Bay of Bengal and Chennai city on the north by state Andhra Pradesh, on the south by Kanchipuram District, on the west by Vellore District. At present Thiruvallur District comprise 8 taluks, 14 blocks and 816 villages. As regards to the hierarchy of administrative arrangement there are 6 municipalities, 19 town panchayats and 669 village panchayats in the district. Thiruvallur district has a total population of 27, 38,866 persons (as per 2001 census) of which male account for 13, 90,292 (51%) and female account for 13, 48,574 (49%). Rural population comprises 45 percent and urban 44 percent with sex ratio of 970/1000. The total geographical area of the Thiruvallur district is 341810 hectares. Of this total area, the cropped area accounts for 50.7% (173,409 hectares). The fallow land comprising current and other fallow constitutes 17.7% of total area spread over 60578 hectares. Nearly 31.2% of land area to total geographical area is not available for cultivation. The forests cover 20092 hectares in the district is accounting for 5.9% of the total land area. These are 6 villages located abutting forest ranges in Thiruvallur, Uttukottai, Ponneri and Poonamallee taluks forest areas in the district.

FIELD OF STUDY: POONAMALLEE TALUK THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT

Universe: The universe of this study consists of all the households, living in “Brick kilns” of Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District.

Research design: Research Design helps to decide upon issues like “what, when, where, how much, by which means etc. of the research study. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Research design constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Seltiz, 1962). Research design should

also focus its attention on the objectives of the study data collection methods, sampling, data processing and reporting. This research is a descriptive design. The study is aimed at describing the social, economic and cultural conditions of the Brick kiln workers. The researcher has attempted to study the psychosocial conditions of the respondents. Descriptive Research Design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it any way. Descriptive designs results in a description of the subject, whether in words, pictures, charts or tables and whether the data analysis shows statistical relationships or is merely descriptive. Moreover this design does not confine the researcher within a frame work of understanding and analyzing. There is a possibility of going beyond.

Sampling method: Sample is a microcosm that is extracted from the population or universe. A good sample represents the population from which it selected. Simple Random Sampling is an alternative to random sampling. It consists of taking every ‘K’th item in the population after a random start with an item from 1 to “K”. Size of the sample refers to the number of items to be chosen from the universe to form a sample size. The size of the sample must be optimum. The sample size is determined by the parameters of size of the population. Considering all these facts the sample size is 50 in this study.

Sources of data: The search for answers to research questions is called collection of data. Data are facts and other relevant materials, past and present, serving a bases for study and analysis. The researcher went to the field and collected the primary data by means of face-to-face interview with the respondents. All the respondents were typical Brick kiln Workers of the rural community. The researcher also gone through reference materials and documented data from published secondary sources like books journals, periodicals, reports websites etc. the researcher also spent sufficient time

in interacting and discussing the topic of the study with different experts in the field.

Tools of data collection: Interview Schedule was prepared to study the psychosocial conditions of brick kiln workers fulfilling all the objectives of the research. The following are the tools of data collection:

Interview Schedule

The interview schedule consists of personal details, family details, socio economic conditions, housing conditions, agriculture land details, livestock details, saving and indebtedness details, water and sanitation, social capital, common property resources details, Impoverishment Risk Assessment, attitude towards the project, psychological conditions, Resettlement and Rehabilitation opinion details. Totally 30 questions excluding sub questions were included.

Preparation of tools: In consultation with the experts and professors and social workers in the particular field, the tools for this study are prepared.

Pretesting: In order to find out the applicability and validity of the tool a well prepared interview schedule was given to 3 respondents. Based on the pre testing the researcher added, deleted and edited some questions on these heads. The pre testing was done.

Actual data collection: The data collection was done at different stages in the month of December 2013. The researcher built rapport with brick kiln workers and Meet the respondents directly in their residence the data is collected

Definitions

Family: Family is a group of person united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption; consisting of single household, interacting and their communicating with each other. Respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, sons and daughters, brother and sisters creating a common culture (Burgees and Locke, 1999).

Forced Labour: "All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself

voluntarily." (Forced Labour Convention, 1930).

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Age category

The study reveals that 38 percent of respondents are in the age group of 21-25 year. It has been evident that significant amount of 38 percent are in the category of 26-30 year and 24 percent of young respondents are in the age category above 30 and above years they are the productive age group.

2. Gender

Most of the respondents who had participated in this survey were males.

3. Religion

Predominantly of the respondents is following Hinduism as the major religion of the country.

4. Caste:

Cent percent of the respondent were Scheduled Caste

EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

Educational profile of the household population heights low level of education attainment; more than half (52%) of the respondents had no formal education. Notably 40 percent of the respondents completed primary education. Findings also indicate that 8 percent of the sample size received higher education, respectively

MARITAL STATUS:

The study reveals that about more than half of the respondents are married. So, this study sought to assess young people's preferences about the age at which to marry and, among the unmarried, their preferences for love or arranged marriages. It is possible, of course, that youth who were married in adolescence might have reported the age at which they married as the preferred age.

Type of family

It reveals that majority 64 percent of the respondents are in the extended family. Whereas 26 percent respondents are in joint family system.

Size of the family

The study revealed that 61.33 percent of the respondent are living in medium size family and it s also significantly reflects that 32 percent of the respondents are living in small size family.

LIVELIHOOD CONDITIONS

If we analyze the engagement of sample of brick kiln workers in various actives it will be founded that 60 percent them are involved in non-agriculture activities. The emergence of new livelihood in locality has attracted the youth from other neighboring areas with passage of time (7 years) these migrated in Poonamallee Taluk for their livelihood options.

The study reveals that the kiln workers are placed in various kinds of work about 96 percent of them are involved in brick making and they carries water for brick preparation is about 40 percent., some of them 24 percent are kiln operators.

Monthly family income

The majority 84 percent of the respondents are earning below Rs.3500 as Monthly Income.

Type of shelter:

It reveals that percent of the respondents are living in hut house with mud wall provided by Kiln Industry. It is significant that most of the respondents do not have proper housing facility.

It also reveals majority 80 percent of the respondents are not satisfied with their access to their food, shelter and services.

Type of house structure and size of the family

The study reveals that 60 percent of the respondents family size is medium (4-6 members) living in hut house is 16-67 percent.

Social Capital

Before resettlement 100 percent of the respondents are satisfied with relationship in the community, At present in Brick kiln the thick social capital is diluting due to migration. For the most part of the youth are not residing in resettled areas.

Consequences of Migration:

One fourth of the respondents are really disturbed psychologically due to migration. Further it is evident that no one is happy about the migration. It is mainly because it has greater impact on their livelihood.

Migration – Sustainability:

Most of the respondent’s dominant strand of migration stresses and the rationality of the migrants on resettlement. Poverty and conflict are one of the curses kept by the Government on them, and the historical patterns of behavior as been changed. The present loss on tenure right of land is critical for ‘survival’.

It shows that nearly 50 percent of the kiln workers felt that there is poor working conditions are available in the Kilns. The necessity was not fulfilled for the kiln workers. There is no proper access to the infrastructure facility in the kilns.

Psychological impact of Brick kiln Workers

It was identified that 32.67 percent have no hope in their life with regard to the implementation of the forced labour and they believed that the project would bring considerable reduction in per capita income. One fourth of the respondents are really disturbed psychologically.

Rehabilitation demanded

The study revealed 100 percent of the respondents are demanding for the rehabilitation in their life. In particular they sought for livelihood rehabilitation.

FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION:

Following are some of the main findings summarized from FGDs conducted in Annambedu *Village*, Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District. In the focus group discussion some of the perceptions are:

DISCUSSION – I

Problems Associated with Forced Labour and Sustainability of Brick kiln Workers:

- Majority of them said due to the impact of development (shift in agriculture)

forced to change their livelihood options overnight.

- The group replied that “we lost the (*Kulathaivam* - in Tamil) our lord, flora and fauna, natural vegetation, herbless, and traditional food practices” in our ancestral village.
- One of the youth raised his voice that “Due to migration I lost my traditional land and culture”
- Young workers said in chorus “Wage is our right.”
- Migration is a statement that removing Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) this is the cry of the young ones.
- The group replied Clay (*Kaliman*) is our source for livelihood.
- Most of them said now we are bonded laborers in Industries but in the past we were enjoying the ownership of our duties.
- Some of them said that Deprivation of land and livelihood is a kind of Terrorism.
- Majority of them said after migration youths are working in local brick kiln industries.

IN-DEPTH OBSERVATION ANALYSIS

Housing characteristics of the brick kiln workers underscore poor living condition among the majority of the population in Brick kiln Industries of Poonamallee taluk.

- Overall brick kiln household living in kachcha house (constructed from mud, thatch or other low-quality materials)
- All the households had no electricity
- Its main source of drinking water obtained from an open pond.
- No access to toilet facilities of any kind was reported through non-participatory method
- The main source of cooking fuel was wood crop residue and dung cakes.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The way forward

The study recommends that the efforts to propagate cleaner brick kiln technologies over the

Next decade should focus on these specific technical measures:

- Adoption of cleaner kiln technologies (principally zig-zag and VSBK)
- Promotion of internal fuel in brick making by mechanizing the brick making process
- Promotion of mechanized coal stoking systems
- Diversifying products (e.g. production of hollow and perforated bricks)
- Promotion of modern renewable energy technologies in brick making

This report has demonstrated that the problem with bonded labour lies not only in the conditions endured by bonded labourers on a daily basis. Rather, this issue merits attention because of the cycles perpetuated by this labour relationship of bondage and servitude. The most obvious cycle is that of debt. With intergenerational transference of debt, children have no choice but to follow in the footsteps of their parents. At the same time, basic poverty issues and subsistence needs force families to take loan after loan, often paying for their winter's food with a loan that they spend an entire season paying back.

Families in brick kilns fell into debt to meet basic needs. The vulnerability these households experienced as migrants is perpetuated by the exploitation of the brick kiln industry to the point that families, upon return to Afghanistan, have little chance of reintegration – defined as a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities.

Bonded labourers depend on their employers for shelter as well as their livelihoods. With little access to land or shelter due to their migratory background and their lack of land tenure security, households are bound to their employers not only by the terms of their contracts but also by the fact that they cannot obtain shelter by other means. They are therefore dependent

on employers at the most basic level: to provide for a roof for their families, which acts as a big incentive and also a form of implicit coercion. The most extreme and widely cited penalty these bonded labourers can be subject to is the loss of their shelter. Faced with the challenge of meeting basic subsistence needs, the cost of education, in terms of lost income from child labour, is too high for most families. Due to this lack of investment in human capital, child bonded labourers do not acquire the necessary skills to break the cycle of poverty and repeat the same cycle with their children as adults; the same is true with adults who have no access to any skills development or training beyond the work that they have been repeating each work season. As a result the cycle of illiteracy and lack of skills ties into the cycle of poverty, debt, vulnerability and dependence.

From what we have learned about the low-margin brick industry, these cycles will not be solved on their own through economic growth and development, and given the projected contraction in the construction sector, conditions will likely get much worse. Therefore, eliminating child bonded labour in brick kilns is currently unrealistic in Poonamallee Taluk, particularly in the current context of transition. Donors need to focus on realistic, low-cost means of relieving the burden of debt and dependence and improving the living and working conditions of bonded labourers. Interventions should be coordinated with government actors at both the national and provincial level.

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