

## **A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF BRICK KILN WORKERS IN UMBRAJ, SATARA**

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**Abstract:** The brick kiln industry plays a significant role in the socio-economic fabric of many regions, providing employment opportunities for a large number of workers. However, the working conditions and socio-economic status of brick kiln workers has been a subject of concern due to their vulnerability and often precarious situation. This study aims to investigate the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers in Umbraj town of Satara district, with a focus on understanding their living standards, income levels, access to basic amenities, government schemes, and overall well-being.

**Key words:** Brick kiln workers, socioeconomic condition

### **Introduction:**

The brick kiln industry plays a crucial role in the construction sector, contributing to economic development and infrastructure growth. However, workers employed in brick kilns often face numerous socioeconomic challenges that affect their well-being and quality of life. Brick kiln workers form a crucial segment of the informal labor force in many regions. They are typically engaged in physically demanding tasks, such as brick molding, drying, and firing, which involve long working hours and exposure to hazardous conditions. These workers are often migrants from rural areas seeking employment opportunities in the brick kiln industry due to limited prospects in their hometowns. Understanding the socio-economic aspects of the lives of brick kiln workers is essential for formulating policies and interventions to address their challenges effectively.

By addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by brick kiln workers, we can strive towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society that prioritizes the well-being of all its members.

The brick industry in India still remains unorganized and no official authentic data is available regarding its status. India ranks second in the brick manufacturing sector in the world. It is an unorganized sector and workers are under continuous stress of work to increase the productivity with fewer resources and less management skill (Khan, Irumjahan & More, Rajan. (2015). It generates seasonal employment and is primarily occupied by women, who carry out the work of bearing and rearing children along with work in brick kilns.

Female workers in the brick industry are mostly illiterate and come from poor economic classes. They are seen in mixing and molding, loading and unloading sections, and living in the same working environment with their families. They are not benefitted with adequate wage and medical facilities. Working for long hours in the same position, lack of rest, and improper diet affects them physiologically and psychologically.

The brick industry generates employment of seasonal nature, and half of the workers in the brick industry are women. Female workers play two roles of reproduction and production, and their work is least recognized and their effect on their health is less studied.

This study has used quantitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, to gather data from brick kiln workers, their families, employers, and relevant stakeholders. The collected data has been analyzed and interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic realities faced by these workers.

Umbraj is a region known for its brick kilns, which are an integral part of the local economy. The industry employs a significant number of individuals, both skilled and unskilled, who engage in brick-making activities. These workers often come from marginalized communities and face various challenges related to their socio-economic status

By investigating the socio-economic aspects, this study seeks to shed light on the challenges faced by brick kiln workers and identify potential areas for improvement.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers in Umbraj, raise awareness about the challenges they face, and provide insights for stakeholders to develop strategies that promote fair labor practices, improved livelihoods, and enhanced social well-being for this marginalized workforce.

### **Review of Literature:**

The great majority of workers in the nation are employed by unorganised businesses and are thus unprotected. Many people migrate across the states of India in search of temporary work because there are no economic opportunities where they currently reside. About half of the migrant labourers used in the production of bricks are women. This study examines the socioeconomic situation of women employed in Haryana's brick industry and emphasises how difficult their lives are. (D. P. Singh)

A valuable building material is brick. India's small-scale, traditional, organised industries produce fired-clay bricks. After China, the Indian brick industry is the world's second-largest brick producer. The industry is one of the major employment-generating sectors, with an annual turnover of over 10,000 crores (Patra, P. Guray).

This study focuses on the unique vulnerabilities faced by children of Nepalese seasonal migrant workers in brick kilns. These vulnerabilities include being child labourers, being unpaid labourers who perform household chores or brick production on the side to support the family business, or being abandoned in underprivileged communities with variable levels of support. (Shrestha, Hillis, and Daly, A.)

Women make up half of the population and have made significant contributions to the social and economic advancement of society. They are the most marginalised group despite this, and the bulk of them work in the unorganised sector. Women in the informal economy lose a lot and gain little from it. The International Labour Organisation explains the real picture of women and supports this claim as well. (S. Nandal)

Many people migrate across the states of India in search of temporary work because there are no economic opportunities where they currently reside. About half of the migrant labourers used in the production of bricks are women (Saran, A. B., & Sandhwar, N.).

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. The study aims to investigate the socio-economic condition of brick kiln workers and identify their problems.
2. To determine if Brick Kiln workers benefit from government welfare schemes.

### **Research Design**

The current study was conducted using a descriptive research design.

### **Universe and Population of the Study**

The study was carried out in Umbraj, where Brick Kiln units are located. The study focuses on Umbraj Taluka in Satara District as its geographical universe. The study population consists of brick kiln workers from Umbraj taluka.

### **Sampling and Sample Sizes**

Umbraj has approximately 10 brick kiln units. By using convenience sampling method 50 respondents were selected. Hence the sample size is 50.

### **Data Sources**

The selected study subjects (respondents) serve as primary data sources for this study. Secondary sources of data include books, journals, articles, and online content.

### **Methods for Data Collection**

The interview method was used to gather information from the selected respondents.

### **Tool for Data Collection**

The study was conducted using a structured interview schedule.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Simple statistical methods have been used in the present study to analyse the data.

### **Demographic Profile**

- Majority of the brick kiln workers (62%) are young, with low education levels due to migration.
- Most workers are married, belonging to various castes, with a significant representation of Kumbhar and Matang castes.

### **Income and Living Conditions**

- Annual income varies, with a higher proportion earning around ₹30,000.
- Most workers (96% ) reside near the brick kilns in kachha (mud) houses.
- 84% of respondents' family occupation was agriculture. However, they now work in brick kilns and take it as the main occupation of family.

### **Work Conditions and Wages**

- Many brick kiln workers have more than six years of experience.
- The majority work for 7 to 8 hours a day and are paid based on the number of bricks they produce.

### **Health and Safety**

- Women face minimal risks at brick kilns, and brick kiln owners provide medical facilities.
- Most workers go to the sub-center for healthcare, and health-related expenses are usually paid by the workers.

### **Education and Children's Welfare**

- Children of brick kiln workers mostly attend school, with most living within 2 km of the school.
- Families have few educated members, and most children regularly attend school.

### **Gender Dynamics**

- Women are paid for their work, but their participation is limited to specific tasks.

### Seasonal Migration and Livelihood

- Brick kiln workers often return to their hometowns after the brick kiln season, engaging in agricultural work or farm labor.
- Brick kiln work lasts not more than six months.

### Access to Government Schemes

- Many workers have civil documents, especially Aadhaar cards, but only a minority benefit from government schemes like the E-shram card.

### Recommendations

- Recommendations include:
  - Ensuring regular school attendance for children of brick kiln workers
  - Improving access to and utilization of government welfare schemes
  - Enhancing safety and health awareness among brick kiln workers
  - Providing local employment opportunities to promote uninterrupted education and financial stability

### Conclusion

- The socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers in Umbraj reveal the vulnerabilities and marginalization faced by this population. The study highlights the challenging conditions and limited access to resources for brick kiln workers, particularly the lack of educational opportunities and limited benefits from government schemes. Addressing their challenges through targeted interventions and policy measures can contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive society.

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