Work–Life Balance of Women Brick Workers in Srivaikundam Area of Thoothukudi District

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Abstract- **Brick industry in India is labour intensive industry engaging millions of workers. The focus of the paper was to explore thequality of work life of the women brick workers in Srivaikundamareaof Thoothukudi District. The present study is an empirical one based on survey method. The total number of 120 sample women brick workerswas selected by using simple random sample technique. It was conducted during the period of November 2017. In order to analyse the socio-economic profile of the sample respondents, the simple percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, Garrett's ranking method, multiple regressions and probability analysis was adopted.The study depends on the secondary data available on standard textbooks of related topic, leading journal and published documents, website, records and reports issued by the administrative department in Thoothukudi area. The variety of work in the brick kilns includes cutting raw bricks 12%, extracting clay 16%, crushing and grinding 12%, mixing clay 16%, carrying clay 6%, loading and unloading 24%, pulling a wheelbarrow 8%. Thus themajority of the workers involved loading section. It is inferred that most of the sample women respondents attributed the reason of to earn income for the choice of going to ajob in brick units was ranked first followed by to supplement the family income. To provide education for their children were ranked third, to meet out the family expenditure ranked fourth and own interest for the reason of going to ajob in brick units ranked fifth respectively. In the case of women brick workers, the coefficient of multiple regressions (R2) was 0.8304 indicating 83.04 percent variation intotal income. The regression coefficient of variables namely earnings of women brick workersand their spouse's earnings were statistically significant at 5 percent level. One unit increase in these variables could increase the total family income by 0.3641 percent and 0.0528 percent respectively. Thus it may be concluded from the analysis that the contribution of women brick workers towards family income is found high in the study area.**

Index Terms- **Brick industry, labour intensive, work-life balance, quality of work life, decision making**

INTRODUCTION

India is thesecond biggest manufacturer of clay fired bricks accounting for more than 15% of international production. Brick industry in India is labour intensive industry engaging millions of workers. Producing in thebrick industry is inadequate but contribute more too economic and employment in India. A worker in thebrick industry is frequently migrant and economically poor. Brick is a building material made usually from clay moulded as a rectangular area and backed or burned in a kiln(McGraw Hill Encyclopedia 1982). The second largest sector, after the construction sector, absorbing such a floating labour force is the brick unit (Jayoti Gupta, 2003).

Brick is a building material made usually from clay moulded as a rectangular areaand backed or burned in a kiln (McGraw Hill, Encyclopedia 1982). The various methods of production are determined very largely by the nature of the clay or shale and may be divided into (a) semi-dry or semi-plastic process, (b) stiff-plastic process; and (c) plastic process. (McKay, 1971). To protect bricks from unpredictable storms and rains, the stacks should be made under a shed (Ghose, 1989).

Brick industry is facing a number of problems. These include increased cost and shortage of fuelwood, increasing thecost of alternative fuels such as rice husk and coal. Problems in finding adequately skilled labour, lack of extension services to develop or adopt more efficient production technologies, lack of co-operation among brick makers, lack of formal training, competition from concrete unit etc., (Koopmans, 1987). The knowledge economy has created greater access for women coupled with factors such as changes in marital patterns and smaller families. This has led to an increase in the number of working women and, hence, working mothers (Grossman, 1981).

Effectively creating work-life balance will eventually create more contented employees that contribute to efficiency and success in the place of work. (http://www.indianmba.com).Work-life balance is defined as an employee's perception that multiple domains of personal time, family care, and work are maintained and integrated with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000; Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). Work-family balance reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter-role phenomenon (Marks and MacDermid, 1996).

Demographic changes as seen in the increasing number of women in the workplace and dual career families have generated an increasingly diverse workforce and a greater need of employees to balance their work and non-work lives (Bharat, 2003; Komarraju, 1997). Quality of work life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making avaluable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect (Straw & Heckscher 1984).

Quality of work life encompasses mode of wages payment, working conditions, working time, health hazards issue, financial and non-financial benefits and management behaviour towards employees (Islam & Siengthai 2009). Quality of working life is not a unitary concept, but has been seen as incorporating a hierarchy of perspectives that not only include work-based factors such as job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and relationships with work colleagues, but also factors that broadly reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

Quality of work life carries different interpretations for different employees in an organization. The relationship between working time (fewer working hours) and job satisfaction is ambiguous, though job satisfaction is positively related to working time flexibility for maintaining a reasonable work-life balance (Robbins, 2005). QWL dimensions are broadly divided into Classical dimensions and Contemporary dimensions.

The quality of work that Canadians want rests on four pillars. These are the opportunity to engage in tasks that are fulfilling and meaningful to workers personally; a decent standard of living; health, well-being and support for family life or life outside work generally; and rights including worker participation in decision making (Roopali Johri, 2005).One side sees QWL as a way to improve working conditions, morale and productivity by providing a more congenial workplace where everybody "works together" (Grenier, Guillermo and Banks Andy, 1987).

Brick manufacturing is one of the unorganized industries in India. Female employees in thebrick industry are nearly equal in number to male workers. Female employees carry work of bearing and rearing of children along with work in thebrick kiln. Female workers come from poor economic class and are typicallyuneducated in brick industry. A female workerisperceived in mixing and moulding and loading and unloading sections. The focus of the paper was to explore thequality of work life of the women brick workers in Srivaikundamareaof Thoothukudi District.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1) To study the socio-economic profile of the sample respondents working in brick industries in Srivaikundamarea.
2) To identify the reasons for going to job in brickwork industries
3) To analyse the type of works in brick industries
4) To assess the contribution ofwomen brick workersfamily income
5) To examine the quality of work lifeof the women brick employees

Methodology

The present study is an empirical one based on survey method. First-hand data were collected from the field through questionnaire and observation. The schedule structured was extensively pre-tested. Srivaikundam has been chosen as a study area which is located in Thoothukudi district. The total number of 120 sample women brick workerswas selected by using simple random sample technique. It was conducted during the period of November2017. In order to analyse the socio-economic profile of the sample respondents, the simple percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, Garrett's ranking method, multiple regressions and probability analysis was adopted.The study depends on the secondary data available on standard textbooks of related topic,

leading journal and published documents, website, records and reports issued by the administrative department in Thoothukudi district.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN BRICKWORKS

The socio-economic status of the workers depends upon their age, social group, religion, educational qualification, marital status, number of family members, monthly earnings, saving habits, reasons for going to job in brickwork industries, debt situation, experience in the same brick units, nature of appointment, total working hours, protective measures used and demand of workersand so on. In this paper, the researcher has analysed the socio-economic conditions of the brickwork employees.

Socio-personal characteristics of respondents (n=120)

Variable	Categories	Percentage
Age	Below 30	22
	31 – 40	26
	41 – 50	32
	51 – 60	14
	Above 60 years	6
Marital Status	Married	74
	Unmarried	22
	Widow	4
Level of Education	Illiterate	28
	Primary	42
	Secondary	22
	Higher Secondary	8
Nature of Family	Nuclear Family	76
	Joint Family	24
Family Size	Less than 3	26
	3 – 4	46
	4 – 5	22
	Above 5	6
Type of works	Cutting raw bricks	12
	Extracting clay	16
	Crushing and grinding	12
	Mixing clay	16
	Carrying clay	12
	Loading and unloading	24
	Pulling wheelbarrow	8
Monthly income of the employees	Below Rs. 3,000	22
	Rs. 3,001 and Rs. 3,500	36
	Rs. 3,501 and Rs. 4,000	26
	Rs. 4,001 and Rs. 4,500	10
	Rs. 4,501 and Rs. 5,000	6
Habit of savings	No savings	64
	Save below Rs. 500 per month	24
	Save between Rs.501 and Rs. 1,000 per month	12
Debt situation	No debt	58
	Debt owe to employer	26
	Debt owe to money lender	16
Experience in the same brick units	Below 3 years	32
	Above 3 years and up to 6 years	24
	Above 6 years and up to 9 years	18
	Above 9 years and up to 12 years	12
	Above 12 years and up to 15 years	8
	More than 15 years	6
Nature of appointment	Contract Basis	76
	Regular basis	24
Total working hours per day	More than 8 hours	64
	Below 8 hours	36
Protective measures used	Sun Hats	28
	Working shoes	52
	Gloves	20
Types of Demand of Workers	Wage hike	36
	Job security	22
	Social security	14
	Bonus and advance	16
	Clothing and transport	12
	Total	100

Source: Primary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents were analyzed and presented in the above table. It could be inferred from Table that the important age groups of the respondents are 31-40 years and 41- 50 years. They constitute 26 and 32 percentof the total respectively. It is followed by below 30 years, 51-60 years and above 50 years which constitute 22.00 percent, 14.00 percent and 6.00 percent respectively. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents fall under the age group of below 41-50 years in the study area. The mean age of brick workers worked out to be 41.1 years.

It could be evidence that the majority of the respondents are married. They constitute 74.00 percentof the total. It was followed by unmarried and widow, which constitute 22.00 percent and 4.00 percent respectively.

The important level of education among them is illiterate which constitute 28.00 percentof the total. The number of respondents with primary, secondary

school and higher secondary education constitute 42.00, 22.00 percent and 8.00 percentof the total respectively. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have illiterates in the study area.

It could be identified that a maximum of 76 percent of the total respondents belongs to thenuclear family system, whereas the remaining 24 percent of the respondents belong to thejoint family system. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents belong to anuclear family in Srivaikundamarea of Thoothukudi district.

It could be illustrated that the important family sizes among the respondents are three to four members and less than three members per family which constitute 46.00 and 26.00 percentof the total respectively. The numbers of respondents who have a family size of four to five members and above five members in their family constitute 22.00 percent and 6.00 percentof the total respectively.

The analysis reveals that the important family size among the respondents is three to five members in the study area.The variety of work in the brick kilns includes cutting raw bricks 12%, extracting clay 16%, crushing and grinding 12%, mixing clay 16%, carrying clay 6%, loading and unloading 24%, pulling a wheelbarrow 8%. Thus themajority of the workers involved loading section.

It is inferred that 18 (36%) respondents earn a monthly income between Rs. 3,001 and Rs. 3,500, 13 (26.00 %) respondents earn a monthly income between Rs. 3,501 and Rs. 4,000, 11(22.00%) respondents earn a monthly income below Rs.3000. 5 (10%) respondents earn a monthly income between Rs. 4,001 and Rs. 4,501 and the rest 3 (6.00%) respondents earn a monthly income Rs.4,501 and Rs. 5,000 per month. The mean monthly family income of the households works out to be Rs. 3,460.5.

It is inferred that 32 (64%) respondents do not have savings at all, 12 (24 %) respondents save below Rs. 500 per month and the rest 6 (12%) respondents save between Rs. 501 and Rs. 1,000 per month. The study shows that 29 (58%) respondent are not in any debts, 13 (26.00 %) respondents have borrowed from the money lenders and rest 8 (16 %) respondents have borrowed from their employers.

It is inferred that 16 (32%) respondents have work experience in the same units for a period of below 3 years, 12 (24.00%) respondents have work experience for a period of 3 to 6 years in the same units, 9 (18%) respondents have work experience for a period of 6 to 9 years, 6 (12%) respondents have work experience of 9 to 12 years, 4 (8.00%) respondents have work experience for a period of 12 to 15 years and the rest 3 (6 %) respondents have work experience for a period of more than 15 years.

It is understood that 21 (42%) respondents have chosen the job in brickworks to earn an income to meet their family expenditure, 11 (22.00 %) respondents have chosen the job in brickworks units to meet out the family expenditure, 10 (20.00%) respondents have chosen job in brick units for the supplement the family income and the rest 8 (16%) respondents have chosen job in brick units to provide education to their children.

It is inferred that 76.00 percent of the respondents work on contract basis and receive wages accordingly and the rest 24.00% respondents are regular basis workers. It could be seen that 32 (64%) respondents are working for more than 8 hours per day, and the rest 18 (36%) respondents are working below 8 hours per day.

It could be seen that 28 percent of the respondents use sun hats and only 52 percent of them use working shoes and 10 percent of the respondents use gloves.From the data, it is clear that 36% workers demanded wage hike to maintain their families. 22% workers asked for job security and 14% for social security. 16% of workers demand bonus and advances and only 12% asked for clothing and transport.

Reasons for going to job in brick units

Reasons for going to job in brick units	Weighted Average	Rank
To earn an income	57.02	I
To meet out the family expenditure	39.11	IV
To supplement the family income	51.17	II
To provide education for their children	43.34	III
Own interest	32.04	V

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the table that most of the sample women respondents attributed the reason of to earn income for the choice of going to ajob in brick units was ranked first followed by to supplement the family income. To provide education for their children were ranked third, to meet out the family expenditure ranked fourth and own interest for the

reason of going to a job in brick units ranked fifth respectively.

Stepwise multiple regression dependent variable quality of work life

It is revealed that three of the variables were entered into the equation and the order of inclusion was as follows: job satisfaction, quality of health and income. As each of the additional was entered, the multiple R and R^2 increased. This indicates that job satisfaction, quality of health and income were the best set of predictors of quality of work life having a combined contribution of about 98 percent. Allowing one of the independent variables to operate, while controlling the other variables in the equation, revealed that it was job satisfaction which had the highest contribution to the quality of work followed by the quality of health and income respectively.

Analysis of women brick workers contribution towards family income

In order to assess the contribution ofwomen brick workersfamily income, the following mathematical formulations were used for multiple regression analysis,

$\text{Log } y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log X_1 + \beta_1 \log X_1 + u$

Where,

Y = Total family income (in rupees)

X1 = Earnings of women brick workers(in rupees)

X2 = Earning their spouses (in rupees)

U = Error term or unexplained variation of total family income associated with the left out variables.

β_0, β_1 and β_2 are the parameters to be estimated.

The above model was estimated separately for work on different activities of the women brick workersby the method of least squares. The estimated results are presented in the following Table.

Estimated regression results forwomen brick workers

Variables	Estimated Regression Coefficient	t – value
Intercept (β_0)	0.7369	
β_1	0.3641*	12.6802
β_2	0.0528*	13.8537
R^2	0.8304	
F – value	42.3587	
No of observations	120	

*Indicates the coefficients are statistically significant at 5 percent level.

In the case of women brick workers, the coefficient of multiple regressions (R^2) was 0.8304 indicating 83.04 percent variation in total income. The regression coefficient of variables namely earnings of women brick workersand their spouse's earnings were statistically significant at *5* percent level. One unit increase in these variables could increase the total family income by 0.3641 percent and 0.0528 percent respectively. Thus it may be concluded from the analysis that the contribution of women brick workers towards family income is found high in the study area.

Step Wise Regression Analysis

In order to assess the contribution of independent variables to the quality of work life, stepwise regression analysis was carried out. In the regression model, three variables were introduced and the order of inclusion was as follows: job satisfaction, quality of family life and monthly income. The computed results of stepwise multiple regressions are presented in the following Table.

Stepwise multiple regression dependent variable quality of work life (QWL)

Variables	Multiple R	R^2	F	P	Beta
Job satisfaction	0.9716	0.96	362.83	0.001	0.98
Quality of family life	0.9847	0.97	291.11	0.001	0.41
Income	0.9861	0.98	327.94	0.001	0.04

It is revealed from thetable that three of the variables were entered into the equation and the order of inclusion was as follows: Job satisfaction, quality of family life and income. As each of the additional was entered, the multiple R and R^2 increased. This indicates that job satisfaction quality of family life and income were the best set of predictors of quality of work life having a combined contribution of about 98 percent. Allowing one of the independent variables to operate, while controlling the other variables in the equation, revealed that it was job satisfaction which had the highest contribution to the quality of work followed by the quality of family life and income respectively.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that based on the diverse features that have influence determining the level of awareness of the women employees in accomplishing

the quality of work life, it is obvious and conclusive that majority of the women employees have professed confidently view towards achieving the quality of work life while working in the brick industries are felt satisfactory and fair, whereas, limited of the women employees have felt inversely and the areas perceived from the results of the analysis where fluctuations for improvement required are recommended to raise the productivity of the brick industries through helping the women employees to accomplish their quality of work and quality in life respectively.

Moreover, Government must evolve suitable and sustainable policy support for strengthening the brick industry. Brick industry is one of the feasible rural industries which have so far been escaped from the competitions of the multinational companies. It is accountable to the governments to protect the rural based, employment oriented brick industry from the international competitions. The brick industry has a great future and proposals chance to millions of nationals and women to satisfy their esteemed vision of having a 'house' of their own.

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