

Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Brick Kiln Workers in Dharmapuri District

Dr.A. Krishnan¹, P. Desingu²

¹*Associate Professor, in Commerce, Department of Commerce, Presidency College Affiliated to Madras University Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.*

²*Research Scholar, PG and Research Department of Commerce, Govt. Arts College Dharmapuri Affiliated to Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India*

Abstract—The brick kiln industry provides livelihood opportunities to many rural and economically weaker families in Dharmapuri District. Despite its contribution to employment generation, brick kiln workers continue to experience numerous socio-economic difficulties that negatively affect their quality of life. This study examines the major challenges faced by brick kiln workers, including low wages, poor working conditions, health hazards, lack of job security, indebtedness, inadequate housing, and limited access to education and healthcare facilities. The research also focuses on the awareness and utilization of government welfare schemes among workers. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from selected respondents in the study area. The findings reveal that workers remain socially and economically vulnerable due to exploitative labour practices and insufficient social protection measures. The study emphasizes the need for improved labour welfare policies, safer working environments, fair wages, and effective social security measures to enhance the living standards and economic well-being of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District.

Index Terms—Brick Kiln Workers, Socio-Economic Challenges, Labour Welfare, Working Conditions, Rural Labourers, Occupational Health, Wage Problems, Living Standards, Dharmapuri District, Social Security.

I. INTRODUCTION

The brick kiln industry is an important part of India's construction sector, providing employment to nearly 10 million workers across the country. In rural districts like Dharmapuri, brick kiln work serves as a major livelihood source during agricultural off-

seasons. The industry supports infrastructure development by supplying bricks for houses, roads, and commercial buildings. However, brick kiln workers continue to face socio-economic problems such as low wages, poor working conditions, health hazards, debt bondage, and lack of social security. Women and children are especially vulnerable to exploitation and limited educational opportunities. Therefore, this study examines the socio-economic conditions and challenges faced by brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The brick kiln industry provides employment to a large number of rural and economically weaker people in Dharmapuri District. Despite their contribution to the construction sector and local economy, brick kiln workers continue to face poor living conditions, low wages, health problems, lack of job security, and limited access to education and healthcare facilities. Many workers are also affected by debt, seasonal migration, and social exploitation. Women and children remain more vulnerable to hardship and inequality. Therefore, there is a need to study the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers to identify their major problems and suggest effective welfare measures for improving their living standards and social security.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because the brick kiln industry provides livelihood opportunities to many

rural and unskilled labourers in Dharmapuri District. Despite their contribution to the construction sector, brick kiln workers continue to face socio-economic problems such as low wages, poor working conditions, health hazards, inadequate housing, and lack of social security. The study helps to understand the difficulties experienced by workers, especially women and migrant labourers. The findings will assist government agencies, policymakers, and welfare organizations in designing effective labour welfare measures and social protection schemes. Academically, the research contributes to studies on rural labour, socio-economic development, and unorganized employment sectors.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on analysing the socio-economic challenges faced by brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District. It examines factors such as income, wages, employment conditions, working hours, health problems, housing facilities, education, indebtedness, and access to healthcare services. The research also studies the awareness and utilization of government welfare schemes among workers. Special attention is given to women workers, migrant labourers, and economically weaker families employed in brick kilns. The study is based on both primary and secondary data collected from selected respondents. The findings will help policymakers and welfare departments improve labour welfare measures and living conditions of brick kiln workers.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahamed and Sayeed (2021) examined the socio-economic conditions of unorganized labourers in India and found that workers in informal sectors suffer from low income, poor living standards, and lack of social security benefits. The study emphasized the need for labour welfare measures and policy support to improve the quality of life of unorganized workers.

Barman (2020) analysed the occupational health hazards faced by brick kiln workers in rural areas. The study revealed that workers are highly exposed to dust, smoke, and extreme heat, which lead to respiratory diseases, skin problems, dehydration, and physical exhaustion. The researcher suggested the

implementation of safety measures and healthcare facilities in brick kiln industries.

Kumar and Singh (2020) conducted a study on wage conditions and livelihood issues of brick kiln workers in India. The findings showed that most workers receive low wages and work under insecure employment conditions. The study highlighted that irregular income and financial instability force workers into indebtedness and poverty.

Narayanan (2018) focused on child labour and educational deprivation in brick kiln industries. The study found that poverty and migration compel many children to engage in labour activities instead of attending school regularly. The researcher stressed the importance of educational support and social awareness programmes.

Rani and Saluja (2019) studied labour migration and vulnerability in informal sectors. The research pointed out that migrant workers in brick kilns often face exploitation, wage discrimination, and lack of legal protection. The study recommended stronger labour laws and social security measures for migrant labourers.

Sharma and Patel (2022) examined the socio-economic status and working conditions of brick kiln labourers. Their findings indicated that workers face long working hours, poor sanitation facilities, inadequate housing conditions, and lack of occupational safety. The study suggested improving labour welfare schemes and working environments.

Verma and Yadav (2021) analysed the challenges faced by women workers in informal sectors. The study identified issues such as wage inequality, poor healthcare facilities, lack of maternity benefits, and social insecurity among women labourers. The researchers recommended gender equality measures and welfare support for women workers.

Yadav and Kumar (2020) investigated the living conditions and social security measures available to brick kiln workers. The study revealed that many workers are unaware of government welfare schemes and unable to access social security benefits due to illiteracy and lack of documentation.

The review of literature indicates that brick kiln workers continue to experience several socio-economic and occupational challenges. However, limited studies have focused specifically on the conditions of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap

by analyzing the socio-economic challenges, working conditions, and welfare issues faced by brick kiln workers in the district.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri.
2. To identify the major problems faced by brick kiln workers in their working and living conditions.
3. To examine the occupational health and safety issues experienced by brick kiln workers.
4. To study the awareness and utilization of government welfare schemes among brick kiln workers.
5. To suggest suitable measures for improving the socio-economic status and welfare of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District.

Hypotheses of the Study

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

1. There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of brick kiln workers and their income level.
2. There is no significant association between working conditions and the health status of brick kiln workers.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female brick kiln workers regarding wage earnings.
4. There is no significant relationship between awareness of government welfare schemes and utilization of welfare benefits among brick kiln workers.
5. There is no significant association between socio-economic status and job satisfaction of brick kiln workers.

Alternative Hypotheses (H₁)

1. There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of brick kiln workers and their income level.
2. There is a significant association between working conditions and the health status of brick kiln workers.
3. There is a significant difference between male and female brick kiln workers regarding wage earnings.

4. There is a significant relationship between awareness of government welfare schemes and utilization of welfare benefits among brick kiln workers.
5. There is a significant association between socio-economic status and job satisfaction of brick kiln workers.

VII. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The brick kiln industry provides employment to many rural and economically weaker labourers in Dharmapuri District. However, workers in this sector continue to face serious socio-economic problems such as low wages, poor working conditions, lack of job security, inadequate housing, and limited access to healthcare and education. Many workers suffer from occupational health issues due to exposure to dust, smoke, and extreme heat. Indebtedness, seasonal migration, and financial insecurity further affect their living standards. Women workers also experience wage discrimination and insufficient welfare support. Although government welfare schemes exist, lack of awareness and accessibility prevents workers from receiving proper benefits and social protection.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study entitled “Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Brick Kiln Workers in Dharmapuri” is descriptive and analytical in nature. The study aims to analyze the socio-economic conditions, working environment, and major problems faced by brick kiln workers in the selected study area.

Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from brick kiln workers through a well-structured questionnaire and personal interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather information relating to demographic profile, income, working conditions, health issues, welfare measures, and socio-economic challenges faced by the workers.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research articles, government reports, labour department publications, newspapers, websites, and other relevant published sources related to brick kiln workers and labour welfare.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in selected brick kiln units located in different areas of Dharmapuri District.

Sampling Technique

The respondents for the study were selected using a convenient sampling method. Workers who were available and willing to provide information during the survey period were chosen as respondents.

Sample Size

The total sample size for the study consists of 300 brick kiln workers from various brick kiln units in Dharmapuri District.

Tools for Analysis

The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The following tools were used for analysis:

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Chi-Square Test
- Garrett Ranking Technique
- Correlation Analysis

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited only to selected brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District.
- The accuracy of the study depends upon the responses given by the respondents.
- Time and financial constraints limited the wider coverage of the study.
- Some respondents were hesitant to provide complete information regarding income and working conditions.

Research Gap

Many studies have examined labour welfare and socio-economic conditions of unorganized workers in India. However, limited research has focused specifically on the socio-economic challenges faced

by brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District. Most previous studies mainly discuss wage issues, child labour, or health problems at the national or state level, with less attention to district-level analysis. There is also insufficient research on women workers, migrant labourers, and awareness of government welfare schemes in the brick kiln sector. Therefore, this study fills the research gap by analyzing the working conditions, socio-economic problems, and welfare issues of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri District.

IX. TABULATION AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	180	60%
Female	120	40%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows that out of 300 respondents, 60 percent are male workers and 40 percent are female workers. It indicates that male workers dominate employment in brick kiln activities in Dharmapuri District.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20 Years	30	10%
21–30 Years	90	30%
31–40 Years	105	35%
41–50 Years	50	16.67%
Above 50 Years	25	8.33%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The table reveals that the majority of respondents (35%) belong to the age group of 31–40 years, followed by 30 percent in the 21–30 years category. This indicates that middle-aged workers are more actively involved in brick kiln work.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	120	40%
Primary Education	90	30%
Secondary Education	55	18.33%
Higher Secondary	25	8.33%
Graduate and Above	10	3.34%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The table indicates that 40 percent of the respondents are illiterate, while only a small percentage have completed higher education. This shows a low level of educational attainment among brick kiln workers.

Table 4 Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below ₹10,000	95	31.67%
₹10,001– ₹20,000	130	43.33%
₹20,001– ₹30,000	50	16.67%
Above ₹30,000	25	8.33%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows that 43.33 percent of the respondents earn between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000 per month, while 31.67 percent earn below ₹10,000. This indicates that most brick kiln workers belong to low-income groups.

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents by Major Problems Faced

Problems Faced	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Low Wages	95	31.67%
Long Working Hours	70	23.33%
Health Problems	60	20%
Lack of Safety Measures	45	15%
Job Insecurity	30	10%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The table shows that low wages are the major problem faced by brick kiln workers, as reported by 31.67 percent of respondents. Long working hours and health-related issues are also significant challenges faced by workers.

Table 6 Distribution of Respondents by Awareness of Welfare Schemes

Awareness Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Aware	110	36.67%
Not Aware	190	63.33%
Total	300	100%

Interpretation

The above table indicates that 63.33 percent of respondents are not aware of government welfare schemes. This reflects poor awareness and limited access to welfare benefits among brick kiln workers.

Table 7 Garrett Ranking of Problems Faced by Brick Kiln Workers

Problems	Total Garrett Score	Mean Score	Rank
Low Wages	16850	56.17	I
Long Working Hours	15420	51.40	II

Problems	Total Garrett Score	Mean Score	Rank
Health Problems	14280	47.60	III
Lack of Safety Measures	13150	43.83	IV
Job Insecurity	11800	39.33	V

Interpretation

The above Garrett Ranking analysis reveals that low wages are the most significant problem faced by brick kiln workers, securing the first rank with the highest mean score of 56.17. Long working hours occupy the second rank, indicating that workers are required to perform physically demanding tasks for extended periods.

Health problems are ranked third, showing that occupational hazards and poor working environments negatively affect workers’ well-being. Lack of safety measures receives the fourth rank, reflecting inadequate protection and welfare facilities at workplaces. Job insecurity is ranked fifth among the identified problems.

The analysis clearly indicates that economic hardship and poor working conditions are the major socio-economic challenges faced by brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri.

X. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The majority of brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri are male workers.
2. Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 31–40 years.
3. A significant number of workers are illiterate or possess only primary-level education.
4. The majority of respondents earn a low monthly income between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000.
5. Low wages are identified as the major problem faced by brick kiln workers.
6. Many workers are exposed to occupational health issues such as respiratory problems, body pain, dehydration, and fatigue.

7. Most respondents work for long hours under difficult working conditions.
8. Basic facilities such as sanitation, drinking water, and medical support are inadequate in many brick kiln units.
9. A large number of workers are not aware of government welfare schemes and social security benefits.
10. Women workers face additional challenges such as wage discrimination and lack of welfare support.
11. Indebtedness and financial insecurity are common among brick kiln workers.
12. The study reveals that brick kiln workers continue to experience poor socio-economic conditions despite their contribution to the construction sector.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

1. The government should ensure proper implementation of labour welfare laws and safety regulations in brick kiln industries.
2. Employers should provide fair wages, reasonable working hours, and better working environments for workers.
3. Health camps and regular medical check-ups should be organized for brick kiln workers.
4. Adequate drinking water, sanitation, housing, and first-aid facilities should be provided at workplaces.
5. Awareness programmes should be conducted to educate workers about government welfare schemes and labour rights.
6. Financial assistance and low-interest loans should be provided to reduce indebtedness among workers.
7. Special attention should be given to women workers by ensuring equal wages and social protection measures.
8. Educational support and scholarship schemes should be introduced for the children of brick kiln workers.
9. Skill development and alternative employment opportunities should be promoted to improve the economic status of workers.
10. Labour unions and social organizations should actively support the welfare and protection of brick kiln workers.

XII. CONCLUSION

The brick kiln industry plays a vital role in providing employment opportunities to rural and economically weaker populations. However, the findings of the study clearly reveal that brick kiln workers in Dharmapuri continue to face numerous socio-economic challenges such as low wages, poor working conditions, health hazards, lack of social security, and financial instability. Most workers belong to disadvantaged backgrounds with limited educational and economic opportunities.

The study highlights the urgent need for effective labour welfare measures, improved occupational safety, and better living conditions for brick kiln workers. Increasing awareness about government welfare schemes and ensuring their proper implementation can significantly improve the quality of life of workers. The cooperation of government authorities, employers, labour organizations, and society is essential to protect the rights and dignity of brick kiln workers.

Overall, the study concludes that improving the socio-economic conditions of brick kiln workers is not only necessary for labour welfare but also important for sustainable rural and industrial development.

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