

# SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF REGISTERED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN TRINELVELLI DISTRICT

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## Abstract

The construction sector is a key driver of economic growth in India and a major source of employment, particularly within the unorganised segment. Despite the availability of several welfare schemes, construction workers continue to experience economic and social insecurity. This study assesses the socio-economic conditions and quality of work life of registered construction workers in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Primary data were collected from 592 registered workers through a structured interview schedule. The analysis focuses on demographic characteristics and core dimensions such as general well-being, working conditions, job satisfaction, social security, and grievance redressal mechanisms. The results indicate persistent issues related to employment instability, insufficient health protection, and limited access to effective social security benefits. The findings suggest that worker registration alone is not sufficient to ensure better living or working conditions. The study emphasizes the need to strengthen policy implementation, improve workplace safety, and enhance welfare delivery systems to promote sustainable development and worker well-being in the construction sector.

## Keywords

Construction Workers, Social Security, Socio-Economic Status, Quality of Work Life, Unorganized Sector

## 1. Introduction

The construction industry occupies a significant position in the socio-economic development of any nation, contributing substantially to gross domestic product and employment generation. Globally, the sector accounts for nearly seven percent of total employment. In India, construction is the second-largest employer after agriculture and absorbs a large share of the unorganised workforce. Employment opportunities in this sector range from skilled and semi-skilled roles to unskilled and support functions.

Over the years, the Indian construction sector has witnessed a gradual decline in the proportion of skilled workers, alongside a growing dependence on unskilled labour. This structural shift has contributed to labour shortages, productivity chal-

lenges, and increased vulnerability among workers. Construction labourers often face irregular employment, unstable income, and limited access to basic social protection, making them one of the most disadvantaged groups within the unorganised sector.

Although both central and state governments have introduced various legislations and welfare schemes to regulate working conditions and safeguard labour rights, the actual benefits received by workers remain limited. Many construction workers continue to be exposed to unsafe working environments and occupational health risks. Field observations in locations such as Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli New Bus Stand, Vannarpettai, and areas near Tirunelveli Junction reveal daily uncer-

tainties related to job availability, travel distance to worksites, long working hours, and lack of health security.

Construction workers are broadly classified as registered and non-registered workers. Registered workers are legally eligible for welfare benefits, while non-registered workers are excluded from most schemes. However, the extent to which registration improves socio-economic conditions remains unclear. Against this background, the present study attempts to examine the socio-economic status and quality of work life of registered construction workers in the Tirunelveli district.

## 2. Objectives

- To examine the socio-economic status of registered construction workers in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- To provide appropriate suggestions for improving the socio-economic conditions of the workers.

## 3. Review of the Literature

A considerable body of literature exists on quality of work life across various organised sectors; however, studies focusing on unorganised sectors such as construction, agriculture, and beedi work are relatively limited. Quality of work life has evolved from being viewed merely as a means of livelihood to a multidimensional concept that places the worker at the centre of organisational and social processes.

Quality of work life broadly refers to the extent to which the work environment supports employee well-being, satisfaction, and personal development. Scholars have described it as the overall favourableness of working conditions, including physical environment, job security, participation in decision-making, fair treatment, and opportunities for growth. A supportive work environment is essential for retaining workers, enhancing productivity, and promoting psychological well-being.

Earlier studies highlight that factors such as

wages, working hours, safety conditions, supervisory support, and social recognition play a critical role in shaping work life quality. Research also suggests that inadequate supervision, excessive workload, and long working hours contribute to stress and poor mental health, while positive peer and supervisor support can improve job satisfaction and performance.

In the context of construction labour, the literature identifies general well-being, working conditions, job satisfaction, access to social security, and grievance redressal as the most influential dimensions affecting quality of work life. These dimensions form the basis for the analytical framework adopted in the present study.

## 4. Conceptual Framework

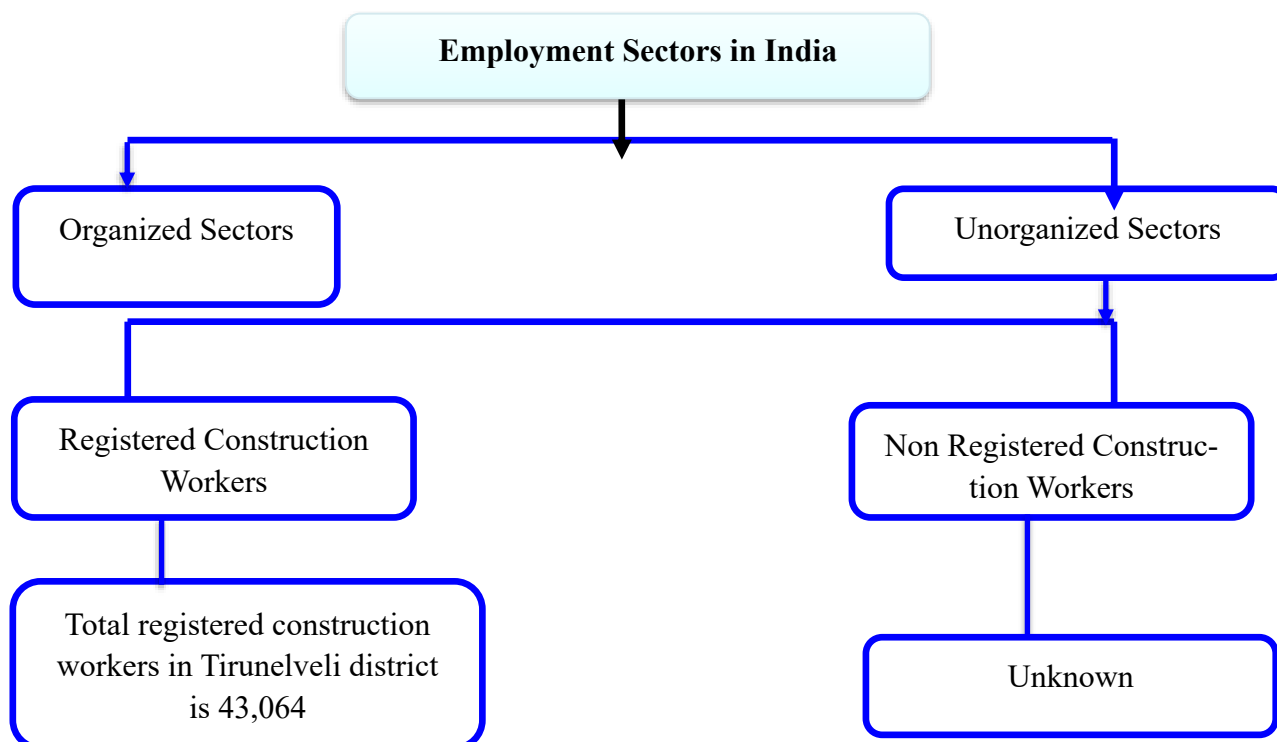
The study is guided by a conceptual framework that links socio-economic factors and work-related conditions with the overall quality of work life of registered construction workers. The framework considers general well-being, working environment, job satisfaction, social security, and grievance redressal as key determinants.

## 5. Research Methodology and Analysis

The study adopts a descriptive research design based on primary data. A total of 592 registered construction workers were selected as the sample, which was considered adequate for meaningful analysis. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule administered in both English and Tamil to ensure clarity and inclusiveness.

The interview schedule consisted of two sections. The first section captured demographic details, while the second section included 120 statements measuring five independent variables and one dependent variable related to quality of work life. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Reliability analysis was conducted to ensure internal consistency of the data before further analysis.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Registered Construction Workers:**



Source: Primary Data

**Table 1 -Demographic Profile of Respondents**

S.No	Demographic Profile		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	488	82.44
		Female	104	17.56
		<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100.00</b>
2.	Category of Occupation	Mason	177	29.89
		Carpenter	30	5.06
		Title workers	38	6.41
		Concrete workers	62	10.47
		Fitter	44	7.43
		Electrician	25	4.28
		Welder	29	4.89
		Painter	36	6.08
		Plumber	20	3.37
		Cithal	131	22.12
		<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100.00</b>
		3.	Marital Status	Married
Unmarried	78			13.17
Separated	10			1.68
Widow	20			3.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>			<b>100.00</b>

4.	Age	Below 20	12	2.02
		21-30	104	17.59
		31-40	106	17.90
		41-50	235	39.52
		Above 51	136	22.97
		<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field survey

The findings provide valuable insights into the socio-economic profile and work life conditions of registered construction workers in the study area. The workforce is predominantly male, reflecting the physically intensive nature of construction activities. Occupational distribution indicates a higher concentration of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, suggesting limited skill advancement opportunities.

Age-wise analysis shows that a large proportion of workers belong to middle-aged and older age groups, indicating reduced participation of younger individuals in construction employment. This trend

## 6. Conclusion

The study concludes that registered construction workers in Tirunelveli district continue to experience socio-economic vulnerability despite their contribution to economic development and access to welfare schemes. Employment insecurity, inadequate health protection, unsafe working environments, and weak social security mechanisms remain major concerns.

The quality of work life of construction workers is significantly influenced by general well-being, working conditions, job satisfaction, social security, and grievance redressal systems. However, gaps in policy implementation limit the effectiveness of existing welfare measures. Therefore, there is a strong need for improved enforcement of labour regulations, enhanced health and safety provisions, comprehensive social security coverage, and efficient grievance redressal mechanisms.

Addressing these issues holistically will not only improve the living and working conditions of construction workers but also contribute to higher productivity and sustainable growth in the construction sector.

may be attributed to job insecurity, health risks, and the availability of alternative livelihood options. The predominance of married workers further highlights increased household responsibilities and financial pressure.

Despite being registered and eligible for welfare schemes, many workers continue to face challenges related to health security, safe working conditions, and income stability. The results clearly indicate that registration alone does not automatically translate into improved quality of work life.

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