

Construction Workers, Problems and Policy-building: An Anthropological Study of Migrant Labour in Delhi

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Abstract

The study looks into the various dimensions of labour migration that includes factors responsible, challenges faced, their plight and safeguards. An attempt has been made to figure out the link between these dimensions and the process of recruitment and their legal status. The present paper is an ethnographic study of a labour camp in Delhi with the idea to highlight their sociocultural conditions. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in a labour colony and on a construction site in Delhi where in-depth interviews of the workers were conducted.

Keywords: Construction Sector, Labour, Migrant Labour, Policy, Unorganized sector

Introduction

Globalization is playing an important role in generation of livelihood opportunities for people but has not been able to vanquish poverty in our country. Social protection is not formally accessible to all rather it has degenerated despite of growth of right -based politics, income instability is rising leading to the expansion of casual labour practices and distress induced self-employment without access to any work rights. This is leading to increased vulnerability at the work place. According to ILO (2014) in developing countries like India, informal sector acts as a major source of employment for labour force. This kind of labour is not organised and does not come under any regulatory framework due to which they are vulnerable to abuse of basic rights. Growth in the workforce is the root cause of the growing unorganized sector. Migration has exposed workers to the insecure, low- paying and labor-intensive nature of industry. The working and living conditions, poor health, inaccessibility to public services, compromised legal status, and job insecurity poses threat to their social and economic well-being (Reza et al. 2019).

Population expansion and livelihood opportunities in urban centres have worked as push factors for migration but exposure to vulnerabilities at the destination cannot be ignored (Turner 2019). Being exposed to perceptible coercions that

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