

Decent Construction, Indecent Work..... The Poor Construction Worker

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The construction industry is going through one of its best period. Its activities are booming and the boom is unparallel in terms of size, capacity and quality. In whichever city one looks at, there are huge billboards advertising new commercial and/or residential ventures. The daily newspapers carry special supplement every Saturday. Most of the big cities and satellite towns, such as Gurgaon, Noida, Vasi, etc. have come up with mega construction projects aimed at building scores of residential complexes, shopping malls, office complexes, multiplexes, etc. In addition to the sheer volume and variety of construction there is marked difference in the style and quality of new constructions. The designs are more adventurous, stylish and daring. Commercial complexes are adopting the glass and metal looks to be consistent with the global trends. The shopping malls and multiplexes built in Bangalore, Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai are comparable to the ones built in any city in either Southeast Asia or to that matter in Europe and US.

According to a survey² the cities of Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi have emerged as the top three investors' choice for real estate investment during 2005. The Survey also noted that investment interest in the region would continue to be robust during 2005 with more confidence towards the retail and office property markets across the region.

The construction, nevertheless, has so far been a labour intensive industry. Irrespective of the nature and size of the project, labour had been the major component. Since independence, the construction industry in India has been accounting for about 40 per cent of the development investment. It contributes about 5% to the gross domestic product [GDP] and 78% to the gross capital formation. About 16 per cent of India's working population is dependent on construction for their livelihood.

The liberlisation of Indian economy has caused flow of new capital, entry of new players as also informational technology brought about remarkable change in all spheres of economic activities. These had transformed the nature of Indian construction industry as well. High-rise building, long and broad flyovers, development of new township /residential areas, huge dams, carpeted roads, foreign collaborators, etc. are increasingly becoming visible in the entire metropolis. The current trends indicate that the industry is posed for rapid growth as increasing number of construction activities would be

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² Jones Lang LaSalle's Annual Investor Sentiment Survey – Asia. The Investor Sentiment Index measures investors' expectations of total returns and is an average of the responses. The majority of the cities survey received a positive or neutral assessment in the short term (twelve month ahead), Mumbai and Bangalore topped the list of preferred real estate investment locations in 2005 with a sentiment index of 1.13 followed by New Delhi at 1.17

undertaken both by private and public agencies. Increasing number of highways, widening of current roads, building of tracks for sky trains, etc. would imply still more construction activities.

The UPA Government has constituted a **taskforce**³ to update and revise the present National Housing and Habitat Policy approved by the GOI in 1998. The said policy did away with the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, 1976 and empowered the architects to sanction plans. It also lowered the stamp duties. The taskforce will review the existing policies and draft new ones, reviewing existing schemes, policies, guidelines, laws, byelaws and regulations at the central [federal] and state levels. The taskforce will submit its draft policy and other recommendations by the end of May 2005

The development has brought about increasing use of machinery and prefabricated materials in the construction work. Multi-storied building, fly-over, etc. in the background of time constraints demanded use of time saving technologies. This in turn has led to the use of pre-fabricated components and machinery that required use of skilled workforce. The case of Delhi Metro Rail Project, currently under progress in various parts of Delhi is an example to this effect. Consequently, one observes clear division with regards to nature of employment in the emerging construction industry in India. Those with skills and formal qualifications have regular employment (with or without written employment contract) and form "core group" while those with limited or none skills are hired on casual basis depending of the day-to-day requirements. The semi/ unskilled workers are hired either directly or through labour contractors. In the process these workers are deprived of all the social security provisions. The changing nature of construction industry entails higher demand for workers with skills.

The significant differences in the emerging construction activities are increasing use of prefabricated components, capital-intensive technology, etc. It has also been observed that the specialisation aspect has also come to play. Consequently, in large / complicated structure a number of contracting agencies join, each executing a specific area of construction on which a particular agency is stated to possess specialisation. The time taken in transforming a design on the paper to actual structure is also rapidly reducing. The innovative designs with refined building materials are not only contributing to the beauty of the final product but also in its durability. Time and quality, therefore, would be two important determinants in the emerging nature of the construction industry in India. This would demand greater precision in the execution of the work. This in turn would imply higher level of competency from both professionals and workers [skilled and unskilled].

The GOI's Commerce Ministry has on March 4 this years, issued guidelines for FDI upto 100 per cent under the automatic route in township, housing, built-up infrastructure and construction development projects. This will include housing, commercial premises, hotels, resorts, hospitals, education institutions, recreational facilities and city / regional

³ The members of the taskforce consist of the representatives from the Planning Commission of the GOI, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Finance and other organizations such as CREDAL, CII, FICCI, HUDCO, HDFC, NHB, etc.

infrastructure subject to following guidelines: [I] In case of development of housing plots a minimum land area of 10 hectares; [ii] In case of construction development projects, a minimum built up area of 50,000 sq. meters; [iii] In case of a combined projects, any one of the above would suffice. The investment would further be subjected to: [I] minimum capitalisation of \$10 million for wholly owned subsidiaries and \$5 million for joint ventures with Indian partners. The funds would have to be brought in within 6 months of the commencement of business of the company; [ii] Original investment can't be repatriated before a period of three years from completion of minimum capitalisation. However, the investor may be permitted to exit earlier with prior approval of the Government through FIPB. [iii] At least 50 % of the project must be developed within a period of five years from the date of obtaining all statutory clearances.

Construction Workers:

The construction industry falls under the informal sector as such it is extremely difficult to give a figure that fully represent the size of work force engaged in the construction industry. The Government of India gives a figure of 8 million. This figure however relates to the organised sector while the majority of the construction workers are in the unorganised sector. The National Centre for Labour (NCL) an apex body of organisations functional in the unorganised sector and the National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation (NCC-CL) claim that 25 to 30 million workers are engaged in the construction industry. Of the total over 95% workers are contract / casual workers. According to estimates of the government, about 20 per cent of the workers in the construction workers are women. While the unofficial estimates puts the figure at 60 percent or above. Most of the construction workers, with the exception of those working in the villages and block level semi urban areas, are migrant workers.

There is no qualification to become a construction worker⁴. Invariably all the entrants to the industry come as ordinary or unskilled workers. They work as a helper to mason, plumber, painter, carpenter, electrician, etc. in the process they acquire skill on one or the other aspect and gradually promote themselves as a skilled worker of one type or the other. The graduation from unskilled to skilled is usually limited to male workers. The female worker remains a helper / unskilled through out her working life.

⁴ The Government of India during a national seminar on Welfare for Construction Workers held in 1992 explained Construction workers as those mainly employed through contractors and remain casual from the day s/he commences working till the day s/he finally leaves the job. Thus he is born casual and dies casual without any sort of regular employment in his/her entire career. Besides the construction workers who build houses for others, do not have house of their own to live in, construct schools for others' children but do not have the same for his own child, construct hospitals for others but doesn't receives any medical treatment himself and for his dependants. The socio-economic characteristics of the construction workers indicate that practically all have a below poverty line family background and a great majority of them backward class as also from minorities. Most of them are in the age group of 14 to 30 years and have migrated individually, even if married. Practically all have all come to cities for better and brighter future and have intention to return after amassing some wealth.

The socio-economic characteristics of the construction workers⁵ indicate that practically all have a below poverty line family background and a great majority of them backward class as also from minorities. Most of them are in the age group of 14 to 30 years and have migrated individually, even if married. The construction industry has prevalence of non-written work contract, excepting in the case of professionals, such as engineers, architects, etc. The professional are either partners or are hired with written terms and conditions. For the other categories of workers it is the unwritten contract and this contract could be for a period of one day or for the whole life. The continuation or the otherwise in employment is dependent entirely on the decision of the concerned entrepreneur.

Some of the major difficulties faced by a construction workers include: i. Informal Nature of Employment Contract: The non-visible employer - employee relationship is probably the main problem faced by the construction since it comes in the way of enforcing the statutory provisions. Resultantly, the construction workers are deprived of all the welfare measures guaranteed under various laws. In the absence of a visible employer-employee relationship the status of an individual as a construction worker is always in question. ii. Non-enforcement of Legislative Provisions: There are almost thirty of the existing legislation the provisions of which are of direct relevance to the construction workers, e.g. Employee State Insurance Act, Employee Provident Fund Act, Maternity Act, Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, etc. In addition, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Condition of Services) Act was enacted with focus on construction workers. In addition the ILO Convention No. 102 on Minimum Standard of Social Security lists nine benefits that all workers must receive, namely medical care, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old age benefits, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity benefits and survivor's benefits. All, excepting the unemployment benefits are covered under the existing legislation. With these legislative provisions, one would have thought that workers in the construction industry are in receipt of benefits accruable there under. However, making of law by itself is not enough to mitigate the hardship of the workers. The applicability of the Building and other Construction Workers Act is limited to establishments employing 10 or more workers; as also to individuals employing such workers and whose cost of construction is more than Rs. 10 lakhs. The provisions practically excludes 90 percent of the construction workers as they neither work in group of 10 or more nor are usually work in construction works of higher values. iii. Shifting Nature of Work: The mobile nature of construction activities have been causing immense difficulty to the worker as also his/her dependants since with every shift they have to set up new establishments. This creates problems relating to children upkeep, education, etc. also. iv. Skill Upgradation: The emerging nature of construction works entails knowledge of new techniques of construction as also knowledge about the use of

⁵ According to the first National Commission on Labour of the GOI, the workers in the construction industry include 'those who have not been able to organise in pursuit of a common objective because of constraints such as (a) casual nature of employment; (b) ignorance and illiteracy; (c) small size of establishments; (d) scattered nature of employment; and (e) superior strength of the employer operating singly or in combination.....'.

machinery used in the construction works. The avenues for upgradation of skills for construction workers are almost non-existing.

Some of the major causes of the problems faced by the construction workers could be summarised as follows: (i.) Complicated and contradictory Labour Laws: Most of the problems faced by the construction workers are due to non-coverage as also non-effective enforcement of labour laws. The laws are many but the same are complex as such beyond the understanding of an average workers as also of their representative / trade unions. Even the officers of the enforcement machinery have expresses reservations since there exist contradictory provisions. (ii.) Biased Administrative Machinery: It is stated that there are insufficient number of inspectors to undertake inspection of all the establishments consequently, neither they are fully informed about the statutory provisions nor do they have time and resources to fully address the concerns of the construction workers in particular and unorganised workers in general. (iii) Weak Socio-economic Background of the workers: One of the primary causes of the problems faced by the workers in the construction industry is that most of them hail from socio-economically weaker section of the society. Their access to basic necessities of life is extremely poor. Above this, they face an unregulated employment environment, lack of consciousness about collective actions; face neglect from the regulatory machinery; lack of visibility; etc. The poverty and the fear of unemployment force them accept what ever is given to them by the employers / contractors. (iv) Illiteracy and ignorance: Illiteracy of workers has come in the way of improving their awareness about rights and responsibilities. Majority of them is not aware about the benefits admissible to them under the law. (v) Ill-informed Employers: An overview on the nature of employer in the construction industry indicates that most of them comprise of small contractors and have graduated from being an ordinary worker. They too are unaware of the legislative provisions governing their operations as also their relation with fellow workers. (vi) Inadequate trade Union activity: Union conspicuously absents in the construction industry, more so in the unorganised segment. There are some trade unions but the same are localised. The presence of the unions affiliated to one or the other Central Trade Union Organisations [CTUO] are more or less ceremonial in nature. The National Federation of Construction Labour [NFCL] is yet to register its presence as a national body. (vi) Non-committed Functionaries: The affairs of workers organisations, whether co-operatives or unions, are generally in the hands of functionaries who are not fully committed to the concept of workers' welfare. Most of the times, their activities are conditioned by personal or political considerations. (vii) Ineffective involvement of actual workers; Organisations of construction workers have less than effective involvement of actual workers. Both, the labour co-operatives and unions have dominance of interest group resultantly the activities of the organisations and counter productive in the sense that the benefits are pocketed by a group other than for those it was meant.

Status of Workers' Rights in India:

On 18th June 1998 the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference [ILC] of the ILO adopted a “**Declaration of Fundamental Principles**”. The declaration makes it

mandatory for member States to enforce provisions of Core Labour Conventions [i.e. Convention Nos. 87, 98, 29, 100, 105, 111 138 and 182] irrespective of whether the same have been ratified or not by the national governments. The Conventions are grouped into four areas, i.e. (1) Freedom of Association; (2) Forced Labour; (3) Discrimination; and (4) Child Labour. The convention ratified by India form part of Conventions on Forced Labour and Discrimination. All member countries are required to submit a report on the progress made in the implementing the principles enshrined in the aforesaid Conventions. India has ratified four out of eight Conventions that form part of ILO's Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The government is taking steps to see that child labour conventions are ratified while that relating to Freedom of Association does need to be ratified as the same has been guaranteed under its Constitution.

Group	Convention	Date Ratified
Child Labour	138: Minimum Age Convention, 1973	-
	182: Worst Form of Employment, 2000	-
Discrimination	100: Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	25.09.1958
	111: Discrimination [Employment & Occupation] Convention, 1958	03.06.1960
Freedom of Association	087: Freedom of Association & Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948	-
	098: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	-
Forced Labour	029: Forced Labour Convention, 1930	30.11.1954
	105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convn., 1957	18.05.2000

The position with regards to enforcement of the provisions of legislation that covers the provisions of core labour conventions are:

A. Child Labour: Article 24 of the Constitution of India prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years of age in any factory or mine. Further the Government has introduced legislation like the Child Labour [Prohibition and regulation] Act, 1986 to prevent employment of child labour. The Government of India has also announced a National Policy on Child Labour in 1987 aimed at rehabilitating children after withdrawing them from prohibited employment. The GOI has further identified certain industries as hazardous thus prohibiting employment of children therein.⁶ The Supreme Court of India on December 10, 1996 issued directive aimed at abolishing child labour in occupations identified in the Child Labour [P&R] Act, 1986 and implementation of free and compulsory education for all the children until they have attained the age of 14 years as prescribed under Article 45 of the Constitution⁷.

⁶ the diamond polishing industry in Surat [Gujarat], match industry in Sivakashi [Tamil Nadu], the precious stone polishing industry in Jaipur [Rajasthan], the glass industry in Firozabad [UP], the brass industry in Moradabad [UP], the slate industry in Markapur and Mandsaur, and the handmade carpet industry in Mirzapur- Bhadohi [MP] and Jammu & Kashmir.

⁷ The Court directed that all those employers offending the 1986 Act were to pay a compensation of Rs 20,000 for every child employed. The fine so collected would be deposited in a fund to be called "Child Labour Rehabilitation and Welfare Fund". The Court, noting that the income accruing from the corpus

The employment of children, however, is wide spread and touches almost all the industries in the unorganised sector. It is rampant in the construction industry. Most of these children are subjected to worst form of exploitation. India has large number of working children. The estimated figure on child labour ranges between 40 to 100 million. The government, however, gives a figure of 14 million only. Mass illiteracy and wide spread poverty have been identified as major caused behind the existence of the practice of child labour. Insensitiveness of employers as also of the government too could be considered as responsible for the same.

The GOI in 2003 adopted education as fundamental right. Accordingly, the governments are now required to take measure to ensure that children upto the age of 14 years are made to go to schools.

B. Trade Union Rights: Article 19 of the Constitution of India guarantees freedom to form union as such right to form union is a fundamental right in India. The Trade Union Act, 1926 also provides for the formation of trade unions for redressal of member workers' grievances. As of now there are estimated to be over 60,000 trade unions in the country. It is difficult to state accurately the current membership strength on the trade unions as no more than 15 per cent of the union have been filing the mandatory annual returns to the government. The last verification of CTUOs membership was done in 1994 which declared the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh [BMS] as the most representative union.

However, there are certain categories of workers such as civil servant, police, army, etc. who are debarred from forming and / or joining a trade union. The group not covered under the provisions of Trade union Act have, nevertheless, formed their associations and are undertaking activities for and on behalf of its members and this includes going on strike, e.g. the case of strike by Bihar Police.

In the recent years, some of the state governments have imposed restriction on formation of union, and if formed then on its functioning effectively. For example, the state governments of Kerala and West Bengal had passed orders restricting functioning of trade unions. The Haryana State government has, on November 8, 2000 passed order preventing its employees from going on strike.

C. Discrimination: Article 16 of the Constitution of India states that no citizen, on the ground of religion, race caste, sex, etc. discriminated against in respect of employment. The payment of wages act as also the minimum wage act also does not make any distinction between male or female workers. Nevertheless, in practice, the provisions of law as also of the constitution are openly ignored. Excepting the public sector

fund of Rs 20,000 per concerned child would not be enough to dissuade the parents / guardians from seeking employment of the child, directed the respective governments to deposit in the aforesaid Fund additional Rs5000 per child, in case the government is not in a position to provide a job to an adult member of the concerned family.

undertaking and large private enterprises, there exist differential rate of payment for male and female workers. A child worker is also paid at half or 1/3rd the normal rates which may not be as prescribed in the schedule of the Minimum Wage Act.

The vast unorganised sector and diverse nature of the country has been often given as reason for State's inability to enforce legal provision. Consequently, despite of the Government commitment on the subject, workers continue to face discrimination of various kinds. The women workers are paid at almost half the rate of male workers [who are in any case not being paid wagers at the rate suggested by the government]. The absence of trade union activities have given the employer free hand to treat workers as they desire.

D. Forced Labour: Article 23 of the Constitution forbids forced labour of any kind. The Bonded labour (Abolition and Regulation) Act also forbid forced labour of any kind and as such the bonded labour System in India is stated to be formally abolished in February 1976. However, various study on bonded labour in India show the practice continues. In the recent years high incidences of bonded labour have been found in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh. Other studies have also indicated that the plight of workers in the brick kilns and mines no better than slaves. So also is the case with those working in building and road construction, agriculture and plantation, stone quarries, and other comprising part of the Unorganised sector.

Emerging nature of India labour market

The trends indicate that in the years to come the Indian labour market will be of dual nature. The rapidly growing size of Indian population, which had crossed 1 billion mark, would continue to expand the size of the workforce that already stands at about 400 million. Majority of this workforce would be unskilled/semi skilled workers working on a casual basis. The size of casual workforce would be further enlarged by professionals and skilled workforce [particularly those employed in the information and technology and other emerging sectors] engaged on job /time contract basis. Lifetime employment, single skill, etc. would increasingly become a distinct entity. The size of government employees would continue to fall with government dismantling its economic interests. The dis-investment of government share in public sector undertaking and consequent re-organisation of their production process would pave way for the retrenchment of a significant percent of workforce employed on permanent basis. Consequently, the nature of emerging labour market is expected to be: contract, multi-skilling, flexibility, knowledge based, etc.

Securing Decent Work?

According to the ILO a “Decent work” is the converging focus of the four strategic objectives, namely **rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue**⁸. It is a “productive work in which rights are protected, which generates an

⁸ This is the essence of the ILO's goal of Decent Work for All. It connects growth strategies in open economies with people's daily lives and aspirations. Gender equality and a development perspective are

adequate income, with adequate social protection. It also means sufficient work, in the sense that all should have full access to income-earning opportunities. It marks the high road to economic and social development, a road in which employment, income and social protection can be achieved without compromising workers' rights and social standards. Tripartism and social dialogue are both objectives in their own right, guaranteeing participation and democratic process, and a means of achieving all the other strategic objectives of the ILO. The evolving global economy offers opportunities from which all can gain, but these have to be grounded in participatory social institutions if they are to confer legitimacy and sustainability on economic and social policies.⁹"

The first condition that needs to be satisfied to reduce decent work deficit is according opportunities to for workmen to earn a decent living under decent work conditions. The Minimum Wage Act 1948 lays

For the world's largest democracy this is a mammoth task. The difficulties are due not only to the size of the workforce in the Construction Industry but also due to lack of information about conditions therein. These have been resulting in generalistic assumption by the policy makers as also by other functionaries. The twin issues of labour

cross-cutting issues. *The starting point for this approach* is that people have to earn a living by working. This is a fact of life. But it is not enough to have any work; we also have to take into account the content of this work and the conditions under which it is performed. Factors such as working time and work intensity, wage levels, a safe working environment and, critically, whether we can develop skills and help people to change jobs, all contribute to the quality of work. For employment to grow, we need an enabling environment for investment and enterprise creation, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, and productive industries geared to local markets. Investment in local development must be a key feature of a more balanced global economy. *The second dimension of decent work* is expressed in the ILOs [core labour standards](#): freedom of association, freedom from discrimination, freedom from forced labour, and freedom from child labour. The unanimous acceptance of these rights at the 1995 UN Copenhagen Social Summit and subsequently in the 1998 ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work gives them global scope. The choice of these four sets of principles reflects their character as basic enabling rights. They provide a base on which other rights and capabilities can be built as the availability of resources permits. *The third dimension concerns security*. Much work is insecure, either because it is irregular or temporary, because income varies, because it is physically risky or generates vulnerability to disease, or in other ways. Security is a powerful need, and it can be achieved in a variety of ways - through formal social insurance systems and also through investment in workplace safety; and through labour market institutions and policies which protect workers against fluctuations in employment. Legislation or collective agreements to deal with the ups and downs of the market or training systems which offer routes back into the labour market are other ways of ensuring more security. *And the fourth dimension centres on representation and dialogue*. The ways in which people's voices can be heard are a crucial aspect of decent work. For workers, the route to representation and dialogue is through trade union organisation, but just as toadies unions are very different from those of the past, worker representation structures will have to continue to adapt. "Job insecurity" and "exploitation" are the two most pressing problems faced by the workers in the construction industry. The two factors adversely affect their physical and mental health as they constantly under pressure. This in turn affects their capacity to effectively undertake their functions as also work towards upgradation of their skills. Resultantly, they are perpetually in low paid employment.

⁹ From the Decent Work, Report of Mr. Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General, 87th session of the International Labour Conference, 1999

surplus and informal nature of industry¹⁰ too are coming in way to secure what is legitimately due to the construction workers. The government's, more so of the state governments', attitude towards this industry too had been of casual nature. For example it has been years since a meeting of the expert body on the construction industry was held. Even the framing of rules for implementing the Building and Construction Labour is pending in most of the states implying that all the efforts to get the concerned law enacted had more or less been of no consequence.

On the other hand about 33 per cent of Indian live below the poverty line and many of such are actively engaged in the construction industry. Then, excepting the dying phenomena of joint family system, there exist no social protection for majority of the population. In this scenario, it is but natural that there exist deficit the level of "decent work".

In the above scenario, it doesn't seem strange when opines about unions having lost its relevance are expressed. Many of the employers have taken measures aimed at taking over the functions of trade unions. On the other hand the traditional manner of union functioning is proving to be futile in the emerging competitive industrial environment. Resultantly, unions have not only witness decline in their membership but also are facing competition from non-affiliated / independent trade unions formed by former members of the affiliated unions. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that the function of trade unions could be effectively undertaken by any group other than unions themselves.

This globalisation is a testing period for all the social partners, more so for trade unions since it is the worker on who's shoulder the major burden of these transitory period fall. The unions, therefore, would have to take comprehensive approach in meeting emerging challenges of new India.

On the part of the government, it will be mandatory to see that the employers comply with the provisions of laws, including those relating to social security. The Government must ratify all the core convention since with the adoption of Fundamental Principles of Right by the ILO it doesn't make any difference whether these conventions are ratified or not. Further, India's move for greater integration in the global economy would have positive impact of the same. The government should also streamlining its administrative machinery and imposing exemplary punishment on defaulters and collaborators.

The ITUM has primary responsibility to ensure application of trade union rights on all workers, irrespective of whether he is in organized or unorganized sector. The unions should do away with their habit of living on the past glory and must be forward looking. There is no alternative to systematic and professional management of the affairs of the unions. The unions is a serious business and services proposed to be rendered are of continuous and crucial importance and such *ad hocism* in the management of union must

¹⁰ "A unique feature of the construction industry is that for labour legislation it is considered as an industry while for all other aspects such as banking and finance, the sector is NOT considered as an industry" according to the National Centre of Labour

go. The members willing to become member and to pay for the services would depend on the quality of services rendered by the union.

The primary function of trade union, from workers' point of view, is to protect and fight against the violation of their legal rights in the light of current norms of fairness, equality and social justice. Unions are also expected to strive continually for a better deal for employees in respect of monetary rewards, working conditions and control over the work situation. The involvement of trade unions in the affairs of the larger community and in social and economic policies at various levels is, no doubt important, but is secondary to their primary responsibility regarding protecting the rights and interests of employees.

To deal with this situation it is necessary that representatives of workers and builder have frequent meeting to narrow down the information gap as also to promote understanding of mutual concerns. As the size and pace of construction work increases, the risk factor also increases. It will be in the interest of both builders and the construction workers that a legitimate system of employer and employee relationship is developed that would cover all the risks of both the employer and workers.

Unorganised Sector is not only difficult but also huge and heterogeneous sphere to work in. This would require all the professionalism and sincerity to succeed. The organisation needs to have clear and sufficient understanding of the ground realities. For this purpose, they need to undertake general and sectoral survey to fully understand its peculiarities as also 'push and pull' factors.

It is imperative for the organisation of construction workers to become profession and more focused to their constituency. Casual remarks or political statement would be increasing counter productive. One has to understand the continuation of worker dependants on the continuation of the construction activities.

Growth of individual income greatly depends on the skill enhancement. Organisations ought to work towards securing access to ITIs as also on establishing skills development centres for the construction workers.

Tools and equipment used in the construction activities are expensive as such beyond the means of average construction workers. The organisation could think of establishing Tool Banks that would lend the necessary tools to construction workers on mutually agreed conditions.

There is no alternative to awareness generation. This is seriously lacking. The organisations, ought to find suitable ways of propagating their functions as also existing provision beneficial to Construction Workers?

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