



**Special Issue of First International Conference on Advancements in Research and Development**  
**A Study on Welfare Schemes for Migrant Construction Workers in Karnataka**

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**Abstract**

*The rural economy has undergone drastic change. The irregular rain, fragmented land holding and profit less agricultural sector has forced the rural youths to migrate towards urban centres in search of better employment opportunities. The construction sector mostly informal and unorganized is the major sector that is attracting majority of migrant population. Most of the migrant workers do not register themselves under any organization and remain unorganized. Though there are many welfare schemes and welfare fund, the migrant labourers are unaware of the schemes available for their welfare. This paper tries to make an attempt towards the welfare schemes available in their favour. The awareness regarding the same among migrant workers and a brief study on the unutilized welfare fund. 107 labourers working in various construction sites in Bangalore were considered for the study.*

**Key words:** Migration, Migrant labor, Informal Sector, Unorganized labourers, Welfare Scheme, Welfare Fund, social security net.

**1. Introduction**

Migration occupies an important place and complex demographic phenomenon. Since ancient times there are traces of migration from one place to another either for trade, employment, marriage or for many other reasons. The migration of labourers demands greater attention because the people come from various diverse and complex socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The construction sector has been the second largest sector providing employment after agriculture. The migrants are mainly attracted towards construction sector because this sector provides employment for both skilled and unskilled individuals. The Government and many other unions have been working in favour of the welfare of these workers. But unfortunately many workers who come to cities are not aware of the labour department and

do not enroll themselves and remain unorganized. Construction sector is informal in nature and employs vast majority of the workforce. The better quality of life for these unorganized employees will surely improve the nation's quality of life. But unfortunately this is not being possible because the workers employed in informal sector are mostly unorganized and so denied of benefits that formal organized workers enjoy.[1-4]

The 2015-16 Economic Survey has come out with the major issue and says that it is a challenge to provide 'good jobs' that guarantees job protection and also expresses anxiety that there is a need for creating 'decent jobs' for the masses. The workers in formal sector are the tax payers and are linked to benefits such as leave facility, social protection, compensation, health facility, insurance and pension schemes. [5-6]

In India, the formal sector provides jobs but it stands only to about 10% of total employment, the

remaining jobs are in the informal sector. The 68th NSSO report brings out the truth that since 2011-12 the share of formal sector jobs have increased but it could not match the growth of informal sector. The main problem with informal sector is that, though nearly 90-92% of individuals work here, the labourers working are not covered under social safety network. Many problems like job insecurity, lack of compensation, denial of health facility, failure to provide leave facility, bad social and working condition etc are common. Further safe and conducive housing facility is rarely found, lack of creche facility are other problems that revolve around informal unorganized workers. The problem aggravates in case of migrant workers.

This study will be restricted only for the welfare schemes made available to construction workers, the awareness about these facilities among the selected sample, the benefits availed by workers and the unutilized welfare fund.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The construction sector inspite being a largest sector providing employment opportunities lacks the implementation of laws in wage distribution, conducive work environment, conveyances etc., The medical and health facilities are not provided and most of the children of the migrant workers are denied of primary education. Nearly 90% of the workers are unorganized and do not have the idea of laws that exist in favour of them since most of them are illiterates and uneducated. Many of them don't get registered under any welfare board that is made available for them. The welfare fund that is collected from the builders and contractors as cess which is not fully utilized.

**2.1 Present Study:** - Many of the construction workers are not registered under any welfare boards and so are not the beneficiaries of the welfare fund extended towards protection of labourers. The secondary data collected from Karnataka Building And Other Construction Workers Welfare Board and welfare fund reveals that welfare board and utilization of funds in construction sector would surely help them. But unfortunately most of them don't get registered and the welfare fund is also not efficiently utilized.

Further, the empirical study on these factors are rarely made.

**Scope of the study:-**The present study confines itself to the registration of migrant workers under Karnataka construction workers welfare board and the benefits extended under the board towards these workers. The Welfare Fund and its utilization are also considered. The migrant construction workers only within Bangalore city are selected for the study.

### Objectives:-

- To know number of sample respondents registered under welfare board.
- To examine construction workers awareness regarding the welfare schemes available for construction workers.
- To analyse the collection and utilization of welfare fund towards construction workers.
- To provide few suggestions for the better utilization of the fund.

### 3. Methodology:-

The survey sample method was used to collect data pertaining to construction labourers in Bangalore. The workers working in construction of apartments, individual houses were considered for survey. Samples of 107 respondents were selected for the study. Secondary data were collected from various published books, articles, journals, central and state government reports, NSSO reports and mainly website report of Karnataka State construction welfare board and newspaper.

### 4. Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board:-

The Construction Workers Welfare Board was the Board introduced by the Government of India under Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act, 1996. The main objective of the board is to regulate the employment and conditions of service of building and other construction workers and to provide for their safety, health and welfare measure and for other matter connected therewith or incidental thereto. The rules to the act were brought into force by the Karnataka Government with effect from 1.11.2006. The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act 1996 was introduced by the

Government of India to provide for the levy and collection of cess on the cost of construction incurred by employers with a view to augmenting the resources of the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Boards constituted under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

The Government of Karnataka has constituted the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 to implement the provisions and the schemes as per the above Act1.

### 5. The Benefits under The Welfare Board

Following are some of the benefits extended for the beneficiaries:-

- Disability Pension -{Sec. 22(1)(b) read with Rule 40}: Rs. 1,000/- per month and Ex gratia payment up to Rs. 2,00,000/- depending upon the percentage of disability.
- Shrama Samarthya Tool kit-cum- Training Programme upto Rs. 20,000/-
- Housing (Karmika Gruha Bhagya) - 2,00,000/-
- Maternity Assistance (Thayi Lakshmi Bond)- Assistance of Rs. 30,000/- in case of female child and a sum of Rs. 20,000/- in case of male child (for first two children only)
- Funeral Expenses: Rs. 4,000/-to meet the funeral expenses of the deceased construction worker and Rs. 50,000/- as ex-gratia
- Educational Assistance - (Kalike Bhagya) ( Two children of the registered construction worker)
- Medical Assistance ( Karmika Arogya Bhagya): Rs. 300/- per day of hospitalization to a maximum of Rs. 10,000/- for continuous period of hospitalization
- Accidental Death/ Permanent Disability: Up to Rs. 5,00,000/-
- Treatment of Major Ailments (Karmika Chikitsa Bhagya): Upto ` 2,00,000/-: Treatment of Major Ailments .
- Marriage Assistance (Gruha Lakshmi Bond)50,000/-: Marriage Assistance to the beneficiary or to his 2 children.
- LPG connection to registered construction workers.( Karmika Anila Bhagya) connection including a two burner stove and refill for his or her family

•BMTC bus pass : Assistance of free Bus Pass to registered construction workers to commute in Bengaluru Metropolitan Transportation Corporation (BMTC) buses

•KSRTC bus pass-Assistance of free Student Bus Pass to children of registered construction workers travelling in KSRTC buses

•Assistance for pre-school education and nutritional support of the child of the registered woman construction worker -Thayi Magu Sahaya Hastha: Rs. 6000/- (at the rate of Rs. 500/- per month).

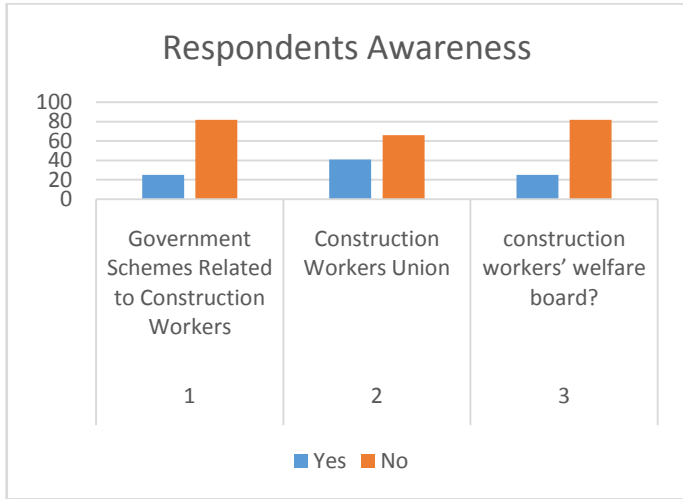
### 6. Awareness among Construction Workers

Many workers move from their native places to cities in search of jobs. The infrastructural developments in urban areas attracts these migrants from within and outside state. Irrespective of whether the worker is skilled or unskilled , the construction sector provides them job. The present study concentrates on awareness of existence os welfare board and schemes in their favour. The main objective of the study was to know the extent of Awareness about these welfare schemes among construction workers. The structured questionnaire was prepared to know the facts .

Total Number of Respondents selected for the study was – 107

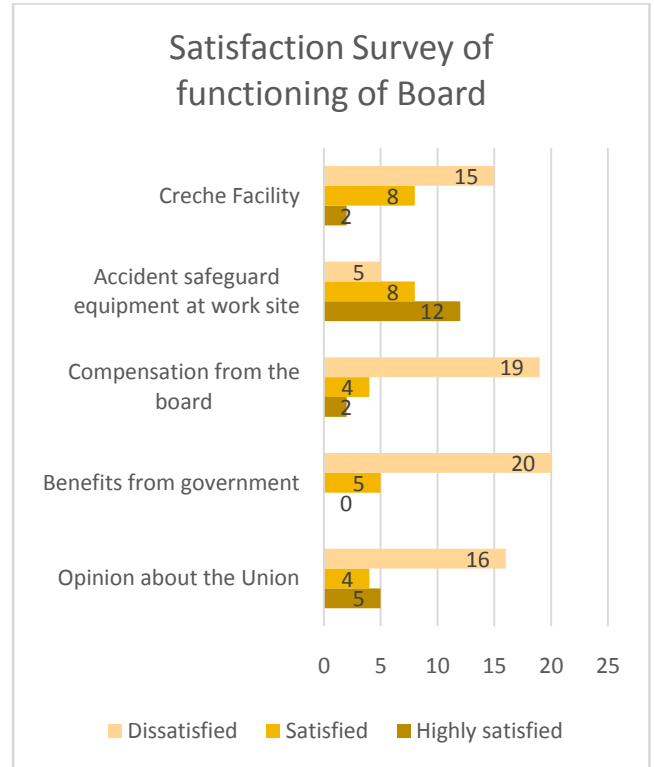
**TABLE: 1 - The table below shows the details.**

S.No	Awareness About	Yes	No	Percentage
1	Government Schemes Related to Construction Workers	25	82	23.36%
2	Construction Workers Union	41	66	41.12%
3	construction workers' welfare board	25	82	23.36%



**Fig.1. Graphical Representation of Awareness among Sample Respondents**

In order to know the various benefits availed by few respondents, questionnaire consisting of opinion regarding union, benefits claimed, reasons for not availing benefits was asked and the opinion of the selected sample respondents was recorded. Out of 25 respondents who were aware of the union and had registered themselves. The responses were collected to make a satisfaction survey of the functioning of Welfare Board



**Fig.2. Graphical Representation of Satisfaction Survey**

**Table: 2 -The Table below shows the details**

	Opinion about The Union	Benefits from government	Compensation from the board	Accident safeguard equipment at work site	Creche Facility
Highly satisfied	05	00	02	12	02
Satisfied	04	05	04	8	08
Dissatisfied	16	20	19	5	15

**7. Welfare Fund**

In order to provide security for the unorganized workers, the Supreme Court ordered for collection of Welfare Fund through cess from Land owners, builders and so as per the order The building and other construction workers welfare cess Rules 1998 was introduced by the Government of India in exercise of the powers conferred by sub section (1) of section 14 of the building and other construction workers welfare cess Act 1996 (Act 28 of 1996)

Since 2006-07 to 2018-19 Rs. 8538 crores has been collected in the country and the number of registered construction under the board is 16.73lakhs as on November 2019.<sup>3</sup>

The Karnataka Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board was established in 2006 and since its inception the cess from builders are being collected every year and an amount of Rs.1204.80 crores is accumulated and number of registered construction workers is 2,97,815 in Karnataka alone.

The construction industry is booming in the country and there are around 10 crore construction workers in the entire nation. There are 30 Worker Boards and an amount Rs. 50,000 crores is lying



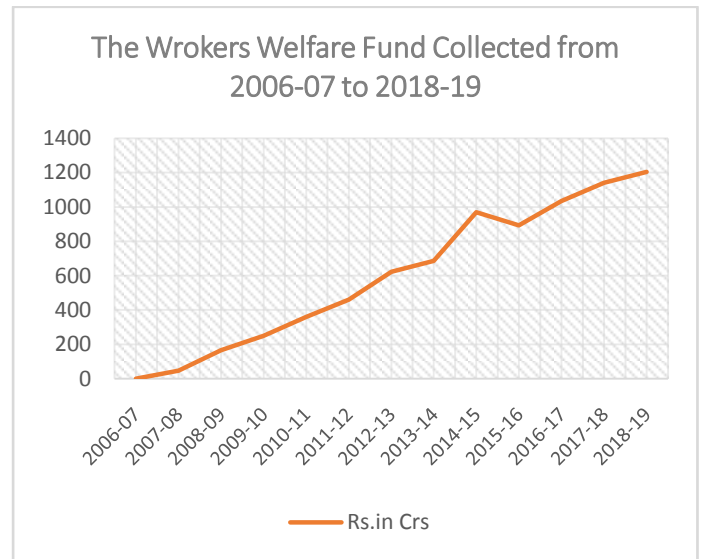
idle under the welfare fund. The construction workers working under huge builders are suffering a vary dangerous and insecure working conditions. Many a times the compensation made during the accidents for these workers are made by government and the welfare board doesn't come forward and use the welfare fund. This has led to non utilization of crores of rupees. There are all chances that in future the fund will be taken over by the government for utilizing it for causes.

**Table: 3 - The Table below shows the details of Workers Welfare Fund Collected from 2006-07 to 2018-19 and number of workers registered under welfare board in Karnataka**

Year	Rs.in Crs	Registered Labourers
2006-07	1	
2007-08	46.84	30493
2008-09	166.62	38278
2009-10	251.40	34400
2010-11	361.02	40578
2011-12	461.22	62244
2012-13	622.70	98379
2013-14	686.33	220909
2014-15	969.33	239031
2015-16	892.97	246350
2016-17	1035.31	95335
2017-18	1141.21	185463
2018-19	1204.80	297815

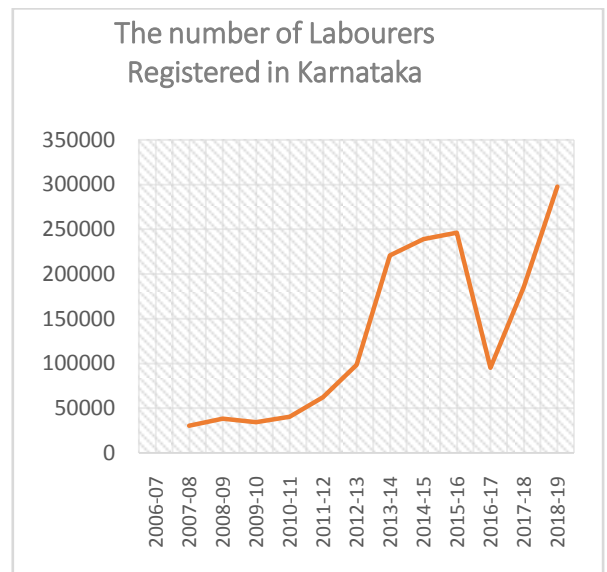
The table reveals that the cess has been collected regularly from the builders and the accumulated fund has seen a drastic rise. The labourers getting registered under the welfare board is increasing except for two years. The number of migrants in construction sector is enormous since this is the sector where the workers get jobs easily inspite of being skilled or unskilled . Many workers move out of there native place either for short or long period. Those who come to cities for short period do not register themselves under any union or welfare boards and so suffer non compensation for any

accidents they encounter and lack medical benefits even during their short stay.



Source : KBCWWB as given in Prajavani Newspaper

**Fig.3. Graphical Representation of the details of Workers Welfare Fund Collected from 2006-07 to 2018-19**



Source : KBCWWB as given in Prajavani Newspaper

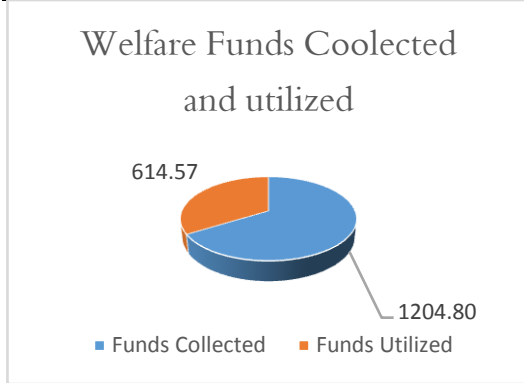
**Fig.4. Graphical Representation of the details of number of workers registered under welfare board in Karnataka**

The fund collected is Rs.1204.80 as on 2018-19, but the utilization of funds shows a very pitiable situation. The number of registered workers is 2,97,815 by 2018-19 and if the fund was used efficiently, the entire amount should have supported the construction workers in every aspect

of their lives. But unfortunately, the fund remains unutilized and the below table reveals the fact.

**Table: 4 -The table below shows the Welfare funds collected and spent since 2006-07**

Funds Collected	Funds Utilized
1204.80	614.57



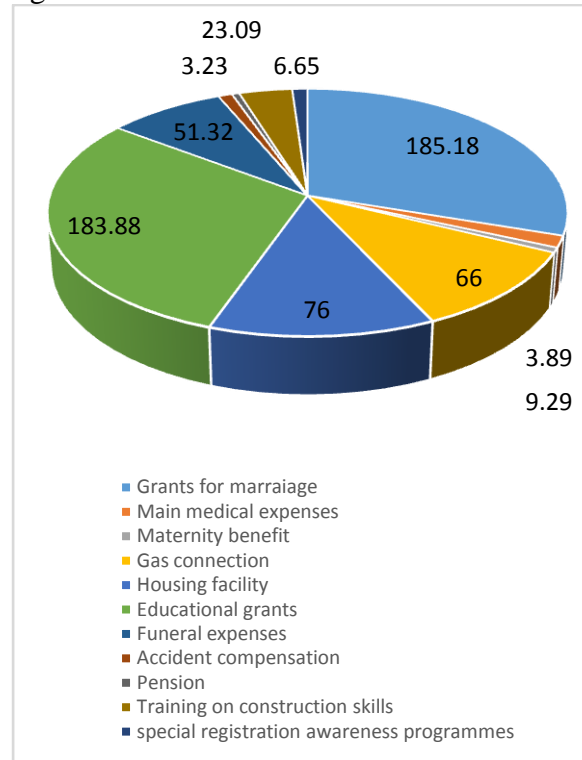
**Table: 5- The Table below shows the benefits under which the funds have been spent since 2006-07**

Sl.No	Benefits	Rs.in Crores spent
1	Grants for marriage	185.18
2	Main medical expenses	9.29
3	Maternity benefit	3.89
4	Gas connection	66
5	Housing facility	76
6	Educational grants	183.88
7	Funeral expenses	51.32
8	Accident compensation	6.04
9	Pension	3.23
10	Training on construction skills	23.09
11	special registration awareness programmes	6.65
	<b>Total Funds Utilized</b>	<b>614.57</b>

Source : KBCWWB as given in Prajavani Newspaper

The Tables and Graphs reveal the fact that the funds collected as cess is not being fully utilized though the number of registered beneficiaries is increasing every year. The government is trying its level best to create awareness among the construction workers to be a part of union or get membership under the welfare board. But, the unique problems of these workers like illiteracy, migrant nature; temporary stay at a

particular place etc has been avoiding them to register themselves.



**Fig.5. The Graph shows the benefits under which the funds have been spent since 2006-07**

**Suggestions**

- The registration of construction workers under welfare board should be made mandatory
- The Aadhar Card should be collected by house owners or builders to register them under welfare board. The owners should come forward and take initiative in this regard.
- Awareness should be created about all the benefit schemes that are available under welfare board
- Registration Camps in and around construction sites should be taken up seriously.

**Conclusion**

The Supreme Court has taken action to bring all construction workers under safety net but for many reasons the objective is not satisfactorily met. The development index of the country also depends on the Physical Quality of Life Index and this has to be considered seriously and the decent life of informal sector workers should be given utmost priority.

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