



## EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: SOCIAL JUSTICE

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TOPIC: VULNERABLE SECTION

### The barriers faced by construction workers

#### Growing Importance of the Construction Sector

- The construction sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in India, contributing about 9% to the national GDP.
- It is projected to reach \$1.4 trillion by 2025 and employ around 3 crore workers by 2030.
- Labour shortages are a concern, partly due to workers' reluctance to relocate for welfare reasons.

#### Challenges Faced by Construction Workers

- **Frequent Relocation and Job Insecurity:**
  - Migrant workers often move between construction sites, leading to job insecurity and unstable incomes.
  - Their temporary employment makes it hard to access consistent welfare benefits.
- **Difficulties in Accessing Welfare Schemes:**
  - The BOCW Act, 1996 protects workers, but many struggle to access benefits.
  - Over ₹70,000 crore collected for worker welfare remains unutilized due to bureaucratic issues.
- **Documentation Barriers:**
  - Workers need identity proof, birth certificates, and residence proof, which they often lack due to their migratory nature.
  - Employment certificates are also required, but contractors often refuse to provide them.
- **State-Specific Issues:**
  - Different States have different rules for verification, causing inconsistencies in welfare access.
  - Migrant workers lose access to benefits when moving between States.
- **Seasonal Employment and Emergency Support Issues:**
  - Workers face income loss during seasonal job gaps (e.g., heatwaves, construction bans).



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- Slow administrative processes delay financial relief, and lack of digital infrastructure worsens the situation.

## Proposed Solutions

- **Creating a Unified Labour Identification System:**
  - A nationwide system for worker identification (similar to One Nation One Ration Card) is needed.
  - Linking BOCW registrations with UAN on e-Shram would provide portability of welfare benefits.
- **Improving Digital Infrastructure:**
  - States should adopt digital platforms to streamline welfare schemes and reduce delays.
  - A centralised portal for real-time tracking of benefits and Aadhaar-based verification is recommended.
- **Simplifying Documentation Requirements:**
  - Accept alternative forms of proof to help workers access benefits.
  - Organise on-site registration camps for worker enrollment in welfare schemes.
- **Investing in Skill Development:**
  - Focus on skill development programs to address long-term labour shortages.
  - Construction firms should ensure safe working conditions and invest in training initiatives.

## Conclusion

- Labour shortages in the construction sector stem from welfare access challenges, job insecurity, and systemic barriers.
- Improving documentation, digital infrastructure, and skill development programs is essential for creating a stable and secure workforce.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-barriers-faced-by-construction-workers/article69341639.ece>