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WELFARE SCHEMES OF BEEDI WORKERS IN INDIA



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

The beedi industry is generally located in the 'unorganised' sector, although beedi rolling began in the factory sector (in early twentieth century), over the last three decades, the beedi manufacturers have increasingly shifted the work from factories into the households, small unincorporated units or into small work sheds. Mostly the economically and socially backward populations are involved in beedi industry. In India, female beedi workers accounting 75.02 per cent and 25.12 per cent of male workers in the year 2014. Almost all the states dominate female workers in beedi industry except

Gujarat. In Gujarat state, male beedi workers accounting 53.19 per cent and female beedi workers account 46.81 per cent in the year 2014. In India totally 51.28 lakh beedi workers have identity cards. The highest cards issued in the state of West Bengal accounting 14.40 lakh, followed by Madhya Pradesh 10.21 lakh. Most of the funds spend in Educational scholarship scheme of beedi workers families in India accounting 42.68 lakh during the period of 2006-07 to 2012-13, next Housing scheme (33.18 lakh), Health scheme (29.93 lakh), Recreation scheme (0.10 lakh) and Other schemes were accounting 16.53 lakh rupees of beedi workers in India.

KEYWORDS

Beedi industry, Gender, Identity cards, Welfare schemes, India.

INTRODUCTION: -

The unions also point out that beedi workers constitute a major share of the workforce under the poverty line.

The first formal production of beedis started in 1902, although the rural people were known to have made beedis for their own consumption much before this date. Recently, India is the 3rd largest tobacco producer in the world. In 1915, a beedi rolling unit was established by Abdul Noor Mohammed in Sagar. Bhagwandas Shobhalal Jain (B.S. Jain & Co.) was established, in 1920 after which beedi manufacturing has been the main source of employment and revenue in the district after agriculture. The number of beedi workers in Madhya Pradesh in 1995 was 6,60,000. Within Madhya Pradesh, Sagar, Damoh and Jabalpur districts have the largest number of beedi workers, with Sagar leading in 1994 with 2,75,000 workers.

Andhra Pradesh is the second largest producer, with about 6.25 lakh beedi rollers in 1995, in recent 4.5 lakh beedi rollers in 2014. Telangana and Nizamabad are the main districts where beedi rolling is concentrated here with about 4.2 lakhs are in the Nizamabad district alone. Beedi manufacturing started in 1901 in Nizamabad. However, it was only in the 1920s that this industry grew. The industry received another boost after 1952 when many manufacturers from Gujarat and Maharashtra shifted operations. The employers from Maharashtra and Gujarat preferred Nizamabad mainly because labor laws were poorly enforced compared to in their home states and workers were willing to work on lower wages.

The beedi industry also came up in Kerala by 1920s. After World War I, trade connections with Ceylon and Burma helped establish the beedi industry in North Malabar. The Charkha (spinning wheel) brand of beedis riding on the popularity of the nationalist movement and the swadeshi sentiment (boycott of all foreign goods including cigarettes) popularized beedi use. At the time, it was mainly men who were beedi rollers assisted by children in tying the rolled beedis. Beedi workers came from the Muslim and lower caste communities, (Tiyas/ Ezhavas). In April 1934, the first beedi rollers association (Sree Narayana Beedi Thozhilai Sangham or The Sree Narayana Beedi workers' Association or SNBTS) was formed in Tellicherry. Kerala developed central manufacturing beedi units with this spreading to Mangalore town in Karnataka.

In the 1930s, after Gujarat started cultivating tobacco, beedi manufacturing began in this state in Kheda district. Due to a network of canals being built to facilitate irrigation, local farmers switched to cash crop production, especially tobacco. Being the heart of tobacco production Gujarat lent easily to the mushrooming of beedi factories in Ahmedabad, Patan and Palanpur in North Gujarat and in Surat and Billimora in South Gujarat. When the Gujarat government implemented the Factories Act in 1952, the beedi companies shifted their manufacturing across the border to other states such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh where employers mainly employed home based workers. The remaining manufacturers in Gujarat also followed suite and shifted into home based production. Tobacco continued to be produced on scale in large work sheds. Mechanization took the place of manual work in cutting, grinding and sieving reducing the workforce by half.

The beedi industry is generally located in the 'unorganised' sector, although beedi rolling began in the factory sector (in early twentieth century), over the last three decades, the beedi manufacturers have increasingly shifted the work from factories into the households, small unincorporated units or into small work sheds. Currently, while there are some major beedi manufacturers with large enterprises these constitute only about 10 percent of all beedi manufacturing. Typically large manufacturers contract out the work of rolling beedis to contractors who then either sub-contract work out further and/or get the work done by individuals in their homes on a piece rate system. The

production is therefore widely dispersed. It is difficult to establish an employer-employee relationship as set out under the labour law since beedi production is undertaken through a chain of contractors and sub-contractors and also through a sale-purchase system which makes the beedi workers self-employed (a client-supplier kind of relationship rather than the employer-employee relationship).

STATE-WISE BEEDI WORKERS IN INDIA

Gender bias against the women coupled along with strong patriarchal tendencies, religious, caste factors results in a wide prevalence of child labour in beedi industries. For instance it is assumed that the girl children working in home based work in economically poor households is preferred. Likewise, education in poor households mostly the girl children are burdened with taking care of younger siblings and doing household chores. The notion of saving the money earned by doing beedi for better marriage proposals is also a major factor for indulging in beedi work

Table-1: State-wise Number of Beedi Workers by Sex in India (As on 31.07.2014)

States/UTs	Number of Beedi Workers				
	Male	Female	Total	% of Male Members	% of Female Members
Andhra Pradesh	45804	412236	458040	10.00	90.00
Assam	5500	13500	19000	28.95	71.05
Bihar	87000	216580	303580	28.66	71.34
Chhattisgarh	6776	11981	18757	36.13	63.87
Gujarat	25000	22000	47000	53.19	46.81
Jharkhand	48213	65195	113408	42.51	57.49
Karnataka	36868	235886	272754	13.52	86.48
Kerala	5866	13500	19366	30.29	69.71
Madhya Pradesh	600000	900000	1500000	40.00	60.00
Maharashtra	21053	175706	196759	10.70	89.30
Odisha	40000	120000	160000	25.00	75.00
Rajasthan	4000	46000	50000	8.00	92.00
Tamil Nadu	5967	73938	79905	7.47	92.53

Tripura	6000	14000	20000	30.00	70.00
Uttar Pradesh	90000	360000	450000	20.00	80.00
West Bengal	408423	1573644	1982067	20.61	79.39
India	1436470	4254166	5690636	25.24	74.76

Source: Lok Sabha Starred question No. 475, dated 11.08.2014.

State-wise number of beedi workers by sex in India presents table-1. In the year 2014, the highest male workers worked in the state of Madhya Pradesh (6 lakh), followed by West Bengal (4.08 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (0.9 lakh), Bihar (0.87 lakh), Jharkhand (0.48 lakh), Andhra Pradesh (0.46 lakh). In Andhra Pradesh only 10 per cent of the male beedi workers and 90 per cent of the beedi workers recorded in 2014. In all India accounting 25.24 per cent of male beedi workers and 74.76 per cent of female workers worked in the year 2014. Almost all the states dominate female workers in beedi industry except Gujarat. In Gujarat state, male beedi workers accounting 53.19 per cent and female beedi workers account 46.81 per cent in the year 2014.

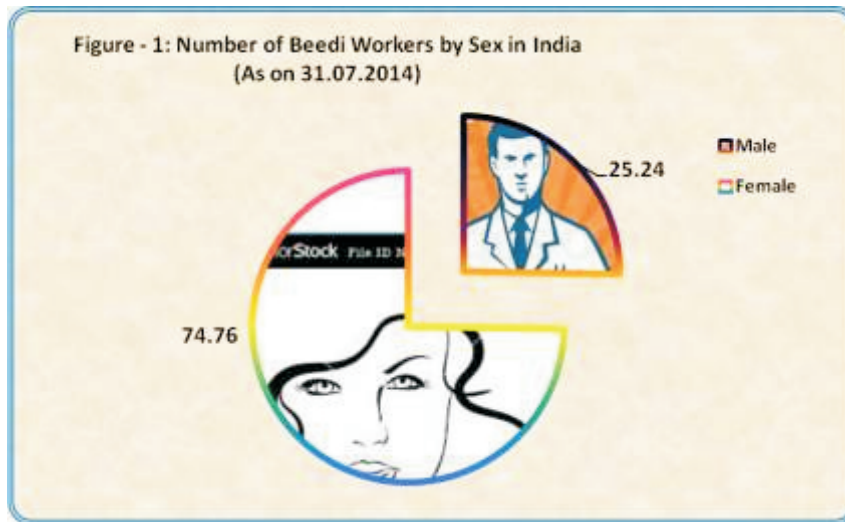


Table-2: Selected State-wise Number of Identity Card Issued to Beedi Workers in India

States	Male	Female	Total
Rajasthan	3603	36713	40316
Gujarat	25589	20680	46269
Uttar Pradesh	93311	330480	423791
Karnataka	25003	206940	231943
Kerala	15092	45442	60534
Odisha	45782	183127	228909

Andhra Pradesh	34177	320252	354429
Tamil Nadu	62140	565111	627251
Madhya Pradesh	408504	612755	1021259
Chhattisgarh	9439	14159	23598
Bihar	103455	152421	255876
Jharkhand	45678	61251	106929
West Bengal	504038	936070	1440108
Assam	2543	4722	7265
Tripura	4333	8047	12380
Maharashtra	49470	197879	247349
India	1432157	3696049	5128206

Source:Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 86, dated on 28.11.2011
Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1970, dated on 26.03.2012.

In India totally 51.28 lakh beedi workers have identity cards. The highest cards issued in the state of West Bengal recorded (14.40 lakh), followed by Madhya Pradesh (10.21 lakh), Tamil Nadu (6.27 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (4.23 lakh), Andhra Pradesh (3.54 lakh), Bihar (2.55 lakh), Maharashtra (2.47 lakh), Karnataka (2.32 lakh), Odisha (2.28 lakh), Jharkhand (1.07 lakh), Kerala (0.60 lakh), Gujarat (0.46 lakh), Rajasthan (0.40 lakh), Chhattisgarh (0.23) and Tripura (0.12 lakh). Detailed state-wise and all India identity cards information were presented in table-2.

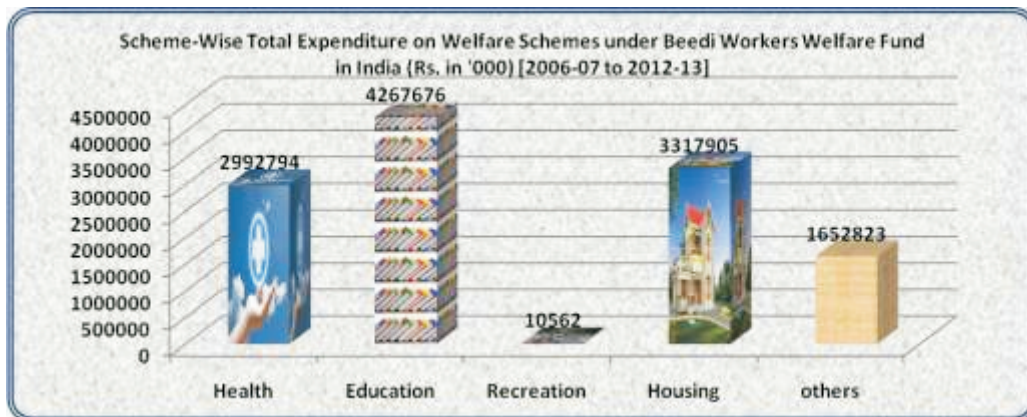
WELFARE SCHEMES FOR BEEDI WORKERS IN INDIA

Beedi workers welfare fund act, 1976, is to provide for welfare scheme for the beedi workers and their families, relating to health, education, maternity benefits, group insurance, recreation, housing assistance etc.. . Under the fund, there are also special scheme to encourage education of children's of beedi workers. One of the main hardships that tend to be ignored is the health hazards to which the children are exposed. There is a direct connection between the certain occupational diseases like T.B, lung cancer etc. Beedi rollers experience an exacerbation of asthma, anemia, giddiness, postural and eye problems, and gynecological difficulties. In a recent study, in south India also has highlighted that the health hazards existing in the beedi rolling environment experienced by the women beedi rollers is at an alarming rate. In addition, the immense psychological turmoil which these children face is usually brushed aside. The extent of psychological pressure that a young girl faces can be gauged from the incident where a girl who used to get beatings from her if she fails to maintain the required target of beedies started borrowing from a lender. Her mother was informed about her borrowing of beedies from the lender who was not properly paid back. In order to escape beatings from her mother the girl committed suicide in the forest by eating the seeds of a wild plant. This incident highlights the dangerous impact of the profession where the target is all that matters. In India most of the fund spends for beedi workers, Education, Housing, Health and some others schemes. Scheme-wise expenditure on welfare schemes under beedi worker fund in India presented in table-3. Most of the funds spend in Educational scholarship scheme of beedi workers families in India accounting 42.68 lakh during the period of 2006-07 to 2012-13, next Housing scheme (33.18 lakh), Health scheme (29.93 lakh), Recreation scheme (0.10 lakh) and Other schemes were accounting 16.53 lakh rupees of beedi workers in India.

Table-2: Scheme-Wise Expenditure on Welfare Schemes under Beedi Workers Welfare Fund in India (Rs. in ' 000)

Name of the Scheme	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2011-2012	2012-2013 (up to Sept. 2012)	Total funds (2006-07 to 2012-13)
<i>Health</i>	337250	416954	454037	673693	702890	407970	2992794 (24.45)
<i>Education</i>	400000	785309	1065985	955130	815892	245360	4267676 (34.86)
<i>Recreation</i>	1650	1845	1886	2198	2053	930	10562 (0.09)
<i>Housing</i>	559100	876324	770134	610017	502181	149	3317905 (27.10)
<i>others</i>	67000	285668	1091858	85062	73684	49551	1652823 (13.50)
Total	1365000	2366100	3383900	2326100	2096700	703960	12241760 (100.00)

Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India.



CONCLUSION

The unions also point out that beedi workers constitute a major share of the workforce under the poverty line.

In the year 2014, the highest male workers worked in the state of Madhya Pradesh (6 lakh), followed by West Bengal (4.08 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (0.9 lakh), Bihar (0.87 lakh), Jharkhand (0.48 lakh), Andhra Pradesh (0.46 lakh). In Andhra Pradesh only 10 per cent of the male beedi workers and 90 per cent of the beedi workers recorded in 2014. In all India accounting 25.24 per cent of male beedi workers and 74.76 per cent of female workers worked in the year 2014. In India totally 51.28 lakh beedi workers have identity cards. The highest cards issued in the state of West Bengal recorded (14.40 lakh), followed by Madhya Pradesh (10.21 lakh), Tamil Nadu (6.27 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (4.23 lakh), Andhra Pradesh (3.54 lakh). In India most of the fund spends for beedi workers, Education, Housing, Health and some others schemes. The most of the funds spend in Educational scholarship scheme of beedi workers families in India accounting 42.68 lakh during the period of 2006-07 to 2012-13, next Housing scheme (33.18 lakh), Health scheme (29.93 lakh), Recreation scheme (0.10 lakh) and Other schemes were accounting 16.53 lakh rupees of beedi workers in India.

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