

Unorganized Labour: Contemporary Trends and Challenges in Selected Areas of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar District of Gujarat

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Abstract:

Unorganized labour continues to play a crucial role in sustaining Indian economy, yet the workers themselves remain largely unseen and unsupported. This study explores the everyday realities of migrant and informal workers who form the backbone of construction, service, and domestic labour in the city. Their experiences reveal uncertainty in wages, shifting worksites and constant movement in search of employment. Many arrive from tribal and scattered areas of Gujarat, driven by the hope of a better livelihood but quickly confronting the harshness of informal urban labour markets.

The study highlights how these challenges are not isolated problems but are deeply rooted in the structural nature of unorganized labour. The research study highlights issues like awareness of social security provisions, wages, demography of labour force, basic needs like home/shelter, water ,sanitation, education.

Keywords: Social security, Unorganised sector, welfare

Introduction:

India is the 4th largest economy in the world GDP ranking 2025 list. According to the 2001 Census, 314.54 million persons have changed their place of residence within the country and out of this, 29.90 million or 9% have left their place for work. In India approximately 93% of workers are in the unorganized sector. The various social security schemes are currently being run by different Ministries/ Departments under Schedule II of the "Unorganized Workers Social Security Act (UWSSA), 2008" for welfare of the unorganized workers.

Unorganized labour in India includes people who work without formal jobs, fixed salaries, or job security. These workers are found in construction sites, households, small shops, farms, and streets. Most of them earn low and uncertain wages, making their daily life very challenging. They often work in unsafe places without proper safety measures. Benefits like health insurance, paid leave, or pensions rarely reach them. Many are not aware of their rights, which increases their chances of being exploited. Women workers face even more problems like lower wages, unsafe working conditions, working in crucial health situations like periods, pregnancy etc. Migrant workers struggle with housing, transport, and lack of documents. Because there are no proper records, it becomes difficult for the government to support them. India needs stronger policies and transparent mechanism to protect and uplift organized workers.

Many of the workers operate without any formal training or job security, often depending on physically demanding tasks that offer little opportunity for skill development. Wage delays, payment cuts, and the

pressure to accept whatever work is available are common. Access to basic needs like housing, sanitation, healthcare, and electricity remains limited, forcing workers and their families to live in conditions that deprive them of stability and dignity. Women workers face additional challenges, including lower pay, unsafe work environment, and limited recognition of their contribution. This research study tries to unfold present conditions of unorganised workers in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat. This research study was conducted by labour welfare students in support with the organisation centre for labour research and action.

Research objectives:

1. To identify awareness of social security schemes amongst workers.
2. To study the education of their children.
3. To study procedural awareness of social security schemes.
4. To study demography of workers.

Sample size: Total 80 respondents.

Sample selection: simple random sampling method was adopted.

Geographical area: Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts of Gujarat.

Research method: Survey method

Research tools: questionnaire, observation method.

Locations of survey: CTM Naka, Gandhinagar naka, Naroda gaam basti, Motera basti uvarsad- adalaj brick kiln site, barejadi brick kiln site. In this paper researcher has shared important points and data of the research study.

Key data information of the research study is as follows.

Table 1: Origin state of the workers

states	No.of respondants	Percentage
Gujarat	46	57.5%
Rajasthan	16	20%
Uttar Pradesh	10	12.5%
bihar	8	10%
Total	80	100%

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents were from tribal areas of Gujarat state.

Table 2: Children's primary education

Their children's Primary education	No.of respondants	Percentage
Yes	45	56.3%
No	31	38.7%
Drop out	4	5%
Total	80	100%

Interpretation: less than fifty percentage of workers have accepted that their children were having primary education. More than forty percentage of workers have revealed that their children could not study because of their frequent migration for employment.

Table 3: Awareness on Social security Act 2008

Awareness on Social security Act 2008	No.of respondants	Percentage
Yes	7	8.7%
No	58	72.5%
partially	15	18.8%
Total	80	100%

Interpretation: More than seventy percentage of the workers do not have knowledge about social security schemes/ benefits provided by state and central governments. Very few have knowledge of various social security schemes.

Table:4 Awareness of registration process under various social security schemes.

Procedural awareness of S.S schemes	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	7	8.7%
No	58	72.5%
partially	15	18.8%
Total	80	100%

Interpretation: out of eighty respondents only seven respondents have accepted that they have procedural knowledge of various schemes.

Table 5: challenges facing by workers while accessing social security schemes

Challenges	No. of respondents	Percentage
Lack of information	56	70%
Low level of education	17	21.3%
Social exclusion due to poverty	7	8.7%
	80	100%

Interpretation: majority of the respondents replied that they do not have enough information to access social security schemes. Many of the schemes are available in digital form so Education plays crucial role in access of social security schemes.

It is found through this research study that people migrate from tribal belt of Gujarat and other states of India in search of job. There are various reasons for workers to migrate from one place to another; urban development and demand for more labourers, no job opportunities at village/state level, seasonal migration due to small part of land or no land to cultivate, lack of education so labour work is the only option, migration to known person/relative or contractor. Unorganised sector holds major stake in economy of India.

Government of India has introduced new labour codes on 21st November 2025. 1. The Code on Wages, 2019 2. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020. 3. The Code on Social Security, 2020 and The Occupational

Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. It has covered GIG workers, platform workers who are considered part of unorganised sector. Benefits like Provident fund, medical insurance, gratuity is now made available to this segment of the economy. This historic step will make difference in thousands of people engaged in unorganised sector.

Conclusion:

The contemporary challenges faced by unorganised labour in the selected areas of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar reveal a persistent struggle for stability, dignity, and recognition. Despite their crucial contribution to the local economy, these workers continue to struggle with low and uncertain wages, lack of social security, unsafe working conditions, and limited awareness of their rights. Their experiences highlight the urgent need for stronger policy implementation, better access to welfare schemes, and more inclusive institutional support. Addressing these issues is not only important for improving unorganised workers' livelihoods but also for ensuring equitable and sustainable development.

The new labour codes carry the potential to improve the lives of unorganised workers, but their actual impact largely depends on how well they are implemented on the ground. While the promise of simplified laws, wider social security coverage, and clearer rights offers hope, many workers still remain unaware of these changes. Gaps in registration, digital access, and employer compliance mean that the benefits often do not fully reach those who need them most. As a result, the new labour codes may ease certain challenges, but their true effectiveness will depend on sustained awareness, strong enforcement, and genuine efforts by all stake holders to include the unorganised workforce in the country's formal protection systems.

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