



A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF CARPENTERS IN BODINAYAKANUR

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Abstract

The present study is undertaken to explore the Socio-economic conditions of carpenters in the study area. A Carpenter is a skilled craftsman who performs carpentry – a wide range of woodworking that includes constructing buildings, furniture and other objects out of the wood. The following functions are Working by hand or with hand tools, Reading and Interpreting drawings, Grinding and sharpening tools, Measure, cut, shape, assemble and join materials, Knowing the properties of various types of wood and timber and Using glues and preservers. The main objective is to examine the overall view about the Socio-Economic conditions of carpenters during the study period. Random sampling has been adopted for the study. Three hundred samples have been selected from the universe by following the Lottery Method. Primary data were collected from 300 samples. For this, a well structured interview schedule has been prepared. The interview schedules were pre tested and pilot study was conducted. The study covers to period of seven months from October 2016 to April 2017. Percent age analysis has been applied to study Socio-Economic conditions of the carpenters. Finally conclusions were drawn and suggestions were offered.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Conditions, Carpenters.

Introduction

Carpentry is the art and trade of cutting, working and joining timber. This term includes both structural timber work in framing and items such as doors, window and stair cases. The working of wood in building is an ancient craft and still comprises one of the most important activities in construction work. In the past, when buildings were often wholly constructed of timber framing, the carpenter played a considerable part in building construction; along with the mason he, has been the principal building worker. The scope of carpenter's work has altered, however, with the passage of time. Increasing use of concrete and steel construction, especially for floors and roofs, means that the carpenter plays a smaller part in making the frame work of building except for houses and small structure. On of the other hand, in the construction of temporary form work and shuttering for concrete buildings, the carpenter's work has greatly increased. The study focuses on the Socio – Economic Conditions of Carpenters in Bodinayakanur.¹

Concept of Carpentry

Carpentry is a skilled trade in which the primary work performed is the cutting, shaping and installation of building materials during the construction of buildings, ships, timber bridges, concrete framework and wood house. Today many other materials are used and sometimes the finer trades of cabinetmaking and furniture building are considered as carpentry. Carpentry in the United States is almost always done by men. With 98.5 per cent of Carpenters being male, it was the fourth most male – dominated occupation in the country in 1999, and there were about 1.5 millions positions in 2006. Carpenters are usually the first tradesman on a job and the last to leave. Carpentry normally framed post and beam buildings until the end of the 19th century. Now this old fashioned carpentry is called timber framing. Carpenters learn this trade by being employed through an apprenticeship training normally for 4 years. It is also common that the skill can be learned by gaining work experience other than a formal training program, which may be the case in many places.²

Functions of Carpenters

- Working by hand or with hand tools
- Reading and Interpreting drawings
- Grinding and sharpening tools
- Measure, cut, shape, assemble and join materials.
- Knowing the properties of various types of wood and timber
- Using glues and preservers
- Using hammers, chisels and saws to cut and fit materials
- Working well independently or with co-workers under deadline to get the job done
- Working in different areas of the occupation
- Experimenting with various materials and methods to solve construction Problems
- Prepare cost estimates and documentation for clients
- Conform to building codes and other regulations
- Supervise apprentices or other workers



Significance of Carpentry

Carpentry industries are labor intensive and have high potential in employment generation. Thus they help to solve wide spread problems of disguised unemployment existing in the rural area. By providing employment, the carpentry industries also have high potential for income generation in rural areas. Thus they help in reducing disparities in income. Both rural and urban areas. The carpentry industries encourage dispersal of economic activities in the rural area which in turn promote a balanced regional development. The carpentry industries also help in protecting and promoting the art and creativity ie-the age old rich heritage of the country. Carpentry industrialization fosters economic development in rural areas. This checks–rural-urban migration on one hand and reduces the disproportionate growth in the cities, growth in slums, social tensions and atmospheric pollution on the other. Development of industries in rural areas help to building up carpentry republics. Carpentry industries are environment friendly and lead to development without destruction which is the need of the hour.

Statement of the Problem

Carpentry is a skilled trade in which the primary work performed is the cutting, shaping and installation of building materials during the construction of buildings, boat, timber bridges, concrete framework and coffin. The locally available resources should be utilized to satisfy the ultimate needs of public. Moreover the skill of local people of the village shall be utilized and developed to the requirement of modern world. Rural men engage agriculture and agriculture allied activities namely Carpentry, Blacksmithy, Beekeeping, Mason and Basketry. Among them, carpenters are playing an important role in the construction work. Carpenter's Socio-Economic conditions are not upto the mark in India in general and the study area in the particular. They are less educated, economically poor, homeless they lack awareness about banking facilities, unemployment and underemployment. Hence an attempt has been made to study the Socio-Economic conditions of the carpenters in Bodinayakanur.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to examine the overall view about the Socio-Economic conditions of carpenters during the study period.

Review of Literature

M.L Jesudoss's (1983) in his article named "Socio Economic Study of Construction Workers", dealt with wages, recruitment, working and living condition of construction workers in Nagamalai areas of Madurai district in Tamil Nadu of India which is a area. The study revealed that the wage rate was low and working and living condition in the study area were poor.³

M.L Jesudoss (1990) studied the "Wages and Working Conditions Workers" in Madurai city in India. This study was about the migratory nature, requirement, social profile of organized contribution workers, methods of wages payment, wage structure, level of differential working conditions, Legislative protection and socio economic characteristics of the organized construction workers. Proper enforcement of welfare measure can improve their position. This was the findings of this study.⁴

Dubey,V.K., (1995) in his article titled "Socio- Economic Transformation of Rural Economy", studied about the income generation between the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of labors. He has concluded that this increased income is in the result of the proper utilization of the existing facilities and the infrastructure of the members.⁵

R.Rajaratnam (2001) contributed an article on "A Socio Economic study of Unorganised SC/ST (Dalit) Workers", of Triunelveli District in Tamil Nadu, South India. He made a study about Dalit unorganized workers living in rural areas of Triunelveli District. Here he, focused on the reasons for illiteracy, poor living and working condition. His study did not the construction sector, low beginning power, low level of wage rate, highly migratory nature, deep indebtedness are the major findings for the socio economic conditions of Dalits.⁶

B.Ponnusamy (2003) in his study named "Socio-Economic conditions of workers in Urban Informal Sector –A Study of Construction Workers", highlighted that the economic backwardness of the construction workers, social ignorance of working conditions, low level of age rate, existence of poor, working conditions, unavailability of employment are the major findings of the study.⁷

Research Methodology

Sampling

Random sampling has been adopted for the study. It refers to the technique of sampling in which each and every item of population or universe has an equal independent chance of being included in the sample. Six hundred and twenty four carpenters are located in the study area. The list has been collected from society of the carpenters. Three hundred samples have been selected from the universe by following the Lottery Method. For this, each carpenter is assigned a number. Thus all carpenters are allotted numbers. The papers containing the numbers are mixed in a box and selected. 300 samples were selected.



Data Collection

Primary Data

Primary data were collected from 300 samples. For this, a well structured interview schedule has been prepared. The interview schedules were pre tested and pilot study was conducted. Necessary corrections and deletions were made. Thus, bias has been removed by cross check.

Frame Work Analysis

Percentage Analysis for Analyzing Demographic Characteristics of Sample Respondent like Age, Sex, Income, Expenditure Pattern, Marital status, Education Qualification, Number of Children. Percentage analysis issued to study the socio-economic conditions of the sample respondents.

Period of Study

The study covers to period of seven months from October 2016 to April 2017.

Limitations of the Study

The study has following limitations. It covers the period of seven months only. Moreover the data collected from sample respondents have permanently residence in Bodinayakanur. Time is also limited to infer the result from the sample respondents. The findings to the study are applicable only to Bodinayakanur.

Result and Discussions

Age

Age is the basic factor that determines the capacity to learn and earn. It is also a limiting factor in many respects namely: admission to a school, to get government job and get retired from services. It is one of the important parameters to decide the level of maturity of the employee. Necessary data were collected and classification was made on the basis of the age group of the respondent. The result is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Age wise classification

S. No	Age (Year)	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	20-25	51	17
2	26-30	52	17
3	31-35	57	19
4	Above 35	140	47
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows the Age wise Classification of sample respondents. Majority (47%) of the respondents belong to the age group of above 35 years and 19 per cent of the total respondents belong to the age group between the 31 and 35 years. And Seventeen per cent of the respondents come under category the age group between the 20 and 30 years. It is inferred that most of the carpenters are belong to the category of above 35 years.

Gender

Effectiveness and Expertise on work depends on the gender they belong to. Male works hard as they are the bread winners and female undertake both hour work and other work. So they may not be as hardworking as the male are. Table 2 shows the Gender wise classification.

Table 2: Gender wise Classification

S. No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Male	300	100
2	Female	Nil	-
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows the Gender wise classification of sample respondent. Almost one hundred per cent of total respondents belong to male category because carpentry work is being undertaken by only male people. Female respondents are either home makers and they perform work other than carpentry. It is traditionally followed in their community. It is found that carpentry work is meant for male only because it involves heavy manual and mental work.



Area of Residence

Area of residence is an important demographical factor which has an influence on the life style of the people and their behavior. Area-wise Classification of the sample respondents is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Area wise Classification

S. No	Area	No. of Residents	Percentage to total
1	Rural	72	24
2	Semi Urban	146	49
3	Urban	82	27
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 3 reveals the area wise classification of sample respondents. Forty nine per cent of the total respondents are living in the Semi urban area. Then Twenty Seven per cent of sample resides in urban area. Only twenty four per cent of the respondents live in rural are. It is observed that most of the carpenters are residing in Semi Urban area.

Religion

Religion is the fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a group of people. These sets of beliefs concern the cause, nature, purpose of universe involving devotional and ritual observance. They also often contain a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. The religion wise classification of respondents is presented in Table 4

Table 4: Religion wise Classification

S. No	Religion	No. of Respondent	Percentage to Total
1	Hindu	182	61
2	Muslim	54	18
3	Christian	64	21
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 4 shows that out of 300 respondents, 61 per cent of the respondents are Hindus, Twenty one per cent respondents are Christians and 18 per cent respondents are Muslims. It is also indicated that nearly two third of the respondents are Hindus. It is inferred that there are more Hindu carpentry workers in the study area.

Community

Community plays an important role in the place where they work. Workers participation in management depends on the employee's community they belong to for this purpose. The respondents were classified on the basis of their community and the result is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Community wise Classification

S. No	Community	No. of Respondent	Percentage to Total
1	BC	210	70
2	SC	90	30
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

It is observed from the Table 5 that out of 300 respondents, seventy per cent are in the BC Category. Thirty per cent of respondents are in SC Category. It is analyzed that there are more number BC community respondents in the study area.

Level of Education

Education means importing knowledge which is necessary for the introduction of innovative techniques and for betterment. Education is the basic need for employees. It makes the employers to understand the management functions better, act and think effectively. The result is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Education wise Classification

S. No	Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Up to 8 th	147	49
2	SSLC	63	21
3	ITI	37	12
4	HSC	39	13
5	Degree	14	05
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data



It is observed from Table 6 that the majority of the respondents (49 %) are educated up to 8th standard. Twenty one per cent of the respondents have SSLC, qualification. The carpenters who have studied up to HSC and Degree level are.13 per cent and 05 per cent respectively. Some carpenters have undergone industrial training through ITI and they constitute 12 per cent. Nearly 14 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. It is found that the carpenters learned little education and they engaged in carpentry work.

Marital Status

Marital status is taken as an important social characteristics of the society members. It is an indicator of employee's responsibility. The respondents were classified according to their marital status and the result is presented in Table 7

Table 7: Marital Status

S. No	Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Married	216	72
2	Unmarried	84	28
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

It is learned from Table 7 about the marital status of carpenters. Nearly 216 respondents (72%) were married. The remaining 84 respondents (28%) were not married. It is found that the carpenters are working after attaining the age of 18 for their livelihood and they get married at an early age, because of their parents compulsion and the community taboo.

Family Status

The socio-economic conditions of the carpentry workers depend upon the status of the family. Family is a group of individuals who share a legal or genetic bond, but for many people family means much more. Table 8 reveals the classification of the carpentry workers according to their status of the family.

Table 8: Family Status

S. No	Type of Family	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Nuclear	198	66
2	Joint family	102	34
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 8 reveals about the family system among carpenters. It is observed that 198 carpenters (66%) are coming under Nuclear family and the 102 carpenters (34%) are living under Joint family system. The nuclear family system is encouraged by youngsters. It is due to poor earning and selfish character they possess.

Family Size

The size of a family indicates the number of the people belonging to a family. A large family with more dependent members in the family is a burden for the earning members of the family. Table 9 shows the family size classification

Table 9: Family Size

S. No	Number of Members	No. of Respondent	Percentage to Total
1	2	60	20
2	3	72	24
3	4	114	38
4	Above 4	54	18
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

It is understood about the family size of carpenters from Table 9. For nearly 114 Carpenters (38%), the family size is four. Seventy two carpenters (24 %) have only one child with the family size of three. Some families do not have children and they constitute (20 %) as they got married were recently. Unusually the people carpenters 54 (18%) above 4 of family size. It is inferred that 38 per cent of the respondents are four members in their family.



Working Members in the Family

The family members engage in any form of work including carpentry for their livelihood. They attend the work which is available in the area where they live. The following Table 10 presents the working members in the family.

Table 10: Working members

S. No	Working members	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	1	174	58
2	2	48	16
3	3	54	18
4	4	24	08
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

It is found from Table 10 that 58 per cent of the respondents come under single person earning in the family. Among the remaining respondents, 18 per cent have two earning members. They are followed by 16 per cent and 08 per cent will 3 and 4 earning members respectively. Many families have single person earning in the study area.

Nature Carpentry Work

In a carpenters family, the family members are engaging not only in carpentry but also in other work. They engage in mansion work, gold covering, statue shaping and producing utensils. Besides, the carpenters are engaging in other than carpentry work when they have off season. Table 11 presented the pattern of the carpentry work.

Table 11: Pattern of the Carpentry Work

S. No	Carpentry Work	No .of Respondent	Percentage to Total
1	Door work	66	22
2	Cup-Board	66	22
3	Show case	36	12
4	Furniture	24	08
5	General work	108	36
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 11 shows that 108 respondents out of 300 are engaged in general work. They are followed by 66 respondents equal number of respondents working o cup-boards and door work. 36respondents work on show case and 24 respondents work on furniture. Majority of the carpenters are involved in general work.

Type of Work

Carpenters get their work either by way of contract or daily wages work. The carpenters as contractors fix the price for the whole contract and receive their money according to the level of work completed. Some carpenters are not able to get contract work because they are very poor and illiterate. The daily workers work in different places and different type of work and get their wages at end of the day. Table 12 shows type of work.

Table 12: Type of Work

S. No	Type of Work	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Contract	144	48
2	Daily wages	156	52
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 12 shows the type of work they undertake. Almost 52 per cent of the carpenters (156 respondents) are getting work daily and they earn for their life Some times they may not work for several days in a year. Forty eight per cent of the (144 carpenters) respondents took contract work and were employed as daily workers. It is inferred that daily workers are more in number and are engaged in different carpentry work.

Duration of Work

Generally, a person will work for 8 to 10 hours for the occupation he prefers his l. However, an independent job like carpentry workers may require more time to be spent than normal duration. Classification of the respondents based on total hours of work per day was made and the result is presented in Table 13.



Table 13: Working Hours

S. No	Working Hours	No of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Less than 8 hours	126	42
2	8-10 hours	114	38
3	Above 10 hours	60	20
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 13 reveals about the working hours spent by the carpenters. Forty two per cent of the respondents are working for less than 8 hours a day. Nearly 38 per cent of the respondents are working in between 8 and 10 hours per day. Then, only 20 per cent of the respondents are working more than 10 hours a day. It is observed from the Table 12 that two hundred and forty samples out of three hundred sample respondent are working in between 8 and 10 hours.

Experience

It is a general opinion that the experience will create a better perception and quality of work. The carpentry workers having long experience will show expertise in this work field. Therefore, experience is an important factor in determining the socio economic conditions. Classification of the respondents based on their previous experience and their result are presented in the Table 14

Table 14: Experience

S. No	Experience (years)	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Less than 5	48	16
2	5-10	24	08
3	10-15	60	20
4	Above 15	168	56
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 14 displays the experience gained by the carpenters in their work. Nearly 56 per cent have more than 15 years of experience. They are followed by 20 per cent with 10 to 15 years of experience. 16 per cent have less than 5 years experience and 08 per cent have 5 to 10 years experience.

Working in Carpenter

Among the family members involved in different work, the respondents prefer carpentry work. It is a traditional work being carried by a specific community naming Viswakarma. The work is being carried out directly or indirectly by this community. They live in cluster to get and engage work where they live in a village. It is also giving a fair wage to the work done by them and the same is presented in the Table 15.

Table 15: Carpenter Working in Family

S. No	No of Workers	No .of Respondent	Percentage to total
1	1	168	56
2	2	60	20
3	3	48	16
4	4	24	08
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 15 indicates the carpenter working in a family. Majority of the (56%) total respondents family have only one worker. Twenty per cent of the respondents have two carpenters in their family and 16 per cent have three members in their family. They are followed by 08 per cent total respondents with four workers in their family. Table 14 makes evident that majority of the respondents families have only one worker.

Wages

The survey brings out details about the daily wages of the carpentry workers. The average daily wages of the workers is presented in Table 15 and the same is given below



Table 16: Wages

S. No	Daily Wages (Rs)	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	300-400	102	34
2	400-500	102	34
3	500-600	60	20
4	600-700	36	12
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 16 explains about the wage wise classification of the respondents. Equal number of respondents (204) earn between 300 to 500 rupees respectively. They are followed by 60 respondents who earn 500 to 600 rupees and 36 respondents who earn 600 to 700 rupees. It is inferred that most of the respondents are getting wage range 300-500.

Acquiring of Skill

Carpenters' skills depend on educational qualification and the talents they possess themselves. Their skill can be developed by learning method, lecturing method, attending work shop, seminar and observation. Some carpenters acquire skills from their parents as it is a family occupation. The sources of acquiring skill is depicted in Table 17

Table 17: Skills

S. No	Sources of Skills	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	By inheritance	174	58
2	Friends	42	14
3	Relations	54	18
4	Others	30	10
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 17 shows the various sources from where the carpenters acquire skill. Most of respondents (58%) acquire skills of carpentry by inheritance. Some carpenters (18%) acquire from their relations. Nearly 14 per cent of the respondents acquire from their friends and the remaining 10 per cent of respondents acquired talent from the others. It is inferred that most of the respondents acquire by inheritance.

Housing

House is one of the basic requirements of human being after food. The nature of housing is a socio factor that decides the general conditions of human living. Table 17 shows the classification with respect to shelter.

Table 17: House

S. No	Type of House	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Owned	168	56
2	Rented	132	44
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 17 shows the house owned by the carpenters for their living. Majority (56%) of the respondents have owned house and the remaining (44%) of the respondents have rented or a lease house. It is understood that majority of the respondents have their owned house.

Type of House Pattern

The pattern of the house has been classified into thatched, tiled, semi-pucca and Rc house depending on the economic conditions. Table 18 shows the housing pattern possessed by the respondents.

Table 18: Housing Pattern

S. No	Type of Pattern	No .of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Thatched	40	24
2	RC house	70	42
3	Semi-pucca	24	14
4	Tiled	34	20
	Total	168	100

Source: Primary data



Table 18 shows the type of houses where they live. Seventy persons (42%) out of 168 respondents revealed that they live in RC House, whereas 24 Per cent of the respondents live in thatched house. 24 and 34 persons reside in Semi- pucca and Tiled houses. It is found that the majority of the respondents in RC House because of their expertise in their work.

Year Membership

The societies are established in the study area for the benefit of some carpenters who joined the society in the year in which established and sum have joined later. The minimum number to have the joined society is 18years. Table 19 presents the number in the society.

Table 19: Membership

S. No	Number of(years)	No of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1	Less than 5	72	24
2	5-10	78	26
3	Above 10	150	60
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

Table 19 shows the number of years the carpenters have been the member of the society. Majority of 60 per cent them have been member for more than 10 years and 26 per cent have been members for a period between 5 to 10 years and they are followed by 24 per cent having 5 years of membership

Suggestions

Following suggestions are useful for the policy makers to enhance the socio-economic conditions of carpenters in Bodinayakanur.

- Minimum wage shall be fixed for the carpenters in general and Bodinayakanur in particular.
- Governments shall not encourage readymade furniture with respect to doors, windows and other wooden house works.
- Private contract of carpentry work shall be regulated by imposing regulated measure.
- New and existing carpenters shall be given training for making new types and design of furniture in order to compute with machine made furniture.
- Regular employment can be provided by establishing more number of societies in the study area.
- Health care and employees welfare shall be given due significance in their work.
- Governments shall extent financial assistance, concession and subsidies for improving the performance of the carpenters.
- Necessary training centers may be opened in Theni district so as to attract the new carpenters to undertake the job.
- When an individual carpenter produces furniture, government should make necessary arrangements for marketing their produce. It instills confidence in the minds of carpenters.
- Carpenters sons and daughters should be given educational assistance to improve educational qualification and quality.
- In order to improve the quality of work, small machinery may be introduced with or without power in carpentry manufacturing.
- There is a need to improve the communication among carpenters, academics and artistic in the area of carpentry making.
- Device new function for carpentry products to ensure its continuity and sustainability
- Form of associations syndicate or cartel which lead to formation of individual efforts to enhance the standard of living.
- Tamil Nadu government has to create a welfare board to look after the carpenters who are engage in the carpentry work.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi rightly pointed out that India is a country of villages. The Indian economy depends on the economic conditions of rural villages. Economic conditions depend on the employment that the village provides. Most of the employment in rural area is agricultural orientated. Moreover all development is possible only when each and every village self reliant in order to achieve this goal. To sum up, carpenter's socio-economic conditions in Bodinayakanur is not up to the



mark. They are very poor and they lead hand to mouth living. Their improvement will go a long way to improve the standard of living, enhancement of per capita of income and live with good health conditions. Both State and Central government has to take the necessary steps to improve the socio economic conditions.

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