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Topic of Research: Muslim Unorganised Workers in Bihar: A Study of Status and Challenges in Post-Liberalisation Phase (1991-2010)

ABSTRACT

Area of study: The proposed thesis aims to understand the status and challenges of Muslim unorganized workers in post-liberalisation phase. The area of study has under its focus the Muslim unorganized workers in Bihar. While doing so, I have also tried to undertake a micro study of the Muslim unorganized workers in the Darbhanga district of Bihar.

Time Frame: Main focus of the proposed thesis is on the liberalisation phase: 1991 – 2010. However, as a background, researcher used data from 1971 onwards, the time from which data about the unorganised sector became available.

Muslim unorganized workers in India

A large number of them are self-employed; many are working in the traditional non-farming sectors. According to Dr. Arjun Sengupta report (2007), 97% of the Muslim workers are engaged in unorganised sector. Thus, a large number of Muslim workers are susceptible to the vulnerabilities plaguing the unorganized sector. Within the unorganized sector, large number of Muslim unorganised workers work in apparel making, auto repairing, electrical goods making and other such areas. On the whole, more Muslims than others are to be found in production-related activities and transport equipment operations. About 34 per cent of Muslims are engaged in such occupations as against 21 per cent of all workers (Sengupta Arjun).¹

Muslim unorganized workers in Bihar

The Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna, conducted a report on 'Socioeconomic and Educational Status of Muslims in Bihar', for the Bihar State

¹Arjun Sengupta, *Report on Condition of Work and Promotion of Livelihood in the Unorganised Sector*, New Delhi: National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, Academic Foundation, 2007, pp.7-12.

Minority Commission in 2002, the report was presented in 2004. The report was based on a comprehensive survey covering 8159 households, both from rural and urban areas.

Findings of the study

Unorganized sector consists mainly of agriculture related work, small-scale industry based work and self-employment. Economic liberalization has reduced the small-scale strength, which was connected to more than 1500 goods in 1972; it is reduced to 800 goods in 1995. Modern capital intensive technology has replaced labour intensive technology. So, there are a large number of employment losses in the formal sector. The retrenched workers from the formal sector are trying to get absorbed in the informal sector.

A large numbers of workers get informally employed in the formal sector.

There may be a change in the organization of production in the formal sector. A significant amount of sub-contracting starts taking place. By giving contracts to the informal sector to produce semi-finished product, formal sector is reducing its cost of production. The output of the informal sector is used as a raw material of the formal sector.

Muslim female workers have found working participation as irregular wages and wage-workers, while Muslim workers find working participation in self-employed works.

There is living example in Bihar and developing countries that cooperative society succeeded and provides regular jobs, for example, 'Sudha Cooperative Society' in Bihar which work in Milk based industry provides 4 million employments.