

Socio-Economic Challenges Affecting Construction Women Labourers (WCLs) in The Nigerian Construction Sector (NCS)



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ABSTRACT: Women constitute about half of the population of Nigeria and thus a critical mass in the human capital of the country. They make significant contributions to social and economic development of the society, yet they are never appreciated nor supported by public or private institutions. Recently there have been a growing number of women in construction labour work in the Nigerian Construction Sector (NCS) - an area hitherto exclusively preserved of the male folks. This study investigates aspects of social and economic conditions of women construction labourers (WCLs) in Ondo State Southwest Nigeria. Convenience and Snowball sampling were used to sample 101 WCLs. Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The result indicates that most WCLs are low in education and skills hence they mostly participate in supportive roles that are energetic. The WCLs are exposed to multiple risks due to poor Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), welfare and social protection of Nigerian Construction Contractors (NCCs) in the informal construction sub sector of the NCS. The study recommends for the improvement and enforcement of HSE standards, welfare package and training in the NCS.

KEYWORDS: Nigerian Construction Sector, Nigerian Construction Contractors, Women Construction Labourers, economic and social challenges

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has had a dramatic impact on employment relation and work arrangement around the world. It has particularly had significant negative effects on weak and vulnerable economies and on women and children within them (Carr, 2004). Globalisation has also led to significant growth of the informal sector in developing economies which led to a corresponding rise in informal employment. In many sub-Saharan African countries virtually all female non agricultural labor force works in informal employment. This has resulted in a growing 'feminisation of labour' which has brought about a visibility for the women worker which did not exist before (Jhabvala & Sinha, 2006, 2007). According to Charles (1993), more than half of the workforce are women who do over 60% of the work in the world. And earn 10% of the world's income owning only about 1% of the world's resources. Globally, women have been gaining economic equality with men but gender inequality continues to be an issue within the market force. Women are downside in having access to labour markets and most times are not as free as men to choose the kind of activities or sectors where they would prefer to work (ILO, 2009).

Both gender work within specific profession or trades and attain different levels which conform to societal expectations of their gender. In terms of occupation there is the conventional gender split in the pattern of various sectors of employment. In terms of hierarchy, women representation in most sectors reduces with increase in rank (Dainty, 1998). Thus women are crowded into 'job ghetto' of low paid work of junior and supporting positions (ILO, 2009). In more recent study, Jwsshaka and Amin (2020), affirmed that women are more into the informal sector where vocational occupations like catering and fashion designing are areas where women prefer to venture into despite being professionally qualified. This is however leading to the shortage of professionals in the industry. The women gender is overrepresented in subsistence agriculture, domestic chores and work such as sowing (Gregson et al., 1997; Jwsshaka & Amin, 2020). Men carry on dominating while women keep working harder to demonstrate their potential in male-dominated industries. Women are also often disadvantaged in terms of the share of vulnerable employment (i.e. unpaid family workers and own-account workers) in total employment. Women are mostly in the informal sector characterised by insecure and poor quality employment, low skill, income and productivity and no social security

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and pension system despite the exposure to shocks and risks (Jhabvala & Sinha, 2006, 2007). Women who are fortunate to obtain formal employment are most times not paid the same remuneration as their male colleague which may be as a result of discrimination (ILO 2009). In spite of the knowledge and contribution of women of women in the society, they are still disregarded or underestimated. Women have the lowest Human Development Indicators (HDI) in health, nutrition, maternal mortality, fertility and education (HDR, 1998). With the restrictions women face generally, women empowerment and gender equality advancement is not only a fundamental Millennium Development Goal (MDG), but also pivotal to realizing the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all and virtually all other goals (ILO, 2009).

Engaging and retaining more women, is a key priority for solving the construction sector's labour shortage (Gurjao, 2006). In Nigeria, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in 1986 combined with rapid population growth and rural-urban migration resulted in high number of joblessness in the built-up cities SAPs led to the contraction of the formal sector, a non commensurate growth of the informal economy and a phenomenal growth of unskilled women labourers in the urban economy (Faruqee, 1994; Aladekomo, 2004). Considering the high level of urban poverty among women and the lack of regulation of the informal economy there is the need for an investigation into the activities of unskilled women construction labourers (WCLs) in the informal construction sector. In contrast to the extant literature focus on skilled and technical women in construction, this study investigates the socio-economic conditions of CWLs in the Nigerian Construction Sector (NCS) using Akure, the Ondo state capital as a case study.

THE FEMALE GENDER

Gender-induced discriminations have played a major part in the lives of women in poor socio-economic situation in Africa. In traditional African societies, the responsibility of women are substantially maternal, conjugal and domestic services including food crops production, food preparation, fetching firewood, water, shopping for household needs (Oppong & Abu, 1987; Agberia, 1996; Ogbuigwe, 1996; Ajayi & Olotuah, 2005). Thus, marriage and fertility are women's primary source of esteem and dignity within their families and groups (Nosike, 1996). Women who are married are actually regarded as the property of their husband and they do not inherit land or resources. Also, divorce is firmly disallowed and the custody of the children is automatically given to the husband. Women work at home and family farms are unpaid for (Sa'ad, 2001). Women mostly take part in tasks that are tedious and unsafe (Okunribido, 2000). Women in the rural area mostly work in peasant agriculture and generally do the harvest and processing activities themselves (Igbeka, 1993). Women make use of locally fabricated handheld tools and implements in agriculture which are difficult, heavy and injurious to operate and originally designed for the men (Adegbite, 1994; Udry, 1995).

Women are known to be highly industrious and enterprising but mostly engages in home-based informal activities (Jwasshaka & Amin, 2020). Women play the triple roles of reproduction, production and home management. These are not measured in economic terms, thus policymakers have no recognition of the contributions of women to the national economy (Moser, 1985; Amali, 1989). Indeed, Nigerian institutions are highly gendered, family institutions involve strict gender norms on marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, which all appear to be biased against women (Van Staveren & Odebode, 2007). Gendered practices are social construct and are as such informed by the values and norms of societies. The discriminatory practices against women have for long hindered the full development of their potentials which have prevented equal socio-economic participation leading to a high rate of poverty among women (Olotuah & Ajayi, 2008). As at 2006, Adeyemi et al. (2006), compared the participation of men and women in construction industries in Nigeria and only 16.3% of the workforces were women. Of the 16.3%, half of the women were employed as labourers in the industry, 37.5% as administrative staff while 10% were management staff and 2.5% represented skilled women. However, within the construction industry, the population of women now represents only 0.2% of those in the construction profession. (Jimoh et al. 2016). According to Jwasshaka and Amin (2020), out of this population, most of the women are engaged as helpers or labourers, Administrative staff or catering staff. Women constitute about half of Nigeria's population (NPC, 2006). According to Akomolafe and Moammad (2015) there are less than six million women employed in Nigeria which account for 22% of the work force. Therefore, their effective participation is critical to any genuine national development programme (Adeyemo, 1984; Nkom, 1988; Folorunso, 2000; Oganwu & Omotor, 2000; Jwasshaka & Amin, 2020). The active participation of women in development process is dependent upon myriad socio-economic and political factors which include religion, education, marriage, residence, parental support and public policy (Aboribo et al., 2000).

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In Nigeria, traditional values favour men with up to four wives, as they exclusively inherit properties, have automatically have access to the custody of children and these men rarely assist in domestic work and care for the children. These provide the institutional foundation for the highly gendered family norms, glorifying masculine beliefs, rules and practices, while denigrating what is regarded as feminine (Van Staveren & Odebode, 2007). Women disadvantages have been linked to low level of skills and crowdedness in the informal economy. The informal economy is characterized by relatively high unemployment, high-income insecurity, low and irregular earnings, poor labour standards and social security and protection (Van Staveren & Odebode, 2007). Women have less job opportunities and are faced with wage discrimination even when qualified for the job. The low participation and increase in the rate of poverty among women can be traced to downside position in education (Olotuah & Ajayi, 2008). An increased participation in labour force as well as a greater earnings by women could result in an increased enrolment in schools for children, including girls, which will in turn lead to increase in educated girls who grow up to become female role models (Aguirre et al., 2012). Most forms inequality encountered by women in Nigeria has its root in education (Federal Office of Statistics, 1996). To improve the situation, women should be given adequate opportunities for education like men as well as access to extension services. Women access to credit should also be improved since lack of capital has resulted in inefficiency. Additionally, there is the need for cultural reorientation in Nigerian societies and the eradication of all impediments against women (Adeyemo, 1984; Oppong & Abu, 1987; Stephen, 1992; Olotuah & Ajayi, 2008).

THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR (CNS) AND GENDER

In Nigeria, the CNS accounted for 9.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in the third quarter of 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). In 2013, the industry contributed 3.12% to the GDP (NBS, 2013). It also accounts for almost 70% of the nation's fixed capital formation and employs approximately 8million people, which represents about 25% of Nigeria's workforce (Ogunsemi, 2015). Perhaps the more important contribution of the CNS to the socio economic growth is its direct and indirect contribution to employment. Construction work being fragmented and sometimes unorganised accommodates many workers particularly the unskilled labour. Because of its impact on the labour market the CNS attracts a great deal of attention in any political, economic, and social debate (Lavender, 1996). The CNS operations are highly mobile and construction works are carried out on site with projects having fixed-term, rather than continuous. Many construction workers are employed full-term for only the duration of a project unlike other industries. Because of the instability of construction employment, workers move among contractors from time to time (Uwakweh & Maloney, 1991). The increasing informal employment and subcontracting of labour has not had a favourable impact on the level of social protection which makes construction one of the very dangerous occupations. Research across the globe shows that construction workers have a higher tendency to die from accidents during work than others who are not into construction. In the developing economies, the risks associated with construction work are about 3 to 6 times greater (ILO, 2001).

The construction labour market is presently facing a skills shortage (MacKenzie et al., 2000; CITB 2002). More recently, Jwasshaka and Amin (2020), emphasised that CNS is running out of employee due to the non-participation and non-involvement of women who despite possessing the required skill and knowledge choose career in catering, dress making or care giver rather than construction. Odubiyi (2018) however referred to this choice of women as not diversifying but devastating because of the negative effect it has on the progress of the Nigerian construction industry. Ginige, Amaratunga and Haigh (2007), also noted that the problem of skill shortage is due to the inability of the industry to attract young women to take a career in construction. This is a result of the unattractiveness of the industry for women due to the various challenges they face in the industry. This has made construction workers retention become a top priority (Yankov & Kleiner, 2001).

The unwillingness of women to participate in the sector significantly reduces the labour pool from which the CNS can employ (Gale, 1992; Clark & Wall, 1998; Gritziyis & Stoll, 2002). This unwillingness may be due to many reasons including reasons related to the apparent male domination in workplaces; flexible work hours; and the believe that it involves hard physical tasks which requires strength that the female gender may not have (Gale & Skitmore, 1990). Amaratunga et al., (2006) identified the challenges faced by women in entry and retention as knowledge of the career, culture, working environment, training courses for male, recruitment practices and family commitments. Jimoh, et al (2016) and Akinsiku and Ajala (2018) noted that construction industry is mostly male dominated because the works carried out requires physical strength which women may not have and they are faced with other challenges such as long working, commitment to family and self-confidence. The physical strength of men, that is the 'macho' culture has given the CNS a negative social image and confrontational relationships (Barthorpe et al., 1999; Strategic Forum, 2002). Salman, Miranda and Amos (2014) identified male dominance, socio-cultural issues, work and life balance, unfair perception of women's capabilities and slow career progression as the most common

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challenge women face in construction. Many female workers envisaged to leave the sector because of frustrations as a result of abuse and verbal harassment (Dorsey & Minkarah, 1993). There is also a lack of child care facilities, promotion prospects and maternity leave that affect the female gender (Sommerville et al., 1993). So therefore, women within the industry are compelled to choose between having a career and having a family (Dainty et al., 2000a).

Women Construction Labourers (WCLs)

Using data from the International Labour Organization, Aguirre et al. (2012) estimated that globally 812 million women out of the 865 million women that have the capability to contribute to national economies live in emerging and developing nations of which Nigeria is one. The believe is that women do not have the ability to make successful career in construction due to the numerous demands of the industry. This prejudice may not be unconnected to age-long traditions, customs, values and beliefs prevailing among the different cultures in Nigeria. Women are treated as subordinates to men, they are excluded from formal education; a general belief in a low level of female intelligence; non-recognition of unmarried women and classification of some economic activities as exclusive preserve of men (Orubuloye, 1987; Sokomba, 1990; Oruwari, 1992; Okewole, 1997). Recently however, women legal status has changed greatly with a rising increase in female students' enrollment in the engineering and built environment degree programmes in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. This change has enable women to improve in the participation in various economic activities including construction (UNESCO, 1995; Adeyemi et al., 2004). Also, the industry is putting efforts into making the working conditions of the CNS attract more competent construction workers particularly women. There are compelling women labour problems in the CNS such as the need: to increase the number of qualified women joining the CNS; to improve the level of qualified women in the CNS; and to advance the health and safety standard of the CNS for women (Gilbert & Walker, 2001).

A growing body of literature focuses on gender in the NCS. Labeodan (1992) noted that the bulk of CWLs are below the age of 50 years; about 60 percent are married with an average of four children; about 70 percent never had formal school; mostly involved in unskilled support roles; earn meager income, utterly dissatisfied with job and pay; about 90 percent are full time construction workers and have been in the sector for at most 10 years; majority travel between 3 and 6 km daily to reach construction site; prefer buying and selling trades; health and safety issues; few prefer to go back to school. Adeyemi et al., (2004) in their finding observed that women are underrepresented in the NCS. Kehinde and Okoli (2004) affirmed that there are considerable career opportunities for career women in the NCS, though some of these pose serious conflict with their roles as wives/mothers, which therefore affects their career advancement in such fields. Sodunke (2005) observed that the level of participation of women in professional and managerial positions in construction is insignificant due to: the hazard and risks involves; difficulties in combining career with family responsibilities and the vertical segregation by sex in the NCS. The findings of Ishola (2006), showed that women face significant social and economic problems ranging from non-acceptability, low pay due to belief that they contribute less to the manpower output and others.

Similar findings have been reported in other jurisdictions. Nandal (1995) noted that over 76 per cent of the CWLs are illiterate and the working hours are long and could be up to 14 hours a day. SEWA (2000) concluded that 68 percent of the CWLs work as head loaders; 90 per cent are unskilled labourers, while 10 per cent work as semi-skilled labourers; the average daily wages of the female workers are substantially lower than the male workers. 65 per cent of the women's families had been in construction work for many generations. Most CWLs had issues with low health and safety standards. Priya (2002) noted that CWLs have to combine household work with site work; cover a distance of up to 10 km to get to work site; some have infants and children less than 6 years old; suffer abuse and harassment from co-workers and subcontractors; some of their husbands are alcoholic and wife beaters. Reddy (2003) finds that only 31.13 percent of CWLs expressed no satisfaction about their work and wages; 50 percent are forced to continue as CWLs in order to earn their daily bread; while 18.6 percent are neither happy nor unhappy; and almost all will stop work if their husband could get a permanent job. Nandal (2006) concluded that the problems faced by CWLs in the CNS are job discrimination, low wage rates, lack of payment for holidays, long hours under poor working conditions, lack of sufficient rest and underemployment and a total lack of job security and social security benefits. According to Jhabvala and Sinha, (2006) majority of the Indian women are forced into destitution and labour job out of natural contingencies; or loss of breadwinner or death of husband and unforeseen events such as crop failure or livestock loss through diseases or a general market crash.

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METHODOLOGY

Research Design: the study adopts the survey design using questionnaire. Questionnaire help in getting the required information about a specific problem in a way that the analysis and interpretation of the data will show a better understanding of the problem (Trochim, 2008).

Sampling: Convenience and snowball sampling were used for the study. The convenience sampling is used to survey the CWs on construction sites or at their meeting points. From information obtained from these women, snowball is used to access more women at their residence. Self administered questionnaires were used to get needed information from one hundred and one (101) CWs in their different locations using convenience and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is use when there is no direct access to sufficient people in a study. Convenience and snowball sampling were used because of the unavailability of a register of the CWs in the study area which could have served as the sampling frame for random sampling.

The Study area: Akure is a metropolitan city and administrative capital of Ondo State in southwest Nigeria. The city has a population of about 3.5 million people (NPC, 2006) with a projection of about 1.2 million people added by 2016. Half of this population are however female (NPC, 2006). The people are of the Yoruba ethnic nationality. The study is centered on CWs in Akure metropolis of Ondo state of Nigeria. There are at least nine (9) meeting points of construction workers in Akure metropolis. They include -Oluwatuyi Quarters, Oke Aro, Oke Ijebu, Plaza Junction, Aule, Road Block, Karakata Maronu Junction, Odo -Ikoyi Iso onifufu, Ondo road opposite Agip filling station and Green Park Idanre junction.

Method of Data Collection: The study collected primary data with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with questions on aspects of social and economic characteristics of CWs and was divided into four sections; the first section dwells on the background information, which is to collect data on the general characteristics of the respondents. This includes such questions as the age of the respondent, the academic qualification, location of site, marital status. The second section dwells on the reasons why women go for labourer work. The third section centres on level of participation of women in site works and the fourth dwells on the peculiar challenges faced by WCLs.

Data Analysis: Raw data from field work were processed and thereafter analysed. Descriptive statistical techniques were used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to present quantitative description in a manageable form. It reduces lot of data into simple summaries. It also provides a powerful summary that may enable comparison across people or other units. Descriptive statistics used include frequency and percentages to capture the prevalence of aspects of social and economic conditions of CWs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The age of the majority (62 %) of the CWs range between 25 and 40 years, showing that the women are mainly in their productive age. According to Todaroc (1989) the active labour force in any nation is constituted by people between ages 15-64 years. Majority (73%) of the CWs are either uneducated or just elementary education. A large number of the CWs (62 %) are singles, separated, divorced or widows. In other words, most of the CWs are not married; hence they have to work as labourers to earn a living. For the family history of the CWs, a good number of them are from single parentage (40%), polygamy (19%) and Orphans (8%) as shown on table 1.

Table 1. Background Information

Age	Percent (%)	Education	Percent (%)	Marital	Percent (%)	family type	Percent (%)	No of children	Percent (%)
15-20	3.0	no formal education	32.0	Single	7.0	Polygamy	19.0	None	9.0
20-25	8.0	Primary education	41.0	Married	48.0	single parent	40.0	2	22.0
25-30	26.0	Secondary education	23.0	Divorced	7.0	Monogamy	30.0	4	43.0
30-40	36.0	Drop out	3.0	Widow	19.0	Orphan	8.0	5	15.0
Others	28.0	any other	2.0	Separate	20.0	Others	4.0	6-8	12.0
Total	101.0	Total	101.0	Total	101.0	Total	101.0	Total	101.0

The study shows that 85 percent of the responding CWs are full time labourers. This may be due to the fact that most of them are uneducated and unskilled; hence finding a reputable job is hard in an increasingly competitive Nigerian economy, where even graduate unemployment is frightening. Most CWs have between two and eight children (91%). For the primary reasons for unskilled job, most of the women (86%) claim they have to cater for their children and to get food on the table (10 %).

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Considering the fact that most of the CWLs have no husbands, the most important reason given by the women for engaging in construction labour job is taking care of their children. This is a serious social economic challenge since feeding and educating children are considered expensive in the Nigerian economy. Moreover, for the secondary reason, most of them (64 per cent) claim that they are engaged as CWLs because of the lack of other types of job as shown in table 2. Most of the reasons for the growth of the informal sectors and women construction labourers are global and relate to the collapse of the economy since the 1980s and subsequent adoption of painful economic reform programme in most LDCs (Labeodan, 1992; Faruqee, 1994; Nandal, 1995; SEWA, 2000; Priya, 2002; Reddy, 2003; Aladekomo, 2004; Nandal, 2006; Ishola, 2006; Jhabvala & Sinha, 2006 etc.).

Table 2. Social Factors on women construction workers

Mode of empl	Percent (%)	No of children	Percent (%)	Primary reason	Percent (%)	Secondary reasons	Percent (%)
Fulltime	85.0	None	9.0	children	86.0	lack of sponsor	35.0
part time	15.0	2	22.0	Medical	2.0	lack of job opportunity	64.0
Total	100.0	4	43.0	payment of debt	1.0	Family type	2.0
		5	15.0	house rent	1.0	Total	101.0
		6-8	12.0	Food	11.0		
		Total	101.0	Total	101.0		

Given the fact that construction jobs are not stable (Anumba et al., 2004), most women engage in other trades including agriculture (34%) tailoring (31%) food catering (20%) hair dressing (14%) and weaving (1%) to augment and provide income during construction downtime. For most construction sites surveyed the number of CWLs on site range between 5 and 23 women. This compared closely with construction men labourers which are between 4 and 25 men depending on the nature of work being handled. The number of hours spent per day varies between 5 and 12 hours depending on the nature of work, location of site or number of labourers employed for the work as described in table 3. This is considered to be very stressful (Labeoden, 1992). This agrees with ILO, 2012 and Campbell & Ahmed, 2012, that women dominate the informal sector, characterized by vulnerability in employment status, a low degree of protection, mostly unskilled work, and unstable earnings

Table 3. Activities and participation of construction women

other trades	Percent (%)	No of women labourers	Percent (%)	No men labourers	Percent (%)	hours per day	Percent (%)
Hair dressing	14.0	0-5	12.0	0-4	16.0	5	2.0
Cookery	20.0	6-11	29.0	5-10	9.0	6	2.0
Cloth weaving	1.0	12-17	15.0	16-20	51.0	7	16.0
Tailoring	31.0	18-23	45.0	21-25	24.0	Others	79.0
Agriculture	34.0	Total	101.0	Total	100.0	8	2.0
Total	101.0					Total	101.0

From table 4, the CWLs are by far more involved in concrete work (97 %) they help transport concrete from the mixing point to point of placement (SEWA, 2000). The study shows that 66 percent claim employers or site mangers highly accept women for job. 70 percent claim male co-workers highly accept them on site. 89 percent claim that sexual harassment is rare between co-workers.

Table 4. Activities and social interaction of women workers

aspect involved	Percent (%)	acceptance employer	by	Percent (%)	acceptance by co-workers	Percent (%)	sexual abuse	Percent (%)
Blocklaying	1.0	Highly acceptable		66.0	Highly acceptable	70.0C	None	89.0
Excavation	2.0	Moderately acceptable		35.0	moderately acceptable	31.0	Rape	1.0
concrete work	97.0	Total		101.0	Total	101.0	Extra marrital affair	11.0
Total	101.0						Total	101.0

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Table 5 indicates that all the entire respondents (100%) agree that there are no protective health and safety facilities like helmets, booth, hand gloves, goggle, shoes and safety belts and overall etc. 95 percent insists there are no medical and welfare facilities, including toilets, baths, canteens and no first aid treatment available for them. 86 percent of the respondents claim that the job site are hazardous to the health of women particularly mothers. Virtually all sites have no provision for creche and are therefore not baby friendly. The informalization of the CNS has meant a drastic fall in adherence to regulation and procedure (Wells, 1999).

Table 2. Provision of welfare facilities

provision for safety materials	Percent (%)	medical facilities	Percent (%)	Mother pregnancy	Percent (%)	Crèche	percent
None	100.0	None	95.0	Highly effective	9.0		
		first aid	3.0	moderately effective	34.0		
		Toilet	1.0	not effective	2.0		
		Bathroom	2.0	not allowed on site	55.0		
		Total	100.0	Total	100.0		

The study also indicates that most women (95%) believe the no provision of medical and welfare facilities slow down their pace of work. 85 percent said construction labour causes body pain and fatigue. 59 percent said they face economic difficulties, 30 percent claim they are socially unaccepted in the society and 11percent asserts that the job has no real positive impact on their poverty level due to low wages (see table 6). These findings agree with Labeodan (1992); SEWA (2000); Nandal (2006) and Cambel & Ahmed (2012).

Table 6.Challenges on women construction workers

medical challenges	Percent (%)	Health of labour	Percent (%)	Economic challenges	Percent (%)
slows down the pace of work	76.0	Fatigue	13.0	Poverty	11.0
reduction in work	22.0	Psychological effect	5.0	economic imbalance	59.0
Others	3.0	Pains	83.0	Unacceptability in the society	31.0
Total	101.0	Total	101.0	Total	101.0

Health Safety and Environment (HSE) of labourers does not matter to the NCCs. The NCCs hardly make any provision for welfare facilities including water for drinking and washing, toilets, bathrooms and canteens. Even where any of these facilities are available they are of substandard quality. The NCCs have no facilities for crèches for the children. The CWLs are not eligible to get the maternity benefits since employment is informal. Moreover, NCCs are not ready to compensate employee(s) having injuries and they are not covered by insurance and social security. The WCLs can hardly cater for their up keeps, including feeding, accommodation and school fees of their children. No holiday or leave policy is majority of the NCCs. The conditions of CWLs in Akure, Ondo state are hardly different from what is obtainable in other jurisdiction like (Nandal, 1995, 2006; SEWA, 2000). Most of these findings agree with the ILO (2001) that most countries do face challenges in monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for HSE of construction workers. This is due to a combination of ignorance, low levels of organization among the workers and deliberate negligence by employers. The increasing informal employment and outsourcing of labour in the CNS has had a negative impact on the level of social protection of construction workers. There is evidence from many countries that employers do not pay into social security funds for workers who are on temporary contracts. Construction however remains one of the most dangerous occupations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn: the welfare of CWLs is very poor, in terms of their safety, health and holidays etc. The work is characterised by women with no education or at best primary school and have got many children. Most of the CWLs are poor, single parent or with weak, absent or uncaring husband and thus have to provide for the upkeep of their children. To ameliorate the situation, the study recommends that: There should be a standard scale for the wage of laborers; there should be welfare facilities and amenities on sites. there should a drastic change in Health and Safety and Environment

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(HSE) policy of NCCs ,there is need for protection and medication for laborers on site ; there is need for education and skill development; there is need for some form of social security for the informal sector especially CWLs; furthermore free education in form of scholarship should be awarded to the poor and vulnerable children; government should organise poverty alleviation programmes and give out short term loan to women for personal businesses or entrepreneurship; free health care services should be given to women generally because of hazards exposed to; the aged should also be catered for as it was discovered from research that women up to 60 years and above are involved in unskilled construction work.

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