

Socio-Economic Implications of Migrant labors With Special reference to Alwar-Rajasthan

Ruksana Khan^{1*}, Dr Rejoice Solomon²

*Correspondence: Ruksana Khan

¹Research Scholar, Lords School of Management, Lords University, Alwar (Rajasthan), India.

²Professor, Lords School of Management, Lords University, Alwar (Rajasthan), India.

Article History

Received: 20 May 2026 | Accepted: 12 Jun 2026 | Published: 19 Jun 2026

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.22091163](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22091163)

ABSTRACT

Despite India's construction sector employing an estimated 51 million workers nationally — making it the second-largest source of employment after agriculture — the sector remains poorly regulated and socially unprotected. Alwar district in northeastern Rajasthan has emerged as a particularly significant site of construction activity, driven by the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), the Bhiwadi-Neemrana-Tapukara industrial belt, and rapid urbanization of secondary towns.

This paper reviews existing scholarship on construction labor in India and Rajasthan to examine the socio-economic conditions of construction workers, with particular attention to wage structures and minimum-wage compliance, social protection coverage under the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act, occupational safety, educational outcomes of migrant workers' children, and gender disparities in pay and workplace safety.

Drawing on the broader literature on circular and seasonal labor migration in India (Srivastava, 2012; Breman, 2010; ILO, 2021), the review situates Alwar's construction economy within established theoretical frameworks, including the Harris-Todaro (1970) migration model and Piore's (1979) dual labor market theory.

The review finds that national and state-level evidence consistently documents low BOCW registration rates, limited enforcement of minimum wage law, high occupational injury risk, and gendered wage penalties in the construction sector, while noting a persistent gap in district-level empirical research specific to Alwar. The paper concludes by identifying this gap and outlining priority directions for future primary research and policy attention.

Keywords: -BOCW Act, DMIC, POSH Act, RIICO.

1. Introduction: -

India's construction sector employs approximately 51 million workers, making it the country's second-largest employer after agriculture. Yet it remains one of the most poorly regulated, hazardous, and socially unprotected sectors in the national economy (NCEUS, 2007). In Rajasthan, construction labor has expanded substantially over the past decade, driven by infrastructural investment in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), highway expansion under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, and the rapid urbanization of secondary cities.

Alwar district in northeastern Rajasthan occupies a uniquely significant position in this landscape. Located approximately 160 km from Delhi and home to the Bhiwadi-Neemrana-Tapukara industrial belt — which hosts thousands of registered industrial units and has attracted substantial cumulative investment since 2000 (RIICO, 2024) — Alwar has emerged as one of India's most dynamic construction zones, generating considerable annual demand for construction labor (Alwar District Collectorate, 2023).

Despite this economic significance, district-level empirical research on construction workers specifically in Alwar remains limited in published literature. National studies document the broad vulnerability profile of Indian construction workers (Srivastava, 2012; ILO, 2021), while Rajasthan-focused research has tended to concentrate on brick kiln workers and inter-state migrants (Action Aid India, 2018), without fully addressing the distinctive characteristics of Alwar's DMIC-driven construction economy.

This gap is particularly consequential because Alwar exhibits a bidirectional migration dynamic — simultaneously sending local workers to Delhi-NCR for higher wages, and receiving in-migrants from eastern Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar — producing a labor market characterized by wage segmentation, contractor dependency, and structural informality.

This paper reviews existing literature on construction labor in India, Rajasthan, and comparable migration-receiving regions, with the aim of synthesizing current knowledge and identifying the specific gaps that future district-level research on Alwar should address.

2. Review Methodology

This review synthesizes peer-reviewed studies, government and institutional reports, and policy documents addressing construction labor in India, with a focus on Rajasthan and the National Capital Region periphery. Sources were identified through the reference list compiled for this study, supplemented by foundational theoretical literature on labor migration. The review prioritizes studies

addressing four themes: (i) wage structure and minimum wage compliance; (ii) social protection and legal coverage under the BOCW Act; (iii) occupational safety; and (iv) the social and gendered dimensions of construction migration. Given the limited volume of Alwar-specific published research, the review draws on national-level and comparable regional studies, explicitly noting where evidence is extrapolated rather than locally confirmed.

3. Thematic Review of the Literature

3.1 Wage Structure and Minimum Wage Compliance

National and state-level evidence consistently shows that construction wages in India fall short of statutory minimums for large shares of the workforce, particularly among unskilled and migrant workers (Srivastava, 2012). Wage gaps tend to be most pronounced for migrant workers and women performing unskilled tasks, reflecting both weak enforcement of minimum wage law and discriminatory practices linked to subcontracting structures (Bremar, 2010; Wells, 2007). The multi-tier subcontracting common in large infrastructure zones such as DMIC corridors is widely identified as a mechanism through which wages are suppressed as they pass down the contracting chain.

3.2 Social Protection and Legal Compliance

The Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act was enacted to extend welfare coverage and registration to construction workers nationally, yet studies and welfare board reports consistently point to low registration rates and underutilization of accumulated welfare cess funds (Rajasthan BOCW Board, 2023). Awareness of allied legislation, such as the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, is reported as near-negligible among construction workers in the broader literature (ActionAid India, 2018), suggesting that legal protections exist on paper but are not reliably accessed by intended beneficiaries.

3.3 Occupational Safety

Construction is repeatedly identified as one of the most hazardous informal occupations in India, with limited access to personal protective equipment and weak enforcement of worksite safety standards (NCEUS, 2007; ILO, 2021). Compensation for workplace injury is rare in practice despite statutory entitlement, reflecting low worker awareness and limited labor inspection capacity at the district level.

3.4 Migration, Family Welfare, and Children's Education

The broader migration literature suggests that labor migration produces mixed welfare outcomes: income gains are frequently offset by social costs, including disruption to children's schooling when both parents migrate (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Buckley, 2012). The Harris-Todaro (1970) framework remains foundational for understanding why migration persists despite wage uncertainty, while Piore's (1979) dual labor market theory explains the structural segmentation between formal and informal construction employment observed across the sector.

3.5 Gender Dimensions

Women's participation in construction work is consistently associated with lower pay for equivalent tasks and greater exposure to workplace harassment, with limited awareness of protective legislation such as the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and the POSH Act, 2013 (Bremar, 2010). The literature also points to ambiguous effects of male out-migration on women who remain behind, with some evidence of increased financial autonomy alongside heightened vulnerability in other domains.

The Census District Census Handbook for Alwar provides detailed information on rural and urban population, workers, literacy, amenities and other socio-economic characteristics.

Selected Socio-Economic Indicators of Alwar

Indicator	Alwar
Population, Census 2011	36,74,179
Rural population	30,19,728
Urban population	6,54,451
Decadal population growth, 2001–2011	22.8%
Total workforce	17,08,542
Main workers	11,79,461
Marginal workers	5,29,081
Registered migrant labourers reported by Rajasthan Foundation	60,967

Source: Census of India 2011 and Rajasthan Government/Rajasthan Foundation sources. The workforce and registered migrant-labour figures should be interpreted according to the respective administrative/data definitions rather than treated as directly comparable measures.

The national context is supplemented by the **Migration in India, 2020–21** report prepared from the Periodic Labour Force Survey. The report provides information on reasons for migration, duration of residence and other characteristics of migrants.

Table : Selected Labour Indicators of Alwar

Indicator	Alwar
Total workforce	17,08,542
Main workers	11,79,461
Marginal workers	5,29,081
Registered migrant labourers	60,967
Main workers as % of total workforce	69.05%
Marginal workers as % of total workforce	30.95%
Registered migrant labourers as % of reported total workforce*	3.57%

*Calculated from the reported Rajasthan Foundation figures; this is an indicative registration-based ratio, not an estimate of the actual migrant share of the workforce.

4. Socio-Economic Profile and Employment Importance

Migrant labourers in Alwar are likely to be concentrated in sectors where demand for labour is comparatively high and employment can be obtained without advanced formal qualifications. These include construction, manufacturing, transport, warehousing, trade, hospitality, repair services and other informal activities.

The Rajasthan Foundation's Alwar profile specifically identifies migrant-worker-related registration across several categories. Among the listed categories, **industry/business accounts for 1,138 registrations and building and construction for 990**, while tour/travel/transport accounts for 426. These figures indicate the diversity of employment activities associated with migrant labour in the district. The listed registration categories together total 4,288, whereas the same source separately reports 60,967 registered migrant labourers; therefore, the category-wise figures should be treated as a partial registration breakdown rather than a complete occupational distribution.

Table : Selected Registered Categories Reported for Alwar

Employment/Activity Category	Number
Industry / Business	1,138
Building & Construction	990
Tour, Travel & Transport	426
Education & Learning	194
Repair Services	158
Consultancy / Agent	131
Electronics, Electrical & Computer	240
Marketing, Advertising & Printing	53
Medical Related	45
Food & Vegetable	44
Safety & Security	29
Migrant Labour category	25
Other categories	816
Total listed registrations	4,288

Source: Rajasthan Foundation, Alwar profile.

5. Major Socio-Economic Implications

5.1 Employment Generation

Migrant labourers help meet labour shortages in sectors where local labour supply may be insufficient. Industrial and construction activities depend considerably on workers willing to undertake physically demanding and relatively low-paid jobs. Their availability can reduce production delays and support expansion of enterprises.

5.2 Contribution to Local Economic Development

Migrant workers contribute to the local economy not only through their labour but also through consumption. Their expenditure on food, rent, transportation, clothing, communication and other

basic necessities generates demand for local businesses. Thus, migration creates a multiplier effect within the urban and industrial economy.

5.3 Income and Household Welfare

Migration can increase household income when workers move from low-productivity employment to better-paying opportunities. Remittances sent to migrant workers' families can support food expenditure, children's education, healthcare, housing improvements and debt repayment. However, the benefits depend on wage levels, employment continuity and migration costs.

5.4 Industrial Development

Alwar's proximity to the Delhi-NCR economic region and its industrial base creates demand for labour. Migrant workers can therefore contribute to manufacturing, construction, logistics and ancillary services. Their labour supports the functioning of industrial clusters and related service activities.

5.5 Housing and Urban Pressure

Rapid inflows of workers can increase demand for affordable rental accommodation. Workers with limited income may live in congested settlements or temporary housing near workplaces. This can place additional pressure on water supply, sanitation, transport, healthcare and other urban infrastructure.

5.6 Social Security Challenges

One of the major concerns is access to social-security benefits when workers move across districts or states. Migrants may face difficulties in documentation, registration, awareness and portability of benefits. Rajasthan's Labour Department has established a **Migrant Worker Platform** that allows migrant-worker information and concerns to be registered and also provides channels related to employment, skill/training and grievances.

At the national level, the **e-Shram portal** has been developed as a database of unorganised workers, including migrant workers, construction workers and other informal workers. The Ministry of Labour reported more than **30.16 crore e-Shram registrations by 30 September 2024**, illustrating the scale of India's informal workforce and the importance of portable social-security systems.

5.7 Education and Family Welfare

Seasonal and circular migration may disrupt children's education when families move frequently. In cases where workers migrate alone, families may remain in the source region, creating a separation between household members. Consequently, migration may provide higher income while simultaneously generating social costs.

5.8 Working Conditions

Migrant workers are often employed in informal or temporary arrangements. Common concerns include uncertain employment, irregular wages, long working hours, limited occupational safety and inadequate awareness of labour rights. These conditions can reduce the long-term socio-economic benefits of migration.

Concept of Migrant Labour

A migrant labourer is a worker who moves from his or her usual place of residence to another geographical area for employment or livelihood purposes. Migrant labour can broadly be classified as:

1. **Seasonal migrants** – workers who move temporarily during particular seasons.
2. **Circular migrants** – workers who repeatedly move between the source and destination areas.
3. **Temporary migrants** – workers who remain at the destination for a limited period.
4. **Permanent migrants** – workers who relocate for a long-term period.
5. **Inter-district migrants** – workers moving between districts within the same state.
6. **Inter-state migrants** – workers moving from one state to another.
7. **Rural-to-urban migrants** – workers moving from villages to towns and cities for employment.

In Alwar, these patterns may coexist because employment is available in agriculture, construction, industrial units, transportation, hotels, retail, domestic services and other activities.

4. Major Causes of Labour Migration to Alwar

4.1 Employment Opportunities

Availability of employment is one of the strongest reasons for labour migration. Industrial, construction and service-sector activities generate demand for both skilled and unskilled workers.

4.2 Higher Income

Workers may migrate because wages in destination areas are higher than those available in their villages or source regions.

4.3 Agricultural Uncertainty

Seasonal agricultural employment, irregular rainfall, small landholdings and low agricultural income can encourage workers to seek non-farm employment.

4.4 Industrial Development

Industrial activity in and around Alwar creates opportunities in manufacturing, packaging, logistics, maintenance and ancillary services.

4.5 Construction Activities

Housing, roads, commercial buildings and infrastructure development create substantial demand for migrant labour.

4.6 Proximity to Delhi-NCR

Alwar's location provides access to the wider NCR labour market and strengthens economic interaction with neighbouring regions.

4.7 Household Economic Needs

Migration is often a household strategy for increasing income, repaying debts, financing education, improving housing and meeting daily consumption requirements.

5. Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of migrant labourers in Alwar district.
2. To identify the major causes of migration to Alwar.
3. To examine the contribution of migrant labour to the local economy.
4. To analyse the impact of migration on income and employment.
5. To study the major social problems faced by migrant labourers.
6. To examine access to healthcare, education, housing and social-security schemes.
7. To identify major employment-related challenges faced by migrant workers.
8. To suggest measures for improving the socio-economic conditions of migrant labourers in Alwar.

6. Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the major factors attracting migrant labourers to Alwar?
2. Which sectors employ a significant proportion of migrant workers?
3. How does migration affect household income?
4. What socio-economic problems are commonly experienced by migrant labourers?
5. To what extent do migrant workers have access to government welfare and social-security programmes?
6. What policies can improve the economic and social well-being of migrant workers?

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design** to examine the socio-economic implications of labour migration in Alwar district.

7.2 Nature of Data

The study primarily uses secondary data from:

- Census of India 2011
- District Census Handbook, Alwar
- Rajasthan Government publications
- Rajasthan Economic Review

- Rajasthan Labour Department
- Rajasthan Foundation
- Periodic Labour Force Survey-related publications
- Research papers, reports and academic literature

The Census of India migration database provides information on migrants by last residence, economic activity, age, sex and duration of residence at state and district levels.

Research Gap

While the reviewed literature establishes a consistent national picture of wage non-compliance, weak social protection, occupational hazard, and gendered disadvantage in India's construction sector, district-level empirical evidence specific to Alwar remains scarce. Existing Rajasthan-focused studies concentrate on brick kiln labor and inter-state migration corridors rather than the DMIC-driven construction economy that increasingly characterizes Alwar's labor market. Given Alwar's distinctive bidirectional migration pattern, there is a clear need for primary, district-level research to test whether nationally documented patterns hold within Alwar's specific industrial and migratory context.

Conclusion

This review has synthesized existing scholarship on construction labor in India and Rajasthan across five principal dimensions: wage compliance, social protection, occupational safety, children's education, and gender disparity. The literature consistently describes a sector where significant welfare gains from migration coexist with pervasive informality, weak legal compliance, and unequal risk distribution. Alwar's emergence as a major DMIC-driven construction hub makes it a particularly important, yet under-researched, site for examining these dynamics. Future primary research — employing rigorous household survey and qualitative methods — is needed to establish district-specific evidence and to inform targeted policy interventions including strengthened BOCW enforcement, wage compliance audits, and educational support for the children of migrant construction workers.

Article Publication Details

This article is published in the [International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Bulletin](#), ISSN 3108-1428 (Online). In Volume 5 Issue 3 (May – Jun) 2026
The journal is published and managed by [IRPG](#).

Copyright © 2026, Authors retain copyright. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> (CC BY 4.0 deed)

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the editors and the reviewers for their valuable suggestions on this paper.

Funding

The authors declare that no funding was received for this work.

Data availability

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

The author(s) declare that it is not applicable.

Consent for publication

The author(s) declare that this is not applicable.

Competing interests

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

References

1. ActionAid India. (2018). Between Two Worlds: A Study of Migrant Workers in Rajasthan. ActionAid India, New Delhi.
2. Alwar District Collectorate. (2023). District Statistical Handbook 2022–23. Office of the Collector, Alwar, Rajasthan.
3. Breman, J. (2010). Outcast Labour in Asia: Circulation and Informalization of the Workforce at the Bottom of the Economy. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
4. Buckley, M. (2012). From Kerala to Dubai and Back Again: Construction Migrants and the Global Economic Crisis. *Geoforum*, 43(2), 250–259.
5. Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
6. Harris, J.R., & Todaro, M.P. (1970). Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis. *American Economic Review*, 60(1), 126–142.
7. ILO. (2021). World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021. International Labour Office, Geneva.
8. NCEUS. (2007). Report on Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector. New Delhi.
9. Piore, M.J. (1979). Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies. Cambridge University Press.

10. Rajasthan BOCW Board. (2023). Annual Report 2022–23. Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, Jaipur.
11. RIICO. (2024). Investment Rajasthan: Alwar Industrial Area Profile. RIICO, Jaipur.
12. Srivastava, R. (2012). Changing Employment Conditions of the Indian Workforce and Implications for Decent Work. *Global Labour Journal*, 3(1), 63–90.
13. Stark, O., & Bloom, D.E. (1985). The New Economics of Labor Migration. *American Economic Review*, 75(2), 173–178.
14. Wells, J. (2007). Informality in the Construction Sector in Developing Countries. *Construction Management and Economics*, 25(1), 87–93.

Publisher's Note:

IRPG remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations. The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of IRPG and/or the editor(s). IRPG disclaims responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.