

REPORT ON  
WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS  
OF WORKERS IN BIDI INDUSTRY

(Reference period: October, 1978)  
(Survey period: Nov. 78 to Feb. 79)

LABOUR BUREAU  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH



is one of the most important labour industries in the unorganised segment of the industrial sector in our country. As this is an industry where production can be carried on without the aid of machines, a considerable proportion of the working force is employed in the house-hold sector. According to the results of the 1971 census, about 60 per cent of the total number of persons working in this industry were employed in the house-hold sector.

Unlike the workers in the organised sector of industry, those in the unorganised sector are not assured of statutory protection in several matters relating to their working conditions. Before the enactment of the Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966, Bidi units were covered by the Factories Act, 1948. However, in view of the small size of employment, a large number of units in Bidi industry remained outside the ambit of the Factories Act. This problem was, of course, overcome by the enactment of the Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966. Unfortunately, the validity of this Act was challenged in the Court and even after the Act was finally upheld by the Supreme Court in 1974, the process of registration of Bidi units in the country under this Act remained tardy.

The National Commission on Labour, which, inter-alia, examined the limitations of labour statistics in the country, recommended that comprehensive surveys on the working conditions of different categories of unorganised labour should be undertaken for the collection of data necessary for the formulation of suitable ameliorative measures. Accordingly, the Labour Bureau was asked to conduct surveys on the working and living conditions of workers in selected industries in the un-organised sector

like Building and Construction Industry, Jari Industry, Matches and Fireworks Industry and Bidi Industry. Since Bidi was one of the industries being covered in the fourth phase (1977-79) of the Third Occupational Wage Survey, it was decided to canvass the schedule of the Working and Living Conditions Survey along with the schedule for the Occupational Wage Survey. Though, this Report presents the results of the survey of working and living conditions in Bidi industry, important occupational data relating to wage rates and earnings collected during the occupational wage survey have also been included.

Owing to the slow progress of registration of Bidi units under the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, a complete and reliable frame of Bidi establishments in the country was not available. It was decided, therefore, to conduct this survey within the municipal limits of 20 important Bidi manufacturing centres, spread over 13 states in the country. The details relating to the selection of establishments/workers in these centres are given in Chapter-I of this Report. With a view to finalising the schedule, a pilot survey was also conducted. A specimen of the Schedule canvassed during the survey appears at the end of this Report (Appendix-I). The field work of the main survey commenced in Nov. 1978 and ended in Feb. 1979. Information relating to the size and composition of the work force, housing, income, expenditure and consumption pattern, indebtedness, absenteeism, welfare and medical facilities, social security, etc. was collected during the survey.

I take this opportunity to express the Bureau's deep sense of gratitude to the various Employers' and Employees' Associations, particularly, the All-India Bidi Industry Federation and the officials in the State Labour Departments, but for whose help the conduct of the survey

would not have been possible. The responsibility for the planning and conduct of this survey was borne by Shri J.N. Agrawal, Deputy Director (since transferred to the Rural Electrification Corporation) with the assistance of Shri R.K. Goyal, Assistant Director. The field work, involving visits to the houses of the sampled workers scattered over the length and breadth of the country, was ably performed by the team consisting of S/Shri B.C. Bhardwaj, J.L. Chakrayarti, V.S. Sondhi, N. Velayudhan, B.C. Gupta, H.K. Rawat, Mohan Lal, O.P. Oberoi, T.L. Kalyan, A.C. Katoch, Manohar Lal, S.K. Thakurela, Ramji Lal, Rajesh Thakur, Basant Lal, Govind Ram, J.S. Arneja, S.N. Ananthwal, all Investigators Grade-II, under the guidance of S/Shri A.S. Ahluwalia and A.K. Johari both Investigators Grade-I, (now Assistant Directors) and S/Shri Herwant Singh and V.M. Shabi, Investigators Grade-I. The manual tabulation of the data was done by the team comprising S/Shri Vipati Ram, Investigator Grade-I, Mrs. Asha Pant and S/Shri P.N. Vijayan, V.S. Sondhi, J.S. Arneja and Rakesh Verma, Investigators Grade-II and S/Shri S.P. Dhawan, M.M. Vats and H.K. Sharma, Computers, under the guidance of Shri A.S. Ahluwalia, Asstt. Director. Shri Ahluwalia also drafted the Report which was finalised by Shri M.M. Nampoothiry, Deputy Director, with the assistance of Shri P.D. Gupta, Assistant Director. To all these persons my thanks are due.

Views, if any, expressed in this Report are not necessarily those of Ministry of Labour, Government of India.

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Dated: October 16, 1981.



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