

Vulnerabilities and Insecurities – A look out for alternatives for the *adda coolies* in Hyderabad

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Informal employment is tenacious aspect in Indian labour market. Nearly 90% of workforce are involved to be working in informal sector. Over the years, there has also been increase in informal employment in organized sector enterprises. There has been wide literature on arguments and debates on nature of informal employment and the pattern of informalisation. The literature in recent decade has also been focusing on urban informal sector activities and its precariousness. However, there are no established studies concerning the labour *addas*, also called as spot labour markets in urban areas, who occupy a significant position in labour market. In this paper, I would want to put forward a case of urban spot labour markets within the realm of urban informal sector. Their nature of insecure employment and vulnerable work environment will be first examined, and then, it will argued what can be socially and economically just alternatives with regard to their workspaces within the limitations, by which the precariousness can be controlled.

The urban spot labour markets are place where workers gather in a road junction to find work for the day. Intermediaries or contractor might come to pick them up for a day's work. However, it is quite uncertain for these workers to find a job every day and hence most of the days they might end up without any wage work. Most of them end up securing work only two to three days a week². The work they mostly end up doing includes in construction sector, helpers and cleaners, and heavy load carriers et cetera. Women in particular face several challenges, often having men preferred than them by the employer as the former being considered as skillful, existence of wage difference between both genders and also security issues to work with employer alone. Now, the question comes how to address these several work insecurities and vulnerabilities? What can be done right to avoid such susceptible situations?

Workers in these spot labour markets are migrants from nearby rural areas. The waning opportunities in rural side might have forced them to migrate. Urban spaces always gives them a hope to find handful opportunities to survive. These workers face several challenges such as having no minimum wage to determine and hence bargaining with employers for a much lower wage; no fixed number of working hours; no redressal mechanism in case of any accidents or if employer skips paying the wages; insecurities and uncertainty related to finding work every day et cetera. In this paper,

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² According to fieldwork data in the city of Hyderabad

forming a self-administrative mechanism (which is self-organized) will be proposed in order to look into needs and redressal mechanisms necessary for these workers to have decent life.

With the new and growing demands from capital growing on the lines of capitalist production, there has been huge need for workers who can work for securing unending profits. Formal sector jobs have always been tough to grab for the majority of poor because of lack of skills and absence of education background has been serving as an obstacle and hence informal sector has an easy entry. These workers from lower echelons of the society have no other go than depend on the unorganized sector for their survival. Working as casual or daily wage labourers, they serve the needs of whimsical demands of the global capital at their own expense.

This paper will be written with the help of primary data, which includes personal interviews conducted with the workers in spot labour markets within the city of Hyderabad. Specific case studies will also be used when necessary in order to validate the arguments. Their arguments will be considered to build up this paper along with referring critical literature revolving around this area.

Key words: Daily wage workers, Informal sector, Labour *addas*, Neoliberalism, Spot labour market