

Adolescent Social Networks & Sexual Practices

Wassie Kebede

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EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CONDITION OF WORK OF BUILDING SKILLED
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN AYAT AREAS OF ADDIS ABABA

GOJJAM BOGALE

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PRINCIPAL ADVISOR
PROFESSOR ALICE. K BUTTERFIELD (PHD)

CO-ADVISOR
WASSIE KEBEDE (PHD CANDIDATE)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
ILO	International Labor Organization
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
UN	United Nation
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

In the world of work, the wellbeing of the workers depends on the working environment they are engaged in, appropriate labor relations, the income they generate, compensation at the time of accidents and their ability to manage or insure work related risks. This research explores the condition of work of skilled building construction workers in the Ayat area of Addis Ababa. The study employs exploratory research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Face- to- face interviews with 50 construction workers and in-depth interviews with 4 key informants were conducted to collect the data. On the spot interviews were used to access the participants. The findings revealed that condition of work of construction workers is poor due to the poor employment relationships and the lack of safety measures. Lack of written agreements, absence of compensation for employment injuries, and poor payment coupled with inadequate employment opportunity, inadequate skill and training and the temporary nature of work makes the employment relationship very challenging. Delay of salary, denying overtime payment, and wage differences for men and women are the major problems workers encounter. Findings also show that there are no safety measures taken and workers are not protected from health hazards. Understanding the working conditions of workers and ensuring proper employment relations is important to maintain good labor practice in the industry. The study would also imply that the safety of workers has to be given priority to promote workers wellbeing in the industry.

Key Words: Construction Work, skilled Labor, Health Hazard, Occupational Safety, Social Capital,

Employment Relationship

1. INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Study

The study has six chapters. The first chapter is the overview. The second chapter consists of the literature review and conceptual framework. The research design in the third chapter focuses, discussion of methods, participant selection procedures, data collection instruments and analysis techniques. The fourth chapter presents and interprets the findings. The fifth chapter is discussion and analysis. The study concludes with implications to social work and further research.

Background of the Study

In Ethiopia, with its recent urbanization, the construction industry is on the rise, particularly in large cities. One of the main drivers is the acute shortage of housing in the cities resulting from urban population growth. This promoted the government to launch a program of building condominium houses in the cities. The second key driver is the industrial policy which focuses on regional and national industry development (Industrial Policy of Ethiopia, 2007). The construction sector is becoming a main source of employment.

The construction work generates opportunity and contributes to growth in the national GDP. The Central Statistics Authority's report on the Distribution of Employed Urban Population by Major Industrial Divisions states, "Construction industry comprises (6%) of the employed population and (8%) contribution for GDP" (CSA, 2006, p.26). The question remains as to the condition of work for employees in the sector.

The Ethiopian construction sector constitutes, all work related to design, construction and maintenance of roads, airports, bridges, irrigation systems, and dams, commercial and residential buildings (GebreMichael, 2002). To accomplish all these tasks, large numbers of construction

Statement of the Problem

Wages, working time, work organization; adaptation to the demands of life outside and inside work, and working conditions are core elements of employment relationships and of workers' protection (Frye, 2005). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2001, p.11), decent work is defined as:

The aspiration of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men

Decent work means productive work in which rights are protected and an adequate income with adequate social protection. It also refers to a situation that promotes opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work in the condition of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. Siddiqui (2002, p. 2) also states:

Employment is generally seen as the means of sustaining life and of meeting basic human needs. But it is also an activity, through which an individual affirms their own identity, receives satisfaction and makes the fullest development of their potentials and skills, thereby making great contributions to common well-being. Therefore, employment is not to be seen only as the access to any job, rather access to full job of acceptable quality, productive in nature and freely chosen.

The above definitions show that employment is more than getting money. Employment also goes with the basic rights to work and a healthy work environment for every worker. Conventionally, work has also been seen as the pathway to economic and social security. However, the lack of appropriate work related securities leads to work as the main source of risk and vulnerability for some categories of workers who are employed informally (Lund & Ardington, 2006).

Construction is one of the industries in which the rights of workers are not protected and the sector is not viewed positively by workers (Wells, 2004; ILO, 2004). First, the vast majority of construction laborers have always been informally employed without contractual agreements which lead to insecurity (ILO, 2001). The previous studies further explained that in the African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Tanzania, most of the construction labor force is engaged through subcontractors and other intermediaries. In Ethiopia, empirical data is lacking about the situation or magnitude of the problem of workers in the construction industry. Only few documents discuss the situation of construction work and what would be the next step to develop standard for the industry compared to its quality in developed countries (Construction Sector Capacity Building Program, 2002). For effective prevention and protection of workers from any type of contingencies, however, studies should first focus on the situation of workers in their work environment in the countries like Ethiopia where the labor force studies are minimal.

The exploratory interview with construction workers and government personnel on the occupational health and safety and employment relationships of construction work indicted that most employers avoid issuing written contracts with workers and registering them with relevant authorities. The terms and conditions of employment are not regulated in any way, and hence workers have no legal protection against dismissal, and no health and social protection against

sickness. There are no employment benefits like sick leave, or injury compensation (Exploratory Interview with Key informant 'B', November, 2008). Second, in the developed countries and some developing countries like, India, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, to secure workers safety in the construction industry, the issue of construction workers is recognized through legal frameworks and various national and international safety standards (SEWA, 2000; Mitullah & Wachira 2003; ILO, 2005). Developing occupational safety and health policies, construction policies, insure safety standards and establish inspecting institutions or agencies are some of the measures taken.

In Ethiopia, both national and international organizations like Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ethiopian Workers Confederation, and International Labor Organization (ILO) oversee the situation of construction workers for policy influence. An exploratory interview, however, indicates that the condition of work in areas such as employment relationship and occupational health and safety issues are poor. This is due to lack of professional inspection, lack of collaborative work between the organizations and lack of concern of the government on safety issues, which is supported by lack of policy on occupational safety and health in the country. This is what the researcher shares and convinced on the necessity of the studies pertaining to the situation of workers in the construction industries in Ethiopia.

Kanter (1977) suggests that the fate of both men and women is inextricably bound up with workplace structures and processes. Research has also demonstrated that workers' occupational contexts influence family functioning (Grimm & Perry, 1994; O'Neil & Greenberger, 1994; Hughes, Galinsky & Morris, 1992). However, empirical studies are lacking on the working conditions of construction workers in Ethiopia. This problem is seen as a gap in the existing literature. Exploring the condition of work of construction workers is a key step to show what

facing and forwarding ideas that would insure their wellbeing for policy matters. Thus, understanding the employment relations and health and safety of workers from the perspective of government personnel, and the immediate supervisors (employers) is the main rationale of this study.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore and understand the condition of work among building construction skilled workers in Addis Ababa. The study specifically focuses on understanding employment relationships, occupational health and safety issues. The arguments in the study are also rest on the issue of extending social security benefits of workers as a fundamental right for security. Perhaps these are the most important issues to be understood. The study also aims to explore the coping mechanisms of workers to assess how workers survive and risk work related problems without social and health benefits. Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions

The main question guiding this research is: What are the conditions of work of building construction skilled workers at Ayat and surrounding sites of Addis Ababa? This study also answers the following research questions:

1. What are the employment relations of building construction skilled workers at Ayat and surrounding sites?
2. How the workers health and safety conditions are being secured in Ayat and surrounding building construction sites?
3. What coping mechanisms do building construction workers are using to manage their work related risks?

4. What are the views of the government personnel or experts on the condition of work in the Ethiopian construction industry?

Significance of the Study

Research identifies the existing problems and can become a base for action. Therefore, understanding the condition of work of construction workers is important for the development of comprehensive policies or programs regarding the wellbeing of workers in the construction sector. First, the study recognizes the various issues of condition of work at construction work. The findings of this study might provide important information for promoting good labor practice in the construction industry. Findings might be used to inform policymakers in formulating new laws regulating employment relationships and securing safety and health in the construction industry. The information obtained from this study is also useful for the government offices who work to ensure the welfare of workers in the industry.

Second, the study gives ground in knowledge building on work, workers and work environment in Ethiopian situation. Within this insight, the study might give a valuable input for further research on labor practice in the construction industry and opens the door for the future directions of the existing studies to wards working environment in Ethiopia. Third, this research influences the practitioners, policy makers and organizations that have direct linkage with workers and working environment in general and in construction industry in particular. This paves the way for understanding the situation of workers and the information contributes to develop prevention and intervention policies and programs.

Limitation of the Study

The construction sector is large and dynamic; a very small survey covering a single area within urban center obviously has limitations. The condition of work is vast issue. This exploratory study limits itself to one area of Addis Ababa (Ayat construction area) and cannot be generalized to all of Addis Ababa or the Ethiopian construction industry. More over, this study limits itself to building construction workers only. Future, more comprehensive research is proposed to comprehend the work dynamics of construction work, safety and health and worker-employer relations at all construction enterprises for policy influence.

Operational Definitions

- **Condition of Work:** The entire relationships between workers and employers, including safety and health at work.
- **Employment Relationships:** All aspects of worker-employer relationships such as hours of work wage, leave, payments due to dismissal, compensation to victims of employment injures and any other similar matters.
- **Skilled Workers:** Workers who have gained skill informally through experience such as carpenters, painters, builders, plumbers, roofers, metal installation workers and so on.
- **Health Security:** Occupational health and safety issues of employment injury and compensation or accident management systems to maintain the health of workers
- **Risk Management Mechanisms:** Workers strategies which help them in time of contingencies at work.
- **Safety at Work:** Precautions at work including worker knowledge about safety and health issues, delivery of protective equipment, health insurance, compensation of injury due to employment and so on.

- Health Risks: The health hazards due to unsafe construction work conditions.
- Occupational injuries: Any personal injury, disease or death resulting from an occupational accident while workers are working on construction.
- Daily Labor Corners: Informal public gathering places such as street corners, parks, and parking lots where workers congregate to wait for employers to drive by and offer them work for the day.
- Sub-contractors. : Individuals hired by contractors to supply labor on a temporary basis.
- Security at work: It refers to the overall health and safety at work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Labor Force in Africa

Labor force studies are more developed in the Western world than in Africa (Bivens, Gammage, & Avirgan, 2005). Advances in the protection of workers through setting rules and the prevention of workers from employment insecurities and identifying the unsafe industries and minimize occupational health hazards are also concentrated in the Western world. However, workers are remaining insecure in every part of the world (Umesh, & Sabina, 2003). The report of ILO (2006) on employment states that worldwide, millions of workers are losing access to their rights to social benefits such as retirement provision, maternity benefits, compensation for work-related accidents and diseases through the workplace, or never gain the kind of jobs that will get them such benefits.

African workers are no exception. They are exposed to various forms of insecurities. The study on Globalization and Social Security in Low Income Countries showed that the majority of workers are excluded from formal social security and protection systems offered by the governments (Haeseleer & Beghman, 2003). The study further explained that in poorer developing countries, the work environment is hazardous and precarious, with little regulation of safety and very little social protection.

Another study on realizing the Potential of Labor Force in Africa, Barriers and Opportunities states: "due to massive unemployment and surplus of labor, many of the commonly used labor market concepts such as job, employment, union participation, wage and earnings are difficult to apply in Africa" (Fox, Betcherman, Chandra, Eifert, & Adams, 2004 .p.3). Wage employment in the African labor force is also a rare phenomenon as majority of

workers are engaged in demanding but unproductive work (Bivens, Gammage, & Avirgan, 2005).

As Bivens, Gammage and Avirgan (2005) stated, employment for the majority of workers in Africa is often characterized by poor working conditions, both in terms of remuneration and the existence and/or enforcement of basic labor standards. Therefore, improving the economic position of these workers is thus a powerful potential lever for raising living standards and reducing poverty in the developing world including Africa. ILO's (2006, p.3) report on Employment in Africa also states:

Across the continent, workers are denied what used to be entitlements through work; poor conditions of work are associated with poor health and lowered incomes; and there is cross-generational transmission of poverty from the present generation of working people to the next.

Similarly, the findings of the study on rural Kenya and Botswana also confirm that the provision of low wage menial employment through public work schemes is targeting the working poor especially in rural areas (Tesfaye & Sisay, 1999). The study further clarifies, in sub-Saharan African countries, the poor are overrepresented by such type of working systems and low wage is associated with the menial nature of the working poor.

This is not an exception in Ethiopia. As in most developing countries, the labor market in Ethiopia is mainly composed of sizable proportions of unpaid family work and self-employment and a very low share of wage based employment. Since rules and regulations do not have much influence on these types of employment, labor markets tend to be rather flexible and workers' protection is often neglected (Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP), 2006).

What can be inferred from these studies is, majority of the working society in Africa are not secured. However, scholars argue that human development has often been measured in terms of the quality of life of individuals and their communities. The quality of life of the individual and his or her dependents is, then, invariably connected to the individual's income and his or her capacity to earn (Seng, 2007). This shows that when the income or the capacity to earn an income is affected, the quality of life of the individual and his or her dependents is jeopardized in a negative way, often dropping into a state of deprivation. In this respect, Standing (1999, p. 52) cited in Lund and Ardington, (2006) argues:

The absence of appropriate employment relationships such as lack of fair labor contracts, compensation for employment injury, representation, safety and health at work are the main potential factors for the insecurity of workers in work environments.

Therefore, in the world of work, the well-being of the workers directly depends on the income they generate, the working environment they are engaged in, the type of insurance or compensation they have got at the time of accidents or occupational diseases. Moreover, appropriate labor relations for the development of decent work and their ability to manage or insure work related risks and against the risk of temporary loss of income are the fundamental factors to understand the wellbeing or quality life of workers. Identifying these securities, then, helps for further intervention and improvement of working environments in any undertakings.

The Construction Labor Force in Africa

Construction employment in Africa is characterized by little long-term employment (casual nature of work), low wages and long hours of work, and a poor record of occupational safety and health (ILO, 2004; Wells, 2004; Mitullah & Wachira, 2001). Due to massive unemployment, the

growth in the numbers of people in the informal employment has led to work being a source of risk and vulnerability for many workers. Mitullah and Wachira (2003) explain, the fact that construction work by its nature is hazardous and that construction workers are one of the most deprived working groups in Africa.

The construction sector is, then, one of the sectors in which the rights of workers are not protected. As the study on Construction Industry in Developing Countries indicates, construction is regarded almost everywhere as a low status job (Wells, 2004). Similarly, ILO (2004. p.7) states:

In some developing countries, construction is among the fastest growing areas of the labor market and continues to provide a traditional point of entry for less educated workers, but it is often an occupation of necessity rather than choice.

In some markets, the prevalence of archaic labor practices, outdoor work and temporary and casual labor leads many people to shun construction work, leaving it to recent migrants from the countryside or to foreign workers and their children.

Literature also revealed that construction work is a traditional point of entry into the labor market for uneducated, unskilled, and the first job of migrant workers from the countryside to the towns from the rural areas (ILO, 2001; Kanaganayagam, 2007). De Souza (2000) also states, construction work is a job you can do without much schooling. He further explained that it *has* the ability to absorb the excluded and provides employment for those with little education or skill, many of them from the poorer sections of society.

The findings of other empirical studies conveyed that the real reason why construction work is so poorly regarded has much more to do with the terms on which labor is recruited than

the nature of work itself. A study by ILO (2003) on Labor Practice in Construction Work in Africa showed that outsourcing of labor (in which the construction workforce is recruited through subcontractors and other intermediaries) has made work in construction increasingly temporary and insecure which often has a profound effect on occupational safety and health, wages, training and the level of skills, too.

In relation to this, a study on Construction Industry in sub- Saharan Africa also *showed* that the vast majority of construction laborers have always been employed informally which leads them to be more insecure (ILO, 2001; Wachera, 2001). The study further explained that most of labor force is engaged through subcontractors and other intermediaries in the African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Tanzania. Therefore, majority of workers are employed on temporary basis and sometimes without protection and likewise work for long hours at very low wages (ILO, 2005). The other study in Kenya also arrived at the same conclusion. It stated that construction workers are employed without formal (written) employment contracts, and they are exposed to denial of health insurance, and exposed to several health hazards (ILO, 2003). Similarly, Kulkarni (2007)states, the workforce in construction sector is most vulnerable because employment is mostly temporary, the employer and employee relationship is very fragile and most of the time short-lived, the work has inherent risk to life and limb due to lack of safety, health and welfare facilities, coupled with uncertain working hours.

Literature also conveyed that the main reasons for the risky nature of construction work are lack of proper employment relationships due to lack of permanent employment, absence of written contract, absence of injury compensation, poor payment and so on. The findings of other studies on construction also suggested that construction work is one of the unsafe working environments in which workers are engaged in risky work (Mehta, Baum, Theodore & Bush,

2003; ILO, 2006; WHO, 2004). Therefore, the occupational injuries like falling from height, deep cuts, even deaths are the main health hazards that workers are mostly encountered in construction work due to lack of safety measures (WHO, 2006; Kitumbo & Kirenga, 2001; Mitullah & Wachira, 2003; Alazab, 2004).

There are also other reasons for the vulnerability of the majority of workers in construction industry in Africa. As Frye (2005) shows, protection of workers is overshadowed by political, economic issues such as high incidence of poverty, lack of resources and lack of comprehensive regulatory frameworks. Seng (2007) also notes that the population growth and the growth of the informal employment are the main causes for the denying of rights of poor working people to the formal social security systems.

Occupational Safety and Health in Construction Work in Africa

Though condition of work in construction work is more severe in the developing countries, construction work is the riskiest work all over the world. Literature showed that many job and organization factors associated with negative experiences of family life are pertinent in the construction industry. Workers are more exposed to accidents and endure much poorer terms and conditions of work. These include long and irregular work hours (Aldous, Osmond, & Hicks, 1979; White & Keith, 1990), job insecurity (Larson, Wilson, & Beley, 1994) and frequent relocation, which puts strain on the life of workers (Kamerman & Kahn, 1981; Bunker, Zubeck, Vanderslice, & Rice, 1992).

There is no exception in Africa. The condition of work and safety and health in Africa and in most developing countries is poor and it is also a controversial issue. The argument sets on which comes first. In Africa, occupational health and safety issues are competing with other priorities such as poverty alleviation, unemployment problems, population growth, and

affordability issues (WHO, 2005). The writers who argue that employment must come first, analyzed the issue of safety at work from employment opportunity, affordability, and investment perspectives. They deduced that creating employment opportunities through investment has to be emphasized to address unemployment. Others argue that employment opportunity, investment and any other developmental aspects have to go hand in hand with the condition of work at work places.

Ghai (2002) argues that promoting occupational health and safety of workers is difficult to implement in most African countries because of the surplus of labor and rampant unemployment. He further explains that excessive unemployment or surplus labor may lead workers to work in dangerous work places whether the safety issue or the working conditions are improved or not. Therefore, the number of unemployed people in developing countries has to be given priority before addressing to the issue of safety at work. Similarly, Saith (2004) argues that the concept of decent work and occupational health and safety is not affordable in the African countries because improving the condition of work needs more resources and depends on the capacity of each country. Saith saw the improvements of the occupational health and safety issues from the angle of the difficulties how to promote safety at work along with investment promotion. He reasoned out that investment is one of the key sources for generating employment and development. Then, if the focus is given for the improvement of working condition and safety and health of work places, it may discourage investment promotion in the countries like Africa where half of population is unemployed. Addressing unemployment issue has to be given priority to secure the massive unemployed people in developing countries rather than jumped to the safety at work.

The same concept applies in Ethiopia. As the exploratory interview with Occupational Health and Safety experts of MOLSA and ILO explain, one of the challenges in relation to working conditions of workers is a lack of commitment on the side of the government. According to the view of the government, if rules and regulations are formulated on condition of work of workers, investors will not be willing to invest and this may decrease development at all levels of the country (Personal Communication, MOLSA & ILO, 2008).

The argument for safety and health regulations is that workers accept dangerous jobs because they have no choice or, in other words, because they have few or no alternative employment opportunities. On the other hand, the question of safety lies on the capacity or affordability of the employers. The question is, which costs more, the workers life or the expenses of the employers? In this respect, if investment degrades the life of working people and if investment creates inequality, what is the worth of investment? Julius Nyerere of Tanzania in his book *Development and Freedom* notes:

For the truth is that development means, the development of people, roads buildings, the increments of croup out and other things of this nature are not development. They are only tools of development ----an increase in the number of school buildings only if the buildings can be and are being used to develop the minds and the understandings of the people. ---so, every proposal must be judged by the criterion of weather it serves the purpose of development and the purpose of development is the people (1968, p. 59).

In his view, investment has to be also calculated in terms of the out put of investment: how many of people are benefited from any investment. Estrella (2006) also argues, the lack of opportunity for employment is not the answer for the unsafe working condition of workers. He further strengthens his arguments saying that many people may question the affordability of occupational health and safety. However, the question of affordability of safety at work is not comparable when it is compared to 'the multiple expenses of lives' of workers' due to unsafe working condition. He strengthens his argument by saying:

If we find it expensive to make our workplaces safe and healthy, we must consider the multiple expenses of dealing with low morale, absenteeism, illness, accidents, and even death. Which side of the coin we will choose if we really work for social justice and the wellbeing of the workers
(Estrella, 2006.p. 3).

In his view, for the workers who are engaged in hazardous work places and no proper employment relationships like construction workers, the issue of occupational health and safety is not luxury, rather it is the question of life. This argument is further explained that the issue of condition of work would not only be aligned with the concerns of employment opportunity problems, investment, and affordability issues but also with the life of workers in undertakings. Therefore, the big problem lies on lack of commitment of the governments as Reason (2004, p.11) illustrate by mosquitoes as follows:

Mosquitoes can be swatted one by one, but they still keep coming. The best remedies are to create more effective defenses and drain the swamps in which they breed. The swamps, in this case, are the ever-present latent

factors lied beneath the organizational and managerial factors in the construction industry.

As WHO (2005) states, the constraints for occupational health action in the African region include inadequate human resources, weak policies, lack of essential packages for preventive and curative services. In Ethiopia, the question also remains as to the selection of the industries that the health and safety issues for whom and for what. Though it is not easy to set the health and safety issues for all kinds of occupations at a time, safety and health at work should also be at least based on the nature of work (risky nature) environment in which the workers are engaged.

All these contending views show that the conditions of work in the construction sector are still in problematic and workers faced different employment relationship and safety problems. Thus, the researcher took these controversies as an opportunity to conduct a study on condition of work so as to add knowledge on the situation of construction workers in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia amends a proclamation that insures proper employment relations and the health and safety at work though the practical aspects in work undertakings is still minimal. The following section discusses more about condition of work in general and health and safety in particular from the perspectives of the labor legislations and policy frameworks in Ethiopia.

Labor Relations and Policy Frameworks in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Constitution of (1995) and Ethiopian Labor proclamation No, 377/2003 are the two fundamental legislation frameworks that govern worker-employer relations. The Ethiopian Economic Policy of (1992), The National Health Policy of (1993) and the ILO conventions, to which Ethiopia is a signatory, were also reviewed to assess the coverage of labor rights of workers and the working environment at large.

Labor Legislations

Labor Rights in the Constitution of (1995): This legislation has several articles pertaining to the matter of decent work, in general, and safety and healthy environment of working places, in particular. Chapter three of the constitution states, the fundamental rights and freedoms. Among these fundamental rights, a whole range of general principles of labor rights are firmly anchored in the constitution. The constitution also provides the principles such as the right of security of the person (Article 16), the prohibition against inhuman treatment and the abolishment of slavery and servitude (Article 18 (2) and forced and compulsory labor (Article 18 (3) and (4). General freedom of association is laid down in the Constitution (Article 31, “for any cause or purpose”).

Article 42 of sub article (1) also states that employees have the right to form associations to improve their conditions of employment and their economic wellbeing. These rights are extended to the right to form trade unions and other associations to bargain collectively with employers or other organizations that affect their interests. The other important concept in labor relation is, the right to strike which is explicitly mentioned in Article 42 (1) (b) of the constitution. This article, in its paragraph 2, also communicates the right to reasonable limitation of working hours, to rest, to paid leave and to healthy and safe working environment. Article 35 of the constitution also ensures that women shall have equal right with men in employment, promotion payment, wage and the transfer of pension entitlements.

Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003: The Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 is an important tool for unions and employers to participate in all labor matters and employment relationship in the private sector. It is the only comprehensive labor law which is in operation in order to address all aspects of ensuring labor relation to be governed by the fundamental rights

and obligations focusing on industrial activities at all work places. The proclamation applies to all employer –employee relationships in any undertakings who employed one or more persons. Therefore, labor contracts, safety and health at work, occupational injuries and compensation systems are the main issues discussed in this proclamation.

According to this labor proclamation, labor contracts can be for a definite or indefinite period. Unless specific conditions are met, a labor contract is presumed to be for an indefinite period. These specific conditions are: performance of the task (the replacement of the worker who is temporally absent, when there is exceptional high workload, urgent work to avoid danger or damage, etc) and seasonal work (occasional work performed intermittently. This labor proclamation also forces the employer to establish written contract and the contract has to specify nature and duration of the training, the remuneration due to the trainees and condition of work. Full grounds for termination of labor contract are related to the conduct of the employee, the ability of the worker to perform his or her task, and the operational requirements of the undertakings.

Regarding occupational health safety and working environment, both the employer and the employee are responsible. According to the Article, 42 clearly indicates, it is the fundamental obligations of the employer to assure that the work places are safe, healthy and free of any danger to promote the health of workers. To comply with the occupational safety and health requirements, the employer has to provide proper inspection of the workers at work places and training to avoid accident and injury to health. Each enterprise has to insure that directives are given and also assign safety office, establish occupational safety and health committee provide workers with protective equipment, clothing and other materials and instruct them of its use. Article 93 of the law also provides, the obligations of workers pertaining to the required co-

operation and putting the practice of the regulation and instruction given by the employer in order to ensure the safety, health and working conditions at work places.

The above article clearly put the duties of workers for cooperation, proper use of protective materials and safeguards, or safety devices provided by employers. In the same law, it is clearly stipulated that no worker may interfere with remove, displace, damage or destroy any safety devices or other appliances given for protection. With regard to occupational injuries and compensation systems, the law has also stipulated about occupational injuries in its Articles (95-112). The law specifies that an employer is liable to all occupational injuries happened on workers. In spite of the fact that the type of disablement, the law also clearly puts the cash benefit that the worker ought to provided. For example, if the worker dies due to occupational accidents, the law indicates that the maximum compensation of the worker is five times his annual wages. According to Labor Proclamation No, 377/2003 whether the contract is issued indefinite period of time or daily basis, the employer is in charge of paying the compensation of the injury after 15 days of employment.

In addition to the above legislations, there are ILO Conventions that deal with worker employer relations and health and safety at work in which Ethiopia is a signatory. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, Con No, 98/1948, 1963, the right to Organize and Bargain Collectively, Con, No. 98/1948, 1963, Equal Remuneration Convention, Con, No, 98/1948, 1999, Discrimination on employment convention, Con, No, 111/1958, 1966, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Environment Convention, Con, No, 155/1981. All these conventions and legislation clearly stated, the principles and the strategies how the wellbeing of the workers are promoted and labor relations are issued at work places. However, there have still been gaps related to the practices so that ratification of the conventions and

issuing legislations are not end by themselves. For the ultimate respect, protection, and wellbeing of the workers, the integration of the conventions or any other frameworks with the real situation of the workers is a must.

National Policy Review

There is no national Ethiopian occupational health and safety policy as per the principle stated by the occupation safety and health and working environment Convention No. 155/1981 to which Ethiopia is a signatory. However, Economic Policy of 1992 and the National Health Policy of 1993 contain relevant aspects pertaining to the promotion and necessity of the improvement of the condition of work of the workers and occupational safety and health services development.

The Economic Policy of 1992 indicates the need for a labor law that determines fair and applicable labor relation, occupational safety, health and working conditions in the spirit of market economy. According to this policy, the labor law to be issued will facilitate the development of private ownership as prime and sole actor in the economic development of the nation. The National Health Policy also clearly indicated principles that directly deal with the issues of occupational safety and health of the workers. It emphasizes the promotion of occupational health and safety in industries and production sectors (Article 2.2 of the policy). In the same policy, (article 3.9), under its strategies to implement the policy, it is clearly stated that inter-sectoral collaboration shall be made in order to develop facilities and mechanisms for workers health and safety in production sectors.

As the above legislation and policy frameworks indicate, the issue of condition of work or (good labor relation and the occupational health and safety of workers) is stated in our constitution and different policy frameworks directly or indirectly. However, there are no

policies or labor administration systems that directly address the issues of occupational safety, health and working environment. Therefore, workers are more vulnerable to violations of their rights and there is a room for employers to exploit workers and expose them to health hazards.

In summary, maintaining the quality life of the individual and his or her dependents has become the primary focus of policies and programs which come under the subject of security at work (Barrientos, & Ware, 2002). The wellbeing of working society is also greatly influenced by the type of working environment he/she is engaged in. However, as the practical situations indicate in Ethiopia, despite the existence of conventions, legislations and policies to insure the importance of good condition of work for working society, practice is still minimal in the construction industry of Ethiopia.

Conceptual Framework

Conditions of work encompasses the entire relationships between workers and employers and also includes, fundamental employment relationships like work agreements, working hours, wages and workers health and safety and any other similar matters (Labor Proclamation 377/2003).

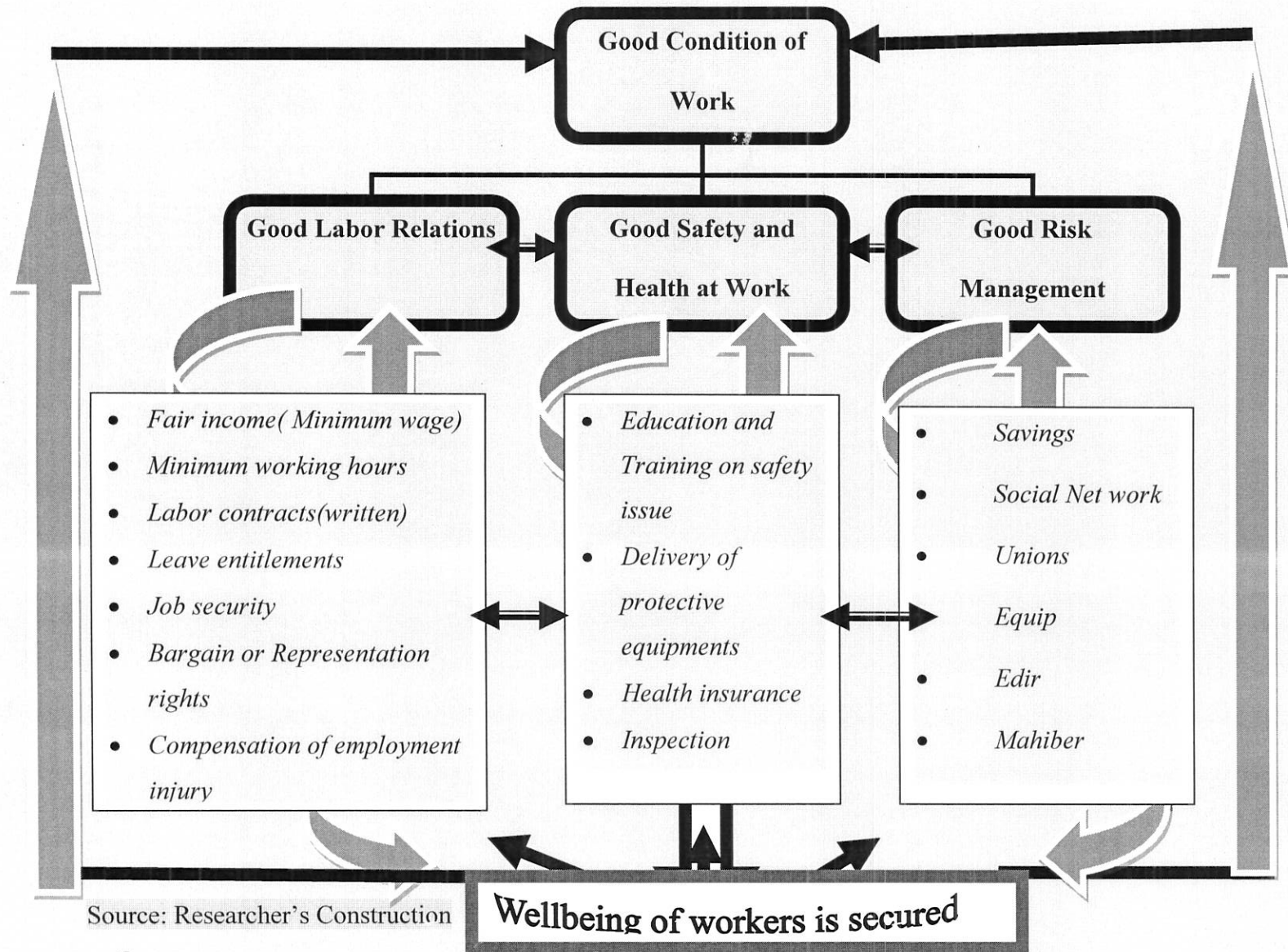
As the literature has revealed, the concept of condition of work has three interrelated major dimensions: appropriate labor relations, safe and healthy working environment, and the worker's risk management mechanisms (Boyer, 2006; Lund & Ardington, 2006). Labor relations refers to workers fair income or minimum wage, proper working hours, labor contracts, leave entitlements, bargain and so on. The occupational health and safety dimensions of the condition of work comprised of the workers knowledge about safety and health issues, delivery of protective equipment, health insurance, or compensation of employment injury.

The third major element of the condition of work is about the worker's coping mechanisms. Risk management or coping mechanism is based on the idea that if workers have proper employment relationships, and working at healthy and safe working places, they will have also good risk management mechanisms. The effects of each of these elements of conditions of work are also very much interrelated and one affects the other. For instance, if the worker has low wage, it affects the worker's health. The reverse holds true. If the worker faces health hazards at work, he/she will be exposed to additional health expenses which affect both the income and risk management mechanisms. As a result, condition of work also has the following horizontal relationships.

Good Condition of Work ↔ **Good Employment Relations** ↔ **Good Health and Safety at Work** ↔ **Good Risk Management Mechanisms.**

It is a kind of functional system in which a loss on one part affects the whole system. Therefore, in the world of work, the wellbeing of the workers depends on the working environment they are engaged in, appropriate labor relations, (the income they generate, compensation at the time of accidents) and their ability to manage or ensure work related risks. The following model shows the whole interaction and relationships among the elements of the condition of work applied in this study to understand the condition of work of building construction skilled workers at Ayat and surrounding construction sites of Addis Ababa.

MODEL OF ANALYSIS



3. RESEARCH METHOD

Study Design

The study employs exploratory research using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Grinnell(2001, p.59) explains that “if little is known about the general problem area and we want to simply explore and gather facts, an exploratory study will be in order.” Grinnell further explains, in such type of study, the results can not generalize to other individuals with similar experiences who were not included in the study. This is because the purpose of exploratory studies is to prepare ground for more extensive work. Therefore, the main rationale for choosing this research design is that, since the existing empirical studies conducted in Ethiopia do not deal with the condition of work of construction workers, an exploratory research design is more appropriate for this study.

Various scholars including Mwanje (2001) and Rubin (2001) suggest that employing both methods in research is highly recommended. As Collins et al, (2006, p.479) cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2006) also state:

Mixing of qualitative and quantitative techniques has paramount importance for participant enrichment, optimizing the sample; such as increasing the number of participants), instrument fidelity (i.e., maximizing the appropriateness and/or utility of the instruments used in the study...).

In this study, quantitative method of inquiry is used in order to explore the condition of work of construction workers through participating relatively large number of respondents (n=50) and describe it accordingly. Yegidis, and Rodriguez (1999) state:

goal of exploratory research design is to derive hypothesis for future endeavors. So, the selection of research participants or cases for study is not a very rigorous or exacting procedure. There may be few cases studied and a small number may be selected in order to learn as much as possible about the phenomenon. The purpose of employing quantitative method in this study is not to produce statistical data on the contemplated concepts and variables for generalization. However, it is to explore more about condition of work through identifying or describing the major components of work in terms of employment relations and health and safety of workers. The purpose of qualitative method is to generate information on the participants perception of their work environment and how they make sense of their lives and others on the natural settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, qualitative method aims to explore the views of workers, union members, and employers on the details of the worker's condition of work in order to substantiate the quantitative data through in-depth interviews.

Selection Criteria

The study was conducted in Ayat and surrounding areas of Addis Ababa. Though there are many construction sites in Addis Ababa in which building construction activities are taken place, this area was selected based on the scoping exercises which was conducted during the month of

areas in Addis Ababa in which many condominium houses and 'real states' are being constructed and new settlements are arranged.

At study site level, respondents were interviewed on the spot from different active building construction sites. This was done through a transit walk across the construction area looking for active construction sites. This is because construction work is very casual; it is difficult to frame the construction sites. Further, since the purpose of the survey was to gather basic information on the construction labor force (employment relations and safety of workers), locating sites in this way within Ayat areas was found to be adequate.

Participant Selection Procedure

The study was participated fifty respondents. Due to the casual nature of the work and the mobile nature of workers, on the spot interviewing was carried out with 50 workers from different building construction sites. This is because of the intention of the study which focuses on describing the main employment relations and health and safety of workers and identifying the major factors that affect condition of work of construction workers. Therefore, relatively large numbers of workers are in order. Respondents were selected purposely. The main rationale for this sampling is, first, it is difficult to get an exact number of construction workers who are employed in each construction sites. This is because of lack of employment profiles of workers in each construction sites during employment due to casual nature of work.

The second reason is the exploratory nature of study. The purpose of the study is not to generalize the findings. Quantitative method is used in this study to explore what is going on in the construction sites in terms of employment relationship and safety and health. Therefore, purposive sampling was sufficient for the selection of respondents for both methods.

To select the study respondents for the survey, the following inclusion criteria were set. The skilled worker who is working in building construction, the worker who has 2 or more years of experience and full consent to participate in the study are the main criteria to select the workers. The study mainly includes only skilled and experienced workers. This is based on the assumption that the longer a worker stays on the job, the greater experience he/she has. Thus, experienced and skilled workers are selected purposely.

In this study, five key informants were also interviewed from MOLSA, ILO, Addis Ababa City Administration Occupational Health and Safety expert and two employers (one immediate supervisor and one contractor) at construction site to understand the views of experts on condition of work of in the construction work.

Data Collection Instruments

The study employs both primary and secondary data sources. To collect data from the primary sources, survey questionnaire for the quantitative method and individual in-depth interviews for the qualitative method were employed. For the quantitative part of this study, a survey was carried out through face-to-face structured and semi -structured interview questionnaire. In order to complement the quantitative data, information gathered through key informant in-depth interviews were also considered. Concerning the secondary data, various studies on work environment in general and condition of work of construction work in particular are reviewed. Inline with this, books, Journals, reports, government's legal documents like the in Ethiopia Constitution and Labor proclamations 377/2003 and different policy documents like Economic Policy of 1992 and the National Health Policy of 1993 and ILO conventions are reviewed and analyzed.

Data Collection Procedures and Instrument Development

Procedures of quantitative data collection: In this study, quantitative data collection was passed through three phases. These include conducting exploratory interview, developing the questionnaire and collecting actual data. First, the preliminary in-depth interviews were conducted (See Appendix-F, G & H). In-depth-interviews with 15 construction workers, and 3 key informants were carried out with the experts from MOLSA, ILO, and one from the immediate construction supervisor.

The exploratory interview was done for two main reasons. The first reason was to gather relevant information in order to understand the situation of construction work and construction workers in the Ethiopian context. The second was to develop a comprehensive research instrument adapted from a similar study conducted in Kenya. Mitullah's study was conducted in Nairobi-Kenya among informal labor in construction industry a scope very similar to this study.

Since there is lack of empirical study on condition of work of construction work, conducting preliminary interviews were important for adopting and modifying the questionnaire from Mitullah's work. Conducting exploratory interviews were also very helpful to add and omit the contents of question items in the Mitullah's study to the Ethiopian situation. Therefore, Mitullah's study was very important for this study as basis for instrument development and to increase the feasibility of the questionnaire.

Second, based on the findings of the exploratory interviews, structured and semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed and adapted for the purpose of this study (See Appendix-C). The findings of exploratory interviews showed, the main challenges of construction workers were: the casual nature the work), employment relation problems (lack of written contract, subcontracting, overtime payment), and safety and health problems. Exploratory

study findings also showed lack of rules and regulations on safety at the work place were increased the vulnerability of the workers to hazardous situations. No compensation is paid for employment injuries. Lack of inspection on safety and health issues at work is another challenging issue in the construction industry.

Based on these findings, the final questionnaire was developed. Then after, the instruments were sent to the advisor and co-adviser for comment and approval. English version of questionnaire was translated in to Amharic. Then, pre-test was conducted with 15 building construction workers at Akaki construction areas which has similar construction activities. The pre-test was important to revise the question items before starting the actual field work. Moreover, it helps to estimate range of time that face-to face interviews consume and to arrange them accordingly.

Third, a broader survey with fifty skilled building construction workers was undertaken on the site. However, it was not easy task for the researcher to collect the data. The issue of labor relation and safety at construction work was sensitive on the side of the employers. Therefore, interviewing the workers at sites was very challenge thing. This is because most people who were in charge of the sites were suspicious of the intentions of the research. Some employers were asked to show them even the instruments. But after extensive explanation and told them that the interview is only for academic purpose, employers were willing.

The second was the challenge on the side of the workers. First, most of the workers were hesitating to give information because of the fear that the employers will not give employment opportunity. They perceived that they lose their employment if they give information. However, extensive explanation about the purpose of the study was the main tool to accomplish the data collection. Moreover, in addition to repeated explanation about the purpose of the study, the roles of two gatekeepers were very crucial. The researcher built rapport with two of the skilled

tion workers who are living and working on the area. They facilitated and explained about the purpose of the interview for the workers so that workers were built trust. This was very effective strategy that helped the researcher to gain trust from workers.

The survey questionnaire was not self-administered. This is because, as the exploratory interviews conveyed, most workers have little or no reading ability. While interviewing, both written and oral consent were taken for their participation with clarifying the aims and objectives of the study (See Annex-A). Respondents are also selected based on their willingness. Moreover, due to the casual nature of the work and the mobile nature of workers, on the spot interviewing is carried out.

Questionnaire Structure

The survey questionnaire has 66 question items. The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section covers employment relationship in construction which includes the types of work, ways of contracts, skills and trainings, ways of employment or recruitment, wages and entitlements and related issues.

The second section deals with health and safety of workers which mainly comprise of the health and health measures, safety education and trainings, health insurance and compensation matters, and similar matters. The third section deals with the risk management of workers. The fourth section covers general information or socio-demographic data about the workers.

Procedures of qualitative data collection: To collect the information from key informants, detailed in-depth interviews with 3- government personnel and two employers were conducted. The in-depth interview guides were prepared based on literature and the findings of preliminary interviews conducted before the actual data collection. Before an in-depth interview was administered, the researcher made rapport with key informants. Based on the rapport built, informants were informed about the study. The purpose of the study and the status of the

researcher made clear at the beginning of the interview. While interviewing, each participant's response was tape recorded with their consent. Each interview took maximum of one and half hours. The setting of the interview was based on the interviewee interests and time preference.

Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative Data Analysis: To analyze the data generated from the survey, descriptive analysis was employed. Descriptive analysis is important to describe and summarize one or more variables for the sample or the population (Grinnell, 2001; Kreuger & Neuman 2006). Grinnell further explained that descriptive analysis for quantitative method of analysis helps to provide information only the group in the study. Therefore, as the main purpose of this study is only to explore (not for generalization) the condition of work of building construction workers, descriptive analysis is preferred to present the data.

The survey questionnaire was first coded by assigning numbers to variable categories. Data was entered in to the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15 software. Appropriate data coding, cleaning and verifying were done before analysis begins. Finally, findings are summarized and presented using tables, graphs and text descriptions. The data were presented and described in terms of respondent's socio-demographic data, employment relationship, occupational health and safety and coping mechanisms of the workers to tackle work insecurities.

Qualitative Data Analysis: To analyze the data generated from expert interviews, the data started with the transcription of interviews and translation in to English. All notes and taped recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. After reading the transcription of interviews, data summarizing and sorting out the contents in to themes began. Then, themes running through the data were identified for the purpose of discussion and analysis. The themes

included were employment relations, safety and health hazards and condition of work in the construction industry. Then after, the themes were developed in to categories, according to the research questions. After categorizing these themes in line with research questions, the results from the qualitative data were presented and analyzed.

Finally, the dominant-less dominant approach of data presentation and analysis technique was employed to analyze the findings generated from quantitative and qualitative methods. As Grinnell , (2001) and Kreuger and Neuman, (2006) state, in this approach of describing findings, the data generated from the dominant method can be illustrated or enhanced by the less one. For example, if the major data is generated from quantitative study undertaken, supplemented by a few qualitative interviews, the quantitative approach results will be elaborated by using qualitative approach. In the same way, since quantitative method of data collection was employed as the main approach for this study, the findings from quantitative data is supplemented with the findings of key informant interviews.

Scope of the Study

A condition of work is vast issue which encompasses employment and work environment work. The elements of condition of work include work stress, different forms of violence at work, work time and work organization, wages and working hours and occupational health and safety at work. However, this study is only limited to the fundamental dimensions of condition of work: employment relations and health and safety at work on construction work.

Ethical Considerations

After the approval of the research proposal by the proposal review committee further permission was requested from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Addis Ababa City Administration and ILO to interview the key informants (Appendix-E). The aims and importance

of the study for the respondents were explained to them and their consent was sought prior to data collection. Moreover, both oral and written consent was requested from the workers and key informants before the instruments are administered (See Appendix-A& B). The respondents for the face- to –face interview of survey as well as in-depth interview were selected based on their willingness. The right to withdraw at any time was guaranteed to every respondent. The researcher also communicated the confidentiality of the information and the privilege of the privacy to them.

5. FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on interpretation and presentation of findings. The sources of data are the survey results and the qualitative information from key informants. The quantitative and the qualitative data are presented under the following four sections: socio-demographic data of respondents, employment relationships, safety and health risks in construction work and coping management of workers on work-related risks.

Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

The survey results show, respondents participated in this study accommodate men of diverse age, education, and migrant workers from different regions of the country. The participants had also different work experience and skills. Table 1 below presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who were participated in the study.

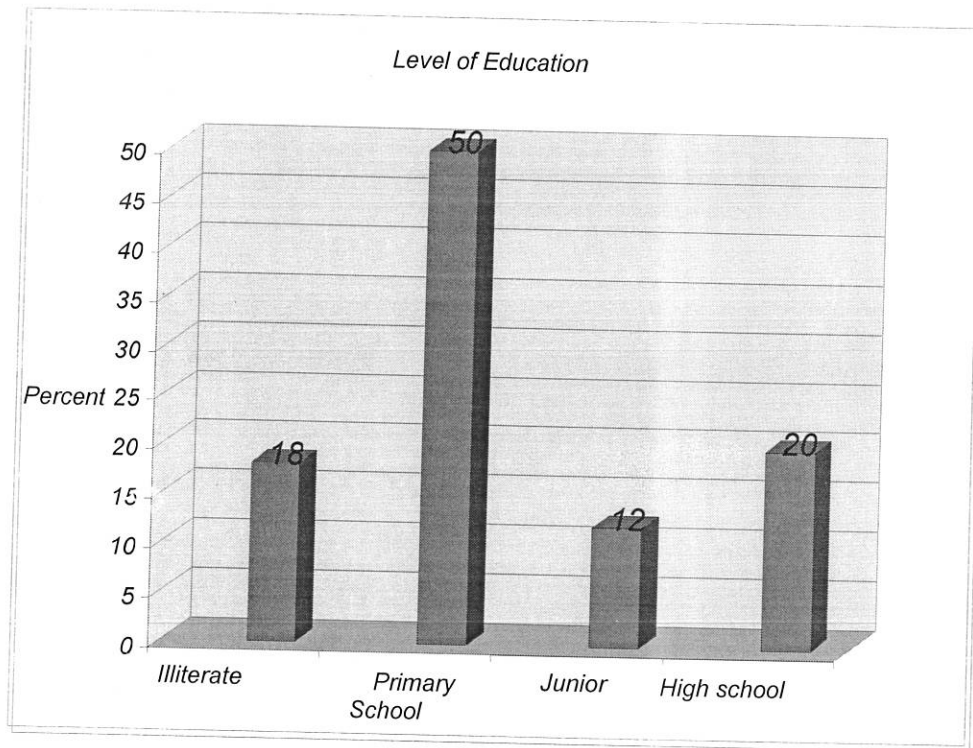
Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample (N=50)

Basic profile of Respondents	Characteristics	Frequency n	Percentage %
Age	19-29 years	3	6
	30-40 years	30	60
	41-50 years	12	24
	51-60 years	5	10
Gender	Female	6	12
	Male	44	88
Marital Status	Single	34	68
	Married	16	32
Place of Origin	Addis Ababa	1	2
	Amhara	21	42
	Oromiya	23	46
	SNNP	5	10
Working Experience	2-4 years	10	20
	5-7 years	30	60
	8-10 years	8	16
	Above 10 years	2	4

The youngest respondent was 19 years old and the eldest was 58. However, majority of respondents are between 30-40 years old (60%) followed by 41-51 years old (24%). These distributions of age groups show respondents who were participated in the study are comparatively young workforce with majority of below 40 years of age. The majority of respondents in the sample are males. Among the 50 participants, only 6 are females. With regard to the respondent's place of origin, the majority were coming from different administrative regions of the country with the exception of one worker who is from Addis Ababa.

Concerning the level of education, the majority of the workers interviewed had less than grade eight level of education. They are dominated by primary education and illiterate workers with only one worker reached to grade ten. Graph 1 below, summarizes the respondents level of education.

Graph1: Percent Distribution of Respondents by Grade Level



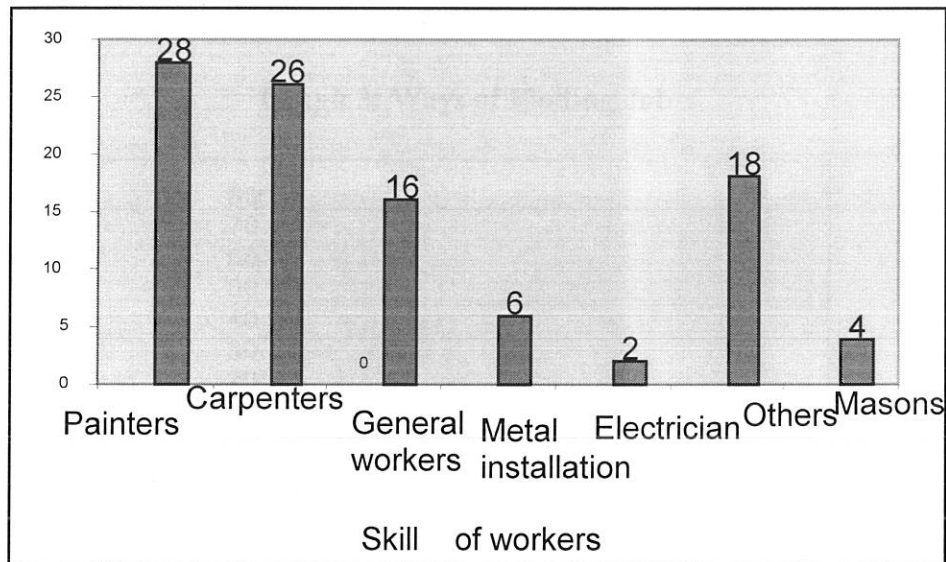
Respondents were asked about the length of years they were engaged in construction job. Most respondents had experiences from 5 to 7 years (60%) followed by 2 to 4 years (20%). The other (16%) of respondents had experiences between 8 -10 years and (4%) of them had more than 10 years experience. Regarding marital status of the respondents, most of them (68%) are single and (32%) are married. However, there is no respondent who is divorced or widowed. Respondents are also asked about duration of stay in their occupation based on the type of skill they acquired. Most of the respondents (96%) are working for 2 -6 years and another (4%) of respondents worked for 7-10 years.

Employment Relationship

To understand employment relationships, there are a number of elements that need interpretation and analysis, including recruitment, work agreement, wage and nature of payment, overtime and payment situations, bargain power, and hours of work. The finding of this study also describes the following main categories of employment relationships such as skill and training, recruitment for employment, worker-employer relationship challenges. Moreover, nature of work and views of respondent's about construction work are also presented and described. However, for the sake of logical sequence, the findings on skill, training and workers ways of finding job presented first.

Skill and Training: Terms of employment depends on the workers skill and training. Graph2 shows, the skill of the respondents.

Graph2: Skill of Workers



Graph 1 displays all respondents in the sample have different skill levels. They learned through experience from their friends or the person whom they know. Majority of respondents are painters (28%) followed by carpenters (26%) and general workers (16%). Under the category of others, respondents who have skills like plumbers, builders, and half-builders are included. General workers are respondents who have two or three working skills at a time, for example, being a builder, painter, and carpenter.

Training: As the finding shows, though all respondents have some kind of skill, they acquired their skills through social connections (social and family networks) without the help of the enterprises or the institution. Large number of them (94%) did not learn in formal institutions. They were learned by their own friends, relatives, or people whom they know through their social acquaintances. Another (6%) of respondents received their skill through on the job training.

(46%) of them, work experience was important means for employment. Another (4%) of respondents are employed based on their reputation. Having a trade test certificate (skill certificate) was not considered as important requirement for employment. No worker uses his/her certificate as the means for employment.

Employment through social connection also illustrates the importance of informal ways of identifying workers in the employment process. As respondents further explained, there is a tendency for potential employers to identify workers by merely interested about individuals who had worked on a particular construction project in which whose workmanship they admire. In most cases, employers undertake search using social networks (friends, relatives) to identify potential employees with work experience. In this respect, the employers said that:

If we have a project, first, we asked our friends if they have wonderful and skilled and experienced workers. Then, they will inform us their contact address so that we employed them other wise, we will go to the daily labor corners to recruit and employ them.

Work Agreement: The survey results conveyed that work agreement is basically on oral negotiation. Majority (94%) of the respondents made their employment agreements on verbal basis. But only (6%) of the respondents were use written agreements during employment. Those workers who use written agreement with the institutions are the workers who are organized and working together forming their own association. The other thing which is much related to the agreement is workers employment benefits like compensation of employment injury and payments due to dismissal and compensation. As most of the workers mention it, they encountered dismissal in the 39th days of work in construction sites. This is because if, workers are staying and working for 45 days in an institution or construction enterprise, the employer has

obligation to pay workers employment benefit with trade test certificate (Labor
 nation, 377/2003). But, finding of this study shows, employers are firing workers in the
 days and employed another person in order not to pay their severance pay and
 nsation.

Bargain Power: The respondents were also asked about their bargain power and
 nces in the construction work. They explained that employers are not happy when the
 s are organized to secure different violations at work. The workers further reported, this
 use the workers who tried to get organized and start working with the institutions are
 ed by the employers as strike creators and they did not get employment opportunities.
 workers preferred to keep silent. The key informant from MOLSA has also shared the
 ideas. He stated that construction workers are the most unorganized workers and
 ing collective agreements with their employers is very challenging. Lack of the initiation
 workers, nature of work and the perception of employers to wards unions and associations
 the promotion of bargain power of workers to maintain good worker-employer
 ship at construction work.

Leave Entitlements: As the survey result shows, (70%) of respondents are not allowed to
 ve. Respondents explained further that if they got sick and stopped working, they are not
 to continue rather they are kicked out with out payment and other workers took their
 This is because their agreement is on daily basis. The respondents who received leave
 ents were also asked whether they received payments or not. The majority of
 ents (90%) did not get payments for their leave entitlement rather they get a chance to
 the institution or enterprises when they felt better. But (10%) of respondents got
 s as well as chance of working in the same institution when they felt better. As the

finding also illustrates, those respondents who get leave entitlements with wage are the workers who work in their own associations like construction workers associations (like carpenters association and builders association) and took contracts from the enterprise.

Income and Nature of Payment

Average daily payment: Respondents were also probed on their average earnings per day. The minimum wage of workers per day is 25 birr and the maximum is 70 birr. However, the mean of workers wage is 46 birr per day which is related to the more skilled workers such as carpenters, builders and painters. Table 2 summarizes the daily payment of workers.

Table 2: Average daily Payment

Daily payment in Birr	Frequency n	(%)
25.00	6	12
30.00	6	12
35.00	3	6
40.00	5	10
45.00	1	2
50.00	12	24
55.00	1	2
60.00	15	30
70.00	1	2
Total	50	100

The very interesting finding about their daily payment is, it also varies with their skill acquisition. The workers daily payment depends on their skill. The highly paid worker is carpenter (70 birr) and the lowest is mason (25 birr). The following table summarizes workers skill and their daily payment.

Table 3: Workers Skill and their Daily Payment

Workers Skill	Daily payment	Frequency n	(%)
Mason	25-35 birr per day	15	30
Painter	36-45 birr per day	6	12
Builder	46-55 birr per day	13	26
Carpenter	56- 65 birr	16	32
Total		50	100

Nature of Payment: As shown in Table 3 below, most of the workers are paid daily and weekly. Table 4 summarizes nature of Payment of respondents.

Table 4: Nature of Payment of Respondents

Nature of Payment	Frequency n	(%)
Daily	31	62
Weekly	11	22
15 days	6	12
Monthly	2	4
Total	50	100

Wage Determination: Respondents were asked about how wage is determined to assess their knowledge and awareness about wage determination. All workers knew how their wages were determined. Oral negotiation is the best mechanism for the determination of their wage with contractors or subcontractors. Large numbers of workers had experienced negotiation with subcontractors which comprises (68%) of the respondents. The other (32%) of respondents had negotiation with contractors. The respondents were also asked on the basis of wage. For the majority (86%) of respondents, their wage was based on the current market condition where as, for the other (10%) of the respondents both market conditions and previous engagements were the basis for their skill based wage determination. However, (4%) of respondents were paid based on previous engagements.

One can infer from the above data that although the main basis for the determination of wage is the prevailing market conditions, the determination of daily payment for each individual worker is based on oral negotiation between the worker and the employer. It has also another indication that there is no minimum wage or any kind of fixed starting salary specific to their skill that guides the workers and employers during employment. Simply, it is a kind of

ment on oral basis unlike the civil servants' employment and salary scale policy of the

Hours of Work and Overtime Payment: Though all respondents were hired for an eight hour day, eighty eight percent (88%) of them were engaged in overtime work during their employment. However, majority did not receive their overtime payments. From those who had done overtime work (74%) of respondents were denied their overtime payment whereas 26% of respondents received overtime payment. Respondents were also asked to give their reasons for such irregularity of overtime payments. More than half of the respondents (60%) did not know the reason behind. The rest of respondents (40%) stated that there are people who are not aware of their rights and give us our payments and there are also others who are very arrogant and denies our payment. These show, workers are not aware about whether over time payment is their right. These workers perceived that it is the kindness of employers in which overtime payment is given on which may also gives employers a room for exploitation.

Employer Relationship Challenges

The survey results indicated that respondents are hired directly by contractors or subcontractors. From all the respondents, (44%) of them are hired by contractors. The other 56% of respondents are employed by subcontractors. Respondents were also asked whether they faced any problems with their employers in the past. Most respondents (80%) reported that they faced different problems. A total of (96 %) of respondents faced challenges with different types of problems where as another (4%) of them are encountered sudden job termination. Table 1.1 shows about the distribution of the responses on the type of problems respondents faced.

Table 5: Type of Challenges Respondents Faced

Type of challenges	Frequency n	(%)
Over time Payment	5	10
Payment Refusal	20	40
Delay of Payment	13	26
Payment with different installments	6	12
Firing /dismissal	2	4
Payment difference with equal work	4	8
Total	50	100

The findings show that the problems raised related to overtime payment have two faces. The first problem is when there is overtime work but workers do not get their payments. The other is forced overtime work with out payment which is done deliberately by employers. This mostly happened when contractors or immediate supervisors ordered workers to mix cement with sand at the ebb of working hour (around at 10:30 local time). Respondents further explained that workers are forced to extend their working hour to finish it. Since employers are not willing to pay their daily payment until they finished that particular work, they do not have options except stick to the work.

Regarding the problem of payment differences for the same kind of work and skill, female workers are less paid than their counterparts for the same type of work. With a total of 6 female respondents, 4 of them encountered payment differences with the same skill and type of work they were engaged in. In this case, for example, if men are paid 25 birr, women would be paid 20 birr with the same effort and the same skill. Workers were probed about the main reasons for the payment problems especially for delay and refusal of payment. They explained that the employment arrangements between the building contactors, sub -contractors and sub-sub contractors' obscure lines of accountability and responsibility. Workers further explain that sub-

contractors frequently contend that building contractors are responsible for paying workers, while contractors place responsibility back on sub-contractors. Too often, workers are unable to discern which employer is in fact responsible.

The qualitative information also confirms the above problems of workers. As one of the key informants from MOLSA explains, delay of payment and disappearance of subcontractors are the common problems in the construction work which creates disputes between the worker and employer. He further added that:

Delay of payment is the common problem. Workers after they finished their task, they need their payment. But employers or their delegates gave them reasons like the bank is closed and they do not have money for the time being. Therefore, they told them waiting for tomorrow. But in most cases, the situation ends up with refusal of their payment and it is very challenging for the workers.

Respondents were further asked by whom most problems are created. The survey results reveal that subcontractors and sub-subcontractors are identified as the main actors for creating different challenges. Those workers who faced different problems with their employers, (8%) of them encountered problems with contractors and (66%) of them with subcontractor. Another (26%) of respondents faced challenges with sub-sub contractors. All respondents further explain that these days, unless there are no any other chances for work, they are not happy to be employed by the subcontractors or sub-sub contractors.

The key informants from MOLSA and Addis Ababa City Administration labor and occupational health and safety experts have also similar views about the above problems. They also identified, worker's lack of knowledge as to who their employers are, lack of strong

ment, lack of proper management of subcontractors and contractors, and workers' lack of knowledge about their rights are the main highlighted factors for the vulnerability of workers.

Expert from Addis Ababa city administration states:

During employment, workers are not aware who their employers are.

They simply went just for work. But when some kind of problem is created with subcontractors, like disappearance, they tried to communicate with contractor. However, contractors may not know who the workers are and they pushed them up to subcontractors. But workers are facing different problems in the middle. But in most cases, they left to find another job rather than fighting with their employers.

Legal Support: Respondents were also asked about their views and experiences whether they have legal support or not to solve the above mentioned problems. Most respondents were not satisfied with legal support due to lack of written agreement during employment, long process of court and low economic status of workers.

Respondents explained that since they do not have written agreement and the fact that the court system basis on written agreement to pass judgments, they lost interest for using legal support.

In the case of witness, their responses have two faces. The first lays on the fact that workers are employed on daily basis and they do not have job security, their friends are not willing to go to the court and assured their eyewitness. The second is that their friends do not go to the court to assure their eyewitness due to fear of dismissal since employment is based on social connections.

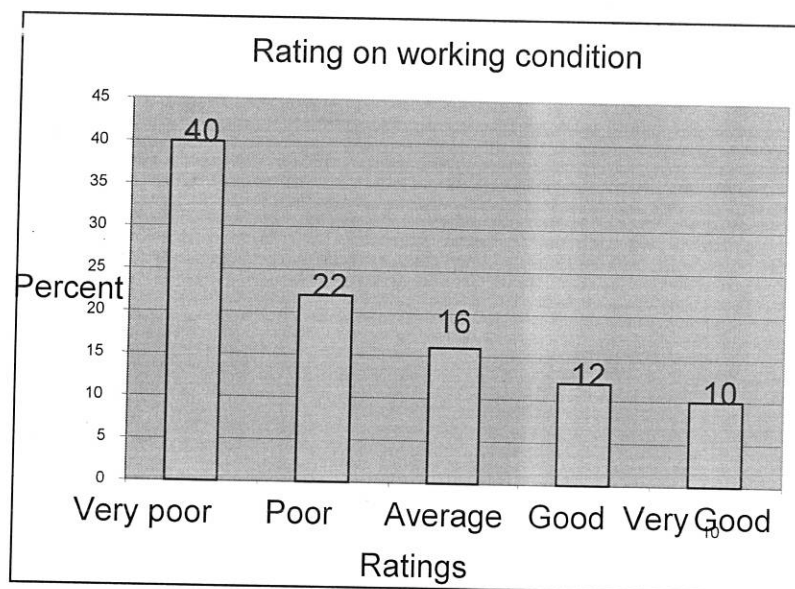
The other main factor is the long process of court to pass judgments. Respondents are not satisfied that court process needs different procedures and appointments. So, different expenses

for transportation and writing purpose are required in which they could not afford. In relation to this, one worker states, *I have to work to feed my self, and my family, how could I survive waiting the hearings of the court except I left it to my God and back to find another work.* This clearly indicates, these workers are not benefited from legal rights properly due to financial problems, lack of job opportunity, and other employment problems.

Nature of Work and Workers view on Construction Work

Workers view on construction work: To assess the views of respondents on construction work and nature of work, they were asked three related questions. The questions are: how they rate the construction work, how their view about construction work is and whether they find work through out the year. In relation to these questions, as Graph-4 shows, most of the respondents are not comfortable with the working condition of construction work. Majority of respondents (62%) reported that the working condition of construction work is poor. Graph 4 illustrates the distribution of the respondent's views on construction work.

Graph 4: Condition of Work in Construction Rated by the Respondents



Respondents were also asked to give their own reasons for each rating of the working condition as described above. Almost all of the respondents have similar views about construction work. Some of the reasons include, construction work is tiresome, very casual, abusive, (employers are selfish), poor pay; very risky and unsafe working environment and poor job opportunity. However, respondents have different views with each of these challenges. Those respondents who said construction work is not good reported that workers are engaged in construction work because they do not have other options. They report that construction work requires much energy in which the payment is not compatible. They further explained that construction work is very risky and also has potential injury, but they have to work to live.

Those respondents who agreed that construction work is good, their argument is simply for the sake of being employed. They report that at least they are employed and able to feed themselves. They also wondered how they are going to live and survive if they are not employed in construction work. The other argument of these workers lies on the potential of construction work for generating employment. They describe that construction work is good because it accommodates many poor, illiterate, and unemployed workers. From the above presentations, one can understand that lack of other optional jobs forced respondents to remain in this job although the work condition is not conducive.

Adaptation is the other factor that maintains respondents to continue working in such challenging job. Although respondents stated construction is very tedious, dangerous and tiresome work, majority of them are working within the sector for more than 2 years. This can be justified with analyzing their working experience. As the information in Table 1 indicates, the least experienced respondent is 2 years and the highest experienced is 12 years. This also further indicates, they are not transient workers in spite of the difficulties they have faced in the

construction work. This may be associated to their low level of education, lack of training, and scarcity of other jobs.

Nature of work: Respondents were further asked about how permanent their job is to assess the nature (regularity) of construction work. Responses show that construction work is very temporary and casual. Majority of respondents (92%) reported that they did not find construction work continuously throughout the year. Only (8%) of them reported that they worked continuously for a full year. Eighty percent of those who reported they did not have job continuously, they only find the opportunity to work for 7-9 months in a year. The other (10%) of them reported they worked for 10-11 months. One worker found job for less than 7 months. This shows the temporary nature of construction work and the insecurity of workers in terms of getting permanent job.

The main factors for the temporary nature of the work according to the respondents include, availability of insufficient construction materials, seasonal nature of the work it self and high competition due to the availability of surplus of labor. In this context, they pointed out that the employers can have a chance to select new employees with less daily wage rate. Availability of other optional jobs when there is no employment in construction was the other area of discussion in this study. Table 6, summarizes the workers alternative works and other mechanisms to sustain their life when there is no work.

Table 6: Workers Alternative Works and Mechanisms

Alternative Works	Frequency n	(%)
Engaged in any kind of work	5	10
Selling traditional tooth brush	1	2
Daily laborer	22	44
Saving	12	24
Selling 'Kollo'	1	2
Employed in baking 'Ingera' and Washing clothes	5	10
Wood work	2	4
Employed as a guard	2	4

Total	50	100
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Table 6 displays, workers were engaged in different types of other optional jobs and they have different coping mechanisms when there don not find work. Forty percent of respondents had experienced and preferred working as daily laborer and the other (10%) of them were engaged in any available work they are accessed. The survey results also found that baking Injera, washing clothes, selling 'Kollo', and employed as a maid, were the experience of the female workers. However, employment as a guard and selling traditional tooth brush were optional jobs for male construction workers.

Health and Safety

Health and safety at work refers to occupational health and safety issues which mainly focuses on: the workers knowledge about safety and health issues, precautions such as knowledge and training on safety issues, delivery of protective equipment by the employers, safety rules and regulations, health risks and related compensation of employment injury. Therefore, presentations of the findings are mainly focused on safety measures and occupational injuries (accidents,) causes of accidents and management of the accidents.

Safety

Respondents were asked about the precautions taken in the construction sites regarding safety practices. The survey found that the safety of employees is not protected and safety measures are none existent. Workers are the only responsible bodies for their health and safety at work. Respondents report that there are no protective equipments like hat, glove, and other protective clothing given for the workers. However, as the finding shows, if there is protective material, it is given for immediate supervisors (or 'Cabos') rather than the workers. This also indicates the lack of concern from the employers' side about safety of workers and also poor

bargain power of workers. Again many workers do not raise safety concerns to their employers because they fear that doing so would jeopardize their opportunity to work. An immediate supervisor or 'the Cabo' who supervises the workers at site described the situation in this way:

People need to keep their jobs. They say every thing is safe ...because they need the job and they do not care whether it is safe or not. They go to the work site whether it is dangerous or not, because they do not have alternative. He further added that both workers and employers did not even, think about safety. Workers are very keen to get jobs and the employers are also focused on how to finish the work on time.

Safety and health training programs can provide several advantages in preventing possible accidents in the construction sites (Arslan & Kivarak, 2005). Within this context, the respondents were also asked whether they received any kind of safety training, information or education about health and safety in the construction sites. As the finding reveals, there is no safety training and workers do not have adequate information about health and safety at work. Respondents further explained that the only concern of employers is about how to finish the work on time and there is no other ways of safety orientation. This conveys, there is a lack of training on safety issues by employers in the construction sites though knowledge about safety and health has paramount importance for the health of workers and creating positive image of work in the construction industry.

Respondents were further asked about self safety measures taken while working in the construction sites. Majority of respondents (94%) had awareness on health and safety issues and knew how to care about them due to risky nature of work. This view is supported by the actions taken by workers to furnish their own precautions such as working shoes, hats, gloves, and

working clothes. However, even if workers are aware about the health and safety measures; significant number of workers did not use protective materials due to financial constraints.

Concerning safety at construction, the information from key informants also confirms that there is no information, training or education about safety at construction. As the construction employer states, there is no training or orientation about safety at work. The employer described the situation in this way:

When we have meetings in our construction association (employers) at the end of the meetings, some times, there are announcements that working environment has to be safe. But there are not that much strict follow ups and giving information about safety for both the employers and the workers at construction sites. Simply, we employed them (workers) and we deal about the wage and the type of work he/she will do. This is the trend.

Health Risks

Respondents were also asked about their experience of accidents and mention some of the health hazards they have encountered within the construction sites. Consequently, more than half of the respondents (60%) of respondents reported, they were some times out of work due to on-the-job-injuries. However, (40%) of the respondents did not encounter accidents. Table 7, illustrates of accidents workers encountered while working.

Table 7: Accidents

Accidents	Frequency n	(%)
Falling from the building	13	46
Falling from the scaffolding/slipping from ladder	2	4
Object fall	5	18
Lacerations	2	4
Others	8	28
Total	30	100

As shown in Table 7, falling is the main causes of accidents. Falling accounts for (72%) of the accidents and other health risks such as, lacerations, pricking/poking by nail or other sharp objects and cutting fingers, accounts for (28%) of potential health hazards. This indicates, construction work is very risky and dangerous which exposes workers to different health hazards which could lead them to temporary and permanent disabilities.

The respondents were asked their opinions about the main possible factors causing construction accidents. Unsafe site conditions and lack of knowledge and training on safety issues were identified as the main factors for the cause of unsafe work conditions. Table 8 shows the distribution of main factors causing accidents.

Table 8: Factors Causing Accidents

Factors	Frequency n	(%)
Poor attitude to wards safety (both workers)	10	20
Unsafe site conditions	18	36
Lack of knowledge and trainings	12	24
Defective materials (poor scaffolding)	6	12
Lack of safety equipments	4	8
Total	50	100

The respondents who encountered accidents were also asked how long they were out of work due to such accidents in the past. This question was raised to assess the severity of the problem and to understand health related compensations for employment injury. As the finding shows, respondents were out of work from days to several months. A total of 60% of respondents were out of work due to accidents for days and months. From these, majority of the respondents (32%) were out of work in days to weeks where as the other (28%) of respondents were out of work in months. Those respondents who were out of work for a week were (53%) and the other

(47%) were out of work for two to three weeks. The respondents who were out of work for months, (57%) of them were out of work for one to three months and (36%) of respondents were out of work from four months to six months. One respondent or (7%) of the workers was out of work for eleven months.

Compensation of Employment Injury: The majority of the respondents who encountered accident didn't receive compensation for the injury. As the survey results show, from (30) respondents who are injured while working, (22) respondents didn't get insurance or employment injury compensation. However, only 8 out of 30 workers get support for their health expense and employment benefits.

The majority of workers were managing their health expense by themselves. Social capital and network are the important mechanisms for the insurance of the workers for their health expenses. Half of the respondents use their social capital for the management of the accidents such as their families (22%), and friends (14%) and both families and relatives (14%) as a means for managing their health expenses. The other 50% of the respondents were managing their accidents by themselves. This illustrates, these construction workers are not secured in terms of health security and compensation of employment injuries apart from the risky nature of the work. The respondents reported that the triangular employment system in the construction work is the main factor that obscures accountability for compensating the workers for their injuries. This is because when workers asked sub-contractors about their compensation, sub-contractors place back their responsibility to contractors. In the middle, workers are unable to distinguish which employer is responsible for payment.

Concerning the health and safety of workers in construction work, key informants also confirm the above findings. All the four key informants share the same view that safety and

health issues in the construction sites are very poor in Ethiopia. Lack of precautions such as absence of standard in scaffolding, lack of inspection, employer's poor attitude about health and safety, and lack of strong enforcements on employers for the supply of protective equipments are the major factors identified. Moreover, low economic status of workers is also the other major factor that makes construction workers very vulnerable to different on-the-job injury. The key informant from MOLSA stated, low economic status and low educational background of workers exacerbate the vulnerability of them to various work-related hazards. In relation to this, the expert states:

Most of the workers in the construction industry are uneducated and they have low economic status so that they give priority for their daily basic needs. They are also voiceless to say "no" to work at unsafe construction sites just for survive. He added that for them, getting job is a big success and working is, all about 'Kerab Tor Yeshala-le' (better to be attacked by spear than hunger) way of thinking just to live and to feed their families.

Though, both key informants and majority of respondents have similar opinions for the main factors for occurrence of accidents, some respondents (three workers) also took low income or wage as the major sources of accidents. One of the respondents explained it as follows:

Workers may fall from the height because some times they come to work without eating their breakfast. Because the money we received is too small to eat three times a day. But construction work is very demanding and needs physical strength. Then, while working, they will fall down and injury occurs.

Behavior of workers, lack of inspection, and lack of occupational health and safety policy are also other main causes of accidents in which key informants were given emphasis. The key informants from MOLSA and ILO stated, workers may come to work drunk and this exposed for different accidents including falling from heights. They further added that this is also associated with lack of rules and regulations about safety issues and lack of policy on occupational health and safety at work in general and in the construction work in particular. The experts further explained that lack of inspection is the main problem due to the absence of specific OSH policy for guiding the inspectors and instruct employers and workers at work. The experts added that there is no single agency or umbrella organization that deals with the worker-employer relations and the employment injury and compensation systems in the construction industry. The system is not worker –friendly so that when the workers faced different problems, they prefer to change other sites considering exploitations and other challenges as a normal trend in construction.

Workers Risk Management

Associational Life: Respondents were asked about their experience in relation to bargain power and rights to form workers association at sites. Most of the respondents (42 out of 50) were not members of union or organization which protects their rights. Only 8 respondents are members of the organizations which protect their rights like construction workers association. Respondents were asked to explain the main factors which prevent them to form unions. Half of the respondent's reported that employer's bad perception on union formation is the main factor that banned them. The other 15 respondents took workers lack of awareness about unions as the main cause. Nature of work is also the other reason for 10 respondents which prevent them to form unions and actively participate in unions to secure their rights when they encountered different challenges with employers.

Similarly, the experts from MOLSA, Addis Ababa City Administration and ILO have similar opinions about the situation of trade unions in construction work in the country. The expert from Addis Ababa city administration states:

If workers are started organizing and forming associations at sites, employers are not happy. They suspected them as strike makers so that they immediately firing them. This is because employers perceived that unions are only stand for their members. Therefore, workers are not initiated to get organized and stand for their right due to fear of dismissal. He further added that since workers are not permanent, and their employment is mostly on oral basis, they have less power to claim their rights. Thus, they preferred to work whatever it comes to survive rather than stand for struggle.

The other factor which was raised by key informants and respondents as important as oral contracting is nature of construction work it self. One of the experts from MOLSA states:

Since construction work is casual; it is very difficult to get them organized as they are not permanent workers in an institution. If a worker is engaged in a certain construction project, he/she has to find another job when the project is completed. Moreover, construction work is different from other industries. All workers are not employed at the same time; each skill worker is employed at each stage of the progress of building construction. Therefore, when a carpenter finishes his part, he left the project and the

other worker follows. This is very challenging to organize them and create awareness about their rights.

Informal risk Management Mechanisms: Respondents were asked about their views and experiences of saving and other risk management mechanisms like membership in CBOs (Community Based Organizations). Saving is the important means of risk management mechanism for (30%) of respondents when they do not find employment. However, most of the respondents (70%) do not use savings. In line with this, respondents were also asked to identify the main factors that prohibited them from saving. Less amount of money they received and the prevailing cost of living of the country are the main factors which banned them from saving. They explain that the money they received is too small and it is not even enough to cover their family expenses, the school fees for their children and renting houses. In relation to this, one of the respondents says, the following proverb to express how the wage he receives is too small and it is not even enough to cover his daily expenses and no money left for saving. He said: “saving is unthinkable, “Kewusha Erat Wusha Kumobet”?, how much money is left on my hand for saving” (literary it means usually the food given for the dog is small and how could another dog is waiting for it).

Unlike their membership status of unions, respondents are members of the community based schemes. More than half of the respondents (56%) were members in either of the CBO namely ‘Edir’, ‘Equb’, and ‘Mehaber’. However, (44%) of them were out of any membership in CBOs. From those respondents who were members in CBOs, most of the workers (79%) have ‘Equb’. Others were members of ‘Edir’ (11%), both ‘Edir and Equb’ (3%) and ‘Mehaber’ (7%). Respondents were further explaining about the major benefits of these community based schemes. Responses show that community based organizations function as informal social

insurance systems when they encountered different work related problems like employment injury and any crisis in life. But financial support and spiritual nourishment are the most important purposes of community based schemes. As the data illustrates, most of the respondents who were members of Edir and Mehaber were workers who are married and have families. However, the respondents who use Equb as a means of risk management, most of them were single workers.

5. DISCUSSION

This section focuses on discussion of major findings based on the research questions. To substantiate the discussion and strengthen the analysis, literature reviews on the Ethiopian legislation and policy frameworks are also incorporated. The chapter discusses on: employment relationship, health and safety and risk management mechanisms of workers on work related risks.

Kanter (1977) suggests that the fate of both men and women is inextricably bound up with workplace structures and processes. He further explains that proper employment relationship is the heart of all the worker-employer relations and for the promotion of health and safety at work. The findings of this study also confirm that employment relations are explained by many and interrelated factors which govern the entire work environment. The following section has detail discussions on the main elements of employment relations in the construction work.

Employment Relationship

Findings of this study confirm that employment relationship is the main challenge and the source of many of the problems at construction work. Lack of written contract, poor payment, and lack of bargain power and absence of compensation for employment injury are the huge contributors for the poor employment relationship. The unorganized nature of workers, casual nature of work, inadequate skill and training, low education and economic status of workers, lack of strong legal enforcement, and lack of knowledge and awareness of workers on their rights, are the other main possible factors which accelerates workers vulnerability for different work related insecurities.

To begin with, training is fundamental to meet skill requirements in any industry for the productivity and employability of work force. In this respect, ILO stated that "training is an

important factor in the realization of several other objectives, notably securing improvement in occupational safety and health and improving wages and other terms on which labor is engaged”(ILO,2003.P.25).

Training and trained work force is vital for the improvements of safety and health at work. However, the majority of the workers interviewed had less than eight years of education dominated by primary education and workers who have no education (illiterate workers). In addition, workers did not acquire skill through formal way of training system rather they learned it through their social connections. On the other hand, though the acquisition of skills of workers is basically informal, the finding conveys, the average daily payment of workers varies with their skill acquisition. This clearly indicates, if skill is the basis for the determination of wage, training is important in the formal way to upgrade them and to create better job opportunity in the labor market. This situation also calls working on skill acquisition of workers to increase their income.

Recruitment: Employment relation starts from how workers are recruited or the way how workers find job. As the finding shows, employment is basically through social connections. The majority of workers find jobs through social connections and family networks, standing at day labor corners or visiting various construction sites. Looking for a job through networks also clearly indicates lack of job opportunity for all workers. As employment is basically through social connections, for the workers who do not have strong social capital or network, this way of job seeking is also less probable to find employment.

As Lai, Lin and Leung (1998) cited in Erikson, (2001) state, people with greater social capital find jobs through contacts with higher status jobs. In this respect, the finding shows that those workers who do not have strong social networks should stand at daily labor corners early in the mornings with their working tools in order to get recruited. These respondents further explain

that whatever the skill and experience they have, they are expected to stand on day labor corners to get the job. This would also imply that as employment is through social networks, workers may work together for the same contractor or subcontractor over a period of time which will deprive their rights. This is basically because these workers do not have access to any other jobs due to their low level of education, inadequate training and skill acquisition. On the other hand, getting a job through personal means also indicates that employment is very temporary and informal that could jeopardizes workers seeking permanent job.

Work Agreement: The type of work agreement has direct relation to many of employment benefits such as compensation of employment injury, overtime payment, and job termination benefits. As the finding shows, the majority of workers were employed based on daily, oral negotiation. Therefore, they lacked employment benefits like compensation for employment injuries or overtime payment. This is because lack of written agreement during employment, long process of the court coupled with low economic status of workers creates room for the employers to exploit workers. When workers are injured or hurt on site, nobody follows it up to ensure that they receive proper care and treatment. Workers are managing their health by themselves or through their networks. Therefore, the burden of care and treatment is borne by the workers and their families alone. Moreover, workers do not have health security at work apart from the risky and dangerous nature of work.

The employer is liable, irrespective of fault, to his workers employment injuries sustained by his/her workers and to cover the general and specialized medical and surgical care expenses and compensation for other temporary and permanent disablements (Part 7 of Labor Proclamation, 377/2003). But this is far from the reality that workers are not benefited due to workers lack of awareness about compensation, lack of sound work management practice in

construction work (lack of umbrella organization health monitoring system), and lack of strong legal enforcement and inspection bodies.

The other thing which is much related to the agreement is workers severance pay and compensation. As most of the workers mention it, they encountered dismissal in the 39th days of work in construction sites. This is because if, workers are staying and working for 45 days in an institution or construction enterprise, the employer has legal obligation to pay workers employment benefit with trade test certificate (Labor proclamation, 377/2003). But, finding of this study shows, employers discharged workers in the 39/40th days and employed another person in order not to pay their severance pay and compensation. This indicates the lack of strong legal enforcement, good governance and labor management to secure these workers. This problem is also aggravated through type of employers in the construction work.

Terms of Employment: This exploratory study conveys, that most workers are employed through subcontractors or sub-sub contractors. Subcontractors and sub-sub contractors are the employers who took contract from the main contractors in the middle of the enterprise and in most cases, workers are not aware of the identity of the main contractors. This type of employment is very challenging for the workers in terms of payment and health related insurances.

The finding of this study reveals, many of the payment problems and sudden job termination are committed by sub-contractors and sub-sub contractors. The main factor is the triangular employment arrangements among the contractors, sub-contractors and sub-sub contractors in the construction industry. These employment arrangements obscure lines of accountability and responsibility. This is because sub-contractors frequently argue that building contractors are responsible for paying workers, while contractors place responsibility back on

sub-contractors. Too often, workers are unable to discern which employer is in fact responsible. This triangular employment arrangement creates burden on workers. For these workers who have low educational background, low economic status, and less bargain power, triangular employment arrangement could be very challenging.

This triangular employment arrangement is also confirmed by other related studies and found that employment through intermediaries is the main sources of many of the problem of construction workers. A study *on Labor Practice in Construction Work in Africa* revealed that "outsourcing" of labor (in which the construction workforce is recruited through subcontractors and other intermediaries) has made work in construction increasingly temporary and insecure which often has a profound effect on occupational safety and health and wages (ILO, 2003).

Wage Determination: *The* other important element in employment relations is the determination of wages and the basis of the wage. Findings of this study show, although the main basis of the wage is the prevailing market situation, the determination of daily payment for each individual worker is based on oral negotiation between the worker and the employer. There is no minimum wage or any kind of fixed starting salary that guides the workers and employers specific to their skill. Since their wage is based on the individual negotiation and prevailing market conditions, in the Ethiopian situation of considerably surplus of labor, there are occasions in which workers may be employed below the prevailing market situations. This situation can be contrasted with the Ethiopian civil servants whose wages are set in law and by contract.

The cumulative effects of all the above factors created different challenges on workers. To this end, different payment problems and sudden job termination were the main challenges that workers faced in this study. Payment problems are related to overtime payment, payment refusal and delay of payment, payment for different installments and payment difference for men and

women. Though most workers were engaged in overtime work, they did not receive their payments due to the lack of concern of employers and lack of knowledge about their rights.

As the finding shows, most of the workers stated that there are people who are very kind and give their payments and there are also others who are very arrogant and deny their payment. These show, workers are not conscious about whether over time payment is their right or not. They perceived that it is the kindness of employers in which overtime payment is based on which may also gives employers a room for exploitation. In the case of payment difference, female workers are less paid despite having the same skill and being engaged in the same type of work. Though article 35 of the constitution ensures, women shall equal right with men in employment, promotion payment, wage and the transfer of pension entitlements, female workers are less paid than their male counterparts for the same type of work.

Healthy worker-employer relationship can be achieved when there is a spirit of harmony and cooperation between the worker and the employer to retain industrial peace. This is also attained when worker-employer relations are governed by basic principles of rights and obligations with a view to enabling productivity and quality of work in any undertakings. Moreover, good employment relationship is not maintained without the active involvement of the mediator (the government) between the worker and the employer.

As the constitution of Ethiopia and Labor Proclamation NO, 377/2003 states, every worker has a right to get overtime payment and his/her salary on time. But workers are far from this ideal. Lack of written agreements, long process of court and low economic status of workers prohibit legal redress. Lack of legal enforcement is also the other main challenge for the proper enactment of workers rights. In the Labor Proclamation 377/2003, if the employer fails to fulfill the obligations and contravenes of the provisions set by labor proclamations contrary to the law,

or if the employer committed any work related violations, the highest penalty is 1200 Ethiopian birr. This low penalty, combined with poor enforcement creates a gap and makes workers vulnerable.

Nature of Work: The temporary nature of construction work seems a global trend. Many of the empirical studies confirm that construction work is casual. Priya (2006) stated that construction workers are subject to layoffs, particularly in the winter months and they are encountered for potential periods of unemployment. Similarly, a study conducted in Uganda, revealed that construction work is one of the most temporary and risky work that made workers vulnerable for other employment problems (Chunua, 2004).

Similarly, as the findings of this study show, construction work is very temporary and casual. On average, employees were out of work from 3 to 5 months which clearly indicates the irregular nature of construction work. Insufficient construction materials, seasonal nature of the work and the fact that ways of finding job is through social connections create obstacles for finding jobs in the whole year. The other factor is the high competition due to the surplus of labor so that employers can choose to select new employees with lower daily wage rates. Thus, workers were engaged in different alternative works and coping mechanisms to sustain their life, when there is no construction work. This could also be one possible factor which strengthens the temporary nature of the work and the insecurity of the workers in terms of finding permanent job.

Workers Views on Construction Work: Findings of this study revealed that work conditions in the construction are poor and most workers are not comfortable. Their stated reasons include construction work is most tiresome, very irregular, abusive, (employers are

selfish), poor pay which is not compatible with effort; very risky and unsafe, work with intense competition due to surplus of labor.

Despite the harsh situation they faced, they remain in the construction work due to lacking options. Adaptation is the other main factor that forces workers to continue in this work though work condition is harsh and risky. After they have been in the construction work for many years, they might adapt to its harsh working conditions, accepting the poor working conditions as unavoidable. This can be justified with analyzing work experiences of workers. Though, the respondents said construction work is very tedious, dangerous, and tiresome, majority of the workers in the sample had been working with in the construction more than 2 years. The least experienced worker in the sample is 2 years and the highest experience is 12 years. This illustrates, these workers are not transient in spite of the difficulties they face, and they continue to work in construction. This is probably associated with their low level of education, lack of formal training, and lack of other job opportunities.

Safety

A healthy work place is an environment where health risks are recognized and controlled if they cannot be removed (Adamson, 2004). The World Health Organization (WHO) also stated, in a healthy work place, the work is designed to be compatible to people's health needs. Therefore, safe workplace is an environment where, to the highest degree, workers well being- physical, mental, and social is promoted and maintained (WHO, 2005).

As findings of this study show, the safety of workers is not catered so that workers are engaged in unsafe working situations. Majority of them were encountered different accidents. Lack of precautions or protective equipments and other working clothing were the main factors

identified. Besides, lack of training and education on safety issues and lack of rules and regulations in the sites about safety are the other main possible factors for the problems of safety.

Though employers have legal obligation for the delivery of precautions or protective equipments, workers are the only responsible bodies for their safety. This study has also an interesting finding about delivery of protective equipments. Protective materials are given for the immediate supervisors or 'Cabos' rather than workers which strengthens lack of concern of employers on precautions. On the other hand, due to financial constraints workers are not also use protective equipments at work so that they are engaged in without safety measures which are dangerous for their health.

WHO explains, safety at work is the responsibility of the worker, the employer and the government which is also stated in Chapter two of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation. Government is responsible to set different occupational policies, passing laws and legislations which help for the promotion of the well being of workers and creating safe working environment in any undertakings. In doing so, the government is responsible to provide workers with protective equipments, clothing and other materials and instruct them of its use (Labor proclamation NO, 377/2003). In this proclamation, the employer is also liable to other additional responsibilities of taking appropriate steps to ensure that workers are properly instructed, and notified concerning the hazards of their respective occupations and the precautions necessary to avoid accidents and injury to health. In addition, the employer has to ensure that directives are given and also the work place and the premises do not cause danger to the health and safety of workers to secure their safety and prevent them from possible accidents.

Government and employers are not the only actors for safety at work. Workers are also responsible for the promotion of their safety and safety of others. Therefore, they are liable to co-

operate the formulation of work rules to safe guard the workers health and safety, and implement the same, make proper use of safety devices and other appliance furnished for the protection of his/her health or safety and for the protection of safety of others. Therefore, the collaboration of workers, government and employers are necessary for creating safe working environment and promoting health of workers which also works for the construction industry.

Employees and employers are the main actors to recognize the responsibility they bear for their own health and health of their own colleagues. In this respect, the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) provides a suitable framework supporting a safety and health culture at work in which Ethiopia is also a signatory. This convention states, the effective prevention of occupational accidents and diseases begins at the enterprise level. Prevention involves participation from governments, workers' and employers' organizations. However, the ground realities of Ethiopia are far from practice and the existing legislations and proclamations are ineffective.

As the information from key informants confirms, safety at work especially the construction safety is very challenging in Ethiopia. The safety issue in general is attached to different factors such as affordability, investment and unemployment and thus, the situation creates controversy. The problem is chicken-egg and it is attached to investment and employment opportunity issues. As the findings conveyed, the government is sandwiched with which comes first: safety first, then, employment opportunity or employment opportunity first, then, safety.

Investment is one of the key sources for generating employment and development. Therefore, the government has also a fear that investors are not willing to invest if rules and regulations on health and safety at work are set. The predicament is, if focus is given for the

improvement of working conditions and the improvements of safety and health at work, it may discourage the investment promotion in the countries like Ethiopia where half of the population are unemployed. This is because safety at work needs extra cost which could decrease the interest and the participation of foreign and domestic investors.

The other challenging thing is the fastest growth of the construction industry. The fastest growth of the industry in the country while the government is not ready for handling the labor force and safety at work also creates burden. As the key informants explained, promoting investment along with health working environment is becoming challenging issue. Inadequate inspection and lack of standards on scaffolding are also the other factors in the industry which renders the effective monitoring and implementation of safety at construction work.

As the key informants explain, in Ethiopia, there is no standard for scaffoldings. For all kinds of buildings (ground and any pluses) the scaffolding is wood so that workers may fall from the height. The problem is also coupled with the absence of occupational health and safety policy in the country and construction work in particular for guiding the workers and employers and other intermediaries regarding the safety at construction sites. Thus, apart from the risky nature of work, workers are not protected.

In Ethiopia, the issue of safety also remains as to the selection of the industries that health and safety issues for whom and for what. Though there are protective enactments that appreciated to the inspection services at work, the practice is minimal due to lack of professional inspectors. According to proclamation 377/2003, work inspectors are responsible to classify the dangerous trades or undertakings, and prepare training programs concerning the prevention of employment injuries and ensure that where undertakings are constructed, whether they are not dangerous to safety and health of workers. However, as the findings show, in the

construction industry, there is no single agency or umbrella organization that follows all the employment relationships and issues of safety and health at work for construction which aggravates the problem.

Health Hazards

The safety of workers is non-existent at construction sites so that workers encountered different occupational injuries. Findings of the current study show, more than half of respondents had encountered serious injury. A serious injury is defined as an injury that required medical attention or resulted in lost on the job. Falling from the height or being hit by falling objects and lacerations such as deep cuts and puncture are the main injuries workers encountered. The main causes for the occurrence of injuries were lack of safety precautions which is resulted from defective materials (poor scaffolding), lack of knowledge and safety training, and lack of rules and regulations on the sites about safety and so on. Behavior of the workers and poor payment were also the other factors for unsafe conditions in construction work. As the finding from the key informants showed, workers may come drunk and it may caused to on the occupational injuries.

Compensation of employment injury: Work-related injuries sustained at construction sites should be under workers' compensation insurance. However, as the finding show most of the injured workers did not receive compensation of employment injury. Normally, these construction workers are employed through contractors or sub-contractors or sub-sub contractors. These employment arrangements between the building contractors, sub-contractors and sub-sub contractors obscure lines of liability for compensation of workers for their injuries. As the findings from the key informants and the respondents indicate, contractors or subcontractors

employ these workers till they remain capable of performing the assign tasks. Whenever they fall sick or become disabled, they are thrown out of employment without any employment benefits.

Traditionally, an employer's responsibility was to help employees when they were sick and injured. To this end, organizations or construction enterprise provided periodic physical examinations, hired nurses to treat injuries at the worksite, paid an employee's salary during short illnesses and, in some cases, secured hospitalization benefits (Labor proclamation NO, 377/2003). However, this is ideally true for the workers who are formally employed. These is because though the employers are liable for helping the injured and ensure compensation of employment injury, there are other factors that has to be considered for the proper enactment of the legislation to protect workers rights. Lack of strong legal enforcement, lack of sound work management practice in construction, workers informal way of employment and oral contracting, and lack of OSH policy have their own contributions to prevent them from legal rights.

Detection and control of occupational exposures depends on a system of monitoring and management at the level of the workplace (ILO, 2001). In the international community including African countries, construction safety gained attention due to the nature of the work (WHO, 2004; ILO, 2006). Thus, different actions like formulating occupational health and safety policy and amendment in labor relations are set to promote safety of workers.

In Ethiopia, though there is no OSH policy, occupational safety and health is incorporated in the labor proclamation. But as the information form key informants confirm, the practice is very minimal. This is because factory inspectorate systems have inadequate staff and resources to implement laws relating to the work environment are the main problems. In addition, lack of coordination of the various organizations which works on health and safety at work, labor and related issues is the other challenge. Key informants expressed concerns about the lack of collaboration between agencies responsible for occupational health and safety at the organization

level. This lack of collaboration at organizational level leads to fragmentation of programs, duplication of efforts and loosens the inspection work and lead to fragmentation and hyphenated accountability.

In general, the health and safety problems of construction workers face could be attributed to lack of information, education, lack of concern of employers on safety and health monitoring system on condition of work with in these construction sites. This calls for the sensitization of workers on various hazards and means of prevention. However, the finding shows that even if the workers are knowledgeable about the safety issues, there is no delivery of the protective materials on the side of the employers. Thus, the workers feel helpless in lobbying relevant authorities to implement the health and safety requirements. This is partly due to lack of organization among the construction workers and fear of dismissal if they engaged in advocacy. This is largely because most of these workers do not have any union or associations which play the role of advocacy and policy influence as discussed in the following section.

Risk Management of Workers

Associational life: The findings from both respondents and key informants conveyed, workers are not getting organized and stand for their rights due to the bad perception of their employers about unions. This view is supported by the actions taken by employers when workers start to form unions and any associations at sites. If workers are organized and start to form associations at sites, employers are not happy and usually they firing them up. Thus, workers are not initiated to get organized and feared that employers would deny them future employment opportunities. This is because unions are predominately viewed by employers as monopolies and the only objectives are raise wages and guarantee jobs for their members. Such views of employers ignore the widespread effect of collective bargain on the operation of work force.

Scholars, however, argued on the importance of collective bargain and the existence of strong unions for mediating both parties to develop smooth relationship between the worker and employer. Mandelstamm (1998) argues, unions are not only concerned with wages and employment opportunities, but also with the physical conditions of the work place, the system used to assign workers to jobs, the provision of training and the availability of channels to settle disputes between workers and employer along with a host of other facets of employment in relationship. In a similar understanding, Part eight of the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation, No, 377/2003 states:

Bargain power or workers unions are very important for enabling workers and employers to maintain industrial peace and work in the spirit of harmony and cooperation of workers. Moreover, trade unions (workers associations) have paramount importance to observe the condition of work and insure the laws, legislations, directives, and statements, respective of the rights of the workers and represent collective negotiations and labor disputes

Though workers have the constitutional rights to get organized and benefited out of it and employers are accountable for permitting workers to form trade unions, the ground realities are quite different from legislative aspects. As the findings show, employers are very resistant and workers are not initiated to form construction unions due to the fear that employers would deny them future employment opportunities. Therefore, passing laws alone doesn't take care of everything. The enforcement agencies must intensify its implementation in the practical aspects. Mainly, it is due to ineffective enforcement mechanisms and workers lack of awareness about

s and the liabilities of employers under relevant statutes affect positively the whole the industry.

place of work has an impact on the ability to get organize (Lund, & Ardington, 2006). e way, as the finding of this study shows, nature of construction work is also the other ch is equally as important as the bad perception of employers for the absence of unions ction sites. This is due to the fact that construction work is casual and also all workers mployed at the same time, it is challenging to get them organized. The question remains ng?

trature suggested that trade unions have enabled the interests of workers to be d, in order to bring balance to the unequal power relations between the worker and the (Lund & Ardington, 2006). However, as findings of this study show, workers are ir basic right of bargain power which destructs the healthy working environment and vates the unsafe working conditions in the construction industry.

Formal Risk Management Mechanisms: The findings of this study show, though most kers are not organized in formal associations and trade unions, they are engaged in rmal risk management mechanisms mainly in informal social insurances and saving. e crucial to alleviate the risk of sudden income loss (Commission on Legal ment of the Poor (HLCEP, 2006). Saving is also important means of risking problems kers were out of work due to lack of job opportunity and accidents for one-third of ts in this study. However, majority of workers are not functional in use of saving due ll amount of money they received and the casual nature of the work. This is because is not enough to cover their daily expenses, school fees for their children and house

The other important risk mechanisms of workers were their engagements in informal finance systems. In this respect, Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor stated, in India, the principal sources of credit are the informal channels such as money lenders, relatives, friends, and traders and so on. There are then traditional sources of funding such as 'Mehaber', Church associations ('Mehaber') and Equbs that are important tools allows people to (HLCEP, 2006).

In the same way, the findings of this study conveyed most of workers were members of community based schemes (Community Based Organizations) like Equib, Edir, and Mehaber. Community schemes were important for them and function as informal insurance system when they encountered on-the-job injury or other work related risks, the main coping mechanism were their friends, relatives, and the person whom they knew. But financial support and spiritual nourishment are the most important purposes of community based schemes for workers. Social capital was also the other main mechanism while they encountered risks.

Employment is considered as the best way out of poverty. The construction industry has very high potential of employment creation. However, as the findings conveyed, the working practices regarding labor in the construction industry such as outsourcing (employment through sub-contractors) and recruiting on temporary and casual terms, lead to deteriorating working conditions. Lack of strong enforcement coupled with the unorganized nature of workers make workers more vulnerable. Therefore, it is viewed that construction industry is a mere exploitation of cheap labor. Creating convenient environment for these workers has to be seen from human right perspective rather than only the social and economical aspects of the country.

In this respect, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the UN, Article 7 states “The States Parties to the present covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work which ensure in particular: remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with: (a) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work (b) Safe and healthy working conditions(c) workers have right to get employment benefits and so on. As the findings show, however, many of the things in relation to the employment relationship and health and safety of these construction workers is out of these basic rights which needs due attention in the industry.

6. IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK AND CONCLUSION

This chapter deals with implication and conclusion. The implication section gives insights on the implications of this research for social work policy, practice, education, and research and future directions. Conclusions drawn from the findings are also included.

Implication for Social Work

Social work in its various forms promotes social justice and intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment. The interventions range from primarily person- focused to involvement in social policy, planning and development. Human rights and social justice also serve as the motivation and justification for social work action (Supplement of International Social Work, nd).

Understanding the working environment is one of the entities in which social work strives to promote human right, justice and liberate vulnerable people at work. As Dubois and Miley (1992) state, social work has great contributions in promoting healthy working

environment through advocacy for workers rights and work place safety. Therefore, occupational social work facilitates change and in both employees and work place organizations and address a wide range of personal and social needs that benefit people. In doing so, social work engaged in research, education and practice to impact social policy and economic development though understanding the interaction of people with in their working environment.

The dynamics of working environment is different from industry to industry and within each working environment. The impact of working environment on people's life is also varies with the type of work they are engaged in and the kind of employment relations. With in these interactions, different problems arise which affects the life of working people. However, problems have to be well understood and identified in order to maintain work security and good employment relations at work. Social work has also a role to address the injustices that exists at work environment in a scientific way to effect change and improve working conditions by critiquing and illuminating inequalities. Therefore, this study has the following implications in social work for practice, education, policy and research.

Implication for Policy

Research is a basis to identify problems, prioritize them and formulating policy, to effect change. Findings of this study show, workers are encountered different employment relationship challenges and work violations like payment refusal, denying over time payment, and wage differences among men and women and so on. Therefore, the study findings might be an input for any attempts done for the development of comprehensive polices or programs regarding the labor relations in the construction industry. The findings of the study on health and safely also show, workers are engaged in unsafe and risky work environment which resulted in many

occupational injuries. This is also an important implication for policy intervention on the area of safety and health in construction work in particular.

Lack of strong enforcement and absence occupational safety and health policy are among the major factors for the unsafe working conditions of construction workers in this study. Thus, this study helps for law enforcements and to comprehend the existing policies, legislations and gaps in relation to condition of work of workers in the construction industry in Ethiopia.

Implication for Practice

Social work intervention ranges from micro-to- macro level (Compton, Galway, & Cournyer, 2005). The improvement of condition of work is very important for the life of working people. In the world of work, the well-being of the workers is directly or indirectly depends on the working environment they are engaged in and labor relations and their ability to manage or ensure work- related risks. In this respect, as Googins and Goodfery, (1985) cited in Dubois and Miley, (1999) state social workers attended to the human and social needs of employees in the work milieu by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments. They further explained that the concerns of occupational social workers also move beyond the concerns of the individual's problem behaviors to concerns with organizational and environmental change to foster healthier and more healthful organizations and communities. Therefore, this study has the following important implications for social work practice.

The findings of this study show, workers faced different challenges and work violations. Moreover, one of the main finding of this study is that construction workers are not safe so that workers were encountered different serious on-the job injuries. Therefore, this study would have implication and used as abase for social work practice and advocacy work for promoting healthy

working environment in the construction industry on condition of work construction industry and other work environments in Ethiopia.

Social work practitioners often work with people, whose rights have been violated or threatened and whose basic needs are not met to address social justice issues. Findings of this study show different violations of workers rights such as discrimination, payment problems and right to safety at work. Thus, this research has an implication of practice to promote social justice and social services at work places.

Implication for Education

As Dubois and Miley (1999) stated social workers engaged in labor-management disputes and advocacy for workers rights and work place safety to improve services and working conditions. NASW (1996) also explains the main roles of occupational social workers are health and wellness promotion programs at work places to address work related risks. Therefore, this research has the following direct implication of education for social work practice in the future.

The research gives first hand information about condition of work and the situation of construction workers which is valuable on how to intervene at work environments in general and in the construction industry in particular. As the findings show, lack of safety measures at construction work is not protected so that workers are exposed to different health hazards. Thus, this research has possible implications of social work education in the area of health and safety at work particularly in field of social work in the health fields.

The findings of this study also reveled that construction workers encountered different employment relationship challenges problems like refusal of payment, payment difference or men and women, absence of employment injury compensation and so on. Social work promotes social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients at different levels of intervention.

Therefore, this study has direct implication for social policy analysis and interventions to promote change at work environment.

Implication for Research and Future Directions

This study explores various issue of condition of work which has an impact on individual and family, and the society so that this research has great contributions for further studies in social work that focuses on family and work conditions. This study sees the multiple issues of condition of work (employment relationship, health and safety and risk mechanisms of workers). This helps social work research to gain multiple outlooks to build a more comprehensive understanding of issues related to the study of work related risks in Ethiopia. Safety at work creates the very foundation for the wellbeing of working people. Social work targets at interventions for social support, prevention and protection of people from any danger to promote wellbeing. Therefore, one of the major issues in this study is the health and safety of workers which could be the main possible areas of study in social work on the issue of safety at work.

Research can serve as a tool to identify the existing social problems as well as basis for action. Since this study focuses on the labor force and health and safety in the construction industry, this study can be used as a ground for further studies on the area of condition of work and work environment in social work. The study findings also provide a base for further research on labor practices in the construction industry in Ethiopia.

Future Direction

Understanding the working conditions at industry or organization level is important to promote the labor relations and to foster safety at work. Labor relations and safety and health issue are also different from industry to industry. With in this insight, studies on condition of work in different industries in general and in the construction industry in particular are minimal

in Ethiopia. Further research is important to identify the problem and promote the working conditions at different levels. Therefore, in the process of this study, the study come up with issues that may need further study to comprehended labor practice and health and safety in the construction industry. The following are important research questions that need further investigation:

1. What are the occupational health risks that construction workers are experiencing?
2. What is the effect of work conditions on the family-life of workers in the construction industry?
3. How is the working condition of women in construction work?
4. How is the participation of woman in construction industry?

Conclusion

The terms under which people are employed and the conditions, under which they work as well as the availability of jobs in the market, can affect the achievement of social objectives such as the alleviation of poverty and promotion of economic and social security. This is because any unsafe working environment affecting the life of a worker, in whatever form, is costly to both the family and the nation as whole.

Condition of work of construction workers is found to be poor. This is mainly due to the poor employment relationship and lack of safety measures which resulted in health hazards. Lack of written agreement, poor payment, and absence of compensation for employment injury and so on are the main factors for the poor employment relationship. In addition, the temporary nature of work, informal ways of finding construction job, inadequate skill and training, were also the other main highlighted factors for problems of workers. Thus, payment problems like

refusal of payment (disappearance of the employers), delay of salary, deny of over time payment, and payment difference for men and women workers were major challenges that workers faced.

Safety and health issues were also the other most challenging things that workers encountered. Safety measures are non-existent in the construction sites. Lack of precautions such as training and education and lack of delivery of protective materials are the main safety measure problems. Therefore, workers were exposed to different kinds of easy and heavy physical hazards. Falls were the dominant accidents such as falling from the buildings and scaffoldings, falling objects. Lacerations such as deep cuts/puncture/poking by nail or other sharp objects, and cutting fingers are the other on-the-job injuries workers encountered. Unsafe site conditions which is resulted from defective materials (poor scaffolding), lack of knowledge and safety training, lack of rules and regulations about safety on the sites were identified as the main factors for the cause of many of the accidents. Moreover, lack of inspection was highlighted as the other potential factors attribute for poor safety and health management in the construction sites.

Work-related injuries sustained at construction sites should be under workers' compensation insurance. However, most of the injured workers did not receive compensation of employment injury due to many and very interrelated factors and thus, the problem is vicious circle. Because construction workers are employed through triangular employment arrangements between the building contactors, sub-contractors and sub-sub contractors which obscure lines of liability for compensation of workers for their injuries.

Though there are also various protective enactments for these workers, the ground realities are totally opposite from legal provisions on the subject. Contractors employ these workers till they remain capable of performing the assign tasks. Whenever they fall sick or become disabled,

they are thrown out of employment without any employment benefits as specified under the labor proclamation 377/2003.

Workers are also unorganized and incapable to bargain on the issue of welfare and social protection due to the employer's resistance and lack of knowledge of the workers on bargain power. Subsequently, the enforcement mechanism provided the relevant enactments are inadequate and ineffective in enforcing the provisions in practical life. Lack of inspection body is also the other challenge to prevent and protect workers from any kind of exploitation and to promote safety at work. In addition, there is no single agency which ensures the effective and efficient implementation of relevant schemes or laws which is worker friendly. On the other hand, the success of any scheme depends upon its implementation; otherwise, the legislation remains a piece of paper for workers. Thus, lack of strong legal enforcement coupled with other organizational challenges and the absence of health monitoring system and the employment relations in the construction sector obscure line of accountability among employers.

In general, the main factors for the poor employment relations and poor record of safety and health at construction work have three folds which need holistic approach to solve the problem: personal factors, the organizational factors, and nature of the work it self. Low economic status, inadequate skill and training, low educational background, unorganized nature of most of the workers are considered as the main personal factors that exposed the workers to work in hazardous situations and different violations of their rights.

The second is the organizational factors which include the reluctance and lack of commitment of the government for the unsafe work condition of construction work places. This is supported by the lack of adequate inspection bodies and at work for promoting safety and health of workers and the good labor relation. The other organizational problem is lack of strong

legal enforcement for the promotion of safety of construction work and labor relation. Causality of the work it self is the third factor that affects the life of workers. The seasonal nature of the work and in availability of sufficient construction materials coupled with surplus of labor made construction work temporary which exposed them for different violations at work.

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Appendices

Appendix-A**Informed Consent for the Respondents**

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Dear Respondent:

My name is Gojjam Bogale, a graduate student in the School of Social Work. In the partial fulfillment my MA in Social work, I am expected to produce a paper work. To this end, I am going to study on Condition of work (employment relations and health and safety measures) of work of construction workers in Addis Ababa. The study is conducted in Ayat and surrounding (Meri-CMC) areas of Addis Ababa. The research aims at gaining better understanding of the condition of work in construction work. The intention of the study is only academic. You are selected to give information on Employment Relationship and Occupational Health and Safety issues in the construction industry. The information you give will be strictly confidential. The success of this study is based on your response. Thank you for your time and your crucial ideas. I would like to thank you for your willingness to involve in the study. We will stay together for about half an hour. Participation in this study is strictly based on your willingness. I would like to thank you again. Can we start?

Yes -----

No-----

Appendix- B**Informed Consent for the Key Informants**

Dear Interviewee,

My name is Gojjam Bogale, a graduate student in the School of Social Work. In the partial fulfillment my MA in Social work, I am expected to produce a paper work. To this end, I am going to study Condition of work (employment relations and health and safety measures) of work of construction workers in Addis Ababa. In the interview, experts who are experienced and knowledgeable like you are going to be interviewed. They are from the Governmental and non-governmental organizations. In our discussions, we will focus on Employment Relationships and Occupational Health and Safety of the construction workers and construction work. I would like to thank you for your willingness to involve in the study that aims to understand the condition of work of construction workers. While answering the questions, there is no right or wrong answers. You can freely explain what you think is relevant. Once you consent to participate, you have also the right to discontinue the participation and/or skip questions you do not want to answer

We will stay together for about one and half hours. For the purpose of gathering details of the interview, your responses will be tape recorded based on your willingness. It will be destroyed after the data is transcribed. Participation in this study is strictly based on willingness.

I would like to thank you again. Can we start?

Yes -----

No-----

Appendix –C**Survey Questionnaire for Construction Workers**

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Introduction

Dear respondent:

These days, in Ethiopia construction work is becoming a major source of employment and income. The industry, however, is characterized by extensive subcontracting, temporary and insecure employment. This research aims at gaining better understanding of the condition of work of (Terms and conditions of Employment and Occupational Health and Safety) of construction workers in Addis Ababa. The study is conducted in Ayat and surrounding (Meri-CMC) areas of Addis Ababa. You are selected to give information on Employment Relationship and Occupational Health and Safety issues in the construction industry. The information you give will be strictly confidential. You can stop the interview at any time. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, you can also skip them. I'd like to start by asking you some general questions about your personal information. The success of this study is based on your response. Thank you for your time and your crucial ideas. Are you willing to participate?

Yes. -----

No -----

001. Questionnaire Identification Number _____

002. Date of Interview ____/____/____
Day Month Year

SECTION I: EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your skill?

- 1. Carpenter
- 2. Painter
- 3. Metal installation worker
- 4. Mason
- 5. Plumber
- 6. Electricians
- 7. General worker
- 8. Others specify -----

2. How long have you been on this job?

-----years

3. Did you receive training to upgrade your skills?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

4. If yes, please specify where you got your training

5. How did you get the job?

- 1. Through relatives
- 2. Through friends
- 3. Standing on daily labor corners
- 4 Visit to previous job sites
- 5. Other (please specify) -----

6. Who hired you in most cases?

- 1. Owner
- 2. Contractor
- 3. Subcontractor
- 4. Other (please specify) -----

7. Do you face any problem with your employers?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

8. If you said yes for Q 10, what kind of problems you faced?

9. Who is the most problem maker?

- 1. Contractor
- 2. Subcontractor
- 3. Others, please specify-----

10. Requirements for employment?

- 1. Certificate
- 2. Reputation
- 3. Work experience
- 4. Other (please specify) -----

11. Work agreement

- 1. Standard written
- 2. Written
- 3. Verbal
- Other (please specify) -----

WORKING HOURS AND LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

12. How many hours do you work per day?

- 1. 8 hours
- 2. More than eight hours

13. Did you work over time?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

14. If YES, is over time wage paid?

- 1. Yes

2. No

15. If your answer is NO, what do you think is the reason?

Describe briefly -----

16. Are you allowed to take leave?

1 Yes

2. No

17. If YES, are wages paid?

1. Yes

2. No

18. How would you rate the working conditions?

1. Very good

2. Good

3. Average

4. Poor

5. Very poor

19. Could you explain why you said so? -----

Wage

20. Specify the nature of payment

1. Piecework

2. Daily

3. Weekly

4. Monthly

5. Other (please specify) -----

21. Average earnings (in Birr): per day ----- per week----- per month -----

22. Do you know how the wage is determined?

1. Yes

2. No

23. If yes, specify?

- 1. Negotiation with owner
- 2. Negotiation with contractor
- 3. Negotiation with subcontractor
- 4. Agreement with institution
- 5. Other (please specify) -----

24. Basis of wage

- 1. Prevailing market conditions
- 2. Previous engagements
- 3. Other (please specify) -----

25. Do you work the whole year?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

26. If your answer is NO, Could you please specify approximate number of months you are out of work -----

37. If you are not working the whole year, what did you do when there was no work?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

28. What is your view of working conditions in construction? -----

29. Comment on payment -----

30. Comment on employment relationship -----

31. Comment on the nature of work-----

**SECTION II: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CONSTRUCTION
WORK**

Safety

1. Who is responsible for safe working condition on site?

- 1. Owner
- 2. Contractor
- 3. Foreman
- 4. Self
- 5. Other (please specify) -----

2. Are there any safety/health regulations on site?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

3. Are safety measures taken in the construction sites?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

4. If YES, What safety/health measures are taken on site?

- 1. Education/information about safety and health
- 2. Protective clothing
- 3. Warning signs
- 4. Other (please specify) -----

5. Did the protective materials like gloves, hats etc, deliver to you while working?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

6. Are you aware of any health/safety hazards on site?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

7. Could you specify how you protect your safety?-----

Health Hazards

8. Have you ever been out of work because of an accident on site?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

9. If yes, for how long (days) ----- (months) ----- (years) -----

10. What was the cause of the accident?

- 1. Falls from the building
- 2. Falls from the scaffolding
- 3. Object fall
- 4. Lacerations
- 5. Others, specify -----

11. How was the management of the accident? Could you describe it briefly? -----

12. Did you receive health insurance or compensation for the accident?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

13. If your answer is NO, how did you manage it?

- 1. With the help of friends
- 2. With the help of my families
- 3. With the help my association
- 4. By my self
- 5. Others specify-----

14. Could you mention some of the major factors for the unsafe working site?

15. How can safety conditions on site be improved? -----

SECTION III: RISK MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS OR STRATEGIES OF THE WORKERS

1 Are you a member of any association?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

2. If yes, please specify the association -----

3. What are the benefits of being in an association? -----

4. Are you a member of any union or organization, which protects your rights?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

5. If yes, please specify -----

6. What benefits do you get from membership of the above organization?

- 1. Loans

- 2. Tools for work
- 3. Training
- 4. Information on wage
- 5. Information on safety/health issues
- 6. Support/advice on dispute resolution
- 7. Medical expenses cover
- 8. Other (please specify) -----

7. Do you have saving account?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

8. Are you a member of associations like Edir, Equip or Mehiber?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

9. If, yes, which association you are a member of?

- 1. Edir
- 2. Equip
- 3. Mahiber
- 4. Other specify -----

10. What benefits you got from these associations?

- 1. -----
- 2. -----
- 3. -----
- 4. -----
- 5. -----

SECTION IV: Socio-Demographic Data

1. Age of respondent -----

2. Gender of the respondent

- 1. Female
- 2. Male

3. From which region you came from?

- 1 Addis Ababa

2. Amhara
3. Oromia
4. SNNP
5. Tigray
6. Other (specify) _____

4. What is your level of education?

1. Illiterate
2. Primary
3. Grade 7 to 8 (Junior high school)
4. High school (grade 9 to 12)
5. College
6. Other specify -----

5. How many years have you been working in construction?

1. 2-4 years
2. 5-7 years
3. 8-10 years
4. Above 10 years

6. Marital status

1. Married
2. Single
3. Widowed
4. Separated

Appendix- D**Guiding Question for Key Informants (MOLSA, ILO, Addis Ababa City Administration
Labor, and Social Affairs)**

1. Would you tell me briefly about the over all programs of your organization in relation to employment relationships and Occupational Safety and Health of construction workers?
2. What types of activities are given in this organization in terms of Occupational Health and Safety and Employment relationship in the construction industry?
3. Could you tell me about the situation of construction workers especially in Addis Ababa?
4. What do you think are the most existing challenges in the building construction industry?
5. How is the coverage of labor rights to these workers? (**Probe:** challenges in employer-worker relationship, Provisions of the safety and health of workers, terms and conditions of employment in the construction work)?
6. How is the relation between this organization and employers (**Probe-**it may be in terms of reporting the accidents to your organizations)?
7. How is the practicality of investment promotion and the workers safety and health in Construction?
8. What is your the over all comment about the existing situation of the workers and the Construction? Industry as a whole?
9. Do you have any other comments to add.?

Thank You Very Much

Appendix-E**Interview Guide for Employers (Immediate Supervisor and Construction Employer)**

1. How long do you have engaged as employer in the construction industry?
2. How is construction work in Ethiopia (**probe**-Government, private...)
3. How is construction work in terms of skilled and trained man power?
4. How are employment relations in construction work?(**probe**: sub-contractor issues?)
5. How do you get the workers when you want to employ the workers?
6. Based on your experience what are the basic challenges and opportunities between the worker and employer in the construction industry?(**probe**: employment relations)
7. How is safety in construction?(Precautions, information and training, and health risks and employment injury compensation etc?)
8. Do you have any comments about construction work and workers and employers relations in Addis Ababa?

Thank you very much for your willingness

Appendix-F

Permission Letter Form the School

Gojjam Bogale is, Social work Graduate student in Addis Baba University, has conducting her masters thesis on “Condition of Work of Construction Workers in Addis Ababa”. In response to this, the university checked whether the research has met the ethical guide line of the university. As a result, it is confirmed that the research won’t bring any potential physical or psychological risk to participants. Thus, the university has given the researcher the permission to conduct the study at Ayat construction areas of Addis Ababa. All concerned bodies are also kindly requested to co- operate the researcher in any way possible.

Best regards

School of Social Work

Annex B: Exploratory interview Guides

Appendix-G

Exploratory Interview Guide for Construction Workers

1. Could you tell about your skill?
2. How long did you work in the construction work?
3. How is your terms of employment while your were working in all these years?
4. How is the agreement?(**probe**-oral, written)
5. How do get work?
6. How wage is is determined? (**probe**-personal, institutional, and so on)
7. Do you face challenges when you work in those years at construction work?(
probe: worker-employer challenges, employment challenges and so on)
8. How is safety at construction **Work** (**probe**, about the protective materials, like glove, helmet etc, Do you get training or information about safety before you get working...)?
9. How are the health risks at work? (experience of self and others)
10. How is the management of employment injury or accidents at construction sites?
(**Probe**-how the accident is managed by the employers, workers, or how is employment injury compensation?
11. How is your associational life at construction work (**probe**- experiences unions, construction associations at construction work and so on).

I thank you in Advance for your willingness

Appendix- H

Exploratory Interview Guide for key Informants (MOLSA and ILO)

1. Would you tell me briefly about the over all objectives of your organization? (**Probe-** in terms of employment relations and health and safety at work?)
2. What activists are specifically given in this organization in relation to occupational health and safety and condition of work in the construction industry (**probe-** e.g., inspection work).
3. How is the condition of work in the construction industry (**Probe-**employment relations, safety and health issues and the other employment benefits in the construction industry).
4. How is the situation of construction workers in Addis Ababa?
5. What are the most challenging things in building construction work in Addis Ababa (**Probe-**in terms of monitoring organization, the intervention of the government for safety and health etc).
6. What are the main challenging things in the construction work?(worker employer relations, safety issues, or inspection if there is or any other ?).
7. What do you think is the main challenges between the employer and the worker in the construction industry? (**probe-** specifically employment relations
8. What attempts are done to secure the construction workers in terms of health and safety?
9. Is there any policy or guide line in which your organization refers when rendering the inspection work in the field? (**probe-** e.g. Occupational health a d safety policy or
10. How is the relationship between your organizations and the employers in construction work (**probe-**in terms of accident report, or union formation and collective agreements between the workers and employers).
11. What is your over all comments about the existing situations of the workers and the construction work as a whole?

Thank you very much.

Appendix-I

Exploratory Interview Guide for Employers

1. How long do you work as construction employer?
2. How grade types are given in the construction work employers?
3. How is construction work in Ethiopia?
4. How are the government and private construction employment in Ethiopia (**probe-** differences, current situations so on).
5. How do you employ the workers?(**probe-** employment procedures, contractor subcontractor relations).
6. How is the employment relation between the employers and workers at construction work?
7. Based on your experience as employer, what are the basic challenges in the construction work (**probe-** in terms employment, workers, nature of the work, and so on).
8. How is safety at construction(**probe**, the employers experience of giving information, workers awareness about safety, precautions or protective materials and the employers awareness about it)
9. How is health risks and their management at construction work (**Probe-** how employment injury compensation s secured?

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this study entitled as "An Exploratory Study on Condition of Work of Building Skilled Construction Workers in "Ayat" Areas of Addis Ababa" is my original work and any material used in this study is dully acknowledged.

Name: GojjamBogale

Signature: _____

Date: June 2009

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Professor Alice.K. Butterfield(PhD)

Signature: Alice K Butterfield

Date: August 21, 2009