

# LIVELIHOODS: CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



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***It is estimated that there are 8-10 lakh construction workers in Delhi, a majority of whom are poor migrants who have come to the city in search of better livelihood opportunities. They form part of the urban poor who face many deprivations related to housing, access to services and social protection. Construction workers of Delhi demand recognition as key city-makers and better facilities for life and work.***

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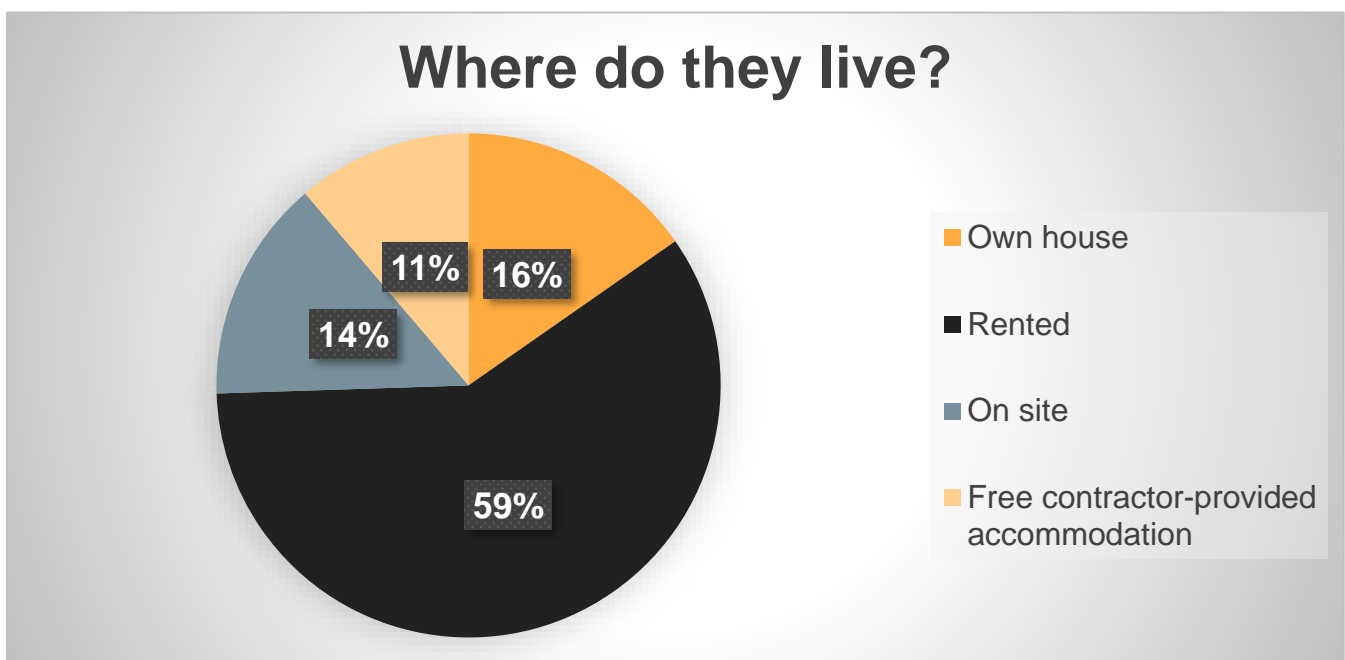
Main Bhi Dilli is a people's campaign aiming to envision and enable a more inclusive city. It is a collective of civil society organizations, activists, researchers, and others who work on diverse issues of housing, livelihood, gender and other rights.

# CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN THE CITY

Traditionally, the construction industry has been labour intensive as the labour is cheap and easily available.. Workers engaged in this industry mostly consists of low-skilled migrants from villages and smaller towns. They are characterised by low wages and poor living conditions.

69% of the workforce is between the ages of 16-35, of which only 12% are women. 81% of all workers find more than 15 days of work in a month. 22% find over 25 to even 30 days of work (Nirmanana).

## Where do they live?



## Their contributions

Construction sector is the third largest employer- 10% of total workforce.

It is an important source of livelihood for the urban poor.

They subsidise urban development by providing labour at low rates.

The prolonged struggle by construction workers has resulted in the enactment of a central legislation called the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act) in 1996. Under this, BOCW Welfare Board was formed in Delhi which is tasked with registration of workers and distribution of cess benefits. However, while over 5 lakh workers have been registered and the cess collected has grown, the claims are not distributed satisfactorily.

# KEY ISSUES

## LACK OF ADEQUATE HOUSING

- Lack of affordable housing  
No provision for families, migrants etc.
- Long distance between the working site and place of stay with lack of transport facilities.
- Lack of availability of basic services like clean water, hygiene food, education, creche and health etc.

## ISSUES OF IDENTITY & ENTITLEMENTS

- Migrant's ID proofs are unrecognized. which inhibits their access to basic services and entitlements in Delhi.
- Lack of awareness regarding the identity, entitlements, rights and Union collectives.

## PROBLEMS FACED BY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

## MECHANISATION & NEED FOR SKILLING

- Loss of work due to changes brought about by mechanization
- Lack of skill upgradation centres for workers training

## HARSH WORKING CONDITIONS

- Low pay
- Long working hours
- Lack of Safety standards which results in frequent accidents
- Lack of spaces for creche, toilets and mess

# WHAT CAN MPD '41 DO FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS?

## 1 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AT WORKING SITES

- Establishment of at least one Worker resource center at labour chowks and residential areas.
- Provision of Sheds at Labour Chowks with basic infrastructure
- Design of Minimal standards for Temporary sheds for construction workers at sites should be issued and implemented.
- Provision of creches (full day working) in residential areas as well as places of work
- A separate lactation room should be constructed to feed the kids.

## 2 FOCUS ON THE LOCATION

- Location mapping process need to be designed and implemented so that on the basis of construction sites, facilities like accommodation and transportation can be provided.

## 3 RENTAL HOUSING

- Provision of low cost housing facilities for migrant construction workers in Delhi through DUSIB.
- For this, the models like Bhavana Foundation's rental hostel should be studied and implemented in the city. Existing vacant buildings and spaces can be used for that.

## 4 PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

- Food, adequate toilets, bathroom/ washing spaces, safe drinking water, crèche, recreational spaces, mess and storage should be there at the construction sites.
- For this, existing models of other places can be studied and bought in place. For example, Soup Kitchens can be set up in hotspot locations where the workers can avail of food.

## 5 SKILL UPGRADATION

- Facility for skill up gradation of construction workers especially should be included in the world class skill centres of Delhi government.
- For this, each working site should have one common space or room for skill development.

## 6 TRANSPORTATION FACILITY

- Subsidized transportation facility like DTC buses and autos should be provided to the workers.

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