

## MASONRY ARTISAN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

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**Abstract:** Industrialization with the advent of newly developed machineries played an important role in the progress of countries worldwide. Building infrastructure and construction is the basis of industrial development. The study hypothesized that adoption of new technology uplifts the socio-economic condition of masonry artisans. The type of questionnaire was semi structured and was designed as a qualitative tool of research. The data was collected from a sample of 53 artisans selected through snow ball sampling from the study locale i.e. Tehsil Chakwal. The data was collected within 15 days, with the help of the key informants who served as the first point of reference. The data was initially qualitative which was quantified for the application of statistical analysis. The variables were then correlated to explore the findings. Statistical analysis of correlation proved the hypothesis that new technologies, education and training have uplifted socio-economic condition of the artisans and also that joint family system serves as a better option as compared to a nuclear setup especially in case of difficult times.

**Key Words:** Education, Family structure, Income, New machinery

### INTRODUCTION

In Islam all are equal; no one is subjugated by other. The French Common Statement of the rights of man says: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." However in reality, inequality is present in every society, separating the rich and the poor. The dominating group, controls the larger portion of the society through various socio-economic features i.e. caste, status, education, profession, income etc. "Every human being by his/her very existence states that he/she wants to be something or someone in the society. Ever since the first human specie appeared on the earth, there has been a progressive evolution of humanity. The increase of art, music, and literature shows human creativeness in its entire splendor" (Balraj 2012).

Mason is a person who has skills to cut stones. "Masons (brick layers or fixers) are individuals who typically build and repair walls, floor partitions, other structures with brick, blocks, precast masonry panels, concrete blocks, and other masonry materials" (Mubarak 2007). Masonry work covers all skills related to building that includes brick laying, cementing, plaster and stones. The study examines the socio economic condition of masonry artisans, income, education, and occupation etc. "Socio-

economic status is a complex measure of one's resources and respect within a public "(Krieger, et al. 1997). Caste plays an important role in this part of the world. Castes cannot be changed with mere will. The existence of closed caste system has prevailed way before partition, and since then the service class or workers have always been placed in the lowest social position and have been labeled as lower class. The children of farmers are expected to take their paternal profession rather than being a teacher or a priest. The status shifting and occupation mobility is usually not an easy task in our country. One is not able to choose one's own rank or status. If the family is into farming the children have to be farmers. The term 'caste' is derived from the Latin word "castus" which means clean. The word "castus" became the root word of the French word *casta* meaning 'breed,' 'race' or a complex of traditional qualities" (Parinithrickal 2006). Education influences the status too. "Education may facilitate the achievement of progressive social, psychological, and financial abilities and possessions, and may provide protection from adverse inspirations "(Winkleby, et al. 1990). Masons mainly belong to the lower class. They are usually not financially strong to attain higher education and better health facilities. "Both

education and health are markers for willingness to delay satisfaction in order to ‘invest in human capital’ (Fuchs 1979). According to the prevailing world phenomena, money whitens everything. Status and respect thus are dependent upon not only caste and education but also economy. Income depends upon the status or profession of individual which is not necessarily chosen by will. Economic disparities occur when margins are demarcated between the rich and the poor. Separation occurs due to inequality between the rich and poor. The wide gap between the rich and the poor contributes to economic separation among neighborhoods, perpetuating the problem of inequality in the education and criminal justice system. Neighborhoods are often a reflection of socioeconomic status and result in economic segregation, which also has the potential to perpetuate racial and ethnic segregations as long as an unequal number of minorities are poor (Pebley and Sastry 2004). Masonry artisans are also called stone masonry artisans. They construct building and work with stones. Socio-economic status is usually measured by defining education, income, occupation and caste etc. The focus of the study is mainly artisans to constitute a significant role in the field of construction agency. Stone is the raw form or material found in the lower layer of earth. “Stone is the oldest material used in the production of buildings. With the help of this material, monumental and tough construction of the past had been manufactured” (Awan 2008).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted to explore the effect of adoption of modern technology on the socio-economic standings of the masonry artisans. To study the socio-economic condition of local masonry artisans, the data was collected from the masonry workers residing in Tehsil Chakwal and gathered through snow ball sampling. The sample of the study was 53 labors. This reference based approach for selecting sampling unit and data provides reliable information on the socio-economic condition of mason. The statistical analysis tool used was Pearson correlation as “Correlation analysis is the simplest technique, measuring the amount of covariance between two variables” (Monroe and Comer 2002).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data was analyzed to examine each hypothesis. New technology, Income, Education and Family are taken as variables determining the socio-economic status. The data was collected from a sample of 53 artisans

through snow ball sampling. Results were analyzed in SPSS through Pearson correlation. Correlation coefficients significant at the 0.05 level. “The effects were verified at 5 % level of significance which means that researcher is 95% assertive in making the correct conclusion (Chaudhry and Kamal 2005).

**Table. 1: Structure of Family**

H<sub>0</sub>: Artisans with lower socio-economic prefer nuclear family system.

H<sub>1</sub>: Artisans with lower socio-economic prefer joint family system.

Question	Nuclear family system	Joint family system
Nuclear family system	Pearson 1	.094
	Sig(2.tailed)	.502
	N 53	53
Joint family system	Pearson .094	1
	Sig(2.tailed)	
	N 53	53

The results from the above mentioned table represents the data of artisans living both in nuclear and extended families, which was then co-related with their socio-economic condition. The nature of family represents the type of family pattern in which the respondents are living. 58% of people live in extended family and 42% live in nuclear family. The study determines through an association between the two variables (extended and nuclear family). There is a normal correlation between nuclear and extended family system that is 0.502. Pearson correlation reported in the table is positive; P value of 0.502 is greater than 0.05. This suggests that the sig value of correlation is statistically significant. Family structure affects the socio-economic condition of masonry artisans and proves as a coping mechanism for their livelihood sustainability. The study hypothesized that, Lower the income of an artisan higher the prevalence of joint family system. Whereas, higher the income of an artisan, greater the chances of living in nuclear family system.

**Table.2: Factors Affecting Socio-Economic Condition of Artisans**

H<sub>0</sub>: Education and technology has not raise socio-economic condition of masonry artisans.

H<sub>1</sub>: Education and technology has improved socio-economic condition of masonry artisans.

Question	Technology	Income	Education
<b>Technology</b>	P 1	.051	.072
	Sig	.717	.607
	N 53	53	53
<b>Income</b>	P .051	1	.136
	Sig .717		.332
	N 53	53	53
<b>Education</b>	P .071	.136	1
	Sig .607	.332	
	N 53	53	53

Table 2 illustrates the results on factors which affects the socio-economic conditions of masonry artisans. 62% respondents suggested that socio-economic condition of masonry artisans has affected due to an increase in their income, 60% education has raised their socio-economic condition whereas, and 55% suggested that new technology upheld their status. Pearson correlation measures the association between two variables of education and new machinery. Correlation coefficients i.e. Income, Education and Technology were significant at the 0.05 level. There is a moderate correlation in education as a pre-requisite in improving socio-economic conditions. Results on new machinery being responsible for rising the socio-economic condition is 0.607. The correlation reported in the table is hence positive. Income's effect on masons' socio-economic condition and education being necessary for their better future holds a moderate correlation of 0.332, whereas new technology's role in raising the income level of masons' socio-economic condition is highly correlated with a result of 0.717. This suggests that the p values of income and technology are greater than 0.05 and statistically significant.

Labor process theory holds a significant position in social sciences as it gives us an insight on "How people work, who controls their work, what skills they use in work, and how they are paid for work. Under capitalism, organization steals labors abilities,

decreases the pleasurable nature of work and the power workers have through controlling skill, while cutting their pays by reducing their wages to those of unskilled workers and increasing the amount of exertion required from workers "(Braverman, 1974). The results of study revealed that unskilled people have usually idea about their work and its significance. It was adjacent through their careless action in work, which was not up to the mark of their owners' expectation and hence were paid low. Since the studies were only focused in the masonry industry, only the artisans were studied. "Masons (bricklayers or fixers) are individuals who typically build and repair walls, floors, partitions, and other structures with brick, blocks, precast masonry panels, concrete blocks, and other masonry materials" (Kamakshi 2007). According to the study outcomes, A few years ago, education was not necessary for this profession, but now a day's majority of the labors hold primary or secondary education as in other parts of the world. "The work of construction labor in Kenya who established that the majority of informal worker/artisans had primary and secondary education" (Mitullah and Wachira, 2003). Artisans used wood machine which is called "furma". Furma is an indigenous tool used for finishing of wood and stone used for micro scale production which is often limited to small scale. An artisan's works manually with this and paid 650 rupees for working all day. Where ever the socio-economic status of the labor is studied, "Standard of living was measured by income, poverty, and individual financial strain" (Lorant, et al. 2007). Since, formal education has become an integral part of human's life. In the world of today, education is used for all kind of income and business related activities of people. Income is the most vital conclusive factor of standard of living. Access to food and shelter, economic comforts, greatly depends upon one's income level.

Pakistan has become progressive country and electrical technologies are being used for any or every kind of work. "Pakistan therefore remains to improve the quality of life of the rural people by improving the rural economy and living condition in the villages through improvement the rural infrastructure, provision social amenities and undertaking productive projects to satisfy local community needs besides, creating gainful employment opportunities (Chaudhry and Chaudhry 2012).

Advanced machinery is used in bigger factories and industrial units where the workers required need to be somewhat literate and are paid more due to ample production. An artisan working at a factory 800 per day. Majority of the respondent's income is less than 20,000. The owner of factories preferred appointing well-educated people for their factory work which has greatly affected on the working opportunities available for illiterate peoples. An up world social mobility trend is only seen with a raise in the income of people. All the factory workers belonged from different villages of Chakwal. The average family size was of five members. "Family is a "unit of kinship" that makes its members strong enough to achieve something in life. Nuclear Family is the family setup which consists of two generations, whereas Joint Family is a family setup which consists of three or more than three generations live together with a single family head" (Bilal, et al. 2013). In most of the cases, they lived in "*kacha*" houses. Most of them cooked their food in the corner of the same room in which they live. Others prepared their food in open air outside their room. Wood was usually used by cooking purpose. Public tube wells or taps were used for drinking water.

## CONCLUSION

Labor class has always been a backbone of the service industry. The research findings suggest that even today the labor class can earn well if they are educated formally and from vocational training institutes. Education is a tool to empowerment; it gives confidence, required skills and helps them earn better pays as compared to their illiterate work mates. It provides them better understanding of machine operation and brings refinement in their work. Modern technology can hence be used creatively for innovation and design in their work which can enhance the salability and production that in turn will pay them well. Improved income will ultimately help them sustain their socio-economic standing and vulnerability to their livelihood will automatically be reduced.

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