
DISPARITIES AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: A HUMANISTIC STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROVISIONS AVAILABLE TO CONTRACTUAL AND REGULAR EMPLOYEES IN DELHI'S GOVERNMENT & AUTONOMOUS BODIES

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Abstract: Contractual employees or, contract workers, are hired, or “contracted,” for a specific project or timeframe for a set fee/remuneration on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis or, when the project is completed. The year on year government surveys of the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) reveals that the number of non-permanent workers is on the rise in state-owned companies. According to the **Public Enterprises Survey 2021-22** by Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under the Ministry of Finance, appx. **36% employees are working on contractual basis** in various state-owned companies across India. While, the contribution of contractual employees has been significant in the operations of the public enterprises/departments, there lacks an equal treatment at par to the regular employees in terms of various financial provisions provided including salaries/wages. They are generally paid less and have lesser means of social security provisions. The purpose of study was to evaluate the existing scenario, challenges and socio-economic conditions of the contractual employees in Delhi's government and autonomous bodies and highlight the essential corrective measures to be able to promote a more productive, stress-free and equitable work environment. The study was conducted in 18 government departments, ministries and other autonomous bodies in Delhi.

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Introduction and Background

A '**contractual employee**' is defined under Section 2(b) of The Contract Labor (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 which states that "a contractual employee is employed by a principal employer in connection with the work of an establishment through a contractor". The government hires workers on contractual basis to save expenses and put a lid on trade unions. Contract workers often get only a fraction of what permanent staff receives. Also, compared to permanent staff, these employees need not be paid any perks.

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According to the Quarterly Report on Employment Scenario (As on 1st January, 2022) (Pg. 32) by Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India defines regular and contractual, the no. of contractual employees working in various sectors in the country has been estimated at 8.66 Laths.

Table 2.11: Sector-wise Percentage Distribution of Total Number of Estimated Workers according to Different Terms of Employment

Sl. No.	Sectors	Self-Employed	Regular (Not on contract) Employee	Contractual Employee	Fixed Term Employee	Casual Employee
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Manufacturing	2.48	80.15	12.38	1.03	3.96
2	Construction	1.32	73.42	19.04	0.52	5.69
3	Trade	4.16	90.06	3.47	0.26	2.04
4	Transport	0.63	91.89	5.14	0.56	1.77
5	Education	1.2	91.14	6.39	0.52	0.75
6	Health	0.56	88.98	9.08	0.54	0.85
7	Accommodation & Restaurants	6.67	84.46	5.23	0.63	3.02
8	IT /BPOs	0.1	94.69	4.84	0.02	0.35
9	Financial Services	6.43	87.7	1.88	0.4	3.6
	Total	1.96	86.42	8.66	0.66	2.29

Talking about the capital state of India, i.e., New Delhi, the similar trend can be seen here as well, as now a days, majority of the govt. and autonomous bodies are deploying their manpower on contract basis. As per one of the articles published online in "the pioneer" dated 11th February, 2023, the leader of Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Sh. Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, has quoted number of appx. Three Lakh contract employees working in various departments under the Delhi Government.

Earlier an article published at "Money Life" dated 17th February, 2015 had cited around one lakh employees, including drivers, conductors, doctors, nurses, teachers, sanitation workers etc. to be working under contractual schemes in various Delhi government's departments and agencies, which means in last 8 years, the numbers have increased more than double.

Hired either directly by the government departments or by a private labour contractor, **the engagement of contract workers has witnessed a significant rise in numbers across various sectors in recent years.** Not being on the roll of the department, the workers are **usually paid less than the permanent workers and are kept bereft of the social security provisions**

Here, it is also pertinent to mention about one of the landmark judgments of Supreme Court in the case of **Girish Jayanti Lal Vaghela & others, 2006** wherein, a Division Bench of Justice KG Balakrishnan and Justice GP Mathur set aside a judgement of the Bombay High Court that had held a contract employee a "government servant" and ruled that a person working with a government department on the basis of a contract is not a "government servant". Hence, no wonders why contractual employees working with any government department are treated differently from how other regular employees are getting treated with.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

- To analyse the differences in various social and financial provisions available to the contractual and regular employees in Delhi's Govt. and autonomous bodies in present scenario
- To study the socio-economical vulnerability of contractual employees in government employment
- To contribute to the existing literatures on employment scenarios and labour issues in Delhi government bodies by providing hands-on evidence and insights from thorough fieldwork

Methodology

The study was carried out in a variety of government and autonomous bodies working under the aegis of Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD). For this study, following departments were randomly chosen:

- Delhi Transport Corporation
- Delhi Metro
- CATS Ambulance
- Department of Education
- Municipal Corporation of Delhi
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)
- Delhi Police

- viii. Delhi Jal Board
- ix. Jag Parvesh Hospital
- x. Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital
- xi. Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital
- xii. Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital
- xiii. Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital
- xiv. Misc. Govt. Departments/Central Ministries in Delhi (Department of women and Child Development, Krishi Bhawan, Election Commission etc.)

The detailed facts related to the methodology adopted for carrying out the study are given below:

(A) Research Design

The research is primarily 'comparative' in nature wherein, the focus has been on comparison between the two variables i.e., contractual employees and regular employees of Delhi's Government and Autonomous bodies. In this study, 'descriptive study design' using survey method has been used.

(B) Universe of the Study

The study was conducted in 18 government departments, central ministries and other autonomous bodies in Delhi

(C) Target Population

The target population in the present study includes contractual and regular employees in groups 'B', 'C' & 'D' working in the government departments chosen (listed above) for the purpose. The detailed profile of the employees and sector may be referred to in the table below:

Departments	Sector	Employees Covered
Delhi Transport Corporation	Transport	Conductors, Drivers, Jr. Clerks, Head Mechanics, Electric Mechanics etc.
Delhi Metro		
CATS Ambulance		
Department of Education	Education	Primary Teachers, Trained Graduate Teachers, Post Graduate Teachers etc.
Municipal Corporation of Delhi		
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)		
Delhi Police	Misc. Bodies	Constables, Head Constables, Personal Secretary etc.
Delhi Jal Board		
Jag Parvesh Hospital	Health	Plumbers, Security Guards, Wireman, House Keeping staff, Data Entry Operators, Lab Attendants, Clerks etc.
Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital		
Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital		
Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital		
Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital		
Department of women and Child Development, Krishi Bhawan, Election Commission etc.	Central Ministries and Depts.	Clerks, Data Entry Operators etc.

(D) Sample/ Participants

The study was conducted using Stratified random sampling under probability sampling technique and the target population was stratified into smaller groups on the basis of employment type and gender. While sampling, these groups were organized, to draw a sample from each group separately.

(E) Sample Size

384 samples which fulfilled the required characteristics of population were chosen

(F) Data Collection

Structured Questionnaires were used for collection of requisite information (as primary source of data collection) using following two components:

- (i) **Section A (Demographic variable)** - Items on demographic variable includes age, gender, employment type, designation etc.
- (ii) **Section B (Provisions)**- Socio-economic provisions available for contractual and regular employees by/from the government/department

Given the nature of study and involvement of various stakeholders, information and data has also been collected through secondary sources like, government records and information available on government websites/public domain etc.

Findings**Section – A (N=384)**

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to selected demographic variables

S. NO.	GROUPS	FREQUENCY (N=384)		PERCENTAGE (%)	
		Regular Employees	Contractual Employees	Regular Employees	Contractual Employees
1	Gender				
	Male	94	180	25%	47%
	Female	63	47	16%	12%
2	Age				
	18-30 yrs.	48	43	13 %	11%
	31-45 yrs.	74	167	19%	43%
	46-60 yrs.	35	17	9%	5%
3	Work Experience				
	Below 5 yrs.	54	74	14%	19%
	5 yrs. -10 yrs.	31	81	8%	21%
	11 yrs.- 15 yrs.	31	59	8%	15%
	16 yrs. -20 yrs.	11	12	3%	3%
	21 yrs & Above	30	1	8%	1%

41% of the employees were holding regular posts in govt. departments whereas, 59% employees were engaged on contractual basis. In the regular employee category, 25% were male and 16% were female. In the contractual employee category, 47% were male and 12 % were female. **Overall, 72% were male employees and 28% were female employees.** 13% of the regular employees were in the age group of 18-30 yrs., 19% in 31-45 yrs. age group and 9% in 46-60 yrs. age group. 11% of the contractual employees were in the age group of 18-30 yrs., 43% in 31-45 yrs. age group and 5% in 46-60 yrs. age group. **Overall, 24%, 62% and 14% employees were in the age groups of 18-30 yrs., 31-45 yrs. & 46-60 yrs. respectively.** 14% of the regular employees had work experience of below 5 yrs., 8% 5-10 yrs., 8% 11-15 yrs., 3% 16-20 yrs. and 8% 21 yrs. & above. 19% of the contractual employees had work experience of below 5 yrs., 21% 5-10 yrs., 15% 11-15 yrs., 3% 16-20 yrs. and 1% 21 yrs. & above. **Overall, 33%, 29%, 23%, 6%**

and 9% employees had work experience of below 5 yrs., 5-10 yrs., 11-15 yrs., 16-20 yrs. and 21 yrs. & above respectively.

Section – B

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to accessibility of various Socio-Economic Provisions

S. No.	Socio-Economic Provisions	Contractual Employees (N=227)				Regular Employees (N=157)			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Leaves & Holidays									
1	Earned Leave (EL)	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
2	Casual leaves (CL) at par with regular staff	6	3	221	97	157	100	0	0
3	Maternity/Paternity/ Child Care Leave	19	8	208	92	134	85	23	15
4	Restricted Holidays (RH)	19	8	208	92	157	100	0	0
5	Paid National Holidays	85	37	142	63	137	87	20	13
6	Paid Public Holidays/Gazetted Holidays	26	11	201	89	157	100	0	0
7	At least one Paid Rest Day in a week	17	7	210	93	157	100	0	0
8	Medical Leaves	1	0.4	226	99.6	137	87	20	13
Salaries and Perks									
9	Salary at par with regular staff	1	0.4	226	99.6	157	100	0	0
10	Gratuity	4	2	223	98	146	93	11	7
11	Annual festive bonus	58	26	169	74	126	80	31	20
12	Provident Fund	59	26	168	74	157	100	0	0
13	Leave Travel Allowance/Concession (LTA/C)	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
14	Home Town' Travel Allowance	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
15	Monthly Travel Allowance	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
16	Misc. benefits/allowance like crockery, entertainment/refreshment/communication etc.	0	0	227	100	88	56	69	44
17	Monthly House Rent Allowance	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
18	Monthly Dearness Allowance	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
19	Children Education Allowance	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
Social Benefits									
20	Medical facilities for self & family	75	33	152	67	157	100	0	0
21	Access to various labour welfare provisions	0	0	227	100	137	87	20	13
22	Accidental death/disability insurance	58	26	169	74	157	100	0	0
23	Compassionate appointment for spouse/dependents; in case of death	0	0	227	100	157	100	0	0
24	Staff residential facility	0	0	227	100	150	96	7	4
25	Education, sports, funeral, marriage and other financial assistance to family; in case of death	46	20	181	80	153	97	4	3
Growth Opportunities									
26	Opportunities for higher studies/professional growth	1	0.4	226	99.6	138	88	19	12

27	Promotions and increment to higher/next level	0	0	227	100	150	96	7	4
Miscellaneous Provisions									
28	Retirement felicitation like, memento, gifts, certificates, medals, etc.	1	0.4	226	99.6	127	81	30	19
29	Official monthly salary slip	97	43	130	57	157	100	0	0
30	Authentic official identity card	113	50	114	50	157	100	0	0

A. **Leave and Holidays' Provision-** None of the contractual employee is getting 'Earned Leave' (EL) facilities while 100% regular employees are getting Earned Leave facilities. Only, 3% contractual employees are getting Casual leaves (CL) at par with regular staff in their respective organizations, while 100% regular employees are getting the same. Only 8% contractual employees are provided with Maternity/Paternity/ Child Care Leave facilities, while 85% of regular employees are being provided the same. 8% contractual employees get Restricted Holidays (RH) facility while 100% regular employees get RH. 37% contractual employees get Paid National Holidays while, 87% regular employees get the same. Only 11% contractual employees get Paid Public Holidays/Gazetted Holidays while 100% regular employees get paid public holidays/Gazetted holidays. 7% contractual employees and 100% regular employees get at least one Paid Rest Day in a week. Only 0.4% contractual employees get medical leave's facility whereas, 87% regular employees have medical leave's facility.

The overall, comparative analysis elicits that on an average only 10% contractual employees have access to various leave and holidays provision whereas, 95% of regular employees have access to the same.

B. **Salaries and Perks-** Only 1 (0.4%) contractual employee reported getting salary at par with the other regular employees of same designation in the organization whereas, for 100% regular employees are getting salaries at par. 2% contractual employees get gratuity facility at retirement/completion of contract whereas, 93% regular employees get gratuity at retirement. 26% contractual employees get Annual festive bonus, whereas 80% regular employees get

Annual festive bonus. 26% contractual employees get provident Fund (PF) facilities whereas, 100% regular employees get the same. None of the contractual employee (0%) get provisions like; Leave Travel Allowance/Concession (LTA/C), Home Town' Travel Allowance and Monthly Travel Allowance whereas, 100% regular employees get all these provisions. None of the contractual employee (0%) get provisions like; Monthly House Rent Allowance, Monthly Dearness Allowance and Children Education Allowance whereas, 100% regular employees get all these provisions from their respective departments. 0% contractual employee get any misc. benefits/allowance like crockery, entertainment/refreshment/communication etc., whereas, 56% regular employees get the same.

The overall, comparative analysis elicits that on an average only 5% contractual employees have access to adequate salaries and perks whereas, 94% of regular employees have access to the same

C. **Social Benefits-** 33% contractual employees are getting Medical facilities for self & family whereas, 100% of regular employees are getting the same. None (0%) of the contractual employees have access to any labour welfare provisions (subsidized canteen facilities, rest rooms, first-aid, etc.) whereas, 87% regular employees have access to such facilities. 26% contractual employees get Accidental death/disability insurance whereas, 100% regular employees get the same. No (0%) Contractual employee get provision of Compassionate appointment for spouse/dependents; in case of death whereas, the same provision is available for 100% of regular employees. No (0%) Contractual employee get provision of Staff residential facility whereas, 96% of

regular employees can avail staff residential facility. Only 20% contractual employees' families have access to post demise financial assistance like; education/sports/funeral/marriage etc.; in case of death of the employee concerned, families of the 97% of the regular employees have access to the same.

The overall, comparative analysis elicits that on an average only 13% contractual employees have access to adequate social benefits for self and families whereas, 97% of regular employees have access to the same

- D. **Growth Opportunities** – Only 0.4% contractual employees get opportunities for higher studies/professional growth (training, education and skill development opportunities etc.) in their respective organizations whereas, 88% regular employees are getting the same. None of the contractual employee (0%) get opportunities for promotions and increment to higher/next level whereas, 96% regular employees get opportunities for regular promotions and increments.

The overall, comparative analysis elicits that on an average only 0.22% contractual employees get growth opportunities for self in their respective organizations whereas, 92% of regular employees regular get promotions and increments.

- E. **Miscellaneous Provisions** - Only 0.4% contractual employees receive proper felicitation at the time of retirement like, memento, gifts, certificates, medals, etc. whereas, 81% regular employees get proper retirement felicitation from their respective departments. 43% contractual employees get Official monthly salary slip from their employers whereas, 100% regular employees get official monthly salary slip. 50% contractual employees get authentic official identity cards from their departments whereas, 100% regular employees get authentic official identity cards.

The overall comparative analysis elicits that on an average only 31% contractual employees get miscellaneous benefits like retirement facilities, authentic salary slips and identity cards whereas, 94% of regular employees regularly get the same.

Discussion

The concluded study reflects a considerable disparity in terms of various socio-economical provisions made available to the contractual employees and regular employees by various departments and autonomous bodies of Delhi Government. Study showed that not even in a single domain of facilities, is contractual employees benefitting at par to their regular employees. Be it Leaves & Holidays, salary and perks, social benefits, growth opportunities or other miscellaneous benefits, contract staff are treated differently and highly on the lower side.

A study done by Pawan Kumar, Abdul M. Khan, Deep Inder, and Anu Mehra in 2013 to assess comparative job satisfaction among regular and staff on contract in Government Primary Urban Health Centers in Delhi, India showed that the majority of contract staff felt that there was some discrimination between regular and contract staff doing the same kind of work. These findings clearly are in sync with the reflections of the current study.

Hanumantha G. and Dr. Pavitra R Alur, 2020 from Department of Studies and Research in Social Work, Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University in their paper explored "Issues and Problems of contract Laborers in India". In their paper, the researchers made use of various secondary data like website, online journals, books and publications etc. and concluded that the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 has not been able to understand problems of the contractual laborers. It should need a complete change to improve the social and economic status of the contract laborers. It further suggested that the contract laborers must be given due attention by bringing them under the net of social security and welfare measures program, provide the continuity job, social security and welfare measures for contract labourer, build the concept of all are equal and provide equal opportunities etc.

The article published by Aashay Jain on the e-journal- 'Legal Service India', 2023, on the topic "The Debate over Contract Labour in India: Pros and Cons" concludes that there are both advantages and disadvantages of contract labour in India. However, despite of its benefits like affordability, adaptability etc., it also leaves scope of exploitation and job insecurity and hence, an appropriate legislation is required to safeguard the rights of contract workers and to make sure that they

receive just compensation, benefits, and working conditions. Accountability on the part of employers for the fair and respectable treatment of their contract workers is also the need of the hour.

The excerpts of one of the articles published by Priyanshi Jain at Tax Guru Platform are reproduced as under:

"It has been observed that contractual employees avail limited rights from their employers since they are primarily employed on the basis of the contract drafted by the employer. Consequently, they are often subjected to unfair treatment within the organization by receiving lesser payment for their work. In September 2022, Odisha saw a massive protest organized by contractual workers. The main theme for the protest was the underpayment of contractual employees in comparison to normal employees. The protesters vocalized the lack of benefits received by contractual employees and demanded that there must exist equal pay for equal work."

Overall, the study elicits a wide gap in the socio-economic conditions of the contractual and regular employees in the government bodies. While majority of the regular employees have access to healthy financial and social provisions, almost all the contractual workers; not being on the roll of the department are usually paid less and are kept bereft of the social security provisions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A descriptive study was undertaken among contractual and regular employees of various government and autonomous bodies (& ministries) of Delhi regarding accessibility of various social and economic provisions. Information from 384 sample employees was collected through structured questionnaire. A conclusion was derived from the finding of the study that the existing model of employment including hiring of contractual employees by these government bodies needs careful re-examination; as the same promotes sense of insecurity, de-motivation and detachment towards the organization among contractual employees.

The study reflects that appx. 54% of the employees in the age group of 18-45 years were contractual. This age group is generally counted to be the prime earning years hence, it becomes utmost important that there should be atleast basic minimum social support provision made available to all contractual employees such as, self & family medical health insurance/facility, provident fund, adequate no. of casual and earned leaves etc. in addition to equal wages for equal work. This would not only ensure job satisfaction among contractual employees but, also increase their commitment and dedication towards their respective organizations besides promoting their retention and support in savings for the future.

Further, appx. 36% employees have been working on contract between 5 to 15 years without much socio-economic support which clearly reflects their commitment and contribution towards their respective departments hence, it is strongly recommended that there should be equal treatment in terms of recognition given by the organizations like, genuine identity cards and salary slips to all employees, graceful retirement and space for professional growth.

Overall, basis the outcome of this study, it is recommended that certain elements which need careful review and immediate attention to eliminate much of the disparity are; basic socio-economic support attached to the employment, ways to promote stress free and equitable environment and adherence to various labour welfare provisions and hence, government and policy makers should thrive for the same in terms of evaluation and re-invention of employment systems in the country which has equitable and justifiable Weightage for both contractual and regular employees.

Lastly, the study gives a strong indication towards requirement of an urgent intervention by social work practioners across the globe to evaluate the existing employment scenarios. While it is important to manage the economy and finances of a country for larger social gains, there is a strong requirement of

also ensuring the equitable work distribution and treatment on humanitarian ground of labour force employed. Social work researches in the past too had elicited this need. Hence, it become utmost vital for the social work agencies to collect the pieces of such studies/findings from regions, co-relate and combine them and further, raise their voices jointly at the global forums to ensure that social work is not just about raising issues like this but, also to take it to its ultimate aim of bringing positive changes in the society.

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