

Chapter VII

Problems and Future Prospect of Brick Industries

7.1 Introduction:

In present day situation, it has been found that the demand for bricks has been increasing rapidly day by day due to the rapid increase in construction activities. But though the demand for bricks is increasing, the brick producing industries are facing so many difficulties and problems. Problems and prospect of brick industry was analyzed by P.K Ghoshal (2008). According to him, the various problems or constraints associated with brick industries were input constraints (raw material, fuel and labour), institutional constraints, technological constraints, financial constraints, land constraints, environmental issues, psychological constraints of the entrepreneurs and socio-economic constraints. In the study areas, it has been found that some of the major problems which almost every brick industry faces are problem of getting adequate soil, high cost of coal, problem of getting labour (both skilled and unskilled), problem of getting appropriate market for selling the finished products and so many other problems.

7.2 Objective:

In this chapter, a study is made to analysis various problems associated with brick industries both from the owners as well as from the workers point of view and also try to highlight some future prospects of brick industries.

7.3 Problems faced by the brick producing industries:

From the study, it is found that the brick producing industries are facing so many problems. The most common problems faced by almost all the industries in both the districts are discussed below-

1. Problem of getting soil:

The most important raw material used in brick production is soil without which production of brick is almost impossible. But most of the brick industries are facing

the problem of getting soil. This is because a large number of brick industries are concentrated in a particular area where there is the possibility of getting soil for production. As a result, these industries face a stiff competition regarding the collection of soil.

2. High cost of coal:

After soil, another important raw material for brick production is coal which is used for firing the green bricks. Though firewood is also used in burning process of bricks, but not to that extent as coal is used. Owners are required to invest huge amount of money for purchasing coal. This has resulted in increasing the cost of brick production.

3. Problem of getting labour:

Brick industry is fully a labour oriented industry. The whole process of brick production i.e. from cutting the mud to carrying the fired bricks to the storage for sale entirely depends upon the labour. In brick industry, both local and migrant labours are used. Labours are used as skilled and unskilled labour. Skill labours are required particularly for the work of burning bricks that are requisite from Bihar. The study in the selected industries in both the districts shows that almost every industry faces the problem of getting labour (both skilled as well as unskilled). It is because of the fact that the labours do not want to work in brick industries as these industries require too much physical labour. Rather they prefer agricultural work or some other business to work in brick industries.

4. Problem of marketing of finished products:

Due to the rapid increase in the construction activities, brick industries are growing up rapidly in both rural and semi urban areas of almost every district. Thus, from the survey in both the districts, it is found that almost every industry sells their products at nearby places within the same district and if possible sometimes some products are sold in the markets of nearby districts. Final products of the selected industries of Barpeta district are sold basically in the markets of Barpeta, Howly, Barpata Road, Pathsala, Nalbari etc while products of the selected industries of Kamrup(R)

district are sold basically in the markets of Hajo, Sualkuchi, Ramdiya, Nalbari, Guwahati, Tamulpur, Kalitakuchi etc.

5. Others problems:

Apart from the above mention problems, there are some others problems also which almost every industry is facing during making production. These are discussed below:

(a) Problem of market price fluctuation:

The market price at which a piece of brick is sold varies from industry to industry, from block to block and from district to district. There is no uniform price at which a piece of brick can be sold.

(b) Problem of uncertainty in brick production:

In brick industries, there always exists a high risk of damaging the production by heavy rainfall, fire accidents etc. If this happens to the production, then the owners of the industry have to incur a heavy loss. So, there is always the problem of uncertainty in brick production.

(c) Problem of over burning of bricks:

The most important part in brick production is firing of green bricks. This important part of brick production rests in the hands of firemen who are involved in the task of firing. But sometimes because of too much heat, a large number of bricks get over burnt. As a result, manufacturers of brick production have to sell these over burnt bricks at a price lower than the market price.

(d) Problem of environmental pollution:

Brick industries are causing serious threat to the environment. The smokes and ashes coming out of the chimney of the industries are causing serious air pollution. Apart from air pollution, the waste materials of the production are degrading the fertility of land and polluting the water of the nearby rivers.

(e) Health problems of the workers:

In brick industries, working hour is very long. Workers work in the industries for 10-12 hours in day. So, they suffer from various types of health related problems because of continuous working in the field. The most common health related problems found among the workers are skin problem, headache, back pain, fever, eye irritation, respiratory disorders and so on.

(f) Problem of child labour:

In brick industries, it is found that children are also engaged in brick production along with their parents. Though primary education is made free and compulsory to the children, most of the children in brick industries do not go to school. Parents also like to engage the children in work rather than sending them to school. Parents have a negative attitude towards schooling. They think that what the child will do by going to school. Ultimately they have to help their parents in work and help the family in earning money. So, child labour is found to be very extensive in brick industries.

(g) Problem of low wages:

The wages provided to the workers are not sufficient at all. The wages provided to them are too low as compared to their hard labour. With such a low wage, they find it very difficult to manage everything including food, clothing and many other needs.

(h) Problem of variation in wages:

The wages provided to the workers for different categories of works in brick industries vary from industry to industry within the same district. No uniform wage is provided to the workers working in brick industries.

(i) Uncertain wages:

Payments to most of the workers involved in different categories of work in brick production are made on the basis of piece rate system. Their payments are made per 1000 bricks. But if some days, there is no production because of rain, workers are

not able to get payment for those days. So, there is uncertainty in getting the wages particularly for those workers whose payments are made on piece rate system.

(j) Problem of providing combined wage:

In brick industries, it is found that though the women workers are involved in brick production, they are not provided separate wage. Their wages are combined with their male partners. As the women workers are not paid separately, they have to depend totally on their male partners for fulfilling their day to day needs. Again, it is also found that most of the husbands spend lots of money in drinking alcohols, consuming cigarettes etc. So, the women workers are not able to fulfill their needs.

7.4 Future prospects of brick industry:

Brick industry is an important industry in unorganized sector. In a country like India, brick industries play a very important role in the development of the economy. In India, construction activities are increasing rapidly day by day. As a result, demand for bricks is also increasing in a comprehensive manner due to rapid increase in construction activities. To meet the increasing demand, large numbers of brick industries are also growing up day by day in different parts of the country. Now-a-days, it is also seen that prices of bricks are also increasing day by day due to the increasing construction activities. The following table 7.1 shows the different prices of bricks and inflation rates.

Table 7.1: Different prices of bricks and inflation rates:

Year	Prices of bricks per 1000 (in Rs.)	Average price per 1000 (in Rs.)	Price rise rate (in %)	Average annual Inflation rate (in %)
2014	5500-6500	6000	-----	
2015	6000-7000	6500	8.33	5.88
2016	6800-7500	7150	10	4.97
2017	7200-8200	7700	7.69	2.49
2018	8000-9000	8500	10.38	4.53

Source of prices of bricks: Field survey from 2014-2018

Source of average annual inflation rate: <https://www.inflation.eu/inflation-rates/india/historic-inflation/cpi-inflation-india.aspx>

The above table shows that the price rise rate of bricks in 2015 is 8.33% whereas the average annual inflation rate is 5.88% which is less than the price rise rate. In the year 2016, the price rise rate is 10% and the average annual rate of inflation is 4.97% which is less than the price rise rate. In the year 2017, the price rise rate is 7.69% whereas the average annual inflation rate is 2.49% which is less than the price rise rate. The price rise rate of bricks in the year 2018 is 10.38% and the average annual rate of inflation is 4.53% which is less than the price rise rate.

Thus, in every year from 2015-2018, it is found that the price rise rate of brick is more than the average annual rate of inflation. Hence, it is profitable for an entrepreneur to establish a brick industry and getting the opportunity to earn considerable amount of profits as the prices of bricks are increasing year after year. Hence, most of the young people can take it as an important source of their business. Most of the educated youths who are not able to get any job or any other employment opportunities can establish a brick industry alone or in partnership and make the production of bricks. By doing so, they on the one hand, can earn some income and on the other hand, can help the economy to meet the increasing demand as well as help this sector to expand. Moreover, when a brick industry is established, a large number of people who do not have any formal education can get the employment opportunities and thus, the problem of unemployment can be solved to some extent. However, now-a-days, it is seen that government as well as various NGOs give training on development of entrepreneurship. So, young people by adopting such training facilities can establish a brick industry and contribute to the economy by making brick production. By doing so, they can get the opportunity of becoming self dependent and also contribute to the development of the economy to some extent. Hence, the future prospects of brick industries are found to be very encouraging and progressive.

7.5 Conclusion:

The survey reveals some important problems associated with brick industry. The most common problems faced by almost every industry in both the districts are problem of getting soil, high cost of coal, labour problem, marketing problem, environment problem, health problem of the workers, problem of lower as well as

combined wages etc. As the brick industry is considered to be one of the important industries under secondary sector, so these problems should be taken very seriously and attempts should be made to reduce these problems. Again, the prices of bricks are increasing day by day as the demand for bricks is increasing due to the increase in construction activities. Hence, young people by establishing brick industries can help the economy to meet the increasing demand and also help this sector to expand in near future.

7.6 Reference

Ghoshal, P.K. (2008) *Prospects and problems of brick industry*, New Delhi: Mittal publication