

# A Study of Occupational Health Problems Faced by Mathadi Workers in Thane District

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**Abstract:** *Mathadi workers form an important part of the unorganized labour force in Maharashtra, especially in Thane district. These workers are mainly involved in loading, unloading, and transporting goods manually in markets, warehouses, and industrial areas. Their work requires continuous lifting and carrying of heavy loads, which exposes them to several occupational health risks. The present study is based on secondary data collected from government reports, research articles, labour department publications, and occupational health studies. The study aims to understand the major occupational health problems faced by Mathadi workers and the factors contributing to these problems. The findings show that Mathadi workers commonly suffer from back pain, joint pain, fatigue, muscle strain, and injuries due to physically demanding work and lack of proper safety measures. The study highlights the need for improved working conditions, provision of safety equipment, and better access to healthcare facilities. Ensuring proper occupational health protection is essential for improving the well-being and productivity of Mathadi workers.*

**Keywords:** Mathadi workers, occupational health, unorganized labour, musculoskeletal disorders, Thane district, manual labour

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mathadi workers are manual labourers who are primarily engaged in carrying goods manually on their heads, backs, or shoulders. The term "Mathadi" is commonly used in Maharashtra and refers to head loaders who perform loading and unloading activities. These workers play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth movement of goods in markets, warehouses, transport centres, and industrial areas.

In Thane district, Mathadi workers are widely employed in wholesale markets, logistics centres, construction sites, and industrial establishments. Their work involves lifting heavy loads repeatedly throughout the day. This type of work requires significant physical effort and exposes workers to various health risks.

Occupational health refers to the physical and mental well-being of workers in relation to their work environment. When workers are exposed to unsafe working conditions or excessive physical strain, their health may be negatively affected. Mathadi workers often work in environments where safety measures are inadequate and protective equipment is not available.

Since Mathadi workers belong to the unorganized sector, they do not always receive proper health protection, medical support, or safety facilities. As a result, they are more vulnerable to occupational health problems.

### Statement of the Problem

Mathadi workers are exposed to physically demanding work that involves lifting and carrying heavy loads for extended periods. This continuous physical strain can result in various health problems such as back pain, joint pain, muscle injuries, and fatigue. In many cases, workers do not have access to proper medical care or safety equipment. Poor working conditions further increase the risk of occupational health problems.



These health issues not only affect the physical well-being of workers but also reduce their productivity and income. Therefore, it is important to study and understand the occupational health problems faced by Mathadi workers using available secondary data.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the occupational health problems commonly faced by Mathadi workers
- To understand the causes of occupational health problems among Mathadi workers
- To study the impact of manual load carrying on workers' health
- To analyze the working conditions of Mathadi workers
- To suggest suitable measures to improve occupational health and safety

### **Research Methodology**

This study is based entirely on secondary data. Secondary data refers to data that has already been collected and published by other researchers, organizations, or government agencies.

The data for this study has been collected from the following sources:

- Government reports related to Mathadi workers and labour welfare
- Reports published by the International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Research articles from academic journals
- Books related to labour studies and occupational health
- Research papers available on Google Scholar and ResearchGate
- Labour department and occupational health reports

The descriptive research design has been used to analyze and present the information in a systematic manner.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Several studies have highlighted the occupational health problems faced by manual labourers.

Reports published by the International Labour Organization have shown that workers involved in manual material handling are at high risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders. These disorders mainly affect the back, shoulders, and joints.

Studies conducted in India have also found that manual labourers frequently experience back pain, muscle strain, and fatigue due to heavy physical work. Continuous lifting of heavy loads puts pressure on the spine and muscles, which can result in long-term health problems.

Research on unorganized workers has also shown that lack of safety equipment and poor working conditions increase the risk of injuries and health problems. Many workers do not receive proper medical care or health protection.

These studies clearly indicate that occupational health problems are common among manual labourers, including Mathadi workers.

### **Occupational Health Problems Faced by Mathadi Workers**

Mathadi workers face several health problems due to the nature of their work.

#### **Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common health problems faced by Mathadi workers. These include back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, and joint pain. These problems occur due to repeated lifting and carrying of heavy loads.

#### **Fatigue and Physical Exhaustion**

Mathadi workers often work for long hours without adequate rest. This leads to physical exhaustion and fatigue. Continuous fatigue can reduce their ability to work efficiently.



### **Injuries and Accidents**

Mathadi workers are also at risk of injuries such as muscle strain, cuts, fractures, and accidents. These injuries may occur due to unsafe working conditions and lack of protective equipment.

### **Postural Problems**

Carrying heavy loads in improper positions can lead to postural problems. Poor posture can affect the spine and cause long-term health issues.

### **Long-Term Health Effects**

Over time, continuous physical strain can lead to chronic health problems such as permanent back pain and reduced physical capacity.

### **Causes of Occupational Health Problems**

There are several factors that contribute to occupational health problems among Mathadi workers.

The main cause is the continuous lifting and carrying of heavy loads. This puts excessive strain on muscles and bones.

Poor working conditions also contribute to health problems. Many workplaces do not provide proper safety arrangements.

Lack of safety equipment such as gloves, belts, and protective footwear increases the risk of injuries.

Long working hours without proper rest also affect workers' health.

Limited access to medical facilities further worsens their condition.

### **Working Conditions of Mathadi Workers**

Mathadi workers generally work in physically demanding environments such as markets, warehouses, and construction sites.

They are required to carry heavy loads manually without the help of machines.

Most workplaces do not provide proper safety equipment.

Workers often work in difficult conditions such as extreme heat, dust, and crowded areas.

These working conditions increase the risk of occupational health problems.

### **Impact of Occupational Health Problems**

Occupational health problems affect Mathadi workers in several ways.

Physically, workers experience pain, fatigue, and injuries.

Economically, health problems reduce their ability to work and earn income.

Socially, poor health affects their quality of life and family well-being.

These problems also affect overall productivity.

### **Welfare Measures for Mathadi Workers**

The Government of Maharashtra has established the Mathadi Welfare Board to protect the interests of Mathadi workers.

The board provides various benefits such as medical assistance, insurance, and pension schemes.

However, many workers are not fully aware of these benefits.

Improving awareness and access to welfare schemes can help improve workers' health and well-being.

### **Findings of the Study**

- The study reveals that Mathadi workers face serious occupational health problems.
- Back pain, joint pain, and fatigue are the most common health problems.
- Heavy load carrying is the main cause of these problems.
- Working conditions are often unsafe.



- Safety equipment and medical facilities are limited.

### **Suggestions**

Several measures can be taken to improve the health of Mathadi workers.  
Safety equipment such as gloves, belts, and shoes should be provided.  
Regular medical check-ups should be conducted.  
Working conditions should be improved.  
Workers should be educated about occupational health and safety.  
Government and welfare organizations should provide better support.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Mathadi workers play an important role in the economy, but their work exposes them to serious health risks. Occupational health problems such as back pain, fatigue, and injuries are common among these workers. Improving working conditions, providing safety equipment, and ensuring access to medical care are essential for protecting their health. Proper welfare measures and awareness programs can significantly improve the quality of life of Mathadi workers.

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