

DISCRIMINATION IN WAGES : A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN SURAT CITY

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Wage differential refers to differences in wage rates due to the location of working place, hours of work, working conditions, type of product manufactured, or other factors. It may be the difference in wages between workers with different skills working in the same industry or workers with similar skills working in different industries or regions. In Indian labour market the earning and wages are considerable rises but the problem of wage differentiation is the burning issue prevailing. This problem is much prevalent in the unorganized market. In India the high rate of migration in urban area is due to higher employment opportunities. One the most important sector for providing the direct and indirect employment is construction sector. The Construction sector in India is the second largest economic activity after agriculture and provides employment to about 33 million people. The present study is focuses on the issue of wage differentiation in the similar construction work at working site in Surat city. We have selected 200 migrant unskilled construction workers by stratified random sampling technique from unorganized and organized sectors. The questionnaires were filled up through personal interviews at the construction working sites. It was conceded that there is a wage differentiation exists between the male and female workers, Naka and Non-Naka workers and workers in construction works of the organized and the unorganized sectors.

Key Words: *Wage differential, Unorganised Workers*

INTRODUCTION

The level of earnings and wages of workers are considered a strong indicator of the livelihood status of the population. Though in a general neo-classical framework, the level of wages and earnings of the workforce is determined by demand for and supply of labour, in developing countries, this is affected largely by strict labour market dualism (Heckman and Hotz, 1986) and strong entry barriers across different segments of the labour market. The Lewisian model of labour market dualism considers the coexistence of traditional and modern sectors of employment as largely explaining the wage differentials in a developing economy. In India, the labour market dualism has been documented widely in terms of formal-informal, employment status of workers, occupation types, sectors of employment, states and regions, etc. (Unni, 2001; Tendulkar, 2003; Das, 2003).

In India with economic reforms, liberalization and globalization involve in domestic economy. This enhance the potential of investment opportunities and usher into the Indian labour market a substantial increase in the income and earnings of workers of all most all sectors. The economic reforms also resulted into the massive labour force transferred from rural to urban area for employment. The several studies provide ample evidence that despite a modest overall performance by the Indian economy during the past one and a half decades, the extent to which economic progress

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has translated into increased labour earnings and, consequently, poverty reduction, has been rather disappointing (Bhalla, 2002; Ghosh, 2004; Kijima and Lanjouw, 2005). Accordingly, slow growth in labour earnings is one of the major reasons for the slower decline in poverty, particularly in the rural areas in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Sen, 1998; Bhalla, 2002; Deaton and Dreze, 2002).

The earning and wages are considerable rises but the problem of wage differentiation is the burning issue prevailing in the Indian labour market. The wage differentiation can be seen not only in the different occupation but also in the same occupation and same type of work. This problem is much prevalent in the unorganized market. The present study is focuses on the issue of wage differentiation in the similar construction work at working sites in Surat city. Therefore it is necessary to first understand the meaning and type of wage differentiation in practice.

Definition Of Wage Differentiation And Its Types

Wage differential refers to differences in wage rates due to the location of working place, hours of work, working conditions, type of product manufactured, or other factors¹. It may be the difference in wages between workers with different skills working in the same industry or workers with similar skills working in different industries or regions. The wage differentiation in the labour market can be classified is as follows²;

- (i) Occupational/skill wage differentials
- (ii) Industrial wage differentials,
- (iii) Area or geographical wage differentials,
- (iv) Interplant/intra-plant wage differentials,
- (v) Sex wage differentials,
- (vi) Race/caste/religion wage differentials,
- (vii) Union/non-union wage differentials,
- (viii) Age/seniority wage differentials.

These are some of the types of wage differentials and one could expand the list by adding many more.

Construction Sector And Migration

Since independence, India has witnessed rapid urbanization and the pace of urbanization is not only due to the natural increase in population growth, but has been mainly caused by the heavy influx of rural migrants into urban areas (Ganguly, 2009; Ledent 1982), especially in the large sized cities. The main causes of higher rural to urban migrations are: lack of employment opportunities, poverty, low wage rate being marginal farmers etc.. The classification of migration according to the area shows that during the period of 1971 to 2001, migration in urban area had increased by 162.2%. The high rate of migration in urban area is due to higher employment opportunities. One the most important sectors for providing the direct and indirect employment are the construction sector.

The Construction sector in India is the second largest economic activity after agriculture and provides employment to about 33 million people. India's Construction industry has grown at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 11.1% over the last eight years. Construction industry is the key for the success of the globalization of Indian economy.

Around 16% of the India's working population depends on building construction for its livelihood and the Indian construction industry today employs about 33 million people and creates assets worth

over Rs 200,000 million annually. However, the construction industry in India is facing a huge shortage of manpower. The strength of skilled workforce in construction has dwindled substantially from 15.34% in 1995 to 10.57% in 2005, whereas relative proportions of unskilled workers have gone up from 73.08% in 1995 to 82.45% in 2005 (GOI, 2008b). In India, it is the largest employer of unorganized labour next to the agricultural sector. But these construction labourers are one of the most vulnerable segments of the unorganized sector as there is no permanent job opportunity for them.

Construction workers are the backbone of the economy as they create the infrastructure necessary for industrial growth. In a globalizing economy, it is the construction workers who are constructing the new economy. Therefore one can say that the construction workers are literally the builders of modern India.

Present paper focuses on an issue of wage differentiation of migrant construction workers in Surat city. Surat is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. In the term of population, its position is ninth in India and second in Gujarat state. Now a day the city has become a key economic capital of Gujarat state. The study of Das (1994) estimated that about 60 to 80 percentage population in Surat city is accounted for by migration. The large numbers of industrial units have attracted labour force from states like Maharashtra, M.P., Odisha etc.. As per 2001 census data, of total population of the city about 55.85 percent population was of migrants.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Harilal K.N. (1989) had focused on issue of gender wage discrimination in India. The gender wages gaps are analysed for regular wage workers in India using the 66th round of NSSO Employment – Unemployment Schedule (2009-2010). The author had examined the wage gaps across different quantiles of wage distribution. He had also estimated the standard OLS wage equation for men and women. The main finding was that of a sticky floor effect, that is, the phenomenon of declining gender log wage gaps across the quantiles.

Kumar B. Ravi (2013) had made an effort to identify gender discrimination among construction workers and identify the means of empowering women construction workers with special reference to Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh in India. The author had collected data through filled-up questionnaires from 440 women construction workers who were selected through stratified sampling technique. This study concluded that many women construction workers are illiterate, widows, only earning members of the family, from depressed class and from low income families when compared to male construction workers. Women construction workers were discriminated against in wages and promotion. The findings of the study also show that the important reasons why women are not promoted as masons is the gender bias which men and women have, and women construction workers are not given an opportunity to be trained informally like men in the construction Industry. The findings also show that women construction workers are competent enough to be trained to become masons and they could be first formally trained and then informally trained to become masons in the construction industry in India.

Dileep Kumar M. (2013) had study on the problems of construction labourers in Pune, Maharashtra in India. In this study the researcher had selected the sample of 1119 construction workers from 82 construction sites in Pune. The questionnaires were filled-up by the personal interview at the working sites. The study concluded that the condition of the worker's in the construction industry is very much deplorable. Neither the law nor the contractors are showing mercy to this socially and economically poor segment of the population. It seems that getting construction firms to follow the

law of the land regarding fulfillment of basic rights related to employment, safety and welfare of workers and ensuring better quality of life is still a distant dream. The results of this study can be extrapolated to other construction sites that are employing or employed the migrant workers.

The Study undertaken by Self Employment Women's Association [SEWA] (2000) on Construction workers in Ahmadabad City. This study was primary data based for which 250 construction workers were selected. Out of them 125 were male workers and the rest were female workers. The results show that (a) almost all the women workers were engaged in unskilled jobs (manually carrying/transferring construction materials); (b) 60% of the male workers were occupied in this work from one generation to the next while 40% had joined this work for the first time - The average daily wages of the female workers were found to be substantially lower than the male workers. The average daily income of the female worker was Rs. 60, as against Rs. 128 for the male worker, who earned more than double of that of the women;(e) The incidence of physical strain during work was more in the case of the women workers. Around 88.8% women complained of fatigue and physical strain during work, while only 74.4% of men complained about it; (f) 70% of women workers complained about chronic body aches, especially in their limbs, hands and head after they joined the construction sector, while some 16% also complained about back-pain, chest-pain, skin diseases etc. In the case of male workers, 77% of them complained of pain in their limbs, hands and headache; Apart from these studies, social scientists like Breman (1985) Brown (1991), Haan Sharma (1997), (2000) Ravi Srivastava (1993) have disused about the wage discrimination of migrant construction workers.

The present study has following objectives;

1. To derive the basic characteristics of migrant construction workers.
2. To examine the wage differentiation between the male and female workers
3. To examine the wage differentiation between workers of the organized and the unorganized sectors.
4. To examine the wage differentiation between *Permanent Workers* and *Naka Workers*.
5. To find out the probable reasons for this wage differentiation.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The analytical part has been done on the basis of the primary data collected through questionnaires.

Source of Data

In the present study both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data were collected through questionnaires. The authentic information about the total migrant workers in the city is not available therefore; we have selected 200 migrant unskilled construction workers by stratified random sampling technique. Out of the total selected workers, 100 workers are selected from the unorganized sector and another 100 workers are selected from the organized sector. In each sector we have selected 50 male and 50 female construction workers, the questionnaires were filled up during March, 2013 to September, 2013 by personal interviews at the construction working sites. The secondary data have been collected through various government publications, reports and websites.

Analysis of Collected Primary Data

The collected primary data have been analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software. The statistical values like averages, standard deviation (SD) and correlations coefficient were calculated. For measuring the wage differentiation between different sections t-test has been used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio Economic Status of Sample Workers

Age Composition

Age of respondents is a crucial factor which affect on working capacity and efficiency and according to their ability and efficiency the wage rate is paid. Basically the young workers are able to spend more time in specific work but efficiency of work depends on the total numbers of years spend in the occupation. Among the selected workers, about 62.0% workers fall in the category of less than 30 years age group. 29.5% and 8.5% workers fall in the category of age group of 31 to 40 years and more than 40 years age groups, respectively.

Religion and Caste

Majority of the workers are found to be followers of Hindu religion (97.5%). However Muslim workers are reported to be only 1.5% in the selected sample. The distribution of workers according to their caste implies that the highest number of migrant workers belong to the S.T. category (46.0%) followed by S.C. category (20.5%). About 15.5% and 18.0% workers belongs to the OBC and Open category respectively.

Educational Status

Education is regarded as an important asset for an individual as it provides the key to the understanding of society and equip the individual to assert his rights and to claim due share from others. Education level is the most important and significant factor which affect working status, living style and awareness about basic facts of the economy. It is widely accepted that the education level has positive impact on earning capacity of person. In our study we have found that more than half of the workers are illiterate (62%). In the case of literate workers majority of workers had got education upto primary level. Only 8.0% workers had got the secondary and higher secondary level education respectively.

Employment Status before Migration

It was found that before migration, majority of workers were casual labourers (63.0%) at their native place. That means their work is not secured in the term of getting work daily. The second important source of employment was found to be farming (40.0%) and only 2.0% workers were doing the service before migration. The important thing noted that, after migration, 11.5% workers get direct employment in construction work because before migration they were unemployed.

Status of Work and Working Hours

The classification of average working hours of construction workers indicates that the majority

of workers spend on an average 8 to 10 hours (71.50%) at the working site. About 15.0% and 13.5% workers work for an average of 4 to 8 hours and more than 10 hours daily, respectively.

There is certain uncertainty regarding the getting the work daily, especially for the *Naka workers*, because these workers get the work from the *Naka*, place where usually they wait for work. It was found that only 24.0% workers got work daily. Other workers could not get the work daily. About 41.5% workers could not get work for an average of 1 to 5 days in month. 28.5% and 6.0% workers said that in a month they could not get work for 6 to 15 days and more than 15 days respectively.

Wage Differentiation

In the present study, we have tried to explore whether wage differentiation prevails between different groups of labourers grouped according to different criteria. For examining the wage differentiation in the construction sector, the data on wage rate has been classified according to the gender, sector and types of labour. The researchers also tried to examine the wage differentiation by using the independent samples t-test. For applying the t-test on the data of wage rate, it is necessary that the data should not violate the assumption of this test. The most important assumption of independent sample t-test is that the data should be normally distributed. Therefore first of all an attempt to check the normality of data on wage rate was made by using the Kolmogorov-smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test. The assumption of this test is that the data are not normally distributed. If the significance value of this test is more than 0.05, we can say that the data are normally distributed. Then we can proceed further for independent sample t-test for compared means. But suppose this test suggests that the data are not normally distributed, there should be other non-parametric test for comparing the means. The most popular test for this is the Mann Whitney U test. The following table shows the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test for normality.

Table: 1, Test of Normality for Data on Daily Wages

Sr.No.	Variables	Means	Kolmogorov-smirnov test	Shapiro-Wilk	
1	Gender	Male	253.20	0.000	0.000
		Female	227.20	0.000	0.000
2	Type of Workers	Permanent	234.55	0.000	0.000
		Naka Workers	269.09	0.000	0.000
3	Sectors	Organized	235.30	0.000	0.000
		Unorganized	245.20	0.000	0.006

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test for normality shows that the data on wage rates of construction workers according to sectors, gender and type of workers are not normally distributed because the values of significance level are less than 0.005, so here we do not reject the null hypotheses that the data are not normally distributed. Therefore for comparing the means wage rate of workers according to the gender, sector and type of workers we have used Mann Whitney U test.

Wage Differentiation between Male and Female Workers

The gender wage discrimination is not a new phenomenon. In this study we found that the wage rates are different for the different workers. Even the wage differentiation also exists at the same work place. Out of total female workers about 43% got the wages of less than 200 Rs. daily. This figure was just 19% for male workers. On the other hand, in the category of wage rate between Rs. 251 to Rs. 300, 34% of the male workers and only 12.0% of the female workers belonged. So it can be said the male workers got the higher daily wages than female workers in construction sector. This conclusion was also strengthened by using a statistical test.

The statistical difference of wage rate between male and female construction workers had been examined by using Mann Whitney U test.

Null Hypothesis H_0 = There is no significant difference in the total rank of wage rate among the male and female construction workers.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1 = There is significant difference in the total rank of wage rate among the male and female construction workers.

Table: 2, Mann Whitney U test for wage differentiation according to gender

Gender	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U test Value	Sign. Value
Male	118.52	3198.0	0.000
Female	82.48		

On the basis of above table, the mean rank of wage rates is higher male workers than female workers. The mean rank of wage rates is 118.52 for male workers and 82.48 for female workers. The Value of Mann Whitney U test is found to be 3198.0 and its significant value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we do reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that significance differences exist in the wage rates of the male and female workers.

Wage Differentiation between Non-Naka and Naka Workers

The status of work has been classified into two categories. The first is *Non-Naka Workers* and second is *Naka Workers*. The workers who are working under the contractor on wages have been classified as *Non-Naka Workers* (permanent worker) and those workers who are doing work on the basis of completing a specific work are called *Naka Workers*. In this study, out of the 200 selected workers, 83.5% workers are permanent workers and 16.5% workers are *Naka Workers*.

The wage rate of the Non-Naka workers and Naka workers had been found to be varying. Out of the total Non-Naka workers, majority of workers (46.7%) got the daily wage between Rs. 201 to Rs. 250 followed by less than Rs. 200 (34.7%). However in the case of Naka Workers, about 45.5% workers got daily wage of Rs. 301 to Rs. 352 followed by the Rs. 251 to Rs. 300 (34.6%). Hence, the wage rates of Naka workers seemed to be higher than Non-Naka worker in this study.

The statistical differences of wage rate between Non-naka and Naka construction workers had been examined by using Mann Whitney U test.

Null Hypothesis H_0 = There is no significant difference in the total rank of wage rate between Non-Naka and Naka construction workers.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1 = There is significant difference in the total rank of wage rate between Non-Naka and Naka construction workers.

Table: 3, Mann Whitney U test for wage Differentiation According to Type of Workers

Type of Workers	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Value	Sign. Value
Non-Naka Workers	92.99	1501.0	0.000
Naka Workers	138.52		

The results of Mann-Whitney U test shows that the mean rank of wages of Naka Workers is 138.52 which is higher than wages of Non-Naka workers mean rank of 92.99. This difference is found to be statistically significant because the value of Mann-Whitney U test is reported to the 1501.0 and its significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we do reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that there is significance difference between the wages of Naka and Non-Naka workers. The Naka workers got the higher wages than Non-Naka workers.

Wage Differentiation between Organized and Unorganized sector's Workers

In this study we had selected equal proportion of workers from construction sites of organized and unorganized sectors. So it will be interesting to know whether there is any discrimination between the wages of organized and unorganized construction workers. The classification of collected data shows that the workers who are working on the site of organized sector got the lower wage rate than unorganized sector. But this difference is not much. Out of total construction workers, 62 workers got the daily wages of less than Rs.200; out of them 56.5% workers were working in unorganized sector. The percentages of workers who got the daily wage rate of Rs. 201 to 250 and Rs. 251 to 300 were found to be higher in organized sector. So we can say that on the construction sites of organized sector the wages are relatively lower than the workers who are working at construction sites of organized and unorganized sectors.

The statistical differences of wage rate between male and female construction workers had examined by using Mann Whitney U test.

Null Hypothesis H_0 = There is no significant difference in the total rank of wage rate between Organized and Unorganized sectors' construction workers.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1 = There is a significant difference in the total rank of wage rate between Organized and Unorganized sectors' construction workers.

The above hypothesis is tested by using the independent sample t-test. The following results were derived.

Table: 4, Mann Whitney U test for wage differentiation by sector

Sector	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Value	Sign. Value
Unorganized	108.43	4207.0	0.047
Organized	92.57		

In the case of daily wage rate of organized and unorganized sector's construction workers, the mean rank of organized sector is found to be lower than unorganized sector. However the difference of mean rank is not very large. The value of Mann-Whitney U test is found to be 4207.0, with significance value of 0.047 which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is do rejected here. Therefore we can say that the differences of wages of construction workers of unorganized and organized sectors are statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study concluded that the young labour force is more engaged. in the construction works The majority of workers were follows the Hindu religion and belong to the scheduled caste category followed by the scheduled caste category. Before migration, i.e. at the native place, majority of workers were casual labour. Hence, security of work was not assured at their native place. About 40% workers were found to engaged in farming at native place but due to the unavailability of irrigation facility they migrated for working in the construction sector during the off seasons.

The cross-tabulation of wage rates with gender, types of worker and sectors clearly shows that there is a wage differentiation between the male and female workers, Naka and Non-Naka workers and workers in the organized and unorganized sector's construction works. The average daily wages of these group workers were reported to Rs. 253 and Rs. 227 for male and female workers, Rs. 269 and 235 for Naka and Non-Naka workers and Rs. 235 and 245 for organized and unorganized sector workers respectively.

Whether wage differentiations between the gender, type of workers and sectors are statistically significant or not is an important task from point of view of policies implementation. Therefore first of all we tried to use the t-test to compare the means of wages, but it was found that the data on wages were not normally distributed. Hence we applied the Mann-Whitney U test for comparing the mean rank of wages. According to the results of this test the wage differentiation is statistically significant in all the cases.

It is necessary to take the steps to remove wage discrimination in the construction sector. We have selected the workers doing the same type of work. The gender discrimination is clearly reflected from the wage discrimination. In the case of Naka and Non-Naka workers, it is found that the Non-Naka workers enjoyed the certain level of work security as they work under the contractor during the specific construction work. There were several laws existed in the practice like Regulation and Abolition Act-1970 for contract labour, Equal Remuneration Act-1976 for equal wages for equal work, Unorganized Worker's Social Security Act-2008 etc... But the effective implementation of these laws can be possible by collective efforts of the government and non-government organizations. As a part of corporate social responsibility, the contractors and the builders should also provide the batter quality of living to the migrant workers.

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Appendices

Appendice-1 Socio-Economic Profile of Migrant Construction Workers in Surat City

Sr. no.	Variables	Reported Answers						
1	Age Distribution	Less than 20 Yrs (10.0%), 21 Yrs to 30 Yrs (48.3%), 31 Yrs to 40 Yrs (32.7%), More than 41 Yrs (9.0%)						
2	Religion	Hindu (96.0%), Muslim (3.3%), Christian (0.7%)						
3	Caste	S.T. (38.3%), S.C. (14.7%), SEBC (16.0%), Open (17.7%), Others (13.3)						
4	Marital Status	Married (77.0%), Unmarried (20.0%), Widow (3.0%)						
5	Native Place	Surat District (3.0%), Other District of Gujarat (18.7%), Other State (78.30%)						
6	Education Level	Illiterate (52.0%), Upto Primary (33.7%), Upto Secondary (13.0%), Upto Higher secondary (1.3%)						
7	Type of Migration	Seasonal (37.3%), Permanent (12.3%), Temporary (50.3%)						
8	Reasons for Migration	Bad economic condition (82.3%), Higher earnings (57.7%), Family reasons (19.0%), Time pass (4.0%), not getting other work (51.0%)						
9	Employment Before Migration	Farming (36.3%), Service (3.3%), casual Labourer (56.7%), Unemployed (13.0%), Others (7.0%)						
14	Status Work	Non-Naka Workers (82.7%), Naka Workers (17.3%)						
16	Working Hours	Less than 4 hours (0.7%), 4 to 8 hours (12.0%), 8 to 10 hours (73.3%), More than 10 hours (14.0%)						
17	No. of days not getting work	Daily (32.0%), 1 to 5 days (38.3%), 6 to 9 days (13.7%), 10 to 14 days (11.3%), More Than 15 days (4.7%)						
20	Wage Rate	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Unskilled (240 Rs.)</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Semiskilled (446 Rs.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male (349 Rs.)</td> <td>Female (227 Rs.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Permanent Workers (296 Rs.)</td> <td>Naka Workers (370 Rs.)</td> </tr> </table>	Unskilled (240 Rs.)	Semiskilled (446 Rs.)	Male (349 Rs.)	Female (227 Rs.)	Permanent Workers (296 Rs.)	Naka Workers (370 Rs.)
Unskilled (240 Rs.)	Semiskilled (446 Rs.)							
Male (349 Rs.)	Female (227 Rs.)							
Permanent Workers (296 Rs.)	Naka Workers (370 Rs.)							

Appendice-2 Classification Daily Wages by Gender

Wage Rate (in Rs.)	Gender of respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Less than 200	19 30.6%	43 69.4%	62
201 to 250	45 50.0%	45 50.0%	90
251 to 300	34 73.9%	12 26.1%	46
301 to 350	2 100.0%	0 0.00%	2
Total	100 50.0%	100 50.0%	200

Appendice-3 Classification Daily Wages by Type of Workers

Wage Rate (In Rs.)	Types of Worker		Total
	Non-Naka Workers	Naka Workers	
Less than 200	58 34.7%	4 12.1%	62 31.0%
201 to 250	78 46.7%	12 36.4%	90 45.0%
251 to 300	31 18.6%	15 45.5%	46 23.0%
301 to 350	0 .0%	2 6.1%	2 1.0%
Total	167 100.0%	33 100.0%	200 100.0%

Appendice-3 Classification Daily Wages by Sector

Wage Rate (in Rs.)	Sectors		Total
	Unorganized	Organized	
Less than 200	27 43.5%	35 56.5%	62 100.0%
201 to 250	47 52.2%	43 47.8%	90 100.0%
251 to 300	25 54.3%	21 45.7%	46 100.0%
301 to 350	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	2 100.0%
Total	100 50.0%	100 50.0%	200 100.0%