

## Socio-economic Conditions of Tribal Women Workers in Coffee Plantation

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### ABSTRACT

The plantation is a part of agriculture, in which the farming of crops is better intended and polished. According to International Labour Organization the term 'Plantation' includes any agricultural undertaking regularly employing hired workers which is situated in the tropical or subtropical regions and which is mainly concerned with the cultivation or production for commercial purposes of coffee, tea, sugarcane, rubber, bananas, cocoa, coconuts, groundnuts, cotton, tobacco, fibers (sisal, jute and hemp), citrus, palm oil, cinchona or pineapple; it does not consist of family or small-scale holdings producing for local utilization and not frequently employing hired workers. Women play an essential role in the overall development of family, society, state as well as the country. Women workers are the chief labor source in a diverse coffee plantation of Kodagu district of Karnataka. They play a significant role in the establishment of Coffee manufacturing in this region. The present study reveals that the 'Socio-Economic Condition of Tribal Women Workers in coffee plantation'. Major findings revealed that there were various drawbacks in the coffee plantation tribal women workers. The study is undertaken with some objectives i.e. Examine the socio-economic condition of the coffee plantation tribal women workers and to analyze the role of coffee plantation authority, NGOs, and State Government as well as a Union Government for socio-economic development of the coffee plantation tribal women workers. The paper based on both secondary data and primary data through field study. The primary data have been collected from selected coffee estates, coffee plantation worker colonies, and tribal villages.

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### 1. Introduction

Agriculture has been the oldest form of activity practiced by people in the civilized world. Though many of the developed countries have moved away from agriculture to industrialization as their mainstay of economic activity, there is no ruling out of agriculture as part of the basic economic activity in any part of the world. There are still certain parts of the globe, where agriculture is predominantly influential in determining the well-being of the people. India is also such a country, where about 70 percent of the labor force is employed in the agriculture sector. Although in the recent years the share of agriculture in Gross Domestic Product is coming down, still agriculture is the dominant sector of the economy and it impacts the wellbeing of the other sectors. The plantation is a part of agriculture and it directly employs more than 2 million workers in the country. Plantation plays a very crucial role in the export of agricultural produce. About 15 percent of the total export earnings of agriculture products come from crops like tea, coffee, and rubber, although these plantations occupy only one percent of the total cropped area. Plantations are economic entities connected historically with certain crops. A plantation crop normally is a monoculture and includes growing of a variety of products like Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Pepper & other spices etc. The cultivation of crops is taken-up in areas which are conducive to their growth and is mainly determined by the consideration of rainfall, the altitude where estates are situated and availability of labor. It is seen that the traditional areas of plantation crops are undergoing a change and newer and newer areas are taking to growing plantation crops. The main

reason for such an expansion is the growth of markets, both domestic and foreign.

The main feature of plantations in India is their structural concentration in terms of their size. The bulk production of tea (80 percent) is accounted by the corporate sector or by large estates, whereas the bulk production in rubber (87 percent) and coffee (60 percent) comes from the small holdings. A majority of the workers in the plantation sector are women. The reason for this is that these plantations are historically linked with colonialism. The plantations are located in remote areas and were sparsely populated during the colonial period. As a result, families were employed rather than individuals, thus absorbing women in the labor force. This workforce does not possess any skills other than plucking a leaf and the workers are mostly landless.

Coffee cultivation is the mainstay of Kodagu's economy. Over the decades, the area under this crop has increased considerably and today, more than 1 lakh hectares of land in the district is under coffee cultivation. Coffee cultivation in Kodagu is unique in the sense that, it is largely dependent on labor since mechanization is not feasible in its hilly terrain. Thus, labor issues play a critical role in the production of coffee as well as the economy of Kodagu. Further, as seen from other chapters in this report, the availability of dependable labor in the district, the social and health aspects related to the plantation laborers are vital from the aspect of the overall human development of the region. This small area study tries to examine the issues connected to plantation laborers in Kodagu using key informants and analyses the structure of

labor in Kodagu and the inter-relationships between the coffee economy, asset ownership and the socio-political processes of the district to derive insights into devising sustainable livelihoods for the population of the district.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the socio-economic condition of the coffee plantation tribal women workers
2. To analyze the role of coffee plantation authority, NGOs, and State Government as well a Union Government for socio-economic development of the coffee plantation tribal women workers.

## 3. Review of the Literature

Binitha M and S John Mano Raj (2018) Revels that Socio-Economic Condition of Rubber Plantation laborers in Kanyakumari District. The researcher gathered information from the rubber plantation laborers through questions framed to understand their wages, education, living conditions, and employment status. Most of the employees have no other tasks leaving apart the plantation work. The region surrounding still remains underdeveloped so the employees have no other sources of employment to improve their lifestyle. The present wage structure the is not adequate to run their family. Though they have drinking water, road, transportation, and sanitation facility but not maintained properly. a They are leading a life in poor condition and hence the younger generations are pursuing better-paid jobs.

Winyoo Kromkratoke and Suneeporn Suwanmaneepong (2017), Analyse the characteristics of rubber farmers in the drought area and attempted to investigate the effect of some economic and social factors which related to the production in Sa Kaeo province, Thailand. The result showed that most of the rubber farmers were female with average age during 51-60 years old. The majorities of them were farmers and were members of a rubber group, as well as used RRIM600 variety. In addition, they employed 1/3 2d/3 (one-third stem two days a day) tapping system and tapping rubber trees by themselves. The average quantity of plot was 1 with 20 rai (3.2 hectares) of land size. The average number of rubber tapping was 1,469. Regarding the runner production, the average production was 179.68 kg. per tapping area (1 Rai) with the average total production of 3,693.65 kg. The result of the regression indicated that land size of rubber and the number of rubber tapping had a significant influence on the rubber production.

Mahalakshmi, (2012) Analyzed the Socio-economic status of women employees in tea plantation industries found out that no. of women workers are facing many problems in the tea plantation. Since women workers are engaged more than the male workers. The study basically focuses on their living condition, wages earning and socio-security benefit. The important factor for their development and the problem faced by the employees are also identified.

## 4. Methodology:

The study is predominantly descriptive and empirical in nature based on the primary and secondary source of information. However suitable statistical tools have been used

for analyzing the primary data. The primary data was collected from the different categories of tribal women n plantation laborers in a coffee estate.

The secondary data was gathered from published documents of coffee bord of India, United planter Association of South India (UPASI) Publication

### • Selection of the Study Area

In this study for the collection of the primary data three taluks of Kodagu district namely Madikeri; Somwarpet and Virajpet taluk has been selected. Where the majority of the majority of women labors working in coffee plantation are tribal women. The economic and social status of tribal women labor is comparatively low when compared to their counterparts in other sectors.

### • Selection of the sample

For the selection of sample in Kodagu district of Karnataka 300 tribal women laborers were selected using stratified random sampling. Corresponding to the percentage distribution of women labor in the plantation sector 100 Tribal women laborers were selected from Madikeri, 100 Tribal women laborer from somwerpet and 100 tribal women laborer were selected from virajpet taluk respectively.

## 5. Analysis and Interpretation

Socio-economic condition concerns the factors that can impact an individual or families social status and economic status. It is an amalgamation of the economic and social position of an individual or a family in relation to income, education, wealth, place of residence and employment status. In this study, income includes daily income, sources of income, earning members in the family, and annual household income. Education includes the level of education of family members and the interviewee. Wealth includes ownership of the house, type of house, household possessions, amenities provided and possession of size of land. Place of residence includes locality. Employment details include the type of employment and number of working days. The analysis is carried out using the percentage method.

### Income and the social condition

Income is one of the socio-economic variables which determine ones economic condition in the society. Wages are paid to tribal women laborer based on their work efficiency and mode of work. Wages paid to the laborers and other sources of household income were analyzed using the percentage method and are shown in the table:1

**Table: 1. Analysis of Income and Socio-Economic condition**

Classification	Respondents	Percentage	
Daily Wage	<300	252	84
	Rs301- Rs.500	48	16
	>501	-	0
One		152	50.67

Earning members of Family	Two	116	38.67
	Three or more than three	32	10.67
Other Occupation	Yes	26	8.67
	No	274	91.33
Other Source of Income	Business	-	0
	Farming	26	8.67
	None	274	91.33
Household income (Annually)	Less Than 1 lack	283	94.33
	Between 1 lack to 2 Lack	17	5.67
	More than 2 Lack	-	-

Source: Primary Data.

From table 1, it could be assessed that 84% of them earn „Less than Rs.300” per day, 16% of them earn „Between Rs.300-500 per day” and none of the respondents earn „More than Rs.501 per day”. 50.67% of the respondents family there is only one earning member, 44.5% of the respondent family there are two earning members and 10.67% of respondents family there are three working members. 91.33% of the respondents do not have a second job and 8.67% of them are having the second job. 91.33% of them do not have a secondary source of income and only 8.67% of them do farming as their secondary source of income. 94.33% of the respondent's annual income is „Less than 1 lakh”, 5.67% of the respondent's annual income is „Between, 1-2 lakhs” and none of them earn „Above 2 lakhs” per year.

### Educational Socio-Economic Condition

Education is a significant aspect which has a direct association with the socio-economic condition of the people. An estimation of one's status is partially decided by what kind of education one has received. However, the education profile among plantation laborers might vary from rest in the district. Table 2 shows the classification of respondents based on the highest level of education of the family members using percentage analysis.

**Table: 2, Analysis Educational Variable**

Variable	Classification	Respondents	Percentage	
Education	Qualification of the Education Status among Tribal Women's	Illiterate	184	61.33
		< 5 <sup>th</sup> Std	64	21.33
		6-SSLC	34	11.33
		PUC	11	3.67
		Graduates	7	2.33

Source: Primary Data.

As seen from the table 2, out of the 300 sample respondents, 61.33% of the respondents family members are Illiterate, 21.33% Respondents Family members are educated up to 5<sup>th</sup> Std, 11.33% of Respondent Family Members are up between 6<sup>th</sup> Std to SSLC, 3.5% of Respondent Family Members are Educated up to 10 PUC, only 2.33% of the

Respondents family members are Graduates, and not even a single person from respondent family are not postgraduate.

### Livelihood Condition and Socio-Economic Condition

Situations that affect the way people live especially concerning their well-being. In this study living conditions include ownership of the house, type of house, household possession, prevailing facilities, possession of the land, place of residence and employment details are analyzed in table 3.

**Table: 3, Analysis of Socio-Economic and Livelihood Condition**

Classification	Respondents	Percentage	
House Ownership	Owen House	74	24.67
	Rented House	2	0.67
	Lease	0	00
	Line Mane(Quarters)	224	74.67
Type Of House	Hut House	42	14
	Katcha House	69	23
	Semi Pakkaa House	189	63
	Pakka House	0	00
House Hold Ownership	TV	87	29
	Mobile	185	61.67
	Gas Stove	112	37.33
	Two Wheeler	69	23
	Radio	94	31.33
Availability of Electricity	Refrigerator	0	00
	Always	132	44
	Some Times	126	42
Sanitation Facility	Never	42	14
	Yes	116	38.67
Road Facility	No	184	61.33
	Available	249	83
Transportation	Not Available	51	17
	Always	38	12.67
	Sometimes	89	29.67
Land holdings	Never	173	57.67
	Yes	4	1.33
Area of Land	No	296	98.67
	Nil	296	98.67
	< 1 Acer	4	1.33
	1 Acer- 2 Acer	0	00
Locality	>2 Acer	0	00
	Urban	17	5.67
	Rural	59	19.67
Type of Employment	Resettlement Colony( Line Mane)	224	74.67
	Full-Time	121	40.33
	Part-Time	137	45.67
	Temporary	42	14
Working Days (Per Month)	Contract	0	0
	< 10 Days	42	14
	Between 10-15 Days	81	27
	Between 15-20 Days	86	28.67
>20 Days	121	40.33	

Source: Primary Data

It could be assessed from the table 3 that, 24.67% of the respondent family live in their own house, 0.67% of respondent family live in Rented House, none of the respondent family members live in leased house and 74.67% of the respondent family members live in line house that has been provided by coffee estate owners. To analyze the livelihood condition the type of house has been examined on that 14% of the Respondent family members have hut house, 23% of the

respondents family members have katcha house, 63% of the respondents have semi pakka house and none of the respondents family members don't have pakka house. When household ownership examined the result shown that 29% of the respondent family have TV, 61.67% of the family have a Mobile phone, 37.33% of the family have a Gas stove, 23% of the family have two-wheeler, 31.33% of the family have radio and none of the family don't have a refrigerator. 44% of Family always has Electricity, 42% of Family have Some-time Electricity and 14% of the family don't even have electricity that shows the result of Electricity availability. When sanitation facility examined 38.67% of the respondent family have sanitation facility and 61.33% of the family don't have Sanitation facility. 83% of the respondent families have road facility and 17 % of the family don't have a road facility. 12.67% Family have Transportation Facility, 29.67% of the families sometimes have Transportation facility and 57.67% of the families don't have proper transportation facility.

When it comes land holdings only 1.33% of Respondent Family has landholding and only 98.67% of them don't even have land for them. In 1.33% the family has less than 1 Acer. when it comes locality of Tribal women Plantation laborer family 5.67 are in the Urban area, 19.67% of them live in Rural area and 74.67% of the family live in Resettlement colony(Line House). To examine the livelihood condition of tribal women laborer in plantation Employment status is the main factor in that 40.33% of tribal women's work as full-time Labourer, 45.67% of them are a Part-time laborer, 14% of them are Temporary Labourer and none of the tribal women's are in Contract. Along with the employment status, their working days (per month) are 14% of them work less than 10 days, 27% of them work between 10-15days in a month, 28.67% of them work in between 15-20 days and 40.33% of them work more than 20 Days in a month.

## 6. Major Findings of the Study

- Majority of the laborer in coffee plantation are tribals in the study area.
- Among the working tribal women labour belong to yerava, jenu-kuruba, soliga, male-kudiya, meda, Naika, Kadu-kurubas.
- The study found that no plantation owners are providing maternity benefit to the women workers in their estates.
- The survey conducted in the present study shows that majority of working tribal women in plantation getting their wage on weekly basis.
- The study also identified that there is a wage discrimination between male workers to female workers.
- It is found that working women in the plantation are in study area possess the BPL Ration card.
- Some of the tribal women workers in the plantation sector are migrating from one estate to another estate.
- Very few tribal women work beyond the normal schedules.

- In the study area, all the majority of the tribal women workers encouraging their children go to schools and no one insisting their children to work in estates.
- According to the study the majority of tribal working women's. regarding the expenditure is consistent alcohol addicts spend near Rs.60-200 per week.
- In the study area, some of the women workers have become a member of various SHGs.

## 7. Suggestion

- To create awareness among working tribal women in the plantation to increase the rate of literacy.
- It a Duty of Plantation Owners to provide housing Facility with all amenities to the workers.
- The equal wage should be given to tribal women laborer in the plantation for equal work without any wage discrimination. Minimum wage Act 1948 strictly implemented in the plantation sector.
- Special Emphasis should be given to tribal women workers in the plantation sector by conducting various training programme.
- Plantation owners should take a responsibility of taking women labors that are addicted for the consumption of alcohol to de-addiction camps regularly.
- The estate worker should be integrated into to the national health scheme; therefore, the existing health and welfare service of the estate tribal women workers will be improved.

## 8. Conclusion

In the present study, in-depth analyses of the socioeconomic status of tribal women labor in the plantation sector were undertaken. The study aimed to identify a factor which influences the Quality of work life in the coffee plantations. For assessment of the socio-economic status of women laborer in the study area a questioner is prepared and first-hand information's are gathered on the basis of tribal women laborer in the plantation sector has not improved much in the study area. the socio-economic status of tribal women workers in the organized sector is much improved when compared to plantation workers. Majority of tribal women workers in the plantation sector are illiterate and they are not aware of a various government programme which is meant for their upliftment. Due to their ignorance, the benefits of government programme are not reaching targeted tribal women labor. Most of the tribal women workers are not the member of a trade union organization, therefore, women plantation workers have week bargaining power, therefore, their per-day wage is also a lot to another organized sector. All the economic indicator and social indicator pertaining to the status of tribal women laborer in plantation sector reveals the pathetic conditions of women's plantation laborer in the study area. Even today they are to be a derived class in the civilized society.

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