



## A Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Coffee Plantation Laborers in Kodagu District

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### Abstract

Coffee first found its way to Coorg in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through the efforts of British officer captain Scott who introduced coffee beans from Yemen and recognized the regions favorite climate and soil conditions for coffee cultivation. Today coffee drinking has become a tradition. The main objectives were to study the socio economic profile of the respondents and their level of financial empowerment in Coorg. To examine the gender disparities in between the plantation laborers and to study the work environment and problems of the labor. The Plantation Labor Act of 1951 covers the coffee estate labour work conditions. The variables used in the study are demographic factors gender age religion caste education marital status occupation and education. socio economic conditions studied family profile economic factors such as debt sources of income subsidiary income savings monthly expenditure and memberships in SHGs Work conditions related to leave facilities and healthcare and overtime. Both primary and secondary data was used and the research design was descriptive in nature with a survey study and data collection by questionnaire method and using sample design stratified sampling technique. The findings showed that the economic conditions were critical with all the workers being debt ridden and landless with the plantation work being their only source of income.

**Keywords:** coffee plantations socio economic work environment healthcare demographic factors.

### 1. Introduction

To study the problems of daily wagers in plantations coffee estates of Coorg or Kodagu was selected. According to plantation labor Act of 1951 and Minimum wages act of 1948 daily wagers never received timely wages, wage parity issues,, no restroom no canteen facilities nor any kind of social insurance. To understand their conditions better a field Survey was conducted data was collected by reading the gender distribution of respondents, education level distribution of respondents device distribution of respondents marital status of the respondents religion wise distribution of respondents, caste distribution, number wise distribution of household expenditures type distribution of respondents, wage type distribution of respondents, distribution of the women workers getting equal wages to men, equal work ability wise distribution to make savings wise distribution of respondents per month. Did the respondents have debt sources? Distribution of respondents while borrowing monthly

expenditure wise distribution of respondents, that is permanent or contract or daily wages whether they have government transportation facilities, locally yes no or sometimes working, while working on work hour distribution that is for 8 hours 9 to 10 hours? Owing the land wise distribution of respondents, Health insurance holding at workplace, status wise distribution of respondents, ration card type , distribution IF getting of Social Security at workplace status wise distribution, Availability of primary Education Center facility for its children, double burden of work both house and outside work wise distribution of respondents for men and women were the different parameters taken for data collection and sampling.

### 2. Review Of Literature

- A.N Chethna N.Nagaraj P.G. Chengappa and CP Gracy (2010) geographical indications for Kodagu coffee or socio economic feasibility analysis data has been

collected of 12 villages located along the Kaveri basin were selected through cluster sampling and in the next stage in the second stage the survey members of the study villages were composed of the concerned revenue office the primary data from 35 planters were composed during February to March 2008 to the agricultural year 2007 eight using pretested schedule the simple tabular analysis was used to evaluate the dark intensity output and profits from coffee and the gains and thrashing of coffee production at high and low shades were worked out to guess the price quality for high shade grown coffee[1]

- Doctor Kulamani Padhi (2007) Agricultural labor in India a close look at the predominant objective of the study of the five year plans to ensure full opportunities for work and better living to all the sections of the rural community and in fastidious to help out agricultural workers and backward classes to come to the stage of the rest it has been iden Say that agricultural workers represent the most abandoned group in the Indian rural constitution workers hold no skill or guidance and they have no substitute service opportunities either[2] and a great number of workers belong to scheduled trips and scheduled casts agricultural laborers especially in smaller villages away from towns and cities are generally unskilled workers carrying out agricultural operations in the centuries old traditional wages[3]
- Shapan Chandra Majumdar Sanjay Chandra Roy (2011) the socioeconomic conditions of tea plantation workers in Bangladesh a case study of Sri mangal it has been cited that most of the countries tea has become a significant product relating to export earning and job from this study it's been founded that Bangladesh produces about 55 to 60 million kilos of tea annually and with this it stands in the tenth position out of 33 producing countries in the universe the study finds that the working situation for pickers is habitually

deprived with the low job, low wages and income security, discrimination among ethnic and gender lines, lack of protective gear and inadequate basic facilities such as housing and sometimes even drinking water and food. The author tried to recognize the current socioeconomic problems confronting the tea industry workforce of Bangladesh and thus provides recommendation to resolve that troubles

### **3. Research Gap**

Inspite of coffee crops yielding good profits to the coffee estate owners post 1991 since liberalization Globalization and privatization era most of the coffee planters businessmen and traders had to face global coffee markets from Brazil Cuba and stiff competition. The coffee workers of Coorg continued to work in the plantations deprived of good wages and work facilities as they never came under the ambit of Labor policy. The Plantation Act of 1951 overlapped with the Factories Act of 1948 as Plantation Act covered even workers in offices hospitals Dispensaries schools etc. But no relief was provided to the coffee estate workers socially or financially and they were daily wage workers who were selected for the study[4].

### **4. Objectives of the study**

- To study the socio and economic conditions of the sampled respondents in Kodagu district.
- To understand the working conditions and problems of the sampled workers in the sampled areas of Coorg.
- To suggest a few measures to alleviate their problems[5].

### **5. Research Methodology**

- Interview method was used for data collection by designing a questionnaire to collect primary data and secondary data was taken from government reports and previously published research articles. Sampling technique was cluster sampling. Data analysis was done by percentage method[6].

### **6. Data analysis interpretation**

**Table 1:** Social factors

Sl.no	No. sampled	Sampled area	Age		Marital	Unmarried	Caste		Household Distribution	
			20%	10%			20%	-	20%	10%
1	50	Virajpet	20%	10%	20%	-	20%	-	20%	10%
2	50	Mdikeri	20%	10%	20%	-	20%	-	20%	10%
3	50	Somwarpet	20%	10%	20%	-	20%	-	20%	10%

**6.1. Field survey 2026-March**

Table analysis The above table shows us that the sample size was evenly taken from all the sampled talukas of Virajpet , Madikeri and Somwarpet . Age wise samples from 18years to 40years were more employed all the workers[7] were married with the majority belonging to Sc/St castes. Their household distribution indicates they were more joint families having 8 to 9 members and nuclear families having 2 to 3 members formed a minority in the sampled number of respondents.

**Table 2:**Economic Factors.

Sl.no.	Sampled respondents	Sampled Area	Wage type	Wage parity	Saving ability	Debts - repayment
			Only Daily wagers	20%	20%	30%
1	50	Virajpet	30%	20%	20%	30%
2	50	Madikeri	30%	20%	20%	30%
3	50	Somwarpet	30%	20%	20%	30%
03	150	03				

**6.2. Field survey 2026 March**

The income per household as per the survey was lesser than 10,000 per month.(90% of the respondents) while only 10% earned more than 10,000Rs, per month, Their working hours were six in the mornings till six in the evening during summers and eight am to six in the evenings during

winters and rainy season. As per their work nature there was no permanent employees or contract workers only daily wagers were taken for survey. They absolutely had no land holdings and depended on their landlords or estate owners for their sustenance. Their saving[8] ability was good but they were not able to repay their debts in time. The main sources of finance were from bank loans but these sampled labor depended more on money lenders 80% and on friends and relatives 20%. Health insurance ration cards and other facilities such as restroom were not present in their work places. No canteen or transport facilities from government were available though primary schools were present. Double burden of taking care of home and work outside was present Secondary Data.

**Table 3:** Coorg taluk population and household number as per 2011 census.

Sl.no.	Sampled respondents	Sampled Area	Wage type	Wage parity	Saving ability	Debts - repayment
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2	50	Madikeri	30%	20%	20%	30%
3	50	Somwarpet	30%	20%	20%	30%
03	150	03				



The total geographical area in Coorg is 4,10,775 area Ha and out of this 1,06,766 hectares are used for coffee cultivation[9].

### Conclusion

The study analyzed socioeconomic conditions of plantation laborers in the coffee plantations based on education income and structure and credit availability it shows that socioeconomic conditions is low in the study area women workers are less educated and they were not aware of many schemes introduced by the government and awareness should be giving most of the workers having membership of SHG's (Self help groups) which helps them to away loan in needy time they are mainly depending on daily wages and also on some subsidiary income less family incomes makes them to avail credit from outside sources to run the family and also all the gender disparities are taking place in the form of discrimination in wages household works exit

### Recommendations

The plantation labor act has to be enforced thereby ensuring minimum facilities like compulsory rest of the 7 th day payment in time basic facilities like drinking water toilet facilities and the plantation area to be provided as many workers are women even though there is the act of equal wages for equal work 1976 despite of a gender aspect till today most of the plantation women labourers are not getting the equal wages here there is need to government intervention and the law has to be and enforced Karnataka planters are not happy kodagu planters are not happy with the consistent increase in labour costs as it makes up 60% of the total cost of coffee cultivation but with high inflation workers are demanding higher wages since there is no substitute to their earnings another important finding in the study is the workplace discrimination which is reported there should be a procedure in which the workers can put forth their grievances and there should be a regressive procedural so an awareness program can be conducted over the rights of the workers in case of discrimination and education session increased awareness would help the workers to be more conscious and improve their socioeconomic conditions the main impediment

finding in the double burden of work of both houses household and outside workers on the fully on women for household work there are no wages at all there's also need to raise consciousness among the laborers on their gender based work

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