

Social Inclusion of Migrant Coffee Plantation Workers in Kodagu District of Karnataka

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Abstract: Coffee plantation's which forms backbone of Kodagu's economy. As harvest season starts in Coorg coffee planters has a lot of issues relating to labour scarcity. Most of the Assamese works in coffee estates during peak season. These migrated workers were excluded from local activities; even they were paid equal to local workers. Both male and female workers are considered for the study. This study aimed to understand the socio-economic conditions of the Social Inclusion of long-term, short term and seasonal migrant coffee plantation workers. The collected data was computed by applying chi-square. Results shown that, a relationship exists between type of migration and social inclusion variables.

Key words: Migrant workers, plantation, social inclusion, economic conditions, growth etc.

I. Introduction:

Plantation work being agriculture in nature is carried out on large pieces of land or estates that are remotely located. Kodagu accounts for nearly a third of the coffee produced in country, thereby earning itself the sobriquet "Coffee Cup of India". With the majority of land used for coffee cultivation, yield per hectare of Arabica and Robusta variety stands out higher in Kodagu than in any other district of the country. The yield invariably depends upon on the performance of the workers employed-be it permanent or the temporary ones.

The labourer force in Kodagu is a multi cultural one comprising besides locals, migrants from Mysore, North Karnataka, North India, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. It is noticed that migration of small landholders, petty businessmen, agents and contractors has seen an increasing trend over the last few decades. On any given day during peak season, one can find migrants from Assam, Bihar, Mysore and West Bengal making up the workforce as they find Kodagu lucrative and safe bet/nest compared to their home states.

II. Migrant labourers in coffee estates of Kodagu:

Coffee is a highly labour incentive crop that requires on an average requires 400 man days per hectare per year for Arabic crop and 300 man days per hectare per year for Robusta. Most of the planters employ a combination of both permanent and temporary labourers, with minimum permanent labourer. With migration of local peasants towards greener pasties, Kodagu often finds itself short on labourers, forcing planters to employ migrant labourers from the other states. Migration too has played an important role. Of the total 5.27 lakh coffee workers in the country, 2.02 lakh are in Kodagu, 1.31 lakh in Chikmagalur district, 0.88 lakh in Hassan district and rest spread across other States.

III. Socio-economic status of migrant coffee plantation labourers:

Labour in Kodagu has always seen multi-cultural. Other than tribal and non-tribal local labourers, migrants from Tamil Nadu, Assam and other states were frequent in the area. The residences of the interviewed migrant labourers had access to basic amenities. All the houses visited had electricity supply, toilets and tiled roofs. Houses of non-permanent labourers had space for kitchen gardens where coffee and other sub crops was grown and this was a supplementary income for them, together with wages. The labourers living in line houses did not state anything wanting, about their places of residence. However, the inference on housing conditions of the labourers should not be generalized to the entire district.

The planters felt that because of the influx of migrant labourers from places like Assam (who hardly know Kannada/Hindi), it is very difficult to understand their needs and especially medical problems when they require medical treatment. The issue of alcohol addiction among the tribal communities were highlighted by many planters.

Kodagu is providing much better working environments and wages for migrant labourers and their families in comparison to other parts of the state; it is only natural since coffee cultivation is comparatively much more profitable than other crops. Even with higher wage rates in plantation labour in Kodagu, plantation labour does not offer growth prospects for labourers. There is considerable 'class difference' between planters and labourers. The distribution of land in the district is highly skewed against the Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations.

IV. Problems faced by the migrant coffee workers:

The demand for workers is so acute in the coffee estates in Coorg that these migrant workers keep hopping from one estate to the other. In the circumstances, it is difficult to keep bonded labourers. Some of the problems are stated below;

- The children of migrant workers they do not have access to local schools due to the language problems.
- The lack of identity proof.

- Lack of bank account.

V. Review of literature:

Gita Bharali (2004) the paper deals with the problem of the social security of the plantation labourers. The study focused on the education of worker's children. It is noticed that plantation labourers in Assam have got many social security benefits in the theory, but in reality it looks different. Profit making management and inactive trade union is not given much importance.

Dr. Kulamani Padhi (2007) study observed the conditions of agricultural labourers in India and based on study suggestions for the improvement of the socio-economic position of the agricultural labourers are given including better implementation of legislative measures, improvement in the bargaining position, resettlement of agricultural workers, creating alternative sources of employment, protection of women and child labourers, improving the working conditions, regulation of hours of work, improvements in agricultural sector etc.

According to **Choudhury (2010)**, when the migrant workers in thousands reached Assam, the local workers along with the tea workers of Chinese origin were surprised that women would also be working for the first time in the plantations. Managers had a satisfactory look since these would be used like slaves and would be paid much less than the Chinese counterparts. They would be submissive, and could not threaten to stop work, like the Chinese and the local workers used to do. Indian prospective tea workers were brought in ships and in very bad condition with no food, proper stay and basic amenities.

K.Saravana and Dr.Lokesha M.U(2017), in their research paper explained about migrated women workers who were excluded in various activities from local, and even they paid less compared to the male. For this Study researcher has adopted descriptive research design with purposive sampling technique to identify the samples. Udai Preek's socioeconomic scale and self prepared social inclusion measurement question with likert scaling was used to collect data. The collected data was computed through SPSS 19.0 by applying chi-square, correlation tests and simple percentile. Results shown that, the majority of migrated women were migrated after marriage and seasonal women migrant worker facing linguistic challenges with local interaction.

A literature review shows that many studies concentrated on women workers in plantation sector. There are some studies which have attempted to understand the coffee plantation from planter's point of view. Most of the studies highlighted only socio-economic status of the different plantation workers. These socio-economic conditions vary in different locality with different type of labourers.

VI. The study objectives:

The study aims to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- To understand the socio-economic condition of Migrant coffee Plantation Workers
- To study the social inclusion of migrant coffee plantation workers.

VII. Scope of the study:

The study concentrated on migrant labourers in coffee plantations of Madikeri region. The study is designed to focus on the socio economic conditions and inclusion of migrant coffee workers. The scope of data collection is restricted to coffee migrant workers located in Madikeri taluk of Kodagu district.

VIII. Research methodology:

(1) Sources of data:

Primary data: The primary field research of this study includes direct interview method and questionnaire. It is planned to collect the required and relevant data from 150 respondents representing the target group.

Secondary data: The secondary data will be used to discuss theoretical aspect of the study. The main sources of secondary data are annual reports, journals, magazines, research articles, text books and selected websites.

- (1) **Sampling design:** It is planned to collect the required primary data with the help of structured questionnaire to the 150 randomly selected respondents.
- (2) **Statistical tools and techniques:** The data obtained from primary and secondary sources will be presented in tables. The data will be interpreted through statistical tools by using chi square test.

IX. Hypothesis:

The following hypothesis was framed based on the research objectives;

H₀: There is no significant relationship between type of migration and social inclusion of migrant workers

H₁: There is significant relationship between type of migrant and social inclusion of migrant labourers with reference to the following variables

1) Type of migration:

- Long term Migration
- Short term migration
- Seasonal migration

2) Social Inclusion:

- Bank account
- Membership in local SHG
- Possession of ration card
- Access to good quality health services
- Accessing education for their children from local school
- Housing facilities.

X. Data analysis and interpretation:

An effort has been made to analyse the socio-economic profile of the respondents. The respondent's age, educational qualification, marital status and various indicators which give an overview of their conditions have been analysed.

Table 1: Socio-Economic profile of the respondents

| Gender | | Experience in current plantation | |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Male | 63% | 0 – 5 years | 26% |
| Female | 37% | 6 – 10 years | 38% |
| Type of migration | | 11- 15 years | 21% |
| Long term | 34% | Above 16 years | 15% |
| Short term | 18% | Place of Stay | |
| Seasonal | 48% | Within the Plantation | 79% |
| Age | | Outside the Plantation | 21% |
| Below 25 Years | 08% | Income(per day) | |
| 25 – 35 years | 43% | Below Rs.300 | 27% |
| 36 – 45 years | 36% | Rs.300 – Rs. 500 | 68% |
| 46 – 60 years | 10% | Rs.500 – Rs.700 | 05% |
| Above 60 years | 03% | Category | |
| Marital Status | | SC | 43% |
| Married | 98% | ST | 32% |
| Unmarried | 02% | Minorities | 12% |
| Educational Qualification | | Others | 13% |
| Illiterate | 46% | Savings Habit | |
| Primary | 37% | Yes | 56% |
| Middle school | 17% | No | 44% |

(Source: Primary data)

Table 2: Significance level between type of migration and financial inclusion of migrant worker

| Sl. No. | Type of inclusion | Response | Types of migration | | | Total | Significance level | | |
|---------|--|-----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|--------------------|----|---------|
| | | | Long term | Short term | seasonal | | X ² | df | P value |
| 1 | Bank A/c | Yes | 32 | 16 | 29 | 77 | 1.3001 | 2 | 0.5221 |
| | | No | 37 | 12 | 24 | 73 | | | |
| | Total | 69 | 28 | 53 | 150 | | | | |
| 2 | Membership in SHG | Yes | 30 | 28 | 23 | 81 | 1.449 | 2 | 0.4846 |
| | | No | 31 | 18 | 20 | 69 | | | |
| | Total | 61 | 46 | 43 | 150 | | | | |
| 3 | Possession of ration card | Yes | 53 | 37 | 07 | 97 | 50.632 | 2 | 0.0000 |
| | | No | 14 | 07 | 32 | 53 | | | |
| | Total | 67 | 44 | 39 | 150 | | | | |
| 4 | Access to good quality health services | Yes | 65 | 28 | 18 | 111 | 7.762 | 2 | 0.0206 |
| | | No | 13 | 14 | 12 | 39 | | | |
| | Total | 78 | 42 | 30 | 150 | | | | |
| 5 | Access to education | Yes | 58 | 35 | 16 | 109 | 18.337 | 2 | 0.0001 |
| | | No | 10 | 12 | 19 | 41 | | | |
| | Total | 68 | 47 | 35 | 150 | | | | |
| 6 | Housing facilities | Yes | 62 | 42 | 11 | 115 | 6.122 | 2 | 0.0469 |
| | | No | 12 | 15 | 08 | 35 | | | |
| | Total | 74 | 57 | 19 | 150 | | | | |

(Significance level at 5%)

The above table reveals that significance level between type of migration and social inclusion of migrant workers in the plantation. It was shown that, still only 32 workers having a bank account among 69 long term migrant plantation workers. Out of 28 short term migrant worker, only 16 members were having bank account and out of 53 seasonal migrant workers, only 29 workers having a bank account. Long term seasonal workers are more in number who has membership in SHGs when compared to other types of migration. Out of 150 respondents only 97 workers possessing ration card. Most of the migrant workers access to good quality of health services provided by the planters and association. 58 long term workers out of 68 send their children to local schools. Seasonal workers (35 respondents) are not access to school because of language problem. Majority of the labourers are provided with housing facilities. Out of 74 long term workers 62 workers were having housing facilities; out of 57 short term workers 42 workers and out of 19 workers 11 are having housing facilities.

Table 3: Association between type of migration and social inclusion of plantation workers

| Sl.No | Variables | Chi Square | d.f | P value | Result |
|-------|--|------------|-----|---------|--|
| 1 | Bank A/c | 1.3001 | 2 | 0.5221 | Not significant H ₁ - rejected |
| 2 | Membership in SHG | 1.449 | 2 | 0.4846 | Not significant H ₁ - rejected |
| 3 | Possession of ration card | 50.632 | 2 | 0.0000 | Significant H ₀ - rejected |
| 4 | Access to good quality health services | 7.762 | 2 | 0.0206 | Significant H ₀ - rejected |
| 5 | Access to education | 18.337 | 2 | 0.0001 | Significant H ₀ - rejected |
| 6 | Housing facilities | 6.122 | 2 | 0.0469 | Significant H ₀ - rejected |

The attempt has been made to analyze the association between the type of migration and social inclusion of migrant workers in the plantation with the assistance of chi-square value and its significance examine each of the social inclusion variables separately. The six social inclusion variables are analyzed separately with the help of the Chi - square test. It has been revealed from table 3 that most of the social inclusion variables significantly associated with the type of migration workers in coffee plantation towards possession of ration card, access to good quality health services, access to education and Housing facilities. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected as there is relationship between type of labourers and social inclusion.

XI. Conclusion:

Migrant workers are lacking many opportunities to exercise their local rights. Majority of worker who migrate from various places are from poor families and are illiterate. Their poor level of education, experience and skills retains them helpless to abuse from illegal placement agencies. The study was found that all kind of migrant workers are eager to send their children to local school and interested in possessing and getting the benefit of Public Distribution System (PDS). Moreover the migrated workers are aware of most of the schemes as announced by the Government from time to time.

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