

WOMEN WORKERS IN COFFEE INDUSTRY OF INDIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe gender distribution of coffee workers in the coffee curing and manufacturing sector of India in terms of employment size, enterprise type, social security benefits and wage. Unit level data was collected from Employment-Unemployment Survey (2011-12) conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Following National Industrial Classification, 2008 (code 10792, coffee curing and manufacturing of coffee) based on usual principal status, it is found that 34% of the total workers are women. Taking into account National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector definition of formal sector consisting of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households with less than 10 workers, only 50% of male workers belong to formal sector while no female worker belongs to formal sector. Surprisingly, only 31 one per cent of male workers and no female worker are entitled to social security benefits. The appalling condition of female workers is evident from female to male wage ratio, it is 0.43. In conclusion, it can be said that overwhelming number of female workers who are mainly casual worker are deprived of all sorts of social security benefits.

Keywords: Coffee, women, informal sector, social security.

INTRODUCTION

Within the urban labour market, gender discrimination tends to take the form of occupational segregation, with women concentrated in poorly-paid, unskilled jobs, and of disparity in earnings, with women earning less than men (Anker, 1997; Birdsall and Sabot, 1991). Studies on female employment have demonstrated the existence of wage discrimination against women (Bourquie, 2002; Joeke, 1985). Labour market discrimination against women is legitimized by stereotypes and social discourse surrounding female work. Employers reflect social attitudes about women's work, for example, when they argue that "women are only working to buy lipstick" (Joeke, 1985). In other words, a woman's work is not considered to be an important source of revenue for the family. However, the rate of female employment in coffee curing sector of India stands in stark contrast to labour market trends; overall female worker population ratio is 24% by usual statusⁱ (NSS, 2011-12) whereas it is 34% in coffee curing sector of India.

The plantation sector, a key sector under India's

inclusive growth regimen is perhaps the most labour intensive enterprise in rural India in comparison with general agriculture. The Indian coffee industry is the fifth largest in the world followed after Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia and Colombia. Coffee production in India is dominated in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu forming the traditional coffee growing regions of South India, followed by the new areas developed in the non-traditional areas like Andhra Pradesh and Orissa as well. Coffee production in India has grown rapidly from 18,893 tonnes in 1950-51 to 3, 15,500 tonnes in 2011-12 and grown by 13 percent during the last six decades. According to the latest statistics published by the Coffee Board of India, the area of coffee harvested in India is 409690 hectares, with yield estimates of 852 Kg per hectare forming a total production estimate of 3,14,000 tonnes. According to the statistics provided by the Coffee Board of India 2011-12, the estimated average daily number of employment in plantations is 606702 (Reddy, 2013).

The present study looks at gender statistics in the coffee curing sector and the way in which these determine gender discrimination in the labour market. In other words, it explores how gender relationships are experienced and perceived at work. It hopes to

demonstrate how gender hierarchies, which have been firmly established by society, are extended and maintained in the factory.

NEED OF THE STUDY

At the international level, a series of United Nations intergovernmental resolutions provide a mandate for the development of policies on the advancement of women and gender equality, as well as for the statistics required for the development of these policies. These include the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Gender equality is also a fundamental component of the Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000), adopted by all Member States of the United Nations in 2000. The eighth Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a framework for measuring progress towards fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration. Goal 3 explicitly calls for gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the associated indicators relating to education, employment and decision-making. The availability and accessibility of gender sensitive data are instrumental to the development and implementation of policies that can facilitate the achievement of national and international objectives. The importance of using statistical evidence to develop appropriate policies is recognized in one of the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The objective H.3 is: “*generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation*” (United Nations, 1995a).

There are many issues and topics on which gender statistics are relevant and needed. A number of gender equality issues relate to the field of work and employment. These are: a) size, structure and characteristics of the labour force, b) gender pay gap and b) unorganised employment (UN, 2010).

Size, Structure and Characteristics of the Labour Force

The labour force is the most commonly used measure of the “*economically active population*”. According

to the relevant resolution from the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ILO, 1983) it is “*all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services, as defined by the United Nations systems of national accounts and balances, during a specified time period*”. Promoting gender equality in employment is widely recognized as an essential component of economic and social development and a key mechanism to combat poverty. It is also an important factor contributing to the economic empowerment of women in their families and communities, and in society at large. Women’s participation in employment increases their contribution to household resources and their control over the allocation of those resources. This leads to greater economic independence and self-determination, which are both important for women’s empowerment. For these reasons, employment was identified as one of the key instruments for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Gender equality is not only a matter of equal access to the labour market, but of equal opportunities to access jobs in the broadest range of industries, occupations, and professional levels, with adequate and comparable remuneration and decent working conditions.

The Gender Pay Gap

The *gender pay gap* is a powerful measure providing an overall picture of gender inequality in total pay for employment. It is calculated as the difference between average earnings of men and women as a percentage of average earnings of men. The gender pay gap combines two key aspects in one measurement: gender segregation and discrimination. The first relates to differences in individual characteristics (such as level of education and work experience), and may be determined by personal choices or gender roles. The second relates to factors such as the “glass ceiling” effect which prevents women from reaching the highest-level jobs, or direct discrimination in which a woman with the same job performance as her male colleagues is paid less. Calculating the pay gap for specific groups of workers based on characteristics such as age, sector, industry, occupation, level of educational attainment, and years of seniority in employment, can lead to a clearer understanding of the reasons for gender pay

gaps, and distinguish between the various factors underlying differences in pay. It will also help to identify specific groups of occupations or sectors where the gender gaps may be wider.

Unorganised Employment

Unorganised or informalⁱⁱ sector employment is a primary source of livelihood for many people, particularly women. Informal employment and the related concept of employment in the informal sector are relatively new topics in labour force statistics that aim to capture different aspects of the informalisation of employment (Hussmans, 2003). In 1993, the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted an international statistical definition of *employment in the informal sector* to refer to all jobs in informal sector enterprises; that is, in small and/or unregistered, private unincorporated enterprises with no complete sets of accounts engaged in non-agricultural activities that produce at least some goods or services for sale or barter. Those working in informal jobs include unregistered employees who do not have explicit, written contracts and, as a result, are not subject to labour legislation, but are not limited to these. They also include workers who do not benefit from social protection, paid annual leave, sick leave or pension schemes even though they may have regular contracts. Indeed, informal employment is generally a larger source of employment for women than formal employment (ILO, 2002a). Average earnings from these types of informal employment are low and not sufficient in the absence of other sources of income to raise households out of poverty (Chen et al., 2005).

National Commission on Enterprises of Unorganised Sector (2007) defines 'organised' and 'unorganised' on the basis of various factors including enterprise type, number of workers and social benefits. All enterprises under the domain of the Government/public sector, public/private ltd. company; co-operatives, trusts, etc. are organised. The enterprise type is unorganised if it is proprietary (male and female); entails a partnership with members from the same household or members from different households; and employer's households (that is, private households employing maid-servants, watchmen, cooks, etc.) coupled with the number of workers, which should be 10 or more. If the enterprise type is not known (missing or other than

mentioned above) and employs 10 or more workers, it is considered as organised. When both the organised type and number of workers are not known, then if the enterprise provides social benefits to its workers, it is organised. The residual sectors are considered as unorganised.

For our purpose, we have describe unorganized sector workers as those workers who are not entitled in any type of social security benefits irrespective of the workers location in organized or unorganized sector. First, by enterprise type, organized and unorganized sector employment is differentiated. Then, receipt of any kind of social security benefit by sector is delineated. Those, who received any form of benefit is demarcated as formal sector worker; rest are unorganized sector worker.

Why Gender Equality Is Important

Promoting gender equality in employment is widely recognized as an essential component of economic and social development and a key mechanism to combat poverty. It is also an important factor contributing to the economic empowerment of women in their families and communities, and in society at large. Women's participation in employment increases their contribution to household resources and their control over the allocation of those resources. This leads to greater economic independence and self-determination, which are both important for women's empowerment.

Gender inequalities persist in a wide range of aspects relating to work. Socio-cultural attitudes, lack of co-responsibility in households and of options to control the timing and spacing of births, as well as employment policies perpetuate inequality in the labour market. Promoting gender equality in employment implies that women and men should have equal access to the labour market, including equal opportunities to access jobs in the broadest range of industries and occupations; to attain any of the various professional levels; to receive adequate and comparable remuneration for the work performed; and to have equal access to decent working conditions (including occupational health and safety), social protection, basic rights, contractual tenure and voice at work. In addition, male and female workers also have different needs and constraints. For example, maternity protection is relevant only for women, while parental leave affects

both male and female workers and their households (ILO 2009).

Why to Study Gender Relations in Coffee Industry?

Review of literatures – both national and international suggests that while there has been several studies on varied aspects of labour market of the North East tea industry [George (1986); UPASI (2003); Hayami and Damodaran (2004)], none of the studies examined different forms of production, interrelationships between different forms and women's roles in different forms. Condition of women workers, role of women workers in trade union, patriarchal attitudes by management towards women workers in plantation industry are studied [Bhowmik (1982, 1994); Govt. of India 2009; Jain, 1998; Koshy & Tiwary, 2011; Rajasenan (2010); Rege (1946)]. The study by Tessy Kurien (2000) deals on working conditions, consumption pattern and the gap between Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and its implementation among four plantation sectors of Kerala e.g. tea, coffee, rubber, and spices. But his thesis does not examine dynamics of gender relations in different forms of production and in different strata of land holding. A special issue on "Plantations, Proletarians and Peasants in Colonial Asia" by The Journal of Peasant Studies (1992) focused on the origins and recruitment of plantation labour, the labour process into which the plantation workforce was deployed, and the labour regimes governing this. What are missing are forms of production and dynamics of gender relations.

When one considers the status of research on labour market issues in plantations other than tea, namely rubber, coffee and spices in India, it is disconcerting to note that the existing studies have hardly recognised the need to account for these diverse issues in other plantation crops namely rubber, coffee and cardamom (Sumitha, 2012).

Though there have been various studies and individual or committee based investigations to understand and report about the plantation crisis induced by the trade reforms, most of them approached the problem from the framework of conventional supply and demand analysis (market instruments), prices and trade (Joy, 2004). Hardly few empirical studies are available that try to understand the labour dynamics and the gender impacts of the

crisis and the trade reforms in a holistic manner and offer valuable suggestions and policy guidelines from a sustainable plantation development perspective (Viswanathan and Shah, 2012).

Internationally also, only two studies are found (Adagal, Kurian & Jayawardena, 2013) that examined plantation patriarchy justifying and normalising subordinate status of women workers in both tea and coffee plantation. Overfield and Fleming (1999) laments that, judging from a review of the research planning documents of plantation industry gender relations in coffee industry have seldom been considered in setting research priorities and formulating their research programs.

In a nutshell, review of literature on plantation industry shows that to what extent gender plays a role in differential access of men and women to various employments has not been studied. These studies underpin an industrial model of competitiveness, based on low-wage female labour which is mainly descriptive; does little to reveal the dynamics of socio-cultural factors that affect the division of labour between men and women, both inside and outside the factory that directly or indirectly determine gender differentiated treatment in the workplace.

For example, there has been no study of the actual differential deployment of female labour time in the different production sectors of plantation industry. Further, there has been no study of the social relations of gender hierarchy in the different sectors of coffee industry.

It is of substantial analytical interest to the sociologist to observe and analyze women's status in coffee curing sector and subsequent entitlements, thereby ascertaining gender differences in labour relations.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on official statistics collected by National Sample Survey Organization Employment-unemployment Survey (2011-12). Unit level data was collected using National Industrial Classification (NIC) five digit industry codes (NIC 2008) on coffee curing and manufacturing sector (code no. 10792)ⁱⁱⁱ. Gender disaggregated data on size of employment, enterprise type, daily wage, social security benefits and size of informal sector was tabulated using usual principal status^{iv} employment. Daily wage data was

calculated as total earnings from wage employment in the preceding week divided by the number of days associated with wage employment by using current weekly status^v.

workers (nearly 1%) is present in urban area^{vi}.

Inequalities in employment size

In the coffee curing sector males constitute 66% of workforce against 34% of females (Table-1). Number of male worker is higher than female workers in urban area (48%) whereas a miniscule of female

Table 1: Rural-urban distribution of Male-female workers in coffee curing sector in 2011-12

Place	Male	M %	Female	F %	Rural+urban	(%)
Rural	2060	17.55	3967	33.78	6027	51.33
Urban	5633	47.97	82	0.70	5715	48.67
Rural + urban	7693	65.52	4049	34.48	11742	100.00

Source: NSSO 68th Round Employment-unemployment unit level data

Regarding status of workers, it is observed that 51% of male workers are regular salaried workers while only one percent of female workers are so (Table-2). It is quite surprising to see that 34% of female

workers are employer while no male worker is employer. Another astonishing finding is that there is no casual worker.

Table 2: Distribution of male-female workers in coffee curing sector as per activity status

Activity status	Rural		Urban		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M	F%
Self-employed	583		559		1142		9.72	
Employer		3967				3967		33.79
Unpaid family worker	583				483		4.97	
Regular salaried	894		5074	82	5968	82	50.83	0.70
Casual worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Similar to regular salaried worker, 51% of males and 1% of females are working in those enterprises where number of workers is more than 20 that is one of the criteria of organized sector (Table 3). Expectedly, all the female workers (34%) are in those enterprises where number of workers is less than 6.

Table 3 : Distribution of male-female workers in coffee curing sector as per number of workers

Number of workers	Rural		Urban		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M%	F%
Less than 6		3967	559		559	3967	4.76	33.78
>6<10	1165				1165		9.92	
>20	894		5074	82	5968	82	50.83	0.70

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

In terms of written job contract, no female workers have written job contract while 8% of male workers do possess written job contract for more than 3 years (Table 4). By method of payment, 48% of males receive regular monthly salary as against 1% of female workers. Consistently with status of women workers, 34% of female workers receive regular weekly payment while only 18% of males receive so (Table 5).

Table 4: Distribution of male-female workers in coffee curing sector as per written contract

Contract	Rural		Urban		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M%	F%
No written contract	1165	3967	5633	82	6798	4049	57.90	34.48
More than 3 years	894				894		7.61	0
Total	2059	3967	5633	82	7692	4049	65.52	34.48

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment survey, 2011-12

Table 5: Distribution of male-female workers in coffee curing sector as per method of payment

Method of payment	Rural		Urban		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	M%	F%
Regular monthly salary			5633	82	5633	82	47.97	0.70
Regular weekly payment	2059	3967			2059	3967	17.53	33.80
Total	2059	3967	5633	82	7692	4019	65.50	34.50

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-2012

Gender Wage Gap

Since there is no casual worker, wage gap for casual workers is not available (Table 6). For rural male workers daily wage is Rs. 65.86; for urban male and female workers it is Rs. 380.28 and Rs. 142.46 respectively whereas combining rural and urban daily male wage is Rs. 333.16 and for female it is Rs.142.86. For regular salaried workers, the wage gap

is 0.43 which is quite high; higher than the national average wagevii of 0.58. By enterprise type, it is found that wage ratio cannot be calculated because no female worker is found in public/private Ltd. and no male worker is found in proprietary male enterprise (Table 7).

Table 6: Average wage earning (in Rs.) received by coffee curing sector workers per day by casual labours and regular/salaried employees by Sex and Type of workers

Type of worker	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	F/M ratio	Male	Female	F/M ratio	M	F	F/M ratio
Regular /salaried employee	65.86	0.0	0.0	380.28	142.86	0.38	333.16	142.86	0.43
Casual labourer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: NSSO Employment-Unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Table 7: Male-female average wage by enterprise type, 2011-12

Enterprise type	Rural		Urban		Rural + Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Proprietary Male				142.86		142.86
Public/private Ltd	65.86		380.28		333.16	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Organized and unorganized sector of Coffee industry

Unorganized sector workers are those workers who are not entitled in any type of social security benefits irrespective of the workers location in organized or unorganized sector. First, by enterprise type, organized and unorganized sector employment is differentiated. Then, receipt of any kind of social security benefit by sector is delineated. Those, who received any form of benefit is demarcated as formal sector worker; rest are unorganized sector worker. Organised sector covers: a) government/public sector, b) public/private limited company, c) cooperative societies/trust/other non-profit institutions. Rest belongs to unorganized sector.

In view of the aforementioned definition, including Govt/public sector, public/private Ltd/cooperative as organized sector in the coffee curing sector, nearly 50% of the workers are in unorganized (Table 8). Of the total workers, by enterprise definition, 51% of males and no female workers are in the organized sector. In terms of social security benefits, non-receipt of any benefit is same for both male and female workers (each 35%) (Table 9). In contrast, only 30% of male workers are only entitled to benefits.

Table 8: Gender distribution of enterprise type of coffee curing sector workers, 2011-12

Enterprise type	Rural		Urban		Total	Percentage		
	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	M%
Proprietary Male	1165	3967	559	82	1724	4049	14.68	34.49
Public/private Ltd.	894		5074		5968		50.83	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2004-05 and 2011-12

Table 9: Social security benefits of coffee curing workers in 2011-12

Social security	Rural		Urban		Total		Percentage	
	Male	Female	M	F	Male	Female	M%	F%
PF+pension+ health care + maternity			2666		2666		22.70	
Gratuity+health care + maternity	894				894		7.61	
Not eligible for any	1165	3967	2967	82	4132	4049	35.20	34.59

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2004-05 and 2011-12

By enterprise type, 51% of male workers and by social security benefits 30% of male workers belong to organized sector. Then the question arises, what is the actual number of informal sector workers? For this question, social security benefits by organized / unorganised sector^{viii} employment is constructed (Table 10).

Table 10: Social security benefits as per organised & unorganised sector by enterprise type in 2011-12

Social security	Organised				Unorganised			
	Male	Female	M%	F%	Male	Female	M%	F%
PF+pension+ health care + maternity					2666		22.70	
Gratuity+health care + maternity					894		7.61	
Not eligible for any	1724	4049	14.68	34.48	2408		20.51	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Now, if by receipt of social security benefits, organised versus unorganised sector employment is categorised, then it is seen that 3560 (30%) male workers belong to organized employment that are in receipt of any social security benefits and no female worker is in organized sector employment (Table 10).

Therefore, it can be said that written job contract, number of workers, and method of payment by enterprise type do not provide consistent picture of unorganized sector of employment (Table 11, 12 and 13).

Table 11: Method of payment as per organised & unorganised sector by enterprise type in 2011-12

Social security	Organised				Unorganised			
	Male	Female	M%	F%	Male	Female	M%	F%
Regular monthly					5074		43.22	
Regular weekly	1724	4049	14.68	34.48	894		7.61	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Table 12: Number of workers as per organised & unorganised sector by enterprise type in 2011-12

No. of workers	Organised				Unorganised			
	Male	Female	M%	F%	Male	Female	M%	F%
Less than 6	559	3967	4.76	33.78				
>6<10	1165		9.92					
>20		82		0.70	5968		50.83	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

Table 13: Type of job contract as per organised & unorganised sector by enterprise type in 2011-12

Type of contract	Organised				Unorganised			
	Male	Female	M%	F%	Male	Female	M%	F%
No written contract	1724	3967	4.76	33.78	5074		43.22	
>3 years		82		0.70	894		7.61	

Source: NSSO Employment-unemployment Survey, 2011-12

CONCLUSION

Based on NSSO employment-unemployment (2011-12) unit level data, comprising 5-digit NIC code 10592, this article explores gender distribution of labour in coffee curing sector of India. Employment size, daily wage, size of unorganized employment and social security benefits are considered. It is found that though women workers comprise 34% of the workforce which is higher than the national average (women's labour comprise 28% of the workforce in India), women workers are more susceptible to discriminatory practices. Only one percent of female workers are regular salaried worker who are receiving regular monthly salary. Female by male wage gap is 0.43, which is lower than the national average of 0.74. On the other hand, following NCEUS definition of unorganized employment that entails non-receipt of any type of social security benefit, it is found that 30% of the male workers are in organized employment while no female worker is in organized employment. The findings confirm that though large numbers of male workers are in unorganized sector employment, deprived of minimum wage and social security benefits, female workers are largely based on a low-wage, unskilled female labour force. Wage inequality still remains norm in the coffee curing sector. As gender equality and empowerment of women is an important Millennium Development Goal, the policy implication is the need for government to institute gender-sensitive workplace regulatory policies and programmes to be adhered in the coffee-curing and manufacturing sector in the country. It should be the responsibility of all the relevant regulatory authorities to ensure that the designated policies as well as the attendant rules and regulations are enforced.

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ⁱ The estimates of employed (or worker) in the age group 15-64 according to the *usual status (principal status)* gives the number of persons who worked for a relatively long part of the 365 days preceding the date of survey.

ⁱⁱ Unorganised or informal sector employment is used interchangeably.

ⁱⁱⁱ As per NIC-2008, there are two codes on coffee industry; 10592 on coffee curing and manufacturing of coffee products and 01272 on coffee growers. Data on coffee growers are not analyzed because there seems to be huge discrepancy in the number of growers between NSSO (4.5 lakhs) and Coffee board (6 lakhs). The difference in the number of coffee growers amounts to 1.6 lakhs. Therefore, only coffee curing sector is taken up for study.

^{iv} A person is considered in the labour force on usual principal status (UPS) if he/she spent relatively longer time (major time criterion) on economic activity during 365 days preceding the date of survey.

^v The current weekly status of a person is the activity pursued during a reference period of seven days preceding the date of survey.

^{vi} Overall, in coffee plantation sector, female labour force participation (55%) is higher than male workers (44%) (Viswanathan and Shah, 2012).

^{vii} According to NSSO EU survey report (2011-12), average wage for manufacturing sector that includes processing of food products is Rs. 395.82. For male workers average wage is 234.65 and for female workers it is 137.18. Thereby, F/M wage ratio is 0.58.

^{viii} Government/Public sector, public/private limited company and co-operative societies/trust/other non-profit organisations belong to organised sector employment as per NSSO schedule 10, 68th EU survey, 2011-12.