

A Study on Socio-economic Condition of Women Rubber Plantation Labourers in Kanyakumari District with Special Reference to Vilavancode

Gracy Rani

Department of Economics, Fatima College (Autonomous), India

Corresponding author: gracyrani447@gmail.com

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to find economic and social position among women workers in rubber plantation. Socio-economic conditions vastly differ across the world. Globalization has become the buzzword on the lips of businessmen, politicians, religious leaders, educators, students, the rich and the poor. It involves every aspect of life-economic, political, social and cultural and religion. The rubber plantation workers in Kanyakumari district are by and large affected by the problems of ignorance and poverty. It is a pity that they are unable to extricate themselves from the cruel clutches of poverty despite their migratory character assiduity and the massive support given by the trade unions and also a fairly high salary or wage rate. The study is to find the socio-economic status of women employees in rubber plantation. The study focuses on the age, experience and socio security level of women employees. Convenient sampling techniques is involved. Percentage analysis is used for analysis and interpretation.

Keywords: *Climate Change and Support Price, Price Fluctuation, Socio Economic*

Introduction

Rubber has played a vital role in the plantation crops of India. Rubber is an elastic substance made from sticky; milky white liquid called latex extracted from the bark of the rubber tree (*Hevea Brasiliensis*) through a process called tapping. Rubber is a Brazil native crop introduced in India by the British; however, cultivation in commercial scale were initiated as early as 1873. It plays a vital role in the National Economy. In the early years rubber was grown only in Kerala and Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu, which are the traditional rubber growing areas of the country. But currently, Rubber is also grown in Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Goa, Coastal Karnataka, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. India is the sixth largest producer and consumer of natural rubber (Binitha, 2018). This paper seeks to examine. the living and working condition of the rubber plantation and to analyze their level of income and expenditure Kanniyakumari district. This district accounts for 98 percentage of rubber production. It has suitable soil and climate for the cultivation of rubber trees. Out of 91807 hectares of total crop area, rubber is cultivated in 19500 hectares. There are 126 small scale rubber-based industries registered under the (Selvia, 2012) District Industries Centre (DIC). They provide employment to 1874 people. Rubber is being cultivated in three taluks of the district: Kalkulam Taluk - 180 rubber estates, Thovalai Taluk - 13 rubber estates, Vilavancode Taluk - 230 rubber estates according to Rubber Board, Marthandam. (Binitha, 2018) According to department of Economics and Statistics of Kanyakumari District there are 41 registered rubber estates with 7373.126

hectares of land in which there are 1998 male labourers and 988 female labourers. Land coverage under rubber plantation in Kanyakumari District is 27407 hectares. (District Statistical Handbook, 2015). This paper seeks to study the living and working condition of the rubber plantation and to analyze their level of income and expenditure in Kanyakumari district.

One of the prominent plantation crops of our country is rubber and has considerable significance to the Indian economy. Rubber is an elastic substance made from sticky, milky white liquid called latex extracted from the bark of the rubber tree (*Hevea Brasiliensis*) through a process called tapping. Rubber is a brazil native crop introduced in india by the british; however cultivation in commercial scale were initiated as early as 1873. In 1895 the first rubber plantations were set up on the hill slopes of Kerala. In 1902 the first commercial *Hevea* plantations were established at Thattekadu, Ernakulum District, Kerala. In India rubber plantations are spread over 5.97 lakh hectares cultivated in 16 states. It has been traditionally confined to Kerala and Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu of which 90% of the total output is from Kerala, next comes Kanyakumari District, followed by Tirpura with 4%. In Tamil Nadu, Nilgiri, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Coimbatore and Salem are the chief rubber producing districts of Tamil Nadu.

Review of Related Literature

In any research project it is essential to understand what has already been done in the specific topic that the researcher chooses and what has been done in the wider subject area of that topic. A Literature review is a text written by someone to consider the critical point of current knowledge including substantive finding as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are secondary sources, and as such, do not report any new or original experimental work. Also, a review of literature can be interpreted as a review of an abstract accomplishment.

Mahalakshmi, Assistant professor, Bharthiar University Art and Science College, Dec 2012 (IJSETR) volume 1, in her study on the Socio-economic status of women employees in tea plantation industries found out that no. of women workers are facing many problem in the tea plantation. Since women workers are engaged more than the male workers. The study is basically focus 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.

V Ushadevi And V.N Jayachandran (2001) A Project of Kerela Research Programme on Local Level Development (krill) centre for research studies thiruvanthapuram. Socio-economic profile of rubber tappers in the small holding sector. The study basically focused on the tapper's workers. The study found that tapper work is not an easy work as it requires skill and is labour intensive for the good health of the rubber tree and maintaining the longetivity of its production period.

A comparative study of the informal conditions of the plantation labourers of india labourer of India and Sri Lanka. By Neelam Choudhary and Deeksha Tayal. The study focuses on the section of plantation labourers, who are directly employed by the employer are and contract workers. The study also suggests the effectiveness of any formalization strategy would require collective involvement and social dialogue among all the key players in the plantation sector.

Government of India (1980) Labour Bureau Ministry of Labour Socio-economic condition of women workers in plantation action. In this study the Government of India focused on the plantation sectors of the labour economical life.

Sanyal Joyjit, Dr. Sikidar Sujit, Timung Ajit, (2015) , in their paper “Socio-Economic Condition of Rubber Plantation Workers- A Synoptic Study”, has presented that the nature of work is very hard. They are engaged in 8-10 hours of work. 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 is not adequate to run their family. They are leading life in poor condition and also not able to provide proper education facilities to their children.

Government of India Ministry of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, (2008- 09) conducted a survey and found out that economic condition of the Workers, particularly women workers, in rubber plantations of Tripura is poor. About 50 per cent sampled women workers in the plantations in the state are employed either on temporary or on casual basis. At all-India level only 7 per cent women workers are temporary or casual. Housing facility is available to only 15 per cent workers in rubber plantations of Tripura whereas at all-India level this figure is more than 75 per cent. The average daily earnings of workers are also lowest in the state’s plantations of rubber when compared with these plantations of other states covered during the survey. Various other benefits provided to the workers are also minimal in the state vis-à-vis other states.

Bent Hansen, Bhalla, Errikson, Roberts and Pranab Bardhan have studied the features of ‘attached labour’ in agricultural sector. Attached labourers are defined as those who are more or less in continuous employment. Their findings show that tighter labour markets lead to more tied labour contracts. In slack labour markets with high unemployment , the employer often does not bother to have long term contracts with labour since he is surer of the labour supply.

Thomas C.A (2004) conducted a study focus on the rubber growers of Kerala. The study states that the small rubber growers face a number of problems from the planting stage to the marketing of the product.

Balz Strasser (2009) explained that the poorest and most marginal holdings derive only a small percentage of their income from their own rubber trees. However, they earn important income from their work as tappers and labourer on neighbouring plantations and are thus altogether very dependent on income from the natural rubber sector.

Karunakaran (2017) The study revealed that prices were so low so that the rubber cultivators cannot even pay workers wages and the recent unprecedented volatility in prices declined rubber production leads to the falling standard of living of the rubber farmers in Kerala. Rubber cultivators in Kerala are mainly small growers and any financial constraints, fluctuations in price or backwardness in technology will affect the growers considerably.

Statement of the Problem

Rubber is one of the important horticultural crops in India. It has a commercial value and it assumes impotent from the point of view in employers working condition. The percent

work “Workers work contribution in rubber plantation” is an attempt to study the living and working condition of the rubber plantation, analyze their level of income and expenditure and give suggestion for improving the status and working condition of rubber plantation in Kanniyakumari district.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study areas follow

- 1.To study the living and working condition of the rubber plantation in Kanniyakumari district.
- 2.To analyze their level of income and expenditure.
- 3.To give suggestion for improving the status and working condition of rubber plantation.

Methodology

The required information for the present study has been collected both from Primary and Secondary data. The information has been collected from the respondents through the separate interview schedule for the rubber plantation labour. The Secondary data required for the study were collected from the various books, Rubber the various articles published in Newspapers, and Magazine.

Sample Design

The Samples were selected by Convenience Sampling Technique. The Total number were samples were collected 25 Respondents. The study was conducted among the select rubber plantation labours in Kanniyakumari district.

Collection of Data

The interview schedule has been used for collection of primary data from the rubber plantation labours employed in the factory.

Statistical Tools of Analysis

The analysis was done by the use of Excel and SPSS. The various statistically tools applied to analysis the primary data were presented percentage analysis to arrive at required from the study. For effective analysis and easy understanding, the data were tabulated.

Rubber Plantation Labour in Kanyakumari District

The data analysis required for the study was collected from the primary data. Primary data were collected directly with the help of interview schedule from the rubber plantation labours in Kanniyakumari district. The sample was selected by administering convenience sampling technique. The total number of samples was 25 and was selected among the rubber industry in rural area. The present study socio-economic conditions of sample rubber workers like, age, educational status, marital status, sources of income size of family accommodation monthly income number of days employed per year type of saving nature of work are analysed. The various statistically tools applied to analysis the primary data were presented analysis to arrive at required from the study. For effective analysis and easy understanding.

Table 1.1 Age Wise Classification.

S: No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Up to 20 year	7	28
2	21 year to 40 year	4	16
3	41 year to 60 year	11	44
	Above 61 year	3	12
Total		25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table.1.1 gives details about the age-wise classifications of rubber workers. Working in rubber plantation labours work out of 25 respondents studied only 7(28per cent) of them belongs to the age between Up to 20 year in rubber plantation labours, than 4(16per cent) respondents belong to the age group among 21 year to 40 year in rubber plantation labours, and 11(44per cent) respondents belong to the age group between 41 year to 60 year and additional, the period of old people above Above 61 year age are only 12 percent of rubber plantation labours.

Table 1.2: Educational Status of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	illiterate	4	16
2	Primary	10	40
3	Higher/Secondary	6	24
4	Degree/ Technical	5	20
5	Post Graduate	0	0
Total		25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table:1.2 shows that the educational status of the sample rubber workers in the study area. The rubber plantation labours 40per cent of primary level education, 24per cent of the rubber workers are Higher/Secondary level 20per cent of the rubber workers are Degree/ Technical and among the total sample in rubber workers.

Table 1.3: Marital Status Wise of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Married	21	84
2	Un married	2	4
3	Divorce	0	0.0
4	Widow	3	12
Total		25	100

Source: Primary data

Table: 1.3 shows that the gender married rubber workers are 84per cent of the rubber plantation labour and4per cent of the labours are un-married in rubber plantation labours, 3per cent labour are widow worker in rubber plantation.

Table 1.4: Sources of Income of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Rubber	15	60
2	Other Agri crops	6	24
3	Employment	4	16
Total		25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.4 states that the various steps of income distribution of the sample respondents in the study area. The rubber plantation labours are 60 per cent of the workers earn income in rubber, but.24per cent of the labour earns income in Other Agri crops and other than 16 per cent labours are earn income in employment.

Table 1. 5: Size of Family Classification of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	1 member to 3 members	4	16
2	4 members to 6 members	15	60
3	Above 6 members	6	24
Total		25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.5 reveals that the 16 percent of labour size of family 1 member to 3 members and 60percent of the plantation labour family size 4 members to 6 members and 24percent of labour size of family Above 6 members.

Table 1.6: Accommodation Classification of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Owned House	16	64
2	Rented House	9	36
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

Table :1.6 shows that almost 64 percent of the labours in the plantations live in their Owned House. Whereas the36percent of labours stay in Rented House.

Table 1.7: Monthly Income of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 7000	1	4
2	7000 - 10000	2	8
3	10000 - 13000	14	56

4	13000 - 15000	5	20
5	Above 15000	3	12
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

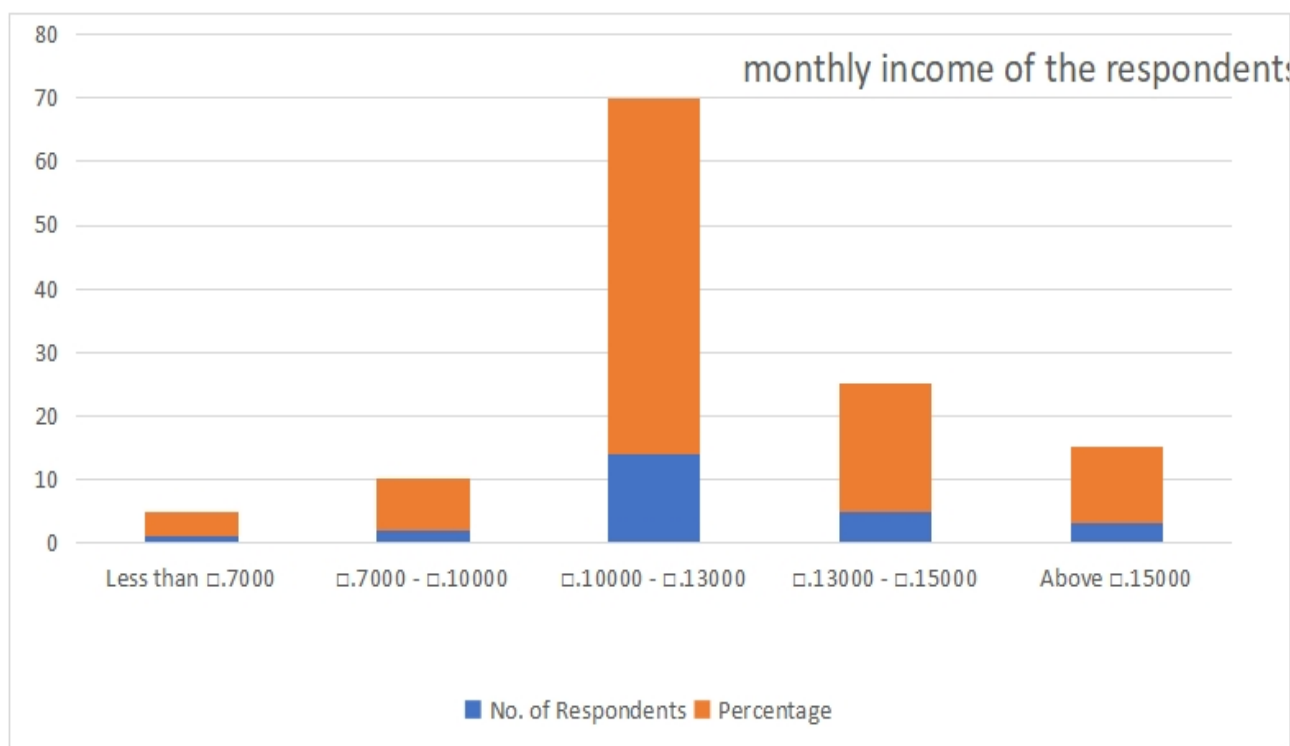


Chart 1.1. Monthly Income of the Respondent

Table 1.7 Implies that the various steps of income groups, 4per cent of rubber plantation labours earn less than 7000. It is significant to note that 8 per cent of rubber plantations labours earn between 7000 - 10000, 56 per cent of labours earn an income in the range of 10000 - 13000,20 per cent are in 13000 – 15000and 12percent are having Above 15000

Table 1.8: Monthly Family Expenditure of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Below 5000	6	24
2	5000 -10000	10	40
3	10000-15000	7	28
4	Above 15000	2	8
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.8 shows that it is understood from Table 1.6 that the rubber workers who spend a monthly expenditure of 5000 -10000, Below 5000, 10000-15000 and above 15000constitute the highest, average and the lowest 24, 40, 28and 8 respectively. Hence, 10rubber workers (40per cent) spend a monthly family expenditure of 5000 -10000 which is the maximum.

Chart 1.2 Monthly Family Expenditure of the Respondent

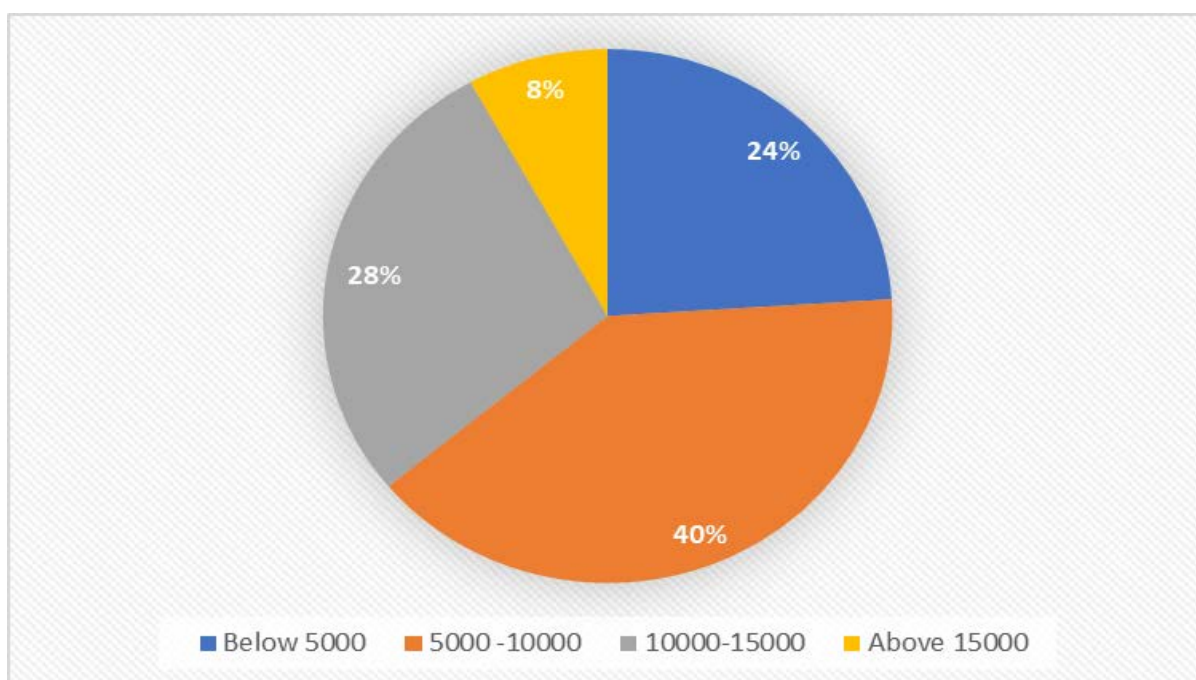


Table 1.9: Number of Days Employed Per Year of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Up to 100 days	2	8
2	100 to 200 days	5	20
3	200 to 300 days	18	72
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.9 It is found that the number of days employed per year classification of the rubber workers in 8per cent of units of rubber plantation labours working in Up to 100 days per year, whereas in 20 per cent units of the labours working in 100 to 200 days per year. Around 72 per cent of unit's labours working in 200 to 300 days per year.

Table 1.10: Type of Saving of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Chit Fund	9	36
2	Post Office/Bank Deposit	4	16
3	Insurance	2	8
4	Gold Investments	4	16
5	No Savings	6	24
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.10 shows that the 16percent of the labours save their Chit Fund36 percent of the labour save their salary in Post Office/Bank Deposit, 8percent of the labour save their salary in Insurance, 16per cent of the labour save their Gold Investments, 24per cent of labour save they are in No Savings.

Table 1.11: Nature of Work of the Rubber Workers

S. No	Particulars	Rubber Workers	Percent
1	Tapping	9	36
2	Field work	16	64
Total		25	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.11 shows that 68.9 percent of the labour's nature of work at Tapping, and 31.1 percent of the labour's nature of work at Field work.

- 44 percent. Of the employees are in the age group between 41 to 60 years
- 84per cent of rubber plantation labours are Married.
- 60percent of the rubber plantation labours family size. Belongs to4 to 6 members
- 64 per cent of the rubber plantation labours live in their Owned House.
- 56 cent of rubber plantation labours earn an income in the range of 10000 - 13000.
- 40 per cent of rubber plantation labours spend a monthly family expenditure of 5000 - 10000.
- 72 cent of unit's labours working in 200 to 300 days per year.
- 36per cent of the rubber plantation labours save their salary in chit funds.
- 64 per cent of the rubber plantation labours nature of work at fields.

Findings and Discussion

The study analyses the socio-economic condition of 25 women rubber plantation labourers in Kanyakumari District, with special reference to Vilavancode. The results show that most respondents belong to the middle-age group, as 44 percent are between 41 and 60 years. Educational attainment is low, with 40 percent having only primary education and 16 percent being illiterate. This limits their access to better employment opportunities.

Most of the respondents are married, forming 84 percent of the sample, which indicates their important role in supporting family income. Rubber plantation work is the main source of income for 60 percent of the respondents. The majority, 56 percent, earn between ₹10,000 and ₹13,000 per month, while 40 percent spend ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 on monthly family expenses. This shows that their savings capacity is limited.

The study also reveals that 72 percent of the respondents are employed for 200 to 300 days per year, suggesting relatively regular employment. However, 24 percent have no savings, and most workers depend on informal savings such as chit funds. Overall, the findings indicate that women rubber plantation labourers have moderate but insecure socio-economic conditions. Better wages, welfare schemes, health support, financial literacy, and alternative employment opportunities are needed to improve their living standards.

Conclusion

The present study brings to the social conditions such as the Age, Educational Status, Marital Status, Sources of Income, Size of Family, Accommodation, Monthly Income, Monthly Family Expenditure, Number of Days Employed Per Year, Type of Saving and Nature of Work. 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 is not adequate to run their family. They are leading life in poor condition and also not able to provide proper education facilities to their children. Only things they appreciate is that they have free water facilities, accidental benefit, maternity benefit, rest shelter facilities, education facilities with which overall they are moderately satisfied as a whole. The government and Rubber Board take care and make more steps to boost and protect rubber producers by considering their contributions to the country and society.

References

- Smith, C., Pritt, M. Binitha and Dr. S. John Mano Raj (2018) "A Study on Labour Shortage in Rubber Plantations of Kanyakumari District" UNNAYAN: International Bulletin of Management and Economics, ISSN No. 2349-7165 Volume – IX, July 2018
- Selvia, YJanet,V. (2012) "A Study on the impact of LPG on Natural Rubber and Rubber-based industries in Kanyakumari District", Thesis, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India. (2012):21,22.
- Sharma, G. Tharian, G. K. & Dey, S. "Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- LongkumerWatisenla, Sharma Amod (2023). Economics of Rubber Plantation in MokokchungDistrict. Indian Journal of Agricultural Research. 57(6): 845-851.
- Adikari, S.B. and Sharma, A. (2018). Marketing Pattern of Rubber Plantation in Tripura, India. International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences. 7(6): 847-853.
- Chouhan, P. Kuki, V. and Bhowmik, I. (2019). A study on the emerging labour relations in the rubber plantations of Tripura. Indian Journal of Economics and Development. 7(4): 56-59.