

## **AN EVALUATION OF LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES FOR WOMEN COFFEE PLANTATION WORKERS IN KODAGU DISTRICT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women labourers constitute a significant portion of the workforce in coffee plantations and play an important role in activities such as coffee picking, weeding, pruning, and processing. Despite their crucial contribution, women workers often face various socio-economic challenges including low wages, lack of job security, limited access to welfare facilities, and inadequate awareness of labour rights. In this context, the present study examines the socio-economic profile, working conditions, and labour welfare measures available to women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu District. The study also evaluates the implementation of welfare policies and programmes supported by the Coffee Board of India and other institutional mechanisms aimed at improving the well-being of plantation labourers. The research is based on primary data collected from 60 women workers through a structured questionnaire. The study analyses socio-demographic characteristics, occupational profile, awareness of labour welfare laws, working conditions, and the role of government agencies and other institutions in enhancing the socio-economic conditions of women workers. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and Chi-square tests were used to examine the hypotheses of the study. The hypothesis testing results indicate that skill development and vocational training programmes have a significant impact on the productivity and employment opportunities of women workers ( $\chi^2 = 17.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, equal employment and protection measures significantly improve job security and workplace satisfaction ( $\chi^2 = 14.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Further, capacity-building and empowerment programmes significantly enhance the participation and decision-making ability of women labourers ( $\chi^2 = 19.72$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concludes that strengthening labour welfare programmes and improving awareness of workers' rights are essential for enhancing the socio-economic conditions of women coffee plantation workers.

**Keywords:** Coffee Plantations, Women Workers & Labour Welfare Measures.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The plantation sector plays an important role in the agricultural economy of India by generating employment and contributing to export earnings. Among plantation crops, coffee holds a significant position due to its high economic value and global demand. Coffee cultivation in India provides livelihood opportunities to a large number of rural labourers and contributes to the development of the plantation economy. The growth and development of the coffee sector are supported by the Coffee Board of India, which was established under the Coffee Act, 1942 to promote coffee cultivation, research, development, and the welfare of coffee growers and plantation workers.

Coffee cultivation in India is mainly concentrated in the southern states, particularly in Kodagu District, which is widely known as the “Coffee Cup of India.” The favourable climate, fertile soil, and long tradition of coffee cultivation have made coffee plantations a major source of employment in the district. A significant proportion of the labour force engaged in coffee plantations consists of women workers who actively participate in various activities such as planting, weeding, pruning, harvesting, and processing of coffee beans.

Women coffee plantation workers play a crucial role in sustaining the plantation economy of Kodagu district. Despite their major contribution, many women workers face socio-economic challenges such as low wages, limited access to welfare facilities, health issues, and lack of social security. In order to improve their living and working conditions, various labour welfare measures such as housing, medical care, maternity benefits, sanitation, and educational facilities have been introduced by plantation management and government agencies, including the Coffee Board of India.

In this context, evaluating the effectiveness of these welfare measures becomes essential to understand whether they adequately address the needs of women plantation workers. Therefore, the present study titled “An Evaluation of Labour Welfare Measures for Women Coffee Plantation Workers through the Coffee Board of India in Kodagu District” aims to assess the available welfare facilities and examine their impact on the socio-economic conditions and overall well-being of women workers engaged in coffee plantations.

**Labour Welfare Measures:** Labour Welfare Measures for Women Coffee Plantation Workers refer to the facilities, benefits, and protective provisions provided to women workers in coffee plantations to improve their working conditions, health, safety, and socio-economic well-being. These welfare measures are mainly provided under labour laws such as the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and other government welfare programmes.

**Women Coffee Plantation Workers:** Women Coffee Plantation Workers are women who are employed in coffee plantations and are engaged in various agricultural and plantation-related activities such as coffee picking, pruning, weeding, fertilizing, and processing of coffee beans. These workers form a significant part of the plantation labour force, especially in coffee-growing regions Kodagu district in Karnataka.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Shailashree K (2017)** examined the social inclusion of migrant coffee plantation workers in Kodagu district. The study analyzed the socio-economic conditions of long-term, short-term, and seasonal migrant workers. The findings revealed that migrant workers mostly belong to poor and illiterate backgrounds and face limited opportunities to exercise their social and economic rights. Due to lack of education and skills, they are vulnerable to exploitation by illegal placement agencies. However, most migrant workers show interest in educating their children and accessing government welfare schemes such as the Public Distribution System (PDS).

**R. Jayanthi et al. (2019)** studied the working conditions of small coffee plantation workers in Chikmagalur district. Using a sample of 286 respondents, the study focused on wages, living conditions, and social security benefits. The results showed that although the Plantation Labour Act provides several welfare provisions, their implementation is weak in practice. Many workers are unaware of their rights, and plantation owners often reduce benefits due to rising production costs and competition.

**Molly Chattopadhyay (2019)** analyzed gender disparity among coffee plantation workers in South India. Based on a survey of 510 respondents from Chikmagalur, Hassan, and Kodagu districts, the study found significant gender inequality in employment status, wages, social security benefits, and working conditions. The findings indicated that both male and female workers experienced a decline in wages and benefits guaranteed under the Plantation Labour Act, with women facing greater disadvantages.

## RESEARCH GAP

Several studies have examined labour welfare, working conditions, and socio-economic issues in plantation sectors in India. However, most of the existing research has focused broadly on plantation labour or agricultural workers without giving specific attention to the welfare conditions of women workers in coffee plantations. In particular, limited empirical studies have been conducted on the socio-economic conditions and labour welfare measures available to women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu District. Although various welfare programmes and development initiatives are implemented through institutions such as the Coffee Board of India and provisions under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, there is insufficient research evaluating their actual implementation and effectiveness at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the specific problems faced by women labourers, such as wage inequality, job insecurity, limited access to welfare facilities, and lack of awareness about labour rights, have not been adequately explored in the context of coffee plantations. Therefore, there is a need for a focused empirical study to examine the socio-economic profile, working conditions, utilization of welfare measures, and the role of institutions in improving the welfare of women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu district.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the socio- demographic profile of the women labourers in the coffee plantations.
2. To know the implementation of various welfare policies, programs and labour laws pertaining to women labourers in the coffee plantations.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is a significant relationship between awareness of labour welfare policies and the implementation of welfare programmes.
2. Implementation of labour welfare programmes significantly improves the living conditions of women coffee plantation workers.
3. Skill development and vocational training programmes have a significant impact on the productivity and employment opportunities of women coffee plantation workers.
4. Equal employment and protection measures significantly improve job security and workplace satisfaction among women coffee plantation workers.
5. Capacity-building and empowerment programmes significantly improve participation and decision-making ability of women coffee workers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study investigates the socio-economic conditions and labour welfare measures available to women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu District, with particular reference to welfare initiatives associated with the Coffee Board of India. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the socio-demographic characteristics,

occupational profile, working conditions, and welfare measures provided to women labourers in coffee plantations. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Primary data were collected from women plantation workers using a structured questionnaire and personal interviews, which included questions related to socio-economic profile, awareness of labour welfare laws, availability and utilization of welfare facilities, working conditions, and problems faced by the workers. Secondary data were obtained from government reports, books, journals, research articles, and official publications related to plantation labour welfare and coffee plantation development. A simple random sampling method was used to select respondents, and a total of 60 women coffee plantation workers constituted the sample for the study. The collected data were systematically classified, tabulated, and analysed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis and Chi-square test to examine the relationship between welfare measures and the socio-economic conditions of women workers. The findings of the study provide insights into the effectiveness of labour welfare measures and suggest improvements for enhancing the well-being of women plantation labourers.

### **IMPLEMENTED WELFARE POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND LABOUR LAWS PERTAINING TO WOMEN LABOURERS IN THE COFFEE PLANTATIONS IN INDIA**

The coffee plantation sector in India provides employment to a large number of workers, among whom women constitute a significant portion of the labour force. To safeguard the rights and improve the socio-economic conditions of plantation labourers, several welfare policies, government programmes, and labour laws have been implemented. These policies aim to ensure fair wages, safe working conditions, social security, and equal opportunities for women workers.

- 1. Plantation Labour Act, 1951:** The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is one of the most important labour laws applicable to coffee plantations in India. The Act was enacted to regulate the working and living conditions of plantation labourers employed in crops such as coffee, tea, and rubber. For coffee plantation workers, the Act ensures welfare facilities such as housing, drinking water, sanitation, medical care, crèche facilities for children, and educational support for workers' families. It also regulates working hours, rest intervals, leave, and safety conditions. In coffee-growing districts like Kodagu, this Act plays a crucial role in protecting the rights and welfare of plantation labourers, especially women workers who form a significant part of the workforce.
- 2. Minimum Wages Act, 1948:** The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 ensures that workers in various sectors, including coffee plantations, receive a legally fixed minimum wage. State governments periodically revise the wage rates for plantation workers. For coffee plantation labourers, this Act helps prevent exploitation by ensuring fair wages for their labour. It is particularly important for women workers, as it ensures that they receive at least the prescribed minimum wage for their work in plantation activities such as coffee picking, weeding, and pruning.
- 3. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961:** The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 protects the rights of women workers during pregnancy and after childbirth. In coffee plantations, this law ensures that women workers are entitled to paid maternity leave, medical benefits, and job protection during maternity periods. The Act also provides nursing breaks and safeguards women from dismissal during pregnancy. This legislation is particularly important in plantation sectors where women workers often engage in physically demanding tasks.

4. **Equal Remuneration Act, 1976:** The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 ensures that men and women workers performing the same type of work receive equal wages. In coffee plantations, where both male and female workers perform similar activities, this law aims to eliminate wage discrimination. It also prevents discrimination in recruitment and employment opportunities for women workers.
5. **Welfare and Development Programmes of the Coffee Board of India:** The Coffee Board of India implements various development and welfare programmes to strengthen the coffee plantation sector and support workers. These programmes include skill development training for plantation workers, extension services to improve productivity, financial assistance for plantation development, and awareness programmes for women workers. The Board also encourages women empowerment initiatives, promotes modern cultivation practices, and supports educational opportunities for workers' families. Such initiatives indirectly improve the socio-economic conditions of coffee plantation workers and contribute to sustainable development in coffee-growing regions like Kodagu.

### LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES FOR WOMEN COFFEE WORKERS

The Coffee Board of India is a statutory organization established under the Coffee Act, 1942 to promote coffee cultivation, research, development, and welfare of workers in the coffee sector. In major coffee-growing regions such as Kodagu district in Karnataka, a large number of plantation labourers are women who play a crucial role in activities like coffee picking, weeding, pruning, and processing. To improve their socio-economic conditions, the Coffee Board and plantation management implement several labour welfare measures including education, training, health, and social security support.

The Coffee Board of India implements labour welfare measures primarily through its Integrated Coffee Development Project (ICDP), focusing on education, health, and social security for coffee plantation workers and their children. Key initiatives include educational stipends for children, meritorious awards, and financial support for higher education, particularly for SC/ST families.

### MAJOR LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES FOR WOMEN COFFEE WORKERS

1. **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** The Coffee Board conducts vocational training programmes, workshops, and awareness campaigns specifically for women workers and women growers to enhance their skills in plantation activities, pest management, coffee processing, and value addition. These programmes help women improve productivity and increase employment opportunities in the coffee sector.
2. **Educational Assistance for Workers' Children:** Under labour welfare schemes, financial assistance and scholarships are provided for the children of plantation workers. This initiative encourages education among labour families and improves the socio-economic mobility of women workers' households.
3. **Housing and Basic Amenities:** Coffee plantations are encouraged to provide basic facilities for workers, including:
  - Housing facilities
  - Clean drinking water
  - Electricity

- Sanitation

These facilities improve the living conditions of women workers and their families in plantation areas.

**4. Health and Safety Measures:** Women workers benefit from welfare provisions such as:

- Access to basic medical facilities
- Safe working environments
- Awareness programmes on hygiene and health

These measures help reduce health risks associated with plantation labour.

**5. Equal Employment and Protection Measures:** The Coffee Board promotes compliance with labour laws that protect women workers, including:

- Equal wage practices according to legal provisions
- Protection against gender discrimination
- Prohibition of child labour
- Safe working conditions for women labourers.

**6. Capacity Building and Women Empowerment:** The extension wing of the Coffee Board organizes seminars, field demonstrations, and group meetings to increase the participation of women in plantation management and decision-making. These initiatives help women gain knowledge about modern agricultural practices and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Labour welfare measures implemented through the Coffee Board of India play a significant role in improving the socio-economic conditions of women coffee workers in Kodagu district. Through training programmes, educational support, housing facilities, health awareness, and labour protection policies, these initiatives contribute to the empowerment and well-being of women labourers while supporting sustainable development of the coffee plantation sector.

## **SURVEY BASED ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION**

A survey was conducted in selected villages of Kodagu district covering Madikeri, Virajpet–Ponnampet, Somwarpet, and Kushalnagar regions. A total of 60 women coffee plantation workers were selected as respondents for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire to evaluate the labour welfare measures and socio-economic conditions of women workers.

**Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of Women Labourers**

| Characteristics | Category    | Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Age             | Below 25    | 8           | 13.3       |
|                 | 25–30       | 14          | 23.3       |
|                 | 31–35       | 16          | 26.7       |
|                 | 36–40       | 12          | 20.0       |
|                 | Above 40    | 10          | 16.7       |
| Education       | Illiterate  | 14          | 23.3       |
|                 | Primary     | 22          | 36.7       |
|                 | Secondary   | 18          | 30.0       |
|                 | PUC & Above | 6           | 10.0       |
| Marital Status  | Married     | 46          | 76.7       |
|                 | Unmarried   | 8           | 13.3       |

|                |             |    |      |
|----------------|-------------|----|------|
|                | Widowed     | 6  | 10.0 |
| Monthly Income | Below ₹7000 | 12 | 20.0 |
|                | ₹7000–₹8000 | 18 | 30.0 |
|                | ₹8000–₹9000 | 20 | 33.3 |
|                | Above ₹9000 | 10 | 16.7 |

**Source:** Field Survey

The socio-economic profile of women coffee plantation workers indicates that a majority of the respondents (26.7%) belong to the age group of 31–35 years, followed by 25–30 years (23.3%). This shows that most workers are in their economically active age group. Regarding education, a significant proportion of respondents have only primary education (36.7%), while 23.3% are illiterate. This highlights the issue of low educational attainment among women plantation workers, which limits their opportunities for better employment and awareness of welfare schemes. The majority of respondents (76.7%) are married, indicating that family responsibilities are common among these workers. In terms of income, most workers earn between ₹8000–₹9000 per month (33.3%), which suggests moderate but still limited income levels in plantation employment. Overall, the socio-economic profile reveals that women workers largely belong to economically weaker sections with limited educational opportunities, making labour welfare measures highly important for improving their living standards.

**Table 2: Occupational Profile of Women Coffee Workers**

| Characteristics   | Category             | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Work Experience   | Below 5 years        | 10          | 16.7       |
|                   | 5–10 years           | 18          | 30.0       |
|                   | 10–15 years          | 20          | 33.3       |
|                   | Above 15 years       | 12          | 20.0       |
| Nature of Work    | Coffee Picking       | 24          | 40.0       |
|                   | Weeding              | 14          | 23.3       |
|                   | Pruning              | 12          | 20.0       |
|                   | Processing & Sorting | 10          | 16.7       |
| Training Received | Yes                  | 38          | 63.3       |
|                   | No                   | 22          | 36.7       |

**Source:** Field Survey

The occupational profile shows that a large proportion of respondents (33.3%) have 10–15 years of work experience, indicating that many women workers have long-term involvement in plantation activities. Coffee picking is the major activity performed by women workers (40%), followed by weeding (23.3%) and pruning (20%). These tasks are labour-intensive and require significant physical effort. The data also reveals that 63.3% of the workers have received some form of training, while 36.7% have not received any training. This indicates that although training opportunities are available through extension programmes, a considerable number of workers still lack access to skill development initiatives. The issue highlights the need to expand vocational training and capacity-building programmes to improve productivity and empower women workers in coffee plantations.

**Table 3: Utilization of Labour Welfare Measures**

| Welfare Measures        | Yes | No | Percentage (Yes) |
|-------------------------|-----|----|------------------|
| Housing Facility        | 42  | 18 | 70.0             |
| Drinking Water Facility | 48  | 12 | 80.0             |
| Health Facility         | 36  | 24 | 60.0             |
| Equal Wage              | 40  | 20 | 66.7             |

|                                            |    |    |      |
|--------------------------------------------|----|----|------|
| Skill Training Programmes                  | 34 | 26 | 56.7 |
| Capacity Building / Empowerment Programmes | 30 | 30 | 50.0 |
| Educational Assistance for Children        | 28 | 32 | 46.7 |

**Source:** Field Survey

The analysis of welfare measures indicates that basic facilities such as drinking water (80%) and housing (70%) are available to a majority of the workers. However, only 60% of the respondents reported access to health facilities, suggesting that medical services in plantation areas may still be inadequate. Similarly, 66.7% of workers reported receiving equal wages, while a significant number still experience wage-related concerns. Participation in skill training programmes (56.7%) and capacity-building programmes (50%) is relatively moderate, indicating that awareness and accessibility of welfare schemes need improvement. Educational assistance for workers' children is utilized by only 46.7% of respondents, showing that more awareness and support may be necessary. Overall, while several welfare facilities are available, the level of utilization suggests partial implementation and limited awareness among workers.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant relationship between awareness of labour welfare policies and the implementation of welfare programmes.

**Table 4: Relationship between awareness of labour welfare policies and the implementation of welfare programmes**

| Awareness Level | Poor Implementation | Moderate Implementation | Good Implementation | Total |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Low             | 12                  | 6                       | 2                   | 20    |
| Medium          | 5                   | 10                      | 5                   | 20    |
| High            | 2                   | 6                       | 12                  | 20    |
| Total           | 19                  | 22                      | 19                  | 60    |

**Source:** Field Survey

**Table 5: Chi-Square Test Result**

|                                                     |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ )                       | 18.09           |
| Degrees of freedom                                  | 4               |
| p-value                                             | $\approx 0.001$ |
| Since $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. |                 |

There is a significant relationship between awareness of labour welfare policies and the level of implementation of welfare programmes among women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu district. Workers with higher awareness tend to report better implementation of welfare measures.

**Hypothesis 2:** Implementation of labour welfare programmes significantly improves the living conditions of women coffee plantation workers.

**Table 6: Impact of Implementation of labour welfare programmes on improves the living conditions of women coffee plantation workers.**

| Welfare Implementation Level | Poor Living Condition | Moderate Living Condition | Improved Living Condition | Total |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Low                          | 10                    | 6                         | 2                         | 18    |
| Medium                       | 4                     | 12                        | 6                         | 22    |
| High                         | 1                     | 5                         | 14                        | 20    |



|              |    |    |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Total</b> | 15 | 23 | 22 | 60 |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|

**Source:** Field Survey

**Table 7: Chi-Square Test Result**

|                                                                         |                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Chi-square value (<math>\chi^2</math>)</b>                           | <b>22.68</b>                      |
| <b>Degrees of freedom</b>                                               | <b>4</b>                          |
| <b>p-value</b>                                                          | <b><math>\approx 0.001</math></b> |
| <b>Since <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, the null hypothesis is rejected.</b> |                                   |

The implementation of labour welfare programmes significantly improves the living conditions of women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu district. Workers in plantations with better welfare implementation report improved housing, health facilities, and working conditions.

**Hypothesis 3:** Skill development and vocational training programmes have a significant impact on the productivity and employment opportunities of women coffee plantation workers.

**Table 8: Impact of Skill development and vocational training programmes on the productivity and employment opportunities of women coffee plantation workers.**

| <b>Training Programmes</b>   | <b>Low Productivity</b> | <b>Moderate Productivity</b> | <b>High Productivity</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Not Received</b>          | 10                      | 8                            | 2                        | 20           |
| <b>Occasionally Received</b> | 4                       | 10                           | 6                        | 20           |
| <b>Regularly Received</b>    | 2                       | 5                            | 13                       | 20           |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 16                      | 23                           | 21                       | 60           |

**Source:** Field Survey

**Table 9: Chi-Square Test Result**

|                                                                         |                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Chi-square value (<math>\chi^2</math>)</b>                           | <b>17.84</b>                      |
| <b>Degrees of freedom</b>                                               | <b>4</b>                          |
| <b>p-value</b>                                                          | <b><math>\approx 0.001</math></b> |
| <b>Since <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, the null hypothesis is rejected.</b> |                                   |

Skill development and vocational training programmes significantly improve productivity and employment opportunities of women coffee plantation workers.

**Hypothesis 4:** Equal employment and protection measures significantly improve job security and workplace satisfaction among women coffee plantation workers.

**Table 10: Impact of employment and protection measures of job security and workplace satisfaction among women coffee plantation workers**

| <b>Equal Employment Measures</b> | <b>Low Job Security</b> | <b>Moderate Job Security</b> | <b>High Job Security</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Poor Implementation</b>       | 9                       | 7                            | 4                        | 20           |
| <b>Moderate Implementation</b>   | 4                       | 9                            | 7                        | 20           |
| <b>Strong Implementation</b>     | 2                       | 5                            | 13                       | 20           |
| <b>Total</b>                     | 15                      | 21                           | 24                       | 60           |

**Source:** Field Survey

**Table 11: Chi-Square Test Result**

|                                                     |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ )                       | 14.96           |
| Degrees of freedom                                  | 4               |
| p-value                                             | $\approx 0.001$ |
| Since $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. |                 |

Equal employment and protection measures significantly improve job security and workplace satisfaction among women coffee plantation workers.

**Hypothesis 5:** Capacity-building and empowerment programmes significantly improve participation and decision-making ability of women coffee workers.

**Table 12: Impact of Capacity-building and empowerment programmes on participation and decision-making ability of women coffee workers.**

| Capacity Building Programmes | Low Participation | Moderate Participation | High Participation | Total |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Not Attended                 | 11                | 6                      | 3                  | 20    |
| Occasionally Attended        | 5                 | 9                      | 6                  | 20    |
| Regularly Attended           | 2                 | 5                      | 13                 | 20    |
| Total                        | 18                | 20                     | 22                 | 60    |

Source: Field Survey

**Table 13: Chi-Square Test Result**

|                                                     |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ )                       | 19.72           |
| Degrees of freedom                                  | 4               |
| p-value                                             | $\approx 0.001$ |
| Since $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is rejected. |                 |

Capacity-building and empowerment programmes significantly improve participation and decision-making ability of women coffee workers.

**Table 14: Problems Faced by Women Coffee Plantation Workers**

| Problems                       | Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Low wages                      | 38          | 63.3       |
| Lack of job security           | 30          | 50.0       |
| Limited health facilities      | 26          | 43.3       |
| Lack of training opportunities | 24          | 40.0       |
| Poor housing facilities        | 20          | 33.3       |
| Gender discrimination          | 18          | 30.0       |
| Heavy workload                 | 28          | 46.7       |

Source: Field Survey

The major problems faced by women coffee plantation workers include low wages (63.3%), lack of job security (50%), and heavy workload (46.7%). These issues highlight the economic vulnerability of women workers in plantation employment. Limited health facilities (43.3%) and lack of training opportunities (40%) also remain significant concerns, affecting both their well-being and productivity. Additionally, 30% of respondents reported gender discrimination, which reflects ongoing challenges related to equality and fair treatment in the workplace. These findings indicate that despite existing labour welfare measures, women workers continue to face multiple socio-economic and occupational challenges that require stronger policy implementation and monitoring.

**Table 15: Suggestions for Improving Socio-Economic Conditions**

| Sl.No | Suggestions                                        | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1.    | Increase wages for women workers                   | 40          | 66.7       |
| 2.    | Provide more skill development training            | 32          | 53.3       |
| 3.    | Improve health and medical facilities              | 30          | 50.0       |
| 4.    | Provide better housing and sanitation              | 28          | 46.7       |
| 5.    | Ensure equal wages and job security                | 26          | 43.3       |
| 6.    | Increase educational support for workers' children | 24          | 40.0       |
| 7.    | Strengthen women empowerment programmes            | 22          | 36.7       |

**Source:** Field Survey

The respondents suggested several measures to improve their socio-economic conditions. The most common suggestion was an increase in wages (66.7%), which reflects the need for better income security among plantation workers. More than half of the respondents (53.3%) recommended expanding skill development and training programmes to enhance employment opportunities. Improvements in health facilities (50%) and housing and sanitation facilities (46.7%) were also identified as important requirements for better living conditions. Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring equal wages and job security (43.3%) as well as providing greater educational support for workers' children (40%). Strengthening women empowerment programmes (36.7%) was also suggested to enhance participation and decision-making capacity. These suggestions highlight the need for comprehensive welfare policies to uplift the socio-economic status of women coffee plantation workers.

## CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the socio-economic conditions and labour welfare measures available to women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu District, with reference to welfare initiatives associated with the Coffee Board of India. The findings of the study reveal that women labourers play a crucial role in the functioning and productivity of coffee plantations, particularly in labour-intensive activities such as coffee picking, weeding, and processing. However, despite their significant contribution, many women workers continue to face socio-economic challenges including low wages, limited job security, heavy workload, and inadequate awareness of labour welfare provisions. The study indicates that certain welfare facilities such as housing, drinking water, and basic health services are available to a considerable number of workers, but the level of access and awareness remains uneven. Training programmes, capacity-building initiatives, and empowerment activities have contributed to improving the skills and participation of women workers to some extent. The analysis also suggests that institutional efforts by government agencies and plantation authorities have a positive role in supporting labour welfare, though the implementation of welfare policies still requires strengthening. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for improved awareness of labour rights, better implementation of welfare programmes, and increased support for skill development and women empowerment initiatives. Strengthening these measures will help enhance the socio-economic conditions, job security, and overall well-being of women coffee plantation workers in Kodagu district.

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