

PROBLEMS OF WOMEN WORKERS IN COIR INDUSTRY IN KANNIYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Coir industry provides employment opportunities and generates income to the people particularly in rural areas and thereby promotes country's economy. It is a labour -intensive industry which provides employment to more than 7,00,000 persons of whom majority are from rural areas belonging to the economically very weaker sections of the society. Nearly 80 percent of the workers are women in the fibre extraction and spinning sectors. India accounts for more than two-thirds of world production of coir and coir products. In India, 8 percent of the coir and coir products are exported to foreign countries and remaining 92 percent is domestically consumed. In this article the problems of women workers and their working condition are analysed and it was found out that no medical allowance and no job security are the major problems faced by women workers in coir industry.

Key words:Coir industry,problems,women workers.

INTRODUCTION

The Coir industry is one of the oldest cottage industries in India .Though its operation is still in the traditional setup, India enjoys a place of prominence among nations producing coir and its products throughout the world. The development of coir industry has taken place in areas where there is concentration of coconut cultivation and availability of coconut husks, Indian coir industry has been fortunate to get boost in the form of the ever increasing awareness about eco -protection. Coir, being a natural fiber which is environment friendly in the strictest sense of the term, is the fiber of the future today.

The word coir, it is the developed version of the Malayalam word ‘kayar’ which means a cord, string or yarn ,spun out of fibre extracted from the husk of coconut. Coir is a natural vegetable fibre extracted from coconut husk either by the natural retting process or by mechanical extraction. The fibre extracted from green husks by the retting process is termed “white fibre “ and that extracted from husk by mechanical process is named “Brown fibre”. Coconut husk is the raw material for coir production.

‘Coir’ is usually called the golden fibre of India. It is one of the important natural fibres, known to the world from time immemorial. It caters to the needs of all sections of people as fibre, yarn, rope, matting’s rugs, rubberized coir and teabags.It provides a good employment opportunities to the people especially for the illiterate women.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To analyse the problems faced by the women workers in their work place.
2. To know the working conditions of women workers in coir industry.

METHODOLOGY

The study is an analytical in nature based on both primary and secondary data.The primary data are collected from the women workers in the coir industry through a pre-tested interview schedule. The secondary data are collected from published magazines,unpublished dissertation,records maintained by the coir co-operative societies and also from the internet.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the women coir workers are illiterate and they are unskilled in coir making. Owing to their ignorance and illiteracy,intermediaries and owners of coir units most often exploit them.In this context the researcher undertakes to study the problems of women workers in coir industry.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The study was conducted by administering the questionnaire among 150 women workers by using stratified random sampling method.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to attract the attention of the Government and the NGOs on the most felt basic problem, the sample households were asked to rank their basic problems. In order to identify the most felt basic problems the ranks assigned by the respondents were converted into scores using Garrett Ranking Technique.

The basic problem which has the highest Garrett mean score, is given the first rank indicating the most felt basic problem. Subsequent ranks are given to other basic problems depending upon their mean scores. The ranks for all basic problems are shown in Table 1

Table.1

Garrett mean scores for basic problems of the sample women workers

SL.No	Basic problem	Garrett means score	Rank
1	Low wage/ income	47.62	VIII
2	Irregular employment	50.1	VI
3	No work during rainy season	50.16	V
4	More working hour	30.98	IX
5	No job satisfaction	51.86	IV
6	Bad working condition	53.88	III
7	No job security	56.2	II
8	No medical allowance	60.8	I
9	No bonus & incentive	48.4	VII

Source: primary data

The above table 1 reveals that no medical allowance with the highest mean square of 60.8 has been ranked first as the most felt basic problem of the sample workers. The problems of no job security & bad working condition have been ranked second and third respectively. The respondents are satisfied about the working hours and income as the mean score are the least for these variables.

WORKING CONDITION OF WOMEN WORKERS IN COIR INDUSTRY

Factor Analysis

The technique of Factor Analysis is used to identify the working condition of women workers in coir industry. ‘Principal Component Analysis’ method is used to extract factors with an Eigen Value of 1 or more. In order to assign variables ‘Rotated Factor Matrix’ is used.

In this study Factor Analysis is applied to know the working condition of women workers in coir industry and the results are given below.

Table 2
KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO Measure of sampling adequacy	:	.501
Bartlett’s test of Chi-square	:	518.376
Df	:	91
Sig	:	.000

Source:Primary data

The KMO value is very high (.501). Similarly the Bartlett’s test rejects the approximate chi-square value is 518.376 at 91 degrees of freedom which is significant at 1% level of significance. Thus factor analysis may be considered as an appropriate technique.

The results of the principal Component Analysis to extent the number of variables are given below:

Table 3
Principal Component Analysis

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loading			Rotated Sums of Squared Loading		
	Total	Percentage of Variables	Cumulative Percentage	Total	Percentage of Variables	Cumulative Percentage

1	2.559	18.282	18.282	1.950	13.930	13.930
2	2.060	14.711	32.993	1.841	13.149	27.079
3	1.600	11.432	44.425	1.760	12.573	39.652
4	1.515	10.822	55.247	1.660	11.859	51.511
5	1.242	8.869	64.115	1.515	10.820	62.331
6	1.076	7.687	71.802	1.326	9.471	71.802

From the above table 3 it is clear that 6 factors can be extracted together which account for 71.802 per cent of the total 14 variables. Hence 14 factors are summated to 6 factors by losing nearly 29 per cent of data.

The table presented below gives the Rotated Component Matrix table found by using Varimax Method which is used to assign factors which have higher loadings.

Table 4
Rotated Component Matrix

S.No	Factors	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
1	No Job satisfaction	.836					
2	Bad working condition	.783					
3	No medical allowance	-.737					
4	No drinking water facility		.857				
5	No Refreshment at workplace		.764				
6	Poor living condition		-.628				
7	No provident fund			.649			
8	No Ventilation facility			.805			
9	No Government support			-.702			
10	No work rainy season				-.773		
11	No job security				.813		
12	Low wage/ income					.834	
13	Irregular employment					.815	
14	No wage for holiday						.854

The above table 4 shows that in the first column the variables namely, 'No Job satisfaction', 'Bad working condition', 'No medical allowance' have higher loading of .836,.783,-.737 respectively and it can be suggested that factor 1 is the combination of these six factors and have the variance of 18.282 percent and it can be named as 'poor working condition'.

From the second column it can be seen that the variables of 'No drinking water', 'No refreshment facility', 'Poor living condition' have the higher loading with a variance of 32.993 and it can be combined and called as 'less facilities'.

The third column shows that the factor 'No provident fund', 'No ventilation facility', 'No government support', have the higher loading of .649,.805,-.702 respectively and are summated and named as, 'poor government support'.

The fourth column it can be seen that the variables of 'No government support', and 'No work in rainy season' have the higher loading to be named as 'seasonal job'.

The fifth column it can be seen that the variables of 'Low wage', and 'Irregular employment' have the higher loading to be named as 'low employment opportunity'.

In the last column have one variable 'No wage for holiday' ' have higher loading with a variance of 9.167 and it can be combined and called as, 'low holiday benefit'.

Thus 14 factors are reduced to six variables and are given different names by using factor analysis.

FINDINGS

This article explains the most felt problem in coir industry and working conditions of women workers in coir industry. In order to identify the most felt basic problems the Garrett Ranking Techniques are used and it is found that no medical allowance and no job security are the major problems as these variables got the highest mean scores. More working hours is the least problem in coir industry. Factor analysis is used to know the working conditions of women workers in coir industry. The analysis indicate that 6 factors are extracted which account for 71.802 per cent of the total 14 variables.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1.No job security is given to women workers in coir industry. Strict rules should be framed by Government to offer job security to those women belonging to the unorganised sector.Contribution towards PF should be made compulsory by the Government.
- 2.When compared to men , women workers have low wages, so that government may fix minimum wages especially for women.

CONCLUSION

Coir industry is one of the foremost cottage industries in India.The Coir industry is an export oriented industry and highly labour intensive.It plays a vital role in providing employment opportunities to the women workers.These women are unprotected and suffer from economic exploitation due to their ignorance and illiteracy.Protective legislation in the critical area of wages, maternity benefit and social security have not benefited a great majority of these women.

Improvement in the working conditions of the women coir and mat workers and the uplifting of their economic and social status are basically linked with the economic development of the country.The establishment of modern industries and increase in the production of coir will create favourable impact on the life of workers in coir industry.

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