

A study on Labour Welfare Measures Adopted by Small Tea Growers in Nilgiris District

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Abstract

This research work explores the operational development with reference the labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers in Nilgiris district. The present study revealed that the topmost welfare measures adopted by the by small tea growers for the labourers was minimizing workers' grievances and the least priority was drawing ideas from workers and recognizing it. Consequently, multiple regression analysis was employed to investigate the factors that are significant on the labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers and found that of the five factors considered four factors were significant and one factor was not significant. The regression output: ($R^2 = .934$, $F(5, 904) = 2128.888$, $P < 0.000$)

Index Terms: Small Tea Growers, Nilgiris, Labour Welfare Measures.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Tea Board of India defines a Small Tea Grower as a person who has a tea cultivation of up to 25 acres. But in the current scenario, most growers own less than 2 acres of land. STGs are often based at very remote areas and are scattered. Though their numbers swell due to remoteness and scattered nature of existence, their lack of organization, bargaining capacity and infrastructure. They are dependent on exploitative trade channels to sell their produce. A range of other issues threatens their existence and livelihood. Labour welfare measure implies the setting up of minimum desirable standards of the provision of facilities like health, food, medical assistance, job security, recreation etc. Thus embraces in its fold all efforts which have their object of improvement of health, safety welfare and general well-being of the workers. Hence, the present study investigates the welfare measures adopted by the Small Tea Growers in Nilgiris District.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is concerned with the operational development with reference to the advantages of demand forecasting to Small Tea Growers. It deals with minimizing workers' grievances, raising morale and enthusiasm of the workers, improvement in workers attitude towards work, increasing the efficiency of people at work and drawing ideas from the workers and recognizing it by the Small Tea Growers.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main focus of the present research work is to evaluate empirically the operational development practices among the small tea growers and the specific objective is to investigate the welfare measures adopted by the Small Tea Growers in Nilgiris District.

4. SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

Nilgiri district was selected for the present study. Tamil Nadu is the main tea producing state in southern India and 17 % of tea productions are from Nilgiris district. Hence, the above District was purposefully selected for the present research.

5. THE SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

The present study has followed area sampling method. At the first stage the selected Nilgiris District was classified into 2 clusters according to their geographical location, i.e. cultivable high altitude cluster and cultivable medium altitude clusters, as there was no cultivable low altitude area in the study District. The cultivable medium altitude zone consisted of Udhagamandalam Development Block, Coonoor Development Block, Kaunda Development Block and Kotagiri Development Block. The cultivable medium altitude zone consisted of Panthalur Development Block and Gudalur Development Block.

After grouping the Development Block, 50 percent of the Development Block from each group was selected randomly namely; Udhagamandalam Development Block and Kotagiri Development Block from the High Altitude Cluster, and Gudalur Development Block from the Medium Altitude Cluster. After selecting the Development Block from each cluster random sample method was employed to select the ultimate sample Small Tea Growers (table 1).

Hence, the present research work covered three hundred and fifty (350) Small Tea Growers under four Development Blocks in Nilgiris District.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

DISTRICT	Geographical Location Cluster (Based on altitude)	Development Block of the District	Sample Block (Selected 50% of the development blocks from each cluster)	Sample Size (No. of Small Tea Growers Administered)
NILGIRIS DISTRICT	High Altitude Cluster (Above 1200 meters average from MSL)	(1) Udhagamandalam (DB)	(i)Udhagamandalam (DB)	105
		(2) Coonoor (DB)	(ii) Kotagiri (DB)	95
		(3) Kundah (DB)	(iii) Gudalur (DB)	150
		(4) Kotagiri (DB)		
	Medium Altitude Cluster (800 – 1200 meters average from MSL)	(5) Gudalur (DB)		
		(6) Panthalur (DB)		
		TOTAL		350

Note: D.B: Development Block

6. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SMALL TEA GROWERS IN NILGIRIS

6.1. Gender Dimension

The gender dimension, age and educational qualification of the Small Tea Growers in the study area are presented in table 2. The study reveals that men constitute an absolute majority among the sample small scale tea growers constituting about 78 percent and male account for 22 percent. Thus, there was more number of men taking up the profession of tea plantation in the study area.

6.2. Age

The majority of the small scale tea grower respondents falls under the age group of 50–65 years (35.1 percent) and 35-50 years (32 percent) followed by the age group of 20-35 years (15.1 percent) and above 65 years (17.8 percent). It can be inferred that, majority (67.1 percent) of the small scale tea grower respondents in the study area belonged to the middle age group capable of taking up the profession productively.

6.3. Educational Qualification

The distribution of the respondents by educational qualification shows that the sample small scale tea growers had not completed proper education. Merely 0.8 percent of them had completed higher studies, 8.6 percent of them had completed Higher Secondary, 9.4 percent had complete secondary level of education, 30.3 percent of the respondents have just completed primary level of education which ranged between 1st and 5th standard, 14.6 percent of them could sign only and 13.4 percent of the respondents were illiterates. However, 14.9 percent of the respondents had undergone for training in tea plantation. Therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents had not completed proper education to carryout tea plantation work.

Table 2: Respondents by gender, age and educational qualification

Sl.No.	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender;		
	Male	273	78
	Female	77	22
2	Age;		
	20 – 35	53	15.1
	35 – 50	112	32
	50 – 65	123	35.1
	> 65	62	17.8
	Mean	51.2600	
	Standard Deviation	11.98104	
3	Educational Level;		
	Illiterate	47	13.4
	Can sign only	51	14.6
	Up to Primary	106	30.3
	Up to Upper Primary	80	22.9
	Up to Secondary	33	9.4
	Up to Higher Secondary	30	8.6
	Graduate & above	3	0.8
4	Professional Education;		
	Underwent training in tea plantation	52	14.9

Source: Primary data.

6.4. Composition of Caste

In the rural social hierarchy, “caste factor” constitutes a major parameter of social status. Caste touches everything in life and socio-economic developments in the villages revolve around it. It decides one’s health, wealth, occupation, social and economic well-being and status and the like. It exerts a great deal of influence on the individual’s perception of everything (*Ghurye 1950*). Table 3 presents the caste and religious profile of the respondents in the study area.

The study reveals that, close to majority of the respondents (46.6 percent) belonged to other castes, followed by Scheduled Castes (34.8 percent) and Scheduled Tribes (18.6). Therefore, it is inferred that, the majority of the respondents belonged to other castes and Scheduled Castes in the study area.

6.5. Practices of Religion

The distribution of respondents by religion showed that 71 percent of the respondents practiced Hindu religion, 14.3 percent of the respondents practiced Christianity and 14.3 percent of the respondents practiced Islam. Hence, it is inferred that high proportion of the respondents (71 percent) practiced Hindu religion, followed by Christians (14.3 percent) and Muslims (14.3 percent) in the study area.

Table 3: Respondents by caste and religion

Sl.No.	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Caste Composition;		
	ST	65	18.6
	SC	122	34.8
	Other caste	163	46.6
2	Religion;		
	Hindu	250	71.4
	Muslim	50	14.3
	Christian	50	14.3

Source: Primary data.

6.6. Types of Sample Family

The family details of sample households are presented in table 4. The study reveals that an absolute majority (78 percent) of the sample households was from nuclear families and 22 percent were from joint family system in the study area.

The majority of the sample families (56 percent) the size were 4-6 members followed by more than 7 members (28.6 percent) and below 3 members (15.4 percent) among the sample households.

Hence, the majority of the sample families were from nuclear family with 4-6 members in the study area.

Table 4: Family detail of the sample households

Sl.No.	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Types of Family;		
	Joint Family	77	22
	Nuclear Family	273	78
2	Family size;		
	Below 3 Members	54	15.4
	4 – 6 Member	196	56
	7 & Above Member	100	28.6

Source: Primary data.

6.7. Type of Houses

The type of houses in which the sample families lived were classified into three categories viz., pucca house (consists of bricks, steel and cement construction of the floor, the wall and roof), kutcha house (it is a hut constructed out of mud, thatched wall and the roof with a natural surface roof) and semi pucca house (it is the combination of the earlier two with the exception of tiled roof). Housing details, land holdings, annual income and annual expenditure of the respondents are presented in table 5.

The study revealed that, the majority of the respondents (58.3 percent) possessed pucca houses of their own, 23.1 percent of the respondents were living in duplexes, 15.1 percent of the respondents in cottage and 3.5

percent of the respondents were living in huts. Hence, it was found that the majority of the respondents were living in pucca houses in the study area.

6.8. Landholding

In rural India, land holding is an important component in the rural economy. The majority of the people in one way or another is engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

Table 5 presents the landholding of the sample population. The study shows that a high proportion of the respondents (67.7 percent) had a land less than 5 acres for tea plantation activities, 24.6 percent of the tea growers had a land between 5 – 15 acres and 7.7 of them had 15 – 25 acres of land for tea plantation activities in the study area. Hence, the present study revealed that an absolute majority of the respondents were practicing tea plantation work with a possession of less than 5 acres in the study area

Table 5: Respondents by Types House and Land Holding

Sl.No.	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Types of House;		
	Pucca house	204	58.3
	Duplex	81	23.1
	Cottage	53	15.1
	Huts	12	3.5
2	Land Holding;		
	< 5 acres	237	67.7
	5 – 15 acres	86	24.6
	15 – 25 acres	27	7.7

Source: Primary data.

7. LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES ADOPTED BY SMALL TEA GROWERS

The welfare measures adopted by the by small tea growers for the labourers is presented in table 6. It shows that, the small tea growers in the study area always try to minimize the workers' grievances (26.9 percent of the respondents), raising the morale and enthusiasm of workers (13.7 percent of the respondents), improving the workers' attitude towards the working environment (11.4 percent of the respondents), increasing the efficiency of labourers (26.6 percent of the respondents), and drawing the ideas from workers and recognizing it (7.1 percent of the respondents).

Further, 24.3 percent of the small tea growers always almost every time try to minimise the workers' grievances (24.3 percent of the respondents), raising the morale and enthusiasm of workers (24 percent of the respondents), improving the workers' attitude towards the working environment (15.4 percent of the respondents), increasing the efficiency of labourers (26.2 percent of the respondents), and drawing the ideas from workers and recognising it (12.6 percent of the respondents).

Conversely, 7.5 percent of the respondents never try to minimise the workers' grievances, 8.6 percent of the respondents never try to raise the morale and enthusiasm of workers, 18.9 percent of the respondents never try to improve the workers' attitude towards the working environment, 8.6 percent of the respondents never try to increase the efficiency of labourers, and 25.2 percent of the respondents never try to draw the ideas from workers and recognising it.

However, 20.2 percent of the respondents hardly ever try to minimise the workers' grievances, 27.7 percent of the respondents very rarely try to raise the morale and enthusiasm of workers, 18.6 percent of the respondents seldom try to improve the workers' attitude towards the working environment, 14.9 percent of the

respondents hardly ever try to increase the efficiency of labourers, and 16.2 percent of the respondents rarely try to draw the ideas from workers and recognizing it.

The calculated mean score of welfare measures adopted by the by the small tea growers for the labourers was between the score 3.1493 and 3.8217, which is between almost every time and sometimes. The calculated standard deviation value on an average of the considered 5 welfare measures adopted by the by the small tea growers for the labourers was 1.17310 and the total score secured by the respondents was between 911 and 1200 of the total highest score 1750.

Hence, the topmost welfare measures adopted by the by small tea growers for the labourers was minimizing workers' grievances, the second priority was increasing the efficiency of labourers at the work place, the third priority was raising the morale and enthusiasm of workers, and the least priority was drawing ideas from workers and recognizing it.

Consequently, multiple regression analysis was employed to investigate the factors that are significant on the labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers. The result is presented in Multiple Regression Model table 6.1. It is found that the coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.934 which indicates that the five independent variables considered are able to explain about 93 percent of the variation in the influence on the labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers. Among the five independent factors considered for the analysis, four independent variables, namely; minimizing workers' grievances (x_1), raising morale and enthusiasm of the workers (x_2), improvement in workers attitude towards work (x_3) and increasing the efficiency of people at work (x_4) are highly significant on the welfare measure adopted by the Small Tea Growers for the labourers. The other one independent variable, namely, drawing ideas from the workers and recognizing it (x_5) is not significant on ensuring labour welfare by the Small Tea Growers.

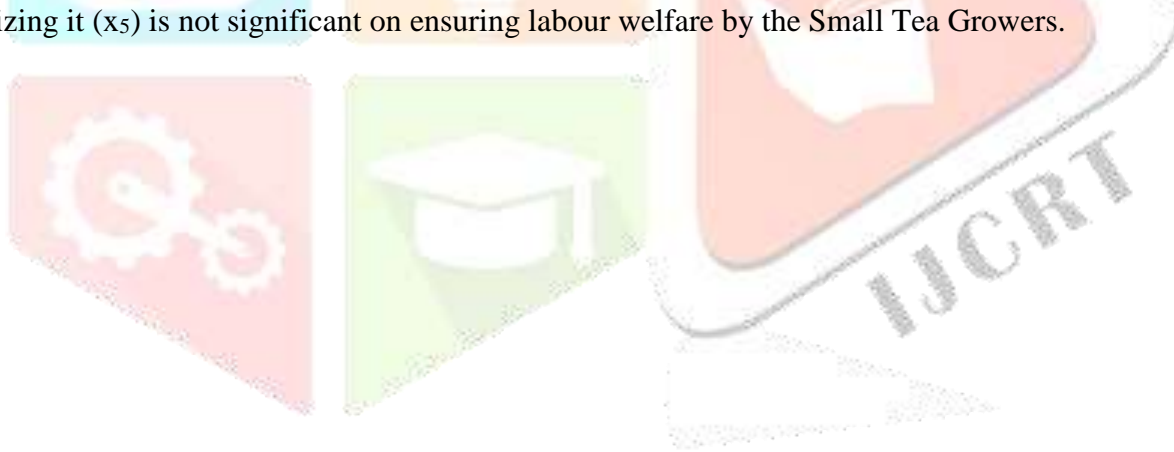


Table 6: Labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers

Sl. No.	Measures	No. of Respondents					T.S.	M.S.	S.D.	Rank
		Every time	Almost every time	Some times	Almost never	Never				
1	Minimise workers' grievances	94 (26.9)	85 (24.3)	74 (21.1)	71 (20.2)	26 (7.5)	1200	3.8217	1.27719	I
2	Raise morale and enthusiasm of workers	48 (13.7)	84 (24)	91 (26)	97 (27.7)	30 (8.6)	1073	3.5238	1.10783	III
3	Improve workers attitude towards work	40 (11.4)	54 (15.4)	125 (35.7)	65 (18.6)	66 (18.9)	987	3.3587	1.14072	IV
4	Increase efficiency of people at work	93 (26.6)	92 (26.2)	83 (23.7)	52 (14.9)	30 (8.6)	1216	3.7097	1.29024	II
5	Draws ideas from workers and recognises it	25 (7.1)	44 (12.6)	136 (38.9)	57 (16.2)	88 (25.2)	911	3.1493	1.11024	V
Labour welfare measures adopted by small tea growers								3.5203	1.17310	

Source: Computed from the sample survey.

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages, calculate. T.S.: Total Score, M.S.: Mean Score and S.D.: Standard Deviation

Multiple Regression Model Table 6.1: Labour welfare measures adopted by Small Tea Growers

Factors	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	Level of Significant
Minimise workers' grievances (x ₁)	.461	.036	12.886	##
Raise morale and enthusiasm of workers (x ₂)	-.061	.025	-2.401	##
Improve workers attitude towards work (x ₃)	.484	.017	28.295	##
Increase efficiency of people at work (x ₄)	.081	.038	2.145	##
Draws ideas from workers and recognises it (x ₅)	-.027	.014	-1.958	NS

N = 350, (R² = .934, F (5, 904) = 2128.888, P < 0.000), ## Highly Significant, N.S. = Not Significant

Multiple Regression Model

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$$Y = .864 + .461x_1 - .061x_2 + .484x_3 + .081x_4 - .027x_5$$

8. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that there was more number of men taking up the profession of tea plantation in their middle age and had not completed proper education to carryout tea plantation work. The majority sample families were from nuclear family having big family belonging to other castes and Scheduled Castes. Further, the present study also concludes that the topmost welfare measures adopted by the by small tea growers for the labourers was minimizing workers' grievances, the second priority was increasing the efficiency of labourers at the work place, the third priority was raising the morale and enthusiasm of workers, and the least priority was drawing ideas from workers and recognizing it.

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