

Socio-Economic Conditions Of Beedi Workers With Reference To Melapalayam Town (Tirunelveli District) In Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

This Study investigates the Socio, economic and demographic conditions of Beedi workers with special reference to Melapalayam located in the banks of Tamirabarani river adjunct to Tirunelveli city, Tamil Nadu in Southern part of India. Melapalayam a densely populated area in Tirunelveli which predominantly occupied by Muslim neighborhoods in which most of the women engages in beedi rolling. India's Beedi workers is one of the unorganized vulnerable segment of labor force in rural areas consist majority of women faces very low wages than other industries. Tamil Nadu is one of the top producers in Beedi industry among the southern states. Lower compensation and Health hazards are the alarming issue in the Industry. Melapalayam is home to more than one hundred thousand populations with Muslim majority also holds hundreds of beedi workers from door to door. The study analyzed the contribution of beedi industry to the development in the area towards their education, health spending, social status and problems faced by the beedi workers.

KEYWORDS Beedi workers, Beedi rollers, work force, Beedi Industry, Socio- economic, demographic, Gross Value Added, etc.,

PRELUDE AND BACKGROUND

Beedi Industry is one of the largest Industry in India which employs more than 4 million work force which is accounted for only 7.04% of the entire manufacturing Industry. In 2010-11 Beedi Industry contributed only 0.65 percent of the total Gross Value Added of the entire manufacturing sector in the country. Women accounted for 90 per cent of the total workforce by home based work or work from home whereas men work at factory job. The employment of workers classified into direct employment by companies and employment through contractors. The majority of the workers are employed directly through companies. More than 95 per cent of Beedi producing are concentrated in 10 states like West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and other states. Beedi workers earns only 17% of the annual average wage earned per worker in the registered manufacturing industry.

Most of the women employees works from their houses and men works at factory site. The wages earned by beedi workers are very lesser than other manufacturing industries. The low wages earned by beedi workers are not able to cope up the inflation and basic amenities. Government of India and State Governments are offering educational scholarships to the children of beedi workers which helps them in some way to attain education.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To assess the reasons for doing Beedi rolling.
- To identify the monthly income range earned by Beedi workers.

- To find out the occupational diseases that affects the health of Beedi workers.
- To know the satisfactory levels among Beedi workers towards their job.
- To bring out the opinions of Beedi workers on various factors.

RELATED WORKS

International Labor Organization (2003) stated the issues of beedi workers in India. The report suggested to apply the Uniform minimum wages for beedi workers at national level. State Governments should revise the minimum wages in Beedi Industry according to the Inflation level which is very slower in action. The report also pointed to expand the health services under Beedi Workers Welfare Board with the help of primary health care centers of state governments.

Monika et al. (2020) observed the employment trends and wage differentials in Indian Bidi Industry. The study concluded that Bidi workers earn much less compared to workers in other manufacturing Industries. Registration and regularization of Beedi workers are essential to administer effectively and can avoid exploitation of workers were recommended in the study.

Senthil Kumar, N. and SubburethinaBharathi, P. (2018) investigated the occupational hazards among Women Beedi Rollers in Tamil Nadu, India and found that women and children employed in Beedi rolling are exposed to many hazardous diseases like cancer, eye problem, back pain and many more. The study also insisted to rehabilitate a million of women beedi workers in Tamil Nadu and provide them alternative job opportunities for their betterment and livelihood.

Srinivasan, S. and PonnuswamiIlango. (2012) examined the socio – economic conditions of Female Beedi workers at Khajamalai, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. The study found that women workers in Beedi Industry is one of the vulnerable segment of country’s work force. It is found that 98 per cent of the Beedi workers were from the marginalized sections of the society and the beedi Industry is present across all parts of the country.

Jojo John and Sandhya Gautam. (2017) Studied the Ground Realities of Beedi Workers in Tamil Nadu and identified that the Minimum wage revision by the state authorities were delayed by 3 ½ years and Beedi production is not getting significant in Tamil Nadu and productions are shifting to other states. The Beedi workers are debt with high interest which in turn unable to come out of the problem. There is no enough health service to beedi workers in Tamil Nadu highlighted in the study.

RESEARCH METHODS

Empirical research has been carried out by the researcher in which empirical evidence is most priority and observations are made through direct and indirect sources. Both Primary and Secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data collected from the Beedi workers through a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data includes various sources like Journals, magazines, newspapers, web pages etc.,

The sample size for the study is 90 with simple random sampling technique adopted. Simple percentage andweighted average scorestatistical tools were used for the data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. REASON FOR PREFERRING BEEDIWORK (Table No.1)

SL.NO	REASONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
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1	Better income	6	6.7
2	Bonus	2	2.2
3	Nootherjob	74	82.2
4	Onlyknownskill	8	8.9
	TOTAL	90	100.0

Source:primarydata

From the above table (1) ,it is evident that overwhelming majority (82.2 percent) says that no other jobs are available for them is the reason for preferring Beedi rolling and only mere (2.2 per cent) says that Bonus and other incentives reason for preferring the Beedi rolling.

2. MONTHLY INCOME FROM BEEDI WORKERS (Table No.2)

SL.NO	EARNINGS PER MONTH	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	BelowRs.3,000	31	34.4
2	3,001to4,000	24	26.7
3	4001-5,000	27	30.0
4	Above5,000	8	8.9
	TOTAL	90	100.0

Source:primarydata

The above Table (2) signifies that out of 90 respondents,most of the respondents (34.4 percent) earns only below Rs.3,000 per month. Some of the respondents (26.7 percent) earns between Rs.3,000 and Rs.4,000 per month. Hence, majority of the respondents earn below Rs.4,000 per month. Only few (8.9 percent) earns above Rs.5,000 per month.

3. TYPE OF HEALTH HAZARDS FACED BY BEEDI WORKERS (Table No.3)

SL.N O	HEALTH PROBLEMS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Asthma	21	26.3
2	Backpain	39	48.8
3	Eyeproblem	8	10.0
4	Anyother	12	15.0
	Total	80	100.0

Source:primarydata

It is clear from the table (3) that out of 81 respondents, most of the Beedi workers (48.8 percent) suffered Back pain due to Beedi rolling, some (26.3 percent) has experienced with Asthma and few (10 percent) got Eye problem.

4. SATISFACTION OF BEEDI WORKERS AND THEIR JOB (Table No.4)

SL.NO	SATISFACTORY LEVELS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Satisfied	28	31.1
2	Moderate	23	25.6
3	Dissatisfied	27	30.0
4	Highlydissatisfied	12	13.3
	TOTAL	90	100.0

Source:primarydata

The above Table (4)shows that out of 90 respondents, the highest (31.1 percent) of the respondents are just satisfied but on other hand, Beedi workers are Dissatisfied, Highly Dissatisfied of their job stands with 30.0 percent and 13.3 percent respectively.

5. OPINION ON BEEDI WORKERS ON DIFFERENT FACTORS (Table No.5)

FACTORS	RESPONSES					LIKERT SCALE		
	SA	A	N	D	SDA	WEIGHTED SCORE	TOTAL SCORE	PERCENTILE POINTS
Beedi industry has improved our standard of living	4	20	20	26	20	232	450	51.55
Beedi rolling Affects health	45	23	10	05	06	361	450	80.22
Income earned by beedi rolling helps our children's Education	10	22	25	16	17	262	450	58.22
Income earned through beedi rolling is sufficient to meet family needs	03	10	35	29	13	231	450	51.33
We gets work daily for beedi Rolling	32	43	09	03	03	368	450	81.77
Beedi companiesoff ers good Wages	03	07	16	22	36	171	450	38

Source:Primary data

The Table (5) evident that Beedi workers gets daily job with highest percentile (81.77) and a weighted average score of 368. Beedi rolling affects the health of the workers with second high percentile (80.22) and a weighted average score of 361.The lowest percentile (38) with a weighted average score of 171 is on Beedi companies offers good wages.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the inferences made by the study:

- Beedi workers unable to find other better jobs is the reason for doing Beedi rolling.
- Majority of the Beedi workers earns below Rs.4,000 per month.
- Back pain and Asthma are the most occupational diseases that affects the health of Beedi workers.
- Two third of the Beedi workers are opined moderate and Dissatisfaction towards their job.
- Beedi workers gets daily job from companies and contractors.
- Beedi rolling affects the health of the workers.
- Beedi companies do not offers good wages.

The following are the recommendations that are suggested by study:

- The state and central government authorities shall initiate more steps to increase the wages of beedi workers.
- The beedi companies shall organize frequent medical check-ups and monitor the health of its workers.
- Beedi may provide protective gears like masks, gloves etc., in order to protect the health of its workers.
- The Beedi workers shall be affiliated to trade unions and demand their rights to companies and policy makers.

CONCLUSION

Earnings from Beedi rolling is one of the major sources of income for the people of Melapalayam and women in particular. The wages earned by Beedi workers are comparatively low than other manufacturing industries. The Beedi rolling affects the health in large. Beedi workers in Melapalayam are not satisfied with Beedi rolling and are not encouraging other family members to Beedi industry. Beedi workers tends to quit the job as soon as their standard of living improved after earnings made from Gulf countries. Hence, younger generation among beedi workers' family prefers to go alternative and foreign jobs. Beedi industry in Melapalayam contributed to the livelihood of the marginalized community is unquestionable.

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