

Issues of Women Workers in Cashew Industries; Palukal Village in Kanya Kumari District

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Abstract: About Fifty percent of world population now is women. The situation is similar in india. Women, who make up about half of this, play a significant role in the survival of society. Traditionally buried within the four walls the woman today goes out in to the outside world and earns what she needs for her family. Today women thrive in education, politics, governance in the social sphere. women face more challenges in the workplace than men. Working women with children need more resources and energy than men.

As women become more and more active in the work place, they need to take care of family matters as well as. Beyond it women are entrusted with many task like preparing food for the family raise children and keeping the house clean. These are unpaid jobs and in addition to this the woman herself is working tirelessly to ensure financial security.

Therefore women in the work place need to be protected and provided with the benefits they need Women who work in factories have to work long hours. Because of that she suffers from various diseases the authorities do not provide the necessary precautions to avoid side effects from the work involved. In some places there are no facilities even for basic needs.

Keywords: issues, women workers, problems, cashew industry, challenges

Introduction

Today, women occupied a high position in india women have a place in the political and industrial spheres, from rural agriculture to high position in the work force. Women have been able to conquer even more space in science and technology. But in ancient time women were forced to stay at home. She got married in her teens and sat down as a mother she was forbidden to go outside. She was not considered in any other field of commerce other than cooking and rearing. She wrote the verdict that she was not capable of it, but entire time the discrimination against women was wiped out and women get equal status with men. Today girls are well educated and bold assessive employment plays a huge role in the poverty. Participation in enhanced work not only helps women to enhance their dignity and maintain confidence on the contrary, they can deal with life's problem alone an ensure financial security. This kind of women attempt to achieve financial security is failing in same places today she faces a variety of issues. Many organizations today have inattention laws to ensure the protection of women but women face same problems in the areas of economics socio culture and health. But the participation of the women in the work, who have survived everything is much highers employment of women is active in all sectors including coir factory, cashew factory, textile industry and bamboo industry.

Birth of Cashew

Cashew is aaborgin of torrid America from Mexico to peru and Brazil and also the west Indies. Four centuries ago, the hazardous Portuguese came sailing down the Indian coasts and brought with them the precious nut tree to control soil erosion on the coasts cashew came, over come and took deep root in the entire coasted zone of India. The crop found homely the Indian soil than its homeland. Cashew first introduced in india at Goa then it spread over southern states including Tamilnadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The word cashew is derived from the Portuguese name for the nut 'Caju' which was borrowed from the Berlin name 'acuja'.

In the field of international development, cashew cultivation has valuable consideration from the advocates, agencies & producers of supporting economic & environmental development. It is very applicable to poor soil situation because its redolent & drought resistant nature. It also offers environmental protection in the fight to combat deforestation and soil erosion. In terms of employment formation & value added to producing economics its nurturing & exploitation nature considered as economically promising for both rural growers & urban industrial processors.

Possibility of Employment

The cashew industry offers the maximum employment opportunities among the industries in Kanya Kumari dist. of Tamilnadu. Tamilnadu is the 2nd important centre for cashew processing in India. Significantly enough more than 85% of the cashew processing industries in Tamilnadu are localized in Kanya Kumari district. At present there are about 350 cashew processing factories with a processing capacity of 5.2 lakhs tones of raw cashew nuts, providing employment opportunities to 60000 workers.

Problems of Women

The working hours of women in a cashew factory are usually from 7 am to 7:30 pm. She enters to job offered by cashew factories due to the lack of alternative employment force and poverty. Many women enter this job even before they get married. Most of them are uneducated and unable to continue their education.

Children of bereaved or bedridden parents or wife arriving at work in a cashew factory. Some do not return to work long after they are married. She stays at home caring for her children and husband, wives of men who destroy all the money they earn as a result of excessive alcohol consumption and provides the basic needs of their baby engages in this means of subsistence. Some women take the cashews home & take the time to beat them.

This was the experience of a woman I met. They have a son and a daughter. She is abandoned by her husband. Now he can live with his own parents. The woman and her elderly mother are cashew workers. His father is ill and an alcoholic. The day I visited their house, her father was lying in the back of the house drunk. They also take care of this sick father. This woman is doing the same job as the men in the other factory. She said the job helps her teach her children and look after the house, even though she does not have a large income. Another feature is that the cashew factory does not offer permanent employment to the workers. This is a very difficult task for female employees.

They do not get any maternity or sex leave. Workers are those who work in the daily wages or once in a week. Similarly, the workers do not have the necessary transportation to reach the factory. Many women rush to the factory after work in home.

- The government act exists but does not provide gloves to workers.
- Workers working under the company is subject to strong supervision and strict control.
- The cashew factory operates on the full support of the workers. So labours have a good responsibility.
- Unsatisfactory wages for hard work.
- Rooms with small ventilation that do not allow enough light and air to pass through make workers uncomfortable. It causes shortness of breath and high blood pressure.
- Factory smoke & cashew smoke can cause asthma, shortness of breath and cough
- The factory closes for days or months due to the shortage of cashew nuts.
- The only rest time they get is at lunch time.

The Tamil Nadu government has fixed the minimum wage as a result of a long struggle by trade unions and others. It has been implemented in cashew factories since about 1983. But the workers are not aware of the wages that exist there as per the law. Union leaders and the factory inspector said that wages could not be fixed because it was a piece of work. Similarly, women workers in the cashew processing industry do not have the opportunity to go into the industry to other sectors. Because there is no other industry on a large scale similar to cashew industry. The main reason for this is that it is locally recognized. As for the male series, they are mostly engaged in construction work. There is work to be done according to the standard of health and good wages will be paid. But about 70 percent of women rely on the Cashew nut factory. Because if they do not have it, they will have to go to other home to work. Another thing available to women working in the factory is dowry. Another group of workers aims to make dowry for their marriage or siblings. It is a social system that exists in all areas where the workers I visit include. The factory workers themselves replace the female workers with those who are married or those who come from far away. There is also the transaction of taking bribes on the pretext of getting a job in a cashew factory. Factories here sometimes have to close for months. This is because the raw nuts are imported from foreign countries or other state. Factories here sometimes have to close for months.

If the load does not arrive the factory shuts down. Female workers suffer a lot during these times. They have no expertise in another job. No one will even let them in on house work for a few days. Engaged chits or the loan taken are unable to repay continuously. A woman in steady area has been for buying jewellery for her Daughters wedding And worrying about how to pay for it. In order to get raw cashew at suitable for consumption delicate and caring process have to be done. (cooking, shelling, peeling etc.).

So skilled workers are needed even if they are not educated. For example, if the cutting and shelling are not handled by very skilled workers, the nut many break. There is no training method. At these times the

work compliant says the section is postponed. In such cases it takes days for female workers to train in their job, this is the reason for the reluctance to work and the loss of confidence.

About 90% of the cashew factory workers are women. Moreover, they are illiterate from poor families. Therefore, they do not recognize the quantity and value of the work they do each day and the profit that the cashew growers make thereby. Women workers who are thus exploited are considered to be an important feature

Another level is for children between the ages of 10 and 15. Today the government has implemented compulsory education for children so there are no children for permanent work in the factories I visited. But he also works with the children under the false pretense that he came with his mother. This is another facet of poverty, with female workers working with children at home.

In fact, the wage relief law requires workers to be given a card and accurate job information. In fact, the pain relief law requires workers to be given a card and accurate job information. But the card system is not implemented everywhere except in a few factories. Management woman Labor India is really exploiting when it comes to bonus gratuity. But this time too to get in touch with the trade union or Women Labor does not want to be a member. This motivates management to continue exploiting.

No Consideration in Society

Women and family members working in cashew factories are not given good consideration in the society. In society, they are considered inferior. Like everyone else, they work hard to support their families. The daughter of a man in a family I know closely has passed MBBS. The child was admitted through the benefits provided by ESI to the children of those working in the cashew factory. But when marriage counseling takes place, it means that the family members of the persons who hold high position in the society reject this proposal. Our society, which claims equality in society today, lags behind such workers. What's more, even in the family, women who are often engaged in such work do not deserve consideration. Maybe the woman earns for the family along with the man.

Low Wages

Female workers are victims of exploitation. The wage difference is a fact that still exists in their case. They have no social status or economic status. It is clear that women are not only in wants of job, but are also going all out to bring home a maintenance earning.

It is considered that men are the bread victors and primary earners for the family. The reality that women are often totally accountable for household work from which they have not found an escape creates. An idea that they are primarily domestic workers and secondarily economic or income earners. However, clearly statically data reveal that women are often sole supporters and primary bread winner.

Sexual Harassment

Almost all female employees are subject to sexual harassment. Regardless of status, personal characteristics or job, they may face adverse circumstances. She is subjected to sexual harassment even in the middle of the road and at the police station where she arrives with a complaint.

Mental Harassment

It is most common in older women and the unhealthy. These people are always being blamed for their work and they are quickly relegated to a job that requires careful attention. By then, they have to hear sarcasm from the workers and the manager. Because they decide, out of poverty, that if they put aside time and earn something, it will be enough. Being subjected to such harassment. Inadequacy of physical conditions. Most of the buildings where cashew processing takes place have poor ventilation facilities. These are the buildings from the earliest times. Rooms do not have enough light and air. In the hot summer months, I noticed that the female employee was suffocating. In addition, the smoke generated by the cashew process is harmful to women. Such workers are exposed to diseases such as suffocation. Similarly, those who cut cashews without using gloves in their hands also get skin diseases on their hands. Fresh water facilities are very limited in many factories. The factory owners do not pay attention to the provision of fresh water facility to the workers. Hence many women are satisfied with the limited amount of water they bring. It pushes employees into many physical ailments. Another factor is the lack of required latrine. Most factories have laterine that do not even have a gate. You will see one or two bathrooms but the number of staff is high.

Why workers choose the cashew nut industry?

- The first & most important reason is poverty. The income received is insufficient to look after the family members.

The son of a mother who works in a cashew factory is a student in my class. The information available to me in the interview with him was as follows. His father does not go to work. There will be silence at home.

An Aunt will look after the sister. The boy told me that our mother made a living by working in a cashew factory. While I was talking to the student, his mother fell out of the car and lay down. The condition of the family at that time was deplorable.

Review of the Literature

These letters give a close picture of the difficulties, the troubles often the griefs, sometimes the agonies that affect many millions of our people, as a concern of normal tasks of their lives. A foolish silence has prevented the public mind from realizing that maternity, among the poorer classes, presents a whole series of urgent social problems. These letters give the facts. It is the first time, I trust, that the particulars have been stated, not by medical men or societal students, but by the victims themselves, in their own words. The Women's Co-operative Federation, unrelenting in their sweats for the advance of the conditions of working women, have solidified a most useful service in causing these letters and in making them open.

"Sri. Kant, says; "Women is an end in herself, and not merely a means to an end". Apart from all questions of social advantage, her opportunity for help for her individual sake, when she needs help to meet the troubles special to this woman, is as valid as any other claim- as the claim of the child, for his own sake, to be secure and to be taught. It is essential to take action to solve the difficulties that here stand revealed, first for the fundamental reason that a nation ought not to stand widespread suffering among its associates, if there are measures by which that despair can be prevented without indirectly causing worse.

National policy for Women is written by Somy Banerjee for those who really need women development. The original schemes and plans are discussed. This book discusses how to get benefit out of these schemes. Drawing on themes across self-restraints and across India to raise our alertness of obvious and hidden discriminations against women, the book recaps us of the multiple ways in which women manage to survive and prosper despite familial, civic and public disregard.

Dr. Kaushal Gupta have discussed in his paper "Perspectives on Woman" about civilizing the position of women, what type of joint family occurred during this era and the kinds of relationship which existed between brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and daughter, brother in law and sister in law and mother in law and daughter in law. He examined the issues and problem concerning Indian women in the male dominated society because the status of women in our country in culture, region and age specific. He again discussed about Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is sometimes called the father of modern India, a reformer who spent his life to promote the status of women. He challenged outdated culture by organizing religious insurgents and championing educational, social and political reorganizations.

Gandhiji, told that, "just as basically man and women are one, their complications must be one." The soul, equally is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a compliment of the other's active help".

Kamal explains in his paper of "Recent Studies on India Women" the theoretical needs of researchers having interest on gender issues in India, no matter what is their theoretical training and experience. Some of the sections in the volume are the down-to earth familiarities of the suppliers that have immense policy-oriented significance. The matters enclosed in the volume are wide-ranging as are the capability of its providers, which include the philosophy of ideal woman hood, issues of women's empowerment, legal dimensions of widowhood, protectiveness and local violence, images of matrilineal, literary and political extents of gender, dalit and tribal women and their varied insights vis-à-vis other Indian women, scientists and entrepreneurs, matrimonial choices, marriage timings, politics of population control, and so on. The ability will be of special interest equally to scholars, investigators and strategy makers on gender.

P. J. Sloane and W. S. Siebert defined on their book "Low Pay amongst Women-the Facts" low pay is a striking feature is the preponderance of women amongst this disadvantaged group within the labour market. This has implications not only for policies which attempt to assist the low paid worker or alleviate poverty, but also for legislation designed to achieve equal pay and equality of opportunity for women.

A. Vamsi Krushna in his paper on "Disparities in Female Literacy Rates and Sex Ratios in Andhra Pradesh" observed that the reforms of the nineteenth century advocated a ban on premature marriage of girls, sustained widow remarriage and opened schools for girls. Female literacy rates, in terms of inter-district disparities were discussed including general variations, along with district-wise variations in sex ratios, Juvenile (0-6 age group) sex ratio and rural urban variations were presented. The author concludes that among the urban population, Nalgonda District ranks first in literacy rate of about 82 per cent while the least urban literacy was recorded in Kurnool district with 66 per cent.

D. Pulla Rao in his paper on "deprivation of women in Education and Employment in India: An historical Perspective" shows that there is a historical deprivation for women in education. The author

examined the percentage share of female enrolment to total and enrollment of females in higher, professional and technical education. Further, progress of female teachers and annual compound growth rate for women teachers are presented. The number of women teachers increased at primary, upper primary and high/ higher secondary stage in 2005-06. The author finishes that this might be because of implementation of reservation strategy in some states in favour of women tutors. Similarly, due to NAEP, NLM, TLCs and JSNs the momentum picked up in both education and employment.

Vijaya Krishna in his paper on “Educational policies and programmes for Empowerment of Women in India” observed that empowerment aims at giving the power of women to take her own decisions and to have control over the destiny. In this connection, provisions in various five year plans were presented and policies and programmes on education and empowerment of women like National Policy on Education, 1986, National Policy on Education Review Committee 1990, National Policy for Empowerment of women in all stages must be raised at least to cover their share in the total population.

P. Jayanand Kumar in his paper on “Empowering Women through Education: It’s impact on Child Mortality in India- An Empirical Analysis” feels that the educational level of women is particularly important because educational attainment can affect age of marriage, reproductive behavior, the consumption of contraceptives, the fitness and dietary levels of the family and status. Tables related to gender-wise literacy rates in India, trends in IMR IN India and Andhra Pradesh are followed by a brief review of literature. Mother’s education and infant and child mortality in rural and urban areas were examined. The regression results show that all the literacy rates have a negative impact on infant mortality rate indicating the impact of mother’s education. In the appendix Table of IMR and literacy rate by States/ union Territories was added.

D. Francis in his paper on “Gender Specific Educational Policies and Programmes in India” found that the Constitution of India promises numerous privileges for women and the related Articles are quoted. The growth of educational institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-02 from primary level to universities is presented along with the percentages of females enrolment to the Total enrolment by stages. The author lists out the challenges faced by women education. The author concludes that the enrolment of girls/women has improved at a quicker proportion than that of boys in all the stages of education, and different measures to improve the female education are suggested.

D. Suseela in her paper on “Role of Media in Promoting Gender Justice in Literacy and Education in India” feels that knowledge is the stepping stone towards the answer of many critical complications. The author examines the two-way communication media as well as one-way communication media and mass media. Regarding the discussions of the media and gender equity in education the author identifies several key areas like educational programmes combining traditional and modern media and print media against illiteracy and concludes that children must be educated to the realities of the media so that they can develop a more critical view.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the profile working women of cashew nut factory in palukal village in Kanya kumari district.
2. To evaluate the socio-economic factors motivating women to work in cashew nut factory.
3. To understand the attitude of women workers towards their work in cashew nut factory.
4. To chart out the problems encountered by women workers in study area.
5. To analyze the socio-economic conditions & problems of cashew workers in society.

Conclusion

Cashew nut industries played an important role in palukal village of Kanya kumari district. It offers employment opportunity to a lot of unemployed. The raising cost of living compels the workers to take up the job. Unfortunately, women are facing a lot of problems in their working environment. Their socio-economic status will be improved only if adequate measures are taken to overcome their problems. The state and central government can formulate many policies to increase the welfare of the workers.

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