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Socio-Economic Deprivation of Women Tea Plantation Labourers in Idukki District

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Abstract: ***The scale to measure socio-economic deprivation was administered to 120 tea plantation labourers in Munnar, Pallivasal and Devikulam gramapanchayaths of Idukki district. The results revealed that the dimensions deprived were income, housing, other public services, social recognition, democratic participation and credit. The overall deprivation index computed were 2.165. It was also found that 56.67 per cent of the tea plantation labourers were highly deprived of the dimensions while 43.33 per cent tea plantation labourers had low level of deprivation of the dimensions.***
Keywords: deprivation, labourers, plantation, women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women were considered as ideal pickers of tea leaves due to their gender attributes like delicate hands, quicker harvesting abilities and productivity of women workers were also high. Also women are steady and regular workers than the men workers. They are on their feet for hours and have to carry heavy loads up and down the hills. But still the women face a lot of discrimination. Recently the wages of tea plantation labourers were raised to Rs.301 from Rs.254 but the rent for their housing (*laayams)*, electricity, water, fuel wood, medicines, etc. are cut from this pitiful daily wage. The workers are provided with housing facilities which again provide more workers to the plantation. The women labourers have dual roles, the first one is the productive role required to earn money to maintain the family and the other is the household activities like cooking, child care, their education, health, elderly care, etc.
Hence, the present study is taken up with the following objectives:

1) Identify the gender roles of women plantation labourers of tea gardens in Idukki district.
2) The socio-economic deprivation of women labourers will be studied.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Munnar, Pallivasal and Devikulam *grama panchayaths* of Idukki district. The sample size were 120 respondents (90 women and 30 men). The data collected were analyzed using median, coefficient of variation (CV), variance, percentage, Kruskal Wallis test and z test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Scale used for measuring the socio – economic deprivation of tea plantation labourers
According to Anoop (2013) it may be possible to mitigate the extent and/ or the level of deprivation, but it is not possible to eradicate completely. The mechanisms responsible for creating disadvantaged situations undergo modifications along with changing social and economic structures, altering the forms of disadvantages.Tina Koshy & Tiwary (2011) found that the necessary facilities for the plantation labourers were given by only 10 percent of estates and tea plantations in the South India provide good facilities to the labourers. As Choudhary and Tayal (2010) reported, the reason for the mass employment of female work force in tea plantation estates were always given as the gender attributes of women workers in plucking high quality and quantity of tea leaves but the real reason was to give low wages.
Rahman and Aktar (2010) concluded that the underprivileged people were highly defenseless to ailments, monetary disorder and natural disasters since the workers were confined in the base pay job with little job security, insufficient food and housing facilities, deprived of basic education and health care services.According to Sen (2005) the economic improvement of a poor family needs an extensive sanctioning and favoring circumstances. How people live their life they value should be the criteria for determining the standard of living of a community and not the mean level of income.
As stated by Tessy Kurian (1999) women are employed in large numbers as they were paid less than men. Chambers (1997) argues that deprivation as poor people perceive it has many dimensions, including not only lack of income and wealth, but also social inferiority, physical weakness, disability and sickness, vulnerability, physical and social isolation, powerlessness and humiliation.

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The socio – economic deprivation was measured with the help of selected dimensions and statements from the scale developed by Shincy N. I. (2012). Out of the 18 dimensions used by Shincy N.I. (2012), nine dimensions suitable for the study like income, education, health, housing, other public services/goods, food security, social recognition, democratic participation and credit were selected with the help of experts. These selected dimensions were measured with the help of statements which were modified for the purpose of the study. However, the number of statements used for measuring each dimensions differed accordingly. Each of these dimensions were measured with a five point continuum, most deprived, deprived, neutral, not deprived and not at all deprived with scores 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

The contribution of each of the selected nine dimensions in socio – economic deprivation were found to be unequal since the number of statements used to measure each dimensions differed. So in order to acquire an equal contribution from each of these dimensions, weightages were allotted to these with the help of experts. The average score of expert's weightage for each dimension was calculated and multiplied with the respondents' responses. Weighted average was calculated for all the dimensions and the median score of these weighted averages, were determined as the deprivation score.

Among the nine dimensions selected for the study, deprived dimensions of the tea plantation labourers along with its deprivation scores were income (2), housing (1), other public services (2), social recognition (2), democratic participation (2) and credit (2). The overall deprivation index computed were 2.165. The dimensions which were not deprived included education, health and food security. The dimensions housing with coefficient of variation (CV) 24.52 and variance 0.07 and food security with coefficient of variation (CV) 20.83 and variance 0.18 had the minimum variation considering all the nine dimensions in the study.

Table 1: Socio-economic deprivation experienced by the tea plantation labourers of Idukki district. N=120

Sl no.	Deprivation scores	Median score	Variance	CV
1.	Income	2	0.92	69.61
2.	Education	4	1.21	63.14
3.	Health	4	1.12	60.89
4.	Housing	1	0.07	24.52
5.	Other public services	2	0.82	60.61
6.	Food security	4	0.18	20.83
7.	Social recognition	2	0.92	65.92
8.	Democratic participation	2	1.55	78.72
9.	Credit	2	1.67	78.06
	Deprivation index	2.165	0.411	43.00

Table 2 indicates that more than 50 per cent (53.33 per cent) of the tea plantation labourers were highly deprived of the dimensions while less than 50 per cent (46.67 per cent) tea plantation labourers had low level of deprivation of the dimensions.

Table 2: Classification of women and men tea plantation labourers based on deprivation index. N= 120

Sl. No.	Category	Women (N=90)	Percentage	Men (N=30)	Percentage
1.	Low	40	44.44	14	46.67
2.	High	50	55.56	16	53.33
Total		90	100	30	100

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From Table 3 it can be observed that two dimensions of deprivation namely, education and other public services were found to have significant difference between men and women labourers using the z test.

Table 3: Deprivation index and its components N=120

Sl. No.	Deprivation scores	Women (N=90)		Men (N=30)		Z value
		Median score	CV	Median score	CV	
1.	Income	2	70.24	2	67.57	0.126 <1.96
2.	Education	4	63.37	4	63.50	0.472 >1.96
3.	Health	4	61.39	4	60.31	0.346 <1.96
4.	Housing	1	25.96	1	18.21	0.033 <1.96
5.	Other public services	2	61.93	2	57.44	0.476 >1.96
6.	Food security	4	21.16	4	19.85	0.187 <1.96
7.	Social recognition	2	66.62	2	64.88	0.332 <1.96
8.	Democratic participation	2	78.46	2	76.39	0.031 <1.96
9.	Credit	2	80.55	4	70.63	0.139 <1.96
	Deprivation index	2.16	24.22	2.22	73.22	

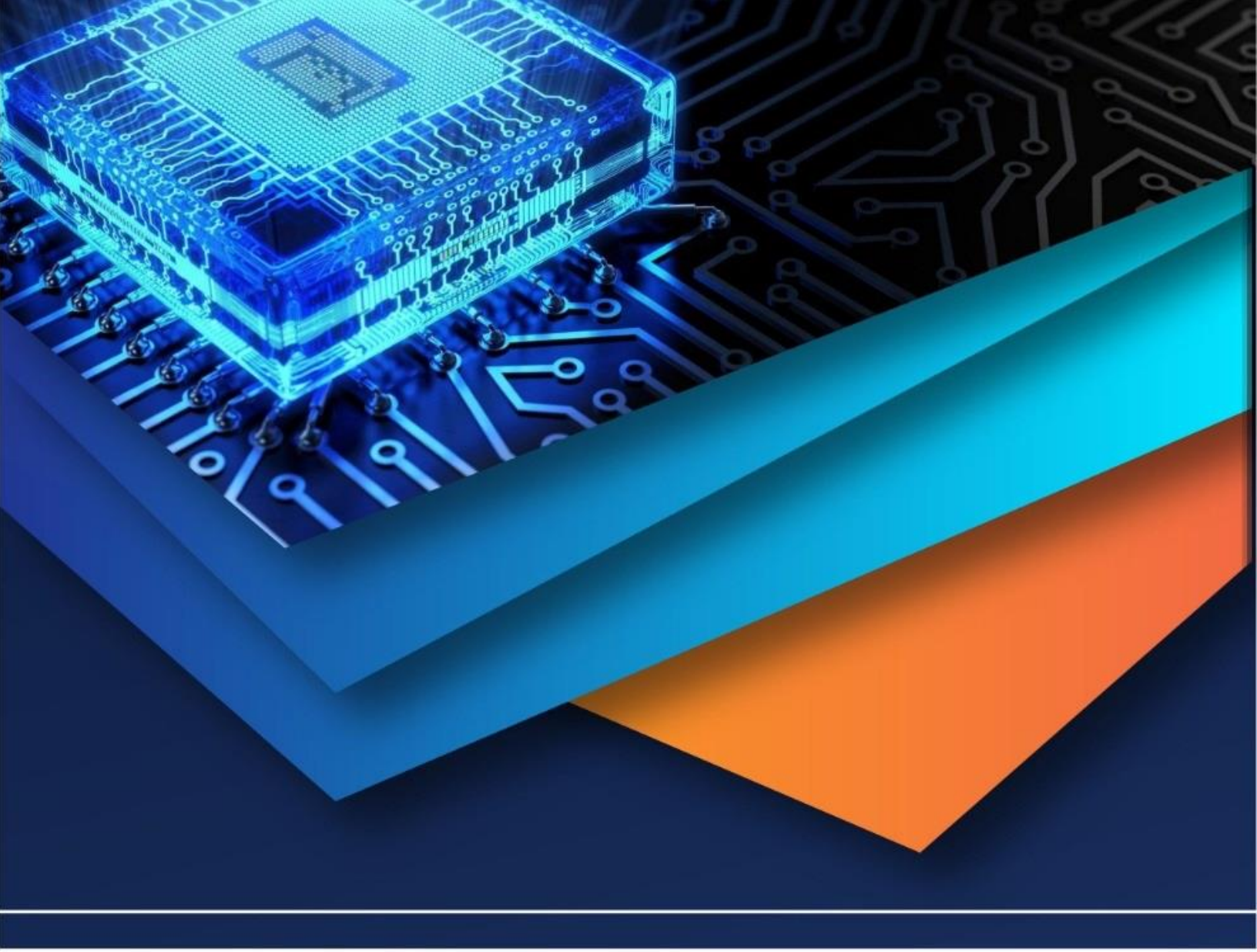
IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the present study it was found that 56.67 per cent of the tea plantation labourers were highly deprived of the dimensions while 43.33 per cent tea plantation labourers had low level ofdeprivation of the dimensions and the deprived dimensions were income, housing, other public services, social recognition, democratic participation and credit while the dimensions education,health and food security were found to be not deprived. Also education and other public services were found to have significant difference between men and women labourers considering all thenine dimensions in the study. The overall deprivation index computed were 2.165.

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