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# THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF COIR WORKERS IN THANJAVUR DISTRICT

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## Abstract

*Coir industry is one of the Village and Cottage industries in India. It provides employment opportunities and generates income to the people and thereby improving the standard of living of the people particularly in rural areas. Coir sector in India is dynamic and vibrant and it involves households, privates, co-operatives, NGOs, manufacturers and exporters. The coir industry in India provides employment to about 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 coir workers in the fibre extraction and spinning sectors are women. India accounts for more than two-thirds of the world production of coir and coir products earning foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 700 million through exports and coir products. The socio-economic factors of the people determine the standing in the society and also the standard of living of them. The factors like age, sex, marital status, community, education, experience, monthly income and expenditures are taken into account in order to measure the socio-economic conditions of the workers those who are engaged in different areas of coir units. In view of the significant role played by the coir workers, an attempt is made in the study to measure the socio-economic conditions of the coir workers in Thanjavur district.*

**Key words :** Coir Industry, Employment and Socio-Economic variables.

## Introduction

Unorganized industrial sector plays a vital role in employment generation and economic development of a nation. Unorganized sector is very suitable sector to the rural people for providing employment opportunities as well as generating income. The family workers mostly engaged in the unorganized industrial sector for their livelihood. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment Government of India, Unorganized sector means an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers managing in the production or sale of goods or providing service of any kind whatsoever, and where the enterprise employs workers, the number of such workers is less than ten. "The contribution of the self-employed women in unorganized sector is enormous to the economy". India's Ministry of Labour, in its 2008 report, classified the unorganized labour force in India into four groups namely occupation, nature of employment, especially distressed categories and service categories. "Workers working in the unorganized sectors even though contributing a major share to the national development are unsecured and backward socio-economically, educationally, politically and in other aspects".

According to 2001 Census, India had 12.6 million children, aged 5–14, who work either part-time or full-time. Of these over 60 percent of the work is in unorganized agriculture sector, and the rest in other

unorganized labour markets. Poverty, lack of schools, poor education infrastructure and growth of unorganized economy are considered as the most important causes of child labour in India. Coir industry is being an unorganized sector in India provides employment opportunities as well as income to the people. Coir sector is being unorganized presently, this article assumes significance in analysis the socio-economic conditions of the workers engaged in coir units especially in Thanjavur district of Tamilnadu state.

## Review of Literature

Sivanesan (2013) in his article, "A Study on Socio-economic Conditions of Women Workers in Cashew Industries of Kanyakumari District", had rightly pointed out that out of 50 respondents, 33.35 percent of the respondents level of satisfaction is moderate, 28 percent of the respondents level of satisfaction is very low, 25.30 of respondents level of satisfaction is low but only 1.35 level of satisfaction is high. The socio-economic status of women workers will be improved only if adequate measures are taken to overcome their problems. He also pointed out that the state and central governments could formulate many policies to increase the welfare of the workers. Rathakrishnan and Sellammalle (2001) in their article, "Micro-Women Entrepreneurs and Socio-Economic Empowerment: A Study", had found that the average annual family income of the women is Rs. 22, 850 and they are contributed to their family on an average

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is Rs. 18,720 (82 percent) per annum. Further, they had stated that women are contributing more income to their family than their counterpart. They had concluded that the participation of women in uplifting the socio-economic status of the family is paramount and significant.

### Importance of the Study

Unemployment problem is increasing in the developing countries like India. In India, 75 percent of the people living in rural areas and they depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Coir industry in India is one of the Agro-based, Village and Cottage industry which provides employment opportunities and generates income to the people particularly in rural areas. Coir industry is suitable to women workers for providing employment and their livelihood. "In India, women-workers constitute about one-fifths of the total work force in the overall economic activity". Further, Coir industry in India is a labour intensive-industry which provides employment opportunities to the people particularly rural folk. "It 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 coir workers are women employed in the fibre extraction and spinning activities". The socio-economic status of the people determines the standard of living of the people. "The socio-economic condition of coir workers is generally very poor and most of the workers are living below poverty line".

### Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are

- ▶ To understand the socio-economic conditions of coir workers in Thanjavur district.
- ▶ To know the wage structure and working conditions of the coir workers in the study area
- ▶ To measure the satisfaction level of the coir workers in Thanjavur district
- ▶ To provide suitable suggestions for overcoming the problems of coir workers.

### Statement of the Problem

Unemployment, underemployment, poverty, inadequate and irregular payment of wages, experience, non-availability of social security, unfavourable working conditions and inadequate welfare facilities are the major problems faced by the coir workers in Thanjavur district especially in rural areas. The people those who are living below poverty line are badly need of employment as well as income so as to meet the day-to-day expenses and

for their livelihood. Agriculture is the major occupation of the people in Thanjavur district. It is a seasonal occupation but the people need regular employment. Coir sector in India is dynamic and vibrant and it involves households, privates, co-operatives, NGOs, manufacturers and exporters for employment as well as income purposes. Further, coir industry is very suitable to the rural people in Thanjavur district especially for women employment.

### Collection of Data

The present study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data for the study was collected from the workers those who are engaged in different aspects of coir units through proper interview schedules and direct observations. The secondary data were collected from the official records of Coir Board, journals, magazines and available websites in the field.

The researcher has directly approached 150 sample workers engaged in coir units in both Pattukkottai and Peravurani taluks of Thanjavur district at non-random (convenience sampling) sample method. Pattukkottai and Peravurani are the major taluks in Thanjavur district in terms of coconut cultivation, and coir production as well as consumption. Out of 150 samples of coir workers, 143 workers were co-operative and responded to collect the necessary information whereas the remaining 7 workers were not responded and no information was collected from them. Therefore, the entire sample consists of 143 in both Pattukkottai as well as Peravurani taluks.

### Sampling Distribution

For the present study, 150 sample coir workers were selected and the necessary information was collected from them. In the aggregate sample coir workers, one thirds of the samples in each categories of coir sector were collected i.e 50 samples from household sector, 50 samples from private coir sector and remaining 50 samples from co-operative coir sector. Out of 150 samples coir workers, 50 percent of the samples were collected in each taluk of Thanjavur district namely Pattukkottai and Peravurani.

### Methodology of the Study

The collected data for the present study were grouped, tabulated analysed, processed and presented in the form of simple frequency tables. The statistical tools like the simple percentages and high square tests were employed in the study so as to analyse and interpret the data and to draw a meaningful conclusion in the form of recommendation to the concerned.

3. Sivanesan, R., "A Study on Socio-economic Conditions of Women Workers in Cashew Industries of Kanyakumari District", *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy*, Vol.2, No. 4, October 2013, ISSN 2319-345X
4. Rathakrishnan, L. and Sellammalle, B., "Micro-Women Entrepreneurs and Socio-Economic Empowerment: A Study", *Southern Economist*, Vol. 40, No. 8, August 15, 2001
5. Monika Yadav., "Socio-economic conditions of Women Workers in Construction Industry", *IJRSI*, Vol. 2, No. 7, July 2015, ISSN 2321 - 2705



## Scope of the Study

The study covers both male and female workers engaged in different areas of coir sectors viz., household units, private coir units and co-operative units working in Thanjavur district especially in two taluks of Thanjavur district viz., Pattukkottai and Peravurani which are major coir producing taluks besides the availability of coconut husks in plenty. The period of the study covered one year i.e 2014-2015.

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed and tested in order to bring out the result.

- ▶ There is no significant relationship between the age of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.
- ▶ There is no significant relationship between the sex of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.
- ▶ There is no significant relationship between the experience of the coir workers and their nature of satisfaction.
- ▶ There is no significant relationship between the monthly income of workers and their nature of satisfaction.

**Table -1 : Age Groups of The Sample Workers In Coir Units**

Age Groups	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total
Below 25	37	20	57
25 - 35	25	13	38
35 - 45	20	9	29
Above 45	13	6	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>143</b>

Source : Primary data

The age groups of the coir workers employed at where is presented in table-1. The total number of coir workers were 143, of which 66.43 percent was satisfied and 33.57 percent was unsatisfied. Out of 95 satisfied coir workers, 38.95 percent was in the age group of below 25 years, 26.32 percent was in 25 to 35 age groups, 21.05 percent was 35 to 45 age groups and 13.68 percent was in above 45 age group category.

Among unsatisfied, 41.67 percent was in the age group of below 25, 27.08 percent was in the age group of 25 to 35 years, 18.75 percent was in 35 to 45 age groups and percent was in above 45 age group category. Therefore, a major portion of coir workers was in below 25 years which accounted for 39.86 percent.

To verify statistically whether there is any significant relationship between age of the workers and their nature of satisfaction, the following hypotheses were framed and the data were subjected to X<sup>2</sup> test, the working results were as follows.

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the age of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the age of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \quad O - \text{Observed value} \quad E - \text{Expected value}$$

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
37	37.87	0.87	0.76	0.020
25	25.24	0.24	0.06	0.002
20	19.27	0.73	0.53	0.028
13	12.62	0.38	0.14	0.011
20	19.13	0.87	0.76	0.040
13	12.76	0.24	0.06	0.005
9	9.73	0.73	0.53	0.281
6	6.38	0.38	0.14	0.020
<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>			<b>0.407</b>

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Degree of freedom} &= (r-1) \times (c-1) \\
 &= (4-1) \times (2-1) \\
 &= 4
 \end{aligned}$$

<sup>6</sup>. Srinivasan, R., "Coir: The Golden Fibre", Facts for you, Vol. 31, No. 11, August 2011

<sup>7</sup>. Jose,V.S. and Sankaranarayanan, K.C., "Coir Industry Performing Below Expectations", Facts for you, Vol.23, No.5, February 2003.

As the calculated 'Chi'-square value 0.407 is less than the table value 9.488 at 5 percent level of significance with 4 d.f., the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the age of workers and their nature of satisfaction.

**Table - 2 : Gender of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Gender	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Male	8	17	25
Female	87	31	118
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>143</b>

*Source : Primary data*

It understood that from table-IV.2 that the gender of the workers those who are engaged in coir units. The total number of workers was 143 of which 21.18 percent of the workers were male and 82.52 percent were female. Out of 95 satisfied workers, 8.42 percent were male and 91.58 percent were female. Out of 48 not satisfied workers, 35.42 percent were male and remaining 64.58 percent were female. Therefore, the major portion of the coir workers in both categories was satisfied which accounting for 66.43 percent.

To verify statistically whether there is any significant relationship between sex of the workers and the nature of satisfaction, the following hypotheses were framed and the data were subjected to X2 test, the working results were as follows.

H0 : There is no significant relationship between the sex of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.

H1 : There is no significant relationship between the sex of the workers and their nature of satisfaction.

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
8	16.61	8.61	74.31	4.463
87	78.39	8.61	74.13	0.946
17	8.39	8.61	74.13	8.836
31	39.61	8.61	74.13	1.871
<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>			<b>16.116</b>

As the calculated 'Chi'-square value 16.116 is greater than the table value 3.841 at 5 percent level of significance with 1 d.f., the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between the sex of workers and their nature of satisfaction.

**Table - 3 : Marital Status of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Marital status	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Unmarried	35	9	44
Married	48	13	61
Widows	14	8	22
Divorcees	11	5	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>143</b>

*Source : Primary data*

From table-3, it could be understood that the marital status of the coir workers in Thanjavur district. Out of 143 coir workers, 30.77 percent were unmarried, 42.66 percent were married, 15.38 percent were widows and 11.19 percent were divorcees. The total number of satisfied coir workers was 108 of which 32.41 percent were unmarried, 44.44 percent were married, 12.96 percent were widows and 10.19 percent were divorcees. Out of 35 unsatisfied workers, 25.71 percent were unmarried, 37.14 percent were married, 22.86 percent were widows and 14.29 percent were divorcees.

**Table - 4 : Community-wise Classification of Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Marital status	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
BC	23	7	30
MBC	37	10	47
SC	52	14	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source :** Primary data

From table-5, it could be understood that the community status of the coir workers. Out of 143 coir workers, 20.98 percent was backward class, 32.17 percent was most backward class and 47.55 percent was scheduled class. Out of 110 satisfied coir workers, 20.91 percent was backward class, 31.82 percent was most backward class and 47.27 percent was scheduled class. There were 36 coir workers were not satisfied of which 22.58 percent was backward class, 32.26 percent was most backward class and 45.16 percent was scheduled class.

**Table - 5 : Educational Qualification of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Educational Qualifications	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Illiterates	28	10	30
Primary School Level	44	14	58
High School Level	17	8	26
Higher Secondary Level	12	5	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source :** Primary data

It observed from table-4 that the educational qualification of coir workers. The total number of coir workers was 143 of which 20.98 percent was illiterates, 40.56 percent had school level education, 18.17 percent had high school level education and 11.89 percent had higher secondary school education. Out of 106 satisfied workers, 26.42 percent was illiterates, 41.51 percent had school level education, 16.05 percent had high school level education and 11.32 percent had higher secondary school education. There were 37 workers not satisfied of which 27.03 percent was illiterates, 37.84 percent had school level education, 21.62 percent had high school level education and 13.51 percent had higher secondary school education.

**Table - 6 : Experience of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Years of experience	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Below 3 years	65	19	84
3 - 5 years	34	12	46
Above 5 years	16	7	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source :** Primary data

From table-, it could be understood that the experience of the coir workers. The total number of coir workers was 143 of which 80.43 percent was satisfied and remaining 26.57 percent was not satisfied. Out of 115 satisfied workers, 56.52 percent had below 3 years of experience, 29.57 percent had 3 to 5 years of experience and 13.91 percent had above 5 years of experience. The total number of not satisfied coir workers was 38 of which 50 percent had below 3 years of experience, 31.58 percent had 3 to 5 years of experience and 18.42 percent had above 5 years of experience.

To verify statistically whether there is any significant relationship between marital status of the workers and the nature of satisfaction, the following hypotheses were framed and the data were subjected to X2 test, the working results were as follows.

H0 : There is no significant relationship between the experience of the coir workers and their nature of satisfaction.

H1 : There is significant relationship between the experience of the coir workers and their nature of satisfaction.

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
65	67.55	-2.55	6.50	0.096
34	36.99	-2.99	8.94	0.242
16	18.50	-2.50	6.25	0.338
19	22.32	-3.32	11.02	0.494
12	12.22	-0.22	0.05	0.004
7	6.11	0.89	0.79	0.130
<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>			<b>1.304</b>

As the calculated 'Chi'-square value 1.304 is less than the table value 5.991 at 5 percent level of significance with 2 d.f., the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the experience of coir workers and their nature of satisfaction.

**Table - 7 : Family Size of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

No. of persons	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Below 3	16	7	23
3 - 5	55	23	78
Above 5	32	10	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source :** Primary data

Table-7 explains that the family members of the coir workers. Out of 143 coir workers, 72.03 percent was satisfied and 27.97 percent was not satisfied. In case of satisfied workers, 11.19 percent had below 3 persons, 38.46 percent had 3 to 5 persons and 22.38 percent had above 5 persons. Out of not satisfied workers, 17.50 percent had below 3 persons, 57.50 percent had 3 to 5 persons and 25 percent had above 5 persons. Therefore, the major portion of coir workers had 3 to 5 persons which accounted for 54.55 percent.

**Table - 8 : Monthly Income of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Levels of Income (in Rs.)	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Below 4,000	48	22	70
4,000 - 5,000	32	14	46
Above 5,000	17	10	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source:** Primary data

From table-10, it understood that the monthly income of the coir workers. The total number of coir workers was 143 of which 67.83 percent was satisfied and below Rs. 4,000, 28.67 percent earned from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 per month, 17.48 percent earned from Rs. 8,001 to Rs. 10,000 per month and remaining 11.89 percent earned above Rs. 10,000.

Out of 87 satisfied workers, 43.68 percent had earned monthly income of below Rs. 6,000, 28.74 percent had earned monthly income from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 8,000, 16.09 percent had earned monthly income ranging between Rs. 8,001 and Rs. 10,000 and 11.49 percent had earned monthly income of above Rs. 10,000. Out of 56 not satisfied workers, 39.29 percent had earned monthly income of below Rs. 6,000, 28.57 percent had earned monthly

income from Rs. 6,000 to 8,000, 19.64 percent had earned monthly income of Rs. 8,001 to Rs. 10,000 and 12.50 percent had earned monthly income of above Rs. 10,000.

To test statically whether there is any significant relationship between the monthly income of workers and the nature of satisfaction, the following hypotheses were framed and the data were subjected to Chi-Square test, the working result were as follows.

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the monthly income of workers and the nature of satisfaction.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is no significant relationship between the monthly income of workers and the nature of satisfaction.

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
38	36.50	1.50	2.250	0.0616
25	24.94	0.06	0.004	0.0001
14	15.21	1.21	1.464	0.0963
10	10.34	0.34	0.116	0.0112
22	23.50	1.50	2.250	0.0957
16	16.06	0.06	0.004	0.0002
11	9.79	1.21	1.464	0.1495
7	6.66	0.34	0.116	0.0174
<b>143</b>	<b>143</b>			<b>0.4320</b>

As the calculated 'Chi'-square value 0.4320 is less than the table value 7.815 at 5 percent level of significance with 3 d.f., the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the monthly income of coir workers and the nature of satisfaction.

**Table - 9 : Monthly Savings of The Coir Workers In Thanjavur District**

Levels of Income (in Rs.)	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Below 1,000	43	33	76
1,000 - 2,000	27	16	43
Above 2,000	15	9	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>143</b>

**Source :** Primary data

From table-, it could be understood that the monthly savings of the coir workers. The total number of coir workers was 85 of which 59.44 percent was satisfied and remaining 40.56 percent was not satisfied in. Out of 85 satisfied workers, 50.59 percent monthly saved below Rs. 1,000, 31.76 percent monthly saved between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000 and 17.65 percent monthly saved above Rs. 2,000. Out of 58 not satisfied coir workers, 56.90 percent had saved below Rs. 1,000 per month, 27.58 percent had saved between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 2,000 per month and 15.52 percent had saved above Rs. 2,000 per month. Hence, it concluded that the major portion of the coir workers had saved below Rs. 1,000 per month which accounted for 53.15 percent.

## SUGGESTIONS

- ▶ The government of India should provide bonus and festival advances to the coir workers for their livelihood
- ▶ It is suggested that the coir entrepreneurs should provide regular employment to the workers
- ▶ The Coir Board should provide proper training facilities to the coir workers for improving productivity
- ▶ Coir Board of India should introduce insurance scheme for protecting the welfare of the workers
- ▶ It is suggested that coir workers should be encouraged and motivated in terms of providing incentives
- ▶ The Government should provide welfare benefits to the coir workers for improving their socio-economic conditions



## Conclusion

Coir industry is a spoon for workers especially rural folk for their employment, income, standard of living and their livelihood. The socio-economic conditions of coir workers in Thanjavur district are generally very poor and they face a number of problems in the working environment like nature of work, experience, irregular employment, heavy work load and inadequate wages. Thus, they are unable to meet day-to-day expenses due to inadequate wages and also they are unable to improve their standard of living. Therefore, it is concluded that the socio- economic conditions of the coir workers can be improved through the efforts of Government of India by fixing standard wages to the workers those are employed in coir industry.

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