

Analysis of Economic Impact of Female Beedi Workers

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ABSTRACT

Beedi rolling is a main livelihood for the women in Tirunelveli district and it generates marginal income and employment prospects for them. The women beedi workers who are the mainstay of the industry should have friendly and encouraging social and economic life. The beedi industry is providing some subsistent living. It is in this backlog, this study has been attempted to analyse the impact of beedi industries on socio-economic status of female beedi workers in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

The specific objectives of the study are

- 1. To study the socio-economic status of sample female beedi workers in the study area.*
- 2. To assess the reason for selecting job in beedi industries*
- 3. To measure the income inequality among the respondents before and after joining the beedi industries.*
- 4. To analyse the impact of beedi industries on income of the sample female beedi workers.*

5. To examine the relationship between the family size and income of respondents

6. To assess the problems faced by the sample female beedi workers.

In this present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. Percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, Garrett ranking method, t test and Gini coefficient were used for the analysis. This study has also analysed the assessment of significance of beedi industries in the economic development genuinely, the role of women in the beedi industry, health impacts of beedi smoking, problems faced by the women, the socio-economic conditions of the sample female beedi industries workers etc., are the essential parts of the study. Thus, it may be concluded from the analysis of the findings of the present study that the life of the female people tends to be better economically after joining beedi industries.

Keywords: Beedi rolling, economic development, foreign earnings, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Women are reflected the human resource of choice for the unorganised sector particularly for beedi industries because they lack education and training, they are agreeable to receive lesser wages for equal work due to gender casting and they have no option for any preparations owing to the imperceptible and unorganised nature of their work. Beedi work was home-based and a subsidiary or the main business of many women in the lower income group. The majority of the female workers were earning for their own living from the beedi industry. The standard of living of female workers was low and they did not get any welfare facilities¹. As it is, women constitute 90 per cent of the total work force involved in beedi rolling². On a more practical plane, the beedi industry has played a crucial role in changing the socio-economic scenario of needy rural areas in the country for better³. Its special attraction, particularly for women, is the simplicity of the process and the possibility of carrying it out at home⁴. For many families engaged in the industry, it has meant survival or a means for rising above the poverty line⁵.

The women beedi workers who are the mainstay of the industry should have friendly and promising social and

economic life. This study has much implication from the point of view of rural employment as it promises full year job with a smaller amount of capital and infrastructure. Beedi industry is one of the most significant sources of employment and income particularly to the rural women in Tirunelveli district. It also brings foreign earnings. So its part is vital in the purpose of economic development of the district. Similarly, it plays a strategic role in employment generation and economic empowerment. The economic and political position of the beedi industry is based on the great number of women workers employed and the amount of foreign currency earned through beedi exports.

The beedi rolling activity is primarily carried out by workers having weaker socioeconomic status in the society. Most of the beedi making work is carried out in rural and semi-urban areas where it is one of the major sources of livelihood for many families. The work of beedi making is primarily carried by Schedule Castes (SC) and Muslims OBC who lost their traditional source of livelihood (weaving, potteries etc.) due cheap industrial substitutes and changing consumer preference.

Beedi making is viewed by these families as an additional source of income to cover-up the shrinking income. Muslim women dominate the beedi work because due to religious stricture they are not allowed to go out to work. Thus home based work is widely acceptable among them⁶. The participation of Scheduled Castes is high in certain centres of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh⁷. Children of beedi workers get involved in this work at a tender age; as a result cases of school dropouts are also reported in large number.

Socio-economic empowerment is essential for self-respect which cannot be achieved without economic independence. It has been widely reported that women beedi workers have poor socio-economic condition. Most of the women roll the beedies at their respective homes only and supply them to the nearby factories. Since they are working as regular and casual labours, they are facing a number of problems in relation to work, security, wage, health and other problems. It is in this backlog, this study has been attempted to analyse the impact of beedi industries on socio-economic status of female beedi workers in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are

- 1) To study the socio-economic status of sample female beedi workers in the study area.
- 2) To assess the reason for selecting job in beedi industries
- 3) To measure the income inequality among the respondents before and after joining the beedi industries.
- 4) To analyse the impact of beedi industries on income of the sample female beedi workers.
- 5) To assess the problems faced by the sample female beedi workers.

METHODOLOGY

In this present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data were collected through personal interview method by using a well-designed interview schedule. In Tirunelveli district the beedi industries are having 75 years of history. There are 96 manufacturer and more than 1000 main and sub-contractors are in the industry. In this field the majority of 95 percentages of the workers are women and female children. Total of 300 sample female beedi workers, each 30 women workers from 10 beedi manufacturing companies in Tirunelveli district were randomly selected

by adopting simple random sampling method. The field survey was carried out during 2016-2017. Percentage analysis, averages, standard deviation, Garrett ranking method, t test and Gini coefficient were used for the analysis.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE FEMALE BEEDI WORKERS

Due to lack of money, energy and lack of time, the researcher has collected the data from 300 respondents in the study area for the determination of investigation and discussion.

Age-wise Distribution

S. No.	Age	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	Below 25 years	22	7.33
2.	26 – 35 years	86	28.67
3.	36 – 45 years	136	45.33
4.	Above 45 years	56	18.67
Total		300	100

Source: Primary data.

From Table the age distribution of the 300 sample female beedi workers shows that 7.33 percent of the female beedi workers are in the age group of below 25 years and 28.67 percent are in the age group 26 to 35 years. 45.33 percent of the total female beedi workers constitute the age group of 36 to 45 years

and those above 45 years constitutes 18.67 percent. It is observed from the Table that majority of the female beedi workers belongs to the age group of 36-45 years who are more active change prone, liberal and innovative. The mean age of female beedi workers worked out to be 38.03 years.

Educational level of the Female beedi workers

Sl. No.	Educational level	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	46	15.33
2.	Primary	59	19.67
3.	High school	98	32.67
4.	Higher secondary	65	21.67
5.	Degree/ Diploma	32	10.66
Total		300	100

Source: Primary data.

It has been inferred that out of 300 samples, 15.33 percent of the sample female are illiterate. 19.67 percent have studied up to primary level, 32.67 percent have completed high school level and

21.67 percent have completed higher secondary. 10.67 percent of the sample female beedi workers has studied up to degree / diploma.

Marital Status of the Female beedi workers

Sl. No.	Marital Status	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	Married	207	69.00
2.	Unmarried	81	27.00
3.	Widow	12	4.00
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data.

It has been inferred that majority of 69.00 percent of the sample female beedi workers are married. 27.00 percent female are unmarried, 4.00 percent are widowed.

Size of the family

Sl. No.	Family Size	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	Below 3	62	20.67
2.	3 – 5	191	63.67
3.	5 and above	47	15.66
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary data.

A maximum of 191 (63.67 percent) of female beedi workers have a family size of 3 to 5 members, followed by 62 (20.67 percent) having a family size of below 3. 47 (15.66 percent) have a family size of 5

and above. It is observed from Table 4.6 that majority of them have a family size of 3 to 5 members. The average size of the family worked out to be 3.9.

Reason for selecting job in beedi industries

Sl. No.	Reasons for Selecting Job	Beedi workers	
		Average Score	Rank
1.	Low educational qualification	63.51	II
2.	Poor economic condition	67.37	I
3.	Unemployment	56.48	III
4.	Personal interest	28.13	IX

5.	Better education to children	50.18	IV
6.	Better status in society	42.08	VI
7.	Easily available	49.64	V
8.	Traditionally	32.72	VIII
9.	Family background	34.52	VII

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table shows the details about the reasons for selecting job of the respondents in beedi industries are by using Garrett's score. The first rank for the reason for choosing the job was assigned to poor economic condition followed by a low educational qualification. Third and fourth ranks were given to unemployment

and better education to children respectively. Readily available and better status in society was ranked fifth and sixth respectively. The seventh rank was given to the reason of family background followed by traditionally and personal interest respectively.

Nature of Work

Sl. No.	Nature of work	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1	Skilled	224	74.67
2	Unskilled	76	25.33
Total		300	100

Source: Primary data.

As per Table, 74.67 per cent of workers are skilled workers and the remaining 25.33 per cent of workers are to unskilled workers.

The number of Beedi bundles rolled by the respondents

S.No.	No. of Beedi Rolls Rolled in a Day	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	10 Rolls	34	11.33
2.	10 – 20 Rolls	65	21.67
3.	20 – 30 Rolls	114	38.00
4.	30 – 40 Rolls	87	29.00
Total		300	100

Source: Primary data.

In a big bundle there were 20 small bundles, each small bundle having 20 rolls and each rolls contents 25 beedies. It displays that 11.33 percent of the sample respondents have rolled 10 rolls every day,

21.67 percent of them have rolled 10-20 rolls. 38.00 percent of them have rolled 20-30 rolls daily. The remaining 29 percent of them have rolled 30-40 rolls.

Working Place for Beedi Rolling

Sl. No.	Work Place	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1	Factory	24	8.00
2	Home	276	92.00
Total		300	100

Source: Primary data.

The table shows that 8.00 percent (24) female workers feel that the work should be made available in the factory

itself, while 92.00 percent (276) female workers are of the opinion that the work should be provided at their home.

Personal Income

Sl. No.	Monthly Personal Income	No. of Female beedi workers	Percentage
1.	Less than Rs.3,000	48	16.00
2.	Rs.3,001 – Rs.5,000	112	37.33
3.	Rs.5,001 – Rs.7,000	84	28.00
4.	Rs.7,001 and above	56	18.67
Total		300	100.00

Source: Primary data.

Table shows that out of 300 female beedi workers a majority of 112 (37.33 percent) earn a monthly income of Rs.3, 001 to Rs.5, 000 followed by 84 (28.00 percent) earning Rs.5,001 to Rs.7,000. 56(18.67

percent) of the female beedi workers earn Rs.7,001 and above, 48 (16.00 percent) earn less than Rs.3,000. The mean monthly personal income worked out to be Rs.4,987.17.

Impact of beedi industries on monthly personal income

Sl. No.	Monthly Personal Income (Rs.)	Number of Respondents	
		Before joining beedi industries	After joining beedi industries
1.	Less than Rs.3,000	98 (32.67)	48 (16.00)

2.	Rs.3,001 – Rs.5,000	140 (46.67)	112 (37.33)
3.	Rs.5,001 – Rs.7,000	34 (11.33)	84 (28.00)
4.	Rs.7,001 and above	28 (9.33)	56 (18.67)
	Total	300 (100.00)	300 (100.00)

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Note: Figures in brackets represent the percentage of the total.

Table reveals the monthly income of the respondents before and after joining beedi industries. Before joining beedi industries, 32.67 percent of the respondents had a monthly personal income of less than Rs.3000, whereas after joining beedi industries 16.00 percent of the respondents had a monthly personal income of less than Rs.3000. 46.67 percent of the respondents had a monthly income between Rs.3001-5,000 before joining beedi industries, which decreased by 37.33 percent after joining beedi industries. 11.33 percent and 9.33 percent of the respondents had monthly personal income between Rs.5,001-7,000, and above Rs.7,001 respectively before joining beedi industries. However, after joining beedi

industries, it increased to 28.00 and 18.67 percent respectively. From the Table, it is evident that after joining beedi industries the respondent's monthly personal income has shown a substantial increase in beedi industries.

To study the impact of the development of income of the sample respondents in beedi industries paired sample 't' test used.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the income of the sample respondents before and after joining beedi industries.

Results of Paired Samples 't' test for income before and after joining beedi industries

Pair 1 Befo re- After	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95 percent Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower			

-	1009.647	58.292	-	-	-		
2779.366	74	04	2894.0813	2664.6520	47.68	299	.000
67			0	3	0		

The test result shows that 't' statistics -47.680 is significant at 1 percent level of significance with 299 degrees of freedom. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference among the income of the sample respondents before and after joining beedi industries is to be rejected. Hence there is a significant increase in the

income of the respondents after joining beedi industries.

Gini Ratio

Gini coefficient of concentration ratio was used to measure the extent of inequalities in the distribution of income of female beedi workers before and after joining beedi industries in the case of those engaged in different activities in the study area.

Gini coefficient ratio	Before joining beedi industries	After joining beedi industries
G	0.21719	0.11782

The Gini ratio was estimated to analyse the distribution of household income of the female beedi workers before and after joining beedi industries in the study area. The estimated values of Gini ratio before and after joining beedi industries indicate that there is no perfect

equality among the women workers income. However, the decrease in the value of Gini ratio from 0.21719 to 0.11782 shows that the income inequality between the female beedi workers has decreased after joining beedi industries.

Health Problems faced by the sample beedi workers

Sl. No.	Problems	Average Score	Rank
1.	Eye problems and irritation	61.97	II
2.	Pain in the limbs and shoulder	51.62	IV
3.	Headache	36.77	VI
4.	Fever, cough and cold	58.28	III
5.	Gastric problem	32.72	VII
6.	Skin related problems	47.21	V
7.	Respiratory problem	64.58	I

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

In the case of health problems of female beedi workers by using Garrett's score the first rank assigned to respiratory problem due to smell of tobacco followed by eye problems and irritation. The third and fourth prioritized problems were fever, cough, cold and long hours of sitting create pain in the limbs and shoulder. The fifth rank was given to the problem of skin related problems followed by frequent headache and gastric problem respectively.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis and findings it can be identified that beedi rolling has developed as a main rural industry and provided large scale employment opportunities and income for women in the rural areas. This study has also analysed the assessment of significance of beedi industries in the economic development genuinely, the role of women in the beedi industry, health impacts of beedi smoking, problems faced by the women, the socio-economic conditions of the sample female beedi industries workers etc., are the essential parts of the study. Thus, it may be concluded from the analysis of the findings of the present study that the life of the female people tends to be better economically after joining beedi industries. For those families involved in

beedi industries, there have been improvements in their economic status and quality of life. Female beedi workers were in an optimistic frame of mind to take independent decisions which in turn confirmed their empowerment in decision making in their family.

Thus, beedi industries no doubt empowered the women and contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of rural women. The study also proves that if development programmes are properly designed and sensitively implemented, they can become a key in unlocking the creative and productive potential of rural poor women.

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