
**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARDS OF TEA PLANTATION WORKERS OF ANAMALLAIS
(VALPARAI), COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**

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ABSTRACT

An occupational health hazard refers to the potential risks to health and safety of workers in their workplaces. Tea plantation workers are facing a number of hazards in their workplaces due to physical, biological, mechanical, chemical and psychosocial factors. The present paper tries to examine the occupational health hazards faced by the tea plantation workers of Anamallais (Valparai), Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu. Factors such as educational level of the workers, Income, availability of medical facilities in the tea plantation, hygiene and sanitation, general awareness and perception about different occupational health hazards have been taken into account while arriving at the finding of the study. The study concludes that the tea garden workers are educationally lagging behind, health facility is not adequate and safety measures are lacking. This made the workers suffer from a number of health problems. The study has concluded mainly with the help of primary data collected with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected from 100 workers, 60 female and 40 male workers surveyed by random sampling method. Secondary information has been collected from books, journals and magazines.

KEYWORDS: Occupational health hazards, tea plantation workers, potential risk.

INTRODUCTION

Occupational health aims at prevention of disease and preservation of the well being of physical, mental and social health of workers in all occupations. As per International Labour Organisation / World Health Organisation (ILO/WHO), Occupational Health is the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations by preventing departures from health, controlling risks and the adaptation of work to people and people to their jobs. Occupation and health are closely related. The occupational environment cannot be separated from the domestic environment. An occupational health hazard refers to the potential risks to health and safety of workers in their workplaces. Tea plantation workers are facing a number of hazards in their workplaces due to physical, biological, mechanical, chemical and psychosocial factors. The present paper tries to examine the occupational health hazards faced by the tea plantation workers of Anamallais (Valparai), Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu. Factors such as educational level of the workers, Income, availability of medical facilities in the tea plantation, hygiene and sanitation, general awareness and perception about different occupational health hazards have been taken into account while arriving at the findings of the study. The study concludes that the tea garden workers are educationally lagging behind, health facility is not adequate and safety measures are lacking. The workers suffer from a number of health problems. The study has concluded mainly with the help of primary data collected with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected from 100 workers, 60 female and 40 male workers surveyed by random sampling method. Secondary information has been collected from books, journals and magazines.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- 1.To find out the various occupational health hazards faced by the workers upon their occupational and social lives.
- 2.To find out the vulnerability of tea plantation workers to various health problems.
- 3.To find out the effects of the health problems of the workers upon their occupational and social lives, and
- 4.To suggest measures for mitigating the occupational health hazards of the tea plantation workers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study has been mainly concerned with the help of the questionnaire prepared for the purpose to analyse the occupational health hazard of tea plantation workers. Questions relevant to the study have been included in the questionnaire like income, housing facility, health and safety measures available to the tea plantation workers. The questionnaire was collected from 100 workers in that 60 were female workers and 40 were male workers. The random sampling techniques were used to collect data. The primary as well as secondary information were used in the study. The primary information was collected by questionnaire and the secondary information was collected from source such as books, journals and magazine. The data collected through the questionnaire have been analyzed and appropriate statistical methods and techniques.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1.1

AGEWISE DISTRIBUTION

S.No	Age	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	20 to 30	18	18
2	30 to 40	42	42
3	40 to 50	26	26
4	Above 50	14	14
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 18% of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 to 30, 42% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 40, 26% of the respondents belong to the age group of 40 to 50, 14% of the respondents belong to the age group of above 50 years. Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 40 years.

TABLE 1.2

SEX WISE DISTRIBUTION

S. No	Gender	No. Respondents of	Percentage
1	Male	40	40
2	Female	60	60
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 40% of the respondents are male, 60% of the respondents are female. Most of the respondents are female.

TABLE NO.1.3

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Sl. No	Education Qualification	No. Respondents of	Percentage
1	Higher Secondary	21	21
2	Secondary	32	32
3	Primary	17	17
4	Illiterate	30	30
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 21% of the respondents completed HSC, 32% of the respondents completed secondary, 17% of the respondents completed primary education, 30% of the respondents are illiterate. Most of the respondents are secondary level of education holders.

TABLE NO 1.4

NATURE OF WORK

Sl.No	Nature of work	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Leaf Plucker	67	67
2	Pesticide Sprayer	22	22
3	Bungalow worker	09	09
4	Others	02	02
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 67% of the respondent work as leaf plucker, 22% of the respondent are pesticide sprayer, 09% of the respondent are bungalow workers and 2% of the respondent are other worker. Most of the respondents are leaf pluckers.

TABLE NO 1.5

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Sl.No	Employment	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Permanent Employee	73	73
2	Temporary Employee	27	27
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 73% of the respondents are belong to the permanent employee, 27% of the respondent belong to the temporary employee. Most of the respondents are permanent employee.

TABLE NO 1.6

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sl.No	Work Experience	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 5 years	24	24
2	5 to 10 years	37	37
3	Above 10 years	39	39
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 24% of the respondents are belong to less than 5 years of experience, 37% of the respondent belong to 5 to 10 years of experience and 39% of the respondent are belong to above 10 years of experience. Most of the respondents are above 10 years of experience.

TABLE NO 1.7**INCOME STATUS**

Sl.No	Income	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below Rs.3000	27	27
2	Rs.3001-Rs.5000	45	45
3	Above Rs.5000	28	28
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 27% of the respondents are belong to below Rs.3000 earners, 45% of the respondent belong to Rs.3001 to Rs.5000 earners and 28% of the respondent are belong to above Rs.5000 earners. Most of the respondents are Rs.3001 to Rs.5000 earners.

TABLE NO 1.8**HOUSING FACILITY**

Sl.No	Housing Facility	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	93	93
2	No	07	07
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, 93% of the respondents are enjoying housing facility and 7% of the respondent are not enjoying the housing facility. Most of the respondents are enjoying the housing facility.

HEALTH AND SANITATION FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN THE TEA PLANTATION:

Tea plantation workers are like other Industrial workers, they also face accidents and sickness. Inorder to provide them the emergency service and medical facility to the affected person.

Health Facilities

In Valparai there are nearly 56 estates, each group of estates will have a hospital and also dispensaries. If the workers are sick they can go and have treatment in the estate hospital, in case if they are severely sick, they will be referred to hospital at Valparai, Pollachi and Coimbatore for further treatment. They are very poor economically and they cannot go for private hospital

treatment. So, they can only go to the government hospital at Pollachi or Coimbatore. They are not adequately provided with the medical facility.

Sanitation Facilities

Tea plantation worker is provided with a house. Drainage system in the labour lines is poor and sullage water pass out of the houses through narrow drains cut in the ground in all tea estates. Overflow of water in to nearby areas creates mosquitoes and germs.

Hygiene

Hygiene influences the health of a population. They usually take both in hot water in order to avoid body pain and also other diseases. They also use hot water to drink to ward off water borne diseases.

TABLE NO 1.9

Factor	Health facility		Sanitation facility		Hygienic facility	
	No.of Respondent	Percentage	No.of Respondent	Percentage	No.of Respondent	Percentage
Highly satisfied	10	10	15	15	11	11
Satisfied	12	12	26	26	12	12
Neutral	29	29	22	22	20	20
Dissatisfied	36	36	27	27	37	37
Highly Dissatisfied	13	13	10	10	20	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 36% of the respondent are dissatisfied by the health facility. 27% of the respondent are dissatisfied by the sanitation facility and 37% of the respondent are dissatisfied by the hygienic facility provided to them.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARDS FACED BY THE WORKERS OF TEA PLANTATION

Tea plantation workers are vulnerable to numerous occupational health problems. Some of the occupational health hazards faced by the workers are given below

Physical Hazard

The climatic condition is one of the inconvenience in the working environment, this is such as heavy rain, cold, mist, etc. This makes the workers to undergo sickness such as fever, asthma, cough and cold. Animal problem is also a major problem which the workers face everyday. Many workers died due to elephant and panther attack while working.

Mechanical Hazard

The mechanical hazard faced by the workers is happening while they are handling machines this would cause the cuts, injuries and sprains.

Biological Hazard

Tea plantation workers are exposed to a number of biological hazards like insect bite, fungal infection, spider infection, etc. One of the main diseases in the tea plants is red spider mite that would cause itching and it is also spreadable to other parts of the body.

Chemical Hazard

Chemical hazard are not the major problem among the workers, because they are not mostly affected by chemicals. Few of the workers undergoing pesticide spraying, if it is touched on the eyes it may create some problem with that sensory organ.

Psychosocial Hazard

Psychosocial health of the tea plantation is also influenced by their overall occupational health condition. This hazard related to stress and frustration due to health outcomes and the rewards on their performance. If there is no satisfaction their involvement in their work will reduce.

TABLE NO 1.10

Factor	Health hazard		Mechanical hazard		Biological hazard		Chemical hazard		Psychosocial hazard	
	No.of Respondent	%	No.of Respondent	%	No.of Respondent	%	No.of Respondent	%	No.of Respondent	%
Yes	68	68	12	12	76	76	08	08	81	81
No	32	32	88	88	24	24	92	92	19	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

From the above table, majority of the employees has hazards, i.e 68% of the respondent has health hazards, 79% has biological hazards and 81% has psychological hazards. 88% has no mechanical hazards and 92% has no chemical hazards.

Causes of Vulnerability of the tea workers to various occupational health hazards

- The workers cannot afford a nutritious diet because of low wages and fall prey to diseases easily.
- Temporary workers get fewer social benefits like medical care, housing etc.
- A pesticide is often sprayed without proper protection. Protective gear is also not provided to the workers while operating machines.

- Intoxication among the tea garden workers is a common phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that the tea plantation workers have a long way to go in terms of mitigation the occupational health hazards. Prevention and control of occupational health hazards among the workers can be done by regular environmental monitoring, including exposure to chemical, biological, mechanical and physical agents in their work environments. Providing economic benefits will help in boosting the morale of the workers, thereby improving their mental and physical health. The study concludes that the tea garden workers are educationally lagging behind, health facility is not adequate and safety measures are lacking.

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