Workplace gender discrimination among curing workers of India

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Abstract: This research paper explored the issue of gender discrimination in workforce in the coffee curing and manufacturing sector of India based on unit level data that was collected from Employment-Unemployment Survey (2011–2012) conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The findings paradoxically reflected masculine nature of coffee industry despite relatively higher percentage of female workers in coffee curing industry (34%) compared to national average of 25.51% (Census of India, 2011). Following National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector definition of formal sector consisting of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households with less than ten workers, only 50% of male workers belonged to formal sector while no female worker belonged to formal sector while only 31% of male workers and no female worker were entitled to social security benefits. The appalling condition of female workers was evident from female to male wage ratio, it was 0.43. Introduction of automation and absence of trade union had resulted in minimal presence of female workers that in turn had increased helplessness of female workers in the coffee curing sector.

Keywords: coffee curing; female worker; informal sector; social security; India.


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1 Introduction

The Indian coffee industry was the fifth largest in the world followed after Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia and Colombia. Coffee production in India was dominated in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu forming the traditional coffee growing regions of South India, followed by the new areas developed in the non-traditional areas like Andhra Pradesh and Orissa as well. Coffee production in India had grown rapidly from 19,000 metric tonnes in 1950–1951 to 300,000 metric tonnes in 2015–2016 and the increase was by 16% during the last six decades. Consequently employment in coffee industry had increased by 24% between 2001–2002 and 2015–2016 (Coffee Board, 2016). Given the important roles played by female workers in the coffee industry (since share of female workers in coffee sector was 55%), the gender dimension became crucial in understanding coffee industry (Viswanathan and Shah, 2012).

Coffee industry comprised of coffee plantation and coffee curing sector. As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO, 2011–2012) the rate of female employment in coffee curing sector of India stood in stark contrast to all India labour market trends; overall female workforce participation was 24% by usual status whereas it was 34% in coffee curing sector of India. The present study looked at gender statistics in the coffee curing sector and the way in which these determined gender discrimination in the labour market. Four areas will be investigated:

- employment size, and activity status
- conditions of employment and wage difference between male and female workers
- receipt of social security benefits
- size of unorganised sector workers in coffee curing industry.

2 Necessity of gender focus

Studies on female employment had demonstrated the existence of wage discrimination against women (Bourqia, 2002; Joekes, 1985). Labour market discrimination against women was legitimised by stereotypes and social discourse surrounding female work. Within the urban labour market, gender discrimination tended to take the form of occupational segregation, with women concentrated in poorly-paid, unskilled jobs, and of disparity in earnings, with women earning less than men (Anker, 1997; Birdsall and Sabot, 1991). Employers reflected social attitudes about women’s work, for example, when they argued that women were only working to buy lipstick (Joekes, 1985). In other words, a woman’s work was not considered to be an important source of revenue for the family. One of the goal of United Nations Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000), adopted by all Member States of the United Nations in 2000 was gender equality. Goal 3 explicitly called for gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the associated indicators relating to education, employment and decision-making. Gender inequality mattered for two reasons (WDR, 2012; Sen, 1999): from the view of development, gender equality meant fewer gaps in well-being between male workers and female workers. Secondly, gender equality mattered instrumentally, because greater gender equality contributed to economic efficiency and the achievement of other key development outcomes. Equal access to education and labour market was likely to shape
At the international level, a series of United Nations intergovernmental resolutions provided a mandate for the development of policies on the advancement of women and gender equality, as well as for the statistics required for the development of these policies. These include the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Gender equality was also a fundamental component of the Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000), adopted by all Member States of the United Nations in 2000. The eighth Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a framework for measuring progress towards fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration. Goal 3 explicitly called for gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the associated indicators relating to education, employment and decision-making. The availability and accessibility of gender sensitive data were instrumental to the development and implementation of policies that can facilitate the achievement of national and international objectives. The importance of using statistical evidence to develop appropriate policies was recognised in one of the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The objective H.3 was: “generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation” (United Nations, 1996).

Gender analysis is a tool to better understand the realities of the women and men, whose lives were impacted by planned development. It identified the types of gender differences and inequalities that might otherwise be taken for granted; for example, how men and women had different access to and control over resources, carry out different social roles, face different constraints, and receive different benefits (Pasteur, 2002).

Three markers of the segregated workspace were particularly striking. First, women were more likely to engage in low productive activities than men and to work in the informal sector. Women were more likely to be wage workers and unpaid family workers than men (UNDP, 1995). Second, among the self-employed, women outside agriculture tended to operate in micro or small businesses, often out of their homes. Third, even within the formal and informal sectors, women and men chose very different jobs. Women were more likely to be in community and public services, retail services, and trade. Men were overrepresented in dangerous professions – such as mining, construction, transport, and heavy manufacturing – with high occupational injury rates in poor and rich countries alike.

Gender inequality permeated into the work pattern in different industries and occupations in both developed and developing nations. Labour force participation rate of women in India remained almost same over the years from 25.6% in 1991 to 27% in 2012 (Census, 2001, 2011), though they have increased from 22.3% in 1991. Women were clustered into selected parts of the ‘economic space’, with little change over time, even in high-income countries. Many women were self-employed in low productivity jobs as unpaid helpers (35%) as more formal jobs were scarce and only 6% of women who work; mostly in the public sector get social benefits whereas 18% of male workers were in unpaid job holding 9% of formal jobs. Despite equal pay laws, wage differentials remained large (Klaveren et al., 2010; Rani and Belser, 2012). In 2012, 60% of women with salaried or casual jobs were paid below the minimum wage compared to 25% of men (Rani and Belser, 2012). Women tended to work in less productive jobs than men; more than a third were unpaid helper (as opposed to 11% of working men) (World Bank,
2012). Women were overrepresented in low-productivity agriculture, traditional small scale manufacturing and in services such as education and household employment. Only 6% of employed women had social benefits such as pensions or maternity leave. This was not necessarily gender-specific, as most jobs in India were in the informal sector without social benefits (Govt. of India, 2013; Mehrotra et al., 2014).

Labour force participation was also influenced by large wage differential^ that women face in India, especially among unskilled workers; among the barely literate, men earned nearly twice as much as women. The differences in wages partly reflected overall education levels and the types of sector where women worked (World Bank, 2012), but discrimination by gender was also likely to contribute. The legal framework for equal pay was not always enforced (Equal Remuneration Act of 1976), partly reflecting the large share of the informal sector (about 95% of employment). The gender wage gap often led women to stay at home. Khera and Nayak (2009) in a survey in rural areas found that many women did not engage in paid work because of low wages.

Promoting gender equality in employment was widely recognised as an essential component of economic and social development and a key mechanism to combat poverty. It was also an important factor contributing to the economic empowerment of women in their families and communities and in society at large. Women’s participation in employment increased their contribution to household resources and their control over the allocation of those resources. This led to greater economic independence and self-determination, which were both important for women’s empowerment.

Gender inequalities persisted in a wide range of aspects relating to work. Socio-cultural attitudes, lack of co-responsibility in households and of options to control the timing and spacing of births, as well as employment policies perpetuated inequality in the labour market. Promoting gender equality in employment implied that women and men should have equal access to the labour market, including equal opportunities to access jobs in the broadest range of industries and occupations; to attain any of the various professional levels; to receive adequate and comparable remuneration for the work performed; and to have equal access to decent working conditions (including occupational health and safety), social protection, basic rights, contractual tenure and voice at work. In addition, male workers and female workers also had different needs and constraints. For example, maternity protection was relevant only for women, while parental leave affected both male and female workers and their households (ILO, 2009).

3 Study of gender relations in coffee industry

Review of researches – both national and international suggested that while there had been several studies on varied aspects of labour market of the North East tea industry (Hannan, 2007; Hayami and Damodaran, 2004; UPASI, 2003), none of the studies examined different forms of production, interrelationships between different forms and women’s roles in different forms. Condition of women workers, role of women workers in trade union, patriarchal attitudes by management towards women workers in plantation industry were studied (Bhowmick, 1982, 1994; Govt. of India, 2009; Jain, 1998; Koshy and Tiwary, 2011; Rajasenan, 2010; Rege, 1946]. The study by Kurien (2000) dealt on working conditions, consumption pattern and the gap between Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and its implementation among four plantation sectors of Kerala, e.g., tea, coffee, rubber, and spices. Studies made by Adagala (1991) in Kenya and by Kurian and
Jayawardena (2013) in Sri Lanka examined plantation patriarchy in Kenya and Sri Lanka respectively justifying and normalising subordinate status of women workers in both tea and coffee plantation. But these articles did not examine dynamics of gender relations in different forms of production and in different strata of land holding. Daniel et al. (1992) in his book on “Plantations, Proletarians and Peasants in Colonial Asia” focused on the origins and recruitment of plantation labour, the labour process into which the plantation workforce was deployed, and the labour regimes governing this. What were missing were forms of production and dynamics of gender relations.

In view of the status of research on labour market issues in plantations other than tea, namely rubber, coffee and spices in India, it was disconcerting to note that the existing studies had hardly recognised the need to account for these diverse issues in other plantation crops namely rubber, coffee and cardamom (Sumitha, 2012). Overfield and Fleming (2001) lamented that judging from a review of the research planning documents of plantation industry gender relations in coffee industry had seldom been considered in setting research priorities and formulating their research programs.

Though there had been various studies and individual or committee-based investigations to understand and report about the plantation crisis induced by the trade reforms, most of them approached the problem from the framework of conventional supply and demand analysis (market instruments), prices and trade (Joy, 2004). Hardly few empirical studies were available that try to understand the labour dynamics and the gender impacts of the crisis and the trade reforms in a holistic manner and offered valuable suggestions and policy guidelines from a sustainable plantation development perspective (Viswanathan and Shah, 2012).

In a nutshell, review of literature on plantation industry showed that to what extent gender played a role in differential access of men and women to various employments had not been studied. These studies underpinned an industrial model of competitiveness, based on low-wage female labour which was mainly descriptive; did little to reveal the dynamics of socio-cultural factors that affected the division of labour between men and women, both inside and outside the factory that directly or indirectly determined gender differentiated treatment in the workplace.

For example, there had been no study of the actual differential deployment of female labour time in the different production sectors of plantation industry. Further, there had been no study of the social relations of gender hierarchy in the different sectors of coffee industry.

It was of substantial analytical interest to the sociologist to observe and analyse women’s status in coffee curing sector and subsequent entitlements, thereby ascertaining gender differences in labour relations. There were many issues and topics on which gender statistics were relevant and needed. A number of gender equality issues related to the field of work and employment. These were:

a size of employment
b conditions of employment
c gender pay gap
d unorganised employment (UN, 2010).
3.1 Size of employment

Employment size was defined as the total number of persons employed who worked in the coffee curing sector during the reference year. The breakdown of employment by gender described how total employment was distributed among male and female workers. Remunerative employment was considered to be one of the major status-deciding factors. The common belief was that man’s high status within the family was due to his position as bread-winner. It was argued that, if a woman’s economic dependence could be reduced by her ability to earn an income outside the household, she would enjoy a higher status, which would be the case if there was not much difference in the nature of the work done by male workers and female workers (Lal, 1979).

In this study, employment was represented by adult paid workers in coffee curing sector. Women’s participation in paid employment had been found to be highly related to their status (Safilios-Rothschild, 1986, 1990), because it showed the tendency among women to earn a living or to augment the family’s income by working for others.

3.2 Conditions of employment

Basic conditions of employment included activity status, size of the enterprise, written contracts at the time of employment, regular monthly salary, weekly leave maternity leave and regular remuneration. In this study activity status, size of the enterprise, written contract and method of payment were taken as indicators of job security as per NSSO criterion. Activity status was determined by nature of employment since regular salaried work was perceived as more secure job than casual or self-employed workers. Size of the enterprise, written contract and method of payment also ensured job security since enterprises with more than ten workers with power and less than 20 workers without power were covered by Factories Act (1948) that had been enacted to regulate the working conditions in the factory and to ensure provisions of minimum basic requirements for safety, health, welfare of the workers as well as to regulate the working hours, leave, holidays, etc.

3.3 The gender wage gap

Women everywhere typically received less pay than men. This was in part because women often held low-level, low-paying positions in female-dominated occupations. A review of data available for six diverse occupation groups showed that in most economies, women still earned 90% or less of what their male co-workers did. In a typically male dominated occupation such as welding in metal manufacturing, the wage disparities were even greater. Female welders in the industrialised economies earned, on average, 79% of what male welders earned, and in developing economies even less at 75%. Even in ‘typically female’ occupations such as nursing and teaching, gender wage equality was still lacking. In Singapore, for example, male first-level education teachers earned approximately 6% more than female teachers, and male nurses 21% more than female nurses (Elder and Schimdt, 2004). It was calculated as the difference between average earnings of men and women as a percentage of average earnings of men. The gender wage gap combined two key aspects in one measurement: gender segregation and discrimination. The first was related to differences in individual characteristics (such as level of education and work experience), and might be determined by personal choices or
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gender roles. The second was related to factors such as the ‘glass ceiling’ effect which prevented women from reaching the highest-level jobs, or direct discrimination in which a woman with the same job performance as her male colleagues was paid less. Calculating the wage gap for specific groups of workers based on characteristics such as age, sector, industry, occupation, level of educational attainment, and years of seniority in employment, could lead to a clearer understanding of the reasons for gender pay gaps, and distinguish between the various factors underlying differences in pay. It will also help to identify specific groups of occupations or sectors where the gender gaps might be wider.

Daily wage data was calculated as total earnings from wage employment in the preceding week divided by the number of days associated with wage employment by using current weekly status.

3.4 Unorganised employment

Unorganised or informal sector employment was a primary source of livelihood for many people, particularly women. Indeed, informal employment was generally a larger source of employment for women than formal employment (ILO, 2002). Average earnings from these types of informal employment were low and not sufficient in the absence of other sources of income to raise households out of poverty (Chen et al., 2006). Informal employment and the related concept of employment in the informal sector were relatively new topics in labour force statistics that aimed to capture different aspects of the informalisation of employment (Hussmans, 2003). Since, there was no universally accepted definition of the unorganised sector, it was crucial to look into the definitions used by the different agencies.

According to the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians framework, informal employment was identified by jobs classified by the status of employment of the workers and the types of production units in which they were employed. The informal employment comprised jobs held by:

1. own-account workers and employers who had their own informal sector enterprises
2. contributing family workers, irrespective of whether they worked in formal or informal sector enterprises
3. employees who had informal jobs whether employed by formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or as paid domestic workers by households
4. members of informal producers’ cooperatives
5. persons engaged in the own-account production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household, such as subsistence farming or do-it-yourself construction of own dwellings.

The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS, 2007) defined ‘organised’ and ‘unorganised’ on the basis of various factors including enterprise type, number of workers and social benefits. All enterprises under the domain of the Government/public sector, public/private ltd. company; cooperatives, trusts, etc. were organised. The enterprise type was unorganised if it was proprietary (male and female); entailed a partnership with members from the same household or members from different households; and employer’s households (that was, private households employing
maid-servants, watchmen, cooks, etc.) coupled with the number of workers, which should be ten or more. If the enterprise type was not known (missing or other than mentioned above) and employed ten or more workers, it was considered as organised. When both the organised type and number of workers were not known, then if the enterprise provided social security benefits to its workers, it was organised. The residual sectors were considered as unorganised.

For our purpose, we had described unorganised sector workers as those workers who were not entitled in any type of social security benefits irrespective of the workers location in organised or unorganised sector. First, by enterprise type, organised and unorganised sector employment was differentiated. Then, receipt of any kind of social security benefit by sector was delineated. Those, who received any form of benefit was demarcated as formal sector worker; rest were unorganised sector worker.

4 Methodology

This study was based on official statistics collected by National Sample Survey Office Employment-unemployment Survey (2011–2012). Unit level data was collected using National Industrial Classification (NIC) five digit industry codes on coffee curing and manufacturing sector (code no. 10792)\(^9\). Gender disaggregated data on size of employment, enterprise type, daily wage, social security benefits and size of informal sector was tabulated using usual principal status\(^10\) employment. Daily wage data was calculated as total earnings from wage employment in the preceding week divided by the number of days associated with wage employment by using current weekly status\(^11\).

5 Findings

5.1 Inequalities in employment size and working conditions

In the coffee curing sector male workers constituted 66% of workforce against 34% of female workers (Table 1). Number of male workers was higher than female workers in urban area (48%) whereas a miniscule of female workers (nearly 1%) was present in urban area.

Regarding status of workers, it was observed that 51% of male workers were regular salaried workers while only 1% of female workers were so (Table 2). It was quite surprising to see that 34% of female workers were employer while no male worker was employer. Another astonishing finding was that there was no casual worker.

Similar to regular salaried worker, 51% of male workers and 1% of female workers were working in those enterprises where number of workers was more than 20 that was one of the criteria of organised sector (Table 2). Expectedly, all the female workers (34%) were in those enterprises where number of workers was less than 6.

In terms of written job contract, no female workers had written job contract while 8% of male workers did possess written job contract for more than 3 years (Table 2). By method of payment, 48% of male workers received regular monthly salary as against 1% of female workers. Consistent with status of women workers, 34% of female workers received regular weekly payment while only 18% of male workers received so (Table 2).
5.2 Gender wage gap

Since there was no casual worker, wage gap for casual workers was not available (Table 3). For rural male workers daily wage was Rs 65.86; for urban male and female workers it was Rs. 380.28 and Rs. 142.46 respectively whereas combining rural and urban, daily male wage was Rs. 333.16 and for female it was Rs.142.86. Both male and female regular salaried workers were getting lesser wage that national average. For regular salaried workers, the wage gap was 0.43 which was quite high; higher than the national average wage of 0.58. By enterprise type, it was found that wage ratio could not be calculated because no female worker was found in public/private Ltd. and no male worker was found in proprietary male enterprise (Table 4).

6 Organised and unorganised sector of coffee industry

Unorganised sector workers were those workers who were not entitled in any type of social security benefits irrespective of the workers location in organised or unorganised sector. First, by enterprise type, organised and unorganised sector employment was differentiated. Then, receipt of any kind of social security benefit by sector was delineated. Those, who received any form of benefit was demarcated as formal sector worker; rest were unorganised sector workers. Organised sector covered:

a government/public sector
b public/private limited company
c cooperative societies/trust/other non-profit institutions.

Rest belonged to unorganised sector.

In view of the aforementioned definition, including Govt/public sector, public/private Ltd/cooperative as organised sector in the coffee curing sector, nearly 50% of the workers were in unorganised sector (Table 5). Of the total workers, by enterprise definition, 51% of male workers and no female workers were in the organised sector. In terms of social security benefits, non-receipt of any benefit was same for both male and female workers (each 35%) (Table 6). In contrast, only 30% of male workers were entitled to social security benefits.

By enterprise type 51% of male workers and by social security benefits 30% of male workers belonged to organised sector. Then the question was raised, what was the actual number of informal sector workers? For this question, social security benefits by organised/unorganised sector employment were considered (Table 7).

Now, if by receipt of social security benefits, organised versus unorganised sector employment was categorised, then it was seen that 3560 (30%) male workers belonged to organised employment that were in receipt of any social security benefits and no female worker was in organised sector employment (Table 7). Therefore, it can be said that written job contract, number of workers, and method of payment by enterprise type did not provide realistic picture of unorganised sector of employment (Table 7).
7 Discussion

The findings paradoxically reflected masculine nature of coffee industry despite relatively higher percentage of female workers in coffee curing industry (34%) compared to national average of 25.51% (Census of India, 2011). Women workers were more susceptible to discriminatory practices in respect of working conditions. Only 1% of female workers were regular salaried worker who were receiving regular monthly salary. ‘Female by male’ wage gap was 0.43, which was lower than the national average of 0.74 (NSSO, 2011–2012). On the other hand, following NCEUS definition of unorganised employment that entailed non-receipt of any type of social security benefit, it was found that 30% of the male workers were in organised employment while no female worker was in organised employment.

The question emerged on the face of the findings was how coffee sector being termed as female dominated sector discriminated against its own female workers. The answer is twofold: firstly though in coffee curing industries ratio of female workforce is higher than national average of female workforce, within the sector male workers represent 66% of workforce. Therefore, numerically male workforce was stronger than female workers. Secondly and most importantly coffee curing work was seasonal starting from December to July in a calendar year\(^{15}\). Female workers were termed as ‘girblers’ whose job was sorting and grading of coffee beans as per colours of the beans. These girblers were recruited only for six months a year on contract basis that assured only minimum wages without any social security benefits. Moreover, these contractors were paid a commission by these female workers from their daily wages. The amount of commission also varied between individual persons on the basis of personal relationship with the contractor. Under the circumstances, female workers earnings fell.

Vulnerability of female workers increased after introduction of automation. Automatic colour sorter of coffee beans had reduced number of female workers accompanied by job loss. Earlier, first stage sorting of coffee beans was done by female workers according to colour of coffee beans that had been replaced by automatic colour sorter. After introduction of automation, only the last stage sorting of coffee beans were done by female girblers. Maintenance and operation of these machines were done by permanent male workers. The justification of not allowing female workers to operate machines was because of ‘tender physical structure’ of female workers. Patriarchal structure of household division of labour permeated into the workplace definition between male job and female job.

8 Conclusions

The findings confirmed that though the large numbers of male workers were in unorganised sector employment, who were deprived of minimum wage and social security benefits, female workers were largely a part of a low-wage, unskilled female labour force. Wage inequality still remained norm in the coffee curing sector. For the last 10 to 12 years, introduction of automation also had decreased workforce and thereby diminished trade union activity in mobilisation of coffee curing workers. Introduction of automation and absence of trade union had resulted in minimal presence of female
workers that in turn had increased helplessness of female workers in the coffee curing sector. This article raised the issue of gender mainstreaming in the coffee curing sector since gender disparities were observed in size of employment, status of employment and in entitlement to social security benefits.

9 Policy implications

As gender equality and empowerment of female was an important MDG, the policy implication was the need for government to institute gender-sensitive workplace regulatory policies and programmes to be adhered in the coffee-curing and manufacturing sector in the country. It should be the responsibility of all the relevant regulatory authorities to ensure that the designated policies as well as the attendant rules and regulations were enforced. Since gender equality and empowerment of female were an important MDG, the empowerment of female would be possible only when they were seen as legitimate members of the workforce. Multi-sectoral interventions from different agencies are necessary for closure of gender gaps in Indian coffee curing sector.

References


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Notes

1 The estimates of employed (or worker) in the age group 15–64 according to the usual status (principal status) gives the number of persons who worked for a relatively long part of the 365 days preceding the date of survey.

2 As per Coffee Board (2016), out of 78 licensed coffee curing works 57 coffee curing industries were located in Karnataka; another 21 curing works were located in Tamilnadu (14), Kerala (6) and Assam (1).

3 This article was a revised and expanded version of the paper entitled ‘Women Workers in Coffee Industry of India’ presented at ICOSS Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 11–13 August 2015.

4 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of United Nations in 2000. The goals range from addressing extreme poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, social exclusion to gender equality, education and environmental sustainability.

5 To understand gender analysis, it is important to understand the conceptual difference between two terms, ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. Sex refers to the biologically determined differences between men and women, and is universal. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the social differences between men and women, which are learned, changeable over time, and vary widely within and across cultures (ILO, 1998; Lahiri-Dutt, 2004).
For regular salaried workers, wages received by males and females in India was Rs. 417.08 and Rs. 307.72 respectively; thereby wage ratio is 0.74 (NSSO, EU Survey, 2011–2012).

The current weekly status of a person is the activity pursued during a reference period of seven days preceding the date of survey.

Unorganised or informal sector employment was used interchangeably.

As per NIC-2008, there were two codes on coffee industry; 10592 on coffee curing and manufacturing of coffee products and 01272 on coffee growers. Data on coffee growers were not analysed because there seems to be huge discrepancy in the number of growers between NSSO (4.5 lakhs) and Coffee board (6 lakhs). The difference in the number of coffee growers amounts to 1.6 lakhs. Therefore, only coffee curing sector was taken up for study.

A person was considered in the labour force on usual principal status (UPS) if he/she spent relatively longer time (major time criterion) on economic activity during 365 days preceding the date of survey.

The fieldwork of the 68th round of NSSO started from 1st July, 2011 and continued till 30th June, 2012. Exchange rate on 30th June 2012 was 1 US dollar = Rs. 55.62.

According to NSSO EU survey report (2011–2012), average wage for manufacturing sector that includes processing of food products was Rs. 395.82. For male workers average wage was 234.65 and for female workers it was 137.18. Thereby, F/M wage ratio was 0.58. 1 US dollar = INR 51 (approximately in 2011-12).

Government/Public sector, public/private limited company and co-operative societies/trust/other non-profit organisations belong to organised sector employment as per NSSO schedule 10, 68th EU survey, 2011-12.

The Employees’ Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 (Act No. 19 of 1952), No. 6, explanation II, ‘retaining allowance’ means allowance payable for the time being to an employee of any factory or other establishment during any period in which the establishment is not working, for retaining his services.