

WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN WORKERS TOWARDS CASHEW INDUSTRIES IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Cashew handling units in Tamil Nadu are found generally in Cuddalore district is known as the Tamil Nadu cashew exchanging capital. Cashew handling units are acclaimed for utilizing enormous number of laborers and the job they play in upgrading the social and monetary status of the women in the general public. Subsequently, this area made an enormous number of women laborers monetarily free, which assisted them with adding to the day-to-day costs of the family and furthermore to meet the family's monetary objectives. This likewise improved the societal position of the women laborers by making them answerable and fit for taking their own choices with respect to the family matters. As of late, because of numerous outer and interior figures the exercises the cashew enterprises show a declining pattern in Cuddalore due to migration of cashew units to different areas to different states. This study means to track down the effect of declining movement in cashew handling units on the social and monetary states of women laborers in Cuddalore District.

Introduction

Cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*), frequently alluded to as 'ponder nut', is one of the most significant processed nuts exchanged on the worldwide commodity advertises and is likewise a significant money crop. It has the potential to provide wellspring of business for the cashew cultivators, empower rustic ladies in the processing area, set out employment open doors and generate unfamiliar exchange through exports. Cashew tree is accepted to be a local of Brazil, from where it has dispersed to various parts of the world primarily for soil preservation, for reclamation and for man's land development. The term 'Cashew' has started from the Brazilian name 'acajaiba' and the Tupi name a 'caju', which the Portuguese changed over into 'kaju' and is commonly known as 'kaju' in India. It is known as 'Paragi Andi' in Kerala meaning unfamiliar nut, 'Lanka Beeja' in Orissa accepting at least for now that its presentation from Sri Lanka, and 'Mundiri' indicating the state of the nut in Tamil Nadu.

Problems faced by women workers in Cashew industry

The functioning long stretches of women in a cashew manufacturing plant are typically from 7 am to 7:30 pm. She enters to work presented by cashew plants because of the pool of elective business power and destitution. Numerous women enter this occupation even before they get hitched. A large portion of them is uninformed and incapable to proceed with their schooling.

Children of bereaved or bedridden parents or spouse showing up working in a cashew production line. Really some don't get back to work long after they are hitched. She remains at home focusing on her youngsters and spouse, wives of men who obliterate all the cash they procure because of unreasonable alcohol utilization and gives the fundamental requirements of their child participates in this method for resource. A few ladies bring the cashews back home and get some margin to beat them. This was the experience of ladies I met. They have a child and a little girl. She is deserted by her significant other. Presently he can live with his own folks. The lady and her older mother are cashew laborers. His dad is sick and a heavy drinker. The day I visited their home, her dad was lying toward the rear of the house smashed. They likewise deal with this debilitated dad. This lady is doing likewise work as the men in the other processing plant. She said the work helps her show her youngsters and care for the house, despite the fact that she doesn't have an enormous pay. Another component is that the cashew processing plant doesn't offer super durable work to the laborers. This is a truly challenging errand for female workers.

Neither maternity nor sex leave are granted to them. Workers are people who work for pay every day or just once a week, likewise, the workers lack the means of transportation to get to the factor. After working from home, many women rush to the factory.

- The government act exists but does not provide gloves to workers.
- Workers working under the company is subject to strong supervision and strict control.
- The cashew factory operates on the full support of the workers. So, labors have a good responsibility.
- Unsatisfactory wages for hard work.
- Rooms with small ventilation that do not allow enough light and air to pass through make workers uncomfortable. It causes shortness breath and high blood pressure.
- Factory smoke & cashew smoke can cause asthma.

The Tamil Nadu government has fixed the lowest pay permitted by law because of a long battle in terms of professional career associations furthermore, others. It has been carried out in cashew production lines since around 1983. However, the laborers don't know about the compensation that exists there according to the law. Association pioneers and the plant controller said that wages couldn't be fixed since it was a piece of work. Also, women laborers in the cashew handling industry don't have the amazing chance to go into the business to different areas. Since there could be no other industry for an enormous scope like cashew industry. The primary justification behind this is that it is privately perceived. With respect to the male series, they are for the most part participated in development work. There is work to be finished by the norm of wellbeing and great wages will be paid. Yet, around 70% of women depend on the Cashew nut manufacturing plant. Since, in such a case that they don't have it, they will need to go to other home to work. Something else accessible to women working in the processing plant is settlement. Another gathering of laborers means to make endowment for their marriage or kin. A social framework exists in all areas where the specialists I visit incorporate. The assembly line laborers themselves supplant the female specialists with the people who are hitched or the people who come from a long way away. There is likewise the exchange of accepting hush money on the appearance of finding a new line of work in a cashew processing plant. Plants here some of the time need to close for a really long time. This is on the grounds that the crude nuts is imported from outside nations or other state. Plants here some of the time need to close for a really long time.

Review of Literature

Lekshmi (2023), The study focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic posed enormous challenges to global industries, particularly vulnerable populations like cashew industry women. This quantitative study examines the challenges faced by women cashew workers in Kollam district during the COVID-19 outbreak. A study of sixty women cashew workers examined their socio-economic position, workplace conditions, income disruptions, healthcare access, and coping methods throughout the pandemic. Only women cashew workers from pre- and post-COVID were included. Data was collected via interview schedule. The pandemic has presented a multitude of obstacles for women cashew workers. Due to cashew processing unit closures and supply chain disruptions, women experienced job losses and decreased income opportunities. Poor financial resources and restricted access to social safety nets increased their vulnerability. The study also emphasises the increased domestic responsibilities caused by lockdown measures, causing additional strain on workers. Access to healthcare treatments varies among women cashew workers, increasing their susceptibility, according to the report. These workers use borrowing, alternate income-generating activities, and seeking support from local networks and NGOs as coping techniques.

Borah et., al. (2023), The study finds that India is the world's second largest producer of cashew nuts. Cashew nuts are roasted or steamed before being shelled. The study was carried out in cashew nut processing industries in Meghalaya's Selsella and Mankachar blocks, as well as Assam. The goal of this study was to compare the cutting strength of cashew nut shells after roasting and steaming. The effect of manual cashew nut shelling on workers' occupational health was also evaluated using ergonomic tools. The moisture content, colour, and hardness of the cashew nut shell were measured. Cashew nut processing had a considerable impact on its cutting strength. The steamed cashew nut shell was stronger than the roasted cashew nut shell. As a result, manually shelling the steamed cashew nut shell needed greater force than the roasted cashew nut shell. Four cashew nut processing enterprises, two each from the Selsella and Mankachar blocks of Meghalaya and Assam, were purposefully chosen. This study's sample consisted of ten female workers from each industry chosen at random. Workers' occupational health was assessed using ergonomic indicators such as working heart rate, energy expenditure, rated perceived effort, hand grip measures, RULA, and REBA analysis. The study's findings revealed that workers in the cashew nut industry were at significant occupational health and safety risk due to a bad working environment, awkward working posture, and repetitive and laborious tasks.

Nair et., al. (2024), A substantial number of individuals in southern Kerala rely on the cashew processing industry to sustain their livelihoods. Consequently, the objective of this investigation was to ascertain the incidence of occupational health issues and their corresponding factors among cashew labourers. 360 cashew labourers participated in this cross-sectional survey. A scheduled interview was conducted to collect socio-demographic information, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), respiratory symptoms, and dermatological conditions. A log-binomial regression analysis was conducted. The prevalence of MSDs, chronic lung diseases (CLDs), and dermatological disorders was 55.8%, 18.9%, and 47.5%, respectively. Workers who were female or had a lower level of education were significantly more likely to report MSDs. CLDs were substantially more prevalent among male employees and those with a greater number

of years of employment. Workers in the shelling and peeling section were substantially more likely to report dermatological issues. Interventions that are specifically designed to enhance the occupational health of cashew labourers are required.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To determine the cashew industry crisis and its affect among women workers.
2. To study the cashew industry's crisis and its affect among women workers with the financial standing of women workers.
3. To evaluate the cashew crisis its affect on women workers' with their socioeconomic lives.

Methodology:

Women workers who lost their jobs in cashew processing facilities and are looking for other employment sources provided the study's data. Using a random sampling technique, the survey was administered to one hundred workers. The main instrument used to gather data was a questionnaire.

Hypothesis for the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between Age and Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Marital status and Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries.

Analysis Tools

Table 1
Age of the respondents

S.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below – 18	44	22
2	19-30	60	30
3	30-40	58	29
4	Above 41	38	19
	total	200	100

From the table 1, it can be seen that out of the 200 respondents 30 were in the age range of 19 to 30, while 22 of them were in between the age of below 18, when 20 of them were aged 30- 40, also in the age group 40-50 has percentage 19, finally 9 percentage of the respondent were above 51 age group.

Table 2
Marital status of the respondents

S.No	Marital status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Married	112	56
2	Unmarried	80	40
3	Widowed	8	4
	Total	200	100

It can be seen from the table 2 that 112 of the respondents who participated in the survey were married and 80 were unmarried and 8 of them were widowed.

Table 3
Income of the respondents

S.No	Annual income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 50000	25	12
2	50001- 70000	86	43
3	70001-100000	44	22
4	100001-above	45	23
	Total	200	100

From the above table 3 it become clear that there is a huge difference in the income of workers. While 12 percentage of them received an annual income below 50000, 43 of them earned an annual income between a sum of Rs.50001-70000, 70001-100000 income have been eared by 22 percentage of workers, among the 200 respondent 23 workers earned more than 100001-above.

Table 4
Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries

S.NO	Work Life Balance	SA	A	N	D	DS	TOTAL
1	Due to much exhausted there is no energy to work in home	70	35	45	40	10	200
		35	13	22	10	5	100
2	I have to work on vacation	50	73	27	30	20	200
		25	37	13	15	10	100
3	There no personal space for family	80	25	36	54	5	200
		40	13	18	27	2	100
4	Due to household responsibility, I'm late for work	30	40	60	48	22	200
		15	20	30	24	11	100
5	Do you give best in work	65	33	26	52	24	200
		33	16	13	26	12	100
6	Do you give best in household	33	47	62	31	27	200
		17	23	31	16	13	100
7	Do you feel difficulty at work because of family responsibility	34	46	25	79	16	200
		17	23	12	40	8	100
8	I discuss family problems with my colleagues	66	17	38	17	62	200
		33	8	19	9	31	100
9	Due to mental drain, I can't participate enthusiasm in family function's	28	48	33	72	19	200
		14	24	17	36	9	100
10	I don't find much time for my hobbies	47	28	41	18	66	200
		24	14	20	9	33	100

The table illustrates various factors influencing the work-life balance among women respondents, highlighting significant challenges in managing professional and personal responsibilities. A notable 35% of respondents strongly agreed that exhaustion from work leaves them with no energy for household duties, while 13% agreed, indicating a cumulative 48% facing this issue. Similarly, 25% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that they often work during vacations, reflecting that 62% sacrifice personal time for work. About 40% strongly agreed that they lack personal space for family, emphasizing the interference of professional duties in

familial interactions. Furthermore, 15% strongly agreed and 20% agreed that household responsibilities make them late for work, affecting 35% of respondents. Despite these struggles, 33% strongly agreed and 16% agreed that they give their best at work, whereas 17% strongly agreed and 23% agreed they give their best in household tasks. However, 23% strongly agreed and 12% agreed that family responsibilities create difficulties at work, affecting 35%. Mental exhaustion also impacts family participation, with 14% strongly agreeing and 24% agreeing, affecting 38% cumulatively.

Table 5
ANOVA for Age and Preferences of Online Consumers

Variables	Age	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Due to much exhausted there is no energy to work in home	Below – 18	44	3.50	1.26	6.925	.005*
	19-30	60	3.98	1.62		
	30-40	58	3.66	1.98		
	Above 41	38	3.74	1.25		
	Total	200	4.36	1.36		
I have to work on vacation	Below – 18	44	4.36	1.00	10.360	.001*
	19-30	60	4.52	1.23		
	30-40	58	4.79	1.65		
	Above 41	38	4.33	1.89		
	Total	200	4.23	1.40		
There no personal space for family	Below – 18	44	1.32	0.33	0.369	0.150
	19-30	60	1.38	0.36		
	30-40	58	1.96	0.25		
	Above 41	38	1.35	0.98		
	Total	200	1.36	0.62		
Due to household responsibility, I'm late for work	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.328	.005*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Do you give best in work	Below – 18	44	3.22	1.54	3.362	.016*
	19-30	60	3.69	1.66		
	30-40	58	3.65	1.22		
	Above 41	38	3.66	1.32		
	Total	200	4.23	1.36		
Do you give best in household	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.328	.043*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Do you feel difficulty at work because of family responsibility	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.300	.004*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		

	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
I discuss family problems with my colleagues	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.321	.003*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Due to mental drain, I can't participate enthusiasm in family function's	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.258	.005*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
I don't find much time for my hobbies	Below – 18	44	3.69	1.33	4.308	.005*
	19-30	60	3.66	1.55		
	30-40	58	4.62	1.66		
	Above 41	38	3.99	1.36		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		

Based on Primary Data * [Sig. @ 5%](#)

The table indicates that the values of 6.925, 10.360, 0.369, 3.362, 4.328, 4.300, 4.321, 4.258, and 4.308 calculated for the f-test satisfy the requirements for significance at the five present levels. The statistics reveal significant variability in the preferences of female workers in Cuddalore District concerning cashew nut industries across different age groups. The stated null hypothesis is contradicted as a result. Nonetheless, this clearly indicates that females are more prone to engage in both secondary and primary activities concerning cashew nut women workers compared to other age demographics and work-life balance in the cashew nut industry. A significant correlation exists between the F values of 4.308 and the five current levels of the data. The data reveal significant heterogeneity in work-life balance within the cashew nut business, contingent upon age. The conclusion is that the presented null hypothesis is accurate.

Table 6
ANOVA for Marital status and Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries

Variables	Age	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Due to much exhausted there is no energy to work in home	Married	112	3.50	1.26	6.925	.014*
	Unmarried	80	3.98	1.62		
	Widowed	8	3.66	1.98		
	Total	200	4.36	1.36		
I have to work on vacation	Married	112	4.36	1.00	7.520	.020*
	Unmarried	80	4.52	1.23		
	Widowed	8	4.79	1.65		
	Total	200	4.23	1.40		
There no personal space for family	Married	112	1.32	0.33	5.369	0.150*
	Unmarried	80	1.38	0.36		
	Widowed	8	1.96	0.25		
	Total	200	1.36	0.62		
Due to household	Married	112	3.69	1.33	4.327	.003*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		

responsibility, I'm late for work	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Do you give best in work	Married	112	3.22	1.54	3.362	.016*
	Unmarried	80	3.69	1.66		
	Widowed	8	3.65	1.22		
	Total	200	4.23	1.36		
Do you give best in household	Married	112	3.69	1.33	4.328	.043*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		
	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Do you feel difficulty at work because of family responsibility	Married	112	3.69	1.33	4.300	.017*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		
	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
I discuss family problems with my colleagues	Married	112	3.69	1.33	5.321	.003*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		
	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
Due to mental drain, I can't participate enthusiasm in family function's	Married	112	3.69	1.33	4.220	.005*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		
	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		
I don't find much time for my hobbies	Married	112	3.69	1.33	4.308	.005*
	Unmarried	80	3.66	1.55		
	Widowed	8	4.62	1.66		
	Total	200	4.23	1.02		

Based on Primary Data * Sig. @ 5%

The f-test results shown in the table satisfy the significance criterion at the five levels currently used, with values of 6.925, 7.520, 5.369, 4.327, 3.362, 4.328, 4.300, 5.321, 4.220, and 4.308 respectively. The data shows that customers in the Cuddalore district have quite different tastes when it comes to cashew nut industries depending on their marital status. This proves that the null hypothesis was incorrect. In any case, this proves without a reasonable doubt that, from the perspective of both their professional and marital lives, women employed in cashew-based industries are more likely to be involved in secondary and main acts. F values of 3.362 are significantly related to the five levels of data that are currently available. According to these results, women's work-life balance varies greatly in the cashew nut industries in the Cuddalore district, and this variation is status independent. The offered null hypothesis is correct, as a result.

Findings

1. A significant number of women (62%) reported working during vacations, indicating limited personal time.
2. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) stated that exhaustion from work affects their ability to manage household duties effectively.

3. It is evident that 40% expressed a lack of personal space for family due to work commitments.
4. Mental exhaustion leads to reduced participation in family functions (38%) and insufficient time for hobbies (37%).
5. There is significant difference between Age and Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries.
6. There is significant difference between Marital status and Women Workers Work Life Balance in Cashew Nut Industries.

Conclusion

The study highlights the dual challenges faced by women workers in the cashew industry of Cuddalore District—workplace difficulties and the inability to maintain work-life balance. Poor wages, lack of benefits, and unfavorable working conditions exacerbate these challenges. Additionally, the economic dependency on the industry leaves them vulnerable during periods of instability or decline. Women workers struggle to balance professional responsibilities with household duties, leading to mental and physical exhaustion. Policy interventions are necessary to address these issues. Recommendations include: Enforcing labor laws for fair wages and benefits, such as maternity leave. Improving workplace conditions to ensure adequate ventilation and safety. Offering flexible working hours or childcare support to help balance responsibilities. Promoting alternative employment opportunities to reduce dependency on the cashew industry. By addressing these challenges, stakeholders can improve the socio-economic conditions of women workers and enable them to achieve a better balance between work and personal life.

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