Socio- Economic and Demographic Profile of MGNREGS and Coolie Workers in Kerala

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Introduction

This study presents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sample population. The primary data collected information on various household characteristics and housing conditions which provide the base for studying the living conditions of the MGNREGS and Coolie workers in Kerala.

Data and Methodology

The survey covered a total population of 1181 out of which 591 were MGNREGS and 590 were coolie workers. This study used Standard of living Index (SLI-IIPS) and cross Tabulation

This study exposed to the housing conditions and amenities of the MGNREGS and coolie workers of their sample population like the housing characteristics, household amenities and environmental conditions, and also deals with Socio-economic and demographic status of the population.

Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of sample Population

The section provides the detailed picture of demographic and socio- economic characteristics of Workers. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of population in broad age categories, religion, age at marriage and marital status of the respondents. Around 40.6 cent of the MGNREGS workers are in the age group 19-44 years, 42.6 percent are aged 20-29 years, 41.7 percent are aged 45-60 years and least concentration of workers is in the age group above 60 years (16.8 percent). In the case of coolie workers, it is about 51.7 percent are in the age group 19-44 years followed by the age group 45-60 (39.8 percent) and above 60 years (0.5 percent).

Table 1.2 Marital status is often represented as single, married, widowed. It is noticed that 5.1 and 8.8 percent of both workers respectively being single. About two third of sample population found to be currently married and 23.7 percent of MGNREGS workers and 14.6 percent of Coolie workers are widowhood. Majority of them are Hindus (72.6, 68.6) followed by Christian (18.3, 8.6) and Muslims (9.1, 22.7). Among MGNREGS workers 32.1 percent are belongs to forward caste and among coolie workers 39 percent are belongs to OBC about 68 percent of MGNREGS workers and 49.1 percent of Coolie workers married in the age between 19-24 years.

Table 1.1 Percentage Distribution of sample MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers by Age and Sex

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Age		
19-44	40.6 (240)	51.7 (305)
45-60	42.6 (252)	39.8 (235)
61+	16.8 (99)	.5 (50)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Sex		
Male	20.8 (123)	75.9 (448)
Female	79.2 (468)	24.1 (142)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)

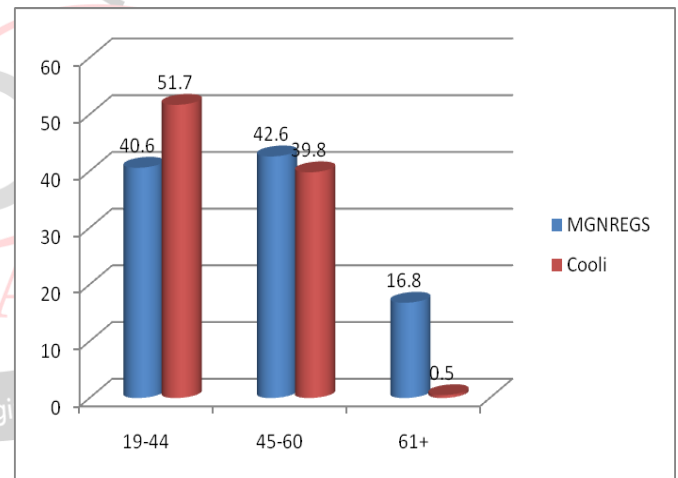**Figure 1.1 by age wise distribution**
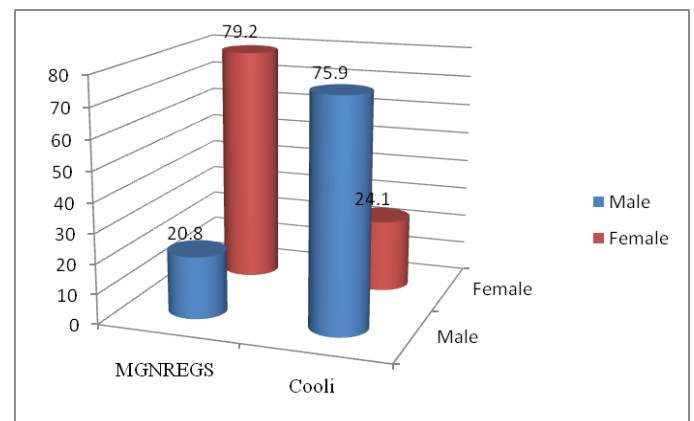

Figure 1.2   by sex wise distribution

Table 1.2 Background Characteristics of Sample MGNREGS workers and Coolie Workers

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Marital Status		
Single	5.1 (30)	8.8 (52)
Married	71.2 (421)	76.6 (452)
Widowhood	23.7 (140)	14.6 (86)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Religion		
Hindu	72.6 (429)	68.6 (405)
Muslim	9.1 (54)	22.7 (134)
Christian	18.3 (108)	8.6 (51)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Caste		
Scheduled caste(SC)	21.2 (125)	32.4 (191)
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	17.9 (106)	4.1 (24)
Other Backward Class(OBC)	27.4 (162)	39.0 (230)
Forward caste	32.1 (190)	24.6 (145)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Age at marriage		
<18	14.1 (78)	2.9 (14)
19-24	68.0 (376)	49.1 (240)
25-29	11.8 (65)	32.9 (161)
30+	6.1 (34)	15.1 (74)
Total	100 (553)	100 (489)

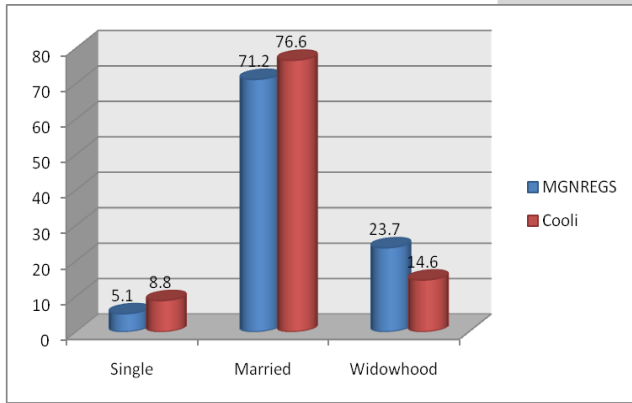**Figure 1.3 by marital status wise distribution**
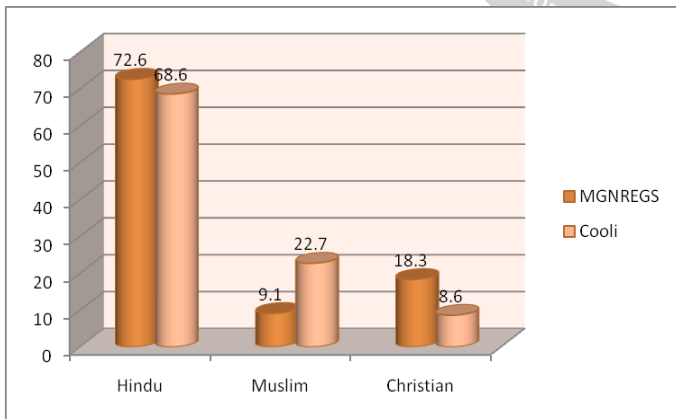

Figure 1.4 By Religion wise distribution

Table 1.3 Percentage Distribution of sample MGNREGS workers and Coolie Workers by Education

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Literacy Levels		
Illiterate	25.3 (142)	22.2 (131)
Middle	38.8 (218)	69.8 (412)
Secondary and above	35.9 (202)	0.8 (47

Total	100 (562)	100 (590)
Attended school		
Yes	94.9(561)	95.1 (561)
No	5.1 (30)	4.9 (29)
Total	100 (591)	100 59 ()
Able to read and write		
Able to read only	10.3 (61)	10.8 (64)
Able to write only	7.8 (46)	3.9 (23)
Able to both read and write	65.3 (386)	74.6 (440)
Can't read nor write	16.6 (98)	10.7 (63)
Total	**100 (591)**	**(590)**

Education plays a vital role in the socio-economic status of any population. Looking into the educational status of population it is observed that among sample population one fourth and more than one fifth of the both workers respectively are literates (Table 1.3). While looking into the status of education of coolie workers it is observed that nearly 70 percent of them have middle class education. It is low among MGNREGS. To be more specific, if the literacy levels are examined carefully we find that more than half of the workers are able to read and write. Majority of them are ever attended the school. Only few percent of them are unable to read or write

Table 1.5 Percentage Distribution of the MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers by Housing Conditions

Variables	MGNREGS (percent)	Coolie (percent)
Roof		
Temporary	20.5 (121)	29.7 (175)
Partially permanent	56.9 (336)	45.9 (271)
Permanent	22.7 (134)	24.4 (144)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Wall		
Temporary	14.9 (88)	22.2 (131)
Partially permanent	60.7 (359)	53.7 (317)
Permanent	24.4 (144)	24.1 (142)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Floor		
Temporary	14.6 (86)	22.9 (135)
Partially permanent	59.1 (349)	52.4 (309)
Permanent	26.4 (156)	24.4 (146)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Ownership of the house		
Own	88.3 (22)	77.6 (458)
Rented	11.7 (69)	22.4 (132)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)

1.2 Housing Characteristics of Sample population

Access to basic household amenities such as proper housing, provision of piped drinking water, sanitation facilities and clean cooking fuel is an important measure of the socio-economic status of any population. In turn, it has implications on their health and living conditions. The survey collected information on several housing characteristics that reflect the overall living conditions of the sample population, including their access to water and sanitation, type of housing and fuel used for cooking. Table 1.5 provides the percentage distribution of the sample population by housing conditions.

The status of roof, wall and floor reflects the housing condition of households. It is observed that 56.9 percent of MGNREGS are living in the houses, in which roof is made by partially permanent material such as asbestos, tiles or plastic sheets, while 45.9 percent of coolie workers are living in the same condition. The same pattern can be observed in the case of material of wall and floors also. More than half of the workers live in houses with walls built by partially permanent materials. More than half of MGNREGS and Coolie workers reside in the houses made of partially permanent floors, followed by temporary materials such as cow dung, soil etc (14.6 percent and 22.9 percent respectively). About 26.4 and 24.7 percent of workers respectively live in houses with floor made of permanent materials. The study found that 88.3 percent of MGNREGS and 77.6 percent of Coolie workers have own houses for living.

Table 1.6 Percentage Distribution of MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers by drinking water availability

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Source of water		
Own Piped water/ hand pump/covered well	66.8 (189)	74.4 (186)
Own Open well	33.2 (94)	25.6 (64)
Total	100 (283)	100(250)
Public source		
Piped water/hand pump/covered well	90.6 (281)	74.4 (186)
Open well	7.3 (29)	25.6 (64)
Total	100 (310)	100 (250)
Use safe drinking water		
Yes	93.3 (587)	98.6 (582)
No	.7 (4)	1.4 (8)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Methods of Water Treatment		
Water boiling	95.2 (559)	95 (553)
Alum using	4.1(24)	4.5 (26)
Chlorine Tablets	.3 (2)	.3 (4)
Total	100 (585)	100 (582)

Table 1.6 presents the distribution of the households by main source of drinking water. Water source is classified here as 'own source' and 'public source'. Around 90 percent of MGNREGS workers and 74.4 percent Coolie workers depend on public Piped water/hand pump/covered well as main source of drinking water. Only 33.2 percent of MGNREGS and 25.6 percent of the coolie workers were used own open well as drinking water source. Among the worker's majority of them that is 99.3 and 98.6 percent respectively make water to safer to drink, boiling is the method adopted among 95.2 percent and 95 percent respectively of the both workers, other methods are using of alum and chlorine tablets, only few percent of workers using such methods.

Table 1.7 Percentage Distribution of MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers by sanitation facilities

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Availability of Toilet facility		
Yes	99.3 (587)	92 (585)
No	.7 (4)	.8 (5)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Type of Toilet		
Own flush	27.6 (163)	7.4 (38)
Own pit	71.7 (424)	92.7 (547)
Total	100 (587)	100 (585)
Type of Fuel used for cooking		
Fuel used wood	70.9 (419)	75.4 (445)
Kerosene	1.4 (8)	2.2 (13)
LPG	27.5 (163)	22.1 (129)
Biogas	.02 (1)	0.3 (3)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)

The access to an improved toilet facility is another indicator of the good living conditions of the population. Table 1.7 presents worker's access to toilet facility. About 99.3 percent of MGNREGS and 92 percent of coolie workers have toilet facility with septic tank or flush system, access to a pit latrine etc. Out of which it is found among around 27 percent of the MGNREGS, flush toilet is used by 27.6 percent of the households. In the case of Coolie workers, it is 7.4 percent. Only few percent of households have no toilet facilities, forcing them for open defecation. Cooking fuel used is yet another indicator of the status of the household. The extent of use of unsafe cooking fuel presents a picture of potential health hazard. About 70 percent of the MGNREGS and 75.4 percent of coolie workers in the surveyed households use wood as cooking

fuel which shows that majority of the workers are exposed to the harmful effects of smoke while cooking. Kerosene, LPG and Biogas are found to be other source of cooking fuel, which   uses only few households.

Table 1.8 Percentage Distribution of MGNREGS and Coolie workers by Environmental Conditions

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Presence of Water Logging Nearby		
Yes	66.3 (392	68.1 (402)
No	33.7 (199)	31.9 (188)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Type of waste water Disposal		
Open drain	67.9 (401)	70.2 (414)
Closed drain	26.1 (154)	21.7 (128)
Open Pit	4.7 (28)	6.3 (37)
Closed pit	1.4 (8)	1.9 (11)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Method of Solid waste disposal		
Surrounding within the house premises	10.5 (62)	5.8 (34)
On by the roads or street	4.10 (24)	1.9 (11)
Collected by agent	3.4 (20)	8.8 (52)
Public waste Bin	7.8 (46)	12.2 (72)
By burning	72.9 (431)	67.3 (397)
In open pit in the compound	1.4 (8)	4.1 (24)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Mosquito problem		
Yes	72.1 (426)	73.9 (436)
No	27.9 (165)	26.1 (154)
Total	100 (590)	100 (590)
Methods for Mosquito control		
Use electric bat	9.9 (42)	14.9 (65)
Use mosquito repellent	4.9 (21)	8.5 (37)
Use bed net	2.3 (10)	5 (22)
Use smoke	83.1 (354)	71.3 (311)
Total	**100 (426)**	**100 (435)**

Table 1.8 provides the percentage distribution of workers by environmental conditions. Environmental hygiene is the one of the most important predictors of health as well as overall population. Casual workers found to be more close to their environmental conditions and they are exposed to more risk of environmental hazards also.

It is observed that 66.3 percent of MGNREGS and 68.1 percent of coolie workers reporting the presence of water logging in their surroundings. Waste water disposal is another important aspect while considering the environmental hygiene. More than half of the both workers disposed waste water to open drain, (67.9 and 70.2 percent respectively) followed by closed drain, open pit and closed pit. These findings reveal that the inadequate drainage facilities n their settlements. While looking into the solid waste disposal of workers, burning found to be most predominant method of waste disposal among both categories. Public waste bin, open pit, surroundings and roads/streets also used to dump waste. About 72.1 and 73.9

Percent of both workers respectively reported that mosquito problem in their surroundings. Smoking is used as the important method of mosquito control (83.1 and 71.3 percent respectively).

Table 1.9 Percentage distribution of MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers and Household amenities and Assets

Variables	MGNREGS	Coolie
Ration card		
Yes	99 (585)	92 (548)
No	1 (6)	7.1 (42)
Total	100 (591)	100 (590)
Type of Ration card		
APL	37.9 (2220	44.9 (246)
BPL	62.1 (363)	55.1 (302)
Total	100 (585)	100 (548)
Household Assets		
Electricity	95.9 (567)	75.9 (448)
Matters	74.3 (439)	64.6 (381)
Pressure cooker	64.5 (381)	85.3 (503)
Chair	81.7 (483)	76.4 (451)
Cot/bed	69.9 (413)	48.5 (286)
Table	48.9 (289)	65.3 (385)
Electric fan	52.3 (309)	56.6 (324)
Radio/transistor	78.5 (468)	75.4 (445)
Television	69.2 (409)	1.9 (11)
Inverter	1.7 (10)	12.6 (72)
Sewing machine	14.2 (84)	67.1 (396)
Mobile or land phone	52.1 (308)	.7 (4)
Tablet	.7 (4)	1.5 (9)
Computer or laptop	1.4 (8)	23.6 (13)
Refrigerator	12.9 (76)	53.1 (313)
Watch/clock	46.7 (276)	7.8 (46)
Bicycle	7.8 (46)	14.6 (86)
Motorcycle	10.8 (64)	.3 (2)
Car	1.0 (6)	.7 (4)
Tractor	.7 (4)	0 (0))

Table 1.9 Percentage distribution of MGNREGS workers and Coolie workers by Household amenities and assets. It is noticed that majority of the workers having ration card. Out of which 37.9 percent of MGNREGS workers and 44.9 percent of Coolie workers are coming under APL category. Looking in to the household assets of workers, it is noticed that 95.9 percent of households among MGNREGS workers have electricity and 75.9 percent of coolie workers also having same. Necessary assets such as Television, Radio and other allied assts are avail in the households of both workers.

Findings from the study indicated that compared to MGNREGS workers Coolie workers found to have poor socio- economic conditions.

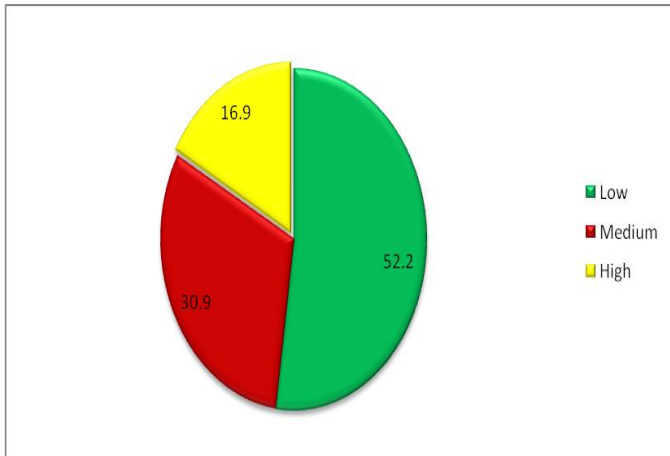**Figure 1.5 Standard of Living index of MGNREGS and Coolie Workers in Kerala**

Figure 1.5 shows the standard of living index (SLI) for the sample population i.,e., for both MGNREGS and Coolie workers. More than half of the workers belong to the poorest section. Only 16.9 percent belongs to the high level category. The SLI for coolie workers separately is shown in figure 4.2. More than half of the coolie workers are in the low socio-economic category while 14 percent belong the high level category of the SLI. Figure 1.3 displays the SLI for MGNREGS workers which more or less similar to those of Coolie workers. However, percent of workers in high level category are more among MGNREGS workers than among the Coolie workers.

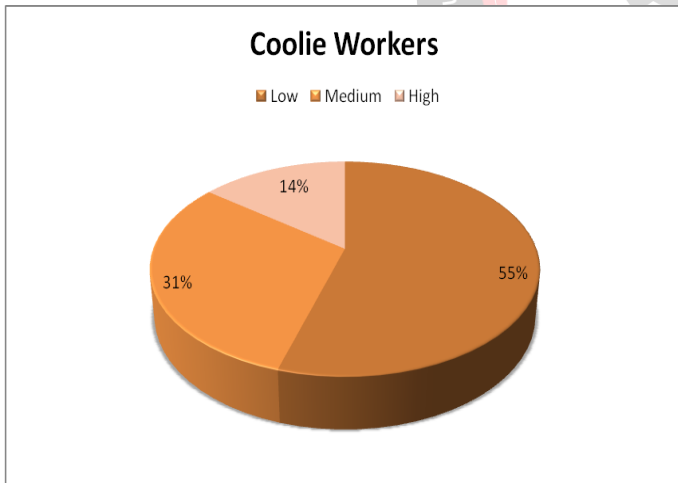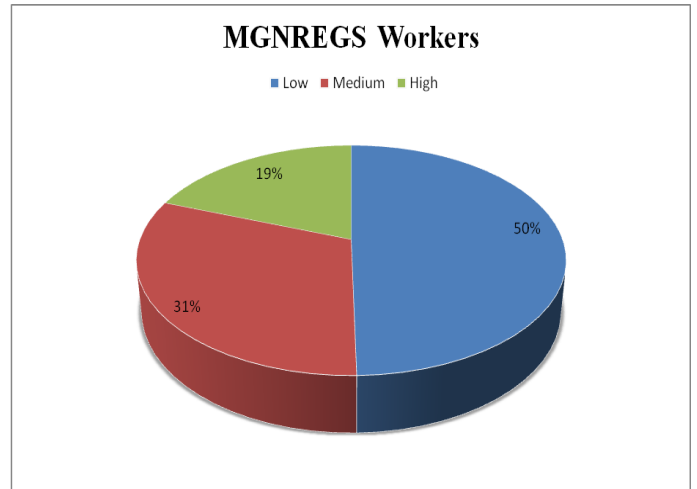**Figure 1.6 Percentage distribution of Coolie workers**

Figure 1.7 Percentage distribution of MGNREGS workers

Conclusion

Standard of living index (SLI) constructed for the sample population. More than half of the workers belong to the poorest section. Only 16.9 percent belongs to the high level category. More than half of the coolie workers are in the low socio-economic category while 14 percent belong the high level category of the SLI. However, percent of workers in high level category are more among. MGNREGA workers than among the Coolie workers.

Reference

1) K.Ramaswamy (2007), "Regional Dimension of Growth and Employment",Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XLII No.49, 08 December, pp. 47-56.

2) Shah S.M. (1989) "Rural Employment : Need for Massive Expansion", Kurukshetra,37(7),18-21.