

**Status of Women Workers: A Sociological Study of Women Workers Working in Cashew Processing Industry in Chandgad, Ajara and Gadhinglaj Tehsils of Kolhapur District**

**Shahu Dhanu Gawade**

Assistant Professor & Head,

Department of Sociology,

R. B. Madkholkar Mahavidhyalaya, Chandgad

**Abstract:**

*The present paper deals with the sociological study of status of women in familial and social situations with special reference to the women working in cashew processing industries in Chandgad, Ajara and Gadhinglaj tehsils of Kolhapur district. The status of women is measured on the basis of the indicators like morality, family planning, education, labour force, etc. In the present scenario, women are the main labour force in the cashew processing industries. Similarly, the skill-based education provides more employment opportunities with handsome salary. Hence, the present paper analyses the women workers working in cashew processing industries located at the above mentioned tehsils in order to find out their status in familial and social lives.*

**Keywords:** status, women workers, familial life, education, labour force, decision making.

**Introduction:**

The present paper assesses the familial and social lives of the women workers working as the chief labour force in the cashew processing industries in Chandgad, Ajara and Gadhinglaj tehsils of Kolhapur district from the sociological perspective. The status of the women is measure with the help of Measure of Status (MS) tool which consist of ten parameters. Out of these ten parameters, only a few parameters such as education, morality, family planning and labour force are used here to assess the status of women working in cashew processing industry. For the assessment, 350 respondents from 27 industries are selected randomly and are interviewed personally in order to understand their views as well as their social and cultural background. Though the study uses Measure of Status tool which “consists of the total score on each of 10 indicators with a maximum score of 100” (Measuring the status of women, (1984)), it is not limited to only these parameters; rather, it uses the indicators which are most suitable at the time of interview in the form of questionnaire.

**Analysis:**

**Education-wise Classification of Respondents:**

**Table No. 1**

Sr. No.	Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Primary	79	22.57
2	Secondary	41	11.71
3	Higher Secondary	35	10.00
4	Graduate	03	0.86
5	Illiterate	192	54.86
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Work*

The proportion of women workers in primary education is 22.57% and the proportion of women workers in secondary education is 11.71%. There are only a few respondents who have completed their graduations. However, more than half percent women i.e. 54.86% women are illiterate. The further enquiry about their illiteracy reveals that most of the women left their education in order to either support their families or due to early marriage. The following table reveals the reasons for their leaving school at the early stage or being uneducated.

Reasons of Illiteracy

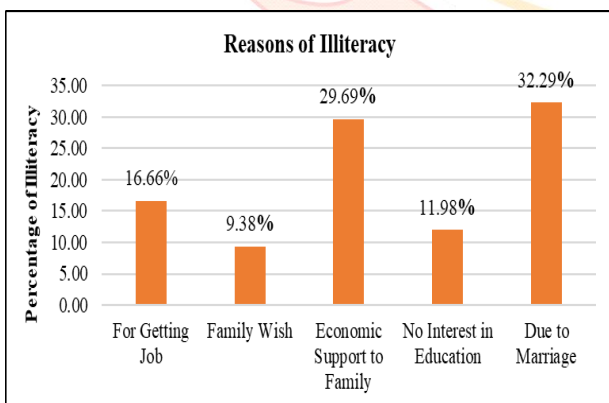
Table No. 2

Sr. No.	Reasons of Illiteracy	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Poor economic condition	32	16.66
2	Family Wish	18	9.38
3	Economic Support to Family	57	29.69
4	No Interest in Education	23	11.98
5	Due to Marriage	62	32.29
<b>Total =</b>		<b>192</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Work

It is found that out of total 192 illiterate respondents 16.66% respondents have not taken education due to their poor economic condition. According to them, education was not useful for livelihood at that time. 29.69% of respondents said they have not taken an education to support their families financially. On the other hand 11% respondents answered that they have not taken education due to no interest in education. The majority of women workers (32.2%) said that they could not get an education due to their weak financial situation and early marriage. The following figure illustrates vividly their reasons of illiteracy.

Figure No. 1



1. Nature of Family and House:

The following table shows the nature of family of sample women respondents. 52% respondents are from separate family and 48% respondents are from joint family. It indicates that

the number of separate family is higher than the joint family.

Table No. 3

Sr. No.	Nature of Family	No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
1	Separate	182	52
2	Joint	168	48
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work

It is also observed that most of the women respondents (60.86%) have 2 to 4 family members and it is highest than the other group of number of family members. 35.14% respondents replied that they have 5 to 7 members in their family. Only 4% respondents answered that they have above 7 members in their family. The study also found that 72% respondents have their own house before join work in cashew industry, which increased upto 81.71% after they got a work in cashew industry. It shows the contribution of cashew processing industries in making them self-reliant. 9.14% respondents have lived in relatives house and this ratio decreased upto 4.43% after their joining work in cashew industry. Their increased economic stability is seen in the type of house they built after getting a job in cashew processing industries.

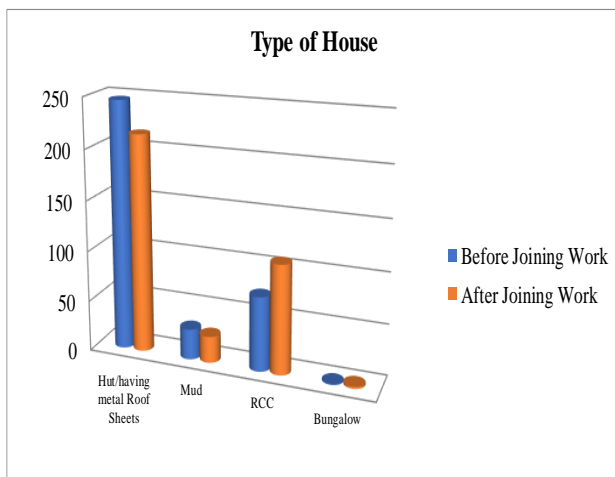
Type of House

Table No. 4

Sr. No.	Nature of House	Before Joining Work		After Joining Work	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Hut/having metal Roof Sheets	246	70.29	215	61.43
2.	Mud	30	8.57	26	7.43
3.	RCC	73	20.86	107	30.57
4.	Bungalow	01	0.29	02	0.57
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field work

Figure No. 2



The above graph indicates that the quality of house is developed after the women workers began working in cashew processing industries. The number of respondents having RCC house is increase and the the number of respondents who used to live in hust of houses with having metal roof sheets is decreased.

**2. Status of Women in Family:**

Each woman has a particular place and has to play a significant role in the family. The researcher has tried to know the place of women in their family, which are working in the cashew processing industry.

**Status of Women in Family**

Table No. 5

Sr. No.	Scale	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent	33	09.45
2	Very Good	87	24.85
3	Good	85	24.28
4	Average	113	32.28
5	Below Average	32	09.14
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work

32.28% women chose the option of average which highlights that they are still at the marginal position in the family. 9.14% women have selected below average option that express their subordination as well as submission to their

husbands. However, there are 24.85%, 24.28% and 09.45% women who said that they are respected and treated very well in the family only because of their work in cashew industry.

**3. Social and Economic Stability of Women workers due to Job:**

The opinions of women workers regarding the social and economic stability due to their job is presented in the following table.

**Social and Economic Stability of Women workers due to Job**

Table No. 6

Sr. No.	Scale	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent	34	09.71
2	Very Good	43	12.28
3	Good	61	17.42
4	Average	128	36.57
5	Below Average	84	24
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work

About 37% women have expressed average opinion and about 24% women have expressed below average opinion which indicates that though their job in cashew processing industry supports the familial life, it does not provide social and economic stability. It is followed by the 17.42% women having good opinion, 12.28% expressed very good opinion and 9.71% opined excellent that expresses, at certain extent, their work brings some kind of social and economic stability.

**4. Opportunity of Political Leadership for Women Workers:**

The data presented in the following table shows the women workers’ opinion about the opportunities of political leadership available for them. In the present scenario, women’s position in politics is becoming stronger than the last few decades which has led even the government to reconsider the reservation policies; and in some states, there is near about 33% reservation given to women in politics. Though, the “Women’s Reservation Bill is a pending bill in the Parliament



of India which proposes to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 33 percent seats in the lower house of the parliament, Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women” (India Today, 2020), the women have taken initiatives in securing posts in the local, state and central political scene. However, majority of women workers expressed that there are minor opportunities for them to participate in local politics which is expressed in the following table:

**Opportunity of Political Leadership for Women Workers**

**Table No. 7**

Sr. No.	Scale	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent	5	01.42
2	Very Good	28	08.00
3	Good	72	20.57
4	Average	107	30.57
5	Below Average	138	39.42
<b>Total =</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Field Work*

39.42% women said that there are no opportunities for them to enter in the politics, whereas 30.57 women said that there are fewer opportunities for them. 20.57% women expressed good opinion expressing their desire to participate with rigid outlook that they are not promoted to do so in the family. 8% and 1.42% women opined very good and excellent respectively which demonstrates their awareness about existing socio-political opportunities.

**Result and Discussion:**

Measure of Status (MS) indicators help to determine the status of women in general both at the familial and social level. The education-wise classification of randomly selected respondents shows that majority of women are illiterate and most of them have not entered in the schools only because they have to support their family or early marriages. Some women said that their parents or husbands could not afford education for them. There are mixed kind of opinions about the nature of family; but their

work in cashew processing industries have definitely helped them to switch from the hut type of house to RCC building. However, in terms of status of women in family, the respondents said that they still are subordinate in the family and do not have any rights of taking economic or any other decisions. Similarly, their job in the cashew processing industry could not provide them social and economical stability. There are also fewer opportunities available for them in the politics which could be the result of patriarchal control or negative opinion about political life.

**References:**

1. Data collected through the interview of women working in select cashew processing industry in Chandgad, Ajara and Gadhinglaj Tehsils of Kolhapur District.
2. Measuring the status of women. (1984). Asian-Pacific population programme news, 13(1), 20–22.
3. India Today Web Desk. (March 7, 2020). Women’s Reservation Bill: All you need to know about the bill which will bring 33 percent reservation for women in Lok Sabh. New Delhi. <<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/women-s-reservation-bill-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-bill-which-is-yet-to-be-passed-in-lok-sabha-1653451-2020-03-07>>