

THE IMPACT OF POOR POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AMONG TEA ESTATE LABOURERS IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY OF OODUWERRE DIVISION IN BADULLA DISTRICT

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Introduction

Over one million tea estate labourers are working in plantation sector in Sri Lanka. Generally those people are poor, uneducated and isolated. They are not considering about the changes of society. According to that situations tea estate labourers are unable to communicate with their activities. There are so many labour issues are found in Sri Lankan tea estate sector. They are working under the low wages, poor living facilities, no proper housing system for them and poor health facilities are there (Jayawardana, 2004 & Wesumperuma, 1996). The main reason behind that is poor political socialization. In other word, due to the poor political socialization they are unaware about fundamental rights which they have and entitle as labourers. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the impact of poor political socialization in violation of fundamental rights of the tea estate labourers in Sri Lanka.

An overall objective of this study is to explore the impact of poor political socialization among the tea estate labourers in Sri Lanka. In line with this, the following are the specific objectives;

1. To understand the fundamental rights violation of tea estate laborers.
2. To identify the limitations of fundamental rights.
3. To identify the reasons behind the poor political socialization among tea estate laborers.

Methodology

The study used two types of data collection methods viz survey methods and content analysis. Two types of survey methods were employed for this study like; structured questionnaire survey on tea estate labourers, and semi-structured interview survey on state owners, officials and civil society leaders. Also, the interviews were extended to some selected tea estate labourers to get their insights about the fundamental rights and its violation. Sample size was consisted of 100 respondents. Beside that content analysis was used to gather secondary data, information and facts. Collected data from different sources, as mentioned above was analyzed using the qualitative and quantitative methods, and it was presented using texts, tables, charts and figures.

Discussion and Conclusion

Tea production in Sri Lanka is high importance to the Sri Lankan economy and the world market. It began during the British colonial period in Sri Lanka. As well as Uva province is a major tea cultivated area. Most of Tamil people are working around tea estates as their

main income. In the Oduwerre Division in Badulla district is the one of tea cultivated area and Tamil workers are the majority of there. Most of the tea estate labourers are not move with the society in quickly. Because of that they have less communication, uneducated, isolated and poor health facilities. Fundamental rights of tea estate labourers of Oduwerre division are violated due to the poor political socialization. In view of these facts, Oduwerre Division was selected as a case study.

In this research, researchers found that fundamental rights of tea estate laborers were violated due to various reasons. Lower level of the education is a one reasons. Generally most of the tea estate labourers were uneducated. They do not pay much attention to the education. There were several reasons behind their low level of education. Those are; financial matters, influence of parents, stopping education under self preference and lack of schools. Due to these reasons they were far away from the education and it finally cause to poor political socialization and violation of fundamental rights.

Poor political knowledge of Tea estate laborers also impacts to the fundamental rights violation of them. Most of tea estate laborers are not active members in the politics. But they always use their voting rights at the elections to gain benefits. Even some of them did not cast their votes due to several reasons, such as stealing the voting cards, prohibiting the opportunity to use the vote and torturing. Finally it cause to poor political socialization and violation of fundamental rights of them.

Laborers do not satisfy with their job due to the violation of fundamental Rights. They have to face lot of problems at the job field. They have not sufficient salary equivalent for their labor. Sometimes laborer's rights violate at the job field. Because they get fewer wages to labor, have to work more hours, torturing under high officers, and problems in resolving employment matters. Especially less wages caused to the beginning of several problems. Due to lack of wages and unsubstantial time they are moving with the social activities in very slowly.

Tea estate laborers' fundamental rights violate due to lack of social welfare facilities. They have not enough infrastructure facilities which are given by the government. There can be seen some housing projects which are launched by the estate regarded company and some other projects launched by the NGOs. They have not land space to build a home because they were Indian origin people. When consider about the electricity as essential need some of laborers could not gained power. The main reason behind that is they have not sufficient financial matters to pay for that. Transportation was another big problem of tea estates. In Addition tea estate laborers have not enough space to religion activities and association. They always try to build up their life condition through the various ways. Since that there can be seen lack of communication with the society.

Tea estate laborers' poor knowledge about fundamental rights protection institutions causes to the Human rights violation of them. They know about only district labor council. They have not knowledge about the Supreme Court, Ombudsman and other fundamental rights protection institutions. Since that tea estate laborers do not move with the finding solution to their fundamental rights violations.

The Media is the one of agent of political socialization process. According to the study most of female workers do not use media to get knowledge about politics. They do not pay their attention with the knowledgeable programs. Their preference depends on the films, Tele-

dramas and other entertainment programs. Finally it cause to poor political socialization and violation of fundamental rights of them.

This study concluded that fundamental rights of the tea estate labourers violate due to the poor political socialization. For the improvement of the political socialization of the tea estate labourers, the study recommends enhancing the knowledge of tea estate labourers on fundamental rights through the public awareness program, enhance the political participation, provide the social welfare facilities, ensure the economic rights, and ensure the social and religion rights of tea estate labourers. Finally it would be helped to avoid the fundamental rights violations of tea state labourers.

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