

## THE IMPACT OF WORKERS JOB SATISFACTION ON WORKER OUT-MIGRATION IN TEA PLANTATION SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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### Introduction

Tea is the second-most popular and cheapest natural beverage in the world having 15,000 cups drunk per second worldwide which is surpassed only by water. It is a surprise that all teas; white, green, oolong, black etc. come from a single plant and the botanical name of this versatile plant is *Camellia sinensis* (Senarath and Athauda, 2010). The humidity, cool temperatures and rainfall in the central highlands in Sri Lanka provide an ideal climate that favours the production of high quality tea. Above all, selective hand plucking is the most significant factor to obtain such a quality tea which cannot be replaced by mechanization. However, this selective hand plucking requires a lot of labour hours and therefore the biggest problem; labour cost accounting 70% of cost of production of tea (Arunathilake, 2001).

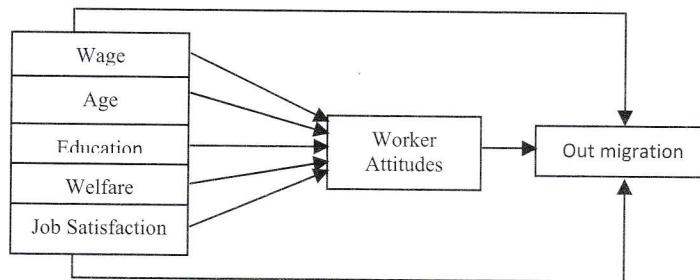
Today, over one million workers are employed in Sri Lankan tea industry directly and indirectly. The work force in the corporate tea plantation sector is mainly residential and 80% of resident work force represents the South Indian Hindu Tamils (Wickramasinghe and Cameron, 2007). During last few decades, workforce has significantly reduced due to labour out-migration. This decline is expected to continue even in the future as the workers are being able to find more attractive employment opportunities from their view point, in outside the tea estates. Literature reveals that apart from wages, attitudes of workers, is the main cause for labour out-migration in tea sector and these attitudes have been developed during the total history of tea plantations on monetary benefits, welfare, social status, job satisfaction, social recognition etc. With this background the specific objectives of this study were to find out the impact of workers Job satisfaction on labour out-migration and to determine whether there is any relationship between job satisfaction and attitudes of workers towards their job.

### Methodology

Worker attitudes have been identified as the main factor for worker out migration that is built up on several factors and these factors were identified as wage, age, level of education, level of welfare of the estate and level of job satisfaction of which a direct impact on worker out migration can also be found out at Figure 1.

Primary data were collected from a sample of 300 workers that was selected using stratified random sampling technique from ten randomly selected tea estates covering all up country, mid country and low country by means of a pre-tested structured questionnaire. Job satisfaction was measured by a set of questions adopted using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). All the attitudinal statements were evaluated using five point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly satisfied" to "strongly dissatisfied". Chi-square test was conducted to find out the association between age, wage, education level, welfare level, job satisfaction and intention to out-migrate of workers. An Overall Attitude Index (OAI) was developed using the average value of (1) welfare attitudinal index, (2) salary attitudinal index and (3) attitudinal job satisfaction index and the impact of the OAI on out-migration was tested using Chi-square analysis.

**Figure 1: Factors for worker out migration**



**Discussion and Conclusion**

The descriptive statistical summary of the factors that influence the intention to out-migrate of workers are depicted in the Table 1, and the results revealed that 96% of workers who have an intention to out-migrate are strongly dissatisfied about their occupation.

**Table 1. Percentage of workers with the intention to out-migrate**

Variables		Intention to out-migrate (%)
Age	16-30	58
	31-45	22
	Above 45	20
Wage (Rs.)	1,000-5,000	49
	5,000-10,000	44
	Above 10,000	7
Education Level	No Education	69
	Below Grade 8	29
	Above Grade 8	2
Level of welfare	Satisfied	31
	Dissatisfied	69
Job Satisfaction	Satisfied	4
	Dissatisfied	96

The results of the Chi-square test revealed that age, level of education, and level of welfare have significant impact on out-migration of workers while wage level and job satisfaction had not significant effect on worker out-migration (Table 2). Descriptive analysis of job satisfaction reveals that 98% of total work force is dissatisfied about their job and it indicates that both worker groups who are intend and not intend to out-migrate have a strong negative attitude about job satisfaction. This attitude leads to determine this factor as not significant through Chi-square test.

**Table 2. Association between migration status with attitudinal variables**

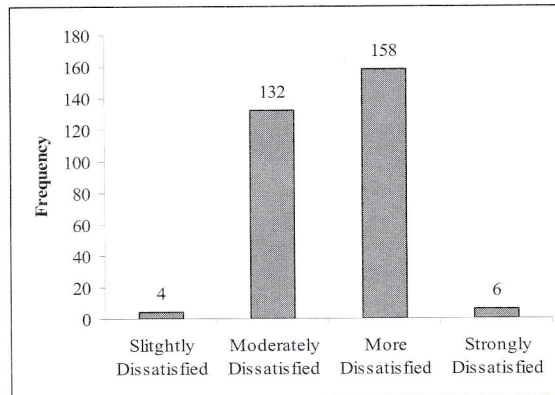
Variable	Pearson Chi-square (p value)	
Age	0.000 *	
Wage		0.482
Education level	0.000 *	
Welfare Level	0.000 *	
Job satisfaction		0.970

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Again, Pearson Chi-square test was performed to check whether there is an association between intention to outmigration and overall attitude to out-migrate. Results of Chi-square test indicate 0.821 p-values, which revealed that OAI does not significantly affect to worker out-migration at

0.05 significance levels. Average OAI, which is worked out by dividing total OAI by the total number of respondents ranked as 0.775 where dissatisfaction levels determined as 0.6 and above were dissatisfied. This index shows that the overall satisfactory level of the estate workers and it reflects, as a total, the workers are dissatisfied. Thus, the study clearly identified almost all the workers have a strong negative attitude towards their job and that had built up of several factors.

**Figure 2. Distribution of overall dissatisfied attitudes of the sample**



For further analysis OAI scale was developed from 0 – 0.9. The study defines that are having vales more than 0.5 are dissatisfied and it defines when value increases the level of dissatisfaction also increases in four stages: (1) Slightly dissatisfied; (2) Moderately dissatisfied; (3) More dissatisfied and (4) Strongly dissatisfied. It is clearly illustrated that more workers are in the middle level of dissatisfaction (Figure 2) which indicates there is a possibility to retain them in the industry using appropriate motivational methods.

It can be concluded that age, education level, welfare level have a significant impact on labour out-migration and also workers have a strong negative attitude towards their job which is mainly influenced by job dissatisfaction. Additionally, factors such as higher education level, age and low welfare levels act as push factors which encourage workers to out migrate from the industry or these factors significantly affect to worker out-migration. The study manly reveals that job dissatisfaction prepare the background for labour out-migration which acts as the main cause for the negative attitude of tea workers towards their job.

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