

Challenges Faced by Female Workers in Trade Union Participation: A Study Based on Balmoral Tea Estate

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Trade union participation is a collective involvement of members in union related activities which are closely related to the effective functions of the union. Trade unions were emerged in Sri Lanka through the background of British colonialized period under the plantation economy system. Several trade unions are in operation at plantation platform. Female workers play a major role in plantation sector because, half of the plantation labor force are Females. They represent several trade unions based on their interest. This study explores the challenges faced by Female workers with the participation of the trade union activities. The study area is Balmoral tea estate which is located in the middle part of Nuwara- Eliya district. The research was based only from the female estate workers. The Primary data was collected from direct observation, in depth interviews and case studies. Secondary data was gathered from relevant books, magazines, and internet sources. The thematic analysis techniques were applied for data analysis. With the use of analyzed data, this study identified prominent causes related to this aspect such as lack of interest in trade union activities, lack of family support, dual burden, lack of awareness about the trade union activities as per the benefits which can be obtain from the union, lack of educational platform, hesitation to express their thoughts and ideas and existing patriarchal contradiction in the community influences on female workers which illustrates gender, class, ethnicity and caste based inequalities among them. Tea estate female workers are unable to participate enthusiastically in trade union activities because of several barriers due to their native structure. But in practical it is defined as a basic right of them. Females' participation is seen as a platform for them to solve their work place related problems on their own. This Study emphasizes the importance and value of the trade union participation of females. Apart from these, all authorized government and non-governmental sectors are expected to create policies and implement programmes to motivate women workers' trade union participation with adequate knowledge and awareness.

Keywords: Plantation; Participations; Trade union; Female workers