

WOMEN IN TEA PLANTATIONS: IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SRI LANKA

DLNP. Liyanage¹

Tea, one of Sri Lanka's prime exports and has provided employment opportunities for thousands of individuals, particularly women, who have historically been excluded. The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has significantly affected these tea estate women's livelihoods and well-being. This research article examines the economic crisis's impacts on tea estate women in Sri Lanka. Data for the research were collected through a questionnaire survey and research articles, and reports. Women from these communities have traditionally been involved in tea plucking, earning a daily wage. Despite the critical role played by these women in the tea industry, they have historically faced challenges such as low wages, lack of job security, and limited access to social services. The research has shown that the economic crisis has led to lower demand for tea, resulting in lower production levels on tea estates. This, in turn, has led to job losses for tea estate women involved in tea plucking. Many tea estates have been forced to reduce their workforce, leaving many women without a source of income. Estates harvest tea on a kilos basis to avoid the labor wages of Rs. 1,000 a day resulted in lower wages. The daily wage of a tea state worker reduced to Rs.450 which bring them to hard. The economic crisis has further deepened these issues, with many tea estates being forced to reduce the provision of social services such as healthcare and education. The reduced wages and job losses have forced many tea estate women to borrow money to meet daily expenses. The women push their children to earn more money from their childhood which shows the hardship of their lives. The government needs to provide social services such as healthcare and education to the tea estate communities. It needs to assure both women workers and children meet their rights equally as other parties in Sri Lanka and sustainable livelihood practices should maintain.

Keywords: Tea Estate Women, Economic Crisis, Employment Opportunities, Low Wages, Impacts

¹ *Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Peradeniya.*
nimeshaliyanage95@gmail.com