



Socio Economic Status in a Hilly Region: A Case Study of Munnar, Idukki District, Kerala, India

Md Kutubuddin Dhali

Department of Geography, Presidency University, Kolkata, West Bengal, INDIA

Available online at: www.isca.in

Received 12th November 2015, revised 15th November 2015, accepted 30th November 2015

Abstract

This paper is mainly focused on the socio-economic status of a hilly region of India. The present study is confined in the socio-economic character in Munnar, Kerala. Socio-economic framework is the basic key for country's development. Munnar is a beautiful clean hilly area of Kerala state in India. It is an important tourist spot of Kerala government. Socio-economic condition and its significant scenario are the main factors for country's progress. Social structure, political stability, government policy, economic growth, educational pattern, demographic graph, women empowerment and food security- these are most important features in this area. Here 'Kerala Model' is apt for this type of work. Hilly region basically shows an under developed and isolated from main traditional society in 3rd world and developing country but here Munnar socio-economic structure is different. Socio-economic structure is dynamic; it is changing over time to time. This work examines the present socio-economic condition of Munnar by Primary survey and field experience.

Keywords: Munnar, socio-economic status, Kerala model, primary survey.

Introduction

India one of the most developing countries in 21st century. Socio-economic status of any country plays an important role for development. After 1990; rapid urbanisation, increase of total population, standard of living, per-capita income, educational progress, sex-ratio, gross income, women and child development indicate different status in south-eastern Asian country. Different states of India have different scenario also. The position of Kerala is significant in our country than any other states by physical and cultural landform inequalities from place to place. So, socio-economic status in plain land and mountain area are mostly different. Kerala is one of the most heterogeneous community states in India, like 35 tribal groups and its distribution is 1.20 % out of total population¹. This type of information provides different socio-economic imbalance and problem yet Kerala's socio-economic status is well. High social development, inter-cast stability and schedule tribes' population developments are indicate 'Follow Kerala'². High socio economic level provides higher education level from surrounding regions and child education is also developing³. Economic development is independent development and it is also different from other development; especially for women economic empowerment is a positive result for socio-economic development⁴. Health development indicates the stander of living of any society and it is also important for socio-economic indicator⁵. Women are important part of a society, they play important role to standardise of society⁶. On the other hand education is another significant element for socio-economic condition. Education is important factor for socio-economic development of a country⁷. Health, education and employment these elements make stander of living⁸. Socio-economic disparity of any region indicates

historical, political, cultural, economic, demographic and governmental process⁹. Socio-economic status is a national status and scenario of a particular place or region¹⁰. Socio-economic status is the structure of any society. It is the framework for national development. It is dynamic and changeable over time to time, government policy to another government policy.

Study Area: Munnar is one of the most significant tourist spots and hill stations on the Western Ghats Mountain, Kerala. This study location is situated in the Idukki districts of Kerala state. The geographical location of the study area is 10°04'45"-10°05'58" latitude and 77°02'40"-77°03'45" longitude (figure-1). This hilly station is most important for large tea garden. Number of layers and layers tea estates, water fall, mountain beauty and wildlife sanctuaries are main attraction of Munnar. The traditional man-made communications of this area are mainly Cochin International Airport (105 km away from study area) and Ernakulum Railway Station (approximately 140 km from Munnar). Munnar is situated 1700 metre from mean sea level. This hilly village comprises by 11 separate wards. Kannimalai, Nullathani, Munnar colony and Letchmi are mainly selected for primary survey. The average altitude of this green hill station is approximately 500 metres. Mountain climate, wet and cold weather for 8 months covers this region. Main seasons of this area are spring (Feb-April), summer (May-Sep), wet winter (Oct-Dec), and dry winter (Jan-Feb).

Research Objectives: i. Observation of social condition of the Munnar according to primary survey. ii. To identify the economic status of the study area is by field data.

Methodology

The present work is based on mainly primary survey but secondary data like previous research reviews and collection of maps also help for this type of research. The methodology also includes both quantitative and qualitative knowledge about socio-economic condition. In the per field stage, we mainly collect different maps, some previous research reviews and work oriented information. Map has been collected from local government office and questionnaire was formed in this stage. Collection of primary data mainly includes field stage. After collection of data, row data is mainly arranged and classified and tabulated. In the post field stage, software used Arc GIS10.2.2 and application, Google Earth is used. Data were represented with some suitable statistical techniques, cartographic way and based on conceptual knowledge. Some programs used here are Microsoft Word document 2010 and Microsoft Excel 2010.

Results and Discussion

A primary survey is one of the most widely used ways to investigate in the social sciences. The most important tool in

this type of research is collection of data. Random sampling is best statistical technique for data collection. Household survey had been carried out in 56 houses of the Munnar (mainly selected 4 wards). From field data, the socio-economic conditions is understood very significant; most significant demographic characteristic is sex ratio. This ratio is between male and female population in a particular place. The scenario of sex ratio here Munnar Colony is 1026:1000, Nullathani is 1001:1000, Letchmi is 867:1000, and Kannimalai is 722:1000 (figure-2). The overall age sex structure provides clear idea of this region (table-1). Actual amount of population or percentages of population in different age groups are unstable from gender to age. The growth of Infant birth rate is more than infant death rate; it indicates short term baby booms. At Nullathani during last 10 years, female birth rate (15) indicates increased result from male birth rate (7) and last 10 years death scenario is 4:4. In Munnar Colony, last 10 years number of male birth is 7 and female birth rate is 6. On the other hand death ratio is 2:3. In Kannimalai during last 10 years birth ratio is 4:5. Letchmi shows birth rate ratio in last 10 years is 5:1. This area is typical developing area and hilly region. Overall 36% population falls in the age group below 24.

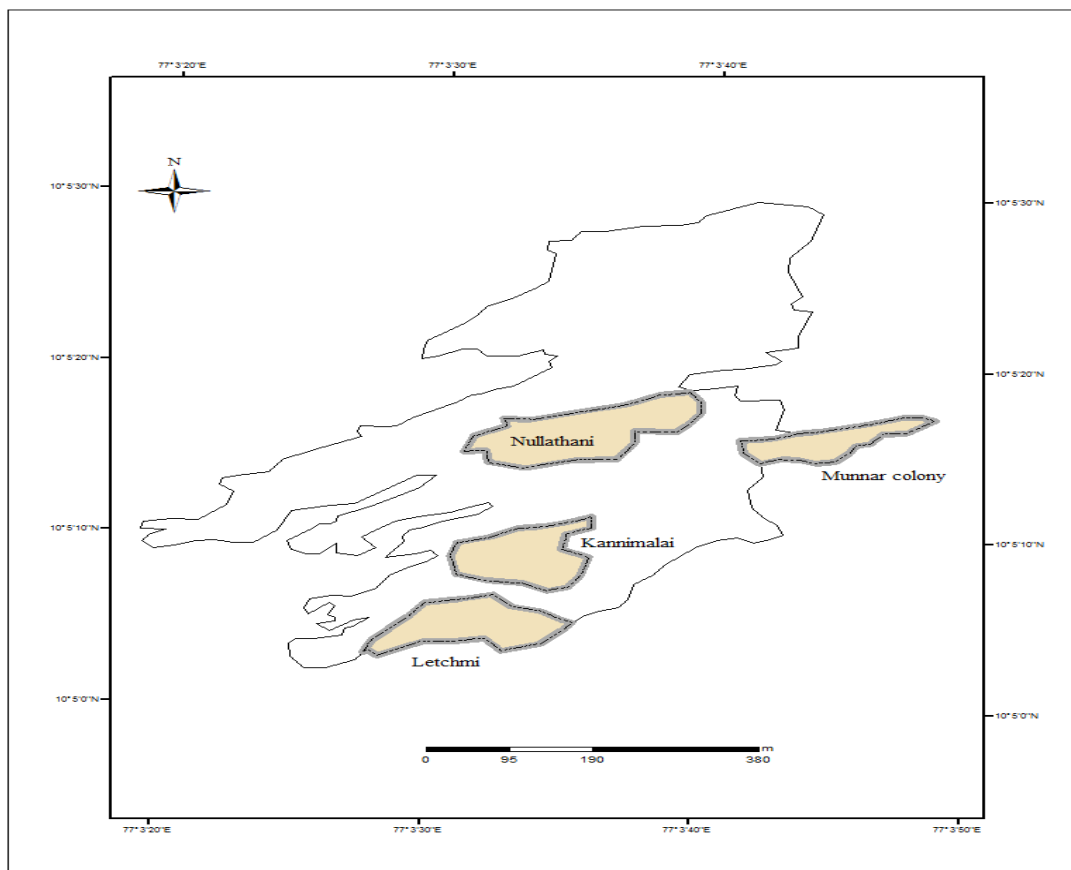


Figure-1
Location map of Munnar, Idukki districts, Kerala

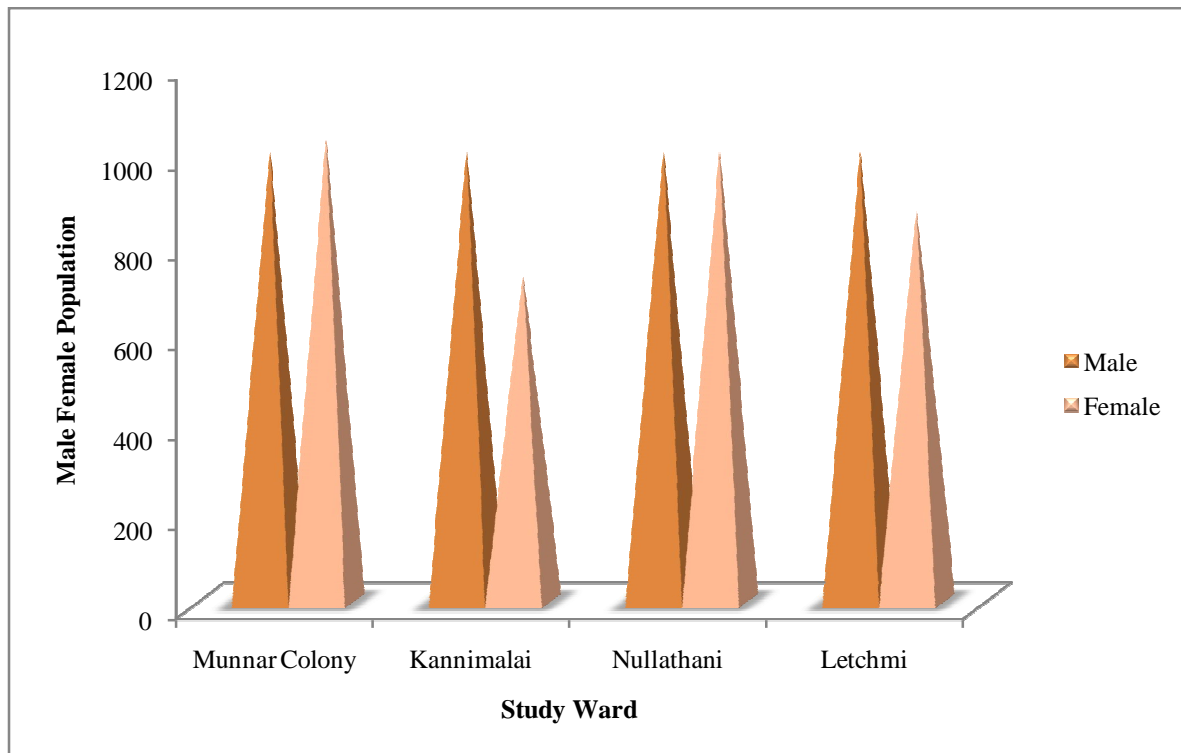


Figure-2
Sex-Ratio of four working ward at Munnar

Table-1
Age groups and Sex-Ratio (% is round figure) at Munnar, Source Primary data, 2013

Age groups	Male (in %)	Female (in %)	Age groups	Male (in %)	Female (in %)
0-4	6	7	40-44	6	7
05-09	8	6	45-49	8	8
10-14	5	6	50-54	6	7
15-19	9	9	55-59	6	6
20-24	9	8	60-64	3	4
25-29	10	12	65-69	2	3
30-34	12	11	>70	3	5
35-39	7	8			

Source Primary data, 2013

Family structure in social science plays another role for socio-economic studies in a particular place. Family population policy also depends on their religious or mental views. In this found survey all over result of 57% families are nucleated and 43% belong to joint family (figure-3). Presence of nuclear family is high in Nullathani (71%) and Letchmi (85%). On the other hand, all over 64% residents are native and other 36% migrated from other places (figure-4) but Kannimalai indicates more over 90% population are local people.

Religious system in a traditional society is social system and culture system. There are mainly three religious groups; Hindu, Christian and Muslim. Hindu population is 69%, Christian is 27% and Muslim population is 4% out of total population (figure-5). This variation of population indicates social multidirectional character of this hilly region. In Munnar colony Muslim population is respectively 12% but in other three wards like Nullathani, Letchmi and Kannimalai mostly are found in Hindu and Christian population.

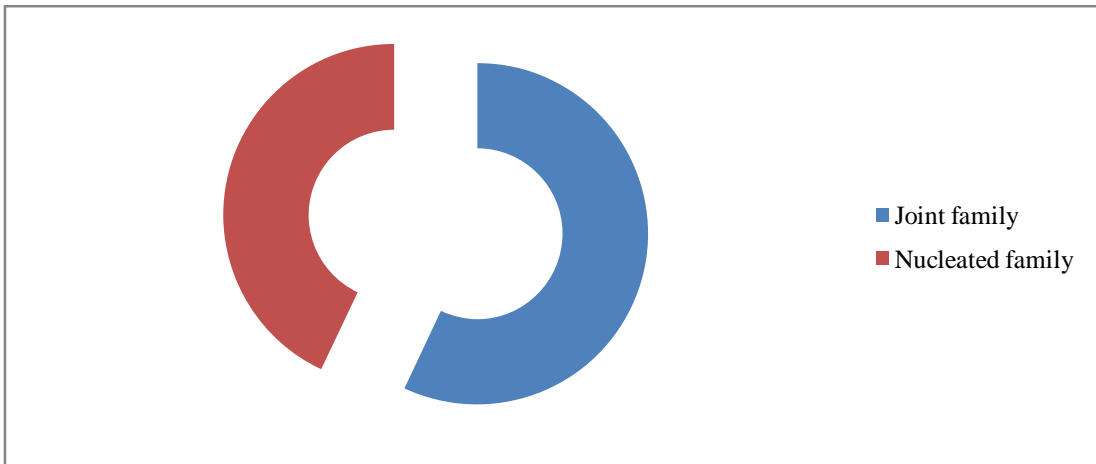


Figure-3
Family structure at Munnar

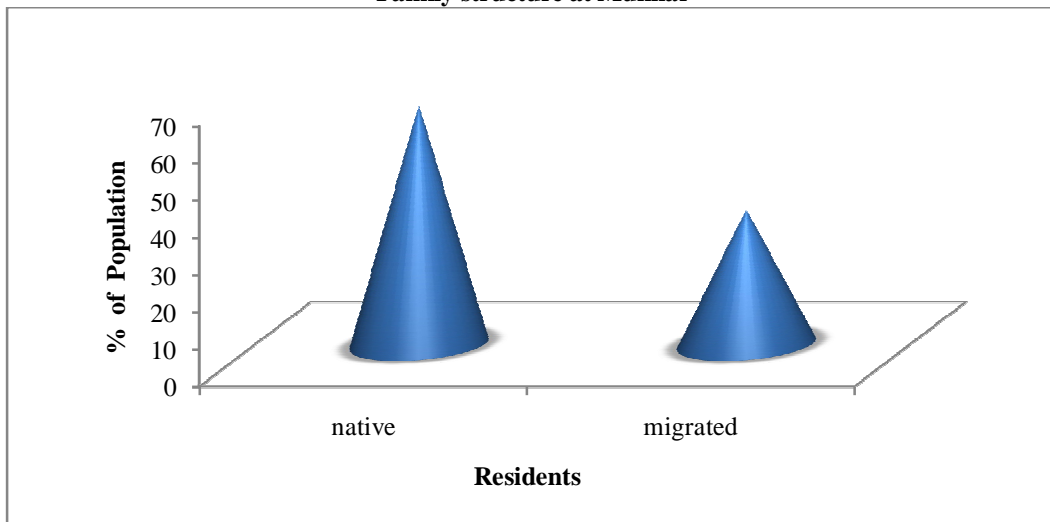


Figure-4
Residential scenario at Munnar

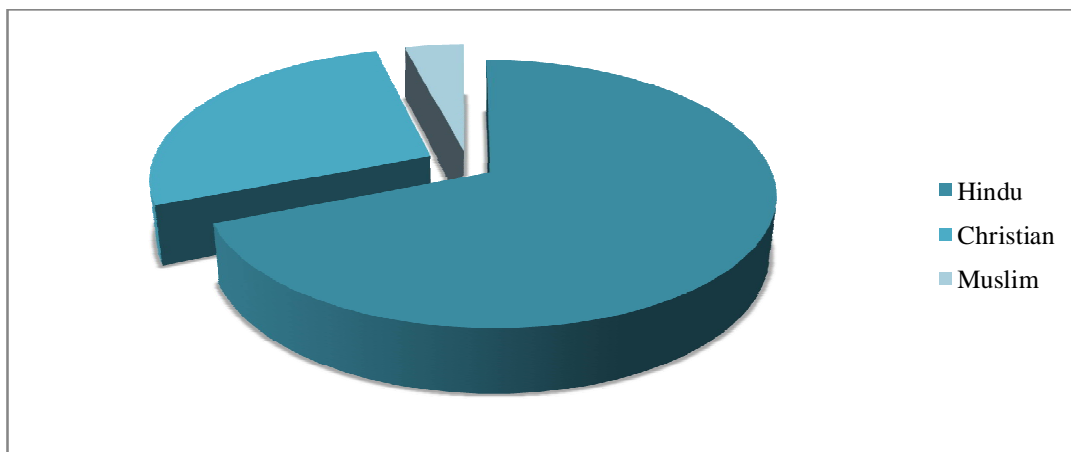


Figure-5
Distribution of Religion at Munnar

Drinking water effects human health. In Munnar overall 75% of family collect water from pipe line source and rest of 25% families' use tank water supply system. Pipe line water supply system is controlled by the TATA. In Nullathani residents also use tank water (71%). On the other side the people of Letchmi depends on pipe line water supply system. Sewage system is a waste water removal system or solution of rainy water management. In an open society, this is the main problem from place to place. In this study area 91% houses have sewage system and rest of 9% houses have don't have proper sewage system. 100% sewage system is found in Munnar colony and Kannimalai but in Nullathani and Letchmi no proper sewage system is there based on primary survey.

Housing condition is another socio-economic structure for social studies. Munnar indicates the variety of houses. 91% houses are pucca and other 9% are kachacha houses. Munnar colony indicates 99% pucca houses and Nullathani, Letchmi 31% and 29% kachacha houses (Table-2) are found. In Kannimalai 6% kachacha houses are found (figure-6).

Table-2
Showing different types of house of four study wards,

Place	Kachacha houses	Pucca house
Munnar Colony	1	99
Kannimalai	6	94
Nullathani	31	69
Letchmi	29	71

Source Primary data, 2013

Economic condition like occupational pattern of Munnar is very well. Different types of workers are present here; tea garden worker, businessman, salesman, teacher, police and so on. The major profession of the residents is work of tea garden (27%). The percentage of Business man is 9%; private service holder is 7% and rest of 28% are students and 23% are house wife. Monthly income of this area is very strong. Maximum salary of population is 5,000-10,000 rupees (31.37%), 10,000-20,000 rupees (23.52%), 20,000-50,000 rupees (27.45%) and other (table-3), (figure-7).

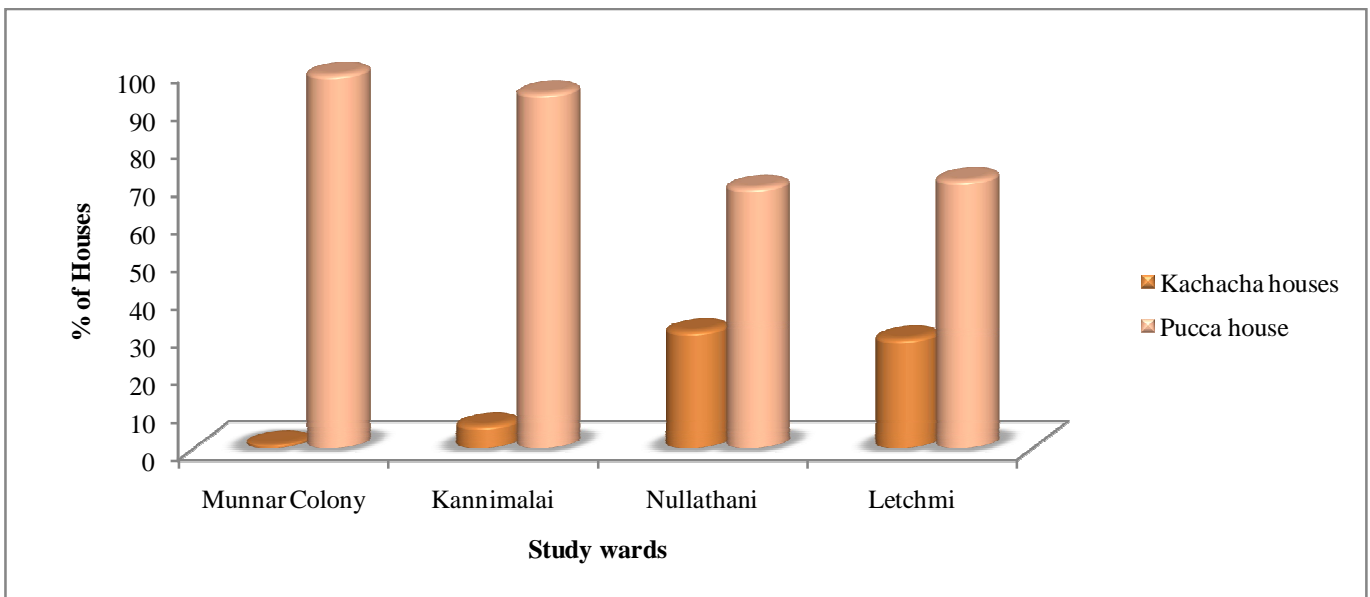


Figure-6
House types at Munnar

Table-3
Showing economic status of population at Munnar, Source Primary data, 2013

Monthly Income (Rs.)	No. of Population	% of Population
0-5000	5	9.8
5000-10000	16	31.37
10000-20000	12	23.52
20000-50000	14	27.45
>50000	4	7.84

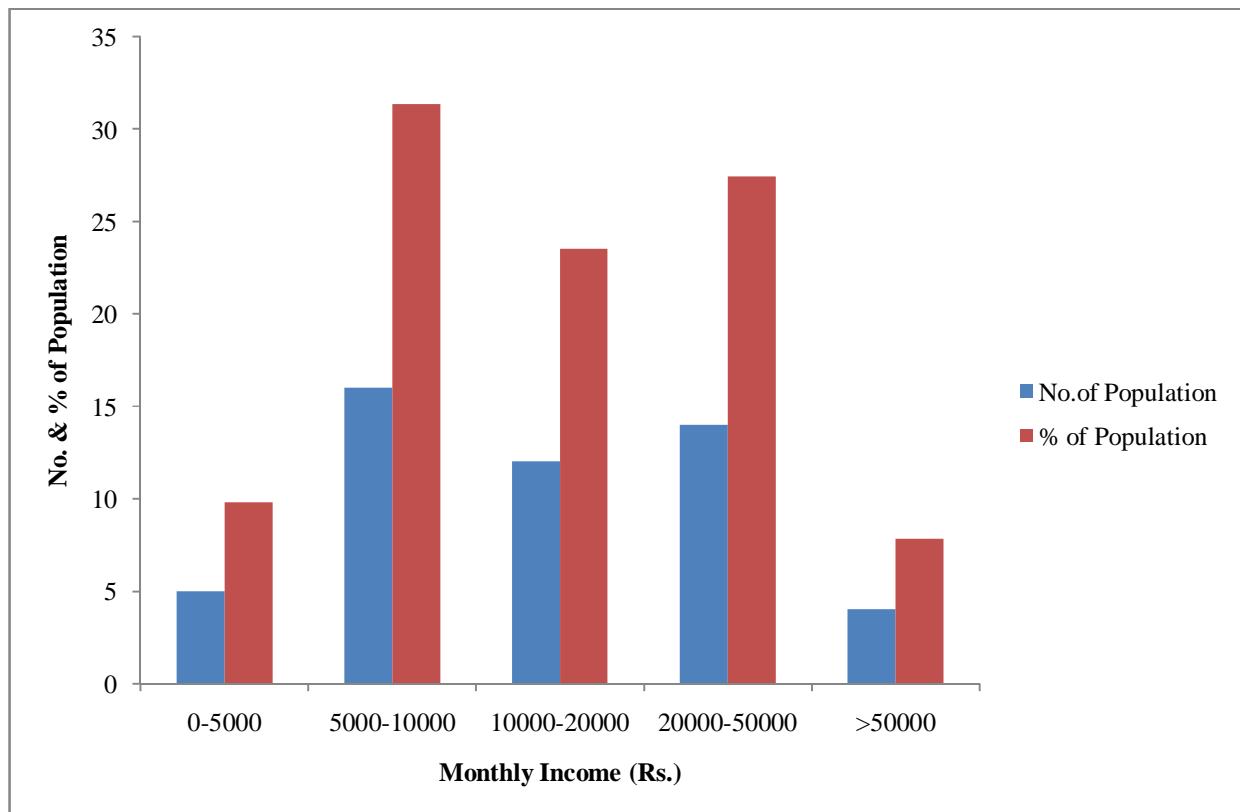


Figure-7
Monthly income distribution of different classes at Munnar

Conclusion

Munnar is the most wonderful mountain place. It is located near the equatorial region. Socio-economic status of this area is most significant. Here in Nullathani and Munnar Colony cultural variation is well and Sex ratio is balanced. The number of Joint families and nuclear families is more or less same but Nullathani and Letchmimostly indicate the nuclear families. Hinduism is major religious view but Christian is also here. Main source of drinking water is pipe line, it is controlled by TATA. Well sewage system is found in this place. Per capita income of residents in this area is also high. Socio-economic status is dynamic and it is changeable. This primary survey shows a micro study and information of present socio-economic condition of Munnar. Socio-economic scenario of this type of hilly region indicates developed society; a part of 'Kerala Model'.

References

1. Census of India, Population report, (2011)
2. CSSEIP Human Development Report of Tribal Communities in Kerala. Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP), CUSAT, Kerala, (2010)
3. Shuang Ji and Koblinsky, Parent involvement in children's education: An exploratory study of urban, Chinese immigrant families. *Urban Education*, **44(6)**, 687-709, (2009)
4. Kulshrestha SP and Day P, Socio-economic status scale (Urban) form-A, National Psychological Corporation, Agra, (1972)
5. Rajasenan D.et al., Health, Education and Employment in a Forward-Backward Dichotomy Based on Standard of Living Index for the Tribes in Kerala, 100-108, (2013)
6. Fantuzzo J., Tighe E. and Childs S., Family involvement questionnaire: a multivariate assessment of family participation in early childhood education, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, **92(2)**, 367-376, (2000)
7. UNDP, Human Development Report 2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_200, (2013)
8. Rajeswari K.V., Socio-economic status and Parental Involvement: a Comparison among Tribal, Fisher folk and Muslim majority Secondary Schools of Kerala, 51-56, (2014)
9. Ramadas K.et.al., Socio-economic factors and longevity in a cohort of Kerala State, India, 479-486, (2011)

10. Government of Kerala, Department of Economics and Statistics, Economic and Purpose Classification of Kerala Government Budget 1993-94 to 1998-99, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, (2000)
11. Centre for Socio-Economic and Environmental Studies (CES), Entry Barriers to Professional Education in Kerala. Kochi, (1997)
12. District Urbanisation Report, Idukki, (2011)