
Factors Determining the Preference to Join the Union Membership among Tea Plantation Workers in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of demographic, union and job characteristics of tea plantation workers on their preference to join the labour union for membership in Sri Lanka. For this purpose, two tea plantation sectors such as Bogowantalawa and Watawala from Hatton and Dickoya urban council areas with total samples of 130 and they were selected randomly. The preference to join the union membership is the dependent variable which is coded as zero for not prefers and one for prefers to join the union as a member. Demographic characteristics, union characteristics and job characteristics were considered as explanatory variables and to identify the impact of these characteristics on workers' preference to join the union probit model was used in the study. The estimated probit results suggest that, workers' income, monthly subscription fee, an opinion about subscription fee, working environment, alternative job opportunities are significant factors to influence their decision in the union membership. Further, marginal effects also examined and its results concluded that, the workers who are getting benefits by paying monthly subscription fee, have 14.8% of more probability to join as a union member while the workers who are working on contract basis have 10.8% of less likely to join the union compared to permanent workers in tea plantation sector. The empirical findings gave significant policy implications which will help the workers and trade unions that engrossing in tea sector to understand the critical factors and that influence workers' preference to join the union in the study area.

Keywords: Alternative job opportunities, Demographic and job characteristics, Probit model, Union membership and marginal effects
