

The bitter taste of Patriarchy: Participation of women coffee farmers in production decision making in Southern India

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Master Thesis

Business, Management and Organization Group

BMO – 80436

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH



The Bitter taste of Patriarchy: Participation of women coffee farmers in production decision making in South India

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Study Programme: M.Sc. Food Technology

Specialization: Food Innovation and Management

Acknowledgement

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the following people. First, I would like to acknowledge my parents who have chosen to support to me throughout my life's pursuit. My supervisors, Mark and Valentina who have always encouraged and nudged me to improve my quality of work. They have also constantly offered feedback, been patient and helped me progress every step of the way. My friend Subbiah who has helped me in many ways to be resilient throughout my Master's Programme. My bonds of sisterhood, Anitha, Divya, Shakuntala and Buvana with who I have had many discussions about patriarchy and have given me reasons to drive change at a grassroots level. My friend Sandeep who has been my source of humor and who shares my love for coffee. My mentor, Ratheesh Krishnan who has always pushed me to think of the right questions and shaped me in the last two years. My housemates at Wageningen who have always accepted me for who I am and taken care of me like I was family. All of my friends in India and in Wageningen who have always been there for me.

My study advisor Emily Swan who has lend her ears and numerous tissues that has helped me find the strength to be able to get closer to the completion of this Masters. My sincere thanks to AJ Jacobs, the author of Thanks a Thousand which is a TED book where he finds at least a 1000 people and thanks them for making his morning coffee happen. That book changed my life and brought to surface my love for coffee. All my respondents who chose to share their stories with me. Thanks to Wageningen University and Research, a place that helped me think with my heart and allowed me to find my passion to act on it. And finally, to coffee itself for being the reason to keep me going metaphorically and literally.

Executive Summary

Coffee is a beverage over which several conversations happen. It is time to start a conversation about coffee. It is one of the largest traded commodities in the world but it continues to have a negative impact on the people and the planet. This research has attempted to understand why people, women especially needed to be included in production decision making as they already were central to the production system. Women have been entering into different roles in the coffee value chain increasingly over the last few years. Because of their increased presence in different parts of the value chain, it was only fair they had increased access to resources, higher decision making power and a fair income for all of their contributions. Equality is still a myth in a lot of contexts and even more so in agriculture. The natural acceptance that men could be producers, migrate to other cities just to earn a living or be in leadership positions is uncommon when it comes to women in many places. Agriculture and India in this case is no exception. Being a woman in India automatically comes with a price tag called independence. Women have not been conventionally allowed to shape their lives and were always expected to be in the shadow of men.

These kinds of practices have been normalized over the years because of the cultural and social obligations that women were expected to fulfill. Belief systems present in every context could further add to this pressure woman have faced over the years. Even though they have had the passion to do great things for the production of coffee, often they have had to cross multiple obstacles before they could fulfill their potential. This research will focus on the women who were coffee producers and understand what kind of norms and other informal institutions affected women's participation for production decision making in South India.

Keywords : women, coffee producers, gender, norms, South India, Livelihoods Framework, informal institutions, decision making

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the 1990's the global production of coffee has increased over 65%. Worldwide, production of coffee provides a livelihood for about 12.5 million farmers and their families (International Coffee Organization, 2019). Zooming into the producing countries in Asia, India ranks as the 8th largest exporter of coffee in the world (Madhavi & Done, 2019). Coffee in the South of India was shade grown and environment friendly (Neilson & Pritchard, 2009). India is home to 16 unique and diverse coffee varieties. It is primarily cultivated in the Western Ghats of the country covered by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (Madhavi & Done, 2019). In India, coffee cultivation was concentrated dominantly in the south with Karnataka producing the largest in volume. Coffee offers employment to more than 600,000 people in India (Madhavi & Done, 2019).

Worldwide, 70% of the labor in coffee production was done by female household members and workers depending on the production system and the region (ICO, 2019). At coffee producing origins, women played a vital role in the production activities. They are commonly involved in different activities like supervising the quality of coffee, irrigation of the seedbeds, harvesting, and drying (Coffee Quality Institute, 2014). As far as India was concerned, there have not been any quantitative studies that focused exclusively on female laborers or producers except one. Based on the data collected by National Sample Survey Organization in 2011-2012, it was found that only 34% of the labourers were women in comparison to the 66% men, all of whom were engaged in curing coffee. While there were close to 51% of men who were paid regularly for their labor, this number for women was just 1%! Women workers were neither being paid equally nor were not able to enjoy any social security (Chattopadhyay, 2015).

Despite it being the second largest traded commodity in the world, the coffee sector still faces numerous sustainability challenges including negative effects of climate change, soil fertility, and gender imbalances (Fairtrade International, 2019). The common patterns of gender imbalance included discriminating against women by not giving them access to land, extension training, and knowledge. This is could be due to the pervasive gender bias in service provisions, educational levels, and social norms at origins (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2003; International Coffee Organization, 2018). It also has a negative effect on decision making on a household level (Coffee Quality Institute, 2014). The participation of women producers in decision making outside their households was still limited. There were a number of reasons that influenced their limited participation in decision making such as insufficient education, age, time poverty, and cultural prohibitions that affected their mobility outside their homes. Women from agricultural households have limited access to land and agricultural resources, further were not included

in community decision making because they were weighed down by the local gendered norms (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, & Worthen, 2017).

Improved participation in decision making could increase the access to resources for these women and it would further increase their household decision making. Food security can improve too (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, & Worthen, 2017). The social position of women improves both within their households and in the community. Finally, it could also increase their confidence and self-esteem (Huyer, 2016).

1.2 Context and Problem Statement

Women producers¹ and laborers play an important and significant role in the production of coffee in India. Women producers in India faced a lot of constraints like gendered division of labor, insufficient education, time poverty, property rights and inheritance (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2017). Gender bias impeded their contribution to agricultural productivity and affected the identities of women as producers even though they had done most of the work (Majumder & Shah, 2017). For example, women producers don't have sufficient access or control in matters of land inheritance and decision making associated with the land (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2017). Or, after harvesting the coffee, the quality improvements were usually done at the producer's residence so that women could be still hold fort at their home (Smith et al., 2018).

Additionally, cultural and social norms in India have influenced the accessibility of rights and resources especially for women producers. Cultural constraints in India have been restrictive for women producers because they had to prioritize domestic and care work before economic opportunities (Sudha & Parthipan, 2019). Norms were informal type of institutions because they are usually self-imposed. The power of informal institutions in shaping societies cannot be overlooked (Waylen, 2014).

Among the many facets of gender inequality, this thesis will focus on the participation of women producers in production decision making. There are two reasons for choosing this focus.

Firstly, Indian agriculture is becoming feminized. It fundamentally translated to higher participation of women in agriculture in rural India. Therefore, decision making is certainly at the nucleus of this transition (Pattnaik et al., 2018)

Secondly, existing research covered topics such as the impact of certificate adoption for women producers (Karki, Jena, & Grote, 2016), and patterns of decision making by women producers (Krishnamurthy, Supriya, & Nishitha, 2018). However, such research does not take into account the cultural and social constraints of these women producers. Research such as this rely only on quantitative data and doesn't really capture individual experiences. These two studies were examples of the research on women and

¹ In this case, producer was defined as an individual who owned and used the land.

coffee in India, yet they do not document the social positioning of women at a household level. These two studies were inclined towards finding patterns but failed to explain the causes for these patterns.

These causes can in turn throw light on the context, restrictions and perceptions which would enable researchers to look beyond quantifying patterns.

Therefore, this thesis will try to understand the influence the social and cultural norms (which can be categorized as informal institutions) could have on the extent of participation in decision making for women coffee producers in India. Using a case study approach, this thesis will focus on the Chikumagalur region in the state of Karnataka. Chikumagalur was popularly known as the birthplace of Indian coffee.

This thesis will use a qualitative data collection technique which could capture the experiences of women coffee producers in the case study area through interviews. The Sustainable Livelihoods framework is the theoretical framework for this study. This framework was chosen for three main reasons. First, it was people- centric. Second, it allowed the researcher to apply the framework at different levels ranging from individuals, households, village, regional or even national. Lastly, the influence of context and institutions on the livelihood strategies and outcomes was central to this framework which aligned with the interests of this investigation (Scoones, 1998 ; Chambers & Conway, 1991; Bray & Neilson, 2017).

1.3 Research Objective

- Understand the informal institutions embedded in the lives of women coffee farmers in Chikumagalur.
- Understand the extent of participation of these women in production decision making.
- Understand informal institutional barriers that influence the extent of participation in the decision-making process.

1.4 Central Research Question

How do informal institutions prevalent in Chikumagalur affect the extent of participation of women coffee farmers in production decision making?

1.5 Sub Research Question

1. What are the informal institutions present in Chikumagalur?
2. How can we understand the influence of informal institutions for these women farmers in particular?
3. What kind of decisions are women farmers usually involved in/excluded from?

1.6 Overview of the Chapters

The structure of this thesis would be as follows. Chapter 2 is the literature review which reviews the existing literature about coffee, informal institutions, women in coffee, and the sustainable livelihoods framework. Chapter 3 is the methodology used to carry out this thesis which includes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. In the later part of Chapter 3, the type and format of data collected, method of analysis and research design would be described. Chapter 4 summarizes the important results of this thesis, thus answering the enlisted sub- research questions. Chapter 5 is the discussion section which will be used to answer the central research question of this thesis. This section will also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this thesis. Finally, chapter 6 is the conclusion which will summarize the findings and conclude the thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This section is divided into four major parts in order to understand how all the particulars of this research have been studied until now. The first was the problems faced by women in coffee, this section focused on all the problems women face due to their gender in the production side of coffee. This is important to understand the relevance of choosing women coffee farmers as the focus for this research. Section 2.1 gives an overview of the kind of problems that arise due to their gender, ethnicity, social norms, insufficient time etc. that directly affects their contributions on the field. Section 2.2 deep dives into existing literature on the theoretical framework used for this research.

Section 2.3 talks about the basic institutional theory. It further has instances on the impact of institutions on agriculture and in coffee production. These instances were listed down for agriculture because the details of the impact would vary depending on the crop yet its effect could be felt in agriculture. Section 2.3.1 specifically focuses on the role of informal institutions specifically for coffee production in developing countries. These two sections together will allow the researcher to understand the impact of informal institutions on coffee production and construct the conceptual framework.

2.1 Women Producers in coffee

The coffee industry globally has taken notice of the increasing number of women farmers (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, & Worthen, 2017).

Share of labour force	Share of household heads / Land-owners	Region / Country	Source
<i>Coffee sector</i>			
70%	20%	Global [†]	ITC, 2008
n/a	23%	Uganda	Meemken and Qaim, 2018
n/a	35% [‡]	Mexico & Central America	Lyon <i>et al.</i> , 2010
n/a	29-34% [§]	Kenya	Dijkdrenth, 2015
n/a	24%	Uganda	Sekabira and Qaim, 2017
n/a	19%	Ethiopia [†]	Author's calculation based on World Bank LSMS-ISA
n/a	28%	Uganda [†]	
n/a	26%	Tanzania [†]	
<i>Agricultural sector</i>			
43%	n/a	Global	FAO, 2011
20%	21%	Latin America	
50%	17%	SE-Asia / S-Asia	
50%	26%	Sub-Saharan Africa	

^{*} Study comprises 15 countries
[‡] Share of female Fairtrade-organic farm operators
[§] Share of female coffee-cooperative members
[†] Nationally representative sample

Figure 1: Women in Coffee (International Coffee Organization, 2018)

Figure 1 was an example to help us understand data regarding women in coffee globally. It was evident that 70% of the labor work in coffee is done by women globally although data per region was not shown. The number of women land owners who cultivated coffee is still not even closer to being equal in number to male land owners.

Globally, even though women have devoted time and energy towards the production of coffee for their households, they are often excluded from participating in agricultural decision making (Lyon, Bezaury, & Mutersbaugh, 2010).

Historically, women have been deprived the status of being accepted as a producer rather were just considered as laborers. Currently, due to the feminization of agriculture, more women took on formal leadership roles in the coffee value chain. The number of women who worked in the agricultural sector has increased in the developing countries from 1990 (Bilfield, Seal, & Rose, 2020).

Studies from other regions outside India have demonstrated the impact of this exclusion. For example, in Ethiopia, women involved in coffee production suffer because of disproportionate work load inside and out their households. Further, they did not earn equally like the men of their household (Lim, Nelson, & Kuenning, 2007). Women in coffee producing households in Uganda, which is the 10th largest producer of

coffee in the world, also face gender inequalities. Gendered division of labor give men the power to make decisions related to production and marketing (Kasente, 2012).

In India, research has shown that women producers were invisible and underrepresented in producer based organizations (Patkar, 2015). Insufficient education, poor access to resources, social norms were some reasons that could explain the existing inequality (International Coffee Organization, 2018).

An observation about the literature on women in coffee globally is that, it has been contextual. The first thing this research has acknowledged is that the context played a very important role in the lives of women. As far as India was concerned, there has not been any significant research that focused exclusively on women in coffee. Nor, about institutional restrictions that caused negative outcomes for women in the coffee value chain. This research will contribute towards bridging this gap by focusing on the types of informal institutions and it's influence on women coffee in the South of India.

2.2 Sustainable livelihoods framework and its application in coffee production

In order to make the connection between the institutions and their influence on the livelihood choices available for women coffee producers (in this case), the sustainable livelihoods framework was selected.

Before deep diving into the literature regarding this framework, preliminary reading helped the researcher choose this framework for three main reasons, 1.the complexity of the framework in connecting the different elements reflects the reality 2.this framework allows the researcher to have a holistic understanding of the cause (institutions) and the effect (outcomes) through this set up 3.the framework's emphasis on the contextual importance of institutions seems appropriate and relevant for this research.

The sustainable livelihoods framework was developed as a means to make livelihoods choices sustainable. It has multiple layers because it doesn't just look at the income and consumption of individuals but also on improvement of the current livelihood strategies of individuals (Chambers & Conway, 1991). This approach was further structured in to a framework by Scoones(1998) making it central in themes relating to rural development, poverty reduction and environmental management. There are five key elements to this framework, three of them connect employment with the reduction of poverty linked to broader issues like security and well-being. The last two focus on the sustainability aspect, more toward the resilience of the livelihoods and the resources. It is flexible and relevant to realize that this framework is not meant to be perceived the same by everyone as it is possible to have different views and therefore a different perception making it open for negotiation.

Using this framework to formulate the conceptual framework of this thesis can be interesting in many ways. First, it has been used to analyze development problems like poverty, rural upliftment among others. It would be a fantastic opportunity to use this framework to analyze gender, yet another complex development

problem in agriculture. The complexity of the framework can be used to realize the intricacies reflected from real life. Gender in agriculture itself is an elaborate topic that has required multi-disciplinary approaches for years to create solutions. Second, it could help the researcher understand that there can be multiple reasons for one outcome depending on the contextual conditions. The complexity, Gender in this case comes with should not be treated as a linearity of cause and effect. In other words, the framework does not oversimplify the problem but opens different avenues for investigation to understand the same problem/outcome. Rather, as layers where a single effect can already be connected to multiple causes. Lastly, the flexibility of the framework offered scope for improvement. This framework is therefore appropriate to be used as a theoretical underpinning for creating the conceptual framework of this these.

Diving deeper into the framework itself, it is possible to understand that in order for the individuals to pursue different livelihood strategies, they need to have different assets which may be tangible or intangible. As these assets and resources allow them to create a livelihood, they were referred to as capitals. There are five capitals namely human, social, financial, physical and natural. The advantage about this framework is that it is possible to start with what assets and resources people currently have. Using these capitals, individuals could potentially apply one of the three identified livelihood strategies which are agricultural intensification/extensification, livelihood diversification and migration. The individuals pursuing separate or combination of strategies could have a positive or negative impact on their household members or their community. Further, being aware of institutions in a context could help in identifying the restrictions/barriers/opportunities that can be destroyed or created. More importantly, it can throw some light on the social processes that directly affect the sustainability of livelihoods which cannot be achieved in a fixed way. It required negotiations, discussions and trade in every step. Therefore, realizing the complexity of institutions in a setting is essential (Scoones,1998).

Current literature on the applications of the livelihood framework in agriculture are primarily on the actor's accessibility of assets and impact of development interventions like fair trade certification on household levels. Bray & Neilson (2017) used the livelihoods framework to do a review of the impact of certification programme like UTZ, Fair trade, Rainforest Alliance on a household level of the smallholder coffee producers. They used this framework to directly assess the impact and it was considered the most appropriate framework as it is people centric. The framework was used because it could focus on the assets both tangible and intangible in order to develop a strategy which ultimately decided the sustainability of the livelihoods. In this case, the strategy was to implement regulations that could get them certified thereby positively impacting their livelihoods. Using the framework, they concluded the certification had impacted different elements of the capital positively or negatively. For example, education had a positive correlation

with certification thereby helping smallholder farmers improve farm management and safety measures. Physical capital would improve because of the willingness of the farmers to invest because of the higher incomes earned through certification. Natural capital would improve upon the adoption of good agricultural practices because of the certification along with increased awareness of the environment. Further, the authors emphasized the importance of institutional settings that allow anyone to look beyond just financial outcomes and understand impacts of these certifications on gender and labor which were usually neglected (Bray & Neilson, 2017).

The actors of the value chain, in this case the women producers were central to this research. Primary data was collected from these women in the given context. This framework was useful in many ways. First, since it has already put the actors in the center, it enabled the researcher to set up an insightful interview guide. Second, the basic connections between the different elements of the framework was established, it could be used to gain insights immediately during the interview. Additionally, these insights had enabled the researcher to improvise the interview guide as per the interviews. Finally, the importance given to the actors in the framework was an important and relevant way to learn about the different contextual social constructs and norms.

The livelihoods framework has also been used in combination with the global value chain approach, rather integrated so the gaps in both the frameworks were complimented because of the other. Neilson & Shonk (2014) designed their research to understand the livelihoods and the global value chains of the Toraja region which produces coffee in Indonesia. This combination of approaches was used because in the value chain approach, insights regarding the structural processes at large that enable different livelihood possibilities and the livelihood framework would be useful to further look at the nuances and the complex reality of the livelihoods that often is overlooked by the former approach.

The above example can be used to explain the complexity of livelihoods framework. The framework itself had many different elements that were not linearly connected. It has not been oversimplified for its end user rather the authors of the framework have emphasized on the dynamism, complexity and flexibility of it over the years. This can be applied to any context and it would still be insightful to make relevant connections based on the objective of the study. The intersectionality between the different elements strongly reflected the reality. This thesis can use this present complexity of the framework to pay attention to the women producers whose lives, experiences, choices and outcomes were bound by their context.

Together, these two lenses could be useful for rural development. In their research, they concluded that value chain approach may offer scope for development yet it was vital to understand the reality of those livelihoods and the current strategies they pursue (Neilson & Shonk, 2014). The livelihoods framework to understand participation at the household and community level to use sustainable coffee certification programs. This approach was used because the coffee was produced predominantly by smallholder farmers in Nicaragua and coffee has been of economic importance to this region. The impact of the coffee crisis has left several of the small holder farmers in particular causing the rapid decrease in incomes, hunger and ultimately poverty. It was therefore appropriate to use the livelihoods framework in the context of Nicaragua and understand the needs and capacities of these small holder farmers first at a household level (Bacon et al., 2008).

This framework was also used to understand the actors in any value chain. In a study done by Bielecki & Wingenbach (2019), they used the livelihoods framework in order to better understand how their identity and the dynamics of their community was affected because of the decisions made during a crisis due to the coffee leaf rust outbreak in Central America. This framework was chosen primarily because of the context in this case Central America where food insecurity concerns were real. It would also affect the community and the individual's livelihood strategies. For this reason, the authors had used this framework to understand the different strategies like diversification for example would be considered and potentially even implemented by the coffee farmers when they had to face a crisis like the Coffee leaf rust outbreak in that region (Bielecki & Wingenbach, 2019). This framework was useful to identify the vulnerabilities and the adaptive capabilities of household on the climate change front to tackle the hazards posed to the small-scale coffee farmers of the Soconusco region of Chiapas in Mexico. Through this, it was possible for the authors to pinpoint the various challenges faced by the small holder farmers to create amenable and better policies that could protect them during hazards (Meza, 2015). Neilson (2013) documented the existing farm practices, post-harvest activities and the livelihoods strategies of the coffee farmers of the Flores region in Indonesia using a livelihoods framework. The livelihoods framework could be looked at as a way of thinking, a lens through which the different connections between the actor's their resources and the environment they are part of could be understood (Neilson, Hartatri, & Lagerqvist, 2013).

This framework had to be given credits for prioritizing and integrating context into it's theory. Understanding context was important to comprehend the complexity between the cause and the outcomes.

It can be understood from the above literature review about the importance and the relevance of the livelihood's framework in the production of coffee for different contexts. This framework has been used as a lens to comprehend what the actors have and do in order to further improve their well-being and a chance to upgrading their lives. Disadvantages of this framework include their ineffectiveness in policy design. Another one being the ability to translate the multilevel approach in real life (Neilson, Hartatri, & Lagerqvist, 2013).

In short, the credibility for this framework was justified through the different examples above. Therefore, The livelihoods framework has also been used to understand the impact of gender as an important institution. The sustainable livelihoods framework was used to understand the differences between male led and female led households in Malawi with respect to livelihood strategies such as diversification to improve the well being of the households. Simtowe (2010) showed that male led households usually earn higher than female led households because of the lack of access to resources due to inequalities. This directly affects the economic activity of the household because of the decisions made by the household heads (Simtowe, 2010). Another study in which gender was touched upon through this framework was by Bray & Neilson (2017) on the impact of coffee certification programs on small holder livelihoods. They found that these certifications had both positive and negative impacts on the lives of the women who were directly involved with the production of coffee in the different regions. While these certifications encouraged women to be active participants in decision making, it was also limiting due to the social norms in many societies (Bray & Neilson, 2017).

The complexity, people-centric nature of the framework and the context were criteria used to select this framework as the most suitable theoretical underpinning of this thesis. Yet, little has been done about institutions which appears central to this framework. Research using the livelihoods framework until now has paid excess attention to understand the distribution and impact of assets in a context for different commodities. The motives behind the emergence of such patterns in a context have not been scrutinized. The gap however, is that there has not been sufficient research done on institutions in a context which could be used to explain the patterns behind the differential outcomes for certain actors of the chain. The results of such studies could allow us to have a deeper and critical understanding of the context before designing suitable interventions.

As far as India was concerned, this research would focus on opening the institutions box of this framework. This study will find out the informal institutions associated with using a gendered lens. This will be the first of a kind study initiated in one of the most important coffee growing regions of India. This study will contribute to re-centering institutions in the livelihood's framework. An outcome like restricted participation in decision making for women could be traced back to multiple causes. Informal institutions

among them dominate the most because it the fundamental basis with which any society evolves. For this reason, this framework will provoke further to see what kind of informal institutions were present in this context and it's influence on women. The intention of this thesis will be to understand the institutional reasons for restrictive participation in decision making of women coffee producers in South India.

2.3 Institutions: Theory and Examples in Developing Coffee Producing Countries

To have a deeper understanding of what constitutes institutions represented in the Sustainable Livelihood framework, this section will define the meaning of institutions and provide examples. Institutions can be defined as a set of rules or constraints that are devised by humans to structure interactions that are social, political and economic (Johnson, 1997) . Institutions reduce uncertainty and also formulate order. They have also been responsible for shaping the direction of economic change. They could be categorized into two types – formal and informal. Informal institutions include values, norms, taboos, customs, code of conduct, those which were usually self-imposed. The main elements that make up the institutions are behavior, symbolic elements and the enforcement by regulatory processes. Structures that could be explained through cognition, norms and regulations enable us to understand social behavior and the meanings attached to them (Veciana & Urbano, 2008). Informal institutions also have an effect on the formal institutions in such a way that they affect their quality and sustainability. They are used in regulating the socio-economic lives of individuals, further positioning individuals relatively. This relative positioning of individuals is a barrier because it doesn't allow access to resources as it depends on the history and culture of a society (Casson, Giusta, & Kambhupati, 2010). Being aware of an actor's institutional conditions is relevant to understand the subtle invisibility of the actor's position in the society and the normality that is attached with the institutions (Lammers & Gracia, 2017). They can be seen as regularized practice that have been formulated by the rules and norms present in the society. They are always important because of the outcome it yields, that being the power relations. They can be shaped and reshaped as they are dynamic in nature making them a cycle of social negotiation (Scoones, 1998). They are rules of the game that are to be followed to achieve a social or economic goal (Johnson, 1997). Institutions can be thought of as a “structure that humans impose on their dealings with each other (North & North, 1992)”. Informal institutions were believed to be overthrown if the formal institutions were in place and monitored sufficiently. Yet, it hasn't been the case because informal institutions also aid in shaping the society.

They could be used to restrict and encourage certain behaviors depending on the actors. Stereotypes about masculinity and femininity have influenced gender bias in any society (Waylen, 2014).

Other than the existing inequality because of time poverty, inequality due to gender also prevents women especially from access to agricultural extension training and information. This also impedes their voices from being heard further causing an identity crisis for these women who considered themselves as helpers

rather than farmers thus making them and their contributions secondary(Mudege et al., 2017 ; Giroud & Huaman, 2019).

Kilby et.,al (2019) point out that the agricultural work done by women in India doesn't help them with forming their identities. They consider their own contribution as an extension of their household work especially in wealthy households. It was uncommon for men to encourage their wives to be financially independent because it could further threaten their role as a provider.

A study conducted to understand the gender, participation and decision making process in farming activities in Ethiopia reported several factors listed including illiteracy, lack of technical skills and knowledge, cultural norms, male dominance, and traditional belief systems with the highest number of interviewees confirming that cultural norms was the most common reason restricting their extent of participation in decision making (Mulugeta & Amsalu, 2014).

Utting (2009) put together a framework that could be exclusively used by researchers to comprehend both the pros and cons of initiatives that aim to make business more responsible. The framework created by her was derived from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework because it enabled the researcher to understand the any measurable impact on a local level. Gender was an important metric to measure impact in any context. She argued because women played a large role in the production of coffee, it would also be vital to account for their importance in the assessment framework.

Gender equality was important because achieving it would be necessary to improve the social and economic conditions to reduce poverty. Through equality in employment, their social position, self-esteem and economic independence can be improved. There were hardly in any studies in India on the impact of gender in the coffee industry. It would be useful to do work on this to offer a valuable insight for improving policies and use these insights to create sustainably sound development plants for the coffee sector (Chattopadhyay, 2015).

Additionally, the gender gap that has been existing in agriculture must be closed for improved economic growth, food security and community development. This could be done by addressing the social, cultural and political constraints that caused the inequality in the first place and restricted the capability of woman. Therefore studies needed to integrate “a culturally sensitive multilevel approach” (Bilfield, Seal, & Rose, 2020).

2.3.1 Role of informal institutions in coffee production

In a study of coffee producer organisations in Mexico (Lyon, Mutersbaugh & Worthen, 2017) the participation of women in coffee producer organizations was found to be restricted primarily because women experience time poverty routinely. Women were obligated to use their time to finish their domestic chores before they could engage with production of coffee or participate in organizational governance in producer organizations. Due to the cultural and social expectations, women have issues especially with mobility and unpaid domestic labor. And time poverty was the outcome because of the gendered norms present in these societies. (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, & Worthen, 2017).

Time poverty as an outcome is more adverse for women than men in households that practice agriculture for their livelihoods since the amount of time women can spend for agriculture is influenced by the time women spend in reproduction and domestic labor. It not only reduces the time spent by these women for production but also reduces their free or leisure time which has a negative effect on the physical and mental health of these women. A study done to understand the connection between time poverty and farm production for the peasant household reveal the negative correlation between the both (Arora & Rada, 2016).

Prevailing gender norms impact women in a lot of ways. Firstly, they act as barriers of access to resources. Next to it, gendered norms directly affect women in different areas including access to education, and extension training. Age, marital status, quality of education, income and ownership of land is directly related to the gendered norms practiced in any society (Smith, 2013).

Evidence from a study done on the high lands of Papua New Guinea discovered the extension officers of that state had promoted and encouraged the association of the coffee crop as manly and modern. It was the job of the women to do a range of household tasks including cooking and helping with their husband's farm in return for protection and their access to the land. They did not hold a high bargaining power due to social constraints and were not receiving any economic returns for those longer working hours in comparison to men (Overfield, 2007).

The perception that women belong to the domestic sphere affected their identities further limiting their opportunity to develop socio-economically (Kaaria et al., 2016). Social norms don't enable women with the power to make household decisions including their ability to gain control over finances at their house (Giroud & Huaman, 2019).

For example, in South Sulawesi in Indonesia, coffee is one of the cash crops. South Sulawesi has ethnic groups which belong to the dominant religion of this region, Islam and follow stringent gender demarcation. Here, the impediment to women's participation in decision making was related to the norms like time constraints, taboos with women's travel, cultural and domestic prescriptions overlapping with work hours (Colfer, et al., 2015). Again, in the Indonesian province of Lampung women's involvement in coffee

production is gendered. Lampung has diverse ethnic groups who cultivate coffee as a cash crop. These ethnic groups dictate the rules and laws related to women, marriage and inheritance. These restrictions allow women only to be involved in certain production activities such as the farming of the coffee than in the post-harvesting processes, unlike men who continue to be remain involved throughout the production process. Women in Lampung have been responsible for some post harvesting activities like sorting, drying and monitoring the fermentation. Yet men didn't have any such restrictions. Women were considered weak and were obligated to follow traditional norms and also adhere to the gendered division of labor allowing women to be excluded out of certain activities other than facing inequality and subordination (Imron & Satrya, 2019). The inference from these two examples was that ethnicity in a region drives traditional gender roles.

From all the above information, it can be inferred the main cause (in this case the informal institution) for restricted participation in decision making for women could be cultural or social norms of a region. The result being time poverty, gendered division of labor, restricted participation in decision making, identity crisis and restricted mobility. Through this research, evidence regarding the informal institutions practiced in South India and its influence will be discovered.

Chapter – 3 Methodology

Section 3.1 introduced the context of this research and the choice for the same. Section 3.2 explained all the activities necessary to perform this research. Section 3.3 provided insights into the theoretical framework through which the conceptual framework was designed in Section 3.4. Section 3.5 discussed the choice of methodology appropriate for this research. Section 3.6 briefly explained the sampling method and 3.7 the analysis of data after it was collected.

3.1 Context

Chikmagalur is a rural district and known for its tourist attractions located in the state of Karnataka. It was believed that coffee was first planted in India, at the Baba Budan Giri hills in Chikmagalur. It is located in close proximities to the Bhadra wildlife sanctuary which is also a Tiger reserve. The official language of Chikmagalur is Kannada and the literacy rate is close to 80%. At higher altitudes, Chikmagalur is home to Arabica plantations and the lower altitudes are suitable for Robusta plantations (Coffee Board of India, 2020)

As far as research goes, no evidence related to studies conducted particularly in this region is available. Therefore, this region was chosen for three reasons, first because it is the birth place of coffee in India, producing coffee as a cash crop would be common. Secondly, this study would be the first one initiated for this region. Lastly, this region is known for its temples, traditions which would enable the researcher to identify and understand the prevalence of informal institutions vividly.

3.2 Research Framework

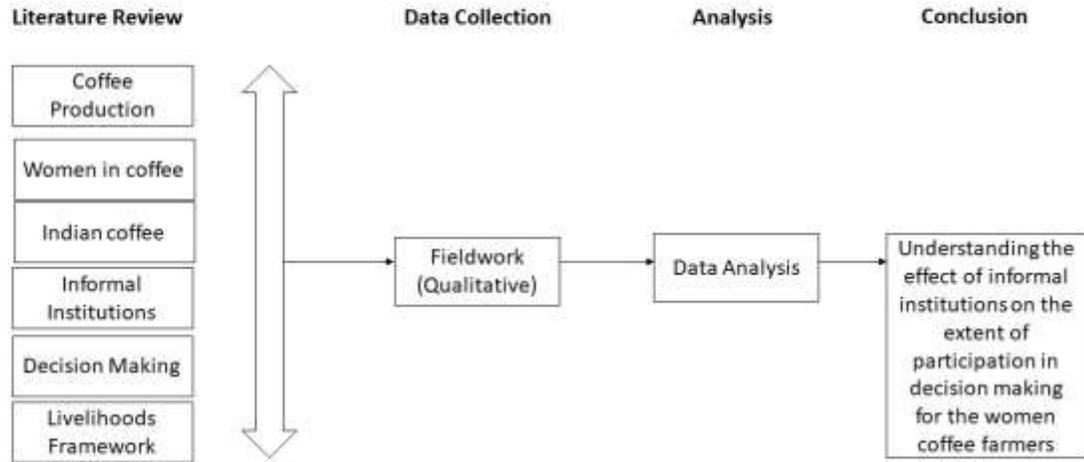


Figure 2: Research Framework, Source: Researcher's own design

Research framework can be defined as a set of sequential steps to be taken to understand the process of research and to fulfill the research objectives. It can be considered as a scheme that can guide the process (Vershchuren & Doorewaard, 2010). First, a literature review was conducted to understand the existing knowledge about the different concepts including coffee farmers around the world, informal institutions, decision making and the theoretical framework. The second stage of the process was to conduct a fieldwork in Chikumagalur region of India and interview coffee farmers using a semi structured interview guide. After which the collected data would be analyzed and the relevant interview questions would be answered. Lastly, new information which was discovered along with the answers to the research questions would be placed in the conclusion section.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

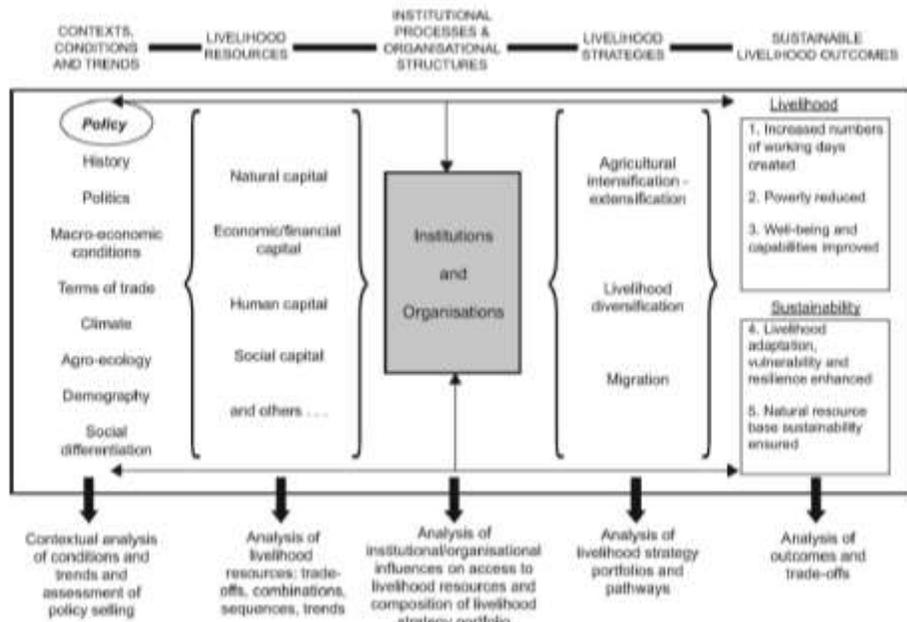


Figure 3: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Scoones, 1998)

As discussed above in the literature review section, the sustainable livelihoods framework was chosen as a theoretical lens because with an emphasis on institutions (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2003). The prevalent institutions in any context can enable or disable access to the livelihood resources. It can also directly influence the livelihood strategies and outcomes. By choosing to put people at the center, focus can be diverted to the social relations among individuals weaved through institutions. This choice allows us to understand the routine experiences of the chosen individuals better and can be termed as an actor-oriented approach. Further, to be more specific, it enabled us to understand the influence of informal institutions like culture, gender, history and spatial synergy of these actors (Turner, 2012). This theoretical framework was chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, from the Figure 3, it can be seen that understanding institutions will enable us to further know the underlying influence it has on the livelihood strategies and resources (Scoones, 1998). It can be useful to understand for this research, how institutions impact the livelihood strategies of the chosen women coffee farmers. Through that, it can be possible to know the reasons for the limited participation of the women coffee farmers in India. Secondly, institutions do have a connection to the context and vice versa. As the effect of institutions are contextual, specific research regarding women coffee farmers in India was scarce. Therefore, this research has narrowed down the context as Chikumagalur for deep diving into the institutions present in this region. It could be vital to understand how women were perceived in that region. This can help us understand the

patterns of patriarchy and norms that dictate what it was to be a woman and a woman farmer in India. Finally, this theory allowed us to have a holistic approach towards discovering the role of institutions in livelihoods. This framework clearly visualized the association between context, resources, strategies and outcomes. It is complex and does not oversimplify the influence of institutions in the other areas. Institutions cannot be studied as a stand-alone concept and this framework conveys that elegantly (Scoones, 1998) . As Institutions is a very broad topic, this research will only focus on informal institutions. Using the above information as the basis, the conceptual framework will be designed.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

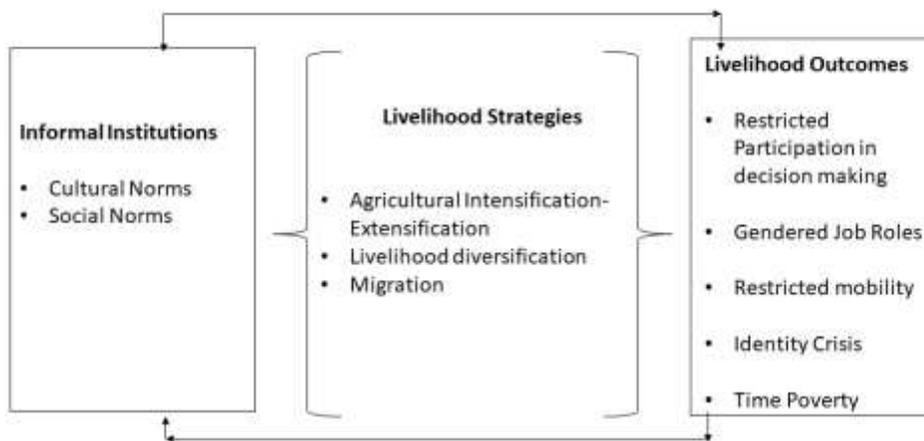


Figure 4: Working Conceptual Framework, Source: Researcher's own design

A conceptual framework can be defined as the researcher's way of connecting the key concepts in the research. It was a useful way to understand the research question and a way to explore the same. It allowed the researcher to also form their own opinion of the theory under investigation. It is also a way to reflect about the research process. It is a way to narrow down the concepts in place using the underlying theory which is considered the foundation of the research (Adam, Hussien, & Joe, 2018).

From the literature, it can be understood that gendered role of men and women in coffee production drives inequality. Women are not given sufficient access to land ownership that directly prevents them from fully being able to participate in production decision making. As the outcome of this inequalities, women suffered

from restricted mobility, penalty that comes with motherhood, time poverty and most of all an identity crisis. Using this framework, where institutions played a central role, it would be relevant to understand how institutions could actually affect the participation of women producers in decision making. These informal institutions may have a direct or indirect impact on the livelihood outcomes of these women thus helping them choose their livelihood strategies. Though these strategies could be adapted by anyone in the production of coffee, yet there is a division of role depending on the gender.

This framework was inspired from the theoretical framework because it was easier to visualize the researcher's development of the conceptual framework through this lens. The conceptual framework was derived from the existing livelihood theoretical framework. The arrows in the framework symbolized a feedback loop which can be interpreted as the loop in which institutions affect and get affected from the outcome, it is circular and continuous. The connection between the informal institutions, strategies and outcome has the ability to influence each other. Due to this, there was also a gendered division of labor in the production of coffee. Informal institutions also have an impact on the way these women view themselves i.e. their identity. An identity crisis and gendered job roles restricted the participation of women coffee farmers in the process of decision making. The extent to which their participation would potentially be restricted could be discovered through this research.

The literature only mentioned norms as an informal institution but nothing specific. The context affected the kind and intensity of informal institutions which can be discovered through this research. For this research, women coffee producers of the Chikumagalur region were chosen. The possible outcomes of the informal institutions at play would be presence of gendered job roles in production and household, restricted participation in decision making, restricted mobility, time poverty and an identity crisis.

Although, all of the elements currently stated in the conceptual framework were derived from the literature review, this research will validate this and also add to it. The informal institutions in the conceptual framework had been oversimplified to just social and cultural norms but clearly there is more to it. This thesis will specifically work on first finding out the informal institutions prevalent in Chikumagalur. Then, to understand the connections between the different elements of the framework based on the reality. The strategies and the outcomes in the conceptual framework were also still overtly generalized and this research intends to offer clarity on these areas as well.

The current structure of the conceptual framework will be useful to answer the research questions of this study. The answers for the prevalent informal institutions in Chikumagalur, the influence of them on the women farmers could help the researcher also subsequently solidify the content for each of the boxes. The interviews with the women coffee farmers would also enable the researcher to establish the connections between the different elements of the framework. In this way, the conceptual framework can be used as the

basis in finding the relevant answers for this research and in turn using those results to strengthen the framework.

3.5 Research Design and Interviews

This thesis will use primarily qualitative research methods. Qualitative research can be used to understand human experiences. Their experiences do have a connection to the individual's social structure (Hay, 2010). To understand the everyday experiences of these women coffee farmers it is vital to deepen our understanding of the local norms and informal institutions embedded in their lives. A semi structured interview method will be used for this research. It uses an interview guide to guide the process. Semi structured interview method was chosen because it gives the researcher a flexibility to adapt when the information supplied is relevant to the context. In comparison to structured and unstructured, semi structured interviews, the rules about conducting the interview is not very rigid.

This method employs an interview guide that covers the basic themes and topics the research should cover in the process (Hay, 2010). It also gives the researcher the chance to understand certain relevant ideas emerging through the answers in the interviews in depth. As the process is still dynamic in nature, it keeps the researcher on their feet so they could act quickly if new ideas surface that was not originally part of the interviewer's guide (Gill et al ., 2008)

3.6 Sampling

For this research, snowball sampling method was used because this context was not explored academically before. There was no way to network with the respondents. Potential respondents would be found out only after going to the field.

This method was appropriate if there were a particular type of people who could not be easily or remotely accessible. It was commonly accepted to use snowball sampling method in qualitative and quantitative research. It proved to be valuable in finding similar kinds of respondents referred through one and another. The advantages of using this method were involvement of the respondents because they were referred by others so they could be useful, locating respondents in a small circle easily through referral. The most prominent disadvantage of this method was selection bias (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

For this research, 4 weeks of fieldwork was carried out in Chikumagalur. The respondents were found using snowballing technique as there was no active database available who fit the requirements of the study. All the women respondents belonging to the coffee producing households were into the production of green bean. Since coffee was grown at altitudes in Chikumagalur, all the respondents from this region primarily grew Arabica. Respondents from Sakleshpur, Belur and Mudigere districts produced both Arabica and Robusta beans.

A total of 12 farmers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Out of this 10 of them were women. As there was not a sufficient number of female farmers who were willing to participate in Chikmagalur, respondents from the neighboring towns like Sakleshpur, Belur and Mudigere were chosen. 4 out of the ten women were widows because their husbands passed away. All the respondents were large holder producers who cultivated more than 25 acres of land. All the respondents were above the age of 35. All the respondents had an education qualification up to under graduation except one.

3.7 Ethics

The names of the respondents were changed to maintain anonymity. The respondents were asked for consent before recording the interview. The researcher bias was consciously kept to a minimum so that it could not influence the answers of the respondents. The researcher did not reveal or compel respondents to share personal stories that were not in line with the interview guide. The researcher did not hurt the religious sentiments of the respondents in any way.

3.8 Method of Analysis

As this research is qualitative in nature, coding was used for the analysis of the data. It required time and creativity from the side of the researcher for this process. It helped with creating the story the research will communicate by answering the research questions. It can bring out themes that could be used to analyze the data descriptively and analytically. It is useful to read between the layers and understand what drives behavior. This method is useful because all the answers could be categorized into themes that fit together thereby aiding the researcher to see a pattern in the answers. (Stuckey, 2015).

As the sample size for this data was small, coding was carried out manually by the researcher. After the interviews were transcribed, major themes were picked out and second round of analysis was conducted where the most recurring themes were chosen. These themes also matched with the literature assuring the logic behind these codes to have emerged.

Chapter 4 Results

This section shares the finding of the field work conducted in month of December 2019. 4.1 gives a brief introduction to the context and it's connection to coffee production. 4.2 structures the results through a visual representation of the findings that aligns in format with the conceptual framework. Section 4.2 also answers the first sub research question. Section 4.3 and 4.4 answer the second research question and explain in detail the patterns regarding the influence of institutions in the lives of women coffee producers. Further section 4.4 also mentions the outcomes that are expected because of the prevalent informal institutions in that region. Both these sections help us understand the pressure informal institutions exert on the lives of the women coffee producers in those regions. Since the informal institutions vary per region, these two sections have a great wealth of contextual answers for the selected regions. The sub section 4.4.2 answers the final sub research question about the kinds of decisions women coffee producers were able to participate.

4.1 Context/ Background

Chikmagalur is a district in the state of Karnataka. The local language spoken by the people was Kannada. This city is located at the foothills of the Mullayangiri peak of the Western Ghats.

From my observations and the interviews, I understand that it has been a touristic attraction because of the mountain ranges and its pleasant climate. It is known for its production of coffee and is home to the arabica variety because of the high altitudes. Chikmagalur was known as the birth place of Indian Coffee, particularly the Baba Budan Giri hills where coffee was planted by a saint Baba Budan in the 1670's. Ever since, coffee has been produced in the hills. The coffee farms or commonly referred to as estate is owned by families who have been cultivating coffee for generations. The official coffee museum established by the Coffee Board of India, a government body that offers information and facilitates trade is also located 5kms from the center of the city of Chikmagalur. The Karnataka Planter's association, an official body that connects the producers and the government is also headquartered in Chikmagalur. The city part of Chikmagalur (in the lower altitudes) is filled with temples big and



Figure 5: Arabica Plantation

small in almost every street and celebrates Hindu festivals in a magnificent manner. Chikumagalur is located in close proximities to the big cities like Bangalore, Mysore allowing urbanization to coexist with its own conventional setting.

Most coffee producers stay inside their estates/farms with their family in bungalows their families have owned for generations and produce coffee. Small holder producers could be spotted drying small batches of coffee outside their houses while travelling through the mountains and nearby towns of Chikumagalur. Some producers along with their family live in the city and travel to their farms by a jeep as the roads haven't been well laid in the known routes. As coffee in India grows at elevation and in between the forest in the Western Ghats, reaching the farms by foot from the center of the city is nearly impossible. Coffee growing in the Western Ghats are invasive into the forest fragments (Mithofer, Mendez, Bose, & Vaast, 2017).

The coffee estates located in the hills also cross paths with the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary which is a protected tiger reserve located 38kms northwest of Chikumagalur. The borders are not demarcated and wild animals are free to move in the forest range. Since coffee is also grown in this forest range, it has been essential for the producers to be vigilant of wild life.



Figure 6: Drying Yard

The casual conversations with the respondents before the interviews allowed them to share that large coffee producers often employed laborers locally. These producers had to further build accommodation facilities for their workers apart from paying their wages. The producers would also sometimes cover the educational expenses of the laborer's children until some point. Although now migrant labor has been a common problem in coffee production. Labors were brought in from North-East to work on these farms and it has been possible because the wages in the South India were better than the North India.

The government offers accommodation for these laborers and their families. As far as the small and medium producers, they get help from their families and children to grow and harvest the coffee. Whether it is a small, medium or large producer, one thing that connects them is the coffee. In Chikumagalur, there is pride and accountability in producing coffee.



Figure 7: Robusta Plant

Coffee is produced in shade grown ecosystem along with other crops that could be monetized like pepper, cardamom and in some cases even paddy (Coffee Board of India, 2020). As coffee is a yearly crop, these other crops along with diversification strategies like bed and breakfast in Chikumagalur provide additional income for the producers.

4.3 Results

Figure 8 contains the results of this research. The results were visualized in a similar manner to that of the conceptual framework to clearly understand the findings of this research. Through the literature review, the basic framework was filled. As this thesis chose to focus on a particular context like Chikumagalur in this case, it was clear that each element had to be highly specific for the chosen context. The exact connections between the elements could not be easily pin pointed. Rather, the observation was that each element influenced the other directly or indirectly. Therefore, it can explain the feedback loop represented in the figure. A detailed explanation of each element and its influence on the other was discussed in the subsequent sections.

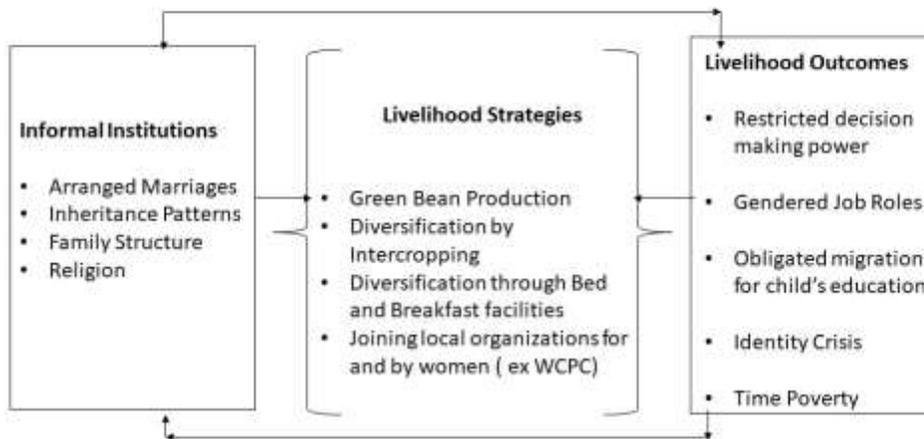


Figure 8: Results of this research

All of the informal institutions presented through this thesis directly contribute to literature for Gender in coffee. As the rules, opportunities and outcomes were different for men and women, and somewhat negative for women, the results and discussion will be inclined in using this perspective. Fundamentally, this thesis has attempted to throw light into institutions, informal institutions in particular that can be restrictive for women coffee farmers especially on the decision- making front wearing a gendered lens. This is the first study that has uncovered the intersectionality of women, coffee and decision making contextually for India using the sustainable livelihoods framework.

4.3.1 Sub-Research question 1 – What informal institutions are present in Chikumagalur?

The different informal institutions identified through the qualitative interviews were arranged marriage, family structure, inheritance patterns, and religion. These were identified specifically for this region. Through coding, different themes emerged and the most recurring ones were labelled under an appropriate title. Although the current literature mentioned informal institutions like social and cultural norms, it does not clarify what are they exactly. One possible explanation would be that informal institutions vary depending on the context. Contextualization of the results could be useful in connecting the outcomes to the one or informal institutions. As these were identified specifically for Chikumagalur, the results and discussion sections will be for this context. Yet it is insightful to understand that these informal institutions play a vital role in shaping the perceptions and stereotypes in a society

4.3.2 Arranged Marriages

Women finding a partner through arranged marriage was common in and around Chikumagalur. Women generally get married immediately after they completed their school or moments after they were finished with their college. It is quite common for the parents to get their daughters married when they are in their early 20's. Through the Indian marriages, women have been subjected to a system of dependency. It is primarily economic in nature because it is not easily acceptable for women to go outside and earn. Marriages in India are arranged. It is orchestrated through the parents of the bride and the groom who mostly belong to the same caste (Dasgupta, 2014 ; Banerjee et al., 2013). It was primarily this way to preserve the endogamy. In this case it was being married from and into Hindu coffee producing families.

Kala** who now runs a bed and breakfast that helps her support their family coffee farm, where the coffee is grown around the bed and breakfast facility said “My mother was a doctor by profession but she decided to give it up as she got married into a traditional family” and also said “*I was in college and I got married. I hadn't thought about at all*”.

Rama** who has juggled between many promising roles including being the founding member of Women Coffee Promotion Council that supports by promoting and selling the coffee grown by the local women coffee farmers Chikumagalur, Sakleshpur, Hassan districts said “The offer was too good to refuse. I got married immediately after I had finished school”.

Sita**, who got married at 23 mentioned that it was important that the parents get their daughters married off before they could become financially independent. Otherwise, it was firmly believed that the daughter would be able to choose her own path in life without consulting with her parents. She also mentioned the

parents were always concerned about what the society would have to say about an unmarried daughter staying back and would simply find a groom for their daughters so they could fulfill their paternal duties.

“The girl would want to study but the mindset of the parents would be to marry her off. Coming to the coffee estate was not an option for the girl as it was male dominated” said Harish**.

Gita**, who manages her coffee farm with her husband in the Mudigere taluk (located 35 kms from the Chikumagalur district) said “I went to Mysore for my studies. As I finished my studies, I got married”.

Saritha**, who now supports looking after the family farm after her son had taken over admits coming to Mudigere 39 years ago because she was married to her husband right after she had finished her college. *“I was 19 when I got married, my co-sister was also married when she was about 22”*, she admits. 7 out of the 10 female respondents were married to a groom whose family has been growing coffee for at least 2 generations in and around Chikumagalur. Only one female respondent had inherited the land from her father who had been growing coffee in Chikumagalur. Only one female respondent had married a first-generation coffee farmer who originally from Calcutta, a metropolitan city in India who decided to buy his share of land in Chikumagalur to cultivate coffee sustainably. Both the male respondents have taken over their father’s land and have been cultivating coffee whose wives are also from coffee growing families.

“I am from a family that has been growing coffee in Coorg and now I was also married into a family that has been growing coffee for the last three generations”, said Sita**.

“I am from a coffee growing family from Coorg and that is why I married into this family who also grow coffee” narrates Rekha** when asked about her choice of groom.

Gita** fondly admits that she was happy to marry into a family that has been into growing and selling coffee much like her family and relates with her younger daughter who had similar interests with respect to the groom.

And finally, Rumi** , who is a resident of Sakleshpur, a hill station in the western Ghats of Karnataka admits in the closing conversation after the interview that she didn’t pursue a job in her field of study because she was married off in Sakleshpur which is where she is expected to live for the rest of her life.

4.3.3 Family Structure

The second important informal institution that impacts the lives of women is family. After the wedding, it is culturally accepted to move in with the husband and his family post the wedding. The outlier being Rathi** who still was working in Mumbai even after being married to her husband who hails from Chikumagalur. “Post marriage I never came and lived here” discloses Rathi** who now runs a coffee farm where coffee is grown sustainably. Rekha**, a women coffee farmer who is originally from Coorg district now grows arabica in Chikumagalur and sells it to a specialty roaster in Helsinki reveals she had lived in Chikumagalur for 30 years with her husband before he passed.

Jacob**, being a third generational coffee farmer in Chikumagalur who runs the Kerehaklu farm lives with his wife and younger son on the premises of the coffee farm has stayed back to grow coffee while his older son has moved abroad to settle there.

Harish stays with his mother and wife who has moved to Bangalore to take care of their son while he stayed back on their coffee farm to overlook and manage his family farm.

It was worth noticing that women often were the ones who had to change their living arrangements post the wedding. The man usually ends up staying back as it is convenient to manage his coffee farm on an everyday basis.

Sita** who used to live with her husband and her family now has two sons both of whom have moved out and the rest of her husband’s family also have separate houses of their own next to each other.

Saritha** who lives with her son and his wife also used to live in a joint family before each family moved out of the house leaving her with her husband and their son.

“It was surprising that my husband stayed back and took care of his parents. He also learnt all about the coffee from the then supervisor who was helping his father manage their coffee farm” said Mathi** whose son now has come back to take over.

“My father-in-law was managing the coffee farm until he passed away and my husband was working in Bangalore”, reveals Rathi**.

The importance of the influence of family on the all spheres of life in India was really high. Men in India were under the guidance of their parents from their birth throughout adulthood. Further after their wedding, the bride had to move in with her husband because of their cultural and religious obligation. Even though they were married, the Hindu religion demands that the interaction between the couple should not become very intimate as it may then be seen as the threat to the balance present in a joint family (Derne, 2000).

The fundamental premise on which marriages were built in the Hindu religion was through control. The living arrangements, care giving and putting the interest of her husband and their family was an unsaid yet acceptable obligation for women. Comparing the experiences of these respondents (like Saritha**,

Sita**,Mathi**), who had to live with their husband and his family to that of Rathi** and Preethi**, the former had a lot more obligations and duties to fulfill before they could attend to their own needs. In case of Rathi**, she continued to have her day job in another city even after her wedding. And finally, in case of Preethi**, even though she had to move in with her husband, conversations with her revealed she had the choice to actually examine the place she was going to live in much before the actual wedding.

The reasons for these contrast experiences could be that the latter two women were financially independent, had day jobs before they could marry. Most importantly, the both grew up in Metropolitan cities while all the other female respondents hailed from in and around Chikmagalur. Urbanization could have played a vital role in shaping the opportunities and advantages for these two women. They should not be mistaken as rebels or outcasts as they have not followed the norms of their Hindu Religion rather the outliers who had the opportunity to anchor their lives.

4.3.4 Inheritance patterns

Inheritance patterns in India are based on religion. In this context, the Hindu Act of Succession (1956) would be applicable because all the respondents were Hindus. The amendment of the Hindu Act of Succession happened in 2005 which stated that women could have equal rights to inherit ancestral property which was not possible before the amendment. Even though there were five states in India (including Karnataka) that amended the law between the 1970's and the 1990's, it was applicable only if the woman was unmarried. After 2005, even when the laws have changed there is a gap in reality (Bose & Das, 2017). Women must be born in the state that passed the law to be able to reap the benefits and should have been unmarried (Roy S. , 2015). Unfortunately, even though Karnataka was one of the states in which the law was amended already before 2005, yet these women producers could not claim their share without a fight (Deere et al., 2013). The results of this field work also conform to the pattern of patriarchal inheritance.

Further it is very common in Chikmagalur to connect coffee as a man's crop. The male farmers usually owned the family land that they inherit from their fathers. In case they have female siblings, they buy their share out as these women get married and move out of their parent's house. And as for men, they continued to live in the same house with their parents until they die and if they have male children then this tradition continues. It is not common for daughters to inherit and run the farm unless they must. In case of female led households when the male is deceased and if they don't have any sons, or if they are not willing to sell the land to someone else only then it is acceptable for a woman to be in charge.

“My father in law inherited his share and he bought the shares from his sisters as they were all over the place. They wanted to sell their shares and my father in law bought it and owned it all” described Rathi** when asked about the timeline of inheritance and land ownership.

“I am a fourth-generation coffee farmer. My great grandfather was a planter followed by my grandfather. This property was bought by my grandfather and his brothers. The eldest and youngest were given properties and three brothers were given money. He invested in the property around 1940’s. And since my grandfather my father took over and then he expanded it. He passed away in 2017. We are still together; my father’s brothers and my brothers are in together to run the estate” explained Harish.

“Coffee plantations* has remained in the coffee growing family and that is why I am still a coffee growing farmer. One of my two sons will come back too grow coffee with me soon” confirmed Jacob** while explaining how the crop was introduced to their family in the 1940’s.

“India is a male dominated society. Property rights in India didn’t come to the daughter till now. It used to go to the son” said Kala** who had to persuade her father to be the one to take over the coffee production in their family.

Rekha**, who has been producing coffee on her own for the last 21 years since her husband had passed told as her husband had passed away suddenly, the responsibilities to continue fell on her. In a review about property rights empowering the rural women of India done by Roy & Tisdell (2002) throw light on a very essential point being if women work on another’s land or even their own family land without having an economic incentive, they would never have the opportunity to invest in a plot of land which can affect their voice in the way they would choose to spend the money as an household.

4.3.5 Religion

Religion is an important informal institution influencing gender roles that emerged from the results of this research. Although religion was not explicitly stated by all the respondents was the driver for their current structure and routines, it was brought up by a few respondents whilst talking about their routines. Religion has also been importance in this context as it can be used to explain patterns related toward restricting women to the domestic sphere post marriage, family structures and inheritance laws. A majority of 84% follow are Hindus in the state of Karnataka. All the 30 districts in Karnataka have a Hindu majority (Census Organization of India, 2011). Since there is a dominant religion, its influence in the everyday lives of the people can’t be overlooked and should be accounted for in the way women were expected to live.

Hinduism is inherently patriarchal. This religion derives its guidelines from ancient scriptures like the Manusmriti and several mythologies. In Manusmriti, women were perceived as highly disloyal and evil as they would tempt men with their sexuality. It was therefore expected that men always kept the women in control. The governing principles of Hindu women propagates *Stridharma* (Duties of a women) and *Pativratadharm*a (Duties of a married women), a religious excuse for men to control and pose restrictions for women (Verma, 2018). *Stridharma* explained the role of a woman first as a mother and a submissive wife to her husband (Tomalin, 2006). Gendered division of roles could be anticipated because of these

cultural and religious beliefs amplifying the gap between the domestic and economic spheres for women in particular (Verma, 2018).

The results of this research also point to the female respondents first wanting to be a good mother and loyal wives as expected from them. It affects the other roles women were capable of and were often forced to prioritize their husbands and children before themselves, making it compelling for all women who belong to the same context. *“My mother was a doctor by profession but she gave it up because she came into a traditional family. Of course, we were growing up and she thought it was important to spend time with us”* narrated Kala** elucidating the difference of role each of her parents played when she grew up.

“In the Hindu culture, women’s house is the kitchen. That is her domain whereas the men work outside. Unlike in the cities, where both husband and wife work, here we have to be there to maintain the house. Even now when the ladies go to the estate, it only after they finish their domestic work” explained Sita** how the culture followed by Hindus could be a reason for only a handful of active women producers.

Religious practices were accommodated in the routine of these women, drawing a thin line between it being mandatory and obligatory. Rekha** while describing her routine mentioned that she would spend some time in the morning doing *puja* (an act of worship in Hinduism). Gita** also doesn’t leave out the detail of doing a *puja* when she clarified her that she could not afford to spend her mornings to monitor coffee production because of her domestic responsibilities. Although Rumi**’s household was not strictly orthodox yet doing a small *puja* before they had their breakfast was not unusual.

Religion didn’t just influence their morning routines, it also affected other areas of their lives. For example, with respect to inheritance, according to the patrilineal Hindu groups, widows could inherit the land of their husbands provided they don’t have male heirs (Deininger, Goyal, & Nagarajan, 2010). This was in line with the results of this research as well.

4.4 Analyzing the influence of Informal Institutions – Livelihood Strategies and outcomes

This section will answer the second sub research question. From figure 8, it can be understood that the livelihood strategies were directly influenced by the informal institution and could also be affected by the observed outcomes. Each of the respondents could choose one or more suitable livelihood strategies based on their social positions of their households. If the household was led by a woman who does not have any male kin, and if the woman wanted to continue producing the coffee, she could choose to produce green beans, diversify or seek extra revenue incomes through Bed and Breakfast facilities. For male led households, women who wanted to participate in coffee production could either support their husbands through taking up responsibility for some activities related to production. They could also supervise and manage crops other than coffee for their household. Only the female led households actually benefitted economically through their livelihood strategies. The other women were included in the livelihood strategies of their households because of their interest to contribute towards the production of coffee. Lastly, women could network and socialize in women centric initiatives of their region. These organizations also shared knowledges about production and created a platform for marketing coffee.

4.4.1 Diversification by Intercropping

Green bean production was common to all the households of this research. For women whose spouses were on the forefront of production, their strategy to be involved was through diversification. Diversification by intercropping coffee with pepper was commonly observed. Women usually managed crops like cardamom, jackfruits, banana, ginger which were intercropped with coffee depending on the household. *“So, we have different plants pepper, cardamom. Part of the paddy fields are now being converted to grow banana, ginger”* mentioned Mathi** who is active in a local organization for and by women to promote coffee across the country other than supporting her husband in the production of coffee by managing the drying, storage of coffee.

“We have WhatsApp groups where we can learn a lot about growing coffee and pepper” shared Rekha** when asked how she was able to access technical knowledge as she has been a coffee producer immediately after her husband passed with no prior experience. Shirish, the current president of the Karnataka Planter’s association explained *“The planters association is the foremost and oldest in Karnataka representing the interest of those who grow coffee, tea and pepper”*. The association was also responsible for setting the prices at which these crops were to be sold together with its members.

The diversification strategy was adopted by women in male led-households in order to be included in the production of coffee. They were in no way economically benefitting through this strategy yet they showed

interest towards contributing for the income of their household by volunteering to share their husband's responsibility. In this way, women were allowed by their husbands to engage in their household's business without explicitly defying cultural norms. They were being accommodated into certain production activities like maintenance of crops that were not coffee because it did not require lots of their time or special skills. Nor these crops were of really high in market value and part of the produce was often used for household consumption. It was an obvious outcome because of the informal institutions like inheritance patterns, family structure and religion that made woman forced these women to prioritize their domestic sphere of life.

For female led households, diversification of crops was an income generating strategy that they have merely adopted from their late husbands. They could also understand the kind of crops that could improve their eco system through conversations with other stakeholders in the value chain. For these women, since they lived by themselves, they were not forcefully restricted to not do anything. Yet, inherently because they have understood the social structures and process in their neighborhoods, they were unable to radically change the way things have been done. Rather, they were still bound to choose familiarity and continue what their husbands had done, probably in a better way!

4.4.2 Diversification through Bed and Breakfast accommodation facilities

The other way in which women diversified were by managing bed and breakfast accommodations built by their household as another revenue source. . Coffee producers with the ability to diversify also build bed and breakfast facility that is usually located adjacent to their farms. In this way, producers gain additional income by hosting visitors throughout the year with a peak during the holiday seasons

Most respondents usually converted their existing huge ancestral houses into homestays and the idea is also to allow visitors to experience the life of a coffee producer by living with them or close to them. So, all these homestays were right next to the household's coffee farm. Saritha**, whose son has taken over coffee production after his father who had passed away recently currently now engages with the guests of their homestay. *"If you have husbands or sons then they will look after the estates and mothers look after the homestays and other things inside their households"* clarified Rekha**, whilst talking about how she and her friend were responsible to continue producing coffee because they had husbands had passed suddenly.

In this way women diversified and managed revenue streams because they were could not directly participate in the production of coffee for three main reasons 1. They would not able to spend sufficient time throughout the production process of coffee because of their overwhelming domestic responsibilities 2. Because their family structure, religion and inheritance patterns narrow down the possibility of being fully involved in coffee production 3. Lastly because their husbands were in charge.

4.4.3 Join local organizations for and by women

The final strategy for these women to still involved in coffee production was through their community. These communities were built by organizations that were formed by local women for marketing and supporting primarily produced by women of those region. Women could socialize and make connections through networking in the community. In this way, they could still support their household in the production of coffee by equipping themselves with contacts through this network.

Women Coffee Promotion council that was local to three districts – Sakleshpur, Hassan and Chikungalur and is head quartered at Sakleshpur is one such community. This organization was born because the local women who were supporting their husbands in production wanted to take matters into hand in order to help with marketing of coffee as the prices were plunging due to the coffee crisis of 2000. *“You are less than 2% right and where would you make a dent in it. Now, we have planter’s association for women and it is called WCPC. They formed that for making coffee powders, make coffee and they go around for exhibitions”* explained Gaya**, how there were only handful of women coffee producers on a mission to enable other women.

“It is very social and recreational. I am more involved in WCPC” said Nanditha who now handles public relations for this organization other than supervising the accounts for the coffee her household produces. Sita**, another founding member who is currently now the president of this organization told *“In 2000, when the coffee rates crashed, a few of us started WCPC. All of us who wanted to do something, they(their children) were settled and they didn’t need us on a daily basis. Coffee board supported us that, if we serve the coffee and it can be marketed really well as catchy as tea. So, the Coffee Board of India, supported us and gave us a stall space alongside of them wherever they travelled. We would sell both hot and cold coffee. Got Tee-shirts like “coffee break is the longest retirement. We are just for promotion and not for profit.”*. This organization encouraged women who considered themselves as just housewives to get out, socialize and gave a platform to contribute for the coffee industry without actually having to defy the norms

4.5. Outcomes

Time poverty, identity crisis and restricted participation were the outcomes because of both the informal institutions in place as well as the livelihood strategies. The connections between the three elements of the framework (institutions, strategies and outcomes) have overlapped with each other. A direct cause effect relationship cannot be concluded in this framework. Unlike men, women juggled between the different roles routinely. They had to hold fort at home which meant cooking all the meals, tending to guests, serving the meals, cleaning up, maintenance of the house, child care, elderly care leaving them time poor. Because

they were identified as wives or mothers first, normalization of their identity to that wasn't unusual even when they contributed sufficiently to their household coffee production. Additionally, given the everyday domestic responsibilities, their capacity to participate holistically including being involved in production decision making was limited. Each sub section will offer evidence from the lives of these women to understanding clearly their experiences and limitations of being in coffee production. An outcome that was unique to this context was the mobility was no longer restricted if mothers had to move to bigger cities in support of their child's education. Therefore, this outcome was termed as migration which was not out of convenience but compulsion to be the one to care for their children.

4.5.1 Time poverty

Time poverty is an expected outcome because women have been obligated to take responsibility of doing domestic chores before they can step outside. This outcome is in line with literature evidence from all the world of women in coffee production. Time poverty also reduces agricultural productivity of women and further restricts their mobility (Lyon, Mutersbaugh, & Worthen, 2017; Arora & Rada, 2016)

Women in Chikumagalur who enter into a marriage have several responsibilities they are expected to fulfill inside their houses. At the end of which they don't have enough time to spend on the field tending to growing the coffee.

“In the Hindu culture, women's house is the kitchen. That is her domain whereas the men work outside. Unlike in the cities, where both husband and wife work, here we have to be there to maintain the house. Even now when the ladies go to the estate, it only after they finish their domestic work” shares Sita**.

“My children were grown up and they can take care of themselves. I came back from Bangalore and I had nothing to do also. We had someone to take care of the house. I thought of involving myself in all this. That is how I started doing this and quite passionate about it” said Gita** who could had the chance to explore her interest in coffee because she was no longer was experience time poverty. Until her children grew up, or she could find someone to hold fort at home, she didn't have the luxury of time to put her needs and interests before theirs.

“You could have smaller houses. Here, the houses owned by these farmers are really big and it is frustrating for women to constantly devote time to maintenance of the house”, explained Rathi**, the plight of being a woman and a wife of a coffee farmer in those regions. Women were expected to take responsibility not just for the care work of their children or family but also cleanliness and maintenance of their houses. Either they could take responsibility in cleaning it themselves or supervise their house help until they could finish the task. These routine tasks can begin as early as 4 AM and go on until 10 PM without a break.

Kala**, took control to run their family coffee farm only after she had tended to her daughter's needs who has now grown up and is living in London giving Kala** time to pursue her passion at 50.

"We have so much responsibility, to take care of the children, grandchildren or guests. So, naturally you say let him do the estate work. There is only so much you can bear. After you finish a hectic day, take time to go to the club and relax have a drink or two. Women are not seen in the bars so the culture is not changed here but not in the cities" explained Sita** who believes India is still predominantly male dominated and it has been hard to take women seriously.

Other than the domestic chores, another logistic pitfall until recently are the roads that lead to the coffee farms have been poorly maintained. Gita** comments that it would have been too much for the women to finish all the household chores, walk all the way to the estate and return every day. Instead it was better arrangement if just the husband would go to the estate, stay there the whole day and then return back home. An interesting point worth understanding from all the interviews has been that provided there was someone to take care of the household and it's chores, then women are "free" to pursue what they want. Until such a system in place was set, the world outside is not of priority.

4.5.3 Restricted Participation in Decision Making

This section will attempt to answer the third sub research question. In a traditional coffee producing household, the male usually makes all of the decisions. In female led households, where there is no male (deceased husband or off springs are females), then it falls upon the women to make all of the decisions both inside and outside the household. Otherwise, the common minds of Chikumagalur prefers the male being in charge. In the results obtained through the interviews, it is worthy to note that even in female led households the closest male kin is often mistook as being in charge.

On field decisions about the production including the conditions and process for a healthy growth of the plants is made by the male farmers. Women in this case, who are often wives to these farmers are informed about the decision but not considered to be included during the process of decision making.

Saritha**, whose husband died two years ago explained that her husband would share the on-goings of the farm with her but would never include her in the process especially with respect to finance. And now since her son has taken over, her son, daughter-in-law and herself together make the decisions regarding the farm. Rumi** said her husband, her mother and father in laws along with herself participate in the decision-making process inside the household although back on the farm it is her husband and his father who discuss and decide things.

On the other hand, Preethi** who is an outlier because she is not from a traditional coffee production household has an equitable say with respect to finance as she was a chartered accountant before marrying her husband and moving to Chikumagalur for producing coffee sustainably.

Rathi**, who was also working in Mumbai, a big city in India before marrying her husband who passed away 7 years back also uses her work experience to help her run her husband's family farm now.

Other than these two women who are not originally from Chikumagalur, it is not normal to be able to make decisions about the production of coffee.

Gaya**, who runs a bed and breakfast facility alongside the production of the coffee said "Ideally as a coffee farmers wife, I never really learned about the industry as such because my husband was there. I was in the process but I was not handling it. In that sense when he passed away, it was not a shock to handle it. I was getting the labour to get to listen to us and get work done. It was a huge learning process. Because in India, they don't accept women in pivotal roles".

These Bed and Breakfast facilities were income streams to continue producing coffee. Female led households who do not have any male kin run these facilities completely on their own along with producing the coffee. It would also make them the primary decision makers. But, in the male led households where women wished to contribute towards the production of coffee, they were side-lined to take merely assist their husbands in taking care of these facilities. They do not have the power to make any kinds of business or production decisions but could only simply participate in running the business. Neither do they get paid for their work because it was perceived to be compensated through inclusion in production. Inclusion also was subjective to change per family So, this subjective inclusion in male led households cannot be mistaken for control.

The insight through these conversations were also that women are provided with everything by every male figure in their lives. Their father first and then their husband later if they have sons then they take care of them. There has not been a need for them to be financially independent.

"I didn't take any decisions then but I used to discuss with them. He never thought I was just a woman. Most of the men are not like that. He was very liberal", said Rekha** who now has now been producing coffee on her own for the last 21 years since her husband passed.

When it comes to the women whose support their husbands in the production of coffee, it is usually the husband who would be the primary decision maker.

Jacob** said "Traditionally it has been the men who make the decisions and I don't know why. But if my wife had an inclination, I would consider her opinion as well" upon enquiring about the gendered roles prevalent in India.

An important remark at this point would be that Jacob** is not representative of the conventional male coffee farmer. This is because, it has not been usual for male farmers to consult the opinion of their wives who were also from families that have been producing coffee. And these women also are not expected to voice their opinions unless asked.

“When my father was here, he would take all the decisions then after I gained some experience, we would jointly take the decisions but right now I am solely responsible for the decisions and bear the consequences” described Harish.

In a household like Kala**'s where there were only female children it has not been easy to claim the property because their father was skeptical about handing over entirely to his daughters. “My father is very much there and involved” mentioned Kala** who makes decisions collectively with her parents and sister about their family farm.

One of the reasons why women don't get involved in this process of being included in the decision making is because they don't want to be in trouble with their husband or their family when there would be differences in opinion. In case of Kala**, she didn't want to run the family farm or take over because her father was young and active, she felt there was no need to interfere. Since she also had a family of her own, they had decided she would take over only if her father could no longer be active.

“Some doctors also stay in the estate for the sake of the husband. They have to stay back. They won't allow us to work after marriage. They tell us we don't need your money”. “When there is nobody to look after then we have to do it. When there is somebody seeing means, we don't want to involve. There will be clashes. Me telling something, him telling something” both of these phrases were quoted from the interview with Saritha** who also believed it was necessary to be included when the husband could handle it. The women who still show an inclination towards being involved with the production of coffee are not fully trusted with power. Even though, most of these women among the respondents do understand the nuances of producing coffee for many years, it was still not generally acceptable to make them equitable or accountable for the process of decision making. “I take all of the decisions. I tell my husband all that I am doing. Before it was all his decisions. Now I take it but he is aware of everything like whatever. Market is volatile sometimes. The selling part I don't involve myself, not that they are going to blame me but I leave it to him” said Gita** who still can't be considered as completely independent when it comes to decision making.

4.5.3 Gendered Job roles in Production

In Chikumagalur, it is the job of the man to provide for his family. They do so by growing coffee along with other crops like pepper and cardamom. They are able to manage on their own with some assistance from their wives. It is very rare to see a woman in charge of managing her husband's coffee farm.

Jacob** and Harish, the two male respondents of this research have taken full responsibility in looking after their respective family farms. Harish said "The work at the estate starts from 7.30AM where there would be a roll call once all the workers have arrived. I will go and supervise and come back to my house at 9AM to have my breakfast. Post lunch, I try to go to the estate. Earlier I used to go religiously, now I must also tend to pending bills and meet with my staff to get updates around 4.30 PM".

"My father in law and husband go to the estate at 8.30AM every day and return only by 4.30. My father in law oversees pulping and processing" shared Rumi** on enquiring the routine of the men of their house shared.

"In the mornings, our field supervisor reports to my husband as I would be busy with making breakfast and performing pooja (rituals done to god) until 10 AM so I have asked the supervisor not to call me" explained Gita** who manages their coffee farm after she finishes her morning chores.

It is how the culture has been in the traditional coffee producing households of Karnataka. Men are free in the morning and have no domestic obligations unlike the women. A typical day on any coffee farm would begin as early as 7AM and get over by 5PM in the evening. Since women have to tend to their chores and children, the men are usually out on the fields to supervise and manage the day's work.

It is uncommon for males to support with the household chores. The two males who were interviewed never described their inclination to help inside the house. They didn't have a specific answer when asked about why men were considered the breadwinners while it was the women's job was confined to inside the house. They both simply said it is how it has been. Their mothers were at home holding fort while their fathers went out to make money.

Sita**, one of the interviewees who has been supporting her husband in coffee farming whilst also being a politician said "Men never cook". She has been living with their husband and his family for more than 39 years. Inside the family, the man and the women have specific roles to play even today. All the respondents did mention that men of the house usually go outside and earn their bread while the women stay at home doing the chores and taking care of the children.

Zooming into the specific context of this research, which is Chikumagalur, it was discovered that men and women were linked to specific roles they must play inside a household and the society for the smooth functioning of the same. It is embedded within the minds of these individuals that this is how a society must function. The society around these women have demeaned their spirits and questioned the necessity for women to have dreams or be ambitious.

With respect to the production of coffee, women are given specific tasks to oversee unless they are fully in charge. Those tasks include overseeing and supervising drying and storage of the coffee. Usually the drying yards are located closer to the houses of these producers making it accessible for the wives and mothers of the male farmers to oversee those activities.

“My mother in law used to go to the farm and supervise the laborers. Then I was doing it but now I take care of the drying and storage of the coffee” narrates Rumi** on the role the women of her family play in the production of coffee.

“When my husband is not there, I make decisions about the payments and also take care of the drying and storage of the coffee” reported Sita** while talking about her husband’s love of being a coffee farmer.

Mathi** told that other than taking care of drying, storage, also had been taking care of the cattle.

4.5.4 Obligated Migration for her Children

Women were spending the majority of their time inside house cooking cleaning, helping their children with their studies every day. The need for quality education for the children prompts a parent to move to a bigger city in the state, handhold the child until it is ready to make it to college. The parent that moves to the bigger city is often the mother who from all these stories suggests seems to be the sole responsibility for the emotional well-being of the child. This trend was observed for almost all the respondent’s who were wealthy enough to send their children to privatized schools. As it is a man’s job to stay back where the coffee is being grown and sold, it is often the women who bears the accountability for the upbringing of the child.

Sita**, a resident of Belur admits that she had to send her children to Bangalore for their studies because they didn’t have good schools or transportation to them from where they had lived.

Harish, the current president of the Karnataka Planter’s Association, a regional body that bridges the gap between the coffee farmers and the government said “My son is in high school and so my wife moved to Bangalore to be with him while I shuttle between Bangalore and our home here in Mudigere”.

“Initially I was busy with the studies of my children and I went to Bangalore for that. They were in a Boarding school, so I took them out and were with them” confesses Gita** who came back to live with her husband in Mudigere only after her daughters grew up to be on their own.

4.5.5 Identity Crisis

In Hinduism, women are meant to be mothers and wives first before anything else. The mothers are also in charge of the day to day care and nurturing of their children (Dhruvarajan, 1990).

All the women interviewees first identified themselves as housewives or homemakers before they could acknowledge the amount of work they have contributed towards the production of coffee. They thought it

would be “too much” or “showing off” if they admitted their contribution. It was not normal for women to accept that they were coffee producers because they perceive themselves as wives or home makers.

“What do I tell about yourself? I am a housewife and I got married at 20. Then I had a daughter. I was a housewife till I was I was 50, 49 actually. Then I decided, we came back, my daughter went abroad to study. Then I started taking care of the resort, homestay and estate. That is, it” said Kala** when asked to introduce herself for the purpose this research. She also explained that “Housewife is a big responsibility. I would not sell a housewife short”. “I am a housewife. I studied in Mysore. And I was married to a planter. I am from plantation* born and brought up here. I was very interested from small. I used to go to the plantation* from when I was young and ask a lot of questions. I was happy to be married to a plantation* boy. I have two daughters and one of them is married to a plantation* boy. To tell you the truth, my other daughter also wants to get married in Chikumagalur and they like it here and plantation*” admitted Gita**. She also later in the conversation told “Not a housewife, a homemaker. Even now, I don't call myself a lady planter”

Saritha** told “I was working as a housewife only. Eating, sleeping, make calls. All our relatives, we go to their house. We would go for at least four days if there is a wedding in Chikumagalur”. In her early days, she and her cousins who got married to the same neighborhood could not do much and would have to stay at home or be available to attend social events.

Harish, when asked about his wife shared “Well she was mainly a homemaker here at home not doing anything at home. She is even academically more studied than me she did her B.sc and a very good student but probably the set up those days ladies in the family unless they are forced to won't take up an entrepreneurial job so I don't think it has stopped her and I think she is happy doing what she wants i never stopped her from doing what she wants She is a just homemaker and staying at home”

In case of Rathi**, who has had previous work experience before she moved to Mudigere to take over her coffee production identified “I am a coffee planter and I run the farm independently”. It was relevant to mention the work experience because even though all the female respondents were educated, they were obligated to get married immediately after their education. This was not the case with Rathi** and it was evident from her answer that she relates her identity to the work that supports her economically.

The above argument could further be strengthened with what Kala** told “Yes, that has been my “pechan” as you call it in Hindi. That has been my identity for a long time and now to change it to calling myself a planter is a bit difficult. It is intrinsically the first thing that comes to me. I think we sell ourselves short a little bit, isn't it?”

Chapter-5 Discussion

The answer to the central research question could be derived from the results of this research. The different informal institutions local to Chikmagalur found through this research can be used to explain the extent of participation of these women farmers in the decision-making process. Although, each informal institution has a direct impact on the livelihood outcomes of these women, it is relevant to understand that the underlying factor that connects all the informal institutions in this context would be religion. Religion in this context actually dictates the guidelines for other identified informal institutions. Therefore, the influence of religion cannot be overlooked while explaining the trends and patterns observed that have hindered the extent of participation for these women farmers.

5.1.1 Religion – The Golden Thread

80% of India follows Hinduism making it the dominant religion of the country. This religion operates with a strong belief system that has been inspired from the scripture. This was already problematic because these were documented centuries back and it should not be considered relevant for the present time. Yet the evolution of these beliefs seemed inappropriate. That is why religious beliefs have to be an important factor while explaining the behavior of a community. In this case, the entire state (Karnataka), where majority were Hindus. The guiding principles of Hinduism suggested that there were specific duties that men and women in a marriage, in a family and in a society were expected to fulfill in their lives. This religion also conveyed that women were easily polluted, weak unlike men who were socially accepted as pure and strong in nature. Women in a marriage were expected to serve and worship their husbands which was in line with the concept of *Pativrata*, a central ideology in the Hindu religion. Their status quo inside a family would change once they become mothers ((Dhruvarajan, 1990), (Verma, 2018), (Tomalin, 2006)).

Most of the respondents of this research got married immediately after their education because it was common and obligatory. It was common because Hinduism doesn't encourage the idea of women being independent. This age-old ideology was first established in a book on the code of conduct for Hindus called the *Manu smriti*. They were specific descriptions about the desirable qualities of men and women. Women had more restrictions than men because they were considered to be a source of pollution and must be kept in control at all times by the men of her family ((Joseph, V, Singh, & Wahid, 2019), (Verma, 2018)) . Independence was not a choice for women in the past. Dependency curbed social interaction outside home heavily influencing the choices women had to make without defying religion.

Through this research an inference would be, gendered roles in coffee production, time poverty, identity crisis, motherhood, restricted participation in decision making were the price these women farmers had to

pay if they belonged to a Traditional Hindu household. It was for this reason, even though a few female respondents of this research were from different parts and from Chikumagalur had the same kind of experiences. The common experiences these female respondents shared were growing up in a coffee producing household observing their fathers go out for production and their mothers stay at home, migrating to nearby cities for education, getting married into a coffee producing household, moving in with their husbands and devoting time for chores and child care among other experiences. These women have known how they must behave and what was expected of them seeing their mothers and grandmothers.

This is relevant because it has shaped the role women have played in different generations. Women were supposed to be loyal wives and caring mothers. But nothing like this was expected out of men. They were free. They were not expected to do domestic chores or child care like women. That is what makes this whole research essential, that it was socially acceptable for men to pursue their dreams, be decision makers while his wife/mother had to spend hours in the kitchen and maintenance of their household. They were not supposed to be bread winners according to this religion. It must therefore not come as a shock, this normalization of gendered division of roles both in the household and production has existed for generations.

5.1.2 Coffee production – Privatized through Patriarchy

Because production of coffee was privatized, the participation in production for women depended heavily on the beliefs of their households.

It is because of that; the structure of the family directly can be mapped to influence the all the outcomes as shown in Figure 8.

Primarily, women couldn't do a lot outside because they lived either in a family with parents of her husband or in a joint family along with the in-laws. This still allowed them to participate in the production of coffee like taking responsibility for drying, storage without having to physically move outside the house. It could explain why most of the respondents actually were specifically involved in drying, storage of the coffee. Thus, structure of the family directly influences the gendered roles in production for these women. As they were only involved in some parts of the production, their extent of participation in decision making was limited. Otherwise, they were not expected to contribute in other aspects of production also limiting their extent of participation in any decision making related to production.

Other ways in which family restricts extent of participation was because of child-care. The women in India spend close to 300 minutes a day taking care of children, elderly or those sick in the family while men spend a mere 30 minutes (Chapman & Mishra, 2019). In this case, some women also had to relocate to the cities for the education of their children which heavily restricted their participation in production decision making as child care had to be prioritized. It was because these women could actually devote time and make

an actual effort towards being involved in production only when their children were able to take care of themselves. It was not possible for these women to be agriculturally productive when they were held accountable for the welfare of their whole family.

5.1.3 Family Structure – A conventional way to cause Identity Crisis

Family also paved way for an identity crisis for these women. 8 out of the 10 respondents identified themselves first as house wives than producers even though they have contributed sufficiently to the production of coffee for their households. They didn't want to take credit for their contribution because it would be perceived as being arrogant. Although identity crisis doesn't seem like an outcome that would affect restricted participation in decision making, it subtly played a role in the background that normalized their primary identities to be wives. This could also be a reason why they would never intentionally question the choices of their husbands even if they were not included in the production decision making. Further, the community there strongly had a notion that if the husband got it covered, there was no need for the wife to also support him on the field. As Agarwal (2001) rightly argues that participation of people has been instrumental in development in her work on participatory exclusion of women in the management of community forests in India and Nepal. She explained participation would have to be defined in every context as the local norms, rules and perceptions directly influence the individuals and nature of participation. This influence for the disadvantaged could significantly affect their voices furthering them away from being included in the process of decision making. It was often for the disadvantaged to also find a group of their own so they were being heard. However, she asserts these groups doesn't compensate for the social and economic inequality or the imbalance of power.

5.1.4 Inheritance Patterns – Patriarchy through Patterns

The next important effect of family was on the inheritance patterns. Inheritance laws were centered around religion in India. The Hindu law of Succession first written in 1956 didn't allow women to be coparceners by birth until 2005. This also meant, male heir could inherit ancestral land and make an income out of it while women didn't have that advantage. Rao (2018) in her book on politics and gender in India explains the following argument – Women are considered an outsider not just because they relocate physically but also because the land that produces the coffee doesn't belong to her. It is therefore unnatural for a woman who entered her husband's family through marriage to claim the rights or make decisions. Yet, all her contributions towards the production is accepted. Unless their husbands passed away, they could not inherit. It was because of this there was an abundance in male coffee producers in comparison the female producers who were just a handful and they became producers out of chance due to the passing of their husbands. Then the Hindu law of Succession gives equal inheritance of the husband's property both acquired and

ancestral for widows and her children. Land rights was an important factor that influenced the participation in decision making. This is in line with literature found on the role of informal institutions in coffee production (Rao, 2018 ; Biswas, 2018 ; Roy S , 2015).

All the outcomes were not a common experience for two respondents (Rathi** and Preethi**) among the others. There could be multiple factors for this pattern to have emerged. Most of all, it was the upbringing of these two women in big cities. The other factors that were common between these two women were their education and work experience before they got married. Even though both of them were wedded to their spouses through an arranged marriage, they still didn't lead conventional life like the other female respondents of this research. Rathi** was working in Mumbai post her wedding and her husband was working in Bangalore. Her Father-in-law was managing the production of coffee until he passed away. Her husband then took over the production, unfortunately he also passed. Only after her husband passed away, she chose to think about taking over production and giving care for her mother-in-law. Rathi** is a full-time coffee producer now and is supported by her mother-in-law who lives with her inside their coffee farm. Even though she doesn't have any prior experience, she is now in charge of production and all the decisions it entails.

In case of Preethi**, she and her husband live inside their organic farm in Chikumagalur and she took equal responsibility to design and build the bread and breakfast accommodations and take financial decisions. Both these women were able to transcend dominant patterns of gender relation due to a number of reasons. The first and the foremost reason was having a day job. This was not commonly observed among the other respondents of this research. Merely having an educational degree does not liberate these women from the bitter taste of patriarchy. For both Rathi** and Preethi**, being in a marriage was another part of their life yet not the primary focus unlike the other women respondents. Both these women also had the opportunity to be financially independent before they got married. This could have also given them the confidence to understand their primary identity of themselves was not to be a mother or a wife. Both these women have also been in a family structure where they were treated equally inside and outside their households. They were not pushed to the kitchens or forego their lives because they were married. An insight that could be used to explain the situation was the age of these women. They both were at least 20 years younger than the other respondents of this research. This age difference between the respondents could have also been the reason to shape their choices as individuals Further, they had equal access to land, resources and were not marginalized by their family to prioritize domestic labor. . Lastly, both these women didn't come from a family of coffee producers or even from the same context as the other respondents of this research. Therefore, not normalizing the contextual definition of being a woman.

5.1.5 Discovering the answer to the central research question

Summarizing the answer to the central research question from the above discussion was as follows. Family structure was the most influential in restricting the extent of participation of these women farmers. There were two ways in which the extent of participation in decision making was restrictive namely internal and external. External restrictions included household responsibilities, child care, selective involvement in production activities (predominantly drying and storage in this case). They couldn't spend time on the field because they had to finish their chores at home and were time poor. It restricted their participation for decisions that were taken on the field because they couldn't be present at all times like their husbands or fathers who didn't have any domestic responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, maintenance of the house or child care. These were factors that were externally restricting their extent of participation in decision making, but family structure also caused this internal struggle – identity crisis. These women who didn't have full ownership of the coffee production (in this case, those who were widowed) didn't choose to identify themselves as producers even though they contributed to their household coffee production. This restricted them to voluntarily participate in production decision making in order to avoid being in a cross with their husbands or fathers. Unless they were required to take complete ownership of the production of coffee, they restricted themselves from all aspects of production as their husbands knew best.

5.2 Theoretical framework – Incorporating institutions into the sustainable livelihoods framework

The Sustainable livelihoods framework was used as the theoretical lens for this research. Instead of simply focusing on the outcomes, this framework helped this research to understand the influence of each informal institutions on this outcome further strengthening the argument that it was just not the fault of these women for not participating but in fact there were restrictions posed by their Religion, Family, Law that they would not choose to question or defy. Another benefit about this framework was the declaration of its dynamic nature. It was multidisciplinary and therefore it was bound to be messy because of perspectives from different disciplines to combat a given problem. It was particularly useful because it made the user understand the necessity of different fields like politics, history, socio-economic conditions while trying to understand access, strategies and outcomes. The need to deepen the understanding of the situation in order to get insights about how any context was shaped and evolved seemed relevant.

This framework does not explain the extent of effect of the different types of institutions potentially because it can vary vastly depending on the context. It was difficult to narrow down only on institutions without overlapping it with other elements of the framework. This framework doesn't give a readymade formula to identify institutions in a context instead only helps the user understand the consequences and the outcomes. This framework was widely used to understand access to resources and measure impact of welfare

interventions but has been used minimally to study institutions. There was not sufficient literature that covered institutions exclusively in coffee using this framework although it does seem to be highly relevant. Further scope for improvement in this framework can be towards connecting institutions to one or more specific outcomes as the connection i.e. the arrows and the direction of arrows do not convey a precise relationship between the elements of this framework. Another pitfall that needs to be addressed would be to clearly define the type of institutions and the impact on strategies/outcomes rather than over simplifying element has just institutions. The framework could de-construct the Institution and Organization element into two separate parts. Each element by itself is made plethora of different concepts. It would be overly ambitious to fit them all in just one box. The definitions of the type of institution could be integrated into the framework which could further clarify the connections of the different elements. Another opportunity for improvement would be to form a clearer connection between the Institutions and the elements in context and trends.

The livelihood strategies list could be expanded or a comment about it varying per context could be additionally added to the framework. The same feedback could apply to the livelihood outcomes. Instead of only talking about the expected positive outcomes in the livelihoods outcome section, it can be left for the researcher to fill it in. This is useful because this framework in this case was used only to understand the problem but not to design the solution. In that case, it would be difficult to work with just the expected outcome.

5.3 Limitations of this research

Next, it is essential to understand the influence of theoretical framework, method and the context of this research. Beginning with the context, this particular context was not sufficiently explored academically until now. This was the first attempt to understand how the informal institutions were embedded so effortlessly into the lives of these women that it can be perceived as normal. Although, there was no existing database or literature for the same combination of the central research question. Currently, entirely depended on the networking ability of the researcher to find more respondents of this research. Secondly, language was not a barrier in this case because all the respondents were educated in this sample size and could clearly communicate their opinions in English. The number of women producers in Chikumagalur was really low, so neighboring districts had to be explored to meet the minimum number of interviews for this research. Each respondent was located at least 30 mins to 1 hour away from the other, logistically it was difficult to do more than 2 interviews every day. They also had limited time to spend because it was the beginning of the coffee harvest season which made them quite busy. Due to the absence of a database of the number of women producers, it was essential to meet every respondent in person to collect their stories and get a reference for a potential future respondent. Further, Location of the interview directly

influenced the openness of the answer and was limiting in case of one or two respondents. As the research was self-funded by the researcher, to stay for longer duration on the field was not possible. Lastly, because the Data Analysis was done manually, it was prone to researcher's bias.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

The relevance of this research in the current times cannot be emphasized enough. This study could be considered the first attempt in understanding the influence of informal institutions on women in the production of coffee in southern India. It is relevant for a number of reasons. Primarily, because more women are breaking the glass ceiling and entering production for their passion to be a coffee producer in those regions. They must be given a chance to be involved instead of merely following norms that offer reasons that cannot be rationally accepted in this current time. To feel involved, they must not be just looked at as wives or mothers but as a peer, as a producer by their family. Secondly, as the focus on Sustainable Development Goals are growing, it is essential to concentrate on solutions/interventions that could at least close gender gaps first (Weightman, 2017) at household levels. To understand the influence of these informal institutions on a household is relatively easy than to look at the effect of it on a state or a country level. Thirdly, coffee has been an important commodity of export in India for many years yet sufficient research has not been done about the people involved in the production through the upstream of the supply chain. Current research in India is on plant health, pest control and developing hybrids suitable for planting. The Coffee board of India, a government organization that currently facilitates trade and also set up research facilities across the state of Karnataka doesn't do any research on the people who have been producing the coffee. It can be useful in order to update policies that could support the inclusivity. Lastly, women could be educated and have the passion to contribute but if there were external restrictions like religion or family that would prevent them from economically uplifting themselves and the country, it would not be useful. Therefore, for all these reasons, research must be made a routine and should focus on improving the well being of the producers.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

To conclude this thesis had discovered a plethora of information about the lives of women in coffee producing households in South India. This was the first study whose scope was to understand the type and influence of informal institutions for these women producers. This study used the sustainable livelihoods framework and focused exclusively on expanding on institutions which was uncommon with respect to the objectives of several researches that have used this framework. Through the preliminary literature review, among the various problems faced by women producers in coffee, restricted participation in production decision making was chosen. It was a common outcome for women producers in coffee globally for which there could be many reasons depending on the context. Cultural and social norms were among those the institutional reasons why women were unable to enjoy their freedom especially outside their households.

This thesis used this as the basis to find out more about the informal institutions present in South India where coffee was first planted by a Saint. All the informal institutions were subsets of the gender which was the nucleus. The informal institutions prevalent were arranged marriages, family structure, inheritance patterns and religion. These informal institutions directly influenced the lives of women through the limited livelihood strategies they could access but the inevitable negative outcomes they had suffered. Although, the primary focus of this research was the restricted participation in decision making, the other negative outcomes that were in line with the literature were also validated through this research. Only female led households who did not have any male kin were able to make production decisions by themselves. Otherwise, women in male led households who had contributed through different production activities were given the autonomy to primarily make household decisions. All the production decisions in their case were made by their husbands and other male members involved from their family.

In both the cases, women still were restricted culturally and socially depending on their situation. They were considered secondary to the man, were stereotyped as wives and mothers and most of all were deprived of the opportunity to shape their lives.

In conclusion, this thesis recommended and encouraged sufficient attention needs to be paid for understanding the drivers and barriers for women in the different coffee producing states of India. It will be useful to improve their situation, increase yield and most importantly cultivate the culture that encouraged women to be independent socially, culturally and economically.

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