

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF LANDLESS AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF VILLAGE IN TIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

Dr. V. Sivasankar*

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Economics, Muthurangam Government Arts College (autonomous), Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India (sivasankarjh@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study examine the socio-economic condition of landless agricultural labour in Tamil Nadu. This study explore preset economic status of the rural labour particularly agricultural labour. This paper highlighted on educational, employment, income and household amenities of agricultural labour in recent time period. This study indicated well-being of rural working class

Key Word: agricultural labour-rural labour

Introduction

As per 2011 Census, total number of workers in India has 481.9 million and among this half million (54.6 per cent) workers were agricultural workers (263.1 million). This agricultural workers were classified into cultivators and agricultural labour. The number of cultivators was 11.8 million (45.1 per cent) and agricultural labour was 144.3 million (54.9 per cent). Consumption expenditure of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSOs) reports reported that the lowest consumption expenditure in the rural household as agricultural labour. In this context, this present study examine the socio-economic conditions, employment, wage and income of the agricultural labour household in Munivanthangal village of Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu. This paper as follows, after the introduction, second section provided on methodology, third section deals on socio-economic conditions, fourth section deals on employment and wage and final section present conclusion.

Methodology

This study was based on primary data and this data collection from Munivanthangal Village in Polur taluk, Tiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu. Census was conducted in the village in January to March in 2019. The Census found 240 household in the village. Among the household, cultivators 71, non-agricultural labour households 33, agricultural labour with landholding 69 and landless agricultural labour 67. On the above basis this study covered all landless agricultural labour households.

Social Background of Landless Labour in the Study Village

Social background of the sample respondents is shown in the table 1. Out of 67 landless agricultural labour, male was 38.81 per cent and female was 61.19 per cent. This clearly evidence that the agricultural labour market in the village is feminized. Religion and caste is the important social factors to determine the supply of agricultural labour in India. In the context, researcher exposed composition of religion and caste. Majority were Hindus (83.58 per cent) and followed by Christian (16.42). For caste composition, Scheduled Castes were 45 per cent, followed by Most Backward Castes (M.B.Cs) were 48 per cent, and Backward Castes (B.Cs) were 8 per cent. For marital status of the sample respondents, 88 per cent were married and 12.0 per cent were widow.

Table 1: Social Background of the Agricultural Labour

Social Background	Number of Respondents	Percent
Gender		

* Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Economics, Muthurangam Government Arts College (autonomous), Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India (sivasankarjh@gmail.com)

Male	26	38.81
Female	41	61.19
Religion		
Hindu	56	83.58
Christian	11	16.42
Caste		
SCs	30	44.77
M.B.Cs	32	47.76
B.Cs	5	7.47
Marital Status		
Married	59	88.05
Widow	8	11.95

Source: Field Survey

Age of the Agricultural Labour

Age of the workers is determined the supply of agricultural labour and on the basis the workers age were classified into five categories (see table 2). Majority of the agricultural labour were positioned in the age of 31 to 50, the age group of above 50 and below age of 30 registered lower percentage. Around 39 per cent of respondents were in the category of 41-50 age group, followed by 27.0 per cent in the age group of 31-40 per cent, 18.0 per cent were in the age group of 51-60, 12.0 per cent in the age group of 21-30 and 4.47 per cent in above the age of 60.

Table 2: Age of the Agricultural Labour

Age	Number of Respondents	Percent
21-30	8	11.94
31-40	18	26.86
41-50	26	38.80
51-60	12	17.93
Above 60	3	4.47
Total	67	100

Source: Field Survey

Literacy and Educational Status of the Agricultural Labour

Educational status determined the occupational mobility of the workers. In the study villages(see table 3), 12 per cent were illiterate, under primary education was 25.37 per cent, high school 51 per cent, higher secondary 7.48 per cent, degree around 3 per cent and diploma holders 1 per cent. This clearly evidence that the agricultural labour was illiterate and lower level of educational status

Table 3: Level of Education

Education	Number of Respondents	Percent
Illiterate	8	11.94
Primary (1st-5 th Standard)	17	25.37
High School (6 th -10 th Standard)	34	50.74
Higher Secondary (11th-12 th Standard)	5	7.48
Degree	2	2.98
Diploma	1	1.49
TOTAL	67	100

Source: Field Survey

Function of Labour Market in the Study Village

Agricultural labour in the study village have involved two types of labour: (a) casual labour and (ii) contract labour or piece rate workers. Casual labour received wage on daily basis from the employers or cultivators or landowners. The wage rate fluctuates on season to season, different agricultural occupation, such as transplanting of paddy, weeding, repair and harvesting. On the other hand, contract labour, worked on two or more than two person joined together or form a group to do work. Before doing a particular work total wage amount is fixed and the total wage amount is distributed among the group workers. In the contract labour system there is no fixing hours and in the casual labour system workers were hired on fixed time .Generally working time in the village has 7.30 am to 1.30 pm.

Occupational Mobility of the Agricultural Labour

Out of 67 respondents, 97 per cent reported that they entered this work before marriage and only 3 per cent reported that they enter the labour market after marriage. So, marriage is not obstacle to enter in the agricultural labour market. Further, researcher exposed the different type of occupation in the occupational history of the respondents revealed 96 per cent reported that this present occupation is the first occupation and only 4 per cent reported that other occupation such as construction work, bullock cards, toddy taping as the first occupation.

In the inter-general mobility of the sample respondents revealed that 86 per cent reported that their father occupation as cultivators and 14 per cent reported that their father as agricultural labour. For mother occupation, all the respondents reported that their mother as agricultural labour.

Employment and Wage

Availability of employment in the study villages is limited and therefore labour moved to neighboring villages to search employment. But the wage rate is same in all surrounding villages in the same occupations. In the days of employment (see table 4), 73 per cent of labour reported that they worked between 180 days to 200 days. 17.9 per cent of labour reported in between 150 days to 179 days and 9per cent of labour reported to work less than 150 days.

Table 4; Days of Employment in the Study Village

Days of Employment	Number of Respondents	Percent
Less than 150 Days	6	9.0
151 Days to 179 Days	12	17.9
Above 180 Days	49	73.1
TOTAL	67	100

Source: Filed Survey

Wage rate varied from male and female for different operation. The entire plough operation in the study village based on tractors and the other agricultural work rate as follows in the table 5. The rate of wage clearly indicated discrimination against women workers.

Table 5

Wage Rate for Male and Female in the Study Village (per day)

Different Operation	Male	Female
Transplanting	Rs.180	Rs.150
Weeding	Rs.100	Rs.80
Harvesting	Rs.150	Rs.130
Digging	Rs.200	-
Fertilizers	Rs.200	-
Pesticides	Rs.350	-

Source: Field Survey

Annual Income Agricultural Labour

Income of the agricultural labour was classified into 4 categories; out of 67 respondents, 57 per cent were reported to earn the income between Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000, followed by 22.39 per cent were in Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000, 17.92 per cent were below Rs.10,000 and 2.98 per cent were in above Rs.30,001.

Table 6: Annual Income Agricultural Labour

Annual Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs.10,000	12	17.92
Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000	38	56.71
Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000	15	22.39
Above Rs.30, 001	2	2.98
Total	67	100

Source: Field Survey

Household Amenities

All the respondents reported that they have own houses and the quality of house varied. Out of 67 respondents, 33 per cent reported that they have thatched house, 21 per cent reported tiles house and 46.27 reported concrete house. All the respondents reported that they have connected electricity, 97 per cent reported to access piped water near the house, 82 per cent reported to have LPG as cooking, 44 per cent reported they have bathroom facilities, and 28 per cent have toilet facilities. In addition to this, all the respondents have ration card, adhar card and bank pass book, 41 per cent reported chief minister health insurance card.

Conclusion

On the basis of above discussion in the paper shows that socio-economic factors determined the supply of agricultural labour market. Agricultural labour is coming from so called low caste groups. They are low educational background and as result poor labour mobility. This study revealed that female is paid less wage than male. This study clearly demonstrations that their annual income is insufficient to full fill their basic needs. In order to improve the economic conditions of agricultural labour through implementation of minimum wage, strengthen social security measures and to promote livestock, non-farm self-employment

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