Issues and challenges of Agricultural labours in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract- The Agricultural laborers are the other vitally involved in farming. Their number is very large and is also rapidly growing. They live a life of object poverty. They are the most backward; the most exploited as also the most neglected class of the rural economy. As such they require our urgent attention, without a satisfactory solution of their problems; no real and durable progress can take place in the rural sector.

Definition- “Agriculture labour are those said to work in agriculture and/or in activities allied to it for the whole or part of the year in return for wages in cash for full time and also for part time job”.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since quite many are small farmers and as such their incomes are derived from more than one type of work earnings as landlords, wages as labour. Agricultural labour enquiry 2011 census, defined Agricultural labour in terms of the sources of income. According to it an agricultural labour household is one whose main source of income is wages from agriculture and activities allied to it.

One feature is that the agricultural wage – labour (if it is not land less) often turns into non-wage labor when it joins family – farm. In this form it is family – labor and its earnings are related to the family – income.

Objectives:

- To find out the problem of agricultural labour.
- To identify the standard of living condition of the labours.
- To show the role of indebtedness of the agricultural labour’s life

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper is prepared by both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected in Cuddalore District agricultural labours, the secondary data is collected books journals and other n line journals.

Agricultural labours belongs to scheduled tribes and scheduled caste those who are in need to survive for their lives only based on the wages obtained from the agricultural work. This paper is based on the problems faced by agricultural labours in tamilnadu.

Agricultural labour is one of the most important segments of ruralpopulation in India as well as in Tamilnadu. In numerical terms, they constitute about one fourth of the total work force. Socio-economic condition of agricultural labourers depends upon number of factors, e.g., income, consumption, asset holdingposition, availability of farm and non-farm employment, wagerates indebtedness etc., are the factorswhich determine their socio-economic condition. Agricultural labors contribution to rural economy is highly significant. According to 2011 census, the total number of agriculturallabourers in Chidambaram Taluk of Cuddalore District, TamilNadu was 15.17 percent in absolute number it was 1,05,3925 out of which 14.91 percent were males and 15.43 percent werefemales. In the early 1970s it was pointed out by a number of economists (Bardhan, 1984, 1986; Krishnaji, 1971; Jose, 1974)that in spite of the process of planned economic developmenthaving been in existence for quite some time, the agricultural labours continued to face a grim situation in most parts of the country. The institutional reforms that were undertaken during thepost – independence period largely ignored them (Joshi, 1975,1987). Results of the various large scale surveys (e.g.Agricultural and Rural Labour Enquiries), on importanteconomic variables relating to agricultural labourers, such aswages, employment etc. revealed that except in few pockets, therehad been no perceptible improvement in their material condition. The performance of six to seven major states accounting for almost 75 percent of the agricultural labourers in the country had been particularly dismal in this respect (Bardhan 1984, 1986;Krishnaji, 1971; Jose, 1974; among others). Thus, the existingscenario did not seem to hold much promise for the majority ofagricultural labourers. However, not every researcher shared the depressing view on the change in the economic condition of agricultural labourers (e.g. Lal, 1979). Given the
nature of the evidence, based primarily on large scale data systems, there was lively discussion on the issue reading to the changing conditions of agricultural labourers.

Period since 1980s. However, the Research mainly focuses on the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers in contemporary Tamil Nadu, where agricultural labours constitute about one fourth of the total work force. From the survey of existing literature it appears that very few studies have been undertaken in Tamil Nadu on this problem, although there have been quite a number of studies in other states of India. Since the eighties till the late nineties vast changes have taken in the rural socio-economic scenarios in Tamil Nadu also. A large area has come under the new agricultural strategy. Along with bio-technological change in agriculture there has been a perceptible increase in agricultural production and productivity. The new agricultural technology has two types of effect on employment of labour, via, labour displacing and labour absorbing effects.

Therefore, the pertinent central question that arises in this context is how the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers are changing under this socio-techno-economic milieu? To get answer to this question we would like to seek answer to another question. What has been the direction of change in agricultural wage rates and number of days of employment per agricultural labourer, which must have effect on income, consumption, and indebtedness of agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu during 1990s and the 2000s? We focus on this question as wage rate and employment availability are the most important quantitative factors that determine material condition of agricultural labourers. However, along with this question we shall also try to find answer to several other relevant questions for our purpose of finding answer to the central question.

Since there is a large gap in literature providing answer to these very significant questions, given the time and resource constraints of an individual researcher we would like to choose Cuddalore district, a predominantly agricultural district of Tamil Nadu, for the purpose of an in-depth study. The proposed study would be an in-depth analysis at micro level of employment, wages and other factors that affect the income, consumption and indebtedness of agricultural labourers. However, we shall also use some macro level data wherever necessary.

### III. PROBLEMS

The chief economic problems of Agriculture labour are,

**Poverty and low standard living:**

Agricultural labour mainly comprises workers belonging to the economically depressed and socially backward sectors or rural society. It consists of landless labourers, who work another lands and the petty land owners who for most of the time work for other. Wages are typically low. Conditions of work often strainous and employment frequently irregular.

The level of living which their earning permit is very meager. Their lives as it were reflect the problems of under development and surplus population. Agricultural labours are less skilled and they have to mainly depend on the wages of agriculture daily.

Socially a large number of agricultural workers belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Because of all these reasons their economic lot has failed to improve even after three and half decades of planning.

1. Cultivators
2. Agricultural labours
3. Workers engaged in forestry, fishing and livestock.

We are primarily concerned with the second of the above categories via agricultural labor.

1. Employment seasonal unemployment is a characteristic of agriculture industry and unemployment of man power is inherent in a system of family farming where agriculture is carry on for subsistrance. In the field of Agriculture, workers do not and cannot get a continuous work. It has been estimated that on an average a form laborer find employment for about 200 days in a year and for the rest of the year he is idle.

**Rural Indebtedness:**

Agricultural labour is heavily indebted. Normally, the farm labourers borrow from the land owners under whom they work. Naturally, they are forced to accept lower wages.

Thus, partly because of factors beyond their contumely and partly because of their inherent bargaining weakness, the farm labourers have been getting very low wages and have therefore to live a miserable sub – human life.
Seasonal Employment:-
Since their employment is only seasonal during agricultural activities, they have to remain unemployed for most part of the year which by itself reduced their capacity to bargain better wages.

Absence of alternative occupation and indebtedness:-
Due to lack of alternative occupation and growing indebtedness to the land lards, they become more or less bonded labourers, working for very meager wage.

Indebtedness:-
It is not surprising to find that the vast majority of labourers are indebted to money lenders, relatives, shopkeepers.

Agricultural labour enquiries:-
The problem of agricultural labourers was increasing year after year and it order to evaluate the economic conditions of this class, the first agricultural labour enquiry was conducted in1950 – 51 by the ministry of labour. The enquiry was spread over a period of 12 months and it covered a sample of 3696 villages the planning commission.

Unemployment and under employment:-
There are two kinds of workers attached workers and causal workers. The term attached and workers refer to those workers employed at least for a month, the casual labourers being employed on daily wages.

Low social status:-
Since ages agricultural workers belong to the most depressed classes of the society which have been neglected here depresses classes mean both economically and socially. Accordingly, it is very difficult for farm rural back ground and their operation are also in rural area.

Paucity of non – agricultural job:-
In fact non – agricultural occupations in village are very scare / rare in village areas and thus mostly illiterate, unorganized and unskilled workers have got no option except to seek job in agricultural sector. Supply of labour being more in comparision to their demand in this sector, their wages is really very low.

Conditions of work :-
The amount of work to be done in a day depends upon the legends of the sowing and harvesting season. There is no regularity in hours of work which depends on the goodwill of the employer. The casual workers have work for about 11 hours a day. They are paid very low wages.

IV. CONCLUSION
Agricultural labourers who are mostly landless and form asignificant section of rural society mainly depend on wageemployment in agriculture. Majority of them belong to thecategory of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are amongthe worst exploited section of the society. Their income has always been meager, resulting in poor living and heavyindebtedness.

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