

Employment Status and Working Condition of Agricultural Labourers in Kadayanallur Taluk of Tenkasi District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: *Agricultural labourers constitute the single largest section of working population in India. They contribute substantially to the development of the national economy by involving themselves in agricultural production activities; but they are the worst exploited section among workers. This study was conducted to find out the employment status and working condition of agricultural labourers in Kadayanallur Taluk of Tenkasi District in Tamil Nadu. It is observed that, payment of remuneration for farm activities is done in both cash and kind, majority of the respondents' average earnings in a month from farm activities is up to Rs. 5000; sowing is the main activity followed by the activities such as, land preparation, intercropping activities, fertilizer application, irrigation, weeding, pesticides spraying, caretaking / watchman and ploughing in which the respondents are involved in.*

Keywords: Agricultural Labourers, Farm Activities, Allied Farm Activities

I. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural labour constitute the major portion of the rural labour. Since time immemorial agricultural labour has a pride place in the Indian economy. Agricultural labour is one of the most important sections of rural population. Their contribution to the rural economy is noteworthy.

In India, agricultural labourers have been increasing since 1951 and the percentage of agricultural labourers has increased from 28 percent to 54.8 percent during 1951 to 2011. According to 2011 census, cultivators have decreased by about 9 million whereas agricultural labourers have increased by about 38 million. Proportion of agricultural labourers has been increasing from 28.0 million in 1951 to 144.3 million in 2011.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Punam, (2012) in his study reveals that though there is significant technological advancement in agricultural sector, agricultural labourers constitute to be one of the most important factors of production, The human labour continues and continue to be a more important factor in the agricultural economy.

Jain and Singh (2000) have conducted a study on the trends in tenancy and labour use pattern in Punjab Agriculture. The study revealed that human labour employed on per cultivated hectare showed a decline in all the size classes except the marginal farms.

Yadav and Kaushik (2006) in their study revealed that total days of different activities in a season ranged from one day to 20 days, maximum days being spent on weeding followed by harvesting. The total time spent by women was maximum on harvesting (75 hrs), followed by weeding (50 hrs), irrigation (24 hrs) and storing (10.5 hrs). Least time was spent on threshing, winnowing, plant protection, fertilizer application and sowing (less than 10 hrs/season). The study concludes that as women mostly do jobs that are tedious, monotonous and requiring manual labour while technical activities are taken over by men, women need to be trained in technical aspects as well to handle farming operations independently

Kumar et al. (2003) in their paper have examined the shifting employment pattern in the rural India. The study revealed a declining trend in rural farm sector employment. With continuing population pressure, small and fragmented agricultural holdings, highly unequal land distribution structure, increasing application of labour saving farm production technologies etc.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary data. The primary data was collected by using a well prepared interview schedule. Personal interview method was adopted to collect information from the respondents. Multi stage random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample agricultural labourers. In the first stage, number of village panchayats in Kadayanallur Taluk of Tenkasi district were listed and out of them, four villager panchayats namely, Anaikulam, chockkampatti, Nainaragaram and Neduvayal were selected. In the second stage, from Anaikulam four villages, from chockkampatti five villages, from Nainaragaram five villages and from Neduvayal five villages were selected. Thus a total of 19 villages were selected. In the third stage, from each of these villages five agricultural labourers were selected. Thereby, a sample of ninety five respondents were selected for the present study. Simple random sampling technique is used to select the village panchayats, villages and the respondents.

IV. DISCUSSION

The employment status and working condition of the respondents is analysed in terms of average number of days they get employment, average earnings in a month from farm activities and their involvement in farm and allied farm activities.

A) Average Number of Working Days in a Month

Number of days the respondents get employment in a month is explained in Table No. 1

Table No. 1: Average Number of Working Days in a Month

No. of Days	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1-7	-	0
8 - 14	83	87.37
15 and more	12	12.63
Total	95	100

Source: Primary Data

Table No.1 shows that 87.37 per cent of the respondents get employment in agricultural related activities for 8 to 14 days in a month and 12.63 per cent of the respondents get employment for more than 15 days in a month.

B) Payment of Remuneration

Payment of remuneration for the agricultural work done by the respondents is explained in Table No.2

Table No. 2: Payment of Remuneration

Remuneration		No. of Respondents	
1. Wage basis		(100)	68 (71.58)
	a) Cash	26 (38.24)	
	b) Cash and agricultural produce	42 (61.76)	
2. Term contract			15 (15.79)
3. Monthly salary			12 (12.63)
Total Respondents			95 (100)

Source : Primary Data

Note : Figures in brackets denotes percentage to respective total

Analysis regarding the payment of remuneration to the sample respondents reveals that (Table No.2), 71.58 per cent are paid on wage basis 15.79 per cent are paid on contract basis and 12.63 per cent are paid monthly salary. Of

those respondents who are paid on wage basis 38.24 per cent get their remuneration in cash whereas 61.76 per cent get their remuneration in cash and in kind that is, in cereals or grains.

C) Average Earnings in a Month from Farm Activities

The amount the sample agricultural workers earn from agricultural activities in a month is analysed in Table No.3

Table No. 3: Average Earnings per month by the Respondents from Farm Activities

Earnings (in Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 5000	63	66.32
5001 to 7500	15	15.79
7501 to 10000	5	5.26
Above 10000	-	0
Total	95	100

Source: Primary Data

Analysis regarding the average earnings in a month from farm activities (table No.3) reveals that 66.32 per cent of the respondents earn up to Rs. 5000, 15.79 per cent earn between Rs. 5001 and 7500 and 26 per cent of the respondents earn between Rs. 7501 and Rs. 10000.

D) Involvement of Respondents in Land Preparation and Sowing Activities

Involvement of respondents in land preparation and sowing activities is explained in Table No.4.

Table No. 4: Involvement of Respondents in Land Preparation and Sowing Activities

Activities	No. of Respondents (n = 95)
Land preparation	76 (80)
Ploughing	11 (11.58)
Sowing	78 (82.11)
Irrigation	63 (66.32)
Fertilizer application	65 (68.42)
Weeding	47 (49.47)
Inter cropping operations	71 (74.74)
Pesticide spraying	27 (28.42)
Care taking/ watchmen	12 (12.63)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in brackets denotes percentage

Analysis regarding the involvement of respondents in land preparation and sowing activities reveals that (Table No. 4), sowing is the main activity as 82.11 per cent of the respondents are involved in this, followed by the activities such as, land preparation (80 per cent), intercropping activities (74.74) per cent, fertilizer application (68.42 per cent), irrigation (66.32 per cent), weeding (48.47 per cent), pesticides spraying (28.42 per cent), caretaking / watchman (12.63 per cent) and ploughing (11.58 per cent).

E) Involvement of Respondents in Allied Farm Activities

The agricultural labourers also involve in allied farm activities which is explained in Table No. 5

Table No. 5: Involvement of Respondents in Allied Farm Activities

Activities	No. of Respondents (n = 95)
Harvesting	79 (83.16)
Threshing	85 (89.47)

Storage of grains	76 (80.00)
Bullock cart driving	11 (11.58)
Tractor operator	7 (7.37)
Soil filling	78 (82.11)
Preparing channels	82 (86.32)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in brackets denotes percentage

Regarding the involvement of respondents in allied farm activities it is evident that (Table No. 5), threshing is the activity which attracts more workers as 89.47 per cent of them are involved in it and the following activities are preparing channels (86.32 per cent), harvesting (83.16 per cent), soil filling (82.11 per cent), activities regarding storage of agricultural produce (80 per cent), bullock cart driving (11.58) per cent and operating the tractor (7.37 per cent).

F) Economic Problems and Constraints Perceived by the Agricultural Labourers

Problems and constraints related to economic aspects, perceived by the agricultural labourers is analysed in Table No. 6

Table No. 6: Economic Problems and Constraints Perceived by the Agricultural Labourers

Problems	No. of Respondents (n = 95)
No continuous work	95 (100)
Low wages	95 (100)
Delayed payment of wages	63 (66.32)
Indebtedness	48 (50.53)
No employment of other family members	51 (53.68)
No employment due to cheap migratory labourers	31 (32.63)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in brackets denotes percentage

Analysis about the economic problems and constraints perceived by the sample agricultural labourers (table No.6) reveals that, not getting continuous work and low wages are the main economic problem faced by all (100 per cent) of the respondents followed by, delayed payment of wages (66.32 per cent), no employment to other family members (53.68 per cent), indebtedness (50.53 per cent) and no employment due to cheap migratory labourers (32.63 per cent).

V. SUGGESTIONS

Agriculture is still the basis of rural development and therefore, greater emphasis should be attached to the agricultural sector in terms of providing inputs at a subsidised rate, improving the irrigational facilities and in encouraging farmers to continue with their cultivation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Since agricultural development is very vital to the growth of our economy, there is a need to give much attention. Unless the living and working condition of agricultural labourers are improved, there cannot be any real progress in agriculture. Skill up-gradation of agricultural labourers and improving their productivity are important aspects of development that has to be done in agriculture.

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