

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS – A STUDY OF SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS OF KARNAL DISTRICT, HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

India is an agrarian economy and two third of population is directly involve in agricultural activities. The State of Haryana has a maximum population dependent on the agriculture sector for their livelihood. This paper has analyzed the market functioning and socio-economic status of district Karnal in Haryana State. The result of this study has shown that most of the labourer are getting temporary work in the agricultural sector and getting low wage rates. The social status of labourer is explained in terms of their age, caste, education level, marital status, family type and family size. Economic status of agricultural labourer is defined in terms of land holding, housing status and earnings. Socio-economic status shows that most of the agricultural labourers are of age group 18-30 and illiterate. This paper highlights that landless agricultural labourers are living in a very bad state and alternative works need to be created for them to enhance their income and status in the society.

Keywords: Agricultural Labourers, Socio-economic status, Agricultural activities.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. Over 58% of the rural households depend on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. Agriculture growth and development under modern agriculture in form of Green Revolution during sixties to nineties has been quite remarkable to move and push the country from severe food shortages and crisis of past to self-sufficiency and surplus in food grains for the time being. States with abundant natural resources with poor economic and social development status have attracted attention in recent times.

The state of Haryana is one of the largest producer of food grain in India and offers a diverse agro climatic condition which is conducive for agricultural production.

Economically, Karnal district is the most developed with higher levels of urbanization, greater diversification of the economy, better infrastructure, higher agricultural productivity, higher per capita income and lower poverty levels. In this study Karnal district of Haryana is taken as focus area for evaluating the level of Socio-Economic status of the labourers engaged in agriculture activities.

Agricultural labourers are those persons who work on the land of others on wages for the major part of the year and earn a major portion of their income as a payment in the form of wages for works performed on the agricultural farms owned by others.

The first Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee of 1950-51 regarded those workers as agricultural workers who normally worked for 50 per cent of more days on the payment of wages. This first committee again classified the agricultural workers into two different categories such as.

(1). Attached labourers are those workers who are attached to some other farmer households on the basis of a written or oral agreement. These attached workers are working as per the wishes of their masters and are not free to work at any other place. They are working both in the house and farms of their masters. Thus, these attached labourers are working as serfs or servants and they are also known as bonded labourers.

(2). On the other hand, casual labourers are those workers who are free to work in any farm on the payment of daily wages.

In India casual labourers include; **a).** Small farmers having very small size of farms and they works on the land of others.

b). Landless labourers who exclusively work for other.

c). Tenants who work on land taken on lease but most of the time works for others.

d). sharecroppers who also work as labourers.

In India, as per census, 2011, out of 481.7 million total workers, 118.7 million are cultivators and another 144.3 million are agricultural labourers. Thus nearly 55.0% of the workers are engaged in agricultural activities compared to 58.2% in census 2001.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agricultural Labourers status always remains a favorite area for the agricultural researcher. A number of research studies are conducted in India on the status and working of these. Some major studies and papers were reviewed for formulation of research design of the present study.

Saha and Rani (1992) carried out a study in a arid village of Jodhpur district of western Rajasthan. The village is inhabited by heterogeneous caste communities. The settlement pattern was by and large compact and dhanis. Data were collected from forty seven farm families selected on the basis of size of land holding. The composition of sample was large (40%), medium (19%), small (23%) and marginal (17%).

Padmanaban (1994) analyzed the demand and supply of the agricultural alabour in thiruvaiyaru Taluk. The study highlighted that total labour used per hectare was 184.21 man days, of which casual labour accounted for 70.06 per cent and family labour 20.31 per cent, the labour requirement for kurvai paddy per hectare was 167.9 mandays and for thaladi paddy it was 173.59 mandays.

Padhi, (2007) studied that agricultural labourers, are landless, from the poorest segment of the Indian rural population. They mostly belong to the economically backward and oppressed section of the society. They mainly belong to the scheduled castes and other backward communities. They are basically unskilled and unorganised and work in farms of prosperous big farmers as casual workers on wages for a larger part of the year.

Sharma H R (2005) analyzed that an average daily real wages earning of adult male and female labourers increase in all major states over the pre and post Independence in India. Further, researcher highlighted the fact that the proportion of agriculture labour rural areas had shown increasing trend in most of the major states during the post reform period as compared with pre reform period.

Kumar and Sen (2000) conducted a research entitled “Contractual arrangements in land and labour markets in Varanasi district (Uttar Pradesh)”. The study revealed that the net area sown and agricultural labour use showed positive relationship. Increase in holding size lead to increase in leasing out activities while the leasing in activities decreases considerably with the size of respondent households irrespective of distance parameter large households mostly engaged in leasing out but not involved in leasing in activities.

Venkateshwarlu & M. Ramakrishna Reddy (2017) stated that agriculture labour is counted in the category of unorganized sector so the income is not fixed they are not covered any insecure and full uncertainty in their earnings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To study the meaning, concept and extent of agricultural labour.

2. To evaluate the functioning of agricultural labour markets in Karnal district.
3. To study the socio- economic status of agricultural labour in Karnal district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study is to examine the socio-economic status of agricultural labourer in the selected district of Haryana. This study has focused particularly in selected villages of Karnal district in Haryana State. The region is selected as it is a prosperous agricultural region, which is referred to as '**rice bowl of Haryana**'. Hence, Karnal district is selected as study area. The district is a predominantly rice growing district and a wheat-growing district. In the study three villages of karnal districts are covered for the collection of data and respondents are agricultural laboureres. Three selected villages are Bhusli, Tikri and Subhri.

A list of all the agricultural labour households of the selected villages was prepared in consultation with village Patwaris, Agricultural Supervisors and local farmers. Total 70 agricultural labourers were finally selected randomly and proportionately in probability proportion to the total number in selected villages of Karnal district. A multi-stage random sampling design was used for the selection of sample households. The study, is mainly based on primary data, also uses the secondary data sources like Census of India,

In this paper, we have discussed the socioeconomic characteristics of agricultural labourers and their participation in agricultural activities. The analysis is divided into three sections. Section-I deals with the types of agricultural labourer and their market conditions from selected households. In Section II, we have analyzed the social status of the sample households like Age, Caste, Educational level, marital status, family type and family size. Section III deals with the economic status like land holding, house status and earnings in a year.

RESULT ANALYSIS

The primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire to cover the three aspects of the study. The results of these three sections are given as below.

Section-1

In this section-1 Agricultural labourers are identified from the three selected villages and on the basis definition they have been categorized as casual and permanent labourers. Further, the labour market of both type is also analyzed on the basis of their work days, wage rate and number of workers as male and female.

Table: 1
Types of Agricultural Labourers covered

Sr. no.	Name of the Village	Casual Labour	Permanent Labour
1.	Bhusli	14	7
2.	Tikri	15	9
3.	Subhri	18	7
	Total	47	23

Source: Own Calculation from Survey

In table-1 from three selected villages total 70 workers were covered out of these 47 labourers are casual and 23 are permanent. During coverage of households of agricultural labourers most of the labourers get work on casual basis.

Table: 2
Functioning of market for casual labour

Sr. no.	Name of the Village	No. of Days Worked	Average Money Wage Rate (Rs/Days)	No of Workers (Male/Female)
1.	Bhusli	145	390	10/04
2.	Tikri	158	380	09/06
3.	Subhri	147	400	13/05

Source: Own Calculation from Survey

Table-2 has shown the functioning of market of the casual labourers in the selected villages. Agricultural labourers get maximum work in Tikri village and less work in Bhusli village. The wage rate of casual labourers is maximum in Subhri village with wage rate Rs. 400 and lowest wage rate is in Tikri village. In Subhri village maximum male workers get the work out of the three selected villages. On the other hand in Tikri village 06 female labourers are getting maximum works as compare to other two villages.

Table: 3
Functioning of market for permanent labour

Sr. no.	Name of the Village	No. of Days Worked	Average Money Wage Rate (Rs/Days)	No of Workers (Male/Female)
1.	Bhusli	240	400	06/01
2.	Tikri	265	390	07/02
3.	Subhri	218	425	07/00

Source: Own Calculation from Survey

Functioning of market for permanent labour has shown in table-3. Maximum work is provided in Tikri village for permanent labourers and they are getting minimum wage rate. The wage rate is maximum in Subhri village with Rs. 425 and in Bhusli village wage rate is Rs. 400. The result of Subhri and Tikri villages shows that maximum male workers are getting the work and no female worker are engaged in agricultural activity in Subhri village.

Section-II

In this section of the paper social status of selected agricultural labourers is studied on various parameters. The results are calculated in proportions of total workers engaged in the selected three villages of the Karnal district.

Table: 4
Social status of the Agricultural Labourers

Basis	Parameters	Villages and Respondents		
		Bhusli	Tikri	Subhri
Age	Below 18	05 (24%)	03 (12%)	03 (12%)
	18-30	08 (38%)	09 (38%)	07 (28%)
	30-40	05 (24%)	06 (26%)	11 (44%)
	40-50	02 (09%)	03 (12%)	03 (12%)
	More than 50	01 (05%)	03 (12%)	01 (04%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Caste	General	03 (14%)	01 (04%)	04 (16%)
	Backwards Class	08 (38%)	09 (38%)	08 (32%)
	Scheduled Class	10 (48%)	14 (58%)	13 (52%)
	Scheduled Tribes	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)

	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Education Level	Illiterate	10 (48%)	14 (58%)	12 (48%)
	Primary	08 (38%)	04 (17%)	06 (24%)
	Middle	03 (14%)	04 (17%)	06 (24%)
	High	00 (00%)	02 (08%)	01 (04%)
	Secondary	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	Graduate	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Marital Status	Married	14 (67%)	19 (79%)	18 (72%)
	Unmarried	05 (24%)	05 (21%)	06 (24%)
	Widow	02 (09%)	00 (00%)	01 (04%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Family Type	Nuclear	05 (24%)	10 (42%)	16 (64%)
	Joint	16 (76%)	14 (58%)	09 (36%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Size of Family	<5	03 (14%)	05 (21%)	04 (16%)
	5 to 10	12 (57%)	06 (25%)	14 (56%)
	>10	06 (29%)	13 (54%)	07 (28%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)

Source: Own Calculation from Survey

Table-4 has shown the detailed result of various parameters of social status of the agricultural labourers from selected villages. Maximum labourers are getting works in Bhusli and Tikri villages are of age group 18-30 years and in village Subhri are of age group 30-40 years. Most of the agricultural labourers, which are engaged in agricultural works, are from scheduled caste. Most of the illiterate labourers are working in the agricultural activities of the selected villages. Maximum agricultural labourers are married. Bhusli and Tikri villages has maximum labourers are living in joint families but in Subhri village 64% labourers are living in nuclear families. In Tikri village family size of labourers is big as compare to other two villages.

Section-III

This section of results will explain the parameters of economic status of selected household of three villages of Karnal districts.

Table: 5
Economic Status of Agricultural Labourers

		Villages and Respondents		
Basis	Parameters	Bhusli	Tikri	Subhri
Land Holding	No Land	15 (71%)	22 (92%)	24 (96%)
	01 to 02 Acre	06 (29%)	02 (08%)	01 (04%)
	02 to 03 Acre	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	03 to 04 Acre	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	More than 04 Acre	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
House Condition	No House	05 (24%)	00 (00%)	02 (08%)
	Hut	06 (29%)	23 (96%)	23 (92%)
	Kuchha House	10 (47%)	01 (04%)	00 (00%)
	Pakka House	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)
Income (Per Annum in Rupees)	Less than Rs. 10,000	02 (09%)	03 (12%)	03 (12%)
	Rs. 10,000 to 20,000	06 (29%)	06 (26%)	04 (16%)
	Rs. 20,000 to 30,000	05 (24%)	09 (36%)	12 (48%)
	Rs. 30,000 to 40,000	04 (19%)	06 (26%)	03 (12%)

	Rs. 40,000 to 50,000	04 (19%)	00 (00%)	03 (12%)
	More than Rs. 50,000	00 (00%)	00 (00%)	00 (00%)
	Total	21 (100%)	24 (100%)	25 (100%)

Source: Own Calculation from Survey

Table-5 has shown that in Tikri and Subhri villages most of the labourers are landless but in Bhusli village 29% labourers are having 1-2 acre land. In Tikri and Subhri villages house conditions of labourers is in very bad state and in Bhusli village 47% labourers have kuchha house. Income results of the selected labourers have shown that most of the respondent has annual income Rs. 20,000 to 30,000.

CONCLUSION

Agriculture labour is counted in the category of unorganized sector, so their income is not fixed. Hence they are living an insecure and underprivileged life and earning just Rs. 150/day along with full uncertainty. The agricultural labourers are one of the most exploited and oppressed classes in rural hierarchy. This paper has analyzed the socio-economic status of agricultural labourers in Karnal district of Haryana State. Three villages were selected for the study and total 70 labourers comprising 47 casual and 23 permanent were covered. It has been identified that most of the agricultural labourers are landless and are getting very low wage rates. The socio-economic status of agricultural labour class is in very bad shape, they mostly belong to scheduled and backward class in the villages. Education level is also very low most of them are illiterate and living in joint families in the villages.

The results show that if they are getting more wage rates correspondingly they get will less work opportunities. Agricultural is a seasonal work and the status of labourers need to be improved by providing them some alternate labour work in the villages. In order to guarantee sustainable agricultural development in the new millennium, rural workers and their families should have access to adequate working and living conditions, health and welfare. An adequate balance between agricultural growth and the protection of the environment is also crucial for the future of the world's food production and for its sustainability. Occupational health in agriculture must be integrated into a rural development policy with a well-defined strategy. All the agriculture labourers need to be covered under the government schemes for their wellbeing and growth.

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