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AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND WELFARE POLICIES IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT:

Agriculture plays an important role in Indian economy. Besides contributing a substantial part of the country's domestic production, it is the largest source of employment and major contributor to the national income. Nearly 80% of the population lives in villages whose predominant occupation is agriculture. Indian agriculture is characterized by increasing number of operational holdings while farm size reduced due to fragmentation.

Moreover farmers are often not sure about the outcome crop enterprises due to changing Eco-system and uncertain rainfall. This situation creates a seasonal unemployment and then adversely affects in weaker section on unorganized sector of the civil society. Besides, most of the people dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their better Livelihood. Large number of small farmers marginal land owners and landless sections of the society depend on Agriculture wage work. Severe poverty, lack of other job opportunity, low incomes were the push factors to enter to agriculture wage sector.

INTRODUCTION

The external agriculture labours denotes those rural labors who are employed on wages in agriculture occupation. Agriculture labour means a person, who for more than half of the total number of days on which actually works during the year, is engaged in agricultural operations as hired labour. Thus agriculture labourer is a person who either has no land of his own or who has too little land to support his family from his income. Agriculture labour enquire report the 1961 senses defines agricultural labour as follows.

“An agricultural is one who worked in another persons land only as a labour (with out exercising supervision or direction in cultivation) for wages in cash kind or share of produce.”

He should have been working as agricultural labourer. In the last or the current working season. In Indian agricultural system at the bottom of the heap were the agricultural labourers, who were again subdivided into permanent farm servants and hired casual labourers who were paid according to the time spent or work done (Dasgupta, 1977:36). The casual labourers usually took up work in farms for specified daily wages. But the wage labourer has less economic security and lower social prestige (Beteille: 1974: 154) in

agriculture. Pauline Kolenda (1978: 139) has pointed out that the landholder's only obligation to such labour is the paying of wages. In monetary terms casual workers seem to be earning more per month than the attached workers. But the attached worker gets at all his employer which the casual worker does not get at all (Bandopadhyay 1979: 12). In addition to this, permanent labourers get more days of work per season than casual labourers (Mencher, 1978: 351). In India the fully attached labourers are mainly hired by big farmers (Bardhan, 1980: 1943). In fact, caste system not only confined the economic but also social advantages to agricultural labourers.

Wage condition is another important area of the relationship between labourers and cultivators. In agriculture, the wage rate varies with the sex of the labourer. Female labourers usually get a lower rate (Bardhan, 1980: 1947). Sushila Mehta (1980: 978) has observed that wage rates vary with respect to agricultural operations. In this connection Nayar (1976: 194) has pointed out that wage rates differ not only from place to place but with different workers under the same landlord.

SHARE OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS IN INDIA

A substantial section of the agricultural community which has either no land or very little land derives livelihood from wage employment, quantitative measurement of the employment work as really significant in the case of worker belonging to the section as well as those poor owner cultivators who * their income by hiring themselves out for wages employment. Thus according to 17111 round of national sample survey (1961-62) employees were 31 % of the gainful employee personnel in rural India why employment according traditional concept as significant for about 69% of rural labour force it is meaningful at last for 31 % of rural labour force.

The problem can be further understood if we consider the proportional of the agricultural workers in different states of the country as given in the table along with the unemployment rates.

In 1981 the population of Karnataka was 371.36 which were nearly 5.3% of India's population. As can be seen from the trend of population from 1901 — 1981 there has been three fold increase in population both in India and Karnataka. In Karnataka 1984, the population of Karnataka was 5.5% of India's population and 0.9% of the world's population. As regards agriculture population. It was 68.05% of the total population in Karnataka which was more than that of India (50.2%) and the world (43.8%). The percentage of agriculture population in total population had declined from 1981 to 1984 in Karnataka, India and the world.

The share of Karnataka in the total main workers of India during 1981 was 6.2% the percentage distributors or agriculture. Main workers to the total main workers are less in Karnataka as compared to India while it is more under agriculture labours.

RESEARCH ISSUE

After reviewing in literature on agricultural labour welfare programmes, some of the research issues for identified. Most of the the studies conclude that agricultural labour are ill iterates and were not aware of wel fore programmes like RLEGP NREP 1) YASI IASWNI EGS.

Karnataka State has rural population of however, 264.04 lakhs (71.17%) of Tumkur district, has 86.2% of the population only depending upon agriculture and allied activities. Most of the agricultures labourer are aware of minimum wages act also.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study has to assess the socio Economic performance of Agricultural Labourer in the light of selected welfare programmes. Further, the political participation is an important aspect which needs detailed study. So far the research on this issue, is scarce and far between. The results of the study will be useful for implementing proper policies for labour welfare. The present study intends to cover the 'Status of Agricultural labour in Tumkur district vis-a-vis labour welfare programmes of Karnataka State⁵' after independence. This study proposes know the socio economic and political status of agricultural labourer and their organizational caparison.

METHODOLOGY

Tumkur belongs to the group districts called the maiden location (plains) Districts and situated in the east central part of Kamataka state and to the south and south east of Chitradurga district. It situated between 12°, 45', 14°, 20'. North latitude and between 76°, 20' and 77°, 31' east longitude. It is bounded on the north by Ananthpur district of Andhra pradesh on the east by Kolar and Bangalore Districts and south by Mandya District and on the west by district of Chitradurga Chikmagalur and Hassan.

Tumkur district comprises of 10 taluks from which 5 taluks were selected, from among there 50 respondent catch from 5 taluks were selected (Madhugiri, Tumkur, Sira, Chikkanayakahally, Pavagada). The methodological section envelope a brief discussion of the study area, sample design. Nature and sources of data and analytical frame work.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary were collected for the purpose.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data were collected with the help of pretested questionnaire, the Agricultural Labours from individually to obtain specific information a questionnaire

Group interviews and focus group discurstion were used for obtaining the information regarding the Government Welfare Programmes, Problems and other family issues. Socio Economic and Political awareness of the Agricultural Labourers, Education, Health and Legal awareness of the Agricultural Labourers were obtained from the male, female and child agricultural labourers and also interview land owners or who provide the employment. A total of 300 questionnaires were administrated to agriculture labour house holds who were randomly selected. Taluk one Hobaly and each Hobaly 2-3 villages were selected for the ability of Agricultural Laboureres for interview. Each Hobaly 50 questionnaires filled for research work.

STUDY AREA

Five taluks in Tumkur district were selected in such a way that they represented the taluks will be well developed as well as less developed. From each taluk one Hobli was selected from each of the hobli 2-3 villages were selected randomly. From each hobli 50 respondents were selected randomly.

General information as well as specific information pertaining to employment, consumption migration and political awareness were collected using suitable interview schedule. The data were tabulated and analysed using multivariable techniques.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary Data were collected from various Journals, Books, and published and unpublished theses. The Agricultural Labour Department and 11.0 Reports Research Papers and Seminars and Articles, handbooks, Different years Census Reports, Agricultural Statistical Books were used and also weather information Bureau Reports are utilized for the research work.

OBJECTIVES

1. To Examine the SOCIO Economic and Political Status of Agriculture Labourers in India.
2. To critically Examine the Central and State Government Welfare Programmes and Policies for Agricultural Labours.
3. To Study the Income and Consumption Pattern of the Agricultural Labourers.
4. To Identify the Issues and Challenges faced by the Agricultural Labourers.
5. To study the Organizing and Political awareness of Agricultural labourers.
6. To know the Empowerment of Agricultural Labour and their Perspectives on Welfare measures.

Labour theories:

Marx's concept of labour theory Unlike usefulness, the amount of labour embodied in a commodity can be objectively measured : by knowing the time required for making. However, all wealth, not just commodities, shares this characteristic of being products of human labour. What we want to know is how do commodities differ from other forms of wealth. Wealth, we know, only takes the form of commodities under certain social conditions, specifically when it is produced for sale. Similarly with labour (used-up human energy): under the same social conditions it becomes "value". Thus value is not something you can find in the physical or chemical properties of a commodity, for it is a social property, a social relation. However, as value only expresses itself in exchange, as exchange value, this social relation appears as a relation between things. This is what is behind Marx's writing about the "fetishism of commodities". Price is the monetary expression of value.

Labour, says the Labour Theory of Value, is the basis of value. But how does labour determine the value of a commodity? The value of a commodity, said Marx, is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour contained in it or, what is the same thing, by the amount of socially necessary labour-time spent in producing it from start to finish. Note that the Labour Theory of Value does not say that the value of a commodity is determined by the actual amount of labour contained in it. That would mean that an inefficient

worker would create more value than an efficient worker. By socially necessary is meant the amount needed to produce, and reproduce, a commodity under average working conditions, e.g. average productivity, average intensity of labour. Its value is the social average brought out by the market. This means of course that what is socially necessary is continually changing.

Under capitalism nearly everything is a commodity, or takes the form of a commodity, is bought and sold. This qualification is necessary to counter the argument often advanced against the Labour Theory of Value that some things that are bought and sold either are not products of labour or sell at prices quite out of proportion to the amount of labour embodied in them, e.g. land and objects of art. Land, under capitalism, has a price which, in its pure form, is merely the capitalisation of its rent. Land has no value as it is not the product of human labour.

Another thing that under capitalism takes the form of a commodity is labourpower (the ability of human beings to work, human energy). Indeed this fact is the basis of capitalism since it presupposes the separation of the producers from the ownership and control of the means and instruments for producing wealth. But there is one very important difference between labour-power and other commodities. Labour-power is embodied in human beings who can think, act and struggle to get the best price for what they are selling. Otherwise its value is fixed in the same way as that of other commodities: by the amount of socially necessary labour spent on creating it and recreating it. The labour spent on creating a man's labour power is that spent in producing the food, clothing, shelter and the other things needed to keep him in a fit state to work. Thus the value of an unskilled man's labour-power is equal to about enough to keep him and his family alive and working. Skilled men get more because it costs more labour to produce and maintain their skills. When the worker finds an employer he is paid a wage, which is the price he is paid for allowing the employer to use his labour power for, say, 8 hours. Wages, then, are a special kind of price; they are the monetary expression of the value of labour-power.

Labour-power has a peculiar characteristic. Because wealth can only be produced by human beings applying their mental and physical energies to materials found in nature and because labour (the expending of labour-power) is the basis of value, labour-power has the property of being able to produce and create new value. Let us assume that our worker's labour-power is worth 4 hours labour a day. After he has worked 4 hours does he stop? Of course not. Under his contract he must work for another 4 hours. Since he is working in his employers' place, with his employers' tools, machinery and raw materials anything he produces belongs to his employer. Thus, in this case, the employer gets 4 hours free labour. This is the source of his profit, which he shares with his creditors as interest and with his landlord as (ground) rent (and with the State as taxes). So the source of all Rent, Interest and Profit is the unpaid labour of the working class

1. Subsistence theory: This theory was first propounded by David Ricardo. For long time it was believed that wages, in the long run, would tend to equal just enough of food, clothing and shelter to maintain existence. This is known as iron law of wages or the subsistence theory of wages.

2. Wages fund theory: The wages fund theory was developed by J.S. Mill. He maintained that a certain fixed proportion of capital of a country was set apart for payment as wages of labourers. This proportion he called the wages fund. Thus according to him, wages at any moment were determined by the

amount of money in the wages fund and if the supply of labour increased, wages would fall, and vice versa. It is implied that if the wages are forced up, capital will leave the country.

3. Residual claimant theory: The residual claimant theory replaced the wages fund theory. According to this theory, the worker is residual claimant of the product of industry. He gets what remains after land, capital and organisation have been paid out of the product as their rewards. Thus, wages are determined after rent, interest and profits have been deducted from the total product. According to traditional theory, labour markets should work on their own, with job seekers finding available jobs, thus creating balance. The three Nobel laureates, however, help show with their model the Diamond-Mortensen-Pissarides, or DMP model that markets do not always work in this way. Owing to small glitches, buyers may find it difficult to find sellers and job-seekers may not find the employers looking to fill a position. For instance, a small cost faced by employers looking for labour may mean they decide not to take on workers even though they need them. Labour participation, earnings in agriculture varies with region and nature of activities labour force are engaged with. In this study an attempt has been made to know the socio-economic, political and demographic profile of agricultural labours in Tumkur district.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Some agriculture labour have benefited from rural development programmes and employment guarantee schemes like RLEGP, NREP, EGS, YASHASWINI, Food For Work programmes, Drought Prone Area Development Programme (DPAP). More than 80% agriculture labours having PDS Card, it is the main source of help for agriculture labourer to lead life.
2. The money for maintenance of family needs of agriculture labourers was by way of wages and most of agriculture labourers were seasonal workers, some migrated to near- by town and Bangalore city for building construction work and some labourers sent their earnings to families.
3. Most of agriculture family members were illiterates and below primary Educated.
4. It was observed that the share of family consumption expenditure accounted for 40 to 60 per cent of earnings. Wage money was mainly spent on consumption of cereals, edible oil, meat, milk, fruit and vegetables, Some of the households purchased home appliances like Radio, T.V., Bicycle and kitchen items. Out of wage earnings children education, clothing and health related problems were met.
5. Some of the Families took loan for milk animals, sheep rearing.
6. The study observed that Government is spending money on various schemes provided for agriculture laboures, but only a few of the programs have benefited the households
7. The agricultural labourers were not interested as participation in politics and communities development activities because caste feelings and personal works.
8. Agricultural labourers had cordial relationship among co-workers but were not providing help in times of need.
9. Majority of agriculture labour childrens chose the occupation as a form of tradition.
10. SC / ST. and OBC caste people were mainly agricultural labours, belonging to Hindu and Muslim religion only.

11. Agricultural labourers were not aware of some of the government programmes.
12. Elected G.P. and T.P. members did not care enough to upliftment of agricultural labourers life Status.
13. Most of the Agricultural labourers took loans and advances from Land owners.
14. In most developed taluk of Tumkur, agriculture labour beneficiary family derived on an average Rs 67611 per annum by participating in welfare developmental programmes of which maximum benefit was from Housing scheme (66.55 %), followed by Programmes concerning with Food and nutritional security (8.00%), Wage employment schemes (7.40%), Social security (7.80%) and Health scheme (6.65%).
- 15 In the case of moderately developed taluks, agriculture labour households through participation in various welfare programmes derived on an average Rs 69243, of which maximum benefit was from Housing scheme (69.11 %), followed by Programmes concerning Food and nutritional security (7.41%), Wage employment schemes (7.80%), Social security (8.66%) and Health scheme (3.32 %) respectively.
16. Similarly in the case of least developed taluk, through various welfare programmes agriculture labour family derived on an average Rs 94940, of which maximum benefit was from Housing scheme (51.32 %), followed by Programmes concerning Food and nutritional security (5.89%), Wage employment schemes (7.25%), Social security (7.92%) and Health scheme (25.80 %) respectively.
17. In most developed taluk, agricultural labour households realized a maximum annual average income of Rs.1,33,224.70 of which 59.79 per cent was from Agriculture labour followed by dairy (Rs. 21254.25 which contributed 15.95 per cent and the contribution of farm income was 12.98 per cent and nonfarm income was 11.26 per cent.
18. In the case of moderately developed taluks, the labour income contributed 61.60 per cent, farm income 19.67 per cent and dairy 12.23 per cent. Non-farm activities contributed 6.48 per cent to the total income of households. The total earnings per labour household in moderately developed taluks amounted to Rs.1,00,869.40.
19. In least developed agriculture labour, the agriculture wage income contributed 72.75 per cent, dairy 17.39 per cent and farm income 6.99 per cent, nonfarm activities about 2.85 per cent to the total income of Rs. 74,552.20 per household. In pooled agriculture labour, the agriculture labour wage contribution was 13.21 and 6.86per cent respectively.
20. Irrespective of situations, agriculture labour empowerment was high in moderately developed taluk as compared to most developed and least developed agriculture labour.
21. It was found that 35 agriculture labour were categorised under high empowerment in the case of most developed taluk, followed by 42 in the case of moderately developed taluks and 11 in the case of least developed taluks. Out of 162 low empowered agriculture labour, 89 belonged to least developed taluks, followed by 58 in moderately developed agriculture labour and 15 in most developed taluks of Tumkur district.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The status of development agriculture labour can be traced by relating their sociodemographic and economic characteristics, participatory role in political and organization in institutions of democracy. The general wellbeing as well as empowerment of households is equally important. This is an important issue which signifies the importance of participation of both agriculture men and women labours in the process. Agriculture labour, constituting nearly more than half of the world's population is expected to participate and contribute for the development of nation. For the realization of this, formal education has been considered as one of the prerequisites which gives leverage in participating agriculture and non agriculture activities. Furthermore, education is also seen as a promoter of socio economic change as well as a vehicle for the reproduction of social structure which ultimately leads to increasing livelihood status of agriculture labour.

The spread of education, preparation of educated, skilled citizens and training of youth promote development of agriculture labour. Unless welfare program on education is made relevant to life, needs and aspirations, it cannot be very effective and successful. Thus, in order to bring about development, the entire welfare program should be a real success and a dynamic process for bringing socioeconomic change in agriculture labour. The time, place, and stages of implementation of welfare programs become indispensable for development of agriculture labour.

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