

## A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FARMERS IN OTTAPIDARAM TALUK, THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

Agriculture in India is the vertical backbone of the country and is regarded as the largest sector of the country's economic activity. It is the major sector of the State economy in which the majority of people earn their livelihood. It is palpable that over the period, the agricultural sector is losing its hold and not able to give expected result. Hence, the people particularly from the rural areas are gradually migrating from the primary sector to other sectors.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Economic Activity, Primary Sector and Migration.

### Introduction

Indian economy is characterized by the existence of high level of informal or unorganized labor employment. The workers in the organized sector constitute about 7 percent of the country's total work force and the rest (93 percent) comprises of subsistence farmers, agricultural workers, fisher folk, dairy workers and those working in traditional manufacturing like hand looms are grouped under unorganized sector.

Ministry of labor has categorized labor force under four groups in terms of occupation, nature of employment, especially distressed categories and service categories. In terms of occupation it includes small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural laborers, share croppers, fishermen and those engaged in animal husbandry, Tobacco rolling and its labeling and packing, building and construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills, oil mills etc.,. In terms of nature of

employment, they are attached agricultural laborers, bounded labores migrant workers, contract and casual laborers.

### **Definition of Agricultural Labors**

The First Agricultural Labor Enquiry Committee 1950-55 defined Agricultural Laborer as “Those people who are engaged in raising crops on payment of wages”.

The second Agricultural Labor Enquiry Committee 1956-57 enlarged the distribution to include “Those who are engaged in other agricultural occupations like dairy, farming horticulture, raising of live-stock, bees, poultry etc., “In the context of Indian conditions the definition is not adequate, because it is not possible to completely separate those working on wages from others.

There are people who do not work on wages throughout the year but only for a part of it. Therefore, the first A.L.E.C. used the concept of agricultural labor household. If half or more members of household should be termed as agricultural labor household. This concept is based upon the occupation of the worker.

The Second Committee submitted that to determine whether a household is an agricultural labor or a mere household, we must examine its main source of their income. If 50% or more of its income is derived as wages for work rendered in agriculture only, then it could be classed to agricultural labor household.

According to the National Commission on Labor “an agricultural laborer is one who is basically unskilled and unorganized and has little for its livelihood, other than personal labor.” Thus, persons whose main source of income is wage, employment fall in this category. Mishra and Puri have stated that “All those persons who derive a major part of their income as payment for work performed on the farms of others can be designated as agricultural workers. For a major part of the year they should work on the land of the others on wages.”

## **Problems of agricultural laborers in Tamil Nadu:**

### **Low agricultural productivity**

The first problem is related to low productivity in agriculture. In which about 70 percent of labor force is engaged and still the country is not self-sufficient in food productivity.

### **Seasonal employment**

The agricultural laborer does not get employment throughout the year. He is employed only during sowing and harvesting seasons.

### **Low social status**

Mostly the agricultural laborer in India belonged to scheduled castes that have been neglected for countries. They have always been exploited by the people of higher castes. These poor laborers are not strong enough to fight for their better working conditions.

### **Hours of work**

The hours of work of agricultural laborers is not fixed like the industrial laborers. They vary according to different places and seasons, often it is seen that the agricultural laborers have to work day and night, without proper rest. As a result their health is adversely affected.

### **Indebtedness**

The agricultural laborers in India are heavily indebted. They are born in debt and die in debt.

### **Lack of organization**

The agricultural laborers are subject to compulsory unpaid work from times to time by the village mahajan and also their employers.

### **Hard and Arduous work**

The agricultural laborers have to work in the fields in under burning sun, rains, storms, and other cold conditions without any proper rest and adequate.

### **Housing problem**

Most of the agricultural laborers do not have their own houses. They live in huts made of mud walls and thatched roofs. These huts are unventilated and too small for a family to live. Their life will become tough during rainy season to withstand.

The present study is concentrated in analyzing the wage level and working conditions of agricultural laborers and also to find out suitable solutions for their problems.

### **Objectives**

1. To find out the living conditions of agricultural farmers;
2. To find out the socio and economic causes of low standard of living;
3. To study the income and employment potentials of agricultural farmers in the study area;
4. To examine the consumption, savings and indebtedness of agricultural farmers; and
5. To give suggestions to improve their socio economic status.

### **Research Design:**

In this study, both primary and secondary data collected in order to get the opinion of Effect of Advertisement on Consumer Brand Preference in Thoothukudi City.

### **Primary Data**

Primary Data was collected from the respondents through the questionnaire. Data is also gathered by talking to the respondents.

### **Secondary Data**

Secondary Data was collected from various books, Journals, Magazine and Previous Records

### **Research Methodology**

Data collected through the questionnaire is analyzed and presented through percentage analysis.

### **Sampling Design**

A sample of 80 respondents in the study was selected and the questionnaire was distributed to get primary data.

### **Statement of Problem**

The development of the Indian economy is dependent on the development of farmers and agricultural labourers.

### **Review of Literature**

R. Chandramohan and D.Thommas Victor Raja (2010), There is no doubt about the fact that development of women has always been the central focus of planning since independence. Empowerment is a major step in this direction but it has to be seen in a relational context. In recent years there have been explicit moves to increase women's reservation policy bill is however a very sad story as it is repeatedly being scuttled in parliament. But after a long battle the resolution has been passed in parliament on 9 march 2010. A clear vision is needed to remove the obstacles to the path of women's emancipation both from the government and women themselves. Effort should be directed towards entire development of each and every section of Indian women by giving them their due share.

ManojDolli (2010) a blend of private, public and joint service delivery mode needs to be developed to expand access to electricity or other energy services. The unmet demand can be successfully met with alternative technologies for off-grid electrification such as renewable energy and service delivery through community participation as long as the governments support such programs with enabling policies. Community driven development activities, pursuing poverty reduction and gender equity by targeting the rural poor and disseminating technologies can enhance the quality of life for rural people.

Gabriel Simon Thattil and Reshmi R. Prasad (2010) Human beings, male or female, working in organizations are fundamentally efficient, powerful, productive and rewarding. But organizational factors sometimes produce frustration and oppression. Such organizational do influence the performance of all employees including managers. Their impact on the weaker and more vulnerable sex is at the more complex. Women managers have a dual role to play, as managers of their organizations. A home-job family balancing exercising in crucial in the managerial function of every women.

Dawn C.P. Ambrose and et.al (2010) analyzed Rural Women in Agriculture and Food Processing. In the study they have concentrated on role of women in agro processing sector, nature of women's involvement in India, gender and globalization, improving women's status in society, technology and its impact on women. They have concluded in this study on the introduction of appropriate technology can overcome some of these factors by reducing women's workload and improving productivity. Sterilization equipment, pots, utensils, cooking stoves and hand held grinders are some examples that can benefits self-employed food processors.

Other appropriate technologies include, fish smoker's oil processors, solar dryers for fruits and vegetables and improved bee hives.

Datt and Sundharam (2004) have given a data related to the agricultural laborers after using the data provided by the census of India, 1991. The fact in the study is that the proportion of agricultural laborers among agricultural workers has gone up from 28.3 per cent to 40.3 per cent in 1991.

R.Rajeswari (2010) analyzed socio-economic condition of women. In the study they have concentrated empowerment of women is therefore the process of controlling power and strengthening of their vitality, of the three board categories of empowerment viz., economic social and political the first is the key may lead to other kinds. Efforts are being made through special development programmes with greater gender sensitivity. Finally they have suggested nevertheless, women's concerns are getting flag marked. Today, women have become part of the global development debate. India has a long way to go before Indian women are able to hold a pride of place of in the functioning of the nation.

VijayaBasker M. (2010) analyzed Savings Agricultural Labor from Agriculture, SEZs and Politics of Silence in Tamil Nadu. In the study they have study for different region and different sectors. In the study they have concentrated on embedding policymaking in a regional regime of growth, evolving policy frameworks, processes of land acquisition and resistance and regional political economy and neoliberal development.

### **Profile of Ottapidaram**

Ottapidaram is a small town in Thoothukudi district and headquarters of Ottapidaram taluk, the biggest taluk in Tamil Nadu state, India. Ottapidaram is a tourism centre with accessibility to many places in Tamil Nadu. Thoothukudi or Tirunelveli can be easily accessed from anywhere and Ottapidaram is very close to these two places. The great freedom fighter V. O. Chidambaram Pillai called VOC hails from Ottapidaram. VOC is also called as "KappalottiyaTamizhan" because he launched one of the first shipping companies, Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company which operated ship between Tuticorin and Colombo against the British during the British regime in India.

As of 2011, total population of Ottapidaramtaluka is 1.2 lakh includes about 63 villages. The population of Ottapidaram city is 7963. Male and female population constitutes equal proportion (i.e.: 50%). There are about 33 thousand households in the Ottapidaramtaluka and an average 4 persons live in every family.

Ottapidaram has two schools: V. O. C. Government Higher Secondary School and T. M. B. Mcavoy Rural Higher Secondary School.

### Data Analysis and Interpretations

A sample study was undertaken by this group. 80 respondents were selected to find out the living conditions of the farmers. The sample include all categories of the farmers on the basis of sex, religion education qualification etc. The different concepts in the living and working conditions are revealed by the survey undertaken and analyses in this chapter.

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	60	75
	Female	20	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	Below 20	2	2.5
	21-30	24	30
	31-40	44	55
	41-60	10	12.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Illiterate	14	17.5
	Literate	4	5
	Primary	18	22.5
	Middle	30	37.5
	Higher secondary	8	10
	Graduate	6	7.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

The above table reveals that out of the 80 respondents, 75 per cent of the respondents are male and 25 per cent of the respondents are female workers. The data reveals that male farmers are more than female. 2.5 percentages of the respondents are below 20 and 30 percentages of the respondent age group of 21-30, 55 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 31-40, 12.5 percentage of the respondent age group is 41-60. Most of the agricultural workers are in the age group of the 31-40.

The above table reveals that majority of the agricultural workers have middle school education. Nearly 17.5 percent of the people have illiterate and 5 percent of the people were literate and 22.5 percent of the people were primary education. 37.5 percentages of the respondents are studied middle school education. 10 percent of the people were higher secondary and 7.5 percent of the people have graduate. Illiteracy is one of the main causes for doing agricultural work.

The chapter is analyzed to highlights the findings of the study on the socio-economic analysis of farmers and to offer possible suggestions for improvement in the future.

### **Findings**

1. Majority of the farmers (75%) are male.
2. 55% of the respondents are in the age group of 31 – 40.
3. 37.5 percentages of the respondents were studied middle school education.
4. Majority 80% of the respondents are doing permanent full time in agricultural work.
5. Most of the respondents are doing farming work more than five years.
6. 80% of the respondents are working up to 8 hours per day.
7. 60% of respondents are getting the of households income of below Rs1,00,000/- per year.
8. The agricultural laborer is economically poor. Most of the respondents asset value is below Rs. 1,00,000/-.
9. The women agricultural laborer economic condition are very poor, so 36 respondents are to be savings habits. The people are unable to save since they are in cutter poverty very few save negligible amount and they make use of banks and post offices for their savings.
10. Out of 80 respondents, 32 respondents are spent more in household expenditure of their income group of Rs. 1 lakh to 2 lakhs.

### **Suggestions**

On the basis of the above findings, the suggestions for improvement can be made on the following lines.

1. The workers have to work for very long hours. These need be regulated. The working hours should not exceed eight hours per day. Extra payment should be made if the work



exceeds eight hours. There should be a break of at least one hour between the morning and evening.

2. Working conditions need be improved. Only male adults may be allowed to work during rainy season. Women and children should be prohibited from heavy work under unhealthy conditions. Women with five or more month pregnancy should stop all manual work.
3. In order to improve the efficiently and standard of living, it is essential that proper arrangements are made for organizing vocational, technical and elementary education.
4. Low wage in agricultural employment are associated with the low productivity of India agriculture. This problem require far-reaching improvement in agricultural sector, ie., intensive rural development projects so that the sector can generate more income by increasing of the productivity of workers, better farming methods and training of the farmer in modern agricultural skill, increase of rural credit facilities etc. Plans for promotion of small scale industries in village road construction, improvement of facilities and public utilities for infrastructure development need be pursued. There is also need for training programmes for villages and creation of jobs in the rural areas.
5. In order to maintain the family size prescribed by the government effective family planning measures must be popularized.
6. The prevailing wage rate is not sufficient for maintaining their minimum standard of living. So minimum wages act should be effectively implemented.
7. In order to reduce the unemployment, various schemes with regard to rural development such as SampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana (SGRY), Swranajayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana (SGSY), TRYSEM, DWACRA etc, should be introduced.
8. A state level Review Committee may be appointed which should review at regular intervals the implementation of various schemes.
9. There is no Agricultural labor organization. The political leaders and government should come forward to organize a union for the welfare of the people in these area. This well helps then to secure fair wages, proper working hours and avoid exploitation. This will strengthen the bargaining power.
10. The co-operative credit societies should play more roles by providing financial assistance to the agriculture laborers doing off-season.

11. In agricultural countries like India it is obvious that very small improvement in working conditions, implements, tools design or poor posture can lead to large benefits.
12. Further it is necessary that surveillance assess economic conditions and long term health outcomes. This can be achieved by investing the prevalence of disorder among retired farmers.
13. Role of women in agriculture is so significant that without them almost nothing can be done on the farms as traditionally majority of the male workers of the region do not participate in working on the farms except ploughing the fields.
14. If the farms are small and steps are narrow then the ploughing work is done by women only.
15. Women are working right from digging of land to processing and storage of farms crops.
16. Institute of Himalayan Environmental Research and Education is constantly endeavoring to locate and develop appropriate technologies to reduce the drudgery and burden of farmers and also to improve the living conditions of the community
17. Human Agricultural labor is fully important to reduce stress and increase comfort, safety and efficiency.
18. It is aspects in design and operation of agricultural equipment is important.
19. Work related risks and posture related problems are very common found among agricultural laborers.

## **Conclusion**

When all the evidences are brought together and fairly assessed, the living style of agricultural labor households with larger family size gives us not satisfactory. Other factor such as possession of assets, less number of days of employment available per worker per capital income low, per capital expenditure and very high marginal propensity to consume tempt us to conclude that the socio economic conditions of agricultural labor household are very poor.

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