

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF LANDLESS AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

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Arts, Science and Commerce College Sangamner, Dist– AhmednagarEmail: gita7515@gmail.com**ABSTRACT:**

Agricultural labour is an important factor in the Indian agricultural economy and it depends on agriculture in rural areas. 80% of the total workers in India are in rural areas and most of them are agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourers are socially and economically weak and depend on agriculture throughout their lives. Every person in rural areas is related to agricultural labourers. Therefore, agricultural labourers have an important place in the agricultural economy. In modern times, due to social changes, there is a shortage of agricultural labourers. Although this is a fact, the number of agricultural labourers is high in rural areas; but there is no morality in working as an agricultural labourer. Every labourer considers the work of agricultural labourers to be inferior. They do not easily agree to work in agriculture. Due to this mentality, there is a shortage of agricultural labourers. This is a very big challenge in agriculture at present.

Key Word: Agricultural Labour, Landless Agrarian Labour, Tribes, Wage-Earner and Non-wage Earners in Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION:

An agricultural labourer is a worker who works in the field of another person as a means of livelihood in the expectation of remuneration. Although there is no consensus among economists on who should be called an agricultural labourer, those who fulfill the following conditions should be called agricultural labourers. The purpose is to work on the field of another person in the expectation of remuneration. He does not have ownership rights over the land. While working in the field, he does not take decisions related to that work himself. He does not accept any risk in agriculture. The remuneration for the work is only in the form of wages. Not in the form of profit. The remuneration received by the worker can be partly in the form of goods and partly in cash.

DEFINITIONS OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR:

Although there is disagreement among economists about who should be included in the concept of agricultural labour, some inquiry committees have defined who should be called agricultural labour.

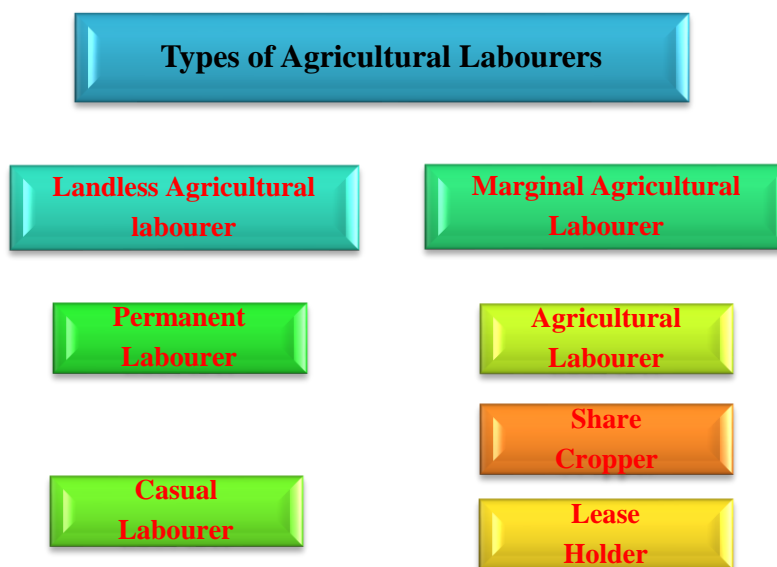
- 1) **First Agricultural Labour Inquiry Committee (1950-51):** “Those labourers who work in agriculture for wages and work in agriculture for the most number of days in the year are called agricultural labourers.
- 2) **Second Agricultural Labour Inquiry Committee (1956-57):** “Those labourers who, along with agricultural production, do other agricultural related activities such as animal husbandry, dairy farming, poultry farming are called agricultural labourers.”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the Concept of Landless Agriculture Labor of tribal area of North Maharashtra.
2. To critically study the Economical Condition of tribal Landless Agriculture Labors in North Maharashtra.

Sources of Data: Information was collected from Government’s annual reports of the tribal area in North Maharashtra. Additionally, Various Magazines, Books and Articles were collected and studied from government offices.

Types of Agricultural Labourers - Based on the definition of agricultural labour and the duration of work in agriculture, the National Labour Commission has given the types of agricultural labourers.



1) Landless Agricultural Labor - Those labourers who work only on other people's farms for their livelihood and do not have their own land are called landless labourers. These labourers are of two types.

a) Permanent labourer: A labourer who works permanently in agriculture in a farmer family is called a permanent agricultural labourer. This labourer works permanently in agriculture for twelve months.

b) Casual labourer: A labourer who works for planting and harvesting crops as and when required according to the season is called casual labourer. These labourers are hired for a specific job. Once that job is completed, they are laid off.

2) Marginal agricultural labourer - Some members of a farmer family work in someone else's farm to increase their income. Their own farming is small. That is, they work in their own farm and work in someone else's farm as an employment. There are three subtypes of marginal agricultural labourer.

a) Agricultural labourer: Those who work continuously or whose labour is hired for farming are agricultural labourers.

b) Sharecropper: A labourer who works on an annual basis to cultivate the land of a farmer is a sharecropper. In this category of labourers, a contract is made between the farmer and the agricultural labourer. Farming is done as per that contract.

c) Leaseholder: In this category of labourers, labourers take the land of a farmer for cultivation for a specific period. Once that period is completed, the rights of the labourer cease.

The reasons for the increase in Tribal Landless agricultural laborers

- 1. Uncertainty and insecurity in agriculture:** The unpredictability of agricultural income, crop failures, and market fluctuations drive farmers to seek alternative livelihoods as laborers.
- 2. Financial crisis and debt:** Farmers struggling with debt and financial difficulties may abandon farming and become laborers.
- 3. Lack of employment opportunities in agriculture:** Insufficient job opportunities in agriculture, particularly for youth, lead to an increase in agricultural laborers.
- 4. Inequality and social injustice:** Social and economic inequalities, such as landlessness and lack of access to resources, force farmers to become laborers.

5. **Lack of education and skills:** Limited access to education and skills training hinders farmers' ability to adapt to changing agricultural conditions, leading them to seek laborer positions.
6. **Demographic changes:** Changes in population demographics, such as an increasing youth population, contribute to the growth of agricultural laborers.
7. **Natural disasters and climate change:** The impact of natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation on agricultural productivity and livelihoods drives farmers to become laborers.
8. **Land fragmentation and distribution:** The subdivision and distribution of land, leading to smaller farm sizes, contribute to the increase in agricultural laborers

Rate of Daily Wages for Landless Agricultural Labor in Maharashtra - The table no. 1. presents information about the rate of daily wages for men and women in agriculture in Maharashtra over a period from 2011-12 to 2020-21.

Table No. 1
Rate of Daily Wages for Landless Agricultural Labor in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Agriculture Ploughing			Sr. No.	Sowing		
	Year	Men	Women		Year	Men	Women
1)	2011-12	167.69	116.97	1)	2011-12	160.91	107.62
2)	2012-13	214.66	122.00	2)	2012-13	175.71	106.47
3)	2013-14	223.13	139.65	3)	2013-14	189.96	112.69
4)	2014-15	245.00	142.36	4)	2014-15	200.36	115.82
5)	2015-16	249.35	150.00	5)	2015-16	225.26	146.50
6)	2016-17	278.80	175.55	6)	2016-17	253.93	169.39
7)	2017-18	283.40	202.00	7)	2017-18	247.73	170.40
8)	2018-19	294.62	213.33	8)	2018-19	273.06	187.89
9)	2019-20	317.75	240.00	9)	2019-20	302.31	217.91
10)	2020-21	332.57	263.64	10)	2020-21	328.53	233.78
Threshing/Harvesting				Picking Workers (Tea, Cotton, Tobacco & other commercial crops)			
Sr. No.	Year	Men	Women	Sr. No.	Year	Men	Women
1)	2011-12	149.00	94.00	1)	2011-12	143.08	111.90
2)	2012-13	201.39	122.73	2)	2012-13	152.11	124.17
3)	2013-14	211.65	125.96	3)	2013-14	179.68	137.96
4)	2014-15	215.36	145.89	4)	2014-15	185.00	142.39
5)	2015-16	217.63	153.24	5)	2015-16	191.67	159.20
6)	2016-17	233.68	165.79	6)	2016-17	180.42	176.74
7)	2017-18	274.22	197.36	7)	2017-18	218.46	182.63
8)	2018-19	274.55	188.20	8)	2018-19	224.55	175.32
9)	2019-20	307.06	231.67	9)	2019-20	168.75	194.12
10)	2020-21	321.09	239.33	10)	2020-21	246.92	227.73
Sr. No.	Transplanting			Sr. No.	Logger & Wood cutters		
	Year	Men	Women		Year	Men	Women
1)	2011-12	163.75	104.00	1)	2011-12	198.79	-
2)	2012-13	178.33	116.00	2)	2012-13	215.41	-
3)	2013-14	195.63	128.36	3)	2013-14	231.45	-
4)	2014-15	209.23	130.15	4)	2014-15	241.90	-
5)	2015-16	225.26	146.50	5)	2015-16	247.69	-
6)	2016-17	253.93	169.39	6)	2016-17	247.50	-

7)	2017-18	247.73	170.40	7)	2017-18	282.08	-
8)	2018-19	273.06	187.89	8)	2018-19	293.57	-
9)	2019-20	302.31	217.91	9)	2019-20	318.10	-
10)	2020-21	328.53	233.78	10)	2020-21	353.64	-
Sr. No.	Applying Pesticides			Sr. No.	Irrigation Workers		
	Year	Men	Women		Year	Men	Women
1)	2011-12	209.22	98.74	1)	2011-12	172.69	121.58
2)	2012-13	215.43	110.52	2)	2012-13	185.65	126.35
3)	2013-14	231.42	113.41	3)	2013-14	191.85	130.54
4)	2014-15	245.00	135.00	4)	2014-15	195.45	133.52
5)	2015-16	257.29	139.87	5)	2015-16	198.22	134.69
6)	2016-17	262.50	142.84	6)	2016-17	200.89	138.24
7)	2017-18	276.14	150.00	7)	2017-18	207.87	140.81
8)	2018-19	277.17	151.23	8)	2018-19	219.59	151.05
9)	2019-20	295.19	166.67	9)	2019-20	238.54	166.25
10)	2020-21	341.43	171.46	10)	2020-21	274.47	177.72

Source: <https://labourbureau.gov.in/rural-wages>

The table no. 1, presents data on the rate of daily wages for men and women in agriculture and ploughing/sowing activities in Maharashtra over a period from 2011-12 to 2020-21. The table is divided into two sections: the first section provides data on the average daily wages for men and women in agriculture, while the second section provides data on the average daily wages for men and women in ploughing/sowing activities.

The average daily wages for men in agriculture have consistently increased over the years, from ₹167.69 in 2011-12 to ₹332.57 in 2020-21. In the case of ploughing/sowing activities, the average daily wages for men have increased from ₹160.91 in 2011-12 to ₹328.53 in 2020-21. For women, the average daily wages in ploughing/sowing activities have increased from ₹107.62 in 2011-12 to ₹233.78 in 2020-21.

the average daily wages for men in Threshing/Harvesting activities have consistently increased over the years, from ₹149.00 in 2011-12 to ₹321.09 in 2020-21. In the case of Picking Workers (Tea, Cotton, Tobacco & other commercial crops), the average daily wages for men have increased from ₹143.08 in 2011-12 to ₹246.92 in 2020-21. For women, the average daily wages in Picking Workers have increased from ₹111.90 in 2011-12 to ₹227.73 in 2020-21.

According to the data, the average daily wages for men in Transplanting activities have consistently increased over the years, from ₹163.75 in 2011-12 to ₹328.53 in 2020-21. In the case of Logger & Wood cutters, the average daily wages for men have increased from ₹198.79 in 2011-12 to ₹353.64 in 2020-21. However, there is no data available for women in this activity because women's are not involved in this business. The average daily wages for men in Applying Pesticides activities have consistently increased over the years, from ₹209.22 in 2011-12 to ₹341.43 in 2020-21. Similarly, the average daily wages for women in Applying Pesticides activities have also increased, from ₹98.74 in 2011-12 to ₹171.46 in 2020-21.

Overall, the data suggests that there has been a steady increase in the average daily wages for men and women in agriculture and ploughing/sowing activities over the past decade. However, the wages for women remain significantly lower than those for men, indicating a persistent gender gap in agricultural wages.

Issues of Landless Labour in India:

- The extensive use of machinery in agriculture has created a significant void for landowners by reducing the availability of agricultural lands.

- The disorganized approach of rural farmers and their reliance on traditional methods have led to a substantial increase in landlessness among laborers.
- Poverty has also emerged as a critical factor contributing to the growth of landlessness in rural areas. Most rural regions in India are underdeveloped, which allows for chaos to reign over illiterate and impoverished farmers.
- This eventually results in landlessness among laborers due to high maintenance costs and business losses associated with agricultural lands.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, British rule in India brought about significant changes in the country's economic, political, and social spheres. The introduction of various land-revenue systems, commercialization of agriculture, and the rise of landless agrarian laborers led to the decline of traditional Indian industries and the oppression of Indian peasantry. Despite some positive changes brought about by the British, the negative consequences heavily impacted India's rural economy, leading to widespread poverty, famine, and indebtedness. To improve the current circumstances of landless laborers, it is crucial to implement government interventions, promote rural development, and enhance literacy rates among the affected populations.

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