

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR'S MIGRATION IN TAMIL NADU: REASONS AND REMEDIES

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Abstract

Every human being needs food, shelter and clothing for their livelihood. To earn for the livelihood he seeks the places where Agricultural Labour can earn his daily bread. In a vast country like India, where unequal distribution of resources exist, it is inevitable for the agricultural labour to find a place ideal to him. There is always uncertainty on the farm works and if the off season, it is unable to feed the labour sumptuously hence as an alternative he starts migrating to an ideal place suitable for him. All over the world though migration occurs, there are many specific reasons for Tamil Nadu agricultural laborers to migrate. A study made to achieve this objective revealed that all the laborers prefer to migrate due to poor salary. In a situation of unemployment, when there is not even a single organization to assist temporarily or professionally, as a stop-gap arrangement agricultural laborers shift their place out of necessity. Even absence of social status too makes a person to migrate next in order. In a situation, where a labour has maintained a status for a period, if there is a shift toward, negative level the attitude is very much affected to bow his head before to others. Hence even with a prestige motive, he shifts his work place. Poor job satisfaction long working hours and bad working conditions too chase an agricultural labour from his niche.

Keywords: Agricultural Labour, Labour Migration.

INTRODUCTION

Labour migration is a boon as well as bane for a developing nation. Since, it is affecting people surviving in a territory overcrowding and it is a way of competing for resources in a locality. This leads to unhealthy health hazards in a territory too like pollution, slum development etc. In India labour migration is the order of the day. Many studies have been made on industrial labour migration and the valid reasons have been found out on the agricultural operations side, so far none has studied the migration by workers from Agricultural works.

IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKS

An observation about the farm practices will reveal, majority of farming activities are confined to a particular season. All crops do not need the agriculture labour uniformly in the different stages of their crop growth. Moreover, where there is adequate rainfall, irrigation work may not be required. If it is summer and crop free period, farmer may not need more labour. Hence, this uncertainty on labour needs makes the life of agricultural laborers to consider alternate options.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

We can observe farm laborers run a simple life without adequate savings to meet all their needs in a period of crisis. A vast majority of farm work labour force rely solely on their daily wages for survival.

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OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To identify the agriculture labour problems for migration and
- ❖ To examine the ranking the reasons for agriculture labour migration in the study area.
- ❖

METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the various reasons for which labour migrate from agricultural works, a study was carried out among agricultural laborers in Tamil Nadu. The primary data was used to this study. The simple random sampling technique was followed to collect the data from 150 respondents belonging to various districts of Tamil Nadu. In this study, an attempt was made to enlist various causes for migration is presented in Table No1. Garrett ranking was used to analyze the reasons for agriculture labours migration. This study revealed that all the agricultural laborers preformed to choose migration if there is no adequate salary, for a longer period.

REASONS FOR AGRICULTURAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN TAMIL NADU

There are many problems faced by agricultural labours in terms of both physically and mentally. In the work place the agricultural labours were affected from various discriminations like caste discrimination, gender discrimination and etc. low wage rate is one of the problems faced by agricultural labours. The agricultural works depends upon the monsoon, so naturally the agricultural labours faced by unemployment and underemployment problems. The most important problem of agricultural labours are the welfare facilities in the work place like no toilet facility, no purified drinking water and no first aid facility. Normally the agricultural wage is very low with compared to other sector wage, so automatically the agricultural labours are affected by indebtedness. Last important problems of agricultural workers are the heavy workload like they are directly working under sunlight, this is create so many skin problems.

LOW WAGE RATE

The most complicated problem in the sphere of employer-employee relationship is that of the wages, before state regulation, the wage rates were usually determined by the employers and in the absence of collective bargaining workers had to work for those wages. Wage period in agriculture has its own characteristics; payments are made by the day, week, and month or on a piece rate basis and with or without supplements. There may be wide disparity in wage levels between regions, seasons, and crops

In the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization there is an apprehension in the minds of many that labour force in agriculture is gradually moving away from their main dominant agricultural work to industrial and factory works. As a result the demand for labour has increased and automatically the wages are raised by the landlords more than what is fixed by the notifications issued now and then by different State Governments and the Central Government. There is no mechanism to fix minimum wages to allied agriculture activity such as fishery, dairy, poultry, beekeeping, hunting, cattle rearing and so on. In view of the lack of effective organization and power to bargain collectively the problem of fixing wages remains alive for a long time.

DISCRIMINATIONS

India has ratified Indian Labour Organisations Convention on Equal Remuneration and Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation). Although the Internationally recognized Core Labour standards in India law prohibits discrimination on various grounds, certain groups face discrimination in employment. There is a considerable gender pay gap, It has been estimated that 80% of working women are found in the informal sector. Women are working as cultivators, agricultural labourers, forest produce collectors, in tea plantations, construction industry, as landless labourers, fisheries, animal husbandry, sericulture, tobacco and beedi workers, and in home-based occupations, as weavers, spinners, garments, and food processing, as vendors and hawkers and domestic workers.

HEAVY WORK LOAD

The most important problem of agricultural worker is heavy load. The agricultural workers are making physically hard work from morning to evening continuously. They are working under direct sunlight from morning to evening, which was created many skin problems. India has ratified ILO Conventions on Forced Labour and its Abolition. Forced labour and trafficking in human beings are prohibited by law.¹⁸⁹ However, forced labour is a problem in agriculture, mining, commercial sexual exploitation, and other sectors. The vast majority of estimates for the number of forced or bonded labours in India range between 5 million and, according to recent research from Anti-Slavery International, the much higher figure of 20 million.¹⁹⁰ Bonded labour is a specific form of forced

labour which describes a private contractual relationship whereby a worker incurs or inherits debts to a contractor and then must work off the debt plus interest.

LACK OF WELFARE FACILITIES

The agricultural labours faced one of the most important problem is lack of welfare facilities. In the work place, there is no separate toilet facility for agricultural labours and there is no purified drinking water for agricultural labours. In case the workers are affect any health problem, there is no first aid facilities in the working places.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The problem of unemployment is comparatively more acute and chronic in agriculture sector. A man in rural India may be unemployed, underemployed or partially employed. The problem of rural unemployment may be classified under three heads:

- a) Unemployment
- b) Underemployment
- c) Disguised unemployment.

National Commission on Labour has pointed out that intensity of employment varies according to seasons. Shortage of labour is actually felt during peak agricultural seasons in several areas and a large proportion of labour remains unemployed or under-employed during the slack season.

INDEBTEDNESS

Most of the agricultural labours having indebtedness because of low wage rate of agricultural labours with compared to other sector labours. The unemployment and underemployment problem is one of the most important factor to agricultural labour's indebtedness. The unemployment and underemployment period, the agricultural labours borrowing the loan with high interest rates from various agents like public sector banks, private sector banks, Non-Banking Financial Services, money lenders and relations. Obviously the majority of the agricultural labours were affected from their indebtedness.

Table 1: RANKING THE REASONS FOR AGRICULTURE LABOUR MIGRATION IN TAMILNADU.

Ranks		
Reasons	Mean Score	Rank
Discrimination	3.66	II
Low wage rate	3.95	I
Unemployment and underemployment	3.33	V
Lack of Welfare Facilities	3.34	IV
Indebtedness	3.23	VI
Heavy workload	3.49	III

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, we are clear that the agricultural labours were ranking their problems. The first rank of the agricultural labour's problem was low wage rate and followed by the discrimination was the second rank given by the sample respondents. Heavy work load was the third position of agricultural labour's problems. The agricultural labours in the sample area was given the forth position of problem was lack of welfare facilities. The fifth major problem of agricultural labour was unemployment and under employment. The last position of labour problem was indebtedness given by the sample respondents.

This might be due to their poor savings and commitments to meet family basic needs. In agriculture we can't provide all through the year a continuous employment, as it is offered in Mills. Even in a big farm, this status quo in maintained. Moreover, a farm labour who has a special skill, will expect more yet, it has been legally accepted to provide continuous employment for permanent workers. Unemployment, is often quoted reason for labour quitting agriculture, a place where unemployed workers exist, Labour unrest may be developed, due to mental tension. Majority of agricultural laborers quoted, it as a problem and opted for Migration. "In place, every worker also leads a satisfying life and possess status, too. Due to problem of unemployment or poor salary, when a danger comes to his social status, he is compelled to migrate", the study revealed. On job security reasons and poor job satisfaction reasons agricultural laborers shift from agricultural works and it is next to absence of social status. By seeing their counter parts in other industries and contract employment providing job security an agricultural laborers in attracted towards such jobs since their job security aspects are satisfactory. Moreover, the drudgery involved in the farm operation i.e. making the worker feel exhausted after the day also encouraged him to consider

other alternatives, which he could not cope up with the tempo of hardships. There is also a problem of lengthy working hours involved in some situation like harvesting and sowing for the farm workers.

REMEDIES

- ❖ The Government fix the wage level for agriculture labours.
- ❖ To protect the agriculture labour from discrimination in the working place.
- ❖ The Government Provide supportive services for agriculture labours.
- ❖ To ensure fixed working hours and good working condition for agricultural labours.
- ❖ To waive the agricultural labour's loan for reduce the burden of indebtedness.
- ❖ Provide the welfare facilities for agriculture labours in the working place.
- ❖ Expansion of the employment opportunities for agricultural labours.
- ❖ To give employment security for agricultural labours.

CONCLUSION

Agricultural labour migration is a challenge to be solved. By knowing the reasons or the needs for what they shift, planners can suitably evolve strategies. In a way they are similar to industrial workers in their shifting pattern. Of the reasons quoted poor salary, unemployment, and social status not available are prime considerations to jump out of agriculture. In additions lack of security, poor job satisfaction, lengthy working hours and bad working conditions are often quoted valid reasons for the agricultural laborers to prefer other avenues. This crisis needs priority on the national level, for labour management to support agriculture properly.

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