THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURS IN SRIVAIKUNTAM TALUK, TUTICORIN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture has always been the backbone of the Indian economy and despite concerted industrialization in the last six decades; agriculture still occupies a pace of pride. It provides employment to around 60 percent of the total work force in the country. Agriculture and rural development are interwoven. Rapid development in agriculture and allied activities will improve the quality of life in the rural people. A close integration between agriculture and industry holds better prospects for rural development and advancement of forces in production for skill formation. The census of India defines an agricultural labourer as “A person who works on another person’s land only as a labourer without exercising any supervision (or) direction in cultivation, for wages in cash, kind (or) share such as share of produce”. So these are the positive attitude to rural development as well as national development.

Keywords: Agriculture sector, Agricultural labours, Rural areas, development and employment.

INTRODUCTION:

The word agriculture comes from Latin words ager, referring to the soil and cultura, toils cultivation. Agriculture, in its widest sense can be defined as the cultivation and production of crop plants (or) livestock products. It is synonymous with farming. The field development production of food, fodder and industrial organic materials. Agriculture occupies a key position in the Indian Economy and more particularly in accelerating the process of rural development its role stimulating rural development is unique. It contributes to overall economic growth through supplies of food for sustenance, raw materials for industries and export, earning valuable foreign exchange. It is a source of livelihood for a majority of the rural population and provides a large market for non-agricultural goods and services.
According to population census of 2001, 58.4 percent of the total main and marginal workers in India was engaged in agriculture. Besides, a large number of people earn their living by working in occupations dependent on agriculture, like storage, processing, trade and transport of agricultural products. In villages, about 80 percent of the people earn their livelihood from cultivation and allied agro-industries. A large part of the labour force in towns and cities also finds jobs in agro-based industries and other activities related to agriculture. Thus, the share of agriculture in offering employment is higher in the process of economic development of the country.

Agricultural labourers are socially and economically poorest section of the society. Agricultural labourers households constitute the historically deprived social groups, displaced handicrafts men and dispossessed peasantry. They are the poorest of the poor in rural India. Their growth reflects the colonial legacy of under development and inadequacies of planning intervention in the past. Over crowing and growth of agricultural labourer continued unabated, given poor labour absorption in the non-agricultural sector and also inadequacies of reforms in the agrarian structure. The poverty syndrome among agricultural labourers need to be read against such a background of prolonged rural under development, assetlessness, unemployment, low wages, under-nutrition, illiteracy and social backwardness constitute the poverty syndrome among agricultural labourers. These reinforce each other so as to constitute a vicious circle of poverty. There is little inter-generational upward mobility among agricultural labourer household.

**CONDITION OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN RURAL INDIA:**

1. Most agricultural labourers are illiterate and ignorant they live in scattered villages.
2. They do not have organization and unions.
3. The agricultural labourers are not having enough bargaining power to plead with the farmers and land owners for securing remunerative wages.
4. Agricultural labourers don’t have continuous work on forms. They are seasonally employed in the rest of the year are unemployed. It is one the important condition of low economic position in India.
5. The living condition of agricultural labourers were continued to be pathetic and deplorable. The monthly per capita expenditure was less than Rs. 100, this means that they were below the poverty line and caught in the vicious circle of poverty and misery.
6. Most Agricultural laborers belong to the suppressed and depressed sections of the society, who were neglected for aged together. These are the socially depressed and never had the courage to assert themselves.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

1. To study about the general problem of agricultural labourers.
2. To study about the condition of agricultural labourers in rural area.
3. To examine the economic condition of the respondents.
4. To examine the social condition of the respondents.
5. To analysis the interrelationship between Economic and Social factors of Agricultural labourers.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

Designing a suitable methodology and selection of analytical tools are important for a meaningful analysis of any research problem. This section is devoted to a description of the methodology, which includes sampling procedure, collection of data and tools of analysis.
SAMPLE SIZE:

A sample is a part of the target population carefully selected from the Tuticorin District like Vallanadu, Manakkarai, Karukkulam, Padmanapamagkalam, from the population the researcher has taken 200 respondents.

SAMPLE DESIGN:

Convenient sampling was used to select the samples from the population in the study area.

DATA COLLECTION:

The information collected from both primary and secondary data. The secondary data collected from the Taluk office and agricultural district office. The primary information gathered a well designed interview schedule was drafted and used in the field survey.

STATISTICAL TOOL:

The chi-square test is applied in statistical to test the goodness of fit to verify the distribution of observed data with assumed theoretical distribution. Thus, chi-square test described the described the discrepancy between theory and observation.

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \left( \frac{o - E}{E} \right)^2 \]

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Mainly agricultural labourers depend upon the monsoon condition of India. Most of the labourers are getting only daily wages.

TABLE NO: 1

AGE AND DAILY WAGES OF THE RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Upto 100</th>
<th>100-200</th>
<th>200-300</th>
<th>Above – 300</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Upto-30</td>
<td>05 [16.7%]</td>
<td>20 [25%]</td>
<td>12 [17%]</td>
<td>07 [35%]</td>
<td>44 [22%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>04 [13.3%]</td>
<td>32 [40%]</td>
<td>24 [34.3%]</td>
<td>06 [30%]</td>
<td>66 [33%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>11 [36.7%]</td>
<td>18 [22.5%]</td>
<td>19 [27%]</td>
<td>04 [20%]</td>
<td>52 [26%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Above – 50</td>
<td>10 [33.3%]</td>
<td>10 [12.5%]</td>
<td>15 [21%]</td>
<td>03 [15%]</td>
<td>38 [9%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30 [100%]</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data.

According to the table no: 1, the comparison between age and daily wage of the respondents. Out of 30 respondents are getting highest wage upto 100 [36.7%] in the age group of 40-50, out of 80 respondents are getting highest 40 percentage of 100-200 level of wage in the age group of 30-40, out of 70 respondents are getting 34.3% in the age group of 30-40 and Above – 300 wage limit in the highest [35%] in the age group of upto 30 years.
NULL HYPOTHESIS:

There is no relationship between age and daily wage of the respondents.

**Age and daily wage of the respondents**

[Chi-Square test]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Calculated value</th>
<th>Table value</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>14.87</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculated value of $\chi^2$ [14.87] is less than the table value [16.9]. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table No:2**

**Age and wage system of the respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Daily wage</th>
<th>Weekly wage</th>
<th>Monthly wage</th>
<th>Contact wage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Upto – 30</td>
<td>35 [31.8%]</td>
<td>5 [12.5%]</td>
<td>5 [16.6%]</td>
<td>03 [15%]</td>
<td>48 [24%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40 [36.4%]</td>
<td>15 [37.5%]</td>
<td>12 [40%]</td>
<td>09 [45%]</td>
<td>76 [38%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>25 [22.7%]</td>
<td>12 [30%]</td>
<td>08 [26.7%]</td>
<td>06 [30%]</td>
<td>51 [25.5%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Above – 50</td>
<td>10 [9.1%]</td>
<td>8 [20%]</td>
<td>05 [16.7%]</td>
<td>02 [10%]</td>
<td>25 [12.5%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Table No: 2 explain that, the relationship between age group and system of wage. Out of 110 respondents are getting daily wage earners then 40, 30, 20 respondents in the system of weekly, monthly and contact wage respectively.

**NULL HYPOTHESIS:**

There is no significance of relationship between age and system of wage.

**Age and system of wage**

[Chi-square test]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Calculated value</th>
<th>Table value</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The calculated value $\chi^2 [10.89]$ is less than the table value [16.9]. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

**TABLE NO: 3**

Education brings better awareness about the Environment and the facilities in the rural area. It has an important role in understanding the future planning as well as financial aspects.

**TABLE NO: 3**

Education and Savings system of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Post office</th>
<th>Banks</th>
<th>Chit-funds</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>7 [15.5%]</td>
<td>10 [14%]</td>
<td>22 [36.6%]</td>
<td>10 [40%]</td>
<td>49 [24.5%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Upto high school</td>
<td>10 [22%]</td>
<td>15 [21%]</td>
<td>16 [26.7%]</td>
<td>05 [20%]</td>
<td>46 [23%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Higher Sec. School</td>
<td>12 [26.7%]</td>
<td>20 [28.6%]</td>
<td>12 [20%]</td>
<td>06 [24%]</td>
<td>50 [25%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>16 [35.5%]</td>
<td>25 [35.7%]</td>
<td>10 [16.7%]</td>
<td>04 [16%]</td>
<td>55 [27.5%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Table No: 3 Education is the key role of savings and planning in future. The table explains that, the respondents are mostly higher secondary level as well as the graduates kept their savings in post office and banks, but the uneducated respondents are kept their money only in unorganized sectors.

**NULL HYPOTHESIS:**

There is no importance between education and the system of savings.

**Education and saving system**

[Chi-Square test]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Calculated value</th>
<th>Table value</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculated $\chi^2 [10.89]$ is more than the table value. Hence the Null hypothesis is rejected.

**CONCLUSION:**

Whatever one may say about India, the opposite of it is also true. Mrs. Joan Robinson is more applicable to Indian agriculture. Agricultural economy of India presents a dual picture of prosperity and plenty on one side; and poverty and misery on the other side. There are host of other factors which give rise to many problems that defy solution. The socio-economic structure of the country side, the tenancy system,
uneconomic holding, lack of water-supply at the appropriate time of cultivation, poor credit facilities, poor transport and marketing facilities, unproductive cattle population etc., give rise to multifarious problem in the agriculture sector in India.

The governments of India taking many practical measures have been suggested and some program implemented, they could only touch the periphery of the problems, but could not cut into the core of problems.

The new agricultural technology and pattern of growth have changed the face of Indian agriculture from a “begging bowl” to a “bread basket”, but the population growth has neutralized the beneficial effect of increase in food grains production. The net effect has been a near stagnation of per capita income wide disparities in rural incomes, massive rural unemployment and under employment. All these reasons their economic development is not up to the mark, even after five decades of planning.

REFERENCES: