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## A STUDY ON SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AGRICULTURE WORKERS IN THENI DISTRICT

### Article Particulars

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### Abstract

*Agriculture is a big industry because as a 2013 around 50 percent of workforce in India is employed in agriculture sector. Strong economic growth is a pre requisite for human development for any country because it only provides the required resources for improving the capability of people through better education, health and other social services. This helps the income earning opportunities of individuals. However, the benefits of economic growth have not equitably benefitted people across all section of society. The agricultural worker gets an average of 20 days in a month in better agricultural seasons whereas in peak agricultural seasons they get around 25 days of work. The worker who settled in the village opined that they work as full time work round the year for the farmers of the village. The settled workers are paid rupees 120 to 150 based on the work they involve in agriculture and the wages differ based on the nature of work they involve. Socio-economic status shows their standard of living by using various yard sticks. To improve the economic condition of a person, who need to satisfy members' obligations. There are vast different between rural and urban areas development both economically and socially. It is not only common problem for Indian scenario but also exists in all the developing countries in the world level.*

**Keywords:** *agricultural worker, economic growth, Socioeconomic Conditions, money lenders, education, poverty*

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### Introduction

Agriculture, the largest private enterprises in India, has been and will continue to be the lifeline of the Indian economy at least in the foreseeable future. It is a matter of concern therefore that the share of agriculture in the country's economy has been decreasing over the years. As a 2013 around 50 percent of workforce in India is employed in agriculture sector. Strong economic growth is a pre requisite for human development for any country because it only provides the required resources for improving the capability of people through better education, health and other social services. This helps the income earning opportunities of individuals. However, the benefits of economic growth have not equitably benefitted people across all section of society. Unless there is a progressive public policy initiative to achieve maximum

welfare gains for all people irrespective of class, caste or gender, whatever be the economic growth the fruits of benefits will be enjoyed by few without benefitting the vast majority of the population. Sustained economic growth is possible only when agricultural growth supplemented the overall economic growth. Evidence shows that “developing countries which have achieved sustained economic growth are generally the countries in which the rate of agricultural growth exceeded population growth” (HDR in South Asia, 2002). Now days their participation in agricultural work has been increased, but the problem is even after working a whole day in the agricultural field, they were given very less wage because of which they are not able to improve their socio-economic status. Now a day's agriculture workers are facing lots of problem like health, education, credit availability etc. Thus it is very important to look after this issue in order to improve their standard of living.

### **Agriculture and Employment**

The agricultural worker gets an average of 20 days in a month in better agricultural seasons whereas in peak agricultural seasons they get around 25 days of work. The worker who settled in the village opined that they work as full time work round the year for the farmers of the village. The settled workers are paid rupees 120 to 150 based on the work they involve in agriculture and the wages differ based on the nature of work they involve. The male workers are paid rupees 120 more than the female worker for the works they involve in agriculture. Balakrishnan (2004) argues that the workers have a significant role in rural agriculture and they do not paid the wages based on the work they perform but they usually paid less. Even Srikanth (2014) in his study observes the differences in wages for male and women worker. The village worker do not involve as full time worker in agriculture whereas the settled worker work as full time worker. The village worker do not involve as full time workers in few cases they cultivate small agricultural lands i.e. one acre or less than an acre. When they have work in their agricultural lands they do not work for other farmers in the village. The settled labourers do not have any agricultural lands at their native places and found migration to the areas where they get better employment in agriculture. They found the study village as their choice with the help of their relatives and from the same villagers who have migrated in the past. The introduction of heavy machinery increased the production in agriculture for the farmers and at the same time affected the employment conditions of labourers to an extent. The traditional farm methods are replacing with heavy machinery in recent years in the study village and the number work days are reducing significantly. Hence the farm worker found migration as one of the coping mechanism in the absence of regular employment in agriculture which is causing the labour shortage in peak agricultural seasons in the study farming fields.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. Socio economic conditions among agricultural workers

## Data and Methods

An attempt has been made in this research to analyse the health seeking behaviour of agriculture workers in Theni district. The study was conducted in 5 taluks, namely Andipatti, Bodinayakanur, Periyakulam, Theni and Uthamaplayam coming under Theni district among 50 agriculture workers from different taluks.

## Result and Discussions

### Socioeconomic Conditions of Agriculture Workers

Socio-economic condition of agricultural workers depends upon a number of factors, e.g., sex, age, marital status, social status, type of family, education, monthly income, family monthly expenditure, dept position, source of borrowing and kind of residence are the obvious crucial quantitative factors which determine their socio-economic condition. In the case of micro study it is possible to take a look at many of these factors, so as to be able to present a relatively comprehensive picture with reasonable confidence. This is one of the objectives of the present study.

**Table 1 Socioeconomic Conditions of Agriculture Workers**

Status	Category	Frequency (50)	Per cent (100.0%)
Sex	Male	28	56.0
	Female	22	44.0
Age	Below 40	46	92.0
	above 60	4	8.0
Marital Status	Unmarried	12	24.0
	Married	38	76.0
Social Status	Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe	10	20.0
	Most backward Community	36	72.0
	Backward Community	4	8.0
Type of Family	Joint family	10	20.0
	Nuclear family	40	80.0
Education	Illiterate	30	60.0
	Primary	2	4.0
	Secondary	10	20.0
	Higher Secondary and above	8	16.0
Monthly Income	8000 or less	45	90.0
	8001 and above	5	10.0
Monthly Family Expenditure	6000 or less	37	74.0
	6001 and above	13	26.0
Dept Position	Borrowed	47	94.0
	No Borrowings	3	6.0
Source of Borrowings	Banks/ Association	38	76.0
	Friends and relatives	6	12.0
	Private money lenders	6	12.0
Kind of Resident	Roof	47	94.0
	Concrete	3	6.0

**Source:** Primary data

Among the total 50 sample respondents, most of the workers are in the age group of 40 and below years. Most of them are male workers. Around 76 per cent of respondents are married. Social statuses of the workers majority of 72 per cent were most backward community. Around 80 per cent of the respondents belonged to nuclear families. Only a very low per cent of workers are (4 per cent) higher secondary and above. Around 60 per cent of the workers reported that they had discontinued their school education. While asking for the reasons for dropouts, most of them reported that they did not go to school for helping parents. It is also observed that for 90 per cent of the sample respondents their family monthly income category ranges between Rs.8,000 and less. Also for 74 per cent of the respondent's family spend below Rs.6, 000 for meeting their monthly expenses. While the researcher asked about the dept position among the respondents, most of them (94 per cent) borrowed money followed by banks and associations respectively. Only a very low per cent of workers are (3 per cent) had concrete houses followed by roof houses (94 percent).

This analysis shows that poverty and lack of access to education are their major problems. The low earnings of these workers cannot meet their daily needs. The strong association between the low social status and the agriculture workers also brings out the social dimension of economic deprivation. Taken as a whole, the socio-economic conditions of wage workers are nothing but deplorable. The failure to ensure a little of human dignity at work to this vast multitude of working poor should have received far more political and policy attention than what has been the case hitherto.

### **Conclusion**

Socio-economic status of the sample agriculture workers shows their standard of living by using various yard sticks. To improve the economic condition of a person, who need to satisfy members' obligations. There are vast difference between rural and urban areas both economic development and social development. It is not only a common problem for Indian scenario but also prevails in all the developing countries in the world. In this study, faming fields in Theni district have chosen to find out the socioeconomic conditions of agricultural workers. The objective of the study is to get the first hand knowledge of their socio economic condition for evaluating and assessing the living conditions of agricultural workers. After conducting the study we come to the conclusion that there is an urgent need for the development of rural areas and rural agricultural workers. Government must take more effective steps for their upliftment and betterment.

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