

## LIVELIHOOD STATUS OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

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### **Abstract**

*In India rural women constitute about 80 percent of the women population. There are nearly 50 percent of the total rural population and thus numerically capable of paying a pivotal role in the rural economy. However it's disappointing to note that a demographic prospective women in general and rural women in particulars displays a picture of educational backwardness, poverty, ill- health and lack of opportunities for political and social economic development. Share of employment in the unorganized sector as held by women could be traced to nine major employment systems. They are agriculture, dairying, animal husbandry, fisheries, social and agro forestry, khadi, village industry, handlooms and sericulture.*

**Keywords:** *women agricultural labourers, Agricultural Development, human resources, man power planning, unorganized sector, socio-demographic characteristics*

### **Origin of the women agriculture labourers**

The origin women agricultural labourers' can be tacked back to the ascendancy of British role, when because of the government policy, native traditional industries began declining. As no modern industries grew to replace the tradition disappearing industries, craftsman and artisans living in villages where left with no alternative but to fall back as women agricultural labourers. Through the British government adopted a policy of realization of the country, it did not contemplate modernization, agriculture, except plantations like tea and jute where the British had vested interest, forced even the small formers to join the ranks of workers.

### **Women in Agricultural Development**

A woman is half of the sky, half of the earth, half of the blood and half of the soul of the society. No one can tenancy this fact, because women are indeed a pivot around whom the family tap. Society and the humanity move, the destiny of a nation is crucial and in and without, the service and sacrifice of women. With the advertisement of science and technology the world has moved very fast and therefore, women have to assume a dynamic role in the changing context of the time. It is indispensable that women form and important component of the work force of the society. She shoulders work, and it is because of this vital role the she should be harness her energies and her talents for the betterment of human beings.

Many countries have in the institutions, enshrined lofty loss and statements about the rights the women. Article 15 of the Indian constitution guaranties women quality with men with regard to rights, status and opportunities. But, unfortunately women have become one of the most exploited classes in the male dominating society, and there is a lot of discrimination in respect of her education, employment, status and other dictates tradition and customs. She is just a victim of the rigid social structure and without economic power. The role of women either in industry or in agriculture has increased in a developing country like India, because of the violence of poverty commonly faced by her male counter parts. In rural India, majority of the men feel that the women earnings are inevitably indispensable for making both ends meets.

Since human resources in an economy constitute a significant input in the production process of goods and services, the study of human resources especially the women their quality of work

and their problems are of immense importance in man power planning in a developing country like India. Knowledge about the working of women is more crucial in rural economy of India where the earnings of women are inevitable to the poverty ridden people.

### **Definition of Agriculture Labour**

According to S.E. Thomes, "labour consists of all human efforts of body or of mind, which is under taken in the expectation of reward."

According to Evens, "labour is any exertion of mind and body undertaken partly or wholly with a view to some good other than the pleasure derived directly from the work."

### **Current Position of Agricultural Labourers in India**

Agricultural labourers are provided mostly by economically and socially backward section of the country. They may be divided in different types as follows:

1. Landless labourers that are personally dependent but as also work exclusively for others.
2. Landless labourers who are attached to the landlords.
3. Petty formers with tiny bits of land who devote most of the time working for others.
4. Farmers who have economic holdings but who have one or more of their children and dependent working for others prosperous formers.

### **Statement of the problem**

In spite of more than fifty years of independence, women and more particularly working women by a large constitutes neglected section of the society. The work participation rate of female workers was 22.73 percent as compared to 51.56 percent of the males. The majority of women workers in India were employed in the rural areas, among the rural women workers 87 percent are employed in agricultural as labourers and cultivators. In the urban areas, 80 percent of the women workers were employed in the unorganized sector.

This unorganized sector is characterized is by lack of labour, low coverage, seasonal and temporary forms of employment, high labour mobility: wage dispersed depends on nature of operations, actualization of labour, lack of organizational support and low bargaining power.

According to 2001 census about 90 percent of workers in India are in the unorganized sector. They are facing many problems such as few or opportunities to work. In irregular hours of work, there are the irregular payments of wages non availability of social security and welfare facilities. Exploitative working conditions and sexual security harassment exist at work place. So in this micro level study an attempt is made to assess the socio economic status, wage structure and employment pattern, to analyse the factor determining wage rate and problem faced by the women agriculture labour.

### **Scope of Study**

This project is purely meant to study on women agricultural labourers. The women played a significant role in agriculture. The most of the female agricultural labourers working at produce of food cultivations. This present study covers only Rishivandhiyam block. This study may also bring out suggestions to improve the status of women agricultural labourers.

### **Objectives**

- To study the socio-demographic characteristics of the landless women agricultural labourers.
- To analyse the income, expenditure, borrowing and saving pattern of the women agricultural labourers.

### **Area and period of the study**

The present study of women agricultural labourers in Villupuram district is micro level study. The study has been conducted during the period of 2016-2017.

## Villupuram District Profile

Villupuram district is the 23rd District of the State Tamil Nadu. It has been bifurcated from the erstwhile composite South Arcot District and commenced its function from 30th September 1993 with its Head Quarters at Villupuram. It is the largest District 29 in Tamil Nadu which is predominantly agrarian. The total geographical area of the district is around 7011 sq kms. The district is situated in the northern part of Tamil Nadu and close to the state capital of Chennai in a distance of about 100 kms from its north border. The district's head quarter Villupuram is about 160 kms from Chennai. The boundaries of the District are Bay of Bengal and the Union Territory of Puducherry by the East and Kancheepuram and Thiruvannamalai District by the North, Cuddalore District by the South and West by Dharmapuri and Salem Districts.

## Review

**Molly (2000)** made study on 'wage labour arrangements, in a village of west Bengal, in the district of Brigham out of the sampled SC households, seven are share croppers, one kaiborta does not participate in bore only one shale croppers son and son's wife participate in Kisanis. Average labour days for male and female are 45.4 and 45.5 days respectively. It found that in discussion with wage labours, it is seemed that no attachment to any particular land lords exist the potion-client relationship regularly extends preferential treatment to each other is seen from the finding.

**Ravi and singh (2006)** in their study, at the all India level the female and male wage ratio for agricultural wages showed lower disparity compared to non-agricultural workers. The ratio at the all India level, Showed only marginal change in the case of agricultural worker in both period. In the case of non-agricultural wages, there was consistent rise between 1983(59.7) percent and 1999-2000(68.1) percent indicating a narrowing of gender disparities. The rise was sharper in the post reforms period. This trend is reflective of findings of trends in the growth rate when by the gap between the female and male non-agricultural wage has narrowed down in resent past.

**Shah et al.,(2008)** made a study on 'women labour demand for rise fanning system in Nauru, Eciji, Philippine's" with the objective of determining the factors associated with demand for women labour in rise fanning activities and to describe the problems of women labour participation and suggest policy measures, in four villages, of guimba municipality, Nuevo Ecija, Philippines, a list of farmers of the four villages was made the farmers list was categorised according to form size like small, medium and large. 50 samples from each cluster, using simple random sampling were drawn, atotal of 250 farmers were selected for the study. Two female enumerators gather the field data by means of personal interviews. The necessary data were collected during the dry seasons. Nov-88 to Feb-89 the demand for women labour was determined by the general linear and step wise multiple regression method. The following models were employed to determine the women labour demand in rise farming system.

$$Y_i = a + b_1p_i + b_2tEt + Q_j, Y_i = a + b_1p_i + b_2tEt + W_i$$

He pointed out that the area irrigated was found to be an important one, thus it is recommended that the government and local water users may come up with more effective and efficient irrigation production without including exposure for tapping additional water resources or attiring the physical characteristics of the system.

## Result and Discussion

### Physical Wealth

Physical wealth of the households is one of the components of family income. The nature and level of physical wealth determines some-economic and health conditions of the people, and demographic condition to some extent. It was found that the mean value of the land for the total respondents is 454208. The mean value of the physical wealth among the respondents whose age is below 30 years is higher followed by the higher (302666) and middle age (278333) groups.

The mean value of house/building for the households of the total respondents is 319000, and it is higher among respondents of higher age-group (397166) followed by lower (305583) and middle age-groups (267666). The mean value of livestock for the households of the total respondents is 13485, and it is higher among respondents of lower age-group (7566) followed by

higher (4451) and middle age-groups (4388). The mean value of cycle/moped for the households of the total respondents is 15484, and it is higher among respondents of lower age group (18325) followed by higher (14625) and middle age-groups (10606).

The mean value of cycle/moped for the households of the total respondents is 15484, and it is higher among respondents of lower age-group (18325) followed by higher (14625) and middle age-groups (10606). The mean value of radio/television for the households of the total respondents is 5490, and it is higher among respondents of lower age-group (7041) followed by higher (4696) and middle age-groups (3183). The mean value of fan/air-condition for the households of the total respondents is 2369, and it is higher among respondents of higher age group (3606) followed by lower (2056) and middle age-groups (1756).

**Table 4.1 Details of Average Physical Wealth of the Sample Respondents**  
**Source:** computed

Physical wealth	Below 30 years	31-45 years	46+ years	Total
	N=30	N=30	N=60	N=120
<b>Land</b>				
Minimum	70000	100000	100000	70000
Maximum	700000	550000	600000	700000
Mean	327416	278333	302666	454208
<b>House/Building</b>				
Minimum	150000	80000	80000	80000
Maximum	800000	600000	2000000	2000000
Mean	305583	267666	397166	319000
<b>Livestock</b>				
Minimum	1000	1000	1500	1000
Maximum	100000	11000	12000	100000
Mean	7566	4388	4451	13485
<b>Cycle/Mop</b>				
Minimum	1500	1500	1500	1500
Maximum	45000	35000	25000	45000
Mean	18325	10606	14625	15484
<b>Radio/T.V</b>				
Minimum	2000	1300	1300	1300
Maximum	10000	7500	15000	15000
Mean	7041	3183	4696	5490
<b>Fan/AC</b>				
Minimum	1300	1300	1300	1300
Maximum	12000	3600	18000	18000
Mean	2056	1756	3606	2369
<b>Oven/Fridge</b>				
Minimum	10000	10000	10000	10000
Maximum	14000	12000	15000	15000
Mean	10740	11250	3733	10933
<b>Furniture</b>				
Minimum	1000	1000	1000	1000
Maximum	10000	4500	5000	10000
Mean	1793	1713	1910	1802

The mean value of oven/fridge for the households of is 10933 and it is higher among respondents of middle age-group (11250) followed by lower (10740) and higher age-groups (3733). The mean value of furniture for the households of the total respondents is 1802, and it is higher among respondents of higher age-group (1910) followed by lower (1793) and middle age-groups (1713) (Table 4.1).

**Financial Wealth**

The financial wealth is also one of the components of wealth of the family such as gold/silver, bank deposits, and cash in hand. The financial wealth has significant impact on social and economic status of an individual and the family. It was found that the mean value of financial wealth of the households of the total respondents is 48871, and it is higher among respondents of higher age-group (63800) followed by middle age-group (57292) and lower age-group (28200). The mean value of bank deposits of the households of the total respondents is 48871, and it is higher among respondents of higher age-group (63800) followed by middle age-group (57292) and lower age-group (28200). The mean value of cash in hand of the households of the total respondents is 207

8, and it is higher among respondents of middle age-group (2303) followed by higher age group (2268) and lower age-group (1870) (Table 4.2).

**Sources of household Income**

It is important to study the sources of annual income to understand the nature and level of household income. It was found that the mean value of cash in hand of the households of the total respondents is 2078, and it is higher among respondents of middle age-group (2303) followed by higher age-group (2268) and lower age group (47800) and middle age-group (39360) group (58250) followed by higher age group (47800) and middle age-group (39360). The mean value of income of

the respondents is 45350, and it is higher among respondents of higher age-group “(37430) followed by middle age-group (27330) and lower age-group (5930). The mean value of others income of the respondents households is 110770, and it is higher among respondents of middle age-group (111030) followed by lower age group (109030) and higher age-group (97270) (Table 4.3)

**Table 4.2 Details of Average financial wealth of the sample Respondents**

Finance wealth	Below 30 years	31-45 years	46+ years	Total
	N=30	N=30	N=60	N=120
<b>Gold/silver</b>				
Minimum	10000	25000	10000	10000
Maximum	100000	80000	150000	150000
Mean	28200	57292	63800	48871
<b>Bank deposits</b>				
Minimum	10000	10000	10000	10000
Maximum	100000	35000	100000	100000
Mean	39433	20833	29059	32661
<b>Cash in hand</b>				
Minimum	300	400	400	300
Maximum	4000	11000	5000	11000
Mean	1870	2303	2268	2078

Source: computed

**Table 4.3 Sources of Annual household income of the sample respondents**

Source(in Rs)	Below 30 years	31-45 years	46+ years	Total
	N=30	N=30	N=60	N=120
<b>Income of the Respondents</b>				
Minimum	6000	12000	12000	6000
Maximum	168000	84000	102000	168000
Mean	58250	39360	47800	48470
<b>Other Source of Income</b>				
Minimum	10000	10000	10000	10000
Maximum	60000	60000	60000	60000
Mean	5930	27330	37430	45350
<b>Others Income</b>				
Minimum	18000	12200	12600	12200
Maximum	264000	240000	240000	264000
Mean	109030	111030	97270	110770

Source: computed

### Consumption Expenditure

The study of nature and level of consumption expenditure helps to understand the level of development in each item concerned, it was found that the majority of the respondents had food expenditure(48%) followed by non food expenditure (22%), medical expenditure(18%) and personal needs expenditure(12%). Its shows the ever existing fact that the food expenditure will be more for most of the people irrespective of the demographic, socio economic condition of the families, among the respondents were in the young age group(52%) followed by higher and middle age groups (48%) table (4.4)

**Table 4.4 Average consumption expenditure of sample Households (Rs. Per month)**

Item of the Expenditure	Below 30 years		31-45 years		46+ years		Total	
	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Food expenditure	2220	51.5	2170	47.9	2070	48.3	2170	48.3
Non food expenditure	960	22.2	990	21.8	980	22.8	970	21.5
Medical expenditure	870	20.1	830	18.4	690	16.1	810	18.1
Personal needs	270	6.2	540	11.9	550	12.8	540	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4530</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4430</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4490</b>	<b>100</b>

### Summery & Conclusion

Physical wealth of the household is one of the components of the family income. The nature and level of physical wealth determines socio economic and health condition of the people and demographic condition to some extent. It was found that the mean value of the

land for the total respondents is 454208. The financial wealth is also one of the components of wealth of the family such as gold/silver, bank deposits, and cash in hand. The financial wealth has significant impact on social and economic status of an individual and the family. It was found that the mean value of financial wealth of the households of the total respondents is 48871, and it is higher among respondents of higher age group (63800) followed by middle age group (57292) and lower age group(28200) It is important to study the sources of annual income to understand the nature and level of households’ income. It was found that the mean value of cash in hand of the households of the total respondents is 2078, and it is higher among respondents of middle age

group (2303) followed by the higher age group (2268) and lower age group (18070). It was found that the majority of the respondents had food expenditure. It shows the ever existing fact that the food expenditure will be more for most of the people irrespective of the demographic socio economic conditions of the families. Among the respondents were in the young age group followed by higher and middle age groups.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals that the main factors responsible for poor condition of women agricultural labourers are ignorance, negligence, illiteracy and poverty. Unless social consensus is arrived at and strict laws are enacted in near future the informal agrarian system it would become immensely difficult and so a lot is to be done for the liberation of labour force in Indian agriculture. Otherwise it will become main constraints for socio economic development of Women Agricultural Labourers

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