

8. Issues of Farm Labours in India

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Abstract

Around 53 percent of India's population is engaged in farming. However, agriculture in the country still depends upon the mercy of monsoon. Therefore, farmers and farm workers have to rely on the strength or intensity of the monsoon. If the monsoon is healthy, then the crop will also be excellent, otherwise, the farmers will face drought situations and heavy rain. Agricultural workers in our country are listed as non-organized industries, so their wages are not fixed; they are forced to live an insecure and miserable life in poverty. Farmworkers are one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged classes in rural hierarchies; have been exploited by landowners. Everything was done to change their circumstances right up to the start of Independence. Under the Indian Constitution, everyone in instruction, service, and so on should be given an equal open door. The government has an extraordinary responsibility to boost farmworker's monetary conditions.

Key words: Agriculture Labour, India, Problems of farm labour, Poverty, Income of farm labours

Introduction

Agricultural labour holds the lowest position in the socio-economic system in a rural settlement in India. Agricultural or farm labourer is that person working on an alternative land and not involved in and maintaining farm management and receiving money or a portion of the crop to serve. He does not have any property rights or any threats to the farm. He has no land rights. In short, we apply to farm workers who, by their work on farming, "earn their livelihoods."

Describing the conditions of Indian agricultural labour P.T. Mayya writes,

"The Indian labourer spends his days in dirt and mud. He produces food grains for us but remains hungry himself. He feeds our cows but never gets anything but water. He fills our stores with food grains, but begs his own ration for the whole year. He continuously chops woods and fills water for those who have become rich on behalf of his labour. His condition is heart wrenching and Piteous."

Actually, a growth in the population of agricultural workers, farmers and farm workers engaged in crop production was one of the most significant characteristics of the rural Indian economy. But the key problems in their daily lives are underemployment, underdevelopment and surplus populations.

Generally, they get fewer wages, working conditions place an undue strain on them, and the job they get is highly irregular. The most neglected class in Indian rural system is agricultural workers. Their income is low, and they have irregular employment. Because they lack expertise or experience, they often have no alternative work prospects. Socially, many farmworkers belong to planned castes and scheduled tribes. So they are a class that suppressed. They are not trained and can not fight for their freedom. Despite all these reasons, even after five decades of preparation, their economic lot has failed to change.

To conventional farming, labour is an essential input to growing production. In the early stage of growth, (because the land was available in large-scale) increases in the availability of labour led to the clearing of further land for cultivation. The increase in the supply of labour was a boon to society at this stage of growth. This contributed positively and helped to improve agricultural production.

Modern farming is the adoption of new technologies, and technological innovation needs heightened capital use in agriculture. Even with the use of more capital and new technologies, several farm operations demanded labour intensification such as the development of seedbeds, weeding, irrigation and harvesting. Labour is, therefore, a vital input in modern agrarian growth. Agricultural labourers are the poorest social and economic parts of society. Houses of farm labourers are the traditionally marginalised social classes, displaced handicraftsmen, and dispossessed the peasantry. We are the poorest of the rural Indian population. Its growth represents the underdeveloped colonial legacy and the inadequacies of previous planning interventions. Due to weak labour absorption in the non-agricultural sector and also insufficient reforms in the agrarian system, overcrowding and growth of agricultural labourers continued unabated.

The condition of poverty among farm labourers needs to be read against such a backdrop of prolonged rural underdevelopment, restlessness, unemployment, low wages, under-nutrition, analphabetism and social backwardness constitute the syndrome of poverty among farm labourers. These strengthen one another to form a vicious circle of poverty.

These reinforce one another to form a vicious circle of poverty. There's little upward mobility between generations among farm labourer households. In any pattern of economic development, the human factor is of paramount importance. More so do India's farm labourers, the most extensive unorganised segment

of the country encompass the most impoverished workers, working on India's sunny fields? Many of them come from the economically deprived parts of our society, and many continue to live in poverty.

Indeed, farmwork's economic conditions are pitiful. They got small wages and had a very miserable life.

Issues of Farm Labour:

Poor Social Condition:

Many farm workers belong to the marginalized classes that have for years been ignored. The poor caste and the depressed classes were socially handicapped and never had the courage to stand up. They were like dumb animals.

Poverty and under work:

The causes of low wages and consequently the poor economic role of agriculture work in our country are both unemployment and underemployment. There is no continuous work for farm workers. The Second Agricultural Labour Survey reported that a farmer has an average work for about 197 days a year and is then idle for the rest of the year. Unemployment also occurs in rural areas, apart from underemployment. Low income and consequently low living standards of farm workers are attributable to lack of continuous work.

Non-farming lack of work:

The lack of non-agricultural occupation in rural areas is another important factor for low wages and the poor economic conditions of farmworkers. First, the rising population pressures in rural areas are increasing and there is a steady rise in the number of landless workers.

On the other hand, there has been an increase in population pressure on the countryside due to the absence of any other occupation in rural areas and the absence of inter-regional mobility. Therefore, supplementary jobs can improve the economic conditions of the working classes.

Unorganised, uneducated and unawareness:

Trade unions organize migrant workers in manufacturing and are able to negotiate fair wages. Farmers live in small villages and are illiterate and ignorant. Therefore, in labour unions they could not be united. This was advantageous for political parties to become involved in trade union activity in urban areas where the workmen could organize themselves. In the case of agricultural jobs, this is almost impossible. Consequently, it is difficult for them to negotiate and secure high salaries with the landowners.

Farm employees are extremely indebted:

Normally the farm workers borrow from the property owners they work with. They are, of course, obliged to accept lower wages.

At times, workers do not have their own houses or they do have built their own houses on land donated by the landlords. The staffs are therefore obligated to the landlords to do so. High debt is therefore a central factor in farm workers' weak economic situation. Thus farm labourers have got very low wages and have to live in a miserable under-human condition due partly to uncontrolled factors and partly to their lack of negotiations.

Government's initiatives

Wages:

The Minimum Wages Act has been passed since 1948 and the need to enforce it in agriculture has since been interpreted. Does the Act not apply to the agriculture sector?

Bonded Labour abolition law:

Since independence efforts to eradicate the evil of bonded labour have been made because they are exploitative, inhumane and violate all standards of social justice.

Accommodation:

Laws for providing housing in villages for farm workers were passed in many States.

Employment Schemes:

Rural Employment (CSRE), National Rural Employment Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY), and National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP), Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA

Development agencies for growth:

Special agencies - Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MFAL) - were created in 1970-71 to solve the problems of Agriculture labour of the country.

Findings

Since then, the number of farm employees has been growing continuously. Farm labour income is usually less than other employers' income. In agriculture, the income and economic welfare levels of the people

depends on various factors, such as prices on their produce, the rates at which the economy generally improves movement, the average income per person varies from overall income, and the prices earned and paid are likely to be less relevant than the others.

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