



A STUDY ON WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN NOCHIKULAM VILLAGE OF ALATHUR BLOCK IN PERAMBALUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Agriculture plays an important role in our country. It contributes major portion to National Income. It provides employment opportunity to the rural people. Allied sector based on Agriculture product as raw materials for their industry. These agro based industry contribute major share on National income. These industries are also providing employment opportunity.

Objectives

- *The study the socio-economic conditions of the agriculture labour in Nochikulamvillage of Alathur Block in Perambalur District.*
- *To analyse the working conditions of the labour.*

Key words: Agriculture, labour, wages, working hours, education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the main occupation of around 70% of the population. They are engaged directly (or) indirectly in this field and generate 22% of National gross product. Even though there is increase in food production due to rapid growth of population, it is not sufficient for the economy.

In another aspect we can say that, Agriculture depends on monsoon and climatic conditions. The failure in the monsoon condition affects the yield of cultivation of crops.

In some places the fertility of the soil affected more, so the return from this sector is even below level. The dependent factors (cost of production of seed, wages for labourers, cost of production of fertilizer, poor irrigation facility) force them to migrate from rural to urban sector.

Women labourers are migrate to urban area, force them to work as domestic labour, vegetable vendor, Coolies in small industry (eg : in super market they are working in packing section) etc. “Urbanization force them to spend more” Naturally their standard of living at below level.

The Nature of work is not a continuous one. The Income, profit, production and productivity are not constant. Loss may affect the growth of the economy. It affects the standard of living of the people. Emotions plays a major role in the workplace and it is well described (Gopinath, R 2011). Job Satisfaction with three different modeling structures is well explained (GOPINATH, R, 2016 & Gopinath, R., and R. Kalpana, 2019).

2. TIME SPENT AT WORK BY WOMEN AND MEN

Whether in Industry services (or) agriculture women and men have different responsibilities and activities. For most women family and work are constantly tied together. For most men, work means and income producing job with a fixed schedule outside the house.

In poor agricultural societies women work in the field as well as tend to the daily needs of their families, such traditional female activities as growing and processing the food consumed by their families, gathering fuel wood, collecting water and cooling are unpaid women often work more hours men, studies from the 1980, 1990s mainly in developed region, show women working at least two hours per week more than men in 13 countries and often 5-10 hours per week more. The 13 countries are Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany (Fed. Rep.), Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom, USSR (former).

(Source: Statistical division of the United Nations secretariat from data provided by Andrew Harvey as consultant. Based on studies in 21 countries)

(Chapter 5 “Work” – The status of world’s women P. No. 230)

3. PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKPLACE

It is defined as gainful work of any kind either on the basis of self employment (or) hired wages salary basis in production for self use (or) for the work market in agriculture industry (or) service in public (or) private sectors and in organized (or) unorganized sector.

Irrespective of employment category (casual and regular / salaried), organized to unorganized sector and localities (urban and rural), women workers in India are paid a lower wage rate, says a report by Oxfam, an International Profit Organisation.

The gender pay gap was 34% in India, that is women get 34% less compared to men for performing the same job with same qualifications, says the report which based its estimates on employment survey (EVS) 2011-12 done by NSSO, ILO studies also builds as the first equality report launched by Oxfam in 2018.

It has been analyzed the gender pay gaps in the organized sector across different occupation and different enterprise type. It says that women professionals even in the highest ranks of labour (legislators, senior officials and managers) are also paid less compared to their male counter parts. However these women contribute only one percent of the total female work force and the gap is lowest as they are aware of their rights.

Wage difference is lesser for more skilled (or) unskilled workers, across enterprise type; wage difference is less for government / public sector and public / Pvt. Ltd. Company.

Women's labour force participation India is one of the lowest in the world women comprise half of the Indian population but make up less than a quarter of labour force. Three in four Indian women do not work in the country. Looking at extremely low levels of participation of women in the labour market makes one wonder whether the phenomenal success of India's economic transition forgot about its women and left them behind. "Says the report title mid the gap. The state of employment in India.

The report also talks about the feminization of agriculture and how it should not be celebrated on the other hand, for casual workers wage gap is narrower in rural areas.

A casual labourer is a person who is casually engaged in others farm (or) non-farm enterprises (both house hold and non house hold), and in return receives wages according to the terms (or) periodic work contract.

The report stresses that while in equality in jobs has increased in equality in education has decreased between boys and girls. But this situation further exacerbates the crisis in jobs when it comes to women. Even as girls frequently outperform boys in school examination, they are not finding suitable jobs for the skills that they have.

Quoting a study the report says that, while both men and women are diversifying out of agriculture, almost 75% of rural women are still engaged in it.

A patriarchal ideology and local socio-cultural traditions confine women to the village where agriculture continues to be their most important source of food and income. Male out migration has also pushed women into taking as more responsibility of own cultivation and to perform wage labour to ensure household's daily survival it says (www.downtoearth.org.in) women's labour force participation India among the world's lowest: Oxfam Mar 2019).

4. OBJECTIVES

- To study the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers in Nochikulam village.
- To study the working conditions of agricultural labourers.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study consists of both primary and secondary data. Nearly 50 samples were collected from the study area on random basis.

6. AREA OF STUDY

Nochikulam village is located in Alathur block of Perambalur District. The total population of Nochikulam village is 1928. It includes 942 men and 986 women as per the 2011 population statistical report. Nearly 171 women go to work as coolie in farming field 120 of their work as coolie in farming field and the rest (51) do work as labourers in construction and industries.

Majority of women work in fields and do work as sowing seeds, removing weeds, collecting cottons, corns and harvesting. Their working time is from 7.30 am to 1.30 pm and their wages is ₹ 200/- per day.

But for men workers working time begins 7.30 am to 10.30 am and their wages are ₹ 300 for three hours. To work between 3.30 pm to 6.00 pm ₹ 150/- is given for their work between pm to 6.00pm.

The pay for field labour and farming are listed below in detail:

6.1 Corn

Wages for sowing seed, root out the weed and harvesting ₹ 150/- is given for the work between 7.00 am to 1.00 pm for women.

6.2 Paddy

Field work by women to sow saplings for an acre ₹ 200/- given as wages. To weed out from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm ₹ 200/- is given as wages.

6.3 Cotton

From 9.00 am to 2.00 pm ₹ 200/- is give as wages for sowing cotton seeds and weed out. Wages for construction and industrial related works from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. for men the wages ₹ 500/- is given.

MNREGP women workers are getting ₹ 200/- to ₹ 243/- as their maximum wages ₹ 200/- to ₹ 229/- is given for deepening the river belts and sowing the saplings of tree. In general there is a difference in wages given for men and women. For three hours of

work ₹ 300/- is given for men and for women ₹ 200/- is given. For 5 hours work ₹ 550/- is given for men and ₹ 350/- for women for the whole days work. There will be more farming works during August, September, October and during the month of December (from last week) January, February there will be harvesting works and wages given for that. There won't be daily works available in the rest of the month.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Religion

S.No.	Religion	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Hindu	40	80
2.	Christian	8	16
3.	Muslim	2	4
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 1 shows that 80 percent of the workers are Hindus, only 4 percent of the workers are Muslims.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Community

S.No.	Community	Respondents	Percentage
1.	BC	13	26
2.	MBC	7	14
3.	SC	28	56
4.	ST	2	4
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 2 shows that 26 percent of the respondent belongs to BC community. Maximum of 56 percent of the respondent belongs to SC community.

A Study on Working Conditions of The Women Agricultural Labour in Nochikulam Village of Alathur Block in Perambalur District

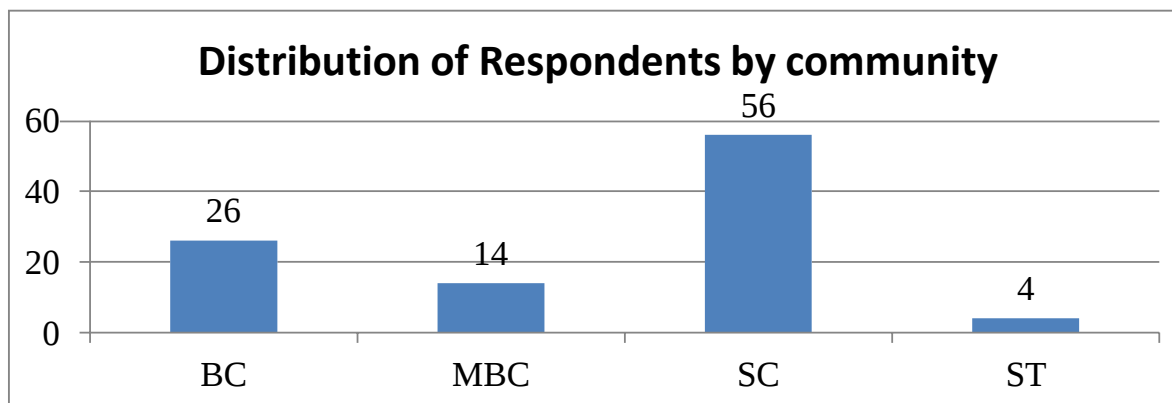


Figure 1 Distribution of Respondents by Community

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Age

S.No.	Age	Respondents	Percentage
1.	25 – 30	5	10
2.	30 – 35	18	36
3.	35 – 40	10	20
4.	40- 45	7	14
5.	Above 45	10	20
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 3 shows that 36 percent of the workers belong to the age of 30-35, 20 percent of the workers belong to the age of 30-45 and above age of 45 respectively.

Table 4 Size of the family

S.No.	Family	Respondents	Percentage
1.	2-4	23	46
2.	5-7	25	50
3.	8-10	2	4
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

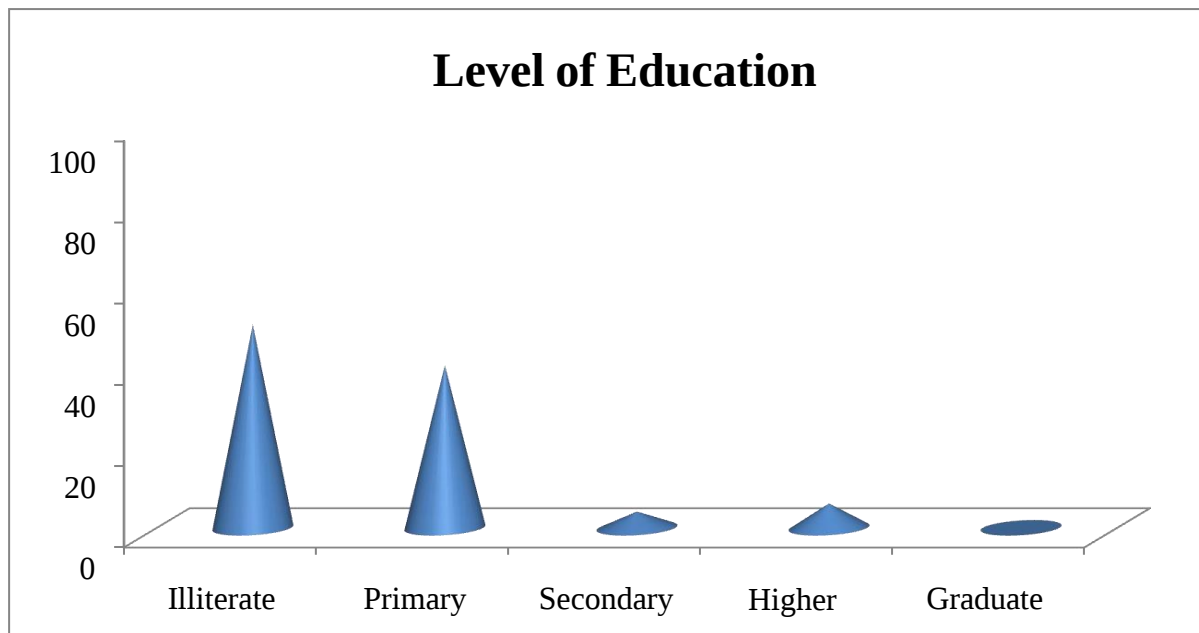
The above table 4 shows that the size of the family of the workers 50 percent of the workers family size is 5-7, only 4% of workers size of the family is 8-10.

Table 5 Level of Education

S.No.	Education	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	25	50
2.	Primary	20	40
3.	Secondary	2	4
4.	Higher Secondary	3	6
5.	Graduate	-	-
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 5 shows that majority of the workers are illiterate.

**Figure 2** Level of Education**Table 6** Marital Status of the Respondents

S.No.	Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Married	30	60
2.	Unmarried	4	8
3.	Widow	10	20
4.	Divorce	6	12
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 6 shows that 60 percent of the workers are married. Only 8 percent of the workers are unmarried.

Table 7 Type of Houses

S.No.	Houses	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Thatches	22	44
2.	Brick	10	20
3.	Concrete	18	36
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 7 shows that 44 percent of the workers living in Thatched home and 36 percent of the workers living in concrete home.

Table 8 Level of Income

S.No.	Monthly Income	Respondents	Percentage
1.	1000 – 2000	5	10
2.	2000 – 3000	10	20
3.	3000 – 4000	30	60
4.	4000 - 5000	5	10
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

A Study on Working Conditions of The Women Agricultural Labour in Nochikulam Village of Alathur Block in Perambalur District

The above table 8 shows that 60 percent of the workers earn income of 3000 – 4000 in a month. 10% of the respondents earn ₹ 1000 – 2000 and 4000 – 5000 respectively.

Table 9 Income from other sources

S.No.	Other Sources of Income	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Vegetable vendor	18	36
2.	Fruits vendor	20	40
3.	Construction	10	20
4.	Other work	2	4
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 9 shows that nearly 36 percent of workers sell vegetables in the evening after their working hours.

Table 10 Nature of work

S.No.	Items	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Sowing	5	10
2.	Plugging	15	30
3.	Transplantation	7	14
4.	Weeding	13	26
5.	Spraying	5	10
6.	Harvesting	5	10
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 10 shows that 30 percent of the workers engaged in plugging 28 percent of the workers doing weeding work.

Table 11 Employment in Load Agriculture

S.No.	Loan Agriculture	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Servant Maid/ part time labour	13	26
2.	Construction	20	40
3.	Self employment	13	26
4.	Other	4	8
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 11 shows that at the time of non availability of work in agriculture 40 percent of the labour engaged in construction. 26 percent of the labour work as servant maid and self employed.

Table 12 Gender Discrimination

S.No.	Sex	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	44	88
2.	No	6	12
	Total	50	100

Sources: Primary data

The above table 12 shows that 88 percent of the respondents find that there is discrimination among the workers.

7. FINDINGS

The present study is economic, social and working conditions of agricultural labour in Nochikulam village reveals the following findings.

- 80 percent of the respondent belongs to Hindu religion, 16 percent of the respondents belong to Christian and 4 belong to Muslim religion.
- 56 percent of the respondent belongs to SC community, 26 percent of the respondent belongs to BC, 14 percent belongs to MBC and only 4 percent belongs ST.
- Out of 50 respondent 18 comes under the age group of 30-35, 10 respondents come under the age group of 35-40 and above 45.
- The majority ie. 50 percent of the respondent family size is 5-7. 46% of the respondent's family size is 2-4. Only 2% of the respondent's family size is 8-10. That is even though they are uneducated they are aware of family planning and its importance.
- The study finds that 50 percent of the respondents are illiterate, 40 percent are at primary level 4 percent are at secondary level and 6 percent are at Higher secondary level.
- 60 percent of the respondent are married, 8 percent of the respondents are unmarried 20 percent are widow and 12 percent are divorce.
- 44 percent of the respondents are living in Thatched house, 36 percent are living in concrete house remaining 20 percent are living in Brick house.
- 60 percent of the workers income lies between ₹3000 – 4000, 10 percent of workers income lies between ₹1000 – 2000 and ₹4000 – 5000. 20 percent of the workers earn ₹ 2000 – 3000.
- After the working hours 40 percent of the worker sell fruits, 36 percent of the respondents sell vegetables. 20 percent engaged in construction.
- 30 percent of the workers doing plugging 14 percent of the workers doing Transplantation,
- 26 percent of the workers are doing weeding 10 percent of the workers are doing spraying and harvesting.
- At the time of non availability of agricultural work. 40 percent of the respondents engaged in construction. 20% of the workers engaged in self employment.
- 88 percent of the respondents find there is discrimination in their work 12% of the workers find there is no discrimination among the workers.
- 36 percent of the respondents expenditure comes under the ₹ 0 – 2000 bracket. 24 percent of the respondents expenditure comes under ₹3000 – 4000 and 40 percent respondent expenditure comes under ₹4000 – 5000 level.
- 43 percent of the respondents have goat. 13 percent of the respondent's posses poultry 14 percent of the respondents have no assets.
- 33 percent of the respondents save ₹2000 – 3000, 13 percent of the respondents save upto ₹3000 – 5000 remaining 54 percent are not saving the money. Because their Income does not permit them to save.
- 57 percent of the respondents save their money in Chit fund and 20 percent of the respondents save money on Co-operative bank. Remaining 23 percent of the respondents save money in post office.
- 56 percent of the respondents borrow money for repaying the debt. 21 percent of the respondents are borrowing money for their children education, remaining 23 percent of the respondent borrow money for celebrating function.

- 60 percent of the respondents work for 9-12 hours. 40 percent of the respondents work for 4 to 6 hours.
- 66 percent of the respondents are casual labour and 34 percent of the workers are contract labour.
- 43 percent of the respondents not satisfied with the prevailing wage rate. 57 percent of the respondent satisfied with the wage rate.

8. SUGGESTIONS

- Government should support the unorganized worker by providing subsidy for starting a small business.
- The workers should make use of government programme like women development, craftwork, kundan work, coor work etc., which are exclusively for the female.
- For equal work, equal pay should be paid irrespective of gender.
- Awareness should be created about union, hours to work, alternative job etc.

9. CONCLUSION

The government and voluntary organization should support the women worker in agricultural sector is the way of social security measures. The problem is endless. But the local governance should take the responsibility of the workers to improve their standard of living.

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