

## **A Study on Women Role in Agricultural Sector in Thiruvallur District**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women Agricultural labourers who are mostly landless and form a significant section of rural society mainly depend on wage employment in agriculture. Majority of them belong to the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and are among the worst exploited section of the society. Their income has always been meagre, resulting in poor living and heavy indebtedness. Much worse are those who get casual agricultural work merely exist and do not live. Their morning holds no promise for the evening and they can never sleep without tensions for they have no stocks left for the morning. Struggling for their morning and evenings they pass their whole life. This, however, does not mean that no attempt has been made to define Agricultural labour. Different experts and various committees have been set up by the Government of India to study the problems of agricultural labour have attempted to provide a precise definition of the term 'agricultural labour'. In this chapter an attempt is made to present the meaning and types of agricultural labourer, their features and problems. Further, the various government measures adopted to improve the conditions of agricultural labourers are briefly outlined. At the end the growth of agricultural labour over a period of time in India, and the study area is made in order to present the latest position of agricultural labourers. In brief, it may be observed that the situation of an agricultural labourer differs substantially from that of an industrial labourer; he is an unorganized lot, his bargaining power is weak, and generally, the supply of agricultural labourer exceeds its demand.

**Keywords: women bonded labour, laws, exploitation, awareness.**

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### **I. Introduction :-**

#### **Small intro and evolution :-**

The importance of agriculture in economic development of any country, rich or poor is borne out by the fact that it is the primary sector of the economy, which provides the basic ingredients necessary for the existence of mankind and also provides most of the raw materials which when transformed into finished products serve as basic necessities of the human race. In India agriculture is the largest sector of economic activity. (Pandey, n.d.) It provides not only food and raw materials but also employment to a very large proportion of the population. Being the dominant sector the improvement or changes in national output depend on agriculture. (Cohen 1953) Agriculture forms the back-bone of the Indian economy and despite concerted industrialization in the last six decades; agriculture occupies a place of pride. Being the largest industry in the country, agriculture provides employment to around 65 per cent of the total work force in the country.

#### **Current trends related to the topic:-**

In provincial India, the level of ladies who rely upon agribusiness for their business is as high as 84%. ... Ladies' interest rate in the horticultural segments is about 47% in tea manors, 46.84% in cotton development, 45.43% developing oil seeds and 39.13% in vegetable creation.

#### **Factors affecting the topic :-**

Women are typically, and wrongly, still characterized as "economically inactive" in statistical surveys of agriculture, a result that tells us more about survey methodology than about reality. Agricultural extension services still do not attach much importance to reaching women farmers or women on the farm. Policy makers

and administrators typically still assume (in the face of the empirical data) that men are the farmers and women play only a "supportive role" as farmers' wives .

#### **Government initiatives :-**

MKSP was launched in 2011 as a sub-component of National Rural Livelihoods to improve the present status of women in agriculture and provide opportunities to women farmers for their empowerment. The scheme aims at providing extension services and production assets to women farmers. The data provided by the census of India reveals that in 1981, about 69 per cent of the total workers were engaged in agriculture and allied activities; during 1991, the share of agriculture in total employment slightly declined to 68 per cent. In absolute terms, agriculture provided employment to 256 million persons in 1997, thus bringing percentage of economically active population in agriculture to 61 per cent. It is really disturbing that the proportion of agricultural labourers has increased and the cultivators have indicated a decline. The basic definition of agricultural labour was provided by the department of Census, Government of India. According to the Census of India, 1961, all those workers were included in the category of agricultural labour who worked on the farms of others and received payment either in cash or kind (or both). (Chalapathi Rao 2018; Das, Ghosh, and Gangopadhyay 2011) The 1971 Census excluded those farm workers from the category of agricultural labourers for whom working on the farms of others as a secondary occupation.

#### **Comparison with other countries :-**

When compared to other countries there is also a special class of agricultural labour called the 'bonded labour' who are at the bottom of agricultural ladder in India. The prominent feature of this system is that a man pledges himself or sometimes a member of his family against a loan. Inability to pay back the loan results in the attachment of that person to the creditor till such time when the loan is finally paid. Agrarian serfdom thus lingers on in India- a relic of the Middle Ages which might well be regarded as one of the darkest blemishes in the economic life of the present day India. (Patnaik 1983) Firstly, agricultural labour is unorganized unlike industrial workers; agricultural workers need not work in unison. (Madras Institute of Development Studies 1988) A lack of contact between workers makes it impossible to develop any meaningful organization. (Patnaik 1983; Kumar 1997) Secondly, agricultural workers are basically unskilled; they may not be skilled in the art of cultivation. Consequently, their supply is perfectly elastic and therefore whatever they earn is in the nature of transfer earnings. The employer often uses this position to his personal gain by contracting to less than what the market forces would have warranted otherwise (Patnaik 1983; Kumar 1997; Heneise 2017). Thirdly, agricultural labour is migratory in character. It can be drawn from a distant place to the place of work during a busy season. Fourthly, the employers of agricultural labour himself may not be a person of high means. (Jha 1997) The extents to which the employment and wages of agricultural labour can be increased within the agricultural sector, depends on the supply and demand for labour.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- To study about agricultural labourers in India
- To analyse about their growth, characteristics and growth in India.

#### **II. Review of literature:**

(Byres, Kapadia, and Lerche 2013; Ganesh, John, and Saravanan 2013; Chandrasekara Naidu 1981) The book *Agricultural labour in India* written by Praveen Kumar, Agricultural Labourers constitute 26.15 Per Cent Of The Total Workforce In India. Starting With An Exhaustive Review Of The Existing Literature On Agricultural Labourers, From Pre Independence Times To The Present, This Book Concludes That There Has Been Little Improvement In Their Economic Situation.

(Byres, Kapadia, and Lerche 2013; Ganesh, John, and Saravanan 2013; Chandrasekara Naidu 1981; Nagalakshmi, n.d.) *A Detailed Analysis Of Agricultural Labour In Two Selected Villages Of Purnia District In Bihar.* Agricultural labourers are socially and economically one of the poorest sections of the society. They constituted 37.73 per cent of the total rural work force in 1981.

(Jha 1997; India. Labour Bureau 1961; Tripathy and Pradhan 1996) They have no assets or assets with low productivity, no regular full time jobs or very low paid jobs. They are unskilled, unorganised and have dispersed over a large area. Their poor living conditions affect their working efficiency and productivity in agriculture and this in turn affects the economy as a whole.

(Madras Institute of Development Studies 1988)The problem of rural labour unemployment is aggravated by the growth of population and labour force in recent decades. Excess labour could not be shifted to the manufacturing sector due to the slower rate of growth of that sector.

(Patnaik 1983; Kumar 1997) Agriculture had to bear this burden of excess labour which has resulted in low productivity in agricultural sector. Thus, casual nature of employment, ignorance, small size of the establishments with low capital formation per person employed, and superior strength of the employer, scattered nature of the establishments, as result of all these agricultural labourers have not been able to organise themselves in pursuit of a common objective. It is a matter of some controversy whether a separate class of agricultural labourers existed in the pre-British rural India. There is, however, enough evidence to show that there was large scale extensive additions to the ranks of agricultural labour during the British rule in India.

(Jha 1997; India. Labour Bureau 1961)The growth of agricultural labourer was a product of a process of disintegration and immiserisation, and not of a developmental process in the Indian economy.

(Chalapathi Rao 2018)The growth of population has added to the number of agricultural labourers. The ranks of agricultural labourer have swelled from 7.5 million in 1881 to 144.3 million in 1981. In one hundred thirty years the number of agricultural labourers has increased by 136.8 million.

(Pandey, n.d.)The problems of agricultural labourer have not arisen due to the specific weaknesses of this class. The basic cause is the lack of sufficiently fast growth which appropriated with structural and technological changes. Hence, the principal instrument for tackling these problems is the totality of planned effort for development.

(Chalapathi Rao 2018; Das, Ghosh, and Gangopadhyay 2011)Growth by any means to be followed by removal of poverty is not a viable strategy for cohesive development of Indian society. "No rate of growth that can be realistically envisaged could make major impact on the problem within the foreseeable future if inequality remains as acute as at present, nor could any feasible egalitarian policies after the position significantly in the absence of an accelerated rate of growth.

(Jha 1997) Important determinant of supply of labour is the participation rate of potential workers. In the peak season, the work force swells, women, children and older people join the labour force during the harvesting season.

(Athreya, Djurfeldt, and Lindberg 1990) The important factors which influence the participation rates are changes in cropping intensity and production, development of the non-agricultural sector, changes in literacy rate and growth in the population.

(Pandey, n.d.)Pandey S.M. has done regression analysis on the 1971 census and came to the conclusion that spread of literacy and the growth of increase in population severely depresses the overall, as well as the male participation rate in rural areas suggesting that more and more young children, especially males, are going to school, which reduces the size of active labour force.

(Patnaik 1983; Kumar 1997)The female participation shows no significant effect on either the over-all or male participation rate. A higher sex ratio increases the male participation rate.

### **III. MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

The methodology used in this study is empirical research. Empirical research is based on observed and measured phenomena and derives knowledge from actual experience rather than from theory or belief. Empirical research is where you conduct "hands on" experimentation. In other words, you get your results from actual experience rather than from a theory or belief. The idea that knowledge is largely attained through exploration of concepts, deduction, intuition and revelation. The sample size of the survey is 1499 and the survey has been conducted on random sampling.

The study was limited to a certain extent as the general public were not interested in answering the survey conducted due to their work shifts and most probably many of them were not willing to spend time on the questions. The survey was limited to 1527 individuals. The independent variables are occupation and the dependent variables are whether agriculture labour is bonded labour and whether they are covered under the rules and regulations framed by the government. The research tool used for this article is chi Square and based on this research has been carried out by proving the hypothesis.

**HYPOTHESIS**

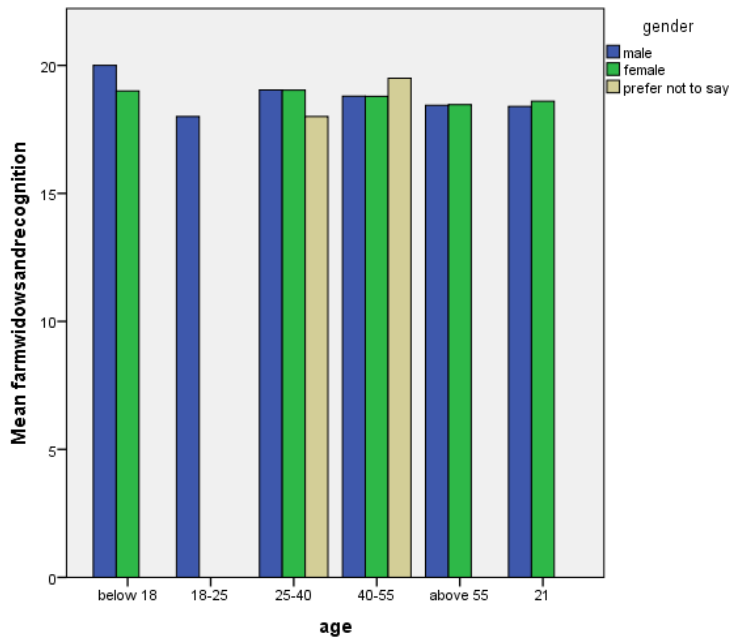
Null hypothesis

Women agricultural labourers are not bonded labourers and they are covered by the rules and regulations framed by the government.

Alternate hypothesis

Women agricultural labourers are bonded labourers and they are not covered by the rules and regulations framed by the government.

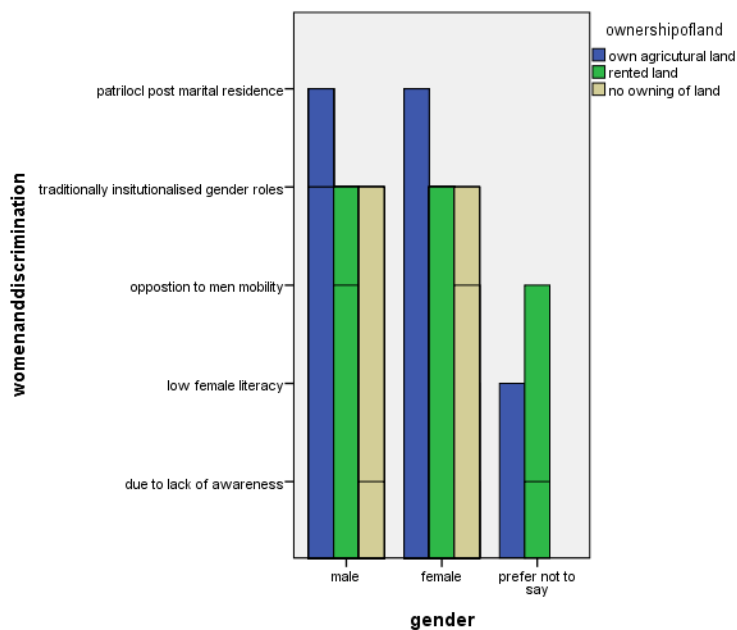
**GRAPH - 1**



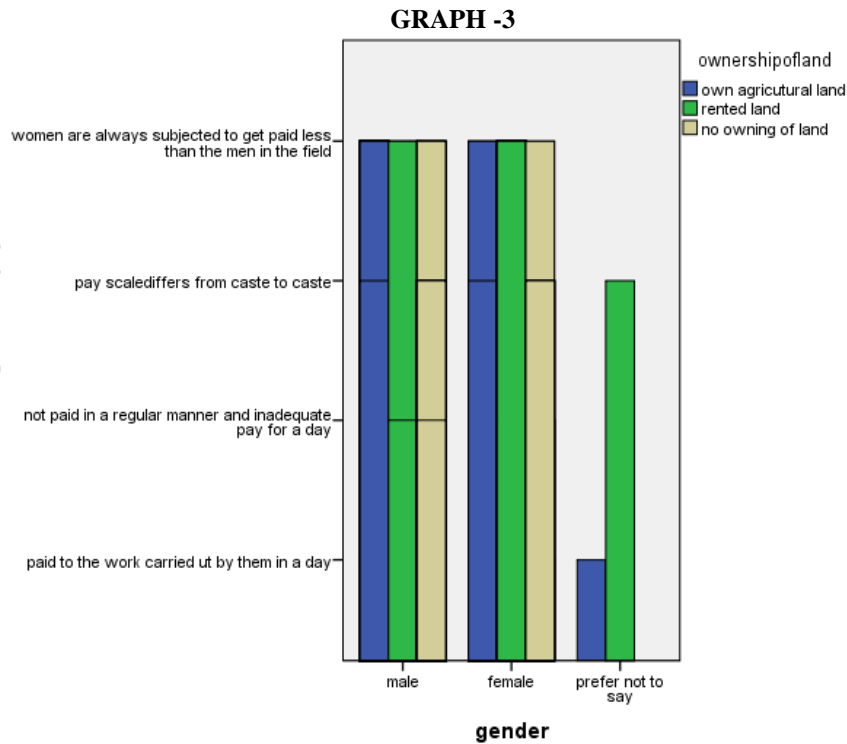
**LEGEND**

The above table 1 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on a random sampling .This response was collected from the public based on their occupation .

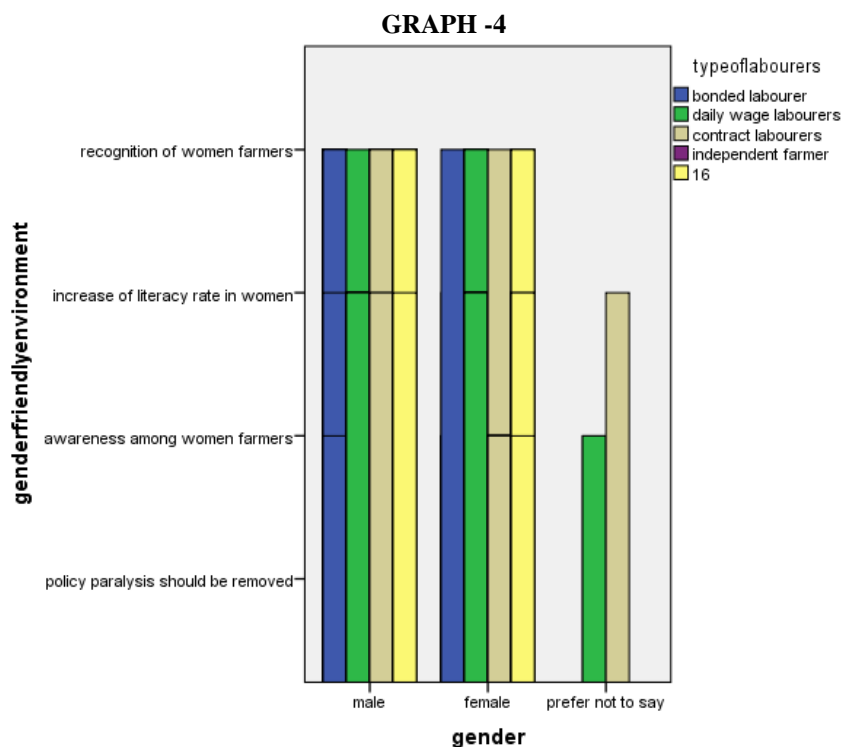
**Graph- 2**



The above table 2 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on women role in agriculture by way of random sampling. This response was collected from the public based on their gender.

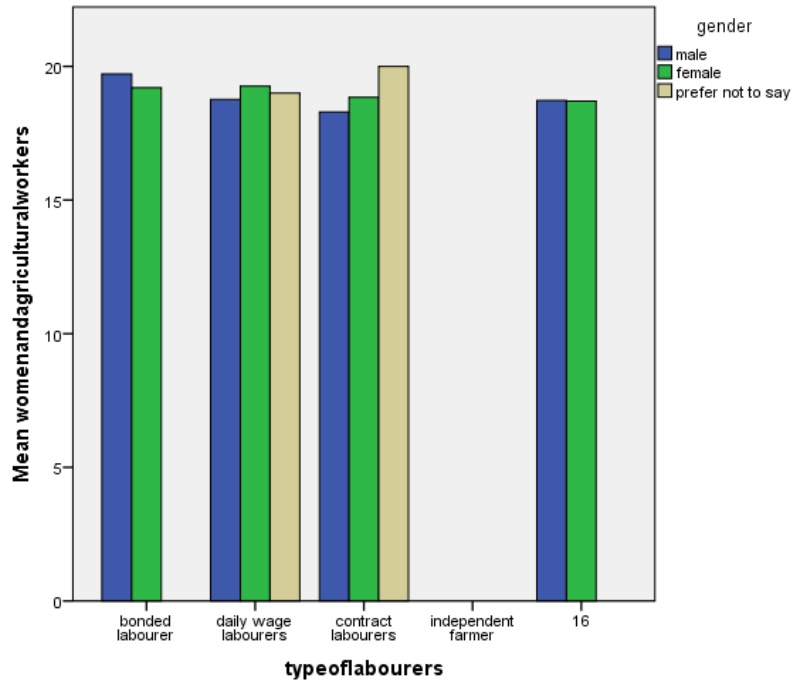


The above table 3 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on women role in agriculture by way of random sampling. This response was collected from the public based on their gender.



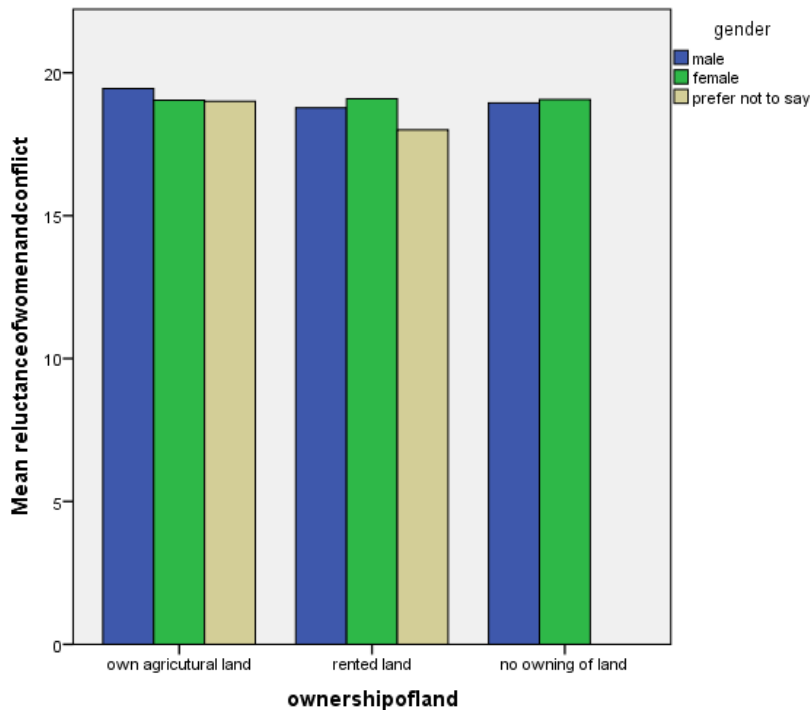
The above table 4 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on women role in agriculture by way of random sampling. This response was collected from the public based on their gender.

**GRAPH -5**



The above table 5 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on women role in agriculture by way of random sampling. This response was collected from the public based on their gender.

**GRAPH -6**



The above table 6 has been calculated by the responses collected from 200 respondents. The question imposed towards the general public on women role in agriculture by way of random sampling. This response was collected from the public based on their gender.

#### **IV. Result :**

The analysis clearly depicts that the women in the agricultural sector are being discriminated against without any basic rights. This is due to the lack of education in the agriculture sector.

The range of survey varies according to each families scenario and their customs followed in a particular community.

#### **V. Discussion :**

- It has been observed that the human factor is of supreme importance in any pattern of economic development. More so are the agricultural labourers of India, the country's largest unorganized section comprising the poorest workers, toiling on the sunny fields of India.
- Agricultural labourers who are mostly landless and form a significant section of rural society mainly depend on wage employment in agriculture. Majority of them belong to the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are among the worst exploited section of the society. Their income has always been meagre, resulting in poor living and heavy indebtedness.
- It has been observed from the foregoing description that the agricultural labourers are socially and economically poorest section of the society. Agricultural labourer households constitute the historically deprived social groups, displaced handicraftsmen and dispossessed peasantry. They are the poorest of the poor in rural India.

#### **VI. Conclusion :-**

Women agricultural workers are basically unskilled; they may not be skilled even in the art of cultivation. Consequently, their supply is perfectly elastic and therefore whatever they earn is in the nature of transfer earnings. The employer often uses this position to his personal gain by contracting to less than what the market forces would have warranted otherwise. Since Independence, the central as well as the state governments have taken some measures to improve the economic condition of agricultural labourer. They include the passing of legislation to fix minimum wages for agricultural labour, the removal of disabilities the ceilings on land holding and the redistribution of surplus land among the landless labourers etc. The irrigated land can provide more man days of work as well as suitable works to agricultural labourer and agricultural development. Most of the people living in the rural areas most of them are illiterates and unskilled labourers. So, they can not go freely into non-agricultural sector like industry, trade and commerce service sector etc. Therefore, irrigated land not only provides more employment to agricultural labourer, but also it provides broad base to their livelihood. The commercial crops that are grown in irrigated areas usually require more labourers because these crops take more water and require more care. Since Irrigated land leads to double and multiple cropping it will provide working opportunities throughout a year for the agricultural labourer.

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