

The Changing Trends Of Agricultural Labourers In India – An Analytical Study

Mr. A. Sreenivas

Research Scholar, Department of Applied Economics, Telangana University

Dr.A.Punnaiah

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Economics, Telangana University

Abstract

In India agricultural labourers constituting about 30 per cent of total workers and 14.38 per cent of total rural population. The Agricultural work force gives over 30 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**). Regrettably, in our country agricultural labourers are of the weakest section socially and economically, their fundamental problems are insufficient income, meager productivity, inadequate wages, and infrequent work. Since the 1951 there has been a structural shift in the occupational choice among workers, particularly agricultural workers, with changes in their occupational choices ranging from cultivators to agricultural labours. In this paper an attempt is made to analysis the number agricultural labourer in India and comparison of agricultural labour with cultivators, total population and rural work force in terms of Number and Annual growth rates.

Keywords: Cultivators, agricultural labourers, Total Workers Rural Population, Total Population.

Introduction

Agricultural labour includes landless rural labour, small and marginal farmers and village functionaries; they serve as farm labourers of cultivation who engage them for various operations like ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, watching and carrying. Census 1981, defined the term agricultural labour as a person who worked in another persons' land for wages in cash, kind, and share of crop. Such a person, has no risk in

cultivation, but merely, worked in another person's land for wages. Census 2001, a person who works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share is regarded as an agricultural, labour. She or he has no risk in the cultivation, but merely works on another persons' land for wages. An agricultural labour has no right of lease or contract on land on which she/he works. Agricultural labourers had no right of lease or contract on land on which he worked, Availability of Employment in a region depends upon various s factors like rainfall, Irrigation facilities, types of crops grown extent of mechanization, modernization, location of the area, Supply of labour, mobility of the labour.

Agricultural Labourers in India:

In India agricultural labourers constituting about 30 per cent of total workers and 14.38 per cent of total rural population, the Agricultural work force gives over 30 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Regrettably, in our country agricultural labourers are of the weakest section socially and economically, their fundamental problems are insufficient income, meager productivity, inadequate wages, and infrequent work. Since the 1951 there has been a structural shift in the occupational choice among workers, particularly agricultural workers, with changes in their occupational choices ranging from cultivators to agricultural labours.

Table-1: Number of Agricultural Labourers in India and Annual Growth Rates

| Year | Agricultural Labourer (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates |
|------|--|---------------------|
| 1951 | 27.3 | NA |
| 1961 | 31.5 | 15.38 |
| 1971 | 47.5 | 50.79 |
| 1981 | 55.5 | 16.84 |
| 1991 | 74.6 | 34.41 |
| 2001 | 106.8 | 43.16 |
| 2011 | 144.3 | 35.11 |

Source: Registrar General of India.

The table 1 shows that the number of people working as an Agricultural Labourer in India during the period 1951 to 2011, the total number of people working as an Agricultural Labourer in all over India was 27.3 Millions in the year 1951. Then in following decades the number of people working as an Agricultural Labourer in India is increased decade to decade. It is concluded by observing the annual growth rates from the above table that there is enormous raise in the Agricultural labour India the reason behind this raise may be the elevated net growth rate of the population of India, Growth of indebtedness due to low income leading to transfer of land from the small owners to the creditors,

resulting in the former into becoming agricultural labourers, Decline of domestic industries and handicrafts.

Table 2: Cultivators Vs Agricultural Labourers

| Year | Cultivators (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates | Agricultural Labourer (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1951 | 69.9 | NA | 27.3 | NA |
| 1961 | 99.6 | 42.49 | 31.5 | 15.38 |
| 1971 | 78.2 | -21.5 | 47.5 | 50.79 |
| 1981 | 92.5 | 18.29 | 55.5 | 16.84 |
| 1991 | 110.7 | 19.68 | 74.6 | 34.41 |
| 2001 | 127.3 | 15 | 106.8 | 43.16 |
| 2011 | 118.8 | -6.68 | 144.3 | 35.11 |

Source: Registrar General of India.

The table 2 reveals data pertaining to agricultural labourers and cultivators in India from 1951 to 2011. The number of cultivators has dipped by over 8.5 million in the last decade. It also invalidates reviewers who have been worried about scarcity in agricultural labour. The data proves more than 37.5 million people have migrated from cultivators to farm labour in the last decade. According to table 2 the number of cultivators in India in 1951 were 69.9 million where as the agricultural labourers were 27.3 million. Then in following decades the number of cultivators declined decade to decade but the number of people working as an Agricultural Labourer in India is increased decade to decade. There are many reasons for this development in agricultural labourer and decline in cultivators such as decreasing average size of operational holdings, farming becoming infeasible, increasing agricultural wages, rampant selling of agricultural.

Table 3: Total Workers Vs Agricultural Labourers

| Year | Total Workers (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates | Agricultural Labourer (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates | % of Agricultural labourer in Total Works |
|------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| 1951 | 139.5 | NA | 27.3 | NA | 19.56 |
| 1961 | 188.7 | 35.27 | 31.5 | 15.38 | 16.69 |
| 1971 | 180.4 | -4.4 | 47.5 | 50.79 | 26.33 |
| 1981 | 244.6 | 35.59 | 55.5 | 16.84 | 22.69 |
| 1991 | 314.1 | 28.41 | 74.6 | 34.41 | 23.75 |
| 2001 | 402.2 | 28.05 | 106.8 | 43.16 | 26.55 |
| 2011 | 481.9 | 19.82 | 144.3 | 35.11 | 29.94 |

Source: Registrar General of India.

The table 3 shows that only 19.56 per cent of total workers in India are agricultural labourers. The trends for total workers and agricultural labourer in table 3 reveals that in the year 1951 Total Workers in Millions were 139.5 and it moved up to 481.9 million in the year 2011.

similarly The agricultural labourers in the year 1951 were 27.3 Millions and it is move up to 144.3 Millions in the year 2011. By observing the growth annual growth rates of Total works every decade there were escalating movement except in the year 1971. The Annual growth rates of Agricultural labourers are in greater than ever decade to decade.

Table 4: Total Population Vs Agricultural Labourers

| Year | Total Population (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates | Agricultural Labourer (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1951 | 361.1 | NA | 27.3 | NA |
| 1961 | 439.2 | 21.63 | 31.5 | 15.38 |
| 1971 | 548.2 | 24.82 | 47.5 | 50.79 |
| 1981 | 683.3 | 24.64 | 55.5 | 16.84 |
| 1991 | 864.4 | 26.5 | 74.6 | 34.41 |
| 2001 | 1028.7 | 19.01 | 106.8 | 43.16 |
| 2011 | 1210.9 | 17.71 | 144.3 | 35.11 |

Source: Registrar General of India.

The table 4 shows that there was a raising trend in the Total Population of India and the Number of Agricultural Labourer in India, by observing the table 4 it is concluded that there is a positive trends in Total Population and Number of Agricultural labourer in India. In the year 1951 The Total population of India is 361.1 Millions and it was augmented to 1210.9 Millions in the year 2011.

Table 5: Rural Population Vs Agricultural Labourers

| Year | Rural Population (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates | Agricultural Labourer (in Millions) | Annual Growth Rates |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1951 | 298.6 | NA | 27.3 | NA |
| 1961 | 360.3 | 20.66 | 31.5 | 15.38 |
| 1971 | 439.0 | 21.84 | 47.5 | 50.79 |
| 1981 | 526.6 | 19.95 | 55.5 | 16.84 |
| 1991 | 630.6 | 19.75 | 74.6 | 34.41 |
| 2001 | 742.6 | 17.76 | 106.8 | 43.16 |
| 2011 | 833.7 | 12.27 | 144.3 | 35.11 |

Source: Registrar General of India

The table 5 shows that there was a bump up movement in the Rural Population of India and the Number of Agricultural Labourer in India, by observing the table 5 it is concluded that there is a activist tendency in Rural Population and Number of Agricultural labourer in India. In the year 1951 The Rural population of India is 298.6.1 Millions and it was amplified to

833.7 Millions in the year 2011 concurrently The Agricultural labourers are in increased from decade to decade.

Conclusion

In India agricultural workers constitute the major segment of the total work force they are at the heart of the food production system. Yet these work force are neglected by the policy and decision-makers in governments, agricultural and rural development agencies, intergovernmental organizations, science and research institutions, agricultural banks and credit institutions as well as in many civil society organizations and groups due to this in our country agricultural labourers are of the weakest section socially and economically, their fundamental problems are insufficient income, meager productivity, inadequate wages, and infrequent work although day to day the agricultural labourers increasing rapidly due to population pressure, uneven distribution of landholdings and other reasons.

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