ABSTRACT

Agriculture in India is the vertical backbone of the country and is regarded as the largest sector of the country’s economic activity. It is the major sector of the State economy, in which the majority of people earn their livelihood. Though the share of agriculture in the aggregate economy has declined rapidly during the planned development of the country, it assumes a pivotal role in the rural economy. The contributory share of agriculture in GDP has declined from 55.4 per cent in 1950-51 to 18.5 per cent in 2006-07 and again declined to 16.9 per cent in the year 2013. Agriculture at present provides livelihood to 60 percent of the total population. The sector provides employment to 58.4 percent of country’s workforce and is the single largest private enterprise.

Agricultural farm labourer’s issues occupy a prominent place in India’s political economy because agriculture employs a large section of the rural population providing direct employment to almost two-third of the workforce.

As such in Tamil Nadu economy is agriculture based and a major proportion of agricultural labourer’s in the labour force work are engaged in agriculture and traditional industries like cashew, coir and handloom. According to the 2011 year census, there were about 23,72,446 agricultural labourer’s in Tamil Nadu State which is 4.08 per cent of India as 5,81,62,962 agricultural labourer’s, of which 10,34,184 were male labourer’s and 13,38,262 were female labourer’s in the state of Tamil Nadu.
Agricultural labourer’s, mostly landless constitute the poorest segment of the Indian agricultural population. They are basically unskilled and unorganized and work in farms of prosperous big farmers as casual workers on wages for a larger part of the year. The phenomenon of under employment, under development and surplus population are simultaneously manifested in the daily life of agricultural labourer’s.

Owing to the interest on the agriculture labour position, an attempt has been made to study on socio economic status of the agriculture labour with reference to Tamil Nadu in India. The following objectives are framed for the purpose of present study.

i. To study the socio economic status of agricultural labourer’s in Tamil Nadu.

ii. To identify the reasons for quitting or migrating from the agriculture work among the agricultural labourer’s in the study area.

iii. To examine the satisfaction level of the agricultural labourer’s towards various schemes offered by the Central / State Government in the study area.

iv. To evaluate the satisfaction level of the agricultural labourer’s towards services offered by the agricultural agencies in the study area.

v. To identify the problems faced by the agricultural labourer’s in the study area.
vi. To suggest better ways and means to improve the socio-economic status of the agricultural labourer’s in the study area.

The present study covers 300 agricultural labourer’s from Tamil Nadu by using stratified random sampling method. The reliability of this research is 0.923 and 0.916 for the level of satisfaction towards various schemes offered by Central / State Government schemes and the level of satisfaction towards services offered by various agricultural agencies respectively. The opinion of the agricultural labourer’s was collected through an interview schedule. Descriptive research has been used in this research for finding the socio-economic status of the agricultural labourer’s. Various suitable statistical tools were used like Percentages, Mean, Ranges, Standard Deviation, Cross tabulation, Chi-Square test, ANOVA, Correlation analysis, Multiple Regression analysis, Henry Garrett Ranking Technique, Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling.

The research has been presented in five chapters viz., 1) Introduction and Design of the Study, 2) Review of Literature, 3) An Overview of Farm labourer’s in Tamil Nadu, 4) Data Analysis and Interpretation and 5) Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion.

It is found from the analysis that maximum level of satisfaction towards central/state government schemes perceived by female respondents, 36-50 years aged respondents, graduate respondents, unmarried respondents, upto 4 members family size respondents, the respondents whose family has experienced upto 5 years in agricultural work, the respondents whose main occupation is agriculture work, the respondents who have upto 5 years
experience in agriculture work, the respondents worked above 21 days in agriculture in a month, the respondents earned up to 0.75 lakhs in a year, the respondents who have both own and lease land, the respondents who have above 2 acres, the respondents who have red soil land, the respondents who have bore-well irrigation, the respondents who live common place and the respondents who have a single migration from their native place.

Majority of the agricultural labourer’s quitting / migrating from the agriculture works for the reasons as ‘unemployment’ and ‘lengthy working hours’ and majority of the respondents are keeping agricultural labourer’s in agriculture for ‘Government can fix the fair wages to fulfill food and accommodation’ and ‘providing insurance scheme’.

The factor analysis found from the 28 factors related to agricultural labourers’ opinion towards migrating or quitting agricultural work comprises into six major factors representing health and occupational hazards, lack of awareness, lack of security, poverty, lack of support and social backwardness and opined that among the six factors, lack of support is the major reason for migrating or quitting agricultural work.

The empirical findings of this study are very important for the respected authorities like Government and agriculture land owners in their policy formulations. The study is equally important to the agricultural labourer’s in their rational judgment about the degree of agricultural risky work and in deciding their working or migrating strategy.