CHAPTER-IV

ORGANISATION OF MANPOWERS
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Defining a worker is less difficult than distinguishing him from other workers, particularly in peasant communities. It is not easy to distinguish one from the other among old, adult, children male and female in terms of their contribution to the production system. The contributions of children as helping hands and the household chores by females, often, go unnoticed. We have described all participants in the production system as workers.

A worker is one who spends some time in work that contributes directly or indirectly to the production process in which the household is engaged. This operational definition includes all those children and old persons whose contribution is of considerable significance, particularly, during labour shortages. On the other hand, women and girls engaged solely in cooking, fetching water, cleaning utensils (household chores), as baby sitters, etc., or those who do not participate in any of the processes of the production system of the household, have been excluded from the work force.

The total Kissan population in the sample area has been divided into four broad age-groups to analyse the
working situations of different groups (Diagram 4).
All those who are above 60 years and below 5 years of age are categorised as 'non-workers' or dependants and constitute about 18% of the total population. Children between 6 to 15 years of age constitute around 26% of the total population, and 57.44% of them are 'workers' or 'intermittent workers' or 'earning dependants'.
22.38% of the workers are the above children (Table 34).
The army of the community belong to the age-group of 16 to 60 years who constitute the major bulk of the working force (i.e. 77.62%) (Table 34). Thus, the workers can be divided into two groups, viz., children and adults.

THE CHILDREN

13 out of 104 Kişān households in the village have no children. 24 households have 86 children (42 boys and 44 girls) below the age of 5 years contributing around 16% to the Kişān population of the village (Table 34). 66 households have 141 children (75 boys and 66 girls) between 6 and 15 years of age and constitute 26.4% of the Kişān population in the village. Among them, children of only seven households do not participate in any work and have been classified as the non-workers.

These children are initiated into work as a part of the traditional socialization process and subsequently enter into the labour market under economic pressure. Poverty (measured here by the size of land holding) is the
principal cause in pushing children to the labour market. They are employed in different agricultural operations both in and outside the family farm on wage as well as on exchange (Table 35 and 36).

The children are found in eight types of work (Table 35).

**BABY SITTING**

Children between 6 to 15 years of age play an important role in baby sitting of their young siblings, in age group 2 to 5 years (children below one year) are left to the care of old men and women in the family.

41 boys and 68 girls were found to be engaged in it. Most of them belong to 8 to 10 years of age (Table 35).

**HOUSEHOLD WORK**

Cooking, sweeping, fetching water, cleaning utensils, looking after domestic animals and birds, etc., constitute household chores. Except the latter two items, the others are feminine jobs. 19 out of 78 boys in the average age group of 11 years are engaged in them (Table 35).

**ANIMAL CARE**

The elderly boys, above the age of 11, are normally engaged in looking after the domestic animals like, cows, bullocks, buffaloes and goats. 3 or 4 boys
in a group take the animals into the forest for grazing. The advantage of such group-grazing is to have better control over animals and less chance of missing in the forest. Grown-up girls are not allowed to go far away from the house, except with the elderly females.

When they are engaged in cattle grazing it is always in the company of elderly females.

A boy is also engaged to look after the animals of kinsmen and neighbours on annual payment and is paid according to the number of animals he is expected to take care of.

FOREST COLLECTION

Family is the unit for any forest collection which may also include its guti.

Forest collection, as such, is a bi-sexual activity (girls out numbers the boys, Table 35). Children accompany their parents to the nearby forest areas. Sometimes women accompanied by children do the job.

PLOUGHING

Boys from age of 7 and 8 years are seen engaged in tilling (Table 35). In fact boys are initiated into the job at this age through temporary controlling of the plough when the adult tiller is taking his morning meal or engaged in some other work for a while.
The average age of boys in this job is around 13 (Table 35). Normally, above 15 years of age, are preferred, because ploughing is physically an exerting job.

WEEDING AND TRANSPLANTATION

Girls below 10 years are initiated into this job in the family farm along with their mothers. After gaining some expertise, they accompany their mothers to work on wage or go to help some one in the village. The girl-child wage rate is half that of an adult female.

Occasionally, some boys are also engaged in activities associated with weeding and transplantation as discussed in Section II of Chapter III.

HARVESTING

Harvesting consists of crop-cutting and threshing.

Crop-cutting is bi-sexual and hence, is labour intensive. The proportion of children to the total workers in it is highest than the other agricultural activities. Girls predominate in it (Table 35).

Threshing, on the other hand, is masculine and the boys constitute around 6% of the total workers engaged in it (Table 36). 28 boys are found in this job. Among those, 25% have worked on exchange and the rest have worked for the family. Normally, boys are engaged to move behind the animals to keep them mobile. There is no case of hired labour for threshing.
Children are found employed in the family farm, and on wage. Children who work in their family farms do so along with their parents. Such children constitute 64.43% among the child workers (Table 36). They are drawn from 19 families (Table 37).

Children working on wage constitute 11.74% of the total child workers (Table 36). They came from 25 families (Table 37). 23.82% child-workers are deputed by their families to help their neighbours occasionally (Table 36).

Children are engaged in wage, both casual and contractual. The wage of a casual child worker is normally half that of an adult. Children are less preferred in jobs requiring physical exertion. In case of contract labour children are preferred for gharkhia. Such workers are made annual payment (bartan). The payment includes 3 pieces of cloth in a year. The annual payment of child labourers varies from ₹.200/- to ₹.400/-. The gharkhia should reside in the employers house. But those who are employed in the native village, normally, do not reside in the employer's house. On the otherhand, those who are employed outside the village have no alternative than to reside in master's house. 10 Kisan boys from 7 households are employed as resident labour.

There are 15 families whose children work under this situation (Table 37). Children belonging to 83.81% families of small, marginal and middle farmers sell their labour when their help is not needed in their own farms (Table 37).
THE ADULT

The adults in the age group of 16 to 60 constitute 55.43% of the total Kisan population in the village. About 95% among them are workers contributing 77.62% to the work force (Table 34). This working population has 53.74% (151) males and 46.26% (130) females (Table 34).

Sexual division of labour is customary and is universal. Among the Kisans certain jobs such as, ploughing, using carrying-rod are taboo for the female. In jobs like threshing female participation is not normally seen, though it is not a taboo. The Kisan males are expected to refrain themselves from weeding, uprooting of seedlings, transplantation. The participation of males the females in that of masculine jobs and referred to as 'māiguli' and 'chv'. However, some other jobs, viz., or reclamation, etc., are undertaken.

THE FEMALE

The females constitute 44.57% of the total Kisan population out of which 26.05% are in the age group of 16 to 60 years. There are 100 families constitute 35.53% among the adult workers (Table 3).
Those women who can work get engaged for about 240 days in a year in a number of activities (Appendix VIII) out of which 40 days are spent in forest collections and the rest in family agriculture. They are engaged for almost an entire month during transplantation and weeding, i.e. during the months of Srāvaṇa and Bhādrava (mid July to mid September). During Āświna, Kārtika, Mārgasira and Pauṣa (from mid September till mid January) they remain busy for about 20 days a month (Appendix VIII), in harvesting and gardening simultaneously, normally in their family farms.

When a female is not engaged in agriculture she either is busy in the household chores or away from home for grazing the family cattle, or forest collection or shopping. The responsibility of child care, cooking food, fetching water, cleaning the utensils, sweeping the home, etc., are feminine jobs. The Kīṣāṇ women have also to look after the domestic animals and birds. These duties are performed often with the help of old women and elder children (between 6 to 15 years of age). During the non-agricultural seasons (from March to April), the animals are let free to move for grazing. The females have to let them out in the morning and collect them in the evening. The stall-fed animals, particularly, the bullocks, are fed at home by the females. The goatlings and the little chicks are taken care of by the housewives. During the peak agricultural season some women go for grazing the bullocks in the afternoon when the males are engaged in agriculture.
Forest collections, except kendu leaves, cannot be taken seriously as a means of livelihood. The Kisans spend around 40 days in a year for forest collection (Appendix VIII) and receive around 6% of their average annual income (Table 5), in addition to the consumable items of edible leaves and roots.

Though males participate in forest collections, females dominate the scene. Certain collections, such as, picking of kendu leaves, drying and storing of sáal seeds, mahua flower, dhātki flower and processing of mākar kandā, etc., are purely feminine jobs.

Bullocks and buffaloes are taken care of by males and only occasionally by females or children. Whereas goats are cared by the old and the children, and only occasionally by the adult females. Three adult females were found to be regularly employed in goat-grazing.

The senior most woman in the family deals with sale and purchase. She attends weekly markets of the village as well as the villages like, Kuntra, Kusumi and Kuchinda. She sells ketable surplus from the farm and the forest as lay to day consumer goods. Transaction in f s though small, is the monopoly of th r contribution of females in forest coll dom to visit the markets.

Non-agricultural wage earning in Turei-Niktimal is rare. Occasionally, however, it is available in construction or repair of roads, ponds and houses.
It is observed that women participate in all the agricultural operations except tilling and threshing. Transplantation as such and weeding, the two important agricultural operations are female enclaves (Table 38). As soon as transplantation is over, weeding starts. They engage around 78.35% of the total female workers (Table 39) during three months, i.e., from July to September. Crop-cutting, too, is dominated by the females and it is third in order in employing female workers. Women work with men in land reclamation, as earth carriers (Table 39).

Female labour in exchange and wage earning together constitute 61.29%, and 63.63% and 57.27% in their respective categories (Table 40). However, highest number (28.64%) of females have worked in their family farms, only. 8.26% have been exchanged and 4.33% have been recruited on wage (Table 41).

Females on wage are always casual. There is no incidence of any woman working as guti, though sometimes a female is employed on annual contract to clean the cowshed. Both the work and the worker are referred as khat pakā. Only one such case is reported from the village. The incumbent spends around half an hour for this in the morning at her convenience. Though, the contract is for a year, payment is made in each month. It is around 20 kgs. of paddy a month and a piece of cloth in a year.
The major sources of exchanged female labour are the various social groups of the community, such as, the lineage, the clan, the bāḍ and the pāṇṭhi. Reciprocity is more frequent among the bāḍs and the pāṇṭhis. 28% and around 20% out of 63.63% of women have been employed within the bāḍ and the pāṇṭhi respectively through this method (Table 40). Lineage ranks third with 10.60% in exchanging female labour. Clan, as a social group has supplied only around 2% whereas, 3% have been recruited on exchange from the other communities (Table 40). In case of hiring labour, too, (Table 40) the bāḍ and the pāṇṭhi are the two main sources. But a sizable number of women (15.64%) have been recruited on wage from non-Kiṣān communities. It is second largest source of hired female labour followed by pāṇṭhi (14.18%). Hiring from the lineage and the clan is meagre (2.36% and 3.27% respectively Table 40).

THE MALE

The males constitute 53.43% of the total Kiṣān population of the village. 151, out of 157 adult males, are workers in the age group of 16 to 60 and constitute 41.71% of the total workers (Table 34).

These adult males seem to be working round the year for 285 days. Āśhaḍha to Kārtika are the busiest months during which they work everyday. The working days during Mārgasira-Pauṣa and Baiṣṭākṣhya-Jyeṣṭha are around 20 days a month. The latter two are the preparatory and
the former two are the closing months of agricultural operations. Faguna and Chaitra are the leisure months during which working days average around 10 days a month (Appendix VIII).

Agriculture, as a whole, is dominated by males except weeding and transplantation (Table 39). Ploughing a round-the-year activity, involves the highest number (41.44%) whereas threshing, a short time activity, involves the lowest (6.08%) number of males (Table 39).

50.83% of the male workers are self employed; 4.71% circulate in mutual exchange and only 3.23% sell their labour (Table 41). The females outnumber the males in exchange and hired categories, but the situation is reverse in case of family category. This disparity is due to the nature of and the time-boundness of the programmes in agricultural operations.

Hired labour can be casual (bhutier) or on contract (guti). The term 'bhutier' is derived from bhuti meaning daily wage. Bhutier is he who is paid on daily wage basis. It refers to short-term recruitments on daily wage. Their employment ranges from 1 day to a week or occasionally a month. A few Kišāns, namely; Bipin Majhi, Dasru Bar, Chernga Majhi, work as casual labourers only.

Some casual labourers are permanently attached to certain employers, such that the employers, whenever they need a casual labour, engage the specified ones only;
and on the other hand, the labourers always prefer the specified employers. This mutual attachment help the poor labourer to raise small loans, receive wages in advance, borrow the cart, bullock, bicycle, etc., from the employer. In turn they occasionally do a small piece of domestic work for which no remuneration, except a free meal, is received. Such labourers are referred to as barasmundi (throughout year).

The daily wage for an adult male is Rs.6/- or 5 tambi (5 kgs.) of paddy and for a female it is Rs.5/- or 4 tambi (4 kgs.) of paddy. The children get half of the adult wage. The barasmundi often gets a piece of cloth as an annual gift.

A contract labourer, on the other hand, is a worker attached to an employer on an annual contract. Usually, the contract starts from the first day of Māgha and ends on the last day of Pauṣa or on Pauṣa Purṇimā. The end date is strictly followed. The wage is calculated from the date of entry at the annual rate of payment. Therefore delay in entering the contract reduces the total wage a guti gets at the prevailing rate.

The mode of payment is of two types: monthly (māsli) and buṇā (a piece of paddy land of 20 to 30 decimal) or bartan. Monthly payment is referred as māsli. It is paid on two instalments i.e. fortnightly, and calculated @ 2 tambi (or around 2 kgs.) a day. The fortnightly instalment is termed as pari.
Māsli of a labourer is around 60 kgs. @ 2 kgs. per day subject to deduction for the days of absence.

Bartan refers to the annual payment. It is negotiable, primary consideration being the physical capability of the employee. It ranges between 12 to 29 khandis (approximately 240 to 358 kgs.). The children, employed as guti, however, get less than even the lower limit.

Seven out of 23 gutis were given a piece of cultivable land in lieu of bartan. This practice is called buṇā. The area of the land varies from 20 to 30 decimals where 20 to 30 kgs. of paddy can be sown. The land is normally of māl or bernā type. It is cultivated by the labourer taking a few days off from his routine for which no deduction is made. Usually the plough and the bullocks of the master is used. The produce of the buṇā land is taken by the labourer in lieu of his wages.

Labourers prefer bartan, whereas, masters prefer buṇā. The latter is subject to the vagaries of nature and the chances of crop failure are very high. Gutis who have cultivable land of their own and have members in the family to look after cultivation, prefer it. Bartan is assured payment. In case of drought and general crop failure, however, the workers do get some exgratia payment. The ghar khiā gutis are paid bartan only.
Another type of guti system called as sāhāji guti has recently emerged in this locality. Under this system two persons, jointly and simultaneously, enter into the contract with an employer with the usual terms and conditions. They work alternately for a week or fortnight and share the wages accordingly.

There are two cases of sāhāji guti in the village continuing since last year (Case 9 and 10). The teams are those of Kartika and Lalit; and Katru and his brother Dasru. The first two work under Basanta Patel and the second under Bishnu Patel.

In addition to māsli and bartan the employee is given a piece of cloth of about three meters long annually. Two employees, however, were given cash @ Rs.10/- in lieu of the cloth. Besides, one khandi of paddy is also given annually in lieu of breakfast, locally known as thirpiā.

There are 23 Kiṣāns working as guti in the village for 12 affluent non-Kiṣān and 3 Kiṣān households. None of them are gharkhiā. These gutis perform all agricultural and some non-agricultural works as required by the employers.

For the Kiṣāns the sources of adult male labour are their own lineages, bāds, pāṇṭhis and the other neighbouring communities. Pāṇṭhi, a masculine voluntary
working group, is the principal source. Bād ranks second followed by other communities and the lineages. Labour on exchange is confined to the members of the community. The sources of hiring are located in other communities (Table 42). We find that less male labour (36.37%) compared to the females (63.63%) is exchanged. In case of hiring females are dominant (57.27% Table 42) and within the family the male work force out number the females (Table 41).