PROFILE OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN ANDHRA PRADESH – REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Synopsis Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Award of Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Economics

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture the heart of Indian economy provides employment to nearly 52 per cent of the population. But it contributes only 16 per cent to India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agricultural growth is given top priority by Indian Government as around 70 per cent of the population lives in rural India. Whose occupation is agriculture and allied activities.

Agriculture plays an important role in economic development in providing food to the nation, enlarging exports, transferring manpower to non-agricultural sectors. It aides capital formation and secures markets for industrialisation.

Indian agriculture is highly gender sensitive as 75.38 per cent women work force are engaged in agriculture, with 94 per cent women in crop cultivation.

Women form backbone of agricultural workforce and vital path of Indian Economy. The key role of women in agricultural development and their contribution in the field of agriculture, food security, horticulture, dairy, nutrition, sericulture, fisheries, and other allied sector is recognised all over the world. Women supply labour to produce physical output with quality and efficiency.

Although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plough fields and harvest crops while working on farms; women weave and make handicrafts
while working in household industries; women cook food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores such as cooking, fetching water and looking after children.

Agriculture is the invention of women. They domesticated animals, took part in ploughing the land. They are active participants as labourers in cutting, thrushing and storing grain thus occupying special place in agricultural activities. But, they are not adequately remunerated. This gives rise to many problems for women.

It is proved that there is discrimination on all counts. Women in rural areas are paid less than what men are paid for the same work. In fact, in some occupations women work for more number of hours and receive lower remuneration. They eat less, work more, suffer severely to create comforts for their family members. The problem lies in economics of women labour, psychology of women as mothers and sociology of women employment and women empowerment.

To address the problems of women agricultural labourer International National initiatives are taken up. The discrimination women labourers suffer can be eliminated by welfare measures and social security measures, which provide justice and solace to the deprived labour class.

Agriculture is not an organised industry in India. There is abundance of unorganised man power which includes women and children to search field work. Despite these facts nearly 70 per cent of
Indian population depends upon agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture contributes 25 to 30 per cent to the gross national product in India. The science of agricultural economics studies allocation, distribution and utilisation of the resources used by and commodities produced by farming. Agriculture contributes for the export lead growth of an economy.

The employment trends of rural agricultural labourers reveals that women labourers were mostly in casual agricultural work like weeding, transplanting and harvesting. Modernisation of agriculture displaced women more than men from their traditional jobs. This displacement turned women into agricultural labourers. It has been pointed by D.R. Gadgil that the maximum number of working days in the year for male workers is about 186 days in lands with assured water supply and only 112 days in the year in the dry zone. The maximum number of working days for women is 180 days in the wet zone and 85 days in the dry zone. Despite these developments agriculture still holds its importance in Indian economy by providing employment opportunities for labourers raw materials for industrialists and livelihood for many who in one way or other is dependent on agriculture.

Agriculture has been rightly named as the mother of all industries and the maintainer of human lives standing at the basis of all sciences and arts. It is indeed, at the head of civilisation and progress. Agriculture can sustain without industry and it aids birth of industry, so agriculture is bedrock of economies like India.
HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL WOMEN LABOUR

Women have played and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support systems, such as land, water, flora and fauna. They have protected the health of the soil through organic recycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of varietal diversity and genetic resistance. Their fore, without the total intellectual and physical participation, it will not be possible to popularise alternative systems of land management to shifting cultivation, arrest gene and soil erosion, and promote the care of the soil and the health of economic plants and farm animals.”

Saikia and Srikula Gogi (1981) have observed that in India, one-fifth of the total labour of a family comes from women. One-third of the women labour of the family is engaged in agriculture. The general trend is that both educated men and women become averse to manual labour. Now-a-days in the rural societies, most of the educated women of the rich families are exempted from the agricultural labour. Besides, women of some particular castes and communities are not allowed to work in the field in spite of their deplorable economic condition.

Bina Agarwal (1986) has examined the inter linkages between gender, poverty and agricultural growth in India. It shows how women and female children of poor rural households bear a disproportionately high share of the burden of poverty. This is manifested especially in a systematic bias against females in the intra-household distribution of food and health care. However, there are significant cross regional

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differences in the extent of the bias which is much higher in the north-western states relative to the southern.

Some of the likely factors-economic, social, historical-underlying these differences are discussed here. The specific problems of female-headed households are separately considered. Also, the on-going debate on the relationship between rural poverty and agricultural growth is critically examined. In addition, a detailed quantitative analysis is undertaken of the differential effects of the new agricultural technology, and associated growth, on the employment and earnings of female and male agricultural labourers (who constitute the bulk of the rural poor).

The association between changes in these economic variables and other, such as in the incidence and pattern of dowry payments, are the implications of both these aspects for the situation of rural women in poverty in different geographic regions.

Nata Duvvury (1989)\(^4\) pointed out that India in the recent past has witnessed an upsurge in research on various aspects of women’s existence, with the early focus on the social facets of their status giving way to analyses of women’s location within the sphere of economic production, a shift that was promoted by the alarming decline in female participation.

Sharma, Brij Bala, Moorti and Kaistha (1993)\(^5\) in their article studied on male and female labour in hill agriculture and the resources

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\(^5\) Sharma, Brij Bala, Moorti and Kaistha, "Male and Female Labour Productivity", Vol.34, No.1, April-June 1993, pp. 116-120.
were under utilised in both farm and livestock enterprises and found that the productivity of male labour was higher than female labour in case of farm enterprises and reverse was true for livestock enterprises. So, efforts should made to increase the productivity of resources through their balanced and enhanced use, reallocation etc.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Women perform multi-dimensional activities such as agricultural activities which cover Sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing etc., along with domestic activities like Cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel wood gathering, household maintenance etc. They also perform allied activities which include Cattle management, fodder collection, milking etc.

Mainly rural women are engaged in agricultural activities in three different ways depending on the socio-economic status of their family and regional factors. They are work as Paid Labourers. Women cultivate their own lands. They act as managers of certain aspects of agricultural production by way of labour supervision and the participation in post harvest operations.

AREAS OF WORK IN AGRICULTURE

Women in agriculture spend time even seven to eight hours a day in the fields. In some of the agricultural activities they share the work with men. In some aspects women are not employed in any remunerative work. Women are more efficient than men in some aspects of employment. But most women lack confidence and lack of
skills as their husbands are not interested in sending their wives to venture in such new occupations.

Haque’s (1998)\(^6\) paper analyses the regional trends, patterns and determinants of wages of agricultural labourers in India. It also examines the relationship between wage rates and rural poverty in various NSS regions. Based on the analysis of available state wise, region wise and district wise data, the paper bears out that in the wake of economic liberalisation, there is a declining trend in real wages in many states. Besides, in every state, there are some districts where the wage rates are much lower than the state average wage rates and these districts include high productivity as well as low productivity areas. Improvements in real wage rate is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for enabling the agricultural labour households to cross poverty line. Also wage discrimination against women labourers exists in many places even for similar type of work being performed by men and women. Moreover, the adult-child wage ratios are very high in most parts of the country. In fact, interventions by both government and workers’ organisations would be required for effective implementation of minimum wages and employment guarantee schemes in all these areas.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF WOMEN LABOUR

Increase in women’s work in agriculture is due to out migration of male partners. Women’s work remains invisible in family enterprises. Women in rural areas are engaged in other activities (viz., livestock, fisheries and forestry) besides farming.

Women employment is largely determined by socio-cultural factors. Certain situations force women to go for employment. The individual decisions to work depend upon the family to which a particular woman belongs. As per the studies of the ILO motives behind women employment differ with marital status. Both economic and non-economic reasons are behind women employment. The motivational reasons vary with marital status. The reasons can be classified as economic and those arising from national necessity for increasing production. There are generally accepted factors which force women to enter the labour market. They can be listed as:

1. Insufficient Income of the main breadwinner which necessitates supplementary income from women labourers and others.
2. The bread winners of the family may become incapacitated due to accidents and mishaps.
3. The sudden demise of main bread winner, and
4. Women’s desire to be independent economically to secure a higher standard of living.

Financial reasons, non-financial reasons are behind women’s employment. The financial reasons are economic pressures, other economic needs ambition for higher standard of living. The non-financial reasons are personality traits, making proper use of time and traditional occupations. In India, women have been participating in agricultural activities mainly due to economic reasons as rural poverty is higher and compiling factor. There are some traditional occupations, wherein women labour is absorbed and utilised to increase production and to obtain economic gains for the family and society as a whole. In Andhra Pradesh also, women’s labour is a traditional and economically
needed activity. In the study area, as per the answers provided by the women labourers, causes for women labour are classified as those which are traditional in nature. Even today there are many families who do not believe that education is necessary for women.

WELFARE OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

The term “labour welfare” is one which leads itself to various interpretations, and it has not always the same significance in different countries.

As pointed out by the Royal Commission on Labour, the term ‘welfare’, as applied to the industrial worker “is one which must necessarily be elastic, bearing a somewhat different interpretation in one country from another, according to the different social customs, the degree of industrialisation and the educational development of the worker”\(^7\).

Hence, it is difficult to give a precise definition of the term ‘welfare work, since it is essentially flexible. According to Mr. Arthur James Todd\(^8\) aptly remarks, “A series of sharply diverse opinions exist on the motives and merits of industrial welfare work”.

CLASSIFICATION OF LABOUR WELFARE WORK

It is very difficult to gave a precise difference of welfare work undertaken by global national and local agencies. The term denotes a comprehensive meaning. It embarrasses certain categories which can be classified as statutory, voluntary and mutual; (1) Statutory, (2)

\(^8\) Quoted by the Labour Investigation Committee Report, p. 345.
Voluntary and (3) Mutual. Statutory welfare constitutes those provisions of welfare work which depend for their observance on the coercive power of the Government. In order to preserve the minimum standard of health and safety of the workers, the Government enacts certain rules which have to be abided by the employers. They may relate to certain essential working conditions, like hours of work, light, hygiene and sanitation etc. Such State interference, in providing statutory provisions for workers’ welfare is increasing day-by-day in every country. Under voluntary welfare come those activities, which are undertaken by employers for their workers.

The idea is apparently philanthropic, but if we go deep into the matter, then, we find out it is a sound investment also because the various welfare activities of the employers not only increase the efficiency of the workers but also reduce the chances of conflicts. Voluntary welfare work is also undertaken by some social organisations, like the Y.M.C.A. Mutual welfare is a corporate enterprise of the workers, who improve their lot in a suitable manner. Trade unions for this purpose undertake many provisions for the welfare of the workers.

**Objectives of Welfare Work**

The objective of welfare activities is partly humanitarian, partly economic and partly civic. It is humanitarian, as it aims at providing certain facilities and amenities of life to the workers which they themselves cannot provide. It is economic, because it improves the efficiency of the workers and keeps the workers contented and minimises the chances of conflict. It is civic, because it is a means to
promote a sense of responsibility and dignity among the workers and to make them better citizens.

**Labour Welfare Activities in India**

The welfare activities took a start during First World War of 1914-18. The Government of India and industrialists came together to promote welfare of workers to safeguard their health and well-being in the interests of the Indian economy and economy of the states as well. In 1922, an All India Welfare Conference was held in Bombay. In 1926, either result of a convention of the International labour conference as enquiry as undertaken to assess the welfare and the provision of Government assistance both at Centre and States. During wars the Indian Government launched schemes for labour welfare. Ordinances were made and labour welfare provisions are included in various acts and industrial policies.

In Andhra Pradesh also programmes of amenities to provided expanded medical facilities were made. Improvements in the living channels of workers were made in the form of construction of staff quarters; drainage schemes, water supply schemes and electrification were undertaken. Recreation facilities for staff and facilities for education and health of their children were also undertaken.

Welfare work is to be considered as a joint responsibility of the employers state and trade unions. These three stake holders are to work in harmony to raise the standards of living of workers. Governments have already to come to know the importance of welfare activities various governmental schemes for labour welfare and social security were taken as policy initiatives. Legislative measures, social
security and labour protection, legislation lead to welfare of industrial workers and workers in other areas of economic activities.

**Andhra Pradesh Government and Welfare Initiatives**

The Union Ministry of Labour as also many of the State Governments have set up welfare funds in respect of various categories and sub-categories of workers such as mine workers other than coal mine workers, beedi and cine workers, head-load workers, agricultural workers etc. For agricultural workers who constitute the largest segment of workers in the unorganised sector, a number of schemes are already being implemented by the Central Government such as National Social Assistance Programme, National Family Benefit Scheme and Employment Assurance Scheme. The Government of India has launched a new scheme viz., the Agricultural Workers’ Social Security Scheme in 2001. However these initiatives are generalised and no specific commitment has been undertaken in respect of women agricultural labourers.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Chauhan (1971)\(^9\) observed that as agriculture being an unorganised industry, labourers lack bargaining power. The availability of women and children to field work, and their lack of bargaining result in low wages, the prevalence of the system of payment in kind is a factor responsible for low wage. These systems of payments are governed by tradition and custom.

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\(^9\) Chauhan, J.B.S., *“Agricultural Labour in India*”, Yojana, May 16, 1971, p.23.
Leela Gulati (1978)\textsuperscript{10} examined working women in India and value of their labour. She found that the children of the agricultural labour too continuing the same occupation despite whatever education they had been able to receive. She also found that hunger, disease and indebtedness are an integral part of the life of the women labour. There is little prospect of anyone in the family breaking out of viscous circle.

According to Krishna Ahooja Patel (1979)\textsuperscript{11} and Ela, Bhatt (1985)\textsuperscript{12}, technological progress has the dual effect of widening women’s employment opportunities and at the same time pushing them into less skilled and less mechanized occupations.

The study of Ghodaka and Ryan (1981)\textsuperscript{13} discussed that availability of family female labour is inversely related to the farm size. Females may be forced to work outside the family farm in cases where the family owns little or no land in order to supplement the meagre income of adult male members. When farm size increases, women may withdraw from work or only confine to their own farm work.

Anuva Saikia (1985)\textsuperscript{14} studied work participation rate of females depended on cropping pattern, crop intensity and economic compulsion to engage in farm activities of Jorhat and Sibsagar districts, Assam. Females worked as casual labour on the farms during specific

farm operations. The average female work participation rate was higher on marginal farms. The female work participation rate and volume of employment were higher in paddy. Transplanting and harvesting of paddy were done exclusively by female workers per hectare use of labour decreased and per farm use of labour increased with the increased with the increase of farm size.

*Reddy (1985)* study of female labour employment in dry land areas was carried out at Nagaur. It is observed that the number of employed days declined with the increase in the size of land holdings at most of the centers. The employment opportunities increased with the increase of moisture index of region. The employment situation in the case of female workers differed from one location to another due to variation in the cropping pattern, rainfall distribution, soil type, availability of irrigational facilities and non-agricultural works available in the locality.

The employment days in crop production increased with the increases of land holding but declined with the increase of land holding in the case of hiring out female labour for wage and also miscellaneous works such as earth works and road repairs etc., at all centres. The unemployment in the case of females was very severe at all locations.

*Haque’s (1998)* paper analyses the regional trends, patterns and determinants of wages of agricultural labourers in India. It also

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examines the relationship between wage rates and rural poverty in various NSS rounds. Based on the analysis of available state wise, region wise and district wise data, the paper bears out that in the wake of economic liberalisation, there is a declining trend in real wages in many states. Besides, in every state, there are some districts where the wage rates are much lower than the state average wage rates and these districts include high productivity as well as low productivity areas. Improvements in real wage rate is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for enabling the agricultural labour households to cross poverty line. Also wage discrimination against women labourers exists in many places even for similar type of work being performed by men and women. Moreover, the adult-child wage ratios are very high in most parts of the country. In fact, interventions by both government and workers’ organisations would be required for effective implementation of minimum wages and employment guarantee schemes in all these areas.

Pallavi Chavan and Rajshree Bedamatta (2006) in their paper examine the trends in agricultural wages in India from 1964-65 to 1999-2000, using data from Agricultural wages in India and Rural labour Enquiry, after dealing with the limitations of the AWI data. The trends show that there was slowdown in the rate of growth of real daily wages of male and female agricultural labourers in more than half of the districts in the sample during the 1990’s. Earlier, there was a striking rise in the growth of daily real earnings across all states between 1983 and 1987-88. Second, there was a rising trend in the variations in real wages across districts in the 1990’s. Third, the differences between the

average wages of male and female agricultural labourers have widened over the years. Fourth, the daily wages of male agricultural labourers exceeded the minimum wage levels in most states, while those of women were below the minimum in most states.

**Ved and Menon (2011)**\(^{18}\) provide the framework for analysing convergence at the policy level. Convergence in agriculture-nutrition is a new element of policy design in India. The agriculture and food security sectors are mainly oriented toward ensuring availability and access, they deal essentially with production (supply) and livelihoods, although in discussions of food security, nutrition is mentioned.

**Viswanathan and Serajuddin (2010)**\(^{19}\) in India, rising food prices would have an adverse impact on the poor, because (a) the poor have a large share of expenditure on food, and (b) most poor households are not buyers of staple food rather than net sellers. The impact on poverty would have four damaging effects on the poor, through (a) impaired nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women and of pre-school children, (b) impaired health status of women and children; (c) an increase in child labour and withdrawal of children from school; and (d) the distress sale of productive assets.

To find out the profile of agricultural woman labourers in the state, we made the following the objectives.

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OBJECTIVES
The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To find out the nature and extent of women labour in Agriculture in the selected villages in Six Districts belonging to three geographical regions of Andhra Pradesh.

2. To assess the socio-demographic and economic conditions of working women in Agriculture in the selected areas.

3. To examine the degree of discrimination if any based on gender.

4. To evaluate the working conditions of women labourers in Agriculture in the study areas.

5. To suggest measures to promote gender equality for the all round development of women.

6. To examine the welfare measures, if any, with regard to woman agricultural labourers in Andhra Pradesh.

HYPOTHESIS
The following hypotheses are listed during the study.

Social Factors:

1) Woman agricultural labourers are from all religions and communities.
2) All of them have their own houses, with drinking water, sanitation, electricity facilities.
3) All of them have ration cards and MGNREGS cards.

Demographic factors:

4) Woman agricultural labourers are from joint families and all are married.
5) All of them have minimum education.
6) They have large families.

Economic Factors:

7) Woman agricultural labourers earn their income only from agricultural activities.
8) They spend their income more on non-food items and less on food items.
9) All of them have debts to repay.
10) A few of them have Bank accounts.
11) They are all members of DWCRA groups.
Other Related factors:
12) All the woman labourers have movable assets.
13) All of them have live stock to generate additional income
14) None of them have their own lands.
15) All of them are healthy.

Welfare related factors:
16) Many of the agricultural woman labourers availed government sponsored welfare schemes.
17) All of them are being benefited by the Government programmes.
18) Agricultural woman labourers work voluntarily to earn income.
19) Working conditions at work place are quite satisfactory.

METHODOLOGY
The research is exploratory in nature and so uncontrolled observation method is applied in the process of data collection. The interview method is followed. A pilot study is conducted where in, pilot study schedules are canvassed to select respondents. Then the data collected is analysed. Based on the analysis, the questionnaire is finalised and the data was collected. The area chosen for study is a village. The unit is woman agricultural labourer.

Source of Data
Multi-stage random sampling method is used to select the districts, mandals and villages. Systematic circular stratified random sampling method is used at each stage. 6 districts were selected from three geographical regions viz., Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana of Andhra Pradesh. 12 mandals, two from each district are taken. 24 villages are selected, two from each mandal. The following table shows the names of the districts, mandals, and villages taken for the study.
### Table II.1
REGION-WISE DISTRICT, MANDAL AND VILLAGE COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Region</th>
<th>Code and District Name</th>
<th>Code and Mandal Name</th>
<th>Code and Village Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coastal Andhra</td>
<td>2.VIZIANAGARAM</td>
<td>17.DATTIRAJERU</td>
<td>23.VANDHYAVASI</td>
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<td>46.M.LINGALAVALASA</td>
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<td>34.KOTHIVALASA</td>
<td>14.SUNDARAYYAPET</td>
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<td>28.RELLI</td>
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<td>4.EAST-GODAVARI</td>
<td>129.RAJAHMUNDRY (RURAL)</td>
<td>5.MORAMPUDI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coastal Andhra</td>
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<td>9 RAJAVOLU</td>
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<td>59.SAKHINETIPALLE</td>
<td>4.GUDIMULAKANRIKA</td>
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<td>8.ANTARVEDI</td>
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<td>8.PRAKASAM</td>
<td>28.MADDIPADU</td>
<td>10.VENKATARAJUPALEM</td>
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<td>20.YEDUGUNDERAPADU</td>
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<td>56.SINGARAYAKONDA</td>
<td>4.SOMARAJUPALLI</td>
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<td>8.SANAMPUDI</td>
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<td>Rayalas-Neema</td>
<td>12.ANANT-APUR</td>
<td>12.RAPTADU</td>
<td>5.GONDIREDDIPALLE</td>
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<td>10.YERRAGUNTA</td>
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<td>63.ROLLA</td>
<td>3.ROLLA</td>
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<td>7.DODEERU</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Telangana</td>
<td>17.MEDAK</td>
<td>23.CHEGUNTA</td>
<td>15.ANANTHASAGAR</td>
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<td>29.KASANPALLE</td>
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<td>45.MULUGU</td>
<td>13.DAMARAKUNTA</td>
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<td>27.BANDA MAILARAM</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>21.WARANGAL</td>
<td>25.KESAMUDRAM</td>
<td>8.INUGURTHY</td>
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<td>16.ANNARAM</td>
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<td>50.MANGAPET</td>
<td>12.RAMANAKKAPETA</td>
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<td>23.DOMEDA</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
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</table>

NB: Codes and sequence of names are taken as given in the census of India tables.
Primary Data

The unit of study is a women labourer. Out of 24 villages 1200 sample women labourers, 50 from each village, chosen for the collection of primary data. The women labourers are selected on the basis of “Willingness to answer the questions” were taken. The women labourers who are reluctant to answer the questions were left out. Care has been taken to include different communities, working as women agricultural labourers, in order to explain the socio-demographic and economic profile in general and for each community.

Questionnaire containing 264 questions was canvassed to obtain data on socio-demographic and economic status of the agricultural women labourers from 24 villages during the months of April and May 2012.

Information, regarding demography, economic activity of the villages was also collected from the Surpanches of the respective villages. Wage rates, prevailing in the villages, at the time of data collection, were checked from the records of the village revenue officers. Help of school teachers and Anganwadi workers was taken during data collection. Hospitality was arranged to the research scholar by the village elders at free of cost.

Secondary Data

The secondary data is obtained from the previous studies such as the International and National Journals of Agricultural institutes, Indian Journal of Labour Economics, articles in various newspapers. Agriculture News and Bulletins from United Nations Agricultural Organisations.
Statistical methods

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used throughout the study. The simple statistical methods of data collection, classification of data and tabulation of data are adopted. Statistical averages are employed to explain and analyse data. Each table consists of information and the percentages calculated and are quoted along with the quantitative data. The measures of central tendency like averages, percentages, correlation, regression analysis are used to arrive at conclusions.

Description of the study area

Andhra Pradesh location in the merging area of the Deccan plateau and the Coastal plains, the state has got varied physical features. Historically known as the “Rice Bowl of India”.

Andhra Pradesh Climate is generally hot and humid. The major role in determining the climate of the state is played by South-West Monsoons. But the winters in Andhra Pradesh are pleasant. As per the 2011 census, Andhra Pradesh has a total population of 84,665,533: previously it was 76,210,007 in 2001. Out of the total population of Andhra Pradesh, the population of male are 42,509,881 and female are 42,155,652. The population growth was 11.10 percent and the population of the state forms 7.00 percent of India in 2011. The total area of Andhra Pradesh is 275045sq.km with a density of 308 per sq.km.

Agricultural is the most important sector of Andhra Pradesh’s economy. About 70 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and the state is one of India’s main rice-producing areas. The main crops are rice, maize, millets, pulses, caster, tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, groundnut and bananas. The covered forest area in the state is about 23
percent, and important forest products include teak, eucalyptus, cashew, tamarind, bamboo and soft wood.

Geographically, the state is located in between the longitudes of 77°E and 84°W 40’ N and 22 degrees N. Spread over an area of 2,75,045 sq.km. This is the 4th biggest state in the Indian sub-continent. This state of south India shares its borders with the state of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Orissa towards its north, Karnataka towards its west and Tamil Nadu towards its south. The eastern side of the state is bordered by Bay of Bengal, which is situated on the country’s coastal area, Andhra Pradesh has got a coastline of around 972 km, that makes it possess the 2nd longest in the nation.

SOME SALIENT CONCEPTS IN AGRICULTURE WOMEN LABOURERS

Concept of work

There are different definitions of work, relevant for qualifying employment, unemployment.

Census Definition

The Census of India recognises production for own consumption in cultivation as economic activity. The term cultivation in the census, covers only growing of certain crops such as cereals, millets, sugarcane etc. Growing of plantation crops, vegetables, flowers and other crops are not included under cultivation. Growing of such crops if done, exclusively for home consumption, is not considered as economic activity in the Census.
Processing of primary commodities for own consumption and own account production of fixed assets are also excluded from the purview of economic activity in the Census. In other words, with the exception of cultivation, the Census does not include the non-market economic activities as work. Consequently persons working for the household in non-market activities would not be ‘workers’.

**NSSO Definition**

The NSSO has defined ‘work’ or ‘gainful activity’ as the activity pursued for pay, profit or family gain or in other words, the activity which adds value to the “rational product.” Normally, it is an activity which results in production of goods and services of exchange. However, all activities in the agricultural sector (Division ‘0’ of the NIC) in which a part or whole of the agricultural production is used for own consumption and does not go for sale are also considered as gainful. In short, work is defined as any market activity and any non-market activity relating to the agricultural sector.\(^{20}\)

Main Workers are those who had worked for the major part of the year are termed as main workers. By major part of the year is meant 6 months (183 days) or more. Marginal workers are those who had not worked for the major part of the year, i.e., those who had worked for less than six months (183 days) in the year are termed as marginal workers.

**ILO’s Concept**

According to Resolution No.1 of the 13\(^{th}\) International Conference of Labour Statisticians 1982, the economically active population comprises persons of either sex, who furnish the supply of labour for

\(^{20}\) NSSO, New Delhi.
the production of economic goods and services as defined by the United Nations systems of national accounts and balances, during a specified time reference period.

According to these systems, production of economic goods and services includes all production and processing of primary products whether of the market, for barter or for own consumption. The production of all other goods and services for the market and, in the case of households which produce such goods and services of the market, the corresponding production for own consumption.21

FINDINGS

- We found that majority of the respondents are from Hindus (95.3 per cent), followed by Muslims (2.6 per cent) and Christians (2.2 per cent) in the state. Region-wise analysis shows, Hindus dominated all regions, followed by Muslims and Christians. Muslims are more in Telangana and Rayalaseema regions, similarly, Christians are more in Coastal Andhra, followed by Telangana and Rayalseema regions.

- It is observed that the communities identity are Scheduled castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), backward communities (BCs) and other communities (OCs). The sample of 1200 consists of 600 respondents in the Coastal Andhra area belongs to the four identified communities.

- It is also observed that we assume that the poor people only attend the agriculture work, Malas are more poor than Madigas

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in the state, followed by Yadavas, Goudas, Rajakas, Thorpu Kapus, Lambadis, Iyyarakas, Reddys and Kammas.

- The study found that the number of families in the nuclear family system 477 (47.70 per cent) are in Coastal Andhra region followed by 351 (35.10 per cent) in Telangana 171 (14.50 per cent) in Rayalaseema. The essence is that out of the 999 nuclear families highest are in Coastal Andhra region and those in joint families most of them 123 are also in Coastal Andhra region.

- It is also observed that the facilities like electricity, drinking water at residential houses in the 3 regions, out of the 1186 houses with electricity 592 are Coastal Andhra area, 397 in Telangana and 197 in Rayalaseema. But the facility of protected drinking water is not available to all the sample residential houses.

- It is observed that the majority of the respondents are illiterate. Literacy is high in costal Andhra followed by Telangana regions.

- It is found that majority (579) are getting treatment from Private Hospitals, followed 370 in Government Hospitals, 97 are Visiting RMPs while 74 are Visiting PHCs for treatment.

- The study found that the total family income of the respondents grouped in to seven categories. Majority of the respondents are in the slab of Rs.1501-3000 (35.9 per cent) followed by below Rs.1500 (31.3 per cent) and Rs.3001-6000 (20.6 per cent) only two families are having income of Rs 15001-18000 (0.2 per cent). In costal Andhra majority (35.8 per cent) of the families are having Rs.1501-3000 income followed by Rs.3001-6000 (26.2 per cent) and below Rs 1500 categories (26.0 per cent). On the whole Coastal
Andhra respondents are having more family income than the rest of the regions.

- The regression analysis of food items shows the respondents are spending more on cereals and cereal products, Sugar, Salt and other Spices, Eggs, Fish and Meat, Refreshments, Pulses. They are using less Edible oil.

- The expenditure on non-food items of the respondent families range is from Rs.400-5400. There are 640 families spending on non-food items Rs.400-1400 out of them 193 are in Coastal Andhra region, 272 Telangana and 175 are in Rayalaseema 449 families spend Rs.1400-2400 with 309 in Coastal Andhra region, 118 Telangana and 22 Rayalaseema. Only 4 families out of the 1200 spend 4,400 to 5,500 on non-food items and those families are in Coastal Andhra only.

- The results of the regression analysis for non-food items. We have excluded, Pan and Tobacco, Liquor and Others variables from the regression analysis, as they are altering the Beta values of other items very badly. The R-square value is 0.607 indicating a fairly good model.

- Regarding Beta values, the Clothing and Foot wear (-0.017), Electricity (-0.30) and Taxes/Cess (-0.054) are showing negative values indicating their spending on the above items are negligible when compared with other non food items. We observe that, the highest spending is observed for Soaps, Detergents, Toothpaste and other cosmetics followed by Education and Medical. They are also spending fairly good amounts on consumer goods Fans, Lights etc., Rent, consumer durables and Fuel and Lighting, they
are not giving much importance to Clothing, Free Electricity is provided by the government and they are exempted from paying house Tax and Cess.

- Regarding the payment of wages the exploitation in all the districts is estimated at 42.51 per cent in the state. The district-wise details are different for different districts. The mostly exploited women labourers are in Vizianagaram district (55.25), followed by Anantapur (51.16), Prakasam (44.84), Warangal (37.18), Medak (36.13) and East Godavari (30.5). Thus the lowest exploited respondents are in East Godavari district.

- Most of the responds are participating in MGNREGS works for 40-70 days. Only 23 out of 1139 attended only for 30-40 days. Wages for these activities differ from year to year. 10.3 per cent are employed for 90-100 days.

- The mode of payment of wages is in cash for all the respondents in the study area 779 (64.90 per cent) of them take wages individually.

- It is observed that 1072 (89.3 per cent) labourers expressed that they are treated well at workplace. 128 (10.7 per cent) respondents reported that they are not treated well.

- With regard to harassment infliction at work place, 94 (7.8 per cent) reported that they are harassed. They are 63 (67.0 per cent) in Coastal Andhra, 24 (25.5 per cent) in Rayalaseema and 7 (7.4 per cent) in Telangana. More harassment is found in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions.
➢ Freedom to change place of work is reported that more people from Coastal and Telangana are willing to change place of work when compared with Rayalaseema.

➢ Regarding the facilities at work place, 96.2 per cent respondents reported drinking water is provided. 94.1 per cent reported that there is no rest place at work. All of them reported that they don’t have any other facility at work.

➢ Women labourers in the study area are found to work for 6 to 10 hours a day.

➢ Most of the respondents work for 3 to 7 days in a week.

➢ We observe that the largest chunk of the sample women work like hard toilers and drudges undertaking agricultural labour and household work with no sufficient rest intervals.

➢ Highest number of women (300) work for 4 months rendering special service.

➢ All the respondents don’t know what is labour unionism.

➢ It is clear that Government schemes have not at all penetrated deeply into the villages taken for the study. 1153 (96.10 per cent) of the women labourers are unaware of the NFBS as they have not received any benefits. The same is true in the cases of NMBS with 1177 (98.1 per cent) and AGS with 1182 (98.5 per cent) receiving no advantages. No specific programmes or schemes are there for the women agricultural labourers. They do not have any knowledge about the government programmes or labour Laws.
SUGGESTIONS

➢ The study suggests that women agricultural labourers’ situation would improve on a greater scale if their excessive dependence on agricultural operations in and around their villages and attachment to hard core politically motivated labour contractors, slow process of removing unemployment and poverty are addressed.

➢ Steps need to taken to unchain the women labourers and allow them to work freely. They should be free enough to move as per their convenience to earn their livelihoods and organise themselves to improve their bargaining power in the hold of strong unionism. The suggestion is based on the studies finding that agricultural labour is mostly provided by economically and socially backward communities and vulnerable poor families.

➢ The study suggests that WAL may be assured of stable employment along with nutritional support and adequate food grains supply to make the right to food a realisable goal for all those involved in agricultural sector known for its distress due to vagaries of nature.

➢ As the study observed that some families of the respondents are involved in activities such as dairy development etc., their products need be sold for reasonable prices at suitable markets. Institutional finance must be provided for all the women agricultural labourers to buy Live-stock, Sheep, Pigs etc., at no interest or minimum interest.

➢ Marketing facilities may be enhanced to sell the products at profitable prices without mediator’s looting of the due share of WAL in the agricultural sector.
CONCLUSION

The present study evidences the socio-demographic and economic conditions of the women labourers are low and poor and status of women in rural community has not been changed. Maximum number of female agricultural labour household are living below the poverty line and they are not getting proper wage for their work. Very few women labour are receiving the benefits from the government schemes. The social conditions in which they live continue to be traditional, exploitative and anti-women in character and impeding the development of the agricultural labour in general and of the female agricultural labour in particular.

It can be concluded that the number of rural male total workers is slowly decreasing, while the number of rural female total workers is steadily increasing at the national, state as well as at the districts level, Thus, though the chunk of women labour are increasing, there are only a few government developmental programmes, which are of women specific, in the country as well as in the State. It is found that only privileged sections are benefited from these developmental programmes. The weaker sections are benefited only to a limited extent. Lack of awareness about various developmental programmes is found. The present study reveals the low socio-economic status of these sections in spite of various developmental programmes of the government.

Government must accord industry status to agriculture also. The benefits that are there for the organized sector labourers must be made applicable to the agricultural labourers with statutory safe guards. Life insurance cover must be provided to the agricultural women labourers by government paying the insurance premiums. More welfare schemes are to be created for the betterment of these unrecognized important people.
REFERENCES

Books/Articles:

1. Agricultural Labour In India (A Compendium of Basic Facts). Labour Bureau, Dept. of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India, p.244

Constitution of India

2. Articles 15(1) & 16(1)

3. Articles 15(1) and 16(2)

4. Articles 15(1), 16(2) and 325

5. Articles 15(1), 16(2), 23(2), 29(2) and 325

6. Article 15(2) prohibits discrimination by private individuals in regard to use of facilities and accommodations open to the public. Articles 28(3) and 29(2) forbid discrimination in private educational institutions.

7. As an amended by the Constitution Forty – Forth Amendment Act, 1978, which has inserted clause (2) of the Article.

8. Articles 16(2)

9. Article 17

10. Article 23: “Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour – (1) Traffic in human beings and began and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of the provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. (2) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from imposing.

11. Articles 29(2) and 30(2).

Journals/Seminar/Workshops


8. Quoted by the Labour Investigation Committee Report, p. 345.


**Reports/Sections/Acts**

1. According to international standard, all employed persons and even self employed persons, should be covered, irrespective of their employment. I.L.O’s recommendation No.67 of 1944 regarding Income Security.


3. Food for work programme: Guidelines, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi, p.IV.


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