Chapter X

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The most important feature of the rural economy in India, has been the little growth in number of agricultural workers and the unemployment problems of marginal farmers and agricultural labourers who are engaged particularly in crop production. The phenomenon of under employment and surplus population are both. Simultaneously manifested in the daily lives. They get usually low wages. Their working conditions are not satisfactory. Work output is low. The employment which they get is irregular.

Therefore it calls for an examination of the problems and issues related to pattern of employment, wage payment, incomes, family consumption expenditure and savings of the agricultural labourers. The approach taken in present study implies the following issues for discussion.

(1) What is the pattern and level of unemployment of 'with land' and Without Land' agricultural labourers?

(2) Whether agricultural labourers get full employment?

(3) Do the agricultural labourers of the study area are paid the revised minimum wages fixed by the Govt.

(4) Do the agricultural labourers earn sufficient income to meetout their family consumption expenditure?

(5) What incentives and facilities should be provided to them for increasing their employment and income?
To answer the above questions and to deal with the above issues, the level and pattern of employment, income, family consumption expenditure and savings have to be examined in general and in regard to findings of the present study, in particular.

The demand for labour in agriculture is highly seasonal and uneven due to the seasonal nature of agricultural operations. There is a peak demand for labour in the harvesting season and next to that in times of transplanting and weedings. However, the number of labour in demand depends upon the size of holdings and the nature of cultivation or the crops raised.

The findings of the study showed that an agricultural labourer was found to be employed on an average, for 256.54 days during one year. Of these, agricultural sources accounted for 239.85 days and non agricultural sources 16.69 days. All these show that the agricultural labourers are gainfully employed at the most for 5 to 8 months during the year and in the remaining part they remain idle. The extent of idleness (unemployment) was worked out at 43.46 days which accounted for 14.49 per cent of the total available working days. It was 8.78 days for 'with land' and 60 days for 'without land' labourers, accounting for 2.93 per cent and 20.00 per cent respectively, to total days available for work.

It is not only that agricultural labourers are not gainfully employed throughout the year but the wages which they get for agricultural works are lower than what paid to industrial workers or to workers engaged in more or less similar occupations. There is
little uniformity in regard to agricultural wages and methods of payment and these vary from place to place. The method of wage payment also differs considerably. It may be paid in cash or in kind or in kind and cash both.

The wages paid to them in general is lower. These low wages are responsible for their poor standard of living. It is impossible for an agricultural labourer to make his both ends meet with these small wages earned from agricultural works in about 8 months, during the year, with no other gainful employment for rest of the period. The result is that they are mostly semi-starved not having enough physical strength to perform in a proper manner of all agricultural operations.

As regards income and expenditure analysis, there existed a deficit in their family budget. The per household average annual income of the agricultural labourers, from all sources came to Rs. 11649.18 while the family consumption expenditure was worked out to Rs. 13620.17 per household per annum. Thus, the expenditure came higher than the income resulting in dis-savings of Rs. 1970.99 per household. The labour is thus hardly left with any margin to spend or any comfort or luxary and can not save anything with the result that in case of any emergency or an occasion of social ceremony and religious festivals etc. They are forced to borrow money.

The agricultural labourer has not been benefitted to much from the rising prices because his wages have not gone upto the same extent and he has not been able to share in the profits of agriculture while their cost of living has increased. Inspite of the fact that
there has been an increase in the employment and income of the labour households during the recent years with adoption of new farm technology. There is hardly any scope for savings, because households income falls short of consumption expenditure. The overall profile that emerges is that almost all the agricultural labourer are living below the poverty line.

To sum up, it may be said that the solution of problem of the agricultural labourers is the crying need of the day to improve the condition of the agricultural labourers, an alround effort is needed. The problem is connected with the general improvement in agriculture and with measures like rural housing, adult education, extensive of debt relief to labourers, establishment of multipurpose cooperative societies etc. Employment opportunities with the rural economy are to be expended through extensive development of village and rural industries and agricultural processing units. In order to provide regular employment public works have to be organised and emphasis placed on rural men power programmes.

The programme for upgrading of wage in agriculture needs special consideration. The implementation of the Minimum Wage Act needs attention in the areas where wages are adjudged to be low due to caste and economic inequalities. The Minimum Wage Act, 1948 and Trade Union Act,1926 are applicable to agricultural labourers. Of all the existing labour laws applicable to agricultural workers, the Minimum Wage Act 1948 is the most important one. It provides for fixation of minimum wage and its revision periodically. All though a number of State Government including Uttar Pradesh have already
taken action in this direction, but this has not yet got success. Coordinated efforts by different organisation like Panchayats and Block are needed in its enforcement.

It is true that the benefits of various statutory and non-statutory schemes do not generally reach the workers in rural areas primarily due to the lack of organisations and awareness among the agricultural workers. In order to overcome this situation, a scheme to organise rural workers by appointing honorary organisers at block level should be instituted. The function of the organisers should be to educate the workers on their rights and duties and stress the value of workers organisation and help them to organise Trade Union and other forms of organisation as may be considered necessary.

Central Government has so far conducted four All India Rural Labour Enquiries besides National Sample Surveys. The first two enquiries known as Agricultural Labour Enquiries were conducted during 1950-51 and 1956-57 while the other two enquiries known as Rural Labour Enquiries were conducted during 1963-64 and 1974-75. These enquiries should be conducted regularly and the objectives should further be extended to the extent of employment, under employment, wage structure income structure pattern and level of consumption expenditure and indebtedness etc. The data so furnished will help in making policies for ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of the agricultural labourers.

Low wages in agricultural employment are associated with the low productivity of Indian agriculture as well as the low
productivity of agricultural labourer which is mostly unskilled. The solution of the farmer's problem requires for reaching improvement in agricultural sector i.e., Intensive Rural Development Project so that the agricultural sector can generate more income by increasing the productivity of workers, project for soil conservation works, better farming methods and training of the farmers in modern agricultural skill, increase of rural credit facilities etc. Plan for promotion of small scale industries in villages, road construction, improvement of facilities and public utilities for infrastructure development need to be pursued. There is also need for training programmes for villages and creation of jobs in the rural area's that call for more skilled labour so that the trained person would be better able to find, if necessary are independent market for their labour outside the particular rural work in which they have been absorbed.

The importance of programme for subsidiary occupations arises from the fact that the majority of the agricultural labourers are land less and are under employed in a year. Recognizing the urgent need to provide work for these labourers, since the beginning of 1970 the Government of India initiated a number of special employment programmes. Mention may be made in this context of the crash scheme for rural employment, Drought prone Area Programmes, Marginal Farmers and agricultural labourers development scheme and pilot Intensive Rural Employment project. A review of the working of these programme indicate that their total impact so far has touched only the fringe of this problem of mass rural under employment and unemployment. Therefore, there is an urgent need to step up efforts in
this direction. Keeping in view the various problems that have been thrown up in the course of the implementation of these programmes and the measures required to overcome them.

**Testing of Hypotheses:**

On the basis of findings and discussion on different issues of the study, the hypotheses laid out in Chapter-II are hereby proved.

The first hypothesis that the agricultural labourers do not get full employment during an agricultural year has been proved as per findings given in Chapter VII.

The second hypothesis that the level of employment, wage rate and earnings of agricultural labourers without land is higher than the agricultural labourers with land is proved as per findings given Chapter VII and VIII.

The third hypothesis that the percentage expenditure on food decreases with the increase in income while the expenditure on education, health and social ceremonies show the reverse trend was also found to be valid as per findings discussion in Chapter IX.

The last hypothesis i.e., the agricultural labourers both 'with land' and 'without land' have no savings with them was found to be true as per discussion given in Chapter X.