Chapter V

The Problems of Small Farmers in Srivaikuntam Taluk of Thoothukudi District - A Detailed and Critical Analysis
CHAPTER - V

THE PROBLEMS OF SMALL FARMERS IN SRIVAIKUNTAM TALUK OF THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT – A DETAILED AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Another essential and very important chapter in the present research study is the detailed and critical probing of the vital social and economic problems of small farmers in the selected study area, which also actually included in the part of the chosen Research problem and other remaining objectives and Hypotheses of the research study. As such, this chapter will make the entire research work perfect and completed in all aspects.

Few factors are elaborately analysed in the study of poverty among small farmers in Srivaikuntam Taluk of Thoothukudi District with the help of the Rank chart.
**FIGURE NO: 5.1**

**RANKING CHART OF SMALL FARMERS IN SRIVAIKUNTAM TALUK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated Figures

Names of Problems

1. Nature of Employment – Temporary / Permanent
2. Low Income
3. Low Fertility of Land
4. Increased cost of cultivation
5. Loan Availability problem
6. Reduction of subsidies
7. Competition from Big Farmers
8. Irrigation problem
9. Damaged caused by pests and Insects
10. Loan Repayment
11. Procurement problem
12. Storage problem
13. Immediate sale at low price and Absence of proper government support
The chart clearly explains the following conditions and their impact on the state of poverty.

(i) The foremost essential problem of small farmers which is analysed in this chapter is the \textit{nature of employment}. This is really a very important variable in the present analysis because of the fact that the nature of employment, generally has a direct link with the level of income and poverty.

The respondents belonging to Backward community have been permanently employed. On the other hand, the respondents belonging to Scheduled Caste do not have permanent employment. The reason is that most of the respondents are agricultural labourers in the case of Scheduled Caste.

(ii) The \textit{availability of loan} is remote for scheduled caste (70 percent).

(iii) The \textit{subsidies} are not available to a larger extent to the scheduled caste respondents (44 percent).

The problem of loan repayment is faced mostly by scheduled caste (57 percent).

(iv) By observation the researcher has found that there is only a marginal difference in \textit{fertility} in the lands cultivated. It
does not make any variation on the productivity of the soil.

(v) All the lands in the study area have been irrigated by the Thamirabarani river. Though river-fed crop failures are common when rain fails, all have to undergo the same kind of loss. Therefore the irrigation does not make significant change in the living of the respondents.

5.1. **Income analysis**

Income analysis gives us the actual condition of the people, who are poor and who are poor of the poorest. The following table depicts the various measurements yielding the statistics.
### TABLE NO: 5.1

**CLASSIFICATION OF INCOME FOR THE DIFFERENT CASTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage of households</th>
<th>Annual average family income</th>
<th>Per capita Income</th>
<th>Monthly per capita income</th>
<th>Perday Income</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Coefficient of variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>Rs. 41,428</td>
<td>Rs. 16,560</td>
<td>Rs. 1380</td>
<td>Rs. 46</td>
<td>23108</td>
<td>53.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Rs. 38,000</td>
<td>Rs. 10,382.5</td>
<td>Rs. 865</td>
<td>Rs. 28.84</td>
<td>16177</td>
<td>42.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>Rs. 34,500</td>
<td>Rs. 10,360</td>
<td>Rs. 863</td>
<td>Rs. 28.75</td>
<td>16178.68</td>
<td>46.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Caste</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>Rs. 38,750</td>
<td>Rs. 13091.21</td>
<td>Rs. 1090.93</td>
<td>Rs. 36.34</td>
<td>17000.00</td>
<td>43.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculated value of survey data*
From observing the table we have concluded that the coefficient of variation is high in the case of the income distribution of the Backward community respondents.

The per capita income per day is higher for the Backward community among the total number of respondents. The per capita income for other two communities are similar. The Backward community respondents are better off than the other community people. The respondents belonging to both Scheduled caste and Most Backward community are below the poverty line whereas those of Backward community is just above the poverty line of Rs.45 per day. (official estimate)

5.2 Consumption Pattern

The consumption pattern of the respondents reveals the following facts. The expenditure on food alone shows 66.41 percent of the total outlay. This is an ample evidence that the people are on the verge of poverty. If we include the clothing and housing, the other essential items it accounts to 72 percent. The following table shows the annual expenditure of consumption pattern among the three categories.
TABLE NO : 5.2

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Percentage of households</th>
<th>Annual Average Expenditure</th>
<th>% of Expenditure on Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>Rs. 12,833</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Rs. 12,536</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>Rs. 12,680</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the annual consumption expenditures of the three categories are compared there is no significant difference. They are having the same consumption standard. The Scheduled caste shows only 1 percent lower than the other. The Lorenz curve shows a high degree of variation in expenditure among the small farmers. The Gini co-efficient is 0.30. This can be explained with the help of a Lorenz curve.
FIGURE NO. 5.3 LORENZ CURVE SHOWING VARIATION IN EXPENDITURE AMONG THE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE STUDY AREA.
5.3. The Hypotheses Tested

The hypotheses formulated have been tested one by one.

**HO₁**

There is no significant variation in the mean incomes among the Backward community, Most Backward Community & Scheduled Caste respondents of the small farmers.

The following statistics have been used to test the Hypothesis.

**TABLE NO : 5.3**

**CASTE - WISE INCOME DISTRIBUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>C.V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) BC</td>
<td>41,428</td>
<td>23,108</td>
<td>55.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) MBC</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>16,177</td>
<td>42.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) SC</td>
<td>34,500</td>
<td>16,179</td>
<td>46.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) All</td>
<td>38,750</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>43.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The co-efficient of variation is 43.87 percent for all the small farmers. It can be concluded that the variations in income is considerable. However, the variation in income is very high as far as the Backward community farmers are concerned.

Chi – Square test has also been applied. The calculated value is 18.4576. The table value for degrees of freedom 6 at 5 percent level of significance is 12.6.
The result shows that the calculated value is greater than the table value. Therefore, the Ho is rejected. Therefore there is significant variation among the income levels of the three categories.

The Lorenz curve also shows a high degree of variation in income among the small farmers. The Gini co-efficient is 0.37. This can explained with the help of a Lorenz curve.
Figure No. 5.3 Lorentz Curve Showing Variation in Income Among the Households in the Study Area.

Cumulative percentage of households.
There is no significant variation in the mean incomes among the respondents occupation-wise.

**TABLE NO : 5.4**

**COEFFICIENT OF VARIATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Pattern</th>
<th>C.V.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>34.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>44.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Labour</td>
<td>41.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coefficient of variation of mean incomes in the owners category is low when compared to the other two categories. On the whole there is significant variation in incomes among the respondents of the three categories.

The chi-square test has been applied for the purpose. The calculated value is 17.9675. The table value for degrees of freedom 9 at 5 percent level is 16.9. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value there is significant variation in incomes among the three categories. The small farmers in the owned land category has an edge over the other categories.
Ho$_3$

There is no association between poverty and the caste groups living in this area.

The per capita incomes of the 3 categories are given below:

**TABLE NO : 5.5**

**RESPONDENTS INCOME LEVEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Perday Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Rs. 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>Rs. 28.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Rs. 28.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures as per our data shows that the respondents in the Backward community group have an edge over others. Therefore, it can be concluded that poverty is associated with caste, that is those who are in the lower rung of the society are under the clutches of poverty. This has been proved by and far by the following data.
TABLE NO : 5.6

FACTORS DETERMINING POVERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>MBC</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Percentage of casual labourers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Percentage of Farm size below 0.5 acre</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Family size</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Illiteracy</td>
<td>31.58</td>
<td>19.74</td>
<td>48.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poverty is all-pervasive among the scheduled caste as per the figures given above. The poverty is acute among the respondents belonging to the Scheduled caste because most of them are agricultural labourers. Illiteracy is high among them and the family size is also higher. Most of them possess land below 0.5 acre.

**Ho4**

There is no significant difference between the mean income of all the respondents and the mean incomes of the three caste categories.

Sampling Errors have been calculated with the mean income of all the respondents and the respective means yielding the following results.
The 't' test shows that the estimated values are less than 1.96 at 5 percent level of significance. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean income and the mean incomes of the three categories (BC, MBC and SC).

\textbf{Ho}$_5$

There is no significant difference between the mean income of all the respondents and the mean incomes of the three categories i.e., owner cultivators, Tenants and Agricultural labourers.

The following results have been obtained.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Sl. No.} & \textbf{Category} & \textbf{SE} \\
\hline
(i) & BC & 0.1575 \\
(ii) & MBC & 0.44 \\
(iii) & SC & 0.25 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
TABLE NO : 5.8
't' test II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Owner Cultivators</td>
<td>0.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>Agricultural Labourers</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 't' test values at 5 percent level are below 1.96. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean income and the mean incomes of the above 3 categories.

5.4 Estimate of households below poverty line in the study area.

With the help of the less than Cumulative Frequency Curves the percentage below the poverty line is found out.
Figure No.5.4: LESS THAN CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY CURVE FOR THE INCOME LEVELS

BC category

MBC category

SC category
In the study area 21 per cent of households are below poverty line in the year 2004 – 2005. There is significant variation between the official estimate and our estimate to. Being a micro level study the estimate may have some variation. An estimate of percentage of households below poverty line on the basis of less than cumulative frequency curve for the income levels shows that 17 per cent in Backward Community households falls below poverty line and 19 per cent in Most Backward Community households and 21 per cent in Scheduled Caste households fall below the poverty line.

From the above detailed but critical and in-depth analysis made on a full scale under various selected major variables, it is identified that these are the essential causes for the high level poverty and misery among the small farmers of Srivaikuntam Taluk of Thoothukudi District. Therefore, suitable suggestions would be given in the last chapter to liberate these poor economically down – trodden people, as early as possible.