CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises the conclusions and findings of the study. Further, a few suggestions are made at the end for the better working and living conditions of agricultural labourers. The following are the main conclusions of the study.

In India, agricultural workers constitute the major segment of the total rural workforce. Due to population pressure, uneven distribution of land holdings and other reasons; the number of agricultural labourers has been increasing from time to time. The living conditions of these labourers is altogether different when compared to other categories of labour.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN INDIA-AN OVER VIEW

In 1961, agricultural workers were 131 millions which was increased to 185 millions by 1991. For the same period, the percentage of agricultural labourers to total agricultural workers had increased from 24.03 to 40.30 per cent. In Andhra Pradesh, the percentage of labour households in total rural households was 34.3 per cent in 1964-65 and it rose up to 48.4 per cent by 1987-88, registering an increase of 14 per cent. And in states like Punjab, Tamilnadu and Gujarat substantial increase in the labour households had been objected. Experience shows that the proportion of labour households seen to increase during the occurrence of droughts and other natural calamities. It is quite disheartening to note that on one hand the percentage of agricultural labourers to total agricultural workers has been increasing and on the other hand the percentage of cultivators has decreased.

From our analysis, it is found that nearly 80 per cent of the rural labour households are agricultural labour and two-thirds of the agricultural labour households are
not in possession of land. It is also found that the rural labour households has been increasing.

Among the male agricultural workers, agricultural labourers account for 34.31 per cent in 1991 as compared to 29.97 per cent in 1961. Among the female agricultural workers, agricultural labourers contributed nearly 30 percent, which was gone up to nearly 56 percent by 1991. In all are enormous increase in the number of agricultural labourers is noticed.

In 1971, landless households formed 9.6 per cent, which slightly increased to 11.3 percent by 1982 and has not been increased till 1992. However, the percentage of semi­landless and marginal farmers has increased. This contributed to the growth of agricultural labourers. Based on rural labour enquiries and national sample survey data, it is found that adult males secured employment for 277 days in 1964-65 and in 1977-78 it was 293 days and slightly increased to 296 days by 1987-88. For the same period adult female reported employment for 199, 232 and 254 days respectively. With regard to Andhra Pradesh for the said period, adult male was employed for 288, 249 and 285 days, while the adult female employed for 201 , 172 and 245 days respectively. The availability of employment in agriculture is mainly influenced by the rainfall. All the rural labour enquiries brought-out the fact that agricultural labourers remain unemployed for more than one-third of the days in a year.

The size of the households has increased over a period of time. Agricultural labourers are paid low wages. Wage differentials among male, female and children are found. The average household income decreased in 1956-57 when compared to 1950-51. Further, the per capita annual income decreased in 1956-57 and increased in 1964-65 and 1974-75. For the same period expenditure exceeded the incomes of the agricultural labourers. This led to the increased burden of indebtedness.

Indebtedness is an impediment to the prosperity of the agricultural labourers. From the analysis, it was found that average debt per individual household has registered an eight-
fold increase. The major source of borrowing till 1977-78 was non-institutional sources-with specific reference to money-lenders and employees. Subsequently, institutional agencies have also come up to finance the agricultural labourers. However,, still non-institutional agencies are playing dommate role. It is also discouraging to note that the amount borrowed by the agricultural labourers is mostly utilised for unproductive purposes, particularly for meeting the consumption expenditure. Keeping in view the macro-level data, it was thought there is a need to address different problems of agricultural labourers at the micro-level. Hence, the present study was carried out with a view to analyse the working and living conditions of agricultural labourers in a drought-prone District of Andhra Pradesh. To fulfill the objectiveness of the study, data were collected and analysed on different aspects of agricultural labour, with specific reference to employed and unemployed days, income from wages and other sources, expenditure pattern and indebtedness. Further, an attempt was also been made to study the asset position of agricultural labourers. Since, the poverty was identified as an important malady of agricultural labourers, the same was also examined.

The second chapter deals with objectives, Hypothesis, Methodology, of the study, Sources of data collection, limitation of the study, chapter scheme, operational definitions of the concepts used in the study. Important studies carried-out on the problem under study were also reviewed in the second chapter. Primary data was collected in 12 villages of three sample mandals spread over in Kurnool District. The primary data was collected through the personal interview method with the help of a pre-tested structured schedules.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study has been carried, keeping the following objectives in view, Viz.,

1. To review the structure and growth of agricultural labour in India.
2. To study the socio-economic conditions of the sample agricultural labourers in the study area and to asses the extent of employment and unemploymment of sample agricultural labourers between the areas largely irrigated, less irrigated and dry zones of Kurnool District in the State of Andhra Pradesh.
3. To enquire into the employment and working conditions of sample attached and casual agricultural labourers.

4. To study the wage structure, rates and methods of payments of wages to agricultural labourers and to examine the employee and employer relations separately for the irrigated and dry zones of Kurnool District.

5. To analyse the levels of income, expenditure, savings and indebtedness of the sample agricultural labourers; and

6. To suggest measure, in the light of the present empirical study, for improving the conditions of agricultural labourers in the drought-prone areas.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses have been tested.

1. Payment of wages is not influenced by the availability of irrigation facilities.

2. There is not much of significant difference in the annual per household incomes of casual and attached labourers.

3. Indebtedness of the labourers is not compelling them to join as attached labourers under the land owner-cum lender.

4. Per capita expenditure of attached labourers is not higher than that of casual labourers.

5. Expenditure pattern of different caste categories of agricultural labourers shows wide variation.

6. Majority of the agricultural labourers are not aware of Minimum Wages Act.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Selection of the study area.

Sizeble portion of the rural population in Andhra Pradesh comprise agricultural labour. There are differences in the conditions of labourers within the three regions of
Andhra Pradesh viz., Coastal, Telangana and Rayalaseema regions. Kurnool District represents other Districts in the Rayalaseema region with regard to drought-proneness. To our knowledge, it is found that so far no comprehensive, scientific study has been made on the agricultural labour in the Kurnool District. Hence, the Kurnool District has been purposively chosen for the present study. Besides, familiarity of the researcher with the study area was also one of the reasons for the selection of the study area.

**Selection of the Mandals**

Though Kurnool District is a drought-prone District, there are some mandals with good irrigation facilities, some mandals with limited irrigation facility (known as partly irrigated area) and some mandals with negligible irrigation facilities. Based on the criteria within the Kurnool District, the researcher has identified three identical sub-regions i.e 1) mandals with more irrigation, ii) mandals with moderate irrigation and iii) mandals with less irrigation. However, it is neither necessary nor feasible to study all the mandals that fall in under each category in view of the similarities. Hence, three mandals (one each) representing the three sub-regions were randomly selected. Sirvel mandal representing high and assured irrigation Orvakal mandal representing less irrigation and Maddikera mandal representing negligible irrigation have been selected as first stage units of our sample.

**Selection of Villages**

With a view to give representation to different parts of the each of the selected mandals, all the villages in the sample mandal were grouped into northern, southern, western and eastern clusters. Thereafter, one village from each cluster was selected based on random sampling method. Thus in, in all, 12 villages were selected from the three sample mandals spread over the study area i.e., Kurnool District.
Selections of Agricultural Labourers

In our preliminary survey conducted in the three randomly selected mandals, agricultural labourers constituted a considerable size of the total population. Keeping in view paucity of time, financial and man-power resources at the disposal of the researcher, it is preferred to have sample survey for an in-depth study of agricultural labourers. Moreover, we found homogeneity within each category of the agricultural labourers. Hence, the sample selection was resorted to.

Basically, there are two types of labourers engaged in agricultural operations, viz., casual and attached labourers. For the present study, it has been decided to select randomly a sample of 250 agricultural labourer households comprising of 225 casual labourer households constituting 90 per cent of the total sample and 25 attached labourer house-holds constituting 10 per cent of the total sample. It was estimated that on an average the casual and attached labourers were found in the ratio of 9:1 and as such the total sample has been divided based on this criteria. To make the scientific selection of the respondents, a census survey was conducted in the sample villages to ascertain the number of the households belonging to the category of casual labourers and attached labourers. Accordingly, the sample from each village was selected in proportion to their number in the universe. Further, with a view to give proportionate representation to different caste groups. We have worked out the proportion of each caste category in the total agricultural labourers. Thus, from each mandal 80 to 85 agricultural labourers (depending up on the size of the universe ) formed the actual sample for the present study. In all, 250 agricultural labourer households spread over 12 villages of the three mandals of Kurnool District of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh have been selected for the present study.

Studies so far carried out by the Government, research institutes and the individual scholars can be broadly categorised as macro-level and micro-level studies. The macro level studies mostly have relevance at national level and these studies are mostly based on the data that had already been collected and used. The committees and commissions appointed by the Government at the Central and State level are of routine in nature. On the other hand, the
macro-level studies are not comprehensive. The present study proposes to analyse different aspects of agricultural labourers in a comprehensive manner at the micro-level.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA

In the third chapter Socio-economic background of the study area i.e., Kurnool District is briefly presented. The second part of the chapter deals with the profiles of sample Mandals i.e., Sirvel Orvakal and Maddikera.

As per 1991 Census Kurnool District (the study area) occupied 11th rank among the Districts of Andhra Pradesh, and third rank in the population of Rayalaseema region. The density of populations of Kurnool District is 168 persons per sq. km. In the total population of the District rural population constitutes 76 per cent. Schedule Caste and Scheduled tribes were represented by 17.42 per cent and 1.88 per cent respectively. The literacy rate District was reported at 33 per cent.

Agricultural workers formed 72.04 per cent of the total work-force in the District. About 72 per cent of working population is engaged in agricultural sector. Of the total geographical area, 51.55 per cent is under cultivation. Area under forests is 18.08 per cent. Only 16.72 per cent of the net sown area enjoys irrigation facility. The important crops grown in the District are ground-nut, sun-flower, jowar, cotton, paddy and korra. The productivity of important crops is low as compared to the State average mainly because of wide spread of dry land cultivation. Keeping in view the problems of dry land areas, particularly the rain fall (declined to 560.5mm in 1994-95 as compared to 1991), Central Government has identified 23 mandals for the implementation of water-shed development programmes. As our study has been carried out in 3 mandals, 2 of the mandals, which are categorised as partly irrigated and less irrigated mandals i.e., Orvakal and Maddikera, have also been brought under water-shed development programme. The District has 168 bank branches, and has many as 889 factories, mostly agro-based.
Sirvel mandal which has been selected, under the category of having relatively good irrigation facilities, exhibits certain important features. In this mandal agricultural labourers constitute nearly 30 per cent of the population. Of the total geographical area, wet sown area constitutes nearly 70 per cent. Irrigation facility is available for 44.16 percentage of the cultivated land. Canals are major source of irrigation in the mandal. Important crops grown are cotton, paddy, jowar, ground-nut, sun-flower and tobacco.

In Orvakal mandal (partly irrigated mandal), agricultural labourers formed 32.15 per cent of the total population. Nearly 47 per cent of the total geographical area is categorised as net sown area. Irrigation facilities are available for 4.87 percentage of the land under cultivation. Tube wells are the major source of irrigation. Important crops cultivated are ground-nut, cotton, jowar, chillies, tobacco, sun-flower, red gram, korra and paddy.

Maddikera mandal, one of the sample mandals, comes under the category of having low or negligible irrigation facilities. In this mandal, agricultural workers constituted 25.26 per cent of the total population. Area under cultivation is reported at 85.46 per cent of total geographical area. Only 261 acres of land is irrigated. The principal crops grown are groundnut, jowar, korra, red-gram, sun-flower and chillies.

**BACK GROUND OF THE SAMPLE LABOURERS**

The fourth chapter deals with the Socio-Economic profile of agricultural labourers. For better comparison and understanding mandal wise analysis was attempted.

The sample consists of both casual agricultural labourers and attached labourers. In Orvakal mandal, 77 casual labour households and 8 attached labour households formed as sample, and in Maddikera mandal, of the total sample of 85 agricultural labourers, 76 are casual agricultural labourers and 9 are from the category of attached labourers. In Sirvel mandal, the total sample is 80; of which, 72 are casual agricultural labour households and 8 are attached labour households. Our preliminary and final surveys clearly shows that
agricultural labourers in the study area mostly belongs to the category of land less and to a lesser extent to marginal and small farmers category.

In the total sample labourers casual labour households male constituted 51.18 per cent and 48.82 per cent are female labourers. Highest number of casual labourers were reported in the category of SC and BC. It is also evident from the study that attached labourers were drawn mostly from depressed castes. Majority of the male population in the study area comes under the age group of 36-60 years. With regard to female population majority of them were in the age group of 15-35 years. Majority of the sample agricultural labourers came from the families where the family size was relatively small. The total sample of agricultural labour households broadly belonged to four caste categories i.e., SC, ST, BC, and OC.

Of the total sample of 250 agricultural households (including attached labourers), nearly 70 per cent reported that they have nuclear family system. From this, it can be inferred that the joint family system is loosing its ground in the rural areas. Of the total 250 sample agricultural households nearly 40 percentage were found to be literate. Majority of the sample agricultural households are living in huts. Evidently, the rural poor are denied of minimum housing facilities. Ownership of houses also reveals the fact that whatever the type of house they own they prefer to live in instead of seeking a on rent basis house. For various reasons many of the sample labourer families share a single room for all purposes. Since the $X^2$ calculated value is less than the $X^2$ table value at 5 per cent level of significance indicates that the differences among the types of house owned by the sample agricultural labourers in three selected mandals are negligible. Major source of drinking water of the sample households is bore well. The important diseases from which the sample labourers are suffering are, tuberculosis, asthma and poor eye-sight.

We found that the only 29 per cent of the casual labourers reported the land ownership per capita availability of land is less than one acre. In case of average for landed households it is in between 2 to 3 acres. Of the available little land, irrigation facility is
available for negligible percentage of land. Of the three sample mandals in Sirvel mandal the highest number of casual labourers reported the land ownership. With regard to land ownership BC agricultural labourers stood first followed by the STs, OCs, and SCs. In case of attached labourers 39 per cent have reported the land ownership. Per household average land in case of sample casual agricultural labourers is less than one acre except in case of OCs of Orvakal and BCs of Sirvel mandal. If we take the average only for the households with land it is between 2 to 3 acres. Among the caste categories OCs and SCs in Orvakal mandal stood first and the least being STs Sirvel mandal. This is true in almost all caste categories in the sample. In all the sample mandals, under the study, land property formed a major portion of the value of total fixed asset, followed by house property. This is major not only true with regard to casual labourer household but also attached labour households. The value of dwelling-house accounts for the major portion of the total assets for an agricultural labour households without land. As far as the estimated value of the live-stock, and other assets owned by the agricultural labourers shows that the distribution is not even.

**EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, TOTAL INCOME, TOTAL EXPENDITURE, INDEBTEDNESS, AND SAVINGS OF THE SAMPLE CASUAL AND ATTACHED LABOURERS.**

From the study, it is found that in the highly irrigated sample mandal i.e., Sirvel, majority of the casual agricultural labourers have been found working on daily wage rate basis and in Maddikera mandal 46 per cent of the sample agricultural labourers reported that they has been working on daily wage rate basis. In case of Orvakal mandal, where the irrigation facility was negligible, the casual labourers to the extent of 52 per cent, reported the daily wage rate as the basis of their employment.

Employment determines the status of an individual and also supports his family. Hence, it is necessary to examine the magnitude of unemployment among the sample casual agricultural labourers, per capita employment days have been worked out. Per capita employment available for a casual labourer in Sirvel mandal was 255 man-days and in
Maddikera mandal it was 235 man-days, while in Orvakal mandal it was 250 days both in agricultural and non-agicultural activities. No significant variation is found in the per capita number of days employed between the three sample mandals. The conclusion that emerges from our analysis is that the availability of irrigation has a positive impact on employment generation. In all the mandals, agriculture stood as the major contributor of employment. If there was scanty rainfall the land remained uncultivated. Next to agriculture, self-employment constituted a major source of employment, followed by non-agricultural employment in the study area. However, agriculture, the primary sector failed to provide full time employment to the agricultural labourers.

Non-availability of work seems to be the major casual factor for the large number of days of unemployment as reported by sample casual labourers of the study area.

Attached labourers have to work as a full time worker under a farmer, which means they do not have fixed working hours. However, we have computed the average working hours. On average, each attached labourer in the study area was found to be working nearly ten to thirteen hours except in Maddikera mandal. The conclusion that can be drawn from survey results is that in Sirvel mandal attached labourers have to work comparatively longer hours when compared to other two sample mandals. Naturally, in better irrigated area as compared to less irrigated areas.

Main reasons reported by the attached labourers for their preference to work as attached, labourer are remunerative wages, financial and moral support from the master as and when required by the labourers. With regard to work satisfaction of the attached labourers, our empirical study shows that only one-third have reported satisfaction and the rest are neither satisfied nor responded.

In our study of the three mandals, agricultural wages formed the major source of income of the sample casual and attached labourers. In Sirvel mandal, per household annual income of the sample casual labourers was RS. 12,598 and in Maddikera mandal it was
Rs.9,418, while its was Rs. 11892/- in case of Orvakal mandal. A definite trend is noticed in regard to the per capita incomes of the sample agricultural labourers. The per capita income of agricultural labourers was found to be high i.e., Rs. 3,877 in Sirvel mandal which enjoys better irrigation facilities. Next to the Sirvel mandal, the per capita income was found to be Rs. 3283 and Rs. 2880 in Orvakal and Maddikera Mandals respectively. In all the three mandals BC sample agricultural labourers have reported the highest average annual income. In terms of per capita income BCs occupied second place in Orvakal and Maddikera mandals. The first place is by OCs in Orvakal STs in Maddikera mandal. In Sirvel BCs stood first. Evidently, comparatively lesser per capita income of the agricultural labourers is owing of the lesser degree of irrigation facilities prevailing in Maddikera and Orvakal mandals.

In regard to the average income levels of attached and casual labourers it was found that the attached labourers are comparatively in a better position. In Sirvel Mandal, per household income of the sample attached labourer was Rs.17,626 and in case of Orvakal mandal it was Rs.23,848, while in Maddikera Mandal it was Rs.25249. Eighty four per cent of the attached labourers had the incomes in the range of Rs. 10000-25000. Main source of the income of the agricultural labourers with land is the income through sale of agricultural produce. In the case of agricultural labourers without land the main source of income is the wage income. In come from other sources is reported by a negligible percentage of agricultural labourers. As far as the per household annual average expenditure casual labourers of Orvakal mandal recorded the highest expenditure with Rs. 12869 followed by Maddikera and Sirvel mandals with Rs.10,668 and Rs.10,218 respectively. In the study area per household income of the attached labourers higher than the per household income of casual agricultural labourers. This is because of assured employment of attached labourers. Further, the family members of the attached labourer households also contributed to the family income by working as casual labourers. The hypothesis 'there is not much of significant difference in the annual per household incomes of casual and permanent agricultural' is rejected as the empirical study proved that the per household annual income of the attached labourer is higher than the annual income of the casual labourer.
Wage rates paid to different agricultural operations are not uniform in the study area. It is also found that women labourers are not paid wages on par with the men labourers. Our analysis shows that during the busy agricultural season, labour was getting highest wage rate compared to slack season. The labourers working in Sirvel mandal (known for better irrigation facility) have reported higher wages compared to less irrigated areas. Further, no agricultural labourer in the study area was found obtaining wages in kind (in the form of grain). Majority of the sample labourers obtained wages in cash only. Highest average wage per household was reported by the respondents of Sirvel mandal at Rs.8,586 and the next highest was found in the case of the casual labourers of Orvakal mandal at Rs.6,761 and the least average wage earned was by the sample casual labourers of Maddikera mandal at Rs.5,857. It is important to note that in all the three sample mandals wage fixation is governed by the supply and demand factors and as such the question of implementation of Minimum Wages does not arise. The hypothesis that payment of wages is not influenced by the availability of irrigation facilities stands nullified as the analysis showed that the wage income of the agricultural labourers belonging to the Sirvel mandal (known as highly irrigated area) went up as compared to the wage income of the Orvakal (partly irrigated mandal) and Maddikera mandal (with negligible irrigation facility).

The study has revealed that total income, value of house and live stock, income and expenditure are greater for agricultural labourers with land than the labourers without land. Further, the income and expenditure levels of attached labourers are higher than the casual labourers in the study area. Hence, our hypothesis ‘per capita expenditure of attached labourers is not higher than that of casual labourers’ is not accepted.

Saving pattern of the casual labourers shows that only in Sirvel mandal the households reported savings to a lesser extent. This works out Rs.1931 (average per household). Contrary to this, the attached labourers belonging to all the 3 sample mandals have reported the savings. Per household savings of the attached labourers in the study area is worked out of Rs.3980.
Indebtedness reflects the degree of dependence on others. To meet the consumption and other purposes finance was borrowed by the sample casual labourers exhibits certain important features. For the study area as a whole average debt per household has been worked out at Rs.1165/-. The inter-mandal comparison shows that in Maddikera mandal, per household debt was high. This may be because of less irrigation facilities in the region and the irrigation facility will have a positive impact on the employment generation, as it was observed in the study areas. The burden of the average per household debt in case of sample casual labourers of Orvakal mandal is (RS. 1549) about double the burden of sample casual labour households of Sirvel mandal (RS. 786). It is also found that debt burden is more on OC casual labourers followed by ST, SC and BC categories. If we calculate the average debt only for borrowed households per household debt was found high. Casual labourers belonging to non-irrigated villages have reported that they have borrowed the amount to meet consumption and other requirements. In case of attached labourers the debt burden was found high. This might be mainly because of the employer forced the labourers to borrow from them so as to have their without any break. This is one kind of linkage (interlocking of credit with labour service). As far as savings are concerned, only in Sirvel mandal the casual labourers reported savings while in case of attached labourers majority were reported with savings.

In the study area, most of the non-agricultural operations are attended to by the male agricultural labourers. To a lesser extent, works like construction are attended to by female labourers. Non-agricultural wage rates in all the three sample mandals are found to be higher than the agricultural wage rates. As far as income through non-agricultural wages is concerned, highest income i.e., RS. 1484 per household was reported by the casual sample labourers of Sirvel mandal, followed by Orvakal and Maddikera mandals at Rs.1456 and Rs1447 respectively. Thus it can be concluded that there is not much of difference with regard to non-agricultural wage income among the three sample mandals.
In all the three sample mandals, there is much similarity in the consumption as the sample casual labourers spent a major part of their income i.e., 70 to 79 per cent on food only. It was found that expenditure on clothing was uniform and low in all the sample mandals. Only two percentage of amount was spent on education of their children. In case of the sample attached labourers the expenditure on food was around 55 to 71 per cent, which was less than the expenditure incurred by casual labourers. As the attached labourer gets his food from his employer, naturally the expenditure incurred on food by them is to meet the needs of other members in the family. From the comparison of the expenditure pattern of sample casual and attached labourers, it can be concluded that the attached labourers are comparatively better placed in terms of expenditure on clothing and other items. Our field survey results shows variations in regard with expenditure pattern of different caste groups. Hence, the hypothesis expenditure pattern of different caste categories as shows variation is accepted.

Average non-agricultural wages of sample attached labourer show that some of the family members do participate in non-agricultural activities. The income so derived was recorded highest by the households of Orvakal mandal at Rs.1235 and in the case of Maddikera and Sirvel mandals the figures stood at Rs.1,061 and Rs.1000 respectively. Of all the caste categories, attached labourer households among Scheduled Tribes reported Rs.25000/- per household as income earned from non-agricultural wages.

For casual agricultural labourers wages are paid mostly in cash and in case of attached labourers too the same thing holds good. However, certain other non-monetary benefits are provided to the agricultural labourers with specific reference to the attached labourers category. In regard to the system of wage payment, it was noticed that majority of the attached labourers i.e., 36 per cent preferred the payment as and when they required. The next important system is payment in advance (this category constituted 28 per cent). Attached labourers procure advance on the day contract starts. The amount was treated as a standing advance to be adjusted. Another system prevailed in the study area is obtaining wages at regular intervals. Of the three sample mandals, a negligible percentage of attached
labourers prefer the payment at the end of the year. We may, therefore, concluded that owing to poor financial conditions and uncertainty of their employment, they seek either advance payment or payment as and when needed.

Our study results with regard to additional benefits (apart from wages) indicates that the benefits of casual labourers are not comparable with that of sample attached labourers. 36 per cent of the casual labourers have reported one or other additional benefit. In all only 10 per cent of the sample casual labourers reported that they were provided with food during the working time. In case of attached labourers, 80 per cent of the sample labourers reported that food was provided by their masters. Evidently, the attached labourers were treated as members of family, and as such they availed certain other benefits like clothing and housing.

In the study are 43 to 67 per cent of the attached labourers have been working with the present employer for more than one year. The main reason for their continuation are amicable disposition, help in times of need and attractive remuneration. Further, study results shows that 33 to 57 per cent of the attached labourers reported that they were not continuously working with the same farmer due to delay in payment of wages, exploitation and remunerative wages. Agrarian relations are often disturbed due to conflict between the labourers and the employers. The mode of settlement of the conflict between the employer and the employee is through mutual adjustment and the next important source of settlement is through local leaders assistance. SC respondents in the study area almost banked upon only these two sources for the settlement of disputes or any conflict. In case of BC respondents in addition to the said sources they were sought the interference of a third person (other than a local leader).

From our sample survey it is found that majority of the sample casual agricultural labourers were not aware of the developmental schemes implemented for their benefit. Further, it is also found that even the sample labourers who were aware of the developmental schemes lacked detailed knowledge about them. Only 11 per cent of the total sample agricultural labourers have benefited from the Governmental schemes. Nearly 72 per cent of
the sample labourers did not hear of the Minimum Wages Act. Comparatively the awareness is more among the sample agricultural labourers of Sirvel mandal compared to other two sample mandals. Contrary to the general expectations, the awareness about the Minimum Wages Act was found high among SCs and the least by STs. Hence, our hypothesis 'majority of agricultural labourers are not aware of Minimum Wages Act' is proved.

**ANALYSIS OF VARIATION (ANOVA) FOR CASUAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

ANOVA results with regard to per capita wage incomes of casual labourers shows the negligible variation among all the categories of casual labourers, because the F value is lower than the F critical value. Even with regard to income, expenditure, savings and indebtedness the variation is found negligible, as the F values are lower than the F critical values.

**ANOVA FOR ATTACHED AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

Variation with regard to annual per capita wage incomes of the attached labourers, among to different caste groups is negligible as per the ANOVA Test. With regard to per capita total incomes the variation is negligible. The same is the case with regard to their expenditure and savings. However, the analysis of variation (ANOVA) with regard to annual average indebtedness reveals that the level of variation is more.

Our study identifies illiteracy, low rate of wages and income, less opportunities of employment in agricultural and non-agricultural occupation, indebtedness, poor social condition are some of the issues being encountered by the sample casual agricultural labourers.
We found that majority of the sample attached labourers did not express complete satisfaction in regard to wage payment and provision of other benefits. Unfavourable working conditions explains for their dissatisfaction.

It is evident from our study that the casual labourers’s work was restricted to field operations, whereas the attached labourer had to attend to all sorts of work. Majority of the respondents have been continuously working mainly because of high wage income and it is equally important to note that 43 to 67 per cent of labourer are continuing as, they are indebted to the farmers. Since, majority of agricultural labourers are drawn from the low income categories, they prefer to work as attached labourers with the hope that the employer may extend to them the necessary financial help as and when necessity arises. The attached labourers stated that they were forced to quit their work from under one farmer to another owing to factors such as heavy load of work, undue delay in the payment of wages, which were mostly unremunerative. Attached labourers resolved disputes, if any, which arose between them and employers by resorting to mutual negotiations or through the good offices of local elders.

In the light of our empirical study, we conclude that agricultural labourers, in a drought-prone region in particular, are subjected to abject poverty, exploitation and their Socio-Economic conditions are in a miserable plight. If we compare the facilities available to the agricultural labour in the study area compared to the industrial labour the discrimination would be more clear.

We suggest the following measures, to be implemented both by Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations, working in tandem, for the amelioration of the miserable plight and improvement of the quality of life of the agricultural labour who constitute the bulk of the rural work-force.

*Land Reforms*
Effective and speedy implementation of land reform measures will go a long way not only in creating the asset to the agricultural labourers but also generating additional employment opportunities within their native villages. This step will also reduce economic and social tensions in the rural areas.

Creating More Watersheds

Watershed development programme has shown positive signs of development in drought-prone areas. By dividing the drought-prone sample mandals like Maddikera and Orvakal into many mini water-sheds, agricultural labourers will secure additional employment during and after its implementation.

Equal Wages

To implement equal wages for equal work Government should take corrective measures. As a first step there is a need to conduct region-specific studies about the productivity of male and female agricultural labourers, without which payment of wages to the female agricultural labourer will remain a far cry.

Creating Additional Employment Opportunities

In our study, the sample agricultural labourers particularly the casual labourers have been struggling with the problem of seasonal unemployment. To minimize the severity of unemployment problem particularly in chronically drought-prone mandals like Maddikera and Orvakal, the Government must take steps to augment employment through the Government-sponsored employment generation schemes. Public works like road construction, soil conservation, minor irrigation, bunding and leveling of land, digging of wells, removal of silt in the tanks, afforestation construction of schools, hospitals, libraries, will not only generate additional employment but also create the needed social and economic overheads for further development.
Micro-level planning for creation of additional employment avenues

According to the level/stage of development it is necessary to prepare separate plans for the areas which endowed with irrigation and other resources and the areas which are lacking these resources and are frequently prone to drought. This step will go a long way in generating additional employment.

Unionisation Of Agricultural Labourers

Our study revealed that the agricultural labourers have not been able to organize themselves. This naturally reduces the bargaining capacity of the agricultural labourers. To overcome this problem, Government should take measures to organise them so as to strengthen their bargaining power and also to fight against their exploitation by employers. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’S) should take active part in mobilising the labourers towards unionisation.

Imparting Skills

To reduce the burden on agricultural sector, agricultural labourers, particularly the younger generation needs to be trained in skills required for the manufacturing enterprises. Further, a section of the rural labour may be trained in repair and maintenance of producer, consumer and other durable assets so that they can seek self-employment opportunities. In the absence of training the pathetic conditions of agricultural labourers can not be improved.

Linking of Employment Generation Schemes With The Agricultural Developmental Schemes:

Agriculture is still considered as the primary source of employment and income in the rural areas. It is therefore, necessary to plan in such a way that the programmes introduced
to develop the agricultural sector must also in a way to provide additional employment avenues.

**Strict Implementation of Minimum Wages Act:**

It is disheartening to note that in the study area, agricultural wages are nearer to the minimum wages only in the peak seasons, while in slack season wages are paid at a lower rate. Hence, there is a need for strict implementation of Minimum Wages Act with a review to raise the wage levels of the agricultural labourers. In view of the widespread illiteracy among the sample agricultural labourers, the administrators should extend the necessary help in obtaining the Minimum Wage.

**Supply of Essential Commodities:**

In the study area, most of the sample agricultural labourers were found getting only rice through public distribution system (PDS). To compensate for the rising prices of other essential commodities including the food-grains and other essential commodities, they need to be supplied through PDS.

**Minor Irrigation Development:**

As the scope for major irrigation is limited in the study area, it is suggested that the agriculturists have to be encouraged to irrigate the crops by creating appropriate minor irrigation systems. This step will increase the intensity of cropping, facilitate the use of modern inputs and help to generate additional employment and income and also increases the wage level.
Small Scale Industries:

It is found that in the study area agricultural sector has failed to provide full time employment to the casually employed agricultural labourers. In order to reduce the magnitude of unemployment there is a need for expansion of small-scale industries, mostly agro-based. Which will absorb the surplus small and marginal farmers who are joining the ranks of agricultural labourer. To accelerate the pace of growth of agro-based industries, Government should create the needed infrastructure like roads, transport, communication, banking agencies in the nodal or rural growth centres.

Housing:

Government should construct pucca houses for the agricultural labour so that they can live in hygienic environment with a sense of psychological security and societal respectability.

Educating the Families of Agricultural Labourers

It is a matter of concern, as revealed by sample agricultural labourers, that many of them are illiterate. Besides, during our survey, it was also found that enrollment of the school-going children was low among the agricultural labourers. Added to this, drop-out rate is also abnormally high. To overcome all the afore-said problems, the head of the household should be educated first. The focus should be on importation of non-formal education or functional literacy. Universalisation of elementary education should be another important step in the direction of ensuring education to the children of agricultural labourers.

Establishment of Labour Bureaus at Mandal Level

As the problem of unemployment in the backward regions, particularly the drought-prone areas like Kurnool District, cannot be solved in a short time, the labour bureaus have to be set up in mandals like Maddikera and Orvakal with a view to impart skills and training according to the local needs. These bureaus should also in advance assess the employment at
the local level and also explore the possibilities of employment opportunities in near by /far off places. If this sort of information is provided to the unemployed agricultural labourers, a few of them will definitely migrate to other areas where their services are needed. This step will not create local shortages of labour.

Introduction of Location-Specific Appropriate Technology:

To ameliorate the conditions of cultivators with specific reference to less irrigated and moderately irrigated parts of the study area, there is a need to encourage the farmers to adopt modern technology with specific reference to dry land technology. This not only helps in raising production and productivity levels in agriculture, but also generate additional employment opportunities. In the drought-prone areas if changes are to be brought about with regard to cropping pattern, success on this front will also pave the way for creating additional employment.

Dairying

To improve the socio-economic conditions of the agricultural labourer households in the study area there is a need to extend financial and other help for setting up subsidiary occupations. In the light of our present study, it is suggested that the dairying has to be taken up as a subsidiary occupation, which is self-employed in nature. This is considered as most honourable and income generating activity for agricultural labourer households.

Regulation of Working Hours

We found in our study that the agricultural labourers were working for more than the stipulated time. In fact, they have to work right from the sunrise to sunset. To overcome this problem, Labour Welfare Department should take steps to ensure that the agricultural labourers will not work beyond eight hours per day. Any additional work over and above this should be paid additionally. If agricultural labourers are also educated about this provisions, one can see the improvement with regard to the working hours.
Streamlining the Working Conditions of Attached Labourers:

In the study area, the attached labourers reported that they were facing problems like ill-treatment, rigid working hours, no provision for leave etc., Appropriate statutory measures should be taken up to improve the working conditions.

Provision for Reservations to the Children of Agricultural Labourers in Education and Employment

Since the agricultural labourers are drawn from different caste categories, many a labourer finds it difficult in availing the benefits and other concessions extended to them by the Government. We therefore suggest that agricultural labourers should be treated as a separate category extending the benefit of reservation to the children of agricultural labourers with regard to education and employment.

Financing of Agricultural Labourers Through Institutional Agencies

As it has been observed in our survey, majority of the agricultural labourers without landed property (both attached and casual) borrowed from non-institutional agencies (including the present and prospective employer). As a result, the labourers are prone to exploitation. Hence, the vital importance of institutional credit agencies extending their financial support and services to the agricultural labour for not only productive purposes but also to meet pressing consumption expenditure.

In addition to the above stated measures, it is suggested that National policy for agricultural labour should be formulated to include measures for expanding and strengthening the programmes of assistance for meeting the basic needs of the agricultural labourers in the drought-prone regions in particular and the country in general.