Chapter-VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
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► Land-labour market in agriculture emerged due to unequal distribution of land in the agrarian economies. A few households own disproportionately large part of agricultural land while majority of other households own little or no land. Land owners lease their surplus land or hire labour services for optimal utilization of their land resources. Those owning little or no land lease in land or hire out their labour services to earn their living. The oligopolistic land owners determine the wages of agricultural labourers which is far below the wage rate which could prevail in a competitive market conditions. Agricultural labourers are unorganized and hence they cannot collectively resist the low wages paid by land owners. Agriculture being seasonal, agricultural labourers faces seasonal unemployment and underpayment of wages.

► Agricultural labourers in rural areas largely belong to economically and socially backward households like SC/ST etc. They are mostly landless and poor and depend on farm work in the villages. Broadly there are two categories of agricultural labourers viz. casual labourers hired on a day-to-day basis and paid at the end of the day’s work. The second category of labourers is piece rated casual workers. They are related to permanent labour or attached or tied labour hired on a long term basis.
Permanent labour is viewed as an implicit labour contract by which risk averse workers accept employment at a lower level. Overall accepted cost to the entrepreneur in exchange for smoothening fluctuations in consumption. Two categories of permanent or attached workers are identified viz. (1) Permanent labour employed to perform activities that require some precision and judgement and whose outcome is known after some time. (2) Permanent labour employed to perform all types of activities both monitorable and non-monitorable. This latter category of permanent labour has been acceptable to experts like Bardhan and Rudra, (1981), Bhalla (1976) and Breman (1993).

Transformation of agriculture due to adoption of new agricultural technology, has made a qualitative effect on the functioning of the labour market in terms of

- increase in wages and employment
- consequent fall in deprivation
- increasing feminization of labour
- reduction in the exploitative conditions of employment
- proliferation of tied labour attachment through credit and land leasing.

Recent studies have reported increasing casualisation of labour, increasing feminization of labour due to male migration, the decline in the customary and dependency relationship, increasing integration of labour market due to increased mobility of labour because of development in the means of communication and road
infrastructure (Srivastava, 2000). It is observed by some experts that in the changed scenario the tied labour contracts have been voluntary (H.R. Sharma and Virendar Kumar, 2003). It has been suggested by some researchers that despite substantial increase in real wages and employment opportunities available to agricultural labourers they continue to depend on the landlords, which depresses their wages causing an insignificant improvement in their standard of living. The phenomenon has been termed as the standard of living paradox (Heyer, 1997 cited in Corta and Venkateshwarlu, 1999).

►Variously defined by Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee of 1950-51 and 1956-57 and the National Commission on Labour, agricultural labourers are those workers who work on others land for wages. Agricultural Labour Committee has categorized agricultural labourers into (i) Attached labour and (ii) Casual labour. Attached labourers are further classified into (i) Bonded labourer, (ii) Long term farm servant and (iii) Tied labourer. Casual labourers are classified into (i) Small farmer labourers, (ii) Tenant labourers and (iii) Share croppers.

►Agricultural labourers in India are characterized by the following.

• They are unorganized
• They are unskilled
• They migrate from one area to another
• They are seasonally unemployed
• They get low wages
• They belong to weaker sections of the society
• They work long hours
• There is absence of social security for them
• They are indebted
• They have low social status
• There is high incidence of child labour.

►The incidence of landlessness among the rural households in the country varied from 34.5% in 1987-88 to 42.8% in 2004-05. There is a wide variation in the incidence of landlessness among rural households in different states during the period.

►The high incidence of households without land among the agricultural labour families is found between 1983 and 2004-05 in India.

►There is a trend of increase in the number of rural households percent age of rural labour households and percentage of agricultural labour households during 1983 to 2004-05. However a marginal decline is found in the agricultural labour households over age size of rural labour households, average number of wage earners (ALH) and average number of wage earners (RLH).

►There is high incidence of agriculture labour households of OBC (36%) and SC (34%) than that of ST (14%) and Others (16%) in India.

►Number of days worked in a year by men are more than for women in the category of (1) wage employment (2) self employment and (3) salary employment. It is surprising that the number of days
worked by children is more in self employment compared to men and women.

► There is a decline in the number of days not worked by men women and children due to sickness and due to want of work between 1983 and 1999-2000.

► There is a decline in the growth rate of agricultural employment and wages in the categories of self employment and wage employment. But there is a increase in total agricultural employment.

► There is average daily earnings in agricultural operations for men women and children have gone up during 1983 to 2004-05. Similarly average daily earnings of men, women and children have gone up during the same period.

► There are average daily earnings in non agricultural operations for men, women and children have gone up during 1983 to 2004-05. Similarly average daily earnings of men, women and children have gone up during the same period.

► There is real per capita consumption expenditure of agricultural labour households was higher in 1999-2000 compared to the previous years.

► The literacy rates amongst workers and persons below 7 years of age for male and female has been lower than national average in states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. It is very high in Kerala followed by Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
The proportion of children from agricultural labour households has gone up considerably in all the states in 1999-2000.

A review of various research studies on agricultural labour at regional and national level has revealed some major issues and problems relating to the farm labourers in general and farm labourers in India in particular. Existence of surplus labour and the consequent underemployment has been a major problem in the country according to R. Parthasarathy (1997).

A more detailed study by Kulamani Padhi (2007) has highlighted the precarious socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers. The labour class is one of the most neglected classes in the rural economy. Agricultural labourers suffer from low income, irregular employment opportunities, lack of skill and training. The socially weaker sections like SCs and STs constitute the major component of agriculture class in rural areas.

Mahaveer Jain (1987) has referred to the plight of women agricultural labourers who faced hardship like low wages, ill health, poor work conditions and absence of facilities for children carried to the workplace.

Suneet Chopra (2005) has drawn attention to the declining number of workdays due to mechanization and modernization of agriculture leading to unemployment.

Abdul Aziz (1979) has strongly argued for organization of agriculture labourers to safeguard their interests. Income and assets
poverty of agricultural labourers has been mentioned by Sharma B.P. (1986).

►A field study by G. Jyothina (1996) has revealed invisible women labour services and unemployment in Chittor district. The author has pleaded for equality of wages for women labourers.

►Agricultural labour lack infrastructural facilities and assets like land, housing, etc., according to P. Kothandarami and Others (1996).

►A study by T. Rajulu Shanthy (2009) in Kerala and Tamil Nadu has revealed that majority of women (63%) agricultural labourers were low in labour efficiency.

►Sumit Mazumdar and M. Guruswamy (2006) have found from their study that change in the cropping pattern in Kerala had displaced large volume of women workforce from agriculture especially in the rural areas. There has been a declining trend in work participation among females due to stagnant manufacturing industry and large scale emigration and out migration from the state.

►A study by Sabita Misra (2008) on “Life of Women Agricultural Labourers in Orissa” has highlighted the socio-economic profile of women agricultural labourers in two districts of Orissa. The study has revealed poor housing and low wages affecting the efficiency of women labourers. The author has suggested for formation of unions, provision of nutritious food and provision of better living conditions.

►Sunil Kumar Misra (2001) has observed that the slow rate of occupational diversification coupled with a high work force
dependency on the agricultural sector is one of the indicators of backwardness of the region. He has suggested for shifting the workforce from agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector.

►N. Sreedhar and I. Narendra Kumar (2012) have argued for protection of female and child labourers. They have stressed the need for effective implementation of various schemes of the government for the welfare of the agricultural labourers in general and the women and child labourers in particular.

►Haveri district came into existence in the year 1997 subsequent to the reorganization of districts in Karnataka state. The district is in the northern part of Karnataka and lies on the north latitude 14° 28° and 14° 59° and east longitude 75° 07° and 75° 38°.

►The total geographical area of the district is 485156 hectares and accounts for 2.53 percent of the total area of the state. Located in the interior part of the state the district has fertile black and red soil. Four rivers Varada, Kumudhwati, Dharma and Tungabhada drain the district. The district does not have any mineral resources. The district has a total forest area of 47454 hectares and accounts for 10 percent of the total geographical area of the district. Non-agricultural and accounts for 7 percent, barren land 1 percent, permanent pastures 3 percent, trees and plants 1 percent, current fallow land 2 percent, net sown area 75 percent, arable but not available for cultivation 1 percent and other fallow land accounts for 1 percent of the geographical area of the district.

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The district has two climatic zones viz. Malnad zone and Transitional zone. Hirekerur, Hanagal and parts of Shiggaon come under Malnad zone. Ranebennur, Byadagi, Haveri and Savanur come under transitional zone. The normal annual rainfall of the district is 753 mm.

Demographic details of the district indicate that the district has a total population of 14.39 lakhs constituting 2.72 percent of the total population of Karnataka state. Large majority of 79 percent of the district population lives in rural areas as against the state's average of 69 percent. The density of population in Haveri district is 298 per sq.km, which is slightly more than the state average of 275.

Of the total workers cultivators account for 30.5 percent, agricultural labourers 43.7 percent, domestic workers 4.1 percent and other workers 21.6 percent.

Haveri district is well served by a large number of schools and colleges. There are 569 primary (lower) schools, 809 primary (higher) schools, 329 high schools, 95 PU colleges, 30 degree colleges, 3 polytechnic colleges, 2 engineering colleges and 1 medical college. There are 21 G.P. libraries, 10 branch libraries and 19 slum area libraries.

The district has number of hospitals in private and public sector. There are 78 Allopathic hospitals, 16 hospitals of Indian System of Medicine, 18 private and 6 Taluk hospitals, 5 Community Health Centres, 64 Primary Health Centres, 307 Primary Health Sub-centres, 423 Drug Shops and 1 Blood Bank in the district.
The district is served by 101 kms of National highways, 588.21 kms of State highway, 1884.91 kms of District roads, 20.60 kms of other district roads and 4821.60 kms of Village roads. The total road length in the district is 7416.32 kms. The district has 99 kms of Broad-gauge railway line. There are 258 Post offices, 58 Telegraphic Exchanges, 28908 Telephones, 4753 Public Telephone booths and 1 Panchayat Mobile Service Centre. There is large number of motor vehicles serving the public, industry and commerce, etc. The total number of vehicles in the district is 127930.

The district is highly agricultural oriented. Total sown area in the district is 433469 hectares. Net sown area is 36671 hectares. The district has an area of 75186 hectares of irrigated land. Canals, Tanks, Borewells and Lift irrigation are the major sources of irrigation in the district.

Main crops of the district are paddy, jowar, maize and ragi. Important cash crops are groundnut, chillies and cotton. Cereals occupied 50.18 percent of the Gross Sown Area. Pulses occupied 7.60 percent, oil seeds occupied 7.45 percent and cotton occupied 18.54 percent of Gross Sown Area. The district has 64297 marginal land holders, 72117 small land holders, 16133 semi-medium land holders, 45979 medium land holders and 1896 large land holders.

There are 227 Agricultural Cooperative Societies, 256 Milk Producers Cooperative Societies, 21 Housing Cooperative Societies and 7 Marketing Cooperative Societies in Haveri district. The total number of cooperative societies in the district was 807 with 375024
members. There are 7 Regulated Markets (Main) and 12 Sub-Markets in the district.

►The district has large number of banking institutions serving different customer groups. There are 16 State Bank of India, Group Branches of which State Bank of India has 10 branches and State Bank of Mysore has 6 branches. The total number of commercial banks in the district was 47 of which 37 belonged to public sector and 11 belonged to private sector. Karnataka Vikas Grameen Bank has 51 branches, Cooperative banks have 18 and KSFC has one branch in Haveri district.

►There are large number of small scale industries in Haveri district, which include Engineering, Chemicals and other sector. The district has one sugar cooperative factory in Sangur – Haveri. The Karnataka State Small Scale Industrial Development Corporation has formulated Industrial Estates at Ranebennur, Haveri, Shiggaon and Hirekerur. Development of Industrial Estates is under progress at Savanur, Byadagi and Haveri. Industrial sheds are offered on lease-cum-sale basis. A total number of 8786 industrial units are registered with an investment of Rs. 155.84 crore employing 33510 persons. These small scale industrial units are engaged in manufacturing activities relating to food processing, textiles, furniture, leather, chemicals, metals, paper, printing, plastics, minerals, machine tools, transport, etc.

►The district has made rapid strides in some areas of social development. There are 1776 Yuvaka Mandals and 119 Yuvati
Mandals in the district. The district has 10978 Old Age Pensioners and 50159 Maternity Allowance beneficiaries. Haveri district has large number of 4260 Stree Shakti Sanghas with 10456 Scheduled Caste members and 8845 Scheduled Tribe women members. The total number of women members in these sanghas was 67834. The district has 1687 Anganwadi centres.

► The Government had covered 194 groups under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swa Rojgar Yojana (SGSRY) and individual schemes in Haveri district in 2009-10. The financial involvements were Rs. 258.53 lakhs and Rs. 6.74 lakhs respectively. Employment generated under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2009-10 was 54.36 lakh mandays and funds utilized under the programme were Rs. 9123.63 lakhs.

► Age-wise distribution of respondent agricultural labourers has revealed that majority of agricultural labourers belonged to economically active population between 25 and 55 years of age. Age has an important impact upon the capacity and productivity of individual workers. Majority of 41 agricultural labourers in Byadagi taluka and 33 agricultural labourers in Hirekerur taluka belonged to 35-44 years of age group followed by 23 agricultural labourers in Byadagi taluka and 29 agricultural labourers in Hirekerur taluka belonged to 45-54 years and 24 and 20 respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka respectively belonged to old age group of 55 years and above. A small number of 12 and 18
agricultural labourers in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka belonged to younger age group of 25 to 34 years.

► Male agricultural labourers are involved more in agricultural work compared to female workers. This is an obvious fact as majority of female members of the families are engaged in domestic work. Hence the study has covered majority of 90 male respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi and 97 in Hirekerur taluka.

► Workers belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes are found more as agricultural labourers compared to those belonging to other caste groups. The study has covered 43 and 21 agricultural labourers belonging to Scheduled Caste groups in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka respectively, while 14 in Byadagi and 23 in Hirekerur taluka belonged to Scheduled Tribe caste groups. There were 21 labourers each in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka belonged to Lingayat caste group. Further 22 labourers each in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka belonged to other caste groups.

► Majority members of the families including the respondent agricultural labourers had primary education (473) in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. A lesser number of 50 members of families of respondent agricultural labourers have secondary education. Illiteracy among the members of respondents' families was high as a large number of them (264) were illiterate. A very few (12) had higher education.

► Factors causing illiteracy among the family members of respondent agricultural labourers include lack of money income,
increase in family expenditure, large size of the family, social practices and lack of interest among children in going to schools and lack of educational facilities in the villages. Maximum number of respondent agricultural labourers has mentioned lack of adequate money income as the cause of illiteracy followed by lack of interest among children in going to schools, large size of the family, social practices and neglecting schooling.

► Occupational distribution of families of respondent agricultural labourers indicates that majority them referred to agriculture and agricultural labour followed by agriculture and labour work under MGNREGA.

► Personal interviews during the field survey have revealed largely similar trends regarding the nature of work participation by respondent male agricultural labourers in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka comprising the study areas. Majority of the respondents were found to be exclusively involved in agricultural labour work followed by substantial number of respondents combining agriculture with other work. A lesser number of respondents were found involved in agriculture along with agricultural labour work. Thus the main stay of work participation in agricultural labour combined with either agriculture or non-agricultural work for the respondent agricultural labourers in the study area. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of work participation of male family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).
Agricultural labour and domestic work has been the major work participation of majority of female family members of respondent agricultural labourers. A small number of female members of agricultural labourers have combined domestic work with agricultural labour, while a still smaller number of female members have been involved only in domestic work. Thus agricultural labour as the major work participation of female members of the family of the respondents agricultural labourers is found from the field survey in both Byadagi and Hirekerur study areas. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of work participation of female family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

Child members of the families of the respondent agricultural labourers are mostly involved exclusively in schooling both in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. A handful of child members of the families of respondents are engaged exclusively as child labourers in Hirekerur study area. A good number of child members of the respondents have been involved both in schooling and labour work. The small number of child members of the respondent families involved in labour work indicates the prevalence of child labour among the poor families connected with agricultural work participation. There is no similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of work participation of child family members at 5% level of significance (p<0.05).

Economic poverty of the agricultural labourers is apparent from the fact that majority of the respondents in the study areas are
landless labourers. However a good number of respondents in both Byadagi and Hirekerur study areas had some land. Further, the substantial numbers of the respondent were casual labourers and one respondent was fully attached to agricultural labourers.

► Some agricultural labourers supplement their wage income by operating agricultural lands as tenants. It is also observed in many cases, that such labourers/tenants loose their tenancy when the owners evict them for their own reasons. This leads to the labourers becoming landless agricultural labourers, depending purely on wages income. However the study has revealed that none of the respondent agricultural labour was evicted as tenant by the land owners.

► The practice of attached labour among the respondent agricultural labourers is absent as revealed by the study. The study has revealed that respondent agricultural labourers are working for particular land owner. There is mobility of labour in the farm sector largely determined by forces of demand and supply in the labour market.

► It is significant to find from the field survey that the respondent agricultural labourers did not suffer from loan liabilities. However responses of few agricultural labourers indicate that they do face the problem of resorting to borrowings due to their inadequate wage income.

► Land owners allotting small piece of land to labourers for cultivating as cotenants of crop sharers is indicated by the respondents. Owners providing the facility of bullocks and agricultural
implements to respondents for cultivating allotted land have been asserted by a few respondent agricultural labourers. These labourers are also under obligations to comply with the land owners needs by providing their labour different purposes. Very small number of respondent agricultural labourers obtained consumption loan from the land owners.

► Wages of agricultural labourers are determined by the prevalent labour market forces in the rural economy of the country. However rural labour markets in India do not confirm to the classic competitive labour markets of economic theory. Wages for agricultural labourers are paid on daily basis. However under attached labour system wages are based on yearly basis.

► Wages paid to agricultural labourers have shown wide variations with regard to different operations of farming in the two study talukas Byadagi and Hirekerur. Thus there is inter-regional and inter-operational variation in the amount of wages received by the respondent agricultural labourers. Differences in the amount of wages paid to agricultural labourers are found relating to ploughing, sowing, transporting, harvesting, threshing, cow herding, spade work and other operations. Higher wages are paid to male workers for spade work, threshing, harvesting, transporting, while wages are lower for sowing and ploughing in the study areas. There is no similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of wages of male agricultural labourers of family members at 5% level of significance (p<0.05).
Wages paid to female agricultural labourers are much lower for all these operations compared to the wages paid to male agricultural labourers. Similarly wages paid to child labourers are still lower compared to male and female agricultural labourers. Wages paid to agricultural labourers for long duration under attached or contract labour practices are paid both in cash and kind such as food or food grains, etc. There is no similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of wages of female agricultural labourers of family members at 5% level of significance (p<0.05).

Earning of attached/semi-attached and other labour respondent families averaged at Rs. 42,400.00 in the study areas of Byadagi and Hirekerur. Average earnings of other members of the respondents working outside agricultural sector were estimated at Rs. 14,294.90 in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. Average earnings of members of the respondent families working outside the village were estimated at Rs. 21,600.00 for the two talukas of Byadagi and Hirekerur study areas. The current total earnings of the members of the respondent households in the study areas of Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka averaged at Rs. 31,721.11

Different wage rates are prevalent in the villages depending upon customs and practices. Thus labour market in rural areas is more imperfect. This aspect of wage differentials for agricultural labourers has been affirmed by majority of respondents in the study areas. The study has revealed that agricultural labourers in the study areas preferred other options for work, which indicates that they are
not happy with conditions of work and the amount of earnings from their present status as casual attached labour. However majority of respondent agricultural labourers did not face situations where they had to work for lower wages than the ruling wage rate. Employers are found to offer different wage rates for the same operations according to majority of respondent agricultural labourers.

Wages have been pushed up in recent years in rural areas due to the initiation of the Government schemes like MGNREGA and due to migration of surplus labour to urban areas. However majority of respondent agricultural labourers in the study areas have indicated that wages have not changed during the current year compared to the last year. Changes in wage rates of agricultural labourers take place mainly by the employers' unilateral decisions according to majority of respondent agricultural labourers. A downward movement of wage schedule of agricultural labourers was observed by majority of respondents during the current period.

Agricultural labourers are not much conversant with the government's Minimum Wage Rate policies. This has been found from the responses of the agricultural labourers in the study area. Majority of respondents in Byadagi (66) and in Hirekerur (78) study areas have mentioned that they were not aware of the government policy of Minimum Wage Rate. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of knowledge about the minimum wage rate policy of the government among agricultural labourers of family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).
The incidence loan liability of agricultural labourers in the study areas has been limited. It is found from the study that only 13 percent of respondents in Byadagi taluka and 9 percent in Hirekerur taluka had obtained loan against their labour work. No mortgage was offered for the loan according to the respondents (20) who had taken loan. Loan obtained from employers is interest bearing as well as interest free according to the respondents. Such situations depend on the relationship between the labourers and the employers. Agricultural labourers being poor have also resorted to borrowing from sources which are not related to their labour work. A small number of agricultural labourers in Byadagi (37%) and in Hirekerur (42%) have resorted to such loans. Such loans amounted to Rs. 10680.00 in Byadagi and Rs. 9207.32 in Hirekerur. A small number of respondents offered mortgages for such loans. Such loans have been interest bearing according to majority of respondents covered by the study.

Poor agricultural labourers have been forced to obtain loan every year. This has been affirmed by a substantial number of respondent agricultural labourers in the study area. Further consumption credit could be obtained easily according to them.

Major sources of loan for the respondent agricultural labourers included traders and commission agents, landlords, cooperative societies, relatives and banks. Maximum number of respondents obtained loan from traders and commission agents followed by landlords, cooperative societies, relatives and banks. For
landless labourers the major sources of loan are landlords, relatives, traders, commission agents and banks.

► Agricultural labourers possessed agricultural land through ownership or by way of leading from the owners. The size of the owned as well as leased land of the respondent agricultural labourers has been small and marginal. In Byadagi taluka the leased land at 2.13 acres was higher than owned land of 1.82 acres. In Hirekerur taluka the owned land of the respondent agricultural labourers was higher at 1.92 acres compared to leased land of 1.80 acres.

► A small number of 2 respondent agricultural labourers cum tenants in Byadagi worked mainly for the landlord and they were paid current wages by the landlord. On the contrary 6 respondent labourers in Byadagi and 5 in Hirekerur did not work for the landlord only. The 2 respondent had other obligations towards the landlord and they did not have freedom to work for other employers without the fear of loosing the tenancy of land. This indicates the 2 respondents who were cultivating the leased land of the land owner were under severe control of the latter. It is found further that the 8 respondent agricultural labourers with leased land had their own bullocks and plough for operating their land. The 12 agricultural labourers each in Byadagi and Hirekerur with leased bond shared the cost of seed, fertilizers, etc. for the leased land. Majority of the respondent agricultural labourers managed their own land without hiring outside labour for agricultural operations.
Maximum of 93 respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi and 100 in Hirekeru taluka derived their family income from wages as agricultural labourers which indicates the intensity of dependence on agricultural labour as a source of family income. Income from own land has been indicated by 47 respondents in Byadagi taluka and 53 respondents in Hirekerur taluka. Income from leased land has been mentioned by 6 respondents in Byadagi taluka and 3 from Hirekerur taluka. Thus the income from this source is limited to a few respondents. Income from subsidiary activities is indicated by a small number of 4 respondents from Byadagi taluka and 10 respondents from Hirekerur taluka. This indicates that a few respondents are involved in subsidiary earning activates to augment their family income. Income from other sources too has been mentioned by majority of respondents in both the taluka areas. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of income from all sources at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

Wage earning of family members of the respondent agricultural labourers per year was estimated at Rs. 36055.00 in Byadagi and Rs. 30490.00 in Hirekerur taluka. Earnings from own land of respondent families was Rs. 35628.57 in Byadagi and Rs. 32540.98 in Hirekerur taluka. The earnings of members of the families of respondent agricultural labourers from non-agricultural labour was Rs. 12855.43 in Byadagi taluka and Rs. 11025.35 in Hirekerur taluka. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of
earning of family members by selling labour at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

► Perceptions of the respondent agricultural labourers regarding the situations of agricultural employment in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka have revealed significant trends.

► Majority of respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi and in Hirekerur taluka have mentioned that there are sufficient employment opportunities for them in agriculture. A good number of other respondents have considered the position as "surplus employment" opportunities in agriculture. However a small number of respondent agricultural labourers have complained of lack of employment opportunities in agriculture. There is no similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of employment situation in Agriculture in the study area at 5% level of significance (p<0.05).

► Agricultural labourers have been augmenting their wage income from other supplementary income from other sources to meet their needs for the family expenditure. However large majority of 88 respondents in Byadagi and 91 in Hirekerur taluka have found the income inadequate to meet their family income. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of adequacy of total income to provide for all needs of the family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

► Change in employment pattern of the family members of agricultural labourers has been mentioned by majority of respondents
in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. Change is bound to occur as the surplus labour in rural areas has reduced the scope for persistence in agricultural labour alone. Moreover various government schemes like MGNREGA have provided alternative opportunities for agricultural labourers. There is no similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of change in the employment pattern of the family members at 5% level of significance (p<0.05).

► The study has revealed the limited range of consumption levels of agricultural labourers covered by the study. The consumption of food items like cereals, pulses, vegetables, meat/fish, etc. is restricted due to their low level of income. Consumption of rice and jowar in terms of quantity is comparatively higher compared to pulses, vegetables, wheat, meat and fish, etc. There is little variation in the level of consumption of food items by the agricultural labourers both in Byadagi as well as Hirekerur talukas covered by the study.

► Consumption expenditure on the other items of the families belonging to the respondent agricultural labourers has shown variations. Expenditure on fuel and on alcohol has been higher compared to other items like medicine, kerosene, phones, etc. The male members of the families of the agricultural labourers seem to have been addicted to consumption of alcohol. Expenditure on clothing is also high.

► The living standards of agricultural labourers are reflected through the range of domestic possessions available with them. Maximum number of agricultural labourers in Byadagi and Hirekerur
study areas possessed chairs, mobiles and used electricity in their homes. A good number of respondent agricultural labourers used kerosene lamps, watches and cycles. A relatively more number of respondent agricultural labourers in Hirekerur study areas possessed these items. This indicates the respondent agricultural labourers in Hirekerur areas are better off compared to those in Byadagi study areas.

► Unproductive expenditure of the families of agricultural labourers covered by the study includes expenditures on alcohol, which has been indicated by maximum number of respondents followed by expenditure on gambling and consumption of tobacco. There is variation in the number of respondents indicating these expenditures in Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. Expenditure on alcohol is indicated by more number of respondents in Byadagi compared to those in Hirekerur taluka while more number of respondents in Hirekerur taluka have indicated expenditure on gambling compared to those in Byadagi taluka. Expenditure on consumption of tobacco is mentioned by more number of respondents in Byadagi taluka compared to those in Hirekerur taluka.

► Expenditure on social functions has bearing on the living standard of the agricultural labourers. Social customs compel them to observe those celebrations and they are forced to spend money even by resorting to borrowings. It is found from the study that majority of the respondents incurred expenditure on festivals in both Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka followed by expenditure on fairs. There is similarity
between both talukas with respect to mean number of social expenditure of the families of respondent agricultural labourers at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

►Health problems have been another concern compelling the respondent agricultural labourers to adjust the expenditure out of their meager wage income. Majority of them have indicated the incidence of ill health among the members of their families. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of ill health in the family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

►The reasons for ill health mentioned by the respondent agricultural labourers include polluted water, unhygienic food, low level of nutritious food and slum environment. Majority of respondents (56) in the two talukas mentioned low level of nutritious food followed by polluted water (48), unhygienic food (11) and slum environment (2).

►Major items of family expenditure according to majority of respondents are food (190), social functions (157), habits (129), hospitals (112) and education (12).

►Agricultural labourers receive their wages in terms of money and in kind. Payment of wages in terms of money is more common in the areas covered by the study. It is found from personal interview that majority of respondents in Byadagi (99) and Hirekerur (99) received their wages in terms of money. A small number of 14 respondents in Byadagi and 1 respondent in Hirekerur received wages in kind.
Financial facilities for the rural poor have been extended by the Government under different schemes. A good number of respondents in the study areas have availed of these facilities though majority of them could not avail of the facilities. However a substantial number of respondent agricultural labourers have obtained help from rich farmers in their respective areas. Such mutual help is possible as rich farmers also need the services of the agricultural labourers.

Majority of 151 respondent agricultural labourers have availed of Ration Cards under the BPL consideration and others under Antyodaya Scheme. Such cards help these poor labourers to obtain subsidized food grains and other essential commodities. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number availed of ration cards of the family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

Living conditions of the respondent agricultural labourers are indicated by the type of residential houses they live in. Majority of 83 respondents lived in Janata houses followed by those living in Tiled house (56), Huts (34), Semi-pucca house (11), Mud house (11), Rented house (5) and RCC house (3).

Large majority of respondent agricultural labourers (148) had electricity facility in their residential places. However the facility was not available for a good number of agricultural labourers (52). This indicates the level of their living standards. Oil lamps, kerosene lamps and solar lamps were used by a small number of 23 respondents in Byadagi and 29 in Hirekerur taluka. There is similarity between both
talukas with respect to mean number of electricity facilities of the family members at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

►The study has revealed that majority of respondent agricultural labourers use agricultural waste (96%). Firewood is used by small number of respondents (4%). Dung cake is used by 1 respondent and Gas/LPG is used by 1 respondent. The use of agricultural waste by 96 percent or respondents indicates the economic poverty of the agricultural labourers who could not afford to use LPG/Gas.

►The use of communication and entertainment media has been confined to radio, TV and mobile. These are the modern means of communication media. It indicates that despite their economic poverty respondent agricultural labourers have become familiar with these modern means of communication and entertainment.

►Domestic animals like buffaloes, bullock, cows, goats and sheep have been owned by majority of respondent agricultural labourers. These domestic animals are owned as they provide some supplementary income in addition to their wage earnings.

►A substantial number of 78 respondent agricultural labourers has become members of self help groups which have become very common organizations for promoting savings and developing the self help approach among the rural poor. A large number of 155 respondent agricultural labourers have affirmed that they have developed savings habits. The impact's of self help groups and rural banking networks have contributed in this direction.
- Majority of respondent agricultural labourers (193) have been using common taps for drinking water. Very few (5) respondents have their own water taps while hand pumps (bore wells) are used for drinking water by 2 respondents. Large majority of respondents (151) have been using open defecation in the absence of their own toilet facilities. A lesser number of respondents (45) had their private toilets while others (4) used common toilets.

- Food security is the major problem faced by majority of respondent agricultural labourers (96%). Financial problem is faced by maximum number of respondents (98%). Problem of electricity (81.50%), drinking water (65%), health problem (30.50%), drainage (23%) are the major problems faced by the respondent agricultural labourers in the study area. Other problems faced by a small number of respondents relate to sanitation, education, roads and environment, etc.

- Government has initiated a policy of employment guarantee schemes in rural areas as agriculture is largely a seasonal occupation. Hence the Government schemes to initiate the seasonal unemployment of rural agricultural workers. The 1817 Poor Employment Act in UK and the New Deal programme of 1930’s in USA are important steps in this direction. Such employment schemes are initiated in countries like Chile (1987) India (1978) Pakistan (1997) Bangladesh (1983) Philippines (1990) Botswana (1960) and Kenya (1992) etc.
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005) has been hailed as a major initiative of the Government of India. MGNREGA is considered as a policy to boost rural income, stabilizes agricultural production and reduce the population pressure in urban areas through migration.

MGNREGA stipulates that every rural household shall have a right to at least 100 day's of guaranteed employment at the wage rate of Rs. 155 per day. Productive works are to be taken up under the programme for creating permanent assets. Training and upgrading of skills of labourers form part of MGNREGA. Payment may be made in cash or kind decided by State Council employment is to be provided within a radius of 5 kms of the residence of the labourer. Provision for children of female laboures on worksite is to be provided for their safety and welfare.

MGNREGA should provide employment without affecting agricultural work in the area. The programme should create productive assets to promote agricultural productivity.

MGNREGA contains “trigger mechanisms” which entitles the people legally to obtain a “Job Card” which has to be provided to anyone applying for the same within 15 days record of days of work and wages received during the year.

MGNREGA has become a lifeline for the rural people. The impact has been positive. It has ensured income security decreased the incidence of poverty; increased food intake reduced mental depression, positively affected health outcomes. The scheme has
decreased gender differential in wages and has increased real wages. It has enhanced agricultural productivity.

► Implementation of MGNREGA has been associated with some flaws in many places. "Missing Job Cards, Fudges Muster Rolls and Diversion of MGNREGA Funds through fake bills". There is improper maintenance of MGNREGA documents. Studies at Bilwara in Rajasthan and a report of the Accountant General (Local Bodies Accounts and Audit) on MGNREGA in Belgaum district in Karnataka have amply proved these flaws in the implementation of the scheme. Social Audits in many states have also not revealed the non-compliances by the administration of the MGNREGA’s stipulations.

► This huge national programme needs an independent body that looks after information technology, HRD, evaluation, social audit and grievance redressals. A dedicated national authority like National Authority for NREGS (NAN) should be setup as an autonomous body. The present ad hoc approach aimed at providing immediate employment should yield place to a systematic, well planned well coordinated effort.

► The performance of MGNREGA is the world’s largest rural employment scheme. The field survey relating to the implementation of the programme indicates very impressive performance in Haveri district of Karnataka state.

► Employment opportunities in the rural areas have brightened due to the initiation of the Government employment scheme of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. This
has resulted in reducing the incidence of seasonal unemployment in the rural sector. However a total number of 90 respondent agricultural labourers only could avail of the employment under the MNREGA scheme while majority of 110 respondents could not avail of the facility. The MNREGA scheme has resulted in reduction of agricultural labour work to large extent according to majority of the respondents in the study area. There is similarity between both talukas with respect to mean number of availing of employment under MGNREGA at 5% level of significance (p>0.05).

► The wage rate per day was Rs. 155.00 under the MGNREGA as indicated by the respondent agricultural labourers in the study area. However majority of respondent agricultural labourers are not satisfied with the MGNREGA scheme as the employment guarantee under the scheme is only for one member of a family and for a limited number of 100 days. Further majority of respondent agricultural labourers felt that there is no improvement in their economic conditions due to MGNREGA.

► There is need for improvement of quality of work undertaken under the MGNREGA Scheme to majority of respondents in Byadagi taluka and a substantial number of respondents in Hirekerur taluka were not satisfied with the quality of work undertaken under MGNREGA.

► Corruption in the implementation of MGNREGA scheme is found in the two study talukas of Byadagi and Hirekerur. There is divergence of opinion in this context as majority of respondents in the
study area asserted the prevalence of corruption in the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme. However a god number of respondents in both the study area did not agree with the majority views in this context.

➢ A large majority of respondents in the two study areas of Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka were dissatisfied with the provision of 100 days of employment under the MGNAREGA Scheme a lesser number of respondents in both the study areas were satisfied with the 100 days of guarantee of employment and one job card.

➢ Job Card entitles the holders for employment of 100 days in a year the field study has revealed that only 51.5% of the respondents had Job Cards. While maximum number of 48.5% to the respondents did not have the Job Cards. Hence there is need for ensuring the issue of Job Cards for all those who need them and who are eligible for the same.

➢ MGNREGA Scheme has failed to ensure 100 days of employment to large majority of 83.5% of respondents in the study areas of Byadagi and Hirekerur taluka. This indicates the failure of the scheme in its main objective of ensuring employment to rural workers. Hence efforts must be made do ensure employment for 100 days to all the eligible workers.

➢ Maximum number of Job Cards was issued to respondent house holds belonging to other castes followed by households belonging to scheduled castes. Taluka wise maximum number of households belonging to SC and ST caste groups were given. Job
Cards in Hirekerur taluka maximum number of households belonging to other castes in Haveri talukas had Job Cards. The number of Job Card holding households was more in 2010-11 compared to 2011-12.

► Hirekerur taluka had maximum number of households working under MGNAREGA in Haveri district. Total number of such households was higher in 2010-11 than in 2011-12. A similar trend is observed relating to the cumulative person days generated in 2010-11 which was higher than in 2011-12.

► There is a decrease in cumulative number of house holds completing 100 day's of employment. The number of beneficiaries of land reforms had decreased in 2011-12 compared to the previous year.

► The study has revealed that the number of persons registered for employment and the number of persons employed under MGNREGA was higher in the age group of 18-30 years compared to other age groups. The number of persons registered for employment under MGNREGA was higher in 2011-12 compared to 2010-11. However the number of persons actually employed was higher in 2011-12 compared to the number in 2010-11.

► Major works covered in Haveri district under MGNREGA included flood control, rural connectivity, water conservation and water harvesting. Renovation of traditional water bodies, draught proofing, irrigation canals, irrigation facilities to SC/ST groups, land development were the other works in addition to Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendras etc.
The total number of works under the MGNREGA in 2010-12 was involving labour expenditure of Rs. 3957.56 lakhs and material expenditure was Rs. 2668.46 lakhs. The total expenditure on labour and material under the scheme in Haveri district was lower in 2011-12 compared in 2012-11.

In terms of number of works initiated under MGNREGA Land Development Works led others which are Rural Connectivity, Irrigation Facility for SC/ST, Drought Proofing and Flood control in 2010-11. A similar trend is followed in 2011-12.

The pattern of work initiated indicates that the MGNREGA works and expenditures are largely oriented in creating rural infrastructure. Taluka wise Hirekerur taluka has accounted for maximum number of works under MGNREGA schemes in Haveri district.

MGNREGA has taken up the construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra in Haveri district, thus providing opportunities for rural employment. Works are being carried out by Gram Panchayats and at Block level. A total number of 208 panchayats are involved and a total number of 97 works have been taken up in the 7 talukas of the district.

Results of the Hypotheses

The five hypotheses have been examined in the light of the research findings and the results have been explained here.

Hypothesis 1

"Employment in agriculture is influenced by the family income of agricultural labourers".
The hypothesis is accepted and is vindicated by the research findings. Maximum of 93 respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi and 100 in Hirekerur taluka derived their family income from wages as agricultural labourers which indicates the intensity of dependence on agricultural labour as a source of family income. Income from land or from other source was very much limited or negligible.

**Hypothesis 2**

"Rural employment programmes of government have helped much of the agricultural labourers".

The hypothesis is rejected in the wake of the research findings. Majority of the respondent agricultural labourers are not satisfied with the employment scheme of MGNREGA as the employment guarantee under the scheme is only for one member of a family and for a limited number of 100 days. A total number of 90 respondent agricultural labourers could avail of the employment under the MGNREGA scheme while majority of 110 respondents could not avail of the facility.

**Hypothesis 3**

"Illiteracy and low level of education has led majority of respondent workers to become agricultural labourers".

The hypothesis is accepted. Majority of 264 members of the families of respondents were illiterate. Large number of 473 members of the families of respondent agricultural labourers had only primary education and a lesser number of 50 members of the families of respondent agricultural labourers had secondary education.
Hypothesis 4

"The incidence of agricultural labour is not related to any caste group of people in the study area".

The hypothesis is rejected. Workers belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes are found more in number as agricultural labourers compared to those belonging to other caste groups. The study has revealed that 43 respondent agricultural labourers in Byadagi taluka and 21 respondent agricultural labourers in Hirekerur taluka belonged to Scheduled Caste. Further 14 in Byadagi taluka and 23 in Hirekerur taluka belonged to Scheduled Tribe caste groups.

Suggestions

► The imperfections in the agricultural labour market in our country have unfavourable impact on wage payments in different places and for different operations in agriculture. Wages are largely determined by the farmers who employ agricultural labourers on ad hoc basis. This has led to wage differentials among the agricultural labourers involved in different agricultural operations and in different places. In addition to this inter operational differences in wages and in different places wage differentials based on gender too have been arbitrary practices followed by farmers in their payment of wages. Women agricultural labourers are paid much below the wages received by male agricultural labourers though women perform the same work and for the same duration. The field survey has revealed this anomaly of wage differences and discrimination between male and female agricultural labourers. It is therefore necessary for the agricultural
labourers to form unions to fight unitedly against the exploitation by the farmers who practice this discriminatory treatment of agricultural labourers based on gender and also because of their weak bargaining power.

► The study has revealed that agricultural labourers are largely unaware of the Minimum Wages Act. This is another reason for the agricultural labourers to allow themselves for exploitation by the rich farmers. There is therefore need for educating the poor agricultural labourers about the legal provisions of the Minimum Wages Act. Non-Government Organizations and leaders of social and political organizations should take lead in this direction to enforce the provisions of Minimum Wages Act and compel the farmer-employers to abide by the legal stipulations.

► Large number of agricultural labourers belongs to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities who are economically poor and socially backward. Majority of them are in debts and continue to work for the money lending farmers. Thus they are caught in a vicious circle of low wages and huge amount of loans obtained from farmers. This indebtedness of agricultural labourers is further exploited by the farm employers. Hence it is suggested that government should initiate debt relief measures in favour of agricultural labourers on the lines of the debt relief measures extended to the poor marginal and small farmers.

► Agricultural labourers suffer from seasonal unemployment as agricultural operations are seasonal. There is need for alternative
employment opportunities during off season for the agricultural labourers to overcome the problem of seasonal unemployment. Agricultural labourers should form Self Help Groups (SHGs) and undertake rural based entrepreneurial activities like rearing milch animals, basket making, preparing food related items like papads, pickles, etc. The Central Government Scheme of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme should be advised properly to suit the agricultural labourers during the off season in rural areas to provide employment to them.

► Labour co-operatives should be organized and they should take up some work creating activities. This would help in providing additional employment for members of the families of agricultural labourers. These societies should provide credit facilities to agricultural labourers for taking up dairy farming, poultry and other rural based activities. Further the societies should also provide necessary marketing facilities for these products produced by agricultural labourers.

► The productivity of agricultural labourers is low in general as most of them are illiterate and unskilled. Hence there is need for providing training to agricultural labourers for enhancement of their skills. Extension services of the agricultural colleges and universities should devote time and resources in this direction.

► There is need for creating proper work environment for female agricultural labourers while working in the farm. Female workers with children should be provided on site facilities for children.
arrangements for providing drinking water and rest places should be made by the farmers engaging female agricultural labourers.

►Though the Minimum Wages Act was passed as far back as in 1948, yet its implementation leaves much to be desired. There is no administrative machinery worth the name to implement effectively the provisions of the Minimum Wage Act. Even otherwise, fixation of minimum wages in an era of continuous and exorbitant rise in prices carries no consolation for the starved masses of agricultural workers. Hence, it is necessary to provide for periodical revision of minimum wages keeping the changing price trends in view.

►The best policy is to create ample employment opportunities outside the field of agriculture. Because of the pressure on land of increasing population it is becoming more and more difficult to absorb additional labour on farms and unless other sectors of the economy create ample employment opportunities it will not be possible to solve the problems of agricultural workers. Perhaps, the best strategy would be to promote labour intensive industries in rural areas. For this purpose facilities of power, finance and training rural youth should be provided in the villages. This will reduce the dependence of agricultural workers on land and increase their incomes.

►It is necessary to improve the working conditions of agricultural workers. Their hours of work should be statutorily fixed and strictly enforced. In case of work beyond the stipulated hours, overtime payments should be made. Child labour should be totally banned.
The state can, if it wishes, organize special programmes to improve the standard of living of agricultural workers. Since a large proportion of such workers belong to scheduled castes, they are not allowed to take water from village wells. State can arrange for drinking water for them. State can also provide housing sites to agricultural workers so that they do not remain houseless. State can organize fair price shops in rural areas to save agricultural workers who generally sell goods at high prices. To improve the socio-economic environment in which agricultural labourers work, State can provide amenities of rural life like health centres, maternity wards, sports facilities, clubs, etc. special programmes for vocational and technical training of agricultural workers can also be arranged.

Agricultural labour has no social security, no earned leave, no sick leave and no pension or gratuity. Substantial efforts should be directed in this field. Since, these labourers are not permanently attached to any employer the task of providing social security is indeed a complex one. Thus, this responsibility has to be borne by the State.

These measures can go along way in solving most of the problems of agricultural workers. As stated earlier, the basic task is to distribute surplus land amongst agricultural workers and provide additional employment opportunities in villages through the development of small and cottage industries. General improvement in the working conditions, enforcement of legislative measures, provision of social security, etc. ate all secondary to the above two measures.
MGNREGA has emerged as a lifeline for the rural poor. The Act has been revolutionary in its promise of inclusive growth the right to work and the dignity of labour and a rational participatory relationship with the state. Notwithstanding negative aspects in its implementation MGNREGA stands apart from employment and poverty alleviation programme in significant ways. It is the largest employment guarantee scheme in the world which has woven transparency and accountability into the mundane fabric of daily interaction of people with government.

The MGNREGA management information system must record the demand for work. It must then track the gap between date of application for work and date of opening of work. MGNREGA software should automatically generate the pay order for payment of unemployment allowance to such wage seekers whose demand for work is not met within 15 days of demand. Reports prepared on this must be part of the essential set of report to be tracked at the state level.

Each block must have a full-time dedicated programme officer for MGNREGA, rather than the current 'additional charge syndrome'. Each PO's office should have additional technical staff at the block level to oversee the work of the multi-disciplinary teams at the cluster level.

Certain initiatives and changes can also prove helpful. The realization of sufficient numbers of person-days to earn a critical minimum income that triggers household-level effects is the first
condition. Timely payment of wages through individual accounts of women workers encourages participation, and greater control over earnings. A daily wage system instead of wages as per the SOR has been helpful in realizing minimum wages. The experience of HP is proof of this and the Act does not prohibit it. Alternatively, a gender-sensitive SOR, as has been introduced in Bihar, can be experimented within other states as well. Working conditions need to be made more conducive by enforcing and strengthening existing provisions and adding new ones. For example, breastfeeding breaks for lactating women and flexibility in working hours may be considered. Creche provision may be linked with the Anganwadi or Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centres, panchayat bhavans, local school buildings, etc. to make them more practical. Among others, maternity relief for women, along the lines of MEGS, make-shift toilets at the worksite and innovations in work instruments so as to reduce work drudgery may be adopted.

► Gram Panchayats must empower ward members, self-help groups, village-level revenue functionaries and the labour groups to receive applications for work and issue dated receipts on behalf of the gram panchayats.

► Increased participation in procedural aspects and greater control over the types and management of assets can increase social and community benefits. The Kerala model of linking NREGS with women's groups (Kudumbashree) may be useful for greater process participation. A minimum representation of women among the NREGS
functionaries like programme officers, rozgar sevaks, ombudsmen, members of vigilance and monitoring committees, mates, etc. would be useful. Some of the assets created, if properly chosen, may reduce the load of unpaid work like fetching water, fodder, etc. Creation of skill-generating assets like horticulture or fisheries through ponds can also be further explored to ensure better lateral benefits from such assets. (Ashok Pankaj and Rukmini Tankha, 2010)

►Labour Groups need to be provided work orders, at the beginning of the financial year, which would constitute a guarantee of 100 of work to each of the family represented in the labour group, leaving the choice to the labour group when to work on the work[s] detailed in the work order.

►The Ombudsman system should be overhauled so that Ombudsman acts as empowered full time grievance redressals officers at the district level.

►This huge national programme needs an independent body that looks after information technology, HRD, evaluation and social audit. A dedicated national authority like National Authority for NREGS (NAN) should be setup as an autonomous body. The present adhoc approach aimed at providing immediate employment should yield place to a systematic, well planned well coordinated effort.