Chapter-II

REVIEW OF EARLIER STUDIES
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The present study is designed to examine dimensions of “The Agricultural Labour in Karnataka – A Case Study of Haveri District”. A comprehensive review of relevant literature in the area of research is essential as it places the research study in its proper perspective by indicating the amount of work already done in the related area of the study. It provides background information to aid the researcher in designing and analyzing the research work. A large number of studies have examined the various dimensions of agricultural labour in India. There have been a good number of published works in the form of research papers, reference books, reports, etc. in the area of agricultural labour. An attempt is made in this chapter to give a brief account of literature related to the topic of the present research work.

A brief survey of earlier studies on rural labour and their main highlights in India are outlined below.

The existing studies mainly in the field of agriculture labour have been conducted by the official agencies like Government of India and various State Statistical Departments, certain academic institutions and research organizations have undertaken some such studies, though much of the research workers have done analytical work, mainly based on the data collection by the Ministry of Labour, State Statistical Departments and various Agro-Economic Research Centres.
The Government of India initiated an investigation as early on 1905 in order to conduct the wage census in rural areas of various states. One of the main objectives of the enquiry was to throw some light in the economic condition of the depressed classes of the people in the country. However, data so collected was not useful because of some lacuna.

R. Parthasarathy (1997) has referred to the existence of surplus labour in Indian agriculture in his article “Surplus Labour in Agriculture – A Review of Literature and Some Evidence”. The findings have a special reference to Tamil Nadu and its constituent zones. He argues that considering the labour time spent only on crop production the results indicate existence of surplus labour in almost all the zones. He has concluded that the net surplus was estimated at 36 percent for the state as a whole. Zonewise analysis the author has concluded that labour deficit in the first zone might largely be due to a lower work force depending on agriculture relative to other zones. The author presumes that in other zones where paddy constituted a major crop the magnitude of surplus labour estimates point out that it may not be due to crop pattern alone though labour intensive it may be largely due to the supporting factors (such as irrigation, cropping intensity) that might affect labour demand. The author has found from his study that the sixth zone showed the largest difference between the peak season labour demand and labour demanded on an average during the year resulting in low removable surplus. He concludes that it is a clear case of underemployment rather than open unemployment.
Kulamani Padhi (2007) in the article “Agricultural Labour in India – A Close Look” has observed that agricultural workers constitute the most neglected class in Indian rural structure. Their income is low and employment irregular. They lack alternative employment opportunities since they possess no skill or training. The author has referred to the fact that large numbers of agricultural workers belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Hence they are oppressed class without any organization to fight for their rights. The author has referred to various legislative measures taken by the government to improve the conditions of agricultural labourers viz. Minimum Wages Act, Abolition of Bonded Labourers, Providing Land to Landless Labourers, Provision of Housing Sites to Houseless and Special Schemes for Providing Employment viz. Cash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE), Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP), Food for Works Programme (EWP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Programme (RLEP), Draught Prone Area Programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, TRYSM, DWCRA, Abolition of Bonded Labour Act, IRDP and MGNREGA Act, etc.

Mahaveer Jain (1987) in his paper “Women in Agriculture – Their Conditions of Work” has focused his arguments on the extreme hardship under which our women in agriculture work and survive. They are trapped in vicious circle of low income, ill health, low wages, poor working conditions and exploitation by landlords and other higher caste people. Most of the rural agricultural women all over the
country have to work from early morning till late in the evening. In the field women do all kinds of agricultural work like weeding, harvesting, threshing, husking, drying, storage and sometime ploughing. The author has observed that apart from low wages most women agricultural workers worked under poor working conditions, some of whom even carried their children to the fields where there were no shelter and children were exposed to vagaries of nature. Women workers were denied rest and were not provided good drinking water. The author has cited paucity of land causing women taking upto agricultural labour. Another reason was lack of other employment opportunities in the absence of land. Low paid wages and inhuman behaviour of landowners have been other problems faced by women agricultural workers in India. Most of the women agricultural workers belonged to lower castes. The author has rightly perceived “Absence of productive land, lack of employment opportunities, low wages and inhuman treatment by landowners all perceived by women agricultural workers to be linked to their placement within the caste hierarchy”.

Suneet Chopra (2005) in “The Problems of Agricultural Labour and Neo-Liberal Reforms” has observed that the survival of agricultural labour, a third of the rural population depend primarily on employment. Rural employment has declined and the number of days of work of agricultural labour has come down from 122 in the 80s to about 72 now. The decline is sharper where mechanized and corporatised agriculture is being practiced. The author has criticized
the ruling classes whose policies are working to dispossess marginal farmers, weavers, village craftsmen and agricultural labour. The author has rightly concluded “...under the neo-liberal market life has become unbearable for the rural poor and especially agricultural labour who are the most oppressed and exploited among them...”.

Sushanta Mahapatra (2007) has made an empirical survey on “Livelihood Pattern of Agricultural Labour Households in Rural India – Evidence from Orissa”. The author has analysed employment generation, income of different categories of labour and the extent of indebtedness and earning prevalent among rural landless labourers and agricultural households in rural Orissa. The author has mentioned that a third of rural households constitute landless labour households which depend completely on wage employment. Another 60 percent of rural households are comprised of marginal farmers and small farmers who do not generate sufficient income from their land. Even small farmers with upto five acres supplement their agriculture with outside jobs or wage employment. The author has concluded that the evidence relating to rural labour households and agricultural labour households shows an explicit overall decline in employment both for male and female labour. Further the author argues that there is also a decline in the average number of earning members per household. The rural labour households and agricultural labour household in the study state (Orissa) are characterized by low earning, decline in income, low consumption and high debt. The author has
pleaded for remedies to be found to generate more employment and income.

**Abdul Aziz (1979)** in his study “Organizing Agricultural Labour in India – A Proposal” has emphasized on organizing agricultural labour in India. He has made an assessment of problems. His study has led to some useful suggestions for organizing the agricultural workers on cooperative basis. He has strongly argued for rural labour cooperatives and enforcing proper wages to agricultural labourers.

**Sharma B.P. (1986)** in his study “Poverty among Agriculture Labour Households” has made a survey of poverty dimensions of agricultural labourers in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. He has covered 100 households and interviewed through stratified random sampling method. He has found that 85 percent of the households are either income poor or asset poor. The study has revealed significant association between poverty and absence of female workers in the households.

**G. Jyothsna (1996)** in her article “Wages of Women Labour in Chittur District” has observed that the main characteristic of female employment in India is its invisibility as 77.5 million of women employed in rural areas in India are mostly in unorganized sector. As women contribute a major segment of rural workforce their service must be made use of more productively in accelerating the pace of agricultural and rural development. The author says the objective of economic equality without gender discrimination has not yet been realized in India. In some areas the female wage rates are lower than
the prescribed minimum wage. In cultivation except ploughing, leveling and irrigation fields all other operations are either equally shared with men or even performed only by women. The author has examined the participation of women labour force especially in Chittur district in Andhra Pradesh. Women labourers are connected with all the activities starting from sowing and transplanting to that of harvesting. Wages are the main source of income of the sample agricultural households. Wages are paid in kind for a few operations connected with the harvesting, threshing of paddy and groundnut, etc. The findings indicate that the per capita female agricultural wage income is low and per day wage is also low.

V.K. Ramachandran (1990) in his research study “Wage Labour and Unfreedom in Agriculture” has brought out inequality among rural households, intergenerational occupational change, employment positions, seasonality of employment, wages and indebtedness of agricultural labourers. The author has found from his study that freedom of employment along with other aspects of freedom from avoidable morbidity and mortality provides a basic measure of positive freedom which is relevant in assessing the living standards of the agricultural labourers.

S.N. Tripathy and Pradhan K.C. (1996) have made a study on “Agricultural Labour in India”. His study has been focused on the agricultural labour system and living conditions of agricultural labourers in Orissa in three districts of Koraput, Phulbani and Kalahandi. His findings have revealed significant facts.
i) Agricultural labourers from the hardcore of rural poverty solely depending on agricultural earnings.

ii) Rural labourers are mostly illiterate.

iii) Agricultural labourers are mainly employed in three categories viz. daily basis, yearly basis and daily labourers may also be employed for half day or full day.

iv) Monthly basis employment is found rarely.

**N.K.A. Nair (1987)** in his survey “Agricultural Labour in Kerala” has studied the employment, wage payment, income and consumption pattern and asset position of agricultural labourers. The study has revealed that because of organization of agricultural labourers through series of struggle for asserting their rights and for realizing better wage levels there has been continuous increase in the wage rate of agricultural labourers in Kerala.

**Rajendra Patel (1988)** in his study “Minimum Wages for Farm Workers in Maharashtra” has analysed the minimum wages for agricultural labourers in Maharashtra. He has found from his study that agricultural workers are illiterate and unorganized and they are from the weaker sections, scheduled caste and poorer section of the society. He has suggested that the wage revision should be made continuously keeping in view the price hike. He has argued for improving the bargaining power and proper organization and education of wage labour as it was the single source of income of agricultural labourers.
Pandey (1989) in his study "The Problems and Prospects of Agricultural Labour in Bihar" has presented an overview of the problems and prospects of agricultural labour in the state of Bihar. He has analysed the underlying factor responsible for retardation of agricultural development and worsening conditions of agricultural labourers. The factors mentioned by the author include poor production relations, highly inadequate facilities, poor infrastructure facilities, non-implementation of land reforms, etc. The author has suggested for shift of agricultural workers to non-agricultural sector in order to extricate the agricultural labour from the vicious circle of poverty.

Mitra Bhadra (1986) has examined the conditions of plantation women workers in his study "Plantation Women Workers and their Commitment to Industrial Workers in India" has brought to light that the tribal women workers who have traditionally agricultural background could easily adjust themselves in the tea industrial work and working environment. The author has found that their commitment to work is at a high level and they are more committed than the male counterparts with regard to 'extra teaf wage', they are obviously more committed than the male workers.

H.R. Sharma and Virendar Kumar (2003) have made a micro-study of the functioning of Agricultural Labour Market in agriculturally developed region of Himachal Pradesh. The findings of the Study reveal some significant trends. The authors have found that, most of the Agricultural labourers were males and belonged to
Scheduled Caste households. The wage was mostly paid in cash and the percentage share of kind-wage in the total wage was extremely small. The labour contract system in the Study area indicated that, time rate of wage was the most important. Another significant finding of the authors related to localized agricultural work in the villages. They could go out to other villages for work for the better.

The authors have revealed in their Study that, agricultural labourers of permanent nature were better off compared to casual labourers in terms of per day wage earnings. Further, Caste affiliations revealed that, a significant proportion of permanent labourers belonged to non-scheduled caste households. The authors have affirmed that, the institution of permanent labour is on the decline/decay. Another finding of the study was that, the incidence of labour-credit interlocking was much more pronounced as compared to labour-land locking.

**K. Ramakrishna Reddy and R. Narasimha Reddy (1996 National Seminar on Rural Labour at Hyderabad)** have observed that, rural female work participation rate (RFWPR) in Anantapur District is high and varied less among the mandals. The authors found that, the economic and demographic factors taken separately also provide a significant explanation for inter-mandal variations in RFWPR, but economic factors seem to be more dominating than demographic factors. Regarding the individual variables, rural male work participation rate emerged as the significant variable influencing RFWPR in the district. Further, the authors maintain that, Rural Sex
ratio has emerged as a significant variable influencing RFWPR in Anantapur District. Thus, higher the Sex ratio, the higher will be the RFWPR and vice-versa. The authors inferred that, the proportion of SC and ST female population has been found significant and positively associated with RFWPR. The authors have concluded from their study that, it is a mix of three significant factors – rural male work participation rate, rural sex ratio and proportion of SC, ST female population, which are really governing RFWPR in Anantapur district.

P. Kothandrami Reddy and D. Babu (1996) (National Seminar on Rural Labour at Hyderabad) have observed that, agricultural labour is prevalent mostly due to the existence of highly skewed trends of rural poverty. Agricultural labour is largely offered by economically and socially backward sections of the Society. They lack infrastructural facilities and assets like, land, housing, etc. The author’s study of Agricultural labourers of Gotlagunta Village of Nellore District in Andhra Pradesh has revealed that, these labourers are forced to find employment in the neighborhood and they are trapped in debt, encircled by poverty and distress. Regarding the wages paid to agricultural labourers, the study has revealed that, market wages paid to them are much lower than that of the minimum wages.

Dr. S. Ratnakumari (1996) (National Seminar on Rural Labour at Hyderabad) in her Study has revealed that, though IRDP is expected to benefit different occupational group, it has no uniform impact on different groups. Agricultural labourers are benefited at
least from IRDP in comparison with other occupational groups. The study has also revealed that, asset retention was low among agricultural labourers due to poor economic conditions.

B. Raghovulu Naidu and Jaya Krishna (1996) (National Seminar on Rural Labour at Hyderabad) have viewed that indebtedness of agricultural labour is an indicator of poverty. Indebtedness among this class of workers is basically due to their meager and irregular income, which is insufficient to sustain themselves and their families. Economic conditions force them to borrow. Moreover, most of their borrowings are not put to productive use and as a consequence, the debt burden increases.

Pratap Reddy (1996) (National Seminar on Rural Labour at Hyderabad) has studied the distribution of workers between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Andhra Pradesh and at the National level. The findings of the study reveal that, the workers have moved from non-agricultural sectors to agricultural sector owing to structural retrogression in the Indian Economic development. The author suggests that, an alternative strategy of development is necessary particularly to create more employment opportunities.

Luciano Gutierrez (2000) in his article “Why is Agricultural Labour Productivity Higher in Some Countries than others” has found some empirical regularity between agricultural labour productivity growth, investment and education for 44 countries during the period of 1980-93. The author has found strong evidence that where agricultural investment and educated people rates are higher
agricultural labour productivity grows faster. It is revealed from his study that there is evidence of conditional convergence which means that cross country agricultural productivity does not converge to the same level of steady state but that productivity in each country converges to its own long run equilibrium. The author has observed that free trade may foster agricultural labour productivity and the implementation of liberalizing trade reforms may reduce productivity differentials. Another finding of the author confirms that during the period 1980-93, agricultural labour productivity in the tropical countries grew less on average than in temperate countries.

**T. Rajula Shanthy (2009)** in the article “Efficiency of Women Agricultural Labourers in Rice Farming Systems of Kerala and Tamil Nadu” has found that majority of women (63%) agricultural labourers was low in labour efficiency. The analysis is based on the data obtained from a survey in Kollam district in Kerala and Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu. It has revealed significant difference between the women agricultural labourers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu with respect to their overall labour efficiency level. The difference is attributed to labour attachment practices and increasing demand for non-agricultural works. The author has found that dimension-wise analysis of labour efficiency showed that majority of them belonged to high group under the dimension adjustability and competency whereas majority had low efficiency with respect to dimensions such as determination in work situation, interpersonal relationship, team spirit and commitment, work environment, socio-economic and
situational. The author has further found that the respondents had neither higher nor low efficiency in case of confidence dimension.

**Sumit Mazumdar and M. Guruswamy (2006)** in their paper “Female Labour Force Participation in Kerala – Problems and Prospects” have observed 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 large scale emigration and out migration from the state. Agriculture dominated districts of Kerala continue to be highest women employing districts. The authors have found that agriculture no longer remains the most important sector of female employment. Casualisation of women workforce is on the increase.

The authors have perceptibly concluded that structural transformation of women’s economic activity have taken place in the state with agriculture and traditional industries loosing importance and tertiary sector taking up its place, yet reduction of employment among women have taken place in the process. The authors have concluded that migration, reduction in paddy cultivation, growth in per capita income (mainly due to remittances), male work force participation, sex ratio and female literacy rate to certain extent emerged as the variables having significant correlation with female workforce participation rate.

**Omprakash Parganiha et al. (2009)** in their article “Migration Effect of Agricultural Labourers on Agricultural Activities” have
provided some significant results of their field survey conducted in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. The authors have found that out migration is greater in the poorly developed agricultural areas and it is particularly high amongst the landless farmers. The study has revealed that non-migrants had more knowledge and adoption about different agricultural practices and also production and productivity of different crops was higher as compared to migrants. Seasonal migration elsewhere takes place for jobs as very few farmers grow second crop after rice and there is lack of jobs. In Chhattisgarh agriculture is mainly dependent on man power as little mechanization has taken place. Hence migration of labour affects agriculture in the state.

Sabita Misra (2008) in her article on “Life of Women Agricultural Labourers in Orissa” has highlighted the socio-economic profile of the women agricultural labourers in two districts of Orissa. Her findings reveal significant trends about their social background. It is found that 96 percent of them belonged to backward caste families and illiterate most of them were landless. It is revealed that 40 percent of the respondent women labourers took up farming in leased in lands. Livestock management has been another source of income for women agricultural labourers. Small business, contract work betel farm service, rural credit and farming have been a source of income for a smaller number of women agricultural labourers. Most of these women workers were in debt. The house conditions of these workers were poor. Low wages had affected their work efficiency. The author
has suggested for wage enhancement formation of unions, provision of nutritious food and provision of better living conditions. The author has argued in favour of appropriate policy reforms and institutional changes required for emancipation and empowerment of rural female labour force.

**Steve Wiggins (2007)** in his article “Rural Employment and Migration – In Search of Decent Work” has argued for new thinking on rural employment for creating more and better rural jobs. The author has stressed the need for finding ways to improve existing rural jobs and to create additional jobs for more than 100 million new workers expected in the decade leading up to 2015. He has observed that rural employment is inextricably bound up with the challenge of meeting the first millennium. Development Goal was for reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The author has suggested the following measures:

i) Increase growth in agriculture and in the rural non-farm economy.

ii) Invest in rural people in basic education, skills health and nutrition.

iii) Encourage migration through provision of information, improved transport, making rights to public services and protection and facilitating remittances.

iv) Push to better labour standards to end child labour and to correct gender inequalities.
Sunil Kumar Misra (2001) in his paper “Poverty and Economic Change in Kalahandi - Orissa: The Unfinished Agenda and New Challenges” has focused on the economic structure and socio-economic conditions of the people to identify the probable reasons for chronic poverty in the district. He has emphasized the need for the development of the non-agricultural sector through proper planning for reaping the benefits of large deposits of raw material and human resources.

The author has observed that the slow rate of occupational diversification, coupled with a high work force dependency on the agricultural sector is one indicator of backwardness of the region. He has suggested for shifting the workforce from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector. The author has suggested for development and revival of the irrigation system. He has stressed the need for agricultural development through technological development, improving irrigation system, supplying high yielding variety of seeds, formal credit for cultivators, improving the infrastructural facilities, strengthening marketing societies and an effective implementation of land reforms.

Fung Kwan (2009) in his article “Agricultural Labour and the Incidence of Surplus Labour – Experience from China during Reform” has conceptualized, identified and measured surplus labour at regional, provincial and national levels by a stochastic frontier functional specification. Mr. Fung Kwan has found that the existing size of agricultural surplus labour is still significantly large with
continued practice of the household registration system and China's WTO membership. The author has concluded that surplus labour in rural China can be viewed as the legacy of supporting industrialization but has been transformed into a burden since the 1990s. Between these two stages rural China has undergone tremendous economic changes to which the peasants have contributed.

Priya Deshingkar (2004) in her article “Understanding the Implications of Migration for Pro-poor Agricultural Growth” has observed that even though, a majority of poor migrants are employed in the informal or unorganized urban sector they can earn more than they would be able to within traditional agricultural labouring or marginal farming arrangements. The author comprehends that combining rural and urban livelihoods provides a dual advantage to the poor agricultural labouring and marginal farming are important safety nets when urban employment is mainly in the informed sector which is high risk commuting is the most preferred mobility option because it allows people to keep the rural social and economic links alive and cuts down the considerable costs of food and housing in urban locations.

Marvin P. Miracle and Sara S. Berry (1970) in their article “Migrant Labour and Economic Development” have affirmed that areas supplying migrants are likely to benefit from net additions to both human and physical capital from a widening of consumption expectations and horizons and from technological change, especially after migrants return from the host economy output in the home
economy is most likely to fall if experience in the host economy leads a sufficiently large proportion of migrants to settle there permanently. The authors have argued that areas receiving migrants are most likely to benefit from low wages development of unused resources and spread of new technology. However the authors have apprehended that migrants may contribute to development problems by increasing inflationary pressures or by adding to social and political tensions.

**K.P. Kannan (1998)** in his paper “Political Economy of Labour and Development in Kerala – Some Reflections on the Dilemmas of a Socially Transforming Labour Force in a Slow Growing Economy” has presented a critical view of the political economy of labour and development by examining the roles of labour unions, state and capital. The three dimensions of the discussion relate to (i) technological choice in the face of high and rising labour costs in labour intensive activities for maximizing long term growth and employment, (ii) mismatch between labour supply and labour demand as a result of changing job expectations of the younger generation in a technologically stagnant economy and (iii) lack of new investment despite growing loanable funds and declining resistance to technological change. The author has emphasized the failure of labour unions to agree to productivity improvements through technological changes and increasingly resorting to ‘closed shop’ strategies.

**Diganta Mukherjee and Uday Bhanu Sinha (2011)** in their study “Understanding NREGA : A Simple Theory and Some Facts” have analysed the impact of NREGA scheme on (i) rural labour
market, (ii) income of the poor households and (iii) overall agricultural production. The study has revealed that the income from NREGA alone can be a substantial part of the target income of the poor. This target income is the root cause of the backward bending supply curve of labour. The authors have assertively stated that in the current scenario with limited opportunities for productive spending and market access, it is unlikely that just generating extra income would alone solve the problem. Thus to enhance the opportunities for poor the policy should be inclusive multipronged.

Xiaobing Wang and Jenifer Piesse (2009) in their article “Economic Development and Surplus Labour – A Critical Review of the Lewis Model” have tried to clarify and extend Lewis theory of duel economy model which according to the authors contain some confusions and ambiguities especially with respect to the definition of surplus labour and the wage determination mechanisms in both traditional and modern sectors. The authors have referred to the emergence of surplus labour.

Since the labour is paid not the marginal product but the average product of labour. The authors have identified two types of surplus labour with type-I surplus labour being defined to be when the marginal product of labour is lower than zero and type-II surplus labour being when marginal product of labour is higher than zero but lower than the wage level. The existence of surplus labour according to the authors has led to migration from rural to urban employment.
N. Sreedhar and I. Narendra Kumar (2012) in their article "Gender Discrimination in Agriculture Sector – A Study in Andhra Pradesh" have found that significant wage differentials exist between male and female agricultural workers, the former getting much higher wages than the latter. The authors 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.

Ibrahim Soliman and Osama Ewaida (1996) in their paper "Impact of Technological Changes and Economic Liberalization on Agricultural Labour Employment and Productivity" have tried to assess the impacts of technological changes and economic liberalization on agricultural labour employment and productivity in Egypt. The study has led to the conclusion that the optimum allocation of inputs for rice production implied to decrease the human labour use on farms. The authors have suggested that to reach a maximum income from such agricultural activities a less labour intensity should be used. Positive analysis approach showed that the employment of human labour has decreased by almost one-fourth due to all technological changes and economic reform policies practiced over the last decade. Normative approach analysis (least cost combination of inputs) showed that the human labour employment should be decreased by about two-thirds in order to maximize income.
Praveen Jha (2006) in his paper “Some Aspects of the Wellbeing of India’s Agricultural Labour in the Context of Contemporary Agrarian Crisis” has tried to interrelate the wellbeing of agricultural labour with the developments in the agricultural sector itself. He considers the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers having complex linkages with the larger structure and pace of economic transformation and specific public policies addressed at their wellbeing. The author has argued that the neo-liberal economic regime since the early 1990s has affected the rural economy adversely with ominous consequences for the wellbeing of agricultural labourers. The author has, however, commended the initiation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as a welcome step and has argued that its reach must be scaled up and expanded. He considers the overall economic policies as unfavourable for India’s rural economy and obviously on the agricultural labourers.

S. Chandrasekhar, S. Manickam and D. Solomon Raj (2011) in their article “Role of Agriculture in Employment Generation” have analysed the employment position of agricultural labourers in the study area of Toothukudi district. They have found that the duration of employment in agricultural operation is limited while non-farm employment potentials in the study area are limited. Hence they have pleaded for generation of non-farm employment to overcome the problem of seasonal unemployment of agricultural labourers. They have suggested to expand irrigation facilities in the region so that employment opportunities in agriculture can be increased. The study
has referred to the problem of displacement of male workers in paddy cultivation in the areas resulting in unemployment of male workers. The authors have suggested to create alternative employment to male workers in the region.

**S. Mahendra Dev (1986)** in his article “Growth of Labour Productivity in Indian Agriculture” has examined the labour productivity during the period 1962-65 and 1975-78 at All India level covering 56 agro-climatic regions and the contributions of yield, cropping intensity and land labour ratio to the increase/decrease of labour productivity in each of these agro-climatic regions. The author has also discussed the association between the level of labour productivity in agriculture and rural poverty. His study has revealed that labour productivity in crop producing sector has shown a positive but low growth during the study period. Further growth of labour force in high agricultural growth regions was lower than that of low growth regions. The author has found positive relationship between growth of labour productivity and land productivity. He has also found that rural poverty was significantly associated with levels of labour productivity.

**Pallavi Chavan and Rajshree Beldamatta (2006)** have in their article “Trends in Agricultural Wages in India 1964-65 to 1999-2000” have examined the trends in agricultural wages in India using data from Agricultural Wages in India and Rural Labour Enquiry. The author’s study has revealed that there was a slowdown in the rate of growth of real daily wages of male and female agricultural labourers in
more than half the districts in the sample in the 1990s. However the author’s study has revealed that there was a striking rise in the growth of daily real wages across all states between 1983 and 1987-88. They have also found that there was also a rising trend in variations in real wages across districts in 1990s. Another major trend noticed by the authors was that the differences between the average wages of male and female agricultural labourers have widened over the years. Compared to the minimum wages the authors have found that the daily wages of male agricultural labourers exceeded the minimum wages in most states while those of women were below the minimum wages in most states.

Mukesh Eswaran, Ashok Kotwal, Bharat Ramaswami and Wilima Wadwa (2009) in their study “Sectoral Labour Flows and Agricultural Wages in India, 1983-2004: Has Growth Trickled Down?” have examined the evolution of poverty in India through the prism of agricultural wages and employment. The study has tried to link the movement in wages (and hence poverty) to the fundamental process of sectoral labour flow that underlies economic development. The analyses has led to the finding that despite the rapid growth of the non-farm sector its success in drawing labour from land has been limited. However the authors have found that agricultural earnings have increased indicating the pivotal role of agricultural productivity. The authors comprehend that the stock of the labour force already locked into agriculture is large and the best way to improve living standards would be to boost farm productivity.
Alex George (1987) in “Social and Economic Aspects of Attached Labourers in Kuttanad Agriculture” has examined the problems of the highly oppressive feudal characteristics of the system of attached labour which prevailed in Kuttanad until 1943. These labourers belonged to the Pulayat and Paraya castes. They become apparently free after the abolition of slavery in 1855. The author has explained in his study that the prevalence of the system of attached labour even during the early period of capitalist investment in agriculture was due to several factors no least of which is the characteristic form of highly labour intensive cultivation in the region known as Punja cultivation. Further the fact that Pulayas and the Parayyas were alone engaged in the hardest and the dirtiest of tasks involved. The author maintains that the grip of the feudal system was so firm that the attached labourers were slow to unionize. The author has concluded that the attached labour system of Kuttanad collapsed as a result of unionization of attached labourers. He further mentions that this was not a mechanistic outcome of the development of capitalist investment in Punja cultivation. He concludes that it was only with the arduous and intensive efforts of a group of activists of Communist Party of Travancore that the attached labourers were unionized in 1943.

T.N. Krishnan (1991) in his article “Wages Employment and Output in Interrelated Labour Markets in an Agrarian Economy – A Study of Kerala” has examined the wage structure and wage movements and their relation to employment and output in an
agrarian economy in transition. The author has studied the issues involved from four major aspects viz., analysis of the wage structure in agriculture and in construction activity, a theory of wage structure in the context of interrelated labour markets, movements in wage relativities in relation to change in product demand and lastly the author has developed an analytical model to explain employment behaviour in interrelated labour markets and has applied the model to explain the changes in employment and output in the agricultural sector of Kerala economy. The author has concluded that high wage rate in the economy has been an important factor at least in the poor performance of the agricultural sector in Kerala. The author’s other conclusion indicates that the bio-technological and institutional innovations necessary to sustain a high wage rate in agriculture were totally ignored in the agricultural development programmes.

G.K. Chadha and M.K. Khurana (1989) in their article “Backward Agriculture, Unrewarded Labour and Economic Deprivation – Bihar’s Contrast with Punjab” have examined the economic characteristics of rural labour households in Punjab and Bihar. The authors have found from their study that relatively bigger proportion of total yearly employment earnings is available in off farm employment in Punjab compared with Bihar. On the other hand the proportion of on farm employment earnings in Bihar is much bigger than that of Punjab. Further the authors have found that a slightly lower number of mandays of on farm employment in Punjab vis-à-vis that in Bihar, is more than compensated by relatively higher mandays
of off farm employment. Consequently mandays of total yearly employment are higher in Punjab than in Bihar. The authors have emphasized the point that the stable and consistently expanding agriculture in Punjab has enabled its labour households to maintain the edge in all correlated of employment over their corresponding counterparts in Bihar by offering the former more remunerative employment opportunities.

Kailash Sarup (1991) in his article “Changing Contractual Arrangement in Agriculture Labour Market – Evidence from Orissa” has analysed the mechanisms of contractual arrangement between the employers and agricultural labourers in the specific context of some east Indian villages (Orissa) by taking into account the type of crops, prevailing technology and other characteristics of economic and social environment including external interventions such as immigration of labour, enterprising farmers and state intervention. The author has revealed that the evidence on changes in the labour arrangements illustrates the sensitivity of contractual arrangements to changing economic technological and other conditions. The author has found that the mode of payment for farm servants have undergone changes to cope with external intervention. The casual labour market has become more flexible and less differentiated in terms of gender in the wet areas even though the discrimination in terms of wage payment is persistent on a limited scale. The employers have resorted to a variety of strategies such as provision of interest free loans, other loans, tie-in with casual group labour, incentive
payments besides the provision of house site to the semi permanent workers and tiny pieces of land for cultivation to farm servants. The agriculture labour market in the study area is segmented on the lines of caste, tribal kinship, gender, local/migrants and so on suggesting lack of collective bargaining or collusion among the labour households for demanding higher wages. This has resulted in the daily wage rate paid to the labourers going below the minimum wage prescribed by the state which itself is low.

**Vinoj Abraham (2009)** in his article “Employment Growth in Rural India – Distress Driven?” has observed that the employment growth during the 1990s occurred when there was a widespread distress in the agricultural sector with low productivity, price instability and stagnation leading to indebtedness. The study by Mr. Abraham reveals that employment growth in the rural areas was probably a response to the income crisis that is gripping farming. The author has argued that under conditions of distress when income levels fall below sustenance then the normally non-working population is forced to enter the labour market to supplement household income. He has further perceived that the decline of agricultural sector has also probably created forced sectoral and regional mobility of the working population with the non-working population complementing them.

**Vijaya Rajni (2007)** in the article “Casual Labour Contracts of Agricultural Labourers in East and West Uttar Pradesh” has analysed the nature of casual contracts prevailing in the rural labour market in
regions with diverse socio-economic patterns of development. The author has described the growth of “group” labour contracts particularly with immigrant in Meerut as the most important feature of such a labour market. The analysis further looks at interlinked transactions in the agricultural labour market and highlights the emergence of interlinked transactions in the dairy market of Meerut, where agricultural labour households are increasingly getting tied with “dudhiyas”. The author’s analysis demonstrates the increasing importance of non-agricultural employment for the labour households and the pattern of diversification of agricultural labour households in Meerut in the form of dairying.

Ratindranath Pramanik (2008) in his article “Changing Terms and Conditions of Employment of Agricultural Labourers in West Bengal” has provided the results of the survey of hired rural agricultural labour contracts in three sets of West Bengal each at different stages of economic development. He has tried to throw light on the relative importance of different categories of employment. The author has found from his study the heterogeneity of labour contracts even within same region. He has revealed that the group labour system is gaining popularity among medium and large size farmers. The author has attributed this preference for group labour to the maintenance of timeliness for different agricultural operations, given the numbers of peaks with very little time gap between peaks and problems of synchronization of management of crops.
G.S. Bhalla and Peter Hazell (2003) in their article “Rural Employment and Poverty Strategies to Eliminate Rural Poverty within a Generation” have discussed the likely scenarios regarding employment and income growth in agriculture and non-agriculture in rural and urban areas under various assumptions about sectoral growth rates and employment elasticities. The authors have rightly perceived that India faces a problem in generating enough employment in the years ahead to keep pace with the growth in the labour force as also raising wages and productivity of workers. The authors have considered possible strategies for increasing employment significantly reducing rural and urban poverty by 2020 viz
i) Accelerating the rate of sectoral and national economic growth.
ii) Reversing the declaration of agricultural growth and public investment in agriculture.
iii) Promotional policies for labour intensive and higher income generating allied agricultural and non-agricultural activities in rural and urban areas for domestic and export markets and
iv) Diversification of agriculture towards hither to neglected dry land has the potential to lead to an appreciable acceleration in agricultural and rural employment and to reduce poverty.

Rakesh Tiwari et al. (2011) in their article “MGNREGA for Environmental Service Enhancement and Vulnerability Reduction: Rapid Appraisal in Chitradurga District, Karnataka” have assessed the potentials of MGNREGA activities to enhance and provide environmental services. The study has covered 20 villages during
2009 and examined the key programmes implemented during the period. The study is conducted by using rapid scientific assessment methods. The authors have used an indicator approach to analyse environmental services such as water for irrigation and improvement in soil quality. The status of environmental services before and after implementation of the activities was examined. The authors have found that the MGNREGA activities were found to have reduced the vulnerability of agricultural production water resources and livelihoods to uncertain rainfall, water scarcity and poor soil fertility.

S. Mohan Kumar (2008) in his article "Kerala’s Agricultural Labourers – Victims of a Crisis" has made a general statement that most of the relief packages to tackle the farm crisis do not cover agricultural labourers who largely belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The author has made analysis of the situation of agricultural labourers in the crisis affected districts of Kerala – Wainad, Idukko and Palakkad. Further he has reviewed the performance of the welfare schemes for agricultural labourers which are implemented through the Agricultural Workers Welfare Fund Board.

L. Bervidova (2001) in his article "Labour Productivity as a Factor of Sustainable Economic Development of the CR Agriculture" has analysed the labour productivity as a factor in economic development of Czechoslovakian Republic. He has emphasized that as a decisive productive factor it is possible to consider labour which activates other production in such a way that labour creates sources
for reproduction and improvement of other production factors. It creates sources for sustaining economic development. The author has emphasized that efficiency of labour as a production factor is generally evaluated by the level of labour productivity. Using the indicator of gross agricultural production per one worker labour productivity grows even with the decrease of production. The author has concluded that it is possible to state that despite the significant decrease of the number of workers, labour productivity in agriculture is still low for the above mentioned reasons and to this fact also the possibilities of sustainable economic development of agriculture as a branch of the national economy responds.

Sukhpal Singh (2009) in his article “Survival of Agricultural Labour in Punjab – A Burning Question” has pleaded for ensuring security of agricultural labourers by giving housing plots of at least 5 marlas of land. Further non-farm employment opportunities should be generated for agricultural labourers. He has pleaded for a debt-waiver scheme in favour of agricultural labourers as is done in case of farmers by the government and in order to ensure employment NREGA scheme should be implemented effectively. Social security measures must be initiated in the rural areas for taking care of health, education of the children and social commitments in favour of agricultural labourers. The author has pleaded for setting up of an Agricultural Labour Commission for addressing the multi-pronged problems of agricultural labourers.
M. Vijayabaskar (2010) in his article “Saving Agricultural Labour from Agriculture: SEZs and Politics of Silence in Tamil Nadu” has highlighted how the intensity of farmers in Tamil Nadu are submitting to the public policy of land acquisition for non-farm activities thereby pushing the vulnerable sections of agricultural labourers to non-farm occupation. Social considerations like caste antipathy towards the Dalit labourers who generally are more involved in agricultural labour has also its role in reducing agricultural employment to such caste groups. The increased number of SEZs in Tamil Nadu has led to reducing the significance of agriculture and thereby displacing workers from agriculture. The author has very succinctly stated long-term crisis in agriculture, a process of growing landlessness of marginal farmers, a resultant move toward non-farm employment, a relatively more decentralized pattern of urbanization and a degree of social mobility among the backward classes have all appeared to play a role in this phenomenon.

Sinha Debotosh (1989) in his article “Impact of Female Work Participation: A Study of Agricultural Labourer Households” has drawn attention to the fact that with the development of agricultural economy and other economic activities, the demand for women’s labour in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors has been on the rise. Women work on the farms owned by them or on family farms or as tenants or wage earners and as such they form large proportions of agricultural workers. The author has made an empirical survey of male and female agricultural labourers in
Birbhaum district of West Bengal. His findings have thrown light on the conditions of women agricultural labourers and the discriminatory treatment of women labourers by the employers. The discrimination against women labourers is more glaring in terms of lower wages compared to those of male labourers even though women labourers worked for the same hours of work as men.

Nisha Srivastava and Ravi Srivastava (2010) in their article "Women Work and Employment Outcomes in Rural India" have observed that large scale surveys show that while rural women's employment has grown over the decades, women are still largely self employed or employed as casual labour in agriculture. The authors have referred to the various forms of discrimination women faced including job-typing that pushes them into low paying jobs. They have observed that higher work participation per se does not lead to better outcomes unless accompanied by higher education and/or assets. Education may not positively influence a woman's participation in work but for women who are in the workforce education is the most important determinant of better quality non-agricultural work. The authors maintain that women's autonomy measured in terms of control over land, mobility and willingness to join self help groups enables them to move into non-agricultural jobs. The authors have argued for policy intervention to increase work opportunities and enhance wages for rural women workers.
Kalpana Wilson (2001) in her article “Agricultural Labourers Struggles in the Movement against Globalization” has viewed the problems of agricultural labourers from different angles in the context of globalization and its impact on Indian agriculture and on agricultural labourers. The author has argued that global capital and the forces of globalization are currently seeking to appropriate reshape and redefine the wage labour which is carried out in cultivation. The author has tried to analyse how rather than displacing existing feudal and patriarchal relationships in Indian agriculture, globalization has incorporated and adapted them to its needs in a variety of regionally specific ways. The author’s analysis also covers the political nature of agricultural labourers’ movements, which are compelled to be progressive rather than defensive projecting a vision of social and economic transformation, which also leads to a questioning of unequal relationships among those who are struggling for change.

References


