INTRODUCTION
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Recent developments have stimulated renewed interest in studies of the concept and related measurement and analysis of underemployment, and given them a fresh impetus. Increasing efforts are being directed towards the development of human resources and, in particular, towards manpower planning which seeks, among other things, to effectively utilize the available resources. In the developing countries, the study and discussion of the problems of economic development have tended to focus attention on how the available labour supply can be more usefully utilised to accelerate development under conditions of their factor endowment. Then, there is the social aspect of employment. Enlightened social policy in most of the under-developed countries increasingly seeks to confer, or at least recognise, adequate employment in specific qualitative and quantitative terms as a basic human right, for example, the right to work, the right to non-discriminatory treatment in regard to employment, the right to a job adapted to the skill or capacity of the workers, etc.¹ Employment standards based on economic and social criteria provide

¹ At the international level, such rights are recognised, for example, in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and the convention concerning Employment Policy adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1964.
yardsticks for identifying deficiencies in the actual conditions of employment of individuals or groups. The reserves of underemployed or inadequately employed labour which may be thus identified constitute an economic as well as a social problem and a number of countries have initiated action programmes to deal with them. Significant changes have taken place in the methods of inquiry. Advances have been made in the field survey techniques, especially in regard to sample surveys, which are now being widely accepted and applied. Moreover, methods have been developed for the measurement of employment and unemployment as a part of an integrated statistical system. These methods are, however, found to be lacking in some respects for an inquiry into employment inadequacy and may need to be supplemented. Certain analysis contend in this regard that the conventional concepts and methods for measuring employment, when applied in the context of a weak or non-existent labour market, as for example, in the rural areas of many developing countries, present a distorted or incomplete picture of the employment situation which needs to be corrected or completed.2


and

Valuable experiments have been carried out in several countries to test some of the concepts of underemployment, especially, as regards their suitability as a means of measurement of under-employment through field survey techniques. A number of developing countries also carried out labour force sample surveys, mostly in the last decade, which brought out, inter-alia, the possibilities and problems of the measurement of underemployment and related phenomena in conditions of highly imperfect labour markets.

Underemployment is a conspicuous problem of today's world, more particularly, of developing countries like India. It consists in slow or fewer motions, lower intensity of work, lower income and lower productivity in low developed agriculture. Production work consists of motion elements, measured in time units. When fewer motions are performed openly in a time span, there may exist underemployment. However, all physical motions may not necessarily produce something which is marginally productive. Work sharing and work stretching are the two important forms of underemployment in low developed agriculture. Sometimes a false notion is harboured that small farmers are taking work less seriously and hence, are more underemployed than the


farmers with large holdings. As a matter of fact, as T.W. Schultz observes, the farmers within their small, individual allocative domain, are fine tuning entrepreneurs, tuning so subtly that many experts fail to recognise how efficient they are. Given the constraints, underemployment may be more or less on either of the types of farms. There are many symptoms of underemployment in agriculture, e.g., land fragmentation, farm size and other characteristically structural features of low-income agriculture. One can not neglect this serious problem of under-employment, because, firstly, it is quantitatively very high in absolute term. Secondly, it is assumed to constitute a reservoir of untapped productive potential. As economic development requires optimal utilisation of resources, it, therefore, construes that the problem of underemployment must be solved first. Thirdly, underemployment adversely affects the whole complex of human life and outlook. Prolonged underemployment inevitably brings injurious reactions to the human qualities, as the habit of regular work may be lost. Fourthly, it involves considerable loss to the nation's wealth.


In the past, some studies have been made to examine, both theoretically and empirically, the problem of underemployment in Indian agriculture but there are opposing conclusions. The present study of an empirical nature is, therefore, necessary for studying the situation with real perspective in rural Punjab.

Punjab is one of the relatively progressive and prosperous states of India but it is not free from the aggravating problem of underemployment in rural areas. Sizeable net immigration from the state is a testimony to this. A sizeable proportion of the agricultural population is being rendered surplus due to the declining size of land holdings consequent upon rapid growth of population.

Realizing the gravity of the problem, an empirical study was undertaken to assess the extent of underemployment in rural Punjab during the year 1982. The purpose was to make an empirical study of the problem of underemployment and to analyse the factors responsible for the growth and genesis.

Objectives

The dimensions of the problem of underemployment with all its deleterious effect warrants a special study of the phenomenon. More specifically, the objectives of the study are the following:

(i) To conceptualise the problem of underemployment in its proper perspective;
(ii) To pin-point the genesis and causes of the problem;
(iii) To determine the extent of the problem in Punjab agriculture (among self-employed workers and in-migrated labourers).
(iv) To find out the relationship of the problem with wages and productivity and the impact of factors influencing underemployment;
(v) To determine the relationship between dualism and underemployment;
(vi) To find out the productive absorption of underemployed labour;
(vii) To suggest appropriate remedies and policy prescriptions for tackling the problem of underemployment.

Scope and Limitations

This study covers the rural areas of Punjab. The present study has the following limitations:

(i) The study covers only the rural areas of Punjab and ignores the urban areas;
(ii) The study deals only with the agricultural sector and the non-agricultural sector is ignored completely;
(iii) The study considers underemployment among the permanent farm workers;*

* Permanent workers consist of family workers and permanent farm servants.
(iv) Owing to the financial and time constraints, it was not possible to collect data from the entire State of Punjab. A few districts were selected for data, and the results were extrapolated for rural Punjab as a whole;

(v) The micro level of analysis of underemployment can not be generalised for the conditions of the country as a whole.

The present study has been divided into eight chapters. In chapter one "Concept of Underemployment" a few definitions of underemployment will be analysed critically. This chapter will also discuss a few definitions of underemployment which will be accepted or rejected according to the experience of field research. Finally, an effort will be made to arrive at a suitable definition of underemployment.

Chapter Two "Forms and Components of Underemployment" deals with the discussion of various forms and components of underemployment. Generally, underemployment is of two types, i.e. open and hidden. However, conceptually, underemployment may be of various types, seasonal underemployment, open-underemployment, underemployment of expansion and disguised underemployment.

Chapter Three "Nature and Causes of Underemployment" discusses that underemployment arises out of a lesser availability of job opportunities and not due to lack of effective demand. A common feature of underemployment in these countries is that it fails to respond to fiscal policy
measures designed to increase employment by stimulating effective demand. This would bring us to an examination of the Kenesian General Theory of Employment against the background of an under-developed country. We have discussed economic and non-economic factors responsible for the emergence of under-employment in Punjab.

Chapter Four "Extent of Underemployment" brings empirical results about the degree and extent of underemployment in rural Punjab. We have divided the chapter into two sections. In the first section, we have presented the problem of measurement, while the second section presents the methodology, data collection and suitable techniques by the help of which empirical results were obtained. We also discussed the results pertaining to underemployment against the background of large-scale in-migration of labour from other states.

In the Fifth chapter, "Wages, Productivity and Under-employment", an attempt has been made to find out empirically the relationship between wages, productivity and underemployment. In the first section, we have clearly defined the terms (a) wages and (b) productivity and presents the empirical results of the districts under study. In the second section, we have used an econometric model to calculate the 'marginal productivity of labour'. The log-linear transformation of the production function is used in our analysis. The factors influencing labour employment on Punjab farms have also been analysed. The regression technique is used to study the impact of different variables viz. (i) irrigation, (ii) Seed HYV, (iii) Fertilizer, (iv) Pesticides etc. The function is used separately for bullock and tractor operated farms for different crops of the four districts. The third section explains diagrammatically the representation of wages, productivity and underemployment from the foregoing analysis.

In the sixth chapter, "Dualism and Underemployment",
the main aim is to show the empirical and graphical representation of dualism and underemployment within agriculture. We have also made an attempt to show the regional dualism within agriculture i.e., between two districts, one advanced and the other backward, along with the dualism among farmers i.e., big farmers and small farmers.

The seventh chapter, "Labour Absorption in Agriculture" is divided into two sections. In the first section, we have shown the removable and non-removable aspects of underemployment. It is comprised both the micro and macro concepts. The macro concept will give the potential underemployment which is not removable in all cases. It becomes removable, only if we show the removable surplus from farms in micro perspective. In the second section, a case is built for effective utilization in the agricultural sector, provided the agricultural sector is reorganised. Various real instances will be cited to support this argument. Simultaneously, special attention will also be devoted to the maximum use of high-yielding and labour absorptive inputs.

In the eighth chapter, we will give the resume of the foregoing analysis and suggest some policy prescriptions emerging from it.