CHAPTER 4: KEY FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1. Key Findings

4.1.1. Socio-economic Status

1. The landless agriculture labourer households of Thanjavur District are distributed among many caste groups unevenly. Consanguineous and endogamous marriages are common practice among the landless agriculture labourers of Thanjavur District. A Patriarchal practice is seemingly evident with most families residing in the native village of the husband.

2. Most of the current agriculture labourers are in the prime working age of 31 to 60 years. The low key involvement of the young members below 30 years in agriculture can be construed as a preference to seek opportunities elsewhere.

3. Most of the labourer and their spouse have been found illiterate. The few who had attended formal education had mostly dropped-out at the earlier stages of schooling.

4. The labourer households seek opportunities in both farm and non-farm activities to support their livelihood.

5. Most of the current agriculture labourers in the district do not prefer temporary migration for occupational purpose. This could be because of the poor skill of the labourer making it difficult to find a remunerable job elsewhere or those who prefer to migrate make a permanent movement from the villages.

6. Landless agriculture labourers are aware of the population control and hence many households have a few children.

7. Majority of the labourer households have made attempts to provide formal
schooling to their children.

8. The landless agriculture labourers are able to fulfill their food and clothing needs only. On other physical and socio-economic requirements, the households are not able to meet their needs.

9. Addiction to alcohol is rampant among the men folk of landless agriculture labourers.

10. Most of the landless agriculture households own a house, though the poor quality of the house is obvious.

11. Preference for constructing toilet in labourer households is low and hence open defecation is a common practice causing serious health threat. Easy access to potable water supply is also a constraint.

12. Most of the households cook using firewood, thus exposing the family to carcinogenic filled smoke, fire and insect bite.

13. Many labourer households own domestic cattle i.e., goat and cow. The domestic cattle can support the households with income generation and can be a health supplement.

14. The households have exercised their borrowing options in both formal and informal institutions. The fragile economic system of the households has made the informal source a more attractive option.

15. Domestic violence against women is very high among the landless agriculture labourer households of Thanjavur District.
4.1.2. Self Help Group

1. The women participation in SHG is dominant among the labourer households. The participation of these women in SHG is fairly recent and the groups are operating with reasonable hygiene in terms of group size, frequency of meeting, democratic decision making, stability etc.

2. Majority of the women participants have borrowed from the group but very few have invested in self-employment. SHG women perceive better socio-economic development after joining their groups. However the other purpose of SHG to create sustainable livelihood through self-employment has not taken off.

3. Socio-economic status of women after joining SHG has improved in households where the urge to improve the living status is felt by both the husband and wife.

4. Women SHG member who are regular in participating in group meetings and availed loan facilities have benefitted.

4.1.3. Fire Wood

1. Firewood is the most preferred cooking fuel as it is available at almost free of cost. The households are comfortable in using firewood for cooking except for the fear of any fire accident.

2. Firewood has a better preference in households where the husband and wife are earning through various income sources to improve their living standard. This behavior may be due to their intention to find ways for reducing expenditure. Firewood being available mostly at free of cost, these households are able to arrest the expenditure towards cooking fuel.

3. The preference for firewood is high in households with husband in a fairly
working age of less than 60 years.

### 4.1.4. Micro-Finance

1. In most cases the landless agriculture labourers borrow from MFIs for consumption purpose only.

2. Labourers involved in occupational migration are more satisfied borrowing from MFI. This could be the result of non-access for the women to other formal and informal sources without the presence of the husband.

### 4.1.5. Mobile Phone and Transportation

1. Male members of the labourer household are the dominant users of mobile phone. They benefit by using mobile phones to seek and manage alternate occupational opportunities.

2. The benefit from using mobile phone is visible in households with better socio-economic upward mobility status.

3. The good transportation is perceived to support in seeking job opportunities at locations outside the village as well.

### 4.1.6. Public Distribution System

1. The supply quantity of rice to the labourer families is insufficient for most of the labourer families.

2. Fair Price shops do not supply all items to the customers in a single trip. Hence women who are mostly the buyers, make multiple visit and spend substantial time in the shop for their purchase. The amount of time spent in the shop reduces the women’s time from attending to house chore work or other remunerative jobs.
3. Uneducated labourers finding meager jobs take support of the PDS system. Households are satisfied with the PDS system, if the fair price shop provides all eligible items of the ration card holders.

4.1.7. Street Vending

1. The number of labourer households engaged in street vending is relatively less. The street vending in most cases is done as a part time, with self-capital and on road pavements. As a mere traders of goods, the labourers have neither specialized nor able to infuse capital in the street vending business for any expansion.

2. Since the size and level of street vending business was negligibly worthwhile, there is no substantial difference among the labourers on the benefit from street vending.

4.1.8. Alcohol

1. Addiction to alcohol is rampant among the men folk of the landless agriculture laborers of Thanjavur District. Many of the alcohol addicts also realize the benefit of quitting alcohol and show interest in de-addiction. However, the numbness drink seems to prevail.

2. Alcoholic labourer working to earn income through various job opportunities perceives better benefit in quitting his alcoholic habit. The labourer thus is able to realize the drain hole for his hard earned money.

3. Highly addicted alcoholic labourers prefer quitting their addiction. This reflects the realization of the hardship their family members would have undergone physically, mentally and socially due to the habit.
4.1.9. Current Livelihood Status Score

1. The livelihood status of the landless agriculture labourer households is better off when the husband generates income through alternate occupation as well. This highlights the benefit of generating employment in rural areas beyond agriculture.

2. The livelihood status of the landless agriculture labourer households is better when the wife is not involved in alternate occupation. This result signifies the contribution of women towards the mental well-being of the family and arresting the income flow by attending to household activities by herself.

3. The livelihood status is better for families with an alcoholic member. This status could be the result of other family members working harder to compensate the income and mental drain due to the alcoholic member.

4.2. Suggestions

1. The landless agriculture labourer family members involved in self-help group reside in rural areas and are mostly illiterate. Their access to urban markets and bargaining power with market entities are bound to be dismal. Hence development institutions should support in skill development and act as a bridge for the finished products from the self-help group women to reach the markets. This will encourage women in SHG to invest their borrowings on self-employment which is not the case as of now. Societies may also be formed for collective action among villagers.

2. Joint Forest Management should be initiated at every village. Paramboke lands should be identified and trees planted. The maintenance, cutting and distribution of wood for cooking purpose should be controlled by the local Panchayat through
the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. In this way, deforestation can be prevented and the requirement for firewood can also be fulfilled at the village level.

3. Panchayat Institutions may register Micro-finance Institutions on negotiated terms for operating in their respective villages. Micro-finance Institutions should disburse and collect loan amount at the local Panchayat office. The transactions at the Panchayat office location will ensure high adherence to operating hygiene by the finance institutions.

4. PDS shops in villages may be operated in the late evening hours as well. Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies should monitor the movement of all materials at the shop uniformly on a daily basis. The fair price shops if supporting a sizeable population, may also allot specific days for each household in order to avoid overcrowding. This arrangement will eliminate the non-productive hours spent by the labourers in the fair price shops.

5. A provision under the priority sector lending to be made for offering credit to rural street vendors. The Panchayat may issue licence to street vendors for identification of the beneficiaries by the bank. The street vendors may also form societies which could improve their bargaining power with suppliers and help them sell products that complement and not compete among themselves.

6. The state government should set up equal number of de-addiction centres for each TASMAC outlet operated. The funds raised from sales of liquor should be strictly spent only for de-addiction centres. Thus the income from selling alcohol is not seen as a funding source for the government.
7. Use of dung cake does not seem to be popular among the labourer households in
Thanjavur district though cattle are owned by many. Community bio-gas plant
may be installed and cooking gas could be supplied to contributing houses limited
by a quota system. This arrangement of cooking gas supply can provide a clean
cooking option.