Abstract

Study of Supportive Livelihood Measures Adopted by Landless Agriculture Labourers of Thanjavur District
B.Balasubramanian
Dr.R.Srinivasan
Dr.S.Vaidhyasubramaniam

Agriculture has so far been the backbone for the functioning of Indian economy. Even though the percentage of GDP contribution has declined, agriculture as a major livelihood system and food security provider to the nation is undisputable. The benefit of country’s growth story not being inclusive is evident from the below poverty line (BPL) statistics available. The 107.6 million landless agriculture labourers in India with scanty skill and assets, make-up for a substantial contribution to the BPL population. The prime livelihood source of these labourers, agriculture, is not sufficient to provide employment throughout the year. The interventions so far from the various stake holders including the government to these labourers has not left a high impact. Hence this study is directed to first understand the current livelihood of the landless agriculture labourers and suggest implementable interventions that do not alter the existing living system of the labourers.

The research study is conducted in Thanjavur District, an economy thriving on agriculture. The households of the landless agriculture labourers constitute almost half of the district population of about 24 lakhs (census 2011) and a sign of distress migration is visible in the rural areas of the district. The study is based on a modified ‘Sustainable Livelihood Approach’ model initially developed by the International Department of U.K. The current capital assets (physical, social, finance, natural, human, government) and liability element of the landless agriculture labourer
households of Thanjavur district are captured in a survey. The study considers street vending, transportation, mobile phone, micro-finance, firewood, street vending, public distribution system against capital assets and alcohol for liability element. Percentage analysis, t-test, ANOVA, multiple regression is employed for analysis of the data collected and findings presented.

The elements under study are perceived important by the labourer households for meeting their livelihood needs. The minimal skill, asset and opportunity available to the labourer households are preventing the labourers to best exploit these livelihood sources. Poor transportation access to villages, no low-interest financing for expanding business are few reasons for poor return on the capital assets. The poor are also attracted to elements that can deteriorate the family wealth and health. Alcohol is one such element which in Tamil Nadu is uniquely promoted by the state government itself. This study proposes interventions for better utilization of these elements to further support the livelihood of the poor landless agriculture labourers.