

AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AT SRIVAIKUNDAM IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Over 70% of Indians depend on agriculture and allied jobs for a living. Women are essential to economic growth. In 1/3 of households, women contribute 50% of the total earnings. They contribute 2/3 of the world's work hours, 50% of the world's food, 60% of the work force, and 30% of the official labour force. The study focuses on women's role in paddy cultivation, farm operations, household decision-making, challenges they face, ideas, and policy actions. India's most important industry is agriculture. This popular sector has contributed to the increased pace of the economy's changes and bigger revolution. Agricultural women labourers are unorganised, unskilled, non-migratory, have no legal protection, and have difficult relationship with landowners. According to the study, agricultural women labourers in the study area needed better working conditions. Their work hours should be regulated. Overtime pay should be given for extra hours. Improve agricultural women labourers' socioeconomic environment. The state can provide health centres, maternity wards, youth clubs, and sports facilities. Special programmes for agricultural women labourers can be arranged.

1. INTRODUCTION

In India, a sizable portion of the population is denied the bare necessities of clothing, cereals, pulses, milk, and vegetables, which would allow them to consume enough calories to maintain their current standard of living. The minimal per capita expenditure is the sum of all the amounts stated in monetary terms.

Nearly 50 percent of adults are women. Despite making up one-third of the labour force, they work two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce one-tenth of its income, and own just one percent of its real estate. Dixon (1982) conducted an analysis of data from the International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, and National Population Census, which showed that women made up 38% of the agricultural labour force in developing nations. Dixon (1982) calculated that women make up 45.3% of the agricultural labour force in 19 South and South East Asian nations.

He claims that due to flaws in data collection, such as undercounting the contribution of unpaid family labour, underestimating the seasonality of women's labour, and self-reporting bias of the interviewees, who are primarily men, this figure is actually underestimated. According to the report of the Planning Commission's Task Force on Employment Opportunities, there was a significant decrease in the number of people employed in agriculture throughout all of India between 1993–1994 and 1999–2000. Due to the current situation, certain industries or professions that rural workers in general and rural women in particular are employed in have already started to experience setbacks. In 13 states, the rate of overall employment growth for rural residents has decreased since 1993 compared to the decade before that.

1.1 LABOUR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN TAMILNADU AGRICULTURE

The production of food grains dominates the Tamil Nadu State's agricultural economy. Because agriculture plays a significant role in the state economy, it is estimated that farm women spend between 160 and 290 days working in the fields each year. The same has been categorised in accordance with the various types of land.

<https://www.tn.gov.in/crop/classificationofland.pdf> (Table.1)

Table.1 - CLASSIFICATION OF LAND DURING 2020-2021

Sl. No.	District	Total Geographical Area		Forest			Barren & unculturable area		
		Area	% to State	Area	% share of		Area	% share of	
					Geographic	State area		District Geographic	State area
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Chennai	44111	0.3	300	0.7	0.0	7	0.0	0.0
2	Kancheepuram	170479	1.3	3685	2.2	0.2	2115	1.2	0.5
3	Chengalpattu	263892	2.0	20175	7.6	0.9	8826	3.3	1.9
4	Thiruvallur	324069	2.5	19736	6.1	0.9	13569	4.2	3.0
5	Cuddalore	367781	2.8	1415	0.4	0.1	14623	4.0	3.2
6	Villupuram	391468	3.0	14846	3.8	0.7	20604	5.3	4.5

7	Kallallurichi	330735	2.5	56851	17.2	2.6	36047	10.9	7.9
8	Vellore	223264	1.7	89953	40.3	4.2	10190	4.6	2.2
9	Ranipet	185553	1.4	9970	5.4	0.5	4729	2.5	1.0
10	Thiruppathur	183201	1.4	62363	34.0	2.9	5525	3.0	1.2
11	Thiruvannamala	631205	4.8	152810	24.2	7.1	20585	3.3	4.5
12	Salem	520530	4.0	125682	24.1	5.8	38198	7.3	8.4
13	Namakkal	336719	2.6	43909	13.0	2.0	24539	7.3	5.4
14	Dharmapuri	449777	3.5	164177	36.5	7.6	15804	3.5	3.5
15	Krishnagiri	514326	3.9	203964	39.7	9.5	23938	4.7	5.2
16	Coimbatore	472322	3.6	111871	23.7	5.2	4798	1.0	1.0
17	Thiruppur	519559	4.0	48168	9.3	2.2	2548	0.5	0.6
18	Erode	572264	4.4	227511	39.8	10.5	6270	1.1	1.4
19	Tiruchirapalli	440383	3.4	36773	8.4	1.7	12598	2.9	2.8
20	Karur	289557	2.2	6187	2.1	0.3	2786	1.0	0.6
21	Perambalur	175739	1.3	16281	9.3	0.8	2786	1.6	0.6
22	Ariyalur	193398	1.5	739	0.4	0.0	8523	4.4	1.9
23	Pudukottai	466329	3.6	23535	5.0	1.1	9863	2.1	2.2
24	Thanjavur	339657	2.6	3390	1.0	0.2	2149	0.6	0.5
25	Thiruvarur	209709	1.6	2452	1.2	0.1	113	0.1	0.0
26	Nagapattinam	154225	1.2	3531	2.3	0.2	32667	21.2	7.1
27	Mayiladuthurai	117358	0.9	1102	0.9	0.1	751	0.6	0.2
28	Madurai	374173	2.9	48473	13.0	2.2	13031	3.5	2.8
29	Theni	324230	2.5	134813	41.6	6.3	12226	3.8	2.7
30	Dindigul	626664	4.8	138923	22.2	6.4	36210	5.8	7.9
31	Ramanathapura	408957	3.1	4488	1.1	0.2	4457	1.1	1.0

32	Virudhunagar	424323	3.3	26466	6.2	1.2	4525	1.1	1.0
33	Sivagangai	418900	3.2	16533	3.9	0.8	4699	1.1	1.0
34	Tirunelveli	387606	3.0	83758	21.6	3.9	23787	6.1	5.2
35	Tenkasi	288244	2.2	44000	15.3	2.0	6240	2.2	1.4
36	Thoothukudi	470724	3.6	11012	2.3	0.5	19685	4.2	4.3
37	The Nilgiris	254485	2.0	142577	56.0	6.6	3402	1.3	0.7
38	Kanyakumari	167200	1.3	54155	32.4	2.5	4001	2.4	0.9

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Only recently have social scientists begun to pay intense attention to issues relating to women's economic contribution, spatial and temporal variations in their participation rates, the effects of development on their economic opportunities, etc. The focus of earlier writings on women was their place in society and the value of their roles as mothers and housewives. Their contribution to the economy was viewed as either minor or subsidiary. The most well-known writing on women, however, was found in J.S. Mill's famous book on the "Subjection of Women," where he emphasised the value of earning for women's overall dignity. The intensity of labour employment varies for different crops. The most labour-intensive crop among cereals is rice. In India, rice production is the single largest employer because it occupies a significant portion of the country's land.

In their study on rural transformation, Saradmoni and Mehra Barunamitra insist that a number of programmes put in place since independence have had negative effects and have even limited women's participation in economic activity. The majority of rural development programmes lacked any kind of particular consideration for rural women. The institution of Mahila Mandals, which was nothing more than the adoption of a middle class model skewed toward home economics and welfare, was the only programme worthy of the name.

According to Barunamitra, women in small and marginal farm families participate in a variety of agricultural tasks, either on their own land or on the land of others as hired labourers. Farmwomen work in crop husbandry to choose and store seeds, preserve healthy seeds, treat seeds, transplant seeds, apply fertilizer, and store food grains.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite several obstacles, women contribute greatly. Women play significant roles in both the production of rice and the activities that take place after harvest, and they frequently acquire different agricultural expertise and knowledge than men do. They account for close to 50% of the world's population, 33% of the labour force according to official statistics, 70% of all hours worked, 10% of global income, and even less than 1% of global property. These hard statistics support the validity of a study that focuses on the state of women today. Many

of the activities that women engage in that are financially rewarding are either not acknowledged or are inaccurately represented in statistical data. In actuality, neither their domestic labour nor their involvement in production-related agricultural and non-agricultural activities is evaluated economically. The discrimination that follows women today from the time of recruitment is one of the most glaring realities that they must deal with. Women are treated as inferior, and there is blatant pay discrimination as well. The goal of the current study is to provide light on the role that women play in agriculture. The majority of people in India rely on agriculture for their livelihood. As a result, women's participation is essential for strengthening the household sector. In addition to various recommendations and policy measures, this study aims to evaluate how women participate in and play a role in various farm activities, their contribution to household duties, their role in decision-making, and the issues they face. Additionally, it would assist programmers and decision-makers in identifying ways to empower women and address their problems.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To investigate the socioeconomic circumstances and pattern of income and expenditure distribution among agricultural women labourers.
- ✓ The pattern of agricultural women workers' participation in agricultural production, specifically paddy cultivation, will be examined.
- ✓ To research how job segmentation in agriculture contributes to sex and wage discrimination.
- ✓ Analyse the labour utilisation of women in paddy cultivation and the supply responsiveness.
- ✓ To examine the challenges faced by agricultural women labourers in the study area and to recommend strategies for enhancing farm women's economic conditions and bolstering the agriculture sector..

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The majority of rural households in our nation are those of cultivators, landless agricultural labourers, and artisans. Government programmes to reduce poverty must take into account the specific living circumstances of agricultural labourers who lack access to land. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will assist decision-makers in developing policies that will lift poor people out of poverty.

6. HYPOTHESES

1. The participation of men and women in paddy cultivation is equal.
2. Farm households' annual income is unrelated to their agricultural income.
3. The age of the female labourers has no bearing on the farm households' yearly income.
4. Family size has no impact on the farm households' annual income.

7. METHODOLOGY

In the current study, the economic and social circumstances of the households of landless agricultural labourers in Srivaikundam, Thoothukudi District, are analysed. There are roughly 1022 farming households in Srivaikundam. 100 of these households were chosen at random, and 622 of them fall into the category of landless agricultural labourers. A list of the households of landless agricultural labourers was created with the assistance of the village administrative office, and it included the names of the household heads in alphabetical order. Using a straightforward random sampling technique and the lottery method, 100 households were chosen.

7.1 Period of the Study

Field investigation work was done between 2020 and 2021, and the information gathered relates to that time period, which was a typical year for agriculture.

7.2 Socio-Economic Conditions of Selected Women Agricultural Labourers

From region to region, there are significant differences in the type and level of women's participation in agriculture. Their participation in a particular area is largely influenced by the type of farming system used, the opportunities for local families to make a living, and most importantly, the dominance of the caste, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics of the local families. Knowing their personal information, such as age, caste, educational attainment, income, spending habits, etc., is crucial to comprehending the situation in real life.

7.3 Distribution of Income of the selected Households

The following lists the specifics of the distribution of per capita income among the chosen households of landless agricultural labourers in Srivaikundam for the Thoothukudi district table.2.

Table.2 - Distribution of Income of the selected Households

Income Range	Number of Households
Less than Rs.15,000	42
Rs.15000 – Rs.30000	30
Rs.30000 – Rs.40000	28

8. FINDINGS

1. The majority of residents in the study area have received their primary education, which accounts for 42% of all education, followed by secondary education at 14% and higher education at 22%.
2. The majority of landless labourer households, or 76% of all households in the study area, are from British Columbia. The next caste with a majority representation of 18% is MBC.
3. In this area, 60 percent of the 100 households live in concrete homes, 28 percent in tiled homes, and 12 percent in homes made of asbestos.
4. Of the 100 households, 18 have fewer than 4 family members (representing 36% of the total), 24 fall into the category of 4-6 people (representing 48% of the total), and 8

fall into the category of 6 people or more (representing 12% of the total). According to the data, most families have between 4 and 6 kids.

5. The annual household income of landless agricultural labourers is Rs. 7,14,200. The households receive 100% of the total income from non-agricultural sources.
6. The annual expenditure for landless agricultural labourers' households is Rs. 6,70,160. Of which, Rs. 4,58,820, or about 68.46 percent of the total expenditure, was spent on the food items covered by this study. Non-food items receive the remaining 31.54 percent of spending.

9. SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ It is important to encourage the landless agricultural labourers to focus more on activities away from the farm.
- ✓ The improvement of family planning knowledge is dependent on the expansion of educational facilities.
- ✓ These agrarian labourers without land may be eligible for low-interest bank loans and credit.
- ✓ The government may run training initiatives to provide instruction in nonfarm activities.
- ✓ A number of employment programmes should be implemented to reduce unemployment.

10. CONCLUSION

In this village, the level of poverty among agricultural labourers without land is not acceptable. They are unable to buy the necessities for their lives. The solution is to give unemployed people employment opportunities. The government must take the necessary actions to offer financial aid and implement job-oriented programmes for this group of agricultural labourers who are without land. To address the issue of rural unemployment and a low standard of living, the government must take the necessary actions for landless agricultural labourers. The government should offer enough credit options and job opportunities to landless agricultural labourers to give them more room to improve their socioeconomic circumstances and give them a better chance to tap into the potential of the community's resources. There isn't a labour union for farmers. To ensure the welfare of the landless agricultural workers in these areas, the political leaders and the government should step forward and organise a union. This will enable them to obtain fair pay, appropriate working conditions, and prevent exploitation.

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