

CONSUMPTION PATTERN AND EXPENDITURE OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS IN MANIPUR: A CASE STUDY OF TAOBUNGKHOK VILLAGE

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The consumption pattern and expenditure is considered to be an important parameter to examine the economic conditions of people living in any society. The paper attempts to bring out the consumption pattern and expenditure of Agricultural Labour Households in Manipur. The paper is based on a field study in a village called Taobungkhok in Manipur. The paper examines the consumption pattern of both Landless Agricultural Labour Households as well as very small cultivating households who also work as agricultural labour due to their marginal holdings (0-0.62 acres). As reflected in their consumption patterns and expenditure, the paper shows that the living conditions of Agricultural Labour Households with some land (ranging from 0-0.62 acre) are better than landless Agricultural Labour Households. The paper however concludes that the consumption pattern of both the landless as well as those small cultivating cum agricultural labour households can be improved in order to strengthen their economic conditions and also for overall development of the rural sector in Manipur.

Keywords: Consumption pattern, Agricultural Labour, Landless, Landholding Households

Introduction-

Agricultural Labourers constitute an important section of the rural community in India. However, the social and economic status of Agricultural Labourers is still considered to be weak as compared to other sections of people living in the rural society of India. They are backward, unorganized and unable to fulfill their basic consumption requirements because of their low income level and poverty (Tripathi,2005). Even though Indian agriculture has made rapid growth in terms of production and productivity of different crops particularly after the adoption of the Green Revolution, this increase in production and productivity did not give a major positive impact on the income level of many farmer households in India (NarayanaMoorthy and Sujitha, 2021). Studies show that despite rapid economic progress during the past decades in India, the per capita calorie and protein intake in the rural areas has not shown only a slight rise (Kumari and Prasad, 2018).

The paper analyses the consumption pattern and expenditure of Agricultural Labour households in a village called Taobungkhok, located in the state of Manipur. Consumption pattern and expenditure is considered to be one of the best indicator used in measuring the economic conditions of people living in a society (Das and Bagchi, 2008). Agricultural Labour Households referred to those households whose members worked in the field of others to earn wages in order to support their livelihood. In this study, both landless Agricultural Labour households and those small cultivating households who still work as Agricultural Labour to support their families were

included. The village was mainly chosen to study the consumption pattern of Agricultural Labour households of a village strongly integrated with the urban economy during those days. The state of Manipur lies in the north eastern part of India. Imphal is the capital city of Manipur. In Manipur, Rice is grown as the major agricultural product and along with this, pulses, potatoes, vegetables and other agricultural crops are grown throughout the state. The total population of Manipur according to census 2011 is 28,55,794, out of which the number of male population is 14,38,586 and that of female is 14,17,208 (Statistical yearbook, 2015).

Objectives:

- i) To identify the Agricultural Labour Households in the Village chosen for survey, that is, Taobungkhok
- ii) To study the consumption pattern of Agricultural Labour Households in Taobungkhok
- iii) To make a comparative study of the consumption patterns of the landless Agricultural Labour Households and Agricultural Labour Households having small plots of land in Taobungkhok

Methodology:

The study is based on the findings of a field study conducted in the village of Taobungkhok in the year 2007. This village is located at about eight kilometers away from Imphal and is a part of the Patsoi Assembly constituency of Imphal West District. The entire village of Taobungkhok is surrounded by paddy fields. On the west of Taobungkhok lies the village called Patsoi, Changangei on the South of Taobungkhok, Ghari on the East of Taobungkhok and Langjing on the North of Taobungkhok. The settlement area of the village is divided into three segments viz, Awang Leikai, Mayai Leikai and Makha Leikai. Three rounds of survey were conducted in order to fulfill the objectives of the study. In the first round, no structured questionnaires were used as it was just a preliminary round and the main purpose was to get acquainted with the villagers so that preparations for the census survey can be done. However, the second round of survey was a census survey where each and every household in the village were visited and information was collected on the age and sex distribution of the population in the village, their education level, the distribution of operational holdings and to find out those households whose main occupation is Agricultural Labour in the village. In the third round of survey, only those sample households identified as Agricultural Labour (both landless as well as those households having small plots of land) during the census survey were interviewed. Information was collected on the consumption pattern of Agricultural Labour Households from the sample survey. A sample of 73 Labour Households was selected for the purpose of the study. This includes both landless Agricultural as well as landholding Agricultural Labour Households. Apart from landless Agricultural Labour Households, there were few households with small plots of Agricultural land ranging from size class of 0-0.62 acre who still earn income as wage Agricultural Labour. They still work as Agricultural Labour in the field of others as the produce from the small plots of agricultural land

were not sufficient enough to support their livelihoods. These households are identified as small cultivators cum Agricultural Labour Households in the present study.

The total number of Households in Taobungkhok during the surveyed year, in 2007, was 419. The total population of Taobungkhok was 2288 with 1176 male (51.4 percent) and 1112 (48.6 percent) female population. Literacy rate of Taobungkhok excluding children population during the surveyed year is 88.6 per cent including 28 post graduates and one PhD during the surveyed year. An 'Agricultural Labour' is defined as a person who worked on another person's land for wages. An Agricultural Labour has no right of lease or contract on the land on which he or she works (Census of India, 1981). The same definition was adopted in 1991, 2001 as well as in 2011. However, in this study, the agricultural labour households were identified during the second census survey on the basis of the respondent's answer to the questions on their main occupations in terms of time allocation.

Findings of the Study:

The present study focuses mainly on the consumption expenditure of food for landless Agricultural Labour Households and small cultivators cum Agricultural Labour households in Taobungkhok village. Table 1 shows the average annual Consumption Expenditure of food per Agricultural Labour Households in Taobungkhok in a year which was calculated as per the prices existed during the surveyed year. The table shows that there is much similarity in the consumption pattern of the landless and small cultivating cum Agricultural Labour Households (size of holdings ranging from 0-0.62 acre) in Taobungkhok village.

Table 1

Average consumption expenditure of food per Agricultural Labour Households in 365 days in Taobungkhok Village (Value in Rs)

Items	Landless Households (Value in Rs)	Households with some land ranging from 0-0.62 acres (Value in Rs)
Rice	16796.9	16464.0
Atta	36.9	40.0
Other Rice Products	26.7	8.0
Pulses	140.8	368.8
Other Pulse products	23.1	22.4
Milk and Milk Products	161.5	489.6
Edible Oil	584.3	1411.2

Egg	110.8	144.0
Fish	840.0	3040.0
Meat	35.4	96.0
Vegetables	2292.9	2964.0
Fruits	324.0	442.4
Sugar	64.15	125.6
Spice	30.10	120.0
Beverage	96.9	568.0
Others	258.5	1640.0
Total	21823.0	27944.0

Source: Sample survey

The items of food have been categorized as Rice, Atta, other rice products, pulses, other pulse products, Milk and milk products, edible oil, Egg, Fish, Meat, Vegetables, Fruits, Sugar, Spices, and others food items not listed above. Agricultural Labour households have been categorized into two, one is the landless Agricultural labour households and the other is the Agricultural Labour Households holding small plots of agricultural land ranging from 0-0.62 acres.

The table shows that with the increase in the size of holdings, the consumption expenditure increases and vice versa. The table also shows that the landless household spends more amount on consumption of rice(cereal) as compared to landholding Households. This shows an inverse relationship between asset/ income and cereal consumption. The average annual consumption expenditure on rice per landless household in Taobungkhok is Rs 16,796.9 and for Agricultural Labour Household with landholding size of 0-0.62 acres, the average annual expenditure on rice is Rs 16,464. On the other hand, the consumption expenditure on items such as Atta, other rice products, pulses, other pulse products, milk and milk products, edible oil, fish, meat, vegetables, fruits, spice, is more with the landholding households. These households also have more consumption expenditure on items such as sugar, beverage etc than the landless category. On the whole, the annual consumption expenditure on food for the near landless households having small plots of agricultural land with size category ranging from 0-0.62 acres of land is Rs 27,944 which is higher than that of the landless household, that is, Rs 21,823. This shows that the income level of the Agricultural Labour Households with some land will be higher than the landless Agricultural Labour Households. It is well reflected in the consumption patterns too, that is, the landless households spends more of their income on cereals, mainly rice and the landholding households spends more on protein and other essential nutrient rich food. However, the study gives an implication that for overall development of the rural sector, the consumption pattern and nutritional requirement of both landless as well as near landless households needs to be improved.

Conclusion-

The findings of the study show that the consumption expenditure of the Agricultural Labour Households with some land is higher than the Landless Agricultural Labour households. It is also

reflected in the study that the Landless Agricultural Labour Households spent more amount on rice, as compared to the Agricultural Labour Households having small plots of agricultural land. However, the consumption expenditure pattern shows that the Agricultural Labour Households having some land spent more on nutrient rich food which gives an implication that the economic conditions of the Agricultural Labour Households with some land is better as they can afford to buy these food items as compared to the Landless Agricultural Labour Households in the surveyed village. On the whole, the study shows that there is a need for improvement in the nutritional intake of both the landless as well as landholding Agricultural Labour households for overall rural development.

*Note: The surveys referred to in this article are part of the field work conducted for submission of doctoral thesis of the author.

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