



A REVIEW ON LABOUR PROBLEMS AND REDRESSAL MECHANISM IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

A Review on Labour Problems and Redressal Mechanism in Agricultural Activities Abstract: Main aim of this research is to review the labour problems and redressal mechanism in agricultural activities. Agricultural labours have faced various problems. Agricultural labours are not free from slavery in many developing countries like India. Their income, standard of living and social status are very low for agricultural labours. This study uses secondary data collection methods through prior researchers and investigations like books, journals, thesis, research publications and so on. Main problems of labours which are reviewed in this study are seasonal unemployment, low social status and low wage rate. In future, this work can be detailed by collecting the primary data source through quantitative approach among various investigators.

Keywords: Labour Problems, Seasonal Unemployment, Low Social Status, Low Wage Rate, Redressal Mechanism.

1. Introduction

Agricultural labours are those persons who work on other land for wages for many years. They can earn major portion of their income as a payment for performed work on the agricultural farms. Increasing population size, decline of cottage and village industries, small farmers eviction, holdings of un-economy, growing indebtedness, deforestation, capitalist forming for the growth of river erosion are the main causes of the agricultural labor problems in most of the regions (Bansil, 2009). In fact, the problems of agricultural labours are the major barriers in the economic development of a rural economy of the country. In this way, the disaster has severely affected the well-being of labours in the agricultural sector (Patel and Surendar, 2002 & Rao, 2011). The agricultural labour has occupied the lowest rung of the rural ladder. Their problems are complex and they received very lower wages when compared to the industrial labourers. Generally, the agricultural labours have constituted the largest role of labourers (Kumar, 2008). Total agricultural workers are fast growing which is depending on the employment of wage paid. Most of the illiterate workers do not have the courage to demand a high wage due to poverty and low social status (Surendra, 2007; Gardner, 2001 and Runge, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to find the problems of rural labours and to redress their problems, like lack of knowledge, market demandable agricultural commodities, irrigation system, flood, drought, modern technology, illiteracy etc. So present study attempt to investigate the problems of labours and find the redressal mechanism to solve the problems.

2. Literature Review:

2.1.1 Labour Problems And Redressal Mechanism In Agricultural Activities:

a) Absence Of Alternative Occupation/ Seasonal Unemployment:

The labours have faced the linguistic barriers in the agricultural activities. Seasonal and temporary work have affected the workers in the agricultural sector (OSCE, 2009). In general, workers are hard to reach due to the seasonal work with the higher mobility. Seasonal workers often lack the protection of workplace including the unemployment compensation, health insurance, security of job and stability (Adesina, 2013). Seasonal unemployment has occurred due to the variations of the season in the activities of particular fields caused by climatic changes. Most holding land concentration of the farmers has consumed less hectares so that the problems of agricultural labour are increasing day by day due to the seasonal unemployment. The seasonal oriented sectors are bound to give rise to seasonal unemployment.

Khan (2013) studied about the agricultural labour problems in Assam. In fact, the farm worker has often faced the problem of seasonal unemployment and under-employment. Moreover, in the rural areas, the farm workers are not getting the alternative job when they have suffered from the seasonal unemployment (Ayinde, 2008). Apart from these, the illiteracy, poverty, lack of facilities of training etc are some of the problems faced by the labours in the activities of agriculture. The living standard is very low among most of the agricultural workers. Low economic growth rate, adoption of untimely economic policy measures, wrong impression about the technical and vocational studies, neglect of the agricultural sector, poor enabling environment, rapid population growth, migration of rural-urban and the gradual collapse of the manufacturing sector are some of the fundamental factors which account for the unemployment in most of the developing countries (Okafor & Emeka, 2011).

Redressal Mechanism

A study done by Kiran (2012) examined about the agricultural unemployment in India. The rapid population growth has failed to absorb the huge and growing labor force. Unemployment has reduced to a large extent by increasing the investment



level in the agriculture. The agriculture globalization has given scope for the evil designs of some corporate giants. Most of the governments have enhanced its investments in rural infrastructural facilities by penetrating into the nook and corner of each district (Bansil, 2009). The excess labour in the agriculture has shifted into non-formal unemployment sectors. Special programs have implemented to improve the skills of the labour in the agricultural production process.

Causes and solutions of unemployment in India has investigated by Bhaskaru (2015). Usual status, weekly status and daily status are some of the concepts of unemployment. Seasonal unemployment has pointed as the normal phenomenon in the Indian agriculture. Most of the farmers have failed to find some temporary employment in the non-seasonal period. Lack of irrigation facilities are referred as the main reason for seasonal employment for agricultural labours (Agarwal, 2010). In this sense, rapid economic development has implemented to reduce the rural unemployment. Further this scheme has opened new avenues of employment successively. The rural landless employment guarantee programme (RLEGP) has aimed at providing the employment guarantee to at least one from each landless household for about hundred days per year (Rao, 2011). Apart from these, the employment assurance scheme (EAS) has provided a better solution in the agricultural lean season. Employment of agricultural labourers in Andhra Pradesh has analyzed by Ramanaidu (2015). The welfare programmes have implemented Cash scheme for rural employment (CSRE), national rural employment guarantee programme (NREGP) and Integrated rural development programme (IRDP). Further these programmes have played a potential role in solving the problems of seasonal unemployment for the labours in the activities of the agriculture (Kumar, 2008 and Gadgil, 2007). Creation of alternative source of employment, improvement in agricultural sector, co-operative farming and the proper training for improving the skills of farm labourers are some of the legislative measures made for the improvement of socio-economic positions of the agricultural labourers (Sonawane, 2016). Pension facility, alternate source of income for farmers and the need for national weather risk management system are some of the solutions to the problems of the seasonal unemployment in agriculture.

b) Low Social Status

A study done by Vetrivel and Manigandan (2013) examined about the agricultural labour in India. Most of the agricultural workers have belonged to the depressed classes. Further they have been neglected for age of 26. The low caste and the depressed classes are socially handicapped. They don't have courage to assert themselves. In particular, the agricultural workers are like dump-driven cattle. In some parts of India, the labourers belonging to the agricultural sector are migratory, moving in search of job at the harvesting time. Government measures to improve their status have proved ineffective due to the powerful hold of the rural elite classes in the economy of rural aspects.

Palanisamy and Mahesh (2014) studied about the socio-economic analysis of agricultural landless labourers in Tirupur district. The agricultural labourer incomes are very limited. The standard of living is not improved in a way such that the status of labourers is very low when compared to the other income group of people. Agricultural labourers have are socially and economically backward people. Landless labourers attached to the landlords have created some impact to the labourers in agricultural sector. Socially, the labourers belong to oppressed class are not organized and cannot fight for their rights. This is the main reason for their lower economic level.

A study done by Raj (2016) examined the socio-economic status of rural women agricultural labours in Puducherry region. The less amount of wage is found to be the main problem of backward economic status of the labourers. Credit availability has also created a negative impact on the socio-economic status of the labourers. Moreover, the socio economic statuses of rural women agricultural laborers are not high. From the cultivator status, many such households have become labourers of agriculture. In this sense, the low wage rate for women has created the negative influence on the development of their socio-economic status

Redressal Mechanism

Sadati et al (2010) has explored the solutions for overcoming challenges facing peasant farming system in Iran. The peasant mode of production has not developed the labor social forms and it leads to the production socialization in a higher level. In fact, the social and cultural factor acts as the influential factor of agriculture in developing countries (Ashrafi, Mehrabian and Pourkakhaki, 2007 and Fami, Samiee and Sadati, 2009). Empowerment among peasants, revolution of science and culture in the exploitation of social and economy, payment with low interest and long-term facilities, social solution are some of the solutions to improve the social status of labors.

According to Government of India (2013), MGNREGA, national rural livelihood mission (NRLM)-Aajeevika, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) are some of the schemes under the major poverty alleviation and employment generation programme. Further, these programmes have implemented to improve the status of



labour in the rural areas. The MGNREGA has played a vital role to enhance the livelihood security of households in the rural areas. Apart from these, the NRLM scheme has aimed to lift the assisted rural poor families above the poverty line by providing the generating assets in income through bank credit and subsidy of government.

Problems faced by informal workers in different sectors in India have investigated by Muthusamy and Ibrahim (2016). Awareness should be created about the social welfare legislations and more importance should be given to the female workers in family in order to improve the status of female agricultural labours. Training and education about the activities of agriculture towards the labours have paved a way to improve their social status effectively.

c) Low Wage Rate

A study done by Agasty and Patra (2013) examined the policy implications of migration, wages and agriculture. The migration has created a strong bearing on agriculture and the problems of labor-wages. The sector of agriculture has faced the acute labour shortage and the rising wages and costs. In some areas, the rise of wages has been enough to render the minimum wage law. Wage, structure of farm costs, size and productivity of output in agriculture are created an impact on the labour in agricultural activities. Moreover, the farm wages have determined by the the demand for and supply of labour in which the wages have increased due to the MNREGA and minimum wage laws.

Growth, structural change and wage rates in rural India has analyzed by Reddy (2015). The agricultural and non – agricultural wage rates have deflated by using the price index of consumer for agricultural and rural labour. Wage rates trends have shown the relative labour demand and supply conditions. In this sense, the lower wage rate has given to the unskilled labours and this has created a negative influence in their agricultural performances. The drivers of change and their effect on wage rates are referred as the vast differences in wage rates among the developed states.

Parmeshwar (2016) studied about the dimensions of rural wage employment in India. Temporary employment, poor working conditions, lack of social security, high presence of child labour, irregular pay and few opportunities for advancement are some of the categories linked with the unorganized wage employment in rural areas (Dorward and Chirwa, 2011). Agricultural wages have tended to be lowered when compared to the non-agricultural wages. Further, the poor unskilled tends to participate in the wages activities of agriculture. Moreover, the illiteracy level among the employed poor rural wage has high.

Redressal Mechanism

A study done by Ramasamy (2004) examined about the constraints to growth in Indian agriculture with needed technology, resource management and trade strategies. Ease of land preparation, timeliness and the quality of work done are some of the factors which are influenced the labours in the agricultural sectors (Nankani et al, 2006). In particular, the level of income of the agricultural labour households has depended on the wage employment availability as well as the real wage rate. Bhargave (2014) studied the impact of India's rural employment guarantee on the demand for agricultural technology. The Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (NREGA) has played an effective role to solve the issues of low wage rate of a labour in the agricultural activities (Basu, 2011). Further, this act has aimed to alleviate some of the concerns by providing the public works employment to rural households at the minimum wages. In particular, the wage increases are biased towards the women more when compared to the men (Liu and Barrett, 2013). The NREGA program has targeted well to poor laborers. Enforcement of minimum wages in rural areas acts as the second goal of NREGA. The Indian Minimum wages act 1948 was created to ensure a subsistence wage for workers (Fan, Hazell and Thorat, 2000). The authors have analyzed that the NREGA has created the positive impact on the agricultural wages in the labor markets. Employee guarantee has played a vital role to increase the agricultural wages. Prasad (2014) focused on MGNREGA as the strategy to overcome labour shortage in agriculture. The farmers are not able to pay wage rate as equal to the MGNREGA wage rate due to their low income from agriculture. MGNREGA has both the positive and negative impacts on the socio-economic status in the rural areas. Further it has improved the bargaining power among the labourers and it also empowers the women in terms of rate of wage as equal to men. Moreover, the MGNREGA has given equal opportunities to men and women in terms of wage rates and work in agricultural activities. It provides social protection to the vulnerable people living in the rural areas in India.

3. Discussion

From the above literature, it was clear that the seasonal unemployment, low social status and low wage rate are mainly encompassed in the labour problems of agricultural activities. Further, there are many redressal mechanisms available to solve those issues and some of them are discussed briefly in this section.

S.NO	Problems	Description	Redressal Mechanism
1	Seasonal unemployment	It has affected the labours in the agricultural sector (OSCE, 2009)	Rural landless employment guarantee programme (RLEGP) has aimed at providing the employment guarantee for the labours. (Ramanaidu, 2015)
		Seasonal workers often lack the protection of workplace. (Adesina, 2013)	National rural employment guarantee programme (NREGP) plays an important role to solve the problems of seasonal unemployment (Sonawane, 2016)
		The labours are not getting the alternative occupation when they suffer from the seasonal unemployment (Khan,2013)	Increasing the irrigation facilities are paved a way to reduce the seasonal unemployment (Bhaskaru, 2015)
2	Low Social Status	Powerful hold of the rural elite class creates negative impact to the poor laborers (Vetrivel and Manigandan, 2013)	Empowerment among peasants have created the positive impact on the development of their social status (Sedati et al, 2016)
		The low and depressed class of labors does not have courage to fight for their rights. (Palanisamy and Mahesh, 2014)	National rural livelihood mission (NRLM) scheme has aimed to lift the assisted rural families above the poverty line by providing the generating assets in income via bank credit (Government of India, 2013)
		Credit availability creates negative impact on the economic status of the laborers (Raj, 2016)	Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) scheme has provided lot of opportunities to improve the status of the laborers. (Muthusamy and Ibrahim, 2016)
3	Low Wage Rate	Less amount of wage has found to be the main problem of backward economic status of the laborers (Agasty and Patra ,2013)	The Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (NREGA) has played an effective role to solve the issues of low wage rate of a labour in the agricultural activities (Ramasamy, 2004)
		Low wage rate has given to the unskilled labors (Reddy, 2015)	Employee guarantee scheme has played an important role to increase the agricultural wages (Bhargava, 2014)
		Women agricultural labors have received lower wage when compared to the men labours (Parameshwar, 2016)	The minimum wages act, 1948 has created the positive impact on the development of wage rate for the poor laborers in agricultural sector (Government of India, 2013)

Table:1: Analysis of Labour Problems And Redressal Mechanism In Agricultural Activities

Source: Author

The Table 1 depicts the analysis of labour problems and redressal mechanism in agricultural sector. Further these redressal mechanisms plays a potential role to reduce the problems of laborers in an effective manner.

The low wage rate has highly affected the agricultural labours when compared to the other problems. These low wage rates of labour are also associated with the social status. Further, this low wage rate has decreased the quality of life of the workers. The minimum wage act 1948 has played an important role to solve the issues of low wage rate for the labours. Most of the labours are suffered in getting the alternative occupation during the seasonal unemployment. In this sense, several schemes such as RLEGP, NREGP etc are implemented to redress the problem of seasonal unemployment. Apart from these, NRLM scheme was implemented to lift the social status of the labours by providing lot of opportunities.

4. Conclusion

This research has reviewed various problems of laborers and redressal mechanism in the agricultural activities. Increasing the skills of farmers, peasant's empowerment, improvement of farm management among the farmers through effective technology and education are some of the common solutions to redress the problems of labours in agricultural activities. In addition to the redressal mechanism, government should take proper action for various problems for agricultural labours like wage reforms, hours of work, new agricultural methods, improving the living conditions and so on. Finally, the use of

existing equipment and inputs and some modern methods should be emphasized in every agricultural region to reduce such problems of labours in an effective manner.

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