

CHAPTER - 5

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The main thrust of this study as earmarked in the first chapter was focused to study major problems of agricultural labourers in the selected villages of the hilly area. It is an established fact that Konkan region is one of the poor region with rich resources in the Maharashtra state. The main problem focused so far was to find out the exact conditions of the agricultural labourers in the village and to examine the changes in their living conditions.

As reported earlier, the case study method was followed by concentrating on the intensive study of the agricultural labourers in villages. The primary data so far collected was analyzed with specific conclusions.

Most of the agricultural labourers survive so far belonged to the age group of 31 to 50 years.

The caste structure in villages comprises of 50 % to the backward castes including scheduled castes and other backward classes. The share of caste was more than others. The agricultural labourers are mainly constituted by the lower castes in the society.

The literacy has improved during the last decade. It was higher (60.75%), but without required knowledge of modern technology.

The total migration in the selected villages was less (25.39%), except one village.

The average size of family of the respondents was 3 to 4 and most of families had more than 1 person working as an agricultural labour.

No modern techniques were used in agriculture, consequently the yield rate remained less. More intensive capital has been employed for higher yield.

Agriculture was totally based on subsistence level. There was hardly no marketable surpluses remained.

Horticulture is growing culture in the region.

The farmers were not signified the importance of soil testing and the use an imperative quality of fertilizers.

The farmers were using primitive implements on rental basis.

One third of the total earning came from agriculture, which is the main livelihood of the region. Dairy and poultry have joined as subsidiary occupations.

Overall occupational status in the surveyed area was low due to other professional opportunities in the mofussil area.

The housing and drinking water facilities have been aggregately improved both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

More than 50% of agricultural labourers were not having land holdings. Most of the agricultural labourers were marginal farmers with uneconomic holding.

The farm workers maintained the minor livestock.

The main source of income was agriculture with small amount of yield. Most of the labourers were depending on wages due to the low productivity of the land.

The income from milch cattles and other occupations were supportive income sources to some families.

The expenditure analysis shows that lower the income and higher are the expenditure, consequently the poorest of the poor have huge deficits, which they normally cover by accepting loans etc. The composition of expenditure interestingly shows that low-income labourers were spending on non-food items, this non-food items include consumption of tobacco, Pan and liquor etc.

Most of agricultural labourers were in need of loans for production and consumption purposes. The main source of loan was Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies. Most of the families were facing the problem of repayment.

The payment of wages was substantially improved but most of the labours were not getting minimum wages. The female labourers were still discriminated by sex in wages. The wages received by agricultural labourers differ by working mode, cropping pattern and the seasonal works.

The extent of unemployment is almost one half during the season. Agricultural labourers were not aware of organisation, so they were facing so many problems related to wage rate and government subsidies etc.

Agricultural labourers were economically exploited.

Despite some of the marginal improvements in the living conditions of agricultural labourers, the twin problems of poverty and unemployment are still a cause of concern.

SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions for the further improvements in the conditions of the agricultural labourers in hilly area are made as under.

1. The Employment Guarantee Scheme (E.G.C.) should be modified and applied to hilly region. This modification in the EGS will certainly provide an effective solution for the problem of the unemployment.
2. The Present minimum wage rate for the area under study is Rs. 47, but most of agricultural labourers are not getting this minimum wage. They may be motivated to the desired

minimum wage rates in the region. The labourers are made aware of a various welfare schemes.

3. It was found that irrigation capacity of the taluka was not fully utilized. The need is to make use of the capacity of irrigation.
4. It was observed that the cattle population is not having either proper living conditions or getting medical facilities. To overcome this problem, the financial assistance should be provided by the organized sectors.
5. The main aim of the dairy farming is to improve the living conditions of the small farmers who are below the poverty line but it is found that the cattle population, mainly cows and buffaloes are not yielding high. The need is to replace the local cattle with high milch variety of cattle. More facilities should be provided for cross breeding.
6. To improve the financial conditions of the labourers the need is to develop the co-operative agro based industries.
7. The horticulture sector should develop further.
8. Higher educational facilities need to be improved for removing the educational backwardness.
9. Some educated people are migrating to nearby districts like Bombay, Kolhapur etc. The development of a region is not possible unit and unless, the youngsters are intensively

interested in the economic development of the region.
Therefore, the need to stop brain drain is essential.

10. With the growing awareness among the agricultural labourers, the organisation of labourers, on the lines of trade union with the initial outside leadership, should be encouraged so as to ensure a better bargaining power.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the problems of agricultural labourers in Shahuwadi Taluka in the hilly region can be dealt with squarely, if the political leaders, and the various agencies of the voluntary organizations intensify their efforts on solving overall problems of the hilly areas. The labourers themselves should also take up the challenge seriously by confronting to the problems rather than running away from problems.