



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Economics

TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN KARNATAKA STATE

KEY WORDS: agricultural labour, decadal change, structural changes.

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture labour has become the most important component in Indian agriculture. A little less than half of the total cost of production of field crop is of labour. Economic development of any country lead to structural changes in the occupational distribution. It meant that employment in the agricultural sector declined and it rised in the secondary and tertiary sector. In the last decade, agricultural labour growth has seen some drastic changes. The agricultural labour percentage to total percentage has decreased. It has negative slope. The present analysis on census data related to agricultural labour to national and Karnataka reveals that still agriculture sector is the major sector to provide employment. At all India, agricultural labour has been increasing which means, the secondary and tertiary sectors are failed to absorb the agricultural labourers.

Introduction:

Agriculture labour has become the most important component in Indian agriculture. A little less than half of the total cost of production of field crop is of labour. It is much more for labour intensive crops such as sugarcane, cotton, vegetables etc. Agricultural labourers are socially and economically poorest section of the society. They are the poorest of the poor in rural India. Workers in the agricultural sector are classified into three main categories namely, cultivators, agricultural laborer and workers engaged in forestry, fishing and livestock etc.

It is an established trend that as an economy matures; there is a movement of agricultural workers from low productivity agriculture to higher productivity sectors. However in India, the trend has not been limited to just declining share of agriculture in total employment but also has led to a significant decline in absolute number of people employed in the agricultural sector. It is really disturbing that the proportion of agricultural laborers has increased and the cultivators have indicated a decline.

The present paper is an analysis of the trends in agricultural workers in Karnataka during the last decades using Census data. It is an attempt to present the changes in agricultural labour particularly in the context of census of 2011 data, Census of India. The analysis is to bring out changes during last decade (2001-11).

2. Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data. The study is confined to Census data only. Census data from 1961 to 2011, published by Registrar General of India, used for national and Karnataka state. The study uses simple average, percentage and growth rates as analytical tool for analysis and comparison.

3. Results:

Economic development of any country leads to structural changes in the occupational distribution. It meant that employment in the agricultural sector declined and it rised in the secondary and tertiary sector. It was observed from the census data that the occupational distribution in the total workforce was still more than half of the workforce was concentrated in agriculture. However, an important feature of the trend was that there was a sharp rise in the size of agricultural laborers at National level, but there was a sharp decline in Karnataka state. Table 1 showed that the percentage of agricultural labour in India increased since 1961. It has increased from 19.56 percent in 1961 to 30.00 percent in 2011. On the other hand, however the percentage of agricultural labour in Karnataka has increased from 16.65 percent to 28.74 percent in 1991, after 1991 agricultural labour has started to decline steadily in Karnataka. It is declined from 26.40 percent in 2001 to 25.67 percent in 2011.

Table 1: Agricultural labour in India and Karnataka

Year	India	Karnataka
	Total agricultural laborers (% to total workers)	Total agricultural laborers (% to total workers)
1961	19.56	16.65
1971	26.98	26.69
1981	26.02	26.78
1991	27.16	28.74
2001	26.69	26.40
2011	30.00	25.67

As per 2011 census, Karnataka state has 6,10,95,297 population and size wise population Karnataka state stood at Ninth rank among all the states in India and it accounted for 5.05% share of total population in India. Total 3,74,69,335 persons resided in rural area that was 61.33% and remaining 2,36,25,962 persons resided in urban areas that was 38.67%. The percentage of Agricultural labour to total workers decreased during last decade. It showed there was a sharp decline in agricultural labour. It meant the dependency on agriculture was decreasing slowly. The table-02 revealed that the data related to two decades of agricultural labour data by gender and spatial changes. The total agricultural labour was 26.46 percent in 2001 but it is decreased to 25.67 percent in 2011. However, the rural agricultural labour was increased from 34.46 percent in 2001 to 36.41 percent in 2011. On the other hand urban agricultural labour was decreased. The gender wise analysis of agricultural labour showed that the male agricultural labour was increased in both rural and urban areas. However, the female agricultural labour increased in rural areas but decreased in urban areas.

Table 2: Decadal changes of agricultural labour

Agricultural laborers	2001			2011		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Person	26.46	34.46	5.07	25.67	36.41	4.47
Male	17.20	23.94	3.33	17.97	26.94	3.39
Female	43.45	50.15	11.16	40.33	51.32	7.57

In the last decade, agricultural labour growth has seen some drastic changes. The agricultural labour percentage to total percentage has decreased. It has negative slope. The rural agricultural labour has just grown at just 0.6percent which is even less than 1 percent. On the other hand, it has decreased slightly in urban agriculture labour with -0.06 percent.(Table-03)

Table 3: Decadal changes of agricultural labour in Karnataka

Agricultural labourers	Total	Change
Person	34.54	33.81
Rural	43.73	44.33
Urban	5.13	5.07

Conclusion and policy implications:

The above analysis on census data related to agricultural labour in

India and Karnataka reveals that still agriculture sector is the major sector to provide employment. At all India, agricultural labour has been increasing which means, the secondary and tertiary sectors are failed to absorb the agricultural labourers. On the other hand, the scenario of Karnataka state with regard to agricultural labour has different from at all India. Even the agricultural labourers has increased in absolute number the percentage of agricultural labour to total workers has been decreasing in Karnataka. Due to decreasing of agricultural labour in Karnataka, farmers are facing labour scarcity for agricultural operations. Government has to generate employment to absorb the agricultural laborers to secondary and tertiary sectors. In rural areas, it has to encourage build non-farm employment. Because educated youth is not ready work in agriculture. Small and home made industries to set up at rural areas.

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