

## **Working Condition of Women Agricultural Workers: A Study With Reference to Virudhunagar District, Tamilnadu**

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**M. Selvakumar and K. Jegatheesan**

### **Abstract**

For the economic development, the agriculture sector plays an inevitable role. But the agricultural sector depends on women workers. Though nearly half of the world's population constitutes women, yet they are unprotected, exploited and discriminated. The status of women workers in India is obvious from the fact that more than 70 per cent of them are engaged in agriculture sector. Hence the researcher has planned to study the working conditions and living style of the women worker in the particular field.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Sector, Women Workers, Working Conditions

### **Introduction**

Agriculture in India is one of the most important sectors of its economy. It is the means of livelihood of almost two thirds of the work force in the country and according to the economic data for the financial year 2006-07, agriculture accounts for 18 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). About 43 per cent of India's geographical area is used for agricultural activity. Though the share of Indian agriculture in the GDP has steadily declined, it is still the single largest contributor to the GDP and plays a vital role in the overall socio-economic development of India.

Despite declining share of agriculture in the economy, majority of workforce continue to depend on agricultural sector for employment and in rural areas dependence on agriculture is more as nearly 75 per cent of rural population is employed in agricultural sector. However, there is disguised employment in the sector due to limited opportunities for rural non-farm employment. This disguised employment leads to lower labour and resources productivity in the sector relative to other sectors of the economy. The low labour productivity leads to higher rates of poverty in rural areas.

Women workers play an important role in agriculture sector. More than 60 per cent of the workers in agriculture sector are women. These working

women in agriculture are exploited by various reasons. The most important reason is that these women workers are not aware about their strength and opportunities. The working conditions and living style of the women worker in agriculture sector is very pathetic. Therefore, the study is planned to analyse the working and living conditions of women workers in agriculture sector.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Agricultural workers constitute by far the largest segment in the unorganised sector and their number according to 2001 Census was more than 100 million. In addition, a significant number are listed as cultivators (large, medium and small) of whom approximately 50 per cent belong to the category of small and marginal farmers. Many of these small and marginal farmers on account of utterly deficit, small and uneconomic holdings and low yield work on the land of others. Further, a significant number engaged in livestock, forestry, fishing, orchards and allied activities as well as small and marginal farmers work as agricultural workers in their spare time or in times of difficulty to supplement their meager income.

In spite of the fact that these agricultural workers have such numerical strength, they are extremely vulnerable to exploitation on account of low levels of literacy, lack of awareness, persistent social backwardness and absence of unionisation and other forms of viable organisation. The avenues of stable and durable employment for them have been limited leading to inter-district and inter-state migration in search of better avenues of employment and wages but with a lot of dislocation of family life, dislocation of education of children and numerous other handicaps.

Several measures have been taken to protect the interests of the working class and uplift the condition of agricultural workers. The very first legislation, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 was applied to the agricultural sector also. Subsequently, the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 was enacted to provide certain basic facilities to plantation workers. Many other existing labour laws are applicable or have direct bearing on agricultural labour. The problems of agricultural labourers have been sought to be tackled through Multi-dimensional course of action viz., improvement of infrastructural facilities, diversification to non-farm activities, skill improvement programmes, financial assistance to promote self-employment, optimising the use of land resources and so on, through a

variety of rural development, employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes. All these efforts have not been able to adequately protect the interests of agricultural workers. This is partly on account of lack of bargaining power. Keeping in view this broad perspective, this research has made an attempt to study the working and living conditions of women workers in agriculture sector.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study is to analyse the working conditions of women workers in the agricultural sector in Virudhunagar District and to offer suitable suggestions based on the findings of the study.

### **Scope**

This study is mainly confined to the study of the working conditions of women workers in agricultural sector in Virudhunagar District.

### **Methodology**

The study is based on the both primary and secondary data. The primary data of this study was collected from the sample respondents of women workers in agricultural sector in Virudhunagar District through a well structured interview schedule. The secondary data was collected from Government reports, journals, magazines, books, web sites and so on.

### **Sampling Design**

Virudhunagar District consists of eight revenue Taluks. From each Taluk eight villages were selected through lottery method and averagely five respondents were identified from each village through stratified non random sampling method. Totally 300 women workers were selected for this research purpose.

## Analysis of Results

### Demographic Factors

Table 1 gives the detail about the Demographic factors of the respondents.

**Table 1. Demographic Factors of the Respondents**

Sl. No.		No. of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Age-wise Classification of the Respondents</b>			
1.		70	23.33
2.	25 - 49 Years	174	58.00
3.	50 - 74 Years	54	18.00
4.	75 and above	2	0.67
<b>Marital Status of the Respondents</b>			
1.	Married	247	82.33
2.	Unmarried	53	17.67
<b>Community-wise Classification of the Respondents</b>			
1.	SC/ST	86	28.67
2.	BC	113	37.67
3.	MBC	93	31.00
4.	Others	8	2.66
<b>Religion-wise Classification of the Respondents</b>			
1.	Hindu	284	94.66
2.	Christian	11	3.67
3.	Muslims	5	1.67
<b>Number of Family Members</b>			
1.	Below 3 members	78	26.00
2.	3 - 6 members	208	69.33
3.	6 - 9 members	11	3.67
4.	Above 9 members	3	1.00
<b>Level of Annual Income of the Respondents</b>			
1.	Below Rs.20,000	170	56.67
2.	Rs.20,000 - 40,000	107	35.67
3.	Rs.40,000 - 60,000	20	6.66
4.	Above Rs.60,000	3	1.00
Total		300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From Table 1, it is inferred that out of 300 respondents, most of the respondent belong to the age group of 25 - 49 years, are married, belongs to BC community, are Hindus, have 3 - 6 members in their family, and earn below Rs.20,000 annually.

### Level of Experience

The researcher has also analysed the level of experience of the respondent in the study area and the gathered details are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Level of Experience in the Field of Agriculture**

Sl. No.	Years of Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Below 5 years	94	31.33
2.	5 - 10 years	78	26.00
3.	10 - 15 years	70	23.33
4.	15 - 20 years	54	18.00
5.	Above 20 years	4	1.34
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 2, it is noticeable that out of 300 respondents, 31.33 per cent of the respondent have below 5 years of experience in the field of agriculture, 26 per cent have 5-10 years of experience, 23.33 per cent of them are in the field of agriculture for 10-15 years, 18 per cent have 15 - 20 years of experience and the remaining 1.34 per cent of have above 20 years of experience.

### Status of Ownership of Land

The researcher has also enquired the status of the land possessed by the respondents in the study area. These details are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Status of Ownership of Land**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Owned	164	54.67
2.	Not Owned	136	45.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 3 reveals that out of 300 respondents, 54.67 per cent of the respondents have agricultural land and the remaining 45.33 per cent do not have any agricultural land. It is understood that majority (54.67%) of the respondents have agriculture land.

### Number of Acres of Land

The researcher has analysed the number of acres of land possessed by the respondents in the study area. It is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Number of Acres of Land**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Less than 2	64	39.02
2.	2 - 4	52	31.71
3.	4 - 6	32	19.51
4.	6 and Above	16	9.76
	Total	164	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 4, it is evident that out of 164 respondents, 39.02 per cent of the respondents have less than 2 acres of agricultural land, 31.71 per cent have 2-4 acres, 19.51 per cent have 4 - 6 acres and the remaining 9.76 per cent have above 6 acres of agriculture land. It is found that the most (39.02%) of the respondents have less than two acres of agriculture land.

### Employment in Others Land

Table 5 presents the respondent's employment in others land.

**Table 5. Employment in Other's Land**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Working	207	69.00
2.	Not Working	93	31.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 5 shows that out of 300 respondents, 69 per cent of the respondent work in other's land as agricultural labourers and the remaining 31 per cent of them work in their own land. It is clear from the fact that majority (69%) of the respondent work in others land as agriculture labourers.

### Reasons for Working in Others Land

The researcher has also analysed the ultimate reason for working. It is displayed in Table 6.

**Table 6. Reason for Working**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Non availability of water	26	12.56
2.	Insufficient of working capital	22	10.63
3.	Chances of loss	23	11.11
4.	Not having land	136	65.70
	Total	207	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 6, it is inferred that out of 207 respondents who are working as labourers in others land, 65.70 per cent of them work because of not having their own land. About 10.63 per cent work due to insufficient working capital, 12.56 per cent for the reason of non-availability of water and the remaining 11.11 per cent due to the chances of loss of work in other's land though they are having their own land.

### Opinion about Agricultural Work

The opinion of the respondents about satisfaction in agricultural work is received. Table 7 shows the details.

**Table 7. Level of Satisfaction with Regard to Agricultural Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Satisfied with Agricultural Work	232	77.33
2.	Not Satisfied with Agricultural Work	68	22.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 7, it is revealed that out of 300 respondents, 77.33 per cent are satisfied with agriculture work and the remaining 22.67 per cent are not satisfied with agricultural work. It is inferred that majority (77.33%) of the respondents are satisfied with agricultural work

### Type of Work Carried Out by the Respondents

The type of work of the sample respondents are depicted in Table 8.

Table 8. Type of Work

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Responses	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Plugging	70	300	23.33
2.	Weeding	91	300	30.33
3.	Plotting	53	300	17.67
4.	Irrigating	49	300	16.33
5.	Feeding	48	300	16.00
6.	Fertilizing	63	300	21.00
7.	Harvesting	64	300	21.34
8.	Post harvesting	30	300	10.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 8, it is revealed that out of 300 respondents, 30.33 per cent of them are involved in weeding activities, 23.33 per cent are involved in plugging, 21.34 per cent are involved in harvesting activities, 21.00 per cent in fertilizing, 17.67 per cent are in plotting, 16.33 per cent are involved in irrigating, 16.00 per cent in are engaged in feeding and the remaining 10.00 per cent are involved in post harvesting activities. It is inferred that (30.33%) of them are involved in weeding activities in the study area.

### Ranking of Agricultural Work by Respondents

The respondents were asked to rank the various agricultural works in the order of their preference. Table 9 shows the ranks for the various agricultural work by the women workers

Table 9. Ranking of Agricultural Work

Sl. No.	Type of work	Rank								Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1.	Plugging	44	29	47	49	42	19	35	35	300
2.	Weeding	54	42	43	54	34	32	21	20	300
3.	Plotting	35	49	39	38	31	35	33	40	300
4.	Irrigating	54	37	26	30	58	43	41	11	300
5.	Feeding	51	39	39	36	43	35	21	36	300
6.	Fertilizing	14	46	40	46	40	56	31	27	300
7.	Harvesting	33	18	48	31	30	36	68	36	300
8.	Post harvesting	15	40	18	16	22	44	50	95	300
	Garret Value	80	68	60	54	47	41	33	21	

Source: Primary Data



In order to Rank the nature of Agricultural work chosen by the respondents, the Garratt Ranking Techniques has been used. Table 9 shows the responses of the respondents regarding the type of Agriculture work.

**Table 10. Agricultural Work to Choose the Choice of the Labours**

Sl. No.	Reason	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Plugging	15601	52.00	IV
2.	Weeding	16695	55.65	I
3	Plotting	15345	51.15	V
4.	Irrigating	16089	53.63	II
5.	Feeding	15921	53.07	III
6.	Fertilizing	14898	49.66	VI
7.	Harvesting	14304	47.68	VII
8.	Post harvesting	12347	41.16	VIII

It is observed from the Table 10 that 'weeding' has been ranked first, 'Irrigating' has been ranked second, 'feeding has been ranked third followed by 'plugging' in fourth rank, 'plotting' ranked as the fifth rank, 'fertilizing' has been ranked sixth, 'harvesting' ranked as seven and 'post harvesting' has been ranked eight.

#### Opinion about the Type of Work

The researcher has also analysed the opinion about the type of work of the respondent in the study area. It is narrated in Table 11.

**Table 11. Opinion about the Mode of Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Compelled	118	39.33
2.	Not Compelled	182	60.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From Table 11, it is lucid that out of 300 respondents, 60.67 per cent are compelled to do particular type of works and the remaining 39.33 per cent say that we not are not compelled. It is understood that majority (60.67%) of the respondents are compelled to do the particular type of work.

### Details about Working Days

The nature of opinion about working days of agricultural labourers. These details are shown in the Table 12.

**Table 12. Opinion about Working Days**

Sl.No.	Status	No. of Respondents	Percent to Total
1.	Work in all days	122	40.67
2.	Not all days	178	59.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above Table 12 that out of 300 sample agricultural labourers, 40.67 per cent of the respondents are having work in all days and the remaining 59.33 per cent of the respondents are not having work in all days in a week.

### Number of Working Days in a Week

The details of number of working days in a week is shown in the Table 13.

**Table 13. Number of Working Days in a Week**

Sl.No.	No. of Days	No. of Respondents	Percent to Total
1.	Less than 3 Days	24	13.48
2.	Above 3 Days	159	86.52
	Total	178	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the Table 13 that, out of 178 agricultural labourers, 86.52 per cent of the respondents got the work Less than 3 days in a week and the remaining 13.48 per cent of the respondents got above 3 days in a week.

### Level of Work

The researcher has analysed the opinion about the level of work carried out by the respondents in the study area. It is shown in Table 14.

**Table 14. Level of Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Hectic	113	37.67
2.	Normal	187	62.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is known from Table 14 that out of 300 respondents, 62.33 per cent of the respondents have say that the work is normal and feel that the work is hectic in nature. It is understood that most (62.33%) of the respondents feel that the work is normal.

### Approximate Wage per Day

The researcher has also analysed the approximate wages received by the respondents per day. This classification of the respondents on the basis of their wages is displayed in Table 15.

**Table 15. Approximate Wage per Day**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Below Rs.75	167	55.67
2.	Rs.75 – Rs.100	118	39.33
3.	Rs.100 – Rs.125	11	3.67
4.	Above Rs.125	4	1.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is evident from Table 15 that out of 300 respondents, 55.67 per cent earn daily wage of below Rs.75, 39.33 per cent earn Rs.75-Rs.100, 3.67 per cent earn Rs.100 – Rs.125 daily and only 1.33 per cent earn above Rs.125 per day. It is inferred that most (55.67%) of the respondents earn daily wage of Rs.75 and below.

### Wage Payment System

The wages may be paid daily, weekly, monthly, fortnightly. The wage payment system is shown in Table 16.

**Table 16. Wage Payment System**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Daily	128	42.67
2.	Weekly	126	42.00
3.	Fortnightly	29	9.67
4.	Monthly	17	5.66
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 16 reveals that out of 300 respondents, 42.67 per cent have daily wage payment system, 42.00 per cent have received their wages on weekly basis, 9.67 per cent have fortnightly payment and the remaining 5.66 per cent have monthly payment. It is evident from the fact that majority (42.67%) of the respondents have daily wage payment system.

### Opinion about Wages

The researcher has also analysed the respondent opinion about wages. It may be low, moderate and high. The opinion of the respondents is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17. Opinion about the Wage**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Low	111	37.00
2.	Moderate	185	61.67
3.	High	4	1.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 17 indicates that out of 300 respondents, 61.67 per cent of the respondent have opined that their wage is moderate, 37 per cent feel that their wage is low and the remaining 1.33 per cent have the opinion that their wage is high.

### Equality of Wages

The researcher has analysed the level of quality in wage payment. It may be equal or unequal. It is shown in Table 18.

**Table 18. Equality of Wages**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Equally Treated	65	21.67
2.	Unequally Treated	235	78.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 18 explicates that out of 300 respondents, 78.33 per cent of the respondents are getting a wage which is not equal to male worker and the remaining 21.67 per cent are getting wage equal to male workers. It is inferred that majority (78.33%) of the respondents are getting a wage which is not equal to male workers.

### Wages in Kind

The wages to agricultural labourers may be paid in kind. The details about the wages in kind are displayed in Table 19

**Table 19. Form of Wages**

Sl. No.	Form	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Kind	75	25.00
2.	Cash	225	75.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 19 clearly shows that out of 300 respondents, 75 (25%) respondents are getting their wages in the form of a product/kind and the remaining 225 (75%) are getting their wages in the form of cash only. It is inferred that majority (75%) of the respondents are getting their wages in the form of cash.

### Details about Additional Wages for Additional Work

The researcher has analysed the additional wages received by the respondents for additional work. It is presented in Table 20.

**Table 20. Details about the Wages for Additional Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Received	208	69.33
2.	Not Received	92	30.67
	Total	300	100.00

Table 20 indicates that out of 300 respondents, 69.33 per cent of the respondent are getting extra wages for additional work done and the remaining 30.67 per cent are not getting extra wages for additional work. It is very clear that most (69.33%) of the respondents are getting extra wages for additional work being done.

### Details about Increment

The researcher has analysed the details about the increment provided by the employer. The details are narrated in Table 21.

**Table 21. Details about Increment**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Given	219	73.00
2.	Not Given	81	27.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 21 shows that out of 300 respondents, 73 per cent of the respondents get increment and the remaining 27 per cent are not get any increment. It is found that majority (73%) of the respondents get increment in the study area.

#### Methods Followed in Fixation Wages for Extra Work

The wages for extra work may be fixed on the basis of time or on the basis of production. Table 22 shows the basis of wage fixation for extra work.

**Table 22. Methods Followed in Fixation of Wages**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	On the basis of time	222	74.00
2.	On the basis of production	78	26.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 22 shows that out of 300 respondents, 74 per cent of the respondents received their extra time wages under time rate system and the remaining 26 per cent received it under production system.

It is found that most (74%) of the respondents received their extra time wages under time rate system.

#### Method of Wage Fixation

Table 23 shows the method of wage fixation in the study area.

**Table 23. Wage Fixation Method**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	On the basis of time rate	241	80.33
2.	On the basis of production	59	19.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is lucid from Table 23 that out of 300 respondents, 241 (80.33%) received their wages on the basis of time rate system and the remaining 59 (19.67%) received it on the basis of production. It is inferred that the majority (80.33%) of the respondents received their wages on the basis of time rate system.

#### **Advances/Loan Received from the Landlord**

In the study area, the researcher has also analysed the details related to the advances received by the labourers. It is presented in Table 24.

**Table 24. Advance Received from the Landlord**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Received	49	16.33
2.	Not Received	251	83.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from Table 24 that out of 300 respondents, 251 (83.67%) respondents did not receive any advance and the remaining 49 (16.33%) received the advance from the landlord. It is inferred that the majority (83.67%) of the respondents did not receive any advance from the landlord.

#### **Details about Agricultural Employment**

Table 25 reveals respondent's information about agricultural employment.

**Table 25. Details about Agriculture Employment**

Sl.No.	Opinion	No. of Workers	Percent to Total
1	Whole year	88	29.33
2	Off season	212	70.67
	Total	245	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 25 explains that out of 300 respondent of agricultural workers, 70.67 per cent are not provided with employment in agriculture throughout the year, and remaining 29.33 per cent of the respondents are getting employment in agriculture throughout the year.

### Nature of Employment

In the study area, the workers are appointed as either permanent or temporary. The results are presented in Table 26.

**Table 26. Nature of Employment**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Permanent	116	38.67
2.	Temporary	184	61.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 26 clearly shows that out of 300 respondents, 61.33 per cent did not work permanently with single landlord and the remaining 38.67 per cent worked with single landlord. It is indicated from the above Table 31 that majority (61.33%) of the respondents did not work permanently under single landlord.

### Details about Bonus/Gifts

The researcher has analysed the details about bonus or gift received by the respondents from the landlord in the study area. It is presented in Table 27.

**Table 27. Bonus or Gift Provided**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Provided	167	55.67
2.	Not Provided	133	44.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 27 surfaces that out of 300 respondents, 55.67 per cent receive bonus during the festivals and the remaining 44.33 per cent did not receive any bonus. It is revealed that most (55.67%) of the respondents received bonus during festivals.

### Type of Bonus/Gift

The employer may offer bonus/gift in the form of monetary or non-monetary forms. The form of bonus is displayed in Table 28.



**Table 28. Type of Bonus/Gift**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Dress	44	26.35
2.	Sweets	13	7.78
3.	Money	56	33.53
4.	Agricultural products	54	32.34
	Total	167	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is observed from the above Table 28 that out of 167 respondents those who receive bonus, 33.53 per cent of the respondents received cash as a gift, 32.34 per cent of the respondents received agricultural products as a gift, 26.35 per cent of them received dress and the remaining 7.78 per cent of the respondents received sweets as a gift in the study area. It is revealed that majority (33.53%) of the respondents received bonus in the form of cash.

#### Working Hours per Day

The researcher was interested to know the working hours of the respondents. The working hour details are presented in Table 29.

**Table 29. Working Hours Per Day**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Below 6	44	14.67
2.	6 – 8	171	57.00
3.	8 – 10	84	28.00
4.	Above 10	1	0.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is observed from Table 29 that out of 300 respondents, 57 per cent worked 6 – 8 hours per day, 28 per cent worked 8 – 10 hours per day, 14.67 per cent of them worked for below 6 hours per day and the remaining 0.33 per cent of them worked above 10 hours per day. It is inferred that majority (57%) of the respondents worked for 6 – 8 hours per day.

#### Starting Time of Work

The starting time of the work disturb the age style and pattern of the workers. Result regarding the starting time are presented in Table 30.

**Table 30. Starting Time of Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	6 am	48	16.00
2.	8 am	161	53.67
3.	10 am	87	29.00
4.	12 noon	4	1.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is noticeable from the above Table that out 300 respondents, 161 (53.67%) respondents start their work at 8 a.m., 87 (29%) start their work at 10 a.m., 48 (16%) of them start at 6 a.m. and the remaining 4 (1.33%) start their work at 12 noon. It is inferred that most (53.67%) of the respondents start their work at 8 a.m.

#### **Availability of Lunch Break**

Sufficient time should be provided to take lunch to the workers. If the time is not sufficient, the workers take their lunch quickly and it seriously affects their behaviour. Table 31 indicates the availability of lunch break.

**Table 31. Availability of Lunch Break**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Provided	270	90.00
2.	Not Provided	30	10.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 31 exhibits that out of 300 respondents, 90 per cent of the respondents say that the lunch break is provided and the remaining 10 per cent of them feel that it is not provided. It is inferred that most (90%) of the respondents say that the lunch break is provided.

#### **Opinion about the Level of Employment Opportunity**

The researcher has also enquired about the level of employment opportunity in the study area. It may be full-time or part-time. These are narrated in Table 32.

**Table 32**  
**Employment Opportunity**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Full Time	139	46.33
2.	Part Time	161	53.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 32, it is clear that out of 300 respondents, 46.33 per cent are full time agricultural workers and the remaining 53.67 per cent of them are part-time agricultural workers since they are unable to get full-time employment. It is crystal clear that majority (53.67%) of the respondents are part time agricultural workers in the study area.

#### **Details about Other Activities Performed by Part Time workers**

The researcher has analysed the details about other activities performed by the part time respondents. It is presented in Table 33.

**Table 33**  
**Details about other Activities of Part Time Workers**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Maintaining cattle	34	21.12
2.	Go to non-agricultural work	89	55.28
3.	Doing business	20	12.42
4.	Idle	18	11.18
	Total	161	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 33 gives that out of 161 respondents who are part time agricultural workers, 55.28 per cent go for non-agricultural work, 21.12 per cent get themselves involved in maintaining cattle, 12.42 per cent are doing business and 11.18 per cent are not involved in any work. It is clear that majority (55.28%) of the respondents go for non-agricultural work.

#### **Opinion about Agricultural Employment**

Agriculture is based on the climatic condition of the areas. The related details are presented in Table 34.

**Table 34**  
**Employment Opportunity Provided**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Full time	88	29.33
2.	Part time	212	70.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 34, it is evident that out of 300 respondents, 70.67 per cent of the respondent have opined that they are not getting agriculture work whole the year and the remaining 29.33 per cent are getting agricultural work whole the year.

#### **Kinds of Work in Off Season Period**

The researcher has taken the interview from the respondents about employment during off-season period.

**Table 35**  
**Kinds of Work in Off-season Period**

Sl.No.	Opinion	No. of Workers	Percent to Total
1	Match work	32	15.09
2	Firework	24	11.32
3	Coir Industry	34	16.04
4	Brick works	12	5.66
5	Building construction	24	11.32
4	Allied Agri. Activities	86	40.57
	Total	212	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from Table 35 that out of 212 respondents, 40.57 per cent of the respondents are going to allied agricultural activities, 16.04 per cent of the respondents are going to coir industry, 15.09 of the respondents are going to match works, 11.32 per cent of the respondents are going to match works, 11.32 per cent of the respondents are going to firework industry 24 respondents are working as building constructors and remaining 5.66 per cent of the respondents are going to brick manufacturing industry during off-season period of agricultural work.

### Treatment of Workers

The researcher has also analysed the level of equality in treatment. It may be balanced or unbalanced. The results are displayed in Table 36.

**Table 36**  
**Level of Equality in Treatment**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Balanced	220	73.33
2.	Unbalanced	80	26.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 36 points that out of 300 respondents, 220 (73.33%) of them said that all the workers are treated equally in the work place and the remaining 80 (26.67%) felt that they are not treated equally. It is found that majority (73.33%) of them said that all the workers are treated equally in the work place.

### Mode of Unbalanced Treatment

This study also investigated the unbalanced mode of treatment followed by the employer. The details are listed in Table 37.

**Table 37**  
**Unbalanced Mode of Treatment**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Wage wise	22	27.50
2.	Working hours	14	17.50
3.	Treatment of workers	14	17.50
4.	Job allotment	30	37.50
		80	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 37 indicates that out of 80 respondents who felt that all the workers are not treated equally, 22 (27.5%) of them felt that there is partiality in wages, respondents say that they are discriminated by working hours, 14 (17.50%) towards treatment of workers and the remaining 30 (37.50%) opined that there is a no equality in job allotment. It is understood that the most (37.50%) of them felt that there is partiality in job allotment.

### Opinion of Respondents about the Acceptability of Employment Offer from Other Places

The researcher has made an attempt to collect data relating to the acceptability of respondents about employment offer. It is shown in Table 38.

**Table 38**  
**Opinion of Respondents about Employment in other Places**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Accept	167	55.67
2.	Reject	133	44.33
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 38 discloses that out of 300 respondents, 167 (55.67%) of them went to the nearest places for agriculture employment and the remaining 133 (44.33%) did not go for nearest places for employment. It is understood that most (55.67%) of the respondents went to the nearest places for agricultural work.

### Reasons for Accepting Opportunity from Other Places

The researcher has analysed the reasons for accepting offer for employment in other places. It is presented in Table 39.

**Table 39**  
**Reasons for Accepting Opportunity from other Places**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Higher wages	25	14.97
2.	Regular works	67	40.12
3.	Work not available in our place	46	27.54
4.	Better treatment	20	11.98
5.	For a change	2	1.20
6.	Better working condition	7	4.18
	Total	167	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 39 highlights that out of 167 respondents who move to the nearest places for employment, 14.97 per cent of them go for higher wages, 40.12 per

cent of them go for regular works, 27.54 per cent for work not available in their place, 11.98 per cent go to other places due to better treatment, 1.20 per cent go for a change and the remaining 4.18 per cent go for better working conditions.

### Usage of Machineries

In this modern world, advanced machineries are used to reduce our work. Agriculture is also not an exception. Most of the work in agriculture is carried out with the help of machineries. Table 40 shows the usage of such machineries in the study areas.

**Table 40**  
**Usage of Machineries**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Used	69	23.00
2.	Not Used	231	77.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 40 clearly shows that out of 300 respondents, 77 per cent of the respondents say that the machineries are not used in agriculture and the remaining 23 per cent of them say that they used machineries in work. It is inferred that majority (77%) of the respondents did not use any machine in their work.

### Opinion of Respondents about the Application of Machines in Agriculture

The researcher has also analysed the ultimate results of machines in the study area. It is shown in Table 41.

**Table 41**  
**Opinion about the Application of Machineries**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Affects the work	211	70.33
2.	Not Affects the work	89	29.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 41 shows that out of 300 respondents, 70.33 per cent of the felt that use of machines affect their work and the remaining 29.67 per cent opined that there was no problem in the application of machineries. It is clear that

majority (70.33%) of the respondents feel that the use of machines affect their work.

### Opinion of Respondents about the Influences of Machineries in Agriculture

Generally the workforce have some hesitation to introduce new machineries due to production process. Here also the agricultural labourers have hesitation to use the machineries in the agricultural field due to some factors. Table 42 shows the reasons to hesitate to use the machineries.

**Table 42**  
**Means of Influences**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Reduces the wages	87	41.24
2.	Creates unemployment	112	53.08
3.	Compel to learn	12	5.68
	Total	211	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 42 explicit that out of 211 respondents those who feel the use of machines affect their work, 53.08 per cent have opined that using of machines creates unemployment, 41.24 per cent feel that the reduces wages and the remaining 5.68 per cent of them feel that the landlord compels them to learn about the operation of machines. It is derived from the Table 50 that the majority (53.08%) of them has opined that using of machines creates unemployment in the study area.

### Risk in Agriculture Work

Risk is inevitable in any venture. Agriculture is not an exception to this. Table 43 shows the opinion of agricultural women workers about risk.

**Table 43**  
**Opinion about Risk in Agricultural Work**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Risk	144	48.00
2.	No Risk	156	52.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 43 unfolds that out of 300 respondents, 52 per cent of them felt that agriculture work is risky one and the remaining 48 per cent opined that it is not risky.



### Types of Risk

The researcher has also analysed the risk available in the agricultural work. Table 44 shows the various forms of risk in agriculture.

**Table 44**  
**Types of Risk**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Hard physical work	93	64.58
2.	Dangers from insects	23	15.98
3.	Financial Risk	16	11.11
4.	Creates diseases	12	8.33
	Total	144	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 44 illustrates that out of 144 respondents those who felt that agricultural work is risky, 64.58 per cent of them feel that it needs hard physical work, 15.98 per cent of them feel like that because of dangers from insects, 11.11 per cent say it involves financial risk and the remaining 8.33 per cent of them feel that agriculture work creates some disease. It is found that majority (64.58%) of the respondents felt that it needs hard physical work.

### Reasons to Choose the Agricultural Work

Table 45 shows the responses of the respondents regarding the reasons to choose the agricultural work.

**Table 45**  
**Ranking the Reasons for Choose the Agricultural Work**

Sl.No	Statement	Rank											Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1.	Family Situation	61	56	59	32	19	13	14	13	14	14	5	300
2.	Work that own place	30	32	24	28	16	37	35	34	26	30	8	300
3.	Flexibility	34	39	27	41	29	36	16	18	21	20	19	300
4.	Chances for part time Employment	22	20	28	27	28	24	29	44	48	20	10	300
5.	Chances for part time Business	10	25	15	17	35	36	46	28	30	27	31	300
6.	Maintaining the home also	20	24	26	42	31	31	33	30	19	30	14	300
7.	Traditional work	90	39	42	22	22	18	20	14	13	8	12	300
8.	Just to utilize rest hours	10	10	16	10	19	8	31	23	46	49	78	300
9.	High wages	12	13	8	27	29	40	37	35	23	40	36	300
10.	Holistic work	2	24	26	24	42	36	16	43	22	36	29	300
11.	It is only source of employment	9	18	29	30	30	21	23	18	38	26	58	300

In order to rank the reasons for choose the agricultural work by the respondents, the Garrett's Ranking Technique has been used.

### Garrett's Ranking

In the Garrett's ranking technique the present position is calculated by using the formula:

$$\text{Per cent} = \frac{100 (R_{ij}-0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where,  $R_{ij}$  = Rank Given for the  $i$ th variable by the  $j$ th respondents,  
 $N_j$  = Number of variables ranked by the  $j$ th respondents

**Table 46**

#### Agricultural Work to Choose the Choice of the Labourers

Sl. No.	Reason	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Family Situation	18784	62.61	II
2.	Work in own place	15870	52.90	IV
3	Flexibility	16502	55.01	III
4.	Chances for part time Employment	15268	50.89	VI
5.	Chances for Business	14209	47.36	VIII
6.	Maintaining the home also	15555	51.85	V
7.	Traditional work	18928	63.09	I
8.	Just to utilize rest hours	11733	39.11	XI
9.	High wages	13652	45.51	IX
10.	Holistic work	14221	47.40	VII
11.	It is only source of employment	13578	45.26	X

It is seen from Table 46 that among eight reasons to choose the agriculture, 'traditional work' gets the first rank followed by family situation, flexibility, work in own place, maintaining the home, chances for part time employment, holistic work, chance for business, high wages, it is only source of employment and just to utilize rest hours ranks last.

### Major Findings of the Study

The highlights of the findings of research study are reported below.

- Majority of the respondents (58%) are in the group of 25-49 years.
- Majority of the respondents (82.33%) are married.
- More than 37.67 per cent belong to BC community.

- About 94.66 per cent are Hindus..
- Most of the respondents (69.33%) are size 3-6 members of the family.
- Majority of the respondents (56.67%) are earning below Rs.20,000.
- Majority of the respondents (31.33 %) are having below 5 years of experience.
- Majority of the respondents (54.67%) are having land
- About 39.82 per cent of the women workers are having less than 2 acres of land.
- Most of the respondents (69%) are going to others land for employment.
- Majority of the respondents (65.70%) go to others land only because of not having the land.
- Majority of the respondents (77.33%) are satisfied with agricultural work
- Most of the respondents (30.33%) are involved weeding work in the study area.
- Majority (60.67%) of the respondents are compelled to do the particular type of work.
- Most (62.33%) of the respondents feel that the work is normal.
- Majority of the respondents (55.67%) are earning below Rs.75 per day.ØMajority of the respondents (42.67%) are paid daily wages in the agricultural work.
- Most of the respondents (57.33%) are satisfied with wage.
- Most of the respondents (61.67%) have opined that their wage is moderate.
- Majority of the respondents (78.33%) feel that they are treated unequally.
- Majority of the respondents (75%) are getting the wages in the form of cash.
- Most of the respondents (62.67%) feel that the wage in the form of products is sufficient for them.
- Most of the respondents (69.33%) are getting extra wages for additional work.
- Most of the respondents (73%) are getting increment in wage.
- Most (34.24%) of the respondents get Rs.11-Rs.20 as the increment per annum.
- Most (74%) of the respondents received their extra time wages under time rate system.

- Majority of the respondents (80.33%) received their wages on the basis of time rate.
- Most of the respondents (83.67%) of agricultural laborers do not receive any advance or loan.
- Majority of the respondents (61.33%) are not working permanently with single landlord.
- Most of the respondents (55.67%) receive bonus (or) gift on festival times.
- More than (33.53%) respondents received benefit or bonus as paid money.
- Majority of the respondents (57%) are working 6 – 8 hours in the field.
- Majority (53.67%) of the respondents start their work at 8 a.m.
- Majority respondents (90%) are provided lunch break in working time.
- Majority of the respondents (53.67%) are not provided full time employment.
- Majority (55.28%) of the respondents go for non-agricultural work.
- Majority (73.33%) of them said that all the workers are treated equally in the work place.
- Majority of the respondents (37.50%) felt that there is partiality in job allotment.
- Most (55.67%) of the respondents go to the nearest place for agricultural work.
- Majority (49.19%) of the respondents go for better working condition in the study area.
- Most of the respondents (77%) have not used machineries in agriculture work.
- Majority of respondents (76.11%) have opined that the machineries affect the agricultural labours.
- Majority of respondents (53.08%) have opined that the use of machineries creates unemployment.
- Most of the respondents (52%) feel that the agricultural work is a non risky one.
- Majority (64.58%) of the respondents felt that it needs hard physical work.

### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions are offered for better working condition of women workers in agriculture sector.

1. Government should take active role in the welfare of women in agricultural sector.
2. The minimum wage should be fixed for agricultural workers, especially for women.
3. A separate act should be enacted at central and state level for agricultural women.
4. Most of the women are treated unequally with men; therefore government should take appropriate measures to protect the women from this problem.
5. Additional facilities like first aid box, lunch break, and refreshment and so on should be provided to women workers.
6. The wage system should be monitored and it should be revised once in a particular interval.
7. Few steps should be taken to provide employment for the whole year.
8. A system should be established to redress the problems of agricultural women.
9. Government and local body authorities should take steps to provide house to houseless women workers of agricultural sector.

### **Conclusion**

From this study, it is revealed that majority of the women workers in agricultural sector are not satisfied with their working conditions but they feel proud to be an agriculturist. They are not treated equally with male workers. They are provided only part time/seasonal work and the wage payment system is not fair. Majority of the women workers select the agricultural work for its traditional nature.

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