



Tactful Management



SAFETY AND HEALTH OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN INDIA



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Abstract:

*Agricultural is a main source of livelihood of the majority population in the world. Therefore agricultural sector must be properly developed and efficiently maximized. The economy of developing countries is depending on agricultural sector. For achieving the best output from agricultural sector, there must be proper atmosphere, proper financial management and proper human resource management. These factors are responsible for achieving best possible objective from agricultural sector. But it is a fact, which we consider only atmosphere and financial management, and ignored to workers management. Basically agricultural labourers are the root promoters for higher productivity and profitability from agricultural sector. Around 1.3 billion workers are engaged in agricultural production worldwide. It means around half of the total world labour force engaged in agricultural sector. Almost 60 % of them are in developing countries. A great majority of agricultural workers are found in **Asia**. This is mostly high density populated region of the world. In Asia more than 40 percent of the world's agricultural population concentrated in **China** and more than 20 percent in **India**.*

KEYWORDS : *Agricultural , properly developed and efficiently maximized.*

INTRODUCTION:

In developing countries, near about 95 percent of agriculture worker population lives below poverty line. The incidence and the severity of poverty are greater in rural area. This situation resulted in low income of waged workers, small farmers, subsistence farmers, small tenants and share croppers, who constitute mostly in the rural sector. Socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors influence on the health and safety of the farmers and farm laboures. Generally rural agricultural labourer works and lives under the worst condition, their standard of living and nutrition are influenced badly under the specific environment.

In India, rural population does not participate actively in Policymaking and are not involved in decisions which are concerning them. Here, it must to know about agricultural labourer, or to whom we can say as agricultural labourer?

Definition of Agricultural Labour

'An agricultural labour may be the small or marginal farmer or an artisan, but when a person derives his main earning by the agricultural work on others farm is called an agricultural labour.'

The **First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee** which was formed in 1950-51 (ALEC), defined this as "Those people who are engaged in raising crops on payment of wages." The basis of this definition was the quantum of hired employment which might be applicable in period/time. Accordingly, the Committee lay down that people who worked for 50% or more than it in a day on payment of wages should be regarded as agricultural workers. The committee has also defined the term agricultural labour household. If the head of household 50% or more than it and the earners report agricultural labour as their main occupation, that family should be classified as an agricultural labour household.

The Second **Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1956-57)** adopted income as a criterion to demarcate the agricultural labour families. As a person was deemed to be an agricultural labourer and family agricultural house hold if his or she or families major source of income during the previous year was only through the agricultural wage. The changeover, from "work" to "income" seemed more scientific. However, even this was not without flaws.

In the context of Indian conditions, the definition is not adequate because it is not possible to separate those working on wages from others completely. There are some people who do not work on wage-base throughout the year but only be a part of it. Hence, the first **ALEC** used the concept of "agricultural labour household". This concept was based upon the occupation of the worker. But the second **ALEC** substituted income criteria and said that an "agricultural labour household" is one whose main source of income is wages only by the agriculture."

Working Condition of Agricultural Labour:

The working condition is different from region to region, inequalities in economic development, due to many factors. Regional imbalance is resulted in coexistence of two main agricultural sectors. The first is characterized by low-skilled subsistence farming, which includes large proportion of unskilled population, while the second category include skilled and market oriented farmers and farm labourers, who use highly automated production processes and consequently, achieve high productivity with minimum labour force. There are also different categories of landownership pattern and methods of cultivation. Basically in India, there is an existence of low-skilled subsistence farming. It means farmers and farm workers achieve lower productivity with maximum labour force, through traditional method and with maximum risk of hazardous/injury. Ultimately it may say's that, the working condition is different according to different location in India. But some of the common features of Indian agriculture working condition as follows;

- ✚ The fact that most of the works are carried out in the open air, exposing the Labourers to climatic condition.
- ✚ The seasonal nature of work and the urgency of certain task in specific period.
- ✚ The contact with animals and plants, thus exposing workers to bites, poisoning, infections, parasitic diseases, allergies and other health problems.
- ✚ The use of chemicals and biological products.

From the above reason there may be chances of different types of diseases to agricultural labourer.

Availability of Health Services to Agricultural Labourer:

The health status of rural population is lower than urban population. Government ignored to rural sector and concentrate towards large health services in urban area. Generally funds supply for health

services are inadequate in rural area. **Small Rural Health Care Centers** often find it difficult to attract and retain staff at Rural Health Care Centers. The mortality (*Loss of life on large scale*) rate is also higher in rural area.[iv]

In India, agricultural labourers are live in extremely primitive (*crude*) condition, in areas where inadequacy of infrastructural facility viz. Roads and Transportation. In India the majority portion of agricultural have an inadequate diet and exposed to both general and occupational diseases. Many diseases and health related problems arise from poor sanitation, inadequate housing, malnutrition, and different types of parasitic and bacterial infections affecting the entire agricultural labourer.

Compensation Scheme for Occupational Injuries and Diseases to Agricultural Labourer:

In India there is no any compensation scheme provided to agricultural labourer against occupational injuries and diseases. But some of the countries are providing coverage in a single national insurance scheme. Due to under-reporting and availability of statistics on occupational hazardous and diseases in agriculture are inefficient.

CONCLUSION:

Agricultural ranks top among the most hazardous sector. Agricultural labourers are at high risk for fatal and nonfatal injury, work related lung diseases, noise- induced hearing loss, skin diseases etc. One of the difficulties in dealing with agriculture is that it is a very complex and heterogeneous sector. It is one of the most hazardous occupations in India.[iii] According to **ILO** estimates, workers suffer 250 million accidents every year. Out of total 3,35,000 fatal workplace accidents worldwide. Diseases and accidents caused by agricultural work are also conditioned by a range of factors such as climate, living condition, level of education, training, technological development and quality of services etc. Agricultural workers are depending on the general standard of public health services in rural area where the provision of health care, adequate water supply and sanitation system are generally insufficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to solve the above all problems, the researcher has tried to suggest some remedies. The following suggestions will help to overcome the threats in the development of rural agricultural labourer.

- Formulation and implementation of transparent health and safety policy in agriculture.
- Workers in agriculture should be trained /educated on agricultural hazardous and means of prevention.
- First aid education for farmers in case of acute injury or hazardous.
- There must be utilization of protective and security tools while working.
- Extension agents, co-operative societies and trade unions should be equipped with accurate information so that they can enlighten farmers on the hazardous.

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