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Title

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITONS OF AGRICULTURE
LABOURERS IN PUNJAB**

(GROUND REALITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT)

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Introduction:

In rural economy, Punjab is dominating as two third of its total population and 65% of its total workers live in villages. Further 42.2% of the total workers in Punjab are engaged in agriculture (cultivators and agricultural labours). Their share in total rural workers, as per reliable sources is 57.2%. Since the early 2007-08, the yield of major agricultural crops has been experiencing stagnation. The additional increments in yield are rising at a very high marginal cost. As a consequence, per hectare net return is declining and this is the real crisis of Punjab agriculture. The annual trend growth rate of per hectare return, over variable costs from wheat and paddy (combined) was -2.18% during this period. In this case of cotton, it was -14.24% per annum during the same period [Ghuman 2001]. A depleting water table, the ever-rising use of fertilizers and pesticides, over-mechanization, declining fertility of soil and almost stagnant minimum support prices (in real terms) are major reasons for a shrinking of farmers income from agriculture. Along with the shrinking of income, the labour absorption capacity of agriculture is sharply decline. The employment of labour in the rearing of major crops in Punjab declined from 48 crore man days during the triennium ending 2006-07 to 48 crore man-days during the triennium ending to this period. Taking view of Sector ate in Chandigarh, a European style, pomp and show, prosperity and modernity of pompous people presents a real picture of Punjab that is at so called no.1 position in India- the most prosperous state of India- a big lie or false statement which can please a person factually but not in reality. Chandigarh along with other five metro-cities represents its hi-fi life style, high standard of living, shining Boleros 3G handsets and fashionable jeans, T-shirts wearing youth, pomp and show of Disco-Multiplex represents a few "Yankees" of corrupt politicians, officers of high rank, New-rich villagers, contractors, builders traders and cooperators. This is not a real aspect of real Punjab, it is not a true story of struggling, Punjabis turning pages of employment magazines, keeping a heap of high degrees, asking for vacancies, exploring itself in contactors or corrupt traders. The truth about the miserable condition of unemployment can be estimated from the bottom of their level in Chandigarh.

Objective:

Our aim is to study the socio economic conditions of agriculture labourers in Punjab and Effect of unemployment. We also want to study about the socio economic conditions of women labour which does not consider labour that causes under consumption state of economy, female labour is used only 17%. it is irony?

The main aspects of the problem of corruption in Punjab are Low proportion of labour force in total population of Punjab, Large part of labour force is either unemployed or under employed and Low average productivity of labourers. All the three aspects of the problem of employment jointly account for the poverty in the country, low per capita income and slow rate of economic development. Economic progress of the country is possible only by finding a proper solution to all the three aspects of the employment problem. People falling in the age-group of 15-60 years constitute the labour force of the country. In Punjab, working population is barely 37.5 per cent of the total population. Thus, only 1 person out of 3 persons is a worker and the other two are dependent on him. In developed countries, working population constitutes 40 to 50 per cent of the total population. High dependency ration implies low income per capita and therefore poverty.

Problem of agricultural labour has becoming alarming stage in Punjab and now Govt. resources are also verifying this fact. According to 'Financial Express' from April 1, 2009 to March 31,2010, during this period 67587 unemployed people has been enrolled but 47 such employment offices could provide opportunities to 3855 only. Upto March 31,2010, 4.8 Crores of unemployed has given their names in employment office and 2345 people get allowance that is 128 per month. According to the reports, during last twelve years, 50189 have been provided opportunities (annually 4182) where as it cost Rs.100 crore. These facts represents Govt's performance clearly and dangerous situation of unemployment also. It can not easily assessed from such reports as these are factual reports that can not be reliable. Firstly, age limits to nominate in such offices is kept 35 years where as working duration or age limit at work is 60 years. Secondly, youth (in Punjab is not interested or lossing their interest to get nominated after formalities which are bearing no fruit. Third fact is, these offices facilitate in urban areas not in rural areas where major portion of population inhabitants. Thus such institutions are providing half information about the intensity of problem. Hence, In Punjab, literate is more in ratio of

unemployed illiterate. Economist S. Sucha Singh Gill presents the facts about unemployment in 2004, 30 lakh and more than of working population was out of job and we can easily estimate that this fact will have cross the level from 35 lakh. The form of unemployment in Punjab is far different from that of India. 60% of unemployed population which have passed only matric or some more comes from rural areas that 2/3rd of the total population. The agricultural labourers are forced to live under miserable conditions of work and standards. This is not an issue of unemployment but also a matter of unemployment but also a matter of pitiable standard of employment and working people. Such people which pass their youth awaiting opportunities, get work at lower wage-rates, which do work under landlords in form of interest which work at shameful salaries in private institutions, which selling goods at charts, those who are working at contractual basis, multipurpose health workers, data entry operators, those who are educators, E.G.S. volunteers, RAMSA, ZP Workers etc. all are suffering and suffering continuously perhaps there is no end point of such sufferings. These are such more examples those are suffering from the Devil of unemployment, those who play cards eating poppies, rubbing their palms for tobacco, addicting drugs, so –called followers of babes or jagrans etc. all are the best examples of uselessly out of job workers.

Low proportion of agriculture labour force in Punjab is due to two reasons. Age-Structure: According to Census of India 2001, the proportion of children up to the age of 15 years is 39.5 per cent of the total population whereas in developed countries this proportion is 20 to 25 per cent. Due to high proportion of children up to the age of 15 years, the proportion of working population in the total population remains low. These children come under the category of dependents, as legally, they are prohibited from going to any factory for work. Low rate of Employment among Women: Hardly 32 per cent of women are employed in Punjab. The remaining 68 per cent of women are engaged in their domestic chores. In developed countries about 70 per cent women are employed. The problem of unemployment and under-employment in Punjab is a grave and complex problem Unemployment in Punjab is wide prevalent and after every Five Year plan, the problem grows from bad to worse. due to corruption According to Bhagwati Committee, "Unemployment problem has assumed an alarming proportion and in future it is likely to become still graver." Unemployment is a curse. It is indicative of poverty to the individual degradation to society and loss of human resources to the nation. Economists mean by unemployment, a situation in which an individual is ready and willing to work at the

prevailing rate of wages, but he does not get work. According to Prof. Pigou, "A man is unemployed only when he is both without a job of not employed and also desires to be employed. Since sixth Five Year Plan, employment in Punjab is measured in terms of Standard Persons Years. A standard person year refers to a person who works for 273 days in a year at the rate of 8 hours per day; that is, who works for total 2184 hours in a year. In under-developed countries like India, there is not only the problem of unemployment but also of under-employment. Under-employment refers to that situation under which a labourer does not get full time job or gets job much below his capacities or qualifications. If a person does not get work for 273 days in a year or eight hours per day, he will be treated as under-employed.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is an India job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is the largest planning of centre Govt. to give Employment to illiterate rural labourers. Although it is said that it has started from 2005. But Actually in June 2008 it is implemented in all six hundred Districts of India. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-relate unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of Rs. 100 per day. The central government outlay for scheme is Rs. 40,100 crores in Financial Year 2010-11.

This act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women. The government is planning to open a call center, which upon becoming operational can be approached on the toll-free number, 1800-345-22-44. It was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed on 2 October 2009. The act directs state governments to implement NREGA "Schemes". Under the NREGA the Central Government meets the cost towards the payment of wage, $\frac{3}{4}$ of material cost and some percentage of administrative cost. State Governments meet the cost of unemployment allowance, $\frac{1}{4}$ of material cost and administrative cost of State council. Since the state Governments pay the unemployment allowance, they are heavily incentives to offer employment to workers.

However, it is up to the state government to decide the amount of unemployment allowance, subject to the stipulation that it not be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ th the minimum wage for the first 30 days, and not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the minimum wage thereafter. 100 days of employment (or unemployment allowance) per household must be provided to able and willing workers every financial year.

The scheme commenced on February 2, 2006 in 200 districts, was expanded to cover another 130 districts in 2007-2008 and eventually covered all 539 districts in India by April 1, 2008. The outlay was Rs. 110 billion in 2006-2007, and rose steeply to Rs. 391 billion (140% increase in amount with respect to previous 2008-2009 budget) in 2009-2010. First a proposal is given by the Panchayat to the Block Office and then the Block Office decides whether the work should be sanctioned.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in its performance audit of the implementation of NREGA have found "Significant deficiencies" in the implementation of the act. The plan was launched in February 2006 in 200 districts and eventually extended to cover 593 districts. 4, 49, 40,870 rural households were provided jobs under NREGA during 2008-09, with an national average of 48 working days per household.

But the implementation in majority districts has not been properly therefore the heavy amount purposed for this scheme is being wasted due to corruption and lack of proper planning. Due to illiteracy and lack of Awareness most of village workers are not being paid proper wages and are being exploited. Major corruption is seen to be in this scheme on lower to upper level.

After investigation of so many villages corruption which type of I feel that NEREGA is only source of corruption by Bureaucracy, village sarpanch, village secretary and their spoons. Money is not used for real object. In so many villages Laboures have not Job card and they demand then no action is taken to make employment card. Most of Laboures are not aware from this scheme. They demand for work orly, there for they have not certificate for demanding Job. So they cannot get unemployment allowance. Due to unawareness and illiteracy of Labour class, they do not clear about the rules of this scheme. So they put the thumb where corrupt capitalist say by this way they show more attendance than actual working day and extra many goes to their pockets.

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a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of Rs. 100 per day. The central government outlay for scheme is Rs. 40,100 crores in FY 2010-11.

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SOLUTION:

Punjab needs a comprehensive land use/ acquisition policy, which would include mapping of the entire land in Punjab, The special economic zones and other projects should be established on relatively less productive land. The farmers should be given the market price plus the dislocation cost. To take care of their live hood and employment, at least one member of the farmer's household should be given suitable employment in that project.

The problem of landless agricultural labourers working on the land, poor to acquisition, is rather serious. This is also a form Corruption. Such households also need to be compensated with suitable employment in those projects or elsewhere. In Punjab, Rural labour cannot afford fee and funds of education due to low income. The corruption and size of black economy in the state are highly correlated with each other. Going by the national estimates of black economy (40 to 45% of GDP) the size of the black economy in Punjab is likely to be in the range of Rs. 45000 to 50000 crore per annum. This along with high degree of corruption should be a serious concern

of all the political parties in the state. It has a negative fall out on govern. The hallmark of governess is its credibility, which in turn depends on integrity, transparency, efficiency, accountability and delivery of justice.

Everybody wants opportunities to live an honorable life so; it is an hour to plan an Ideal but working modal to face this problem. Most of it, our Govt. Show direct them to provide best chances to work not to beg.

CONCLUSION:

The problem of agricultural labourers working on the land, poor to acquisition, is rather serious. This is also a form Corruption. Such households also need to be compensated with suitable employment in those projects or elsewhere. In Punjab, Rural labour cannot afford fee and funds of education due to low income. The corruption and size of black economy in the state are highly correlated with each other.

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