

**SMALL, MARGINAL AND DALIT FARMERS IN RAINFED
AGRICULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF SRINIVASA SARDGI IN
KALABURGI¹ DISTRICT, KARNATAKA**

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Abstract

Land is a very important economic commodity for the rural people. Based on the amount of land, households get social status and livelihood in the village. If the households have the land, they may have the other assets. Land enhances the dignity of the family. Most of the land holdings family having households are engaging themselves in the fields and recruiting some labour for working in their fields. If the land size is more then it provides employment for the whole family. Through land they can get income. Most of the Indian farmers are getting dignity because of their land. In villages, if land is not available for the households, then he/she has to work as an agriculture labour/non-agricultural labour. From the generation to generation only some of the social groups are having more lands and they are gets dignity in the social market. In India, 60% of total cultivated area is rainfed and this area is dependent on rainfall. The rainfed area provides 40% of food grains and 60% of livestock fodder is coming rainfed area alone. Small, Marginal farmers are play a major role in raising agricultural development and poverty reduction, improving socio-economic inequalities. Majority of the farmers landholdings is <2 hectares. But the most of the small and marginal farmers are Dalits in India in general and, particular in Karnataka state. In the above direction the study focused on small and marginal Dalit farmers in Karnataka state. According to 2011 census, Karnataka total SC population is 74,95,763 and the

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share of total population to SC population is 20 per cent. In Karnataka state Dalits are economically very poor, and most of the rural people are landless labours and some of them are small, marginal farmers and there are fewer are large farmers. The study primary data on rainfed region is based on in Karnataka state. The study has been chosen Srinivas saradgi village purposely in rainfed area of Karnataka. The objectives of the paper are to investigate the factors which are more obstacles to the agrarian development in the study area (rainfed)? Secondly to find out the socio economic conditions of small, marginal and Dalits in study area? Finally, to know what are the water sources of small and marginal Dalit farmers in rainfed region of selected village?

Introduction

Small land holdings play an important role in raising agricultural development rural transformation and poverty reduction (ICRISAT 2013). Over 60 per cent of the population of Karnataka State is depends on agriculture for its livelihood. A majority of these are small and marginal farmers with landholding of <2 ha, accountable for nearly half of the food production in the state (GoK 2011). Rainfed farming plays a key role in the economic development of the country. Also, every 1% increase in global agricultural productivity translates to a decrease In the absolute poor of the world by 6 to 8 million. The Karnataka has the biggest area under rainfed agriculture in India after Rajasthan. Crop yields in the rainfed areas are 1-1.5 tonnes per hectare, which are two to five times less than those on research farms (ICRISAT 2009). Karnataka state is economically one of the fastest growing states in India. The annual average rainfall varies from 3085 mm in the coastal region to 593 mm in the northern dry region of the state. Nearly half of the total rainfall is received during the monsoon season. The role of smallholders is extremely significant in overall agricultural sector and economic progress of the state at large, i.e., in terms of food, labour and foreign exchange contribution (GoK 2006, 2011). Karnataka state stands on second place after Rajasthan, in terms of total geographical area prone to drought. Nearly 90% of the population in this semi-arid region is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Rearing of sheep and goats plays an important role in the economy of India in general and sustainable livelihood of poor people of rain fed agro-ecosystem in particular. In Srinivas saradgi village fewer of Dalit households are rearing of pigs for their livelihood. The

Northern region of Karnataka is predominantly dry, which constitutes about 42% of area and contributes about 49.5% of food grain production in the state. The major crops grown in this region are sorghum sunflower, red gram. The farmers practice traditional farming with limited use of energy inputs indigenous tools and implements (Guruswamy 2001). About 70% of the farmers of drought affected regions of Karnataka are characterized by very small size of land holdings, hence agriculture is still largely depends on their livelihood. The rainfed areas of Karnataka districts are Koppal, Raichur, Kolar and Kalaburgi districts of Karnataka with where in high level of poverty, many small and marginal farmers are indebted both to money lenders and banks. Hence we have been chosen study area is Kalaburgi district. Kalaburgi district is a one of the rainfed area in the Karnataka state. It is located in the northern part of Karnataka state and lies between North latitude 17.10° and 17.45° and between east longitude 76.10° and 77.45° . The total geographical area of the district is 16,224 Kms. The district is the biggest district in the State. At the same time the district is one of the most backward districts in the Karnataka state and occupies a lowest position in economic as well as human development indicators. This district is a one of the drought prone district in the state. Most of the minority (Muslims) and Scheduled Caste (SC) people are living in the district. The district total households are 4, 71,601 and the average family size of the district is 5.4 per cent. The total SC population is 6,48,782 of which male population is 3,30,091 and female population is 3,18,691 (Census, 2011). The share of SC population in total district population is nearly 25.3 per cent and most of the SC population is concentration in the district.

Land and Dalit

Land is a very important economic resource for the rural people. Based on the amount of land, households get social status and livelihood in the village. If the households have the land, they may have the other assets in general prospective. Land provides dignity of the family. Through this they can get income. Most of the Indian farmers are getting dignity through their lands. In villages, if land is not available for the households, then he/she has to work as an agriculture labour/non-agricultural labour. From the generation to generation only some of the social groups are having more lands in the villages. According to FACT SHEET (2006) have emphasized the Dalit and Adivasi land ownership in India; Dalits were suffered from displacement from land through ages. The government of India abolished tenancy system but Karnataka and Maharashtra

implemented the tenancy system, whereas other states were not. The Bhoodan movement was introduced in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh and it was successful many places on the sake paper. And the study emphasized that there is an inequalities more compared to Dalit and other communities. The study analyzed the SC, STs and others in land holdings and land sizes in different places of India. But there was inequalities high among the social groups particularly most of the Dalits does not have single piece of land and they works as an agricultural labour and non agricultural labour. At the same time UNNATI, UNDP and Government of India (2012) stressed the importance of the land. According to authors there was a strong correlation between land and atrocities. Most of the Dalits were not having land in Rajasthan and they are facing discrimination in the society and they compliant in the police station but the police department not taken any action due to being a Dalits does not have land and most of the landlords are belongs to upper community. Due to lack of peace of land in Rajasthan, Dalits and poor people were migrating in different states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab in search of livelihoods. The study focused on caste based discrimination and alienation. The study found that 10 per cent of land was registered in the name of female (woman). A large number of the land distributed to Dalits is not actually in the possession but owning by non-Dalits. Land distributed record is panel document only on paper.

Objective of the paper

Based on the above discussion the study framed suitable objectives. The objectives of the paper are to investigate the factors which are more obstacles for the agrarian development in the study area (rainfed)? Secondly to find out the socio-economic conditions of small, marginal and Dalit households in study area? Finally, to know what are the water sources of small, marginal Dalit farmers in rainfed region in the selected village?

Methodology of the Study

The study has chosen Kalaburgi district of Karnataka state. We have been selected Srinivasa saradgi village as a study area in Kalaburgi district. In Srinivas saradgi total households are 1299 of which SC households are nearly 700. Out of 700 households we have been selected randomly 150 households and also detail information collected from the selected households. For

the collection of primary data we canvassed structured questioner and relevant information from the concerned people and authorities. The primary details were collected during 2013-14.

Profile of the Srinivasa saradgi -village

Srinivas saradgi is located 15 Kms distance to district head quarter of Kalaburgi. The village is having good road connectivity from district head quarter to the village. Beside the village Airport boundaries were constructed (28/07/2014). The village total population is 7,523 of which male population is 3,881 and female population is 3,642. Srinivas saradgi total households are 1,299. The average family size in the village is 5.78 per cent. The total SC population is 4,373 of which male population is 2,280 and female population is 2,094. The ST total population is eleven (11) only. The total literate in the village is 3,399 of which male literates are 2,118 and female literates are 1,281. The total illiterates in the village are 4,124 of which male illiterates are 1,763 and female illiterates are 2,361(Census 2011). This village is having 7 hamlets (Thandas). The seven thandas are belongs to Lambani caste (community). The Lambani caste persons come under the SC category. In the village one Post of office is located and it is functioning very well. Punjab National Bank is available in the village and it is providing agricultural loans to the farmers, Self-help groups (SHG) loans to women and other loans to the villagers.

Educational Institutions

In the village all primary and secondary schools are established by the State government of Karnataka. Parents need not worry about their children education because schools are functioning in a proper manner in their village. One hostel was constructed by the government and providing necessary facilities to the poor students. Most of the Dalit and weaker sections students are availing hostel benefits. One Intermediate (Pre university college) college is located in the village.

Grama Panchyat (GP)

GP office is located near to main bus stand in the village. GP is performing its duties according to the constitutions. But the village secretary and concerned authorities were not available during our field visit (end of the July month 2014) but the office was opened in the morning to evening. So the villagers were sitting simply in front of the GP. We called concerned authorities and

asked them to provide some information and they told us they were busy in entering information into the computer at district headquarter of Kalaburgi.

Market in the Village

One market shed was constructed by the GP, but it is not functioning due to some political reasons. Most of the villagers are getting vegetables in the village itself and vegetables are producing same village people. For shopping purpose villagers are going to Kalaburgi city. Majority of the village elders are wearing white clothes and putting white cap on the head and sitting in the main bus stand and chatting with each other. We asked them why you are sitting idle in the bus station. They told us there is no rain in the monsoon due to this they were unable to get employment in the fields. Some of the SC young men, particularly Lambani caste men were gathered in one house and playing cards (they betted amount). We asked them why you are playing cards. They replied and there is no work due to this we are playing cards. During slack season Dalit men are playing cards in the village. The Government of India and State Government of Karnataka have to be utilizing human capital appropriate manner. GP has to take initiate and implement the Mahathama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) for the Dalit people in the village. At the same time Dalits men has to improve the technical skills during slack season in the village. For the long run sustainable purpose Dalit men have keep on improve their education capabilities.

Socio-economic condition of Dalits

All categories of social group households are living in the village. The main social groups in the village are: OC (Brahmin, Lingyath and Komoti), BC (Gowdas), SC (Lambani, Madigas, Holiyas and Madhara) are staying in the village. Most of the Lingyath community main activity is agriculture and allied activities. But the majority of the SCs main activity is agricultural labour and very fewer of them are small farmers and Dalits are unable to get full employment due to agriculture is depend on monsoon. Most of the SCs are depends upon large farmers for their daily employment. In this village, particularly, Dalit (except lambani caste), are getting employment only four months in a year and rest of the 8 months they are simply sitting at the houses. During 8 months their livelihood is very pathetic. Whatever they earned 4 months amount of income, they have to adjust to total days of year. Dalits are taking food grains loan

from the large farmers in the village. Whosoever taken loans from the large farmers, the person has to work up to his completion of loan amount of food grains. Some of the household groups are working in district head quarter of Kalaburgi as construction workers. In case of Lambani (SC-sub-caste) household's livelihood is better than the Madigas and Holiyas (SC-sub-caste). Fewer of the Lambani caste households are constructed good houses and they are having little piece of land and some are got government jobs and their livelihood is better than the Holiyas caste.

Results and Discussion

Government of India spending crores of rupees for educate to the rural and urban people. But still illiterates are more in rural areas. Nearly seventy five per cent of the Dalits in Srinivas saradgi village head of the households are illiterates, followed by higher secondary, 6th to 8th standard, Intermediate & 1st to 5th and only one Dalit person is educated up to degree (Table1). At the same time most of the illiterates are comes under the landless labour category. Among the Dalits, greater part of the households are having owning houses and nearly 5 per cent of the households are not having the own houses (Table 2) and they were staying in rented houses and they were not happy with that houses in addition to they were paying an average 770 rupees per annum. Evangelista (2010) emphasized the importance of the home or house. According to him shelter is a basic and universal need. But the home or house will give the full satisfaction and freedom. People build their adequacy choice of house as an individual capability. And he described the homeless people face multiple problems in multiple ways, and poverty also one of the major problem. At the same time the construction of house is also very important for the rural households. Pucca houses are very good and more comfortable for the rural people in general particularly in Srinivas saradagi village. The semi-pucca house is little bit better than the Kuchcha houses. The Kuchcha houses are not more comfortable to the householder. Greater parts of the dalits are not having the good houses and they are staying in Kuchcha and semi-pucca houses (Table 3). At the same time, among the land owners most of them are the landless labours are staying in Kuchcha houses. The construction of roof of the house is very important for the households. Evangelista (2010) study described that the roofless people are not capable and their choice is based on the scarce of opportunities available to them. The roofless people are

natural exposed in cold and sun hot; sometimes there is a possibility to die also. Most of the study areas village Dalit households during rainy season, rain water flowing inside the houses, due to this most of the Dalits families are unable to sleep during night times. In our study area data reveals that nearly 83 per cent of the household's roof is constructed through different material used; those are: Stones (41%), Mud (40%), Timbers (5%), Slates and Tiles (Table 4). Among the Dalits, landless labours are constructed comfortable houses and followed by marginal and small farmers.

Table 1 Head educational status and land particulars

(Figures in brackets of percentage of rows)

Land particulars	Illiterates	1 st to 5 th	6 th to 8 th	High Secondary	Intermediate	Degree	Total
Landless labour	93 (77)	4 (3)	5 (4)	15 (12)	3 (2)	1 (1)	121 (100)
Small and marginal farmers	16 (70)	2 (9)	1 (4)	3 (13)	1 (4)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Medium and large farmers	3 (50)	0 (0)	1 (17)	0 (0)	2 (33)	0 (0)	6 (100)
Total	112 (75)	6 (4)	7 (5)	18 (12)	6 (4)	1 (1)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Table 2 Land category and owning houses

Land category	Do you have a owning house			Percentages		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Landless Labour	114	7	121	94	6	100
Small and marginal farmers	23	0	23	100	0	100
Medium and Large farmers	6	0	6	100	0	100
Total	143	7	150	65	5	100

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Table 3 Land category and type of house

Land category	Type of house				Percentages			
	Pucca	S-pucca	Kuchcha	Total	Pucca	S-pucca	Kuchcha	Total
Landless labour	24	17	73	114	21	14	64	100
Small and marginal farmers	3	7	13	23	13	30	57	100
Medium and large farmers	0	2	4	6	0	33	67	100
Total	27	26	90	143	19	18	63	100

Note: S-pucca means Semi pucca:

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Table 4 Land category and type of roofing

(Figures in brackets representing percentages in rows)

Land category	Mud	Concrete	Stones	Slates	Tiles	Timber	Total
Landless Labour	55 (48)	14 (12)	37 (32)	1 (1)	1 (1)	6 (5)	114 (100)
Small and marginal farmers	1 (4)	4 (17)	17 (74)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)	23 (100)
Medium and Large farmers	1 (16.67)	1 (16.67)	4 (67)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (100)
Total	57 (39)	19 (13)	58 (41)	1 (1)	1 (1)	7 (5)	143 (100)

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Family size of the house

Household's family size is very important for the economic development of the house. Small house is very beautiful and sustainable for long run one generation to generation. The average family size of the Srinivas sardgi village is 5.5 per cent. Among the Dalit, small and marginal farmers head of the households family size is higher (7) compared to other land category households. At the same time, the lowest average family size of the households is 5.3 per cent and they come under landless labour category (Table 5).

Table 5 Family size of the village

Land category	Total households	Total family members	Average family size
Landless labour	121	636	5.3
Small and marginal farmers	23	158	6.9
Medium and large farmers	6	33	5.5
Total	150	827	5.5

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Household occupation

Occupation is determined by the economic status of the households. All most all family members are engaged in different occupations in their village. The main occupations are self employed farming, self-employed in non-farming/business, government employee, private employee, agriculture labour, non-agriculture labour, households and other work. Our study village data reveals that most of the household heads are working as an agriculture labour (48%) followed by non-agriculture labour, private employee, self-employed in agriculture farming etc. Those who are comes under the landless labour category their main occupation are agriculture and non-agriculture, it means that the landless labour are pushing them to work to non-agriculture labour.

At the same time those small and marginal farmers' head of the household's occupation is agriculture labour. The small and marginal farmers, after cultivation of their land they usually work in other agriculture work. Because their land is not sufficient for their livelihood due to this small and marginal farmers are working as an agriculture work and non-agriculture work. Only five members are working in government and 15 members are working in private sector (Table 6).

Table 6 Land and occupation particulars

(Figures in brackets representing percentages in rows)

Land category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Landless labour	8 (6.61)	3 (2.48)	3 (2.48)	14 (11.57)	58 (47.93)	26 (21.49)	3 (2.48)	5 (4.13)	1 (0.83)	0 (0)	121 (100)
Small and marginal farmers	1 (4.35)	2 (8.7)	1 (4.35)	0 (0)	13 (56.52)	3 (13.04)	1 (4.35)	2 (8.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Medium and large farmers	2 (33.35)	0 (0)	1 (16.67)	1 (16.67)	1 (16.67)	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (16.67)	6 (100)
Total	11 (7.33)	5 (3.33)	5 (3.33)	15 (10)	72 (48)	29 (19.33)	4 (2.67)	7 (4.67)	1 (0.67)	1 (0.67)	150 (100)

Occupation codes: Self-employed farming-1; Self-employed in non-farming/business-2; Govt. employee-3; Private employee-4; Agriculture labour-5; Non-agriculture labour-6; Pensioner-7; Dependent-8; Householdwork-9;; Others-10).

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Income of the households

Income is very important for the households. Without income survival is very difficult. In rural areas male wage rate is higher than the female wage rate. Total income is divided by total persons involved then gets the average income. Most of the male persons are work in other than agriculture sector and they are able to work in digging and construction and other activities. Due to this reason male wage rate is higher than female wage rate. Most of the farm work activities are showing the plants/ paddy, weeding, cutting the crops and etc. This is very easy work for female and age old male. Generally this kind of work is doing by females and Children, due to this female wage rate is low. Nonfarm activities are like, caste occupations, making the bricks, repair work, construction, trading, transport, manufacturing, services and etc. For doing these work persons is required for some kind of skills like education, technical skills and etc. Most of the males are engage in this work. Female also engage in this work but the participation rate is low. Due to the above reason the nonfarm wage rate is higher than the farm wage rate. In our study data reveals that an average household income is 50045. Among the Dalit households' medium and large farmers' household's average income is higher compared to other two groups

(Table 7). The landless labour average income is less and their earning status also low compared to other two groups.

Table 7 Land category and annual income (2013-14)

Land category	Total households	Total main income	Average income
Landless labour	120	5492700	45773
Small and marginal farmers	23	1483000	64478
Medium and large farmers	6	481000	80167
Total	149	7456700	50045

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Irrigation water sources of Dalit farmers

Land is a very important resource for the rural people. Based on the amount of land, households get social status in village. If the households have the land, they may have the other assets in general prospective (Busenna, 2013). In our study village all most greater part (81%) of the Dalits are not having the lands and they are working as an agriculture labour and non-agriculture labour. Nineteen per cent of the Dalits are having own land in Srinivasa saradgi village. Majority of the Small and Marginal farmers are unable to drill the bore wells or construction of open well. The small and marginal farmers are economically poor and their social status also low due to this they are unable to drill the bore wells in general and particularly in Srinivas sardgi. In our study area the village data shows that nearly 59 per cent of the farmers are depends on rainy water (Table 8). And rests of the 40 per cent of the farmers are having bore well (24 %), open well (10 %) and Tanks (7%). We enquired about the farmers what are the reasons for not dig the open well or drill the bore wells in their lands. They told us there is no sufficient funds with them to drill the bore well and there is no guarantee get the water if drill the bore well in their land. In addition to that most of the Dalit farmers' lands are not suitable to cultivate the crops and their agriculture is gamble in rainfed.

Table 8 Irrigation water source of Small and Marginal farmers

Land category	Rain water	Open well	Tank	Bore well	Total
Small and marginal farmers	65.22	13.04	8.70	13.04	100
Medium and large farmers	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	100
Total	58.62	10.34	6.90	24.14	100

Source: Primary data collected, 2014.

Rainfed area and development

The main obstacles for the development in the rainfed areas are harsh environment and illiteracy. The essential problem is low water availability, degradation of natural resource, because of poor management which ultimately results in low productivity. Another one more important problem is that frequent occurrence of droughts and the infrequent of devastating floods in some of the regions. And also the small holdings also face new challenges on integration of value chains, liberalization and globalization effects, market volatility and other risks and vulnerability, adaptation of climate change etc (Dev, 2012). In our study data reveals that nearly 60 per cent of the Dalits farmers are facing water problems. Because of water problem monsoon Dalit farmers are unable to cultivate the land in addition to Kalaburgi district is one of the drought prone district in Karnataka state. In Kalaburgi district is facing frequent drought every 4 to 5 years and also sun hot is very high during summer season. Due to this local people called to Kalaburgi is “Sun Hot City”.

Dalit farmers and crops cultivation

Most of the Dalit farmers are very poor and they are unable to invest on commercial crops, in general and particular in our study village. Small, marginal and Dalit farmers cultivating crops are: Dal, Jower, Maize, Pulses Ragi, Rice, Sugar cane, Sunflower, Bajra, Sajja, Vegetables and Banana (Table 9).

Table 9 Small, marginal Dalit farmers' cultivation of crops

Crop name	Medium and large farmers	Small and marginal farmers	Total
Banana	0	2	2
Dal	0	9	9
Jower	0	7	7
Maize	4	7	11
Pulses	2	4	6
Ragi	0	3	3
Rice	0	1	1
Sugar cane	0	2	2
Sunflower	3	2	5
Bajra	0	1	1
Sajja	0	1	1
Vegetables	1	1	2
Total	10	40	50

Source: Primary data collected, 2014

Summary and conclusion of the study

In the above discussion greater part of the Dalits are land less labour and their socio-economic conditions is very pathetic, some of the houses are very poor and in front of their houses pigs are moving. Among Dalits majority of the household's occupation are agriculture labour and non-agriculture labour. Those who are landless labour their main occupation is agriculture and non-agriculture, it means that the Dalits are pushing them to work non-agriculture labour work.

At the same time other educated head of the households' occupations are also improved and they are working as a Government employee and as a private employee and partly involving non-agricultural activities. In our study area data reveals that an average household income is 50045. Among the Dalit households' medium and large farmers' household's average income is higher compared to other two groups.

Land is a very important asset for the rural people. In our study village all most, greater part (81%) of the Dalits are not having the lands. and they are working as an agriculture labour and non-agriculture labour. Nineteen per cent of the Dalits are having own land in Srinivas saradgi village. Among the landowners majority of the heads of the household are illiterates. In our study data reveals that only 15% of the heads of the household are Small and Marginal farmers and 4 per cent of the Dalits are medium and large farmers. And greater parts of the households are landless labour and few of them are government and as well as private employees. The main obstacle for the rainfed area are water and environmental degradation and severe drought and floods are main cause for not develop the rainfed agriculture. And the main reason for not drill the bore well open well is lack of sufficient funds from Dalit farmers. Secondly there is no guarantee get the water if drill the bore well in their lands. In addition to most of the Dalit farmers lands are not suitable for cultivate the crops.

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ⁱ Previously it called Gulbarga district