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**ECONOMIC STATUS OF  
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS  
IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT**

*By*

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THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
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VELLAYANI  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
1994

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled Economic status of Agricultural Labourers in Thiruvananthapuram District is a bonafide record of research work done by me during the course of research and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree diploma associateship fellowship or other similar title of any other University or Society

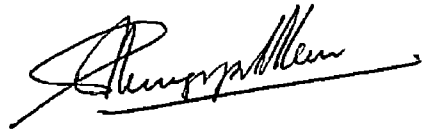
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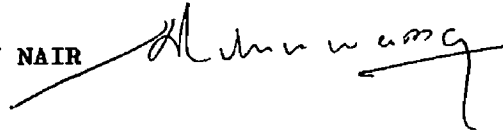
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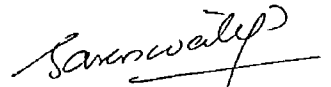


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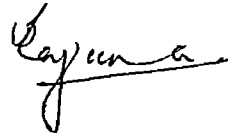
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- II Sub division wise distribution of Krishibhavans in Thiruvananthapuram district
- III Inverview schedule for collection of data from agricultural labourers

## ABBREVIATIONS

ALHH		Agricultural Labour Household(s)
PDS		Public Distribution System
PHC	-	Primary Health Centre



**INTRODUCTION**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Agriculture still remains the mainstay of our economy even after 47 years of independence. Development in India is synonymous with rural development since more than two third of its population reside in the rural areas with agriculture as their main occupation more accurately as their livelihood. Agriculture and allied activities constitute the single largest contributor to the GDP of India accounting for almost 33 per cent. Out of a population of 2.9 crores in Kerala (census report 1991) 2.1 crore people live in the rural areas. Of the total labour force of the state agricultural labourers alone constitute around 25.66 per cent. Out of the state income of Rs 13531 crores at current prices the share of agriculture was Rs 4601 crores (34 per cent) and allied sectors contributed another 440 crores of rupees. (Dept of Economics and statistics Government of Kerala). This reveals that agriculture is the main stay of Kerala's economy also.

Human labour use in Indian agriculture is likely to be a topic of significance for some time to come. This is particularly so since the last four decades saw little

occupational diversification. However the rate of growth of agriculture in India is at a slow pace only about 2 per cent per annum. The growth rate of employment in primary sector during 1981-91 was least in Kerala only 1.28 per cent as against an all India average of 2 per cent (Bhattacharya 1993). Till the eighties the growth rate of agriculture had lagged behind to that of population but the trend has slowly started to reverse in the eighties. There is no doubt that the overall employment growth would continue to depend crucially on the primary sector in the coming years. Demographic pressure on land is deepening. According to Sheila 1993. There is just too much labour waiting to be supplied should a chance at a few extra days paid work appear on the horizon inside or outside the farm (Sheila 1993).

It is true that agriculture in India had a break through during the late sixties generally known as the Green revolution period. Many attempts have since been made to examine its impact on the nation's economy. It is said that one of the indirect contributions of green revolution was its impact by way of labour absorption. From about 20 million mandays of employment generated in mid sixties it rose to 850



million mandays in 1988- 89 due to the various development programmes (Rao 1989) But in a big country like India with the fast growing population the benefits were reaped only by a smaller section that too in a few pockets The other areas still had to depend on traditional materials and methods the result being low productivity and poverty

One of the major limitations of planning in India is that despite a conscious effort made by the planners to promote labour intensive techniques of production the growth of employment has continuously lagged behind the growth of labour force A study conducted by the Department of Economics and statistics (Government of Kerala 1988) recorded that an agricultural labour could find employment only for about 188 days per year It is notable that at present this figure might still be lower This may be one of the main reason for the prevalence of poverty and poor quality life among the agricultural labourers and marginal farmers

Labour is one of the vital inputs in the agricultural production process Agricultural labourers being the core of the weaker sections of the society deserve

a very special attention in the present day context. However they are the most exploited and oppressed class in the rural hierarchy. The case may be slightly different in a state like Kerala where their condition is considered to be not too worse off. Upliftment of agricultural labourers has to be one of the most important concerns of our planners and administrators. As per research findings 85 per cent of the working population in Kerala belong to the unorganised and informal sector and nearly 50 lakh among them are wage labourers which include the agricultural labourers also (Government of Kerala - 1991). Low earnings, inadequate and unsteady employment and lack of any protection and welfare cover characterise the employment in the unorganised sector.

The present study was undertaken to analyse the economic status of agricultural labourers in the state with reference to a particular district. Some of the aspects the study will enquire into include the extent and pattern of employment, wages, income, expenditure, pattern, extent of poverty, indebtedness, social participation, benefits from the labour welfare programmes etc. The study has the following broad objectives:

### Objectives of the study

- 1 To understand the levels of employment underemployment and unemployment of the agricultural labourers of Thiruvananthapuram district
- 2 To study the wage rates and modes of payment of wages of the labourers in the study
- 3 To estimate the income levels of the agricultural labour households
- 4 To assess the expenditure pattern of the agricultural labour households
- 5 To estimate the extent of poverty if any of the selected households
- 6 To estimate the indebtedness and savings of the sample households
- 7 To assess the support through the various welfare programmes for the selected households
- 8 To understand other details such as social participation cosmopolitaness health and hygiene and aspirations of the labour households
- 9 To study the level of political participation of the agricultural labour households

### Need for the study

The agricultural labourers constitute the single largest section of the total work force both in the country and in the state. For the overall development and progress of the nation, upliftment of these people is highly essential. It is known that planning has been always done taking into consideration this objective also. However, the results always were not as good as expected and the labour force still has a long way to go for attaining prosperity.

A research investigation into the various aspects that constitute the economic status of agricultural labourers will enable the formulation of suitable measures to ensure effective planning and implementation of the policies. This study assumes importance in the fact that it is a research attempt to study the overall economic status of the agricultural labourers of a particular district. Earlier studies have been concentrating more on particular aspects like wages, employment etc. only.

### Scope of the study

The inferences derived out of this study could be developed to identify the problems and lacunae in the

existing policies and programmes for the welfare of the rural poor. Also it may help to understand the changing pattern of agriculture which has led to a reduction in the extent of employment of the labourers in agriculture sector. Also this study may help planners and administrators in devising suitable strategy for effective implementation of policies and programmes in future.

#### Limitations of the study

Constrained by limited time and resources it was unable to operate this study in all parts of the state. Also since this forms only a part of the M Sc (Ag) Programme the respondents were selected only from one district (viz) Thiruvananthapuram. These limitations might have narrowed down the scope of generalisation of the results. Also since the study was based on the expressed opinion of the respondents it may not be free from personal biases, varying capacities of memory retention and prejudices. In spite of these limitations much care has been taken to make the study as objective as possible.



**THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

## 2 THEORETICAL ORIFNTATION

Theoretical orientation helps in clear understanding of important concepts being put under study with theoretical definitions and explanations. This chapter has the objective of furnishing a proper orientation to the study by associating available research findings with the proposed research study. The review of previous works attempted in this chapter may help in formulation of hypotheses suggesting methods of research and may also be useful in the interpretation of the results. It also provides a base for evaluating one's research by comparing it with related efforts of others.

Here an attempt is made to review pertinent literature and to cover efforts made by other researchers in the related fields of investigation. The review of past studies has been presented under the following sub titles

- 2 1 Agricultural labourer
- 2 2 Agricultural labour house hold
- 2 3 Labour force and Labour productivity
- 2 4 Employment
- 2 5 Wages
- 2 6 Income

- 2 7 Levels of living
  - 2 8 Public distribution system
  - 2 9 Consumption expenditure
  - 2 10 Measurement of poverty
  - 2 11 Indebtedness
  - 2 12 Savings
  - 2 13 Welfare schemes
  - 2 14 Social participation
  - 2 15 Political participation
- 2 1 Agricultural labourer

Agricultural labourer has been defined by various experts and committees appointed by the government from time to time

Desai and Shah (1951) in their study on the problems of farm labour in Gujarat defined the term agricultural labourers as all those who depend mainly on farm wages for their maintenance irrespective of other sources of income

Government of India (1955) defined agricultural labourer as a person who reports that he or she was engaged in agricultural operations as hired labourer for wages for 50 per cent or more of the total number of days worked by him or her during the previous year



Government of Kerala (1976) defined agricultural labourer as a person who in consideration of the wages payable to him by a land owner works on or does any other agricultural operation in relation to the agricultural land of such owner

Census of India (1981) defined agricultural labourer as a person who worked in another person's land for wages in cash kind or share of crop. Such a person has no risk in cultivation but merely worked in another person's land for wages. An agricultural labourer had no right of lease or contract on the land on which he worked. Padmanabhan (1981) defined agricultural labourer as a person doing any kind of agricultural operation for a farmer in receipt of wages in the form of either cash or kind or both.

For the present study an agricultural labourer has been defined as any person above the age of 18 who reports that he or she was engaged in operations related to agriculture as hired labour for wages in cash or kind for 50 per cent or more of the total number of days worked by him/her during the preceding year.

## 2 2 Agricultural labour household (ALHH)

Government of India (1955) in the first Agricultural Labour Enquiry Report defined agricultural labour family as a family in which either the head of the family or fifty per cent or more of the earners report agricultural labour as their main occupation

Supe and Singh (1968) in their study measured family size as large (family having more than 5 members) and small (family having less than 5 members)

Bardhan s (1984) analysis based on the data on Rural Labour Enquires suggests that between 1964 & 1974 annual wage income per ALHH declined in all the states except in UP For rural India as a whole it declined by 16 per cent during this period Proportion of ALHH below the poverty line for rural India as a whole increased from 52 to 56 per cent

Sankar (1985) defined an ALHH as one in which 50 per cent or more of the earners report agricultural labour as their main occupation which in turn is defined as the occupation in which he or she was engaged for 50 per cent or

more of the total number of days worked by him or her during the past 12 months

Kurien (1987) on an assessment made on agricultural labourers marginal and small farmers concluded that at least 50 per cent of the number of the work force and their families and thus of the total population must be considered to be in a situation where the level of living can only be abysmally low and the mode of living highly insecure and precarious

Dev (1988) opined that in the case of Kerala there is a big gap between income actually earned by the labour households and the potential income since unemployed days are the highest in the state compared to the rest of the states This indicates that poverty among landless agricultural labour households in Kerala mainly arises due to high rate of unemployment days rather than low wages

In the present study an ALHH has been defined as a house hold to which the respondent belonged and the main source of its income was from activities related to agriculture

### 2 3 Labour force and labour productivity

Pandey (1957) defined labour force as the number of men available for gainful work on the preceding day

Shanmuga sundaram (1980) defined labour productivity as the output per man day of labour input. Labour productivity depends on the quality of labour, the available land area and other direct inputs associated with labour.

Franklin (1981) in his study on concepts of unemployment methods of measuring unemployment in an under developed country defined labour force as all persons both male and female in the age group between 15 and 59 who may be regarded as eligible for employment. Students, disabled and mentally retarded may be excluded from the labour force.

Sankar (1985) defined labour force as all persons both male and female belonging to the age group 15-59, excluding students, disabled and mentally retarded persons.

Dev (1986) opined that an analysis of labour productivity and its relation to rural poverty needs no

special justification It is by now generally recognised that rural households with access to little or no land or non land assets and dependent primarily on uncertain and fluctuating wage employment form the single largest segment of the rural poor If the productivity of these workers are high rural poverty may be low

In the present study labour force is considered to be constituted by all persons above the age of 18 years and who are engaged in labour activities related to agriculture Students disabled persons below the age of 18 and the mentally disabled persons form the dependant group

#### 2.4 Employment

Employment denotes the availability of job opportunities to the working class

Pandey (1957) in his study on the pattern of agricultural labour in Uttar Pradesh defined different levels of employment as follows

1 Full employment A man is considered fully employed if the total hours worked by him are not less than the total

hours he was available for gainful work during the reference period. It means that if a labourer was with job but not at work due to personal reasons like sickness and hence was not available for work he would be considered fully employed.

2 Unemployment If the number of hours worked by a member of the labour force was zero during the reference period although he was available for gainful work he was considered unemployed.

3 Under employment If the number of total hours available for gainful work during the reference period was greater than the number of total hours worked by a member of the labour force he was considered under employed.

Goswami and Bora (1970) in their study on the demand for agricultural labour in rural areas of Assam defined full employment as 300 days of 8 hour man days. This was arrived at on the assumption that one worker will get one holiday for each week (52 days) and 13 days for sickness and other works.

Jose (1978) in his study on Agricultural labour force in Kerala observed that the employment figures for

Kerala was lowest among Indian states Panicker (1978) found that open unemployment rate works out to 33 per cent of the labour force Incidence of undernutrition and malnutrition is a reflection of the very low level of income which in turn is due to inadequate employment opportunities

Puhazhendi (1980) in his study on Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu observed that on an average male labour could find employment for 223 50 mandays in a year In the study area no one was fully employed and 75 per cent of them were moderately underemployed and remaining 25 per cent were severely under employed

Dutt (1981) observed that the paucity of non-agricultural occupations in village areas was one of the most important reasons for low wages and poor economic conditions of the farm labourers Franklin (1981) opined that if a person is employed for more than 9 months during the preceding year he or she may be classified as fully employed A person who remains unemployed (ie ) without any productive work during the previous year may be classified as unemployed and the remaining all those who have been employed from one to nine months may be classified as seasonally unemployed

Kumar et al (1981) found that wages product price and irrigation are the dominant determinants of employment

Sankar (1985) defined employment of Agricultural Labourer as wage paid agricultural employment plus non agricultural employment like construction work digging wells fencing thatching houses etc

Thamarajakshi (1989) in a study on agricultural growth rural development and employment generation observed that there has been an increasing casualisation of rural labour and a large number of marginal holders had become available for and primarily dependant on wage labour The proportion of casual wage labour in the rural work force has increased from 22 to 29 per cent from 1973 to 1983 Fifty five per cent of workers belonged to families below poverty line, 20 per cent of workers were ready for additional work

Banerjee (1993) found that there has been a perceptible decline in agricultural output and employment during the post green revolution period Rural employment in general and agricultural employment in particular showed a downward trend and this has slowed down total employment



growth although urban employment registered some improvement. The condition of the agricultural labour is likely to worsen in a truncated reform which eludes land reform and the basic structure of production relations in the agrarian sector and which emphasises on agro industries and infrastructure development by private investment depending on profitability and market conditions.

In this study the concept of employment has been kept as work done for wages as hired labour or for self in a day for not less than 6 hours. The type of work include ordinary labour operations in cultivated lands, construction, digging wells, thatching, skilled work and other house hold works.

## 2.5 Wages

Wages are the returns the workers get for their labour.

Misra and Gupta (1974) opined that apart from productivity there are several other variables such as distribution of land holdings, irrigated area, availability of pumpsets, tractor use and availability of agricultural labour playing an important role in wage determination.

Pandey (1976) attributed the substantial wage hikes of agricultural labour in Kerala not to the level of agricultural development or to the size of its agriculture sector. According to him effective unionisation of the agricultural labourers and pro labour attitude of successive state governments have improved the bargaining capacity of the workers which enable them to get maximum advantages.

Parthasarathy (1983) in his study found that the wage rates had increased much faster than farm prices in Kerala for rice cultivation. He concluded that this might have accounted for stagnation of paddy production in Kerala. Rajagopalan (1983) observed in his study on deceleration of agricultural growth in Tamil Nadu that real wages tended to be stagnant even though an incremental 30 per cent of labour could handle an incremental output of 40 per cent. Increasing labour productivity could have been rewarded with better wage income than what has been paid actually.

Sankar (1985) defined wages of agricultural labour as wages and earnings for agricultural employment both in cash and kind.

According to Baby (1986) existing studies on agricultural wages in India could be faulted on 3 counts uncritical use of wage data from varying sources endpoint comparison and use of an appropriate deflator

He has compared the movements of wages and cereal prices and has found that the movement of retail prices when superimposed on the movement of money wages showed a trend synchronisation "It is seen that over the period 1960 1980 whenever there was an increase in retail price of rice it was followed by an increase in the money wage rate but the rising trend in money doesn't stop with the prices but continues well into the initial years of the down swing of prices also (certain year to year increases in the money wages in few consecutive years is followed by stagnancy or decline in the succeeding years and the cycle is repeated"

Sridhar (1987) found that money wages tended to move along with prices both in periods of falling as well as rising prices Also cereal prices play a very important role in determining the level of money wages and therefore the level of real wages

Acharya (1989) observed that there is a wide and persistent variation in the wages across regions sometimes within the state. Wages are sensitive to general upswings and downswings in the economy such as agricultural production and inflation.

Puranchand et al (1993) observed that between 1980 and 1992 both money and real wages have increased in all the states with the highest wages in Punjab in the country. The rise in nominal and real wage rates per annum was the highest in Kerala (Rs 1 40 and 0 19 ps respectively) among all the states in the country.

Kaur and Goyal (1993) in their study have indicated significant differences in the wages of females and males for the operations in which both were employed. Even for the operations which were female labour intensive and were considered to be better performed by them such as weeding their wages were only half the wages of males.

In the present study wages are considered as the returns the labourers get either in cash or in kind for the work they have done as agricultural labourers.

## 2.6 Income

National Council of Applied Economic Research (1961) defined income of a house hold as the earnings both in cash and kind that has accrued to and realised by the members of the house holds during the reference period

Dantwala (1975) in a study on poverty and unemployment in 12 villages observed that estimation of income especially of the poor house holds is a tricky problem particularly in view of the fact that many of these households resort to multiple occupations. The reported duration of the employment in each of them and the income derived therefrom are subject to a wide margin of error

Lekshminarayan (1977) opined that a category called pure agricultural labourers are fast disappearing as income from agricultural labour is only a fraction of the total income of labour house holds. In view of this discussions based merely on wage rates of ALHH are not worth while

Rajendran (1981) observed that income from crops formed the major source of income of the farm house holds and

it formed about 82 per cent of the gross income of farm families

Sankar (1985) defined income of the ALHH as the total income comprising agricultural wage income self employment income salaries remittances grants etc if any

Narayana (1990) in his study on rural poverty found that 60 per cent of the bottom population in rural India is wholly or partly dependant on wage incomes

Singh and Hazell (1993) observed that per capita income is a useful measure of poverty because it summarises a household's ability to acquire all its basic needs

In the present study income of an agricultural labour household has been defined as the total earnings and receipts of the household for the past one year from agriculture wages livestock pensions salaries grants and other social contributions

## 2.7 Levels of living

According to Sharma and Guha (1966) the term level of living is employed to indicate actual condition of life

and work It means the plane of living or content of living which would take into consideration the composite goods and services actually consumed which may or maynot be identical with what the individual or family regards as necessary or desirable

Sankar (1985) opined that level of living takes into account the composite goods and services actually consumed by the family which may or maynot be identical with what they regard as necessary or desirable

Acharya (1992) observed that rise in wages is detrimental to employment but a freeze in wages can seriously affect levels of living of hired labourers who form the poorest section in rural India

In the present study levels of living is conceptualized as the real life situation of the labour households and as to how much they spent on goods and services

## 2 8 Public Distribution System (PDS)

Tyagi (1990) criticised the PDS in that per capita distribution of food grains in different states had not been

consistent with the percentage of population below the poverty line in these states

Dev and Suryanarayana (1991) observed that at the all India level the dependence of the poor on the PDS in rural areas for rice wheat edible oils etc is less than 16 per cent It means that the dependence of the rural poor on the open market is much higher than on the PDS for most of the commodities distributed under the PDS More or less people of all income groups depend uniformly to the same extent on the PDS with respect to all commodities in rural areas even though there are slight variations

PDS is rural biased at the all India level for rice coarse cereals sugar and cloth These items constitute 60 percent of total PDS purchases Hence it appears that PDS is not urban biased but pro rural However the findings at the state level vary In states like West Bengal PDS is still urban biased

Franke (1993) in his study in Kerala found that the ration shops provide as important food subsidy for landless households but doesn't bring them upto the level of calorie



sufficiency However as per another finding of Geetha and Suryanarayana (1993) part of the reason for not buying from the Fair Price Shops is inadequate irregular and poor quality of food grains supplied by these shops This is the reason cited even by the poor people

Suryanarayana (1994) again observed that in Kerala the gap between consumption requirements and local production resulted in the open market prices remaining at a substantially higher level than the ration prices which in turn provided inadequate incentives for consumers to continue their purchase from the ration shops

By PDS is meant in this study the ordinary fair price shops (ration shops) in each village under the state government's ministry of food and civil supplies which supplies essential items like cereals sugar kerosene edible oils etc to the common man at subsidised rates based on their possession of ration cards

## 2 9 Consumption Expenditure

Dantwala (1961) found that consumption expenditure exceeded income for all categories of Agricultural Labourers

the deficit varying from 128 to 259 per cent highest being for attached workers

Shah (1960) Consumption expenditure revealed a shift in favour of food items as compared to non food items which tends to support the hypothesis that increase in food production is likely to be followed by a rise in food consumption under chronic conditions of under nutrition

Pandey (1976) observed that household income was just sufficient to meet the consumption expenditure for the sample as a whole provided that the amount of outstanding debts was kept more or less the same either by not repaying them or by incurring new debts to repay the old ones

Puhazhendı (1980) observed that expenditure on food was 67.45 per cent followed by clothing 6.16 per cent and the expenditure on social and religious functions ranked third in total expenditure

Rajendran (1981) in his study on consumption behaviour of farm households found that about 66 per cent of total expenditure was spent on food and rest on non food

items Clothing was the most important non food item of expenditure

Varadarajan (1981) opined that consumption expenditure is influenced significantly by the income of the families Consumption is influenced by the total variable income Elasticity of consumption for farm families were found to be inelastic as suggested by theories of consumption

According to Sankar (1985) consumption expenditure comprises all expenditure incurred by the households exclusively on domestic account including consumption out of home grown produce gifts loans wages received in kind etc

In the present study consumption expenditure denotes the expenses incurred by the family as a unit for food and non food items like cloths lighting medicine education travel recreation social & religious functions service charges maintenance charges etc

The item total expenditure included the sum of consumption expenditure (total food expenditure + total non

food expenditure) with expenditure incurred on agriculture  
 livestock repayment of old debts etc

## 2 10 Measurement of poverty

Planning commission (1970) under the Government of India defined poverty on the basis of per capita consumption expenditure and declared Rs 20 per capita per month at 1960-61 prices minimum desirable consumption standard

Again planning commission (1977) defined the poverty line as the midpoint of the monthly per capita expenditure class having a daily calorie intake of 2400 and 2100 per person in rural and urban areas respectively. At 1979-80 prices the mid points are Rs 76 and Rs 88 in these areas respectively. With changes in prices these figures change. In terms of this definition one can identify the poor as those who do not incur this much consumption expenditure. These thus classified live below the poverty line.

Bardhan (1984) observed that proportion of ALHH below the poverty line of rural India as a whole increased from 52 to 56 per cent during 1964-65 to 1974-75.

Sankar (1985) considered a person as poor if the per capita consumption expenditure per month was less than Rs 110 99 at 82 83 prices

Dandekar (1986) has commented on the poverty alleviation programmes thus The proportion of the population below the poverty line 44 4 per cent in 1983 is of course below the same in 1971-72 namely 46 0 per cent But the decline is too small only about 1 6 points in 11 years to derive comfort from The size of the problem is simply too large compared to the size of the antipoverty programmes Also it is to be noted that the small decline in poverty since 1977 78 is partly due to the prices of primary food articles not rising to the same extent as the rise in prices of other commodities

Shergill (1989) had the following conclusions in his study

- 1 Higher land concentration is associated with lower incidence of rural poverty
- 2 Extent of tenancy as such does not seem to influence the incidence of rural poverty

3 Capitalist penetration in agriculture is the most important factor that determines the incidence of poverty in the rural areas

Narayana (1990) observed that relationship between cyclical fluctuations in the incidence of poverty and the real wage rates seems to be inverse and fairly close. Sharp increases in cereal prices bring down the real wages leading to an increase in the incidence of poverty and vice versa.

Sidhu (1991) found that in Punjab and Haryana even though wage rates are high about half the wage labour households are still living below the poverty line. It is therefore argued that agricultural development alone cannot solve the problem of unemployment and rural poverty.

Jain (1992) considered 6 methods for drawing absolute poverty line and concluded that the planning commission method was quite useful in the case of developing countries like India. In this method the recommended minimum level of food intake is given in terms of a calorie norm of 2100 and 2400 calories per person per day in urban and rural areas respectively.

In this study also the poverty line is based on the methodology followed at present by the planning commission House holds with per capita per month consumption expenditure less than Rs 210 at 1992 93 prices is considered poor

## 2 11 Indebtedness

Shah (1960) in his study based on first and second Agricultural Labour Enquiry reports found that there was a major increase in borrowings of agricultural labourers

Desai (1969) suggested that merely helping workers to secure loans at low rate of interest will not help them The better way is to help them exercise control over their expenses

Varma (1980) in his study on indebtedness among ALHH based on the report of the Rural Labour Enquiry Committee (1974 75) concluded that in most of the states the majority of house holds are in debt More than three-fourth of the ALHH were in debt in the union territory of Pondicherry and the states of Kerala Rajasthan Haryana and Tamil Nadu

Sankar (1985) defined indebtedness of the ALHH as the total amount of borrowings of the house holds in cash and kind as on the date of collection of the data

Sarkar (1973) found that despite the greater incidence of modern agricultural technology the economic conditions of the landless tenants (pure tenants) who are tied to the bondage of perpetual debt with their land owners (leasers) are noticeably worse off than the landless agricultural labourers who enjoy freedom to secure employment with different employers with whom the land less labourers are not enmeshed with any loanable transactions

In the present study an ALHH is said to be indebted if it has any loan outstanding against it and the level of indebtedness depends on the total amount outstanding of the household

## 2.12 Savings

Desai (1970) defined saving as the difference between current output and current expenditure. The term current denoted any period less than one year



Deole and Ashturkar (1974) have pointed out that holdings below 10 acres did not show any saving on the contrary they were in deficit Savings tended to increase with the increase in the size of the holding

Sankar (1985) has defined current savings as the difference between current disposable income and current consumption expenditure

In the present study savings has been defined as the total sum of money the respondent had invested in any of the formal or informal institutions

## 2 13 Welfare Schemes

Gopal (1984) in a benefit cost analysis of the Indian family welfare programme found that the benefit cost ratio have declined from 82 06 to 7 05 during 1966-67 to 1978-79 It revealed the fact that benefits were not increasing corresponding to the growth in expenditure

Rath (1985) observed that at the end of seven years of operation of IRDP only about 3 per cent of the poor

house holds in rural India would have been helped to rise above poverty. The essential point was that despite achievements of targets in other respects the programme's impact on the poor was inadequate.

In his study Dandekar (1986) concluded that the size of the problem is simply too large compared to the size of the antipoverty programmes.

Parthasarathy (1987) has said that most of the lands received by the poor house holds was given up by them as they did not have complementary resources to develop and use the newly received lands. Annual income per house hold derived from common property resources ranged between Rs 530 and Rs830 and is much higher than the income generated by the antipoverty programmes.

According to Kurien (1989) If one judges IRDP in terms of crossing the poverty line it has so far been a grand failure as only 10-12 per cent of the beneficiaries could reach the goal. If the criterion applied is an increase in family income about three-fourth of the assisted families experienced at least some increase.

Malyadevi et al (1992) have observed that the various programmes could not benefit the economically weaker sections of the society as they were inadequately financed and implemented by different departments without any co-ordination. They suffered from several defects and did not succeed to an appreciable extent either in removing poverty and unemployment or creating productive assets. They were time bound and were viewed as some thing of extra work by the officials who had to operate at the block and village level. Rao (1992) has examined the potential and prospects for integrating the major poverty alleviation programmes and has concluded that there is potential for the greater integration within the overall development strategy.

Fatimabi (1993) found that education, cosmopolitaness, mass media participation, contact with extension agency, economic motivation, innovativeness and level of aspiration of agricultural labourers had positive and significant relationship with their attitudes towards welfare schemes.

In the present study welfare Programmes are considered to be government sponsored ones which has the

objective of uplifting the rural poor for attaining better prosperity (above the poverty line)

#### 2.14 Social participation

Interaction with the other people of the society and involvement in social functions is considered important in any study in the field of social sciences

Nelson (1992) found that education, social participation, contact with extension agency, innovativeness and scientific orientation were significantly and positively related with the awareness of Krishaka vikasana samathy members about krishi bhavans. Contact with extension agency was found to be the most important factor in shaping the attitude of farmers towards Krishabhavans.

Ashaletha (1993) suggested that infrastructure facilities in the Krishabhavans should be improved by local mobilisation of infrastructure with the help of the farmers.

Fatimabi (1993) has found that for majority of agricultural labourers, contact with extension agency was low.

and also that the agricultural labourers were in a miserable condition with low education poor socio economic status social participation contact with extension agency etc

In the present study for determining the level of social participation of a person we take into account factors such as membership in organisations and frequency of attendance in programmes such as meetings seminars exhibitions field trips etc

## 2.15 Political participation

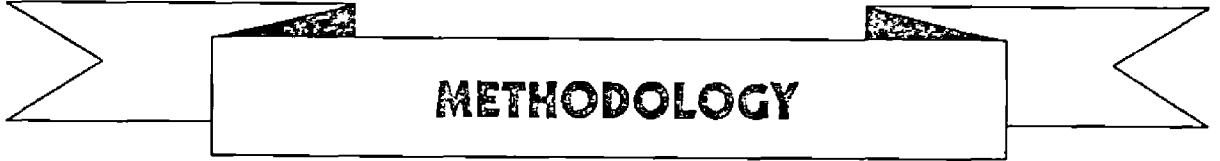
Pandey (1976) in his study on the pattern of wages income and consumer expenditure of agricultural labourers in India observed that the substantial wage hikes of agricultural labourers in Kerala may not be attributed either to the level of agricultural development or to the size of its agricultural sector. Effective unionisation of agricultural labourers and pro labour attitudes of the successive state governments have improved the bargaining capacity of the workers which enabled them to get maximum advantages

Bardhan (1989) in her study has made the following observations

- \* The agricultural labourers and marginal peasants are poor not just in land and other productive assets but also in organisation
- \* The incidence of labour tying is remarkably less in the relatively more unionised rural Kerala

According to Subramanian (1994) "On the question of effect of unionisation of agricultural labour the studies in Kerala showed that it could achieve high wage rate but on the contrary in Thanja ur district of Tamilnadu it didnot succeed to the extent needed"

In the present study political participation is measured by noting the fact whether the respondent is a member of any o the registered political party or tradeunion in common and also the reason both for eithe joining the movement or not joining the movement



**METHODOLOGY**

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a brief description of the methods and procedures employed in conducting the study the details of which are presented under the following heads

- 1 Location of the study
- 2 Sampling procedure
- 3 Selection and measurement of variables
- 4 Procedure of data collection
- 5 Period of study
- 6 Statistical tools used

#### 3 1 Location of the study

The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala state. The district has a comparatively high population of agricultural labourers among all the districts of Kerala. The district wise population of agricultural labourers in Kerala is given in Appendix I.

#### Sampling procedure

Since the study was to find out the economic status of agricultural labourers only agricultural labourers have



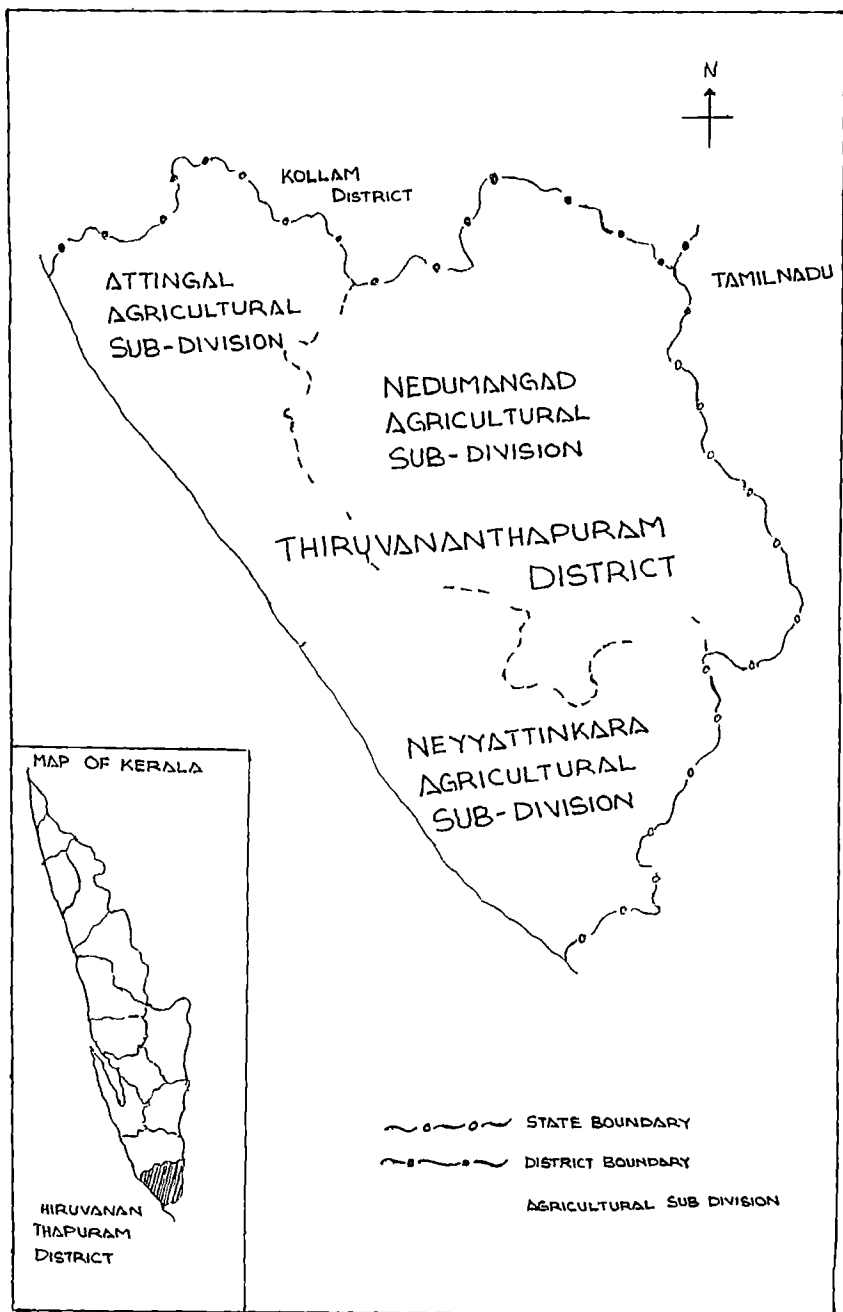


FIG 311 MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE STUDY

been included in the study Thiruvananthapuram district has 84 Krishibhavans under the three subdivisions viz Attingal Nedumangadu and Neyyattinkara The subdivision wise distribution of Krishibhavans in the district is given in Appendix II A three stage random sampling procedure was adopted for the selection of the respondents with the subdivision the Krishibhavan and the respondent being the first second and third stage units respectively

Of the three subdivisions in the district Neyyattinkara subdivision was selected randomly

A map showing the location of the study is the given in Fig 3 1 1

### 3 2 1 Selection of Krishibhavans

From the selected subdivision the names of the Krishibhavans were arranged in alphabetical order and four Krishibhavans were selected at random The Krishibhavans thus selected were Maranalloor (Athiyanoor block) Pallichal (Nemom block) Poovar (Parassala block) and Venganoor (Athiyanoor block)

### 3 2 2 Selection of Agricultural labourers

In this study an agricultural labourer is considered as one whose main source of income (more than 50 per cent) is from wage employment in the agriculture sector

Separate lists of farmers were collected from each of the four selected Krishibhavans and they were contacted for obtaining the names of the labourers employed by them. Thus a list of agricultural labourers was prepared for each of the four Krishibhavans. From each list thirty agricultural labourers were selected at random to constitute a sample of 120 agricultural labourers as respondents for the study.

### 3 3 Selection and measurement of variables

Based on the review of earlier works, discussions with experts and observations by the researcher, a list of 15 main variables were selected and included for the study. The variables included in the study were

- 1 Basic family particulars
- 2 Education
- 3 Employment & wages
- 4 Land holding (owned and operated)
- 5 Land use pattern
- 6 Possessions
  - a farm implements & machinery
  - b Livestock
  - c Consumer durables
- 7 Permanent assets
- 8 Income of the household
- 9 Household expenditure pattern
  - a food expenditure
  - b non food expenditure
  - c Total expenditure
- 10 Participation in welfare programmes
- 11 Savings
- 12 Indebtedness
- 13 Social participation
- 14 Exposure to mass media
- 15 Political awareness & participation and
- 16 Miscellaneous factors

The explanation of the variables used for the study is given below

### 3 3 1 Basic family particulars

This refers to the following sub variables which help us to know in depth about the basic characteristics of the sample household For the measurement of the various variables the scale followed by Fathimabi (1993) was adopted with slight modifications

The sub variables included were

- a Religion The religion to which the family actually belongs
- b Caste Caste of the selected respondent
- c Family status By this it is meant whether the household selected is of single joint or nuclear type
- d Housing condition Denotes whether the house of the respondent is a hut thatched or tiled one
- e Electrification Whether the house is electrified or not
- f Family size It includes the total number of members in the household above the age of five

- g Family Composition It denotes the number of male and female members in each household
- h Family employment Refers to the total number of earning members in each household

The above variables were measured using the following scale

Categories	Score
Religion	
Hindu	1
Christian	2
Others	3
Caste	
Scheduled Caste (Sc)	1
Scheduled tribe (St)	2
Backward Caste (Bc)	3
Forward Caste (Fc)	4
c Family status	
single	1
Joint	2
Nuclear	3

## d Housing condition

Hut	1
thatched	2
tiled	3
Others	4

## e Electrification

Not Electrified	0
Electrified	1

## 3 3 2 Education

Education refer to the extent of literacy of the respondent at the time of conducting the survey

Trivedi (1963) developed a scoring system for measuring different levels of education in his socio economic status scale. The method was followed by Padmanabhan (1981) to measure the educational status of agricultural labourers. The method adopted by Padmanabhan is followed here with slight modifications. The scoring pattern was as follows

Category	Score
illiterate	0
primary school	1

middle school	2
high school	3
collegiate	4

### 3 3 3 Employment and wages

According to Webster s third international dictionary employment is any activity in which one engages and employs his time and energy In the present study employment is considered as work done by an individual either for wages as hired labour or in own field Here to find the total employment of a labourer the total number of days he had worked in the preceeding year was taken

Since agriculture alone may not provide employment on all days the respondents may engage in other types of works also Hence data have been collected separately for the type of work number of days employed as hired labour and number of days worked in own field

The working hours and the duration of break period has also been taken into account



Wages denote the reward obtained by the employee for his work. Wages paid to the labourer both in cash and kind has been taken into account and the total wages is taken as the sum of the money wages & money equivalent of kind wages

### 3 3 4 Land holding (owned and operated)

This was considered in two categories. The first category as the total area of land owned by the labourer measured in cents. The area under dry/garden land and wet land has been measured separately and their summation was taken as size of owned holding.

The second category which is the operational holding include owned land and land leased in (area measured in cents) for agriculture and other purposes.

### 3 3 5 Land use pattern

This was characterised as the different uses to which the land was put by the respondent. This measures the area used for different purposes such as building

agriculture land kept as fallow and land used for other purposes

The cultivation details of the farmers is accounted here which includes the area under each crop yield expenditure returns profit /loss actually gained during the previous year

### 3 3 6 Possessions

This variable has been categorised into three

- 1 Farm implements & machinery
- 2 Livestock
- 3 Consumer durables

#### 3 3 6 1 Farm implements & machinery

This refers to the total number of farm implements and machinery which the farmer possesses. The farm implements include spades pickaxe plough sickles baskets ladders sprayers etc. The present value of the implements possessed by the farmers is also obtained for the study.

### 3 3 6 2 Livestock

In this the farmer's possession of livestock is considered. The number and value of cattles & poultry is taken separately and also the annual expense and income of the farmer from the livestock is taken into account for the study.

### 3 3 6 3 Consumer durables

This includes the farmer's possession of consumer articles like radio, bicycle, furniture, iron, TV etc commonly seen in our society. The number of articles possessed by the respondent and their present value is taken into account.

### 3 3 7 Permanent assets

This variable is useful in estimating the value of possessions of permanent nature by the respondent. The values of the land owned, house, ornaments etc are summed up to find the permanent assets of the respondent.

### 3 3 8 Income of the household

Annual income of the household can be said to be the total retains of a farmer in monetary terms during one year. In this study income of the household has been characterised as the income from various sources such as agriculture wages livestock pensions contribution etc. The annual income of the household was computed as the total sum of income in monetary terms from the above different sources for a period of one year preceding the study.

### 3 3 9 Household expenditure

Household expenditure is defined as the financial commitments involved typically in the manner of living by the household. It takes into account 3 aspects. These are

#### 3 3 9 1 Food expenditure

This denote the expenses incurred by the household as a unit for food items such as cereals coconut tubers provisions & oils fruits & vegetables fish egg meat milk etc and also the expenses in teashop

Another important factor considered in the study is the dependence of the household on the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the degree of dependence

### 3 3 9 2 Non food expenditure

Here the annual expenditure pattern of the household on various non food consumption items are included and summed up as the total non food expenditure. The items include clothes, house rent (if any), lighting, personal necessities such as cigarettes, beedi, betel chewing, snuff, liquor etc., medical expenses, educational expenses, money spent on recreation, travelling, taxes, newspapers, maintenance etc. Also the percentage share of each of these to the total non food expenditure is taken into account.

### 3 3 9 3 Total expenditure

It is defined as the total amount spent annually on food, non food, consumptive items, agriculture, livestock, repayment of old debts etc. Total expenditure obtained by the summation of these individual expenses and also the percentage share of each of these in the total expenditure is found out.

### 3 3 10 Poverty

Poverty is a variable that cannot be directly observed. Researchers follow different methods to estimate the poverty among a population and draw poverty lines. The planning commission under the Government of India during the sixth five year plan adopted a new technique for measuring poverty based on the consumption expenditure of the households (Planning commission Govt of India 1993). In this the daily calorie requirement was considered. For rural people the minimum calorie requirement was kept at 2400 calories per day and the money equivalent was worked out to be Rs 76 per capita per month (1980-81 prices) to meet this requirement. This was arrived at through the Wholesale Price Index of various commodities.

This method is still followed by the planning commission to work out poverty line and is considered as one of the best methods by many researchers. In the present study the Wholesale Price Index has been taken from authoritative sources and poverty line was worked out to be Rs 2509.8. Hence in the study households with per capita consumption expenditure of less than Rs 2510 was considered to be poor.

### 3 3 11 Participation in welfare programmes

The government over the years have launched a number of programmes for the upliftment of socially and economically weaker sections in which majority of the agricultural labour households fall. The objective of these programmes is achieved through financial assistance to the weaker sections and also through generation of employment opportunities.

In this study the impact of the various programmes such as Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and special Employment Programme (SEP) which were carried out through the Krishibhavans is studied. Welfare programmes for the pension and relief of the workers is also taken into account. The name of the programme, amount of money obtained by the household, its purpose and utilisation pattern is studied by taking the actual figures for each household.

### 3 3 12 Savings

Savings is defined as the amount of money which the sample household has saved in the form of deposits.

which are readily available if needed with external agencies

The agencies include both formal and informal institutions. Period of savings, institution, amount saved etc. are taken as actual figures in this study to understand clearly the economic status of the family.

### 3.3.13 Indebtedness

Indebtedness is a state of obligation for something received. In this study the term indebtedness is used to denote the credit availed and its utilisation by the sample households. Details of credit regarding periodicity, source, amount, interest, details of repayment, outstanding balance and overdues of credit are studied in detail.

It had been concluded in some of the earlier studies that the agricultural labour households are one among the poorest in the society and hence a detailed study of indebtedness of these households assume great importance.



This refers to the extent of involvement of the respondent to the social organisations either as member or as office bearer. The procedure followed by Fathimabi (1993) is adopted here with slight modification for scoring.

Items	Score
1 No membership	0
2 Membership in one organisation	1
3 Membership in two organisations	2
4 Office bearer in one organisation	3

Attendance in extension activities either as a member or as an office bearer was considered important. For attending meetings seminars exhibition demonstration field trips etc regularly occasionally and never the scores given were 2 1 and 0 respectively.

The final score of a respondent was obtained by adding up the scores for attendance in extension activities and multiplying it with the scores secured as member or office bearer of the organisations in which participation was reported.

### 3 3 14 1 Closeness to agricultural support system

The various personnel identified in the system were agricultural assistants agricultural officers veterinary surgeons field officers (banks) Input dealers and scientists (KAU) Closeness to agricultural support system was defined as the contact of the respondents with the above mentioned personnel For giving the scores for frequency of contact the method adopted by Alex (1994) was followed The scoring pattern is as follows

Frequency of contact	Score
Never	0
Sometimes	1
Often	2
Most often	3

The individual scores were summed up to get the closeness with agricultural support system score for that respondent

### 3 3 15 Exposure to mass media

Mass media are agencies which reach large number of people at the same time In this study mass media agencies

included are news papers radio television farm and other magazines

Exposure to mass media refers to the number and frequency of mass media information sources used or contacted by the respondents

For quantifying this variable the procedure developed by Fathimabi (1993) was adopted with slight modifications

Medium	Frequency	Score
1 Newspaper	Regular	2
	Occasional	1
	Never	0
2 Television	Regular	2
	Occasional	1
	Never	0
3 Radio	Regular	2
	Occasional	1
	Never	0
4 Farm magazines	Regular	2
	Occasional	1
	Never	0
5 Other magazines	Regular	2
	Occasional	1
	Never	0

The scores of utilisation for each medium was given as 2 and 1 for own and other sources. The scores for the source was multiplied with frequency of the respective medium and similar scores were added to obtain the final score of the respondent's mass media participation.

### 3.3.16 Political awareness and participation

It is often mentioned in studies relating to socio-economic status of labourers that one of the reasons for the betterment of labour force in Kerala compared to that of other states is their political awareness and participation.

For that reason this variable assumes importance in this study. Here political participation is operationalised as to whether the respondents are members of political organisations and if so in which organisation. The organisations have been classified into three as the leftist parties, the political unions related to the congress party and others.

Also the reasons of the respondents as to why they have joined or not joined in these unions have been taken into consideration in this study.

### 3 3 17 Miscellaneous factors

A few miscellaneous factors also have been included in this study which are important in finding out the economic status of the agricultural labourers. These are described below.

#### 3 3 17 1 Cosmopolitanness

It refers to the respondent's extent of contact with outside village such as the nearest town and the purpose of visit. The scoring procedure adopted by Fathimabi (1993) has been followed here with slight modification.

a	Frequency of visit to the nearest town	Score
	Daily (More than 4 times a week)	4
	Once in a week	3
	Once in a fortnight	2
	Once in a month	1
b	Purpose of visit	
	Related to agriculture	3
	Related to domestic service	2
	Entertainment	1

The final score of a respondent is the total sum of scores obtained by him in a & b

### 3 3 17 2 Health & Hygiene

This include a set of factors and the scoring of these factors is done as follows

Factor	Score
1 Distance to nearest PHC	
Near	2
Less than one Km	1
More than one Km	0
2 Access to other sources of medical care	
Yes	1
No	0
3 Type of latrine	
Latrine with septic tanks	2
Ordinary latrine	1
No latrine	0
4 Drinking water facility	
a) Source	
Pipes	3
Well	2
Ponds Canals	1

## b) Ownership

Own	1
Not own	0

## 5 Waste disposal

Made into compost	2
Other useful methods	1
Thrown out	0

The final score of a respondent is the sum of the individual score obtained for these factors

## 3 3 17 3 Details of leisure time

It takes into account the following Firstly whether the respondent gets enough leisure time Secondly how many days he is willing to work in a week and lastly details of leisure time activities which is categorised into 3 with scores as no activity 0 wasted or misused 1 and used for productive purposes - 2 The final score is the sum of the scores for the 3 types above

### 3 3 17 4 Level of aspiration

#### a Present

In this an enquiry is made to see whether the respondent is satisfied with his present type of life and whether he like farm work or non farm work Also the reasons for this is taken into account

#### b Future

It is operationally defined as the overall life goals in his material world that a labourer prefers Here it covers two aspects the first one being aspirations about the level of education for the children and the second one about the occupation preferred for the children The scoring pattern adopted is as follows

Level of education	Scores
Matric	1
Graduate	2
Professional/Technical	3



**Occupation preference**

Agricultural labourer	1
Business	2
Government job	3

**3 4 Procedures of data collection**

Data collection was made through direct personal interview with the respondents. After the finalisation of variables under study and discussions with experts, a draft interview schedule was prepared and pretested among ten labourers. Errors were eliminated and modifications were made in the final interview schedule prepared for use at the time of interview. The format of the interview schedule is given in Appendix III.

The data were collected during the months of February, April and May of 1994. All the 120 respondents who were agricultural labourers were interviewed directly by the researcher himself. The respondents were met either in their homes or at the working places. The interview was conducted in a natural conversational manner and their responses for the various questions was recorded in the schedule itself.

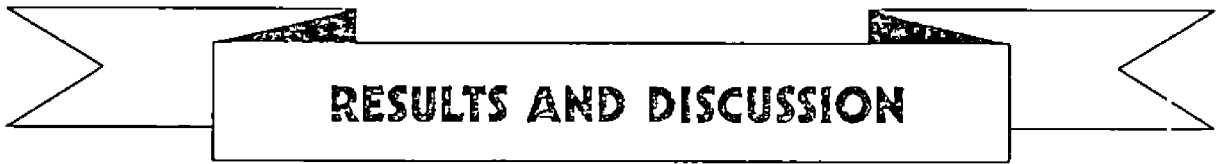
### 3 5 Period of study

Since this study form only a part of the academic programme of the researcher and the time availability was limited the period of study was confined to one year Data was collected for various items in the questionnaire based on the respective facts and figures for the immediately preceded year

### 3 6 Statistical tools used

The data collected from the respondents were coded tabulated and analysed (Snedecor and Cochran 1967)

Mean standard deviation coefficient of variation and correlation coefficients were the statistical tools employed to draw inferences from the data Linear regression analysis was also done for important variables such as income expenditure and indebtedness to explain their dependence on the variables viz employment, family size age holding size etc and the significance of the fitted regression was tested



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the study are presented and discussed under the following heads

- 4 1 General description of the sample households
- 4 2 Details of employment of the ALHH
- 4 3 Working conditions wage rates and mode of payment of wages
- 4 4 Land holding pattern and cultivation details of the sample households
- 4 5 Possession of farm implements consumer durables permanent assets and livestock among the ALHH
- 4 6 Income levels of the ALHH
- 4 7 Expenditure pattern of the ALHH
- 4 8 Extent of poverty among the ALHH
- 4 9 Support to the ALHH through various welfare programmes
- 4 10 Savings and extent of indebtedness of the sample households
- 4 11 Profile characteristics of the ALHH
- 4 12 Level of political participation and trade unionism
- 4 1 General description of the sample households
  - 4 1 1 Religion and caste

The distribution of the respondents based on their caste religion is given in table 4 1 1 The

Table 4 1 1 Religion and caste of the sample households

Religion	Caste	Scheduled caste	Backward caste	Forward caste	Total
					- - -
Hindu		63 (53)	26 (22)	16 (13)	105 (87.5)
Christian		3 (2)	12 (10)	0 (0)	15 (12.5)
					- - -
Total		66 (55)	38 (32)	16 (13)	120 (100)
					- - -

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total)

respondents under study were Hindus (87.5 per cent) and Christians (12.5 per cent) only. Among these 55 per cent belonged to scheduled castes namely Cheramar, Pulaya and Sambava while 32 per cent belonged to Nadar community which is a backward class. Only 13 per cent of the sample households belonged to forward caste being mainly Nairs.

The results reveal that mainly the socially backward sections belonged to the agricultural labour class. The results are in agreement with the findings of Sundaram (1973) and Mishra (1979).

The sex-ratio (proportion of female and male members) among the selected households was 0.983 whereas the corresponding state and national figures are 1.036 and 0.929 respectively (Census report 1991).

#### 4.1.2 Family type and family size

Table 4.1.2 reveal that Majority of the households were of nuclear type (93 per cent) and only six per cent were of extended joint type. One person was found to have no family lived as single.

Table 4 1 2 Basic particulars of the respondents/households

## a Households

Characters	Number	Percentage
1 Family type		
Single	1	1
Joint	9	6
Nuclear	112	93
2 Family size		
< 4	86	72
> 4	34	28
3 Housing condition		
Hut	5	4
Thatched	73	61
Tiled	42	35
4 Ownership		
Owned	118	98
Rented	2	2
5 Electrification		
Electrified	65	54
Not electrified	55	46
b Respondents		
1 Age		
< 36	26	22
36 55	76	63
> 56	18	15
2 Sex		
Male	115	96
Female	5	4

Family size ranged from 1 8 persons with an average of four In 72 per cent of the households the maximum size of family was four while 28 per cent of the households recorded families with more than four members The family type and size didnot have variations with regard to different castes or religions

#### 4 1 3 Housing condition Ownership and Electrification

Major ty of the population (61 per cent) lived in thatched houses Thirty five per cent of the households had pucca houses with tiled roof and four per cent lived in kutcha type huts Only two per cent lived in rented houses whereas the others had own houses Forty six per cent of the houses were not electrified and forty per cent of the houses were provided with electricity (vide table 4 1 2) under the free connection quota which is a recent policy change by the government Most of the houses were recently renovated with the financial assistance through programmes like IRDP from external agencies etc These results highlight the poor conditions that prevailed in these households till recently

#### 4 1 4 Age and sex of the respondents

The age of the respondents put under study ranged from 23 to 72 with an average of 44 years Sixty three per



cent of the labourers was in the age group 36-54 years 22 per cent were youngsters below 35 years of age while 15 per cent was of old age (above 55 years) Male members headed 96 per cent of the households while female headed families were only 4 per cent (vide table 4 1 2)

#### 4 1 5 Education

The educational status of the respondents is given in table 4 1 3 Thirtyone per cent of the respondents were illiterate 45 per cent had schooling upto primary level and 20 per cent upto middle classes Only 4 per cent had completed high school education It was also observed that majority of the illiterates (70 per cent) were in the age group above 55 years

The low literacy level may be attributed to the poor conditions prevailed at those times of their education with respect to the socio economic status Sankar (1985) and Fathima (1993) also reported similar results in their studies

#### 4 2 Employment status

The study was confined to Agricultural labourers and hence the main occupation of all the respondents was

Table 4 1 3 Education levels of the respondents

Religion	Caste	Illiterate	Education level				Total
			Primary School	Middle School	High School	college	
Hindu	FC	7 (6)	5 (4)	3 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	16 (13)
	BC	8 (6)	13 (12)	4 (3)	1 (1)	0 (0)	26 (22)
	SC	13 (15)	27 (23)	15 (13)	2 (1)	0 (0)	53 (53)
Christian	FC	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	BC	3 (2)	7 (6)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	12 (10)
	SC	0 (0)	2 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)
Total		37 (31)	54 (45)	24 (20)	5 (4)	0 (0)	120 (100)

(Figures in brackets denote percentage to total)

agricultural labour. Some of the respondents (32 per cent) resorted to other works also because their main occupation alone couldn't make their both ends meet throughout the year. Eighty per cent of the respondents engaged in head load works, 10 per cent had unskilled labour activities and 14 per cent engaged themselves in household activities and other types of works.

They worked for 220 days per year on an average which included both main and other occupations either as hired or self labour. As hired labour these people could find employment for 187 days only per year on an average.

These results show that enough employment opportunities are not provided for them to fulfill their necessities. The results of the study conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics (Government of Kerala 1988) and that of Puhazhendi (1980) are in agreement with the present results. This economic situation makes them engage in self employment in agriculture by leasing in land. In the study it was observed that 39 per cent of the households had leased in land for agricultural purposes so that they can improve their financial position little.

Table 4 2 1 Extent of employment of the respondents  
(in mandays per year)

Pattern of employment	Number	Percent
Fully employed (more than 300 mandays)	6	5
Moderately underemployed (201-300 man days)	80	67
Severely underemployed (less than 200 man days)	34	28
Total	120	100

The levels of employment and under employment will be more clear from table 4 2 1

Considering 300 mandays as the minimum requirement for full employment (Pandey 1957) it was observed that only 5 per cent of the respondents was fully employed (including self employment also) Sixty seven per cent of the respondents were moderately under employed with employment for 201-300 mandays while 28 per cent were severely under employed with less than 200 mandays of employment per year

This brings out the fact that lack of opportunities of employment still remains a major problem for the agricultural labourers This may be one of the reasons for their low economic status Panicker (1978) Sankar (1985) and Banerjee (1993) had reported similar results in their studies

The employment status of the members of the sample households is given in table 4 2 2 Distribution of households based on number of earning members with respect to social back ground and family size revealed the following results

Table 4 2 2 Distribution of sample households based on number of earning members

Factor	Number of Households				Total
	one	two	three	above	
<b>1 Family type</b>					
Single	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Joint	0 (0)	2 (40)	2 (40)	1 (20)	5 (100)
Nuclear	40 (35)	50 (45)	21 (18)	3 (3)	114 (100)
<b>2 Religion</b>					
Hindu	34 (32)	47 (45)	20 (19)	4 (4)	105 (100)
Christian	7 (47)	5 (33)	3 (20)	0 (0)	15 (100)
<b>3 Caste</b>					
FC	8 (50)	6 (38)	1 (6)	1 (6)	16 (100)
BC	15 (39)	15 (39)	8 (22)	0 (0)	38 (100)
SC	18 (27)	31 (47)	14 (21)	3 (5)	66 (100)
<b>4 Family size</b>					
Small < 4	34 (39)	39 (46)	12 (14)	1 (1)	86 (100)
Large > 4	7 (21)	13 (38)	11 (32)	3 (9)	34 (100)
<b>Total</b>	41 (34)	52 (43)	23 (19)	4 (4)	120 (100)

(Fig in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

Thirty four 43 and 19 per cent of the households had one two and three earning members per household respectively and only four per cent of the households had more than three earning members each

Considering the family type only three per cent of nuclear type of households had more than three earning members and 35 44 and 18 per cents had one two and three earning members each respectively In the case of joint families 40 per cent each of the households had two or three earning members and 20 per cent had more than three earning members No specific pattern was observed on the distribution of households based on number of earning members versus religion caste and family size as seen from the table

The earner dependent ratio will throw more light on the level of employment and unemployment in a family (Table 4 2 3) The average number of earning member per household was two though the average size of family was four The employment level in relation to the annual income of the households revealed that none of the households had average annual income less than Rs 15000 per year ( $I_0$ ) Hence in the discussion here after the income levels are categorised as  $I_1$   $I_2$   $I_3$  and  $I_4$  as given in the table 4 2 3

Table 4 2 3 Economic status of the households

Annual income (Rs )	no of ALHH	Average Family size	Earners per ALHH	Dependency ratio	Percentage of earners to total No
< 15000 (I <sub>0</sub> )	0	0	0	0	0
15001 30 000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	78 (65)	3.7	1.7	0.53	46.8
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	28 (23)	4.4	2.3	0.46	53.6
45001 60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	11 (9)	4.8	2.2	0.55	45.3
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	4.3	2	0.54	46.2
Overall	120 (100)	3.9	1.9	0.52	47.8

(Fig in parantheses denote percentage to total)



Dependency ratio (number of dependents to total number) ranged from 0.46 to 0.55 with an average of 0.52. The percentage of earners to total number ranged from 45.3 to 53.6 with an average of 47.8. In all the income classes except I<sub>2</sub> the dependents outnumbered the earners.

The results showed that among the sample as a whole more people depended on the income generated by lesser people. The average dependency ratio of 0.52 reveals an unhealthy trend of the economic status of the ALHH. This may be due to the lack of the employment opportunities to them. A report published by the Department of Economics and Statistics (Government of Kerala 1988) cited 188 mandays of employment for an agricultural labourer in the late eighties. In the present study the corresponding figure was obtained as 187 for hired labourer. This brings to the conclusion that no improvement in employment generation in agricultural sector has occurred during the last 4-5 years leading to decline in the economic status of the ALHH. However slight variations can occur on the number of days of employment in a year since agriculture is highly dependent on weather. A good agricultural year provides more agricultural employment and vice versa for a bad agricultural year. This was pointed

out by Unni (1988) in his study that there is no specific trend in the annual number of days of employment per worker the relationship seem to be with good or bad agricultural year A significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.4866$ ) was observed between the number of days employed and age of the respondents indicating the inverse relationship between the two

#### 4.3 Working conditions Wage rates and Modes of payment of wages

A labour manday was considered to be eight hours of work with a break of one hour thus working effectively for seven hours All the respondents as agricultural labourers worked either in wet land or dry/garden land and were generally engaged in digging ploughing and levelling preparing coconut basins taking tapioca mounds and opening pits for planting banana As mentioned earlier some had subsidiary occupations also

The wage rates varied for different agricultural operations ranged from Rs 50 to Rs 68 for male labourers with an average of Rs 62 and paise 40 For female labourers wages ranged between Rs 40 and Rs 50 with an average of Rs 47 and paise 20

The minimum wages for agricultural labourers fixed by the Government of Kerala (with effect from 01 04 1992) at present for various agricultural operations are as follows

1 Men labourers for doing ordinary heavy labour like digging preparing basin etc (eight hours) Rs40 and paise 20 per day

2 Female labourers doing light type of works (weeding etc ) for eight hours Rs30 per day for ploughing and for transplanting there are slight variations

The respondents under study were found to receive higher wages than those prescribed by the government Here even a female labourer earned a wage more than that prescribed by the government for a male counterpart The results of this study is on par with the observations made by Panicker (1978) and Baby (1986) Regarding the disparity of wages among the male and female labourers similar results have been pointed out by Venkataraman (1987) and Jose (1988)

These wages have been paid in cash except in the case of coconut climbers who received it both as cash and kind 73 percent of the wages being paid in cash (average Rs

50) and the rest as kind (average value Rs 18) Most of the labourers preferred wages as cash only

High consumption expenditure in the state may be one of the reasons for the prevalence of higher wage rates Another reason that can be cited is the comparatively higher education level of the labourers below the age of 55 and the consequent bargaining strength Similar results have been reported by Baby (1986) and Srivastava (1986)

#### 4 4 Land holding pattern and cultivation details

The frequency distribution of the households based on the size of the holding (land area in cents) with respect to various social classes and family size is given in table 4 4 1

Sixty one per cent of the house holds had own land with an area less than 10 cents Among these some had in fact no land at all (who were yet to get their title deeds from the government) Seventeen per cent of the house holds possessed 10 20 cents six percent had 20 30 cents and seven per cent had holdings of size 30 40 cents Only nine per cent of the sample households owned more than 40 cents of land The above figures are inclusive of both wet and dry/garden lands

Table 4 4 1 Land holding pattern of the Households

Category	Land owned (cents)					Total
	0-10	10 20	20 40	30 - 40	> 40	
<b>1 Family type</b>						
Single	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Joint	4 (66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (17)	1 (17)	6 (100)
Nuclear	68 (61)	21 (18)	7 (6)	7 (6)	10 (9)	113 (100)
<b>2 Religion</b>						
Hindu	66 (63)	18 (17)	6 (6)	8 (7)	7 (7)	105 (100)
Christian	7 (47)	3 (20)	1 (7)	0 (0)	4 (26)	15 (100)
<b>3 Caste</b>						
FC	4 (25)	4 (25)	2 (12.5)	2 (12.5)	4 (25)	16 (100)
BC	17 (46)	10 (26)	3 (8)	1 (2)	7 (18)	38 (100)
SC	52 (80)	7 (10)	2 (3)	5 (7)	0 (0)	66 (100)
<b>4 Family size</b>						
Small < 4	59 (68)	13 (15)	5 (6)	4 (5)	5 (6)	86 (100)
Large > 4	14 (41)	8 (23)	2 (6)	4 (12)	6 (18)	34 (100)
<b>Total</b>	73 (61)	21 (17)	7 (6)	8 (7)	11 (9)	120 (100)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

Considering the caste wise distribution it was observed that 90 per cent of the households belonging to the scheduled castes possessed only less than 20 cents on their own and none among the SC households had holdings above 40 cents. In the case of forward caste households 25 per cent possessed more than 40 cents each and an equal proportion had holdings in the range 20 - 40 cents.

The results obtained indicate that majority of the ALHH had only a little area of land at their disposal. Even if they wish to do farming as business, non possession of holdings will be the most important constraint. The alternative left is to lease in land. The ALHH were interested in leasing in land for cultivation with the two fold objective of income and employment generation for improving their standard of living. It was observed that in majority of the cases the area leased in by the sample households was also small up to 25 cents.

The results obtained in the study with regard to the total area and area under cultivation (land use pattern) of the sample households are given table 4.4.2

Table 4 4 2 Land use pattern of the households

Holding size (cents)	-		-		-	
	No of ALHH	Average size of holding (cents) own leased in	Average size of holding (cents) own leased in	Average size of cultivated area (cents)	Ratio	
0 10	73 (61)	6 6	1 2	2 3	0 35	
10 20	21 (18)	15 0	3 1	15 1	1 06	
20 30	7 (6)	24 3	43 4	64 7	2 66	
30 40	8 (b)	36 1	24 1	57 1	1 58	
> 40	11 (9)	68 2	45 7	109 8	1 61	
Overall	120 (100)	18 71	3 6	21 68	1 35	

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total)

Sixty one per cent of the families that had only less than 10 cents of their own had an average holding size of 6.6 cents and average cultivated area of 2.3 cents. The average holding size ranged from 6.6 to 68.2 cents with an overall average of 16.7 cents while the average size of cultivated area ranged from 2.3 to 109.8 cents with an overall average of 21.7 cents (This included leased in land also). The proportion of cultivated area to total own area was an average 1.35 with the maximum ratio being 2.66 which was estimated from these ALHH who owned 20 - 30 cents of land. Respondents who owned less than 10 cents of land were not found to cultivate usually in leased in land while majority of the ALHH who had more than 20 cents of own land did cultivate in leased in lands also. The proportion of cultivated land showed an increasing trend in tune with the possession of own land. The reason for this may be the insufficiency of area to be utilised for cultivation apart from their utility purposes such as house, cattle shed etc. The ALHH who possessed more than 20 cents of land could keep a portion of their area for cultivation in addition to the leased in lands. Lack of capital was also a reason for not leasing in land among those who owned less area. This category of respondents may not be in a position to advance the money for leasing in.



Table 4 4 3 Cultivation practices among the sample households

Crop	Number of households		Average area under each crop (cents)
	Not cultivated	Cultivated	
Coconut	17 (15)	103 (85)	8 2
Paddy	107 (89)	13 (11)	46 2
Tapioca	76 (63)	44 (37)	15 8
Pepper	117 (97)	3 (3)	3 3
Vegetables	103 (85)	17 (15)	23 2
Banana	53 (44)	67 (56)	10 5
Other crops	108 (90)	12 (10)	33 4

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total of each crop)

As mentioned earlier many of the labourers lease in land for cultivation with a two fold objective to get employment and to derive some income from it. The results obtained are in agreement with the findings of Sankar (1986) Baby (1986) and Jose (1988)

The cultivation practices of the sample house holds are given in table 4.4.3

Most of the sample households were growing coconut palms amounting to 85 percent of the total sample with an average area of 8.2 cents. It was followed by banana (56 percent of the ALHH) with an average area of 10.5 cents and tapioca (37 per cent) with an average area of 15.8 cents. Though paddy was cultivated only by 10 per cent of the sample households the average area under cultivation was found to be 46.2 cents. Ten per cent of the households used on an average 33.4 cents for cultivation of other crops like sweet potato, yams, ginger, amorphophallus, pulses and betel vine. Only in three per cent of the house holds was pepper cultivated.

Majority of the households (91 per cent) possessed an area less than 40 cents each. In this one cannot expect

to grow much crops that can improve their income Paddy and tapioca being their main food items they may not be having marketable surplus to improve their income but the produce of these will help them to maintain their family to a considerable extent

The low status with respect to the possession of land has limited their cultivation of crops which has lead to decrease in income and thereby their economic position Similar results showing that the cultivation practices among the farm labour households is very limited has been obtained by Sankar (1985)

#### 4 5 Possession of farm implements consumer durables permanent assets and Livestock among the ALHH

The results under this are given and discussed under the following sub-heads

- 4 5 1 Possession of farm implements in the ALHH
- 4 5 2 Possession of consumer durables in the ALHH
- 4 5 3 Value of permanent assets in the ALHH
- 4 5 4 Livestock status of the ALHH

The classification of households based on the values of the farm implements consumer durables and permanent assets is given in table 4 5 1

Table 4 5 1 Classification of Households based on value of farm implements consumer durables and permanent assets

Farm implements		Consumer durables		Permanent assets	
Value (Rs )	No of ALHH	Value (Rs )	No of ALHH	Value (Rs )	No of ALHH
Nil	7 (6)		-		--
1 100	13 (10)	< 500	54 (45)	<25000	42 (35)
101 200	32 (21)	501 1000	28 (23)	25001 50000	44 (37)
201 300	31 (27)	1001 1500	17 (14)	50001 75000	17 (14)
301 400	16 (13)	1501-2000	5 (4)	75001 100000	5 (4)
> 401	21 (17)	> 2001	16 (14)	> 100001	12 (10)
Total	120 (100)		120 (100)		120 (100)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total)

#### 4 5 1 Possession of farm implements in the ALHH

The common implements which an agricultural labour needs for his work include the plough spade pick axe sickles baskets sprayers etc The level of possession of these and their values have been considered in this study

Table 4 5 1 reveals that 64 per cent of the ALHH possessed farm implements worth upto Rs 300 among which 10 per cent possessed implements worth less than Rs 100 Thirty per cent of the households had implements worth more than Rs 300 and six per cent of the households didnt seem to possess any implement

Six per cent of the households possessed own plough 95 per cent had spades of which 49 per cent had only one spade each and 41 per cent had two spades each in their possession About 25 per cent of the labourers possessed pick axe but only 14 per cent owned sickle which is essential in harvesting paddy Also only six per cent had own sprayers for spraying plant protection chemicals

Most of the ALHH had to hire implements for work since the level of possession with them was low This might

also have contributed significantly for the low level of cultivation practices among these households

#### 4 5 2 Possession of consumer durables in the ALHH

The consumer durable items commonly seen in the households include radio bicycle furniture iron TV etc The level of possession of these items among the ALHH showed that 45 per cent of the households had consumer durables worth less than Rs 500 and 28 per cent possessed items worth Rs 500 - 999 Only 14 per cent had durable items worth more than Rs 2000 (vide table 4 5 1)

Considering the item wise possession it was observed that 47 per cent of the sample households had radio Bicycle was possessed only by 17 per cent of the households while 92 per cent possessed furniture However more than 4 items of these was observed only in 25 per cent of the households A few ALHH (less than 5 per cent) possessed television sets also

It was observed that the level of possession of consumer durable items by the ALHH was low This might be due to the low income of the households from which they may not afford to buy consumer durables

#### 4 5 3 Value of permanent assets in the ALHH

Permanent assets value was calculated as the sum of the values of land house gold ornaments (if any) and any other item of permanent nature. Distribution of the households based on the value of permanent (table 4 5 1) assets showed that only 10 per cent had permanent assets worth more than Rs 100000 and 72 per cent of the households assets worth less than Rs 50000 only.

Significant and positive correlations were observed between value of permanent assets and land holding owned ( $r = 0.8983$ ) cultivated area ( $r = 0.4629$ ) and family size ( $r = 0.2709$ ).

It can be inferred that land is the main factor which influences the value of the permanent assets and that the possession of items of permanent nature like gold is only meagre among the sample households.

#### 4 5 4 Livestock status of the ALHH

In this study livestock has been classified broadly into two as cattle and poultry. Cattles included milch cow heifers buffalo goats and bullocks used for draught purposes. Poultry included hens and cocks.

Table 4 5 2 Livestock status of the households

Cattle number	No of ALHH	Poultry number	No of ALHH
-			-
0	59 (49)	0	39 (32)
1	50 (42)	1 3	39 (32)
2	10 (8)	4 6	29 (24)
> 3	1 (1)	> 7	13 (12)
		-	
Total	120 (100)		120 (100)
	- - -	---	- - -

(Figures in parantheses lenote percentage to total)



Results obtained in the table 4 5 2 show that 49 per cent of the ALHH didnot possess any cattle while 42 per cent had one cattle each in possession. While 32 per cent of the sample households didnot have poultry an equal percentage possessed 1 3 poultry (hens) each and 36 per cent had more than four poultry of their own.

The livestock status of the households was in no way able to improve their economic status. Their possession was to the minimum only. The reason for the low possession of cattle may be their poor income status as this has become expensive at present.

#### 4 6 Income levels of the ALHH

Income is the main factor that influence the economic status of the ALHH. The frequency distribution of the households based on annual income (in Rs ) is given in table 4 6 1.

Majority of the ALHH (65 per cent) had an annual income below Rs 30000. 23 per cent within the range Rs 30000 - Rs 45000 while only 12 per cent had income more than Rs 45000 per year. Comparing the distribution of households with different social characters and family size

Table 4 6 1 Distribution of Households based on annual income (Rs /year)

Category	No of ALHH		Income range			Total
	15001 30000	30001 45000	45000-60000	> 60000		
<b>1 Family type</b>						
Single	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)	
Joint	3 (50)	2 (33)	0 (0)	1 (17)	6 (100)	
Nuclear	74 (65)	26 (23)	11 (10)	2 (2)	113 (100)	
<b>2 Religion</b>						
Hindu	70 (67)	27 (25)	6 (6)	2 (2)	105 (100)	
Christian	8 (53)	1 (7)	5 (33)	1 (7)	15 (100)	
<b>3 Caste</b>						
FC	10 (63)	4 (25)	1 (6)	1 (6)	16 (100)	
BC	23 (61)	7 (18)	6 (16)	2 (5)	38 (100)	
SC	45 (68)	17 (26)	4 (6)	0 (0)	66 (100)	
<b>4 Family size</b>						
Small < 4	62 (72)	17 (20)	5 (6)	2 (2)	86 (100)	
Large > 4	16 (47)	11 (32)	6 (18)	1 (3)	34 (100)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (65)</b>	<b>28 (23)</b>	<b>11 (9)</b>	<b>3 (3)</b>	<b>120 (100)</b>	

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

Table 4 b 2 Family income and holding size (own) of the sample households

Income (Rs /year	Area (cents)	No of house holds					Total
		0 10	10	20	20	30	
15001 30000	(I <sub>1</sub> )	53 (68)	11 (20)	4 (5)	3 (4)	2 (3)	78 (100)
30001 45000	(I <sub>2</sub> )	13 (68)	2 (7)	2 (7)	3 (11)	2 (7)	28 (100)
45001 60000	(I <sub>3</sub> )	0 (0)	2 (19)	1 (9)	2 (19)	6 (53)	11 (100)
> 60000	(I <sub>4</sub> )	1 (33 3)	1 (33 3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (33 3)	3 (100)
<b>Total</b>		73 (61)	21 (18)	7 (6)	8 (6)	11 (9)	120 (100)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

it was seen that in all the cases except large families majority of the households had annual income less than Rs 30000 while only 47 per cent of the large families belonged to the group  $I_1$

Table 4 6 2 gives a two way classification of the households based on the annual income (Rs ) and total land owned (cents) It was observed that among the 65 per cent that belonged to the group  $I_1$  68 per cent had an area less than 10 cents and an equal percentage in  $I_2$  also had own holdings less than 10 cents only As holding size rose income was seen to increase since 72 per cent in  $I_3$  had an area above 30 cents and 33 per cent in  $I_4$  had above 40 cents A significant and positive correlation was observed between possession of land and income ( $r = 0.4916$ )

The income distribution for the different levels of income based on the various sources is furnished in table 4 6 3

The overall average income for the ALHH was found to be Rs 29887 per year the major share of which was income from wages (68 per cent) This can be seen in all categories of respondents except for  $I_4$  where their major share was from

Table 4 6 3 Income distribution among Households based on sources of income

Income (Rs year)	No of ALHH	Average income (Rs /year) from					Average income per ALHH (Rs /year)	Average annual percapita (Rs /year)
		Agricu lture	Wages	Live- stock	Pension	Others		
15001 30000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	78 (65)	3250 (14)	17810 (77)	1756 (8)	155 (1)	229 (1)	23200 (100)	6283
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	28 (23)	5962 (17)	24338 (68)	4370 (12)	70 (1)	921 (2)	35661 (100)	8117
45000-60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	11 (9)	14480 (28)	27651 (54)	8541 (17)	0 (0)	9 (1)	50681 (100)	10518
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	37563 (51)	26213 (36)	9848 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	73624 (100)	16986
Overall average	120 (100)	5770 (19)	20445 (68)	3190 (11)	117 (1)	365 (1)	29887	8078

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

agriculture The result may be attributed to the reason that those who either possess or lease in land find more employment in these lands and do not work on all days as hired labour In the overall average annual income only a small proportion may be attributed to agriculture and other sources of which agriculture stands first (19 per cent) It was also observed that as the income levels go up the percentage share of wages show a downward movement whereas share of income from agriculture increase The reason for this may be as cited earlier

Average annual per capita income amounted to Rs 8078 among the households with the average of  $I_1$   $I_2$  together being Rs 7200 and average of  $I_3$  and  $I_4$  being Rs 13752 It shows that the per capita income of  $I_3$  and  $I_4$  classes being nearly double that of  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  together The relation between the average annual income and the per capita income indicates that the family size is almost the same among the four income groups It can be concluded that the ALHH on a whole depend largely on wages for their income followed by agriculture

Correlation analysis was done between income and other selected variables Income from agriculture showed



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significant correlation with total area owned ( $r = 0.3764$ ) and value of permanent assets ( $r = 0.4156$ ). Significant and positive correlation was observed between income from wages and age of the respondent ( $r = 0.3075$ ) and family size ( $r = 0.4107$ ). Total income showed significant and positive correlation with family size ( $r = 0.2962$ ), total land holding ( $r = 0.4916$ ) and value of permanent assets ( $r = 0.5271$ ).

To understand the relation between other variables and the total income, linear regression analysis was done using 2 sets of independent variables. The effect of the independent variables, namely number of days of employment ( $x_1$ ), family size ( $x_2$ ) and holding size owned ( $x_3$ ) on total income ( $y$ ) was explained by the equation

$$y = 15465.59 + 9.36x_1 + 1942.09x_2^* + 265.88x_3^{**}$$

which was significant ( $F = 14.471$ ) and found to explain 27.233 per cent of the variation in total income. Among the independent variables, number of days of employment ( $x_1$ ) did not have a significant effect on the total income while the other two variables had significant contribution.

Another equation explaining the effect of incomes from agriculture ( $x_1$ ), wages ( $x_2$ ) and live stock ( $x_3$ ) on total income ( $y$ ) was also estimated as

$$y = 1121.31 + 0.98x_1 + 0.98x_2 + 0.97x_3$$

This regression was highly significant (F = 1679.49) explaining about 97.8 per cent of the variation in total income. All the 3 independent variables had significant contribution on the total income. The second regression equation is the better one to explain the income of agriculture labourers in the present study.

#### Concentration of income

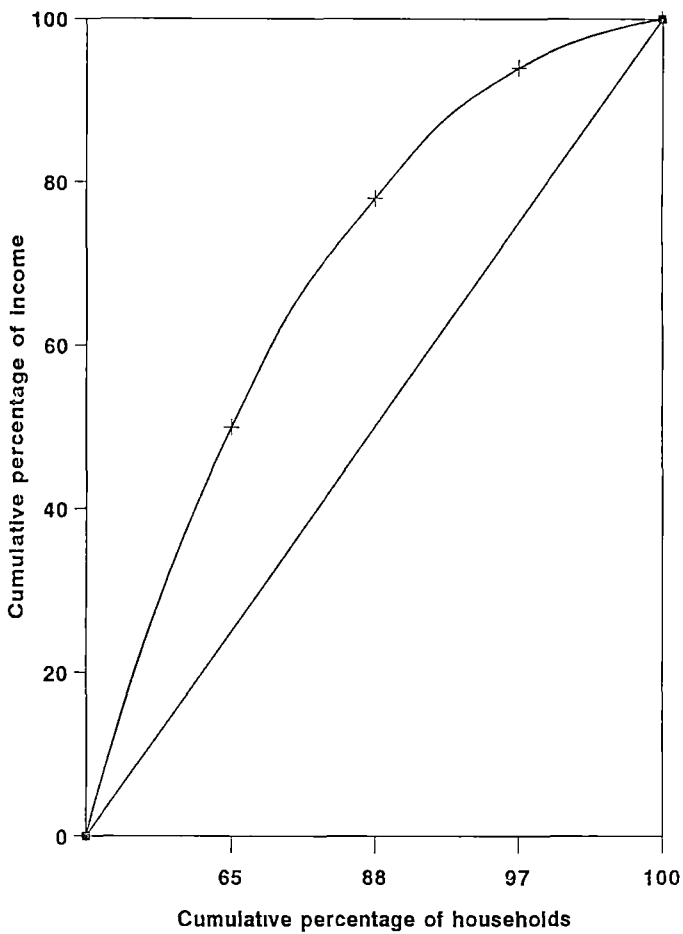
Lorenz curve is an important measure of income inequalities in economics research since it explains the distribution of income. This method was tried in the present study also. The figure 4.6.1 drawn based on the data from the study reveals that the poorer population enjoys a less than proportionate share of total income which is the actual hypothesis on which Lorenz curve is based (Vide table 4.6.4).

The results obtained in the overall analysis of the income levels of the households has stood in tune with the results obtained by many researchers in similar studies such as Sankar (1985), Singh and Hazell (1993) and Samad and Hussain (1993).



Table 4 b 4 Cumulative percentage of Households and annual income

Income level (Rs /year	No of ALHH	Cumulative percentage of ALHH	Income
-			
15001 30000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	78	65	50
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	28	88	78
45001 60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	11	97	94
> 60000	3	100	100
-	-	-	- -



**Fig. 4.6 1. Lorenz curve showing distribution of total income among the ALHH**

Income of labour households often fluctuate sharply from year to year. The present study is based on a short period and hence the conclusions derived from this may not be a true replica of the economic conditions of the agricultural labourers in the long run.

#### 4.7 Expenditure pattern of the ALHH

The results in this section are given and discussed under the following sub heads

4.7.1 Dependence on public distribution system (PDS)

4.7.2 Food expenditure pattern

4.7.3 Non food expenditure pattern

4.7.4 Total expenditure pattern

#### 4.7.1 Dependence of the ALHH on PDS

Eighty nine per cent of the households were depending both on the PDS and the open market to meet their food requirements. Ten per cent of the ALHH were found not to depend on PDS for any item purchase (The main reason for this was the non-possession of the ration cards issued by the government). One household fully depended on PDS for the purchase of cereals, sugar and kerosene which are the items distributed generally through the fair price shops. The PDS

is still an indispensable institution for household purchase. The other food items were purchased from open market by all the households. The percapita distribution of food grains through PDS was inadequate in order to meet the requirements of the households leading to additional purchase from open market. Thus the PDS though provided an important food subsidy to the poor ALHH was not sufficient to fulfil their complete food requirements. Dev et al (1991), Franke (1993) and Suryanarayana (1994) have also reported similar results.

#### 4.7.2 Food expenditure pattern of the ALHH

Table 4.7.1 provides an insight on the expenditure on different food items based on their monthly food expenditure of the ALHH.

Forty eight per cent of the households were found to spend more than a quarter of the total food expenses on cereals like rice and wheat and an equal proportion spent 16.25 per cent of their total food expenditure on the same. Seventy six of the households used to spend less than ten per cent on coconut while 24 per cent spent 11.15 per cent for the same. Less than five per cent of the total food expenses was spent on tubers by 73 per cent of the ALHH while 27 per

Table 4 7 1 Expenditure on different food items by the selected ALHH

Item	No of ALHH						Total ALHH
	Percentage of monthly expenditure						
	0 5	6 10	11 15	16 20	21 25	> 25	
Cereals	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (3)	12 (10)	46 (38)	58 (48)	120 (100)
Coconut	8 (6)	84 (70)	28 (24)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Tubers	88 (73)	32 (27)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Coffee/Tea	119 (99)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Vegetables	78 (65)	42 (35)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Provision	6 (5)	88 (73)	26 (22)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Fish egg milk & meat	2 (2)	4 (3)	12 (10)	38 (32)	44 (37)	20 (16)	120 (100)
Other expenses	4 (3)	28 (23)	12 (10)	20 (16)	26 (23)	30 (25)	120 (100)

(Figures in brackets give percentage to respective class)

cent were found to spent 6-10 per cent. Almost all the households had spent less than five per cent on coffee tea and sugar. Expenses on vegetables was less than five per cent for 65 per cent of the ALHH while it ranged between six to ten per cent for the remaining. Majority of the households (73 per cent) were found to spend 6-10 per cent of their total food expenses on provisions like chilly oils spices coriander grams etc while 22 per cent utilised 11-15 per cent on this. For items like egg fish meat and milk 69 per cent of the ALHH used to spent 16-25 per cent of the total food expenditure while 16 per cent spent more than that. Only three per cent of the ALHH spent less than five per cent of their total expenditure on other items (mainly tea shop expenses) while about 48-49 per cent each of the households spent between 6 to 20 and above 20 per cent for the same. Wide variations among the ALHH was observed with regard to meat and milk products and in other (tea shop) expenses. The study revealed that about 60 per cent of the ALHH spent Rs 1200 to Rs 3600 per annum in tea shops while 17 per cent spent even more than this. The high expenditure in tea shops ultimately lead to a reduction in household purchase of other items.

Table 4 7 2 Ratio of cereals to total food expenditure

Annual income (Rs )	No of ALHH	Expenditure on cereals Rs	Total food expenditure Rs	Percentage
15001 30000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	78 (65)	238572	721883	33
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	28 (23)	118548	416540	28
45001 60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	11 (9)	52656	180744	29
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	18084	52248	35
- - - - -	-	-	-	-

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to group total)

The percentage of income spent on food was also analysed. Only one per cent of the total ALHH spent less than 20 per cent of their total income for food while 27 per cent spent 20-40 per cent. Fifty two per cent of the ALHH spent 40-60 per cent and another 20 per cent spent more than 60 per cent of their total income to meet their food requirements alone.

The analysis of food expenditure on cereals with respect to various income categories was done and revealed the results given in table 4.7.2.

Wide variations were not observed in all income categories with respect to the proportion of expense on cereals to total food expense though the lowest and highest categories did show a little high proportion compared to the other two categories ( $I_1$  and  $I_3$ ).

Correlation analysis was done between total food expenses and other selected variables and the results are given in table 4.7.3.

Significant positive correlations were obtained for total food expenditure with family size, total income, cereal prices, expenses on meat and milk products, other food expenses on meat and milk products, other food expenses etc.



Table 4 7 3 Correlation between total food expenditure and other selected variables

Variable	r value	Variable	r value
Age	0 0444	Total income	0 6098**
Number of days employed	0 1946	Prices of cereals	0 6860**
Family size	0 3339**	Expense on milk & meat products	0 5631**
Income from agriculture	6 4143**	Other expenses	0 4304**
Income from wages	0 5127**		

\*\* Significant 1% level of significance

Food expenditure analysis revealed that most of the expenses on food by the ALHH was on cereals and in tea shop. The reason for the high expenses in tea shop may be attributed to their mode of work. The results obtained in this study is in agreement with the findings of Pandey (1976), Rajendran (1981) and Sankar (1985).

#### 4.7.3 Non-food expenditure pattern of the ALHH

The distribution of the households based on the percentage share of their expenditure on the various items is given in table 4.7.4.

Wide variation was observed for the expenditure on clothes by the households. Forty seven per cent of the households used to spend 11.15 per cent of their total non food expenditure on this item. A normal distribution pattern was observed on the percentage expenditure on clothes by the respondents in the range 0-100. Only less than five per cent of the non food expenditure went for lighting. The medical expenses ranged from 0-10 per cent by 53 per cent and above 10 per cent by the remaining ALHH. Only nine per cent of the ALHH spent more than 20 per cent of the total non food expenses for medicines. While 36 per cent of the households had spent more than 20 per cent of their total non food expenses on education, 34 per cent utilised 6-20 per cent for the same. Sixty two per cent of the ALHH spent 11-20 per

Table 4 / 4 Expenditure pattern on non food items by the selected households

Item	Percentage of expenditure						Total ALHH
	0 5	6 10	11 15	16 20	21 25	> 25	
Clothes	4 (3)	32 (27)	5t (47)	20 (17)	8 (6)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Lighting	116 (97)	3 (2)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Tobacco & liquor	20 (17)	8 (6)	12 (10)	12 (10)	12 (10)	5b (47)	120 (100)
Medical expense	40 (39)	24 (20)	28 (23)	16 (15)	8 (6)	4 (3)	120 (100)
Education	42 (34)	8 (6)	14 (12)	15 (12)	29 (25)	12 (11)	120 (100)
Religious & social functions	1 (1)	19 (16)	36 (30)	38 (32)	11 (9)	15 (12)	120 (100)
Recreation	98 (82)	22 (18)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Travelling	25 (21)	43 (36)	41 (34)	11 (9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
News paper & Magazines	118 (98)	2 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Service charges	117 (98)	3 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Maintenance & repairs	48 (40)	37 (31)	23 (19)	12 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Fuel	28 (23)	78 (63)	16 (14)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)
Other expenses	68 (57)	48 (38)	6 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	120 (100)

(Figures in brackets denote percentage to respective class)

cent of their total non food expenses on religious and social functions Expenses for recreation was less than five per cent of the total for 82 per cent of the households Travelling expenses as percentage of total non food expenditure ranged from 0 to 15 for 91 per cent of the ALHH Expenses for both newspaper and journals and as service charges were less than five per cent for 98 per cent of the households under study Forty per cent of the ALHH had spent only less than five per cent of their total non food expenditure for repairs and maintenance 50 per cent spent 6-15 per cent while ten per cent spent even more for the same purpose Majority (63 per cent) of the households used to spent 6-10 per cent on fuel The percentage expenditure on tobacco and liquor amounted to more than 25 per cent for 47 per cent of the ALHH and less than five only for 17 per cent of the sample Other expenses ranged from zero to ten per cent of the total non food expenditure for most of the households

Correlation of non food expenditure with selected characteristics is presented in table 4 7 5

Significant positive correlations were obtained with variables such as age of the respondent family size total income price of cereals tea shop expenses expense on clothes tobacco and liquor education and medical expenses

Table 4 7 5 Correlation between Non Food Expenditure and selected characteristics

Variable	R Value	Variable	R Value
Age	0 2073*	Teashop expenses	0 2418*
family size	0 3149**†	Total food expense	0 4157**
Income from agriculture	0 1717	Expense on clothes	0 4315**
Income from wages	0 4758**	Expense on tobacco & liquor	0 7749**
Total income	0 3709**	Education expense	0 2425*
Expense on cereals	0 3458**	Medical expenses	0 0798

\* Significant at 5% level of significance

\*\* Significant 1% level of significance

The analysis of the results show that a bigger proportion of their expenditure is on tobacco liquors and other stimulants. If the expenses on these could be reduced they can improve their financial position and there by utilise more money for education of children purchase of clothes and other important items. Results obtained in this study about the non food expenditure pattern of the ALHH is in agreement with those obtained by Rajendran (1980) Varadarajan (1980) and Sankar (1985)

#### 4 7 4 Total expenditure pattern of the ALHH

Total expenditure pattern based on the four income levels  $I_1$ ,  $I_2$ ,  $I_3$  and  $I_4$  is given in table 4 7 6. It is observed that in all categories except  $I_4$  the highest percentage of expenditure was on food. Disparity in  $I_4$  may be due to the low income elasticity of food items. Similar trend was seen in the case of expenditure on non food items also. In  $I_4$  41 per cent of the total amount was spent on agriculture while in  $I_1$  it was only eight per cent. While  $I_1$  category spent 51 per cent of the total expenses on food the corresponding figure for  $I_4$  was only 25. Expenses on livestock and others were low in the case of  $I_1$  category. The overall figures were as follows. Of the total expenditure about 46 per cent was spent on food, 28 per cent on non food items, 12 per cent on agriculture, nine per cent

Table 4 7 6 Expenditure pattern of Households across income levels

Income (Rs/Year)	No of ALHH	Average annual expenditure (Rs)					Total
		food	non food	agriculture	livestock	others	
15001 30000	78 (65)	12078 (51)	7534 (32)	1912 (8)	1348 (6)	502 (2)	23374 (100)
30001 45000	28 (23)	14876 (45)	8983 (27)	3553 (11)	4065 (12)	2232 (7)	33709 (100)
45001 60000	11 (9)	16431 (37)	8466 (19)	8582 (20)	7158 (16)	3643 (8)	44280 (100)
> 60000	3 (3)	17416 (25)	10271 (15)	28150 (41)	9054 (13)	3433 (5)	68324 (100)
Overall	120 (100)	13267 (46)	8026 (28)	3562 (12)	2707 (9)	1267 (5)	28825 (100)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentages to group total)

on livestock and five per cent on other purposes like unforeseen expenses

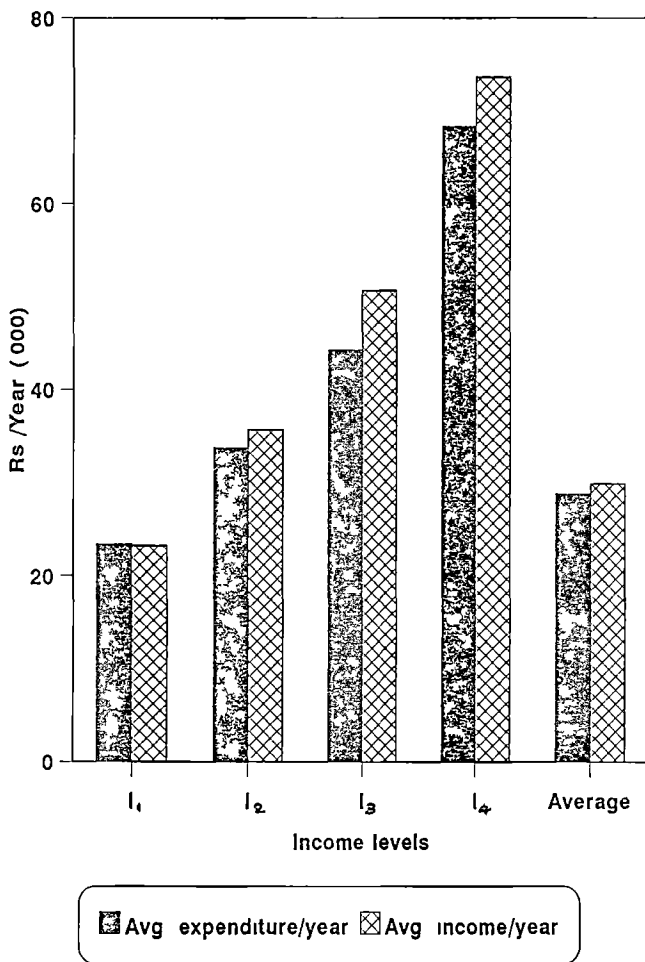
The relationship between income and expenditure for the various income categories is diagrammatically represented in the figure 4 7 1

It is seen that in the group  $I_1$  to which 65 per cent of the households belong the average annual expenditure exceeds average annual income by two per cent. The corresponding figures for  $I_2$ ,  $I_3$  and  $I_4$  were 92, 81 and 92 per cent of the average annual income. The overall result show that the ALHH spend about 98 per cent of the income earned by them in an year. The ratio (expenditure/income) above unity show the over expenses of households in  $I_1$  which may lead them to borrow money from others to meet their demands and thereby lowering their economic status. The high overall ratio of 0.98 reveals the proportionate rise in expense with the income.

The high percentage distribution of amount spent on agriculture by  $I_4$  category of the ALHH may be due to the non adoption of scientific cultivation practices by most of these people which leads to low productivity ultimately leading to to high cost benefit ratio.

Correlation analysis was done to find out the variables that were significantly related to total





**Fig. 4 7.1. Average income and expenditure pattern of the households across income levels**

Table 4 7 7 Correlation between total expenditure and selected variables

Variable	r Value	Variable	r Value
Age	0 0567	Expense on clothes	0 5427**
Family size	0 2264*	Education	0 2234*
Total land holding	0 3722**	Total non food expense	0 4501**
Price of cereals	0 5860**	Expense on agriculture	0 7301**
Total food expense	0 6407**	Expense on live stock	0 5234**

\* Significant at 5% level of significance

\*\* Significant 1% level of significance

expenditure (Table 4 7 7) Significant positive correlation was obtained on total expenses with family size land holding total income price of cereals expense on clothes education expenses on agriculture and expense on livestock

The total annual expenditure (y) was explained in terms of number of days employed ( $x_1$ ) family size ( $x_2$ ) and total income ( $x_3$ ) using the regression equation

$$y = 4882.2 + 4.42x_1^{**} - 459.74x_2^* + 0.83x_3$$

The fitted regression was found to be significant (F = 208.811) explaining 84.37 per cent of the total expenditure (y) by the independent variables. However among the three only the variable  $x_3$  (total income) was found to have a significant influence on Y.

Another linear equation with the following independent variables was estimated to explain the total annual expenditure (y) total food expenses ( $x_1$ ) total non food expenses ( $x_2$ ) expenses on agriculture ( $x_3$ ) and expenses on livestock ( $x_4$ ). The estimated equation was

$$y = -1.176 + 1.01x_1 + 0.99x_2 + 0.99x_3 + 1.00x_4$$

The fitted regression equation had high significance (F = 352401) and was found to be an exact fit ( $R^2 = 0.9999$ )

The results of this study is in agreement with many of the similar studies done earlier. It could be seen that as the income level rises the percentage of it spent for food lowers which shows that the elasticity of demand for the food items is low. When income level rises people will have more percentage of money ready to spent on other items of non consumptive nature. Similar results have also been obtained by Rajendran (1981), Sankar (1985) and Samad and Hussain (1993).

#### 4.8 Extent of poverty among the ALHH

Poverty line drawn based on the planning commission method (Ref. Report of the Expert group planning commission Government of India, 1993) worked out to be Rs 2510 per capita per year for consumption expenditure.

Results of the present study based on this reveal that 18 percent of the ALHH live below it while another 21 percent lie marginally above the poverty line with consumption expenditure ranging between Rs 2511 and Rs 3000 per capita per year. Poverty ratio (percentage of population below the poverty line) in some of the states estimated by the planning commission during 1993 (source Report of the Expert group planning commission Government of India 1993) was as follows:

Orissa	44 7
Kerala	17 0
Punjab	7 2
India	29 7

Results obtained in the present study is almost similar to that of the planning commission with respect to Kerala

In Kerala there is a big gap between income actually earned by the labourers and the potential income due to the high unemployment. Thus poverty among the ALHH arise mainly due to the high unemployment situation rather than the low wages. The conditions of these poor house holds will certainly improve if more employment oppurtunities are provided. Similar results with regard to the poverty among rural labour house holds have also been obtained by Dev (1988) and Banerjee (1993)

#### **Support to the ALHH through the Various Welfare programmes**

The Government has introduced various labour welfare programmes for the upliftment of the socially and economically weaker sections. These programmes include Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) operated

through the block and panchayat level institutions Special Employment programme (SEP) and Special Component plan (SCP) carried out through the local krishibhavans pension schemes like The Kerala Agricultural Workers Welfare Scheme (KAWWS) and Kerala Agricultural Workers Pension Scheme (KAWPS) and Kshemanidhis

The results of the study (table 4 9 1) revealed that 31 percent of the ALHH were not covered by any of the programmes Thirty six percent were IRDP beneficiaries and 17 percent SEP/SCP beneficiaries while the remaining ALHH were covered by other types of programmes The maximum amount per house hold (Rs 6050) was obtained through the kshemanidhis though it covered only two percent of the sample An amount of Rs 5903 per house hold was benefitted through IRDP Only 26 per cent of the ALHH had received financial assistance to the tune of more than Rs 5000 from the welfare schemes while the remaining 44 per cent got only meagre amounts less than that Eighty six per cent of the beneficiary ALHH through these schemes required non repayment while the remaining 14 per cent had to repay the loans obtained

Beneficiary house holds of the IRDP utilised their loan amount mainly for constructing house (Since the loans

Tabel 4 9 1 Beneficiary households by type of the welfare programme

Name of the scheme	NO of benefitted ALHH	Total amount(Rs)	Amount per household (Rs)
IRDP	43 (36)	253850 (85)	5903
SCP/SEP	20 (17)	14745 (5)	737
KAWWS/KAWPS	6 (5)	6060 (2)	1010
Kshemanidhis	2 (2)	12100 (4)	6050
Others	12 (10)	12125 (4)	1010
none	37 (31)	-	
Total/overall	120 (100)	298880	2491

(Figure in parantheses denote percentage to total)

were meant for that purpose) while SCP/SEP were mainly meant for providing basic amenities to the poor house holds along with employment generation. The pension schemes (KAWKS & KAWPS) were not popular among these only 15 per cent of the ALHH were beneficiaries and earned on an average Rs 1010 per year.

It was observed that thirty per cent of the house holds were not covered by any of the schemes and majority of the beneficiaries were in receipt of meagre sums only on an average Rs 2491 per beneficiary house hold. The magnitude of the problems faced by the ALHH is incomparable with the benefits of the welfare schemes and this may be a reason for the low impact of these programmes on the ALHH. Another reason may be attributed to those beneficiaries of the loans who belonged to the non target group. Had the support through the various welfare programmes been utilised properly among the weaker sections one can expect an improvement in their financial position and consequent improvement in their economic status. Similar results were obtained by Dandekar (1986), Paul (1989), Ghosh (1993), Gulab (1993) and Subramanian (1994).



#### 4 10 Savings and level of debt of the sample Households

##### 4 10 1 Savings of the ALHH

The frequency distribution of the labour households based on their levels of savings indicated that 40 percent didnot have any savings. Thirty three percent of the ALHH had current savings more than Rs 2000. 13 per cent between Rs 1000 and Rs 2000 and 14 per cent of the house holds had savings less than Rs 1000.

Table 4 10 1 depicts the savings of the households through various agencies of the houses. Among the households that had savings 33 per cent deposited in inormal agencies like daily chits and it formed only 17 per cent of the total amount saved. The house holds saved maximum through insurance policies followed by co-operative chits. The average amount saved per house hold was found be about Rs 5405.

The highest average investment was also seen in insurance policies and even though only 17 per cent saved through it the amount collected was 46 per cent of the total. One of the reasons for the large number to save through daily chits was its low premium which these people

Table 4 10 1 Savings of the households through different agencies

Agency	No of ALHH	Amount per ALHH(Rs)	Percentage to total amount
Banks/ post office	16 (22)	2844	11
Insurance funds	12 (17)	12358	46
Co-operative chits	8 (11)	5275	19
private chits	12 (17)	1928	7
others	24 (33)	4619	17
No savings	48		
Overall	72 (100)	5405	100

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total ALHH having savings)

could afford Moreover in most of the cases money was collected by agents from the doorsteps of the ALHH

The results obtained show that effective savings is not practiced by most of the house holds and this may be accounted as one reason for their weak financial position The results are in agreement with the findings of Sankar (1985) and Deole (1992)

#### 4 10 2 Indebtedness of the ALHH

A household with high level of income cannot be financially sound if the credit amount outstanding and the amount overdue are equally high In studies related to economic status the credit availed assume equal importance as the income and the expenditure of the household Analysis of the level of indebtedness are depicted through tables 4 10 2 to 4 10 8

Frequency analysis showed that 11 per cent of the house holds always preferred obtaining loans 22 per cent took loans occasionally and 17 per cent were averse to being indebted Fifty per cent of the ALHH availed credit only when necessary On the type of the agency preferred 52 and 12 per cents preferred formal agencies like Banks and

cooperatives respectively while informal sources were preferred by 27 per cent (Friends & Relatives 25 per cent and money lenders 2 per cent) The reasons cited for the preference of above agencies were easiness to obtain loans (59 per cent of the ALHH) and lower interest rate (28 per cent) Most (95 per cent) of the house holds reported that they have problems in obtaining loans due to procedural rigidities (63 per cent) and bureaucratic set up (29 per cent) mainly

The credit sources of the ALHH with regard to the various income levels are presented in table 4 10 2 Thirty three per cent of the ALHH had availed credit either from formal or informal agencies while 18 per cent utilised both the type of agencies Eighty five per cent each of I<sub>1</sub> & I<sub>2</sub> categories 72 per cent of I<sub>3</sub> and 100 per cent of I<sub>4</sub> categories of the ALHH were responsible for clearing debt

Table 4 10 3 furnishes the distribution of house holds based on the sources of credit with regard to the holding size Among the house holds that had credit balances 36 per cent had obtained loans from commercial banks while 18 per cent resorted to co operatives for credit support The distribution of the house holds that depended on informal

Table 4 10 2 Income level and credit sources of ALHH

Annual income per ALHH (Rs)	Total no of ALHH	Agency of credit instit ion insti utional tutional		both	Total no of inleb ted ALHH
15001 30000(I <sub>1</sub> )	78 (65)	21 (32)	32 (48)	13 (20)	66 (85)
30001 45000(I <sub>2</sub> )	28 (23)	14 (58)	5 (21)	5 (21)	24 (85)
45001 60000(I <sub>3</sub> )	11 (9)	3 (38)	3 (38)	2 (24)	8 (72)
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	1 (33)	0 (0)	2 (67)	3 (100)
Total	120 (100)	39 (33)	40 (33)	22 (18)	101 (84)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to respective category total)

Table 4 10 3 Credit support among beneficiary households by type of agency

Holding Size	No of ALHH Agency						Total no of indebted ALHH
	No of ALHH	Banks	Co ope ratives	Money lender	Friends relatives	Others	
0 10	73 (61)	23 (22)	7 (7)	14 (14)	13 (13)	5 (5)	62 (61)
10 20	21 (18)	8 (8)	4 (4)	3 (3)	4 (4)	0 (0)	19 (19)
20 30	7 (6)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	3 (3)	0 (0)	5 (5)
30 40	8 (7)	4 (4)	2 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (7)
> 40	11 (9)	1 (1)	4 (4)	1 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	8 (8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120 (100)</b>	<b>37 (36)</b>	<b>18 (18)</b>	<b>18 (18)</b>	<b>22 (22)</b>	<b>6 (6)</b>	<b>101 (100)</b>

(Fig in parantheses denote percentage to total)

sources (45 per cent) were as follows Money lenders-18 per cent friends & relatives 22 per cent and other sources -6 per cent Seventy nine per cent of ALHH who possessed 0-20 cents of land were the main beneficiaries of credit (86 per cent among them) support Commercial Banks were the main source of credit for all the classes except the ALHH that possessed more than 40 cents each in whose case the main agency was co operative societies

The amount of credit overdue of the ALHH in relation to the size of holding is analysed with table 4 10 4

The average credit amounted to Rs 4420 while the outstanding amount was Rs 3853 Among the five categories of the ALHH based on the holding size percentage of credit overdue on credit outstanding ranged from 0 to 74 with an average of 51 Not much variation was observed in the case of proportion of households indebted to total no of households per class It was seen that the ALHH with holding size of 30-40 had borrowed the largest sum and the amount outstanding and overdue per household was also the highest for this category However in the case of households with less than 10 cents the amount overdue expressed as percentage

Table 4 10 4 Overdues of credit received in relation to the size of the holding

Holding size (cents)	Average amount (Rs )			borr wed	Out standing	Over due	Overdues as percentage of outstanding
	No of ALHH	No of indebted ALHH	Perce ntage				
0 10	73	62	85	3800	3196	1207	38
10 20	21	19	90	3858	3073	1897	62
20 30	7	5	71	1510	1250	0	0
30 40	8	7	88	9346	8970	6634	74
> 40	11	8	73	8000	7958	4425	55
Overall	120	101	84	4420	3853	1978	—



of amount outstanding was only 38. One reason for this might be that these people borrowed only small amounts which they were able to repay. Another observation made during the study was that average amount per loan was larger in the case of loans issued through formal agencies and people approached non formal agencies for smaller loans mainly for consumption purpose. Majority of the ALHH that approached the non institutional agencies belonged to the lower holding size classes only. These agencies are very strict as far as the repayment of the loan is concerned. This will be more clear from the observation that even though 85 per cent of the households with 0.10 cents of land had availed credit the percentage of loan outstanding as overdue was only 38 while in the last class with holding size more than 40 cents only 73 per cent of the ALHH had availed loans but the corresponding percentage is 55. The overdue was found to be high for loans availed from formal institutions. This is in agreement with the findings of Louis (1981).

The level of loan overdues among the ALHH is given in table 4.10.5

It was seen that 35 per cent of the households were prompt in repayment of loans the majority of which fell

Table 4 10 5 Level of loan overdues among the ALHH

Level of overdue (Rs )	No of defaulters	Percentage to total defaulters	Overdues per defa ulter (Rs )	Percentage of total amount
Nil	36	35	0	0
1 500	7	7	437	1 4
501 1000	15	15	953	7 0
1001 1500	6	6	1273	3 8
1501 2000	9	9	1850	8 2
above 2000	28	28	5784	79 6
Total	65	100	3132	100

under the low holding size class Forty three percent of the defaulted ALHH have to their credit more than Rs 2000 each as amount overdue with an average of Rs 5784 Results revealed that 80 per cent of the total overdue amount was to be repaid by 28 per cent of the defaulters only However majority of the respondents who had availed credit in all classes were defaulters and thus on a whole the indebtedness level among the ALHH was high

The average loan overdues at different income levels is given in table 4 10 6

The average overdue per defaulter was found to range between Rs 2151 and Rs 10667 with an overall average of Rs 3136 The major share of the indebted households were from the  $I_1$  category The group  $I_1$  had 60 per cent of the total defaulters who had to pay 50 per cent of the total amount overdue In respect to the other 3 categories based on income levels the percentage of amount overdue to total didnot vary much In the case of  $I_4$  it was observed that eventhough it had only three per cent of the total number of defaulters the percentage of amount overdue was as high as 16 per cent and the average overdue per defaulter was a huge amount of Rs 10667

Table 4 10 b Average loan overdues based on income levels

Annual income (Rs )	No of ind ebted ALHH	No of defaulters	Average overdue per defaulter (Rs )	Percentage to total defaulter	total amount
15001 30000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	66 (55)	39 (32)	2629	60	50
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	24 (20)	17 (14)	2151	26	18
45001 60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	8 (7)	6 (5)	5467	9	16
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	3 (3)	10667	5	16
Total/overall	101 (84)	65 (54)	3136	100	100

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total)

Table 4 10 7 Utilisation pattern of credit received

Income (Rs /year)	No of indebted ALHH	Credit availed per ALHH (Rs )	End use of credit (No of ALHH)	
			Original purpose	Diverted purpose
15001 30000 (I <sub>1</sub> )	66 (54)	3638	46 (45)	20 (20)
30001 45000 (I <sub>2</sub> )	24 (20)	3868	18 (18)	6 (6)
45001 60000 (I <sub>3</sub> )	8 (7)	6312	8 (8)	0 (0)
> 60000 (I <sub>4</sub> )	3 (3)	19667	3 (3)	0 (0)
Overall	101 (84)	4420	75 (74)	26 (26)

(Figures in parantheses denote percentage to total)

The utilisation of credit availed with regard to the various income categories is presented in table 4 10 7

The amount of credit availed per ALHH ranged from Rs 3698 to Rs 19667. About the utilisation pattern 74 per cent reported that they had utilised the credit for the original purpose while 24 per cent had diverted the use of credit. Households that belonged to  $I_1$  &  $I_2$  only had diverted the purposes while all the ALHH that belonged to  $I_3$  &  $I_4$  categories did utilise the credit availed for its original purpose only. The average amount of credit availed per household was found to be Rs 4420. In the category  $I_4$  the average amount availed as credit was very high (Rs 19667). This might be one of the reasons for the large sum in this category remaining as credit overdue (vide table 4 10 6)

Correlation analysis was done to find the degree of relationship of different variables under credit such as total amount availed, total amount outstanding, total amount overdue with other selected variables and the results are given in table 4 10 8

Total amount of credit availed was significantly related to income from agriculture, wages, total food

Table 4 10 8 Correlation (r) between variables of credit and other selected variables

Variables	Total amount availed r value	Amount outstanding r value	Amount overdue r value
Family size	0 1943	0 1630	0 2879**
Total land holding	0 1911	0 2117*	0 2501**
Income from agriculture	0 3452**	0 3681**	0 3989**
Income from wages	0 3156**	0 2338*	0 2339*
Total food expenses	0 3202**	0 2979**	0 4008*
Total non food expenses	0 2433*	0 2045*	0 3057**
Expense on agriculture	0 3466**	0 3719**	0 3862**
Total expense	0 4221**	0 3951**	0 4490**

\* Significant at 5% level of significance

\*\* Significant at 1% level of significance

expense on agriculture and total expenditure  
 Significant and positive correlation was obtained for the  
 amount outstanding with income from agriculture total food  
 expense on agriculture and total expenditure while  
 amount of credit overdue was significantly related to income  
 from agriculture total food expense total non food expense  
 expense on agriculture and total expenditure

Regression estimate was also done on credit amount  
 overdue (Y) with the variables such as number of days of  
 employment (X<sub>1</sub>) family size (X<sub>2</sub>) size of land holding (x<sub>3</sub>)  
 total income (x<sub>4</sub>) total expenditure (x<sub>5</sub>) and total amount  
 borrowed (x<sub>6</sub>) and the equation was obtained as

$$Y = 769.94 + 8.88x_1 + 426.19x_2 + 13.49x_3 + 0.11x_4 + 0.16x_5 + 0.29x_6$$

The regression was significant (F = 17.067) and found to  
 explain 47.54 per cent of the variation in the credit amount  
 overdue. Among the independent variables all except I<sub>3</sub> (size  
 of land holding) had significant influence on Y. However the  
 effect of x<sub>1</sub> (no. of days of employment) and x<sub>4</sub> (total  
 income) on Y was found to be negative.



of the credit showed that majority of the households were indebted irrespective of their income levels. The results obtained from this study is in agreement with the findings of Varma (1980), Sankar (1985) and Debbarayan (1993).

#### 4.11 Profile characteristics of the ALHH

There are a number of characters which individually may have only minor importance but on the whole contribute significantly in assessing the economic position of an individual. A few among such are analysed and discussed below.

##### 4.11.1 Social participation

Sixty two per cent of the respondents were found to be not members of any of the organisations and only one respondent had membership in two social institutions while the rest were members in one institution each.

The mean social participation was found to be 3.3 (table 4.11.1) which was very low. Based on this the ALHH were categorised into two: those having low social participation (<3.3) and those with high participation (> 3.3).

3 3) As such 56 per cent of the respondents had low social participation

#### 4 11 2 Closeness with agricultural support system

The objectives of personnel like Agricultural officer Agricultural assistant field officers of bank Veterinary surgeon etc who work for the development of agriculture and allied activities will be achieved only if the rapport with the people including labourers is good In the study it was seen that Agricultural assistant was the person with whom the labourers had maximum contact that too occasionally only Agricultural officer was contacted by 30 per cent of the respondents occasionally The other personnel were rarely contacted for help or advice

The mean score obtained for closeness with agricultural support system was 4 4 (vide table 4 11 1) Even though the mean score itself was low the distribution of the population into low and high groups showed that 55 per cent of the ALHH belonged to the low group (Score <4 4) of closeness with agricultural support system The overall low score obtained in the study indicates that this might be one of the reasons for the agricultural backwardness and low crop productivity observed in these areas

Total 4 11 1 Distribution of respondents based on their selected profile characteristics (I)

Character	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Social participation	Low < 3 3	67	56
	High > 3 3	53	44
Closeness with agriculture support system	Low < 4 4	66	55
	High > 4 4	44	45
Exposure to mass media	Low < 4 8	51	42
	High > 4 8	69	58

Table 4 11 2 Distribution of the respondents based on their selected profile characteristics (II)

Character	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Cosmopolitaness	Low < 4 6	48	40
	High > 4 6	72	60
Health and Hygiene	Low < 7 6	52	43
	High > 7 6	68	57
Aspirations (future)	Low < 4 1	35	32
	High > 4 1	74	68

#### 4 11 3 Exposure to mass media

The mean score obtained for this as seen from table 4 11 1 was 4 8. Larger proportion 58 per cent belonged to the high level group (score > 4 8) while the remaining households had low exposure only.

Programmes through radio was listened to by 85 per cent of the respondents and some among these had radio sets of their own. Fifty three per cent had high and 34 per cent medium exposure to the newspapers while TV viewing was limited to only 10 per cent of the respondents. Media like farm and other informative magazines was not found to be popular among the ALHH and had only 11 per cent of these as subscribers. The higher level of exposure to mass media might be due to the social awareness of the labourers.

#### 4 11 4 Cosmopolitaness

Cosmopolitaness measures the frequency of the visit of the people belonging to rural households to nearest town or urban centre. From table 4 11 2 it can be seen that the mean score for cosmopolitaness was 4 6. Sixty per cent of the respondents had high level of cosmopolitaness (score  $\geq$  4 6) where as the remaining had low level. Only 66 per cent of

the respondents visited nearby towns at least once a week and 26 per cent had fortnightly visits. About the purpose of visit 89 per cent did it for domestic purposes, eight per cent for entertainments, while only three per cent utilised the visit for matters related to agriculture.

#### 4.11.5 Health and Hygiene

Thirty four per cent of the ALHH had PHC within a distance of one kilometer. All the households had access to either government or private hospitals. However majority (63 per cent) of the households primarily depended on private hospitals for medical treatment.

With respect to other amenities 51 per cent of the ALHH did not have latrine. 41 per cent had ordinary latrines and only eight per cent of the ALHH had latrines with septic tanks.

Wells were the primary source of drinking water for 93 per cent of the households and only 55 had one of their own while others were dependent either on neighbourhood or panchayat well. About five per cent got water from street tap connections while the rest depended on ponds for taking

water The water obtained was pure in the case of 97 per cent of the households

About the disposal of waste none of the ALHH had adopted scientific practices of waste disposal like compost making While 33 per cent of the households used the waste to feed cattle and poultry the rest simply threw out the waste

Considering the above factors the mean score for health and hygiene was worked out to be 7.6 (table 4.11.2) Fifty seven per cent of the households had high level (score  $\geq 7.6$ ) of health & hygiene while the others had low level

It was seen that majority of the households had high level of cosmopolitaness and health and hygiene This may be attributed to the higher literacy rate and social awareness of the labourers

#### 4.11.6 Leisure time

Most (94 per cent) of the respondents reported to have enough leisure time and were willing to work for more number of days than their present level

Regarding the number of days per week they were willing to work 25 per cent were ready to work on all days 53 per cent for six days and only 5 per cent were reluctant to work for more than 4 days a week mainly due to their old age

During the available leisure day 73 per cent took rest 19 per cent engaged themselves in household activities while nine per cent misutilised it for activities like gambling etc

The results revealed that one of the main problems of the agricultural labourers was the under employment situation they have to counter The poverty of these households could be removed to a large extent by providing them with enough job oppurtunities

#### 4 11 7 Aspirations

##### a Future

The future aspirations denote the aspirations of the respondents about their children Sixty five per cent had medium aspirations only while 26 percent had very high aspirations and nine per cent kept away as this was not applicable to them since they had no children About the

occupation preferred for their children seven per cent were satisfied if their children become agricultural labourers and six per cent preferred business for their children. However 77 per cent of the respondents preferred government jobs for their children.

The mean value of the scores obtained for aspirations (future) was 4.1 and it was seen that only 29 per cent of the households had low level of aspirations about their children (score < 4.1). The results show that on an average the aspirations are high. This would naturally be so since no parents would prefer to see their children in a condition as worse as theirs.

b Present

Forty three per cent of the labourers preferred a shift of occupation from farm work to non farm work whereas 57 per cent were satisfied with their present position. The various reasons given by the respondents in preference of the type of work include (percentage of respondents in brackets)

a farm work is preferred

- 1 no specific reasons (18)
- 2 farm work is good (15)



- 3 independence (9)
- 4 no scope for other jobs (15)
- b non farm work is preferred
- 5 better wages and income (15)
- b better standard of living (5)
- 7 high status in the society (2)
- 8 regular income (9)
- 9 less manual labour (9)
- 10 other reasons (3)

From the overall results of the profile characteristics it can be inferred that the labour households have high aspirations and good mass media exposure (awareness) However in the case of social participation and closeness to the agricultural support system majority of the households were in the lower level only The results obtained in the present study is in tune with the findings of Dharmaraja (1982) Nelson (1992) Ashalatha (1993) Fathimabi (1993) and Alex (1993)

#### 4.12 Level of political participation

Many studies have shown that one of the most important reasons for the prevalence of high wages in the

state is the degree of unionisation of the labour force. The people of Kerala are well known for their political awareness and hence the study of levels of political participation assumes much significance in a study like this.

Results of the study show that 52 per cent of the respondents (agricultural labourers) were members of registered political parties / trade unions. Among them 62 per cent were members of the communist parties, 35 per cent of the labourers were members in the congress party and three per cent had membership in other parties. The reasons given for their participation or abstaining from the political movements have been broadly classified into 10 as follows with the percentages of respondents given against them:

a Reasons for joining political parties

1	Beneficial to the individual	16
2	Was forced to join	1
3	Beneficial to the community	21
4	No specific reasons	14

b Reasons for abstaining from political movement

5	Ignorance about them	0
6	Not interested	45
7	Not beneficial for self	11

8	Is a nuisance	12
9	Subscription fee	0
10	Other reasons	- 0

The results of the study indicate that majority of the respondents were members of political movement and a few among them (2 per cent) were office bearers also. The high wage rates and better social conditions of the labourers can be attributed to the high level of political participation among the labourers, is desirable also so long as it acts for their well being and prosperity. The results of the study is in agreement with the findings of Panicker (1978) Baby (1986) Bardhan (1989) Pushpangadan (1992) and Subramanian (1994).



**SUMMARY**

## 5 SUMMARY

Agriculture is the primary sector in our economy contributing for about one third of our gross domestic product and agricultural labour is one of the vital inputs in the agricultural production process. But various studies have shown that even now the levels of living and the socio-economic status of these people are very low. Even though new policies have been introduced over the years the plight of this class still remains the same. The present study aimed at understanding the economic status of the agricultural labourers in Thiruvananthapuram district had the following objectives

- 1 To understand the levels of employment under employment and unemployment of the agricultural labourers of Thiruvananthapuram district
- 2 To study the wage rates and modes of payment of wages of the labourers
- 3 To estimate the income levels of the Agricultural Labour Households

- 4 To assess the expenditure pattern of the ALHH
- 5 To estimate the extent of poverty if any of the ALHH
- 6 To estimate the levels of indebtedness and savings of the sample households
- 7 To assess the support through the various welfare programmes for the selected households
- 8 To understand other details such as Social participation  
Cosmopolitaness Health and Hygeine and Aspiration levels  
of the labour households
- 9 To study the level of political participation of the  
ALHH

The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala state. A three stage random sampling procedure was followed and 4 Krishibhavans (Maranalloor Pallichal Poovar and Vizhinjam) were selected from the Neyyatinkara agricultural sub division. Thirty agricultural labourers were selected from each of the 4 Krishibhavans as respondents thus making a total sample size of 120. Through detailed discussions held with experts and review of literature a set of 15 important variables were selected to be included in the study.

Some of the important variables selected to work out the economic status of the agricultural labourers were basic family particulars like religion caste family type family size housing condition etc level of employment working hours and wage rates land holding size land holding pattern and cultivation practices possession of farm implements and consumer durables livestock status value of permanent assets income levels of the house holds dependence on the PDS expenditure pattern of the house holds extent of credit availed and its utilisation benefits from labour welfare programmes savings of the house holds levels of social participation health and hygiene conditions participation in trade union activities and other details such as exposure to mass media cosmopolitanness aspiration levels etc

Basic family particulars were measured by the scale developed by Venkataramiah (1983) and followed by Fatimabi (1993) Education levels of the respondents was measured by the scale followed by Padmanabhan (1981)

Employment level was measured by the total number of days a person actually worked in the previous year and

wage rates was measured as the earnings both in cash and kind which the worker got as a reward for his/her work

Land holding size was measured separately both as owned and operated holdings in cents. Own holding included the total land owned by the respondent and operated holding was conceptualized as the land in which cultivation was done which included leased in lands also

Land use pattern was measured with the cultivation practices of the households and the average area under each of the major crops

Possession of farm implements was measured both in terms of the number of each implement (which are of common use) the labourer owned and the present value of the farm implements owned by him

Live stock status was measured in terms of the number, value, expenses and income levels from both cattle and poultry to the labour house hold



Possession of consumer durables was measured as the number of each of the commonly seen consumer durable items owned by the sample household and also by the present value of those items

Permanent assets included houses land gold and other items of permanent nature which were owned by the sample household and was measured by their present value

Measurement of income was done for the previous one year across the various sources of income of the ALHH and was measured in Rs per year per household

Expenditure pattern was measured in three heads namely total food expenditure total non food expenditure and total expenditure per year in Rs per household

Poverty among the ALHH was measured using a poverty line constructed based on the consumption expenditure pattern Benefits for the ALHH from various labour welfare programmes was measured along with the total amount received per household and by the type of programme

The level of savings of the households was obtained from the amounts deposited by the ALHH in the various types of agencies. Indebtedness was measured from the data available on the credit amount availed amount outstanding and amount over due.

Social participation was measured by the scoring pattern followed by Alex (1993) with slight modifications. The same procedure with modifications was used to measure the closeness with agricultural support system and the exposure to mass media.

Cosmopolitanness, aspiration levels and health and hygienic conditions were measured by following the scale used by Fathimabi (1993) with slight modifications.

Level of political participation was measured by the type of union in which the respondent had membership (if any) and the reason either for joining or abstaining from the movement.

Data was collected from agricultural labourers with the help of a pre tested and well structured questionnaire.

The process adopted was personal interviews which were conducted in a smooth and cordial manner

The data collected was coded tabulated and analysed with the help of statistical tools viz the frequency and percentage analysis mean standard deviation correlation and linear regression analyses to derive the results

#### Salient findings

- 1 Ninetythree percent of the Agricultural Labour Households were of nuclear type in composition
- 2 Housing condition of the ALHH included thatched houses (61 per cent) huts (4 percent) and only 35 percent had houses of good condition
- 3 About half of the total households were not electrified
- 4 The average family size was 4
- 5 A large proportion of the labourers belonged to the age group 35 55

- 6 In the households female labourers accounted only less than one sixth of the total number of labourers
- 7 More than three fourth of the respondents were either illiterate or had only primary schooling
- 8 As agriculture alone could not provide enough employment opportunities a few had resorted to subsidiary occupations also like head load work and other unskilled Labour activities
- 9 Average days of employment as hired labour was as low as 187 days per year
- 10 About 67 percent of the labourers were moderately under employed with work for 200 300 days only a year
- 11 About one third of the total households had only one earning member each
- 12 The average number of earners and dependancy ratio was found to be 1 9 and 0 53 among the ALHH
- 13 Average wage rate for male labourers was found to be Rs 62 4 per day and for female labourers Rs 47 2 per day
- 14 Female labourers had only less employment opportunities compared to their male counter parts

- 15 Wages were paid in cash only except in the case of coconut climbers where a small portion was given in kind
- 16 The average size of land holding both owned (16 71 cents) and operated (21 68 cents) was low for the ALHH
- 17 A significant proportion of area under cultivation was not owned by the ALHH but leased in from landlords
- 18 Possession of farm implements consumer durables and livestock was found to be low among the ALHH
- 19 Value of the permanent assets including land was worth less than Rs 1 lakh for about 90 percent of the households
- 20 Average annual income per household was Rs 29887 and the per capita income was about Rs 8078
- 21 Total income per household had significant correlation with family size number of days employed and total area under cultivation
- 22 Distribution of income was in association with the Lorenz curve where it showed that in the lower income levels proportionate share of the total ALHH enjoy only less than proportionate share of the total income

- 23 Eighty nine percent of the ALHH were dependent on PDS for partial fulfilment of their food requirements while ten percent depended on open market only Only one household met its requirements of cereals sugar and kerosene fully from the PDS
- 24 Expense on cereals had the highest share (about 32 percent) in the total food expenses for majority of the ALHH
- 25 A large number of households spent a significant amount on tea shops and hotel About 48 percent of the ALHH used to spent more than 20 percent of their TFE in tea shops and hotels
- 26 Expenses on food items formed the major share (about 46 per cent on an average) in the total expenditure
- 27 Total expenditure had direct and significant correlation with total income and family size
- 28 Poverty line drawn based on the planning commission method showed that 18 percent of the households lived below the poverty line while 21 percent were marginally above it

- 29 Thirty one percent of the ALHH were not covered by any of the welfare schemes and even the beneficial households had obtained on an average only a meagre amount of Rs 2491
- 30 ALHH depended equally on formal institutions like commercial banks co operatives and non formal agencies like money lenders friends relatives etc for availing credit
- 31 Eighty four percent of the households under study had availed credit at the time of the study
- 32 Credit availed was significantly related with the size of holding and total income of the household
- 33 Sixty five of the ALHH that had availed credit had amount overdue against them and in many of the cases there was no specific reason for non repayment of loans
- 34 About 28 per cent of the defaulters had on an average Rs 5884 overdue against them and the sum formed about 80 percent of the total amount overdue
- 15 large sums of money on credit was given by institutional agencies like commercial banks and co operatives while

- non institutional agencies like money lenders, friends and relatives advanced small amounts only at high rates of interest and such sums were mainly used to meet consumption requirements
- 36 Credit overdue was significantly and positively related to total land holding total expenses total credit availed and total amount outstanding
- 37 Regression analysis showed that total income and number of days of employment had significant and inverse relation with the credit amount overdue
- 38 No specific trend was observed on the level of indebtedness of the ALHH on the size of holding or different income levels
- 39 About half of the total number of households didnot have any savings
- 40 Majority of the ALHH that had savings invested in informal agencies like private and daily chits
- 41 Social participation levels of majority of the respondents were low



- 42 Scientific cultivation practices were not followed by majority of the households since they had only low level of association with agricultural support system
- 43 Health and hygeinic conditions of majority of the households were satisfactory
- 44 Ninetyfour percent of the respondents were willing to work for more number of days but couldn t get it due to lack of employment oppurtunities
- 45 Of the total respondents 52 percent were members of registered political parties and the level of their political awareness was high while the others abstained from politics due to reasons like lack of interest ignorance etc and some others even considered it as a nuisance

The findings of this study indicate that agricultural labourers are in a comparatively poor condition with low education economic and social status In general the income level of the population was low and expenditure level is high Majority of the households were indebted and about one fifth were living below the poverty line with percapita consumption expenditure less than Rs 2510 per year

Most of the labourers were moderately and some were severely under employed. The land holding size of the agricultural labourers in general was very small. A large proportion of the households were still not covered by any of the welfare programmes and the savings level of majority of the households was very low.

The study confirms many of the bitter findings about these poor people in earlier studies. Adequate steps are to be taken to improve their socio economic conditions without leaving them neglected and their contribution to the field of agriculture should be given due consideration.

Unless we treat households as the primary unit for purposes of rural development and agricultural development it will be difficult to develop labour intensive techniques that alone can guarantee employment. Consolidation of holdings would widen the access of small and marginal land holders to improved technology and thereby lead to an increase in agricultural production. But under the existing conditions achievement of this is difficult.

The current antipoverty programmes though quite significant in terms of absolute outlays are not sufficient to tackle the problems of the ALHH. Implementation of these can be done more effectively by widening the role of non governmental organisations.

It is true that the conditions of the socially and economically weaker section have much improved in the last four decades but a lot is yet to be done. Growth is not possible by just wishing for it. Simple econometrics show that the great sources of growth lie within the country itself waiting to be unshackled.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study can be elaborated along the following lines of research work in future

1. Elaborate studies can be done covering time series data also.
2. Similar studies can be conducted in other districts of the state also.
3. Separate studies can be conducted for different types of agricultural labourers like paddy field workers, coconut climbers, skilled labourers etc.



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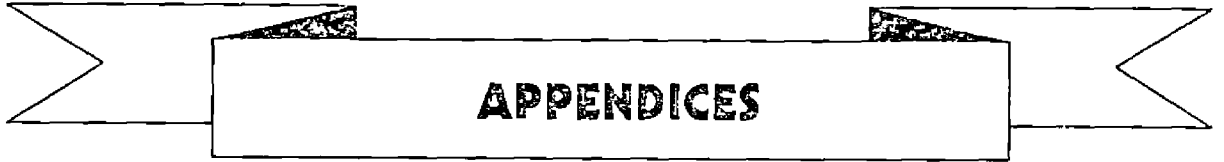
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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix I

### District wise population of agricultural labourers in Kerala

Sl No	District	Total Population	No of agricultural labourers
1	Kasargode	1071508	80000
2	Kannur	2251727	121193
3	Wyanad	672128	74237
4	Kozhikode	2619941	82002
5	Malappuram	3096330	225737
6	Palakkad	2382235	347702
7	Thrissur	2737311	1182266
8	Ernakulam	2817236	134845
9	Idukki	1078066	860630
10	Kottayam	1828271	124876
11	Alappuzha	2001217	143707
12	Pathanamthitta	1188332	86669
13	Kollam	2407566	153047
14	Thiruvananthapuram	2946650	261064
	Total (Kerala)	29098518	2103395

## Appendix II

### List of Krishibhavans in Thiruvananthapuram district (sub division - wise)

#### (A) Attingal Sub division

##### I Chirayinkeezhu block

1	Anchuthengu	5	Kizhuvillam
2	Azhoor	6	Mudakkal
3	Chirayankeezhu	7	Vakkom
4	Kadal kavoor		

##### II Kazhakootam block

1	Andoor Konam	5	Mangalapuram
2	Attipra	6	Pothencode
3	Kadinamkulam	7	Sreekarlam
4	Kazhakootam		

##### III Kilimanoor block

1	Karavaram	5	Navaikulam
2	Kilimanoor	6	Pallickal
3	Madavoor	7	Pazhayakunummel
4	Nagaroor	8	Pulimath

**IV Varkala block**

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1 Chemmaruthy  | 5 Manampoor |
| 2 Cherunniyoor | 6 Atur      |
| 3 Edava        | 7 Vettur    |
| 4 Flakumon     |             |

**(B) Nedumangad Sub division**

**I Nedumangad block**

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1 Anad       | 4 Panavoor |
| 2 Aruvikkara | 5 Vembayam |
| 3 Karakulam  |            |

**II Vamanapuram block**

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 Kallara   | 5 Pangode      |
| 2 Manikkal  | 6 Peringammala |
| 3 Nanniyode | 7 Pullampara   |
| 4 Nellanadu | 8 Vamanapuram  |

**III Vellanad block**

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 Aryanad   | 5 Tholicode    |
| 2 Kattakada | 6 Uzhamalakkal |
| 3 Kuttichal | 7 Vellanad     |
| 4 Poovachal | 8 Vithura      |

**(C) Neyyatinkara Sub division**

**I Athiyannoor block**

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 Athiyannoor   | 5 Thiruvalliam |
| 2 Kanjiramkulam | 6 Venganoor    |

3 Karumkulam

7 Vizhinjam

4 Kottukal

## II Nemom block

1 Balaramapuram

5 Nemom

2 Kalliyoor

6 Pallichal

3 Maranalloor

7 Vilappil

4 Marukil

8 Vilavoorkal

## III Parassala block

1 Chenkal

4 Parassala

2 Karode

5 Poovar

3 Kalathur

6 Thirupuram

## IV Perumkadavila block

1 Amboori

6 Ottasekharamangalam

2 Ariyancode

7 Perumkadavila

3 Kallikkad

8 Perumpazhuthoor

4 Kollayil

9 Vellarada

5 Kunnathukal

## V Thiruvananthapuram Rural

1 Chettivilakom

3 Ulloor

2 Kadakampally

4 Vattiyookavu

[Source Directorate of Agriculture Govt of Kerala (1992)]

### Appendix III

#### Economic status of agricultural labourers interview schedule

Sub Division	Name of Krishibhavan
1 Name and address of the respondent	
2 Religion	Caste
3 Block	Panchayat
4 Primary data of the household	
a Family status	Joint/Nuclear
b Housing condition	Hut/thatched/tiled/concrete
c Nature of ownership	Owned/Rent
d Whether house is electrified	Yes/No

#### 5 Family particulars

Sl No	Name	Relation to the head of family	Age	Sex	Educational Status				
					Nil	Pri mary	Mid dle	High sch ool	Abso lute
					-				---

b Employment details

Number of Member	Employment status		No of days employed	
	Main	Sub	Main	Sub

Type of work			Working hours Per day	Break hours
Agri	Non agri	Others		
hired/self	hired/self	hired/self		

Wages				Total Rs	Remarks
Agri Cash/Kind Rs	Non agri Rs	Others Rs			

Employment Status	(1) Govt Servant	(2) Govt Labour	(3) Private labour	(4) Business	(5) Household activities	(6) Collie
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10 Farm implements and machinery

Item	Number	Value Rs	Income Rs	(if any)
Country Plough				
Spade				
Pickaxe				
Showel				
Sickles				
Mechanised Ploughs				
Baskets				
Sprayers				
ladder				
Tractors				
Others (Specify)				

11 Live stock status

Live Stock	Number	Value	Income	Expense	Remarks
Milch cow					
Work Cattle					
Bufffalo					
Goats					
Pig					
Foultry					
Others (Specify)					

12 Consumer durables

Items	No	Year of Purchase	Price	Mainte nance	Present value Rs
Radio					
Fan					
Bicycle					
Table					
Chairs					
Cots					
Iron					
Others (Specify)					

13 Permanent assets

Type	No /Area	Value Rs	Income Rs	Expense Rs	Net income or value (Rs )
Land					
Houses					
Shops					
Gold					
Others (Specify)					

14 Details of Income

Sources of Income	Total Income (Rs )
Agriculture	
Wages	
Live Stock	
Rents	
Pension	
Others (Specify)	

15 Household expenditure Pattern

(a) Food expenses (monthly average)

Item	Source	Qty Purch ased (Kg )	Rate/Kg	Total expenses Rs
Rice				
Wheat				
Coconut				
Tapioca				
Provisions				
Oils				
Fruits				
Vegetables				
Fish				
Egg				
Meat				
Milk				
kerosene				
Firewood				

Source (1) Fair price shop (2) Open market  
(3) Own field (4) Consumer federation

(b) Other expenses

Items	Consumed Quantity	Rate/Unit	Total expenses	
			Permonth	Per Year
1	Teashops			
2	Cloths			
3	House rent			
4	Lighting			
	Electricity			
	Kerosene			
5	Conventional necessities			
	Coffee			
	Tea			
	Betel chewing			
	Cigarette Beedi			
	Tobacco			
	Snuff			
	Toddy Arrack			
	Gambling			
6	Medical expenses			
	Govt Hospital			
	Pvt Hospital			
7	Education			
	a Books fees etc			
	b Private tution (if any)			
8	Religious/Social functions			
	Festivals			
	Marriages			
	Others			
9	Taxes			
10	Recreation			
	Cinema			
	Drama			
11	Travelling Expenses			
12	News paper			
	Magazines etc			
13	Service charges			
	(Washing servants)			
14	Repairs Maintance etc			
15	Luxuries			
	Ornaments			
	Motor vehicles			
16	Fuel			
17	Others (specify)			

16 Details of Expenditure

Type	Amount (Rs )
Household expenses	
(a) Food expenses	
(b) Other expenses	
Expenses on agriculture	
Expenses on livestock	
Other expenses (Specify)	
Total	

17 Credit availed and its utilisation

(a) Source	Year of borrowing and period	Purpose	Security	Amount (Rs )
1 Formal organisation				
Banks				
Co operat ves				
Others Specify				
2 Informal sources				
Money lenders				
Fr ends				
Re atives				
3 Others (Specify)				

Interest	Utilisation Pattern	Amount repaid	Source of repayment
-			-

- - - - -

Whether repayment is prompt	Amount out standing	Reasons for non repayment (if any)	Amount overdue(Rs )	Remarks

- - - - -

b Periodicity of obtaining loans    Never/ Occasional/ Regular/  
only when needed

c Agency most preferred for credit

- Reasons    1    Fastness to obtain loans  
            2    Lower interest rate  
            3    Better co operation  
            4    Others (specify)

d Problems in obtaining loans    if any    Yes/No

If Yes give reasons

- a    Procedural rigidities  
                                b    Bureaucratic setup  
                                c    Others (Specify)

e Use of availed credit

- 1    Used for the original purpose    Yes/No  
2    Used for other purpose            Yes/No  
3    Mis used                             Yes/No

If answer is Yes for (2) & (3) give reasons

18 Benefits from labour welfare schemes

Name of Scheme	Amount	Purpose	Utilisation Pattern
----------------	--------	---------	---------------------

Amount outstanding Rs	Amount overdue Rs	Remarks
--------------------------	----------------------	---------

19 Savings

No	Type of savings	Institution	Period	Amount	Interest	Total value
-						

20 Social participation

- a Are you a member of  
Panchayat/Co operatives/Farmers forum/Ela Committee
  - b Do you attend the meetings and other programmes  
Regular/Occasional/Never
- Frequency of participation in extension activities

Activity	Attendance		
	Regular	Occasional	Never

- Meetings
- Seminar
- Exhibition
- Demonstration
- Field trips

d Closeness to Agricultural support system

Personnel	Most often	often	Sometimes	Never
Agrl Assistant				
Agrl Officers				
Veterinary Surgeon				
Field Officers (bank)				
Input dealers				
Scientists (K A U)				

21 Information source utilisation

a Source	Regular	Sometimes	Never	Source of Utilisa tion
Newspaper				
Television				
Radio				
Farm Magazines				
Other Magazines				

22 Cosmpoliteness

a Periodicity of visit to the nearest town

Daily/weekly/fortnightly/monthly

b Purpose fo visits

related to agriculture/domestic services/entertainment

23 Other relevent details

a Health & Hygeine

1 Distance to PHC Near/less than one KM/More

2 Access to medical care Yes/No

3 Type of latrine - Own land/backwater/canals/ordinary/  
with septic tanks

4 Source of drinking water - Well/Pipe/Ponds/Canals/  
River

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--

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5 Is the source own to you Yes/No

6 If No Give details

7 Quality of water pure/impure/muddy

8 Waste disposal

(a) Solid Thrown out/made into compost/other methods

(b) Liquid Thrown out/used for irrigation/directed to  
canals ponds

b Leisure

1 Do you get enough leisure time Yes/No

2 If employed, how many days in a week are  
you prepared to work ?

3 Details of leisure time activities

c Aspirations & values

a Level of education you would  
like to give your children

Matric/Graduate/  
Professional

b Occupation you prefer for  
your children

Agri Labour/  
Govt job/  
Business

24 Trade Union activities

a Are you member of any trade union Yes/No

b Name of the organisation

c If Yes give reasons

Beneficial to me

was forced to join

Beneficial to the community

No specific reasons

d If No give reasons

Ignoirance

Not interested

Not beneficial

A nuisance

Subsription fees

Others

e For how many years you have been a member of the  
organisation

2 Which one of you prefer Farm work/Non farmwork

Please give reasons

2b Any other details you would like to give

27 Suggestions (if any)

## ABSTRACT

The study Economic status of agricultural labourers in Thiruvananthapuram district was carried out with the following objectives

- 1 To understand the levels of employment under employment and unemployment of the agricultural labourers of Thiruvananthapuram district
- 2 To study the wages rates and modes of payment of the wages
- 3 To estimate the income levels of the ALHH
- 4 To assess the expenditure pattern of the ALHH
- 5 To estimate the extent of poverty if any
- 6 To estimate the levels of indebtedness and savings
- 7 To assess the support through the various welfare programmes for the selected households
- 8 To understand details such as social participation cosmopolitaness aspiration levels etc
- 9 To study the levels of political participation of the ALHH

The study was conducted in the Neyyatinkara subdivision of the district in 4 randomly selected Krishibhavans. Sample size of the study was 120 and equal number of respondents were selected from each of the 4 Krishibhavans.

Personal interviews were conducted to collect the data from the respondents with the help of a pre tested and well structured questionnaire.

The variables used in the study included basic family particulars, education level of the respondent, level of employment and details of wages, land holding size and land holding pattern, possession of farm implements, consumer durables, livestock status, value of permanent assets, dependence on the PDS, income and expenditure pattern of the households, benefits from welfare programmes, indebtedness and savings levels of the households, social participation and other relevant characteristics which are useful in measuring the economic status of a household.

For measuring the variables suitable scales were used which were used by earlier researchers with

modifications wherever needed and in some cases suitable scales and classes were formed

Data collected was coded tabulated and analysed with suitable statistical tools Some of the important findings of th s study are

- 1 Majority of the house holds were thatched ones and family composition mainly nuclear
- 2 The average family size was four and large proportion of the labourers belonged to the age group 35 55
- 3 About 67 per cent of the labourers were moderately under employed and 23 percent severely underemployed
- 4 Wage rates of both male and female labourers were above the minimum wage rates fixed by the government and was mainly paid in cash only
- 5 Disparity was seen in wages for male and female labourers the latter earning only about 70 per cent of the former per day even though working hours were same for both

- 6 Average annual income per household was about Rs 29887 and percapita income was about Rs 8078
- 7 Eighty nine percent of the ALHH depended wholly or partially on the PDS to fulfill their food requirements
- 8 Cereals had the highest share in food expenses for majority of households and food expenses formed the major share in total expenses
- 9 Expenditure was significantly and directly related with income
- 10 It was observed that 18 percent of the ALHH were below and 21 percent marginally above the poverty line based on consumption expenditure
- 11 Anti-poverty programmes were yet to reach one third of the population and even the benefited households got only a meagre amount per household
- 12 Dependence for credit by the ALHH was equal on both formal and non formal agencies and 84 percent of them had availed credit
- 13 Sixty five percent of the households that availed credit had amounts overdue against them

- 14 Financial base of the households was unstable at all levels of income
- 15 Family size and number of days of employment was inversely and significantly related to credit amount overdue
- 16 About half of the total households had no savings and the others mainly invested in non formal agencies only
- 17 Social participation level was low for most of the ALHH
- 18 Most of the ALHH were highly exposed to mass media had high levels of health and hygiene cosmopolitaness and aspirations
- 19 Majority of the respondents were members of registered political parties and had high political awareness

The results obtained from the study was similar to those obtained in earlier studies with regard to most of the variables. The agricultural labourers were still poor and down trodden and their upliftment needs greater attention than that given now. By proper policy modifications and implementation it can be made sure that their upliftment is not a herculian task.