

WORK, WAGES AND WELLBEING OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN PALGHAT DISTRICT

By

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THESIS


Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of
Master of Science in Agriculture
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Vellanikkara - Trichur

1985

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Work, wages and well-being of agricultural labourers in Palghat district" is a bonafide record of research work done by me during the course of research work and this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award to me of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title of any other University or Society.


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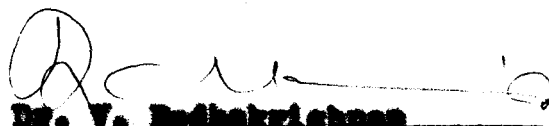
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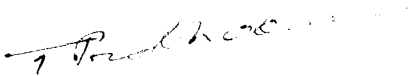
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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
1 INTRODUCTION	1 - 5
2 CONCEPTS AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6 - 21
3 MATERIALS AND METHODS	22 - 25
4 AREA OF STUDY	26 - 35
5 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS	36 - 50
6 EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES	51 - 82
7 INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND LEVELS OF LIVING	83 - 121
8 SUMMARY	122 - 134
REFERENCES	1 - 1v
APPENDIX	
ABSTRACT	

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
3. 1	Classes of sample households according to income and their designation.	23
4. 1	Normal rainfall and rainfall during 1982 in Palghat district.	27
4. 2	Land utilisation in Palghat district.	28
4. 3	Growth of population and agricultural labour force during the period 1971 to 1981.	29
4. 4	Area under important crops.	30
4. 5	Production and productivity of important crops in Palghat district as compared to that of Kerala State for the year 1981-82.	32
5. 1	Distribution of sample agricultural labour households according to income.	36
5. 2	Caste structure of selected agricultural labour households.	38
5. 3	Sex and age distribution of members of the sample labour households.	39
5. 4	Composition of family, average family size, labour force and labour participation in selected agricultural labour households.	41
5. 5	Age, sex and educational status of selected agricultural labour households.	45
5. 6	Details of labour households having a piece of land.	48
5. 7	Distribution of family members of selected agricultural labour households by economic status.	50

LIST OF TABLES (Contd.)

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
6. 1	Distribution of different classes of workers in the sample households.	52
6. 2	Extent of employment (in man days) per labour household per annum.	54
6. 3	Extent of employment in man days per labour household per year (income groupwise) in Alathus Block.	58
6. 4	Extent of employment in man days per household per year (income groupwise) in Chittur Block.	59
6. 5	Monthwise and Blockwise details of employment per selected labour household (in mandays).	61
6. 6	Monthwise details of employment in agriculture per selected labour household.	64
6. 7	Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of total employment in days.	67
6. 8	Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of employment in agriculture.	68
6. 9	Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of non-agricultural employment in days.	69
6.10	Pattern of employment of selected agricultural labour households.	71
6.11	Level of underemployment (income groupwise) per selected agricultural labour households (in man days)	72
6.12	Level of employment and underemployment of selected labour households per man unit in man days.	73

LIST OF TABLES (Contd.)

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
6.13	Level of employment in selected agricultural labour households.	74
6.14	Average wage rates of agricultural labourers (male) and average farm-gate prices of paddy.	78
6.15	Computation of real wages of agricultural labourer (male).	80
6.16	Estimated real wages of agricultural labourers.	82
7. 1	Level, source and distribution of income per annum of selected agricultural labour households.	84
7. 2	Per capita income level of selected agricultural labour households.	87
7. 3	Distribution of agricultural labour households by the level of total income per household.	90
7. 4	Distribution of agricultural labour households by the level of total income per household in Alsthur Block.	91
7. 5	Distribution of agricultural labour households in Chittur Block by the level of total income per household.	92
7. 6	Pattern of per household annual expenditure of selected agricultural labour households.	94
7. 7	Pattern of consumption expenditure per household, per capita and per consumption unit in different income groups of agricultural labour households.	96

LIST OF TABLES (Contd.)

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
7. 8	Annual expenditure per consumption unit on cereals and on total food items in selected agricultural labour households.	99
7. 9	Estimated per household savings among the different income groups of selected agricultural labour households.	101
7.10	Extent of indebtedness (in Rs.) per family and per capita among the different income groups of selected agricultural labour households.	103
7.11	Debt range among selected agricultural labour households.	106
7.12	Purpose of borrowing and the amount of debt incurred by the selected agricultural labour households.	107
7.13	Types of houses possessed by the selected agricultural labour households (income groupwise).	108
7.14	Number of rooms per household and per family member in the selected agricultural labour households.	109
7.15	Distribution of selected agricultural labour households according to accessibility to hospitals and medical care other than hospitals.	111
7.16	Distribution of selected agricultural labour households according to source and accessibility to drinking water.	112
7.17	Average number of man days lost per family in the different income groups of selected agricultural labour households.	113

LIST OF TABLES (Contd.)

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
7.18	Distribution of respondents on the basis of the number of days they are willing to work during a week and leisure time activities.	114
7.19	Distribution of respondents according to their educational aspirations for children.	116
7.20	Distribution of respondents according to occupational aspirations for their children.	118
7.21	Membership of respondents in the trade union organisations.	119
7.22	Distribution of respondents according to their reasoning for joining/not joining trade union organisation.	121

LIST OF FIGURES

- 4.1 Notional Map of Panchayaths and G.P. Blocks in Palghat district.
- 6.1 Wages of agricultural labourers and farmgate prices of paddy.
- 7.1 Lorenz Curve showing distribution of total income among agricultural labour households.
- 7.2 Lorenz Curve showing distribution of total income among agricultural labour households in Alathur Block.
- 7.3 Lorenz Curve showing distribution of total income among agricultural labour households in Chittur Block.
- 7.4 Ratio of cereals to food.
- 7.5 Income and Indebtedness per family.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the fourth decade after the start of economic planning, India remains as she has been for centuries, a rich land with poor people. It is widely agreed that the progress and achievements made by the country both in industry and agriculture are overshadowed by the persistence and aggravation of poverty among the masses in general and rural masses in particular. Agricultural labourers constitute a significant segment of India's rural poor. As far as agricultural labourers are concerned, there has been a steady increase in terms of absolute numbers, that is from 17.26 million in 1901 to 55.39 million in 1981^{*}. Their proportion in the total workers works out to 25.16 per cent in 1981 as compared to 15.59 per cent in 1901. Although numerically strong, agricultural labourers are socially and economically worse off. A significant portion of them belong to scheduled and backward castes. The categories of rural population have remained poor and backward essentially because of lack of productive employment and low wages. Our policy for the economic development

^{*} Government of India, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, Indian Labour Year Book 1982, p. 281.

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pursued in the past placed greater emphasis on mobilising financial resources, building infrastructure for the economy, etc. Huge investments made in irrigation, fertilizers, etc. and introduction of technological innovations have no doubt contributed to increased agricultural growth. But the assumption that increase in agricultural production and higher levels of income would lead to an increase in income all through the agricultural sector has proved wrong. The mass of agricultural labourers have been deprived of an equitable sharing of the benefits of agricultural development. The disparities in the distribution of income have not only persisted over time but are reported to have widened.

Agricultural labourers continue to be one of the economically weakest and socially handicapped sections of the rural poor. Their employment is seasonal in nature and the opportunities for supplementary work are quite meagre resulting in low levels of income. Unemployment and under employment are its chronic attributes. They lack in organisation, political weight and social influence.

The need to focus realistically on the fundamental conditions of the economic and social existence of this section of the society who live close to the margin of

subsistence and to bring about rapid and substantial changes in these conditions can hardly be over emphasized. It is worth recalling that for Gandhiji the welfare of the least was complementary to the welfare of all. The one cannot be secured without the other.

In order to bring about any improvement in their condition, it is necessary to have an intimate understanding of the existing socio-economic conditions of this section of community. The concern about the rural poor is comparatively a recent phenomenon and hence not much is known about them so far. In a large and diverse country as that of ours, the condition of agricultural labourers cannot be uniform throughout all regions. Hence for a proper understanding of the problems of agricultural labourers in specific regions, it is essential to generate information at the appropriate level. This study is an attempt in that direction and it proposes to examine the present socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers in Palghat district.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are:-

1. To understand the levels of employment, under-employment and unemployment of agricultural labourers in Palghat district.

2. To study the wage rates and mode of payment of wages in the locality.
3. To estimate the income of agricultural labour households.
4. To assess the expenditure and level of living.
5. To estimate the savings and indebtedness of labour households.
6. To understand other details such as health and hygiene aspirations and values, unionisation, etc.

Limitations of the study

i) Agricultural labourers are mostly illiterate and they do not keep any record of the extent of income, expenditure or duration of employment. So their response on these aspects and related questions is mainly based on memory. Such data cannot be treated as very accurate. However, maximum effort was taken to cross check and to minimise the error.

ii) Another important limitation was that most of the crops in the study area were adversely affected by drought during the reference period which in turn reflected in the level of employment of agricultural labourers of the selected households.

iii) The sample households are confined only to two blocks of the district.

Plan of the study

This thesis consists of seven chapters including the present one.

Chapter II deals with the important concepts relevant to the study, besides reviewing important past studies on the subject.

In Chapter III the methodology, units of measurement, etc. used in the study are discussed.

Chapter IV deals with the salient features of the study area such as land use pattern, crops grown, irrigation, industries, etc.

In Chapter V the general characteristics of the sample households such as caste, sex, age distribution, educational and economic status, etc. are discussed.

Chapter VI deals with the aspects of employment, underemployment, wage rates, etc.

In Chapter VII, income, expenditure, savings, indebtedness, shelter, health and hygiene, etc. of selected labour households are discussed.

CONCEPTS AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter II

CONCEPTS AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter an attempt is made to clarify the important concepts relevant to the study in the light of major studies undertaken in the past.

Agricultural labour

Desai et al. (1954) in their study on the problems of farm labour in Gujarath defined the term 'Agricultural Labourers' as all those who depend mainly on farm wages for their maintenance irrespective of their other sources of income.

Government of India in the First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Report Vol. II (1955) defined

(i) Agricultural Labourer as a person who reports that he/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 during the previous year and

(ii) Agricultural Labour Family as a family in which either the head of the family or 50 per cent or more of the earners report agricultural labour as their main occupation.

Desai et al. (1957) in their study on **Employment and Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in Western U.P.** included under the term **Agricultural Labourers** all those persons who were employed in the fields for wages in cash or kind for carrying on agricultural operations on temporary or permanent basis and such persons may or may not own any land to be cultivated by them on their own accord. It thus included even those petty tenants and subtenants who possessed only fractional area of land which hardly returned them enough for maintenance and therefore were forced to work as **Agricultural Labourers** in fields of others to supplement their petty earnings from their own land.

Shanmugasunderam (1973) while studying the economic and social implication of high yielding varieties programme in Tamil Nadu observed that 74 per cent of agricultural labour households belonged to harijans.

While studying the implications of the new strategy in agriculture in R.S.Pura Block of Jammu district, **Sadhu (1980)** found that 94 per cent of the selected agricultural labour households belonged to scheduled caste category.

In the present study an **Agricultural Labourer** is defined as a person who reports that he/she was engaged in agricultural operations as hired labourer for wages in

kind or cash, for 50 per cent or more of the total number of days worked by him/her during the preceeding year. It also includes those who possessed a piece of land which hardly returned them enough for maintenance and were therefore forced to work as hired labourer in fields of others. An Agricultural Labour Household, in the present study is defined as a household in which 50 per cent or more of the earners report Agricultural Labour as their main occupation. Main occupation of a person is defined as the occupation in which he/she was engaged for 50 per cent or more of the total number of days worked by him/her during the past twelve months.

Employment

While studying wage paid employment and other concepts in Agriculture, Dantwala (1956) pointed out that employment of Agricultural Labour has three distinct components, wage-paid agricultural employment, self employment - on a small owned or leased land - and non-agricultural employment.

Jose (1978) in his study on Agricultural Labour Force in Kerala observed that the employment figures for Kerala are the lowest among Indian states.

Sadhu (1980) studied the implications of the new strategy in agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir and found that for a substantial period in a year the farm labourers remained without work and this was the most important reason for the appalling poverty of this section of rural society.

According to Dutt (1981) paucity of nonagricultural occupations in village areas was one of the most important reasons for low wages and poor economic conditions of Farm Labourers.

In the present study employment of agricultural labourer is defined as wage paid agricultural employment plus wage paid nonagricultural employment like construction works, digging wells, fencing, thatching of houses, etc.

Full employment, Unemployment, Under-employment

Pandey (1957) in his study on the pattern of Agricultural Labour in Uttar Pradesh defined different levels of employment as follows:-

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.

If a member of the labour force was with job but not at work because of personal reasons such as sickness and was not available for work, he would be considered fully employed.

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 as unemployed.

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, the member was considered under-employed.

Goswami et al. (1970) in a study on the demand for agricultural labour in rural areas of Assam, defined full employment as 300 days of 8 hour man-days. This figure 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.

Krishna (1973) in his study on "Unemployment in India" defined under-employment as follows:-

Logically there are only four major criteria according to which a person can be called under-employed. We may call a person under-employed if

(i) he is gainfully occupied during the year for a number of hours (days) less than some normal or optimal hours (days) defined as full employment hours (days); or

(ii) he earns an income per year less than some desirable minimum; or

(iii) he is willing to do more work than he is doing at present. He may either be actively searching for more work or be available for more work if it is offered on terms to which he is accustomed; or

(iv) he is removable from his present employment in the sense that his contribution to output is less than normal productivity and therefore his removal would not reduce output if the productivity of the remaining workers is normalised with minor changes in technique and or organisation.

Franklin (1981) classified different levels of employment thus;

If a person is employed for more than nine months during the preceding year, he/she may be classified as fully employed. A person who remains unemployed, i.e. without any productive work, during the preceding year may be classified as unemployed. The remaining, all those having been employed from one to nine months may be classified as seasonally unemployed.

In the present study, if a person is employed during the preceding year for 300 days or more, he is considered as fully employed. A person is considered under-employed, if he is employed during the preceding year for a period less than 300 days. A person who remains without any productive work during the preceding year although he was available for gainful work, is considered unemployed.

Labour Force

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

Franklin (1981) in his study on "Concepts of unemployment, methods of measuring unemployment in an under developed country" defined labour force as follows:-

All persons both male and female in the age group between 15 and 59 may be regarded as eligible for employment.

Students, disabled and mentally retarded may be excluded from the labour force.

In the present study, all persons both male and female belonging to the age group 15 - 59 years excluding students, disabled and mentally retarded, are included under labour force. The disabled, mentally retarded, students plus those who do not fall under the age group 15 -59 years constitute the dependants.

Wages of Agricultural Labourers

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 attitude of successive State Governments have improved the bargaining capacity of the workers which enabled them to get maximum advantages.

Dhaliwal et al. (1981) in a study on temporal and spatial variations in wages of agricultural labourers in Punjab observed that there was a notable increase in money wages of agricultural labourers especially after the

introduction of new technologies in Punjab agriculture. However most of the increase in money wages has been neutralised by the fast rising prices of consumer goods leaving only a marginal increase in real wages.

In the present study, wages of agricultural labourers include wage earnings for agricultural employment both in kind and cash.

Income of Agricultural Labour

Malya (1961) defined income of a household as the total income of the family consisting receipts from occupations, dairy enterprises, rent received, interest on loans and remittances received, if any.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (1961) defined the income of a household as the earnings both in cash and kind that accrued to and realised by the members of the household 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 household is a tricky problem particularly in view of the fact that many of these households resort to multiple occupations. The reported duration of employment in each of them and the income derived therefrom are subject

to a wide margin of error. Besides a substantial portion of payment for many of these jobs is made in kind which vary in quality from employer to employer and their conversion in money terms cannot escape investigator bias.

Deb et al. (1976) defined income of Agri. Labour as the income earned by different members of the family from various sources.

Lakshminarayan (1977) in his study on changing conditions of agricultural labour in 3 villages in Punjab, Haryana and Eastern U.P. concluded that the category called pure agricultural labourers is fast disappearing, as income from agricultural labour is only a fraction of the total income of labour households. In view of this, discussions based merely on wage rates of agricultural labour households are meaningless exercises.

In the present study, the income of agricultural labour household is defined as the total income of households comprising agricultural wage income, non-agricultural wage income, self employment income, salaries, remittances, grants, etc. if any.

Agricultural wage income includes income realised as wage earnings for agricultural employment both in kind and

cash and non-agricultural wage income is the income realised as wage earnings for non-agricultural employment both in kind and cash.

Self employment income was the net income realised from crops, live-stock, petty shops, etc.

Levels of living

According to Sankaranarayanan (1963) level of living is not wholly a monetary or even an economic concept. It is so comprehensive as to include the material and non-material consumption of individuals living in a family and also the collective wants of groups and communities. The factors determining levels of living are income of family, its earning strength, social status, individual temperament, reasons for living in a particular place and other considerations.

According to Sharma et al. (1966) who studied the regional variations in the levels of living of Industrial workers, 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 may not be identical with what the individual

or family regards as necessary or desirable. The term 'standard of living' on the other hand relates to the aspirations or expectations of the people i.e. the living conditions which they seek to attain/regain or which they regard as fitting and proper for themselves. The term 'norm of living' represents a combination of goods and services recommended by experts who base their judgements on certain objective criteria.

In the present study, level of living takes into account the composite goods and services actually consumed by the family which may or may not be identical with what they regard as necessary or desirable.

Consumption expenditure

Dantwale (1961) in his study on 'Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry' observed that consumption expenditure exceeded income for all categories of agricultural labour, the deficit varying from Rs. 128/- in the case of casual workers to Rs. 259/- in the case of attached workers.

Shah et al. (1963) in their study on levels of living in rural areas observed that 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.

Chedda (1965) in his study on the pattern of rural - urban consumer expenditure in Andhra Pradesh observed that the demand for foodgrains increased in the rural areas with rising levels of living which suggested that there was no satiety for foodgrains for rural consumers.

Pandey (1976) in his study on pattern of wages, income and consumer expenditure of agricultural labour in India observed that the 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.

In the present study consumption expenditure comprises all expenditure incurred by the household exclusively on domestic account including consumption out of home grown produce, gifts, loans, wages received in kind, etc. The expenditure on household enterprises is excluded from consumption expenditure. Consumption out of home grown produce and wages received in kind are valued at farm harvest prices. Expenditure on purchase, construction, and repairs of houses

are excluded from consumer expenditure schedule since they are considered expenses on capital account, but the expenses towards maintenance of residential buildings are included.

Measurement of Poverty

Planning Commission in its Fourth Five Year Plan Report defined poverty on the basis of per-capita consumer expenditure and declared Rs. 20/- per-capita per month at 1960-61 prices as the minimum desirable consumption standard.

In the Fifth Plan this was revised to Rs. 40/- per month.

In the Sixth Plan poverty line was redefined on the basis of nutritional requirements of 2400 Calories per person per day for rural areas. In money terms it was calculated at Rs. 65/- per month, for rural areas at 1977-78 prices.

In the present study, on the basis of the above expenditure norm, poverty line is fixed at Rs. 110.94 per-capita consumption expenditure per month at 1982-83 prices. If the per-capita consumer expenditure was below this, the person was considered as poor.

Savings

Deesai (1970) in his study on the pattern of income-distribution, savings and expenditure in rural areas defined

savings in aggregate terms as current output minus current expenditure. The definition of current could be any period not exceeding one year.

In the present study current saving is defined as the difference between current disposable income and current consumption expenditure.

Indebtedness

Shah (1960) in an analysis of the trends in the economic conditions of Agricultural Labourers based on the First and Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Reports, found that there was a major increase in borrowings from other sources mainly relatives and money lenders than those from employers during the period 1950-51 to 1956-57.

Dantwala (1961) in a study based on Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry observed that although the quantum of indebtedness of agricultural labour households increased during the period between 1950-51 and 1956-57, the percentage of debts incurred for meeting consumption expenses declined and the percentage of borrowings for production and social expenditure increased which was a clear indication of the improvement in the economic condition of agricultural labour households.

According to Desai (1969) merely helping the workers to secure loans at lower rate of interest will not really help them. The only way out will be to help them exercise control over their expenses. Some one (Social Workers) will have to re-educate them and reformulate their budget.

Varna (1960) in his study on indebtedness among agricultural labour households based on the report of the Rural Labour Enquiry 1974-75 observed that in most of the states the majority of the households were in debt. More than three-fourth of agricultural labour households were in debt in the Union Territory of Pondicherry, States of Kerala, Rajasthan, Haryana and Tamil Nadu.

In the present study, Indebtedness of agricultural labour household is defined as the total amount of borrowing of household in cash and kind as on the date of collection of data.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Chapter III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Choice of Study Area and Sample design

Palghat district comprises of 12 Community Development Blocks vis. Alathur, Attappady, Chittur, Kollengode, Koshalmannam, Mannarghat, Nemmara, Ottapalam, Palghat, Pattambi, Sreekrishnapuram and Trithala. Alathur and Chittur Blocks were selected for the present study purposively. According to census data 1981, Alathur taluk had the highest percentage of agricultural workers (49.96) in the district followed by Chittur taluk (49.18). Alathur and Chittur Blocks comprise of 10 and 6 Panchayaths respectively.

A three stage random sampling was adopted for the study. At the first stage two Panchayaths were selected randomly from each Block. In the second stage one village was selected randomly from each selected Panchayath. In the third stage twenty five agricultural labour households were selected randomly from each of the four selected villages.

The Panchayaths and villages selected for the study were the following:-

Name of Block	Name of Panchayath	Name of village
Alathur	1. Alathur	Alathur
	2. Kannambra	Kannambra II
Chittur	1. Koshinjempara	Valiapallepathy
	2. Nallepilly	Nallepilly

The total of 100 households selected were classified according to the gross income of the family. The different income groups and their designation used in the study are given in the following table.

Table 3.1. Classes of sample households according to income and their designation

Sl. No.	Income	Designation
-1-	-2-	-3-
1	Less than Rs.1000/-	I ₁
2	Rs.1000/- to Rs.2000/-	I ₂
3	Rs.2000/- to Rs.3000/-	I ₃
4	Rs.3000/- to Rs.4000/-	I ₄
5	Rs.4000/- to Rs.5000/-	I ₅
6	Above Rs.5000/-	I ₆

Collection of data

The data were collected through personal interviews using a well structured schedule designed for the purpose

during the months of February, March, April and May 1983.

A copy of the schedule is given in the Appendix.

Period of study

The information was gathered for the period from 1st March 1982 to 28th February 1983.

Units of Measurement

(a) Human labour

In the present study eight hours of work by an adult male was considered as one man-day of labour. For the purpose of standardisation of the work units of different categories of labour 1.5 female days were considered equivalent to one man-day unit.

(b) Adult consumption units

For the purpose of calculating the consumption while studying the nature of family consumption, the family members of the different categories were equated on the basis of the following equivalence which was standardised by Khare (1975).

<u>Male/Female</u>	<u>Age in years</u>	<u>Consumption unit</u>
Male or Female	0 - 6	0.45
Male or Female	6 - 14	0.75
Female	14 and above	0.90
Male	14 and above	1.00

Analysis

The data generated were analysed mainly by the tabular method. Tabular analysis was conducted with the objective of obtaining averages and percentages to aid in data interpretation. The pattern of income distribution among the labour households was studied by making use of the most important measure of income inequalities viz. the Lorenz Curve. The other statistical methods employed in data analysis include computation of correlation and regression coefficients to study the relationship and dependence between variables. The method of least squares was employed where it was required to examine time trends in the data.

AREA OF STUDY

Chapter IV

AREA OF STUDY

Palghat district is situated in the central part of Kerala state. Unlike many other districts in Kerala it does not have any coast line. It is bounded on the east by the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, on the north and north west by Malappuram district and on the south by Erichur district. The district is divided into 5 taluks and 12 C.D. Blocks.

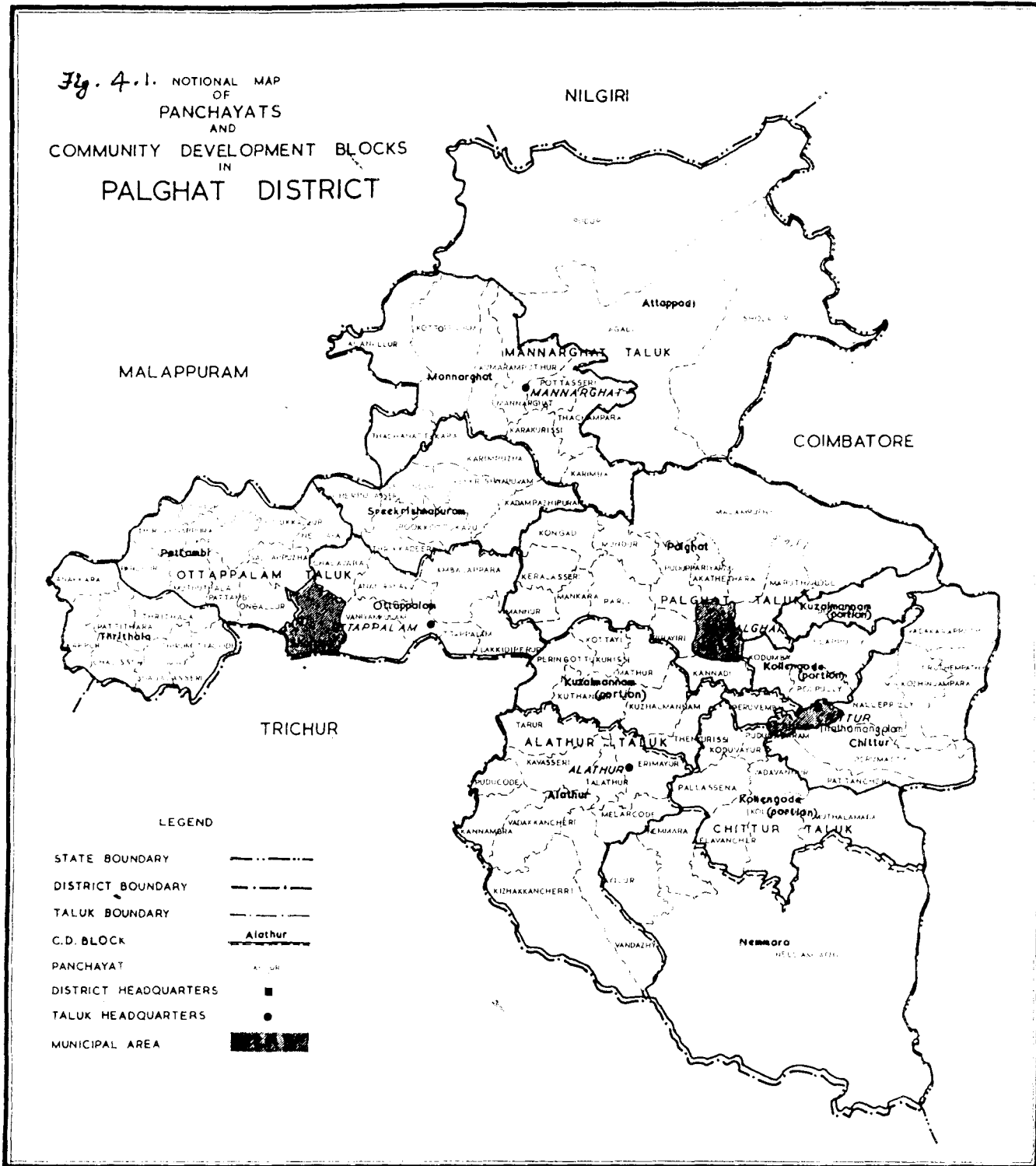
Soils

There are three main types of soil in the district, viz. (a) laterite soils, (b) virgin forest soil and (c) black soil. Laterite soils are found in Ottapalam, Alathur, Palghat and Chittur taluks. Virgin forest soil is found mainly in Mannarghat taluk and in the northern region of Ottapalam taluk. Black soil is confined to the eastern region of Chittur taluk.

Climate and Rain fall

The district is having tropical climate, except in Attapady hill ranges where it is temperate. March to May are the hottest months. Rainfall is moderately good.

Fig. 4.1. NOTIONAL MAP OF PANCHAYATS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS IN PALGHAT DISTRICT



Normal monthly rain fall based on 1901 to 1950 data and the average monthly rain fall during 1982 are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Normal Rain fall and Rain fall during 1982 in Palghat district

Month	Normal Rain fall	Rain fall during 1982
July	649.9	375.6
August	363.0	74.8
September	169.5	7.0
October	257.2	184.5
November	140.9	158.2
December	29.7	0.1
January	9.8	-
February	9.3	-
March	27.0	0.2
April	79.6	45.0
May	158.4	155.1
June	503.4	301.4
Total	2397.7	1301.9

(Source: Farm Information Bureau, Government of Kerala, Farm Guide 1984)

Nearly 70% of the total rain fall is received during the four months of June to September enabling the farmers to grow paddy without irrigation. Rain fall received during the year 1982 was very low (54.3%) compared to normal years.

Land Utilisation Pattern

Land utilisation pattern of the district is furnished in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Land utilisation pattern in Palghat district

Sl. No.	Particulars	Area in ha	Percentage to total
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-
1	Forests	136257	31.04
2	Land put to non-agricultural use	31636	7.22
3	Barren and uncultivable land	13888	3.16
4	Permanent pastures and other grazing lands	341	0.08
5	Miscellaneous tree crops	8144	1.88
6	Cultivable waste	26071	5.94
7	Fallow other than current fallow	3118	0.70
8	Current fallow	6491	1.48
9	Net area sown	212884	48.50
10	Area sown more than once	121371	27.65
11	Gross cropped area (9+10)	334255	76.14
12	Total geographical area (1+2+.....+9)	438980	100.00

(Source: Farm Information Bureau, Government of Kerala, Farm Guide 1984)

Demographic features

The demographic features of the district as revealed

by the 1971 and 1981 census are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Growth of population and agricultural labour force during the period 1971 to 1981

Particulars -1-	1971 -2-	1981 -3-	Percentage increase in 1981 over 1971 -4-
<u>Population</u>			
Males	8,19,571	9,91,854	21.02
Females	8,65,771	10,50,058	21.28
Total	16,85,342	20,41,912	23.35
Sex ratio	1,052	1,058	0.57
<u>Total workers</u>			
Male	4,02,083	4,39,687	9.35
Female	2,02,742	2,24,631	10.80
Total	6,04,825	6,64,318	9.84
<u>Agricultural labourers</u>			
Male	1,41,308	1,39,892	-1.00
Female	1,51,575	1,58,656	4.76
Total	2,92,883	2,98,548	1.93
Percentage of Agri. labourers to total workers	48.42	44.94	-7.19

The total number of agricultural labourers and the number of female agricultural labourers increased during the period of 1971 to 1981 in Palghat district but the number of male agricultural labourers registered a decline during the period. The percentage of agricultural labourers to total workers declined from 48.42 in 1971 to 44.94 in 1981.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the main occupation of people in the district absorbing 59.4 per cent of the working population. Crops raised probably best reflect the intrinsic properties of land, the weather, the land development status and the social and political forces operating in an area.

Area under major crops (1981-82) in the district is given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Area under important crops

Sl. No.	Name of crops	Area	Percentage to total cropped area
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-
1	Paddy	180877	54.11
2	Coconut	22916	6.86
3	Vegetables	7374	2.21
4	Plantation crops (Tea, Coffee, Rubber & Cocoa)	14408	4.31
5	Tapioca	12714	3.80
6	Pulses	10707	3.20
7	Cotton	6777	2.03
8	Groundnut	9918	2.88
9	Cardamom	3407	1.02
10	Sugarcane	2568	0.77
11	Arecanut	2395	0.71
12	Other crops	60494	18.10
	Total cropped area	334255	100.00

(Source: Farm Information Bureau, Government of Kerala, Farm Guide 1984)

It can be seen from Table 4.4 the major crop raised in the district is paddy which occupied 54.11 per cent of the total cropped area. The cropping intensity works out to 157.01 per cent. Details of production and productivity of important crops in the district as compared to the State are given in Table 4.5. From the table it can be seen that 22.42 per cent of the total paddy area in the state is in Palghat district which produces 28.77 per cent of the total production of paddy in the state. Of the total area under sugarcane in the state, 30.64 per cent is in Palghat district producing 35.72 per cent of the total gur produced in the state. Almost the entire groundnut and cotton crops are grown in Palghat district. The productivity of paddy and sugarcane is more than that of the state.

The main subsidiary occupations are dairying, goat rearing, poultry, etc.

Irrigation

The district is endowed with Bharathapuzha the longest river in Kerala and its tributaries, Bhavani and Sirvani rivers. Bharathapuzha benefits the mid land region and the other two rivers benefit the high land region of Attappadi. There are seven irrigation projects in the district viz.

Table 4.5. Production and productivity of important crops in Palghat district as compared to that of Kerala State for the year 1981-82

Sl. No.	Name of crop	Area (ha)		Production (tonnes)		Production per ha (tonnes)	
		Palghat	Kerala	Palghat	Kerala	Palghat	Kerala
1	Paddy	180877 (22.42)	806871 (100.00)	385389 (28.77)	1339395 (100.00)	2130 (127.85)	1666 (100.00)
2	Coconut	22915 (3.44)	666618 (100.00)	77* (2.56)	3006* (100.00)	3360 nuts (71.51)	4509 nuts (100.00)
3	Vegetables	7374 (2.34)	315675 (100.00)	NA	NA	NA	NA
4	Plantation crops (Tea, Coffee, rubber, cocoa)	14408 (4.06)	354724 (100.00)	6665 (3.04)	218577 (100.00)	462 (75.00)	616 (100.00)
5	Tapioca	12714 (5.13)	248069 (100.00)	191346 (5.11)	3745142 (100.00)	15050 (99.69)	15097 (100.00)
6	Pulses	10707 (9.97)	33910 (100.00)	6606 (29.64)	22286 (100.00)	616 (93.76)	657 (100.00)
7	Groundnut	9518 (99.98)	9707 (100.00)	8493 (99.80)	8572 (100.00)	863 (100.00)	883 (100.00)
8	Cotton	6777 (100.00)	6777 (100.00)	10724** (100.00)	10724** (100.00)	1.58** (100.00)	1.58** (100.00)
9	Cardamom	3407 (6.25)	54516 (100.00)	171 (2.24)	28000 (100.00)	50 (kg) (98.04)	51 (kg) (100.00)
10	Sugarcane	2568 (30.64)	8381 (100.00)	17771 (gur) (35.72)	49749 (gur) (100.00)	6920 (gur) (116.60)	5935 (gur) (100.00)
11	Areca nut	2395 (3.94)	61251 (100.00)	344* (32.09)	1072* (100.00)	143632 (nuts) (82.21)	174723 (nuts) (100.00)

* : Million nuts

** : Bales of 170 kg

NA : Data not available

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total of the State)

1. Malampuzha project
2. Walayar project
3. Mangalam project
4. Gayathri project
5. Potkundry project
6. Chitturpuzha project and
7. Kanjirapuzha project.

Industries

In any area, employment and income opportunities available outside the sphere of agriculture are directly related with the level of industrial development and infrastructure.

The district is very backward in industrial development. There are eleven large and medium scale industries in the district.

There are altogether 260 small scale industrial units in the district having a total investment of Rs. 227.21 lakhs, employing 3342 persons. These units are manufacturing furniture, engineering goods, safety matches, etc.

Handloom weaving is the most important cottage industry in the district. This is being carried on under both co-operative and private sectors. There are altogether 29 Weavers Co-operative Societies in the district.

Tertiary sector

According to the 1971 census 16735 persons are employed in transport, storage and communication.

The total number of motor vehicles on road as on 1980 is 11653, the details of which are given below.

1. Auto Rickshaws	165
2. Cars	2883
3. Taxi cars	887
4. Stage carriages	401
5. Motor cycles	4015
6. Goods vehicles	1065
7. Tractor Trailers	277
8. Other vehicles	1670
Total	<u>11653</u>

(Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala)

The total length of P.W.D. road as on 1-4-1981 is 1295 km and the length of railway line in the district as on 1978-79 is 139.21 km. There are 432 post offices and 760 fair price shops in the district.

The total number of commercial banking offices functioning in the district as on 31-12-1980 is 188.

The per capita income at 1979-80 prices was
Rs. 1130.2.

In short the district is having a total population of 20.4 lakhs. Agriculture is the main occupation absorbing 59.4 per cent of the working population. Paddy is the major crop raised covering 54 per cent of the total cropped area. The productivity of paddy is greater than that for the state. The cropping intensity works out to 157.01 per cent. The district is very backward in industrial development.

**GENERAL CHARECTERISTICS OF
THE SAMPLE AGRICULTURAL
LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS**

Chapter V

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE
AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS

Knowledge on the socio-economic conditions like the population, its structure, educational status, occupation, income, etc. is of great value in the context of development. In the following pages an attempt is made to examine the general socio-economic conditions of the sample agricultural labour households.

As stated earlier, sample households were classified into six categories on the basis of gross income of households. The distribution of sample households according to income is given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Distribution of sample agricultural labour households according to income

Sl. No. <small>-1-</small>	Income groups (in Rupees) <small>-2-</small>	Number of households <small>-3-</small>	Percentage to total number <small>-4-</small>
1	Less than Rs. 1000/-	9	9
2	Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 2000/-	29	29
3	Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 3000/-	35	35
4	Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4000/-	20	20
5	Rs. 4000/- to Rs. 5000/-	6	6
6	Above Rs. 5000/-	1	1
	Total	100	100

Nine per cent of the total sample households was in the lowest income group i.e. less than Rs. 1000/- and one per cent belonged to the highest income group i.e. above Rs. 5000/-. The income of 75 per cent of the households ranged from less than Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 3000/-. From the Table it can be inferred that all the households belonged to very low income group.

Caste

The caste structure of selected agricultural labour households is given in Table 5.2. Seventy three per cent of the sample households belonged to Eshava, which is considered as a backward community; 23 per cent belonged to Scheduled Castes and 4 per cent belonged to Muslims. This is a peculiar phenomenon of this area as in other states it has been found that majority of agricultural labourers belonged to scheduled castes. In Tamil Nadu for example, Dr. V. Shanmugasundaram's study found that about 74 per cent of agricultural labour households belonged to Harijans. Similarly Sedhu studied 50 agricultural labour households in R.S. Para Block of Jammu district and found that 94 per cent of the selected farm labour households belonged to scheduled caste category.

Table 5.2. Caste structure of selected agricultural labour households

Income group	Hindu			Total	Chris- tian	Muslim	Grand total
	Higher castes	Eshava	S.C.				
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-
I ₁	-	9 (100)	-	9 (100)	-	-	9 (100)
I ₂	-	16 (55.17)	12 (41.38)	28 (96.55)	-	1 (3.45)	29 (100)
I ₃	-	27 (77.14)	6 (17.15)	33 (94.29)	-	2 (5.71)	35 (100)
I ₄	-	17 (85)	2 (10)	19 (95)	-	1 (5)	20 (100)
I ₅	-	3 (50)	3 (50)	6 (100)	-	-	6 (100)
I ₆	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Total	-	73 (73)	23 (23)	96 (96)	-	4 (4)	100 (100)

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total of respective rows)

It is also worth noting that only those belonging to the Eshava community were found in the lowest income class.

Sex and age distribution of sample households

Sex and age distribution of members of the sample labour households classified according to income groups are given in Table 5.3. The total number of members in the respondent households was 500 of which 50.2 per cent was males and

49.8 per cent females. The sex ratio works out to 992 which is quite contrary to pattern for the district as well as for the State.

The highest percentage of males (12.6) was in the age group 6 to 15 years. The highest percentage of females (11.4) was in the age group 16 to 25 years. The percentage of males and females was lowest in the age group 46 to 59.

Among the income groups the highest percentage of males was in the highest income group I_5 (55.81) and the lowest in the lowest income group I_1 (41.94).

The opposite was the case for females. The highest percentage of females (58.06) was in the income group I_1 and the lowest (44.19) was in the income group I_5 . The data reveal that the income of households shows a tendency to increase with the decline in percentage of females but for minor deviations in some groups

Composition of families

If one considers those up to 15 years of age as children and those in other age groups as adults, the sample as a whole had 66.4 per cent adult members and 33.6 per cent children as detailed in Table 5.4. Percentage of children was highest (38.71) in the income group I_1 and lowest (26.85)

in I_4 . The percentage of female children was lower than that for male children in all the income groups except in the income groups I_1 (where it was the same for both) and I_5 .

Among the income groups, percentage of adult members was highest (72.09) in group I_5 followed by I_4 , I_6 , I_3 , I_2 and I_1 . The highest percentage of children was in the income group I_1 (38.71) followed by I_2 , I_3 , I_6 , I_5 and I_4 .

The average family size for the sample as a whole was 5. Among the income groups family size was above average in I_6 (9), I_5 (7.17), I_3 (5.43) and I_4 (5.4) while it was lower than the average in income groups I_1 (3.44) and I_2 (4.10). The data show that as the size of family increases income of households also increases. This leads to the conclusion that they have no incentive to limit the family size because as the size of family increases working labour force per family also increases which results in an increased earning power. Children also contribute to the earning power of the family directly or indirectly.

Labour Force

Out of the total population of 500, 55.2 per cent constituted the potential labour force belonging to the active working age groups of 16 to 59 years which comprised 26.6 per cent of males and 28.6 per cent of females. Among

the income groups the highest percentage of potential labour force was in the income group I_5 (60.47). Potential labour force of male members varied from 19.35 per cent in income group I_1 to 33.33 per cent in I_6 and that for females ranged from 22.22 per cent in group I_6 to 32.26 per cent in group I_1 .

On an average for the sample as a whole, the working labour force which constituted the actual earners was 49.4 per cent of the total population comprising 21.6 per cent males and 27.8 per cent females. The percentage of males in the working labour force ranged from 9.68 in the income group I_1 to 33.33 in group I_6 . The percentage of females in the working labour force varied from 20.93 in group I_5 to 31.48 in I_4 .

For the sample as a whole potential labour force was 55.2 per cent but the working labour force was 49.4 per cent which showed that about 10.5 per cent of the total labour force did not find employment either for lack of employment or for their own lethargy and indifference. Labour force participation ratio (working labour force expressed as percentage of pot. labour force) for the sample as a whole was 89.49. The same ranged from 50 in group I_1 to 100 in group I_6 for males and 90 in I_1 and in I_5 to 100 in I_4 and

I₆ for females. It was also seen that, both labour force ratio (potential labour force expressed as percentage of total population) and labour force participation ratio were higher in the case of females in most of the income groups

Educational status

Table 5.5 provides information about the educational status of population of selected agricultural labour households. Out of the population of 500 members in the sample families 52 members belonged to the age group of 0 to 5 years. This group was not considered in the analysis of educational status of labour households as the children have not attained the school going age. Of the balance 448 members, 47.99 per cent was illiterate and 52.01 per cent literate. The percentage of literacy for the sample as a whole was below that for the district (55.88) and for the State (70.42) but was higher than that for the country as a whole (36.03) according to 1981 census. Out of the total population of 223 males in the sample households 35.43 per cent was illiterate and 64.57 per cent was literate. Out of the total population of 225 females only 39.56 per cent was literate. Thus while a substantial proportion of men was literate, a substantial proportion of women was illiterate.

A further analysis showed that women lagged behind men at all levels of education. While the percentage of males who received primary and middle school education was 24.21 and 20.18 respectively, the corresponding figures for females were only 19.12 and 13.78. The percentage of males who received high school and higher education was 19.28 and 0.9 respectively. The corresponding figures for females were only 6.22 and 0.44.

On the basis of discussions with the respondents, the reasons for the low level of education of female workers compared to male workers were stated to be mainly the following:-

1) Given the meagre resources, it is generally the sons who are given preferential treatment for getting education.

2) A section of the rural society especially that comprising the older members still considers imparting education to girls is not very essential.

3) The girls are being asked to perform household duties and to look after the younger children while the older members of the family go out for work.

With regard to the different age groups, it could be observed from the data that the percentage of literacy

kept on increasing with the younger age groups, the highest percentage of literacy (92.24) being among the age group of 6 - 15 years. The lowest level of literacy (3.57 per cent) was found in the highest age group of 60 years and above. While this is a clear indication that education has taken roots in this section of population, one disturbing fact noticed was that even in the age group of 6 - 15 years, 13.21 per cent of girls and 3.17 per cent of boys did not receive any education although education was provided free of cost. The reason attributed to for this by the respondents was that their meagre resources were hardly sufficient to provide books and dresses to the school going children.

In short the literacy level for the sample as a whole was below that of the district as well as the state. It was found that the younger age group of 6 to 15 years had the highest percentage of literacy. However, females lagged behind males at all levels of education.

Ownership of land

Details of land owned by the sample labour households are given in Table 5.6.

Out of the total of 100 sample households 99 households possessed a piece of land each and only one household

Table 5.6. Details of Labour Households having a piece of land

Sl. No.	Income groups	Total No. of H.H.	No. of H.H. having land	No. of H.H. having no land	From whom land was received			Total H.H. with land	Average area of land per H.H. (in cents)
					Land reforms	Purchase	Ancestral		
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-
1	I ₁	9	9	-	-	2 (22.22)	7 (77.76)	9 (100)	8.39
2	I ₂	29	29	-	9 (31.03)	3 (10.34)	17 (58.62)	29 (100)	11.69
3	I ₃	35	34	1	8 (25.53)	5 (14.71)	21 (61.74)	34 (100)	9.49
4	I ₄	20	20	-	6 (30)	3 (15)	11 (55)	20 (100)	8.45
5	I ₅	6	6	-	1 (16.67)	-	5 (83.33)	6 (100)	11.50
6	I ₆	1	1	-	1 (100)	-	-	1 (100)	3.00

H.H : Households

(Figures in parentheses denote percentage to total H.H. having land)

did not possess any land. Majority of the households (61.62 per cent) received land as ancestral property and 13.13 per cent of the households purchased it. Only the remaining 25.25 per cent of the households received land as a result of land reform measures.

The average area of land held per household for the sample as a whole was 9.88 cents.

Economic status of family members

Table 5.7 shows the distribution of family members by their economic status.

The data in the above Table show proportion of earners in different income groups ranged from 38.71 in I_1 to 57.41 in I_4 . On an average the percentage of earners and dependants in the total population worked out to 49.4 and 50.6 respectively for the sample as a whole. Earners per household varied from 1.33 in the income group I_1 to 5 in income group I_6 , the average number of earners per household for the sample as a whole being 2.47. Dependency ratio was highest in the lowest income group (1.58) and the same was lowest in the income group I_4 (0.74). Percentage of earners was highest in income group I_4 (57.41) and lowest in income group I_1 (38.71).

Table 5.7. Distribution of family members of selected agricultural labour households by Economic Status

Sl. No.	Income groups	No. of households	Number of earners			Number of dependants	Total members	Farmer per household	Dependancy ratio	Percentage of earners to total members
			Male	Female	Male + Female					
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-	-11-
1	I ₁	9	3	9	12	19	31	1.33	1.58	38.71
2	I ₂	29	22	31	53	66	119	1.83	1.25	44.54
3	I ₃	35	41	54	95	95	190	2.71	1.00	50
4	I ₄	20	28	34	62	46	108	3.1	0.74	57.41
5	I ₅	6	11	9	20	23	43	3.33	1.15	46.51
6	I ₆	1	3	2	5	4	9	5.00	0.80	55.56
Total		100	108	139	247	253	500	2.47	1.02	49.4

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

Chapter VI

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

In the following pages an attempt is made to examine the level of employment, under employment, unemployment, etc. of the selected agricultural labour households and the wage rates and mode of payment of wages in the study area.

Out of 247 earners in the sample households, 207 (83.81 per cent) reported agricultural labour as their main occupation and 8 (3.24 per cent) reported themselves to be exclusively non-agricultural labourers. The balance 32 (12.95 per cent) who were engaged in self employment, other occupations, etc. were excluded while studying the details of employment although income earned by them was included in the total family income.

The distribution of different classes of wage earners (agricultural and non-agricultural) is as detailed in Table 6.1.

Out of the total 215 wage earners, that is, the total number of earners excluding those engaged in self employment, other occupations, etc., 96.28 per cent was employed in agriculture while 3.72 per cent was exclusively non-agricultural workers. Out of the 207 agricultural labourers 41 workers,

that is, 19.81 per cent (11 females and 30 males) received non-agricultural wage employment also while the others (80.19 per cent) were exclusively agricultural workers.

As far as the income groups are concerned, the highest percentage of agricultural labourers was in the highest and lowest income groups (I_6 and I_1) which did not have any non-agricultural workers. The percentage of non-agricultural workers varied from 1.96 in income group I_4 to 12.5 in income group I_5 .

Average number of workers per household ranged from 1.22 in income group I_1 to 4 in I_6 .

Extent of Employment

Extent of employment, agricultural and non-agricultural per labour household of the sample, is indicated in Table 6.2. Average employment per household for the sample as a whole amounted to 170.65 man days per year, of which 77.57 per cent was in agriculture. Employment to attached agricultural labour per household per year was higher (49.12 per cent of total employment) than that obtained by the casual workers (28.45 per cent of total employment). Out of the average employment of 170.65 man days per household per year, 22.43 per cent was non-agricultural employment.

Table 6.4. Extent of employment in man days per household per year
(Block wise and Income group wise) Chittur Block

Sl. No.	Income group	Employment in Agriculture						Employment outside Agriculture			Grand total Agri. & Non-agri. employment	
		Male		Female		Total		A + C	Male	Female		Male & Female
		A	C	A	C	A	C					
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-	-11-	-12-	-13-
1	I ₁	-	11.43 (17.61)	47.01 (72.43)	-	47.01 (72.43)	11.43 (17.61)	58.44 (90.05)	1.71 (2.63)	4.75 (7.32)	6.46 (9.95)	69.90 (100.00)
2	I ₂	30.93 (26.21)	16.57 (14.04)	31.52 (26.71)	14.95 (12.67)	62.45 (52.92)	31.52 (26.71)	93.97 (79.63)	22.14 (18.76)	1.90 (1.61)	24.04 (20.37)	118.01 (100.00)
3	I ₃	28.73 (14.68)	26.60 (13.59)	83.86 (42.84)	22.80 (11.65)	112.59 (57.51)	49.40 (25.24)	161.99 (82.75)	30.07 (15.36)	3.69 (1.89)	33.76 (17.25)	195.75 (100.00)
4	I ₄	15.72 (7.51)	42.00 (20.06)	75.59 (36.11)	56.84 (27.15)	91.31 (43.61)	98.84 (47.21)	190.15 (90.82)	17.09 (8.16)	2.12 (1.01)	19.21 (9.18)	209.36 (100.00)
5	I ₅	63.00 (31.58)	-	36.34 (19.22)	21.66 (10.86)	99.34 (49.79)	21.66 (10.86)	121.00 (60.65)	78.50 (39.35)	-	78.50 (39.35)	199.50 (100.00)
6	I ₆	112.00 (64.86)	-	60.67 (35.14)	-	172.67 (100.00)	-	172.67 (100.00)	-	-	-	172.67 (100.00)
Overall		25.50 (16.10)	23.46 (14.82)	59.86 (37.80)	24.40 (15.41)	85.36 (53.91)	47.86 (30.22)	133.22 (84.13)	22.36 (14.12)	2.77 (1.75)	25.13 (15.87)	158.35 (100.00)

A : denotes Attached

C : denotes Casual

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to grand total)

the average employment days in agriculture per household in each Block were more or less the same. The figure for Alathur Block was 132.30 man days and that for Chittur Block was 133.22 man days. But there was some difference in the extent of total employment, when employment from agriculture as well as non-agriculture was taken together. The average employment per household (agricultural and non-agricultural combined) was 183.69 man days in Alathur Block while the same for Chittur Block was 158.35 man days. The reason for the difference in the extent of employment was due to the fact that non-farm employment opportunities in Alathur Block was comparatively more than that in Chittur Block, which is evident from the data in Tables 6.3 and 6.4.

Other features regarding the pattern of employment were more or less similar in the two Blocks. Females dominated in agricultural employment in both the Blocks while the male workers got more employment out side agriculture compared to their female counterparts.

A month-wise analysis of the extent of employment per selected household was made separately for each Block, to locate the lean and peak months, details of which are furnished in Table 6.5.

The extent of total employment per household varied from 5.50 to 22.97 man days in the months of Chingam and Edavam respectively in Alathur Block and 5.79 to 21.48 man days in the months of Meenam and Kanni respectively in Chittur Block. Seasonality was noticed even in non-agricultural employment.

Extent of employment per household was below 10 man days in the months of Chingam, Dhanu and Karkkitakam in Alathur Block and in Chingam, Kumbham, Meenam, Metam and Karkkitakam in Chittur Block. Employment was more than 20 man days in the months of Kanni, Meenam, Metam and Edavam in Alathur Block and during Kanni and Edavam in Chittur Block.

As far as employment in agriculture is concerned, the intensity was maximum during the month of Edavam (19.40 man days) followed by Kanni (18.41 man days) in Alathur Block. The maximum employment in agriculture was noticed in the months of Kanni (20.34 man days) followed by Edavam (19.77 man days) in Chittur Block. The minimum extent of employment in agriculture was in the month of Chingam both in Alathur and Chittur Blocks.

The extent of non-agricultural employment per household was maximum (11.51 man days) during Metam in Alathur Block and Dhanu (5.20 man days) in Chittur Block.

The data show that there is not much variation in the extent of employment in agriculture in different months between the two Blocks but there is considerable variation both in the quantum and the time of availability (months) of non-agricultural employment. Non-agricultural employments in the area are mainly construction works, digging wells, etc. which do not recur regularly every year. Hence the extent of total employment, which is inclusive of non-agricultural employment also is not considered a suitable criterion in identifying the lean and peak periods of employment of agricultural labourers in the area under study.

The extent of employment in agriculture during different months was taken into account for identification of peak and lean periods of employment.

Month wise details of employment in agriculture per household for the sample as a whole are as depicted in Table 6.6.

In order to understand the variation in the demand for labour in agriculture during different months it is necessary to have an idea of the cropping pattern, season and the cultivation practices followed in the study area. It is with this view that such details pertaining to the study area, are discussed in the following paragraph.

Table 6.6. Month wise details of employment in agriculture per selected household

Sl. No.	Name of Month	Employment		(in man days)
		Male	Female	Total (Male + Female)
-1-	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -
1	Chingam	1.20	2.17	3.37
2	Kanni	8.82	10.56	19.38
3	Thulam	5.07	10.74	15.81
4	Vrischikam	2.53	9.92	12.45
5	Dhanu	3.53	3.39	6.92
6	Makaram	4.67	8.56	13.23
7	Kumbham	3.60	4.87	8.47
8	Meenam	2.10	4.66	6.66
9	Medam	4.19	4.44	8.63
10	Edavam	9.71	10.88	19.59
11	Mithunam	2.58	10.78	13.36
12	Karkkitakam	1.39	3.11	4.50
	Total	48.39	83.98	132.37
	Average	4.03	7.00	11.03

The major crop raised in the area under study is paddy. Two crops are usually grown every year. The first crop is a rain fed crop. Both dry sowing and transplanting are practiced during the first crop season. Preparatory cultivation for

first crop (virippu) starts with premonsoon showers and sowing / planting commences with the on-set of south west monsoon during the month of Edavam. There is high demand for labour during this period because the first crop paddy is primarily a rain-fed crop and the farmers try to make the best use of the early showers received. Further, a late sown / planted first crop will lead to a late second crop which the farmers want to avoid for different reasons. The first crop is normally harvested during the months of Kanni - Thulam. The second crop (mundakan) which is an irrigated crop is raised immediately after the harvest of first crop. There is heavy demand for labour during the months of Kanni and Thulam as the farmers are in a hurry to complete second crop planting simultaneously with the first crop harvest, since a late planted second crop may be subjected to drought and pest attack. As such they employ as many labourers as possible during this time. The second crop is harvested normally during the month of Makaram and post-harvest operations are done in Makaram and Kumbham.

The data in Table 6.6 show that employment per household in agriculture was below 5 man days during the month of Chingam and Karkkittakan. This is due to the fact that important operations for first crop paddy would be over by this time and the crop would be maturing or ready for harvest. The possibility of getting non-farm employment such as construction

works, digging of wells, etc. is also limited because of heavy rains during these months. So one could safely designate the months of Karkkittakam and Chingam as the lean months as far as agricultural labourers in the district are concerned. Data presented in Table 6.6 reveal that employment in agriculture was more than 15 man days during the months of Kanni, Thulam and Edavam. Demand for labour is high during these months for reasons explained earlier. As such the months Kanni, Thulam and Edavam could be designated as peak months of employment of agricultural labourers.

Employment Intensity

Intensity of employment is estimated in the present study on the basis of the number of days the agricultural labourers of the selected households reported actually worked during the reference period. Employment intensity would therefore refer to the intensity of employment among those employed and thus it also would indicate the extent of under employment among the agricultural labourers.

The details of total employment both agricultural and non-agricultural taken together for the sample as a whole are given in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7. Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of total employment in days

Sl. No.	Employment level in days	No. of agricultural labourers			Percentage to total
		Male	Female	Male + Female	
1	Less than 30	1	1	2	0.93
2	31 - 60	12	34	46	21.40
3	61 - 90	18	34	54	24.19
4	91 - 120	27	47	74	34.42
5	121 - 140	11	10	21	9.76
6	141 - 160	2	4	6	2.79
7	161 - 180	4	5	9	4.18
8	181 - 200	1	1	2	0.93
9	201 - 300	2	1	3	1.40
10	301 and above	-	-	-	-
Total		78	137	215	100.00

It can be seen from the table that the employment figures ranged from less than 30 to 300 days. While 0.93 per cent of the workers received below 30 days of employment, 1.4 per cent received employment between 201 and 300 days. The data reveal that roughly about 80 per cent of the workers received employment for less than 120 days which indicates that the bulk of the workers remain unemployed for about 8 months in a year.

The distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of employment in agriculture is given in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8. Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of employment in agriculture

Sl. No.	Employment level in days	No. of agricultural labourers			Percentage to total
		Male	Female	Male + Female	
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-
1	Less than 30	1	1	2	0.97
2	31 - 60	27	35	62	29.95
3	61 - 80	15	24	39	18.34
4	81 - 100	14	36	50	24.15
5	101 - 120	9	25	34	16.43
6	121 - 140	3	10	13	6.28
7	141 - 160	-	3	3	1.45
8	161 - 180	1	3	4	1.93
9	181 and more	-	-	-	-
Total		70	137	207	100.00

Data given in Table 6.8 show that the level of employment in agriculture ranged from less than 30 days to 180 days. While 0.97 per cent of the agricultural workers get less than 30 days employment in agriculture, 1.93 per cent got employment between 161 and 180 days. It is also evident from the

data in the table that only about 26 per cent of the agricultural labourers got employment in agriculture for more than 100 days.

Details of non-agricultural employment are furnished in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9. Distribution of agricultural labourers by the level of non-agricultural employment in days

Sl. No.	Employment level in days	No. of agricultural labourers			Percentage to total
		Male	Female	Male + Female	
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-
1	Less than 10	-	-	-	-
2	10 - 20	1	1	2	4.08
3	21 - 40	6	4	10	20.41
4	41 - 60	11	2	13	26.53
5	61 - 80	6	3	9	18.37
6	81 - 99	8	-	8	16.33
7	100 and above	6	1	7	14.28
Total		38	11	49	100.00

Non-agricultural employment ranged from 10 days to more than 100 days. Out of the 49 workers to whom non-agricultural

employment was available during the reference period 4.08 per cent got only 10 - 20 days employment in the non-agricultural sector while 14.28 per cent of the workers received 100 days and more. Roughly 50 per cent of these workers received more than 60 days of non-agricultural employment.

Pattern of employment and under employment

In this study 300 days of eight hour man days was taken as full employment. This figure was arrived at on the assumption that one worker will get one holiday for each week (52 days) and 15 days leave for sickness and other activities. If a person was employed for 300 days or more he was considered to be fully employed. If he was employed for less than 300 days he was considered to be under employed. Under employed were further grouped into severely under employed and moderately under employed. If the employment figure for a worker was between 200 to 299 days, he was considered moderately under employed and if it was below 200 days he was considered as severely under employed. The pattern of employment is as given in Table 6.10.

Data in Table 6.10 show that none of the labourers of the selected labour households was fully employed. What one finds from the data is substantial under employment

Table 6.10. Pattern of employment of selected agricultural labour households

Sl. No.	Pattern of employment	No. of labourers		Total Male + Female
		Male	Female	
-1-	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -
1	Fully employed	-	-	-
2	Moderately under employed	2 (0.93)	1 (0.47)	3 (1.40)
3	Severely under employed	76 (35.35)	136 (62.25)	212 (98.60)
	Total	78 (36.28)	137 (63.72)	215 (100.00)

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total)

among the labourers of selected households. Almost 99 per cent of the labourers was severely under employed.

Level of under employment per selected agricultural labour household (income group wise) is furnished in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11. shows that under employment per selected labour household ranged from 60.44 per cent in income group I₅ to 82.72 per cent in income group I₆. Under-employment was highest in the highest income group. Income of households in this group was high because of the fact that the number of workers per household in this group was as high as

four (compared to 2.14 workers per household for the sample as a whole) although all the workers were severely under-employed. If one ignored the highest income group, one could observe a negative correlation between income and under-employment.

Table 6.11. Level of under-employment (income groupwise) per selected agricultural labour households (in man days)

Sl. No.	Income group	Total employment per household in man days	Total available man days per household	Under-employment (in man days) per household
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-
1	I ₁	59.64 (22.34)	267 (100.00)	207.36 (77.66)
2	I ₂	126.30 (30.73)	411 (100.00)	284.70 (69.27)
3	I ₃	182.19 (32.83)	555 (100.00)	372.81 (67.17)
4	I ₄	237.36 (39.56)	600 (100.00)	362.64 (60.44)
5	I ₅	261.58 (39.28)	666 (100.00)	404.42 (60.72)
6	I ₆	172.67 (17.28)	999 (100.00)	826.33 (82.72)
All groups		170.65 (33.63)	507.42 (100.00)	336.77 (66.37)

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total available man days per household for each group)

The average level of under employment per household for the sample as a whole was 66.37 per cent.

An income group wise analysis of the level of employment and under employment of selected labour households per man unit is given in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12. Level of employment and under employment of selected labour households per man unit in man days

Sl. No.	Income group	Total employment in man days per man unit	Total available man days per man unit	Under employment per man unit in man days
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-
1	I ₁	67.10 (22.37)	300 (100.00)	232.90 (77.63)
2	I ₂	92.33 (30.78)	300 (100.00)	207.60 (69.22)
3	I ₃	98.10 (32.70)	300 (100.00)	201.90 (67.30)
4	I ₄	118.68 (39.56)	300 (100.00)	181.32 (60.44)
5	I ₅	117.74 (39.25)	300 (100.00)	182.26 (60.75)
6	I ₆	51.85 (17.28)	300 (100.00)	248.20 (82.72)
Total		100.78 (33.59)	300 (100.00)	199.22 (66.41)

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total available man days per man unit)

The data in Table 6.12 show that the percentage of under employment per man unit was highest (82.72 per cent) in the highest income group, that is, I₆. If one leaves this group which comprised only one per cent of the total

households and which had the highest number of earners per household and the lowest dependancy ratio, the remaining data reveal that as the under employment level decreases from 77.63 per cent in group I₄ to 60.75 per cent in group I₅, the income of households also steadily increases. The level of under employment per man unit for the sample as a whole was 66.41 per cent.

It is obvious from the data that the level of under employment is severe in all the income groups of agricultural labourers which probably has resulted in poverty and poor economic conditions.

Unemployment

The level of unemployment in the selected agricultural labour households is depicted in Table 6.13.

It can be seen from the table that out of 276 persons in the potential labour force belonging to the age group of 16 to 59 years only 247 (89.49 per cent) could get employment during the reference period. The rest of 29 (10.51 per cent) members did not receive any employment either due to lack of employment opportunities or due to their own lethargy.

As far as the income groups are concerned, the highest level of unemployment (25 per cent) was noticed in the lowest

Table 6.13. Level of unemployment in the selected agricultural labour households

Sl. No.	Income group	Potential labour force			Working labour force			Unemployed labour force		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	I ₁	6 (37.50)	10 (62.50)	16 (100.00)	3 (18.75)	9 (56.25)	12 (75.00)	3 (18.75)	1 (6.25)	4 (25.00)
2	I ₂	28 (46.67)	32 (53.33)	60 (100.00)	22 (36.67)	31 (51.67)	53 (88.33)	6 (10.00)	1 (1.67)	7 (11.67)
3	I ₃	49 (47.12)	55 (52.88)	104 (100.00)	41 (39.42)	54 (51.92)	95 (91.35)	8 (7.69)	1 (0.96)	9 (8.65)
4	I ₄	31 (47.69)	34 (52.31)	65 (100.00)	28 (43.08)	34 (52.31)	62 (95.38)	3 (4.62)	-	3 (4.62)
5	I ₅	16 (61.54)	10 (38.46)	26 (100.00)	11 (42.31)	9 (34.62)	20 (76.92)	5 (19.23)	1 (3.85)	6 (23.08)
6	I ₆	3 (60.00)	2 (40.00)	5 (100.00)	3 (60.00)	2 (40.00)	5 (100.00)	-	-	-
All groups		133 (48.19)	143 (51.81)	276 (100.00)	108 (39.13)	139 (50.36)	247 (89.49)	25 (9.06)	4 (1.45)	29 (10.51)

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total of potential labour force)

income group I₄ followed by income group I₅. The level of unemployment decreased as the income of households increased except in income group I₅. The lowest level of unemployment was found in the highest income group I₆ where all the members of the labour force could get employment during the reference period.

A sexwise analysis showed that the level of unemployment was higher in the case of male workers in all the income groups. The possible reason for a comparatively lower level of unemployment to male workers has been explained earlier.

Wage rates and mode of payment

Payments to agricultural labourers are made both in kind and cash.

Payment in kind:

Normally the wages for the second crop operations which are carried out after the harvest of first crop, are paid in kind to attached agricultural labourers. Casual labourers are usually paid in cash. Rate of wages paid in kind ranges from 6 to 10 edangashys of paddy (1 edangashy is approximately equal to 1 kg) in the case of male workers and 5 to 8 edangashys in the case of female workers.

Harvesting is done on a crop sharing basis. The proportion of the shares of land lord and the labourer ranges from 7 : 1 to 6 : 1. This sort of arrangement is of mutual benefit as it provides a substantial portion of the food requirements of workers and it reduces the risk to the farmer on this account when the harvest is poor. Harvesting is done exclusively by attached labourers. The casual labourers may also get a few days harvest in farms where there are no attached workers.

Payments in cash:

Rate of wages paid in cash varies from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- for male workers and Rs. 5/- to Rs. 7/- for female workers for agricultural employment. Rate of wages offered takes into account the seasonal variation in the demand for labour. A slightly higher wage is offered during the planting season. The casual labourers who are employed along with attached workers during the peak season are sometimes offered a little more than that of the attached workers.

Payments for non-agricultural employment are made exclusively in cash. The rate of wages for non-agricultural employment ranges from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- in the case of male workers and Rs. 5/- to Rs. 8/- in the case of female workers.

It was found that there was not much variation in the wage rates between agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Wage rate for non-agricultural employment was either equal to or slightly more than that for agricultural employment for both men and women.

As far as wage differentials between men and women are concerned there was striking difference both in agricultural and non-agricultural employment. As shown above the wages of female workers were nearly half or even less than half of that of male workers. However, the difference was not so apparent in the case of payments made in kind.

Estimation of changes in real wages:

The average daily wage rates of paddy field labour and the average farm gate prices received for paddy relating to the period 1971-72 to 1981-82 concerning Palghat district are presented in Table 6.14. Since the two variables, prima facie, exhibited a degree of joint linear relationship as depicted in Fig. 6.1, the correlation coefficient between the two was worked out. A high positive correlation coefficient of 0.77 was obtained between the wages and the prices considered. The coefficient of determination in the case was found to be 0.59. Thus 59 per cent of the variation in wages could be due to prices. The linear regression of wages (x) on prices (y) was also

Table 6.14. Average wage rates of agricultural labourers (Male) and the average farm gate prices of paddy in Palghat district

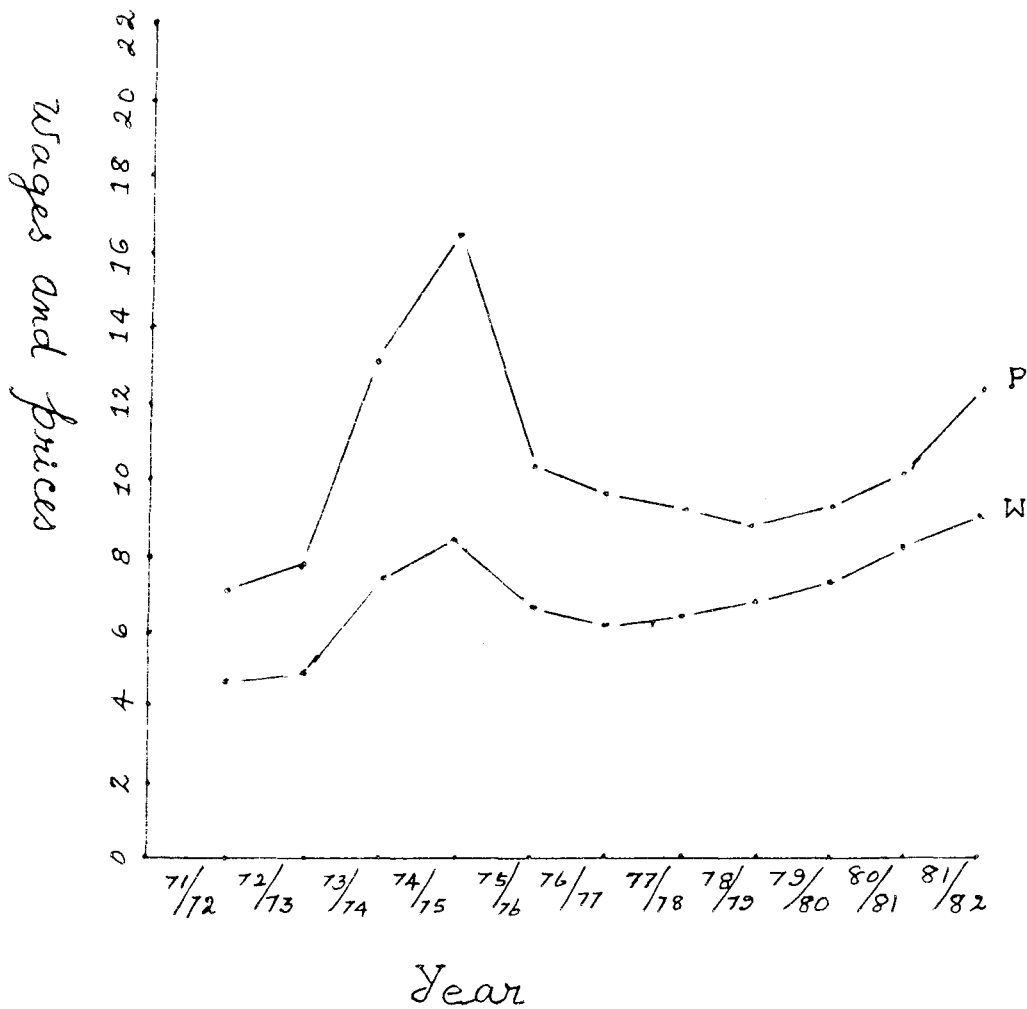
Sl. No.	Year	Average wage rate* of paddy field labourer (male) in Rs.	Average farm gate** price of paddy Rs./Std. Para
-1-	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -
1	1971-72	4.58	7.01
2	1972-73	4.88	7.43
3	1973-74	7.37	13.06
4	1974-75	8.39	16.42
5	1975-76	6.54	11.19
6	1976-77	6.18	9.83
7	1977-78	6.35	9.12
8	1978-79	6.75	8.78
9	1979-80	7.15	9.32
10	1980-81	8.08	10.39
11	1981-82	9.08	12.43

* Source : The Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala, Statistics for Planning 1977, 1980 and 1983.

** Source : Records from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum.

1 Std. Para = 7.5 kg

Fig. 6.1 Wages of Agricultural labourers and Farm Gate prices of Paddy



estimated from the data using the method of least squares. The regression equation thus obtained was

$$x = 2.59 + 0.4 y$$

The average daily wage rates of paddy field labour and the average retail price of the staple food of agricultural labourers viz. rice, are presented in Table 6.15. The data pertain to the period 1971-72 to 1981-82. Since the consumer price index for Palghat district was available only from 1976-77 onwards, it was decided to estimate the real wages of

agricultural labourers by deflating money wages with the corresponding retail prices of rice which is the most important food item of agricultural labourers. The coefficient of variation of wages and retail prices of rice were worked out. These were 19 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, showing that the relative variations of wages and prices during the period are not greatly different. The real wages thus derived are also presented in Table 6.15. The linear time trend of the derived real wages was mathematically estimated to understand the rate of growth of real wages over the period. The equation to the straight line which fits the data best was arrived at as

$$y = 2.87 + 0.02 t$$

In the equation 'y' denotes the derived real wage, while 't' relates to the time period originating at 1976-77, such that 1971-72 and 1981-82 would correspond to -5 and +5 respectively.

Table 6.15. Computation of real wages of agricultural labourers (male)

Sl. No.	Year	Average daily wages of agricultural labourers (male) Rs.	Average* retail price of rice Rs./kg.	Real wages of agricultural labourers (male) Rs.
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-
1	1971-72	4.58	1.44	3.18
2	1972-73	4.88	1.64	2.98
3	1973-74	7.37	2.21	3.33
4	1974-75	8.39	3.26	2.57
5	1975-76	6.54	3.44	1.90
6	1976-77	6.18	2.71	2.28
7	1977-78	6.35	2.37	2.68
8	1978-79	6.75	2.17	3.11
9	1979-80	7.15	2.18	3.28
10	1980-81	8.08	2.37	3.41
11	1981-82	9.08	3.20	2.84

* Source : The Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala, Statistics for Planning 1977, 1980 and 1983.

Based on the estimated values of real wages using the aforesaid equation (Table 6.16) it was observed that the absolute growth of real wages during the period of ten years was Rs. 0.20. The real wage level in 1981-82 was found to be 7.2 per cent higher than that in 1971-72 implying a compound growth rate of 0.6 per cent per annum.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that although the real wages of agricultural labourers of Kerala in general might have increased substantially as observed by Sri. Pandey (1976), the growth rate was only marginal in the case of agricultural labourers in Palghat district.

Table 6.16. Estimated real wages of agricultural labourers obtained using the equation $y = 2.87 + 0.02 t$

Sl. No.	Year	Actual real wages	Estimated real wages
- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -
1	1971-72	3.18	2.77
2	1972-73	2.98	2.79
3	1973-74	3.33	2.81
4	1974-75	2.57	2.83
5	1975-76	1.90	2.85
6	1976-77	2.28	2.87
7	1977-78	2.63	2.89
8	1978-79	3.11	2.91
9	1979-80	3.28	2.93
10	1980-81	3.41	2.95
11	1981-82	2.84	2.97

INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND LEVELS OF LIVING

Chapter VII

INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND LEVELS OF LIVING

Income of households

In the present study income of agricultural labour households was defined as the total comprising agricultural wage income, non-agricultural wage income, self employment income, salaries, grants, etc.

Agricultural wage income included income realised as wage earnings for agricultural employment both in kind and in cash. Wages in kind (paddy) were converted in money terms at harvest price for paddy. Non-agricultural wage income was the income realised as wage earnings for non-agricultural employment such as construction works, digging wells, fencing, thatching of houses, etc.

Sources and level of income of selected agricultural labour households are presented in Table 7.1. On the whole 56.87 per cent of income of agricultural labour households was earned through agricultural activities and the rest from other occupations, self employment and other sources such as remittances, grants, etc. Roughly about 70 per cent of the total income was from wage employment i.e. 56.87 per cent from agricultural wage employment and 14.03 per cent from non-agricultural wage employment for the sample as a whole.

Thus agricultural wage income was the major source of income (56.87 per cent) of the selected household on the whole, followed by non-agricultural wage employment (14.03), other occupations (9.52 per cent), other sources (9.47 per cent) and livestock (8.23 per cent). The lowest contribution to total income was income from crops (1.88 per cent). A source wise analysis of total income of different income classes presented in Table 7.1 reveals that the class with the highest level of income has the lowest contribution from agricultural wage employment (35.43 per cent) towards total income. It is interesting to note that, to low income groups of households, major share of income accrued from agricultural wage employment while in the higher income groups the share of income from non-agricultural activities was on the increase. This suggests that those who were fortunate enough to have a combination of occupations were definitely better off than those who merely depended on agricultural wage employment. In backward agricultural tracts such as Chittur and Alathur, opportunities for such combination were severely restricted, though in some cases indifference could well be the reason for adopting a combination of occupations.

Another feature revealed by the analysis was that for the sample as a whole the lowest share towards total income was from the net income from crops, although 99 per cent

of the selected households owned a piece of land each. This indicates that ownership of these marginal lands is not of much advantage to earn a substantial income.

The per capita annual income might be a better indicator of the relative income position of labour households. The data presented in Table 7.2 suggest that the labourers in income group I_4 enjoy the highest per capita annual income (Rs. 643.63). The labourers in the lowest income group i.e. I_1 enjoy the lowest per capita annual income (Rs. 211.73). The average per capita annual income for the sample as a whole was found to be Rs. 472.39.

The per capita per day income ranged from Rs. 0.58 in income group I_1 to Rs. 1.74 in income group I_4 , the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 1.29. It can be observed that the per capita per day income was too low to fetch even a meal even in the case of workers in the highest per capita income group.

A more accurate way of examining the relative income position of labour households would be the income per adult consumption unit. The income of labour households per consumption unit per day ranged from Rs. 0.69 in income group I_1 to Rs. 1.99 in income group I_4 . The average income per consumption unit per day was found to be Rs. 1.52 for

Table 7.2. Per capita income level of selected Agricultural Labour Households

Sl. No.	Income group	Level of income per labour household	Average annual income per labour household	Average annual income per family member	Average income per family member per day	Average annual income per consumption unit	Average income per consumption unit per day
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-
1	I ₁	0 - 1,000	729.22	211.73	0.58	253.40	0.69
2	I ₂	1,000 - 2,000	1,611.09	392.62	1.08	470.51	1.29
3	I ₃	2,000 - 3,000	2,397.94	441.73	1.21	522.59	1.43
4	I ₄	3,000 - 4,000	3,427.00	643.63	1.74	729.99	1.99
5	I ₅	4,000 - 5,000	4,307.00	600.98	1.65	692.82	1.90
6	I ₆	5,000 - 6,000	5,575.00	619.44	1.70	701.26	1.92
		Overall	2,361.97	472.39	1.29	555.50	1.52

the sample as a whole. Income per consumption unit was also found to be very low in all the income groups.

Concentration of Income

The pattern of income distribution among the labour households was studied by making use of the most important measure of income inequalities viz. the Lorenz curve which depicts the size distribution of income. The proportion P of the households arranged from the poorest to the richest are represented on the horizontal axis and the proportion Q of income enjoyed by the proportion P of the households is shown on the vertical line. Obviously zero per cent of the households enjoy zero per cent of the income and hundred per cent of the households enjoy hundred per cent of the income. So the points $(0, 0)$ and $(1, 1)$ are always on the Lorenz curve - the curve runs from one corner of the unit square to the diametrically opposite corner. If every household has the same income, Q will always be equal to P , so that the curve coincides with the diagonal through $(0, 0)$ and $(1, 1)$. In the absence of such perfect equality, obtaining in any real situation, the poorer household will enjoy a proportionately lower share of income and Q will, in general, be less than P . It follows therefore that any Lorenz curve must lie below the diagonal and its slope will

increasingly rise - at least not fall - as we move to richer and richer households.

Based on the data presented in Table 7.3, Table 7.4 and Table 7.5 Lorenz curves were drawn for the whole study area and then for Alathur and Chittur Blocks respectively. Lorenz curve drawn for the whole study area revealed that there was inequality in the distribution of income as shown by the departure of the Lorenz curve from the egalitarian line. (Fig.7.1.) On perusal of the shape of Lorenz curves drawn for Alathur and Chittur Blocks it could be concluded that the extent of inequality in income distribution was more in Chittur Block compared to that in Alathur Block. (Fig.7.2 and 7.3.)

Expenditure pattern

Total annual expenditure incurred by the sample households was broadly grouped into two categories viz. consumption expenditure and non-consumption expenditure. Consumption expenditure was again categorised as expenditure on food items and expenditure on non-food items. Expenditure on food items included expenditure on cereals, pulses, spices, fruits and vegetables, oils and fats, milk and milk products, non-vegetarian items, sugars and the amount spent in tea shops. Expenditure on non-food items included expenditure on fuel and lighting, liquor, education, clothes, cosmetics, transport

Table 7.3. Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by the level of total income per household

Sl. No.	Income level per household (Rs.)	No. of households	Total income of households (Rs.)	Income per household (Rs.)	Percentage of households	Percentage of income	Cumulative percentage of households	Cumulative percentage of income
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
1	0 - 1,000	9	6,563.00	729.22	9	2.78	9	2.73
2	1,000 - 2,000	29	46,721.61	1,611.09	29	19.78	38	22.56
3	2,000 - 3,000	35	82,956.00	2,370.17	35	35.12	73	57.68
4	3,000 - 4,000	20	68,540.00	3,427.00	20	29.02	93	86.70
5	4,000 - 5,000	6	25,842.00	4,307.00	6	10.94	99	97.64
6	5,000 - 6,000	1	5,575.00	5,575.00	1	2.36	100	100.00

Table 7.4. Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by the level of total income per household in Alethur Block

Sl. No.	Income level per household (Rs.)	No. of households	Total income of household (Rs.)	Total income per household (Rs.)	Percentage of households	Percentage of income	Cumulative percentage of households	Cumulative percentage of income
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
1	0 - 1,000	2	1,318	658.00	4	1.08	4	1.08
2	1,000 - 2,000	15	25,316	1,687.33	30	20.69	34	21.77
3	2,000 - 3,000	20	47,642	2,382.10	40	38.94	74	60.71
4	3,000 - 4,000	9	30,602	3,400.22	18	25.00	92	85.71
5	4,000 - 5,000	4	17,484	4,371.00	8	14.29	100	100.00
6	5,000 - 6,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7.5. Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households in Chittur Block by the level of total income per household

Sl. No.	Income level per household (Rs.)	No. of households	Total income of household (Rs.)	Total income per household (Rs.)	Percentage of households	Percentage of income	Cumulative percentage of households	Cumulative percentage of income
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-
1	0 - 1,000	7	5,245	749.29	14	4.61	14	4.61
2	1,000 - 2,000	14	21,405	1,528.93	28	18.80	42	23.41
3	2,000 - 3,000	15	35,314	2,354.27	30	31.02	72	54.43
4	3,000 - 4,000	11	37,938	3,448.91	22	33.33	94	87.76
5	4,000 - 5,000	2	8,358	4,179.00	4	7.34	98	95.10
6	5,000 - 6,000	1	5,575	5,575.00	2	4.90	100	100.00

Fig. 7.1. Lorenz curve showing distribution of total income among labour house holds.

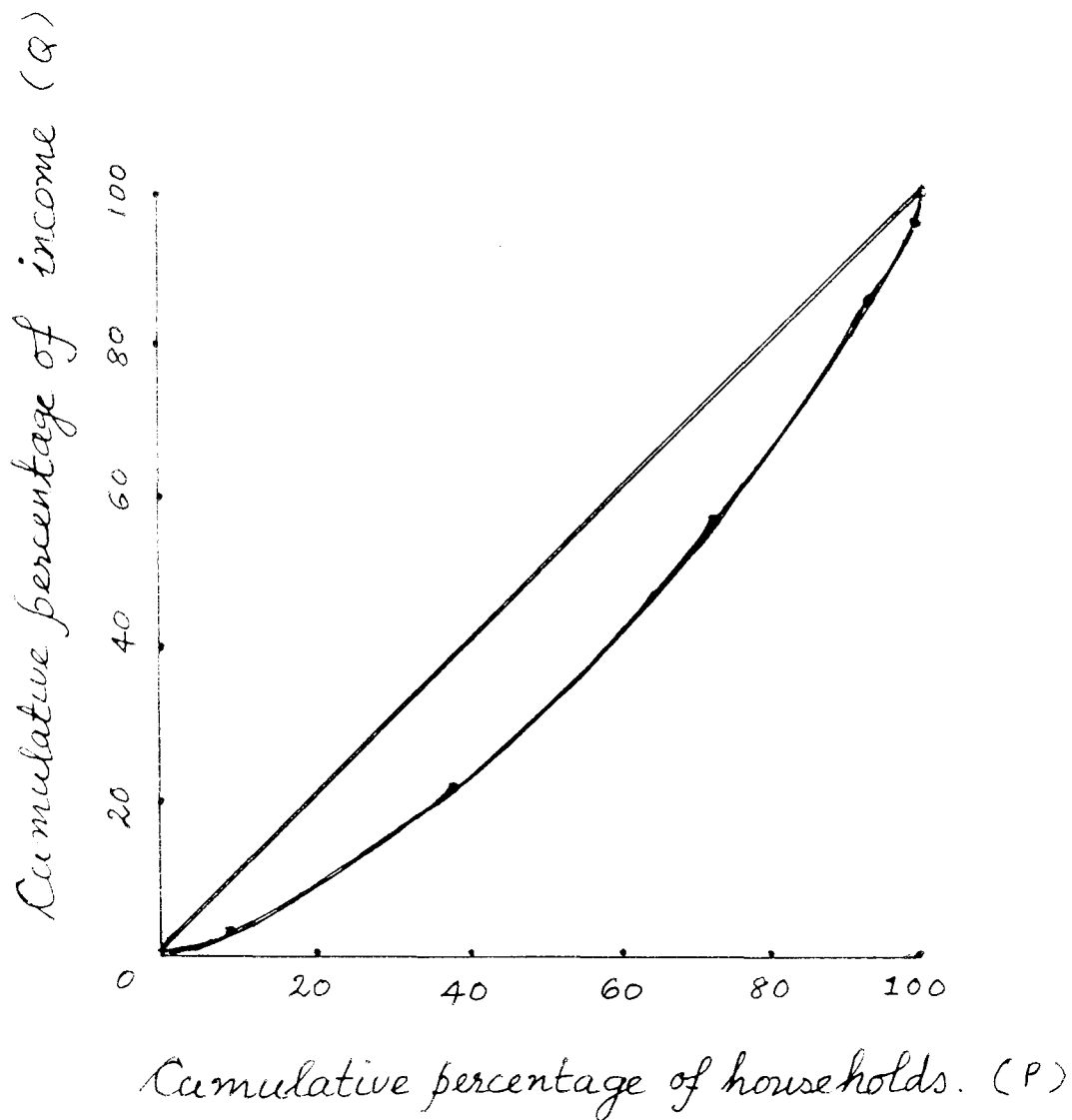


Fig. 7.2. Lorenz curve showing distribution of total income among labour households in Alathur Block.

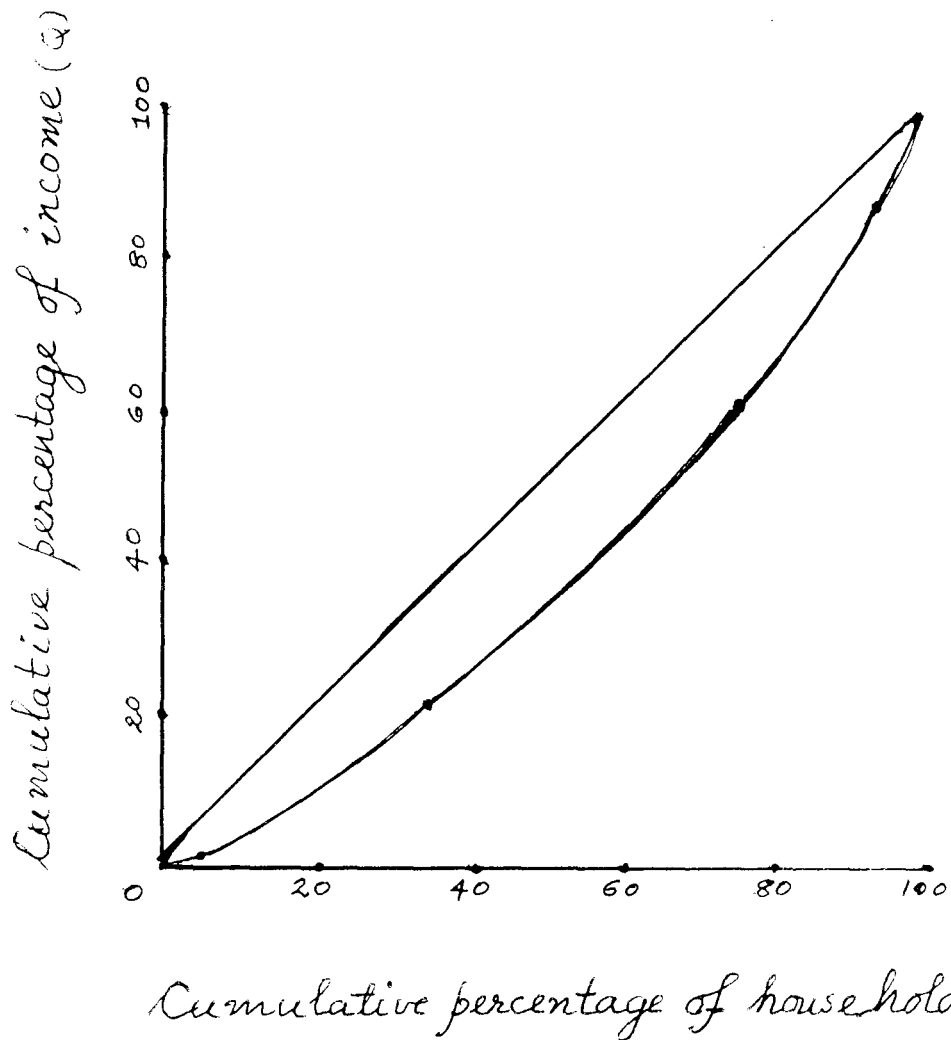
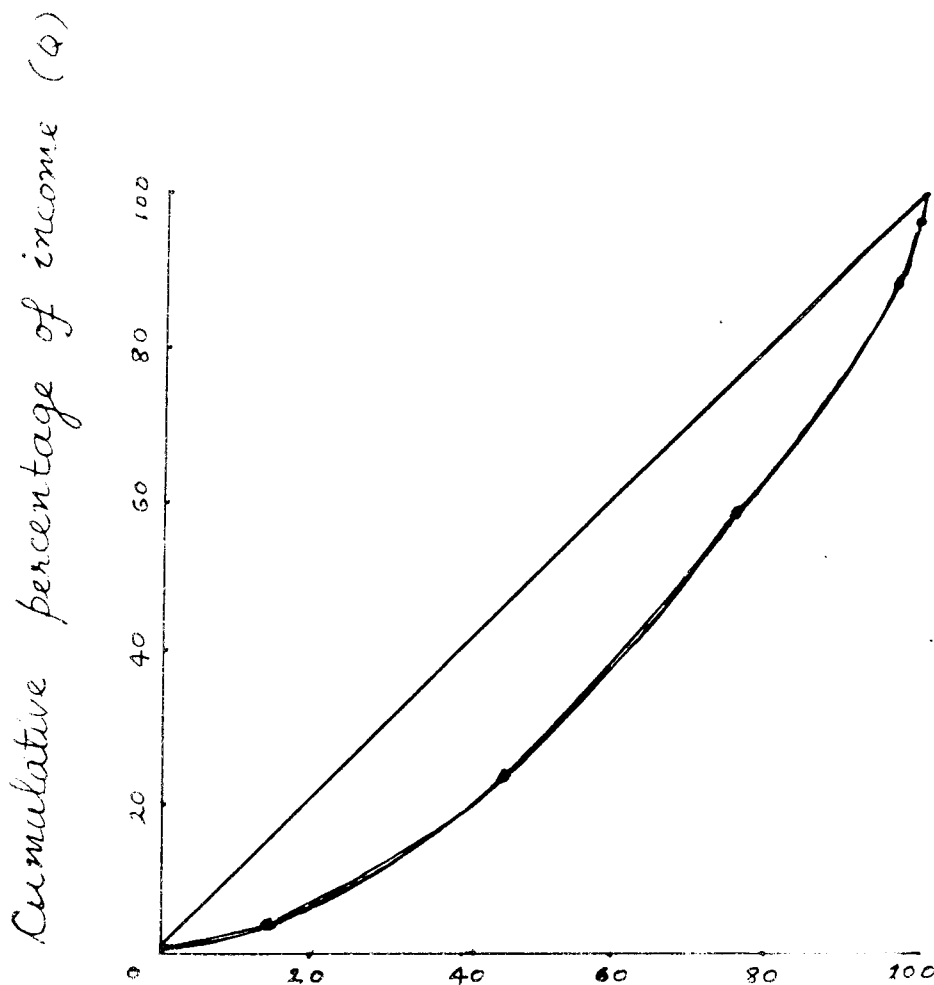


Fig. 7.3. Lorenz curve showing distribution of
total income among labour house holds
in Chittur Block.



Cumulative percentage of house holds. (P)

and communication, social and religious expenses, recreation, maintenance of houses, service charges, furniture and utensils, house rent, medicine and treatment. Non-consumption expenses included taxes and other expenses like repayment of loans etc.

The details of expenditure on each item per household are presented in Table 7.6. On an average the labour households spent Rs. 2,925.78 annually of which Rs. 1,819.77 (62.20 per cent) was on food items, Rs. 1,042.61 (35.64 per cent) on non-food items and Rs. 63.40 (2.17 per cent) on non-consumption items.

Since the income difference among the labour households was quite significant (between the lowest and highest income groups, the difference was more than 4 times), analysis by income groups would be more pertinent.

Data in Table 7.6 reveal that the absolute amount spent on food items increased as income increased. However, the proportion of total expenditure on food items increased from 63.70 in income group I_1 to 64.97 in income group I_3 and then started declining as the level of total expenditure increased. This is in conformity with Engel's law that expenditure on a necessity is initially high and is a decreasing function of total expenditure.

Among the non-food items, expenditure on conventional necessities ranked first accounting for 7.25 per cent of total expenditure followed by social and religious expenses accounting for 7.01 per cent of the total expenditure. In the case of non-food items no correlation was observed with income probably because of the fact that the level of expenditure is low and hence insensitive to normal income effects.

Pattern of Consumption Expenditure

The pattern of per household, per capita and per consumption unit consumption expenditure in different income groups is presented in Table 7.7.

The per household annual consumption expenditure ranged from Rs. 1,576.01 in income group I₁ to Rs. 6,586.55 in income group I₆, the overall figure for the sample as a whole being Rs. 2,862.39. The per household consumption expenditure in income groups I₁ and I₂ (38 per cent of the total households) was below the average per household consumption expenditure for the sample as a whole and in income groups I₃, I₄, I₅ and I₆ (62 per cent of the total households) it was above the average for the sample as a whole.

Table 7.7. Pattern of consumption expenditure per household, per capita and per consumption unit in different income groups of Agricultural Labour Households

Sl. No.	Income groups	Sample size	Per household consumption expenditure per year	Per capita consumption expenditure		Per capita consumption expenditure per day	Per consumption unit consumption expenditure		Per consumption unit consumption expenditure per day
				per year	per month		per year	per month	
	(Rs.)		(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-
1	Below Rs 1,000	9	1,576.01	457.55	38.13	1.25	547.65	45.63	1.50
2	1,000 - 2,000	29	2,157.86	525.87	43.82	1.44	630.19	52.52	1.73
3	2,000 - 3,000	35	2,994.66	551.65	45.97	1.51	652.63	54.39	1.79
4	3,000 - 4,000	20	3,620.96	670.55	55.88	1.84	769.19	64.10	2.11
5	4,000 - 5,000	6	4,276.27	596.69	49.72	1.63	687.87	57.32	1.88
6	6,000 & above	1	6,586.55	731.84	60.99	2.01	828.50	69.04	2.27
	Overall	100	2,862.39	563.99	47.00	1.54	663.86	55.32	1.82

As the per household consumption expenditure does not give a clear indication of the level of living of the labourers, the per capita consumption expenditure was worked out for the different income groups. The per capita per day consumption expenditure ranged from Rs. 1.25 in the lowest income group I_1 to Rs. 2.01 in the highest income group I_6 , the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 1.54. The data in Table 7.7 show that the per capita per day consumption expenditure was below the average per capita per day expenditure for the sample as a whole in 73 per cent of the total households (in income groups I_1 , I_2 and I_3).

The consumption expenditure per consumption unit would be a better indicator of the relative position of the labour households as far as the level of living is concerned. The per day per consumption unit consumption expenditure ranged from Rs. 1.50 in income group I_1 to Rs. 2.27 in income group I_6 , the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 1.92. As much as 73 per cent of the households (those in income groups I_1 , I_2 and I_3) had a lower per adult unit consumption expenditure than the average figure for the sample as a whole.

The data in Table 7.7 show that the per capita and per consumption unit consumption expenditure increased as the

per household expenditure increased in income groups I₁, I₂, I₃, I₄ and I₆. But in income group I₅ the per capita and per consumption unit consumption expenditure registered a fall with an increase in the per household expenditure. This was due to comparatively higher family size, lower per capita income and higher percentage of non-consumption expenditure by this group.

Poverty

Poverty or the state of being poor is a relative term, the meaning of which varies depending upon the state of economy of a country. In developed countries poverty line is drawn at a level where the essential needs include all modern amenities such as electricity, indoor flush toilets, refrigerators, television, etc. But in a developing country poverty line generally denotes a subsistence level or just enough calory intake to ward off hunger or malnutrition.

In the draft Sixth Plan poverty line was defined as Rs. 65/- of consumption expenditure per capita per month for rural areas at 77-78 prices. This will work out to Rs. 110.94 at 1982-83 prices. In the present study poverty line is fixed at Rs. 110.94 at 1982-83 prices.

From the data presented in Table 7.7, it can be seen that the per capita consumption expenditure per month ranged from Rs. 38.13 to Rs. 60.99. As such it is evident that all the selected agricultural labour households including those in the higher income groups fall below the poverty line.

Ratio of cereals to total food

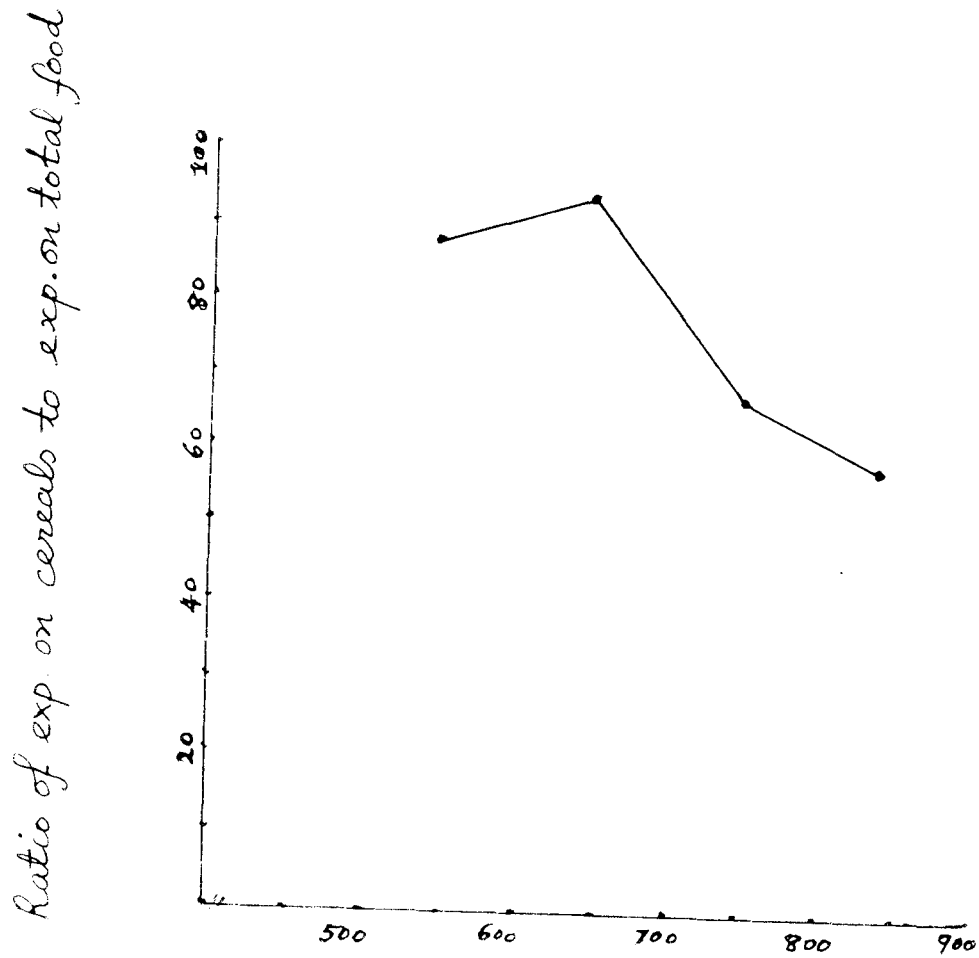
Table 7.8 shows the annual consumer expenditure classes on per consumption unit basis and their corresponding expenditure on cereals and for all food items taken together.

Table 7.8. Annual expenditure per consumption unit on cereals and on total food items in selected Agricultural Labour Households

Per consumption unit annual expenditure classes	Sample size	Expenditure on cereals in Rs. per consumption unit	Expenditure in Rs. on total food per consumption unit	Expenditure on cereals as ratio to total expenditure on food
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-
Rs.500 - Rs.600	9	306.98	349.28	88
Rs.600 - Rs.700	70	393.44	415.19	94
Rs.700 - Rs.800	20	339.88	493.42	68
Rs.900 & above	1	230.44	387.45	59

Expenditure on cereals are also expressed as percentage ratio to total food expenses which is reproduced in Fig. 7.4.

Fig. 7.4. Ratio of cereals to food.



Annual per consumption unit expenditure classes (Rs.)

A perusal of Fig. 7.4. reveals that as the per consumption unit expenditure on food increases the proportion of food expenditure spent on cereals increases initially and then there is a fall. The possible conclusion that one can draw is that at low levels of income the labourers were underfed and therefore with increase in income they increased their cereal intake but after a certain point the expenditure on food items increased not only because of higher intake of cereals but also because of diversification of menu.

Estimated household savings

Saving is referred to as the surplus of disposable income over consumption expenditure computed on a per household basis. The pattern of per household savings in the selected agricultural labour households is presented in Table 7.9.

Data presented in the table show that the per household income is not sufficient to meet the per household consumption expenditure in all the income groups except group I₅ which comprises 6 per cent of the total households. Negative savings were observed in 94 per cent of the households ranging from Rs. 1,019.05 in income group I₆ to Rs. 196.17 in income group I₄. Deficit or savings per household was

Table 7.9. Estimated per household savings among the different income groups of selected Agricultural Labour Households

Sl. No.	Income groups	Sample size	Current per H.H. disposable income (Rs.)	Current per H.H. consumption expenditure (Rs.)	Current per H.H. savings (Rs.)	Current savings/deficit as percentage of current disposable income
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
1	I ₁	9	727.34	1,576.01	- 848.67	116.68 (deficit)
2	I ₂	29	1,611.45	2,157.86	- 546.41	33.91 (,)
3	I ₃	35	2,368.73	2,994.66	- 625.93	26.42 (,)
4	I ₄	20	3,424.79	3,620.96	- 196.17	5.73 (,)
5	I ₅	6	4,305.68	4,276.27	+ 29.41	0.68 (savings)
6	I ₆	1	5,576.50	6,586.55	-1,019.05	18.30 (deficit)
All groups		100	2,360.81	2,862.39	- 503.05	21.31 (,)

Note: H.H. denotes Household
 + denotes savings
 - denotes deficit



also worked out as percentage of current per household disposable income. Deficit per household ranged from 116.68 per cent of income in income group I₁ to 5.73 per cent in income group I₄. The percentage of per household deficit declined as the per household disposable income increased except in income group I₆. For the sample as whole the deficit was worked out to be Re. 503.05. This shows that the majority of the households are in debt and require stabilisation of income in order to make any improvement in the level of living.

Indebtedness

In the absence of sufficient margin in household disposable income over consumer expenditure the possibility of incurring debts would be strong. The extent of indebtedness per family and per capita was worked out income group-wise which is presented in Table 7.10.

It was observed that 94 per cent of the selected households were indebted. However, the indebtedness per household or per capita did not show any correlation with changes in the per household income level. Indebtedness per household ranged from Rs. 303.33 in income group I₅ to Rs. 2,200/- in income group I₆, the average indebtedness per family for the sample as a whole being Rs. 832.30.

Indebtedness per capita ranged from Rs. 43.02 in income group I₅ to Rs. 248.39 in income group I₁, the average figure for the sample as a whole being Rs. 166.46.

Table 7.10. Extent of Indebtedness (in Rupees) per family and per capita among the different income groups of selected Agricultural Labour Households

Sl. No.	Income group	No. of H.H.	No. of indebted H.H.	Total indebtedness	Indebtedness per family	Indebtedness per capita
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
1	I ₁	9 (100)	9 (100.00)	7,700.00	855.56	248.39
2	I ₂	29 (100)	28 (96.55)	15,850.00	546.55	133.19
3	I ₃	35 (100)	33 (94.29)	39,880.00	1,139.43	209.89
4	I ₄	20 (100)	17 (85.00)	15,750.00	787.50	145.83
5	I ₅	6 (100)	6 (100.00)	1,850.00	308.33	43.02
6	I ₆	1 (100)	1 (100.00)	2,200.00	2,200.00	244.44
All groups		100	94	83,230.00	332.30	166.46

Note: H.H. denotes Households

(Figures in parentheses are percentage of indebted households to total households in each group)

Data presented in Table 7.10 reveal that majority of the labour households, irrespective of their level of income are

indebted and that the extent of indebtedness does not decrease with increase in the level of income. There could be several possible explanations for this phenomenon. First of all, the earnings of most of the households including those in the highest income group are not sufficient to meet the consumption expenses.

Secondly, higher incidence of debt is indicative of not only the economic condition of the borrower but also of the willingness of the lender to lend money. It is quite possible that with higher per capita money income, the credit worthiness of borrowers might also have increased so as to induce the lenders to lend more. This could be one of the reasons for the high level of indebtedness of the household in the highest income group.

Another reason for the increased incidence of debt could be easy availability from employers in the form of advance payments on account of the employer's strategy to keep them 'tied' so as to reduce the risk involved in the nonavailability of labour during peak seasons.

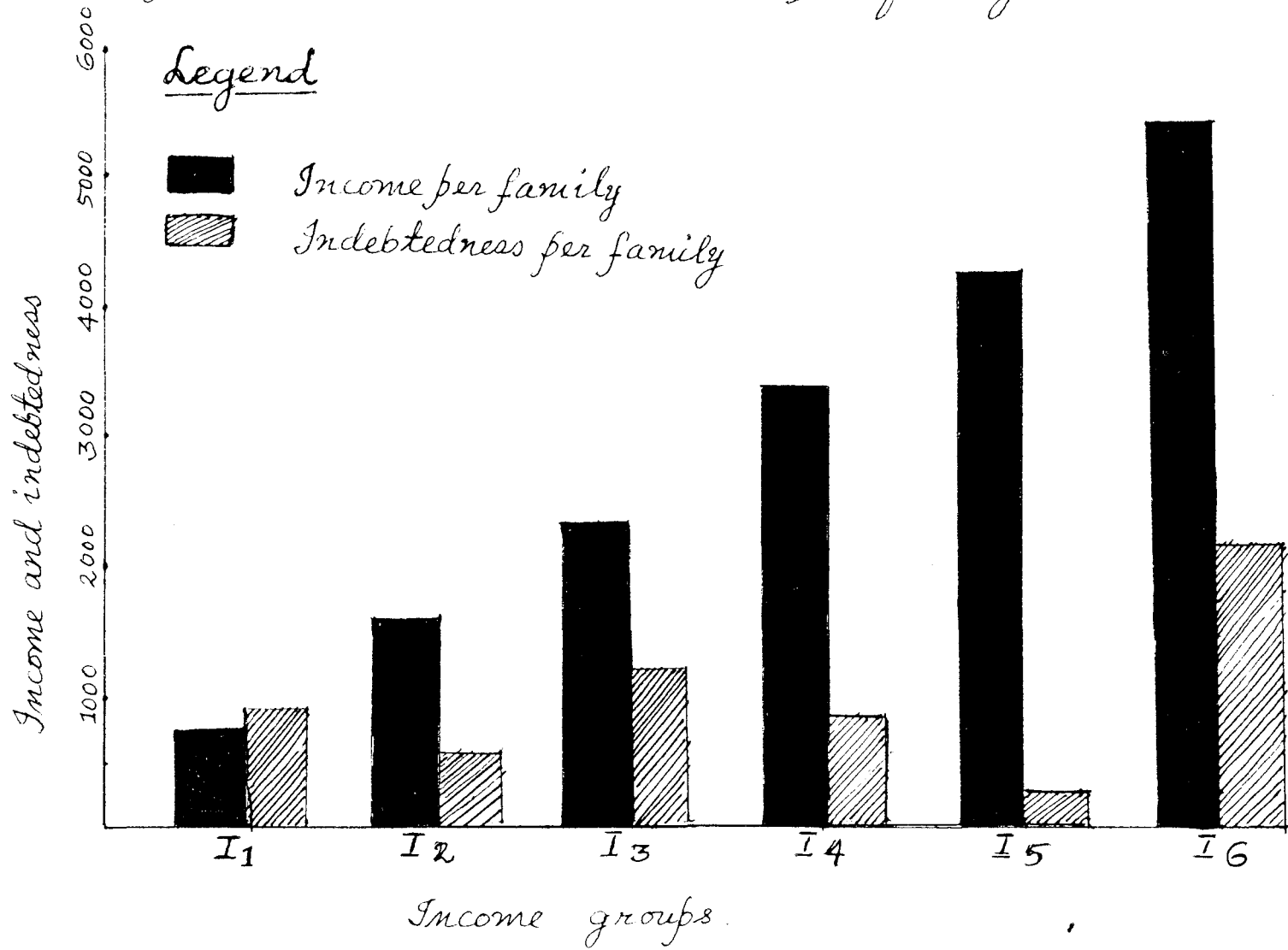
Another possible reason for the chronic indebtedness of these households is that there are quite a few environmental factors operating on these individuals in such a way that they do not feel so bad about borrowing for consumption.

His numerous colleagues and friends are habitually indebted. So the status of being indebted has some sort of a social approval. Atleast it is not frowned upon by his friends and relatives.

The income and indebtedness per family in different income groups are presented in Fig. 7.5. which show that there is no correlation between the level of income and the extent of indebtedness per family in the selected labour households. It follows therefore that an increase in the level of income of households would not automatically bring forth a reduction in the extent of indebtedness. Although improvement in the level of income is important in the case of low income groups to stabilise income and consumption expenditure, what is more important in the case of higher income groups is to exercise control over expenditure. One will have to forego ones minor pleasures for some time till the entire loan is repaid. It is here that they need the help of social workers who would work with them to re-formulate the budget to cut down inessential expenses and somehow help them to survive through the next few months or years.

The debt range among selected agricultural labour households are presented in Table 7.11.

Fig. 7.5. Income and indebtedness per family



**Table 7.11. Debt range among selected
Agricultural Labour Households**

Sl. No. -1-	Debt range in Rupees -2-	No. of Households -3-
1	0 - 500	61
2	501 - 1,000	19
3	1,001 - 1,500	7
4	1,501 - 2,000	3
5	2,001 - 2,500	3
6	2,501 - 3,000	3
7	3,001 and above	4
Total		100

It could be observed from Table 7.11 that the indebtedness of majority of the households (80 per cent) was below Rs. 1,000.00. Of the balance 20 per cent of the households 10 per cent were in the debt range from Rs. 1,001/- to Rs. 2,000/-, 6 per cent in the range from Rs. 2,001/- to Rs. 3,000/- and 4 per cent were having a debt over Rs. 3,000/-.

Purpose of borrowing

Because of the general inflation and the gap in household income and expenditure, most of the agricultural labour households are indebted. Table 7.12 shows the amounts of borrowing

made by the selected agricultural labour households for different purposes.

Table 7.12. Purpose of borrowing and the amount of debt incurred by the selected agricultural labour households

Sl. No.	Purpose of borrowing	Amount of debt	Percentage of total debt
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-
1	Consumption	26,580	31.94
2	Social and religious functions	21,400	25.71
3	Medicine and treatment	13,950	16.76
4	Maintenance of house	2,000	2.40
5	Production	15,400	18.50
6	Others	3,900	4.69
	Total	83,230	100.00

It can be observed from Table 7.12 that the highest percentage (31.94) of debt was incurred for meeting consumption expenses followed by social and religious expenses (25.71 per cent) and production purposes (18.50 per cent).

Shelter

The type of residence used for living shows, to a great extent, the economic position of household, especially in a country where the most attractive form of investment seems to be the construction, renewal or acquisition of a house, which is considered as a status symbol.

The data on the standard of housing of agricultural labourers in the different income groups are presented in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13. Types of houses possessed by the selected Agricultural Labour Households (Income groupwise)

Sl. No.	Income group	Type of houses				Total No. of houses
		Type of construction		Type of roofing		
		Pucca	Kacha	Tiled	Thatched	
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
1	I ₁	—	9 (100.00)	5 (55.56)	4 (44.46)	9 (100)
2	I ₂	—	29 (100.00)	18 (62.07)	11 (37.93)	29 (100)
3	I ₃	1 (2.86)	34 (97.14)	29 (82.86)	6 (17.14)	35 (100)
4	I ₄	1 (5.00)	19 (95.00)	14 (70.00)	6 (30.00)	20 (100)
5	I ₅	—	6 (100.00)	5 (83.33)	1 (16.61)	6 (100)
6	I ₆	—	1 (100.00)	1 (100.00)	—	1 (100)
Total		2	98	72	28	100

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total)

Data in Table 7.13 show that only 2 per cent of the houses were pucca and the rest were kutchha ones. Of the total 100 houses 72 were tiled and 28 were thatched.

As far as income groups are concerned the percentage of thatched houses decreased as the income of households increased except in income group I₄.

Number of rooms available in houses

The number of rooms available per person also give some indication of the level of living of people. Data on the number of rooms available per household and per family member are presented in Table 7.14. The data reveal an interesting feature that the number of rooms available per person decreases as the income of household increases.

Table 7.14. Number of rooms per household and per family member in the selected agricultural labour households

Sl. No.	Income group	Sample size	No. of family members	No. of rooms available	No. of rooms per household	No. of rooms per family members
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-
1	I ₁	9	31	22	2.44	0.71
2	I ₂	29	119	75	2.59	0.63
3	I ₃	35	190	96	2.74	0.51
4	I ₄	20	108	49	2.45	0.45
5	I ₅	6	43	18	3.00	0.41
6	I ₆	1	9	2	2.00	0.22
All groups		100	500	262	2.62	0.52

It was already observed that as the family size increased, income of household also increased. This means that the number of rooms per family member and other convenience in the houses did not increase as the size of the family increased, although the household income increased simultaneously with the increase in family size. The possible conclusion that one can draw is that affluence did not lead to status consciousness so as to make any improvement in the living conditions.

Health and Hygiene

Aspects of health and hygiene were studied on the basis of access to hospital and medical care other than hospitals (services of private doctors, indigenous medical practitioners, etc.), number of man days lost due to diseases, source and access to drinking water, type of latrines, etc.

Access to medical care

The details regarding the availability and accessibility to medical care are furnished in Table 7.15. The data presented show that 35 per cent of the households had accessibility to hospitals at a distance of less than 1 km, 38 per cent at 1 - 2 km and 27 per cent at distance of above 2 km. As far as access to medical care other than hospital is concerned, 55 per cent of the households had it at less than

1 km, 27 per cent at distance 1 - 2 km and the rest of 18 per cent of households had no access to medical care other than hospital.

Table 7.15. Distribution of selected agricultural labour households according to accessibility to hospitals and medical care other than hospitals

Distribution of households according to accessibility to hospitals					Distribution of households according to access to medical care other than hospitals				
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-
No access	Less than 1 km	1-2km	Above 2 km	Total	No access	Less than 1 km	1-2km	Above 2 km	Total
-	35	38	27	100	18	55	27	-	100

Availability of drinking water

Data on the source and accessibility to the source of drinking water are presented in Table 7.16 which show that only 2 per cent of the households had their own source of drinking water. The other 98 per cent had to depend on public well, public taps or private tanks for drinking water.

As far as the distance to source of drinking water is concerned, for 70 per cent of the households the source of drinking water was at a distance of less than 0.25 km and the rest of 21 per cent of the households had sources of drinking water at distances ranging from 0.25 to 0.5 km.

Table 7.16. Distribution of selected agricultural labour households according to source and accessibility to drinking water

Distribution of households according to source of drinking water						Distribution of households according to accessibility to source of drinking water			
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-	-5-	-6-	-7-	-8-	-9-	-10-
Own well/tank	Other pvt. wells	Public wells	Public taps	Pvt. tanks	Total	Less than 0.25km	0.25 to 0.5km	Above 0.5km	Total
2	34	18	41	5	100	79	21	—	100

Type of Latrines

The availability and the type of latrines are good indicators of the living condition of people. Out of the 100 selected households surveyed only 2 per cent had latrines (country type). Public latrines were also not available in the near about areas. This shows that almost all the households are in unhygienic conditions.

Man days lost due to diseases

Data on man days lost due to diseases are furnished in Table 7.17. The average number of man days lost due to diseases per family ranged from 3.54 in group I₂ to 10 in group I₆, the average for the sample as a whole being 4.44. The number of man days lost due to illness were found to be low in all the income groups probably because:-

(1) Man days lost during peak periods only - that is during harvesting and planting periods were taken into account.

(11) The low level of income and lack of employment opportunities might have forced them to work whenever employment was available even when they were not physically well.

Table 7.17. Average number of man days lost per family in the different income groups of selected Agricultural Labour Households

Sl. No.	Income group	Total No. of man days lost due to diseases	Average No. of man days lost due to diseases per family
-1-	-2-	-3-	-4-
1	I ₁	32.00	3.56
2	I ₂	102.68	3.54
3	I ₃	195.50	5.59
4	I ₄	80.00	4.00
5	I ₅	24.00	4.00
6	I ₆	10.00	10.00
All groups		444.18	4.44

As such the comparatively low number of days lost due to illness cannot be taken as an indication of a good health status enjoyed by the labourers.

Leisure

Opinion of respondents regarding the number of days they are willing to work in a week was also studied. Table 7.18 has

been prepared on the basis of this information.

Table 7.18. Distribution of respondents on the basis of the number of days they are willing to work during a week and leisure time activities

Sl. No.	Income groups	No. of respondents	Distribution of respondents on the basis of their willingness to work in a week			Leisure time activities
			5 days	6 days	7 days	
1	I ₁	9	2	7	-	Nil
2	I ₂	29	2	24	3	..
3	I ₃	35	1	26	8	..
4	I ₄	20	1	14	5	..
5	I ₅	6	-	5	1	..
6	I ₆	1	-	1	-	..
All groups		100	6	77	17	Nil

It was observed that the majority of respondents (77 per cent) wanted a day's rest after 6 days of work in a week. Seventeen per cent of the respondents were willing to work on all days in a week while 6 per cent preferred to work only for 5 days in a week. The reason for preference for a lower number of days of work in a week by the poorer households was stated to be their poor health conditions which did not permit continuous hard work.

It was also observed that none of the respondents had any sort of leisure time activities.

Aspirations

Only educational and occupational aspirations of the respondents for their children were taken up for the study.

Educational Aspirations

On the basis of the aspirations of the respondents for the education of their sons and daughters Table 7.19 has been constructed.

From the data presented in Table 7.19 it could be observed that for the sample as a whole 75.44 per cent of the respondents desired matriculation and 17.54 per cent desired graduation as the level of education for their sons while 7.02 per cent preferred to have only middle school education for their sons.

As far as female children are concerned 65.31 per cent of the respondents desired high school education, 16.33 per cent desired middle school education and 8.16 per cent desired college education for their daughters. 10.2 per cent had no definite opinion.

Table 7.19. Distribution of respondents according to their Educational Aspirations for children

Sl. No.	Income group	Distribution of respondents on the basis of their aspirations on the level of education for their sons					Distribution of respondents on the basis of their aspirations on the level of education for their daughters					
		LP	UP	H	C	Total	LP	UP	H	C	No appli- ration	Total
1	I ₁	—	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	—	3 (100)	—	2 (40.00)	1 (20.00)	1 (20.00)	1 (20.00)	5 (100)
2	I ₂	—	—	14 (87.50)	2 (12.50)	16 (100)	—	1 (9.09)	8 (72.73)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
3	I ₃	—	2 (8.33)	18 (75.00)	4 (16.67)	24 (100)	—	3 (15.00)	14 (70.00)	2 (10.00)	1 (5.00)	20 (100)
4	I ₄	—	1 (12.50)	6 (75.00)	1 (12.50)	8 (100)	—	2 (25.00)	4 (50.00)	—	2 (25.00)	8 (100)
5	I ₅	—	—	2 (40.00)	3 (60.00)	5 (100)	—	—	4 (100.00)	—	—	4 (100)
6	I ₆	—	—	1 (100.00)	—	1 (100)	—	—	1 (100.00)	—	—	1 (100)
All groups		—	4 (7.02)	43 (75.44)	10 (17.54)	57 (100)	—	8 (16.33)	32 (65.31)	4 (8.16)	5 (10.20)	49 (100)

Figures in parentheses are percentage to total of respective groups

LP : denotes Lower Primary
UP : denotes Upper Primary

H : denotes High School
C : denotes College

Occupational Aspirations

Occupation which the respondents aspired for their children were reported as agricultural labour, government service and others. The distribution of the respondents on the basis of their occupational aspirations for their children is presented in Table 7.20.

Out of the total of 69 respondents 40.58 per cent aspired government service, 11.59 per cent desired other occupations and 10.15 per cent preferred agricultural labour as occupations for their sons. 37.68 per cent had no definite aspirations.

As far as female children are concerned, out of the total of 48 respondents 39.59 per cent aspired government service and 8.33 per cent desired agricultural labour occupation for their daughters. The balance 52.08 per cent had no definite aspirations. They wanted their daughters to get married as early as possible.

Trade Union activities

Unlike other states in the country Kerala is characterised by the numerical strength and militancy of organisation of agricultural labourers. These unions are

Table 7.20. Distribution of respondents according to the occupational aspirations for their children

Sl. No.	Income group	No. of respondents who preferred occupations for their sons as					No. of respondents who preferred occupations for their daughters as				
		Agri. labour	Civil service	Others	No aspiration	Total	Agri. labour	Civil service	Others	No aspiration	Total
1	I ₁	-	2 (50.00)	-	2 (50.00)	4 (100)	-	2 (50.00)	-	2 (50.00)	4 (100)
2	I ₂	3 (13.64)	7 (31.81)	2 (9.10)	10 (45.45)	22 (100)	3 (7.70)	4 (30.76)	-	8 (61.54)	13 (100)
3	I ₃	3 (10.00)	12 (40.00)	3 (10.00)	12 (40.00)	30 (100)	-	9 (47.37)	-	10 (52.63)	19 (100)
4	I ₄	1 (16.67)	3 (50.00)	1 (16.67)	1 (16.66)	6 (100)	2 (28.57)	1 (14.29)	-	4 (57.14)	7 (100)
5	I ₅	-	4 (66.67)	1 (16.67)	1 (16.67)	6 (100)	-	3 (75.00)	-	1 (25.00)	4 (100)
6	I ₆	-	-	1 (100.00)	-	1 (100)	1 (100.00)	-	-	-	1 (100)
All groups		7 (10.15)	28 (40.58)	8 (11.59)	26 (37.68)	69 (100)	4 (8.33)	19 (39.59)	-	25 (52.08)	48 (100)

Figures in parentheses are percentage to total of respective groups

organised by political parties. Data regarding the membership of respondents are presented in Table 7.21. It is evident from the table that 71 per cent of the respondents have membership in trade union organisations and that the most powerful organisation is the Kerala State Karshaka Thoshilali Union which is affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Table 7.21. Membership of respondents in the trade union organisations

Income group	No. of respondents having membership in			No. of respondents having no membership in any of the organisations	Total
	KSKTU	DKTF	Others		
I ₁	7	-	-	2	9
I ₂	20	-	-	9	29
I ₃	21	1	1	12	35
I ₄	14	-	-	6	20
I ₅	6	-	-	-	6
I ₆	1	-	-	-	1
Total	69	1	1	29	100

Notes:- KSKTU denotes Kerala State Karshaka Thoshilali Union sponsored by the CPI(M)
DKTF denotes Desseya Karshaka Thoshilali Federation affiliated to the Congress Party

Based on the replies made by the respondents to a question "Why you joined / did not join the trade union organisation", Table 7.22 has been constructed. Majority of the members (85.92 per cent) replied that they had joined the organisation because it was beneficial to them while 1.41 per cent felt that the organisation was beneficial to the community. However 11.26 per cent reported that they were forced to join. With regard to nonmembers 31.03 per cent was not interested in the trade union activities while 27.59 per cent considered it as a nuisance. Among the nonmembers 20.69 per cent felt that the organisations were not beneficial to them and 3.45 per cent was reluctant to pay subscriptions.

Table 7.22. Distribution of respondents according to their reasoning for joining / not joining the organisation

Income group	Reasons for joining					Reasons for not joining					Grand Total	
	A	B	C	D	Total	E	F	G	H	I		Total
I ₁	5	1	1	-	7	-	1	-	-	1	2	9
I ₂	14	-	5	1	20	5	1	2	-	1	9	29
I ₃	23	-	-	-	23	2	5	3	-	2	12	35
I ₄	14	-	-	-	14	2	1	1	1	1	6	20
I ₅	5	-	1	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I ₆	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	61 (85.92)	1 (1.41)	8 (11.26)	1 (1.41)	71 (100)	9 (31.03)	8 (27.59)	6 (20.69)	1 (3.45)	5 (17.24)	29 (100)	100

(Figures in parentheses are percentage to total)

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The present study was conducted with a view to understand the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers in Palghat district. The specific objectives of the investigation were the following:-

1. To understand the levels of employment, under-employment and unemployment of agricultural labourers in Palghat district.
2. To study the wage rates and mode of payment of wages in the locality.
3. To estimate the income of agricultural labour households.
4. To assess the expenditure and level of living.
5. To estimate the savings and indebtedness of labour households.
6. To understand other details such as health and hygiene aspirations and values, unionisation, etc.

Alathur and Chittur Blocks were purposively selected for the study.

One hundred agricultural labour households were selected at random from four villages belonging to two

Panchayaths each from a C.D. Block adopting a three stage random sampling. The data were collected during the months of February, March, April and May 1983. The reference period was from 1st March 1982 to 28th February, 1983.

Area of study

Palghat district situated in the central part of Kerala state comprises of five taluks. The district is divided into 12 C.D. Blocks. Palghat is having tropical climate with a normal rainfall of 2397 mm per annum. Agriculture is the main occupation absorbing 59.4 per cent of the working population. Agricultural labourers constitute nearly 45 per cent of the working population.

The major crop raised is paddy comprising 54.11 per cent of the total cropped area. The district produces about 28.77 per cent of the total production of rice in the state and nearly cent per cent of ground nut and cotton produced in the state. The cropping intensity was found to be 157.01. There are seven irrigation projects in the district. The district is very backward in industrial development.

General characteristics of the sample households

Unlike other parts of the country where the majority of agricultural labourers belonged to scheduled castes, 73 per cent of the selected households belonged to Ezhava

community (which is considered as a backward community), 23 per cent belonged to scheduled caste and 4 per cent to Muslims. The total number of members in the sample households was 500 of which 50.2 per cent was males and 49.8 per cent females. The sex ratio worked out to 992 and was quite contradictory to the pattern for the District as well as the state.

Of the total members in the sample households 66.4 per cent comprised adults and 33.6 per cent children. The average family size for the sample as a whole was 5. The highest income group had the highest family size and the lowest income group had the lowest family size. The labourers had no incentive to limit the family size, as a higher family size meant a higher earning power.

Of the total population 55.2 per cent constituted the potential labour force belonging to the working age group of 16 to 59 years. But the actual working labour force was 49.4 per cent. About 10.5 per cent of the total labour force did not find employment during the reference period.

Educational status

The percentage of literacy of members in the respondent households, belonging to the age of six years and above

was 52.01 which was below that of the district as well as the state. The percentage of literacy of females was less than males at all levels of education. The possible reason identified for this was that the girls were asked to perform household duties while the boys were given preferential treatment for getting education. It was found that the percentage of literacy kept on increasing with younger age groups, the highest (92.24 per cent) being in the age group of 6 to 15 years. This was a clear indication that education had taken roots in this section of population.

Economic status

The percentage of earners to total members ranged from 38.71 in income group I₁ to 37.41 in income group I₄, the figure for the sample as a whole being 49.4. The average number of earners per household for the sample as a whole was 2.47 and the dependency ratio was 1.02.

Employment

Out of the total 247 earners, 32 (12.95 per cent) who were engaged in self employment, other occupations, etc. were excluded while studying details of employment. Of the balance 215 workers 96.28 per cent was employed in agriculture while 3.72 per cent was exclusively non-agricultural workers. 19.81 per cent of agricultural workers received

non-agricultural work also occasionally. The highest percentage of agricultural labourers (100) was found in the highest and lowest income groups which did not have any non-agricultural worker.

Average employment for the sample as a whole was found to be 170.65 man days per year per household of which 77.57 per cent was in agriculture. While the males received comparatively more non-agricultural employment, females received more employment in agriculture. The total employment per worker for the sample as a whole was found to be 79.45 man days which was very low. The reasons identified for such a low level of employment were large scale tractorisation, widespread use of high yielding varieties, fragmentation of land and the abnormal weather conditions which prevailed during the reference period.

The lean months as far as employment in agriculture was concerned were identified as Karkitakam (July-August) and Chingam (August-September) when employment in agriculture per household was below 5 man days. The peak months were identified as Kanni (September-October), Tulam (October-November) and Edavam (May-June) when employment in agriculture was more than 15 man days per household.

It was found that nearly 80 per cent of the workers received employment for less than 120 days which indicated that the bulk of the workers remained unemployed for about 8 months in a year.

It was found that none of the workers was fully employed. Of the 215 workers who depended on wage employment 1.4 per cent of them was moderately under employed while 98.6 per cent of them was severely under employed. The average level of under employment for the sample as a whole was 63.37 per cent of the total available man days. It was also found that the average level of under employment for the sample as a whole was 199.22 man days per man unit. Out of the 276 members in the total labour force only 247 (89.49 per cent) could get employment during the reference period. The rest of 29 members (10.51 per cent) did not receive any employment. The level of unemployment was higher in the case of males in all the income groups than that for females.

Wage rates and mode of payment

It was found that the wages are paid both in kind and cash and that there was no uniformity in the prevalent wage rates. The attached labourers are usually paid in kind especially during the second crop season. The casual labourers are usually paid in cash. Wages in kind varied

from 6 to 10 edangazhis (6 to 10 kg of paddy approximately) for male workers and 5 to 8 edangazhis (5 to 8 kg of paddy approximately) for female workers. Harvesting charges are paid exclusively in kind on a crop sharing basis. The proportion of the share of the land lord and the labourer ranged from 7 : 1 to 6 : 1. Wages paid in cash ranged from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- in the case of male labourers and Rs. 5/- to Rs. 7/- in the case of female workers for agricultural work. Payment for non-agricultural work was made exclusively in cash which ranged from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- for male and Rs. 5/- to Rs. 8/- for female workers. It was observed that the wage rates for agricultural and non-agricultural works were more or less equal and that there was striking wage differentials between men and women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. It was also observed that the increase in the real wages of agricultural labourers during the period from 1971-72 to 1981-82 was only marginal.

Income

For the sample as a whole roughly 80 per cent of the total income was from wage employment that is 56.87 per cent from agricultural employment and 14.03 per cent from

non-agricultural wage employment. The lowest contribution to the total household income was found to be the income from crops.

It was noticed that to low income groups of households the major share of income accrued from agricultural wage employment while in the higher income groups the same was from non-agricultural activities. This suggested that those who had a combination of occupations were definitely better off than who merely depended on agricultural wage employment.

The average per capita annual income for the sample as a whole was found to be Rs. 472.39. The per capita per day income which was worked out as Rs. 1.29 was too low to fetch even a meal. The average income per consumption unit per day was also found to be very low (Rs. 1.52).

The pattern of income distribution among the selected labour households was studied making use of the Lorenz Curve which showed that there was inequality in the distribution of income and that the extent of inequality was more in Chittur Block compared to that in Alathur Block.

Expenditure

On an average the households spent Rs. 2,925.78 annually of which 62.19 per cent was on food items, 35.64 per cent on

non-food items and 2.17 per cent on non-consumption items. It was found that the absolute amount spent on food items increased as income increased. However the proportion of total expenditure on food items increased at first and then started declining as the total expenditure increased which was in conformity with Engel's law. No correlation was observed in the case of non-food items to changes in income probably because the level of expenditure was too low to be sensitive to normal income effect.

The per capita per day consumption expenditure ranged from Rs. 1.25 in income group I_1 to Rs. 2.01 in group I_6 the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 1.54. The consumption expenditure per day per consumption unit ranged from Rs. 1.50 in income group I_1 to Rs. 2.27 in group I_6 , the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 1.82. About 73 per cent of the households, that is, those in I_1 , I_2 and I_3 had a lower per adult unit consumption expenditure than the average figure for the sample as a whole. It was also found that as the per consumption unit expenditure on food increased, the proportion of food expenditure spent on cereals increased initially and then declined.

It was also found that all the households including those belonging to the higher income groups were below the poverty line.

Estimated savings

It was found that the per household income was not sufficient to meet the per household consumption expenditure in any of the income groups except in income group I₅ which comprised 6 per cent of the total households. Negative savings was noticed in 94 per cent of the households. The deficit per household ranged from 116.8 per cent of the current disposable income in income group I₁ to 3.75 per cent in group I₄. The percentage of per household deficit declined as the per household disposable income increased, except in income group I₆. It was found that majority of households were in debt and needed stabilisation of income.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness per household or per capita did not show any correlation with changes in the per household income. Indebtedness per household ranged from Rs. 303.33 in group I₃ to Rs. 2,200/- in group I₆, the average for the sample as a whole being Rs. 382.30. On an average the indebtedness per capita was Rs. 166.46. It was found that the bulk of the households were indebted irrespective of their level of income. The possible reasons for this were identified as the low earnings of households, easy availability of loans, etc.

It was found that the highest percentage of debt was incurred for meeting consumption expenses followed by social and religious functions and productive purposes.

Shelter

It was found that only 2 per cent of the households was pucca and the rest of the buildings were kutcha ones. With regard to the type of roofing, out of 100 households surveyed 72 were tiled and the rest 28 were thatched. On an average the number of rooms available per household was 2.62. It was also noticed that the number of rooms available per person decreased as the income increased.

Health and hygiene

It was seen that 35 per cent of the households had accessibility to hospitals at a distance of less than 1 km, 38 per cent between 1 and 2 km and 27 per cent at distances above 2 km. While 82 per cent of the households had accessibility to medical care other than hospitals at distances within 2 km, 18 per cent did not have any such facility.

As far as drinking water is concerned only 2 per cent of the households had their own source of drinking water. The rest had to depend on public well, tap or tank. It was

also found that only 2 per cent of the households had latrines and there were no public latrines in the near-about areas.

The average number of man days lost due to diseases per family was found to be 4.44. Man days lost due to illness during the peak periods that is during the months of Kanzi, Tulsa and Idavam only were taken into account.

Aspirations

Only educational and occupational aspirations of the respondents with regard to their children were studied. It was observed that 75.44 per cent of the respondents desired matriculation, 17.54 per cent desired graduation and 7.02 per cent desired only middle school education for their sons. As far as daughters are concerned, 65.31 per cent desired high school education, 16.33 per cent desired middle school education and 8.16 per cent desired college education while 10.2 per cent had no definite opinion.

With regard to occupation 40.58 per cent of the respondents aspired government service and 11.59 per cent other occupations while 10.15 per cent preferred agricultural labour as occupation for their sons. 37.68 per cent had no definite opinion. As for female children 39.59 per cent

of the respondents aspired government service and 8.33 per cent agricultural labour as occupation for their daughters. 52.08 per cent had no definite aspiration.

Trade union activities

Out of the total respondents 71 per cent had membership in one or the other of the trade unions. Kerala State Karsaka Thozhilali Union was found to be the most powerful trade union in which 69 per cent of the respondents had membership. Two per cent of them were members in other trade unions while 29 per cent had no membership in any of the unions. To a question as to "Why you joined the trade union?" the majority (85.92 per cent) replied that it was beneficial for them to join in it. To a question as to "Why you did not join the trade union?" the majority of the non-members (31.03 per cent) replied that they were not interested in the union activities while 27.59 per cent felt that it was a nuisance.

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APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X

Schedule of Interview

(1)

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR HOUSE HOLD ENQUIRY

1. Name and address of respondent :

2. Religion, Caste :

3. Village, Block :

4. Family and composition :

Sl. No. (1)	Name of Members (2)	Sex (3)	Age (4)	Education					Relation to head of family (6)	Occupation		Activities of dependants (8)	Income		Other sources (specify)
				Nil	Primary (5)	Middle	High School	Higher		Main	Sub (7)		Main	Sub	

5. Land Holding

Total Area (1)	Area under building (2)	From whom received Ancestral/Purchased/ leased in/on account of land reforms (3)	Present Value (4)	Remarks (5)

Name of Member :

Name of Month	Extent of Employment		Rate of wages				Total wages	
	Agri Work	Non Agri work	Agri Work Cash	Kind	Non Agri work Cash	Kind	Cash	Kind
Meenam								
Metam								
Edavam								
Mithunam								
Karkitakam								
Chingam								
Kanni								
Thulam								
Vrischikam								
Dhanu								
Makaram								
Kumbham								

12. Levels of Living:-

A. Family Consumption Expenditure

Sl. No.	Items	Qty. consumed during				Rate per Unit	Total exp. per year
		Previous day	Previous 7 days	Previous 30 days	During a yr.		
	<u>FOOD</u>						
1	<u>Cereals</u>						
a	Rice						
b	Ragi						
c	Wheat						
d	Ravai						
e	Others Specify						
2	<u>Pulses</u>						
a	green gram						
b	black gram						
c	Red gram						
d	Bengal gram						
e	Others (Cowpea horse gram etc)						

Sl. No.	Items	Qty. consumed during				Rate per Unit	Total exp. per year
		Previous day	Previous 7 days	Previous 30 days	During a yr.		
3	<u>Spices and Condiments</u>						
a	Chilliss						
b	Tamerind						
c	Turmeric						
d	Others (Cumin, Pepper, Asafocfide)						
f	Sugars & Starches						
5	Fruits & Vegetables						
6	<u>Oils & fats</u>						
a	Coconut oil						
b	Ground nut oil						
c	Gingelly oil						
d	Vanaspathi						
e	Others (specify)						
7	<u>Milk and Milk Products</u>						
a	Butter milk						
b	milk						
c	Others (specify)						
8	<u>Non Vegetitems</u>						
a	Mutton						
b	Chicken						
c	Fish						
d	Eggs						
e	Pork						
f	Beef						
9	<u>Conventional Necessities</u>						
a	Coffee						
b	Tea						
c	Others						
a	Betil leaves						
b	Arecanut						
c	Tobacco						
d	Cigaretts						
e	Beedes						
f	Churut						
g	Snuff						
h	Amount spend in tea shops						
i	Others (Toddy Arrack						

Sl. No.	Items	Qty. consumed during				Rate per Unit	Total exp. per year
		Previous day	Previous 7 days	Previous 30 days	During a yr.		
10	<u>House rent</u>						
11	<u>Fuel & Lighting</u>						
a	Kerosine						
b	Wood leg						
c	Match box						
d	Electricity						
e	Others						
13	<u>Education</u> (for the year)						
a	School fees						
b	Books						
c	Notes						
d	Writing Materials						
14	<u>Clothing and foot wear</u>						
15	<u>Health and Medical care</u>						
a	Medicine						
b	doctors fee						
c	Others						
16	<u>Cosmetics</u>						
17	<u>Furniture Utensils etc.</u>						
18	<u>Transport and Communication</u>						
19	<u>Social and Religious expenses</u>						
a	Festival						
b	Marriage						
c	Others						
20	<u>Recreations</u>						
a	Cinema						
b	drama						
c	Others						
21	<u>Repairs & Maintainance</u>						
22	<u>Service charges</u> (washing, servant etc)						
23	<u>Newspaper, Magazine etc.</u>						
24	<u>Other Miscella- neous expi</u> Non food Total Food and Non food Total						

B. Non Consumption Expenditure

Sl. No.	Items	Monthly	Annual
1	Taxes (house tax etc.)		
2	Savings		
3	Interests, Investments, Insurance etc.		
4	Others (Specify)		
	Total		

C. Shelter

a. Type of House Pucca/Kutcha
Tiled/Thatched

b. Present value

c. Owned/rented

d. No. of rooms to a person

D. Health and Hygiene

a. Distance to the hospital/
P. H. Centre (in k. m.)

b. Access to medical care
other than hospital/P. H. Centre

c. Extent of prevention action

Adults

Children

d. Type of Latrine

e. Source of drinking water

f. Distance to the source of water (k. m.)

g. Quality of water

h. Diseases (name of disease and mandays
lost during the year for each member)

E. Leisure

1. If offered employment how many days
in a week you are prepared to work

2. What are your leisure time activities

F. Aspirations and Values

1. The level of education you would
like to give to your children

Matric/graduate/Higher

2. Occupation which you
aspire for your children

} Agri. lab./Military/Civil Service/Business

Male :
Female :

13. **Indebtedness and Savings**

A. Indebtedness

Sl. No.	Agency	Date of borrowing	Purpose	Security	Amount	Interest rates	Amount outstanding	Remarks (Specify bondage if any)

14. **Savings :**

(Loans advanced, Jewellery, Cash in hand, Cash in bank, Kuris etc.)

S. No.	Form of saving	Year	Present Value	Remarks

13. Trade Union Activities of Respondents

- a. **Are you a member of any Trade Union?** Yes/No
- b. **Name of the organisations**
- c. **Why did you join the organisations?**
- i) **Beneficials to me**
 - ii) **Beneficial to the community**
 - iii) **Forced to joint**
 - iv) **Others**
- d. **Why did not you join the organisation**
- i) **Not interested**
 - ii) **A nuisance**
 - iii) **Not beneficial**
 - iv) **Have to pay subscriptions**
 - v) **Others**
- e. **How long you have been a members of the organisations**
14. **System of wage payment in the locality** Cash Nil
- Agri Work**
- Non Agri Work**
15. **Which do you prefer**
- a) **Farm work**
 - b) **Non farm work**
16. **What are the reasons for your preference for**
- a) **Farm Work**
 - b) **Non farm work**
17. **If you do not work on what you prefer, give reasons for the same**
18. **Wages for different kinds of job** **Male/Female**
- Farm Work**
- Construction work**
- Mill/factory work**
19. **Seasonal variations in wages for**
- digging**
- weeding**
- post harvest**
- operations**
20. **Are you adopting any family planning measures if not specify reasons**

WORK, WAGES AND WELLBEING OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN PALGHAT DISTRICT

By

P. N. SANKAR

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of
Master of Science in Agriculture
Kerala Agricultural University

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to understand the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers in Palghat district. The specific objectives of the study were

1. To study the level of education of agricultural labourers
2. To understand the extent of employment, under employment and unemployment
3. To study the wage rates and mode of payment of wages
4. To assess the level of income, expenditure, levels of living, savings, indebtedness and other aspects such as health, hygiene, aspirations, etc.

Alathur and Chittur Blocks which are having the highest percentage of agricultural labourers in the district were selected for the study. One hundred agricultural labour households were selected from four villages belonging to two Panchayaths each from a Block, adopting a three stage random sampling.

Unlike other parts of the country where the majority of agricultural labourers belonged to scheduled castes, only 23 per cent of the selected households belonged to scheduled castes. Seventy three per cent belonged to Eshava and the

rest to Muslim communities. The sex ratio worked out for the sample as a whole was 992 which was quite contradictory to the pattern for the district as well as the State.

The average family size for the sample as a whole was found to be 5. The lowest income group had the lowest family size and the highest income group had the highest family size.

It was found that 55.2 per cent of the population in the selected households constituted the potential labour force but only 49.4 per cent constituted the actual working labour force.

The percentage of literacy of members in the age groups of six years and above was 52.01 which was below that of the district as well as the State. The percentage of literacy of females was less than males at all levels of education.

For the sample as a whole the average number of earners worked out as 2.47 and the dependency ratio was 1.02.

Average annual employment per household for the sample as a whole was found to be 170.65 man days of which 77.5 per cent was in agriculture. The average annual employment per worker was found to be 79.45 man days which was very low. The severe drought which affected the crop during the reference period, large scale use of tractors, fragmentation of land,

use of high yielding varieties, labour saving tactics of farmers, etc. were the possible reasons identified for the low level of employment per person.

The months of Karkkitakan and Chingan were identified as the lean months and the months Edavan, Kanni and Tulas were identified as peak months as far as employment in agriculture is concerned.

Nearly 80 per cent of the workers received employment for less than 120 days which indicated that the bulk of the workers remained unemployed for about 8 months in a year.

It was also found that none of the workers was fully employed; 1.4 per cent of them was moderately under employed, 98.6 per cent was severely under employed. The average level of under employment for the sample as a whole was 66.37 per cent of the total available man days. Under employment per man unit was 66.41 per cent of the total available man days per man unit. It was also found that 10.51 per cent of the potential labour force was unemployed.

The wage rates of labourers ranged from Rs.10/- to Rs.15/- in the case of males and Rs.5/- to Rs.7/- in the case of females for employment in agriculture. For non-agricultural workers the rates ranged from Rs.10/- to Rs.20/- for males

and Rs.5/- to Rs.8/- for females. There was striking wage differentials between men and women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Payments made in kind ranged from 6 to 10 edangazhis of paddy for male and 5 to 8 edangazhis of paddy for females. Harvesting is paid exclusively in kind and the share of the land lord and the labourer ranged from 7 : 1 to 6 : 1. It was observed that the increase in the real wages of agricultural labourers during the period from 1971-72 to 1981-82 was only marginal.

For the sample as a whole roughly 80 per cent of the total income accrued from wage employment; 57 per cent from agricultural and 14 per cent from non-agricultural employment. The rest was from other sources. The average per capita annual income for the sample as a whole was Rs.472.39. The per capita per day income was found to be Rs. 1.29 and per day income per adult consumption unit was Rs. 1.52. It was also observed that there was inequality in the distribution of income.

On an average the households spent Rs. 2925.78 annually of which 62.2 per cent was on food items. It was found that as income increased the proportion of total expenditure on food increased at first and then started declining. No correlation was observed in the case of non-food items to changes in income.

The per capita per day consumption expenditure ranged from Rs.1.25 to Rs.2.01, the average for the sample as a whole being Rs.1.54. The consumption expenditure per day per consumption unit was Rs.1.82 for the sample as a whole. It was also found that all the households in sample were below poverty line.

The per household income was found to be insufficient to meet the per household consumption expenditure in any of the income groups except in income group I₅. Negative saving was noticed in 94 per cent of the households. The deficit per household for the sample as a whole was Rs.503.05.

On an average for the sample as a whole indebtedness per family and per capita were found to be Rs.832.30 and Rs.168.45 respectively. Indebtedness per household or per capita did not show any correlation to changes in the per household income. The highest percentage of indebtedness was found to be incurred for meeting consumption expenses followed by social and religious functions.

Ninety eight per cent of the houses of the labourers was found to be kutcha ones. Seventy two per cent was tiled and the rest thatched. On an average the number of rooms available per household was 2.62.

It was found that all the selected households had accessibility to hospitals at distance ranging from less than 1 km to more than 2 km.

Only two per cent of the households had their own source of drinking water and the rest had to depend on public taps, public or private wells and tanks. Similarly only 2 per cent of households had latrines.

The number of man days lost due to diseases per family was found to be 4.44. Only the days lost during peak seasons were taken into account.

It was observed that 77 per cent of the respondents preferred to have a days rest during a week.

With regard to the educational aspirations of respondents for their children the majority of them desired high school education for their sons and daughters. As far as occupational aspirations are concerned 40.58 per cent desired government service for their sons while 37.68 per cent had no definite opinion. For female children 39.59 per cent aspired government service while 52.08 per cent had no definite opinion.

It was found that 71 per cent of the respondents had membership in trade union organisations. The Kerala State Karsaka Thoshilali Union was found to be the most powerful trade union organisation absorbing 69 per cent of the respondents as its members.