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## Socio-economic condition of agricultural labour in Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, India

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### Abstract

India is predominantly an agricultural country where around 60 -70 percent of total population is directly and indirectly still depends on agriculture for his livelihood and the country it contribute to 16-17 percent of total GDP. It still remains the most acceptable fact that agriculture continues to plays greater role in the socio economic development of the country. The agricultural labours constitutes a considerable proportion of rural work force in India. In the present study area Utter Dinajpur District in West Bengal total population. Total population of the district 30lakh. Above 83.36 percent of labour of total are male and rest are female. Nearly 37.36 percent of labours are belongs to backward classes.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic condition and agricultural labour

### Introduction

Agriculture labours is the most important segment of rural population in India as well as West Bengal. They constitute about one fourth of the total work force and their contribution to rural economy is highly significant. By the term of agricultural labours we means a person who sell his or her labour power to work to another person's land for wages in money. According to the 1991 census a person who work another person's land for wages in money consider as agricultural labours. The production of agriculture depends upon the efficiency of agricultural labours which in term depends upon their socio economic condition. Most of the agricultural labours in the villages are land less and so they are fully depends on daily wages paid.

### Study area

Uttar Dinajpur is a district of the Indian state of West Bengal. Created on 1<sup>st</sup> April in 1992 by the division of west Dinajpur district. It comprises two sub-division Raiganj and Islampur. This district lies between latitudes 25°11'N to 26°49'N and longitudes 87°49'E to 90°00'E occupying an area of 3142sq km. the regional topography is generally flat with gentle southerly slope towards the main river like Kulik Nagar and Mahananda. The districts forms a part of the basin lying between Rajmahal hills on the east. The older alluvium is estimated to be Pleistocene age. An altitudes of the districts is 36 to 76 meter. Uttar Dinajpur is bestowed with a very fertile soil. The soil is very rich in nature due to the alluvial deposition. In this district the nature of climate is classified as worm and temperate. The summer are much rainier than winter in this district. This climate is considered to be a Cwa according to koppen climatic classification. In the district the average annual temperature is 24.9 °C and the average annual rainfall is 1570 mm. This climate is favorable for the growth of paddy, jute, maize, sugarcane etc. Raiganj sub-division is well known for its Tulaipanji rice. Here the major Tulaipanji (paddy) growing area are Raiganj, Kaliaganj, Hemtabad, Itahar. Pineapple is the major fruits in this district. Major pineapple growing area is Chopra, Islampur and Karandighi.

### Problems of agriculture labours in rural India

The first agricultural labour enquiry was conducted in the year 1950-51 by the Ministry of labour. The enquiries revealed the followings problems of agricultural labour.

1. Low wage rate. This is the main problems of this sector.
2. Increasing of family members is the problems of land less agricultural labours.

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3. The gross income of agriculture is very low.
4. Most of the agriculture labours belongs to backward classes.
5. They do not have any organization and union.

**Objective of the study**

1. To examine the problems face by the agricultural labour in study area.
2. To find out the income and expenditure pattern of agricultural labours.
3. To examine the socio economic condition of agricultural labours.
4. To analysis the interrelationship between the agricultural labours and land owner.
5. To study the composition of assets and liabilities of agricultural labours.

**Methodology**

The information collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data collected from different statistical book, agricultural development office Etc. The primary data collected by a well design of interview schedule was drafted and use in the field survey.

**Demographic characteristics**

The different demographic features of agricultural labours of Uttar Dinajpur District is discus below

**Gender**

The sex composition of the sample of agricultural labour is presented on table 1.

**Table 1:** Sex composition

Sex	No of respondents	Percent
Male	272	78.84
Female	73	21.15
Total	345	100

Source: field survey data.

The table explain that the male constitute 78.84 percent of total agricultural labours and rest is the female i.e. 21.15 percent in the Uttar Dinajpur district. In the different part of cultivation like Ploughing, sowing, embarking, watering require more male labours than female.

**Age**

Details of age composition of Uttar Dinajpur district is presented on the table 2.

**Table 2:** Age composition

Age group	No of respondents	Percent
Below 25	49	14.20
25-35	113	32.75
35-45	98	28.41
45-55	56	16.23
Above 55	29	8.40

Source: field survey data.

From the table two it is reveals that 32 percent of agricultural labours fall in the age group of 25-35 years. 28 percent of workers are in the group of 35-45 years. 16 percent of workers are falls in the groups in 45-55 years. 15 percent below 25 years and 8 percent falls in above 55 years.

**Caste**

Caste composition of agricultural labours are presented on table 3.

**Table 3:** Caste composition

Caste	No of respondents	Percent
Un reserve	9	2.60
Obc	217	62.89
Sc	28	8.11
St	91	26.84
Total	345	100

Source: field survey data.

From the represented table it is express that 62 percent of agricultural labours are belong to other backward classes and 26 percent of labours were schedule tribe. Schedule caste constitute 8 percent where UN reserve category constitute only 2 percent of total agricultural labours. Other backward caste labour were highly concentrate in Chopra, Islampur, Goalpokhor-1 and 2 block where as schedule tribe labour highly concentrate in Itahar, Kaliaganj and Hemtabad block.

**Marital status**

The marital status of respondents of agricultural labours are presented in table 4.

**Table 4**

Marital status	No of respondents	Percent
Married	298	86.37
Unmarried	29	8.40
Widowed	18	5.25

Source: field survey data.

Table 4 reveals that 86 percent of agricultural labours were married where as 2 percent were unmarried. Rest of the agricultural labours were widowed.

**Size of family**

Size of family of respondents of agricultural labours in Uttar Dinajpur district is presented table 5.

**Table 5:** Family size

No of family members	No of respondents	Percent
Below 3	11	3.18
4-6	276	80.00
7-8	35	10.14
Above 8	23	6.66

Source: field survey data.

From the represented table it is observed that 80 percent of agricultural labours family member in between 4 - 6 person. Because most of the labours were illiterate they do not have any consciousness about population control. Only 3 percent of total workers having small family. 10 percent of rest 6 percent of total respondents having family members above 8 person.

**Educational status**

The level of literacy plays important role in the decision Making and active participation in any agricultural activities.

**Table 6:** Educational status

Educational stage	No of respondents	Percent
Illiterate	272	78.84
Elementary	72	20.86
Secondary	1	0.29

Source: field survey data

In the study area, 52 percent of agriculture labours were illiterate and 20 percent of labours are able to write and read i.e. studied up to primary level. Only 1 person studied up to secondary level but he works occasionally in the agriculture field.

### Income of respondents

Monthly income is the most important indicators of Socio-economic development of agricultural labour. The wages of labours were fixed by the state government. In the year 2016 the wages was fixed as 225 without food and 209 with food for unskilled agricultural labours per day, 247 without food and 231 with food for semi-skilled labours, 273 without food and 256 with food for skilled agricultural labours.

**Table 8:** Income of respondents

Monthly income	No of respondents	Percent
Below 3000	84	24.34
3000-6000	189	54.78
Above 6000	72	20.86

Source: field survey data.

From table it is clear that 54 percent of workers earns between 3000-6000 rupees per month while 24.34 percent of workers earns below 3000 rupees and rest 20 percent earns above 6000 rupees per month.

### Housing condition

There were many types of house found in the study Area. Details of house condition is presented on the table 6.

**Table 6:** House condition

House types	No of respondents	Percent
Hut	149	43.18
Pucca	6	1.73
Kutchha	86	24.92
Mixed	104	30.14
Total	345	100

Source: field survey data.

Table 6 reveals that 43 percent of agricultural labours had hut types of house where as only 1.7 percent workers have Pucca house. 30 percent of total agricultural labours lived in mixed types of house and rest 24 percent labours have Kutchha house.

### Water supply and sanitary facility

Pure water supply and proper sanitary facilities is very essential for the socio economic development of agriculture labours. 89 percent respondent's of agricultural labours out of total were having supply of drinking water by different method like tube well, hand pipe etc. only 39 percent out of total respondents having latrine facility and rest 61 percent have no any kinds of latrine. Maximum of the latrine were constructed by state and central government scheme.

### Major finding of the study

- 78.84 percent of agricultural labours are male while 21.15 percent are female.
- Around one third (32.75%) of agricultural labours are in the age group of 25-35 years.
- Maximum number (62.89%) of agricultural labours are belongs to other backward classes.
- 86 percent of agricultural labours are married and 5 percent are widowed.
- 78.84 percent workers out of total are illiterate.
- 43 percent of agricultural labours are lived in hut House while only 1.7 percent of workers have Pucca house.
- Above 78 percent of workers monthly income below 6000 per month.

### Suggestion for improvement

Following suggestion are be made for the improvement of the socio economic condition of agricultural labours.

- To arrange of proper training for improving the skill of agricultural labours.
- Improving the working efficiency of agricultural labours.
- Proper application of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNRES).
- The wages of the labours should be increase as per the maximum wages fixed by the government.
- Protection of women and child labours in field of agriculture.

### Conclusion

In the investigation of socio economic condition of agriculture labours in Uttar Dinajpur District it is found that the most important problems in agriculture is the lower wages by which they do not fulfill their basic need. Lack of pure water supply and proper sanitary facilities is also the problems of the workers. Most of the agricultural labours of the study are illiterate despite that now they are encouraging their children to study.

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