



## PATTERN OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Most of the studies on rural India focus on agricultural labour conditions, gender discrimination and there are very few studies on caste based pattern of employment in India. The rural India reveals the significant existence of caste discrimination in employment and wages. The inequality of land ownership in rural India did not get the much desired attention, which could be observed in failure of land reform programmes. As a result there are deep inequalities of land ownership, employment opportunities, and wages in rural India. There is a need to change the pattern of employment in rural areas for better livelihoods through land reforms, infrastructure development, access to organized credit and development of non-farm sector.

**Keywords:** Rural Employment, Scheduled Castes Rural Employment, Gender Employment Discrimination

### INTRODUCTION

Agricultural labour is one of the most important segments of rural population. But it is one of the economically weakest and socially deprived sections of the rural poor. The most of the agricultural labourers belongs to socially deprived sections of society. Agricultural Labour households are among the poorest compared to other types of households in rural India in all states (Dev 1988).

NCEUS (2007) referred self-employed in agriculture as farmers and wage workers as agricultural labourers. Together they are referred to as the agricultural workers. Agricultural work force form 57 per cent of the workers in the total workforce in India during 2004-05. Nearly two-thirds of the agricultural workers (64 percent) are self-employed (farmers) and remaining, a little over one-third (36 percent) are wage workers. 98 percent of wage workers are casual labourers. In rural areas agricultural workers constitute 72.6 percent of total workers in 2004-05, down from 81.6 percent in 1983 (61<sup>st</sup> Round of NSSO).

There is the strong correlation between SC/ST household and being wage-labourers in rural India (Jha 1997). Even the most of the bonded labour come from Scheduled Castes followed by Scheduled Tribes (Sarma 1981). Thus Scheduled Castes form the major part of agricultural workforce (Saxena 1969; Jhodka 1994; Som 2005). They possess no human and physical assets and derive their livelihood from wage paid manual labour in agricultural activities.

Land ownership has not risen appreciably among Scheduled Castes. The predominance of marginal farmers among the land owners indicates that the Scheduled Castes cannot escape great dependence on agriculture labour. During early nineties most of the Scheduled Caste landholders were marginal (46.4 percent) and small farmers (31.6 percent) (Velaskar 2000). Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been kept out of the purview of farm sector relief packages of both the central and state governments.

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Scheduled castes have least access to agricultural land, and capital assets, employment and social capabilities. The Som (2005) study found that nearly 70 percent of total agricultural labourers are from Scheduled Castes. High incidence of landlessness and near landless among the Scheduled Caste households