

Socio-Economic Conditions of Agricultural Labourers in the Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

Indian economy mainly depends on the agriculture sector. At the time of independence, this sector contributed about 52% of Gross Domestic product (GDP) and employed over three-fourth of total work force in the country. In 1961, there were 31.5 million agricultural labourers in India, which accounts for around one-fourth of the agricultural work force. Some of the small and marginal landholders engaged as labourers, but these minute holdings cannot afford even bare subsistence for a family. These landholders' major part of the income is derived from working on others farmer's field. In this sense, these landholders are labourers. A large group of landless labourers belongs to the poorest and most depressed sections of society. Mostly the landless agricultural labour groups such as the *Malas* and *Madigas* are generally employed in the fields of the dominant 'ryots' as farm servants and seasonal labourers. Even though Coastal Andhra has irrigation facilities to a large extent and agricultural development is of the higher order in the region, the proportion of the agricultural labourers to the total agricultural workers has increased remarkably after the Green Revolution due to various technological advancements in the agrarian sector. Numerous agricultural labourers got displaced from the agricultural sector in rural areas due to agrarian transformation and mechanization during the green revolution period of post-independence era.

Keywords

Agricultural Labourers, Caste, Family, Income, Religion, Surveys.

INTRODUCTION

In the agrarian sector of India, the earnings and productivity of landless labourers are important aspects, which significantly define the level of economic development. There has been a steady rise in the number of landless agricultural labourers in India. According to the [8] and [9], the number of agricultural labourers was 106.7 million in 2001 and that number rose to 144.3 million in 2011. In India, the strategies to develop assets of landless agricultural labourers are a neglected realm in the Indian economy. In 2020, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an interruption of subsistence and work for most economically disadvantaged families of agricultural labourers.

For the primary survey, fifty households each in Amruthalur and Mulpur villages from Amruthalur mandal (block) of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh were selected. The survey analyses their socio-economic conditions, along with the nature and extent of their displacement from the agrarian sector. This research paper discusses the inadequacies in the existing legal provisions and social measures so far undertaken but have not been proved beneficial for the empowerment of displaced agricultural labourers due to the mechanization of agriculture. Calculation of simple percentages has been made for the understanding of data in an easy manner. Primary sources data has been collected through: interviews with landless labourers, discussions with government officials, and household surveys. The survey was conducted by the author during the time of *Makar Sankranti* in January 2022. Households of

landless agricultural labourers were visited frequently to obtain precise information regarding their socio-economic conditions. The respondents of the questionnaire were mainly the heads of the household.

Furthermore, this research paper consists of five sections. The first section provides a general profile of the two villages surveyed in Amruthalur mandal inhabited by landless agricultural labourers belonging to the *Mala* and *Madiga* communities. The second section mentions socio-economic conditions including— details of housing, assets, land, occupation, income, savings, and indebtedness. The third section analyses the family occupational history. The fourth section provides an account of migration trends among agricultural labourers. The fifth section deals with social security measures, and the last section ends with concluding observations.

For an intensive study, a total of hundred households— fifty households in Mulpur and fifty households in Amruthalur—were taken up for primary data collection from Amruthalur mandal in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. While selecting them, consideration was given to cover households of agricultural labourers belonging to the *Mala* and *Madiga* communities, who were displaced by the mechanization process in the agricultural sector. A comprehensive survey was carried out with a detailed questionnaire. From Amruthalur village, thirty-five *Madiga* households and fifteen *Mala* households were surveyed; while the primary data of forty *Mala* households and ten *Madiga* households were collected from Mulpur village respectively— where there was the highest concentration of

displaced agricultural labourers due to the mechanization process in the agricultural sector.

Amruthalur

The distance from Amruthalur village to Guntur town is 42 kilometres and the nearest town i.e. Tenali is 17 kms away which is connected by road. The village is spread over 14.99 sq km as it is a *gram panchayat* having a total population of 6,524 people and about 1,963 houses according to 2009 statistics. As per the Census 2011, the literacy rate of Amruthalur is 74.1% while 68.16 percent is the female literacy rate. There was an availability of electricity connection and there was a *Panchayati* hand-pump for *Dalit* settlement.

Mulpur

The distance from Mulpur village to Guntur town is 36 kms and the nearest town is Tenali, which is ten kilometres away and to which it also has road connectivity. The village is spread over 12.92 sq km, as it is also a *gram panchayat* having a total population of 5,387 people and about 1,558 houses according to 2009 statistics. The literacy rate in Mulpur is 66.0 percent, whereas 31.7 percent is the literacy

rate among females according to the 2011 Census. Electricity connection is available and the majority of the *Dalit* households had hand-pumps installed.

PERSONAL DETAILS

This section deals with various characteristics of the sampled households of the landless labourers in the Guntur district including the amenities enjoyed by them and their awareness of various schemes implemented by the government. The data regarding several aspects of the members (total members = 305 persons) belonging to sampled landless labour households (total households=100) like distribution based on age, sex, religion, family size, marital status, caste, education was first collected through fieldwork and then analysed.

Population and Age

Table 1 shows the total population is 305 persons in the total 100 sampled households: 161 persons in Mulpur and in Amruthalur 144 persons. Of which, 49.7 percent were males, 44.8 percent were females in Amruthalur village. In Mulpur village 50.3 percent were males, 55.2 percent were females. The distribution of this population is as follows:

Table 1. Population of the displaced agricultural labourers in the two surveyed villages.

	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%	Total
Male	75	49.7	76	50.3	151
Female	69	44.8	85	55.2	154
Total	144	47.2	161	52.8	305

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the sampled households of agricultural labourers. It has been observed that among the sampled households in Amruthalur village, about 6 percent were in the age group of 20–29, 14 percent in 30–39, 36 percent in 40–49, 26 percent in 50–59, 14 percent in 60–69 and 4 percent in 70 and above. It has been observed that among the sampled households in Mulpur village, about

4 percent were in the age group of 20–29, 12 percent in 30–39, 34 percent in 40–49, 30 percent in 50–59, 14 percent in 60–69 and 6 percent in 70 and above category. The total population of the surveyed agricultural labourers has a majority of persons below the age of 60 i.e. 81 percent. It was observed that more middle-aged people and fewer young people were working as agricultural labourers.

Table 2. Age Pyramid of Male and Female agricultural labourers.

Age of Respondents	Number of Households	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Total	100	50		50	
70 and above	5	2	4	3	6
60–69	14	7	14	7	14
50–59	28	13	26	15	30
40–49	35	18	36	17	34
30–39	13	7	14	6	12
20–29	5	3	6	2	4
11–19	-	-	-	-	-
01–09	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Marital Status

The marital status of the sampled landless labourers can be seen in Table 3. It has been observed that the number of married persons in Amruthalur village is 96 percent; 4

percent of the population is unmarried and there are no widowers. On the other hand, the number of married persons in Mulpur village is 90 percent, while only 10 percent are widowers and none are unmarried.

Table 3. Distribution of the sampled landless labourers according to their marital status in Guntur district (2022).

Marital status	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Married	48	96	45	90
Unmarried	2	4	-	-
Widower	-	-	5	10
Total Population	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Family Size

Table 4 shows the distribution of the sampled landless labourers according to their family size. Most agricultural labourers have a nuclear family consisting of a father, mother, son, and daughter. The majority of the households i.e. 50

households) have a family size between 4 to 6 members. 46 households which constitute 92 percent have 2 to 3 members in the family. The remaining households having different family sizes are shown in Figure 4.4. This shows that there were few households comprising of very large families but members did not share a common kitchen (Figure 4.4).

Table 4. Frequency of number of members in households.

No. of family members	Number of Households	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
1 member	2	-	-	2	4
2-3 members	46	20	40	26	52
4-6 members	50	29	58	21	42
7 and above	1	-	-	1	2

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Religion

Table 5 is showing the distribution of the sampled landless labourers according to their religion. The table reveals that the followers of Hinduism accounted for a large majority i.e. 98 percent while the Christians were in minority i.e. 2 percent in Amruthalur. In Mulpur the followers of Hinduism consisted of a large majority i.e. 96 percent, while Christians were in minority i.e. 4 percent.

Table 5. Religion-wise distribution of the sampled landless labourer households in Guntur district (2022).

Religion	Number of households			
	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Hindu	49	98	48	96
Christian	1	2	2	4
Total sampled households	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Table 6 shows the caste-wise distribution of the sampled landless labourers. Of the total 100 households, it is observed that all the people belonged to the Scheduled Caste communities. Among the SC— 34 percent were *Malas* and 66 percent were *Madigas* in Amruthalur. Whereas in

Mulpur—82 percent were *Malas* and 18 percent were *Madigas*. Field survey shows that the landless labourers mostly belonged to economically poor and socially oppressed sections of the society (Table 6).

Table 6. Caste-wise distribution of the sampled landless labourer households in Guntur district (2022).

Caste	Number of households			
	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Mala	17	34	41	82
Madiga	33	66	9	18
Total sampled households	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Sex Ratio

The sex ratio is one of the fundamental demographic parameters in knowing the level of development in a given society. Both male and female agricultural labourers are engaged in agricultural activities for sustenance. As per the 2011 Census, the sex ratio in Mulpur is 1011— which is higher than the Andhra Pradesh state average of 993. The average sex ratio of Amruthalur village is 979. It can be observed that there is no preference for a male child over a

female child, which can be considered as an ideal sex ratio.

Literacy

The literacy rate is one of the significant aspects for indicating the socio-economic development of a given community. The literacy rate among the surveyed population of agricultural labourers is 32 percent in Mulpur and 54 percent in Amruthalur respectively. Among female

agricultural labourers, the literacy rate is less in comparison to males. As far as the educational status of the sampled landless labourers is concerned, their condition is not promising. Table 7 shows that majority of them are uneducated. Previously the government has provided free education, incentives, schemes, and reservation for increasing the literacy rate among the SCs population but the situation has remained unchanged. (Table 7; Table 8).

Table 7. Literacy rate among agricultural labourers of surveyed villages.

Total number of respondents	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Literates	43	27	54	16	32
Males	23	14	28	9	18
Females	20	13	26	7	14
Illiterates	57	23	46	34	68
Males	32	13	26	19	38
Females	25	10	20	15	30

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Table 8. Level of education among literate agricultural labourers.

Level of Education	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Primary school	18	10	20	8	16
Male	11	6	12	5	10
Female	7	4	6	3	6
10 th class	16	12	24	4	8
Male	11	9	18	2	4
Female	5	3	6	2	4
12 th class	5	3	5	2	4
Male	3	2	4	1	2
Female	2	1	2	1	2
Graduation	4	2	4	2	4
Male	2	1	2	1	2
Female	2	1	2	1	2

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Out of the total 84 percent of literate agricultural labourers (43 persons), 36 percent have studied till 5th standard or beyond; 32 percent have studied till 10th class; and 10 percent till 12th class. Only 8 percent of the population has studied till graduation level but they were still facing the problem of unemployment.

Conditions of Housing

Data regarding amenities availed by the sampled labourer households— such as housing conditions, drinking water facilities, toilets, and electricity— has been collected through a field survey. In Mulpur, ninety percent of the surveyed agricultural labourer households owned a house, whereas 10

percent among them lived in rented houses. According to the survey— 58 percent of the households lived in concrete houses; 8 percent in tiled houses; and 34 percent in thatched huts. The average rent of the household is very low as most people pay less than 400-500 rupees per month for thatched huts and approximately a thousand rupees for tiled houses. The concrete houses had no tenants during the survey. The concrete houses were built under the mass housing scheme called the INDIRAMMA scheme—Integrated Novel Development in Rural Areas and Model Municipal Areas— which covered people living in rural areas. In 2016, the Andhra Pradesh government launched NTR Housing Scheme under Chandrababu Naidu administration for rural and urban

areas.

Interestingly, these *Dalit* settlements of Mulpur had their hand pumps, lighting, and LPG at home since the year 2004 under the *Deepam* scheme. Around 16 percent of the households did not have toilet facilities. There is no individual tap water facility for each house and the approach road between houses was pathless and slippery, especially during monsoon season. The majority of the houses were having two rooms but it was an overcrowded settlement with insufficient basic amenities, inadequate sewage disposal, and poor lighting of streets.

In Amruthalur village, out of the 66 percent of them owned a house, 34 percent of the surveyed agricultural labourer households lived in thatched houses for rent. According to the survey: 26 percent of the households lived in concrete houses

while 40 percent of them lived in tiled houses; and 34 percent in thatched houses. The average rent of the household is very low and it is the same as in Mulpur. These settlements of *Mala* and *Madiga* communities had a *panchayati* pump, street lighting, and had LPG connections at home. Around 16 households (32 percent) did not have toilet facilities. The majority of the houses were having two rooms. The approach road lamp posts were not working. These conditions were most unhygienic and sanitation was poor and the villages were infested with mosquitoes. In both the villages, the worth of thatched hut was fifty thousand rupees, whereas the cost of concrete houses was approximately one lakh twenty thousand rupees and tiled houses were worth around seventy-five thousand rupees (Table 9; Table 10; Table 11).

Table 9. Housing conditions of the sampled households in Amruthalur and Mulpur.

Housing Conditions	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Own House	62	45	90	17	34
Rented House	38	5	10	33	66
Total	100	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Table 10. Toilet facilities of the sampled households in Amruthalur and Mulpur.

Availability of toilet facilities	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Yes	42	34	68	8	16
No	58	16	32	42	84
Total	100	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Table 11. Types of housing of the sampled households in Amruthalur and Mulpur villages.

Housing Conditions	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Own House	62	17	34	45	90
Rented House	38	33	66	5	10
Total	100	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Landholding

Agriculture is the mainstay of Mulpur and Amruthalur villages where the majority of the households are engaged in agriculture and related activities. Of the 50 agricultural labourer households in Mulpur: 17 houses (34 percent) did not own any land, whereas 33 households (66 percent) owned land including one household which had purchased land. Among the 33 households i.e. 66 percent possessed the land, 17 households (34 percent) owned two cents of land given by Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP government as a part of housing scheme i.e. *Illa Pattalu* (land documents) to provide houses for the disadvantaged sections in society. Ten households (twenty percent) received land during the time of the Indira Gandhi government, whereas 6 households (12

percent) had traditional property.

In Amruthalur village, 38 households (76 percent) had applied for two cents provided by the Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP government but could not receive it and so they did not possess any land. 12 households (24 percent) had 2-3 cents of land given by the Andhra Pradesh government. Out of 12 households, one respondent purchased forty-eight yards on his own in 2016 and other respondents owned ancestral properties who were 4 percent. Seven households (14 percent) received 11/2-2 cents under the Jagan Mohan Reddy YSRCP government. 3 households (6 percent) inherited traditional property from their parents under the administration of the Indira Gandhi central government. Consequently, a majority of households are dependent on agriculture for livelihood (Table 12; Table 13).

Table 12. Landholding details among the sampled households of Amruthalur and Mulpur villages.

Owning of land	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
No Land	55	38	76	17	34
Possession of Land	45	12	24	33	66
Total	100	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Income

The total income of agricultural labourers is meagre. The majority of the households in Mulpur depended mainly on agriculture for sustenance whereas some worked as painters or worked as helpers to a head workman mason (*Tapi maestri*). The majority of the people in surveyed households worked as agricultural labourers in the fields and they did not change their occupation. Males earned three hundred rupees per day while there was the availability of work only during three months at the time of harvest, whereas women earned two hundred rupees for one day's work. According to the survey, 28 households (56 percent) earned 20,000-30,000 rupees per annum, whereas 21 households (42 percent)

earned around 35,000 rupees per annum and above. One of the respondents earned 1,12,000 per annum who worked as an attendant at the Andhra Christian College in Guntur i.e. 2 percent of the sampled households. The survey also revealed that the majority of the landless labourers depended on agriculture for their sustenance despite the low income it generated.

In Amruthalur, according to the survey: 37 households (74 percent) earned 20,000-30,000 rupees per annum, whereas 11 households (22 percent) earned above 35,000 rupees per annum. Two respondents earned 1,12,000 rupees per annum who worked as a teacher at *Anganwadi* school in Amruthalur i.e. 4 percent of the sampled households of agricultural landless labourers in the Amruthalur village.

Table 13. Details of income among the sampled households of Amruthalur and Mulpur villages.

Income per annum	Total	Amruthalur	%	Mulpur	%
Rupees 20000–30000	65	37	74	28	56
Rupees 35000–50000	32	11	22	21	42
1 Lakh Rupees and above	3	2	4	1	2
Total	100	50	100	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

The utilization of income and indebtedness

With a low level of income these agricultural labourers are unable to fulfil their necessities and hence, none of them had savings and the majority of them were compelled to borrow money from the local money lenders at a very high rate of interest. These households borrowed money for various purposes ranging from agriculture, business, health to education, and marriage.

In Mulpur, according to the survey: 39 households (78 percent) had no debt except the DWCRA loan—Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas—which is a component of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) as it is designed exclusively for rural women below the poverty line, to provide them with income-generating activities. However, 22 percent of the sampled labourer households have not availed DWCRA loans. 11 households (22 percent) had debt above 2, 00,000 rupees, mainly incurred for agriculture, education and house construction.

In Amruthalur, according to field survey 24 households (48 percent) had no debt except for the DWCRA loan. 12 households (24 percent) had debt below 1,00,000 rupees mainly incurred for agriculture, health and education,

whereas 14 households (28 percent) had debt above 1,00,000 rupees and the interest rate for one *lakh* rupees was five thousand per month as charged by the local money-lenders. The landless agricultural labourers usually spend a major portion of their income to meet their day-to-day requirements. In fact, except for a few respondents, almost all had spent on family expenditure (Table 13).

Family Occupational History

Furthermore, the survey in Mulpur and Amruthalur has also revealed that all these households were engaged in the agrarian sector, as agriculture labourers for more than two generations. Their grandfathers and fathers worked either as attached (bonded) labourers (90 percent) or agricultural labourer (10 percent) for decades. The majority of the respondents' grandfathers did not take up a new occupation by migrating to the urban areas. As a result, there was no change in their socio-economic condition. They had been working in the fields owned by the *Kamma* and *Reddy* communities. The grandfathers of the respondents were either paid in kind or earned 2 rupees for one day's labour. Even their father's income was approximately 2000-3000 rupees per annum. Even today, this pattern has not changed. It shows that majority of the aged or illiterate agricultural labourers are

engaged in this activity since childhood. Despite attaining education there is unemployment among the people of these households, where the survey was conducted. It can be inferred that eventually working in the fields has become a traditional occupation for them. Only a few respondents had replied that their present condition was better to some extent in comparison to their previous generations, due to government implemented schemes. One respondent worked as an auto driver in the village but two respondents had their small *kirana* (grocery) shop in Amruthalur village whereas in Mulpur one respondent owned a small *kirana* shop.

Mechanization has specifically impacted the SC agricultural labourer communities during the post-Green Revolution period. They only have three months of work during the time of harvest. Mechanization process has made the life of SC communities miserable and as a result a vast majority of them are engaged in non-farm activities. There was however no development in their livelihood. Generally, male respondents migrated due to unemployment after getting displaced by the mechanization process, while the

majority of them remained in Mulpur and Amruthalur villages. The government has been providing free education as a special package for SC colonies but there has been no change in their livelihood or income.

In both Mulpur and Amruthalur villages, the present generation has been engaged in the agrarian sector as agricultural wage workers only. According to the survey in Amruthalur: 90 percent of the population belonging to their grandfather's generation worked as attached (bonded) labourers; 10 percent worked as agricultural wage workers and 76 percent people of their father's generation worked as attached (bonded) labourers, while 24 percent worked as agricultural wage workers.

According to the survey in Mulpur, 88 percent of the population belonging to their grandfather's generation worked as attached (bonded) labourers; while 12 percent of them worked as agricultural wage workers. 74 percent of the population belonging to their father's generation worked as attached (bonded) labourers while 26 percent of them worked as agricultural wage workers. (Table 14)

Table 14. Details of family occupational among the sampled households of Amruthalur and Mulpur villages.

Occupation of the sampled households	Grandfather	%	Father	%	Son	%
<i>Amruthalur Village</i>						
Attached (Bonded) labourer	45	90	38	76	-	-
Agricultural wage worker	5	10	12	24	50	100
<i>Mulpur Village</i>						
Attached (Bonded) Labourer	44	88	37	74	-	-
Agricultural Wage worker	6	12	13	26	50	100

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

Migration Details

Since agriculture does not provide agricultural labourers with enough work throughout the year, they are forced to work in the non-agricultural sector both outside and inside the villages. Usually, agriculture provides them with enough work during the peak season but during the offseason, they have to seek non-agricultural employment by migrating to nearby towns or cities. The trend of migration is one of the prominent indicators that helps in understanding the economic parameters of agricultural labourers in rural areas. Migration is essential for sustaining economic growth to overcome the current recession. Although, the rural-urban migration is prevalent in several parts of Andhra Pradesh, the people of Mulpur and Amruthalur are however, very much

attached to their village. The workers generally migrate to Tenali and Guntur for work as casual labourers on agricultural fields—i.e. 24 percent from Mulpur and 20 percent from Amruthalur villages respectively. The rest of the population— i.e. 76 percent from Mulpur and 40 percent from Amruthalur respectively— among sampled landless labourer households, who migrate mostly migrate to Guntur and Tenali to work as helpers to mason (*tapi maestri*) by engaging themselves in non-farm activities. According to the survey, only a few members migrate and this fact reveals that agricultural labourers are deeply attached to their occupation and village. Males usually migrate alone to these places for a short period ranging from ten days to one month depending on the availability of work (Table 15).

Table 15. Details of migration pattern among the sampled households of Amruthalur and Mulpur villages

Occupation among sampled households after migrating to other cities such as, Guntur and Tenali	Total	Mulpur	%	Amruthalur	%
Worked as a casual labourer	78	38	76	40	80
Worker as a helper to mason (<i>tapi maestri</i>)	22	12	24	10	20

Source: Primary Survey, 2022.

The government has implemented several schemes for the welfare of disadvantaged sections in society. As per the survey, a majority of the respondents were aware of welfare measures—such as *Aarogya Sri*, *Ammavodi* and *DWCRA*—but only a few among the respondents have availed the benefits of these schemes in terms of education or employment, and there is no perceptible change in their lifestyle as such. In 2021, *Rajiv Gramin Bhumiheen Krishi Mazdur Yojana* (RGBKMY) was implemented by the central government to provide endowments to landless agricultural labourers, who are engaged in traditional works in the Indian agrarian sector.

CONCLUSION

Favourable climatic conditions, rich irrigational resources, and soil fertility have been advantageous to agricultural development in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. Consequently, this district has made rapid advancement in the agrarian sector where remarkable growth was recorded in agricultural production. It was considered significant for scrutinizing the role played by landless labourers in the agriculturally leading Guntur district with its progressive economy.

The author has sampled a hundred households where approximately 305 persons reside. The survey result specified that the heads of households were males, having a nuclear family (4-6 members), particularly from the *Mala* and *Madiga* communities belonging to the Scheduled Caste category and the majority of them were illiterate. Although, some of these families gave priority to the education of their children, the majority of these educated students remain jobless. Naturally, they assumed that factors, such as education and higher income were the certain ways to obtain social status in Indian society. These villages are electrified and enjoy average drinking water facilities. They cook food on LPG gas. Mostly the paths leading to their houses are *katcha* roads. They were aware of the Minimum Wages Act and various other schemes implemented by the government to some extent, but they have not gained much from these programmes. They could not fight for their rights because of the high rate of illiteracy prevalent among them. The majority of the households surveyed in the study of Mulpur village, belonged to the Hindu Mala community whereas, in Amruthalur village, the households belonging to the Hindu Madiga community were surveyed. The majority of the people were illiterate and unskilled. Moreover, the law regarding the abolition of slavery did not transform the social conditions of SC agricultural labourer communities. The respondents neither faced discrimination while accessing public facilities nor any kind of exploitation by the land-owning community in contemporary times. The majority of the SC population migrate to the urban areas for avoiding untouchability and exploitation at their respective native place. In contemporary times there has not been much improvement in the living standards of agricultural labourers belonging to *Mala* and *Madiga* communities. Even in terms

of political mobilization the SCs were not able to ascertain their political power in Andhra Pradesh. They have also not formed any agricultural labourer union to address their problems largely, due to their inadequate incomes and poor bargaining power. Usually, the policies and programmes that have been implemented so far, are exclusively focused on promoting the interests of landholders in which are, and therefore in such a scenario, landless agricultural labourers were invariably neglected.

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