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### **Findings**

#### **Agrarian Transformation of Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh**

Indian economy mainly depends on the agriculture sector. At the time of independence, this sector contributed about 52 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employed over three-fourth of total work force in the country. In fact, the number of agricultural labourers has increased from 28 million in 1951 to 144.3 million in 2011. Within the agricultural sector, the proportion of the agricultural labourers to the total agricultural workers has increased from 28 percent to 54.8 percent for the same period. Agricultural labour constitutes a major part of the rural labour in the country, is the most disadvantageous section of the population as they have not much benefited from the socio-economic development witnessed after independence. They are unorganised and hence deprived of the benefits of most of the labour enactments. South India today has the highest proportion of landless labourers to total population in India. It is in South India that the caste system was peculiarly rigid; so that the role of indigenous societies in resisting changes projected from outside is best seen here. In fact, the strength of the caste system provides one method of estimating the number of agricultural labourers (Dharma Kumar, 1992, 4).

This study has made substantial use of primary data which was drawn from the comprehensive survey of hundred households i.e., fifty households in each village i.e., Mulpur and Amruthalur, situated in Guntur district with the help of a questionnaire in January 2022. The author has sampled a hundred households where approximately 305 persons reside. The survey results 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. There has been a steady rise in the number of landless labourers in the Guntur district. This noticeable increase is the consequence of: (a) rapid growth in population during the past sixty years; (b) increase in the rate of agricultural inputs; (c) displacement of labourers due to mechanization process in the post-Green Revolution period; (d) comparatively fewer

employment opportunities for increasing strength of labour force; ( e) evidently labourers are not employed for the entire year, so on an average both male and female labourers work for approximately for 120 days in a year.

There is a high rate of unemployment among agricultural labourers. The male labourers especially, are compelled to get engaged in non-farm activities in their village—such as constructional workers, loaders, painters, rickshaw-pullers, and auto-rickshaw drivers. Few among them migrate to other cities, such as Tenali and Guntur, to work as loaders and construction workers for a period of ten days to one month depending on the availability of work. Despite this situation, they do not get employment throughout the year and their standard of living in the cities is still deplorable.

Women labourers receive lesser wages in comparison to their male counterparts. Due to their domestic duties, they are compelled to seek jobs related to agriculture and allied activities in the villages where they live.

The main source of income for landless labourer households is solely derived from the agricultural sector. The annual income of a majority of sampled landless labourer households was ranging between 20,000–30,000 rupees per annum. Few literate households had an income of 1,20,000 rupees per annum. Usually, labourers took debt from friends, relatives, and local money lenders. They were mainly incurring debt or taking loans at heavy rates of interest. Few assets possessed by them include: thatched houses, livestock, around 2– 3 cents of land given by schemes implemented by the Indian and state government.

The basic hypotheses state that there has been a displacement of agricultural labourer communities, especially from the Scheduled Castes i.e., Malas and Madigas, due to the process of mechanization in the Guntur district. This was further evidenced by their migration pattern from rural to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities. There is a persistent rise in the SC labour force in the rural areas of Guntur district despite the steadily growing urbanization process. People living in Mulpur and Amruthalur villages are very much attached to their villages. The number of days of employment has decreased due to the mechanization process in post-Green Revolution period owing to the introduction of new agricultural technology. However, the influence of landless labourers is crucial for the agrarian sector.