

## Labour Utilisation in Tamil Nadu

### Agriculture

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#### 1. Introduction

Significant increase in the productive use of labour in crop production is a pre-requisite for rural transformation in economies like India. This conclusion is based on (a) the population size (b) the inability of the non-agricultural (secondary and tertiary) sector to absorb the ever increasing workforce and (c) a high workforce concentration in the agricultural sector. Thus the concentration of workforce in the agricultural sector has not only given rise to a high work participation ratio, but also shorter duration of work and stagnating wages at subsistence level. The result is that the man power dependent on agriculture is idle and under-utilised either during a part of the day or year, or, if working unproductive (Myrdal, 1965).

While the siphoning-off mechanism of agricultural labour to other sectors has provide ineffective, the solution to the rural unemployment problems should be in the direction of enhancing labour use productively within agriculture. The possibility of higher labour absorption without sacrificing the productivity criterion gained currency mainly from the observed variation in labour input per unit of land output per unit of labour across the countries in Asia. Further, a study based on inter and intra-district variation also suggests the possibility of labour agumenting potential of agriculture in the Indian context (Vaidyanathan, 1978).

It will be useful to answer the major question regarding the possibilities of absorbing additional labour in crop production. (a) to have an understanding of the extent to which the available labour is used in agriculture and (b) to analyse the determinants of labour demand in crop production. It is in this background that an attempt is made in this paper to present some estimates of labour surplus in agriculture and an analysis of the determinants of labour demand in crop production at a disaggregate level for Tamil Nadu agriculture 1/. In doing this we discuss briefly the data source in Section 2. Section 3 contains the concepts, assumptions, methodology and discussion on the labour surplus estimates. Section 4 provides an analysis of the determinants of labour use in crop production and section 5 summarises the results of this paper.