

## Surplus Labour, Poverty and Agricultural Development - A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh

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Surplus or redundant labour in agriculture, which is a typical characteristic of developing countries, is believed to be one of the causes of or consequence of economic backwardness. A major portion of this surplus comes from rural areas. Most of the developing countries suffer from excess population growth, and the quantum of labour surplus varies from region to region depending on the structural characteristic of the region.

Since the coining of the term 'disguised unemployment' by Joan Robinson in 1936, many attempts have been made to measure the extent of surplus labour in agriculture, especially in the developing countries, but there are only a few studies that have tried to examine the factors influencing the surplus labour. Mere estimation of the magnitude of surplus labour does not help in solving the problem of rural employment. Unless one probes deep into the nature and causes of unemployment it will not serve any purpose of increasing employment opportunities in rural areas. In order to arrive at policy formulations, it should be clear as to what are the factors that lead to an increase in labour demand and the displacement of labour on farms. For instance, as suggested by earlier studies, it is hitherto believed that high yielding variety crops, fertilizers, irrigation, etc., are more labour-absorptive while farm machinery like tractors, threshers, etc., displace labour. Therefore, the testing of the impact of these factors on surplus labour along with the estimates of surplus labour at regional level would give us some idea