

## Stability in Seasonal Labour Absorption under Dryland Farming

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### *Introduction*

Judicious balance in the availability and the use of various farm resources is one of the important dimensions in augmenting the efficiency of a farm production unit. Undersupply of a given resource would act as a constraint on maximising returns from production activity, and its oversupply might push its use to a point where marginal returns to this factor would be low. Farm labour in Indian Agriculture exhibits a distinct characteristics of oversupply and undersupply, depending on the intensity of seasonality in its requirements. The intensity of seasonality in labour employment is more pronounced in dry farming areas, where uncertainty of rainfall is high and mono-cropping in a dominant system. The spread of various cultivation operations in dryland crop production depends on the quantum and interval between rains, apart from the resources available, and the decisions of the farmers in handling these operations. For example, increased number and frequency of rains spread the land preparation, sowing and intercultivation operations over longer period and delayed rains would push land preparation and sowing to a shorter period.

Apart from the climatic influences, there are other physical, technological and socio-economic factors which would determine intensity of seasonality in labour employment. Seasonality could be postulated to vary with labour requirements for different cultural operations of a given crop, with a varietal change as well as change in techniques adopted for undertaking a given operation (say, planting), with dryland crop-combinations, with dryland dominant but coupled with a small proportion of irrigated area, and with overall farming system comprising of both crop and livestock production sectors. The present study is an attempt to evaluate some of these aspects, using farm-level primary data.

### *Methodology*

This study on seasonal labour utilisation in dryland agriculture pertains to Bangalore District, one of the districts under South Eastern belt of dry farming areas of