

## Pattern of Employment of Labour *Vis-a-Vis* Size of the Farm

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A study was conducted to find out the pattern of employment of family, permanent and casual labour in different size groups of farms. The employment of family and permanent labour varied among size groups of farms and there was no such variation in the employment of casual labour. The family labour input was more in small farms where it was the permanent labour in large farms. The total labour input per unit area decreased as the size of the farm increased.

Agricultural sector, especially in a developing country like India, continues to absorb and provide gainful employment for the ever increasing segment of the rural population. The rate of growth in the non-agricultural ventures being slow with a comparatively narrow base, agriculture seems to be the stable resort for the surplus man power. As per the 1971 census 68.63 per cent of the working force was engaged in agriculture. The general trend appears to have been in the direction of increased dependence on agriculture. Further, changes in social, political and economic condition in India have changed the structure of the agrarian society and created a distinct class of agricultural labourers. The New Strategies for the Agricultural Production adopted in the Five Year Plans call for the new directions in the employment policy.

This study was taken up in Theni Block of Madurai district, where the High Yielding Varieties Programme and Intensive Agricultural Area Programme were under operation, with an objective

of studying the pattern of employment of family, permanent and casual labour *Vis-a-Vis* size of the farm.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in three randomly selected villages that constituted 25 per cent of total villages of Theni Block. The farms in the selected villages were arranged in the ascending order of their size and stratified into three broad size groups as follows:-

Small :	0.50 to 4.94 Acres
Medium :	4.95 to 11.56,,
Large :	11.57 acres and above

The sample size consisted of 90 holdings in all; 30 each in small, medium and large size groups. The holdings were selected by applying the technique of probability proportion to the number of holdings in each category in each village.

In all the cases of analysis, the labourers-men and women-were expres-

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sed in terms of man days of eight hours on the basis of wage rate (Sanghvi, 1969). As the ratio was 1 : 2 for men and women in the selected villages, two women days were considered as equivalent to one man day for computing man day units.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Increased cropping intensity would generate demand for increased labour. The major crops in the selected villages were cotton, chillies, groundnut, rice and cholam. The cropping intensity as observed in the sample villages is given below :-

TABLE I. Cropping intensity in the sample villages (In percentage)

Village	Small	Medium	Large	Pooled
Govinda-nagaram	173.8	162.8	164.8	165.4
Jangalpatty	206.1	178.4	166.3	177.2
Thappukund	165.3	171.1	147.9	160.2
Pooled	189.4	170.1	163.6	168.4

The cropping intensity decreased with the increase in the size of the farm. It was 189.4 per cent in the small size farms and 163.6 per cent in large size farms. The farm size being small, the farmer's endeavour was to raise two or more crops and better utilization of available labour and irrigation facilities with a view to realise higher returns.

The pattern of employment of family, permanent and casual labourers

varied among the different farm sizes. The results are presented in Table II.

TABLE II. Number of farms employed labour (Categorywise)

Size	No. of farms Selected	No. of farms employed family labour	No. of farms employed permanent labour	No. of farms employed casual labour
Small	30	30 (100)	2 (6.7)	30 (100)
Medium	30	27 (90.0)	12 (40.4)	30 (100)
Large	30	8 (26.7)	26 (86.7)	30 (100)
Total	90	65 (72.2)	40 (44.4)	90 (100)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages)

All the small farms used their family labour where as in the medium and large size groups only 90.0 per cent and 26.7 per cent respectively made use of the family labour. Thus, it could be noticed that as the farm size increased, the use of family labour decreased. Regarding the employment of permanent labour, majority of the large farms had employed one or more permanent labour. The results showed that there existed a direct relationship between farm size and employment of permanent labourers.

As regards the casual labourers, all the selected holdings were found to have invariably engaged the casual labourers.

To find out the variation in the total labour utilization among the diff-

erent size groups of farms and among the different villages, analysis of variance for the total man days engaged per-acre of net area sown was carried out. The analysis showed that there was significant difference in the labour use between size groups and no significant variation was observed between villages. This was because of the similarity in farming condition in respect of factors like soil, crops etc. between villages. The difference of total labour use between the size groups was mainly due to intensity of farming and pattern of cropping.

The extent to which family, permanent and casual labour was utilised in the three size groups on per acre basis of net area sown was calculated to estimate their importance. The different categories of labour employed in different size groups of farms are presented in Table - III.

TABLE III. Labour employed per acre of net area sown (in Mandays)

Category of labour	Size			
	Small	Medium	Large	Pooled
Family	77.80 (52.57)	26.01 (20.72)	3.70 (3.20)	18.38 (15.40)
Permanent	5.22 (3.54)	18.10 (14.42)	39.98 (29.35)	26.32 (21.55)
Casual	64.16 (43.89)	81.45 (64.86)	78.07 (67.45)	77.46 (63.41)
Total	147.98 (100)	125.56 (100)	115.75 (100)	122.16 (100)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages)

The above Table illustrates the predominance of casual labour, on an

average, in all categories of farms (63.41 per cent) whereas permanent labour accounted for 25.32% and family labour 18.38 per cent. Compared with small farms, there was substantial fall in the use of family labour in the medium and large farms and correspondingly higher contribution coming from casual and permanent labourers.

The analysis was also carried out with gross area sown as it was thought that the relationship between labour utilisation and the independent variables could have been explained better by the variate of gross area sown (Kandaswamy, 1964). The results are presented in Table-IV.

TABLE IV. Labour in each category employed per acre of gross cropped area (in Mandays)

Category of labour	Size			
	Small	Medium	Large	Pooled
Family	41.08 (52.57)	15.29 (20.72)	2.26 (3.20)	10.91 (15.04)
Permanent	2.76 (3.54)	10.64 (14.42)	20.76 (29.35)	15.63 (21.55)
Casual	34.29 (43.89)	47.88 (64.86)	47.70 (67.45)	46.00 (63.41)
Total	78.13 (100)	73.81 (100)	70.72 (100)	72.54 (100)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages)

The employment of all kinds of labour per acre of gross cropped area is noticed to be the highest in the small size farms and the extent of family-labour use is also significantly higher than in the other two groups illustrating the concentration of own labour in farm

operations, due to intensive farm operation. Bhagat Singh (1966), Donkanel (1967) and Dixit and Singh (1970) also observed the same trend in their studies. It is also possible that small farmer used more family labour simply because it was available with no out of pocket expenses.

The family labour input was highest in small size group and it decreased as the farm size increased. At the same time an increasing trend was observed, as the size increased, in the use of permanent and casual labour. This was due to better availability of family labour in small farms and they were not prepared to burden themselves by adding another dependent in the form of permanent labour. Family labour on large farm was confined more to the supervisory work than to control farm operations. Further, some factors like social and financial status of the large farmers inhibited the use of the family labour and also the large farmers preferred to enjoy the valuable commodity namely, leisure.

In the case of large size holdings, the proportion of permanent labour utilisation was greater since they have better capacity to pay for engaging them. Thus, in large farms the family labour input is compensated by way of engaging permanent labour.

The casual labourers contributed a good proportion to the total labour use in all size groups and this was due to the seasonality of agriculture which needs rush-hour operation.

All size groups made use of hired labour during certain period for oper-

ations like sowing and harvesting. This was also observed by Mazumdar in 1964. However, the cost incurred as hired labour was nullified when some of the family members in small farms, worked in the other farms during slack periods or after completing the work in their own farms during the 'rush' period.

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