

**A CASE STUDY OF LABOUR MIGRATION AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR OF
VILLUPURAM DISTRICT IN TAMIL NADU**

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ABSTRACT

This study of at the macro level, the reason for migration differs between the male and female migrants, since the former are more driven for their work and employment, while in the case of the latter, it is their marriage, which forces them to migrate. Even though the area-wise major reasons for migration among the male and female migrants are similar; the extent of migration differs markedly. For instance, in the case of rural males, 43.7 per cent have migrated for work/employment, which is only 14.17 per cent among the urban males, while 82.67 per cent of the rural females have migrated for their marriage, which is only 26.61 per cent in the case of their urban counterparts. This also suggests that other reasons like business and education cause only a negligible impact on migration of the people in the country, though clearly the share of both reasons is higher among the male migrants than in the case of the female migrants and similarly, the proportion is higher among the urban migrants than that of rural migrants. Descriptive statistics also indicates that the mean values of the variables and their minimum and maximum values have all gone up between before and after migration of the respondents, with the exception of loan amount, in which case, it has declined. Thus, migration of the respondents has certainly enabled them in their working and living conditions. The regression estimates suggest that all the independent variables, viz., age levels of the respondents, their levels of education, community and duration of migration all significantly influence the current monthly income levels of the respondents. Moreover, they all positively influence the dependent variable. Thus, monthly income is higher among the older respondents than that of younger respondents, as they have migrated earlier, completed years of education is also positive, though with the

least magnitude of slope value. The positive sign for community also underlines the fact that compared to SC and ST respondents, the MBC respondents earn more and it is still higher among the BC respondents and in the case of duration of migration, those with longer duration of migration also earn more.

Introduction

Migration is a process through which people move from one place of residence to another. It has been a continuous social phenomenon since the dawn of human history. It, for a long time, has been understood as temporary or permanent exchange or transfer of labour between regions or countries in the recent times. Growth of population, development of civilization, emergence of towns and cities, industrial growth and development of communication have widened the gap between rural and urban areas. Moreover, lack of job opportunities, reduction of cultivable area, lack of development of the agricultural sector, lack of transport and education facilities push/pull rural people to urban areas. In this way, movement and settlement have been the inherent nature of human beings since the dawn of civilization and it has taken place in a large scale in the post modern society. Migration is one of the true components of population change in size as well as quality. Movement of individuals implies an element of disassociation from the usual and familiar world. Moreover, it leads to an involvement with a new environment, a new context of physical space and social relationships. Thus, migrants may be known to the new environment or totally unfamiliar with the place.¹ In India, migration of agricultural labourers from villages to towns is not a new phenomenon, but its magnitude in the past one decade due to liberalization has attracted the attention of policymakers and they are trying to find ways to arrest this migration. Hence, studying the impact of liberalization at the micro level on agricultural labourers, on their employment opportunities, working and living conditions and trends, is of vital importance. However, the magnitude of rural labour circulation is of recent origin and is a direct consequence of structural changes, which have taken place both in the origin and destination areas of migration. Though direct statistics on rural-urban migration of agricultural labourers for India are not available over decades for a comparison, it can be well understood with increase in urban population. Urban

population has reached the highest percentage of 31.16 per cent in 2011 from 27.81 per cent in 2001. The reasons attributed to this were net migration of labourers from rural areas and agricultural economy, in addition to natural increase in urban population. Industries situated in the urban areas require a steady supply of labour which induces migration from the adjoining villages and so rural-urban migration impacts the most on the labour market in sending and receiving areas. It also influences development in a number of crucial ways.¹³ There are about 30.93 crore migrants constituting about 25.6 per cent of the total population in 2011. About 32.8 per cent of the migrants are urban and 67.2 per cent are rural, 29.3 per cent are men, while 70.3 per cent are females. The migrants constitute 24.9 per cent of the rural population of the country and 26.9 per cent of the urban population. Female migrants form 37.2 per cent of the total female population during 2011, which is 14.6 per cent in the case of the male population. Temporary migrants are about 5.62 crores in number which is about 17.8 per cent of the total migrants. The total number of migrants in Tamil Nadu stood at 16.68 lakhs according to the 2011 Census, which formed 2.31 per cent of the total population of the State. The rural migrants accounted for 8.48 lakhs and the number of urban migrants stood at 8.20 lakhs and in relative terms, it accounted for 2.27 per cent of the rural population and 2.35 per cent of the urban population. Total male migrants stood at 8.19 lakhs and their female counterparts accounted for 8.48 lakhs and the relative share in their respective population formed 2.26 per cent and 2.35 per cent in the case of males and females respectively.¹⁴

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Migration of workers is a century old phenomenon that has been taking place across the countries in the world. Migration presents both benefit and problem to both the place of origin of the migrants and their place of destination. In the place of origin, it reduces the extent of uneconomic or surplus workforce, which might set right the labour market and wage rate and the repatriation of their savings will also help boost the local economy. However, migration of workers, especially skilled workers might also affect the local economy, by depriving of the qualitative workforce and creating an imbalance in the demographic structure. In the place of destination, migration will help improve the quality of labour force and the functioning of its

labour market and it will lead to huge influx of people, particularly in the case of permanent migration, and hence will exert greater pressure on the availability of basic infrastructure facilities. Migration of agricultural workers, unlike a general migration, is quite dangerous, since it is mostly distress driven and chiefly due to push factors. It is dangerous in the sense that it implies the death of a sector, which is the lifeline of the country, as it has to supply the basic food grains to the country as a whole, apart from the raw materials to the agro-based industries. Thus, the place of origin is mostly affected by the migration of the agricultural workers, in terms of declining economic activities in the agricultural sector, employment and income, and it sucks away the blood of the rural economy. Without the agricultural sector, the rural economy, cannot find sufficient scope for employment generation and income creation, leave alone the issues of livelihood. In the place of destination too, the migrated agricultural workers cannot be expected to improve the quality of the urban workforce, since they are not skilled or suited to the urban labour market. Thus, it is not known to what extent the migrants benefit themselves from their migration leaving aside their agricultural occupation, and to what extent the urban labour market and economy benefits from it, apart from swelling the ranks of unskilled and informal labour force. Hence, the present study makes an attempt in unravelling the issues of socio-economic conditions of the migrant agricultural workers and its impact on their livelihoods.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the nature and pattern of migration at the national level during the study period;
2. To study the degree and pattern of migration in Tamil Nadu during the study period;
3. To understand the socio-economic characteristics of the sample households in the study area;
4. To ascertain the reasons for migration among the sample households in the study area;

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- 1) There is no significant variation in the reasons for migration among the sample respondents in the study area;

- 2) There is no significant difference in the current income levels of the migrated workers in the study area

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is based on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data pertaining to the extent of migration, the pattern of migration, reasons for migration and others have been gathered from the Census of India and also from the report of NSSO, Government of India. The primary data about the nature of migration, reasons for migration, and the impact of migration in terms of the pre and post migration period income level, indebtedness and the level of poverty among the sample households have been gathered through the field survey. For this purpose, a standard questionnaire has been prepared and a pilot survey has been carried out in order to examine the appropriateness and suitability of the questionnaire. Based upon the pilot survey, necessary modifications have been carried out in the questionnaire and the final field survey has been conducted. The migrated workers are presently working in other districts and also in other states and hence, all necessary information during the field survey has been gathered from the other members of the sample households. The questionnaire contained both qualitative and quantitative queries pertaining to the personal information about the migrated workers, their household particulars, land owning status, pre and post income level, saving and investment, indebtedness, the problems they face in the place of destination and their opinions about the present economic condition of their place of origin. This information has been examined on the basis of the age level of the migrated workers, their levels of education, income and other factors.

PROFILE OF VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

Villupuram district is characterized by low per capita income, adverse sex ratio, relatively insignificant level of urbanization, low agricultural productivity, lack of diversification of crops, prevalence of rain fed agriculture, low manufacturing base, insignificant penetration of service sector, low Human Development Index, inadequate forest cover, low gross enrolment at higher education level, high incidence of poverty and unemployment, higher disease burden, poor housing stock, rampant malnutrition and under nutrition, The district of Villupuram is situated in the south-eastern portion of the state of Tamil Nadu. It is bounded on the north by

Thiruvannamalai and Kanchipuram districts, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the south by the district of Cuddalore and on the west by Salem and a part of Dharmapuri districts. presents the location of Villupuram district. The administrative headquarters is located at Villupuram town. The district lies between 110 59' and 120 48' north latitude and 780 60' and 790 to 800 east longitude Villupuram district has a total population of 3463284 (as per 2011 Census), of which males account for 1744832 (50.38 per cent) and females account for 1718452 (49.62 per cent). The Urban population according to 2011 census is 509876 and rural population is 2953408. Thus, 85.28 per cent of the total population reside in rural areas, while only 14.72 per cent of the total population is urban based. This suggests that the degree of urbanisation in Villupuram district is quite less when compared to that of the State average which stands at 48.45 per cent. The rural orientation of bulk of the population in Villupuram also implies that they are mostly agriculture oriented.

Agriculture and Cropping Pattern in Villupuram District,

Agricultural sector plays a major role in the economy of the district, as it is mostly agrarian in nature. Thus, this section analyses the nature and structure of the agricultural sector of Villupuram with the help of the data pertaining to the proportion of area under major crops since 2001-02. To begin with, the area under major crops like paddy, cholam (jowar), cumbu (bajra), ragi, total cereals, total pulses, sugarcane, fruits and vegetables, cotton and groundnut are presented in Table – 1 in terms of percentage to the district's total cropped area. Chart – 3.3 presents the graphical view of the changes in the cropping pattern in the Villupuram district since 2001-02.

Table – 1 Cropping Pattern in Villupuram District, 2001-02 to 2011-12 (in percentage)

Year	Paddy	Cholam	Cumbu	Ragi	Cereals	Total Pulses	Sugarcane	Fruits	Vegetables	Cotton	Groundnut
2001-02	43.5	0.8	5.6	0.4	52.1	5.1	10.0	2.5	4.2	1.4	16.1

2002-03	32.8	0.9	6.9	0.4	42.0	7.5	12.6	3.5	5.2	0.7	19.6
2003-04	46.4	0.8	5.2	0.3	54.2	4.4	8.5	2.7	4.2	1.4	16.9
2004-05	43.8	0.7	4.6	0.4	51.3	5.2	10.6	2.6	4.6	1.4	15.8
2005-06	43.3	0.4	3.8	0.2	48.6	5.5	14.6	2.5	4.3	1.3	15.0
2006-07	40.3	0.6	3.3	0.3	45.5	6.0	17.3	2.7	4.4	1.5	13.1
2007-08	38.8	0.8	4.1	0.3	45.4	6.0	15.2	2.6	4.1	1.9	14.8
2008-09	39.5	0.9	3.4	0.2	46.2	5.2	14.3	2.7	3.8	2.3	13.8
2009-10	40.9	0.6	3.1	0.2	46.4	5.4	15.0	2.7	3.4	1.8	13.2
2010-11	41.0	0.5	2.9	0.2	46.0	6.1	17.6	2.6	3.5	1.5	10.8
2011-12	36.6	Neg.	3.6	0.2	42.5	6.8	20.7	2.9	3.8	1.8	10.2
Mean	40.6	0.6	4.2	0.3	47.3	5.8	14.2	2.7	4.1	1.5	14.5
SD	3.8	0.3	1.2	0.1	3.9	0.9	3.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	2.7

Source: Season and Crop Report of Tamil Nadu, Govt. Of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, various years.

It is noted that paddy is the most dominant crop as far as its area is concerned, since it has been occupying more than 40 per cent of the GSA over the period, though it has declined in the year 2011-12. Its share has gone up from 43.5 per cent in 2001-02 to 46.4 per cent in 2003-04, but has declined since then to the level of 36.6 per cent in 2011-12 and its mean share stands at 40.6 per cent over the period. In the case of cholam, its share has decreased from 0.8 per cent to very negligible level during the period and its mean score stands at 0.6 per cent of the total sown area.

The share of area under cumbu is considerably higher than that of cholam, though it too has declined from 5.6 per cent to 3.6 per cent between 2001-02 and 2011-12 with a mean share of 4.2 per cent; similarly, the proportion of area under ragi has declined from 0.4 per cent to 0.2 per cent. Thus, the total share of all cereals in Villupuram district has come down from 52.1 per cent in 2001-02 to 42.5 per cent in 2011-12, a decline of around 10 percentage points in a decade and its mean share stands at 47.3 per cent. The decline in the area under cereals has been compensated by the rise in the share of area under pulses, though not to the same extent, as it has gone up from 5.1 per cent to 6.8 per cent and its mean score stands at 5.8 per cent for the period 2001-02 to 2011-12. However, the most rapid rise in the area has taken place in the case of sugarcane, as its percentage of area has moved up from 10 per cent to 20.7 per cent, with a mean share of 14.2 per cent, while there has been a marginal rise in the share of area under fruits from 2.5 per cent to 2.9 per cent between 2001-02 and 2011-12, whereas the area under vegetables has declined from 4.2 per cent to 3.8 per cent in the given period, with some fluctuations. As far as cotton and groundnut are concerned, the share of area under cotton has gone up only marginally from 1.4 per cent to 1.8 per cent, while that of groundnut has declined from 16.1 per cent to 10.2 per cent between 2001-02 and 2011-12 and the mean share of the area under these crops stands at 1.5 per cent and 14.5 per cent respectively. This suggests that the proportion of area under food crops which include total cereals and total pulses account for more than 49.3 per cent in 2011-12 in Villupuram district, though it has declined from 57.2 per cent in 2001-02. The changes in the proportion of area under the major crops in Villupuram district from 2001-02 to 2011-12 in Villupuram district are graphically portrayed The production of major crops too has fluctuated over the period which is analysed with the help of the data shown in Table – 2

Table – 2 Productions of Major Crops in Villupuram, 2001-02 to 2011-12

Year	Paddy		Cholam		Cumbu		Sugarcane		Cotton		Groundnut	
	Qty.	% to	Qty.	% to	Qty.	% to	Qty.	% to	Qty.	% to	Qty.	% to

		State		State		State		State		State		State
2002	687210	8.25	2469	0.71	58765	39.56	387610	11.76	9865	3.66	96723	9.10
2003	712455	8.39	2672	0.79	55390	37.81	412345	13.10	10734	4.28	92340	9.23
2004	561130	8.52	2120	0.77	53360	34.88	437830	13.42	11100	4.83	118820	9.51
2005	241287	6.74	1456	0.69	20774	12.15	303369	12.55	3687	4.41	89765	12.51
2006	535413	7.69	1687	0.70	47821	26.83	281367	10.17	11145	3.91	142345	9.12
2007	567189	8.47	1876	0.76	36909	19.58	327900	13.56	16755	5.28	103287	8.93
2008	511931	9.83	1157	0.50	12810	13.51	433409	17.75	7423	4.41	119773	10.91
2009	500879	9.13	1466	0.62	38230	22.90	478129	18.43	9982	4.90	164785	11.45
2010	480329	9.53	3081	1.24	17242	20.09	5787278	15.20	20178	10.06	132891	12.69
2011	512013	8.84	1553	0.63	12889	16.66	7236792	21.13	13300	5.36	94634	10.57
2012	471616	6.32	75	0.03	29870	26.11	8062159	20.69	13036	3.41	98836	9.32
Mean	525587	8.3	1783	0.68	34915	24.6	2195289	15.3	11564	5.0	114018	10.3
SD	122841.8	1.1	815.3	0.28	17382.0	9.5	3147332.5	3.7	4381.7	1.8	24229.6	1.4

Note: Figures in tonnes; cotton in terms of bales and sugarcane in terms of gur.

Source: Season and Crop Report of Tamil Nadu, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, various years

It is noted from the table that the production of paddy has fluctuated from 687210 tonnes in 2001-02 to 471616 tonnes in 2011-12. The mean output of paddy stood at 525587 tonnes with a standard deviation (SD) of 122841.8. The mean share of Villupuram in the total paddy output of the State stood at 8.3 per cent. In the case of cholam too output has moved up and down over the period and its mean output stood at 1783 tonnes. Similarly, the production of cumbu has declined from a high of 58765 tonnes in 2001-02 to a low of 12810 tonnes in 2007-08, which then has increased only marginally to 29870 tonnes in 2011-12. Thus, the mean output of cumbu stood at 34915 tonnes with a SD of 17382, which underscores the extent of fluctuations in the same. Villupuram district alone on an average contributes 24.6 per cent of the total production of cumbu in the state, which indicates the role played by this district in the production of cumbu. The mean output of sugarcane stood at 2195289 tonnes and its SD of 3147332.5 indicates a huge fluctuation in the output of sugarcane over the years. This is also the case with the output of cotton and groundnut. The share of sugarcane in the overall state's production stood at 15.3 per cent, which was 5 per cent in the case of cotton and 10.3 per cent in the case of groundnut. This suggests that the agricultural sector plays a dominant role in the overall state, as crops like paddy, cumbu, sugarcane and groundnut account for substantial share in the overall state's production.

The yield of major crops in Villupuram for the period 2001-02 to 2011-12 is presented in Table – 3 along with that of the State average in order to understand the level of yield in the district. It is observed from the table that there have been considerable fluctuations in the yield levels of major crops in both Villupuram and Tamil Nadu, though the yield in the district has been higher than that of the state in

Table – 3 Yield of Major Crops in Villupuram and Tamil Nadu, 2001-02 to 2011-12

Year	Paddy		Cholam		Cumbu		Sugarcane		Cotton		G'nut	
	Vill.	TN	Vill.	TN	Vill.	TN	Vill.	TN	Vill.	TN	Vill.	TN
2001-02	4151	3196	811	866	2757	1223	108	116	195	238	1578	1885

2002-03	7867	2359	1075	660	2907	869	109	106	205	188	1706	1429
2003-04	3396	2308	744	612	2882	1085	105	102	216	213	1975	1552
2004-05	1474	2703	557	669	1208	1273	115	110	238	244	1520	1632
2005-06	3175	2541	1083	732	3232	1157	109	105	256	260	2437	1775
2006-07	3921	3423	871	999	3116	1511	114	123	295	374	2196	1981
2007-08	3524	2817	386	874	835	1436	110	108	324	343	2162	1957
2008-09	3445	2945	500	912	2520	1472	107	104	344	352	2979	2056
2009-10	3236	3070	1460	930	1522	1513	106	101	350	367	2771	2154
2010-11	3415	3039	891	1014	1202	1564	114	108	336	349	2392	2323
2011-12	3428	3055	924	1033	1346	1575	116	109	328	354	2388	2372
Mean	3730	2860	846	846	2139	1334	110	108	281	298	2191	1920

Note: Figures in kts/ha; Cotton in Bales of 170 Kg/ha and sugarcane in tonnes/ha.

Source: *Season and Crop Report of Tamil Nadu, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, various years.*

most of the years. For instance, during 2011-12, the yield of paddy in Villupuram stood at 3428 kgs per hectare, while that of the state stood at 3055 kgs and similar differences are found in all the crops, with the exception of cholam, cumbu and cotton, in which the state average was clearly higher than that of the district. In the case of cumbu, the yield in the district was considerably less than that of the state, 1346 kgs and 1575 kgs respectively during 2011-12. The differences in the yield levels are also reflected in the mean scores, which indicate the fact that the agricultural sector is quite robust in Villupuram district.

DISTRICT'S INCOME

The income of the district is an important indicator to understand the level of growth of the district and also its percentage contribution to the State's income over the period. Table –4 provides the data regarding the income of the district, that of the State and also the share of the former in the latter, apart from the annual growth rates. It is noted that the income of the Villupuram district in constant terms has gone up from Rs. 355069 lakhs in 1999-2000 to Rs. 547385 lakhs in 2004-05 and further up to Rs. 821669 lakhs in 2009-10 and its mean income stood at Rs. 540451 lakhs with a SD of 191880. The annual growth rate of the district's income has fluctuated from 1.01 per cent in 2000-01 to – 6.61 per cent in 2002-03 then to 10.83 per cent in 2005-06 and then to 6.77 per cent in 2009-10. However, the huge jump in the annual growth rate found during the year 2004-

Table – 4 Income of Villupuram and Tamil Nadu, 1999-2000 to 2009-10 (Rupees in Lakhs)

Year	Villupuram			Tamil Nadu	
	Income	GR	Share in State	Income	GR
1999-2000	355069	---	2.97	11970394	
2000-01	358641	1.01	2.84	12634927	5.55
2001-02	363892	1.46	2.94	12390102	-1.94
2002-03	339837	-6.61	2.73	12452136	0.50
2003-04	358252	5.42	2.71	13228127	6.23
2004-05	547385	52.79	2.83	19364503	46.39
2005-06	606642	10.83	2.74	22158791	14.43
2006-07	686762	13.21	2.68	25628576	15.66
2007-08	737249	7.35	2.71	27233984	6.26
2008-09	769565	4.38	2.70	28503494	4.66

2009-10	821669	6.77	2.62	31336546	9.94
Mean	540451	9.66	2.77	19718325	10.77
SD	191880.0	16.1	0.12	7539811.0	13.7

Note: * District's income is available only upto 2009-10. Figures in Rupee lakhs and in constant prices, GR – Annual Growth Rate.

Source: Statistical Handbook, 2013, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai.

05 has been due to the change in the base period and it has taken place at the district as well as the state level. The mean growth rate of the district's income stood at 9.66 per cent for the total period. In the case of the State, its income has gone up from Rs. 11970394 lakhs in 1999-2000 to Rs. 12452136 lakhs in 2002-03, then to Rs. 22158791 lakhs in 2005-06 and then to Rs. 31336546 lakhs in 2006-10, with a mean income of Rs. 19718325 lakhs and its mean growth rate for the period stood at 10.77 per cent. Thus, the growth rate of the State clearly out competes that of the district, which indicates the extent of lag faced by the district. Moreover, the share of the district's income in the overall State's income has come down from 2.97 per cent in 1999-2000 to 2.62 per cent in 2009-10 and its mean share stood at 2.77 per cent. Thus, the district contributes less than 3 per cent of the State's income over the period 1999-2000 to 2009-10.

WORKFORCE STRUCTURE IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

The area and sex-wise workforce structure of Villupuram district on the basis of the 2011 Census data is presented

Table – 5 Area-wise Workforce Structure of Villupuram District, 2011

Sex	Category	Total	Rural	Urban
Male	Total Workers	1017383	874316	143067

		(100.0)	(85.93)	(14.07)
	Main Workers	806396	684347	122049
		(79.26)	(78.27)	(85.31)
	Marginal Workers	210987	189969	21018
		(20.74)	(21.73)	(14.69)
	Cultivators	23.97	27.20	4.27
	Agricultural Labourers	39.73	44.58	10.10
Female	Household Industries	1.88	1.79	2.38
	Other workers	34.41	26.42	83.25
	Total Workers	685866	638637	47229
		(100.0)	(93.11)	(6.89)
	Main Workers	454406	420761	33645
		(66.25)	(65.88)	(71.24)
	Marginal Workers	231460	217876	13584
		(33.75)	(34.12)	(28.76)
	Cultivators	18.33	19.39	4.02
	Agricultural Labourers	62.40	65.26	23.68
	Household Industries	2.79	2.52	6.50
	Other workers	16.48	12.83	65.80

Source: Primary Census Abstract, 2011, Census of India, New Delhi.

It is inferred that a total of 1017383 males are engaged in the workforce, which comprise of 85.93 per cent from the rural areas and 14.07 per cent from the urban areas. The proportion of urban workforce is quite less than that of rural areas, which is quite understandable given the share of urban population in total population. Among the total male workers, 79.26 per cent is

engaged as main workers, which is 78.27 per cent in the rural areas and 85.31 per cent in the urban areas. Thus, the proportion of male workers who are engaged as main workers is higher in urban areas than in rural areas and thus, the proportion of male workers who are engaged as marginal workers is higher in the rural areas than that of urban areas. This implies the poor quality of jobs which are available in the rural part of the district. The district is dominated by the agricultural sector, since 63.7 per cent of the male workers are engaged in this sector, in which 23.97 per cent are engaged as cultivators and the remaining 39.73 per cent as agricultural labourers. Thus, 1.88 per cent is engaged in the household industries and 34.41 per cent as other workers. The share of male rural workers in the agricultural sector stands at 71.78 per cent *vis-a-vis* 14.37 per cent in the urban areas and hence, the proportion of other workers is 26.42 per cent and 83.25 per cent in the rural and urban areas respectively. In the case of females, 93.11 per cent of total workers are found in the rural areas, while 6.89 per cent in the urban areas. The proportion of workers who are engaged as main workers is 65.88 per cent in the rural areas, as against 71.24 per cent in the urban areas, and thus, 34.12 per cent in the rural areas and 28.76 per cent in the urban areas are employed as marginal workers. This indicates that the proportion of marginal workers is considerably higher among the females than that of males. Among the female workers, 80.73 per cent are engaged in the agricultural sector which is 84.65 per cent in the rural areas and 27.70 per cent among the urban females. The proportion of workers who are engaged as daily wage labourers in agriculture is 65.26 per cent and 23.68 per cent in the rural and urban areas respectively. Thus, the proportion of workers who are engaged as other workers is 12.83 per cent and 65.80 per cent among the rural and urban female workers respectively. This indicates the poor quality of jobs in which the female workers are engaged in Villupuram district and also the dominance of the agricultural sector among the females and especially among the rural females.

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

This section presents the analysis pertaining to the monthly income of the sample respondents on the basis of their area, age levels and community. As the sample respondents are engaged in different types of employment, their average monthly income levels are taken for

consideration. Table – 6 presents the area-wise monthly income of the respondents. It is observed from the table that among the 510 sample respondents, 163 (32 per cent) earn upto Rs. 10000, 138 (27.1 per cent) earn in the range of Rs. 10001-15000 per month, 116 (22.7 per cent) earn Rs. 15001-25000 per month and 93 respondents (18.2 per cent) earn more than Rs. 25000 per month.

Table - 6 Area-wise Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Area		Total
	Sankarapuram	Rishivandiyam	
Upto Rs. 10000	78	85	163
	(47.9)	(52.1)	(100.0)
	[30.5]	[33.5]	[32.0]
Rs. 10001-15000	66	72	138
	(47.8)	(52.2)	(100.0)
	[25.8]	[28.3]	[27.1]
Rs. 15001-25000	60	56	116
	(51.7)	(48.3)	(100.0)
	[23.4]	[22.0]	[22.7]
Above Rs. 25000	52	41	93
	(55.9)	(44.1)	(100.0)
	[20.3]	[16.1]	[18.2]
Total	256	254	510
	(50.2)	(49.8)	(100.0)
	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]

Note: Figures in round brackets are row percentages and those in square brackets are column percentages.

Source: Field survey.

Area-wise, among the 256 respondents who reside in Sankarapuram, 78 (30.5 per cent) earn upto Rs. 10000 per month, 66 (25.8 per cent) come under the income range of Rs. 10001-15000 per month, 60 (23.4 per cent) belong to the monthly income slab of Rs. 15001-25000 and there are 52 respondents (20.3 per cent) who earn above Rs. 25000 per month; and out of the 254 respondents who live in Rishivandiyam, 85 (33.5 per cent) come under the monthly income slab of upto Rs. 10000, 72 (28.3 per cent) fall in the monthly income range of Rs. 10001-15000, 56 (22 per cent) belong to the income category Rs. 15001-25000 per month and 41 respondents (16.1 per cent) come under the monthly income range of above Rs. 25000. This shows that the average monthly income of the respondents is not quite high, though it would be certainly higher than what they would have earned in their place of origin. Overall, 59.1 per cent earn upto Rs.

15000, which is quite understandable as they are engaged as unskilled workers or in the construction sector and the share of those who come under this income slab is 61.8 per cent in Rishivandiyam block and 56.3 per cent in the case of Sankarapuram block. The age level-wise monthly income levels of the respondents are also examined with the help of the data presented

Table - 7 Age Level-wise Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Age Levels				Total
	Upto 30	31-40	41-50	Above 50	
Upto Rs. 10000	68	42	37	16	163
	(41.7)	(25.8)	(22.7)	(9.8)	(100.0)
	[43.6]	[29.6]	[31.4]	[17.0]	[32.0]
Rs. 10001-15000	50	40	29	19	138
	(36.2)	(29.0)	(21.0)	(13.8)	(100.0)
	[32.1]	[28.2]	[24.6]	[20.2]	[27.1]
Rs. 15001-25000	22	39	27	28	116
	(19.0)	(33.6)	(23.3)	(24.1)	(100.0)
	[14.1]	[27.5]	[22.9]	[29.8]	[22.7]
Above Rs. 25000	16	21	25	31	93
	(17.2)	(22.6)	(26.9)	(33.3)	(100.0)
	[10.3]	[14.8]	[21.2]	[33.0]	[18.2]
Total	156	142	118	94	510
	(30.6)	(27.8)	(23.1)	(18.4)	(100.0)
	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]

Note: Figures in round brackets are row percentages and those in square brackets are column percentages.

Source: Field survey.

It is inferred that out of the 156 respondents who belong to the age group of upto 30 years, 68 (43.6 per cent) earn upto Rs. 10000 per month, 50 (32.1 per cent) come under the income range of Rs. 10001-15000 per month, 22 (14.1 per cent) belong to the monthly income slab of Rs. 15001-25000 and 16 respondents (10.3 per cent) earn above Rs. 25000 per month; among the 142 respondents who come under the 31-40 years age group, 42 (29.6 per cent) come under the monthly income slab of upto Rs. 10000, 40 (28.2 per cent) fall in the monthly income range of Rs. 10001-15000, 39 (27.5 per cent) belong to the income category Rs. 15001-25000 per month and 21 respondents (14.8 per cent) come under the monthly income range of above Rs. 25000; in the case of the 118 respondents who fall in the age group of 41-50 years, 37 (31.4 per cent) earn upto Rs. 10000 per month, 29 (24.6 per cent) come under the income range of Rs.

10001-15000 per month, 27 (22.9 per cent) belong to the monthly income slab of Rs. 15001-25000 and there are 25 respondents (21.2 per cent) who earn above Rs. 25000 per month; and out of the 94 respondents who belong to the age group of above 50 years, 16 (17 per cent) come under the monthly income slab of upto Rs. 10000, 19 (20.2 per cent) fall in the monthly income range of Rs. 10001-15000, 28 (29.8 per cent) belong to the income category Rs. 15001-25000 per month, while 31 respondents (33 per cent) come under the monthly income range of above Rs. 25000. Hence, age level-wise, 24.4 per cent of those who are upto 30 years of age earn more than Rs. 15000 per month, which is 42.3 per cent, 44.1 per cent and 62.8 per cent in the successive higher age groups, which underscores a positive relationship between age levels and their monthly income. presents the graphical view of age level-wise monthly income of the respondents. The relationship between age levels of the respondents and their monthly income is further examined with the application of Kruskal-Wallis Test, which is a non-parametric test, which examines the nature and significance of the relationship between two variables. For this purpose, respondents with age level upto 40 years are given a value of 1 and 2 for those who are above 40 years, while those who earn upto Rs. 15000 per month are given a value of 1 and 2 for those who earn more. The test is applied on these values and the test result is presented.

Table – 8 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Age Levels and their Monthly Income Levels of the Respondents

Ranks			
Variable	Age Level	N	Mean Rank
Monthly Income	1.00	298	329.84
	2.00	212	151.00
	Total	510	
Test Statistics			
	Monthly Income		
Chi-Square	251.430***		
Df	1		
Asymp. Sig.	0.000		

Note: *** indicates 1 per cent level of significance.

Source: Computed from Table

The result suggests that the calculated Chi-square value of 251.430 is statistically significant at 1 per cent, which reinforces the significance of the relationship between age levels of the respondents and their monthly income levels. Moreover, as the sign of the test statistic indicates, the two variables are positively related.

The monthly income levels of the sample respondents are further analysed on the basis of their community and presents the necessary data.

Table - 8 Community-wise Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Community			Total
	BC	MBC	SC & ST	
Upto Rs. 10000	11	57	95	163
	(6.7)	(35.0)	(58.3)	(100.0)
	[13.4]	[31.5]	[38.5]	[32.0]
Rs. 10001-15000	21	46	71	138
	(15.2)	(33.3)	(51.4)	(100.0)
	[25.6]	[25.4]	[28.7]	[27.1]
Rs. 15001-25000	24	44	48	116
	(20.7)	(37.9)	(41.4)	(100.0)
	[29.3]	[24.3]	[19.4]	[22.7]
Above Rs. 25000	26	34	33	93
	(28.0)	(36.6)	(35.5)	(100.0)
	[31.7]	[18.8]	[13.4]	[18.2]
Total	82	181	247	510
	(16.1)	(35.5)	(48.4)	(100.0)
	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]

Note: Figures in round brackets are row percentages and those in square brackets are column percentages.

Source: Field survey.

It shows that among the 82 respondents who belong to the BC community, 11 (13.4 per cent) come under the monthly income slab of upto Rs. 10000, 21 (25.6 per cent) fall in the monthly income range of Rs. 10001-15000, 24 (29.3 per cent) belong to the income category Rs. 15001-25000 per month and 26 respondents (31.7 per cent) come under the monthly income range of above Rs. 25000; in the case of the 181 respondents who belong to the MBC community, 57 (31.5 per cent) earn upto Rs. 10000 per month, 46 (25.4 per cent) come under the income range of Rs. 10001-15000 per month, 44 (24.3 per cent) belong to the monthly income

slab of Rs. 15001-25000 and there are 34 respondents (18.8 per cent) who earn above Rs. 25000 per month; and out of the 247 respondents who belong to the SC and ST communities, 95 (38.5 per cent) come under the monthly income slab of upto Rs. 10000, 71 (28.7 per cent) fall in the monthly income range of Rs. 10001-15000, 48 (19.4 per cent) belong to the income category Rs. 15001-25000 per month and 33 respondents (13.4 per cent) come under the monthly income range of above Rs. 25000. Thus, among the BC respondents, 61 per cent earn more than Rs. 15000 per month, which is 43.1 per cent in the case of the MBC respondents and 32.8 per cent among the SC and ST respondents, and hence, the earning capacity of the marginalised sections like MBC and SC and ST communities is much lower.

MONTHLY FOOD AND NON-FOOD EXPENDITURE AMONG THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

This section presents the analysis regarding the area-wise monthly food and non-food expenditure in order to trace the differences in them. Table – 9 presents the data about the area-wise monthly food expenditure. The table reveals that among the 510 sample respondents, 117 (22.9 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month on their food requirements, 164 (32.2 per cent) spend in the range of Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 138 (27.1 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and 91 respondents (17.8 per cent) fall in the above Rs. 4000 expenditure group.

Table - 9 Area-wise Monthly Food Expenditure of the Respondents

Monthly Food Expenditure	Area		Total
	Sankarapuram	Rishivandiyam	
Upto Rs. 2000	56	61	117
	(47.9)	(52.1)	(100.0)
	[21.9]	[24.0]	[22.9]
Rs. 2001-3000	80	84	164
	(48.8)	(51.2)	(100.0)
	[31.3]	[33.1]	[32.2]
Rs. 3001-4000	71	67	138
	(51.4)	(48.6)	(100.0)
	[27.7]	[26.4]	[27.1]
Above Rs. 4000	49	42	91
	(53.8)	(46.2)	(100.0)
	[19.1]	[16.5]	[17.8]

Total	256	254	510
	(50.2)	(49.8)	(100.0)
	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]

Note: Figures in round brackets are row percentages and those in square brackets are column percentages.

Source: Field survey.

Area-wise, among the 256 respondents who belong to Sankarapuram, 56 (21.9 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month, 80 (31.3 per cent) spend Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 71 (27.7 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and there are 49 respondents (19.1 per cent) who spend above Rs. 4000 per month; and out of the 254 respondents who reside in Rishivandiyam, 61 (24 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month, 84 (33.1 per cent) spend in the range of Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 67 (26.4 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and 42 respondents (16.5 per cent) fall in the above Rs. 4000 expenditure range. Hence, overall 55.1 per cent spend upto Rs. 3000 per month on their food requirements, which is 53.2 per cent in Sankarapuram and 57.1 per cent in Rishivandiyam, while 44.9 per cent of the overall respondents spend more than Rs. 3000, which is 46.8 per cent and 42.9 per cent in the two blocks respectively. The monthly non-food expenditure incurred by the sample respondents is examined here on the basis of their area and Table – 10 presents the data.

Table – 10 Area-wise Monthly Non-Food Expenditure of the Respondents

Monthly Non-Food Expenditure	Area		Total
	Sankarapuram	Rishivandiyam	
Upto Rs. 2000	46	51	97
	(47.4)	(52.6)	(100.0)
	[18.0]	[20.1]	[19.0]
Rs. 2001-3000	65	72	137
	(47.4)	(52.6)	(100.0)
	[25.4]	[28.3]	[26.9]
Rs. 3001-4000	78	73	151
	(51.7)	(48.3)	(100.0)
	[30.5]	[28.7]	[29.6]
Above Rs. 4000	67	58	125
	(53.6)	(46.4)	(100.0)
	[26.2]	[22.8]	[24.5]
Total	256	254	510
	(50.2)	(49.8)	(100.0)
	[100.0]	[100.0]	[100.0]

Note: Figures in round brackets are row percentages and those in square brackets are column percentages.

Source: Field survey.

It is noted that among the 510 sample respondents, 97 (19 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month on their non-food requirements, 137 (26.9 per cent) spend in the range of Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 151 (29.6 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and 125 respondents (24.5 per cent) fall in the above Rs. 4000 expenditure group Area-wise, among the 256 respondents who reside Sankarapuram, 46 (18 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month, 65 (25.4 per cent) spend Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 78 (30.5 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and there are 67 respondents (26.2 per cent) who spend above Rs. 4000 per month; and in the case of the 254 respondents who reside in Rishivandiyam, 51 (20.1 per cent) spend upto Rs. 2000 per month, 72 (28.3 per cent) spend in the range of Rs. 2001-3000 per month, 73 (28.7 per cent) come under the monthly expenditure slab of Rs. 3001-4000 and 58 respondents (22.8 per cent) fall in the above Rs. 4000 expenditure range. This indicates that the respondents spend more on their non-food requirements than in the case of food requirements, since the former includes expenses on transport, education, healthcare, clothing, telecommunication, etc. For instance, 54.1 per cent spend more than Rs. 3000 per month, which is 56.7 per cent and 51.5 per cent in Sankarapuram and Rishivandiyam blocks.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examines the socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents on the basis of their area, age level and other factors. This suggests that the younger respondents face more pressure and compulsion to earn and as they also have more years to work, they migrate more compared to the older respondents. More than 57 per cent have completed only upto school level of education. Also, all migrants belong to the non-FC communities. Even though more than 40 per cent of the respondents live in nuclear families, they have to migrate, leaving behind their families due to their pressing economic condition. It is also to be noted that more than 53 per cent of the respondents are landless, which underlines the extent of landlessness and also the fact that even those who own land migrate due to the distress situation in the agricultural sector in the study area. Around one fourth of the migrated respondents are engaged as unskilled workers,

while others are either semi-skilled or skilled like construction workers, carpenters, electricians or drivers. The average monthly income of the respondents is thus, not quite high, though it would be certainly higher than what they would have earned in their place of origin. Overall, 59.1 per cent earn upto Rs. 15000, which is quite understandable as they are engaged as unskilled workers or in the construction sector. The cropping pattern during the last 12 years is discussed along with other aspects of the economy like industry, trade and commerce, its workforce structure and income. The pattern of cropping indicates that the area under paddy and total pulses has come down quite considerably over the last 12 years, which has been compensated by the rise in the share of area mainly under sugarcane and pulses. Thus, agriculture is the mainstay of the district and the workers are engaged mostly in that sector, which is particularly true in the rural areas and among the female workforce. The huge dependence on agriculture, mainly as wage labourers and the reliance on the open well for cultivation all indicate the precarious nature of the sector and the people who are engaged in it. This poor working condition triggers the people to migrate, seeking better opportunities. The introduction of New Economic Policy in 1991 has resulted in the lop-sided and urban-centric growth process, though the rate of growth of the economy has undoubtedly increased. However, in the pursuit of reducing public expenditure, the Government has brought down its expenditure on the social sector and rural sector.¹ This has led to the exclusion many segments like, rural, female, tribal, Scheduled Caste and the general poor from the growth process of the economy. The widening gap between the rate of growth of the overall economy and that of the agricultural sector has further exacerbated the degree of inequality between the rural and urban areas. Thus, for the first time in the history of India, there has been an absolute decline in rate of growth of the rural population between 2001 and 2011. There has been a mass exodus from the rural areas, particularly from the agricultural sector towards the urban centres.² Cultivating farmers have become wage labourers, while thousands of farmers have committed suicides in many States, which illustrates the extent of distress faced by the agricultural workers. Though the Government has initiated many corrective measures to make growth as much inclusive as possible, inequalities still exist. The rural masses in general and those who depend on agriculture in particular remain quite poor, which is proved by the present study. The study has brought out the

fact the level of migration is quite high among the poor, socially and economically marginalized and the less literate population. Migration *per se* has improved their economic condition and that of their households, and their level of poverty has declined, which implies that the level of food security in the sample households has gone up. While they are willing to migrate in order to come out of poverty and to reduce their loan burden, they can enter only the informal sector as contract workers, where working conditions are quite pitiable. However, there is a need to reduce this level of migration from the agricultural sector. A robust agricultural sector is capable of creating more linkage effects in the non-agricultural sector, by which the whole rural economy can develop. Thus, improved attention can be given for extending training in skill acquisition among the disadvantaged segments, apart from strengthening the agro-based industries, the cooperative movement and also the institutional credit delivery system in the rural areas, as they all play a very pivotal role in the development of the rural economy. Also, the MGNREGP can be made more effective by increasing the number of days of employment and also the wage rate to reduce the extent of migration that is taking place in the rural areas of the country in general and in the agricultural sector in particular.

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