

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN LABOURERS IN BALLARI TALUKA- A CASE STUDY OF SANGANKALLU VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

The issue of migration from the rural areas to the urban areas is increasing day-by-day by the rural jobless masses in search of livelihood. The infrastructure in the rural areas is developing at a very slow pace and is providing employment to only few people fulfilling their bare minimum needs sufficient to meet their basic needs. There is a huge difference in the payment system to the women compared to the men in India in spite of equal hard work by the female labourers in the private sector. This difference is posing as a major hindrance to the socio-economic and political participation of the rural women labourers effectively. This article highlights the issues faced by the rural women labourers for their active political participation in the political arena of our country and offers suggestions to overcome them through the involvement of all the stakeholders respectively.

KEY WORDS: Political Participation, Women Labour, Ballari, Sangankallu

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study has the following objectives:

- 1.To understand the issue of migration of the rural women labourers from villages to the urban areas.
- 2.To study the issues responsible for migrating.
- 3.To analyse the impact of migration on the political participation of rural women in the local, state and central elections and its effect on formation of government respectively.
- 4.To identify the issues faced by the rural women and its impact on political participation through migration and due to several other factors.
- 5.To suggest measures to overcome the meagre political participation of the rural women labourers through the effective coordination of all the stakeholders.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focuses on the major issue of migration of the rural masses from villages to the urban areas so it is very useful to the policy makers to take effective steps to overcome the issues related to regional imbalance on the one hand and on the other hand it will also highlight the issues related to the formation of stable government at all levels in the country. This article further depicts the disruptive wage system prevalent in the private sector and huge difference of pay to the women labourers and male labourers. It provokes the concerned stakeholders to take positive steps in overcoming the above stated issues and develop the rural

women labourers economically, socially, politically and culturally etc.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

Sanganakal village, Bellary District, Karnataka State:

Sanganakal is a large village located in Bellary of Bellary district, Karnataka with total 1916 families residing. The Sanganakal village has population of 9184 of which 4609 are males while 4575 are females as per Population Census 2011. (<http://www.census2011.co.in/data/village/604913-sanganakal-karnataka.html>) In Sanganakal village population of children with age 0-6 is 1326 which makes up 14.44 per cent of total population of village. Average Sex Ratio of Sanganakal village is 993 which is higher than Karnataka state average of 973. Child Sex Ratio for the Sanganakal as per census is 979, higher than Karnataka average of 948.(Ibid) Sanganakal village has lower literacy rate compared to Karnataka. In 2011, literacy rate of Sanganakal village was 64.52 per cent compared to 75.36 per cent of Karnataka. In Sanganakal Male literacy stands at 74.51 per cent while female literacy rate was 54.48 per cent. (Ibid) per constitution of India and Panchyati Raj Act, Sanganakal village is administrated by Sarpanch (Head of Village) who is elected representative of village.(Ibid)

WORK PROFILE OF THE VILLAGE

In Sanganakal village out of total population, 4465 were engaged in work activities. 96.73 per cent of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 3.27 per cent were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 4465 workers engaged in Main Work, 662 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 2146 were agricultural labourers. (Ibid)

METHODOLOGY

This study comprises of both the primary and secondary data. The universe of the study is one hundred rural women respondents in Sangankallu village. The research technique used in this study is simple random sampling method. This study is both exploratory and analytical in approach. Interview schedule method has been used to analyse the perception of rural women labourers migrating from village to urban areas during the lean season in the sphere of political participation and to identify the impact of migration on their political participation in local, state and national level elections. The collected data has been tabulated and analysed through simple statistical tools and thereby the inferences have been drawn based on this in the study area.

Table: 1

Age wise distribution of rural women migrant labour respondents N=100

Age group	% of respondents
Youth (18-31)	68
Middle age (32-50)	22
Aged (50-60)	05
Senior Citizens (60 and above)	05
Total	100

Source: Computed from primary data

Table 1 depicts the distribution of the women respondents in the study area according to their age. The table reveals that the active population in the total respondents of 100, the youth in the age group of 18-31 constitute 68 per cent, middle age respondents in the age group of 32-50 is 22 per cent, aged respondents in the

age group of 50-60 is 05 per cent, and the respondents belonging to the age group of 60 and above are recognised as the senior citizens by the Government of India and they constitute 05 per cent. The different age groups were selected for the study mainly to provide an overall scenario of the voter perception with respect to their awareness and participation in the political field and to address their issues individually and collectively for an active political participation in all respects.

Table:2

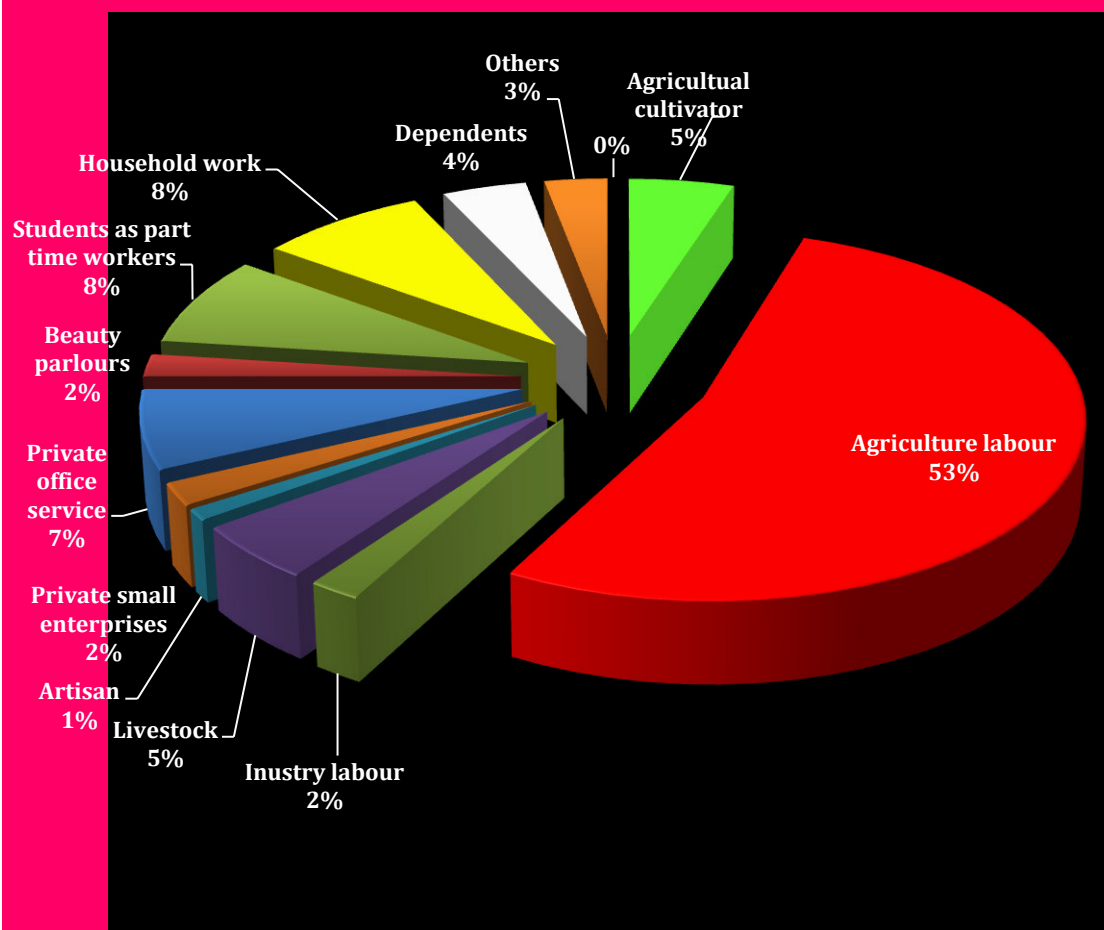
Distribution of rural women migrant labour respondents on the basis of occupation as a fulltime/part-time worker N=100

Primary occupation (Part time or full time)	Percentage (%)
Agricultural cultivator cum labourers	05
Agricultural labourer	53.00
Industry labourers	2.00
Livestock managing labourers	5.00
Artisan working as labourers	1.00
Labourers working in private small enterprises	2.00
Labourers working in private service such as shops	07.00
Labourers in beauty parlors	02.00
Student working as part-time labourers	08.00
Labourers involved in the household work	08.00
Dependents working as part-time labourers	04.00
others	03.00
Total	100

Source: Computed from primary data

In the study area the roles performed in the day-to-day lives of the women in rural areas are multi-faceted and overlapping depending on the family's social status, economic position, educational levels,

Figure:1
Distribution of respondents on the basis of occupation



cultural differences, seasons like kharif and rabi, beginning of the academic year of their children, good and ill health of the head of the family, widow at early stage or aged and so on due to which it is really hard to demarcate the actual fixed role played by the women.

Majority of them replied that they were housewives but along with that they also expressed that they are actively involved in the agricultural and other activities as well mainly to support the family but when compared to their counter parts in urban areas we witness that the position of housewives means looking after the family and not working outside the home for the purpose of supporting their families. Broadly

speaking they work like a slave for the development of the family after getting married and if the husband is hard worker and earns a good enough then in those families the women look after the household chores and children where as if the husband is not able to provide good enough then she along with the household chores works in all possible manner to make both ends meet and supports her husband for their survival to the utmost maximum possible extent was a special and unique feature identified during the process of the study.

In the above presented table 2 it is indicated that the women involved as the agricultural cultivator is 05 per cent, agricultural labour is 53 per cent, workers

in industrial sector 02 per cent, livestock 05 per cent, artisans 01 per cent, private small/mini enterprises 02 per cent, private service 07 per cent, beauty parlour labourers 02 per cent, student community working as part time labourers 08 per cent above eighteen years, engaged in household work 08 per cent, dependents 04 per cent and others 03 per cent respectively. From the above table it is clear that majority of the women are involved in agriculture either directly or indirectly due to abundance of opportunities only during the lean season. During the summer season majority of them migrate to the urban areas to earn their livelihood in order to earn better wages.

It is even noticed that in the drought areas few families migrate to the nearby urban areas to earn their livelihood as a labourer in the construction of buildings under the contractors who act as a channel between the construction plant and the migrant villagers and come back in the monsoon season. Though the MGNREGA is implemented these families that migrate inform that the wages paid by the contractor is bit higher than what they get in the programme or to earn more mainly to clear the debt they have taken previously for the sake of hospital expenditure, marriage functions, fertilizers, accidents met, large family burden, higher education of their children in the cities or urban areas and so on.

Table :3

Perception of the respondents to the key questions asked in the interview schedule

S.No.	Labour rural women respondents	Yes	No
1.	Do you migrate to urban areas during the lean season ?	95	05
2.	Is the major cause of migration related to your economic issues like debt ?	69	31
3.	Do you work as a labourer (Part-time/Full-time) ?	100	00
4.	Do you own agricultural land (2-5 Acres) ?	05	95
5.	Do you actively participate in the democratic process ?	31	69
6.	Do you vote in the elections when you are in urban area for earning the	03	97

	livelihood ?		
7.	Do you participate in the political campaigns, meetings, etc., during the time of elections in your village ?	11	89
8.	Do you wish to have a stable government at the local, state and central level in India ?	100	00
09.	Do you claim benefits through the welfare programmes related to your economic wellbeing provided by the government ?	03	97
10.	Are you aware about the constitutional safeguards for your safety and protection provided by the government ?	00	100

Source: Computed Primary Data

FINDING OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are as follows:

➤ 95 per cent of the rural women labourers migrate during the lean season to the nearby urban areas to earn their livelihood.

➤ 69 per cent of the rural women labourers replied that they migrate to the urban areas to clear their family debt and the rest 31 per cent migrate to earn more wages in the urban areas to fulfil their requirements such as to build their own house, pay school fees of children, pay medical bills of the family and so on.

➤ 100 per cent of the respondents replied that they are working as a part-time or full-time labourers in the study area.

➤ 95 per cent of the rural women labourers do not own land and the rest 05 per cent of them own land after the death of their male head of the family member which is meagre i.e., 02 acre to 05 acre without irrigation facilities.

➤ Only 31 per cent of the respondents replied that they participate during the time of election and the rest 69 per cent of them replied that during the time of migration they are unable to participate as they work for the contractors for a fixed period.

➤ 97 per cent of them replied that they do not vote in the elections during the migration period because of losing their employment.

➤ 11 per cent of them replied that they participate in the political campaigns, meetings, etc., during the time of elections only if the political parties paid them better wages per day compared to the payment during their migration period.

➤ 100 per cent of them wish to have a stable government so that vibrant and innovative programmes may clear their financial issues.

➤ 97 per cent of them are unaware of the economical benefits provided through the welfare programmes by the government in the study area.

➤ 100 per cent of the rural women labourers replied that they are unaware about the constitutional safeguards provided to them by the government.

DRAWBACKS AND ISSUES RELATED TO POOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN

The following drawbacks have been identified in the study area:

1. Rural women labourers lack the knowledge of the welfare programmes meant for their upliftment.
2. Illiteracy is the major cause of their migration.
3. They lack the knowledge of the constitutional safeguards provided to them by the government.
4. 100 per cent of the rural women labourers suffer due to below poverty line status.
5. They are afraid to raise their voice against the atrocities committed against them.
6. They lack skill to work in the secondary sector and majority of them depend on agriculture or work as a labourer in the construction field.
7. They lack political education.
8. Male member of the family dominates them and convinces them to work as a labourer for the economical support to the family.
9. Traditions, customs, beliefs are hindering them from involving in the secondary and service sector activities.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions have been offered to overcome the issues of rural women labourers in the study area:

- Awareness should be generated in them about the welfare programmes and encourage their participation.
- Political education is key to the success for the democracy and seminars, conferences, workshops should be organised to make them effectively participate in the democratic process.

➤ Secondary sector based companies should be encouraged to establish their upcoming units in the rural areas so that they could provide skill training to the rural women and provide them employment.

➤ They should be protected from the clutches of the money lenders and a more friendly approach from the banks to provide them loans should be made by making necessary arrangements in the law through amendment process.

➤ Educational opportunities should be enhanced and free evening classes should be provided to them so that they could depend on themselves particularly in their residing areas.

➤ They should be encouraged both by the local government and the political parties to effectively participate in the democratic process especially during the time of elections.

CONCLUSION

Rural self-reliance is losing its ground since the trigger of the globalisation era. The unskilled labourers especially women from the rural areas are facing severe issues and are forced to migrate in order to earn their livelihood. They are adapting themselves to the cities and are living a miserable life in the slums where they are becoming a victim of many evil practices like prostitution, drugs etc., that further increases their issues rather than minimising them. The government, non-governmental organisations, individuals, literate population should take major possible steps to overcome this increasing menace of issues on the rural women labourers to help them lead a self-reliant life in their villages with all the requirements of education, employment, self-respect and so on and provide them ample provision of freely and actively participating in the democratic process of our country and involve in the nation building either directly or indirectly.

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