

Livelihood pattern of agricultural labour households in rural India: evidence from Orissa State

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Using primarily different published secondary data, the article analyzes employment generation, income of different categories of labour and the extent of indebtedness and earning prevalent among rural landless labourers and agricultural households in rural Orissa, with a view to understanding their livelihood patterns. In this state with more than 85% of rural population, a third of rural households constitute landless labour households who depend completely on wage employment. Another 60% of rural household are marginal farmers and small farmers who do not generate sufficient income from their land. Even small farmers with up to five acres supplement their agriculture with outside jobs or wage employment. The evidence relating to rural labour households and agricultural labour households clearly shows an overall decline in employment both for male and female labour. There is also a decline in the average number of earning members per household. Clearly, the rural labour households and agricultural labour households in this state are characterized by low earning, decline in income, low consumption and high debt, and remedies will have to be found to generate more employment and income.

Key words: Agriculture, Labour, Employment, Income, Credit

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