

SR SANKARAN CHAIR

Research on Rural Labour Matters • Through the Prism Equity Matters

SRSC Seminar Proceedings

DYNAMICS OF RURAL LABOUR RELATIONS IN INDIA



S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)
National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

(Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India)

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030

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NIRD&PR's VISION

- To focus on the policies and programme that benefit the rural poor, strive to energise the democratic decentralisation processes, improve the operation and efficiency of rural development personnel, promote transfer of technology through its social laboratories, technology park and create environmental awareness.
- As a 'think-tank' for the Ministry of Rural Development, NIRD&PR while acting as a repository of knowledge on rural development would assist the Ministry in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development to usher in the change.

NIRD&PR's MISSION

- To examine and analyse the factors contributing to the improvement of economic and social well-being of people in rural areas on a sustainable basis with focus on the rural poor and the other disadvantaged groups through research, action research and consultancy efforts.
- To facilitate the rural development efforts with particular emphasis and focus on the rural poor by improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of rural development officials and non-officials through organising training, workshops and seminars.

About NIRD&PR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj continuously strives to serve the nation through training, research, action research and consultancy activities for development of the rural poor and enhance their quality of life. It aims to:

- Organise training programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops for senior level development managers, elected representatives, bankers, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- Undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research.
- Study functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Development programmes across the States.
- Analyse and propose solutions to problems in planning and implementation of the programmes for rural development; and
- Develop content and disseminate information through periodicals, reports, e-modules and other publications.

Considering the challenges faced by the Government in the development of a large section of rural poor across the country through its various policies and programmes, NIRD&PR as apex training Institute in the field of rural development has to cater to the training and capacity development needs of a large clientele. To achieve these objectives, a nation-wide network of training infrastructure has to play its rightful role. The clientele include a large number of elected PRI representatives at different levels, rural development functionaries, NGOs, Bankers and other stakeholders. Capacity building of rural development personnel and elected representatives is an intrinsic part of the entire rural development process. It helps to improve their managerial skills while keeping them abreast with the latest changes in strategies, government policies and programmes to augment their knowledge and working efficiency resulting in strengthening of the delivery mechanism for the benefit of all the stakeholders. The challenge is huge and NIRD&PR has been able to play its role in the country's rural development initiatives by facilitating qualitative changes in programmes implementation through a process of training, research, action research, consultancy, information dissemination and information building on a continual basis. This has enabled the Institute to emerge as the National Apex Institute for capacity development in the area of rural development.

In its continuous effort to develop managerial skills of functionaries in rural development process, the Institute started one-year fully residential Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) and two one-year PG Diploma programmes in Distance Mode namely, Sustainable Rural Development (PGD-SRD) and Tribal Development Management (PGD-TDM).

Dynamics of Rural Labour Relations in India



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The relationship between rural labour market and labour has been undergoing rapid change due to a variety of factors, including various development and welfare programmes, and the gradual structural changes in the countryside caused by the ongoing economic reforms in the country. There is a need to understand the dynamics of change taking place in rural labour markets in the context of social transformation in rural India.

In order to imbibe a holistic understanding of the labour market situation and its impact on the livelihood of rural labour households, the S.R. Sankaran Chair organised a three-day national seminar on the 'Dynamics of Rural Labour Relations in India' from March 10 to 12, 2016 at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad. We are grateful to Professor C.H. Hanumatha Rao, Professor Mahendra Dev and Professor Yoginder K. Alagh for giving the inaugural lecture, keynote address and valedictory lecture, respectively. Thirty papers were presented during the course of the seminar. It was graced by a number of scholars, including the members of the Advisory Committee, S.R. Sankaran Chair. This booklet contains the proceedings of the seminar.

We have received generous support and encouragement from NIRD&PR authorities and those associated with the S.R. Sankaran Chair. We are thankful to Dr. W.R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, for providing support for the publication of this booklet. Professor R. Radhakrishna, Chairman, Advisory Committee, S.R. Sankaran Chair, gave us continuous support and encouragement for the activities of the Chair, including in the organisation of the seminar. We have also received support from members of the Advisory Committee and many others, including from Professor Suman Chandra, Head, the then Centre for Agrarian Studies and Disaster Management. We are thankful to all of them.

We are also grateful to several participants for valuable suggestions and improvement in the text on earlier drafts of the proceedings.

Our sincere acknowledgements are to members of the faculty and staff of Centre for Agrarian Studies and Disaster Management and other technical staff of NIRD&PR, whose contributions helped us to complete the seminar successfully.

We thank Ms.N.S.Deepa for her contribution, before and after the seminar, for transcription work and Ms. Puja Mehta for her succinct editing of the manuscript.

We hope that this booklet will be useful to researchers, policymakers, civil society organisations and all those interested in the study of issues appertaining to India's rural labour and their livelihood pattern.

Kailash Sarap

Venkatanarayana Motkuri

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON DYNAMICS OF RURAL LABOUR RELATIONS IN INDIA

(held during 10–12 March, 2016)

I. Background of the Seminar

Rural labour market has been undergoing rapid changes due to a variety of factors, which include various development and welfare programmes as well as the structural changes taking place in the countryside because of ongoing economic reforms in the country. This seminar focused on the changing face of labour relations in the Indian countryside and the factors that have contributed to these changes. The background of the seminar is briefly given below.

A large segment of the Indian population lives in the countryside, of which a significant proportion is poor. Improvement in their socio-economic conditions has important implications for the country's development. Rural development and social transformation

in rural areas has been of great concern for policy and research since long. The socio-economic structure and relations of production that hinder the growth of rural economy have also been subject to debate. Contrary to the expectations of the dual economy model of Arthur Lewis and others, the distorted structural transformation that has been taking place in rural India has resulted in low level of labour absorption, both in the urban and rural areas. A variety of measures have been adopted, particularly since the late 1970s, to improve the working conditions of the labouring poor. Undoubtedly, these measures have resulted in some positive developments, which can be gauged from the internal dynamics of the rural economy, impact of external forces and the policy initiatives. However, the structural transformation of the Indian

economy in the recent past has not only been uneven, but also has posed both challenges and opportunities for social transformation. The rural society/economy of India has become more diverse and is gradually converging with its urban counterpart. Besides, globalisation has further accentuated these challenges, particularly threatening the socio-economic structure and livelihood activities.

While the agriculture sector is undergoing rapid changes with the adoption of new systems such as crop diversification, the contour of non-farm activities is also expanding. Various government interventions such as MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) have been successful in generating employment and creating a level playing field for the rural masses. Some urban characteristics of rural India have now become increasingly visible. A variety of factors including exposure to new technologies, improved infrastructure and communication facilities, public action, various development and welfare programmes, and the concomitant structural changes taking place in the countryside have influenced these changes.

Notwithstanding the above, rural India continues its struggle to overcome pertinent issues and challenges. Nearly

70 per cent of the total population of India lives in the countryside. Of the total rural households, according to Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011, 30 per cent depend on crop cultivation for their livelihoods, while 51 per cent derive income from manual casual labour (in agriculture and non-agriculture).

Of late, both the rural income and wages have been rising. Simultaneously, there are rising social disparities, economic inequalities and regional imbalances within the countryside. The dynamics of rural transformation are further exposed to both domestic and global factors. In the context of structural changes in the Indian economy, there has been a growing imbalance between and within regions and also between socio-economic groups. Besides, increasing landlessness, shrinking size of average landholding, growing rural non-farm sector, out-migration and commutation, rising wage rates, rising social and economic aspirations, and social and political mobilisations have implications for rural labour relations.

To what extent have the structural changes observed in Indian economy improved the labour conditions of the rural poor? What is their relative position in the socio-economic strata of the village economy? In case of improvement, what are the factors that have contributed to such improvement

and to what extent? In order to address these questions, there is a need to have a holistic understanding of the changes taking place in rural labour markets/relations and the dynamics of the social transformation in rural India. It seems only appropriate that a broader analysis of the various factors linked to the changes in rural labour markets be undertaken. In this context, the S.R. Sankaran Chair, NIRD&PR, organised a three-day national seminar from March 10 to 12, 2016. The purpose of the seminar was to revisit the issues relating to rural labour relations in the context of the changes taking place in rural economy in general, including public interventions and market forces, for a better understanding. Deliberations and discussions on theoretical formulations and empirical evidences from wider areas on various themes, issues and associated factors offered lessons, gaps and the way forward. Organising such a seminar under the S.R. Sankaran Chair established at NIRD&PR is a purposeful event. Shri S.R. Sankaran, a civil servant, is known for his commitment to and work for the upliftment of the poor and the marginalised. He took the Constitutional mandate seriously,

putting into practice the fundamental principles of equality, non-discrimination, justice and affirmative action in favour of the socially and economically backward sections.

II Inaugural Session

Prof. R. Radhakrishna, an eminent economist and Chairman, S.R.Sankaran Chair, Advisory Committee presided over the inaugural session. The seminar began with a welcome address by Dr. W.R. Reddy, Director General, NIRD&PR. It was followed by a brief introduction to the theme of the seminar by Prof. Kailas Sarap. The inaugural address was delivered by Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao** and the keynote address by Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Prof. Y.K. Alagh delivered the valedictory address.

Welcome Address by Director General

The Director General, Dr W.R. Reddy, welcomed the delegates and expressed his pleasure to be associated with the event. He recollected his interaction with Sri S.R.Sankaran in different roles and said that the current event is a befitting one. In the context

** See full text of the Inaugural Address, Keynote Address and Valedictory Address printed in a booklet: SRSC (2016), 'Rural Labour in India: Processes and Policy Options,' S.R. Sankran Chair, NIRD&PR, Hyderabad.

of labour relations he said that, ultimately whatever research is done, there is a need to identify the areas and factors which will help to improve the socio-economic conditions of labourers. Moreover, he feels that labour relations in rural India are nothing but livelihood relations. Further, he emphasised on the importance of understanding the working of the urban labour market, since migrants from rural areas constitute the bulk of the labour working in the urban areas. In view of this there is a need to understand the extent of migration into urban area and their livelihood condition. Needless to say, a discussion on rural labour markets or rural labour relations would be incomplete without a reference to agriculture. The Director General welcomed everyone on behalf of NIRD and PR and wished that the deliberation that will take place over the next three days will bring lot of useful and insightful suggestions for the benefits of rural areas.

Prof. Radhakrishna in his remarks said that the purpose of this seminar is to understand the dynamics of labour market based on secondary data as well as micro field studies. The papers contributed therein deal with macroeconomics of labour market involving supply and demand factors, institutions and public intervention programmes that underlie the

dynamics of labour market. The seminar deliberations provide useful insights into the nature and structure of the changes taking place in the labour market. The scholarly works have brought out the following statistical features of the changes that have taken place in the rural labour market in the recent times.

First, employment in agriculture has declined not only in relative terms, but also in absolute terms for which both supply and demand side factors are equally responsible. On the supply side, three factors have been identified viz. decline in rate of population growth, decline in labour force participation rate due to increasing enrolment in educational institutions at various levels, and rural to urban migration. On the demand side, there has been an overall decline in the demand for labour on account of mechanisation, agricultural diversification from traditional food crops to commercial crops, significant growth of agriculture and allied sectors, rapid expansion of rural non-farm sector, and implementation of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). In spite of the evidences to prove the tightening of agricultural labour supply, surplus labour exists. Second, there are perceptible developments in the employment type. While the percentage of self-employed has increased in agriculture, the non-farm sector is characterised by increasing

casualisation of labour. There has been an increase in the demand for specific skills, both in the non-farm activities as well as commercial and allied agriculture. Third, real wages for agricultural and non-farm casual labour have increased. Rural wages have grown faster than the urban wages and agricultural wages have grown at a higher rate than the non-agricultural wages. These changes are also reflected in reduced income poverty as well as the rise in the real per capita consumption expenditure of rural labour households. Fourth, while reviewing numerous field studies, Prof. T.S. Papola, an eminent labour economist, noted that there are perceptible changes in the contractual relationships between labour and employers. He also observed that now labourers face relatively less “coercive conditions” and “un-freedom”. It is true that the dynamics of labour market vary across States and tribal areas.

Prof. C. H. Hanumantha Rao, in his inaugural address, said that the rural labour market has acquired prominence in the recent times because of major developments. These are: rise in wages of rural labour in general and agricultural labour in particular, emergence of the rural non-farm sector as an important source of employment, and increasing feminisation of agriculture despite a decline in female labour force

participation rate in the recent past. It has been found that a number of factors including growth in agriculture and overall gross domestic product (GDP) have raised the demand for rural labour, which, in turn, has increased the wages of both male and female workers in quite a few States across the country. Further, the implementation of social security measures like pension schemes, public distribution of food grains, provision of healthcare, and above all the effective implementation of MGNREGA in quite a few States is widely believed to have significantly contributed to raising the rural wages by improving the bargaining power of rural labourers and raising their “reservation wage.”

It has been observed that an increase in wage rate results in an increase in the unit labour cost in rural areas. Farmers have adopted capital-intensive technologies and practices, including diversification of agriculture, in response to the rising costs. As a result, it has not only improved profits of farmers by raising productivity and reducing the unit costs, but also contributed to raising the agricultural growth rate. Though there has been resentment among farmers about welfare programmes like MGNREGA, from a social point of view there is a need to implement such effective measures in order to increase the bargaining power of unorganised labour.

The emergence of the rural non-farm sector as an important source of output and employment holds out the prospect of a spatially broad-based and environment-friendly growth conducive to the well-being of the rural poor. Since the small and marginal farmers are deriving a larger proportion of their income from non-farm sources (when compared to the medium and large farmers) which could be more stable than farm income, rapid growth of non-farm sector may contribute to drought-proofing of incomes of small and marginal farmers. A spatially broad-based growth will reduce costs and urban congestion and may also ensure a larger volume of employment than when growth is limited to high wage areas. However, strong policy measures are necessary to achieve sustainable growth in the non-farm sector. A sustained agricultural growth through an increase in the Total Factor Productivity (TFP) is indispensable for the growth of the non-farm sector because of its strong backward and forward linkages. Besides, there is a need to promote broad-based development of the physical, social and healthcare infrastructure in rural areas.

Feminisation of agriculture is largely a consequence of the movement of rural labourers (male) from farm to non-farm work. With an increasing number of male members taking up non-

farm work, the management of marginal, small and medium farms shall be taken over by women in course of time. The management of farms by women should be regarded as both an opportunity and a challenge. In terms of an opportunity, it will enable empowerment of women who have greater familiarity with enterprises like dairying and horticulture (major sources of farm income). On the other side, it may pose challenges because women lack land and property rights; as a result, farming becomes an additional responsibility apart from household work. Besides, their low literacy level and lack of experience in dealing with agricultural support systems, including extension services (which are heavily male dominated), can also hinder their potential for growth.

In light of the above, there is a need to launch strong policy initiatives, beginning at the national level, to deal with issues such as strengthening land inheritance rights for women, granting of property rights on houses built with public assistance, raising literacy level of and promoting awareness among women farmers, taking appropriate measures to lighten the burden of housework, sensitising the agricultural support systems (including credit institutions) to the needs of women farmers, and particularly, inducting women in large numbers into the

agricultural extension system in order to guarantee concrete improvements for them.

In his keynote address Prof. S. Mahendra Dev discussed the challenges in the labour market in the post-reform period and analysed the trends, determinants and policies on rural non-farm sector. Prof. Dev began the address by citing the enormity of the challenge pertaining to generation of decent employment in the post-reform period. He observed that the policies and strategies formulated thereafter have overlooked the intricate regional and social variations in the country and the prevalence of numerous informal institutions. Besides, the traditional distinction between organised /formal and unorganised /informal workers disregards and simplifies the complex realities of the employment scenario in India.

There are significant imbalances across sectoral shares in GDP and employment. Citing relevant data, Prof. Dev pointed to the fact that while the agriculture sector is the largest employer (49 per cent), its contribution to GDP is negligible (14 per cent). Further, although the service sector contributes the maximum share to the GDP (58 per cent), it employs less than a third (27 per cent) of the workforce. The lowest contribution came from the

manufacturing sector, both in terms of employment (13 per cent) and GDP (16 per cent). He stated that such high employment in agriculture is not observed in most developing countries.

Prof. Dev took into account the huge gap in the percentage of workforce employed in the formal/organised sector (8 per cent) and the informal/unorganised sector (92 per cent). In spite of increased mobility, fragmentation persists in the labour market in terms of gender, caste, religion, tribe, region, educational attainment, vocational skills, location and sector in determining the division of workforce into the aforementioned sectors. The SCs and STs often occupy low-wage occupations and are more vulnerable in terms of earnings and job security, regardless of skills, training and vocational experience.

On the other side, the post-reform period has not only helped abate poverty, but also aided a modest improvement in living standards. The affirmative action policies of the government have been advantageous for diverse social groups, though in varying degrees. This can be gauged from the striking increase in the number of SC and ST employees in public sector undertakings as well as from the large increase in enrolment in educational institutions. However, employment opportunities have mainly been created

in the informal sector, while the good quality regular formal job opportunities are on the decline. These uneven benefits of growth are also evident in the fact that while certain regions and groups have prospered, others are grappling with uncertainties in livelihoods and declining wages.

Moreover, despite many efforts in this regard, an important challenge confronting the economy is the employment of a large percentage of “working poor” and “underemployed” in low productive work in the informal economy. Alongside the high working poverty, a significant number of educated youth is either unemployed, underemployed, or is coping with insecure work arrangements. Besides, with the increase in access to education, women will also comprise a large proportion of the future workforce. Thus, providing jobs for this huge number will be the most important task in the near future that the country has to take very seriously.

Nevertheless, there have been some visible positive trends in the labour market. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), for instance, has proved its efficacy in redefining rural labour relations, enhancing wages and strengthening the rural markets. While its implementation remains uneven,

there is evidence to suggest that it has contributed to increased rural wages and empowerment of the weaker sections. Not only have real wages increased at a consistent three per cent per annum over the last three decades, but also there is a strong labour productivity growth trend. Prof. Dev, however, observed that there has been a reversal in the trend towards informalisation as well as a steep shift of workers from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sectors. While both agricultural and non-agricultural (or non-farm) earnings have increased, the rise has been most rapid for non-farm wages. In terms of access to quality employment, while the vulnerable sections like SCs and STs have benefitted marginally in public sector enterprises, the OBCs have benefitted immensely in both private and public sectors. However, the share of Muslims (except OBCs) has registered a decline.

The development of the manufacturing sector is important for absorbing labour productively. Pointing to the dismal share of manufacturing sector in total employment, Prof. Dev emphasised on the need for ascribing it a greater role in generating stable employment. Despite rapid economic growth, India has not been able to generate productive jobs for its rising workforce. This decoupling of economic growth and productive employment is a cause of concern. It is clear that to make

growth more inclusive, the government will have to provide massive stimulus to the manufacturing sector. In addition, a better understanding of factors and processes that influence the ability of the poor to engage in more sustainable and more remunerative activities will help design effective policies and interventions. Historical experience shows that countries follow agriculture-industry-service sector sequence in order to obtain higher growth and productive employment. Besides, a study of the strategies adopted by countries like Japan and Germany will also help understand the nature of effective industrial policy. He opined that the economy had the potential to increase both the output and employment in the manufacturing sector, provided we overcome the several existing internal and external economic constraints.

Simultaneously, Prof. Dev also stressed the role of rural non-farm sector in generating productive employment and alleviating poverty in rural areas as an antidote to limited capacity of the urban sector and the almost saturated agricultural sector to generate further employment. Citing relevant data, he stated that there has been a significant increase in employment in rural areas, which can be attributed to the non-farm sector. In the early 1990s, the share of the rural non-farm sector was higher in

high agricultural productivity states like Punjab and Haryana as compared to the low agricultural productivity States like Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Further, till 2004–05, the growth in the non-farm sector was mainly concentrated in construction, transport and communication sub-sectors, and a large proportion of workers employed therein were casual wage workers. The wages of casual workers employed in the non-farm sector was higher than those of workers employed in the agricultural sector: the share of the non-farm sector in total rural income was approximately 48 per cent. But post 2004–05, the share of the rural non-farm sector registered a significant increase across States. In poorer States the increase could be attributed to casual employment in the absence of agricultural employment opportunities. In this regard, he commended the upward social mobility the rural non-farm sector has accorded to the vulnerable sections of society, especially the SCs.

Prof. Dev identified myriad determinants that would lead to the growth in rural non-farm sector. These include: agricultural growth and agricultural productivity, commercialisation of agriculture real wages, public expenditure, and development of infrastructure. He also suggested multiple strategies like sustainable agricultural growth and

development, creation of social and economic infrastructure, and greater involvement of women in labour force to speed up the growth rate of non-farm employment in India.

Comments on inaugural and keynote address by Chairman

Prof. Hanumantha Rao, in his keynote address, has made some insightful observations on the causal link between agricultural wage and agricultural growth. He put forth the proposition that an increase in agricultural wage rate and thereby an increase in wage cost in crop production would lead to substitution of capital with labour. As a consequence of farm mechanisation, agricultural productivity would increase followed by a decrease in unit cost which have a favourable effect on agricultural growth. In justification of his proposition, he cited empirical evidences from his earlier work on agricultural technology and recent ICRISAT studies. These observations negate the prevailing dominant view of farmers and some policy makers that MGNREGA would adversely affect agricultural productivity. Prof. Hanumantha Rao also observed that an increase in wage rate would lead to agricultural diversification since it is less labour demanding. Agricultural diversification through its forward and

backward linkages would promote rural non-farm sector. Since non-farm income is less prone to fluctuations, it would protect agricultural households from weather-induced risks by diversifying household incomes. He also observed that non-farm sector is more widespread than agriculture. Spatially spread non-farm sector would on one hand reduce the flow of rural migrants to urban areas and, on the other hand has a favourable effect on poverty reduction.

Prof. Hanumantha Rao and Prof. Mahendra Dev stressed the importance of infrastructure, social protection, and skill development for decent employment. Noting the growing feminisation of agriculture, Prof. Hanumantha Rao has advocated land rights for women agricultural workers and imparting of skills to facilitate their participation in the ongoing rural diversification.

Since these ideas are very relevant from the policy perspective, I hope the seminar participants will throw more lights on them in the technical sessions which will enrich empirical evidences and place them in rural development strategy.

Prof. Suman Chandra proposed a vote of thanks for the dignitaries of the inaugural session.

III General Issues on Rural Labour

This first technical session was chaired by Prof. S.K.Rao and consisted of three presentations. It began with a specially invited presentation by Sher Singh Verick, a representative from International Labour Organisation (ILO), followed by two other presentations. Dr. Verick in his presentation on labour scenario in South Asia Region said that a perusal of the labour market situation in South Asia indicates a slow and uncertain transformation. Although development is associated with urbanisation and industrialisation involving a transformation from agriculture to manufacturing and services and the rise of regular or formal employment, the path is increasingly uncertain and has not been witnessed in many countries in South Asia.

Partha Saha and Sher Singh Verick observed that in India, the contribution of agriculture to GDP has been declining, yet agriculture remains the mainstay of the rural economy as it employs almost half of the population. However, the gap between job seekers in rural areas and employment opportunities in agriculture has been widening. Resultantly, the non-farm sector is increasingly becoming an important source of livelihood. Based on NSS employment and unemployment survey for the years 1999–2000 and

2011–12, this paper analyses (i) rural diversification across States in rural India, (ii) factors responsible for non-agricultural employment, and (iii) which industries within the non-farm sector generate employment opportunities. This paper also looks into the role of agriculture in rural diversification. The broad story that emerges from this analysis is that there has been a significant shift towards non-farm employment in rural areas, and this shift has predominantly taken place among the economically weaker sections of the rural society. Also, access to land is an important factor in this process of diversification.

Panchanan Das and Anindita Sengupta's study is an attempt to look into the causal effect of education on occupational choice in the presence of labour market segmentation using micro level survey data on employment and unemployment in India. In this study, the dependent variable is a categorical variable, with type of employment based on principal activity status and occupational status. Rural employment has been categorised into eight groups: self-employed in agriculture and non-agriculture, unpaid family workers in agriculture and non-agriculture, regular wage earners in agriculture and non-agriculture, and casual labour in agriculture and non-agriculture. As

employment category is likely to be endogenously rather than exogenously determined, the dependent variable is a stochastic event that describes the outcome with a density function. Thus, a multinomial logit model may be appropriate for predicting the occupational choice of individuals. Casual worker in agriculture is taken as the reference group in the multinomial logit model used in this study to look at the shift of workers to non-farm employment. Rural people who have studied up to middle or secondary level were mostly self-employed, either in the farm sector or the non-farm sector. Those with a higher level of education were mostly absorbed as wage or salaried workers on a permanent basis, as expected. The coefficients for different educational dummies are the multinomial logit estimate comparing the effects of education on occupational choice for different categories of employment relative to those in casual employment in agriculture, given the other variables in the model are held constant.

Discussion

Presentations were followed by observations and comments from discussant. Discussant Saumya Chakrabarti started his observations on the paper by Sher Verick & Saha. He said that across Industries, there has been a

shift to the rural non-farm employment, predominantly among economically weaker sections of the rural society. The non-farm sector is substantial in terms of income and employment. But, if one looks at the scenario in India, especially in manufacturing, generation of employment has decelerated markedly, largely due to patenting of manufacturing technologies. Thus, the significant movement of rural labour from farm to non-farm activities has led to tightening of the labour market. Labour scarcity has emerged as one of the major constraints to increasing agricultural productivity in India. This has several implications on agriculture in terms of rise in farm wage, especially in the context of MGNREGA. More importantly, the dispossession of agricultural producers from land is the root cause of immiserising growth of informal sector. Thus, there is a necessity to look for alternative possibilities to add more value to employment in agriculture.

IV Alternative Forms of Organisation of Work in Rural Areas

This second session was chaired by Prof. K.P. Kannan and consisted of four presentations. S. MahendraDev in his presentation on a review of the working of MGNREGS said that such public works programmes are important components

of labour market interventions and social assistance. India has for long experimented with labour-intensive public works, beginning from the 1960s. He mentioned ten potential direct and indirect benefits of the programme: Creation of employment leading to livelihood security, self-respect, asset creation, impact on rural wages, women empowerment, benefits to marginalised sections (like schedule caste [SC], schedule tribe [ST] and women), reducing distress migration, insurance against shocks and seasonality, financial inclusion, and improvement in grassroots processes of democracy.

The paper by N. Nagaraj (co-authored with Lalmani Pandey, Cynthia Bantilan and Namrata Singha Roy) assessed the impact of MGNREGA on labour scarcity, wages, cost of production, and the linkages between wage rates in agriculture and non-agriculture employment, including their implications for the agriculture sector. Their study is based on field survey data of selected villages located in the semi-arid regions of Telangana and Maharashtra under Village Dynamic Studies in South Asia (VDSA). For comparative analysis, the data pertaining to 2003–05 and 2009–2011 has been considered. The key findings of the study are as follows: the real wages for farm and non-farm works exhibited

an upward trend, especially after the implementation of MGNREGA in both the States. The average daily wage rate of male farm workers has grown sharply after the implementation of MGNREGA in both the States compared to almost negative growth rate before MGNREGA. The non-farm wage of male labourers has increased at a higher rate compared to the growth rate of farm wage. While both the farm and non-farm wages have increased by almost three times during the period in which MGNREGA was implemented in some areas, wages from MGNREGA itself have increased only by half. Apparently, the rise in real wage of non-farm sector has outpaced the farm wage resulting in a shift in labour force from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector. However, the phenomenon of gender wage inequality in rural labour market continued over the period from 2001 to 2012. There has been a steady decline in the number of people employed for the cultivation of certain crops. The shortage of male labourers for farm work has been more prominent, whereas the increased involvement of female labourers in the production of major crops confirms the feminisation of agriculture. The share of labour cost formed a significant proportion of the total cost. In order to address labour scarcity, technological developments that are amenable to mechanisation along with custom-hiring facility are

crucial. Further, capacity building programmes for skill augmentation, especially for female labourers, are required.

Harsha Tiwary and Saumya Chakrabarti observed that MGNREGA was adopted in 2006 with the objective of providing a strong social safety net for the vulnerable people. Their study, based on secondary data, analyses whether (i) the benefits of the programme accrue to the poor and illiterate with a feeble political voice, including the SCs, STs, and (ii) the States governed by the regional/smaller parties ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the scheme. Can MGNREGA expenditure induce such inclusions or is it just wasted? The analysis is done across all States, Union territories and districts for a period of three years: 2009–10, 2010–11 and 2011–12. MGNREGA data was collected from the official website of MGNREGA; other data was collected from various sites and reports. The study has made use of pictorial representation (maps), bar and line diagrams. For confirmatory analysis, LSDV (Least Squares Dummy Variable) and pooled OLS regression analyses (separately for States and districts) have been used. State-level analysis shows that programme expenditure plays a vital role in determining MGNREGA outcomes. Poverty and lack of agricultural income

was expected to play a crucial role in “targeting,” but it did not happen. Literacy has a moderate role, perhaps in generating demand for jobs. Further, people’s participation in general elections (a proxy for people’s voice) and the influence of regional parties at the State-level appear to have a strong positive association with MGNREGA outcomes. Overall, the orientation, intention and capacity of a State seem to play crucial roles. Looking at the district-level analysis, there is gross mis-targeting so far as the poor and disadvantaged are concerned. However, MGNREGA has undoubtedly proved beneficial for SCs, STs and women.

Chinmay Tumbe looked into why the rural labour ratio or the proportion of agricultural labourers in the agricultural workforce persistently increased over several decades? He has attempted to address this question by empirically testing two contrasting theories: one, a theory of dispossession whereby cultivators are transformed into agricultural labourers owing to economic distress, and two, a theory of rising population density, declining farm holding size and changing age structures leading to potentially higher returns to labour over returns to land. In his analysis of district level data of Census 2001 and Census 2011, along with supplementary NSS (National Sample Survey) data, he found evidence in

favour of the second theory. In particular, he found considerable evidence in favour of a U-shaped labour ratio-density relationship and has shown the significance of colonial legacy (using a variable for British rule compiled from early 20th century Census), age-distribution, migration, MGNREGS and differential rates of exit from the agricultural workforce as factors explaining the mystery behind the rising rural labour ratio.

Discussion

Presentations were followed by observations and comments by discussants. Prof. Indrakanth said that during the initial years many people were under the impression that one just has to enroll under MGNREGS in order to get wages. As a result, not many assets were created. The scheme was not properly designed and faced many problems, for instance, some farmers were not willing to surrender some land for constructing roads. But, over time, the scheme adopted a piece wage rate policy wherein people could work for long hours. Referring to Nagraj's paper, Prof. Indrakanth said that it was very interesting and contained appropriate data. But when considering the gender wage rate, the author had taken into consideration only absolute wage rates, which gave another impression. In addition, the author had mentioned that

(i) the gap between male and female wage rates had been reduced and (ii) productivity is growing faster than wages. Prof. Indrakanth said that it may be attributed to the enhanced productivity of land and labour through mechanisation. Also, scarcity of labour could be attributed to the demand for higher wages and not necessarily to "shortage" of labour. Further, Prof. Indrakanth said that the author has used demand and supply factors to determine micro level data. Performance cannot be measured on the basis of 100 days because it is only an upper limit. If people want to work, they will work; if not, they will give up work. Thus, the use of demand and supply gap to determine micro level data is questionable. The other discussant Prof. Panchanan Das appreciated the use of panel data set in the paper by Nagraj et al. and suggested that while calculating the change in wage rates it is desirable to take into account the average annual change rather than calculating the same by taking terminal points (2001 and 2012). He also suggested some methodological refinement in the presentation of data in the paper by Saumya and Tiwari and that of Chinmay Tumbe. Similarly B.K.Sahu gave several suggestions relating to substantive and methodological issues relating to the papers. It was followed by a lovely discussion among the participants.

V Changing Perspectives of Women Work in Rural India

This third session was chaired by Prof. Indira Hirway and it consisted of six presentations. Nisha Srivastava's paper (co-authored with Anjor Bhaskar) argued that unlike the experiences of other developing countries where female work participation rates (WPRs) rose with economic development, in India women's WPR has been falling. The paper analyses the decline in female work participation rate, covering the period between 1993–94 and 2011–12. The analysis is based on agricultural census and unit record NSSO data results and pertains to rural areas. The usual status categories (ps+ss) and women in the working age group of 25–59 years have been considered. NSS data shows a dramatic decline in the proportion of workers from 32.8 in 1993–94 to 24.8 per 100 women in 2011–12. This is offset by an increase in the percentage of women engaged in domestic duties and those who forage for food, fuel, etc. It indicates a lack of availability of jobs; as a result, women have to involuntarily opt out of the workforce even though they do not register themselves as unemployed. Moreover, during times of job scarcity, cultural norms dictate that men have the first right to employment. In 1993–94, the largest concentration of female workers was in agriculture, followed by manufacturing. In 2011–12 there was an

absolute decline in agriculture. The construction sector showed the highest growth rates in employment, for men by 9.6 per cent per annum and for women by 12.9 per cent. While male workers increased by 1.9 per cent per annum, female workers increased by only 0.6 per cent per annum.

Work in rural areas has been segregated into agriculture and non-agriculture to see where job opportunities are growing. Within agriculture, employment has been further classified into crop agriculture and non-crop agriculture. Most noteworthy is the relatively high importance given to non-cropping agricultural activities by women as compared to men. Results show that while there was a slow growth in the employment rate of crop agriculture, non-crop agriculture fared worse: male employment rate came down by 2.1 per cent, while female employment fell by -1.4 per cent per annum. For women, the decline was highest in Forestry (-7.5 per cent), plantations (-6 per cent), and animal husbandry (-0.1 per cent). The saving grace was the non-agricultural sector where male employment grew by 11.5 per cent per annum and female employment by 3.8 per cent per annum. Female intensity (percentage of female to total employment) is also examined. In 1993–94, jobs with high female intensity included weeding (48 per cent)

and transplanting (45 per cent). Here female intensity declined to 42 per cent, and 29 per cent respectively in 2011–12. Animal husbandry sector was the third largest employer of women, but the person days of work declined by 0.11 per cent per annum for women. The paper concludes that globally, female WPR has been rising and gender gaps have been reducing. But in India, gender gaps have increased as economic growth has failed to boost female participation. Traditionally agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry have provided jobs to a large number of women. However, over the years, women's participation in these sectors has decreased. Moreover, there has been pervasive mechanisation of many agricultural tasks. Thus, while women have been pushed out of certain jobs, there has been no compensating increase in the opportunities in other sectors.

E Revathi and M.R. Aneesh said a striking feature of labour market in India is the phenomenal decline in female labour force participation rate in both rural and urban areas. However, rural Andhra Pradesh represents a different picture as its female labour force participation rate is one of the highest in the country. In recent times, this downward trend has become more pronounced at all-India level. However, the present study based on primary data conducted in the three districts, namely

Kurnool, Guntur and East Godavari, observes high work participation rates. It finds that the labour force participation rate for women estimated at 55 per cent is much higher than that calculated from NSS data at 43.35 per cent in 2012. Across districts, Kurnool has the highest participation rate followed by Guntur and East Godavari. While 86 per cent women are engaged in agriculture in rural areas, 11 per cent are working in the service sector. Further, 79 per cent women employed in the agriculture sector are working as casual labourers and only 20 per cent as self-employed. In the non-agricultural sector, 24 per cent are self-employed and 35 per cent are regular salaried workers. The number of women working as own-account workers under the self-employed category is more than the number employed as permanent workers under the regular salaried category. Though all three districts exhibit different employment trends for women, they are in line with the leads thrown up from the secondary data.

Partha Pratim Sahu's study focused on rural Odisha. He pointed out that women workers generally face huge quantity and quality deficit in employment, as they have a disproportionately low share in total employment and tend to be concentrated in low-paid, low productivity, low earning and irregular

work with no or very little social security benefits. The low and declining labour force and workforce participation rates for women continue to be a cause of worry. Based on a mix of primary and secondary data sources, he has attempted to understand the changing perspectives of women's work and the decline in female labour force participation rate in rural areas of Odisha. His analysis of secondary data suggests that the overall rural employment growth is falling short of labour force growth; weighty sectors (such as farming) are not growing rapidly (or witnessing slowdown or in some cases declining); the fast-growing sectors are those with relatively low employment share; there is growing asymmetry between state-GDP and employment; and, the State has also witnessed sluggish employment diversification in the last three decades. At the sectoral level also, excluding construction and transport, many sectors witnessed varying degrees of slowdown/negative growth rates between 2004–05 and 2011–12. The share of female employment in rural Odisha registered varying degrees of decline in many sectors, including agriculture. The entry of female job seekers in the many branches of non-farm sector seems to have become even more difficult in recent years.

In terms of types of employment, both male and female workers in rural Odisha suffer quality deficit. The share of good quality jobs, i.e. regular salaried jobs, continues to be less than 10 per cent for male and less than 5 per cent for female workers. More than 90 per cent of employment may be categorised as vulnerable employment. The State has not experienced any favourable shift across the type of employment in the last three decades. Skill and educational attainment is low for both male and female workers in Odisha. In 2009–10, more than 60 per cent workers studied up to the primary level. The situation is anything but pleasing across broad sectors of the State's economy. Nearly 40 per cent primary, 33 per cent secondary and 11 per cent tertiary sector workers were illiterate in 2009–10.

At the aggregate level, the State registered a 10 per cent decline in rural female labour force participation rate (RF_LFPR) between 2005 and 2012. The decline was witnessed across age groups, education categories, religion, caste groups, regions (districts), MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure) class and so on, but at varying degrees. Bulk of the literature, on this issue, is largely based on NSSO data, which offer explanations for this declining trend in female labour force participation. All these factors can broadly be classified into four groups: education, income,

social and cultural, and changes in definitional and measurement issues. The analysis of secondary data is supplemented by the primary survey carried out in three districts, i.e. Kendrapada, Koraput and Sambalpur of Odisha. The data/observations gathered from the field survey attempt to explain factors that lie beyond the decline in the female labour force participation rates. Attempt has also been made to understand the constraints in accessing better job opportunities and/or starting a business venture. Why cannot a female take advantage of the new labour market opportunities that bring high growth and favourable structural changes in the economy? The field observations help understand the role and relevance of educational and training institutions, measures and policies regarding care and domestic duties, promotion of child and aged population care, defying social and cultural barriers, enhancing safety measures and so on. The study captures the impact of declining female labour force participation rate on household livelihood and coping strategies to meet the challenges.

Vandana Upadhyay's study focused on the employment scenario of women in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. Access to employment and earnings is vital for having control over resources as well as for participation in the decision-making process, both

within and outside the household. One of the fundamental aspects of gender discrimination, in almost all parts of the world, is the unequal access of women to gainful employment opportunities. A substantial section of women remain outside the job market. Further, when they have an opportunity of jobs, they have little access to the high-paying, secure jobs. A majority of women work in the informal sector with low levels of earnings and pitiable working conditions. While the underlying causes of such differences in access to employment are complex and diverse, unequal opportunities for learning and education, socially constructed barriers along with patriarchal ideologies have been found to be responsible for unequal participation of women in income-generating employment opportunities. She argues that the relatively lower levels of participation in paid-work, however, do not mean that women are less burdened. Typically, women shoulder a disproportionately higher share of reproductive responsibilities, including child-rearing, caring and other types of domestic work. They also contribute substantially towards meeting the consumption and survival needs of the household members. However, women's employment is constrained by a number of structural inequalities such as relatively lower wage rates and fewer

hours of paid work, sex-segregation in the job market, sex-stereotyping of jobs resulting in designation of women's jobs as "unskilled", and explicit barriers to entry for women in some segments of the job market.

In terms of household work, workforce participation and the changing division of labour, it is observed that women's work participation rate in the State has been showing a declining trend in recent years. Based on a primary survey, using both qualitative and quantitative approach, the analysis of the average time spent on household work and agricultural activities by both men and women and the gendered division of labour shows that the average time spent on unpaid work is much higher in case of women than that of men. The rapid transformation of the tribal economies of northeast India pose serious challenges before women, particularly because, on the one hand there is an increasing attack on the "traditional" egalitarian values and practices, while on the other hand, economic transformation itself has generated gendered processes of exclusion and impoverishment. While in terms of some indicators, females have a better status as compared to the males in the State, and in the country as a whole, clearly there are old and new spheres of marginalisation, segregation and discrimination. The fact that there

is a weak correlation between various social and gender development indicators, and that the position of women in various dimensions of development does not show a unidirectional pattern, could be attributed to the essentially complex nature of the transition process. Women in Arunachal Pradesh are caught between the hopes of expanding economic opportunities and the despairs of facing increasing disparities in fundamental capabilities, visible and invisible entry barriers in accessing emerging opportunities, and exclusionary practices in various spheres. These various dimensions of gender equality are not only interrelated, but also impediments to any of them impede others as well. The study emphasises that although gender relation in Arunachal Pradesh is generally described as egalitarian, particularly in comparison with many other States of India, such a general portrayal, the paper argues, not only hides the wide variations that exist among the northeastern States, but also does not pay adequate attention to the continuing and emerging disparities in various dimensions of well-being, division of labour and empowerment. While the spread of education, occupational diversification and exposure to mass media have helped women in the State to expand their capabilities, unequal opportunities and

subtle discriminations tend to limit the scope for gender equality. In many respects the egalitarian aspects of the traditional social order are rapidly disappearing, and the barriers to new opportunities continue to create gender divide in some, if not all, spheres of life.

Sarada Gopalakrishnan and Aathy Kannan said that the workforce participation rate is an important indicator of the changes in labour force participation rate in the country. Their study probes into changing pattern of women's work in the context of a south Indian State, Tamil Nadu. What is the percentage of women in Tamil Nadu's agricultural labour force? How is the scenario different from that of the rest of India? What kind of significant policy changes should be recommended? Based on secondary data involving Census data for three decades from 1991 to 2011, NSSO data from various reports and the recent NSSO data on migration (64th round), the paper looks into the participation rates (main and marginal) of men and women in Tamil Nadu and analyses the share of women dependent on agriculture as cultivators or agricultural labourers. Besides, it examines the influence of select indicators on rural female workforce participation in agriculture in Tamil Nadu. It was observed that the composition of main to marginal workers

among female workers in India changed from 70:30 in 1991 to 54:46 in 2001 and then to 60:40 in 2011. By contrast, in Tamil Nadu, the share of female marginal workers increased from 16.96 per cent in 1991 to 27.06 per cent in 2001. The composition of female main to marginal workers for rural Tamil Nadu changed from 83:17 in 1991 to 73:27 in 2001 and 78:22 in 2011. In rural Tamil Nadu, women constitute a large part of the workforce in agriculture: 35 per cent cultivators and 48 per cent agricultural labourers. The results also indicate that a majority of the ST households (43 per cent) and SC households (56 per cent) are engaged as agricultural labourers. At the same time, the agricultural labour households and the households that are self-employed in agriculture are the first to move out of the villages. Literacy rate and urbanisation are significant variables that negatively influence the participation of rural women in agriculture.

M. Srinivasa Reddy's presentation (based on a paper co-authored with C.S. Murthy) focused on the analysis of female labour participation across States in India. It found that the female-male wage ratio increased after the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). It enhanced, in particular, the bargaining strength of

females in the labour market. As a consequence, the quantitative significance of the growth of female labour force has altered in unexpected ways. Along with the female-male wage ratio in explaining the share of female labour force (1) in female population (FLFPR), (2) in total labour force, and (3) in the person days of employment generated under MGNREGS, with the cross-section data of Indian States, other explanatory variables such as MGNREGS wage rate, agricultural growth rate and literacy rate on the shares of females in employment were taken in their analysis. The study examines whether any particular pattern has been followed to determine inter-State variations in the person days of employment generated under MGNREGS per household. It was observed that the impact of the explanatory variables is not always positive owing to the social transformation taking place in rural India. With an increase in wages, labourers seem to prefer leisure to work and uphold the patriarchal norms of behaviour. Further, agricultural growth appears to increase the scope for the more dignified and less-taxing MGNREGS work in place of the arduous and low-paid non-MGNREGS work.

Discussion

Talking about the declining labour force participation rate among women,

Prof. Judith Heyer said that it could be attributed to the dual burden on women. Commenting on E. Revathi and M.R. Aneesh's paper, she said that the figures presented made a lot of sense. Compared to the all-India level, rural Andhra Pradesh presents a different picture as far as the labour force participation of women is concerned. Prof. Heyer was pleased to note that Vandana Upadhyay's paper presented an interesting analysis of a different side of the issue at hand. It held unequal opportunities for learning and education, socially constructed barriers and unequal access to gainful employment opportunities as the causes of gender discrimination. A majority of women work in the informal sector with low levels of earnings and pitiable working conditions. Besides, women shoulder a disproportionately higher share of reproductive responsibilities. As a result, the barriers to the new opportunities continue to create gender divide in some, if not all, spheres of life. Further, commenting on the paper by Sarada Gopalakrishnan and Aathy Kannan, which have probed into changing pattern of women's work in the context of a south Indian State, Tamil Nadu, Prof. Heyer said that what is more important is to focus on the quality of employment and the choices available. She said that detailed work has to be done to arrive at more robust

understanding of the factors involved. Lastly, referring to M. Srinivasa Reddy's paper, she said that the paper presented a different angle on the MGNREGS, which was interesting. It forces us to think whether a State analysis enables us to come up with more sensible measures.

Prof. Kannan said that Partha Pratim Sahu's paper, based on a mix of primary and secondary data sources, had given a fairly grand description of the situation in Odisha. Looking at the figures, it could be said that the quantitative and qualitative deficit in employment can be attributed to low productivity, low earning and irregular work. Besides, the low and declining labour force and workforce participation rates for women is a cause of worry, which may be attributed to wage discrimination, lack of social security, burden of work at home, lack of education, dignity of work, etc. Such problems act as barriers to equality and justice. For instance, Muslim women have the lowest rate of enrolment rate in educational institutions, which accounts for the shortfall in employment. The situation is anything but pleasing, and it is time to look at the big picture. Working women are faced with a lot more challenges than their male counterparts. Thus, in view of their marginalised position within the society, it becomes imperative to approach the

problem from a holistic point of view and map out a long-term commitment from all development actors. The floor was opened for discussions. Several questions were addressed to the paper presenters and these were answered by them.

VI Changing Contractual Arrangements in the Rural Labour Relations

This session (fourth one) was chaired by Prof. N. Nagaraj and consisted of seven presentations. Kaustav Banerjee explored the contours of newer forms of interlocking in India and possible explanations for the ongoing agrarian crises based on recent fieldwork in Marathwada. Has there been a change in the nature of interlocking of markets which led to a peculiar form of forced commercialisation as established by previous scholarship (e.g., Bhaduri) or are we witnessing the emergence of a different type of forced commercialisation? The paper traces the appearance of trader-lenders in Marathwada region (as opposed to agricultural-lenders) and the mechanisms of control of the various markets to establish what we are terming newer forms of forced commerce. The role of public policy in ushering this change is also explored in detail. The paper highlights some of the newer mechanisms that can lead to a

more nuanced understanding of the current agrarian crises.

Indira Hirway and Atanu Chatterjee made a presentation on the changing rural labour market in the context of Gujarat. It observed that Gujarat's economy has been witnessing an unprecedented economic growth, including in the agriculture sector, well above the national average. It has been possible because of the diversification (i) of the cropping pattern towards cash crops, (ii) to animal husbandry/dairying and horticulture within the primary sub-sectors, and (iii) from agriculture to non-agriculture. Also, there are many policy initiatives (such as Jyotigram Yojana, irrigation projects, watershed, water harvesting/recharging, and extension services) that have propelled and accompanied agricultural growth and the concomitant diversification. However, there are serious concerns regarding the pattern of growth. This pattern of growth basically caters to those who are able to participate in it. Thus, benefits of rural growth and diversification are unequally distributed in that certain segments have benefited more than the others. The small and marginal farmers, including those dependent on animal husbandry and the landless have poor access to these growth opportunities. Again, since growth is partly dependent on ground water resources, it leads to

environmental problems of depletion and degradation, particularly in the context of climate change. It also increases the vulnerability of the rural poor. In respect of the impact of the growth on labour market outcomes, it is found that one of the consequences is the creation of multiple segments (based on caste, gender and migration). Concerns have also been raised about the exclusion of some regions, sub-sectors and socio-economic groups from the rural economy. Experiences (benefits or losses) of rural labour in this high growth regime vary with different categories of rural areas (like backward tribal areas, backward arid and semi-arid areas, agriculturally prosperous [Bt. Cotton] areas, near urban areas, coastal saline areas, and industrially developed areas). The small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, those belonging to SC/ST communities and women in general are experiencing multiple forms of deprivation. Arid, semi-arid, tribal and coastal saline areas are regions that are lagging behind.

Keshab Das observed that the overwhelming presence of informality in both the labour and production processes in industrial clusters in developing economies has often been construed as characteristic of what is described as the "low-road" syndrome. In contrast to the so-called "high-road" syndrome in better organised and

vigilant clusters, the low-road syndrome represents serious compromises made to achieve cost advantages, typically through labour cost cutting by over-exploiting and taking recourse to all possible unscrupulous production practices that further harm the interests of workers. Interestingly, while the literature on clusters, often drawing upon experiences of industrialised economies, has been obsessed with issues in achieving competitiveness, building networks and accessing the global market, there is much that needs to be explicated regarding the conditions of informal work arrangements that threaten the rights and safety of workers. This is particularly relevant in case of distress-driven rural migrant workers engaged in the most hazardous work in enterprise clusters thriving on price competition, quick profits and state inaction. More importantly, it must be realised that with high degree of vulnerability, the seasonal migrant workers suffer the double whammy of being institutionally unprotected and lacking a local social identity that would provide a sense of solidarity with other workers sharing their status as precarious labour. The issue of labour relations assumes significance not merely due to the exploitative contract arrangements (labour-capital) involving precarious labour that results in minimal net earnings for the worker, but also

because the physical vulnerability of the worker is subsumed under the informal production process (labour-technology) that compromises working conditions.

These issues are addressed through a detailed case study of an overwhelmingly informal and heavily polluting cluster - a large collectivity of stone crushing enterprises in one of India's poorest States, Odisha - that epitomizes the low-road syndrome alluded in the aforesaid. The analysis draws upon field survey observations, including fifty structured interviews with crusher enterprises.

Driven by the rapid pace of urbanization, this cluster has emerged as a major supplier of stone chips of various sizes/categories towards the construction of roads, bridges, buildings and other concrete structures in the State. With over a thousand crushers existing in the cluster and hillocks blasted occasionally for obtaining boulders (for further crushing), the flakes, fines and dust have not only ruined the local agricultural fields and vegetation, but also have caused severe air pollution of a lasting nature. This has resulted in serious disruption of livelihood and an increase in school dropout rate. Consequently, this region has been witnessing large scale migration of the local labour (and families) due to unchecked pollution.

The stone crushing cluster enterprises have been engaging seasonal migrant workers from mostly the impoverished southern and western districts (including the underdeveloped Kalahandi-Balangir-Koraputor KBK region) of the State and, importantly, from the similarly placed neighbouring districts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Since most of the migrant labourers come from the poorest districts, the labour contractor plays a crucial role in responding with alacrity bringing in large number of workers or sending them back in a jiffy. The system of labour contract is based on assurance and incentives offered by the labour contractor. There have been instances where the crusher owner doubles up as the labour contractor. Typically, if the whole family migrates to work, no advances are offered although on-site lodging is available. A monetary advance is offered when a member or two (usually male) of a family joins the workers at the crushers.

Further, the nature of the production process per se has significant implications for the working conditions in the cluster. The workers and their families virtually live in the open or in non-descript shacks, in the midst of omnipresent stone flakes, fines and dust. Casual and unrecorded nature of the work implies that workers receive low

and irregular remuneration, have no assurance of the job-the-next-day and the diversity of source locations has effectively dissuaded any social interaction, not to mention building solidarity. The dysfunctional institutional arrangements, absence of accountability of the cluster enterprises, callous approach towards environmentally sustainable technology and informality have not just undermined the rights of the precarious labourers, but ruined their health, well-being and chances of better livelihood options.

Judith Heyer made her presentation using data from her long-term study of villages located in North West of Tiruppur, based on her data from March 2016 interviews with selected individuals who had taken up different forms of employment open to manual and low-skilled labourers together with data from 2008/09, 1996 and 1981/82 surveys and in-depth interviews in those and other years as well. She compared manual and low-skilled employment options open to people who do not have higher education of any kind. She observes that the main alternative open to low-skilled manual labourers in the villages concerned was agricultural labour, which was often combined with MGNREGA work, employment in power looms, employment in construction, and employment in knitwear units (banian companies). Individuals who had taken

up these and other types of manual and low-skilled employment were interviewed in March 2016 to see how they rated the given options. In an area with numerous non-agricultural employment options for such people, the following findings emerged: (i) agricultural labour is preferred by many to alternative employment in textiles and construction; (ii) bonded labour in power looms is undertaken not out of desperation but to finance, for instance, the higher education of siblings and/or children; (iii) women in these villages work as agricultural labourers or in knitwear units and not at construction sites or on power looms; and, (iv) MGNREGA is a welcome addition to agricultural labour but it does not provide enough employment to satisfy the needs of the people employed under it.

Venkatanarayana Motkuri and Kailas Sarap's presentation focussed on the changing interface between credit and labour market in the context of high growth trajectory that the Indian economy has been experiencing and the consequent growth in rural incomes and wages. Rural labour relations have undergone many changes, including credit-labour relation, as compared to the situation three decades ago. It has been found that the indebtedness in rural areas in general and among rural labour households in particular has not

declined much. Further, non-institutional credit is found to be the predominant source of loans/credit in rural areas, especially among the rural labour households. The policy efforts made during 1970s and 1980s relating to the expansion of institutional credit had reduced the dependency on non-institutional credit. However, the situation since 1990s, which coincides with economic reform regime, has worsened the access to institutional credit among the landed and landless labour households. Consequently, the dependency on non-institutional sources of credit among these households has been increasing. But the nature and extent of interlinkage between credit and labour markets may not be the same. A number of factors, including the increase in rural wage rates, adoption of welfare measures (such as direct or indirect cash transfers) and the implementation of MGNREGA, and functioning of microfinance programmes have created a level playing field in terms of contributing to the effectiveness of income generation interventions, which has influenced the relative bargaining power of rural labour households vis-à-vis the employers. The gradual transformation of rural economy has eroded the bargaining power of landlord/employers/moneylenders, but at the same time increased the relative bargaining power of labour households

owing to the development programmes in operation. In view of this, the nature and extent of transactions in credit and labour market may have undergone changes. This aspect is being studied in rural areas through field level information.

Motilal Mahamallik's presentation (based on a paper co-authored with Kailas Sarap) focused on the various forms of labour contracts in rural areas. The analysis was based on primary data collected from two villages of Haryana. The paper discusses the forms of labour arrangement and labour use pattern prevailing among households in the study villages. Different forms of labour arrangement were found in both the villages. It includes casual labour, fully attached labour (though less in number), group labour (by village workers as well as migrants) for certain activities and *siri* contracts. Each form has undergone certain changes in recent years due to a number of factors. The number of days of work available to local workers in the agricultural sector has declined in recent years owing to mechanisation of agricultural activities and inflow of migrant workers from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar who worked on low piece rate pay. It is found that male workers prefer to commute from their villages to nearby towns and work in different non-farm activities, including in small enterprises and shops. By contrast,

women workers are generally engaged in agricultural work or petty self-employment activities such as making cow dung cake or doing needle work. In case of *siri* contract, nowadays landlords impose interest charges on advance payments from the tenant, and there is flexibility in the input and output sharing arrangement. While the attached labourers are still exploited, the percentage has declined in recent years. There is evidence of interlinkage (labour-credit relationship) in both the villages. MGNREGS has not been functioning since the last three years. High concentration of land holding among a few is an important factor for the prevalence of long-term labour contracts and *siri* contract in the villages.

The paper by Chandayya Makeni (co-authored with Y. Sreenivasulu) focused on the structure and performance of the rural labour market of Andhra Pradesh, both at the State and village levels. The village level analysis is based on data collected from two villages (one with canal irrigation and the other in dry area) in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Though the rural economy has undergone many structural changes, it continues to be an agrarian dominated economy in terms of the share of people dependent on agriculture for survival. Cultivators are witnessing a decline in the share of households in the farm sector, but the

share of agricultural labour households has increased over the period. The paper highlights as to how the rural labour market structure and performance behaviour at State and village levels have undergone changes.

The performance of rural labour market has been studied in terms of employment and wage rates. It was found that real wages increased in all States between 1980–81 and 2004–05. Compared to the post-reform period, real wages have increased in the pre-reform period. Also, agricultural labour households have a choice between tenancy market and the rural non-farm sector.

The panel regression analysis which contains determinants of real wages shows some interesting trends. Real wages are determined by structural factors as well as the choices available to households in the farm sector. As the share of large farmers increases (pure demanders of labourers), real wages also increase. Further, as the share of small and marginal farmers increases, there is a simultaneous increase in wages. Choices in the farm sector have broadened considerably. As household (tenancy) lease increases, there is a decline in real wages, whereas when the rural non-farm sector expands there is an increase in wages.

The village economy was classified into labour-demanding rural households and labour-supplying rural households based on labour exchange data. There was prevalence of low wage jobs in Badarala village (located in dry region) as compared to Velagapalli village (irrigated village). In the latter village, labour-supplying households enter the land lease market, while in the former they have long-term contracts.

Discussion

Discussant G. Vijay said that he found the papers quite interesting, although there was a running thread in all of them, more explicit in some. The ever increasing numbers of labour force apart from the lack of collective action has been the common point in all the papers. Referring to Kaustav Banerjee's paper, he said that it was an interesting piece of work but one has to avoid semi feudal versus capitalistic kind of debate. Rather, a comparison of the States in terms of the old and the new may help establish appropriate public policies, thereby ushering in an era of change. Regarding Indira Hirway and Atanu Chatterjee's work, he said that it was insightful. However, a few questions remain unanswered: What explains the decline in economic growth? Do the social conflicts of the recent past imply towards something that is different from the usual? Do the more recent trends

seem to suggest the opposite? Is the current agrarian crisis aggravating the problems? For the small and marginal farmers (especially those dependent on animal husbandry) and the landless, the access to growth opportunities is poor, which forces them to join the labour market. Further, referring to Keshab Das's paper, he said that it may be interesting to ask: Who are the owners of the production units? Why do the workers not mobilise in spite of a system in place to address their problems? He suggested that it can be answered if one takes into account the political, economic and technological implications of the trends in labour market.

While discussing Kaustav Banerjee's paper Saumya Chakravarty mentioned that 'the role of uncertainty is crucial in the working of capitalism (especially, in the functioning of backward agricultural system)'. But, this uncertainty was present previously also, for instance, in the form of natural shocks or disasters. Does "new uncertainty" refer to shocks produced by the global market? Is it because of the exposure of petty agriculture to global capital? Saumya Chakrabarti appreciated the observations found in Prof. Indira Hirway's paper. He said that her paper provides alternative view to neo-classical predisposition. These days the neo-classical school - bit by bit - is gaining currency, and the argument presented

is that, as capital flows in, labour gains. The data, too, presents a similar picture if you compare growth rates of wages between the casual and the regular workers. Although the average wage is low for the casual workers, if one compares the wages of the casual and regular workers, there seems to be a convergence. In other words, the wage gap between the casual and regular is reducing. How do you explain this? Is capital/investment playing a role in Gujarat's informal/casual sector? Has the proportion of casual workers increased because of the inflow of capital? Commenting on other presentation, Saumya Chakrabarti wanted to know about the nature of owners of these production units in the case of Prof. Das's study. If one looks at the average number of workers, it can be seen that only 18.1 per cent units are DMEs (Directory Manufacturing Enterprise) while the majority happen to be the smaller units. And, if government practices such as labour laws, environmental regulation laws, etc, are enforced on these small enterprises, they will simply close down.

Chinmay Tumbe observed that a common factor seems to be present in all the papers, that is, the relationship between uneven development and social determinants of economic growth. It is a peculiar formation, and as pointed out by Prof. K.P. Kannan, there is a need

for a sociological analysis to make sense of the economic formation. Prof. Judith's presentation has covered the various forms of employment open to manual and low-skilled labourers and it shows that social stratification exists. One interesting dimension is that social class arises from employment relations in industrialised societies. It shows how class identity, neighbourhood, etc., are shaped by the occupational structure. Besides, it helps us understand income inequality from the perspective of "class". However, the point of debate among scholars is as to whether the quality of life is affected by labour mobility. It is important to consider this point, especially in the context of social transformation. While one paper observes that the issue of labour relations assumes significance due to the exploitative contract arrangements (labour-capital) involving precarious labour that results in minimal net earnings for the worker, the other attributes poverty among social classes to the interlocking of markets. But these variations may be state-specific. For instance, Motilal Mahamallik's paper highlights that in the last few decades some aspects of rural Haryana have evolved in tandem with the all-India scenario; in this sense, it is relatively more developed than Odisha. Also, if one compares dry areas with the irrigated areas, there are bound to be

differences. It is thus necessary to update data in order to reach accurate conclusions. After the discussants' observations the floor was opened for discussion.

VII Dynamics of Rural Non-Farm Sector

This fifth session was chaired by Prof. Judith Heyer and consisted of seven presentations. Thiagu Ranganathan's paper (co-authored with Amarnath Tripathi and Bisla Rajoriya) is based on the Indian Human Development Survey data of 2004–05 and 2011–12. It discusses the changing sources of income and income inequality among rural households. It was found that nominal incomes increased by 165 per cent during the period. Income from agricultural labour and cultivation increased moderately by 124 per cent and 160 per cent respectively while income from casual labour and remittances grew by 243 per cent and 516 per cent respectively. Consequently, the average shares of casual labour and remittance increased from 11 per cent and three per cent to 14 per cent and six per cent respectively. It was also found that the number of households undertaking agricultural labour was very less, while a large number was into casual labour and earned from remittances compared to 2004–05. In 2011–12, 33 per cent households were

involved in agricultural labour compared to 37 per cent in 2004–05. Further, the proportion of households earning from casual labour and remittances increased from 26 per cent and six per cent in 2004–05 to 42 per cent and 16 per cent respectively in 2011–12. From gini decomposition of income from various sources, it was found that income from agriculture, business and salaried employment increased inequality in both the time periods. Agricultural labour, casual labour and remittances decreased inequality in both the time periods. Most importantly, remittances were a more important source of income, especially for the lower income quintiles who earned a large portion of their income from it. Remittances led to a reduction in inequality in 2011–12 as compared to 2004–05 with an elasticity of gini to share of remittances at -1 per cent.

The results reveal that since the poorer households are earning less from agricultural labour and more from casual labour and remittances, the pressure on urban spaces may increase in future because of migration. In such a situation measures will have to be taken to ensure both the monetary and subjective well-being of labourers, including those of the migrants. Focus should be on creating opportunities and equitable growth in the rural non-farm sector.

Niti Mehta's paper dealt with the changing employment and enterprise structure in Gujarat during 1990–2005. In the last decade, Gujarat witnessed dramatic shifts in the rural and urban composition of workforce, led by urbanisation, industrialisation and a robust agricultural growth. Given the importance of the unorganised sector in sustaining growth, it is essential to view the relative buoyancy of employment generation in the rural unorganised sector non-farm activities. The non-agricultural activities are amorphous in nature and are subject to rapid change. Given the fast pace of urbanisation, many activities are possibly shifting from rural to urban locations and may also be undergoing changes relating to their size. In view of the above trends, a comparison of the changes observed in the rural non-farm sector of Gujarat for the period 1990 to 2005 has been made.

Dynamic activities have been identified on the basis of the share of employment, by comparing the information available from Economic Censuses (EC) of 1990, 1998 and 2005 at one-digit level of National Industrial Classification. In the context of recent developments, the all-India survey of unincorporated non-agricultural enterprises in manufacturing, trade and other service sector (excluding construction) conducted by the NSS (67th Round, 2010-11) provides

the economic and operational characteristics of enterprises.

The paper traces the overall employment scenario in Gujarat. The share of activity groups in the net domestic product has been examined together with the changes that have occurred over time. An attempt is also made to identify activities that: i) have an important share in the overall non-agricultural employment, ii) are experiencing locational shifts (between rural and urban areas), and iii) are experiencing size substitution.

The analysis indicates that in rural Gujarat, along with agricultural commercialisation, diversification within the primary sector as seen through the rise in employment in allied activities (such as forestry, fishing, and animal husbandry) is an ongoing process. Further, the non-primary sectors that are experiencing a growth in share and creating more jobs include retail and wholesale trading, communications followed by transport & storage. Financial and business services are gaining importance in both rural and urban areas. A shift from urban to rural areas has been observed in trading, transport & storage, communications and financial services. Of late, small manufacturing enterprises are also shifting to rural areas. Some of these activities fall under the self-employment

category, particularly petty trading, land transport, communication and personal services. Nonetheless, these activities are operating as depositories of surplus labour. This kind of examination has importance in the realm of devising support policies for infrastructure, power, credit, technology, etc., in order to strengthen the base of the rural unorganised activities that generate employment.

The paper by Basant K. Sahu analysed the growth of the rural non-farm sector vis-à-vis agriculture at regional and group levels with a view to highlight changes in rural labour relations in terms of rate and intensity of household participation in non-farm activities and its impact on the livelihood of rural households. It also highlights the agrarian structure, constraints vis-à-vis nature, structure and size of non-farm activities in order to understand regional and group specific variations. Besides, it captures household level employment diversification in response to local agriculture and non-farm avenues.

The author has followed a resource-based, area-centered approach and has focused on the level of development in agriculture as well as on the growth in non-farm activities. The emphasis is on analysing rural non-farm employment vis-à-vis agricultural production, agrarian relations, labour

arrangements, rural markets, and the connectivity between two different agro-climatic regions in Odisha representing two different development situations. Four study villages, two each from both the regions (and total of 115 households of different classes in all), were selected on the basis of agrarian structure, proportion of rural non-farm workers in total rural workers, followed by other socio-economic factors.

Concentration of rural workers in the non-farm sector comprising low-return household manufacturing, traditional unskilled services and petty trading activities is found to be common in both the study areas, but very high and seasonal in agriculturally backward areas. Predominance of low value non-farm activities in the backward dry area indicates the presence of distress factors, while workers in irrigated area participated both in high- and low-paid non-farm activities in a balanced way. In the case of non-farm employment in backward areas (comprising household manufacturing, traditional caste-based activities and low-paid trading activities), women constitute more than four-fifths of the labour force compared to their counterparts in developed regions. Moreover, in comparison to their male counterparts, the percentage of women participating in multiple low-return activities is found to be two times higher mainly because of the low value

employment. It indicates that distress driven non-farm employment in agriculturally backward areas has worse gender relations.

High average earnings from non-farm activities are more or less confined to male workers participating in high return non-farm activities such as trade and business activities and skill-based jobs, including regular services. Women's participation in these sectors is found to be abysmally low or absent even in developed areas. It indicates that in the rural areas employment opportunities are appropriated by a few male workers possessing basic education, skills and capabilities, which deters the poor, illiterate, unskilled women workers from participating in such activities. Construction activity is found to be prominent in all study areas because it is mostly supported by the public development programmes such as MGNREGS, rural housing, and PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana).

The average person day employment per women is found to be higher than their male counterparts in both the study areas and more so in the backward areas. It indicates gender inequality in terms of average person days of employment and the degree of misery of rural working women. However, the intensity of employment in non-farm sector declines with farm

size, which supports the fact that with an increase in the level of household income, women tend to withdraw from economic activities. The analysis supports the view that the rate and intensity of work participation is not only dependent on household asset holding and other characteristics, but also has strong regional implications. It may be noted that higher participation rate along with higher employment intensity does not necessarily translate into high income. Land-poor households engaged in multiple low-productivity activities may enjoy higher participation rate and employment intensity but often fail to meet the minimum level of income.

Agriculture may be a crucial engine of economic growth but agrarian constraints and nil improvement in production relations do not benefit the land-poor and socially weaker sections. So, the diversification into non-farm activities, particularly in backward dry areas, has not been effective in fostering dynamic growth. Further, the growth of the rural non-farm sector and the decline in demand for farm wage labour both in the dry and irrigated areas depicts the vulnerability of the rural poor.

Based on field survey data from West Bengal, Chitrita Bhowmick Chakrabarti and Ishita Mukhopadhyay's paper discussed the relationship between the quality of employment and

incidence of poverty. In this context, it analysed the quantitative significance of non-farm sector in the emerging economy, which assumes importance in terms of the development process. However, the presence of a significant percentage of poor in rural areas raises questions about the nature and conditions of work and earnings from their current jobs. The secondary data does not provide information on earnings generated in the non-farm sector, which could have helped determine the potential of various non-farm sectors in the emerging economy in providing stable employment to rural workers and reducing poverty. Therefore, a micro level study was conducted to answer two basic questions: i) Why is it that two regions with similar rural non-farm share have different poverty incidence rates? ii) How important is the quality of employment in reducing the poverty gap between the two studied regions? To answer these questions the poverty estimates for the two selected regions were studied (we calculate Head Count Ratio, HCR for two study regions). The difference in poverty estimates was then decomposed into a characteristics effect (C) and coefficient effect (D) using the Oaxaca (1973) decomposition method. Using primary survey information on households can help devise effective policy measures at micro level, which in

turn may reduce the poverty gap between the two regions.

Ruchi Singh discussed the pattern of migration in Uttar Pradesh and factors that contributed to male migration outside Uttar Pradesh. Migration is often adopted as a livelihood strategy by rural poor to diversify income and risks in less developed economies. In less-developed countries, migration plays a very important role in influencing social and economic development. The interrelationship between migration and economy is the relevant area of discussion these days in less developed economies. This paper makes a comprehensive inquiry into trends and patterns of male out-migration from rural Uttar Pradesh. It has utilised migration unit level data of National Sample Survey 64th round (2007–08). To meet the objective, unit level data has been analysed and tabulated with simple statistical techniques to find out the determinants of rural male out-migration from Uttar Pradesh. Binary logistic regression model has been used. It has been found that most of the male out-migrants are from the household category titled “self-employed in agriculture,” while a still greater number belongs to the category titled “having marginal landholdings”. Most of the male out-migrations are from rural regions in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh. One of the important findings

is that 70 per cent of rural out-migrants (male) have migrated to other States. The major destinations include Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Uttaranchal and Daman & Diu. Majority of the rural male out-migrants (52.27 per cent) belong to the OBC category. The major reason for rural male out-migration was employment and in that the highest number of out migration is to “take up employment” (33.6 per cent), followed by in “search of better employment” (25.0 per cent), and in “search of employment” (19.8 per cent).

Ananda Meher highlighted the role of intermediaries at village level in rural-urban migration relating to brick kiln enterprises. The study looks into the institutional arrangements at village level, especially in western Odisha and the role of intermediaries in facilitating migration of workers from four selected villages to brick kiln enterprises located in Telangana. For the past many decades, there has been a continuous flow of migrants from across western Odisha. One major reason for migration is the provision of loans by the employer (the loan amount is gradually deducted from their wages while they are still employed). Further, the study specifically looks into the interconnection between the political, social and economic institutions in the worker’s place of origin vis-à-vis the

migration process through active participation of labour contractors (Sardar and second Sardar). In order to understand the activities of labour contractors during different stages of operation of labour migration, quantitative and qualitative data have been collected through primary survey. Simple statistical tools have been utilised to analyze the information. The author explains as to how the second Sardar utilises the social, political and economic institutions prevalent in the villages to control the workers and influence them to migrate to the brick kiln enterprises from their place of origin. From social and political perspectives, it shows how the Sardars are able to influence village committees that look into different aspects of socio-economic development, including religious and political aspects, to help in the migration process. It also explains interlinkages between the socio-economic structure at the place of origin and the destination and wage rate decisions after the involvement of these intermediaries (second Sardars). It is found that such groups (of workers) fall into a debt trap and have to work for more number of days, which may roll over to the following year. As a result, the migrants have to work for years until the debt is cleared.

T. Sivamurugan's presentation was based on his paper that examines

the various aspects of non-farm employment and the opportunities available therein to manual worker households in three villages in rural Karnataka. The study utilises household level data collected from the Foundation for Agrarian Studies as part of its Project on Agrarian Relations in India. Census surveys were undertaken in all the three villages in 2009, with follow-up case studies in 2014. The villages are located in different agro-ecological regions of the State. The author has estimated the number of days of employment obtained in farm and non-farm activities by manual workers, and disaggregated by caste and gender. He has also discussed the specific types of non-farm employment available in each of the three villages, in particular, stone quarrying in Gulbarga and sericulture in Kolar. Wage rates in farm and non-farm activities were compared, and the contribution of earnings from non-farm employment to enhancing household incomes of rural households was brought out.

The percentage of employment in non-farm sector was low with variation across the villages. The contribution of MGNREGS was low in general and much low in the drought prone village. It has been observed that apart from location-specific non-agricultural work, non-farm activities were neither very skilled nor

high paying, thus not contributing much to poverty eradication. The paper suggested that eradication of poverty required creation of employment opportunities in the production process and large-scale and long-term rural development programmes.

Discussion

Presentations were followed by observations and comments by discussants. Prof. Keshab Das said that it is important to know why people migrated - and there is a plethora of reasons. Many important questions need to be answered, otherwise it becomes tautological. These questions are: What is the objective for migration, for instance, in coastal areas? What is the quality of labour force? What are the different kinds of activities available? One reason is that we have not only failed to create the necessary infrastructure, but also have been unable to develop skills. It is not enough to say that because we have land, we can irrigate it well. What about the drought affected areas? Where has all the investment gone? Considering the differences highlighted in each of the papers, Prof. Das said that it is equally necessary to study the positive factors that have brought about changes in terms of policy initiatives to help us achieve better results.

Dr. Partha Saha began with the Thiagu Ranganathan's paper, which discusses the changes in sources of income and income inequality of rural households using Gini coefficient. He said that the disadvantage of the Gini coefficient is that it is not just additive across groups. It also has a residual effect. Therefore, using Gini coefficient alone may not give robust results. Further, whether the figures presented are sample estimates of the population or of the households need clarification. Besides, as mentioned, agricultural income has grown at an impressive rate. But, what method/cost concept has been used to calculate the same? Also, remittances have been counted as an important source of income. Here the questions are: What are the types of remittances? If the temporary migrant workers are sending money back home, then how is agricultural income increasing? How is the income of casual labourers increasing? It is important to address these questions in order to avoid contradictory results. Coming to Niti Mehta's paper which focused on the changing employment and enterprise structure in Gujarat, Dr. Saha said that since the study was in its initial stage, he expected a lot of modifications to be made. After the comments of the discussants the floor was opened for discussion. Several questions were put to the paper writers which were responded by them.

VIII Livelihood Issues of the Marginalised Groups

The last technical session was chaired by Prof. Panchanan Das and consisted of four presentations. Sanjit Rout in his presentation (based on his study co-authored with Dr. V. Ratna Reddy) discussed the existence of market inter-linkages involving land, labour, credit and product markets in the rural areas of developing countries, which has been widely documented. Market inter-linkage assumes significance, particularly in tribal areas, as the nature of exchange relationship involving tribal communities has always been unequal on account of the prevailing social hierarchy in the society. The present paper is based on evidence from Chhattisgarh with a sizable tribal population.

Analysis of the secondary data points to changing proportions of the tribal population across different regions of Chhattisgarh as a result of the growing trends of urbanisation and changing intensity of dispossession amongst tribal people. Though agriculture is the major occupation for majority of the tribal households, it is marked by low productivity in tribal dominated areas when compared to non-tribal regions, thus keeping the households in these regions at subsistence level. Limited access to irrigation facilities in these

areas is particularly hampering agricultural productivity. Resultantly, the occupational status of many tribal households indicates a decline - from cultivators to mere agricultural labourers. While rural credit assumes significance in accelerating agricultural development, rural households in tribal areas have limited access to institutional credit when compared to the households in non-tribal areas. In such a situation the households have to fall back on non-institutional credit for their survival and other needs. The present paper attempts to understand the changing nature, structure, forms of factors (land, labour and credit) and output markets and its implications on the livelihoods of tribal communities in the context of the changing agrarian scenario. The paper explores the causes and consequences of inter-linkages between different strata of farm and labour households.

Harishwar Dayal's presentation is part of his ongoing study on 'Inter-linking of Markets in Tribal Areas and Their Implications on Livelihoods of the Tribal Economy: A Case of Jharkhand' based on a field survey carried out in 12 villages selected from three of its districts, namely Palamau, West Singhbhum and Sahebgunj. However, the presentation was based on the findings of the survey in Palamau District only. Historically, Palamau has been notorious for rack-

renting, begari (forced free service) and bonded labour system (the author observed that such issues have been studied earlier by scholars like Sainath, P. Mahapatra and Sudipto Mundle). Bonded labourers were originally known as Kamias¹, but with the passage of time they were reconstituted as labourers bound by debt bondage. Both the systems ensured a constant supply of labour even during a period of shortage by keeping the wage rate low and the interest rate high for consumption deficit households. This form of exploitation was committed through the interlinking of labour market with credit market as opposed to land/tenancy and credit market inter-linkage prevalent in some other parts of permanent settlement areas with a semi feudal environment².

On the current situation, the author observes that there is no evidence of land and credit market interlinkage. It has been found that the tenancy market is very weak in Palamau. Only about 17 per cent of the farmers are involved in it and they, too, have leased very small pieces of land. The most common tenancy is of reverse type.

Those who have a very small piece of land, almost of non-operational size, or those who do not have sufficient capital and sufficient number of family members for cultivation, usually lease out their land to fellow villagers, who cultivate it along with their own piece of land. So, those who lease out their land are not in a position to either invest in their own land or lend money to those who have leased it. So, the interlinking of land and credit market, which was studied by Bhaduri, Prasad and others in detail, is not present here. However, the author observes the presence of some form of interlinkage between credit and product markets. The farmers purchase fertilizers, pesticides and seeds and sell their products to retailers in the open market rather than PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Societies), which sells the agricultural inputs at price lower than the market rate and also purchases their products at prices higher than that prevailing in the open market. Owing to a cash crunch, the retailers provide them the inputs on credit/deferred payment and realize this payment by purchasing their final products, which PACS does not do.

¹ The Kamia labourers were given small consumption loans (to be recovered from their wages), a rent free home, a small piece of bari (courtyard) and palhat (rice) land for self-cultivation, and, in turn they had to work for long hours for the landlord for very low wages.

² Such a situation was first identified by Amit Bhaduri and since then has been widely studied by many.

The most common form of inter-linkage in this district is between credit and labour market. This is done in order to maintain the supply of labour and to increase the surplus by keeping the wage rate low. Besides, it is mainly to help the non-agricultural labourers to migrate. Shortage of labour, generally, is not observed in agriculture where operational holdings are usually small and are cultivated with the help of family and exchange (madait) labour. For non-agricultural operations (which require a large number of labourers) within the locality, the employers usually advance credit in times of need and recover the loan through their wages. While on the one hand, it ensures easy availability of labour at relatively low wage rates, on the other hand, it provides access to self-liquidating credit. Evidence was found in stone crushing industry, where migrant labourers are required to work in a hazardous environment (performing difficult tasks of stone crushing, loading and unloading). The labourers of the district are in demand for work relating to construction or factory work in Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Ahmadabad, and for sowing and harvesting of paddy and wheat in Bhabhua and Rohtasgarh in Bihar or in brick kilns in different parts of the country. Each district has agents who are responsible for recruiting labourers and sending them to different places. The agents get a commission on the basis of the number of labourers sent to the

employers. Within a given locality, agents compete with each other not only in their search for prospective migrants, but also for alternative sources of employment. In order to ensure adequate number of labourers, the agents bind them with credit obligation.

The author also observes that schemes such as the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement, the National Food Security Programme (NFSA) and MGNREGA may have the potential to resolve the issue of market interlinkage. But none of these schemes are functioning properly.

Sikha Dutta's presentation focused on livelihood diversification strategies adapted by the rural tribal population of Assam, which needs to go beyond land-based livelihood and venture into the emerging areas such as human capital (education), physical capital (infrastructure), financial capital (micro-credit), employment generation and empowerment of tribal women through self-help groups (SHGs). Positive discrimination has great potential, but policies need to be more inclusive. On-farm strategies need to shift from the traditional parameter, i.e. the physical output of the production process, towards smart policies for strong and relevant institutions that will promote highly developed modes of agricultural production. All these factors are necessary to foster a more profitable, sustainable and resilient agricultural

sector which is capable of ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Based on household and village as a unit of analysis, primary data were collected from the Mising and Sonowal Kachari communities in Barbaruah Block of Dibrugarh district in Assam. The study highlights that through on-farm, off-farm and non-farm livelihood diversification strategies, positive outcomes are possible with proper utilisation of available resources and that enhancing the structure and the processes can help reduce vulnerabilities. The study concludes that low volume of on-farm production causes livelihood diversification among tribes. More precisely, lack of credit facilities, technological innovation and infrastructure causes non-viability of farming among tribal farmers. As a result, the number of non-farm tribal labourers is increasing in the study area.

Shamsher Singh said that historically, dependency of labourers on their employers or patrons for their various day-to-day requirements such as loans and advances, clothing, shelter, food, etc., has been a source of extra economic coercion and extracting unpaid or under-paid work from the labourers by the latter. The paper focuses on the study of the impact of lack of house ownership on labour relations in a village in the north Indian State of Rajasthan where house ownership among Dalit households is exceptionally

lower than in rural Rajasthan as well as rural India. The study is based on an intensive socio-economic census survey of the households in Gulabewala village of Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. Qualitative data were collected by conducting focus group discussions, interviews with individuals and key respondents and local body representatives and development officials.

Dalit households which did not own their dwellings were mainly long-term manual workers who lived in houses provided by their landlord/employers or in temporary dwellings on the homesteads belonging to the landed households in the village.

The author discusses as to how lack of house or homestead ownership among labourers forces them to get into long-term labour contracts with landed households. It is argued that this dependency results in extra economic coercion and extreme exploitative conditions for the labourers at the hands of their employers. The case study shows that these labourers are unable to improve their housing conditions and access to basic household amenities such as electricity and private drinking-water system as they do not have ownership rights over the dwellings or the homestead plots they live on. The paper further argues that domination of rich, traditionally landed and dominant sections on local institutions and local

administration in rural areas prevents the poor landless Dalits from availing the benefits of the various government schemes meant to improve their living conditions.

Discussion

Discussant Partha Sahu said that the two presentations (on Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand), are an attempt to highlight the incidence of inter-linkages as well as its causes, consequences and implications on tribal livelihood. Both these studies discuss outcomes as well as processes of interlinking of markets and the relationship between the interacting forces and relations of power between tribal communities vis-à-vis others, including factors that contribute to such issues. These studies have also brought out livelihood differences between interlinked and non-interlinked households based on observations from field.

There is a need to study the role of forests and other community property resources in tribal livelihood. It is also worthwhile to attempt an econometric exercise to analyse- the probability of the dependence of tribal households on interlinked markets, and, to explore the role of State and market institutions and other household and individual attributes. It will be useful to reflect upon the lessons learnt from each other (the two states under study) and from

the other tribal dominated States of India.

Prof. Revathi's comments relate to two papers by Sikha Dutta and Shamsheer Singh. Prof. Revathi said that the author's survey and presentation deserve appreciation. However, there is a doubt as the northeastern States fall under the sixth Scheduled Areas, especially with regard to land transfer regulations. What kind of land transfer regulations are there? Is there an interface between the tribals and the non-tribals? According to Sikha Dutta, scheduled tribes constitute 17.9 per cent of the total population of Assam, which includes the landless as well as the marginal and small farmers. Are the two villages under study characterised by landlessness? Have the landless farmers lost land due to the coming of the non-tribals or is it because of the erosion of the Brahmaputra river? These could be the only probable reasons.

The author also mentioned that in times of crises, assets were either liquidated or sold to the non-tribals. If so, under what legislations are non-tribals allowed to purchase land and other assets? Class formation among the tribes is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has sharpened in the recent years, causing inequality to rise. Professor Revathi believes that the penetration of non-tribal into tribal areas is the cause of the exploitative relation

between the tribals and the non-tribals. Therefore, the framework for livelihood analysis needs to be revised.

Commenting on Shamsheer Singh's paper which studies the impact of lack of house ownership among dalit households on labour relations, Prof. Revathi observed that while the Green Revolution changed the landscape of rural India, it also created a class of rich, dominant caste groups/farmers. And, it is the dalits who are exploited at the hands of the rich and the powerful. The possible reason could be that they are migrant workers. She further said that even under the Homestead Act, acres of land were distributed, mostly to the landless poor, and many were given homestead rights in Andhra Pradesh. The question here is that in spite of receiving land and homestead rights, are they granted privileges? These issues need to reach out to a wider audience in order to root out and expose policy failings. After the observations by discussants there were lively discussions on various issues covered in the papers.

IX Valedictory Session

The valedictory session was chaired by Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao. Prof. Yoginder K. Alagh began the valedictory address by expressing his delight at being able to associate himself with the vision of S.R. Sankaran, a civil servant par excellence and a mentor for many involved in democratic planning.

He further added that the pleasure was heightened since this opportunity had come his way through NIRD&PR, an organisation he held in high esteem. Prof. Alagh then turned his attention to discussing the crucial land question against the backdrop of the needs of a fast growing economy. To substantiate his stand, he first mentioned a few field visits to villages across India.

Prof. Alagh began with an illustration of a typical fertile paddy producing village in the eastern part of the nation, grappling with the vagaries of monsoon. Though yields were high, they did not seem to grow. The Second Green Revolution had benefitted the region albeit in an intermittent manner, and was limited to certain pockets. He described how the road to Midnapore, unlike in the past, was now dotted with dairies and nurseries. Located on a slope, Midnapore, an area covered with red laterite soil, was proving to be an agricultural nightmare owing to the waters that invariably drained back to the river.

Located on the banks of River Kasai is a tiny village called Kaspal in the Borkollah Gram Panchayat area. Prof. Alagh was surprised to note that almost every farming household had a tubewell owing to the credit advanced by the State Bank of India (SBI) for water development in this region. His interactions with the local populace revealed that in this densely farmed

region, nobody cultivated more than two acres of land. Owing to the accessibility to developed technology, the prosperous peasants in the village preferred to diversify their activities on the farm rather than leasing land. Cultivation of paddy, however, remains the mainstay of the economy in this region.

Prof. Alagh observed that the farmers of Kaspal had benefitted monetarily, even when the market was down, by engaging in the cultivation of a variety of cash crops and vegetables, especially potatoes. The practice of dairy farming was becoming commonplace with the bulk of labour force comprising womenfolk. The farmers seemed to stay abreast with the latest developments in agriculture in different regions of the country, and were pleased with the increase in food security as well as the literacy levels in their village. However, despite the “growth game” being well underway, the farmers seemed uncertain about the future.

Thereafter, he visited another village, a few hundred meters away from Kaspal. Unlike Kaspal where modernisation seemed evident, this village appeared entrapped in time. Majority of the people lived in poverty, and its mainly tribal and scheduled caste population was still guided by norms, rules and regulations of a socially stratified society. In this mono crop region, the dependence on monsoons is

invariably high and the yields are extremely low. Thus, there is a need to integrate such villages with markets in order to remove barriers to prosperity, and also provide them with the much-needed food security.

Prof. Alagh then turned his attention to the State of Gujarat. Having assumed the responsibility of the Chairman at Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), he had the opportunity to traverse the fascinating area between Anand, Petlad, Khambhat and Wataman Chowky. Located within this lush region is a problem area known as Bhal. He recollected his visit to Khanpur in the Bhal, a few kilometers from Tarapur. In this low lying area, the monsoon water that collected from Saurashtra and North Gujarat easily drained out. This phenomenon coupled with the lack of irrigation facilities resulted in extremely low yields. But, the Sardar Sarovar Project turned the fortunes of the farmers in Khanpur, bringing with it irrigation in a strange way. The drinking water scheme under which the local pond was filled up left ample water for crop irrigation. The farmers were able to take to the cultivation of the high yielding MP ‘tukdi’ variety of wheat. Prof. Alagh, however, expressed his concern over the bad drainage capability of this area, as well as the fluctuating salinity levels of the region that could have a detrimental impact on agriculture. He reminisced the

peaceful protest by the farmers at Chuvahl against the government's quest for industrialisation following the construction of Sardar Sarovar Project canals in this region.

Prof. Alagh then went on to narrate how the Sunshine Project impacted the tribal people in the Panchmahal district of Gujarat. In this primarily impoverished, maize consuming and growing area, A. Tiwari, a civil servant, had introduced biotech maize seeds. Resultantly, not only did the output of maize increase dramatically, but instances of prevalent hunger were no longer heard. However, this golden period ended with Tiwari's transfer.

Prof. Alagh recalled how in his acceptance speech following his election as the first Fellow of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics (ISAE), he had stressed the need to address issues relating to agriculture by transcending the approach to the Twelfth Plan. There were multiple problems confronting the agricultural sector that needed to be addressed such as lack of water, inadequate rural agricultural markets, use of obsolete technology and implementation of policies that hindered the much-needed farm and non-farm diversification. In addition, a focused approach towards successful implementation of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) and ensuring food security was needed. He

had reinforced the need for developing the economic infrastructure and providing access to myriad technologies to ensure a continuum in development. He had opined that higher incomes were inextricably linked to diversification.

Prof. Alagh observed that in the current budget hefty allocations have been made for reviving MGNREGA and an old plan scheme, the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP). He expressed his appreciation for the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for having set aside a dedicated fund for the development and conservation of ground water. He then went on to recall his first stint with the erstwhile Planning Commission back in the mid-1970s, where on his recommendation ten irrigation projects that had been lingering from the First Plan were successfully completed. The completion of these projects played a pivotal role in propelling the country towards food self-reliance. However, with the turn of the century these policies seemed to have outlived their utility in the light of the new demands and challenges confronting the economy.

The current budget, however, has been cautious in its approach, especially with regard to the distribution of fertilisers. For sustained agricultural growth and to promote balanced application of nutrients, it is imperative that fertilisers are made available to

farmers at affordable prices. With this objective, urea being the only controlled fertiliser is sold at statutory notified uniform sale price. Here agricultural marketing plays an important role in stimulating production and consumption, thereby promoting economic development. Economic growth invariably results in an increased demand for food, milk and milk products, poultry products and fish. However, the kisan chases this increased demand in the market sans facilities. Thus, the need of the hour is to provide them with better economic infrastructure as well as access to information technology. Prof. Alagh also praised the government's announcement of a new derivatives market model, which will be very beneficial to farmers. They would get the benefit of price protection in case the price falls below their cost of production, as well as the benefit of any rise in price.

Prof. Alagh then spoke about his book, *'The Future of Indian Agriculture'*, in which he had presented a small model that showed how Indian agriculture could meet the requirements of food security and rapidly diversify itself. These activities, he opined, would not only generate greater employment for those living in rural areas, but also promote economic growth. This, however, will happen only with appropriate help from the institutional structure in terms of appropriate technology and organisational support, and economic

assistance in terms of pricing and infrastructure support. Prof. Alagh, in his book, has visualised growth in rural employment and wage levels. He stated that many of agriculture's problems lie outside of agriculture. He said it made sense to aim at an increase of more than a quarter in the living standards of the farm workers.

Prof. Alagh enunciated the potential of the Indian agriculture to prosper. He stated that demand will grow, and if we succeed in creating the correct incentive and organisation systems, the Indian farmer is bound to respond well. There is a dire need for developing infrastructure, promoting market research and support systems, as well as encouraging both farm and non-farm activities.

Summing up, Prof. Alagh warned against not only the detrimental agricultural policies, but also against the devastating effects of resource constraints. It is thus important to devise effective land and water management strategies. Greater efforts will have to be made by the people concerned with India's future, now that the Planning Commission had been abolished. He expressed his good fortune of having been a member of the erstwhile Planning Commission where myriad opportunities helped him evolve a vision of a detailed agro-climatic strategy for India.

Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao's concluding observations

Following Prof. Alagh's valedictory presentation, his very interesting observations and his extensive response, Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao said he was happy that the observations were made with care and were most relevant to today's scenario. He further added that while remembering Shri S.R. Sankaran, Prof. Alagh had made his observations on the two basic questions relevant to the lives and livelihood of the rural poor.

First relates to the issue of ownership of land. Even though majority of the poor are part of the labour market now, some of them had owned land in the past. Most of them possibly lost it overtime, though it is not known how land was acquired from them. Nevertheless, ownership of land remains a vital question. The second vital issue is related to the wages given to the labourers. Prof. Rao, recalling his presentation made on the first day of the seminar, said that Prof. Radhakrishna had aptly observed that the long term effect of increasing wages on the growth and overall prosperity is positive. Quoting a couple of sentences from Prof. Radhakrishna's address relating to income diversity, need for infrastructure and technology in agriculture, NREGA and food security, Prof. Rao said that he too had similar concerns. Issues pertaining to land are of greatest concern; thus, it is imperative to

investigate these issues further in order to develop appropriate strategies. For this purpose, it is important to involve land owners.

If we recognise their ownership and ensure their stake in the new projects, particularly when the value of land is rising then the land owners will respond positively. In majority of the cases, they can be persuaded to give away their land for the greater interest of the nation. But land acquisition can be ruled out in certain cases. Similarly, in case of water management, irrigation and many other things, issues can be sorted out through participation of different stakeholders and the people concerned.

Prof. Rao asserted that planning in India has been more of indicative and an iterative process and the planning commission has always discussed with different stakeholders and incorporated their views in the next rounds while fixing the targets.

Prof. Rao shared the views of Prof. Alagh that, in whichever ways one reviews and thinks about different targets and goals, many problems can be solved through systematic planning. Lastly he (Prof. Rao) thanked Prof. Alagh and expressed his delight for the observations made on land and wage issues which should be studied further.

The seminar was concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. Kailash Sarap.

List of Key Participants

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1	Prof. R.Radhakrishna , Chairman, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad and Chairman, S.R.Sankaran Chair Advisory Committee	--
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3	Prof. Yoginder K. Alagh ,Chancellor, Central University of Gujarat& Professor Emeritus Sardar Patel Insitute of Economic and Social Research, Thaltej, Ahmedabad	--
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National Seminar on
Dynamics on Rural Labour Relations in India
 10-12 March, 2016

Programme Schedule

Day 1: March 10, 2016 (Thursday)	
Registration	: 9.30 to 10.00 AM
Inaugural Session	: 10.00 to 11.30 AM
	Chairperson: Prof. R. Radhakrishna
	Welcome Address: Dr. W. R. Reddy, Director General, NIRD&PR
	About the Conference: Prof. Kailash Sarap
	Inaugural Address: Prof. C. H. Hanumantha Rao
	Keynote Address: Prof. S. Mahendra Dev
	Vote of Thanks: Prof. K.Suman Chandra
Tea Break	11.30 to 11.45 AM
Technical Session I	: General Issues of Rural Labour
(11.45AM to 1.15. PM)	Chairperson: Prof. S.K. Rao
	Presentations:
	1 Sher Singh Verick (ILO, New Delhi) – General Labour Scenario in South Asia Region
	2 Partha Saha & Sher Verick - State of Rural Labour Markets in India
	3 Panchanan Das & Anindita Sengupta - Labour Market Segmentation, Occupational Choice and Non-farm Rural Employment: Multinomial Logit Estimation in India
	Discussants: Dr. Saumya Chakrabarti
Lunch Break	1.15 to 2.00 PM

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Programme Schedule (Contd...)

Technical Session II		Alternative Forms of Organisation of Work in Rural Areas
(2.00 to 3.30 PM)		Chairperson: Prof. K. P. Kannan
		Presentations:
	1	S. MahendraDev – MGNREGS: Creation of Assets and Livelihood
	2	N. Nagaraj, Lalmani Pandey, Cynthia Bantilan and Namrata Singh Roy – Impact of MGNREGS on Rural Agricultural Wage
	3	Saumya Chakrabarti and Harsha Tiwary - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme: Inclusion or Elite Capture
	4	Chinmay Tumbe – The Rural Labour Ratio: History, Mystery, Density and MGNREGS Policy
		Discussants: Prof. Indrakant, Prof. Panchanan Das, Dr. Basanta.K. Sahu
Tea Break		3.30 to 3.45 PM
Technical Session III		Changing Perspective of Women Work in Rural India
(3.45 to 6.00 PM)		Chairperson: Prof. Indira Hirway
		Presentations:
	1	Nisha Srivastava and Anjor Bhaskar- Vanishing Work: Changing Employment Patterns in Rural India.
	2	E. Revathi and M. R. Aneesh - Rural Female Labour Force Participation in AP: Preliminary Findings from the Field Survey
	3	Partha P. Sahu - Changing Perspectives of Women's Work and Decline in Female Labour Force Participation Rate in Rural India: A Case of Odisha.
	4	Vandana Upadhyay – Changing Female Work Pattern in Rural Arunachal Pradesh: Insights from a Field Survey

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Programme Schedule (Contd...)

	5	Sarada Gopalakrishnan and Aathy Kannan - The Transforming Rural Female Workforce in Tamil Nadu with Special Focus on Agriculture
	6	C. S. Murthy and M. Srinivasa Reddy - Relative Significance of Female labour Force across Rural India in the Aftermath of MGNREGS
		Discussants: Prof. Judith Heyer, Prof. K.P.Kannan
Day 2: March 11, 2016 (Friday)		
Technical Session IV	:	Changing Contractual Arrangements in the Rural Labour Markets
(9.15 AM to 1.00 PM)		Chairperson: Prof. Judith Heyer
		Presentations:
	1	Kaustav Banerjee - Interlocked Markets in Rural Areas
	2	Indira Hirway & Atanu Chatterjee - Understanding Rural Labour Market in Gujarat: Major Concerns
	3	Keshab Das - Down the Low-Road: Precarious Labour in a Stone Crushing Cluster, Odisha
Tea Break		10.30 to 10.45 AM
	4	Judith Heyer – Hierarchies of Rural Labour: Rural Labour Differentiation
	5	Kailash Sarap and Venkatanarayana– Interface between Credit and Labour Market: Some Observations
	6	Kailash Sarap and Mahamallik - Form of Labour Contracts in Rural Areas: A Comparative Analysis
	7	Chandayya Makeni and Y. Srinivasulu - Changing Pattern of Rural Labour Market: Some Field Observations from Andhra Pradesh
		Discussants: Prof. N. Nagaraj, Dr. G. Vijay, Dr. Saumya Chakrabarti, Dr. Chinmay Tumbe

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Programme Schedule (Contd...)

Lunch Break		1.00 PM TO 2.00 PM
Technical Session V		Dynamics of Rural Non-Farm Sector
2.00 to 3.30PM		Chairperson: Prof. Judith Heyer
	1	Thiagu Ranganathan, Amarnath Tripathi & Bisla Rajoriya - Changing Sources of Income and Income Inequality among Indian Rural Households
	2	Niti Mehta - Changing Employment and Enterprise Structure in Gujarat: 1990-2005
	3	Basanta K. Sahu – Dynamics of Rural Non-Farm Sector in Odisha: Issues & Dimensions
Tea Break		3.30 to 3.45 PM
	4	Chitrita Bhowmik & Ishita Mukhopadhyay - Quality of Employment and Incidence of Poverty: Some Results from Field Survey in West Bengal
	5	Ruchi Singh – Trends and Patterns of Male Out-Migration from Rural Uttar Pradesh
	6	Ananda Meher - Brick Kiln Migration from Western Odisha: Process and Role of Intermediary
	7	T. Sivamurugan - Features of Non-farm employment in Karnataka: Evidence from Three Villages
		Discussants: Prof. Keshab Das, Dr. Partha Saha,
Day 3: March 12, 2016 (Saturday)		
Technical Session V	:	Livelihood Issues of the Marginalised Groups
(9.15 AM to 11.15 AM)		Chairperson: Prof. Panchanan Das
		Presentations:
	1	V. Ratna Reddy and Sanjit Rout - Interlinkage of Markets in Tribal Areas: An Exploratory Study of Causes and Consequences in Chhattisgarh

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Programme Schedule (Contd...)

	2	Harishwar Dayal - Credit and Labour Market Interlinkage in Tribal Areas (Jharkhand)
	3	Sikha Dutta - Problems and Prospects of Livelihood Diversification among the Mising and Sonowal Kachari Rural Tribes in Dibrugarh District of Assam
	4	Shamsher Singh – Housing and Labour Relations: A Case Study of Long-term Workers in Rural Rajasthan
		Discussants: Prof. E. Revathi, Dr. P. P. Sahu, Dr. Kaustav Baneerjee
Tea Break	:	11.15 AM to 11.30 PM
Valedictory Session	:	11.30 AM to 1.00 PM
		Chairperson: Prof. C.H.Hanumantha Rao
		Valedictory Address: Prof. Yoginder K. Alagh
		Vote of Thanks: Prof. Kailash Sarap
Lunch	:	1.00 PM

Organising Committee

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Prof. Suman Chandra, Professor & Head, CAS, NIRD&PR

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About S.R. Sankaran

Shri S. R. Sankaran, a Civil Servant, is known for his commitments and actions for the upliftment of the poor and the marginalised. The seamless integrity between his life, ideas and work was the unique dimension of his personality. As a Civil Servant, he took Constitution as a mandate and made every opportunity to put in practice the fundamental principles of equality, non-discrimination, justice and affirmative action in favour of the economically backward sections. He believed that his true vocation as a civil servant was to serve the people where the poor occupied the primacy of position. Within the poor, his concern was about SCs and STs as they have been at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, wallowing in chronic misery and deprivation and subjected to daily acts of injustice and indignity.

The transformative role that Shri Sankaran as a Civil Servant, played in the lives of the poor is exemplary to date. His deep understanding of the social environment of the poor is remarkable. In his view, the poor are typically unorganised, hard to reach, inarticulate, often invisible by residing in periphery. Along with lack of access to land and other natural resources, lack of access to education makes them vulnerable to manipulation by adversaries they suffer leading them to internalise the ideology of dependence and submission. The conditions of poor can be compressed into five disabilities, such as lack of access to land and employment; unfree labour; low wages; institutionalised discrimination; and deprivation in social services. His work during his career and after retirement devoted to uplifting the poor by relieving them from such adversaries and organising them. While working for the poor he had not only used his professional skill but also brought to bear on the problem of human touch and his moral values.

Shri Sankaran was a legendary civil servant, a crusader for social justice, a civil rights activist, a perceptive critic of development and public policy with extraordinary sensitivity, clarity, and above all, an epitome of compassion. A single social goal of his entire life's work was the reduction of contradiction between political and socio-economic inequality.

S.R. Sankaran Chair

S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour) is instituted at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India with the objective of promoting research on issues that would enhance understanding and help in improving the world of work and the life worlds of the rural labour. Collaborative research, seminars, workshops and policy dialogues involving institutions, organisations, policy makers and other stakeholders with similar objectives, and placing the results in the larger public domain through working papers, articles in learned journals, books and policy briefs are part of the activities set out for the Chair.



S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)

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