

**CHANGING FACE OF RURAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURER: A CASE STUDY OF  
NAGARERBARI VILLAGE, KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL**

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**Abstract**

*The study area, Koch Bihar district is one of the most neglected districts of West Bengal. 92 percent population of the district live in rural agricultural surroundings and 70 percent to 80 percent people depend upon agriculture for livelihood. Rural labourers of the study area have been leading their life in the most disposed and socio-politically deprived situation. Monopolistic power exercised by the land lords, minimum and uncertain wages, seasonal nature of agriculture, lack of employment opportunity, growing price of commodity and growing demands have collectively bent down the back-bone of these people in existing agricultural set-up of the district. The paper has attempted to highlight the deplorable situation, changes, challenges and opportunities in the life of agricultural labourer of the study area as well as of the entire district.*

**Keywords:** labour- market, employment, migration, agriculture, wages, agricultural - labourer

**Introduction**

India, being the agriculture oriented country, agriculture labourers are the integral part of total Indian labour force (Mishra, 2008). According to the First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee 1950-55, Agricultural Labourers are those people who are engaged in raising crops on payment of wages. The Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee 1956-57 has prolonged the previous definition as those who are engaged in other agricultural occupations like dairy, farming, horticulture, raising of live-stock, bees, poultry etc. In the context of Indian conditions, the definition is not adequate, because it is not possible to completely separate those working on wages from others. There are people who do not work on wages throughout the year but only for a part of it. As per census of India, agricultural labourers are those who work on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share. She/he has no risk in the cultivation, but merely works on another person's land for wages. An agricultural labourer has no right of lease or contract on land on which she/he works.

Agricultural labourers are the mass of people engaged in primary economic activities who have been pulling thorn of human civilisation on their shoulder by selling their physical labour in agricultural field. The entire world is fed by what they produce. It is the most ironic that these peoples have been the most disposed and socio-economically deprived, unorganised group since time immemorial (Padhi, 2007; Mishra, 2008). Their working time is not fixed in eight hours and the wages they earn are insufficient and irregular. Most of these peoples have no land. Sometimes, they have no own shelter to sleep at night. Seasonal pattern of subsistence agriculture keeps them unemployed for several times in a year. Consequently, they have to search alternative sources of income for survival. Due to illiteracy, lack of proper training and capital, they are unable to escape from the barrier of backwardness. But they are considered as 'important' just before election in rural areas. None is interested about their misery and move forward to share their harsh life. Rural agro-society as well as economic reinforcement of the country has been standing on the hand of these illiterate, uncultured native, who suffer from almost starvation at every night after returning from field. In every year, a large number of rural labourers from Koch Bihar district migrate to different states of India like Rajasthan, Hariyana, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Bihar, Delhi and Arunachal Pradesh as well as other districts of West Bengal in search of work (Sarkar, 2012). Out migration, much of which is seasonal, is now an integral part of the livelihood strategies pursued by a large number of agricultural labourers (Deshingkar et al., 2009). An inconsistent crisis in the agro-ecological set up of the study area has been broken out due to the huge out-flux of rural labours (Sarkar, 2012).

**Objectives**

1. To highlight the account of agricultural rural labourer.
2. To discuss the social status of agricultural labourer of the study area
3. To discuss the changing pattern of rural agricultural labour of the study area.
4. To highlight the problems of the agricultural labourer of the study area.
5. To suggest some prospects for development.

## Methodology

The study is completely based on primary data collected from field and other published materials from related earlier researches of different scholars. An extensive field study has been conducted by the researcher in a village named Nagarerbari located in Dinhata II block of the Koch Bihar district, West Bengal. The entire study has been completed through three stages i.e. pre-field, field and post field. In the field stage, total 200 people who are agricultural labourers have been taken in the study. They have been selected randomly and interviewed with pre-prepared simple structured and semi structured questionnaire. Collected data have been represented by descriptive statistics for better understanding. As the rural characteristics like ethnicity, occupation, agricultural surroundings of all villages of Koch Bihar district are same; the study is representative of the related phenomena of the district. But, it may not be identical to the state level as well as country.

## Study Area Description

The study area, Nagarerbari village is under the administration of Dinhata II block of Koch Bihar district. The district bears a muscular historical back ground. Till 12th September, 1949, Cooch Behar was a princely feudatory state. It was ruled by the *Koch Dynasty* for 450 years. In 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1950, Cooch Behar got the recognition of the status of a district of West Bengal just after its submission to Indian dominion. In spite of its immense agro-industrial potentiality, the district is industrially backward and 90% people living in the rural area lead their daily life depending on the intensive subsistence agriculture. The study area, Nagarerbari Village is located in the southern part of the district Indo-Bangladesh border. The village is located in between 26 ° 01 ' 20.27 " N to 26 ° 00 ' 52.91 " N latitude and 89 ° 31 ' 38.96 " E to 89 ° 34 ' 08.86 " E longitude. As per census 2001, total geographical coverage of the village is 160.6 hectares with total population of 4952. In the study area, total male population is 2554 and female population is 2398. The total working population in Nagarerbari village is 2,584 among which 1524 is male worker and 1060 is female worker. The total agricultural labourer of the study area is 547 including 442 male and 105 female. The study area is connected with Sub divisional town Dinhata with a metalled road with bus connectivity. 2688 persons of the village are able to write and read in their mother language among which 1182 are male and 1506 are female. The study area experiences higher literacy in case of female rather than male.

## Accounts of Rural Agricultural Labourer

Historical background of the study area is different from the others parts of West Bengal as it was under the administration of Cooch Behar State ruled by Princely Koch Kings. Koch Dynasty succeeded the *Kshen Dynasty*. At the time of *Kshen Dynasty*, there were two categories of cultivators in agricultural structure i.e. Land lord and tenants. Land lords were the real cultivators. On the other hand tenants are actually peasants (Mukhopadhyay, 1990). It was continued till 1864 A. D. During the period of Koch rulers, entire circumstances of agricultural labourer were related with three stages viz. *Pre- Ijaradari* (system of land revenue; where, entire estate is divided into some large parts known as *jote* and those *jotes* were leased out to the highest bidder) phase, *Ijaradari* Phase and the phase of *land tenancy system introduced by British*. In 1773 A.D., British entered into Cooch Behar and the state was converted into *Princely Feudatory State*. The feudatory state paid revenue to the British. The king was the supreme owner of the land under its jurisdiction. In 1790 A.D., British administrator introduced *Ijaradri* system and it was continued for near about 70 years. At that time, some people coming in to Cooch Bihar from outside (who were not directly connected with soil) captured most of the *Ijaradari*. They created some group of sharecroppers for their own benefits. Very soon, through the back door of *Logni* system old *Ijaradars*, was converted into tiny peasants; sometimes in simple tenants. Demands of required manpower for cultivation had been crammed by the person engaged as sharecroppers, locally termed *Adhiar* or *Vhagidars*. The *Jotedars* were placed at the top of the hierarchy and at the bottom there were *Adhiars*. In between the two, there were the under-tenants locally known as '*Chukanidar*', '*Dar-chukanidars*', '*Daradar-chukanidars*' and '*Tasia-chukanidars*' etc. (Som, 2005). At the time of first settlement system, two types of middle men can also be found i.e. *Sundor Vagidar* (parts of *Jotedar* who can demand his share at any time) and *Koljani Vagidar* (they were mainly tenants of *Jotedars* created by *patta* or *kobuliot*). '*Chukanidar*' and '*Dar-chukanidars*', sometimes also created *Adhiar* or *Vhagidars*. There was no agricultural labourer as a separate class virtually neither (land) owning nor (those who) rented any lands (Hunter, 1974; Chaudhury, 1901). In *Pre – Ijaradari system*, there were no *Adhiar* or *Vhagidars*. These were created in the period of

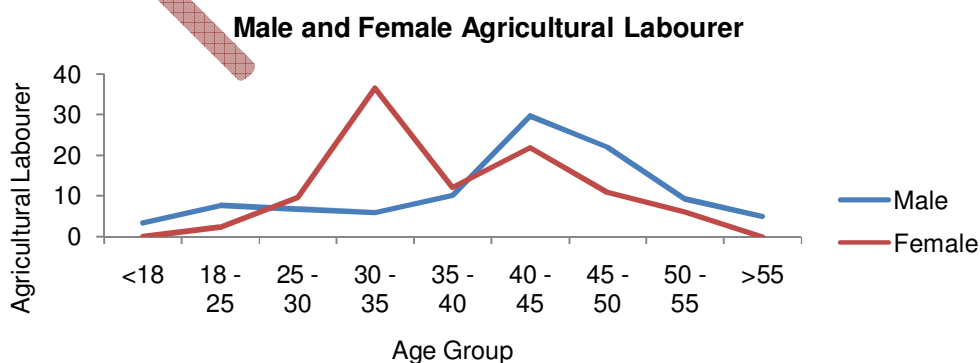
*Ijaradari system.* When there is no work in the field, *Adhiar* or *Vhagidars* people served for wages in field (Chaudhury, 1901). In 1872 A.D., *Ijaradari sytem* was abolished. New settlement was established for 12 years in 1870 – 1872 A.D. In 1889 – 1890 A.D., another resettlement for 30 years was executed and in 1927 A.D., land settlement was rearranged for 30 years. In this phase, tenant creation was restricted through different act. But it was continued in full phase due to the lack of proper implementation of law and order in reality (Chakroborty, 1990). Just after the independence in 1947, implementation of the Land Acquisition Act. in 1954 abolished the *Jotedari* system and individual ownership of land was established. Though the *Jotedari* system was abolished, its influences on rural society have been continued through the back-door of the act. Koch Bihar has experienced huge influx of refugees from Bangladesh (East Pakistan) in two phase i.e. first wave in 1947 A.D. and the second wave in 1971 A.D., (Samaddar, 1999). In 1951 A.D. the total population of Koch Bihar district was 668949, out of which 23000 population in - migrated from other states of India and 122000 people in - migrated from Bangladesh (East Pakistan). In 1961 A.D., out of total population 1019806, 298000 were in - migrants from different Indian states and 252000 were in - migrants from Bangladesh (East Pakistan). In the decade of 1961 to 71, total population of the district increased rapidly (Barma, 2011). This large mass of migrated people became land less, unemployed. Some of them have been started to sell their physical labour in agricultural field for their survival. Consequently, so called agricultural labourer classes have been taken a remarkable position in agricultural social structure of Koch Bihar district. However, during this period, agricultural labourer as a class was emerged (Som, 2005).

### Status of Agricultural Labourer an Overview

There are two types of agricultural labourers, i.e. farm labourer, who resided within the premises of the landlord and another, casual labourer, who had their own households (Sanyal, 1965). Locally unattached casual labourers are also known as '*Bachhar kamla*' or '*Chakuri kamla*' and '*Dinhajira kamala*'.

### Demography

In the study area, out of 4952 total population, 809 people are cultivators and 547 people are agricultural labourer (Census of India, 2010). Primary data analysis shows that in the study area, 59 percent agricultural labourer are male and 41 percent agricultural labourer are female. 3.38 percent male agricultural labourer belongs to the age group of below 18, while it is zero in case of female. The age group ranging from 18 to 25 has 7.62 percent male, 2.43 percent female agricultural labourer. On the other hand, 6.77 percent male and 9.75 percent female agricultural labourer belong to the age group of 25 to 30. In case of 30 to 35 age group, female agricultural labourer is the highest i.e. 36.58 percent but there is only 5.93 percent of male agricultural labourer. In the age group of 35 to 40 number of male and female agricultural labourer is to some extent similar i.e. 10.16 percent and 12.19 percent respectively. In the age group of 40 to 45 years, male labourer is the highest i.e. 29.66 percent but it is 21.95 percent in case of female (tab, 1).



Figure, 1

Table 1, Status of Agricultural Labourers Households

Age Group	Male	Percentage		Illiterate					
		Female	Percentage		Male	Female	percentage	percentage	percentage
<18	4	3.389831	0	0	Male		Female		
18 - 25	9	7.627119	2	2.439024	78 (56.52%)		60 (43.47%)		
25 - 30	8	6.779661	8	9.756098	Literate				
30 - 35	7	5.932203	30	36.58537	Category	Male	percentage	Female	percentage
35 - 40	12	10.16949	10	12.19512	Primary	25	62.5	12	54.54546
40 - 45	35	29.66102	18	21.95122	Upper Primary	12	30	6	27.27273
45 - 50	26	22.0339	9	10.97561	Secondary	2	5	4	18.18182
50 - 55	11	9.322034	5	6.097561	Higher Secondary	1	2.5	0	0
>55	6	5.084746	0	0	Graduate	0	0	0	0
Total	118	100	82	100	Total	40	100	22	100
<b>General Information About the Rural Agricultural Labourer Household</b>									
Toilet System				Investment in Cheat - Fund				Non Electrified	
Sanitary	Open	BPL	APL	Have	Have not	Electrified			
166 (83%)	34 (17%)	136 (68%)	64 (32%)	140 (70%)	60 (30%)	90 (45%)	110 (55%)		

Compiled by the researcher from field 2013



Male agricultural labourer is 22.03 percent and female is 10.97 percent in age group of 45 to 50. Number of male agricultural labourer is higher than female agricultural labourer in the age group of 50 to 55 i.e. 9.32 percent and 6.09 percent respectively. There is no female agricultural labourer in the age group of more than 55 but it is 5.08 percent in case of male. It is clear that, up to 25 years, male agricultural labourer is higher than female agricultural labourer and up to 40 years, number of female agricultural labourer is higher but it goes down the number of male agricultural labourer after the age group of 35 to 40. It is because of the factor of out migration which is dominant in male in the age between 18 to 40 years (Figure 1 & table, 1).

### **Literacy and Levels of Education**

If literacy is considered, a literate person is one, who can read and write and can understand any language. In the study area, 69 percent agricultural labourers are illiterate in which 56.52 percent are male and 43.47 percent are female. On the other hand, only 31 percent agricultural labourers are literate in which 64.51 percent are male and 35.48 percent are female. If the highest level of education of an agricultural labourer is considered, it is found that most of the agricultural labourers have primary level of education viz. 62.5 percent of male and it is 54.54 percent in case of female. On the other hand, only 30 percent male agricultural labourers have completed upper primary level. While in case of secondary and higher secondary level, it is very low i.e. 5 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. In case of female agricultural labourer, nobody has higher secondary level of education. 27.27 percent female agricultural labourers have upper primary level of education while it is 18.18 percent in case of secondary level of education (table, 1).

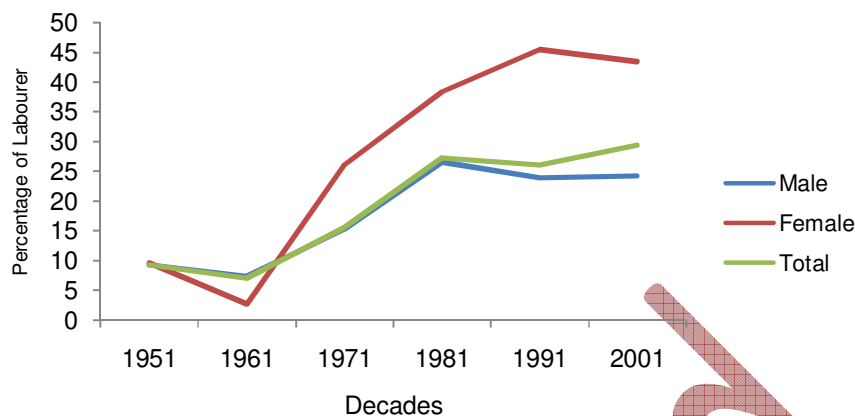
### **Economy**

Houses of all agricultural labourers are *Kancha* in nature which is made of bamboo, straw, jute stick, tin and wood. Tube well is used as a source of drinking water and for other purposes. 83 percent labourers are habituated in open toilet. All of them believe on quack for the procurement of all diseases. 68 percent agricultural labourer belongs to BPL category. All agricultural labourers are enlisted under the NREG scheme. They have got total works of 12 to 14 days in a year in an average. All of them have job card and zero balance bank account in Central bank of Chowdhurihat Branch. But they have no savings in the bank account. 70 percent of them have faith on the success return of different money marketing company which are mainly *Chit - fund*. They have deposited some of their earnings in these companies. Use of T.V, Bicycle and Mobile phone are very common. 45 percent houses of them are electrified under the scheme of BPL. In the lean period of agriculture, they roam about surrounding villages or others places like Delhi, Mumbai, Hariyana, Kerala, Rajasthan etc. in search of different works (table, 1).

### **Changing Patterns of Agricultural Labourer**

Continuous struggle for survival has compelled them to change. Familial responsibility, growing prices of essential commodities and socio – political restraints have collectively increased their vulnerability since long time. Transition of agricultural labourer is occurring in five aspects viz. Feminisation, wages, working time and duration, mode of engagement and out - migration. From the figure 2, it is clear that in 1951 A. D., percent of both male (9.31) and female (9.31) agricultural labourer of the district Koch Bihar was same. In 1961 A.D., percent of male agricultural labourer was decreased to 7.35 and that was decreased to 2.70 percent in case of female agricultural labourer. Since the census year of 1971 A.D., percentage of both male and female agricultural labourer was increasing very sharply (Datta, 2003). Increasing rate of female labourer (26.07 percent) was higher than male agricultural labourer (15.28 percent). Male agricultural labourer of the entire district was increased to 26.58 percent in the census year of 1981 A.D. while it was 38.37 percent in case of female labourer. In the census year 1991 A.D., male agricultural labourer was decreased to 23.91 percent but it was reverse in case of female. In that year, female agricultural labourer of the entire district has increased to 45.47 percent. In the census year 2001, percent of male agricultural labourer was increased slightly to 24.21 percent while female agricultural labourer was increased to 43.46 percent. In the decade of 1951 to 1961, percent of total agricultural labourer was decreased from 9.34 percent to 7.10 percent. From 1961, total percent of agricultural labourer has been increasing. In 1981, it was 27.24 percent (more than three times of 1961). In the decade of 1991, the percent of agricultural labourer was decreased to 26.04 percent and in 2001; it was again increased to 29.40 percent (Table, 2).

**Trend of Agricultural Labourer in Koch Bihar District**



Figure, 2

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Labourers of Koch Bihar**

Census Year	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
1951	9.31	9.61	9.34
1961	7.35	2.70	7.10
1971	15.28	26.07	15.59
1981	26.58	38.37	27.24
1991	23.91	45.47	26.04
2001	24.21	43.46	29.40

Source: District Census Hand Book, Koch Bihar, Computed by B. B. Som.

In 1903, Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri, the then Settlement *Nayib Ahilkar* of Cooch Behar state, in his documentary work entitled 'Cooch State and its Land Revenue Settlement' wrote, 'The ordinary wages of an agricultural day-labourer ranges from 4 annas to 5 annas per diem, giving from Rs.7-8 to Rs. 8-2 per mensem. Labourers of this description received Rs. 2 a month in 1854, Rs. 3 in 1860 and Rs. 5 in 1871. The wages thus increased fourfold since 1854 and by more than a half since 1871" (Choudhury, 1903. p164). Gopa Banerjee in 1974 to 1975 had found *Chakrinder*, who are mainly attached as farm labourer appointed on the basis of verbal contact in Baseldanga village of Jalpaiguri district. *Chakrinders* have to perform all domestic as well as agricultural tasks and was paid Rs 100 to 120 in a year with three meals, betel, biri, tea every day and a pair of Dhuti, and napkin annually. On the other hand, casual labour was paid Rs. 2 to Rs 2.50 in cash and one meal, breakfast and half seer paddy per day. Sometimes, they are paid Rs. 3 to Rs. 3.5 without food. In the study area, wages of both male and female agricultural labourer have been increasing since the decade of 1990 sharply (Bhaumik, 2011). In the study area, Nagarerbari village, only two families have employed two *Chakor* (attached farm labourer) in verbal agreement of Rs.1200 per month including Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. These two *Chakors* get pant, shirt and napkin twice in a year following the season of harvesting. In spite of these, they get *Bidi* and *Khaini*. They have to do all agricultural tasks including domestic works. Their work started from just after getting up from the bed in the morning and ended in the night when they go to sleep. Rest of all agricultural labourers belong to the

category of *Dinhazira*, which is also known as *Kshet Majur*. At present, a male *Dinhazira* labourer earns Rs. 200 in a day with lunch and Rs. 220 without lunch. The female *Dinhazira* labourer gets Rs.150 in a day with lunch and Rs.170 without lunch. At the time of work they get *bidi*, *pan*, *gua* and *khaini*. Their work starts from 9 a.m. and is continued up to 5 p.m. (Table, 2). This class of people does not have any claims in relation to production. They are completely dominated by their employer.

**Table: 2, Calendar of Agricultural Labourer**

Major Crops	Time of Cultivation	Time of Harvesting	Work	Duration of Work	Lean Period	Wedges	
						Male	Female
Aush Paddy	July to August	November to January	Time for commencement of ploughing.	1.5 month	October to November And Last week of January	200 Rs.	150 Rs.
Amon Paddy	February to March	June to August	Mode of ploughing				
Boro Paddy	February to March	June to July	Land preparation	15 days	Last two weeks of April and complete May	Lunch, Pan, Biri, Khaini and Gua	
Tobacco	October to November	March to April	Seed Showing				
Potato	do	February to April	Weeding	1 month	September		
Jute	April	June to July	Harvesting				
Mustard	October	January to February	Carrying the harvested crop to home	1 month			
Wheat	October to November	March	Thrashing				
Pulses	August to September	March					

*Compiled by the researcher*

At present, they are less interested in engagement as individual paid labourer. At the time of interview all agricultural labourer agreed that individual paid labourer (*Dinhazira*) is uneconomic. They are moving towards contractual work (Jodhka, 1994). Generally 8 to 10 agricultural labourers create a group and the leader of the group makes verbal agreement with the employer to finish a proposed work in exchange of certain amount and Tiffin. Sometimes, groups are created with family members. They try to finish the work as early as possible and after the work; they equally distribute the money among all. According to Biren Barman, Shiben Barman, Krishna Sen and Adhar Barman (*Leaders of Labourer Group*) of the study area, contact basis work is profitable. It takes less time and labourers can choose time as per their choice to do the work. Wages are comparatively higher and it is collected just after the completion of work. In this case, the group labourer starts the work in early morning at near about 5 a.m. and finishes within noon at near about 1:30 p.m. As a result, labourers get lots of time after noon to solve own familial matters as well as for entertainment and leisure also. From the employer side, it is also advantageous, because they do not look after the labourer whether he/she is cheating them or not (Table, 3). Very often, the employer does not bear the lunch of the labourers. Works are done with full responsibility. As per the employers' opinion like Dharma Narayan Sen, Binod Chandra Barman and Bhabendranath Barman of the study area, in contractual work, the labourers are more efficient as they try to complete the entire work in minimum time. In *Dinhazira*, the working time starts from 9:30 a.m. and is continued till sunset (4:30 p.m). Within the working time, *Dinhazira* agricultural labourers get a break for their bathing and lunch. After lunch, they take rest and consume tobacco, bidi or pan, *gua* (areca nut) etc. Actually, they wait for sunset, not for finishing the work as just after the sunset, they will be the claimer of *Hazira* (wages) from the *Giri* (employer). On

the other hand, in contractual work, the labourers finish the work quickly to get wages. Consequently, in this case, a contractual labourer pays full attention in work. Output of a contractual labourer is very higher than output when the same labourer is employed as *Dinhazira* (Jodhka, 1994).

**Table: 3, Earnings of Contractual Agricultural Labourer in a Day**

Crops	Nature of Works	Wedges / Bigha	Quantity of work completed per day by a group of 8 to 10 labourer	Per head earnings = $\frac{Ta \times Qw}{L}$ Where Ta = Total amount of wedges/Bigha Qw = Quantity of work completed in a day in Bigha L = Numbers of Labourer in the group.
Paddy	Time for commencement of ploughing.	Rs.1500	3 bighas	Rs. 450
	Land preparation, Seed Showing			
	Weeding	Rs. 800	3 bighas	Rs.240
	Harvesting	Rs. 2000	2.5 bighas	Rs.500
	Carrying the harvested crop to home			
Thrashing				
Tobacco	Seed showing and Transplantation	Rs.1200	2 bighas	Rs. 240
	Furrowing	Rs.700	3 bighas	Rs. 210
	Watering and nursing	Rs.1000	2 bighas	Rs. 200
	Breaking of <i>Bish Pata</i> (unhealthy leaves) and twigs	Rs. 400	5 bighas	Rs. 200
	Mature leaves collection, dying and carrying to home	Rs. 2000	1.5 bighas	Rs. 300
	Binding in bundles	Rs.1500	1 bigha	Rs.150

*Compiled by the researcher*

Since the mid of 1980s, the rural labour of the study area started to move out in other places in search of better wages and work security being afraid of implementation of scientific technology in agriculture. At present, the labour intensiveness of paddy dominated agriculture has got changed in a large. Tractor, Harvester, Thrasher and Motors are used frequently in the field which have reduced the physical works of man. Consequently, the probabilities of irregular employment have encouraged the agricultural labourer to out – migrate in other states of India. They return in the village during peak agricultural seasons. In agriculture based economy, need of labourer is essential throughout the year but the requirement varies season to season. In the peak season like time of transplantation, weeding and harvesting requires huge number of labourer but in the lean period like after transplantation, weeding and harvesting requirements decrease in a large extent. In peak season, there is a scarcity of labourer, while in the lean period labourers become unemployed. In peak agricultural period, wages of labourer increase to unrestrained stage. Besides, sometimes, labourers are hired in the study area from the surroundings. In the study area, there is no labour market and the wages for particular work in a particular time are not fixed. All the formalities are conducted through the familiarity and verbal agreement. The wages fluctuate from time to time. In the lean period, the wages depend on the humanity of employer and it turns in to reverse in the peak season when the labourer is scarce. In the lean period, the aged agricultural labourers who are unable to out – migrate in other state of India, roam about surrounding villages in search of work. Sometimes, they alter their occupations temporarily. Shyama Barman of aged 65 and Shibu Barman, aged 45 of the study area, have joined



in music party of 'Padmanpuran' to continue their earnings when Megu Biswas, aged 50 sells fish catching from wetlands.

### **Problems of Rural Agricultural Labourer**

Rural agricultural labourers of the study area have to encounter several problems which may be categorised under different heads like lack of education, insecure employment, fluctuating insufficient wages, lack of alternative job and lack of labourer market. The agricultural labourers are illiterate and they have no proper training to maintain their skill and profession. Besides, the engagement is irregular due to seasonal nature of agriculture. Not only in the lean period but also half of a year, most of them have to be unemployed. Their engagement depends on the willing of employers. The opinion of rural agricultural labourer is powerless (Rogali, 1995). The wages paid by the employer to them are not only insufficient but also fluctuating time to time. In the peak season, they earn huge but in the lean season they remain in starvation along with their family. There is no rule and regulation for their fair wages. Wages are also determined by the power of the employers. In the study area, there is no labour market. Monopolistic market dominated by the customers of physical labour does not facilitate the seller. Working time period is not fixed. Sometimes, they have to work more than eight hours without any extra wages. In spite of such several problems, they are unable to change their profession due lack of alternative job and proper training. To save themselves from the recession of their profession, they have chosen out – migration from the study area (Chatterjee, 1991; Harberfeld, 1999; Rogaly; 1999; Mahesh, 2002). This huge out – flux of rural agricultural labourer to urbanised area of other states of India has altered the structure of rural society (Sarkar, 2012). Rural agro – economy is being badly affected by this situation.

### **Conclusion**

Agricultural labourers are enclaved today. The overall condition of the rural population have down – trodden significantly over the last fifteen years. Agricultural labourers are also being reshaped through the alteration of political power and global capitalism directly and indirectly. The Economic Survey of 2004 and 2005 pointed out that, the survival of agricultural labourers, one third of the rural population are completely dependent on rural employment which was declined from 60 per cent to 57 percent (Chopra, 2005). Increasing rate of female participation in agricultural tasks, growth of contracted labour and the increasing trend of rural to rural migration have been influenced and intensified by full-blown process of globalisation (Wilson, 2001). The skill of the agricultural labourer is very meagre. Generally, there is abundant supply of agricultural labourer in the study area. Only during the sowing and harvesting seasons, there is a crisis of rural agricultural labourer but when the harvesting season is over, majority of agricultural workers become jobless (Padhi, 2007). Consequently, their deplorable condition is not changing while their demand and the entire environment surrounding them have been changing. The ultimate aim of rural development is to provide minimum per – capita civilisation to the vulnerable rural people. For this, rural agricultural labourer should be provided efficient transport, health, educational and economic facilities with electricity and sources of pure drinking water (Chatterjee, 1991). Labour markets should be established in the study area to raise perfect competition, which will defend the interest of agricultural labourer. Their working duration and wages should be predetermined through the strong and active rules and laws. Overwhelming expansion of chit - fund and local money lender's activity should be restricted completely to bring out agricultural labourer from the lac – house. Alternative sources of employment have to be generated keeping in mind the capabilities of the agricultural labourer. Opportunity of Rural industrialisation through sustainable utilisation of locally available resources such as tobacco, bamboo, cane, woods, pati, areca nut etc. has to be encouraged and simultaneously, suitable environment, such as proper training, fair and fixed market should be established for the prolongation of rural industry. Moreover, they have to be enlightened to know themselves and how much they are lagging – behind. If they are well informed, they will be able to conquer their right by own.

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