

Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam: A Need for Retrieval

Ananthika G.P

Third Year B. Com Ll. B(Hons.), Sastra Deemed University, Thanjavur

ABSTRACT:

Agriculture in India was considered a strong pillar and is considered a crucial sector in India, contributing almost 18.3% to its GDP and employing 45.5% of its workforce. Especially, In Tamil Nadu, agriculture holds a special place in the state's culture and tradition and is vital in ensuring food security and reducing dependence on food imports. Despite this, the agricultural laborers who constitute the major workforce were not provided with adequate welfare measures and job security as that of the Industrial laborers. This research paper sheds light on a few reasons that made industrial laborers be treated in a highly conducive way when compared to agricultural laborers secondly, the paper mainly focuses on evaluating the impact of the only welfare scheme launched by govt of Tamil Nadu that provides cash assistance to Small/marginal Farmers, particularly agricultural laborers and in furtherance of it the researcher conducted a micro level study on the beneficiaries of the schemes in the village named Therkupatti located in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, and suggests for the retrieval of the scheme to benefit a larger number of people.

KEYWORDS: Chief Minister's Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam, Agricultural laborers, Farmers, Tamilnadu farmers, Therkupatti, Thirunelveli

INTRODUCTION:

Agriculture in India has long been a cornerstone of human civilization, it is the largest sector and nearly 56% of the population depends on agriculture. In a country like India agriculture is not only an economic sector but it is also deeply ingrained in the culture and way of life. India is known for agriculture because of its highly diversified nature and suitable agro-climatic conditions, among which Tamil Nadu has all along been one of the states with a creditable performance in agricultural production with its diverse agro-climatic zone ranging from coastal areas to the fertile Cauvery delta, the hilly Nilgiris & arid regions and also due to the farmers and agricultural labors who are more receptive and responsive to the changing technologies and market forces.

The agricultural department in Tamil Nadu has taken up the challenge to achieve a higher growth rate in agriculture by implementing various schemes such as the Agricultural Mechanisation Programme, Demonstration of agriculture machinery and implements, NABARD Assisted Rainwater harvesting Programme, under integrated scheme for oilseeds, oil palm, and maize, Distribution of soil card and various other schemes, also the propagation of relevant technologies to step up production. This research paper aims to concentrate on evaluating the effectiveness of the "CHIEF MINISTER'S UZHAVAR PATHUKAPPU THITTAM" has been launched by the Tamil Nadu government in the year 2011 and also focuses on finding how it is useful to agricultural laborers and suggests the government for its retrieval.

WHO ARE AGRICULTURAL LABORERS?

The term Agriculture not only includes the practice of cultivating plants but also Horticulture, Sericulture, Dairy farming, Poultry farming, Livestock breeding, growing of trees, Inland fishing, etc., therefore the term agricultural labor means any person who is engaged to work in agricultural or allied agricultural operation for wages.

In a developing country like India, the Agricultural labor force constitutes 45.5% of the overall labor force. Despite this, they were not provided with adequate welfare measures and their rights often remained unlegislated the laborers working in these sectors were provided with fewer Govt schemes when compared to other sectors, especially industrial sectors. The agricultural laborers were not treated at par with the industrial laborers who were provided with various welfare measures when compared to the agricultural laborers. The following are considered to be some of the key factors dealing with it.

1. Lack of Legal Recognition:

The Industrial laborers were guided by legal frameworks such as the Trade Unions Act, of 1926, the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 ad, etc., while in the case of agricultural laborers, there were no specific laws enacted to govern them.

2. Cultural & Social factors:

Social & cultural factors can influence how different types of work are perceived and valued. In many parts of societies Industrial jobs are often overlooked and treated as progressive and prestigious whereas agricultural work is seen as traditional and less prestigious.

3. Collective Bargaining power:

Industrial laborers often have more significant collective bargaining power due to their concentration in specific locations & sectors, making it easier to negotiate with employers, on the other hand, agricultural laborers have less bargaining power.

4. Employment Securities:

Many agricultural laborers work seasonally and often migrate in search of employment during the rest of the period. Therefore, they were often vulnerable & provided with less job security compared to industrial laborers with more stable year-round employment.

5. Lack of Awareness:

Many agricultural laborers particularly in remote rural areas may not be aware of their labor rights or have access to information on labor laws.

6. Government Priorities:

Govt may prioritize Industrial & urban labor concerns over those of agricultural laborers due to economic and political considerations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The Govt of Tamil Nadu has been active in implementing various schemes to improve the overall Socio-Economic conditions of Farmers, the schemes include the Sustainable Cotton Cultivation Mission, State

Agricultural Development Scheme, Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation Project, etc., were launched to improve the Infrastructure development, Irrigation projects, provides better access to credit and it includes even the scheme which provides cash assistance to the Small/ Marginal farmers and agricultural laborers. The researcher has taken such a scheme (CHIEF MINISTER’S UZHAVAR PATHUKAPPU THITTAM) that provides cash assistance as a center of research. The researcher found fewer numbers of articles and research papers written concerning the scheme in hand, In One of the papers written by A. MARIA CHRISTIN NIRMALA, M.Com., M.Phil., & Dr.K. SATHYA BAMA Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, T.D.M.N.S. comparative study was made between the registered and non-registered Female agricultural laborers on the problems faced by including Physical, Emotional, and other problems.

Few articles cited the assistance availed to the registered members who are suffering from Tuberculosis & HIV and highlighted Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam.

The Researcher hardly found any articles or research papers that talked about the Impact of the scheme and the need for its retrieval and thereby takes pleasure in writing this article which may act as a base for future research papers in this area.

CHIEF MINISTER’S UZHAVAR PATHUKAPPU THITTAM:

“Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam” came into force on the 10th day of September 2011 in the lieu of Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers- Farmers (social security and welfare) scheme, 2006. This scheme provides the distribution of cash assistance to the registered members of the scheme under various welfare programs.

The registered member will be given a maroon card and his/ her dependents will be given a grey color card. This method of giving cards is the unique feature of this scheme. Every registered member of the family will be provided a card with unique numbers and such a number contained in the card of the head of a family will be included in the card of other members along with the ration card number. Once the card is assigned, it will enable the linkage with Aadhar (UID NO.)

Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam acts as one of the keys to enrolling in the “CHIEF MINISTER’S COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME” for which beneficiaries should be identified & certified by VAO.

This scheme will come under the Department of Land Reforms and the director of land reforms acts as a nodal officer at the state level, and the collector, sub-collector, and commissioner of revenue will operate at the district level.

Members	Dependants
Marriage assistance	Marriage assistance
Old Age Pension	Educational assistance
Monthly assistance during the Temporary Incapacitation period	Grant to Orphan
Accident Relief	Funeral expenses
Natural death assistance	

Funeral expenses	
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Novel Features:

1. Enumerated as the Main Member in the family who is engaged in agriculture and allied to agriculture viz;
 - a. horticulture;
 - b. sericulture;
 - c. the raising of crops, grass, or garden produce;
 - d. the use by an agriculturist of land held by him or part thereof for grazing;
 - e. the use of any land to raise manure crops;
 - f. dairy farming;
 - g. poultry farming;
 - h. livestock breeding;
 - i. growing of trees;
 - j. inland fishing
2. Enumerated as a Dependent Member in the family who depends upon the main member.
3. Paralysis has been included in the accident relief category and a sum of Rs.50,000/- is given as assistance.
4. To avail of the funeral expenses, amount of Rs.2,500/-, no death certificate is required and the amount will be paid immediately.
5. Fine Arts, Teacher Education, and Nursing have been included in this scheme for educational assistance.
6. Educational assistance can be availed under the scheme even if it is obtained under another scheme.
7. Continuing assistance to dependent family members even after the demise of a Farmer member.
8. During temporary incapacitation of a farmer member on account of TB, Cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other terminal diseases rendering the farmer member incapable of doing work, the affected farmer member shall be provided a monthly Pension of Rs.1000/- during the ailment till the disease is cured.
9. A monthly grant of Rs.1000/- is given to the orphan children of the main member who died due to HIV.

DETAILS AND QUANTUM OF AMOUNT: Rs.

1	Marriage assistance	
	Women	10,000
	Men	8,000
2	OLD AGE PENSION PER MONTH (Given through Commissioner of Revenue Administration Department w.e.f. 1.4.2014)	1,000
	(ii) Pension for the period during Temporary Incapacitation due to TB, HIV, Cancer, and other terminal illnesses (per month)	1,000
	(iii) Grant to Orphan	1,000
3	Accident Relief	
	a) Death due to an accident	1,00,000

	b) Loss of both hands	1,00,000
	c) Loss of both legs	1,00,000
	d) Loss of one hand and one leg	1,00,000
	e) Total and irrecoverable loss of sight in both eyes	1,00,000
	f) Loss of one hand or one leg	50,000
	g) Paralysis	50,000
	h) Loss of limbs from grievous injuries other than those specified above	20,000
4	Natural Death (up to 23.4.2017 – Rs. 10,000/-)	20,000
5	Funeral Expenses	2,500
6	Educational Assistance to sons and Children of members	

		Day Scholar		Hosteller	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
a)	(i) I.T.I. Polytechnic (per year)	1,250	1,750	1,450	1,950
	(ii) Diploma in Fine Arts, Teacher Education, and Nursing (per year)	1,250	1,750	1,450	1,950
b)	(i) Bachelor's Degree (per year)	1,750	2,250	2,000	2,500
	(ii) Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts, Teacher Education, and Nursing (per year)	1,750	2,250	2,000	2,500
c)	(i) Post Graduate (per year)	2,250	2,750	3,250	3,750
	(ii) Post Graduate Degree in Fine Arts and Nursing (per year)	2,250	2,750	3,250	3,750
d)	Professional Courses (law, Engineering, etc) (per year)	2,250	2,750	4,250	4,750
e)	Post Graduate Professional Courses (per year)	4,250	4,750	6,250	6,750

MEMBERS:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- He / She must be a person of age from not less than 18 years to not exceeding 65 years.
- He / She may be a small and marginal farmer (including on tenancy) and have wetland not exceeding 2.50 acres and dry land not exceeding 5.00 acres and engaged in direct cultivation.
- He / She may be an agricultural laborer, including inland fishing and laborers working in plantations.

DEPENDENTS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- He / She must be a non-earning member of the family.
- He / She must be related to the registered member either as wife or husband as the case may be or children or the deceased son's wife or his children or parents.

SOME OTHER KEY ASPECTS OF THE SCHEME:

Here are a few of the scheme's salient features,

Financial Support:

Farmers receive financial assistance from the government to help them with their farming endeavors. Subsidies for seeds, fertilizer, insecticides, and agricultural equipment are a few examples of this help.

Insurance for crops:

To shield farmers against crop losses brought on by pests, illnesses, or natural disasters, the program offers crop insurance. Farmers that have this insurance coverage can lessen the financial risks that come with farming.

Education and Training in Agriculture:

To improve farmers' knowledge and abilities, the scheme offers a variety of educational and training opportunities. These initiatives seek to advance sustainable farming practices, effective water management strategies, and contemporary agricultural practices.

Development of Infrastructure:

The scheme also strives to upgrade rural roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems for agriculture.

REGISTRATION FOR THE SCHEME OF CHIEF MINISTER'S UZHAVAR PATHUKAPPU THITTAM, 2011:

The applicants who possess the eligibility shall register under this either by filling out the form and giving it to the appropriate authority or online with the help of the TN e-sevai portal (<https://www.tnesevai.tn.gov.in/>)

PROCEDURE FOR REGISTRATION:

- Application for educational scholarships can be made in the office of the concerned village administrative officers/ revenue Inspector/ vattachiar within six months from the commencement of the academic year.
- In the case of a marriage grant, it should be applied within 3 months before the marriage or within six months after the marriage
- Natural/ Accidental death and cremation grants should be applied for within six months of death.
- Loss of limbs loss of sight or paralysis should be applied within six months of the accident. In cases where it is not possible to apply for the above assistance and get relief within six months, a petition has to be filed to the officers like the Revenue Divisional Officer (from six months to an Additional three months, District Revenue Officer (from six months to additional six months), District Collector (from six months to additional one year) to accept the delay by Govt.

however, it has been stated that after 2019 no new Uzhavar cards were issued to the eligible people and no ways were made for its renewal as well.

The researcher could not find any specific reasons given by the government for the suspension of new applicants for the scheme.

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY:

The researcher took this specific area of research as it found to the researcher that though the scheme came into the year 2011 it did not adequately benefit the people and are large number of members who were eligible to benefit from this scheme may not obtained the benefit due to the lack of awareness or due to other reasons. Therefore, the primary scope of the researcher is to create awareness among the people

regarding the scheme of Chief Minister's Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam and to identify any other reasons which prevented them from registering for it.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this paper is to analyze the effectiveness of Chief Minister's Uzhavar Pathukappu thittam (2011) and to study its beneficiaries in the district of Tirunelveli, particularly in the village of Therkupatti.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

SOURCES OF DATA:

This paper is based on data mentioned in the beneficiary details of the scheme provided on the official website of Govt of Tamil Nadu and in the case of details related to Therkupatti village the details have been obtained through the reports collected from the official register with the help of the VAO of the respective village.

SELECTION OF AREA OF STUDY:

Tirunelveli district has been chosen as a place for research because it was considered to be one of the major contributors to the economy of agriculture in the state of Tamil Nadu, it has a total area of 83.59 acres with a cultivable area of 76 acres. As a result, nearly, half of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Despite this, only 786 members benefitted through this scheme in the year 2023, and the total amount spent was 38,11,660. The members were provided with cash assistance in education, the marriage of the member or his / her dependant, accidents, death, or other purposes. Since it is hard to study the effectiveness of the scheme in the areas of overall district. The researcher planned to do a microlevel study on the village named Therkupatti located in Tirunelveli taluka of Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu. This village is situated 25 km away from the district of Tirunelveli and contains a total geographical area of 418.34 hectares. It has a total population of 3066 people out of which the male population is 1488 while the female population is around 1578 (based on a census report 2011) and contains 1718 workers among which 136 are cultivators who are dependent on agriculture and 602 people work as agricultural laborers. The researcher chose this village as a location to study since it contains nearly 2/3 of people involved in agricultural-oriented activities and found the VAO and other administrative officers were friendly and approachable.

FINDINGS & RESULTS:

The researcher approached the village administrative officer of Therkupatti and collected the following information which is maintained in a separate Register book and found that nearly 586 members have benefitted from this scheme from the year of its implementation to now and to be taken particularly for this financial year nearly 17 peoples have got benefitted by way of obtaining assistance for Marriage expenses, natural death, educational purposes respectively. The researcher could find disappointment among the people for the non-issue of new Uzhavar cards from the speech of the VAO (village administrative officer) who says that the agricultural laborers who are working for daily wages would come in regular intervals and enquire about the chance of retrieval of the scheme and express how the beneficiaries were enjoying the benefit, while they could not.

SUGGESTIONS:

As the Chief Minister's Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam was the only scheme that provides cash assistance to Small/ marginal farmers, especially agricultural laborers, are now disappointed as the new cards were not issued now, therefore the researcher kindly suggests the government of Tamil Nadu to retrieve the scheme and made it beneficial to the small/ marginal farmers and agricultural laborers.

The researcher after the retrieval of the scheme suggests the Govt of Tamil Nadu include the option for registration of the Chief Minister's Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam in the GRAINS (Grower Online Registration of Agricultural Input System) which acts as a single window portal for registration of schemes offered by 13 Agriculture & other departments, came into effect from 01.04.2023 and the farmers have to register their information on the GRAINS website to avail the benefits. The unique feature of this website is that the applicant does not have to submit the necessary documents for registration of all other schemes at all times, a single upload is sufficient.

Similarly, the researcher suggests including the options to know and register for a Uzhavar card under the UZHAVAN App launched by Govt of Tamil Nadu.

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CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam stands as a transformative initiative that has the potential to revolutionize agricultural practices and uplift the small and marginal farming community and Agricultural laborers. Its impact on rural development, and economic growth, cannot be overstated. By providing financial support, and offering educational scholarships, Funeral expenses, and marriage grants, Accident relief, old age pensions, pensions for TB and HIV patients, the program empowers the Agricultural laborers and their dependents.

The need for the retrieval and continuation of the Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam is evident in its positive influence on the lives of Small and marginal farmers and Agricultural laborers as a whole. Retrieving and sustaining this initiative is vital for ensuring the rural prosperity, and the overall well-being of the Agricultural laborers and small farmers.

As we move forward, it is imperative for policymakers to recognize the long-term benefits of the Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam and allocate resources for its continued implementation. The success of this program not only reflects the commitment to the welfare of Small and marginal farmers and Agricultural laborers but also contributes significantly to the overall socio-economic development of the region. In conclusion, Chief Minister Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam stands as a beacon of hope for the agricultural community, and its retrieval is essential for fostering a sustainable and thriving agricultural landscape

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