Project Phase II

Topic : Tamil Nadu Marginal Workers Assessment

Project Definition:

Marginal Workers :

Marginal workers, often referred to as "marginal labourers," are a specific category of the labour force within a country's population. They represent a group of individuals who are engaged in irregular or low-income employment and often face economic and social vulnerability. The concept of marginal workers is commonly used in labour market and employment statistics to categorise a segment of the workforce that is distinct from regular wage/salary workers.

Marginal workers are increasing in tamilnadu as they form a part of the labour force and they work on very low wages which lead to their exploitation, the various industries where marginal workers perform include: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Mining and Quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas, steam and Air conditioning Supply; Water Supply; (Sewerage, Waste Management and remediation activities); Construction; Wholesale and Retail Trade (Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles); Transportation and Storage; Accommodation and food service activities; Information and Communication; Financial and Insurance activities; Real Estate activities; Professional, Scientific and Technical activities; Administrative and support service activities; Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security; Education; Human Health and Social Work activities; Arts, Entertainment and recreation; Other Service Activities; Activities of Households as Employers: Undifferentiated Goods and Services; Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies.

Marginal workers work on various types of jobs which include primary workers fields like Agriculture, Fishing, Mining and to white collar jobs like Public Administration and Defence, Scientific and Technical activities. The workers may also work in both urban or rural area, Their area of work and work type is dependent on their educational qualification which in turn determine their socio-economic status.

The age distribution of marginal workers can vary from one region or country to another, and it can change over time due to economic, social, and demographic factors. In the context of India, where the concept of marginal workers is commonly used, the age distribution of marginal workers may typically be characterised as follows:

Child Labour: Child labour involves the employment of children below the legal working age, which varies from country to country but typically includes those under the age of 14. Child labour is a critical issue among marginal workers in many parts of the world, including India. These children often work in hazardous and exploitative conditions, and their age distribution can encompass a range of ages, from very young children to teenagers.

Younger Age Groups: Marginal workers often include a significant proportion of younger individuals, particularly those in the age group of 15-34 years. This is due to several reasons, including entry-level employment opportunities in various sectors, limited access to formal education, and the need for income generation in lower-income households.

Prime Working-Age Population: The prime working-age group, which typically spans from 35 to 59 years, also contributes to the age distribution of marginal workers. People in this age group may become marginal workers due to underemployment, seasonal employment, or limited job opportunities, especially in the informal sector.

Older Workers: While the majority of marginal workers are relatively younger, there are older individuals, typically aged 60 and above, who engage in marginal employment. This may be due to factors like a lack of retirement benefits, limited pension options, or the need to support themselves and their families.

Gender distribution among marginal workers varies depending on cultural, societal, and economic factors, as well as the specific region and industry in question. Here are some general trends in the gender distribution of marginal workers:

Gender Disparities: Gender disparities are often observed among marginal workers. In many parts of the world, including India, you may find more men than women engaged in marginal employment.

Men as Predominant Marginal Workers: In certain sectors like agriculture, construction, and transportation, men tend to make up a significant portion of the

marginal worker population. They often work as agricultural laborers, construction workers, rickshaw pullers, or in other physically demanding roles.

Women in Informal and Unpaid Work: Women are more likely to be engaged in informal, part-time, or unpaid work, such as household and care work. These roles may not be recognized as formal employment, but they are essential to the functioning of households and communities.

Let us look at the problems of marginal workers and solution to be offered with application of innovation.

1. Lack of Access to Social Services: Many marginal workers struggle to access essential social services such as healthcare and clean water. Marginal workers often struggle to access healthcare services due to financial constraints or limited healthcare infrastructure in their areas. This can lead to unmet medical needs and poorer health outcomes.Adequate access to clean water and sanitation facilities is often lacking in their living conditions, posing health risks.

Innovation:

    a.   Telemedicine and eHealth Platforms:
Develop telemedicine and eHealth platforms that allow marginalized workers to consult with healthcare professionals remotely. These platforms can provide diagnosis, prescription, and follow-up care through video calls and messaging apps.

    b.   Mobile Health Apps:
Create mobile health apps that provide healthcare information, appointment scheduling, and medication reminders. These apps can also offer access to a database of common health conditions and treatments.

    c.   Electronic Health Records (EHR):
Implement EHR systems in healthcare facilities serving marginalized communities to improve patient record management and enable quick access to medical history.

    d.   Geographic Information System (GIS) for Healthcare:
Use GIS to map healthcare facilities and track patient needs in real-time. This can help optimize the allocation of healthcare resources to underserved areas.

e. Learning and Health Literacy:

Develop eLearning platforms and mobile apps that educate marginalized workers about health, sanitation, and disease prevention. This can help improve their health literacy and empower them to make informed decisions.

2. Gender Disparity: Gender disparity in the job market, particularly among marginal workers, refers to the unequal treatment and opportunities that women and men experience in their employment. This issue is characterised by differences in wages, job roles, and access to job opportunities.

Women who are marginal workers often earn less than their male counterparts for the same or similar work. This wage gap is a significant issue as it perpetuates economic inequality. Gender stereotypes often lead to occupational segregation, with women more likely to work in lower-paying, less-skilled jobs. Men, on the other hand, tend to dominate higher-paying positions.Women in marginalised communities may have fewer job opportunities available to them due to social and cultural norms that restrict their mobility and choices.

Innovation:

a. Digital Skills Training Programs:

Implement training programs that specifically target women in marginalized communities to develop digital skills and IT knowledge. These programs should be designed to bridge the digital gender divide and promote equal access to IT opportunities.

b. Online Job Platforms:

Create online job platforms that connect women in marginalized communities with IT job opportunities. These platforms should be user-friendly, promote job postings without gender bias, and offer resources for skill development.

c. Remote Work and Telecommuting:

Promote remote work opportunities in the IT sector, allowing women in marginalized communities to work from home and overcome mobility restrictions. This flexibility can enable more women to access IT jobs.

d. Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:

Encourage IT companies to implement diversity and inclusion initiatives, including gender quotas, mentorship programs, and bias training, to create a more welcoming and equitable work environment.

3. Educational Qualification: Marginal Worker is increasing every year due to lack of proper education which makes them work physically demanding jobs and illiterate jobs which are very daunting and give in return low wage. Marginal workers often lack the necessary skills and qualifications to access jobs that offer higher wages and job security. They may be stuck in low-paying, unskilled jobs. Many marginal workers have low levels of literacy and numeracy, which restrict their ability to perform even basic job tasks or access educational resources.

Innovation:

    a.   Digital Literacy and Basic IT Training:

Launch digital literacy and basic IT training programs aimed at marginalized workers. These programs can provide foundational skills necessary for accessing online resources and starting a career in IT.

    b.   Online Learning Platforms:

Create accessible and user-friendly online learning platforms that offer IT courses, coding tutorials, and other relevant skills training. These platforms can be used by marginal workers to upskill at their own pace.

    c.   Open Educational Resources (OER):

Promote the use of open educational resources, including free online courses and textbooks, to make education more affordable and accessible to marginal workers looking to improve their skills.

    d.   Community Tech Centers:

Establish community technology centers equipped with computers and internet access, where marginal workers can access educational resources, receive training, and seek guidance from mentors.

    e.   Mobile Learning Apps:

Develop mobile learning apps that provide bite-sized, interactive lessons on IT skills and job preparation. These apps can be used on smartphones, which are more accessible to many marginalized workers.

4. Child Labour: Child Labour include working of children from the age of 5-14. This age is the age of children to study in school but they are doing physically demanding jobs which may affect physical and mental development of children. Children from marginal worker families are often forced into work at a young age, sometimes engaging in hazardous or exploitative labour to contribute to their family's income.

Child labour deprives these children of their right to education, which can have long-term consequences on their future employability and overall well-being. Child labour can perpetuate the cycle of poverty. When children are forced to work instead of attending school, they are more likely to continue in low-paying, unskilled jobs as adults.

Innovation:

a. Online Child Labor Reporting Portals:

Create user-friendly online platforms where concerned citizens, teachers, and community members can report instances of child labor. This can help authorities identify and intervene in cases of child exploitation.

b. Child Labor Monitoring Apps:

Develop mobile apps that enable labor inspectors and NGOs to collect real-time data on child labor cases. These apps can use GPS to pinpoint hotspots and facilitate targeted intervention.

c. Data Analytics and AI for Predictive Analysis:

Utilize data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze data on vulnerable areas and identify patterns of child labor. Predictive analysis can help focus resources on high-risk regions.

d. Digital Identity and Birth Registration:

Implement digital identity and birth registration systems to ensure every child has an official record, making it easier to track school attendance and identify child labor cases.

e. Child-Friendly Educational Platforms:

Develop online educational platforms tailored for children who have missed out on traditional schooling due to child labor. These platforms can offer age-appropriate lessons and activities.

f. eLearning Centers:

Set up eLearning centers in areas with a high incidence of child labor, providing access to computers and the internet. These centers can offer catch-up education to bridge the learning gap.

Conclusion:

      In conclusion, the study on the demographics and challenges faced by marginal workers in Tamil Nadu has underscored the significance of innovative assessment methodologies. Leveraging data-driven insights and design thinking principles, this research not only deepened our understanding of the multifaceted issues confronting these workers but also emphasized the crucial role of innovation in addressing their complex socio-economic and educational hurdles. The application of technological solutions, such as advanced data analytics, skill development platforms, and blockchain for labor rights, is essential to accurately assess the needs of marginalized workers, ultimately paving the way for more empathetic and effective solutions to improve their well-being and foster social inclusion in Tamil Nadu.

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