

A Comparative Analysis of the Agricultural Labourers in Karnataka: An Overview of Rural Savanur Taluka

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Abstract- *This study examines the socio-demographic profile and Labour Partition patterns of rural architectural labourers in the Savanur block, Karnataka, based on primary data collected in 2025. The sample of 153 respondents revealed that male labourers constitute 53.6% and female labourers 45.8%, with a few Shares in other gender categories. Age distribution shows the highest participation among those aged 40- 50 (29.4%). Followed by 30 to 40 (24.2%), while younger (15-30) and older (50+) Age groups are less well represented. Maruti status beta indicates that 71.9% are married, 15.7% single, and 11.8% widowed, with widowers being extremely rare. Family structure in the sample is predominantly joined, with 68 0% of households being joined families and 32.0% nuclear. Drawing comparison with Karnataka state, a rising female labour participation rate in rural areas, A growing share of middle-aged labourers and changing family marital dynamics. The findings highlight both alignment and unique local variances in Savanur. The study suggests targeted interventions for underrepresented groups (youth, widowed, female labourers), Improvements in social support and infrastructure and policy measures that recognise the role of marital status and family type in shaping labour force participation.*

Key Words: *Rural Labour Participation, Gender/Female Labour, Age Distribution, Family Type, Etc.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The most crucial factor for increasing output in traditional agriculture is labour. Early expansion was characterised by an abundance of land, which increased labour availability and allowed for the clearing of additional areas for cultivation. Agricultural workers are the most economically and socially disadvantaged group in society. Along with the dispossessed peasantry and displaced artisans, households led by agricultural labourers comprise the historically marginalised socio-economic groups. They are the poorest of the poor in rural India. Their growth is a result of both the colonial legacy of

underdevelopment and previous insufficient planning interventions.

India is basically an agricultural nation, as nearly 70% of the population lives in villages. The majority of the Indian rural workers are dependent on agriculture, and among the workers, the number of agricultural labourers is quite high. Agricultural labourers contribute significantly towards the rural economy and also to the country's economy. The living conditions and the standard of living of agricultural labourers would largely depend on the income earned by them. It also depends on the number of employment days available in a year. Moreover, it is influenced by their level of consumption and the degree of their load. To determine the socioeconomic condition of agricultural labourers, it is extremely important to know their total income, expenditure and credit. (Singh, 2017). Agriculture is a significant player in the economic development of India, and that is the background of rural India. It is the biggest sector of the country's economic activities, growth, and financial as well as livelihood. It provides a livelihood for 60% of the total population of India, which is engaged in agricultural activities. Agricultural labour is counted in the category of unorganised areas because their income is not fixed. Hence, they are living in an insecure and underprivileged Life and earning rupees 150 per day along with full uncertainty. The increase in the number of agricultural labourers has caused an increase in the size of the unorganised sector population. (Mr Mallikarjun Gadad, 2023).

Agricultural labourers are a socially and economically disadvantaged section of society. Agriculture labourers' households constitute the most historically vulnerable social groups, displayed by handicraftsmen and Disposed Gentry. They are the

poorest of the poor in rural areas. Their growth reflects the colonial legacy of underdevelopment and the inadequacies of planning intervention in the past. Despite the growth of agricultural labourers continuing to be powerful, Jeevan has poor labour absorption in the non-agricultural area and also inadequacies of reforms in the farmers' structure. (Anand, 2022)

According to a 2001 survey in India, there were 27.50% and 43.40% of male and female agricultural labourers, respectively. In Karnataka, 23.70% of males and 54.40% of female agricultural labourers have several measures taken to protect the working class and uplift the condition of agricultural labourers. The performance of Indian agriculture in transforming India from a land of status in the mid-1960s to a self-sufficient country during the 1990s is remarkable. However, owing to many Reasons, including the re-emergence of climate risks in recent years, national food self-sufficiency is not sufficiently stable—moreover, the household level and many cases at the Household level (N, June 2013). According to the 2011 census, India's total population was 1.2 billion, of which about 228.3 million people relied on the agriculture sector. Followed by 110.7 million in the secondary sector, 127.8 million in the tertiary sector and the remaining were the rest of the population. It is really astonishing. Between 2004 and 2005, and 2011 and 2012, across the Indian states like Karnataka (4.9 million), Uttar Pradesh (3.63 million), West Bengal (3.71 million), Bihar (3.63 million), and Rajasthan (3.56 million), most agricultural workers were engaged in the farming sector in India. (Diptiranjana Sahoo, July-August 2018).

This study offers a comprehensive understanding of the livelihood patterns and occupational structure of agricultural labourers in Haveri District.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1) Kusuma K.C., and Dr K.C. Basavaraju Write basically an unorganised and seasonal workforce. The papers examine agricultural workers in Karnataka, India, emphasising their socioeconomic disadvantage, low and irregular incomes, weak

bargaining strength, and strong reliance on landholders. While overall workforce growth slows or reverses due to causes including crop failures, rising costs, globalisation, and insufficient minimum support prices, the share of agricultural labourers fluctuates between 1961 and 2011, rising until the early 1990s and then declining by 2011. Furthermore, government attempts (minimum wages, land reforms, welfare programs) and policy recommendations to enhance living standards, bargaining power, and working conditions—such as land redistribution, protection enforcement, and agricultural reform—these studies focus on ongoing problems like poor conditions of employment, debt, a lack of legal protections, and outmigration to non-agricultural sectors.

2) Dr Manas Anand elaborates that, due to their low and irregular wages, lack of skills, poor organisation, and heavy reliance on landlords, agricultural labourers in India are among the poorest and most marginalised rural groups, according to the document's analysis of their socioeconomic circumstances. Those who are landless and members of the Scheduled Castes/Tribes are especially vulnerable. In addition to discussing the policy context, including MGNREGA 2005, which aims to guarantee at least 100 days of unskilled work per rural household and its wage-focused outcomes, it describes characteristics like distributed, unorganised, and illiterate labour, limited bargaining power, seasonal unemployment, direct landlord-employee contact, widespread poverty, and assetlessness. While identifying concerns like unorganised labour, social insecurity, debt, large families, and the absence of social security, the article also reviews the literature on agricultural labour migration, poor working conditions, and policy interventions. It supports policies like housing, social security, enforcement of minimum wages, support for rural industries, improved working conditions, farmer education and health, affordable credit, and the effective application of current laws to improve livelihoods without stifling rural employment.

3) Anurag Choudary and Sukhapal Singh Explain that together, the records evaluate the

socioeconomic circumstances of Punjabi agricultural workers, with particular attention to caste composition, living standards, debt, asset ownership, and literacy across several agroclimatic zones. They draw attention to widespread debt with little ability for its repayment, a heavy dependence on a single source of income, and low asset bases that are concentrated on housing and essential services. To address structural vulnerabilities and ongoing poverty in rural Punjab, the analyses make the case for policy measures such as employment guarantees, targeted debt relief, and the upliftment of disadvantaged agricultural labourers, including loan waivers and social protections.

4) Dr A. Sangamitra and P. Arunkumar Elaborate, using a sample size of 50 workers, the 2018 study looks at the socioeconomic circumstances of agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu, India's Theni region. It describes housing, debt, education, income, and demography. According to the data, the workforce is primarily male, and many members come from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is also a high rate of illiteracy, poor and irregular incomes (usually less than Rs. 8,000 per month), significant household expenses, widespread debt from informal lending, and housing that is typically roofed but not solid. The document's overall depiction of low living standards and poverty among rural agricultural labourers emphasises the necessity of legislative changes to enhance housing, incomes, education, and credit availability.

5) Md. Habibur Rahman and Somprawin Manprasert Examine the differences in SHG (Self-Help Group) formation at the regional and district levels in Tamil Nadu up until about 2010–11/12, stressing the variations in SHG activity, savings, and women's enrolment among agroclimatic regions and districts. It highlights three key trends: relatively low SHG counts in hilly, high-rainfall areas like Kanniyakumari and the Nilgiris, where literacy may not correlate with greater SHG coverage; substantial SHG activity in the North Eastern and Western zones; and significant presence in the Cauvery Delta and Southern zones with varying per-district distribution. Overall, the examination indicates imbalances at the regional and district levels related

to population, literacy, urbanisation, agriculture, and infrastructure; district-level data indicate that SHGs and savings are not evenly distributed and consolidated.

III. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study examines the daily lifestyle, livelihood security, and occupational structure of agricultural labourers in selected rural areas of Haveri District. And how does family structure form (Joint vs nuclear), Gender influence Labour participation flexibility? What are the levels of youth engagement in agriculture, and how do the gender gaps in participation and opportunity observed in Savanur rural block compare with those at Karnataka's rural state scale?

IV. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assess the demographic composition (Age, Sex, Marital status) of rural labourers in the Savanur block
- 2) To compare Savanur's rural labourer participation (By sex, age, family/marital status) with trends in Karnataka
- 3) To explore how marital status and family type influence the economic and social well-being of labour households.
- 4) To identify constraints and enabling factors affecting labour participation among women, youth, and older age groups in the Savanur block

V. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining primary and secondary data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Primary data was collected through extensive field surveys and in-depth interviews with relevant respondents.

The data was then analysed using SPSS software and MS Excel to identify trends, patterns and correlations. The results are represented in graphical formats, ensuring clarity and precision.

This study selects nine rural villages in Savanur Taluk, Namely Hattimathur, Mantrodi, Allipur, Aralihalli, Baradur, Tegghihalli, Madapur, Karadagi, and Chillur, as the study area. A field survey was conducted to collect the primary data (153 Samples) from these villages. The findings are compared with the state-level data of Karnataka to provide a comprehensive analysis of these different rural scenarios.

VI. SELECTED STUDY AREA

About Savanur :

Savanur had a municipal system before independence, and the TMC was founded in 1872 by Shri Abdul Mazid Khan Diler Jang Bahadur (CBE). Savanur town currently has 27 wards, each of which is represented by 27 members. As of the 2011 census, 40,567 people lived there, comprising 20,754 men and 19,813 women. This area is home to 510 Scheduled Tribes and 3928 Scheduled Castes. According to some of the publications on Savanur that are currently available, the region was named after the Nawabs from Bankapur during the month of "Shravan" to become known as "Savanur." Historically, Savanur was dominated by the Marathas, the Bahmani rulers, and the Nawabs. Savanur is the kingdom of the Savanur Nawabs, a princely state. The main attractions of the Savanur are the three large baobab trees, the renowned Shri Satyabhood Math, and the Nawabs' and Nawab's Daughters' bungalows.

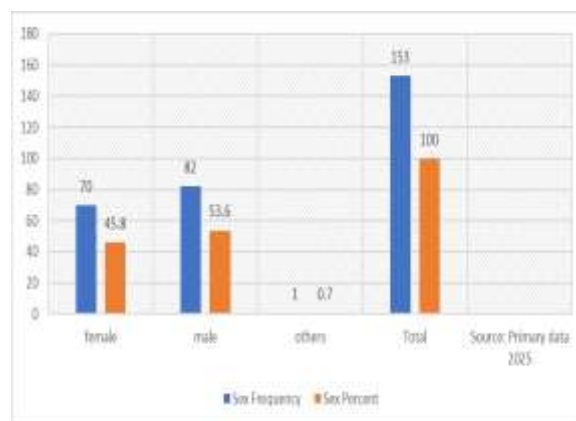
The distance between Savanur and the Poona-Bangalore National Highway is only 10 km. It is the primary commercial hub of the Haveri area, which is situated to the west and 8 km from the train station.

The betel leaves that are formed and sold here are famous worldwide and are sent in bulk to other states. Savanur's geographical coordinates are 41 degrees 51' longitude. Hubballi, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Ranebennur and Davanagere are the closest locations for travel.

VII. DISCUSSION AND ELABORATION OF THE DATA

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Sex		
Components	Frequency	Percent
female	70	45.8
male	82	53.6
others	1	0.7
Total	153	100
Source: Primary data 2025		



The total sample size is 153 agricultural levels from the Savanur rural area. Out of these, 82 are male, which makes up the largest share at 53.6%. This shows that men form the majority of the rural labour force. 70R female labourers accounting for 45.8% Onst. This indicates that women also play a significant role in Adricaja Labour. Their participation is slightly lower than that of men. Only one respondent (0.7%) identified as belonging to other gender categories.

Rural labour parties in Savanur are male-dominated, but women's contributions are also Substantial and almost equal to those of men. This highlights that agricultural work is not exclusively male-oriented. Women are active participants, though often under-recognised and possibly underpaid compared to men. The presence of others also shows inclusivity, but their share remains very small.

Table 2: Female Labour Force Participation –
Savanur Rural vs Karnataka State (Rural)

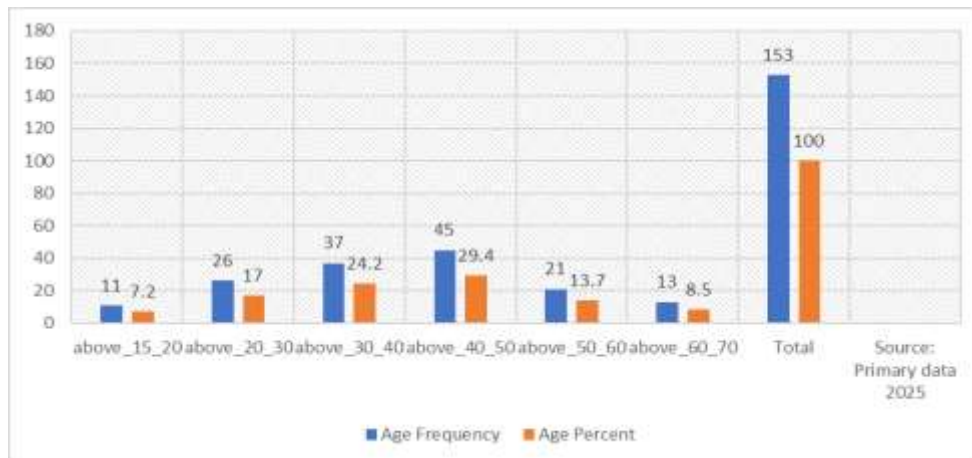
Region / Year	2017-18 (%)	2023-24 (%)	Current Study (%)	Source
Savanur (Study Area)	–	–	45.80 %	Field Survey, 2025
Karnataka (Rural)	28.20 %	43.50 %	–	IWWAGE , 2025
Source: IWWAGE 2025				

The data highlights that female labour participation in Savanur (45.8%) is slightly higher than the recent Karnataka rural averages (43.5% in 2023-24) and far above the earlier rate of 28.2% in 2018-18. This indicates that Savanur follows the broader trend of rising female Labour participation in rural Karnataka, but shows a more progressive level of

engagement, suggesting that women's role in agriculture is particularly strong in the Region (IWWAGE 2025).

Table 3: Age composition of the Respondents

Age		
Components	Frequency	Percent
above_15_20	11	7.2
above_20_30	26	17
above_30_40	37	24.2
above_40_50	45	29.4
above_50_60	21	13.7
above_60_70	13	8.5
Total	153	100
Source: Primary data 2025		



The largest share of labourers is in the 40 to 50 age group (29.4%). Next largest 30 to 40, age group (24.2%), then 20 to 30 (17.01%). The younger Groups (15-20) are very small (7.2%), as are the older Groups (60-70 at 8.5%). So, the bulk of labour is done by people aged 30-50.

This suggests that in Savanur, Agricultural or Google work is primarily done by middle-aged adults. Perhaps because of physical demands, experience, family responsibilities, etc., Fewer very young (just above 15) and fewer at older ages, which is typical in many labour settings.

Table 4: Age Trends Savanur (Rural) vs Karnataka (Rural)

Feature	Savanur (Data)	Karnataka (State / Studies)
Share of younger (≈ 15-30 yrs) labourers	7.2% (15-20) + 17.0% (20-30) = ≈ 24.2%	In Mandya, the <35 group was ~20.8%. Additionally, participation by youth (15-29), especially females, is low.
The major working age group	30-50 yrs: combined ~ 53.6% (30-40 + 40-50)	Mandya study: 35-50 had ~39.2%. Many state averages also show more in the 30-50 range as work-heavy.

Older labourers (above 50)	~ 13.7% (50-60) + 8.5% (60-70) = 22.2%	Karnataka's rural studies also show a sizable share above 50 in agriculture, more than in younger groups in some districts.
Source: https://www.ijmnds.in/index.php/ijmnds/article/view/288?utm_source=chatgpt.com , https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/342439?utm_source=chatgpt.com , https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/342439?utm_source=chatgpt.com		

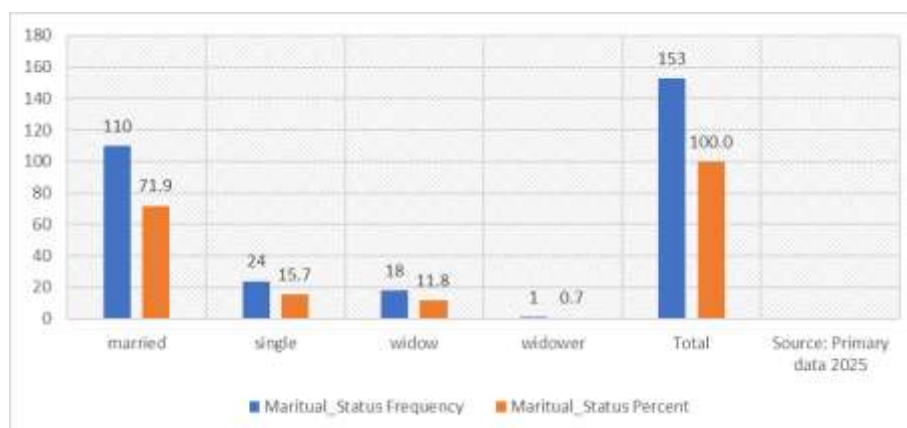
The Savanur distribution is fairly consistent with Karnataka's pattern of most labour being in the middle age bracket (30-50). This is expected in rural agricultural labour where physical capability, experience and family labour burdens are aligned with that age group.

Observe that in the age Groups 1 to 24 years, Female Labour participation declines in rural Karnataka. Partly because of the increased school environment and rising literacy (Vaikunthe, (2017): IJMDS).

Alabujanahalli (Mandya District) Angry workers are increasingly attracted away from traditional farm labour towards non-farm or more regular work. Also, older age groups maintain higher engagement in agriculture. (Satheesha, 2023, vol. 13). Rural youth find significant vulnerability among young people in agriculture, and after that, youth have less stable, more precarious Employment. (H. Gunashekhar, 2024).

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital_Status		
Components	Frequency	Percent
married	110	71.9
single	24	15.7
widow	18	11.8
widower	1	0.7
Total	153	100.0
Source: Primary data 2025		



In the present study of 153 rural labourers in Savanur (2025), Marital status is distributed as follows: constitutes 71.9% (110 of 153) are married, 15.7% (24) are single, 11.8% (18) are widows, and a small 0.7% (1) are widowers. This suggests that a large majority of the Labour Boasts are in marital groups.

Table 6: Marital status growth rate of Savanur vs Karnataka

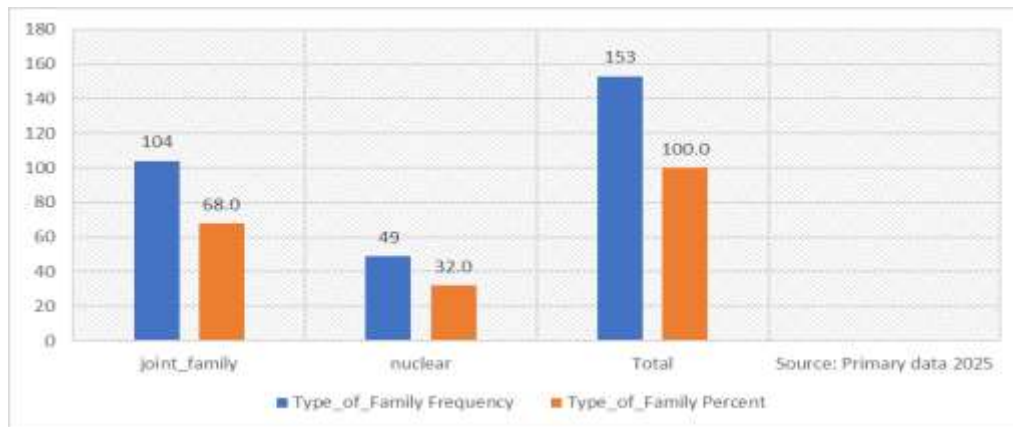
Catego ry	Savanur (%)	Karnataka Rural (From SRS / Census) (%)
Married	71.9	~ 65.1
Never Married / Single	15.7	~ 24.0
Widowed / Widower	~ 12.5	~ 10.9
Source: SRS and Census 2011		

Savanur has a higher proportion of married respondents (71%) compared to the rural Karnataka average (~65.1%). Single or never married has a

Proportion (15.7%), higher than in Karnataka rural (~24.0%). Widowed+ Widower: Savanur's ~12.5% is somewhat close to the Karnataka rural average of ~10.9%.

Table 7: Type of Family of Respondents

Type_of_Family		
Components	Frequency	Percent
Joint family	104	68.0
nuclear	49	32.0
Total	153	100.0
Source: Primary data 2025		



Joint families make up more than two-thirds (68%) of households. Nuclear families are about 1/3 (32%) of the sample. This suggests that in the Savanur Extended family, living arrangements (With multiple generations or more than one household under one roof) are still common in rural labour households.

In the Savanur Block Sample (2025), Joint families dominate, accounting for 68.0% (104 out of 153). After the households, nuclear families constitute just 32.0 per cent. This suggests a strong persistence of extended family structures in rural Savanur, likely driven by economic, social, and cultural imperatives—such as pooled resources, shared labour, and intergenerational support. When compared with rural

Karnataka more broadly, this prevalence of joint families is consistent with earlier sociological observations: Anekal Taluk documented strong patterns of “jointness” in rural Karnataka households, describing how multiple married children and their families often co-reside under one roof. (Hill, 2008). Thus, Savanur data not only align with historical patterns of joint family dominance in Karnataka’s agrarian villages but may also reflect slower adoption of nuclear models in this particular region compared to some parts of the state.

VIII. OVERALL FINDINGS AND RESULTS

- 1) Men slightly outnumber women among rural labourers in Savanur (Male ~53.6%, Female ~45.8%). Women's participation is high, though there is still a gender gap. Consistent with Karnataka trains showing that rural female work participation rates (WPR) are lower than those of males, though rising.
- 2) Most labourers (50-70) are in the middle-aged (30-50), younger age groups (15-30) contribute less, and older age groups still contribute significantly. With general rural labour force patterns, the physically and socially capable middle-aged bracket is predominant. Also, Karnataka data suggests that young women, especially, have lower participation because of schooling, caretaking or lack of opportunity.
- 3) In the Savanur block, A large majority are married (~71.9%), a moderate share is single (~15.7%), and a non-trivial Fraction is widowed (11.8%). With very few widowers. Many liberals have household responsibilities. Karnataka trends show that marital status correlates with female labour participation; Married women sometimes face more constraints, but in some cases, women are working more, depending on family support, etc.
- 4) Joint families are highly prevalent in Savanur (~68%), with nuclear families being much fewer (~32%). Karnataka has both joint and nuclear households, and studies show that joint family arrangements remain strong in many rural parts (Hill, 2008).
- 5) Karnataka state-level findings; Rural women in Karnataka have rising, but still moderate participation, i.e Female WPR in Karnataka is ~32% (PLFS 2020-21) as per the factsheet. Also, many of these women are in self or casual employment rather than regular wage work.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Since younger (15-30) labourers are underrepresented, especially among women, offering vocational training, Apprenticeships Forest skill development could help them enter the labour force productively.

- 2) Public childcare facilities, flexible working hours or local work opportunities could help, especially female agricultural labourers.
- 3) MGNREGA/ Other rural employment schemes can be leveraged to absorb underemployed rural labour, especially for women, widows and those in joint family setups.
- 4) Promote micro-enterprises, Local cooperatives, and small agro-businesses so that more people can work close to home and avoid migration.
- 5) Ensure good transport, access to markets, and local infrastructure (health, education, child care). To reduce dependency on joint arrangements purely for logistical support. And having services closer to villages reduces travel/ Time costs, which disproportionately affect women or older labourers.

X. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

- 1) To sustain and enhance rural labour productivity, skill development, and vocational training for youth are necessary, so younger groups can meaningfully engage rather than drift away.
- 2) Given the significant presence of older labourers, Health, Social Security, and safer work modalities should be integrated into rural labour schemes.

XI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the storm block data provides a valuable microcosm of rural Karnataka's labour realities- offering both affirmation of known state patterns and localised deviations plant suggests tailored policy responses. Continued empirical monitoring coupled with inclusive gender- and age-sensitive programming can help strengthen rural livelihoods, reduce volatility, and promote equitable development in Savanur and similar blocks across Karnataka and India.

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