

## Employment Structure and Rural-Urban Migration in a Tamil Nadu Village: Focusing on Differences by Economic Class

SATO Keiko\*

### Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, migration of workforces from rural to urban areas has accelerated in south India accompanied by remarkable urban-based economic development. To investigate the nature of such rural-urban migration in detail, especially any differences influenced by economic class, a study village was selected from the Madurai District. The detailed analysis found the existence of clear inter-class difference in terms of the shift to non-agricultural occupations; that is, the wealthier class tended to find more remunerable non-agricultural jobs, such as white-collar jobs. The most striking finding was that the traditional class structure in rural India based on ownership of farmland was basically unchanged even after non-agricultural jobs became much more important. This was because of the huge expenditure for education necessary to acquire remunerable jobs and the differential access to credit markets among the different classes.

**Keywords:** rural-urban migration, employment structure, white-collar job, economic class, caste

### Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, migration of workforces from rural to urban areas has accelerated in India, especially south India, with the remarkable urban-based economic development.<sup>1)</sup> The income which can be earned in the non-agricultural sectors, especially by white-collar workers, is much higher than in the agricultural sector. Thus, by shifting occupation from agriculture to non-agriculture, people can raise their income substantially and mitigate poverty [Lanjouw and Murgai 2009; UNDP 2009]. Accordingly, within the agricultural sector itself, there has been a surge in the wage rate and a shift from cereal

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\* 佐藤慶子, Ph.D. candidate, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, 46 Shimoadachi-cho, Yoshida, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8501, Japan  
e-mail: kka1555@yahoo.co.jp

1) According to *Census of India 2011 Provisional Population Totals*, the total population of Tamil Nadu stands 72.14 million whereas the rural population 37.19 million and the urban population 34.95 million respectively. Its decadal growth rate during 2001–11 in rural and urban areas was 6.5% and 27.2% respectively [GOI 2011].

production to high value-added production such as livestock and horticulture.

Several studies have sought to understand the nature of such accelerated rural-urban migration in India, including those analyzing government statistics, such as the National Sample Survey [Singh 1986; Pal and Kynch 2000; Usami 2002; Mitra and Murayama 2008] and studies based on information obtained through field surveys at the village level [Paul 1989; Walker and Ryan 1990; Landy 1992]. But due to inherent difficulties in scrutinizing the process of rural-urban migration [Banerjee 1981; De Haan 1997], especially in collecting information on migrants staying in other areas from the study village [Misra 2009], the details of this phenomenon are not yet fully understood.

The meaning of the term “details” here is at least twofold. One is how to capture the diversity of non-agricultural jobs. Even within employed jobs (other than self-employed jobs), we need to at least discriminate among white-collar jobs, blue-collar jobs and daily labor jobs, since labor conditions are totally different among the three. The blue-collar job category is especially important in the case of south India, including Tamil Nadu, where not only opportunities for white-collar jobs and daily labor jobs but also a wide variety of blue-collar jobs have expanded rapidly. Blue-collar jobs include both regular and non-regular working opportunities in factories, hotels, restaurants, workshops, bus service companies and car rental companies, for instance.

The other meaning of “details” here is how to grasp the multiple steps of migration, that is, how rural households transfer their various resources from their village to urban areas. First of all, higher education (at least up to the 12<sup>th</sup> standard and increasingly up to the college/university or even the graduate school level) is becoming indispensable for acquiring remunerable non-agricultural jobs, not only for white-collar jobs but also for some of the blue-collar jobs [Lanjouw and Murgai 2009]. The process requires huge expenditure in education for extended periods of time, and how to finance it has become a big question for all rural households [Lanjouw and Sharief 2004; Oka 2006]. In fact, parents engaging in non-agricultural jobs are more active in spending income on their children’s education [Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003]. On the other hand, parents in rural areas often have to sell/mortgage their assets (such as land or livestock) to cover this expenditure. Furthermore, financing from relatives who have already got remunerable non-agricultural jobs, particularly white-collar jobs, sometimes becomes crucial [*ibid.*]. It can also be even observed that all the household members move to an urban area in order to facilitate the higher education of their children. But note here that first, even if children finish higher education, it is not easy for them to land remunerable jobs, especially in the government sector, without having social networks already established within urban areas [Banerjee 1983]. Second, after children acquire remunerable jobs in urban areas, questions arise regarding whether and how much they remit to their parents. In some cases they start to assist higher education of their brothers and sisters.

Even parents sell off their assets such as livestock and land then later on buy them back. Third, there are different strategies employed after children get married and they (especially sons) form independent households, remaining in urban areas. What kind of relationship they keep with the parents' household in the original village depends on various factors. Fourth, after retirement if sons do not return to the village, and often call their old parent(s) to their household in the urban area, the whole rural-urban migration process becomes completed. Otherwise, the process will be transferred to the next generation. In the former case, implications to the rural economy will differ depending upon how they deal with their assets (especially land and houses) in their village.

Now, the key questions are as follows. Given the traditional, highly stratified rural society based on unequal land ownership in India, 1) how economic class is related to the employment structure, including self-employed agriculture, agricultural and other daily labor, self-employment in non-agriculture, and white-collar and blue-collar jobs in non-agricultural sectors? 2) how households with different economic class are adopting different strategy regarding the choice of jobs for members of the younger generation, and thereby the attitudes toward the higher education of children? 3) to what extent education is affecting the choice of jobs for the younger generation, and how various categories of job differ in terms of labor conditions and economic return (income)? And finally 4) how much money is necessary to finish higher education and what are the strategies employed to finance the necessary education, which may differ among different economic classes?

In order to investigate the above questions, the author selected a study village in the Madurai District, Tamil Nadu, one of the relatively successful states of India, and collected detailed data. The composition of this article is as follows. The following chapter presents the outline of the study village. Chapter II delineates the characteristics of households in the village in terms of ownership of farmland, durable goods and income by classifying them into five economic classes. Chapter III analyzes the employment structure of the households, with special attention to migration to urban areas, by classifying jobs into white-collar, blue-collar, and daily labor. Chapter IV focuses on the educational requirements for non-agricultural jobs, and investigates the costs of higher education and the differences among the economic classes in financing such education costs. Finally, a summary and conclusion follows.

## I Outline of the Study Village

The study village (hereinafter, Si Village) is located approximately 34 kilometers southwest from Madurai City via Thirumangalam Town (Fig. 1). It belongs to Sowdarpatti *Gram Panchayat* (hereinafter,

S GP), Thirumangalam *Taluk* of the Madurai District.<sup>2)</sup> S GP is one of the 52 GPs belonging to Thirumangalam *Taluk*. According to the 2001 Population Census data, the population size of Madurai City and Thirumangalam Town was 929 thousand and 44 thousand, respectively [GOTN 2009b].<sup>3)</sup> There is a direct bus service 10 times a day from Si Village to Thirumangalam Town, which takes about 30 minutes. Another one hour is needed from Thirumangalam Town to Madurai City by other bus services. However, a direct bus service from Si Village to Madurai City was started in 2009, enabling villagers to reach Madurai City in less than 90 minutes.

Tamil Nadu State is famous for the development of manufacturing industries in India. Madurai District is not an exception and, according to government statistics, there were 27,385 units of “micro small medium enterprises (registered)” as of 31 March 2007 in the district [*ibid.*].<sup>4)</sup> The largest number was classified as “Hosiery and Ready-made Garments” (24.8%), followed by “Food Products” (9.2%), “Paper and Paper Products” (8.6%), “Metal Products and Parts” (6.6%), “Machinery and Parts except Electrical” (5.3%), and “Rubber and Plastic Products” (4.3%). In and around Thirumangalam Town, together with Madurai City, especially after the 1990s, there has been a rapid growth of industries such as textile, match factories, as well as hand-made craft shops, which have grown to be a center for attracting surplus rural labors [GOI 2001].<sup>5)</sup> The development of the service sectors was also observed in the district.

S GP had 862 households and 3,131 residents in 2001 (Table 1). The table indicates that although the number of households increased during the two decades between 1981 and 2001, the population itself decreased<sup>6)</sup> as the average number of members per household declined from 4.37 to 3.63. According to the table, the percentage of workers in agriculture (farmers plus agricultural laborers) was still more than 80% in 2001, but as argued later in detail, recently many villagers stay outside the village (mostly in urban areas), engaging in various types of non-agricultural jobs, which are difficult to identify through the use of government statistics.

S GP is composed of 9 villages (hamlets) and divided into 2 revenue villages. Revenue Village I, to which Si Village belongs, has an area of 1,677 hectares (4,144 acres) including 154 acres of wet farmland (*nañcai*) in tank-command area (*ayacut*) and 1,680 acres of dry farmland (*puñcai*) (Fig. 1).

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2) *Gram Panchayat* is the lowest local administrative unit in rural India. In ascending order, the next administrative unit is *taluk* and then district.

3) Madurai was the third largest city in Tamil Nadu next to Chennai (4,344 thousand) and Coimbatore (931 thousand).

4) The number of units in the district was the sixth largest in Tamil Nadu, next to Chennai (56,912), Coimbatore (54,471), Salem (44,245), Kancheepuram (37,531), and Erode (30,353).

5) Same are reported to the area closer to the Karur-Tirupur textile industry belt in the former Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu [Djurfeldt *et al.* 2008].

6) The rural population in the Madurai District as a whole decreased by 6.2% during 1991 to 2001 [GOTN 2009c].

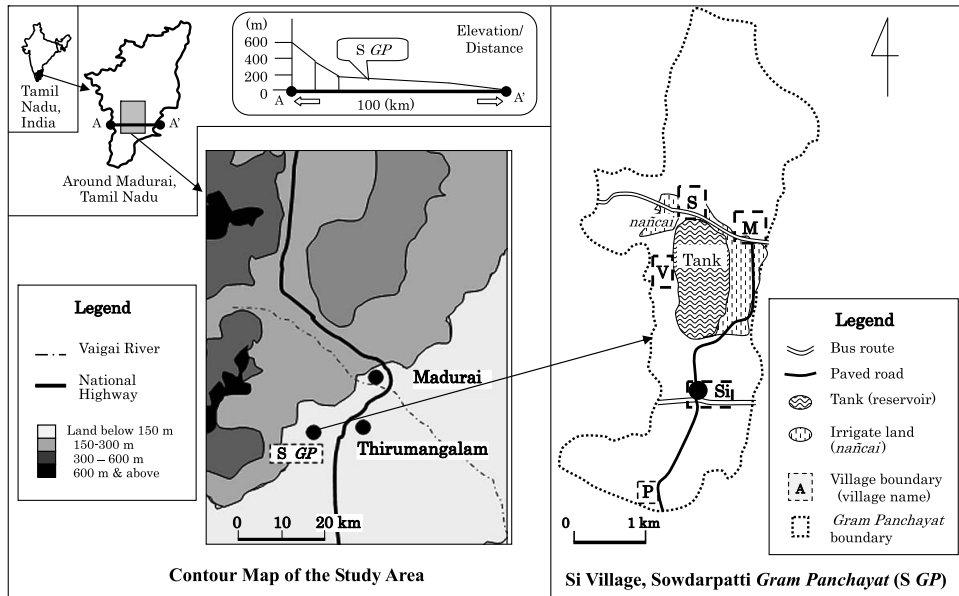


Fig. 1 Map of the Study Village

Source: Prepared by the author.

Table 1 Demographic Features of S Gram Panchayat

		1981	1991	2001
No. of Households		795	868	862
Population	Male	1,709	1,622	1,566
	Female	1,769	1,666	1,565
	Total	3,478	3,288	3,131
Average No. of members per household		4.37	3.79	3.63
Literacy rate (%)	Male	69	62	75
	Female	41	37	54
Cultivators among workers (%)	Male	40	33	38
	Female	24	35	31
Agricultural Laborers among workers (%)	Male	43	51	40
	Female	70	58	57
Others among workers (%)	Male	17	16	22
	Female	6	7	12

Source: GOI [1981; 1991; 2001].

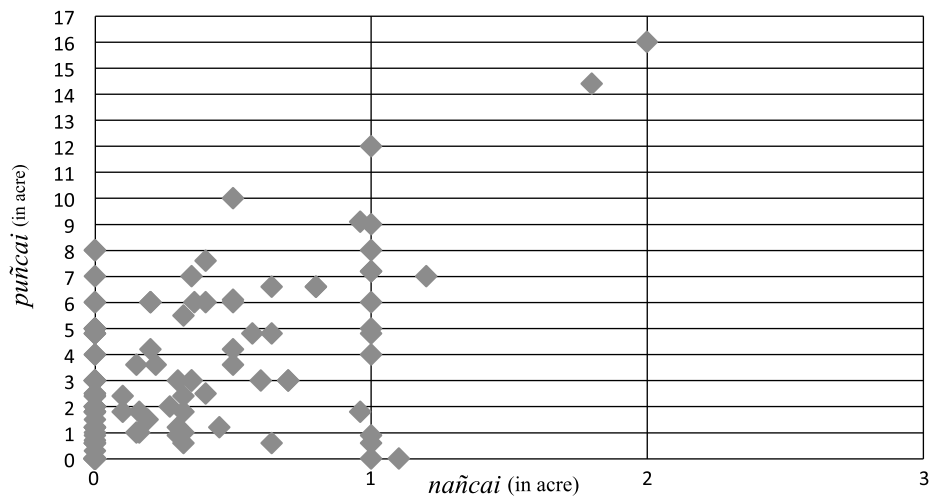
**Table 2** Caste Wise Distribution of Households by the Size of Farmland Holdings in Si Village

Caste ( <i>jati</i> )	Category	No. of HH	Size of Farmland (acre)						
			0	0.01–0.60	0.61–1.80	1.81–3.60	3.61–6.00	6.01–9.00	9.01–18.00
<i>Reddiyar</i>	BC	118	22	4	20	25	25	16	6
<i>Naidu</i>	BC	1						1	
<i>Chettiyar</i>	BC	1	1						
<i>Asari</i>	MBC	8	3		2	3			
<i>Wannar</i>	MBC	5	2	1	1			1	
<i>Amṭattar</i>	MBC	1	1						

Source: Prepared by the author based on the field survey in 2008.

Notes: For the caste category see Oshikawa [1990], GOTN [2009a], and Ministry of Law and Justice [2009].

BC: Backward Caste, MBC: Most Backward Caste.

**Fig. 2** Combination of *Puñcai* and *Nañcai* for All the Households in Si Village

Source: Prepared by the author based on the field survey in 2008.

According to my household survey in 2008, Si Village had a total of 134 households and 421 persons, with an average of 3.14 members per household. Out of the 134 households, 105 households (78.4%) owned farmland; its caste (*jati*) wise distribution is shown in Table 2. From the table, we can see that although the village is categorized as a single-caste village dominated by the *Reddiyar* caste (who occupied 87% of households and 92% of owned farmland), land distribution among the households was fairly skewed. Fig. 2 shows the combination of *nañcai* and *puñcai* land for all the households. Only 58 households (43.3%) had *nañcai* land (mostly less than an acre), whereas 103 households (76.9%) owned *puñcai* land, with large differences in their size (maximum 16 acres). Relatively few households owned *nañcai* land, mainly due to its distance from the village.

The land lease market for *nañcai* land was active in the village. More than half (51.7%) of the households which owned *nañcai* land leased-out all or a part of it. Out of 30 households that leased-out *nañcai* land, 25 households and 7 households were under the contract of mortgage (*otti*) and tenancy (*saibogam*), respectively.<sup>7)</sup> The major households that leased-in *nañcai* land were the *Moopar* caste living in V Village, one of the neighboring villages in S GP (Fig. 1). On the other hand, there was no household which leased-in *nañcai* land among the villagers. Therefore, the number of households cultivating *nañcai* land was only 28 (48% of total). In contrast, the land lease market for *puñcai* land was inactive. Nine households (8.7% of *puñcai* land-owning households) leased-out *puñcai* land (under mortgage contract) and 13 households leased-in *puñcai* land (under tenancy contract). As a result, 96 households (93% of total) cultivated their own *puñcai* land.

Fig. 3 shows the 25-year trend in cropped area of major crops in the Madurai District since the 1980. The cropped area of paddy, sorghum (*cholam*), and cotton has been decreasing whereas that of maize has been increasing. The same trend can be observed in Si Village; the most popular crop was maize (85 households), followed by sorghum (45 households) and cotton (41 households). Due to the small cultivated *nañcai* land, paddy (28 households) was not so important. According to my interviews, the cost for paddy production was relatively high compared to other crops,<sup>8)</sup> and also the risk of ungermination due to the shortage of rainfall. Because of the tiny plot of *nañcai* land, lack of economies of scale and the necessity for purchasing expensive well water made the villagers further avoid paddy cultivation. On the other hand, in *puñcai* land, cotton cultivation, which was previously widespread, has become less popular in recent years due to its labor-intensive nature; it requires lots of hired labor especially for weeding and harvesting. Instead, a combination of maize cultivation and livestock rearing (mainly goats) has become more popular, under which the villagers can give maize as a feed for goats to minimize rearing costs [Sato 2011].<sup>9)</sup>

Note here that the major agricultural season in the study area was from September to March. April to July was basically the agricultural lean season for both farmers and agricultural laborers, with the exception of small areas under cotton cultivation. Therefore, during the dry season, villagers tried to

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7) Two households made both tenancy and mortgage contracts. Tenancy can be divided into sharecropping and lease. Under the sharecropping contract, both the production and the cost of current input are shared 50:50 by tenants and landowners. Under the lease contract, usually Rs.1,000 per acre is paid to landowners as a land rent. On the other hand, under the mortgage contract, Rs.10,000 is usually paid to obtain usufructuary rights of an acre of land. The period is usually 3 years, when the principal money Rs.10,000 is repaid. But if landowners wish to get land back by returning Rs.10,000, the contract can be terminated even before finishing the term. Note that Rs.1–2 yen.

8) See also Table 8 in Jegadeesan and Fujita [2011] in this special issue.

9) Maize cultivation had another advantage of less labor-intensiveness, which is particularly convenient for farm households with side jobs, such as temporary work at a factory or restaurant during the agricultural lean season.

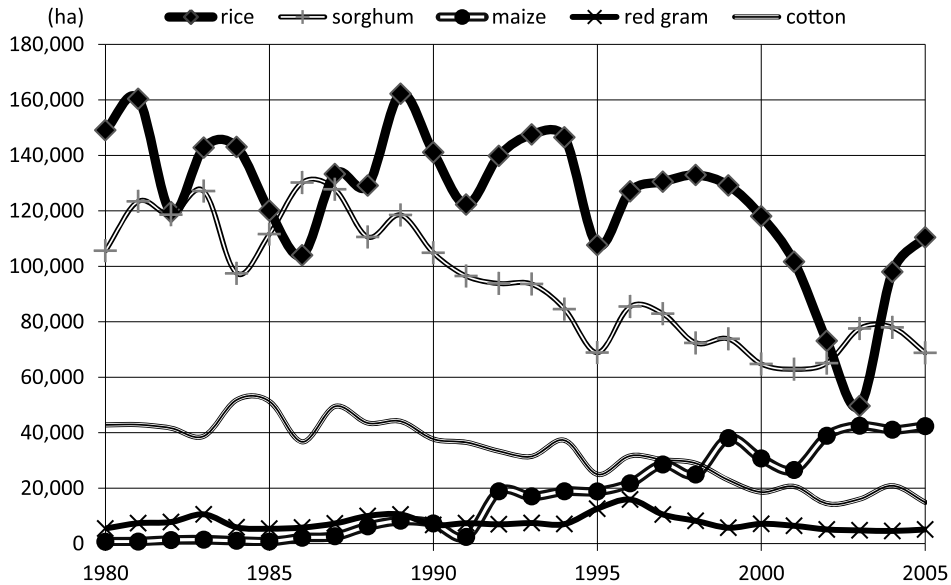


Fig. 3 Trend of Sown Area of Major Crops in Madurai District

Source: Data from Department of Economics and Statistics (Tamil Nadu) [2008 (also from 1980–2005)]. Modified by the author.

Notes: Calculation is based on the following data: From 1980 to 1984 Madurai only, from 1984 to 1995 Madurai and Anna (Dindigul), from 1996 to 2005 Madurai, Dindigul and Theni, respectively.

obtain off-farm jobs, working, for example, as waiters at restaurants or casual workers at factories in Thirumangalam Town. As Sato [*ibid.*] showed, factory work has become more popular among the villagers than goat rearing in recent years.

## II Economic Class Structure in the Study Village

Using the wealth ranking method,<sup>10</sup> we classified the total 134 households in the study village into five economic classes: “upper” (15 households), “upper middle” (17 households), “middle” (37 households), “lower middle” (39 households), and “lower” (26 households).<sup>11</sup> The wealth-ranking method is a technique to classify households by the subjective judgment of native villagers themselves, and is therefore the most time-saving method for classification. Furthermore, its reliability is usually high,

10) Wealth ranking is a method of classifying village households into multiple economic classes by subjective judgment of a villager who knows the village very well [Gardin 1988].

11) Wealth ranking was actually conducted by a 60-year old farmer who had 8 acres of farmland, belonging to the *Naidu* caste. His wife, belonging to the *Reddiyar* caste, was a leader of two Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the village. For details on SHGs, see Fujita and Sato [2011] in this special issue.



**Table 3** Relation between Economic Class and Farmland Ownership

Class	No. of HH	Size of Farmland (acre)						
		0	0.01–0.60	0.61–1.80	1.81–3.60	3.61–6.00	6.01–9.00	9.01–18.00
Upper	15	1				4	4	6
U. Middle	17	1	1			6	8	1
Middle	37	3		1	16	12	5	
L. Middle	39	6	2	17	11	3		
Lower	26	18	2	4	2			
Total	134	29	5	22	29	25	17	7

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2008.

**Table 4** Relation between Economic Class and Possession of Durable Goods

Class	No. of HH	Car/Motor Bike	Refrigerator	DVD /PC	Radio /CD	Electric Fan	Phones /Cell	<i>Armali</i>	<i>Pucca</i> House
Upper	15	4	5	4		14	14	14	14
U. Middle	17	1	1	1	1	13	7	12	13
Middle	37			2	10	30	16	28	21
L. Middle	39				9	29	12	23	9
Lower	26				3	9	2	13	6
Total	134	5	6	7	23	95	51	90	63

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2008.

since villagers themselves know each other fairly well. However, in order to persuade the reader, let us examine the classification result by comparing it with some *objective* indicators.

First, we investigated the relation between economic class and asset ownership. Table 3 and Table 4 show the relationship between the economic class and the ownership of farmland<sup>12)</sup> and durable goods,<sup>13)</sup> respectively. It revealed that wealthier households tended to own larger farmland and also more expensive household appliances such as cars, motor bikes, and refrigerators. By contrast, almost all classes of households except for the “lower” class owned low-priced home appliances such as *armari* (lockers) and electric fans. The relatively wide diffusion of *pucca* (brick or concrete-made) houses can partly be attributed to the IAY (*Indira Awas Yojana*) program which subsidizes house-building for the poor.<sup>14)</sup>

12) As argued later, there observed a strong tendency that migration to urban areas was taking place from wealthier households (same is reported by Greenwood [1971]), usually after selling their farmland. In fact, there were some wealthy households with a very small size of farmland remaining who were going to migrate very soon. Therefore, if classification is conducted based on the size of land holding it may sometimes be misleading.

13) When conducting a survey on holdings of durable goods in developing countries such as India, it is common to check TV sets and bicycles [see Oshikawa 1996]. However, in the case of Tamil Nadu, TV sets were almost exclusively diffused because of the government’s recent free distribution program. And a free bicycle was also distributed to the households with students in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard or higher till FY 2010. Therefore, TV sets and bicycles were not included in Table 4.

14) See Fujita [2011] in this special issue.

**Table 5** Types of Major Jobs by Economic Class

Class	No. of HH	Female Headed Single Income HH	No. of Workers per HH	Living in the Village (230 Persons)					Living Outside (60 Persons)		
				Agriculture <sup>1)</sup>	Daily Laborers <sup>2)</sup>	Blue-collar Workers <sup>3)</sup>	White-collar Workers <sup>4)</sup>	Non-agricultural Self Employment <sup>5)</sup>	Daily Laborers <sup>2)</sup>	Blue-collar Workers <sup>3)</sup>	White-collar Workers <sup>4)</sup>
Upper	15		2.40	18		1	3	2		1	11
U. Middle	17	3	2.35	26		6	1	2		5	
Middle	37	6	2.21	66		6				7	3
L. Middle	39	12	2.23	42	6	11		3		18	7
Lower	26	14	1.73	4	19	14			1	7	
Total	134	35	2.16	156	25	38	4	7	1	38	21

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Notes: <sup>1)</sup> Including agricultural management and livestock rearing.

<sup>2)</sup> Including agricultural laborers, wood chopping laborers, construction laborers and laborers hired by the NREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) program.

<sup>3)</sup> Including workers at mill and match factories, sewing factories, and restaurants, house cleaners, electricians, drivers of either truck or autorickshaw, conductors, guards, quarry managers, third class civil engineers, midday meals cooks, metal workers, and washing workers.

<sup>4)</sup> Including military officers, school teachers, nurses, accountants, office workers, company drivers, and second class public servants.

<sup>5)</sup> Including shop owners and merchants in the village.

Second, we investigated the relation between economic class and major jobs (and thereby income level). Table 5 shows the types of major jobs according to economic class. Note here that the workers “living outside the village” mean that they are “temporary migrant workers,” usually staying in urban areas for work but often returning to the village to join their families. The table indicates that workers from wealthier households are engaged more in white-collar jobs, rather than blue-collar jobs or daily labor jobs, while workers in the “upper middle” and the “middle” classes are engaged more in self-employed agriculture.

On the other hand, generally speaking, the type of job is the major determinant of income level (Table 6). Monthly salary was more or less as follows: Rs.10,000–50,000 for white-collar workers,<sup>15)</sup> around Rs.5,000 for blue-collar workers,<sup>16)</sup> around Rs.1,200–2,500 for daily laborers. Note also that income from agriculture was lower than for white-collar workers, but usually higher than for blue-collar workers or daily laborers.

15) However, a large wage difference existed among the white-collar workers. Workers in the IT sector with IT-related college or graduate degrees in particular, earned a lot; education for this job requires more expensive tuition fees (see for instance, the TNAU homepage [2010]). Indeed, most of the IT engineers working in the US were graduates of the Indian Institute of Technology (or its affiliated colleges) and received almost the same salary as US engineers. But there were no students or workers in the IT-related sectors in Si Village. So the rough estimates of monthly salary (including stipend) of the white-collar workers in the village ranged from Rs.10,000 to Rs.50,000.

16) Note that the permanently employed skilled factory workers in public sectors, although not found in the study village, are classified here to blue-collar workers.

**Table 6** Monthly Income Level of Various Occupations

Category	Class		Vocation and Its Salary <sup>1)</sup>
White-collar workers	I	Higher grade professionals	Army officers (12,000–50,000), School teachers (12,000–), Nurses (10,000–35,000), Accountants
	II	Lower grade professionals including administrators and officials	Office workers (including drivers, teleoperators & store keepers at public/private firm: 6,000–10,000), Public servants (first and second class)
Blue-collar workers	I	Routine non-manual employees including managers, supervisors, and business workers	Managers at mill/match factories, Quarry supervisors, Third class civil engineers, Metal workers, Sales persons at established shops (4,500–6,000)
	II	Routine manual employees	Workers at mill/match factories (temporary 4,000–5,000), Waiters at restaurants, Cleaning persons (4,500–5,000), House servants, Electricians (5,000), Autorickshaw or Truck drivers, Midday meals organizer & cook (1,300–2,500), Tailors (2,100), and Washer men.
Agriculture			Farm management and livestock rearing
Daily laborers			Agricultural laborers (Male: 100–150, Female: 60–80), Wood chopping laborers (120), Construction laborers (150), Laborers under NREGA (80–100)
Non-agricultural self employment			Glossary shopkeepers and Merchants (agricultural product)

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Notes: The categorization of the job is based on the modification of the class scheme presented on Erikson *et al.* [1979]. The unit of income is in Indian Rupee (Rs.). Rs.1=2 yen.

Salaries are specified only where available.

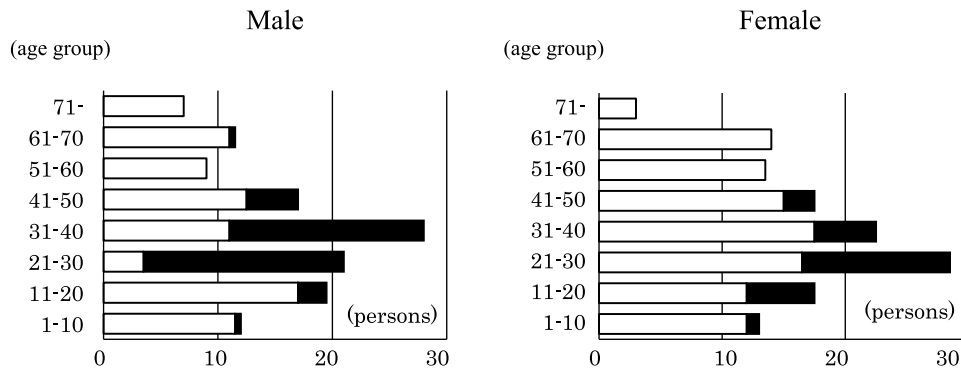
<sup>1)</sup> Daily wage in the case of daily laborers.

In sum, it can be concluded that the classification of households into the five economic classes by the wealth ranking method was quite accurate, from the viewpoint of both asset holding and household income.

Fig. 4 shows the population distribution in the study village according to decadal age group. In the figure, boxes in black indicate persons who stayed outside the village. More villagers, especially younger generation in their 20s and 30s, were “temporary migrant workers,” who stayed mainly in urban areas for non-agricultural jobs.

Fig. 5 is a map of the study village made by the author, in which all the households were classified into the five economic classes. Major public facilities are also shown in the figure. The village had a nursery<sup>17)</sup> and a primary-cum-middle school (1<sup>st</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> standard), a post office, a bus stop, a sub-health center, a village pond, several temples, several grocery shops, a village hall, and a fair price shop under the Public Distribution System (PDS). Compared to the neighboring villages, there were more *pucca*

17) Nursery was installed for the nutrition and pre-school education to pre-school kids by the government’s Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Program (TINP), which was funded by the Women and Child Development Project (WCDP) of the World Bank. See Heaver [2002] for details.



**Fig. 4** Population Distributions by Age Group in Si Village

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Note: White indicates for those staying in the village, whereas black for those outside the village.

houses and paved roads<sup>18)</sup> which extended throughout the village.<sup>19)</sup>

### III Job Structure and Migration Process of Households by Economic Class

#### III-1. *Current Status*

Table 5 in the previous chapter presented the type of major jobs for workers in the study village by economic class. The table also indicated the existence of a large number (60 out of 290 workers or 20.7%) of “temporary migrant workers,” who emigrated alone to urban areas and engaging in non-agricultural jobs. They came back to the village periodically and often supported their families. However, in addition to such temporary migrant workers, we also observed a non-negligible number (32) of “independent migrant workers” who stayed outside the village with new independent households but kept in close contact with their original families. They used to be “temporary migrant workers,” but after they married they formed new households in urban areas and became “independent migrant workers.” Finally, there were 30 households whose members used to stay in the village but by the time of the survey in 2008, had left the village and settled in urban areas completely, returning only occasionally for festivals and/or crop harvest. For convenience in this article, we term them “migrated-away workers.” Some of them still had their houses in the village, which were mostly left empty. Typical cases display the pattern of parents leaving the village to join their sons’ families in urban areas after

18) Some of the paved roads in the village were constructed by *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY) program (in FY 2007–2008). See GOI [2009] for details.

19) However, at the far end of the village, there were some streets with less extent of pavement where *kucha* houses (made of mud and organic materials) were more dominant.

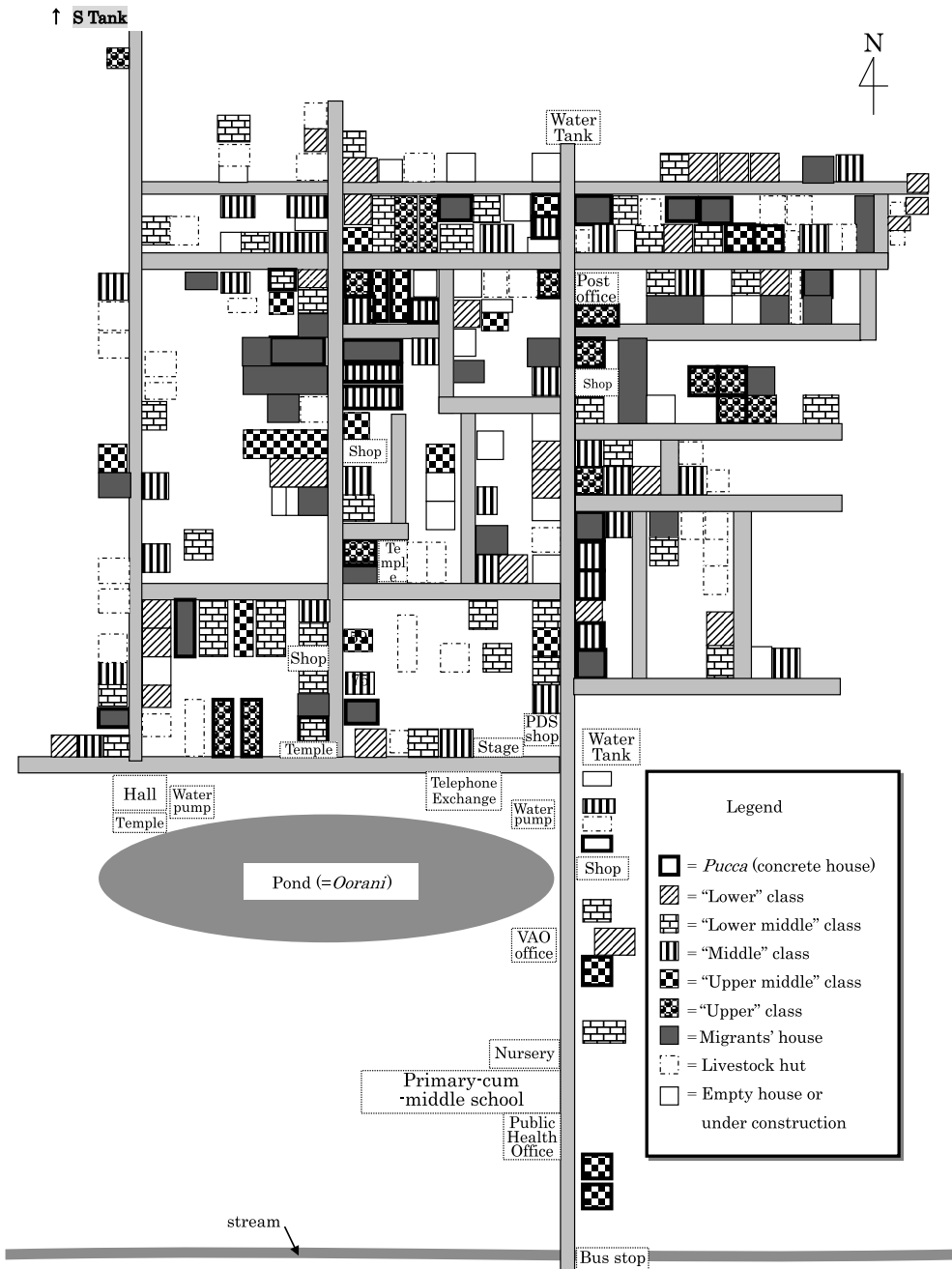


Fig. 5 Map of the Study Village

Source: Prepared by the author based on fieldwork in 2008.

the sons become “independent migrant workers.”

In sum, the typical process of migration of rural households to urban areas is as follows: first, children (especially sons) move to urban areas to pursue higher education and then obtain some non-agricultural jobs after graduation (temporary migrant workers); second, when they get married if they form new households in urban areas they become “independent migrant workers”; third, after that if they bring parent(s) to their residence to live together in order to take care of them they become “migrated-away workers.” When parent(s) leave the village, they usually sell farmland and residential houses, but some of them keep their assets for leasing-out or leave them unused. Therefore, the land sales market was active in the study village. In fact, at the time of the survey in 2008, it was found that 51 households (38% of total) in the village answered that they had either sold or purchased farmland in the past. The major direction of land transfer was from the wealthy to the less affluent, and from the *Reddiyar* of Si Village to the *Moopar* or *Ampattar* of the neighboring villages.

The following will now explain the details of the employment situation according to the category of workers.

1) Workers staying in the village

As shown in Table 5, out of 230 workers who stayed in the village, the overwhelming number (156 persons; 67.8%) worked in self-employed agriculture, followed by blue-collar workers (16.5%), daily laborers (10.9%), self-employed non-agricultural workers (3.0%), and white-collar workers (1.7%).

2) Temporary migrant workers

No one in this category was engaged in agriculture, and the largest number of workers could be found among blue-collar workers (63.3%), followed by white-collar workers (35.0%) and daily laborers (1.7%).

3) Independent migrant workers

Table 7 shows the number of households with “independent migrant workers” and the types of the job they were engaged in. The places they stayed were as follows: 5 persons in Thirumangalam Town, 3 in Madurai City, 2 in other major cities in Tamil Nadu, 10 in small rural towns and villages in Tamil Nadu, and 4 in other states of India. The number of white-collar workers accounted for the majority (50.0%), followed by blue-collar workers (37.5%) and self-employed non-agricultural workers (12.5%).<sup>20)</sup> Each category included military, drivers and conductors in state railway company, various

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20) Compared to the “temporary migrant workers,” the share of white collar workers was high. The interpretation of it seems to be rather difficult. Deshingkar [2006] argued that “employment is the secondary motivation to marriage” and suggested those who were lucky enough to get higher quality job have more desirable characteristics for marriage and hence more easily become “independent migrant workers” (reported by Behrman *et al.* [1995] as well). Anyway, the factors for explaining the phenomenon remain to be explored in the future.

**Table 7** Migrated Relatives of the Sutdy Village

Class	No. of HH	No. of HH which Had Migrated Relatives	Types of Job of Migrated Relative Household		
			Blue-collar Workers	White-collar Workers	Non-agricultural Self-employment
Upper	15	5		4	1
U. Middle	17	6	1	5	
Middle	37	9	1	5	3
L. Middle	39	9	7	2	
Lower	26	3	3		
Total	134	32	12	16	4

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Notes: Each job category is explained as in Tables 5 and 6.

public servants, school teachers, engineers, a nurse (white-collar jobs), painters, tailors, mechanics (blue-collar jobs), a photocopy shop owner, an agent at a real estate business, a news stand owner, and metal workers/jewelry processor-cum-moneylender (self-employed non-agricultural jobs).

#### 4) Migrated-away workers

According to my survey, the number of migrated-away workers was 30. Generally speaking, they were highly educated and engaged in white-collar jobs in urban areas. In some cases, they still owned fairly large farmland in the village. If we exclude the 3 households with unknown residential arrangements, the places they stayed were: 13 households in Thirumangalam Town, 2 in another major city in Tamil Nadu, and 12 in various towns and villages in Tamil Nadu. Eighteen households (60%) had workers engaging in white-collar jobs; teachers (4 persons), military/policemen (6 persons), public servants in the power corporation, telecommunications, the public works department (PWD) and the *panchayat* union (6 persons), a medical doctor (1 person), and a nurse (1 person). In addition, there was a migrant worker in Dubai (1 person), 2 workers employed at spinning mills, and a waiter at restaurants.<sup>21)</sup> Recently, the number of migrated-away workers from the study village has been increasing, and they tend to send their children to a private school, well-known for its English-based education from the primary level onwards, in urban areas.<sup>22)</sup>

The next summarizes salient features regarding the differences in employment structure according to the five economic classes in the study village.

First, the “upper” class household members were most engaged in white-collar jobs among others:

21) He owned a tractor and conducted a tractor rental business.

22) Besides seeking better white-collar jobs in urban areas, seeking better educational opportunities for children was becoming a major reason for migration from rural areas.

there were 3 persons from the first category (workers staying in the village), 11 persons from the second category (temporary migrant workers), and 4 persons from the third category (independent migrant workers). At the same time, 2 persons had a self-employed business in the village and 18 persons were engaged in self-employed agriculture. However, because of large farm size, they usually did only managerial work and depended on agricultural laborers for their farming. Moreover, out of 18 farmers, 7 were people retired from their white-collar jobs in urban areas. After retirement they came back to the village and embarked on farm management. Many of them were receiving pensions, and they also played an important role in the village society as informal leaders.<sup>23)</sup> In the future, it seems that at least some of the 11 temporary migrant workers now working in urban areas as white-collar workers will eventually come back to the village after retirement.<sup>24)</sup>

Second, the “upper middle” and the “middle” class household members were engaged mostly in self-employed agriculture; 92 persons (86% of all the workers in these classes) were from the first category (workers staying in the village). They owned large farmland, although smaller than the “upper” class, and were also active in leasing-in farmland. Compared to other classes, goat rearing was the most popular activity among them [Sato 2011]. Also, many members were working as blue-collar workers (12 persons each from the first and the second categories, plus 2 persons from the third category) and white-collar workers (1 person, 3 persons, and 10 persons from the first, second, and third categories, respectively). Compared to the “upper” class, they were more actively involved in farming and tended to engage more in blue-collar jobs.

Third, the “lower middle” class household members were also engaged mainly in self-employed agriculture; 42 persons (68% of all workers) were from the first category. However, their farm size was smaller and thus they needed to find some other jobs to supplement their income. Blue-collar jobs were dominant among them, although not a few people were engaged in daily labor and white-collar jobs as well. In fact, the numbers of blue-collar workers were 11, 18, and 7 from the first, second, and third category, respectively. In contrast, the number of daily laborers was 6 (from the first category), whereas white-collar workers was 7 (from the second category) and 2 (from the third category), respectively.

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23) In the study village, there was an informal local autonomous body, the activities of which were supported by a common fund. To manage this local body is one of the major tasks of the informal leaders. The major revenue source of the fund was a tax imposed on sellers of various products (mainly crops and livestock) in the village. The product-wise tax rates are determined in an annual meeting and the right to collect taxes is sold to the highest bidders. The system is locally called “*magemai*.” The common fund is spent mostly for village festivals, which are celebrated usually once in 2 years. See Sato [2008] for details.

24) There were two distinctive groups in this class: one in which both parents and children were engaged in white-collar jobs and the other in which parents were engaged in blue-collar jobs but children were engaged in white-collar jobs.



Fourth, the “lower” class household members were mainly daily laborers; 19 persons (51% of all workers) were from the first category and 1 person from the second category.<sup>25)</sup> However, there were many blue-collar workers also; 14 persons, 7 persons, and 3 persons were from the first, second, and third categories, respectively. Also notable was the fact that 4 persons were engaged in self-employed agriculture, although their farm size was minimal.

It should be pointed out here that as shown in Table 5 a large number of households in the “lower-middle” (30.8%) and the “lower” (53.8%) classes were the so-called female-headed households. They were the poorest in the village, as can be observed extensively in rural India.<sup>26)</sup>

Although the number of daily laborers in the study village was small (Table 5), if we include workers whose main jobs were something else but occasionally worked as daily laborers for supplementary income, almost 100 such laborers were found in the whole village. Especially among the farm households with small farm size, there were many agricultural laborers working 10–20 days to earn around Rs.1,200–2,500 per month. Therefore, daily labor was still a very important source of income in the village, especially among the poorer households.

There are primarily two types of systems for hiring laborers: first, laborers are employed individually when they were needed by farmers and paid on a daily basis and second, laborers are managed by a labor group leader<sup>27)</sup> working on a seasonal basis. For example, 5–7 laborers were recruited by a group leader for weeding some plots and the wages were paid through the leader. In general, the prevailing wage rate for the daily laborers was Rs.100–150 for men and Rs.50–60 for women, but for some hard tasks requiring physical strength such as wood chopping, the rate was higher. During the agricultural peak season (such as crop harvesting period) the wage rate tended to be higher than usual. Also, under the NREGA, a 100-day employment guarantee program for the registered laborers in the GP office, started in 2006 in the study village, the daily wage rate of Rs.80 (or Rs.100 since FY 2008–09) was paid regardless of the gender of the laborers, which benefitted women more than men. An interview with the clerk of S GP in January 2009 revealed that 134 persons from the study village were registered for the scheme; most of them were females and either elders, newly married young females, or agricultural laborers (from the four classes except the “upper”).

### III-2. *Some Historical Background*

So far, the article has discussed a typical migration path, in which mainly wealthier *Reddiyar* caste

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25) See Mosse *et al.* [2005] for the case of the poor migrant daily workers for construction.

26) See Yagi [1999] for instance.

27) Leaders of labor groups were found in S, P, and M Villages in S GP (Fig. 1).

people migrated from the village to urban areas. Let us now consider this phenomenon in a historical perspective. Table 8 contains a summary of the socio-economic structural change occurred in S GP, based on my interviews. The number of households of S GP in 2008 is a rough estimate based on an interview at the GP office,<sup>28)</sup> whereas that of Si Village is the actual number based on my household survey in 2008.

As shown in the table, the socio-economic structure of S GP in the 1910s was characterized by the dominance of the *Brahmin*<sup>29)</sup> who occupied most of the farmland. The castes of *Reddiyar/Naidu*,<sup>30)</sup> *Maravar/Kallar*,<sup>31)</sup> and *Vallayar (Moopar)*<sup>32)</sup> leased-in land from the *Brahmin* and cultivated it while depending on *Pallar*<sup>33)</sup> people, who were employed as agricultural laborers. In addition, there were a variety of artisan caste people such as *Chettiyar*<sup>34)</sup> and *Asari*,<sup>35)</sup> and service caste people such as *Wannar* and *Ampattar*.<sup>36)</sup> However, since the 1920s or 1930s, the *Brahmin* people started to migrate to urban areas for higher education and then obtained white-collar jobs such as lawyers, medical doctors, and other public servants created under the British colonial regime.<sup>37)</sup> They sold their farmland mainly to *Reddiyar* and *Kallar* caste people who used to work as their tenants. According to a *Brahmin* still living in S GP (interviewed in February 2007), there were around 60 *Brahmin* households for the whole GP

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28) Total number of households was 1,360, although the Population Census data showed that it was 862 in 2001 (Table1). There is a big gap between the two, but the reason remained unclear.

29) Originally they were sent to the study area from a temple in Tanjore and provided with the *nancai* land attached to Sowdarpatti and Allaparachelli tanks, as salary for their works to perform *pūjya* (ritual ceremony) and became large landowners.

30) They are one of the dominant agricultural castes in south India known as “*kshatriya*” and are characterized by active acquisition of farmland [Srinivas 1989]. The *Reddiyar* people in S GP used to work as attached laborers earlier, but later became tenants for the *Brahmin* households.

31) They are the dominant caste originally staying in Thirumangalam Town and Madurai City, and used to work as attached laborers for the *Brahmin* people throughout the British regime.

32) They originally stayed in Ramanathapuram and used to represent 5% of the total population in Tamil Nadu (Population Census 1971). They might have *jajmani* relations with service castes [Setty 1990]. In fact, in Si Village, they worked for *Reddiyar* caste people as their tenants, but later purchased land from the *Reddiyar* people when they migrated to urban areas.

33) They were the rulers of Tamil during the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century and later became cultivators of wet land. Though not classified as SC in Andhra Pradesh, in Tamil Nadu they were ranked the highest SC among all SCs, and were discriminated by the other higher castes, while looking down and employing other SC people to work for them [Ramaiah 2004].

34) They are a merchant caste originally from Pudukottai, a city between Madurai and Tanjore, but have migrated overseas (especially to Malaysia and Burma) and become successful.

35) There were two types in Si Village: blacksmiths (cum moneylenders) and carpenters.

36) *Wannar* and *Ampattar* were originally untouchable castes, who were traditionally engaged in washing and hair cutting, respectively. But depending on states, now some of them are categorized as the most backward caste (MBC), and receive less merit under the reservation scheme [Oshikawa 1990]. The “migrated-away workers” to urban areas had tended to be engaged in traditional caste jobs but are now engaged more in white-collar jobs, especially among the younger generations.

37) This phenomenon was commonly observed in Tamil Nadu. See Yanagisawa [1996] for details.

**Table 8** Summary of Historical Change in Rural Socio-Economic Structure in S Gram Panchayat

Caste (Community)			Occupational Trend in Agriculture and Non-agriculture by Caste in 1910s and 2010s																
Classification	Administrative Category	Caste ( <i>ati</i> in General Names)	Traditional Occupation	S Gram Panchayat	No. of HH in 2007	1910s					2010s								
						Land Owner	Owner Cultivator	Tenant	Agri Labor	Non-agri. Rural	Non-agri. Urban	Land Owner	Owner Cultivator	Tenant	Agri Labor	Non-agri. Rural	Non-agri. Urban		
Priest	FC	<i>Brahmin</i>	Priest	2		×	×												
Cultivator	BC	<i>Reddyar/Naidu</i>		400	119			×											×
	BC	<i>Maravar/Kallar</i>	Cultivator	300				×											×
	MBC	<i>Vallayar (Moopar)</i>		500					×										×
Craftsmen	BC	<i>Chettiyar</i>	Merchant	10	1						×								×
	MBC	<i>Asari</i>	Metal worker	10	8						×								×
Service	MBC	<i>Wannar</i>	Washer	10	5								×						×
	MBC	<i>Ampattar</i>	Haircutter	10	1									×					×
	SC	<i>Pallar</i>	Agri laborer	160									×						×

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09, Oshikawa [1990]; GOTN [2009a]; Ministry of Law and Justice [2009].

Notes: × denotes major occupational trend by respective caste in 1910s and 2010s, based on the broad and general observation and hearings.

Caste (*ati* in general names) appear is used in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Under the reservation scheme by government, more quotas for the entry examination for the tertiary education and the placements for government jobs were introduced to SC/ST and other backward caste categories to mitigate the economic and social dominance by upper caste people in India. See Oshikawa [1990].

The administrative categories used here are those used in Tamil Nadu. FC=Forward Castes, BC=Backward Castes, MBC=Most Backward Castes, SC=Scheduled Castes, ST=Scheduled Tribes.

in the 1930s but the number decreased to around 20–25 by the 1980s, and finally declined to only 2 households in 2007.

As shown in Table 8, at the time of my survey, the dominant inhabitants in S GP were *Reddiyar*, *Maravar/Kallar*, and *Vallayar* as owner-cultivators and *Pallar* as agricultural laborers. However, as already noted, a highly skewed land distribution was observed even among the same caste households (e.g., *Reddiyar* in Si Village) and many labor households were observed among the *Reddiyar* households as well. The “upper” class people of *Reddiyar* started to migrate to urban areas for non-agricultural jobs (mainly white-collar jobs). And they also started to sell their land to the next highest caste people and also to the poorer households in the same caste. Thus, the farmland continued to be transferred from the higher to lower caste/class people, and the structure of caste-based land ownership is not as rigid as it used to be.

#### IV Education, Its Cost and Source of Financing

##### IV-1. Occupation and Educational Requirement

At present, one of the most important requisites for getting white-collar jobs, and thereby stable and high income in the context of India, is to attain at least an HSC/ITI (finished up to the 12<sup>th</sup> standard, as explained later) or even a college/university degree [Lanjouw and Sharief 2004; Oka 2006]. To confirm this point in the study village, the years of education among village workforces, especially younger generations, was investigated and the result for non-household head members<sup>38)</sup> is shown in Table 9 by types of job and by economic class.

Note here that the education system in Tamil Nadu is as follows: after 5 years of primary education (2 years of pre-school often precede), students move on to 3 years of middle school, followed by 4 years of secondary school. The secondary school is divided into a 2-year curriculum leading to the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC), and, later, another 2 years of higher secondary education for the qualification exam, the Higher Secondary Examination (if one passes it he/she is granted the Higher Secondary Certificate, or HSC). Once an SSLC is obtained, one can choose to take a 1 to 3-year vocational course at Industrial Training Institutes (ITI).<sup>39)</sup> On the other hand, an HSC is necessary for applying to college/university, which is usually a 3–4 year degree program. The entrance to college

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38) One of the major reasons for dealing only with non-household heads is that in the case of household heads, there were many aged farmers who had retired from white-collar jobs, especially among the “upper” class.

39) ITI is the government or private owned training organization that provides post-school technical training for the persons who passed the SSLC.

**Table 9** Average Years of Education for Non-household Heads in Si Village

Class	Workers Staying in the Village (114 persons)					Temporary Migrant Workers (52 persons)		
	Agriculture	Laborers	Blue-collar Workers	White-collar Workers	Non-agricultural Self-Employment	Laborers	Blue-collar Workers	White-collar Workers
Upper	8.9				8.0		10.0	11.9
U. Middle	7.4		9.4	12.0	8.0		10.2	
Middle	6.1		7.3				11.2	12.3
L. Middle	5.3	6.0	8.2		10.0		8.9	12.3
Lower	6.2	6.5	6.1			9.0	8.0	
Average	6.4	6.4	7.6	12.0	9.0	9.0	9.4	12.1

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

depends on the mark attained in the HSE but the condition for the placement (especially at state universities) differs depending upon the caste categories.<sup>40)</sup>

As Table 9 shows, in order to obtain white-collar jobs, at least 12 years of education (HSC/ITI holder) is necessary. We should note, however, that even blue-collar workers, especially the younger generations working as “temporary migrant workers,” had had 10 or more years’ educational background. By contrast, for the workers in self-employed agriculture and daily laborers from poorer classes, the average years of education ranged between 5 to 6 years, indicating either primary school graduates or middle-school dropouts.

In the study village a primary-cum-middle school for 8-year education was established during the 1990s, and almost all the children started to finish at least up to the middle school level. As shown in Table 10, the level of education increased year by year in the village, which was accelerated after the 1980s (for males) and the 1990s (for females). In the late part of the 2000s, almost 100% of children obtained an SSLC (10<sup>th</sup> standard). Note that increasing consciousness of the need for higher education is a nationwide phenomenon. In fact, in order to join the National Defense Academy (NDA), for example, the minimum educational requirement for applicants was raised from 10<sup>th</sup> standard to 12<sup>th</sup> standard (the so called “plus 2”) in 2007.

Let me now focus on the “temporary migrant workers” and “independent migrant workers” aged

40) According to the government reservation policy in Tamil Nadu, the minimum score for placement at state universities is as follows: 60% for open competition including students belonging to Forward Castes (FC), 55% for students belonging to Backward Castes (BC), 50% for students belonging to Most Backward Castes (MBC) and “Pass” (regardless of marks) for students belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) etc. See the TNAU homepage [2010] for detail.

**Table 10** Percentage of SSLC Holders in Si Village by Age Group and Sex

	early 20s	late 20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s
Male	96%	76%	67%	15%	41%	18%	14%
Female	96%	72%	27%	24%	13%	3%	0%

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Notes: For the age group of 70s, ESLC (= 8 years completion) and 4th Form, both of which are regarded the same level as SSLC, are included.

between 15 and 30 to examine their educational background (Table 11). Nearly half of them (47% of males and 46% of females) attained 12 years or more of education. Even in the case of workers without an SSLC (less than 10<sup>th</sup> standard), most of them were found to complete 8 years of education. In fact, among young people aged more than 20, higher education has become much more popular than it appears in the table. But if we focus on the difference by economic class, poorer households show lower educational attainment. Among the “lower” class households there was no one who entered college/university.

#### IV-2. *Cost of Education and Source of Financing*

The cost of education has been surging in recent years in Tamil Nadu, including the study village.<sup>41)</sup> For instance, as noted before, a private English school, offering courses up to the higher secondary level (matriculation school)<sup>42)</sup> and located in Thirumangalam Town, attracted many parents in wealthy households who were concerned for their children’s education. In fact, all 10 students who went to the private English-based school from Si Village (including 2 who had already migrated-away in 2010) belonged to either the “upper” or the “upper-middle” class. They commuted to the school from pre-school or primary school level. The entrance fee and the annual tuition fee of the pre-school<sup>43)</sup> were Rs.2,000 and Rs.6,000 respectively, equivalent to a few months’ wage for an agricultural laborer.

On the other hand, if children go to public schools, the tuition fee for primary education was free, together with text books and lunch.<sup>44)</sup> However, payment of a tuition fee was necessary afterwards,

41) See Education Cost India [2010].

42) It is a kind of higher secondary school, with a curriculum which is aimed at enabling students to pass the HSC with a high grade for entry into competitive placements at colleges/universities. According to Minamino [2003], more than 80% marks on qualification exams such as the HSE are required to apply for the affiliated colleges to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), the most competitive ones in India.

43) These figures are the fee structure at St. Francis Higher Secondary Matriculation School in Thirumangalam Town in which students of Si Village prefer to attend. See GOTN [2010a] for the list of the fee structure of all the private school in Madurai District.

44) See GOTN [2010b] for details of the welfare schemes implemented for school education in Tamil Nadu.

**Table 11** Educational Attainment of Young People Aged from 15 to 30 in Si Village

Class	No. of HH	Male						Female					
		No. of Persons	Below SSLC	SSLC	HSC or ITI*	College /Univ.*	Graduate School*	No. of Persons	Below SSLC	SSLC	HSC or ITI*	College /Univ.*	Graduate School*
Upper	15	9	1	2	2	2	2	10	1	2	3	2	2
U. Middle	17	9		4	3	2		9		2	4	1	2
Middle	37	23	6	5	9	3		23	7	3	11	2	
L. Middle	39	22	8	4	8	2		19	6	7	4	2	
Lower	26	7	6	1				16	12	2	2		
Total	134	70	21	16	22	9	2	77	26	16	24	7	4

Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Notes: Including temporary migrant workers and independent migrant workers.

\* includes those who have not completed yet at the time of the survey. Also for the Graduate School, BA + diploma of education is included.

amounting to Rs.500–650 and Rs.700–900 annually in the middle level (6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> standard) and the higher secondary level (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> standard), respectively. The annual tuition fee at the college/university has become much more expensive, ranging from Rs.60,000 for Bachelor of Science to Rs.260,000 for Bachelor of Information Technology (IT) for 4 years.<sup>45)</sup> But note that expenditures other than tuition fees, such as living expenses, are relatively small compared to the tuition fees, since many students stay in their relatives' houses or in university hostels.

Given that the monthly income of blue-collar workers and daily laborers in the study village was around Rs.5,000 and around Rs.1,200–2,500, respectively, there was no room left for saving money to cover the cost of higher education for their children. Even for white-collar workers with monthly incomes exceeding Rs.10,000, educational expenditure is a heavy burden on their household economy. Furthermore, after graduating from college/university, in order to obtain white-collar jobs especially in the government sector, a recommendation from a person (generally a relative or friend of parents) who has special connection is indispensable, and a commission of roughly Rs.50,000 should be paid to him/her as a custom in the study village.<sup>46)</sup> Therefore, access to credit sources is critical for households across all classes.

45) See the TNAU homepage [2010]. However, the cost for college tuition differs, depending on type of public or private institutes.

46) However according to Banerjee [1984] during the 1980s no commission was needed to get a job in the government sector. There has been a rapid increase in the number of college graduates all over India, although there is only a small increase in job opportunities. According to GOI [2007], the annual rate of increase of placements was -0.54% and 0.92% in the public and private sectors during 1994–2006, compared to 1.54% and 0.44% during 1982–1994. In urban areas, more college graduates were obliged to take low-paid jobs in the private sectors and continued to study through distant learning. Once they obtain higher degrees, they change their job for better salary.

**Table 12** Major Source of Financing the Cost for Education

Class	No. of HH	No. of HH with Valid Answer	Source of Fund			
			Savings	Selling Goat	Bank Loan	Loan from Relatives
Upper	15	3	1	1		1
U. Middle	17	16	3		3	10
Middle	37	13	1	5	4	3
L. Middle	39	7	1	5	1	
Lower	26	2		2		
Total	134	41	6	13	8	14

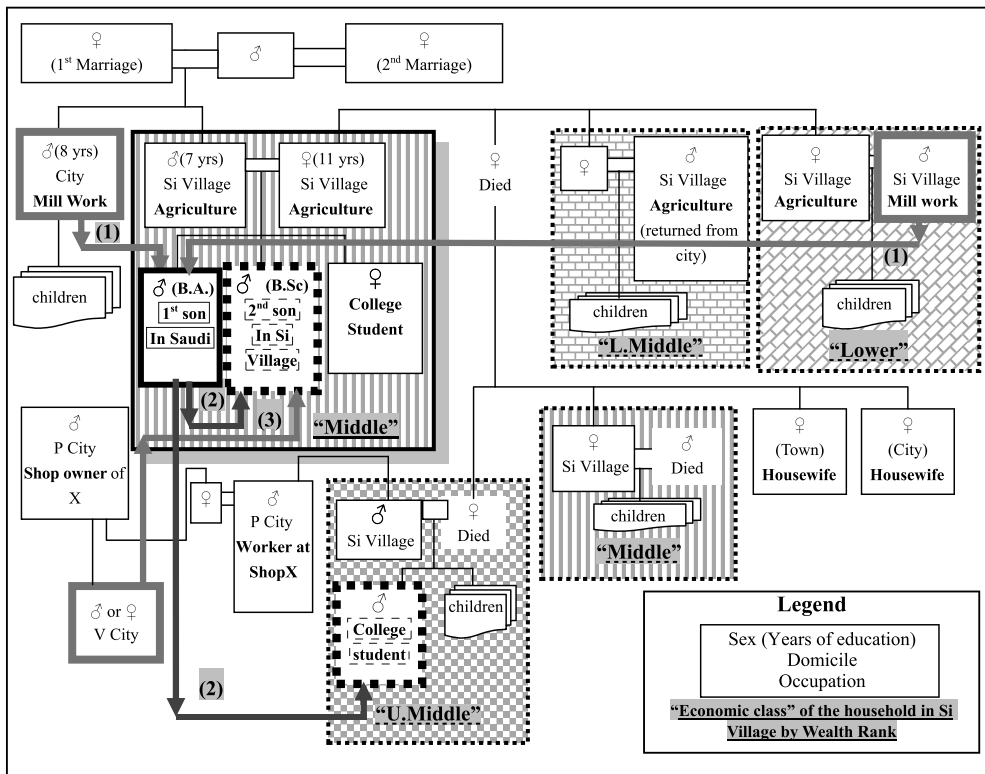
Source: Fieldwork by the author in 2007–09.

Table 12 shows the sources of financing for expenditure on higher education by economic class. Because of the small number of valid answers in the case of the “upper” class, the author gathered more information by interviewing the “upper” class villagers. The result was that most of them did not face serious problems in financing their children’s education because they were white-collar workers in urban areas and could draw on their own salaries or savings. However, for the “upper middle” class people, cases of education financed by their own savings were limited, and many of them depended on relatives. They borrowed money from relatives who were working as blue-collar workers.

An example of a household in the “middle” class is shown in Fig. 6. In the case of this household, there were two sons and a daughter and all of them studied up to college level. The education cost for the first son was provided by relatives who worked at factories (as shown in (1)). When the first son finished college, he got a job in Saudi Arabia and started to support the education of his brother and a cousin on his mother’s side (both are shown in (2)). The second son also received support from a relative working as a small businessman, in the form of accommodations when he studied at a college in V City (as shown in (3)). The youngest child, a daughter, studied at a nearby college, and therefore only the tuition fee was needed. To finance three children’s college education, they additionally borrowed Rs.50,000 from a jewelry shop in the urban area by providing jewelry as collateral and Rs.10,000 from a bank through the Self-Help Group (SHG). Later, all the loans were repaid within five years by the first son through remittance from Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, as shown in Table 12, the poorer households depended more on sales revenue of goats for financing higher education costs. If they sell 10 goats, for instance, they can get Rs.30,000–40,000, although it is insufficient to cover all the expenses. Other sources of funding, although not listed in the table, were farm income, “jewelry loans” from moneylenders outside the village (as mentioned above), and borrowing from banks through SHG. But it is important to note that although the poorer households came to borrow from banks through SHG, as clarified by Fujita and Sato [2011], the





**Fig. 6** Mutual Help among Relatives for Higher Education: A Case of a “Middle” Class Household

Source: Field work by the author in 2009.

Notes: (1) is loan from relatives who work at mills to the eldest son, who is shown in bracket  , to support his cost to study at college.

(2) is a support (money giving) from the eldest son, who is shown in bracket  , who graduated from college and now works in Saudi Arabia, to those who are/were college students, shown in dotted bracket  .

(3) is a support (lodging) from a relative who moved to V city to the second son, when he was studying in V City.

limited amount of the loan (Rs.10,000) was far from sufficient to cover the costs of higher education for their children.

### Summary and Conclusion

In India, especially south India, the expansion of non-agricultural jobs for rural people has accelerated since the mid-1990s, inducing a large-scale migration of workforces from rural to urban areas. To investigate the nature of such rural-urban migration (especially in terms of differences by economic

class) and its impact on rural economies, a detailed case study was conducted in a village in the Madurai District, Tamil Nadu.

Although the village in question was a single-caste village with nearly 90% of households belonging to *Reddiyar*, the cultivator caste, there was a large economic disparity among the households and economic disparity was observed not only in asset holdings (including farmland) but also in income level.

Out of a 290-member workforce in the village with 134 households, 60 (20.7%) stayed outside the village, mostly in urban areas, working as “temporary migrant workers.” They were still single and often came back to their parents’ residences in the village. Besides, however, there were 32 workers who had already formed an independent household in urban areas after marriage. Furthermore, 30 households had already “migrated-away” from the village, and came back only occasionally for festivals and/or crop harvest (in cases of owning farmland). Some of them still had houses in the village, which were mostly left empty. Typical cases displayed the pattern of parents leaving the village to join the families of their sons in urban areas.

Out of 60 “temporary migrant workers,” 21 were working as white-collar workers and 38 as blue-collar workers. Similarly, out of 32 “independent migrant workers,” 16 were white-collar workers and 12 were blue-collar workers. In the case of the “migrated-away workers,” the share of white-collar workers was 60%. By contrast, out of 230 workers staying in the village, 156 (67.8%) were engaged in self-employed agriculture and another 25 (10.9%) were daily laborers, including agricultural laborers. There were only 4 white-collar workers and 38 blue-collar workers. Since the study village was located in a typically pure rural area, most of the non-agricultural workforce was obliged to stay in urban areas. The distinction between white-collar workers and blue-collar workers is important in terms of income level and relative stability of employment. Roughly speaking, the monthly salary observed among the workforce from the study village was Rs.10,000–50,000 for white-collar workers, around Rs.5,000 for blue-collar workers, and Rs.1,200–2,500 for daily laborers. Income from self-employed agriculture was typically lower than for white-collar workers, but usually higher than for blue-collar workers or daily laborers.

The total 134 households in the study village were classified into five economic classes; “upper,” “upper middle,” “middle,” “lower middle,” and “lower.” The study found that the “upper” households owned the largest farmland and were engaged in agriculture, but many of them were white-collar retirees who were receiving pensions and also working as informal village leaders. Their children usually attained higher education and studied or worked in urban areas as white-collar workers. The “upper middle” and the “middle” class households, on the other hand, were the most active farmers in the village, with a fairly large farmland of their own. They were also active in leasing-in land and goat

rearing was most popular among them. The education level of the parents generation was usually not high, but they were also enthusiastic in their intention to provide higher education for their children. However, the share of children who obtained white-collar jobs was much smaller than in the “upper” class. So far, blue-collar workers were dominant in these households.

Although marginal farmers and daily laborers were still dominant in the “lower middle” and the “lower” class households in the village, with the increasing education level among the younger generation in recent years, they have also started to work as blue-collar workers. At the same time, however, a substantial share (53.8% and 30.8% of the “lower” and the “lower middle” households, respectively) were female-headed households, the poorest of the poor, whose major problem was the lack of male workers.

In sum, the most striking finding was that the rural class structure in the study village still largely corresponded with the size of farmland ownership, in spite of the increased importance of non-agricultural employment today. The key to understanding this phenomenon is the high cost of education necessary to acquire white-collar jobs (or even some blue-collar jobs) and inter-class disparity in the access to credit (including relatives who have already obtained remunerable non-agricultural employment) for financing an expensive education. In other words, the high cost of higher education (especially in the college/university level) is reproducing (or even expanding) the traditional structure of economic disparity among households based on ownership of farmland.

However, contrary to the situation during the 1920s or 1930s, when *Brahmin* people migrated from rural to urban areas in Tamil Nadu, rural-urban migration after the mid-1990s is much more widespread, influencing almost all the economic classes, with the exception of some female-headed households, in terms of increase in both white-collar and blue-collar jobs, and the impact of this change is much more fundamental. One example is the labor shortage in agriculture, best exemplified by the rapid diffusion of combine-harvesters for rice harvesting since the mid-2000s. Another important difference is that the scheduled caste people, after receiving farmland through the central government’s policy to transfer farmland on a large scale during the 1970s,<sup>47)</sup> were able to gain an advantage in seeking higher education and government jobs by the reservation policy.

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47) This movement is called “*Bhoodhan* movement.” See Sato [2011] in this special issue.

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