

The Relevance of Marx's Alienation in Contemporary Labour Society- A Case Study of Labor Community in Amarkantak (M.P.)

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ABSTRACT: The paper studies mainly to look at the importance of 'alienation' among the workers. In general, it is very old concept given by Marx based on economical and psychological state of the people. It is found that male may feel more alienated feelings comparison to female labourers. In general, there are seven sections in this paper. First section discusses about meaning and definition of labor. Second section explains a division of labor into organised and unorganised forms. Third section shows a relationship between poverty and a labor in terms of discussing vicious circle of poverty. Fourth section describes labor market where a rural labor moves towards urban areas for better life standard. Fifth section mainly focused on the concepts of 'anomie' and 'alienation' with special reference to E. Durkheim and Marx. Sixth section shows a relationship between alienation and labor. Seventh is the core section where there is a study conducted in Amarkantak (M.P.) proves that how workers may get felt alienate at their work places.

KEYWORDS: Marx, Alienation, Anomie, Surplus Value, Labor, Labor Market, Amarkantak

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I. INTRODUCTION

No society can be existed without a labour community irrespective of their age, gender, caste, and religion etc. Mostly, they may belong to a poor family with a lower caste or a community. Insufficient resources, lower living standard and no access to basic needs are some important causes behind existing labor communities across the world. Gender disparity is common to be seen among labourers when they perform the duties. Labour community is becoming an economic need for the nations. The sectors (like primary, secondary and territory) have depended upon labor and main source of contribution. By and large, a labourer may be considered as an important key in all firms to produce a product for a market. The woman who is daily engaged into household activities defined such as an unpaid workers in a society. On the other hand, a child or an adult who works for long hours facing harmful working conditions in industries either at many work places. It is a true that poverty gives a birth to labor activities. Scholars have been discussed the vicious circle of poverty including the supply, demand and market. It helps to understand the nature of a labor market. It has been found that the lack of resources and low living standard give a strong force to migration. As a result, the labourers are ready to shift from rural to urban areas. Evidences also found that after a long time duty or service, they may be attacked by anomie and alienation. They are gradually developing alienate nature among each other. They also feel psychological pressure under family burden. An important thing is that they always find themselves disappear in the production process. The state of affairs among the labourers has also been discussed by E. Durkheim in terms of explaining the social norms and social control. In a similar way, K. Marx has been considered the psychological and economical causes of alienation among labourers and workers. In this paper, the study has been conducted at 20 workers in Amarkantak (M.P.) to observe the status of 'alienation'.

MEANING AND DEFINITION OF A LABOUR

According to Cambridge Dictionary, 'Labor is a kind of physically hard activity.' On the other hand, Merriam Webster Dictionary has also defined a term 'labor' in the context to 'work' both physical and mental forms. In a similar way, some synonyms (like work, toil, strive, and work hard) have been discussed in the Collins Dictionary. ILO (International Labor Organization) has focused on 'labour force' to study both employment and unemployment forms. So that the labour force has above forms apart from another form as 'potential labour'. WTO (World Trade Organization) has framed the 'labor standards' to generalise health, safety conditions and working hours for children and forced labourers. EU (European Union) has found three elements for the definition of a worker (1) employment performance, (2) relationship of subordination, and (3) remuneration. LS (Labor Statistics (1982) has been adopted a resolution for economically active population,

employment, unemployment and underemployment.¹ Thus, a term 'labour' may be used for hard physical activity by a labourer who takes care of economic structure of a nation.

II. CLASSIFICATION OF LABOUR

Labor may be classified into organised and unorganised sectors. An organised sector means to study the place where the employment is assured by an employer. While the unorganised sector does not depend upon the government or like any other agency to put terms and conditions. It is given the classification below as well.

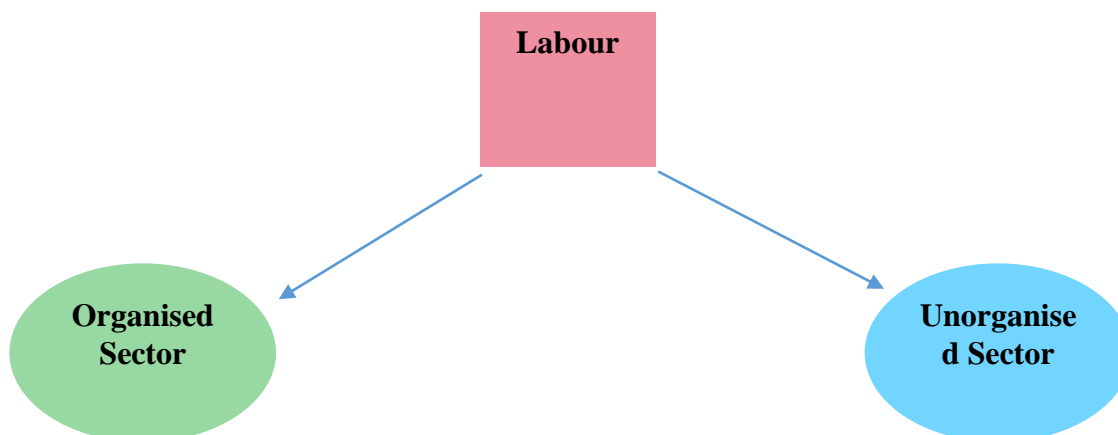


Fig no 1 Classification of Labour

POVERTY AND LABOUR

Poverty has many faces, causes and many affects. It keeps hidden several monetary and non- monetary dimensions. It causes number of obstacles and constraints for not a person but also for a nation under the name of economic crisis.

POVERTY MEASUREMENT IN INDIA

The poverty ratio may be measured in different plan periods as it has suggested by the Planning Commission of India. It can be seen below.²

Head Count Ratio (HCR):	$H = M/N$
Poverty Gap Ratio (PGR):	$R = 1 - \frac{1}{z}$
Amartya Sen's Index (ASI):	$S = H [R + (1-R) G]$

Table no 1 Poverty ration in different period plans

The above abbreviation may help us to understand that H may refer to households in terms of poorer, N is denoting the number, M means money in a form of income at low level, and Z accounts as the poverty line. $\frac{1}{z}$ is defined as the mean income for poorer while R identifies the mean income as shortfall of the poorer. For the poor people, the computation of vectors in a coefficient manner is determined by G. The comparative deprive property may be calculated with S in Sen's Index.

POVERTY CIRCLE

It is argued that a poverty can be like a circle, which all the corners interconnected tightly. There are three factors found in a circle as mentioned in Nurkse and Kindleberger.³ It can be represented below.

- Supply side factors
- Demand side factors
- Market imperfection

¹ See 3rd International Conference of Labour Statistics (1982)

² For more detail: Basic Issues in Development-I p.31 (IGNOU)

³ ibid p. 34 'poverty circle is a vicious cycle'

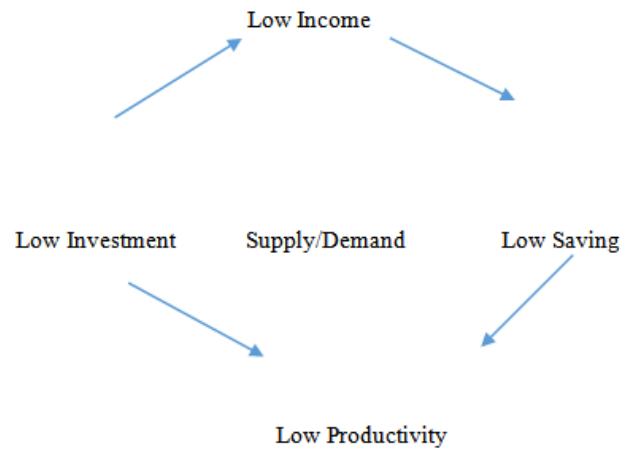


Fig no 2 Low Supply/Demand

MARKET VALUE OF A LABOUR

Labor can either be a demand or be a supply also by describing the nature of an employee in a firm. Goods and services must be satisfied with a legitimate proportion of labour. In the case of power relations, a term ‘bargaining’ is more influential factor to bring changes in a labor market. There are following six constituents of labour markets such as suggested by C. Tilly & C. Tilly (1994).

Worker	Free to work or not at work
Employer	Free to hire and fire to employees
Jobs	Dividing work between firms, within firms via distinct roles
Hiring	Exchange
Networks	Employers with employees or vice versa
Contracts	Formal agreements with informal norms

Table no 2 Six constituents of Labour market

It is a true that sociologists and economists have described the labor market differently. Based on above classification, neo-classic economists have demonstrated the theoretical values of relationship between an employer and the employee in the context of a firm. On the other hand, sociologists have focused upon an inclusion of social relationship in the production of goods and services.⁴

LABOUR MARKET SEGMENTATION

Sociologists have been used a term ‘social closure’, which means that an individual may exclude the others to get a particular job. It may be found within groups also to get segmentation for more benefit and advantage. In the context of labour market, the dualistic model suits to discuss separately the primary and secondary labor market. The primary market has offered jobs with concerning high wages and proposing higher carrier opportunities. The secondary market has entertained the employee with low wages and responsible for less facilities. The nature of segmentation seems more closed to the dual economy. It is said that the segmentation relates with the labour and economic needs of the nation but it goes to interact with an internal structure of a society where the women, minorities and lower class people have been fixed under the economic strata.⁵

RURAL LABOUR MARKET

Like other developing countries, India has labour force found in agriculture and the similar strength also be seen into non-agricultural activities. In contrast to developed nations, the labour force has been engaged into agriculture. The large proportion of country’s GDP in general comes from agriculture. But the government agency (such as SEZ) is planning to expand the industrial unit with addition of land area. It cannot be denied that agricultural proportion is higher in Indian economy.

⁴ See N. Abercrombie et al. (2006: p. 211-12)

⁵ Ibid p. 213-15

RURAL LABOUR AND INTERLOCKING FACTORS

The Rural Labour Inquiry Report (1983) has said that 'rural labour' may be defined as manual labour which is involved into agriculture and non-agriculture activities in favour of hoping the payment, wages and cash etc.'

The National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) (1991) has mentioned that 'rural labour' is the form, which always found in rural areas. They do some work for income purposes.

The NSSO Survey (1999) has found that rural labour can be categorised into manual labourers. They are busy in agriculture and non-agriculture fields for acquiring wages or incomes.

In developing countries (like India) has the rural economy depended upon some factors (such as land, labour, credit, and commodity market etc.). These factors have inter-connected with each other. In the context of trade, Bell (1988) has been discussed the 'transactions' kind of trade between the parties.

MOBILITY AND WAGES DIVISION BASED ON GENDER

Many scholars (like Lewis (1954); Rains & Fei (1961) and Todaro (1969) have shown the evidences of development where an individual migrates from one place to another to get a better job. Wages rate disparity (from 1.5 to 2) is another factor, which trigger the rural labourers to go to urban areas for work. Ryan and Ghodake (1984) have found that the spatial factors are mainly responsible for leaving the places by the landless labourers. The migration also takes place due to certain causes (like the lacking of resources, the big size of a family, and nominal acquisition of property etc.).

In India, the wages level is relatively lower in rural areas. Generally, the male who earns wages and female who works from morning till late night have not entitled for payment. They are unpaid workers. The wage based division can be found in a below table.⁶

Types of wages payment and minimum wage	Wages at hours, days, monthly, yearly. Agricultural wages less almost 2/3rd comparison to non-agricultural wages
Wage differential based on skill levels	Ratio of male-female wage rate is 0.70. Unskilled category includes (sewing, transplanting, harvesting etc.) and Semi-skilled category includes (ploughing)
Sectoral disparities and structural inconsistencies	30.6 fixed for woman less than man. Less participation of unskilled and uneducated woman in secondary/modern sectors

Table no 3 Wages at gender level

III. ANOMIE AND ALIENATION

Anomie is relatively a similar with alienation. It may be defined with the social conditioning and can be understood in terms of the scale of desires and wants of a human being. Each society provides sufficient space for finishing the set of tasks to a human being. The limitless wants harasses the humans in a society. Soon, it was realized by E. Durkheim and has been argued in his classical work 'Suicide' in (1897). He found that anomie may be responsible for suicides rates among people. Later R. K. Merton (1957) has forwarded the same idea and has proposed a theory of deviant behaviour of a human being. He has differentiated the set up goals under culture domain and on the other hand, the constructing means by institutions.

Alienation is the estrangement of individual from themselves and others. In (1844) Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of Marx, it has been pointed out that alienation is a sociological manner. Marx has been argued that an 'objectification' in a society, a labourer who produces an object cannot find herself in the product due to capitalism. The inaccessibility for the product may develop the alien nature in her. Marx has been observed four types of alienation.⁷

The Worker	No control over produced product	Alienation
The Worker	An act of working dominated external constraints, becomes a forced labor and treated as a commodity only	Alienation
The Worker	Human nature	Alienation
The Worker	Capitalism changes social relations into market relations	Alienation

Table no 4 Marx's observations for alienation

Marx has mainly found that the capital accumulation and a desire of profit may create alienation feeling among the workers. There was a similar pathway for anomie and alienation that given by Durkheim and Marx.

⁶ Block 3 Rural Labor Market, p. 84-85 (IGNOU)

⁷ E. Abercrombie 'Dictionary of Sociology', p. 13-15

During (1950) and (1960) alienation has been experimented under psychological pressure. M. Seeman (1959) has given more importance to attitude scale for alienation such as 'powerlessness', 'meaninglessness' and 'self estrangement'. R. Blauner (1964) has demonstrated that a form and its growth of an alienation was absent and abstracted in the craft societies. Alienation was not much clear when there was no pressure for production technology. They were working altogether with their own ways and always felt honour for producing the products.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALIENATION AND LABOUR

In Marx's concept of alienation, it is said that a capital society is behind the alienation among the workers/labourers because a worker who is the producer of a product has not controlled over it. After the production, a product will go to a market where the value of the product is determined by the concerned firm. Thus, the actual reward of a product does not reach to the labourer/worker. When the situation comes out then it affects the whole family of a worker. Marx has shown many cases of alienation. In the case, machinery mechanism has been ordering the worker to perform the same act of labour in the countless times without focusing at creativity. In another case, a worker has not a right to sell the product which is producing in the capital world. She may start to alienate from herself and others as well. She may stop to interact even with the family members also. She could waste her energy and creativity. She could adopt the bad habits. In continuation of such behaviour and adopting the attitude, she may enter into an unorganised family strata. Durkheim has rightly pointed out that she may think and commit a suicide under carrying the situation for a longer time. The table is given below to discuss the affects of alienation over the worker.

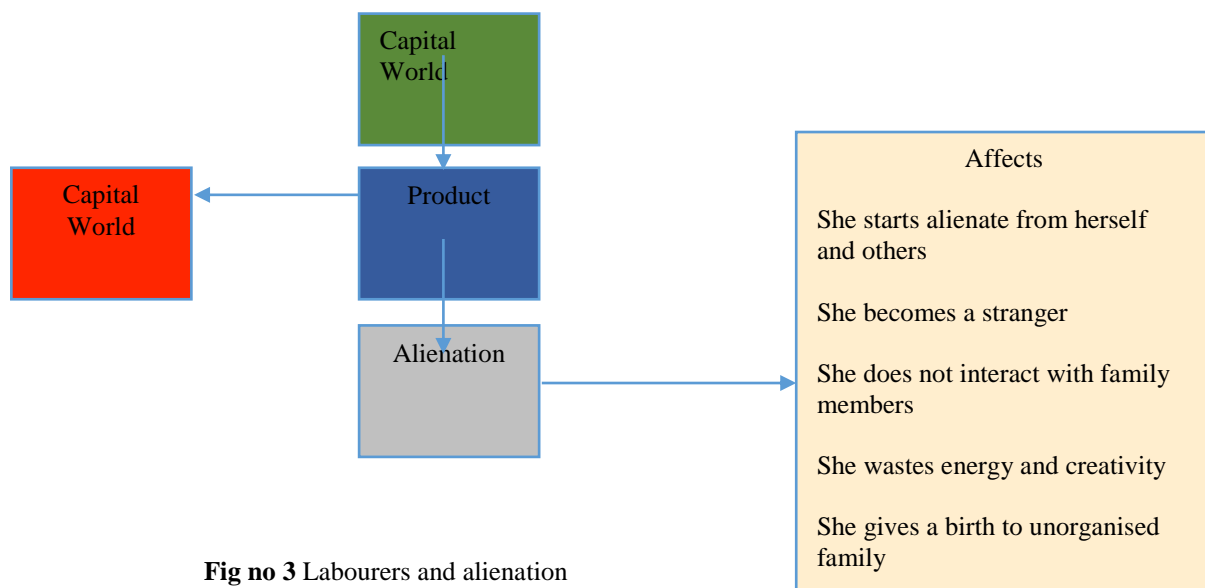


Fig no 3 Labourers and alienation

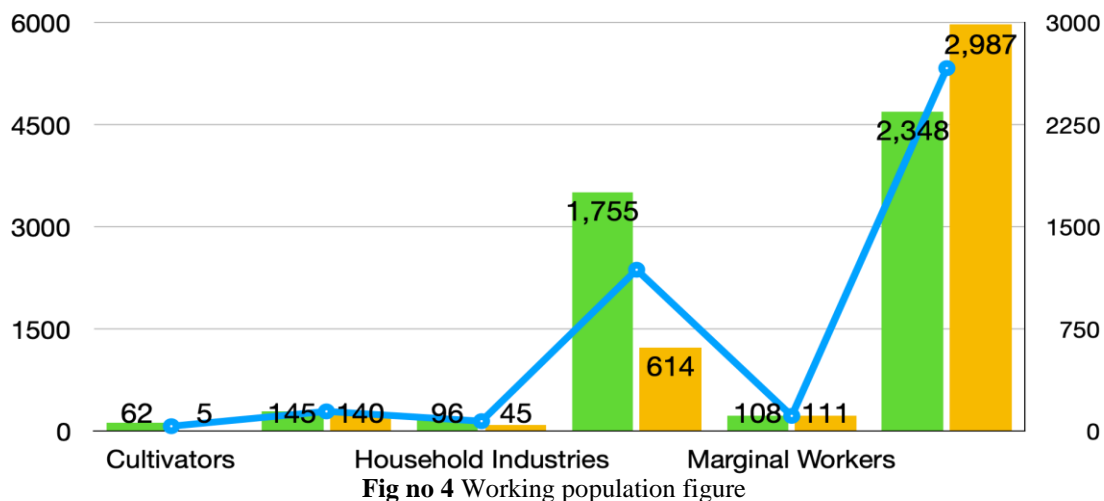
IV. ALIENATION AMONG LABOURERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMARKANTAK

As it has already been discussed that alienation is a state of estrangement of an individual from herself and others. It is a hardcore truth in the capital world where there is less scope or reserved the nominal place for a worker/labourer. She is the real producer of all the products and may be called as the defender for economy. Unfortunately, she is incapable to access the products. As a result, they are developing alienate attitude, which takes her away from each and everyone.

Amarkantak, (a place where it is situated at boundary of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh) and famous for the Narmada River. It has religious importance to pay regard towards Lord Shiva. In fact, the study, which has been conducted, it is mainly around IGNTU (Indira Gandhi National Tribal University) campus.

WORKING POPULATION IN AMARKANTAK AS PER 2011 CENSUS

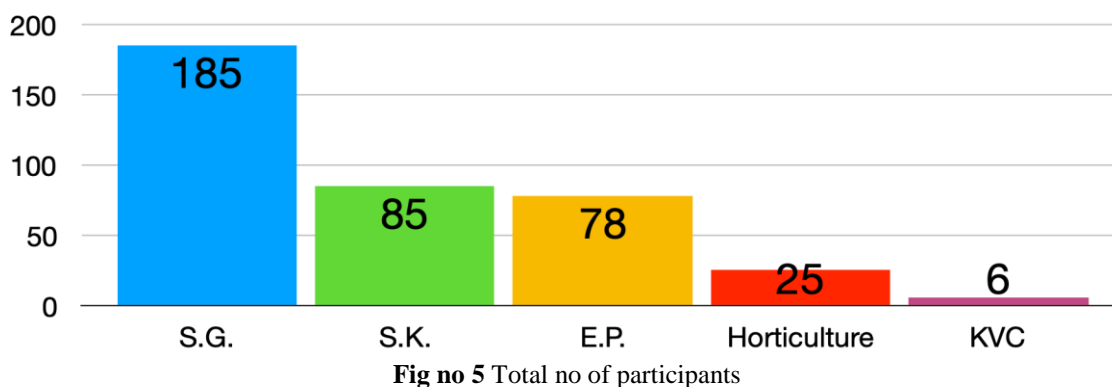
Amarkantak is called 'Nagar Panchayat city', which is located in Anuppur district. It has total 15 wards. As per 2011 census, total 8,416 population has been recorded. There are 4,514 males and 3,902 females contributing the total population. Among the religions, Hindu population dominates with 8,038 (95.51%) in total population. Literacy rate is 80.2% where there is ward no. 09th ranks highest as 90.2% in Amarkantak. It can be seen below as.



In this fig no 4, it is shown that the cultivators (male and female) have total strength is 67, agricultural labourers (male and female) have total no is 285, household industries have total no is 141, other workers have total no is 2369, marginal workers have total is 219 and non-working have total no is 5335.

SCALE OF ALIENATION AMONG LABOURERS AT AMARKANTAK

The study has been conducted at those labourers who regularly come from Amarkantak to IGNTU. The total percentage is shown below.



In fig no 5, the details of selected participants is given below.

- SG = Security Guards (185)
- SK = Safai Karmchari (85)
- EP = Engineering People (78)
- H = Horticulture (25)
- KVC = Krishi Vigyan Centre (06)

SCALING DETERMINANTS OF ALIENATION

There are some determinants can be discussed below.

- Poverty
- Landless
- Temporary Jobs
- Indebtedness
- Misfortunate Incidents

ASSESSMENT AT DETERMINANTS

Variables (V) ↓	Determinants (D) →	Poverty (D1)	Landless (D2)	Temporary Jobs (D3)	Indebtedness (D4)	Misfortunate Incidents (D5)
Security Guards (V1)		✓ <input type="checkbox"/> %	≈ 1 or 1/2 acre	P ≈ T	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safai Karmchari (V2)		✓ <input type="checkbox"/> %	≈ 1 or 1/2 acre	P ≈ T	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>

Engineering People (V3)		✓□%	≈1 or 1/2 acre	P≈T	□Regularly	□
Horticulture (V4)		✓□%	≈1 or 1/2 acre	P≈T	□Regularly	□
Krishi Vigyan Centre (V5)		✓□%	≈1 or 1/2 acre	P≈T	□Regularly	□

Table no 5 Determinants

In this table no 5, the scale of determinants (such as poverty, landless, temporary jobs, indebtedness and misfortunate incidents) have been registered for assessing the details for participants (like Security Guards, Safai Karmchhari, Engineering People, Horticulture and Krishi Vigyan Centre) as they named under variables. Here, the symbol ✓□ means the total 100% poverty, the landless property is determined by ≈/symbol to discuss the unequal occupied land area either 1 or 1/2 acre. In the third determinant, it is found that all variables have permanent or temporary jobs. While in the fourth determinant, it comes out that all the variables are regularly under the indebtedness. Last determinant is found with at least one misfortunate incident could be investigated among the participants.

ON VERGE AT ALIENATION

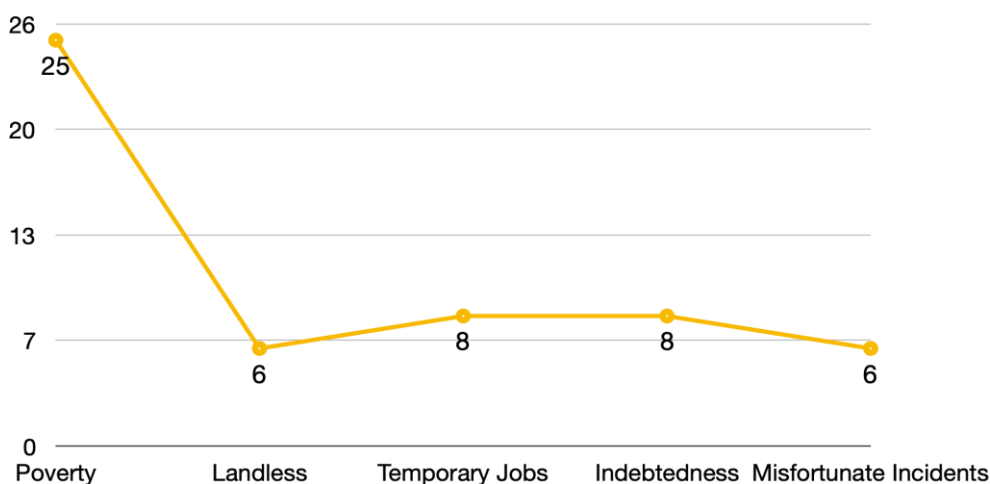


Fig no 6 Total no of found alienate cases among the participants

The above fig no 6 shows the total no of participants who are developing alienate feelings.

Poverty = 25

Landless = 06

Temporary Jobs = 08

Indebtedness = 08

Misfortunate Incidents = 06

Here, it is said that 25 people come from the poverty determinant, 6 belong to landless category, 8 those who are having temporary jobs, again 8 are indebted people and unfortunately 6 have been collected from misfortunate category.

V. CONCLUSION

Labour is a common phenomenon even though it is the current need of all the nations. It starts with an individual due to its poor conditions and force her to do something for survival herself and others also. It cannot be ignored that the working place and working conditions may develop the 'alienate sense' among the workers and labourers at any age of group. This sense has both socio-economic and psychological effects, which have been carefully observed by Durkheim and Marx. The similar kind of sense investigation has been done in this paper through conducting the small survey among poor labour community in Amarkantak at (M.P.). It has been observed that Poverty (D1) has a common blanket to all, covering (SGs, SKs, EESs, HCs and KVCs) have average 25% probability of alienation. The rate of landless (D2) is 1 or 1/2 acre could roughly be estimated with 6% state of alienation. Near about 0.2%, 24%, 18%, 80% and 34% figures give details of temporary jobs in (D3) might be debited 8% strength due to alienation in future. Between 40% to 65% could be accounted for indebtedness in (D4) where again 8% part could be lost acquiring alienate habits. Numbers like (5, 7, 8 etc.) tells about misfortunate incident determinant in (D5) that could soon be lesser than 2% also because of alienation.

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