

Socio-economic Analysis of Women Participation in Indian Agriculture

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Abstract:

India is a developing and predominately agrarian economy. The main occupation is agriculture, because 70 per cent of the population is involved in this occupation. Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields. About 70 per cent of farm work is performed by women. **Women are not recognized as farmers in Indian policies thereby denying them of institutional supports of the bank, insurance, cooperatives, and government departments.** As per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55 per cent were agricultural labourers and 24 per cent were cultivators. However, only 12.8 per cent of the operational holdings were owned by women, which reflect the gender disparity in ownership of landholdings in agriculture. But a large number of women have remained as "invisible workers". The present paper shows that the contribution of women in agriculture is extremely significant using various indicators based on data from secondary sources. It also throws light on the obstacles faced by them in terms of less access to productive resources which do not recognized her work as active productive member.

Keywords: Women, Agriculture, Occupation, Production, Developing Country, Globalization Socio-economic, Employment.

Introduction:

Rural women are the major contributors in agriculture and its allied fields. Her work ranges from crop production, livestock production to cottage industry. From household and family maintenance activities, to transporting water, fuel and fodder. Despite such a huge involvement, her role and dignity has yet not been recognized. Women's status is low by all social, economic, and political indicators.

Agriculture has a vital role in India's socio-economic development. It contributes 15.62 % of GDP and according to World Bank collection of development indicators 42.74 % of employment (male 38.35% and female 56.36%). Women play a significant and crucial role in agriculture development and allied fields. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture varies greatly from region to region. But regardless of these variations, women are actively involved in various agriculture activities. As per census 2011, out of total female workers, 55 per cent are agriculture laborers and 24 per cent are cultivators. However, only 12.8 per cent of the operational holdings are owned by women, which reflect the gender disparity in ownership of landholdings in agriculture. The dream of socio-economic empowerment of women will not be complete without empowering those who are living at India's last periphery. The ones whose day starts before sunrise and continues after sunset. However, gender based discrimination continues in multiple ways: women are not recognized as farmers in Indian policies thereby denying them of institutional supports of the bank, insurance, cooperatives, and government departments. These are the women farmers of India, whose voices often go unheard owing to their gender, and who struggles to establish their identity at a grassroots level due to patriarchal traditions and gender socialization. Women's work in agriculture is in addition to her role as a wife, a daughter-in-law and as a mother.

II. Review of Literature:

Jennifer A. Ball (2019) Very little investigation into women farmers in created nations has been delivered by market analysts, however a lot of what has been concentrated by researchers in different disciplines has monetary ramifications. This article audits such exploration delivered by researchers in all disciplines to investigate how much women farmers are turning out to be more equivalent to men farmers and to propose further commitments to the writing. As specific illustrations, subjects that has been broadly investigated in agricultural nations yet have gotten practically no consideration in created nations incorporate correlations of people farmers' efficiency and their admittance to and utilization of assets.

Singh and Vinay (2012) briefed in their working paper about the significance of female labour in agriculture and allied activities. They further stated that the role of women in agriculture as female labour is not highlighted in India. Despite of their presence in activities sowing, transplanting and post harvest operations they are considered as an invisible workers.

Damisa et.al (2007) highlighted in their study that despite of various social, economic and various other constraints women have high level participation in agriculture and they are very committed in their agricultural activity. Overall the level of involvement of women in farm decision making was found very medium. The extent of involvement and decision making in activities like intercultural operations is 48 percent in harvesting of crops 45.33 percent, storage of farm produce is 42.67 percent; 42.00 percent in sale of farm produce and in subsidiary occupation like animal husbandry and dairy business is 38.67 percent and financial management is 36 percent only (Unati et.al, 2011).

Bala (2010) cited in his working paper regarding engagement and participation of women workers in almost all activities of agriculture but there is discrimination in wages even if they do same type of work as male labour. Further despite of their extensive and active involvement in agriculture of India, they are not considered for decision making in farm activities. Women participation in agriculture will be acknowledged when women farmer will actively participate to build and improve their knowledge and gain access to new and necessary information to make use of most of them in their farming activities. By linking the knowledge and information flow amongst women socio economic progress can be achieved (Dhaka et. al, 2012).

Farid et.al (2009) discussed the major role of women in farming & non- farming activities especially in post harvest operations, homestead gardening, livestock and poultry rearing, selling labour etc. The primary need of women working or seeking employment in various agricultural and non –agricultural activities is to meet the family needs and to enhance the family income.

Sandhu (2004) revealed that the wages got by female agrarian works were not as much as guys. Every one of the respondents needed to function as day by day paid work. Around 31% were the sole workers in their families. Every one of the respondents were part timers. Around 50 penny of them was additionally utilized on agreement premise at season of determined activities.

Objectives:

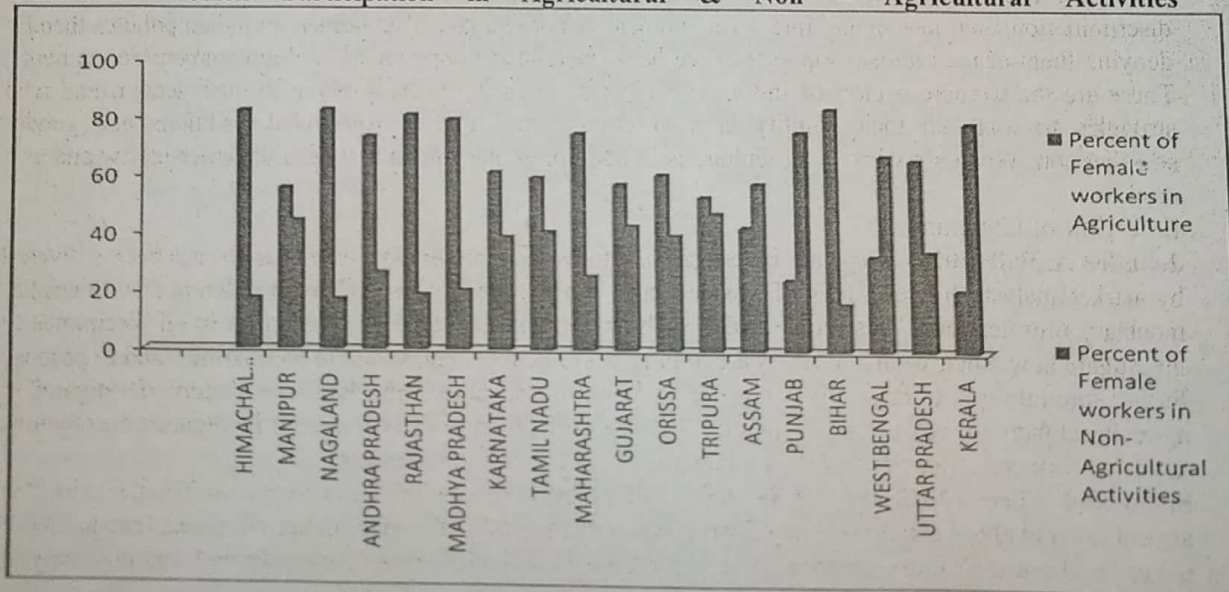
Taking into consideration the productive and optimistic participation of women in agriculture the present study "Analysis of Women Participation in Indian Agriculture" has been undertaken with the following specific objectives

1. To study the trend of women participation in agriculture as cultivator and agricultural labourers in Indian states.
2. To study the main obstacles in women growth in agriculture sector.
3. To study the various ways and means to reduce gender differences and to improve the role of women in the agriculture sector.

Research Methodology:

The entire research work has been done for the successful answering of the above mentioned research question. The prepared paper is a descriptive study in nature. The secondary data and information have been analyzed for preparing the paper extensively. The secondary information have been collected from different scholars" and researchers" published books, articles published in different journals, periodicals, conference paper, working paper, reports, books, newspapers and online data bases.

State-wise Women Participation in Agricultural & Non – Agricultural Activities



Findings:

Some of the major findings are described below.

1. Socio-economic status of landowner has been improved.
2. Improved participation in decision about farm activity.
3. There is a Lack of environment to allow women to be decision makers, Prevalence of conventional practices, Trend of SHG mode of women empowerment.

VI. Recommendations:

For the recognition of land owner women contribution in agriculture and its allied fields and reducing the gender issues, these are the following recommendations:

- a) Recognition of labor work of working women in the rural economy may be accounted in monetary terms.
- b) More facilities should be provided to poor land owner women for land, agricultural and livestock extension services.
- c) Priority must be given to land owner women farmers in accessing credit on soft terms from banks and other financial institutions for setting up their business, for buying properties, and for house building.
- d) Measures should be taken to enhance land owner women farmer literacy rates. A separate education policy for women may serve the purpose.
- e) Women must be involved in decision-making bodies that have the potential to introduce structural changes. This action will bring some changes in the gender relations in the society.
- f) Women must be aware regarding their existing rights, access to judicial relief and redress, removing discrimination through legal reforms, and providing legal aid, assistance and counseling.
- g) Finally it is concluded that the rural women are exploited by land lords for their personal good and enrichment. Women are treated as sub- servant or personal property. In this regard government must formulate policies to enhance their skills and their work should be counted in economic indicators.

VII. Conclusion:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the women participation in agriculture across diverse Indian states based on secondary data source. Efforts were made to systematically collate the data and analyze the trend of women participation in each state. The study clearly depicts active involvement and participation of women in the agricultural sector in almost all the states with few exceptions like Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal where women are actively participating in non-agricultural activities which includes house-hold industry, service sector etc. The growth rate trend illustrates how much the population grew on average per year, over the multiple year periods. It is almost uniform for all the states showing very slight changes in few states which shows a bit higher growth rate than the rest. The cluster analysis further grouped the considered states as per their identical behavior of participation. Thus the entire work can be concluded with the facts that women participation in agriculture is increasing with time and women are now acknowledged with the status of "agricultural worker". Though discrimination of wages and in working status still prevails for women labour but due to implementation of various policies and initiatives taken by government the invisibility of women as an agricultural worker is plummeting and will further diminish in future.

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