



## **Women and agricultural crisis**

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### **Abstract**

Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. However the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro production systems. The mode of female participation in agricultural production varies with the land hold owning status of farm households. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. In overall farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55 per cent to 66 per cent of the total labour with percentages, much higher in certain regions. In the Indian Himalayas a pair of bullocks works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year on a once hectare farm, figure that illustrates women's significant contribution to agricultural production.

**Keywords:** rural, agriculture, invisible, crisis, technology, skills

### **Introduction**

Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development.

Human Development Report. UNDP, 1996

India is a country of villages, about 75 per cent of the people are living in rural areas. There are about 5,76,000 villages in which more than 70 per cent of the people directly depend on agriculture for earning their livelihood. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Income from agriculture plays a predominant role in our national income. India has attained self-sufficiency in food production after 45 years of independence. The credit for this no doubt goes to agriculture workers who spend most of their time in slush and mud but with half appeased appetite. The needs of the urban people are not satisfied without the help of rural farm workers. The labourers devote their life on land for raising the crops.

Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. However the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro production systems. The mode of female participation in agricultural production varies with the land hold owning status of farm households. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. In overall farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55 per cent to 66 per cent of the total labour with percentages, much higher in certain regions. In the Indian Himalayas a pair of bullocks works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year on a once hectare farm, figure that illustrates women's significant contribution to agricultural production.

Women play a significant role in agricultural development and allied fields including, in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post-harvest operations, agro social forestry, fisheries etc. it is a fact long taken for granted but also long ignored. By and large they have remained as invisible workers. Their work has been denying the fact that

women have suffered utter neglect and deprivation over centuries. But they have still made significant contributions in all walks of life.

According to population census of India 2001, there are about 402.5 million rural workers, of which 127.6 million are cultivators and 107.5 million are agricultural labourers. The latest available agricultural census data (Govt. of India, Agriculture census division ministry of agriculture 2002) also reveal that about 78 per cent of operational holdings in the country are marginal and small, having less than 2 hectares. About 13 per cent holdings have 2 to 4 hectares and 7.1 per cent have 4 to 10 hectares of land. 74 per cent of the entire female working force engaged in agricultural operations- 28 per cent as cultivators 46 per cent as agriculture labours (1991 census). About 60 per cent of agricultural operations like sowing of seeds, transplantation of saplings, winnowing, storage of grain etc. are handled almost exclusively by women while in other jobs they share the work with men.

Despite their importance to agriculture production women face several hurdles. They are in fact the largest group of landless labourers and they have no security for their livelihood. Agricultural development programmes are usually planned by men and aimed at men. Mechanization for example alleviates the burden of tasks that are traditionally men's responsibility leaving women's burdens unrelieved or even increased. All agricultural services still have sex bias in favour of men. For instance group discussion usually held in involving mostly men. Women are not able to attend such meetings because of their household chores.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study socio economic problems of women in agriculture.
2. To study health problems of the respondents.

### **Research Methodology**

The based on primary data collected from the agricultural

women workers by direct interview, observation method. Scheduled had been prepared by including the questions regarding their socio economic factors. Forty women agricultural labours were selected from Alkod village (Raichur district, deodurga taluq, Karnataka) by case study and purposive sampling method.

### Scope of the study

The study mainly focuses the problems faced by women agriculture labours.

### Major findings of the study

1. The study revealed that 37.5 per cent of the respondents are married, 32.5 per cent of the respondents are unmarried, 25 per cent of the respondents are widows and 5 per cent of the respondents are separated.
2. Out 40 respondents 42.5 per cent of the respondents are from Dalit community. And 30 per cent of the respondents are from Bada (ST) community.
3. Including agricultural work the respondents are doing coking, childrearing, water collection and household maintenance etc.
4. The nature of the women's work is sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting and fertilizing the field etc.
5. Out of 40 per cent of the respondents 87.5 per cent of the respondents are illiterates.
6. The study revealed that 93.33 per cent of the respondents are daily waged workers.
7. The study revealed that the 75 per cent of the respondents while coming back to home from the working field they bring firewood, collection of fodder; some vegetables from other's field etc.
8. The study revealed that 70 per cent of the respondents are living in the below poverty line. And they are landless. The respondents are expressed their views regarding shelter is their urgent need.
9. 89 per cent of the respondents have no aware about labour organisations.
10. The study revealed that the respondents are not only working in the fields but also grazing of their cattle, milking and cleaning of the cow's dung etc.
11. It is understand that the process of economic liberalization will ultimately result in a situation in which multinational companies will dominate the scene in India and small formers may lose their grip over agriculture, posing a risk of livelihood insecurity millions of agricultural workers as well as labours.
12. The 78 per cent of the respondents have no bank accounts.
13. The respondents have suffered loss of income as a result they are suffering from hunger.
14. The majority of the respondents are undergoing physical violence by their husbands.
15. The 90 per cent of the respondents are suffering from physical illness like back pain, leg pain, shoulder pain, knee pain, white discharge, uterus (gynecological) etc.
16. The 80 per cent of the respondents expressed their views that they never went to hospital for treatment. If it is serious health problem then only they go to hospital.

### Suggestions

1. To provide technological training for improving their skills.
2. Govt. should provide training center for farmers in village level.
3. The govt. should provide self-employment programs for women farmers as well as labours
4. The govt. should establish Raita samparka kendra's in village level.
5. The govt. should establish counseling centers for formers.
6. The govt. should provide mobile health centers.
7. To create awareness about government schemes regarding loans, health, crops etc.

### Conclusion

India is developing in agriculture it is a prime engine of economic growth. The women are performing a vital role in the field of agriculture must not be neglected. The women laborers and cultivators are facing insecurity and also wage discrimination. The male agriculture labours are migrate for better paid work as a result women's are given shoulder to all the responsibility. Women are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very worst conditions because they cannot migrate as easily as men.

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