

RURAL WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA: A STUDY ON AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Women's play a catalytic role towards achievements of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Women's participation is more than men's participation in the agricultural sector. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes.

Key Words: Agriculture, Economic, Livelihood, Environmental, livestock, Farming and Fishing

Introduction

In rural women are key agents for development. They play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global food and economic crisis and climate change. Empowering them is essential, not only for the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also for overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide.

"When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership, opportunities and choices, economics grow ,food security is enhanced and prospects are improved for current and future generation", Michelle Bachelet -Under secretary-general and executive director of UN Women. Women made essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not

defined as “economically active employment” in national accounts, but they are essential to the wellbeing of rural households.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of women in agriculture are more discriminating and difficult performance. Women's participation is less than men's participation in the agricultural sector. women's only participation in related to planting, weeding, harvesting, food processing industry, livestock, farming and fishing etc. to facilitate sector are leading. That's why this study is to the concentrate on woman's role in the agricultural sector and their issues concerning to agrarian crisis is the research paper.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are few books and articles pertinent to the research topic, they are follows.

Sivani Sengupta, in his work **Indian Agriculture**, (2008), the aim of this book is to equip readers with comprehensive manual on Indian Agriculture, which covers nearly all aspects of this arena. In addition, the book makes an effort to understand what has sustained and entailed agriculture in India, how it affects the lives of so many Indians, and what it would mean in the future. Also critical insights have been given in the book, which reflect upon the various intricacies and processes in agriculture in India today. It is hoped that the erudite and informative content of the book proves useful to the readers.

The book **Indian Agriculture**, (2016), written by Parmod Kumar, S. Mohanakumar this volume examines the transitions in Indian agriculture in the past three decades and emphasizes on the role of neoliberal policies and its impact on agriculture. The essays in this volume deal with extremely pertinent and contemporary issues like global food security, livelihood of agricultural labourers, public and private investment and so on.

The book **Women in Agriculture & Trade (2000)**, written by, Raj Kumar, is all about the agriculture and trade is the mainstay of any economy. Overall development goals aim to achieve with equality in developing countries. In rural areas these goals are: to increase agriculture production and income, and diminish existing inequalities. Women comprise half the agricultural labour force in Asia and sub- Saharan Africa, and perform many key agriculture tasks in all regions; developing rural growth as well as equity. Global trends in modernising agriculture systems, despite regional variation, have generally considered neither the actual contributions nor the potential roles of women. Women in agriculture and trade are devoted discuss and analysis various crucial issues concerned with women in agriculture and trade.

The article **Rural Non- Agricultural Employment (1989)**, author Tara Shukla, tried to say the determinants of rural non- agricultural employment of rural – urban linkages, incidence of unemployment and poverty within the rural non- agricultural sphere and the characteristics of its labour market were among the central concerns of the national seminar on non- agricultural employment in India.

The article **Women Professionals in Agriculture (2004)**, written by N. Sandhya Shenoy, D Rama Rao, point out that article look at policy initiatives needed for creating a conducive environment for the

professionals in agriculture in India. The findings are the culmination of a nationwide survey, brainstorming sessions, workshops and personal interactions. Some important issues that affect the careers of professional women in agriculture related to their mobility, spousal employment, and flexibility in work hours and physical facilities.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on descriptive and documentary analysis to covered rural women's employment in India: a study on agricultural industry. This study only secondary data which were collected from books, journals, government reports, News Papers, and Website.

OBJECTIVES

1. To measure the employment of women's labour in agriculture
2. To examine the women worker's performance in agriculture industry in India.

A STATISTICAL PROFILE

In rural India, percentage of women who depend on agriculture for their livelihood is high as 84 per cent. Women formulate about 33 per cent of cultivators and about 47 per cent of agricultural laborers. These statistics do not account for work in livestock, fisheries and various other ancillary forms of food production in the country. In 2017, 94 per cent of the female agricultural labor force in crop cultivation was in cereal production, while 1.4 per cent worked in vegetable production, and 3.72 per cent were engaged in fruits, nuts, beverages, and spice crops. Women's participation rate in the agricultural sectors is about 47 per cent in tea plantations, 46.84 per cent in cotton cultivation, 45.43 per cent growing oilseeds and 39.13 per cent in vegetable production. While these crops require labor-intensive work, the work is considered quite unskilled. Women also heavily participate in ancillary agricultural activities. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Indian women represented a share of 21 per cent and 24 per cent of all fishers and fish farmers, respectively. Despite their dominance of the labor force women in India still face extreme disadvantage in terms of pay, land rights, and representation in local farmer's organizations. Furthermore, their lack of empowerment often results in negative externalities such as lower educational attainment for their children and poor familial health.

WOMEN IN RURAL EMPOLYMENT

Agricultural Activities: Sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing etc. Rural Women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as "economically active employment" in national accounts but they are essential to the wellbeing of rural households. Statistical

data are available regarding their participation in the agricultural sector and allied activities but their impact on the home environment has been completely ignored. Variations in women's participation in agricultural work depend on supply and demand factors linked to economic growth and agricultural modernization.

Farm women felt the impact on their children's education to a large extent, as they were able to provide them with better educational facilities as well as chances to get an education outside the village. Non-farm women only felt this impact to a medium extent; they were able to provide better educational facilities by buying books and stationery, but there were far fewer chances to get their children educated outside the village. The impact of liberalization and globalization on women is important not only because they represent almost half of the total population, but also because they face constraints, which make them less beneficial from the liberalization. Once different impacts are ascertained well designed policy responses may aid women in taking advantage of greater openness to agriculture.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE LABOUR

In India, the typical work of the female agricultural laborer or cultivator is limited to less skilled jobs, such as sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting, that often fit well within the framework of domestic life and child-rearing. Many women also participate in agricultural work as unpaid subsistence labor. Women are the backbone of the development of rural and national economies. They comprise 43 percent of the world's agricultural labor force, which rises to 70 per cent in some countries. 80 per cent of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, who are mostly rural women. Women comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector, but do not have access and control over all land and productive resources.

WOMEN CONTRIBUTION IN FOOD PRODUCTION

In Indian wheat farms, for example, produce about a third of the wheat per hectare per year compared to farms in France. Rice productivity in India was less than half that of China. Other staples productivity in India is similarly low. Indian total factor productivity growth remains below 2% per annum; in contrast, China's total factor productivity growth is about 6% per annum, even though China also has smallholding farmers. Several studies suggest India could eradicate its hunger and malnutrition and be a major source of food for the world by achieving productivity comparable with other countries.[citation needed] by contrast, Indian farms in some regions post the best yields, for sugarcane, cassava and tea crops. Crop yields vary significantly between Indian states. Some states produce two to three times more grain per acre than others.

The traditional regions of high agricultural productivity in India are the northwest (Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh), coastal districts on both coasts, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. In recent years, the states of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh in central India and Gujarat in the west have shown rapid agricultural growth. The Indian food distribution system is highly inefficient.

The movement of agricultural produce is heavily regulated, with interstate and even inter-district restrictions on marketing and movement of agricultural goods. An individual lesson suggests Indian agricultural policy should best focus on improving rural infrastructure, primarily in the form of irrigation and flood control infrastructure, knowledge transfer of better yielding and more disease resistant seeds. Additionally, cold storage, hygienic food packaging and efficient modern retail to reduce waste can improve output and rural incomes.

WOMENS, AS LIVESTOCK KEEPERS

For most women in South India, rearing local breeds is hassle free, add-on and a part-time activity that can be combined with other income generating activities. Livestock is the primary livelihood activity used to meet household food needs as well as supplement farm incomes. It is a common practice in the rural areas to give an animal as part of a women's dowry. Studies have revealed rural women earn extra income from the sale of milk and animals. Mostly women are engaged in cattle management activities such as

- Cleaning of animal and sheds
- Watering of cattle
- Milking the animals
- Fodder collection
- Preparing dung cakes
- Collection farm yard manure

Except grazing, all other livestock management activities are predominantly performed by women. Men, however, share the responsibility of taking care of sick animals. It is evident that the women are playing a dominant role in the livestock production and management activities.

WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR MARKET

Women's wage work is considered a threat to the male personality and women's engagement in multiple home-based economic activities leads to under remuneration for their work. Women spend long hours fetching water, doing laundry, preparing food, and carrying out agricultural duties. The nature and sphere of women's productivity in the labor market are largely determined by socio cultural and economic factors. Women do not enter the labor market on equal terms when compared to men. Their occupational choices are also limited due to social and cultural constraints and lack of supportive facilities such as transport, and accommodation in the formal sector of the labor market. Women's labor power is considered inferior because of employers' predetermined notion of women's primary role as homemakers. As a result of discrimination against female labor, women are concentrated in the secondary sector of labour market.

CONCLUSION

Attitudes regarding women's roles in agriculture must change, as must their access to physical and financial resources so that they can effectively do their jobs. Given the dearth of employment options in rural areas, short-term male migration is only likely to increase in the future. Thus, the onus is on policy makers to create a favourable ecosystem for women engaged in farming by ensuring greater access to physical and financial resources. Improving Water Resources and Irrigation/Drainage Management: Agriculture is India's largest user of water. However, increasing competition for water between industry, domestic use and agriculture has highlighted the need to plan and manage water on a river basin and multi-sectoral basis.

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