



WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

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ABSTRACT

India is a developing and predominantly agricultural country. About 67% of India's total population lives in rural areas and about 60% of the households engaged in agriculture get their income mainly from farming. Agriculture is an engine of development and poverty alleviation in developing countries like India and here it is the main occupation of the poor. About 61% of all the economically active men are engaged in agriculture while this percentage is about 74% among women. In developing countries like India, it has also been seen that women play an important role in activities related to main crop production, live-stock production, horticulture, post-harvesting operations etc. and especially in vegetable farming. Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. But the sector is underperforming in many countries in part because women, who are often a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. In this paper we draw on the available empirical evidence to study in which areas and to what degree women participate in agriculture.

Keywords:- Agriculture, gender, women, production, employment, labour force, work participation rate.

Introduction

The international development community has recognized that agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in countries where it is the main occupation of the poor.³ Women make 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. India is predominantly an agrarian economy. Despite the selection of development, about 68% of its population is still in rural background out of which 60% of the households are engaged in agriculture as their main source of income. Agriculture is a major source of growth and poverty reduction in developing countries like India where it is the main occupation of the poor. Agriculture is the vertical backbone of the country. Major part of the country's population earns its livelihood from agriculture. Our country has a wide and very old setting of agriculture of about 10 thousand years. Currently, India ranks second in the world in terms of agricultural production. Agricultural production in India includes farm crops, fruit crops, plantation crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, etc. Hence overall agriculture is a huge industry which engages about 52% of the total population of India.

Women do in agriculture and rural employment

Women make important contributions to the agricultural and rural economies of all regions of the world. However, the exact contribution both in terms of magnitude and of its nature is often difficult to assess and shows a high degree of variation across countries and regions. This paper presents an overview of the evidence on the roles of women in agriculture and in rural labour markets. It also looks at demographic trends in rural areas with regard to the gender composition of rural populations.

Status of Women in Agriculture

Globally, women make up half of the world's population and produce half of agricultural products according to a United Nations report. This indicates the contribution of women to the economic prosperity of those nations whose livelihood is agriculture. There has always been participation of women in the form of farmers, agricultural labourers and agricultural assistants. Despite this, in the male dominated society, women are suffering from the mother's womb to the grave, their labour plays an important role in the existence of millions of families. The problem of poverty cannot be solved without providing productive employment opportunities to rural women. Women in India are important economic agents especially in the context of poverty. Worldwide, three quarters of women live in rural areas and work in a wide range of agriculture and allied activities. In addition, a large number of women in rural areas depend on the daily wages earned in agricultural work like their men.

Statement of the Problem

The above condition shows that land rights do not affect the participation of women in agricultural production. One could therefore argue that land ownership in this scheme does not affect women's participation in agriculture as they are doing well in agriculture despite the lack of land rights. However, women could be at risk of losing their user rights if their husbands die or if they get divorced, as they might be forced to leave the family or they might decide to leave due to the conditions in that particular family. Therefore, security of tenure could help in situations like these.

Past Reviews

- **Lahiff (2000)** points out that most households in the former homelands (Bantustan areas) depend on multiple sources of income, and amongst others, agriculture contributes a relatively insignificant part compared to wages from mining and pensions. Lahiff (2000) further states that agriculture plays an important role in providing supplementary income to a considerable number of households in the homelands. South Africa has a dual agricultural economy, comprising a well-developed commercial sector and a predominantly subsistence orientated sector.
- **(FAO, 1999)**. A study conducted in Nepal (i.e. Asia) at Chhatis Mauja Irrigation Scheme, shows that when analysing livelihood strategies of households, irrigated agriculture is considered to be subsistence oriented (Zwarteveen and Neupane, 1996). Furthermore, Van Averbek and Mohamed (2006) point out that smallholder irrigation schemes can be used to increase and diversify plant production, and as a result, the outcome of livelihoods dependent on plant production improves. In many African countries, smallholder irrigation is still considered the vital driving force for rural development and poverty alleviation, despite its problems and failures (**Machete et al., 2004**).
- (FAO, 1998). The International Labour Organisation also estimated that 78 percent of women in SSA and only 64 percent of men are economically active in agriculture (**Buvinic and Lycette, 1988**). Food production has long been recognised as primarily a woman's activity, but women also participate increasingly in other agricultural activities such as processing, cash cropping, animal husbandry and marketing.
- There is evidence that in many instances women farmers are not reached by extension services (Baser 1988; Saito and Weidemann 1990). For example, a study in Malawi in the early 1980s found that few women ever had contact with extension agents and that women's participation in agricultural training was limited (Hirschmann and Vaughan (1984). The contact farmer system, in which an innovative group of farmers who have adopted new ideas and technologies teach other farmers, tends to exclude women

(Baser1988). In Zambia, few women farmers were chosen as contact farmers, and femalehousehold heads were less likely than men to know the name of their contact farmer orestension agent (Due et al. 1991)

Significance of the study

The study will help us to find out the impact of women participation in the Agriculture sector in Andaman and Nicobar Islands which has an effect on the socio economic status and contribution of GDP and per capita income of the women in the society. That leads to the factorial development and to find out the current status of women in agriculture field. Hence overall agriculture is a huge industry which engages about 52% of the total population of India. In spite of the fact that the rural population of our country is mostly dependent on agricultural activities, there has been a steady decline in the contribution of agriculture to the country's GDP.

The Objective of the study

The following objectives are framed for the Purpose of the Present Micro-Level Study.

1. To examine the current status of women's participation in agriculture.
2. To study the trends in the participation of women and men in the agricultural sector.
3. To find out the role of women in agriculture and its allied fields.
4. To establish the main causes for men's withdrawal from production and women's increasing role in production.
5. To understand the significance of these trends for women's livelihoods and wellbeing.

The Study area

The research has been conducted a research on the topic of women participation in the Agriculture sector in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in Diglipur taluk of Sitanagar village in Andaman and Nicobar Islands where the study on more impact and development of agriculture sector and benefits over the agriculture sector through the workable condition of women. The main motive is to highlight the socio economic condition and women participation to the Agriculture sector in Sitanagar Village.

Methodology:

The Present Study was undertaken at Sitanagar Village in Diglipur, North Andaman District in Andaman and Nicobar Island. For this Study the researcher is using Primary data. The total population of the Sitanagar Village is 5682 out of total population 2896 female Population and the total Percentage of Female population is 46 % (According to 2011 census by Government of India). For this Purpose, the researcher decided to use Random Sampling method by taking 5% of the women with that has taken 44 Samples. For the Present Study researcher used the structured questionnaire for the collection of Primary data.

Discussion and interpretation

In the research activity the researcher discussed about General information of the respondents according to their age and Response of the women's based on the types of Agriculture and Women participation according to their monthly income and property or land and Response based on women faced challenges in contribution to agriculture activity and Contribution of women in Agriculture Activity based on the age.

Table – 1: General information of the respondents according to their age.

Sl.No	Age (years)	Women of the respondent
		Female
1	20-30	27(61.36)
2	30-40	12(27.27)
3	40 and above	5(11.37)
Total		44(100)

The table – 1: shows the general information of the respondents according to their age. The age level of the women populations is grouped into three levels, namely (i) 20-30 years, (ii) 30-40 years and (iii) 40 and above. In this study area the 20-30 years of women population are major 27 (61.36%) and 40 and above are representing low 5 (11.37%).

Table – 2: Response of the women’s based on the types of Agriculture

Sl.No	Types of Agriculture	Total
1	Subsistence farming	12(27.27)
2	Commercial Grain Agriculture	8(18.18)
3	Arable Farming	9(20.45)
4	Others	15(34.1)
Total		44(100)

The table – 2: shows the response of the women based on the types of agriculture. In the types of agriculture 12 (27.27%) are Subsistence farming and 8 (18.18%) are Commercial Grain Agriculture and 9 (20.45%) are Arable Farming and 15 (34.1%) women’s are others in the level of types of Agriculture out of 44 respondents.

Table – 3: Women participation according to their monthly income and property or land.

MONTHLY INCOME		
Sl.No	Monthly income	Total
1	Below 15000	19(43.18)
2	16000-20000	20(45.45)
3	above 20000	5(11.37)
Total		44(100)
VALUE IN RUPEES OF PROPERTY OR LAND		
Sl.No	VALUE IN RS	Total
1	Below 400000	20(45.45)
2	400000-900000	9(20.45)
3	Above 900000	15(34.1)
Total		44(100)

The table – 3: shows the Women participation according to their monthly income and property or land. In the monthly income 19 (43.18%) having below 15000 and 20 (45.45%) are having 16000-20000 and 5 (11.37%) are having above 20000 in the study area. In the wealth or land or property there is all 44 (100%) women respondents are having to their property. The property's value in rupees is 20 (45.45%) women respondent are having below 400000 and 9 (20.45%) respondent are having 400000-900000 and 15 (34.1%) respondent are having Above 900000 out of 44 women respondents.

Table – 4: Response based on women faced challenges in contribution to agriculture activity

SL.NO	Challenges	Women respondents
1	Low wages	21(47.74)
2	Women exploitation	5(11.36)
3	Financial problem	12(27.27)
4	Lack of agriculture Training	6(13.63)

The table – 4: shows the Response based on women faced challenges in contribution to agriculture activity. The women's are facing challenges based on Low wages is 21(47.74%) and Women exploitation is 5(11.36%) and financial problem is 12(27.27%) and last Lack of agriculture Training is 6(13.63%).

Table – 5: Contribution of women in Agriculture Activity based on the age

Sl.No	Age (years)	Contribution of women in Agriculture Activity
		Female
1	20-30	16(36.36)
2	30-40	22(50)
3	40 and above	6(13.64)
Total		44(100)

The table – 5: shows the Contribution of women in Agriculture Activity based on the age. The age group 20-30 are contributing 16(36.36%) and age group 30-40 is contributing 22(50%) and 40 and above age group is contributing 6(13.64%) out of 44(100%) women respondent.

Major Challenges

1. Women do not have equal rights to agricultural land; they rarely enjoy the rights of land ownership in their own name. Women's limited rights or access to arable land further limits livelihood options and increases the financial strain on women, especially in households headed by women.
2. Women have limited access to the use of productive resources of agriculture.
3. Women do all the non-mechanized agricultural work and do many jobs which put more burdens on them due to lack of equipment and suitable technology.
4. Women have little rights in the process of making economic decisions inside or outside their home. Women do not have the ability to make capital or household decisions, due to which they lack the resources which are necessary for their labour stability and stability of their households.
5. Only few women are in possession of agricultural productive resources such as land, animals and machinery.

Conclusion

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy for developing countries around the world. India as one such country is highly dependent on agricultural resources where the majority of the agricultural workforce is dominated by women. Women in India do most of the household chores as well as agriculture and allied work. It cannot be denied that women are the backbone of the Indian agricultural work force. Despite such a large participation of women, their role and dignity are yet to be recognized. The status of women is low in all socioeconomic and political indications Women's wage work is considered a threat to the male ego and women's engaging in many home based economic activities reduces the remuneration for their work. The contribution of women to agricultural and food production is clearly significant. However, it is impossible to verify empirically the share produced by women because agriculture is usually a venture among household members and involves a range of resources and inputs that cannot be readily assigned by gender.

Suggestion

The following suggestions are made by the researcher based upon the study.

1. The researcher suggested that to improve the agriculture activity and bring modern technology.
2. To make a necessary action to increase the production in agriculture sector and developed economic growth.
3. To increase the women participation and enhance the labour force in the agriculture sector.
4. Develop the rational and factorial growth in agriculture sector through women empowerment.

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