

Agriculture As A Source of Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT: *Women's empowerment in agriculture is an important component of that inclusive growth and feed the future seeks to measure and monitor women's roles and engagement in numerous areas of the agriculture sector. The power in decision making can be acquired and exercised only if they have knowledge about the various programmes plans and current issues access to the basic human development and social policies. Finally says, Women participation in Agricultural development play a vital role in wide range of activities, thereby contributing to sustainable agricultural development.*

KEYWORDS: *Women participation in Agriculture, Women Empowerment, Sociology of Gender, Sociology of agriculture.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Role of Rural Women in Agriculture participation is the backbone of the development of rural and national income. They comprises 43 per cent of the world agricultural labour force, which rises to 70 per cent in some countries. In Africa 80 per cent of the agricultural production comes from small farmers, who are mostly rural women. India has a national tradition bound to agriculture fertility. In the North, the Indus valley and Brahmaputra region are critical agricultural areas graced by the Gangas and monsoon season. Based on 2011 World Bank data, only 17.50 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is accounted by agricultural production. Yet for a majority, an estimated 72 per cent of the 1.1 billion people who live in rural India it is a way of life. Agriculture in India defines familial tradition social relations and gender roles in particularly in Female in the agricultural sector. Whether through traditional means or industrial means or industrial for subsistence or as an agricultural labourer, represents a momentous demographic group. Agriculture is directly tied to issues such as economic independence, decision making abilities, agency and access to education and health services and this manner has created externalities such as poverty and marginalization and compounded issues of gender inequality.

Objectives of the Study:

- To know the degree of Women Participation in Agriculture.
- To Understand the multi dimensional Role of Women in Agriculture.
- To Analyse the role of agriculture in Women Empowerment.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present paper is concerned with the secondary data were collected from the various sources like official documents, reports, standard authorized books and journals.

III. SUMMARY

India has a national traditional bound to agriculture fertility. In the North, the Indus valley and Brahmaputra region are critical agricultural areas graced by the Gangas and monsoon season. Based on 2011 World Bank Data only 17.5 of India's gross domestic product (GDP) is accounted for by Agricultural production. The Role of Rural women in agriculture are the backbone of the development of rural and national income. They comprise 43 per cent of the world's agricultural labour force. Which rises to 70 per cent in some countries? Women play a significant role in agriculture the world over about 70 per cent of the agricultural workers, 80 per cent of the food producers and 10 per cent of those who process basic food stuffs are women and they also undertake 60 to 90 per cent of the rural marketing, thus making up more than two-third of the work force in agricultural production (FAO, 1985). India is a national traditional bound to agriculture fertility. Women are the backbone of agricultural workforce but worldwide her hard work has mostly been unpaid. Their participation very considerably between and within religious changes are happening rapidly in many parts of the

world. That women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro/social forestry fishers etc. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture, no doubt varies greatly from region to region. There is a tendency among most administrators and policy makers to see "men as farmers" and "women as farmer's wives" and highlight their supportive role. Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth to developing countries, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. The Index is a significant innovation in its field and aims to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security and agricultural growth.

IV. HISTORY OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE- IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Women make essential contributions to agriculture and rural economic activities in all developing country regions. Their roles vary considerably among and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world where economic and social forces are transforming the agriculture sector. The emergence of contract farming and modern supply chains for high-value agricultural products, for example, present different opportunities and challenges for women than they do for men. Women work in agriculture as a farmer on their own account, as unpaid workers on family farms and as paid or unpaid labourers on other farmers and agricultural enterprises. They are involved in both crop and livestock production at subsistence and commercial levels. They produce food and cash crops and manage mixed agricultural operations often involving crops, livestock and fish farming. All of these women are considered part of the agricultural labour force. Based on the latest internationally comparable data, women comprise an average of 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force of developing countries. The female share of the agricultural labour force ranges from about 20 per cent in Latin America to almost 50 per cent in Eastern and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome, 2011).

Women in sub-Saharan Africa have relatively high overall labour-force participation rates and the highest average agricultural labour-force participation rates in the world. Cultural norms in the region have long encouraged women to be economically self-reliant and traditionally give women substantial responsibility for agricultural production in their own right. Regional data for sub-Saharan Africa conceal wide differences among countries. The share of women in the agricultural labour force ranges from 36 per cent in Cote d'Ivoire and the Niger to over 60 per cent in Lesotho, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. A number of countries have seen substantial increases in the female share of the agricultural labour force in recent decades due to a number of reasons, including migration, conflict. The female share of the agricultural labour force in the Near East and North Africa appears to have risen substantially, from 30 per cent in 1980 to almost 45 per cent. Some of the highest and fastest-growing rates of female agricultural labour force participation in the region are found in Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Syrian Arab Republic. Women in Eastern and Southern Asia also make very substantial contributions to the agricultural labour force, almost as high on average as in sub-Saharan Africa. The regional average is dominated by China, where the female share of the agricultural labour force has increased slightly since 1980 to almost 48 per cent. The share of women in the agricultural labour force in most other countries in the region has remained fairly steady at between 40 and 50 per cent, although it is substantially lower and declining in some countries such as Malaysia and the Philippines. (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome, 2011).

The current situation:

In this study conducted in four villages of Warangal and Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh focuses on the participation of women in the family affairs and agricultural work and work available to women in agriculture. She also states that, the women agricultural workers were demanding equal work and also equal wages on par with male workers in agriculture sector. (Volmiheni, 1986). In their study indicates the various hindrances faced by the women agricultural workers while performing agricultural allied activities. Women workers undertake and work in the storage of products, seeds uprooting, weeding, hoeing, transplanting, harvesting, cleaning, packing etc. The main difference faced by the agricultural women workers is low wages. They further conclude that, many agricultural women on the other hand the share in agriculture is very higher in rural society. (Choudari and Ganokar, 1992). The condition as female agricultural workers are better in irrigated area. The conditions of female workers in non-irrigated areas are miserable. There is a need for comprehensive policy and minimum wage to promote welfare of the agricultural workers in the study area. (Vithob. B and Madari, 2008).

V. HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL WOMEN IN INDIA

The history of Agriculture in India to Indus Valley Civilization Era and even before that in some parts of Southern India. In Rewari district of Haryana state on the role performance of women in wheat crop, the study revealed that, the total days of different activities in a season ranged from one day to 20 days maximum

days being spent on weeding followed by harvesting . The total time spent by women was maximum on harvesting 75 hrs, followed by weeding 50 hrs, irrigation 24hrs, and strong 10.5 hrs. Least time they doing threshing, winnowing plant protection, fertilizer application and sowing less than 10 hrs/season.(Yadav and Koushik,2006). The study of farm women in England housewives, who occasionally work on their farm and working farm wives, who assist their husband regularly and women farmers pose a threat to male status by doing work which is a preserve of men. It was observed that a women's role is influenced by such variables as size of farm business and socio-economic status. Widowhood might push a women into the role of farmer. Women in Bangladesh are engaged in activities of seed preservation and storage, post harvest rice processing, grain storage, vegetable and fruit sowing, poultry raising, livestock care food processing, food preservation, repair and fuel gathering.(Kabir,1976).

Today, India ranks second worldwide in farm output. Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry and fisheries accounted for 13.7 per cent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2013, about 50 per cent of the work force. The economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP is steadily declining with the country's broad-based economic growth. Still, agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India. Vedic literature provides some of the earliest written record of agriculture in India. Rig-Veda hymns, for example, describe ploughing, fallowing, irrigation, fruit and vegetable cultivation. Other historical evidence suggests rice and cotton were cultivated in the Indus Valley and ploughing patterns from the Bronze Age have been excavated at Kalibangan in Rajasthan. Bhumivargaha, an Indian Sanskrit text, suggested to be 2,500 years old. According to some scientists agriculture was wide spread in the Indian peninsula, 10,000-3,000 years ago. Some claim India agriculture began by 9000 BC as a result of early cultivation of plants, and domestication of crops and animals. Settled life soon followed with implements and techniques being developed for agriculture.(Wikipedia). In this study is labour wage discrimination in agriculture. The results of the study showed that women worked less hours per day compared to men. The allocation of time by women in the six states varied from 7.3 hours per day in Ranchi (Jharkhand) to 9.5 hours per day in Adilbad (A.P). The work performed by women is weeding, spraying, irrigation, harvesting, threshing, drying up of pods grains etc. Wage disparities were found to be higher among men and women in agriculture. The wages of male over female in agriculture were found to be higher 47 per cent in Ranchi (Jharkhand) and lower 31 per cent in Coimbatore(Tamil Nadu).(Sharma,D.K and Singh, T.R(1970).

VI. WOMEN IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Women have played and continue to play key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora and fauna they have protected the health of the soil through organic recycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of varietal diversity and genetic resistance. According to 1991 census the male cultivators has increased in the country by 11.67 per cent from 76.7 in 1981 to 85.6 million in 1991. The female cultivators however have increased at much faster rate of 45.23 per cent from 14.8 million in 1981 to 21.5million in 1991. 74 per cent of the entire female working force is engaged in agriculture operations. About 60 per cent of agricultural operations like sowing the seeds, transplantation of sapling, winnowing storage of grain etc., are handled exclusively by women, while in other jobs they share the work with women. Apart from participation in actual cultivation, women participate in various farms of processing and marketing of agricultural produce (Agarwal 2003).The analysis of this study frequently distribution of wages for males and females in 1982 and 1990 . This produced a different spike in the wage distribution at the minimum wages the spike is less pronounced in 1990 which corresponds to declining tough less and binding minimum wages. The proportion of females paid within 5 per cent of the weekly minimum in 1982 was about 24 per cent.(Sarthi Acharya,1995).In this study here observed that the need for empowering rural women in agriculture through training and extension service arose from the gradual decrease in the availability of arable land, increasing population pressure and growing environmental degradation which has far reaching implications for food and nutritional security in future. Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but inequalities continue to exist between women and men. The institutional bases of women's oppression have to be sanitized to accept equality and women perception of themselves would also need to be changed.(Padmanabhan B.S,2001).

Women Participation in Agriculture:

The concept of inclusive agriculture sector growth is broad and multi dimensional. Women's empowerment in agriculture is an important component of that inclusive growth and feed the future seeks to measure and monitor women's roles and engagement in numerous areas of the agriculture sector. Women play a significant role in agriculture, the world over. Above 70 per cent of the agricultural workers 80 per cent of the food production and 10 per cent of those who process basic food stuffs are woman and they also undertake to 90 per cent of the rural marketing, this making up more than two-third of the work force in agricultural production (FAO,1985).

Multi Dimensional Role of Women in Agriculture:

Women participation in agriculture activities like, that Land preparation 32 per cent, Seed cleaning and sowing 80 per cent, Inter cultivation activities 86 per cent, Harvesting, reaping, winnowing, drying, cleaning and storage 84 per cent, Live stock management activities women participation in shed cleaning 47 per cent, Fodder Collection 23 per cent, Mulching 27.5 per cent. Post harvest activities participation women to Threshing 50 per cent, Drying 33 per cent, Parboiling 67 per cent. Mainly rural women are engaged in activities in three different ways depending on the socio-economic states of their families and regional factors. They are working as;

- 1) Paid labourers.
- 2) Cultivators doing work in their own farmers.
- 3) Manage of certain aspects of agricultural production by way of labour supervision and the participation in post harvest operations.

Women Empowerment through Agriculture:

Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic political and legal strength of the women to ensure equal right to women. Women empowerment helps women to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and well being. Women in Agriculture play a vital role in wide range of activities, thereby contributing to sustainable agricultural development. To achieve inclusive agricultural growth, empowering women by having gender issues. Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth to developing countries, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. The women's Empowerment agency and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector in an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constrains. Agricultural being the traditional sector of India, Women's role in this sector is significant More than 80 per cent of the economically active women are engaged in a wide variety of occupations especially in the unorganised sector. In the rural un organized sector, women care for cattle, sowing, transplanting, harvesting etc. Today, 44 per cent of the world's food is produced by women who indicate how important their role is in farming. Rural women in general and farm women in particular are engaged in different activities. Despite their substantial contributions women continue to be marginalized, undervalued and unorganized. It measures the roles and extent of women's engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains. The issues involved in women's empowerment gender equality emphasized the need for qualitative change and says that it could be achieved only with the enlightenment and involvement of men. The grass root level democratic structures which have triggered of a silent social revolution can play an effective role in achieving the twin goods of female empowerment and male enlightenment making gender equality a reality. A national grid of institutes can help to optimise new opportunities offered by the decentralization process there by making. Education can be effective tool for women's empowerment. It enables farm women to acquire new knowledge and technology for improving and developing their tasks in all fields.(Swaminathan.M.S,1995).Women in the alleviation of household poverty. He further suggested that empowering women with property rights and with saving and investments facilities would contribute much more facilities to the household income. Moreover women's work participation in the income earning activities would raise family income. It can be recommended that income in the hand s of women would contribute much more to the household food security than the income controlled by men. The economic improvement of women is eradication of poverty in particular.(Pattanaik,2001).

1. Production:

This dimension concerns decisions over agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision making over food and cash crop farming, livestock and fisheries. Autonomy in agricultural production.(e.g., what inputs to buy, crops to grow, what livestock to raise, etc.) Reflects the extent to which the respondent's motivation for decision making reflects his/ her values rather than a desire to please others or avoid harm. About all economically active men are engaged in agriculture as compared to 78 per cent of women in 2009, 94 per cent of the female labour worked in cereal production. While 1.4 per cent worked in vegetable production and 3.72 per cent were engaged in fruits and spices crops.(krishisanskriti.2009).The rural women in agriculture and its allied fields in Pakistan and points out that, the rural women in Pakistan have been actively involved agriculture and its allied fields.(Khalida Jamali,2009). Rural women's work ranges from crop production to harvesting operations, from live stock rearing to raising babies. In addition to her daily work routine, consisting of cooking, cleaning and other domestic chores, rural women are also heavily involved in all aspects of agricultural sector. From crop production to livestock rearing , rural women are expected to regularly engage in both domestic economic work. Despite such a huge contribution her participation has yet not been recognized.

2. Resources:

This dimension concerns ownership access to and decision making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables and credit. Sole or joint ownership of major household assets. Whether respondent participation decision to buy, sell or transfer his/her owned assets. Access to and participation in decision making concerning credit .Purchase of Machinery, Purchase and sale of animals, Purchase and sale of land About one fifth women said that they take final decision in these matters, while more than half said that they participate in these decisions to a great extent More than 60 per cent women reported that their advice.(krishisanskriti.2009).Women agricultural workers in Kodumba village of Palakkad district.(Theresia,2004). The study revealed that due to under employed problems in agriculture, women had to seek alternative employment opportunities for a major part of the year. Almost 70 per cent of the women had no other means of income than agriculture. The rest 30 per cent workers depended on work at construction site, the making, fire wood lifting fence making the milking preparation and sales of edible items and bangles etc. They got job ranging from 15 to 100 days in a year.

3. Income:

This dimension concerns Sole or joint control over income and expenditure. In India the population of total number of female workers in agriculture have remained more or less same from 1911,(73 per cent) to 2001,(72 per cent). Out of 127 million women workforce in India 111(2001) million live in rural areas. Their contribution to the economic growth has been quite substantial. Women work form more hours than men in every country. According to the UN Food and Agricultural organization, Women are responsible for 50 per cent of all food production of the world.(Joshi and Alshi,1985). Akola district of Maharashtra and indicate that, the high yielding varieties used by the farmers have increased the employment opportunity of women agricultural workers to get more work in the farmers. They further says that, due to the use of high yielding variety the employment of women as labour has increased by 157 per cent in cotton and by 26 per cent increase in the Lower crops. Thus, this low increased the employment of women agricultural workers in the rural societies.

4. Leadership:

This dimension concerns leadership in the community here measured by membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public. Whether respondent is comfortable speaking in public concerning various issues, such as intervening in a family dispute, ensure proper payment of wages for public work programs etc. Women's inclusion in agriculture conceptualized from the 6th periodic plan (1980-85). It took more than 30 years to formally recognize women's role in agriculture development since the inception of the first periodic development plan in the 50's. The 7th periodic plan recognized the need to have women focussed program and introduced a minimum standard for at least 10 per cent of women participation in agriculture related trainings. Women agricultural workers contributions to the overall income of the family and household are very much important.

5. Time:

This dimension concerns the allocation for time to productive and domestic tasks. Satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities. Women comprise about 50 per cent of the population of which about 78 per cent of all economically active women are engaged in agriculture as compared to 60 per cent of men. Women spent Eight to Ten hours on the farm and taking care of animals besides domestic work. Women are overburdened with work in all categories of households. Domestic work consumed the highest female labour hours followed by dairying activity accounting for about 47 and 24 per cent respectively of the total work hours per day in all activities. Women contribution of farm operation in Western U.P. Meerut, Hisar, Ludhiana, Jaipur and Delhi reported that Rai,K.N,Gangwar,A.C and Grover,I.1999, ladies spent 2.08 hours in agricultural activities, 3.16 hours for animal husbandry practices besides 5.03 hours for domestic work.

Women and Decision Making in Agriculture:

Women's role in agricultural operations, animal husbandry and other economically productive activities is very significant. They contribute about 60-70 per cent of the labour required for these activities thus, playing a pivotal role in sustaining economy. The income of the women agricultural workers from the agricultural work in farms and fields is most crucial for the families which are landless and whose standards of life is very low in the villages. On the other hand the women belonging to the land owing classes, even though they work in the farms get more decision making power and also notice the conditions and status of the poor rural women agricultural workers as a very important but, it is important but, it is seen to be sufferings.(Usha Tuteja,2000).The decision making process is an important segment of every household because it makes implementation of a plan or programme quite easy. In rural areas of the country, both husband and wife are jointly responsible for making decision on matters like family obligations specific housing charges and purchase

of household articles. However, women's suggestions are not given the consideration in the decisions pertaining agricultural sector and important family matters. It is because the majority of women are illiterate, have little time to know about the latest techniques of farming and restricted mobility due to several cultural taboos. We generally talk of women's empowerment, which can be said that women should have powers to determine their own actions, power to have an authority to make decisions and guide their destiny.

VII. CONCLUSION

Women are the backbone of agricultural workforce but world life her hard work has mostly been unpaid. Women in Agriculture play a vital role in wide range of activities; there by contributing to sustainable agricultural development. Women role in Agricultural operations, animal husbandry and other economically productive activities is very significant.

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