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## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF WOMEN LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE WITH REFERENCE TO JALNA DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

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### ABSTRACT

*In Indian society, women have a multi-dimensional role and play an important role in agriculture. Women make up about three-quarters of the required workers in the fields. The majority of rural women make a living by working on the land in many ways. The contribution of women workers is not only in their regular household chores but also in agricultural production and is always higher than that of male workers holding all types of land. Based on that, the condition of rural women is improving day by day. However, most of the contributions made by women in the agricultural sector are unaccounted for and are not paid directly. The wages paid to women agricultural labourers are much lower than the prescribed rate and the wide pay inequality outweighs their disadvantages. Agricultural women play an important role in agriculture. Socio-economic conditions are an indicator of the lifestyle of a rural farming community. For generations, agriculture has been a traditional occupation with more than 70 per cent participation of women. Women in rural areas; Participate directly or indirectly in agricultural work, family work, dairying and many other agricultural activities. Therefore, the current study focuses on the socio-economic status of farmers.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Indian society , multi-dimensional , Agricultural women.*

### INTRODUCTION

Agriculture in India is the backbone of the country and is known as the largest sector of economic activity in the country. It is a major sector of the state economy, in which the majority of the people make their living. Although the share of agriculture in the total economy has declined rapidly during the planned development of the country, it plays a crucial role in the rural economy. It is well known that agricultural workers are the most neglected class in the Indian population. One of the most striking features of India's rural economy is the increase in the number of agricultural workers, including agricultural labourers and agricultural labourers engaged in crop production. Unemployment growth, under development, aspiration and poverty live simultaneously among agricultural workers. They get a fantastic pay for the work done in the worst case scenario, which puts a heavy burden on hard work. Opportunities to work are extremely erratic; So their income is also low because they have no skills or training. They do not even have alternative employment opportunities. Socially, a large number of agricultural labourers are from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Therefore, they are an oppressive class. These workers have nothing but wages for employment. They are not organized

and cannot fight for their rights. For all these reasons, even after five decades of development efforts, their economic situation has failed to improve.

Rural women play different roles, of which economic importance is more. Swaminathan, the famous agricultural scientist describes that it was the woman who first planted the crop and thereby started the art and science of farming. While the men went hunting in search of food, the females began to collect seeds from native plants and began to cultivate hobbies in terms of food, fodder, fiber, and fuel. Women have played and continue to play an important role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, plants and animals.

They have protected soil health through organic recycling and promoted crop safety to maintain diversity and genetic resistance. Main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post-harvest activities, agriculture / social forestry, fisheries etc... In addition, women play an important and vital role in agricultural development and related fields. There is no limit to the participation of women in agriculture. Doubtless, the region varies from place to place. In any region, their participation varies greatly across different ecological sub-regions, farming systems, castes, classes, and stages in the family cycle. But ignoring this difference, there is not much importance in agricultural production, except ploughing, in which women do not actively participate. Studies on women in agriculture in India and other developing and developed countries draw attention to the conclusion that women contribute more to agricultural production than are generally accepted. Recognizing their important role in agriculture should not obscure the fact that women in agriculture are involved in their primary work as wives, mothers and housewives. Considering their dual responsibilities at home and abroad, it would not be worthwhile to consider the fact that rural farming women are increasingly conducting rural training to suit their needs. That organizational training is important in its own right. In order for women agricultural farmers to get fair treatment from change agents, it is necessary to include a large number of well-educated female staff in training and extension programs at all levels of action development agencies at the grassroots level and much more. Therefore, the current study aims to determine the socio-economic status of women in agriculture.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem of women agricultural labourers is multiplied and is mainly cantered around the fundamental problems of the rural economy which include low income, low productivity and lack of continuous employment. Intensive development programs need to be undertaken to improve the socio-economic conditions and potential of women agricultural labourers. Most of these women have less property, are landless and have no property of their own except their labour force. Lack of skills, extensive changes in business during the agricultural thin season; Migration, low wages and exploitation in the workplace and at home are common characteristics that affect the development of these women. By reviewing this brief introduction and literature, the researcher has conducted a scholarly study on a specific topic based on the plight of women agricultural laborers in selected Jalna districts of Maharashtra only with the help of specific topics.

**Table 1.1 Distribution of the Sample Based on their Socio-Economic Status**

Variables	Sub Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	20-30	18	36.00
	31-40	15	30.00
	41-60	17	34.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Educational Status	Illiterate	32	64.00
	Primary	12	24.00
	Secondary	06	12.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Monthly Income	1000-3000	16	32.00

	3000-5000	19	38.00
	>5000	15	30.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Family Size	Small (1-3)	19	38.00
	Medium (3-5)	23	46.00
	Large (>5)	08	16.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
House Type	Thatched	34	68.00
	Tiled	07	14.00
	Pucca	09	18.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table 1.1 describe about the distribution of the sample based on their socio-economic status, and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 18 respondent are between 20-30 years of age, 15 respondents are 31-40 years of age and remaining 17 respondents are 41-60 years of age, it is been concluded that all age women respondents are working in agricultural farm, there is no age bar condition to work in this sector.

The study also reveals about the educational background of the respondent and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 32 women respondent are not educated (Illiterate), 12 respondents are done their primary education and remaining only 6 respondent are done their education up to secondary level, it is due to their economic condition and also early marriage or parents are not interested in education.

Monthly income of the women respondent was also studied in this and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 16 respondents monthly income is between 1000-3000 rupees, 19 respondents monthly income is between 3000-5000 rupees and remaining 15 respondents monthly income is above 5000 rupees.

Family size of the respondent were also studied and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 19 respondents family size between 3-5 members in their family, 29 respondents family size is between 3-5 members in their family and remaining 8 respondents can have more than 7 members in their family.

Women respondents house type was also studied and it was observed that out of 50 respondent 34 respondents are having Thatched type of house, 7 respondents can have Tiled type of house and remaining 9 respondents can have pucca type of houses.

**Table 1.2 Distribution of the Respondents by Awareness on Developmental Programmes**

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency			
		Yes	%	No	%
Awareness	MGNREGA	50	100	00	00
	SHG	36	72.00	14	28.00
	SGSY	16	32.00	34	68.00
	DRDA	10	20.00	40	80.00
	Special Program	30	60.00	20	40.00

The above table 1.2 describes about the awareness on development program and it was observed that all 50 women respondents are very much aware about the MGNREGA program, 36 respondents are aware about the Self-Help Group (SHG) and 14 respondents are not aware about the SHG, whereas the out of 50 respondent only 16 respondent are ware about the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and 34 respondents are not aware about the SGSY program, also only 10 respondent are aware about the District Rural Development Awareness Program (DRDA) and 40 women respondents are not aware about the DRDA awareness program, and 30 respondents are well aware about the special program 20 respondents are not aware about the special program.

**Table 1.3 Utilization of Awareness Program by Respondent**

Variable	Sub Group	Frequency			
		Yes	%	No	%
Benefited by Program	MGNREGA	50	100	00	00
	SHG	31	62.00	19	38.00
	SGSY	07	14.00	43	86.00
	DRDA	06	12.00	44	88.00
Loan From Cooperative	For Agriculture	17	34.00	33	66.00
	Non-Agriculture	33	66.00	17	34.00
Attend the Training Program	Health Aspect	13	26.00	37	74.00
	Training Program	37	74.00	13	26.00
	Financial Program	31	62.00	19	38.00

The above table describes about the utilization of awareness program by the respondent and it was observed that majority of the respondent that is 100% and 62% are utilized MGNREGA and SHG program whereas 86% and 88% of the women respondents are not benefited/not taken any benefits by the awareness program of SGSY and DRDA.

Whereas regarding the loans from the co-operatives 34% of the respondent are taken loan for their agriculture and 66% of the respondents are not taken agriculture loan from co-operative, whereas 66% of the respondent are taken loan for non-agriculture purpose and 34% are not taken loan from the co-operative for non-agriculture purpose.

Also, attending the training program related awareness program of health aspect 26% of the respondent were attended and 37% of the respondent were not attended, whereas 74% of the respondents were attended special training program and 26% of the respondents were not attended the special training program and about the financial program 62% of the respondents are attended the financial program and 38% of the respondents were not attended the financial training program.

**Table 1.4 Family Level Challenges for the Respondent**

Sr. No.	Variable	Frequency			
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Properly Taking Care of Family	35	70.00	15	30.00
2.	Husband Drinking Habit	32	64.00	18	36.00
3.	Facing Domestic Violence	28	56.00	22	44.00
4.	Intake of Energetic Food	23	46.00	27	54.00
5.	Suffering from Various Illness	18	36.00	32	64.00
6.	Being Peace of Mind	24	48.00	26	52.00

The above table 1.4 describes about the family level challenges for the respondent and it was observed that majority of the respondent 35% are unable to properly take care of their family due to agricultural work, regarding the drinking habit 64% of the respondent are facing the challenge that their husband taking alcohol on daily basis, it is heartening that 56% of the women respondent/workers are facing different sort of domestic violence through their family member. Further, the half 54% of the respondents felt that they have not taken sufficient energetic food for their survival even though, Regarding illness, 64% of the respondents have not suffered by any kind of severe illness while continuously involving in agricultural work and In terms of peace of mind, the significant strength 52% of the labourers are not being peace of mind by psychologically due to their overall work nature, domestic and economic burdens in family also.

**Table 1.5 Challenges at Work Place for the Respondent**

Sr. No.	Variable	Frequency			
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Work load at work place	42	84.00	08	16.00
2.	Enough wages	09	18.00	41	82.00
3.	Save the wages	05	10.00	45	90.00
4.	Gender wise discrimination at work place	44	88.00	06	12.00
5.	Cast wise discrimination at work place	47	94.00	03	06.00
6.	Wage wise discrimination at work place	50	100	00	00.00

The above table 1.5 describes about the challenges at work place for the respondent and it was observed that 84% of the respondents have done overload work at agricultural field for their livelihood followed by the majority 82% of the women workers have not earned enough and sufficient wage for daily means and almost all 90% the respondents are unable to get a chance to save their wages due to insufficient of wage as well as lot of family commitments Further, it is sadly to note in the modern era that the majority of the women agricultural workers have discriminated by others at the work place on the basis of gender 88%; caste 94%; and wage 100% respectively.

### CONCLUSION:

From the findings mentioned in this research, it is clear that women farm laborers play an important role in crop production and family economic activities from their salary income. This study found that (20 to 40) women productive age groups are engaged in agricultural work. Only a handful of women in rural areas have taken part in agricultural work and have been earning between Rs. 3000-5000 It is worth noting that no infrastructure is available in the homes of most respondents unless electricity is released. Studies have shown that most of the people are aware and benefited from the benefits of some developmental programs provided by MGNREGA, self-help groups and special women's development programs. Most of the respondents have used loans from cooperatives for non-agricultural purposes. Further, self-help groups continued to provide them with special financial support. Research has also shown that most women agricultural workers are unable to take proper care of their families and children while going to work in agriculture.

Nonetheless, most workers acknowledge that agricultural work and development programs have significantly improved their standard of living, and that these programs are very useful and supportive in raising their living standards in the community. Therefore, in order to protect their interests, the government should come forward to fix the working hours and wages of the day. NGOs should help rural women and organize them in groups and teams for their self-help as well as development.

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