



AGRICULTURAL WOMEN LABOUR AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION WITH REFERENCE TO RAIGAD DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

Women have a multifaceted role in Indian society and play an important role in agriculture. Three-quarters of the workers needed on the farm are women. 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 they are not paid directly. The wages paid to women agricultural laborers are much lower than the prescribed rate and the wide pay inequality exceeds their disadvantages. Women have an important role to play in agriculture. The socio-economic situation is indicative of the lifestyle of the 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: Women Labour, Socio Economic Condition.

INTRODUCTION:-

Agriculture in India is the backbone of the country and is known as the largest area 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 an important role in

the rural economy. It is well known that agricultural workers are the most neglected class in the Indian population. The most notable feature of India's rural economy is the increase in the number of agricultural laborers, including agricultural laborers and those engaged in crop production. Unemployment growth, under development, aspiration and poverty coexist among agricultural workers. They get a fantastic salary for the work done in the worst conditions, which

puts a huge strain on the hard work. The opportunity to work is extremely uncertain; 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 laborers belong to the 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 the first woman planted the crop and thereby started the art and science of farming. While the males went in search of food, the females began to collect seeds from native plants and began to pursue 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. Undoubtedly, the region varies from place to place. In any region, their participation varies greatly in different ecological sub-regions, agricultural practices, castes, classes, and stages in the family cycle. But ignoring this difference is not very important except for plowing in agricultural production, in which women do not actively participate. Studies on agriculture in India and women in other developing and developed countries draw attention to the conclusion that women contribute more to agricultural production than is generally accepted. Recognizing their important role in agriculture, the fact that women in agriculture are involved in their primary work as wives, mothers and housewives should not be obscured. Given their dual responsibilities at home and abroad, it would not be appropriate to consider the fact that rural women are increasingly undergoing rural training to meet their needs. That organizational training itself is important. In order for women agricultural farmers to receive appropriate treatment from change agents, training and extension programs at all levels of grassroots action development organizations need to include a large number of well-educated female staff, and more. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to determine the socio-economic status of women in agriculture.

Statement of the Problem:

The problem of women agricultural labor has multiplied and revolves mainly 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 status and capacity of women agricultural laborers. Most of these women have less property, are landless and have no property of their own without their labor 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 Raigad districts of Maharashtra 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	23	30.66
	31-40	20	26.67
	41-60	32	42.67
Total		75	100.00
Educational Status	Illiterate	42	56.00
	Primary	18	24.00
	Secondary	15	20.00
Total		50	100.00
Monthly Income	1500-3500	21	28.00
	3500-6000	34	45.33

	>6000	20	26.67
Total		75	100.00
Family Size	Small (1-3)	25	33.33
	Medium (3-5)	39	52.00
	Large (>5)	11	14.67
Total		75	100.00
House Type	Thatched	42	56.00
	Tiled	15	20.00
	Pucca	18	24.00
Total		75	100.00

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 75 respondent 23 respondent are between 20-30 years of age, 20 respondents are 31-40 years of age and remaining 32 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 75 respondent 42 women respondent are not educated (Illiterate), 18 respondents are done their primary education and remaining only 15 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 75 respondent 21 respondents monthly income is between 1500-3500 rupees, 34 respondents monthly income is between 3500-6000 rupees and remaining 20 respondents monthly income is above 6000 rupees.

Family size of the respondent were also studied and it was observed that out of 75 respondent 25 respondents family size between 3-5 members in their family, 39 respondents family size is between 3-5 members in their family and remaining 11 respondents can have more than 7 members in their family.

Women respondents' house type was also studied and it was observed that out of 75 respondent 42 respondents are having Thatched type of house, 15 respondents can have Tiled type of house and remaining 18 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	75	100	00	00
	SHG	47	62.67	28	37.33
	SGSY	29	38.67	46	61.33
	DRDA	18	24.00	57	76.00
	Special Program	49	65.33	26	34.67

The above table 1.2 describes about the awareness on development program and it was observed that all 75 women respondents are very much aware about the MGNREGA program, 47 respondents are aware about the Self-Help Group (SHG) and 28 respondents are not aware about the SHG, whereas the out of 75 respondent only 29 respondent are ware about the Swarnjayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana (SGSY) and 46 respondents are not aware about the SGSY program, also only 18 respondent are aware about the District Rural Development Awareness Program (DRDA) and 57 women respondents are not aware about the DRDA awareness program, and 49 respondents are well aware about the special program 26 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	75	100	00	00
	SHG	48	64.00	27	36.00
	SGSY	15	20.00	60	80.00
	DRDA	12	16.00	63	84.00
Loan From Cooperative	For Agriculture	29	38.67	46	61.33
	Non-Agriculture	45	60.00	30	40.00
Attend the Training Program	Health Aspect	21	28.00	54	72.00
	Training Program	52	69.33	23	30.67
	Financial Program	50	66.67	25	33.33

The above table 1.3 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 80% 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 38.67% of the respondent are taken loan for their agriculture and 61.33% of the respondents are not taken agriculture loan from co-operative, whereas 60% of the respondent are taken loan for non-agriculture purpose and 40% are not taken loan from the co-operative for non-agriculture purpose.

Also, attending the training program related awareness program of health aspect 38.67% of the respondent were attended and 61.33% of the respondent were not attended, whereas 69.33% of the respondents were attended special training program and 30.67% of the respondents were not attended the special training program and about the financial program 66.67% of the respondents are attended the financial program and 33.33% 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	55	73.33	20	26.67
2.	Husband Drinking Habit	52	69.33	23	30.67
3.	Facing Domestic Violence	48	64.00	27	36.00
4.	Intake of Energetic Food	43	57.33	22	29.33
5.	Suffering from Various Illness	28	37.33	47	58.67
6.	Being Peace of Mind	34	45.33	41	54.67

The above table 1.4 describes about the family level challenges for the respondent and it was observed that majority of the respondent 26.67% are unable to properly take care of their family due to agricultural work, regarding the drinking habit 69.33% of the respondent are facing the challenge that their husband taking alcohol on daily basis, it is heartening that 64% of the women respondent/workers are facing different sort of domestic violence through their family member. Further, the half 57.33% of the respondents felt that they have not taken sufficient energetic food for their survival even though, Regarding illness, 58.67% 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 54.67% 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	63	84.00	12	16.00
2.	Enough wages	16	21.33	59	78.67
3.	Save the wages	12	16.00	63	84.00
4.	Gender wise discrimination at work place	64	85.33	11	14.67
5.	Cast wise discrimination at work place	68	90.67	07	09.33
6.	Wage wise discrimination at work place	75	100.00	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 78.67% of the women workers have not earned enough and sufficient wage for daily means and almost all 84% 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 85.33%; caste 90.67%; and wage 100% respectively.

CONCLUSION:

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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