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### Gender differences in access to and control over farm resources

**M Milcah Paul and Dr. P Radha Rani**

#### Abstract

Resources are the key considerations for rural people to negotiate their livelihoods. Women do not have proper access to resources which hinders her development and progress. The study was conducted with an objective to explore the gender differences in accessibility and control over farm resources. An exploratory research design was adopted for conducting the study. The study was conducted in 112 households of Aurepalle and Dokur villages in Mahbubnagar district of Telangana State, India. One male and female who were the decision makers in the household were interviewed separately with the help of an interview schedule. The results showed that there were notable differences seen between men and women in the access to and control over the farm resources. Men had greater access to resources like seeds, pesticides and fertilisers, farm implements, water and agricultural loans used for the farm when compared to women. Very few men and women had access and control over subsidies. Though women participated in farm activities they had less access to farm resources when compared to women. The study concludes that promotion of equal access to productive resources between genders must be done which promotes women's empowerment and gender equality in the society.

**Keywords:** Gender, access, control, farm resources

#### 1. Introduction

Resources are the key considerations for rural people to negotiate their livelihoods by obtaining access to land, labour, capital, knowledge and market, which leads to enhanced family well-being (Valdivia and Gilles, 2001) [4].

Three-fourths of all women workers are in agriculture. Women work extensively in different types of agricultural, livestock and production activities in family farms as well as paid agricultural laborers. Women also increase family resources through tasks such as collection of fuel, fodder, drinking water and water for family members and domestic animals. But still their work is under estimated and unrecognized. They do not have proper access to assets and resources and hinders her development and progress.

From the past two to three decades, efforts are being made throughout India and also around world to provide farmers focussed mainly on the farm women with efficient, effective, and appropriate technology, training, information and extension services. Several positive effects are beginning to show in agricultural production statistics and in indices of family well-being. Yet these achievements still fall far short of what is needed at a time when investments in agricultural research and extension are under pressure, when ever-greater demands are being placed on rural women in the face of rapid social transformation, and, in an increasing number of areas, when evidence of environmental degradation is increasing.

Some of the developing and under developed countries including India, have the societies and families which are majorly dominated by men and the resources available and accessible are mostly controlled and vested with men both at the household and farm level. The lack of women's access to resources required for agricultural production and other needs is one of the major factors which hinder the growth and development of women farmers. To understand the existing differences at farm level, this study is conducted with an objective to explore the gender differences in accessibility and control over farm resources.

The review of literature related to the topic also showed that men had more access and control over the farm resources (Singh and Tewari, 2012) [3]. Men and women farmers were found to be different in certain characteristics such as resource use levels, level of education, and access

To Credit or loans. Women showed a lower resource endowment and lower level of education (Boakye *et al.*, 2012).

## 2. Materials and Methods

An exploratory research design was adopted for conducting the study. The location of the study was in two villages namely Aurepalle and Dokur of Mahbubnagar district. The study was conducted in 112 households comprising 66 households from Aurepalle and 46 Households from Dokur using simple random sampling. One male and female from each household i.e. a total of 224 individuals (112 males and females from Aurepalle and 92 males and females from Dokur) were selected and interviewed for the study. Males and females who were the decision makers of each household were interviewed separately. An interview schedule was used to collect the data.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The results in the table 1 showed that there were notable differences seen between men and women in the access to and control over the farm resources. Men had greater access and control over farm resources like seeds, pesticides and

fertilisers, farm implements, water and agricultural loans used for the farm when compared to women. Though women participated in farm activities they had less access to and control over farm resources when compared to women.

The results showed that the access to agricultural loans was very less when compared to the access to other type of farm resources even for men (36.60%). As the educational levels of the respondents were less, they did not have proper knowledge on how to approach the banks and understand on the terms and conditions for taking loans and this created a difficulty in accessing and obtaining loans. The lack of ownership of productive assets was also found to be one of the major reasons which hindered their access to institutionalised loans mainly for women.

On the contrary, very few men and women had access and control over subsidies. The access to subsidies given on seeds, implements, fertilisers and other inputs was also less for both men and women. This might be due to the lack of access to subsidies given by the government and other organisations working for the welfare of the farmers.

**Table 1:** Gender wise access to and control over farm resources in the respondents

Resource	Men				Women			
	Access		Control		Access		Control	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Seeds	85 (75.90)	27 (24.10)	83 (74.10)	29 (25.90)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)
Fertilisers and pesticides	85 (75.90)	27 (24.10)	83 (74.10)	29 (25.90)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)
Farm implements	85 (75.90)	27 (24.10)	83 (74.10)	29 (25.90)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)
Water	85 (75.90)	27 (24.10)	83 (74.10)	29 (25.90)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)	22 (19.64)	90 (80.36)
Agricultural Loans	41 (36.60)	71 (63.40)	46 (41.08)	66 (58.92)	28 (25.00)	84 (75.00)	41 (36.60)	71 (63.40)
Subsidy	4 (3.58)	108 (96.42)	4 (3.58)	108 (96.42)	3 (2.67)	109 (97.32)	1 (0.90)	111(99.10)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

The results obtained were similar to another study which stated that men had more access and control than women over the resources like agriculture land, farm assets, inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and insecticides, retention of produce for commercial purpose, management of labour, management of cash and procuring and repaying loan (Gupta and Jain, 2011) [2].

## 4. Conclusion

Gender inequality in access to resources remains persistent and is a barrier to growth and poverty reduction. Gender disparities tend to be greater in low income countries, communities and rural households. The results of this study also proved that there was a gender differences in the rural households selected for this study. This study also provides a greater understanding on existing gender disparities in farm resource access and control. The study gave an indication to strengthen women's access to productive resources. The results of the study provides an implication that the planners can design programmes and projects that are effective, efficient and equitable which promotes equal access to productive resources which finally promotes women's empowerment and gender equality in the society.

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