International Journal of Home Science 2020; 6(1): 205-207

International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2020; 6(1): 205-207

www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 04-11-2019
Accepted: 06-12-2019

Kusum Chandrakar
Govt. Naveen College,
Gudhiyari, Raipur,
Chhattisgarh, India

Corresponding Author:
Kusum Chandrakar
Govt. Naveen College,
Gudhiyari, Raipur,
Chhattisgarh, India

Role of women in agricultural production system in India

Kusum Chandrakar

Abstract
India is a developing and predominately agrarian economy. 70% of its population is rural, of those households, 60% engage in agriculture as their main source of income. Agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in developing countries where it is the main occupation of poor. Many women, in developing countries, are major producers of food. Nearly 63% of all economically active men are engaged in agriculture as compared to 78% of women. It is observed that women play a significant role in agricultural development and allied activities including main crop production, live-stock production, horticulture, post-harvesting operations etc. About 70% of farm work is performed by women. Women farmers do not have equal access to productive resources and this significantly limits their potential in enhancing productivity. The present paper shows that the contribution of women in agriculture is extremely significant. It also throws light on the obstacles faced by them in terms of less access to productive resources which do not recognized her work as active productive member. 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. Aggregate data shows that women comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force globally and in developing countries. But this figure masks considerable variation across regions and within countries according to age and social class. Time use surveys, which are more comprehensive but typically not nationally representative, add further insight into the substantial heterogeneity among countries and within countries in women's contribution to agriculture. They show that female time-use in agriculture varies also by crop, production cycle, age and ethnic group. A few time-use surveys have data by activity and these show that in general weeding and harvesting were predominantly female activities. Overall the labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men, and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water. The contribution of women to agricultural and food production is significant but it is impossible to verify empirically the share produced by women. Women's participation in rural labour markets varies considerably across regions, but invariably women are over represented in unpaid, seasonal and part-time work, and the available evidence suggests that women are often paid less than men, for the same work. Available data on rural and agricultural feminization shows that this is not a general trend but Indian phenomena, as well as observed in some sectors such as unskilled labour in the fruit, vegetable and cut-flower export sector. This paper re-affirms that women make essential contributions to agriculture and rural enterprises across the developing world. But there is much diversity in women's roles and over-generalization undermines policy relevance and planning. The context is important and policies must be based on sound data and gender analysis.

Keywords: Agriculture, women, developing and rural

Introduction
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 Ganges 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. Yet for a majority of the country, an estimated 72% 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. Female in the agricultural sector, whether through traditional means or industrial, for subsistence or as an agricultural laborer, 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. Agriculture in India defines familial tradition, social relations and gender roles. Female in the agricultural sector, whether through traditional means or industrial, for subsistence or as an agricultural laborer, 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.

Status of women

In rural India, the percentage of women who depend on agriculture for their livelihood is as high as 84%. Women make up about 33% of cultivators and about 47% percent of agricultural laborers [5]. These statistics do not account for work in livestock, fisheries and various other ancillary forms of food production in the country. In 2009, 94% of the female agricultural labor force in crop cultivation were in cereal production, while 1.4% worked in vegetable production, and 3.72% were engaged in fruits, nuts, beverages, and spice crops. Women's participation rate in the agricultural sectors is about 47% in tea plantations, 46.84% in cotton cultivation, 45.43% growing oil seeds and 39.13% in vegetable production. While these crops require labor-intensive work, the work is considered quite unskilled. Women also heavily participate in ancillary agricultural activities. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Indian women represented a share of 21% and 24% of all fishers and fish farmers, respectively. Despite their dominance of the labor force women in India still face extreme disadvantage in terms of pay, land rights, and representation in local farmers organizations. Furthermore, their lack of empowerment often results in negative externalities such as lower educational attainment for their children and poor familial health.

Women farmers and the environment

Extreme climatic changes are among the factors that have begun to jeopardize agricultural production globally. India's agricultural sector which depends greatly on the variations in climate and weather is defined mainly by the monsoon season. The appropriate levels of precipitation that last from June to September, predicate a bountiful agricultural yield later on in the year. Monsoon seasons with insufficient or excessive precipitation, hurts the agricultural sector. Increasing temperatures and erratic precipitation has begun to exhaust agricultural land and create high variations of land. In the past couple of years these trends have made a noticeable impact in India, causing droughts and unpredictable rainfall. Just one season of such weather patterns can be devastating to the livelihood of farmers, who can find no resilience in small farms.

The loss of biodiversity in India and specifically food crops is a serious concern of food security and sustainability of the agricultural sector in India. The connection between women farmers and environmental health is not simply for subsistence and survival. It also stems from a long existing cultural valuation of India's agricultural fertility in ritual and practice. Women's connection to land is reflected in their almanac-like knowledge of plant varieties. Traditional agricultural methods heavily utilized by women subsistence farmers boast environmentally friendly features, such as seed preservation, natural fertilizers and crop rotation techniques that do not exhaust delicate soil. In the wake of Green Revolution's reforms, it is clear that many of the high yield recommendations had severe environmental impacts [16]. The negative environmental impacts of the Green Revolution are barely beginning to show their full affect. The widespread chemical pollution in communities that utilize pesticides and herbicides is creating a public health problem, which has disproportionately impacted women.

In the state of Punjab, which was touted as a success of Green Revolution, cancer rates have skyrocketed. A 2008 study by Punjabi University a high rate of genetic damage among farmers, which was attributed to pesticide use. Ignorance on the appropriate use of pesticides, resulting in the heavy use, improper disposal, the use of pesticides as kitchen containers, and contamination of drinking water with heavy metals are contributing factors. In reaction to the health and monetary costs of inorganic farming many women are turning to organic farming practices. On a micro level women are organizing into collectives to exchange knowledge, organize organic seed sharing, to pursue organic and sustainable agricultural practices.

Special provisions for women farmers in national schemes

Support for Women Food Security Groups (FSGs)

- Groups exclusively of women farmer established and supported under ATMA Cafeteria as a mandatory activity @ Rs.0.10 lakh per group/year to achieve food security at the domestic/house hold level through setting up of kitchen garden, promoting off farm activities such as piggery, goat-rearing, bee-keeping etc.
- Support available for at least 2 FSGs/Block.

Representation of Women farmers in decision making bodies

- Provision for mandatory representation of Women Farmers in
- State, District, Block Farmer Advisory Committees.
- ATMA Governing & ATMA Management Committee at District Level

Agri-Clinics & Agri-Business Centres

44% Back-ended composite subsidy towards cost of project to women as compared to 36% to men.

Mass Media Support to Agricultural Extension

One day specially allocated to cover areas of core competence women farmers in programmes of All India Radio and Doordarshan.

Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture

- Specific coverage of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and women beneficiaries for programmatic interventions.
- Assistance for horticulture mechanization also available grower associations/ farmer groups/Self Help Groups/ Women farmer groups having at least 10 members, who are engaged in cultivation of horticultural crops, provided the balance 60% of the cost of machines and tools is borne by such groups. SHM to enter in to MoU with such association /groups to ensure proper upkeep, running and maintenance of the machines and tools.

National Food Security Mission
Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and marketing support for value chain integration (to un-registered farmer groups, SHGs of Women & others etc. for local marketing of pulses and millets)

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
At least 50% of the allocation is to be utilized for small, marginal farmers of which at least 30% are women beneficiaries/farmers.

Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization
Training Programmes on Gender friendly Equipment for Women farmers are to be conducted by Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes. At least 30% allocation of the fund is to be made for women farmers.

Conclusion
The purpose is to analyse the women participation in agriculture across diverse Indian states based on secondary data source. Efforts were made to systematically collate the data and analyse the trend of women participation in each state. The study clearly depicts active involvement and participation of women in the agricultural sector in almost all the states with few exceptions like Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal where women are actively participating in non-agricultural activities which includes house-hold industry, service sector etc. The growth rate trend illustrates how much the population grew on average per year, over the multiple year periods. It is almost uniform for all the states showing very slight changes in few states which shows a bit higher growth rate than the rest. The cluster analysis further grouped the considered states as per their identical behaviour of participation. Thus the entire work can be concluded with the facts that women participation in agriculture is increasing with time and women are now acknowledged with the status of "agricultural worker". Though discrimination of wages and in working status still prevails for women labour but due to implementation of various policies and initiatives taken by government the invisibility of women as an agricultural worker is plummeting and will further diminish in future.

References

1. Bala N. Selective discrimination against women in Indian Agriculture - A Review Agricultural Reviews. 2010; 31(3):224-228.
2. Census of India. Series India, Primary Census Abstract, General Population. 1981; 11B(i):7-8.
3. Damisa R, Samndi, Yohana M. Women Participation in Agricultural Production- A probit Analysis. Journal of Applied Sciences. 2007; 7(3):412-416.
4. Dhaka *et al*. Constraints in Knowledge and Information Flow amongst Farm Women. International Journal of Agriculture, Environment & Biotechnology. 2012; 5(2):167-170.
5. Farid *et al*. Nature and extent of rural women"s participation in agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Agricultural Science Digest. 2009; 29(4):254-259.
6. Gupta R. Role of women in economic development. Yojana. 1987; 31(8):28-32.
7. Johnson RA, Wichern DW. Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis. Pearson Education Asia, 2000.
8. Singh Vinay. Gender participation in Indian agriculture: An ergonomic evaluation of occupational hazard of farm and allied activities International Journal of Agriculture, Environment & Biotechnology. 2013; 6(1):157-168.
9. Unnati A, Ankush GS, Mande AV. Extent of participation of farm women in Decision making. Journal of Dairying Foods & Home Sciences. 2012; 31(1):72-74.