

A Study of Agricultural Activities Performed by Rural Women and Problems Faced by them in Jammu District of J&K State

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Abstract- Rural women in J&K are extensively involved in different type of agricultural activities. About 20 to 70% of the rural women are involved in agricultural production and post harvest activities, The agricultural activities in which the women play a very leading role in the state are, transplantation, weeding, threshing, reaping, looking after the farm cattle and other live stock (poultry, goat rearing, sheep rearing etc) collecting fodder, watering fruit plants, preparing and transporting manure and other inputs to the field. They also help in constructing and repairing of irrigation channels and storage facilities. A sample of 150 farm women belonging to 5 different villages of Jammu District were selected by using random sampling technique with the objective of studying different activities performed and the problems being faced by them in doing these activities. For data collection interview schedule, field observation and case studies were framed. Data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Index Terms- Agriculture Production, activities performed by women, problems faced by women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women are active partners in farming and undertake management along with men. There are certain unit operations in production agriculture in which women dominate in production agriculture, post harvest management and agro processing.

The agriculture policy 2000 highlights incorporation of greater issues in agriculture, The national policy on empowerment of women stream need to maintain stream gender perspective in development process, and policy framework for agriculture extension suggested mainstreaming women in agriculture (Grover 2004). Without the total intellectual and physical participation of women, it will not be possible to popularize alternative systems of land management to shifting cultivation, arrest gene and soil erosion, and promote the care of the soil and the health of economic plants and farm animals. The women perform the maximum farm operations thereby contributing a lot towards the upliftment of the economic and social status of their families and finally, accelerating the pace of rural development (Singh 2003) Rural women have been intensively involved in agriculture and its allied fields. They perform numerous labour intensive jobs such as weeding, hoeing, grass cutting, picking, and cotton stick collections. Women are also expected to collect fuel wood from fields, which is being used as a major fuel source for cooking (Gupta, M.P 2005). Women's contribution to the farm sector has been ignored and inadequately understood. In our economy, very few scientific

attempts have been made to examine the actual participation of female labour in crop production and other subsidiary activities at the farm level. (Vinod Sharma 2005) In spite of the major role played by women in different agricultural and allied activities, their role in the decision making is negligible. In addition there are many other problems which the rural farm women are facing such as, difficulties in carrying major agricultural operations, unhygienic condition in the field, time management between farm and household activities, veiling problems etc. keeping these in view, the present study has been undertaken to study the type of activities performed by these women and also to assess the problems being faced by them in doing these activities.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample description: A sample of 150 farm women in the age group of 20 – 45 years belonging to 5 different villages of Jammu District of J&K state were selected by using random sampling technique.

Data Collection: Following tools were selected for data collection.

1. Interview schedule for assessing the basic information of the respondents in addition to other relevant operation.
2. Field observations to observe the farm activities of women and type of problems faced by them.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Participation of rural women in farm activities in Jammu district

S. No	Farm activities	Frequency	%age
1	Ploughing of field	3	2%
2	Cleaning of field	102	68%
3	Leveling of field	35	23.3%
4	Raising nursery seedling (chilly, tomato, pea)	98	65.5%
5	Sowing	112	74.6%
6	Transplanting	128	85.3%
7	Manure application	84	56%
8	Fertilizer application	18	12%
9	Weeding	87	58%
10	Thinning	91	60.6%
11	Gap filling	102	68%

12	Irrigation	31	20.6%
13	Plant protection measures (use of insecticides, pesticides)	13	8.6%
14	Harvesting of crop and cutting of grass	118	78.6%
15	Picking	116	77.3%
16	Shifting produce to threshing floor	7	4.6%
17	Threshing	13	8.6%
18	Winnowing	127	84.6%
19	Drying of grains	144	96%
20	Cleaning of grains	144	96
21	Grading	83	55.3
22	Storage	139	92.6
23	Marketing	13	8.6
24	Processing	59	39.3

Farm activities

As agriculture is a multi activity venture and comprises of large no of diverse activities each one of which is equally important and has a direct bearing on the net productivity of the agriculture produce. The present study reveals that women are an integral part of every agriculture activity and many of the activities are exclusively undertaken by women folk. The extent of women participation in these activities is as under:

Ploughing of field: The ploughing of agricultural fields in the study area is mainly done by tractors which are either self owned or hired. Both mechanical and animal ploughing is carried out by men and only 2% of the women sampled are performing this task.

Cleaning of the field: Cleaning of the field is carried out after ploughing and before sowing of seeds and is considered essential for better seed germination and healthy seedlings. The study shows that about 68% of the women are involved in this activity.

Leveling of fields: It is carried out for the final preparation of fields for sowing of seeds or transplantation of seedlings. The study shows that about 23.3% of the women are engaged in this activity in the study area.

Raising nursery and Transplantation: Majority of the women i.e 65.5% are actively involved in the preparation of nurseries for raising seedlings of vegetable and paddy. 85.3% of the women are engaged in transplanting these in different fields.

Manure and Fertilizers applications: The survey in the study area reveals that 56% of the women carry out manuring of the fields and only 12% are engaged in the application of chemical fertilizers. The application of chemical fertilizers in the area is mainly done by men.

Weeding: It is essential for obtaining higher yield of the crops and about 58% of the farm women are doing this task in the study area.

Thinning and gap filling: Thinning of crop plant is carried out in the fields with dense growth and gap filling is required for ensuring proper coverage of the field by crop plants where seed germination rates of seeds is low. 60.6% of the women are engaged in the thinning and 68% of the women in gap-filling activities in the study area.

Irrigation: Only 20.6% of the women are actively carrying out the Irrigation of their agricultural fields as this activity in the study area is mainly carried out by men who do it round the clock according to water distribution schedule devised by irrigation department of the government.

Plant protection measures: Only 8.6% of the women in the study area are carrying out this activity indicating that this activity is predominantly carried out by the man folk of the family.

Harvesting crops and cutting of grass: Majority of the women in the study area i.e 78.6% are performing this activity is indicating that these activities are exclusively undertaken by women.

Picking of the harvest: Majority of the women i.e 77.3% are actively engaged in picking of the harvest and other crop produce.

Shifting produce to threshing floor: Only 4.6% of the women are performing this task as this activity involves heavy load handling and is therefore done mainly by men in the family.

Threshing and winnowing: Only 8.6% of the women are doing the work of threshing as this activity is done mechanically by men and winnowing is exclusively done by women as 84.6% of these are performing this activity in the study area.

Drying and cleaning of grains: More than 90% of the women in the area under study are carrying out these important post harvest activities.

Marketing: Marketing of the produce is considered the male domain in the study area and is wholly carried out by the men in the family but a small percentage of women i.e 8.6% are also actively involved in some way in the process of marketing of crop produce.

Processing: Processing of some crop produce is necessary for increasing its self life such as preparation of Jams, jelly, pickles etc; 39.3% of the women in the study area are actively involved in the processing of produce for its storage and marketing.

Storage: More than 90% of the women engaged in agriculture are, at the end of the cropping season storing the crop produce in a proper way in grain storage containers and other storage structures built for this purpose.

Table 2
Problems faced by rural women in Jammu District.

PROBLEMS	N=	%age
Health problems		
Backache, headache, fatigue/restless	143	95.3%
Unhygienic condition in the field	91	60.6%
Need of healthy diet	120	80%
Management problems		
Management of time between farm and home	107	71.3%
Difficulties in carrying major operations like crop harvesting /transplanting, rice cultivation /sowing	80	53.3%
Social problems		
Feel shy to work with in-laws in field	48	32%
Veiling problem	97	64.6%
Financial problems		

lack of resources	106	70.6%
Lack of finance	114	76%

Health problems:- Almost all the women (95.3%) engaged in agriculture and allied activities suffer from back ache, head ache and fatigue while 80% of the women feel that their diet is not balanced and healthy. Majority of the women in the study area i.e 60.6% feel that the condition in the field is unhygienic.

Management problem: 71.3% of the agricultural women face great difficulty in managing the time between farm and home while majority of the women i.e 53.3% face difficulties in carrying out major agricultural operations like crop harvesting, transplanting, sowing etc.

Social problems:- A majority of the women in the study area i.e 64.6% face the traditional veiling problem while 32% of them are not very comfortable working along with their in laws in the agricultural fields.

Financial problems:- Maximum number of women in the study area i.e between 70-76% face financial problems ranging from severe to mild on account of both lack of resources and lack of finances.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Rural women constitute the most important work force in Indian economy. A good number of economically active women are engaged in Agricultural sector. A study of rural women in different farm activities in Jammu district showed that women are actively engaged in all major agriculture related activities such as ploughing, cleaning and leveling of fields; raising nursery; sowing seeds, transplanting, manure and fertilizer applications, weeding, irrigation etc. Study also shows that majority of the women suffered from minor health problem, management problem, social and financial problem.

V. SUGGESTIONS

As the participation of women in agricultural activities is indispensable and on the increase in rural areas, the following steps need to be taken to enhance their agricultural productivity.

1. Government should conduct workshops, seminars and awareness programmes where the rural farm women are acquainted with the modern cost effective agricultural techniques.
2. Full awareness about intake of healthy diet among the rural farm women should be undertaken on priority basis.
3. Government should frame some policies which benefits the rural agriculture women and encourage them to diversify the agricultural activities.

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