



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Extent of rural women Participation in agricultural activities in Balaghat District of Madhya Pradesh

¹ Bharti Biranwar ²Y.K.Singh ³Swapna Tripathi

1. M.Sc [Ag] Extension MGCGVVChitrakoot Satna (M.P)) 3. Research scholar MGCGVVChitrakoot Satna (M.P) 2.Associate Professor of Transfer of technology MGCGVVChitrakoot Satna (M.P)

ABSTRACT

Rural women play a pivotal role in agricultural and economies in all developing countries. They play key roles by working with full passion in agricultural activities, six village were selected on the basis of their experience in agricultural activities. 120 women farmers, 20 from each village were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Interview schedule was used to obtain information from women n their participation in agricultural activities. The result shows that 85.83%, 78.33%, 75%, 70.83%, and 70% of the respondent participated and engaged in interculture, threshing, winnowing, harvesting and seed treatment respectively. however their participation was limited on irrigation 18.83%, Land preparation 26.67%, Marketing 30%. their extent participation in agricultural activities serious attention and interested support should be given for women to improve their position in agriculture.

Keywords: agricultural activities, participation, women.

Received 21.12.2017

Revised 10.01.2018

Accepted 23.01.2018

CITATION OF ARTICLE

Bharti Biranwar, Y.K.Singh, Swapna Tripathi. Extent of rural women Participation in agricultural activities in Balaghat District of Madhya Pradesh. *Adv. Res. Agri. Vet Sci.*, Volume 5 [1] January 2018: 07-09

INTRODUCTION

Women are the back bone of agriculture workforce but world wild her work had mostly been unpaired. She force the most tedious and back breaking task in agriculture animal husbandry and home. In extension activities the women is now the center point and activities are being keeping her in view.

In India, women have played and continue to play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields. They are involved in main crop production, agro/social forestry, fisheries etc. Women's contribution to agriculture, whether it is in subsistence farming or commercial agriculture, when measured in number of tasks performed and time spent is greater than that of men. A micro study conducted in Indian Himalayas found that, on a hectare farm, a pair of bullocks work for 1064 hours, a man for 1212 hours and a woman for 3485 hours (Shiva FAO, 1991). In the plantation sector women are the crucial labourers (Shivaram, 1988). Depending on the region and crops, women's contributions vary but they provide crucial labour from planting to harvesting and post-harvest operations. Despite working hard, spending longer hours and crucial contribution to agricultural production, their role has not been acknowledged. They are paid less or even left as unpaid workers. That women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro/social forestry, fisheries, etc. is a fact long taken for granted but also long ignored. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture, no doubt, varies greatly from region to region. Even within a region, their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub-zones, farming systems, castes and classes. But, regardless of these variations, there is hardly any activity in agricultural production, except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. In some of the farm activities like processing and storage, women predominate so strongly that man workers are numerically insignificant (Agarwal 2003). Studies on women in agriculture conducted in India and other developing and under developed countries all concluded that women contribute more to agricultural production than has generally been acknowledged. They are in fact the largest group of land less labourers, as most of the women do not have land rights. Although women work in the fields, homes, outside the farm, and at the markets, their male counterparts often dictate decisions over the household and its economy.

From Census data 2001 and 2011, it is evident that the number of agricultural labourers has increased and the number of cultivators has decreased. In 2001, 31.7% of workforce was cultivators and 26.5% were working as agricultural labourers, whereas in 2011 they are 24.6% and 30% respectively. This shows a decline in number of cultivators by 7.1% and increase in number of agricultural labourers by 3.5%. One of the disturbing features is that, during the past several decades there has been a constantly increasing trend in the number of landless labourers. Factors like rapid growth of population, law of inheritance, rise in cost of agricultural inputs and decline in small-scale industries have been responsible for this increase (Sajjad, 1998). The phenomenon of under employment, seasonal unemployment, under development and surplus population are simultaneously manifested in the daily lives and living of agricultural labourers.

The study highlight the role of the invisible working hands of women in the field of agriculture, who are working side by side with the farmers and contributing a lot towards agricultural development. In addition, to the acknowledgement of the greater participation of rural women in agriculture activities, the study also brings the hidden talents of rural women to limelight and signifies the potentials of rural women for proper harnessing and the resultant improvement in farm income and productivity. The study will be of great use to the policy makers in terms of formulating future policies for rural development and agricultural sector.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey was conducted in lonjhi and Paraswara block of Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh. The populations of study consist of rural women farmer involved in agricultural activities. 120 rural women farmers, 20 from each village were selected through simple random sampling technique. The data were collected with the help of structured questionnaire which including demographic information of the respondents, the extent of rural women participation in agricultural activities .

For the purpose of analysis, logical tool and techniques tools have been used as follows:

ANALYTICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

For the purpose of analysis, logical tool and techniques such as percentage method tools has been used. The formula for calculating the percentage is as follows:

Percentage : The term percentage means a traction whose denomination us 100 and the numeration of the traction us called percentage for calculating percentage, frequency was multiplied by 100 and divided by total respondents.

$$P = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$$

Where,

P = Percentage

X = frequency of respondents

N = total number of respondents

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participation of rural women in agricultural activities

S. No.	Agricultural Activities	Participation in agricultural activities	
		Respondent	Percentage
1	Land preparation	32	26.67
2	Sowing	80	67.67
3	Manure/Fertilizer application	43	35.83
4	Inter culture	103	85.83
5	Irrigation	22	18.33
6	Plant protection	83	69.19
7	Harvesting	85	70.83
8	Threshing	94	78.33
9	Winnowing and transport	90	75
10	Marketing	36	30
11	Seed treatment	84	70
12	storage	55	45.83

The result in table indicated that women participation in interculture 85.83% ,threshing 78.33%,winnowing and transport 75%,harvesting 70.83%, seed treatment 70%,plant protection 69.19%,sowing67.67%,storage 45.83%,manure and fertilizer 35.83%,marketing 30%,land preparation 26.19% and irrigation 18.33% respectively. this shows that significant participation of rural women in most of the agricultural activities.

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 Balaghat district showed that women are actively engaged in all major agriculture related activities such as land preparation, seed treatment, sowing, , manure and fertilizer applications, weeding, irrigation, plant protection, harvesting threshing, winnowing, storage and marketing etc.

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