



INEQUALITY BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN MAHARASHTRA (PRE & POST REFORM)

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, women are playing an important role in economic development. They contribute significant proportion in Gross Domestic Product through actively participating in industries, services and in agricultural activities. What is worse with women workers is that they still lag behind in achieving job opportunities in comparison to men. I have examined in this paper male - female work participation and wage in agriculture activities in Maharashtra state regarding pre reform and post reform. Maharashtra ranks the 4th in Human Development Index. Female economic activity rate of 35.97 percent for Maharashtra is higher than the national average of 29 percent. Maharashtra has an outstanding record of establishing women Development. The state has 12 all women panchayats. Women constitute 11.60 percent of membership in the cooperatives. In the rural Maharashtra, the work participation rate of women is 46.5 percent out of which 89 percent in the agrarian sector. In Maharashtra More women than men work as farm workers for wage—1,311 per every 1,000 males—and 789 women for every 1,000 males are cultivators themselves and this gap remained same in pre reform and post reform.

Keywords : Male, Female, Inequality, Gender, MDGs, Disparity, Labour force participation

INTRODUCTION

To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, are the goals of millennium development. The Millennium Development Goals thus mirror of the Millennium Declaration's commitment to gender equality, Gender roles, gender relations, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender analysis, gender balance, etc. Over the past decade, all of those terms have been accepted into declarations, plans of action, policies, for agriculture and rural development, but not always fully understood. Gender inequality analysis is the study of the different roles of women and men in order to understand what they do, what resources they have and what their needs. But in reality Inequality in work participation and wages in agriculture between males and females is a widely documented phenomenon. In developing countries, agriculture sector is the largest for employer in rural area. Inequality regarding work participation and wages between males and females are commonly seen in agriculture in the rural sector .This inequality varies widely between these countries. Female wages as a percentage of male wages is close to 100 percent in parts of Latin America and Kenya but can be just above 50 percent in South Asia.



During the period of 1950 there were social and economic problems in India such as population, poverty, economic disparity, and gender bias etc. After 1950 government of India tried to eradicate these issues and announced various policies for the welfare of the women. In 1991 government of India declared new economic policy. According to policy we could increase the rate of GDP, service sector, industrial sector, real income but gender bias increased day by day. In Indian agriculture sector it is observed that the women always neglected as compared to male. Women are to work in agriculture but she gets less daily wages compared to male. It is observed that to make India super power there were various measures were taken but in agriculture the ratio of gender bias have not changed as compared to pre reform era. The new economic reforms has announced with various objectives, of them is to create equality in agriculture work and wages between male and female but in reality its remains same compare to pre reform. In India, rural women are extensively involved in agricultural activities, but the nature and extent of their involvement differs with variations in agro-production systems. In India the ratio of female to male agricultural wages and work participation varies widely across states. Northern states are much lower than in the states of southern in India. Agriculture is the main source to women workers. 75% of the total male workforce and 85 percent of rural women are employment in agriculture as wage worker in pre reform but its trend around same in the post reform.

OBJECTIVES

The prime objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To measure the work participation and wage between male and female in agriculture in rural area in Maharashtra in pre reform and post reform
2. To overcome the problem of Inequality in work participation and wage
3. To suggest policy measures and to make appropriate policy suggestions to reduce gender inequality in work participation and wages.

HYPOTHESES

1. Women get seasonal employment in agriculture and this trend is unchanged during the pre-reform and post reform.
2. Women are involved in all activities of agriculture in rural Maharashtra
3. Women have limited alternative sources of employment.
4. Male and female doing the same work and spending equal time in agriculture but female get less wage than male and this trend unchanged during pre-reform and post reform

METHODOLOGY

Data for the study have collected from the secondary source. The comparative analysis has been done for pre reform and post reform to understand the changes in work participation and wage between male and female in agriculture sector in rural area for the States of Maharashtra.

In following table and figure show that the female cultivators however have increased at much faster rate than male in pre and post reform. About 75 percent of agricultural operations handled by women. The women laborers got maximum employment in agriculture during *kharif* and *rabbi* Women's studies scholars have argued that increase in work participation of women in rural Maharashtra is a sign of distress, an index of unequal. They gets maximum employment days in the month of June and September in *kharif* season and in the months of October and January in *Rabi* season. They got least employment in the months of February and May. The summer season was the off season for agriculture in the study area. All the women agricultural laborers under study got involved in agriculture during the months from June to January. There is no specific timing during the period of harvest. The women laborers had maximum number of unemployment days in agriculture in summer season. The lack of employment opportunities in agriculture during off season compelled the women laborers to seek alternative employment sources. The laborers got employed in non-farm activities mostly in the months of February, March and April.

Male female work participation rate in agriculture sector in rural area
(% of total labour force)

| India | 1983 | | 2006 | | 2012 | |
|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| | 74.12 | 78.12 | 75.23 | 85.34 | 74.5 | 84.30 |

Source: 1) NSS 55th round , Census of India .2011
2) NSS 68th Round.

Male female work participation rate in agriculture sector in rural area
(% of total work force)

| Maharashtra | 1983 | | 2006 | | 2012 | |
|-------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| | 76.12 | 79.12 | 73.23 | 89.44 | 72.25 | 88.40 |

Source: 1) Human Development Report 2011, status of women in Maharashtra (c.datar 2003),NSS 55th round computed by Prof. Sarathi Acharya
2) 'Wage Rates in Rural India 2007-08, Ministry of Labour, Government of India

Above table show that the participation of rural women in agriculture is increasing in spite of scientific and technological developments. As men migrate in search of better-paid work, women in rural India are taking over agricultural work in the villages. They face meager wages, long hours, hazardous work and sexual harassment. Employment in agriculture is thus available for fewer days per year. It is therefore becoming essential for

men to migrate in search of better-paid work. Women are filling this vacuum. Women are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very bad conditions because they cannot migrate as easily as men. Farmers, on the other hand, also seem to prefer women as agricultural workers. The farmer is faced with the increasing costs of production required for modern agriculture therefore they squeeze their labour costs by using lower-paid women workers.

Wage rate between male and female in Maharashtra

The highest percentage of female work force is of women agricultural labourers who don't own assets, get seasonal/ casual employment and get less paid Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 is the most flouted law in the state. In agriculture, women get 60-70 percent of male wages.

Female to male wage ratio

| | 1983 | 1993 | 1999 | 2004 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| Maharashtra | 59% | 63% | 65% | 63% |
| All India | 69% | 72% | 72% | 70% |

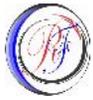
Source: NSS Schedule 10, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2004

Agricultural Wage Rate per day for Males and Females in rural area in India (Harvesting)

| Months | 1987-88 | | 2007-08 | | 2011-12 | |
|-----------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Jun | 38.23 | 26.45 | 79.58 | 66.11 | 138 | 116.40 |
| July | 35.15 | 25.18 | 73.27 | 60.62 | 136.5 | 114.30 |
| August | 33.16 | 24.68 | 73.66 | 61.83 | 137.02 | 115.20 |
| September | 33.98 | 25.12 | 74.08 | 61.98 | 138.65 | 115.35 |
| November | 34.12 | 25.36 | 73.37 | 60.83 | 138.20 | 114.50 |
| December | 33.90 | 25.12 | 74.21 | 60.73 | 137.33 | 114.47 |
| January | 34.26 | 25.10 | 74.19 | 61.36 | 138.30 | 115.30 |

Agricultural Wage Rate per day for Males and Females in rural area in Maharashtra (Harvesting) In Rupees

| Months | 1997 | | 1998 | | 1999 | | 2000 | | 2012 | |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| January | 34.50 | 23.82 | 39.75 | 27.21 | 43.73 | 32.43 | 48.03 | 30.93 | 186.25 | 120.20 |
| February | 35.28 | 24.61 | 40.87 | 27.22 | 41.37 | 28.20 | 46.84 | 32.10 | 185.30 | 121.40 |
| March | 35.88 | 24.24 | 39.75 | 26.71 | 41.72 | 27.42 | 47.57 | 32.14 | 186.50 | 121.30 |
| April | 37.42 | 24.69 | 39.75 | 27.92 | 41.83 | 28.28 | 46.99 | 31.57 | 195.20 | 122.50 |
| May | 38.11 | 25.57 | 39.08 | 26.44 | 41.18 | 28.82 | 47.85 | 32.81 | 196.18 | 122.34 |
| June | 37.89 | 24.90 | 40.00 | 29.79 | 40.91 | 29.00 | 50.75 | 33.68 | 189.27 | 122.90 |
| July | 37.80 | 24.45 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | 37.50 | ----- | ----- | ----- |



| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| August | 37.63 | 22.88 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | 57.92 | 35.71 | 190.35 | 121.30 |
| September | 38.83 | 24.42 | 38.55 | 26.78 | 48.21 | 33.33 | 54.48 | 34.12 | 193.57 | 122.50 |
| October | 39.85 | 27.25 | 42.25 | 31.29 | 45.13 | 31.78 | 50.26 | 34.83 | 190.30 | 122.55 |
| November | 39.39 | 26.96 | 42.65 | 32.05 | 47.47 | 33.42 | 47.95 | 33.64 | 186.38 | 121.70 |
| December | 40.70 | 27.88 | 44.69 | 33.49 | 47.97 | 34.31 | 48.11 | 34.05 | 185.40 | 122.45 |

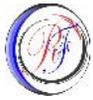
Source: 1) Human Development Report of Maharashtra 2002

2) labourbureau.nic.in/Wage_Rate_Sept2012

Women agricultural workers, although they represent a big proportion of all women workers, continue to receive lower wages than men. The Ministry of labor puts the difference at 60 per cent of men's wages, while the Indian Labor journal showed that women received 75 per cent of men's earnings. As a globalization shifts agriculture into capital-intensive mode, women bear the disproportionate costs of both displacement and health hazards. They carry the heavier work burden in food production and, because of gender discrimination, get lower returns for their work.

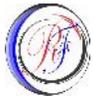
Maharashtra government's policies to equality in work status and wage

- 1) Maharashtra was the first state to establish a women commission in 1983. The commission is sponsor research, appoint investigative committee, whenever violence erupt and suggestions to amend laws or to formulate new law.
- 2) First efforts on the gender budget was made in Australia in 1984. In india efforts were made in terms of allocation funds only in Eights Five Year Plan. At present efforts are being made to undertake gender analysis of the budget of each state.
- 3) Domestic Violence Bill drafted by the Government oh Maharashtra in 2002 and submitted to the government of India for approval addresses the issues of domestic violence and sexual harassment of women at the work place.
- 4) The Priyadarshani Vasatigaiha Yojana was introduced by the stats for the girls –students from the rural area for their college education in 1996-97.
- 5) Maharashtra government started Employment Guarantee Scheme in 1972-73. The aim of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) is to address this problem by providing guaranteed employment at a wage level sufficient to ensure a minimum level of subsistence. By reducing risks faced by poor households, and by constructing productive assets and infrastructure, the scheme also aims to have a longer-term developmental role.
- 6) Post independence feminists began to redefine the extent to which women were allowed to engage in the workforce. Prior to independence, most feminists accepted the sexual devide within the labor force. However, feminists in the 1970s challenged the inequalities that had been established and fought to reverse them. These inequalities included unequal wages for women, relegation of women to 'unskilled' spheres of work, and restricting women as a reserve army for labor. In other words, the feminists' aim was to abolish the free service of women who were essentially being used as cheap capital



CONCLUSION

- 1) After new economic policy agriculture has become technological sensitive but the poor illiterate farm women have little or no access to scientific advancement and technology to achieve higher wage and more income for their family because of illiterate. Women are the backbone of agriculture contributing more labor despite this fact women get fewer wage than men in pre reform and post reform the gap in wage between male female remained same . It was found that most of the govt. policies do not give positive boosts to women workers as creating special opportunity for women and equality in wage
- 2) Women agricultural workers, although they represent a big proportion of all women workers, continue to receive lower wages than men. The highest percentage of female work force is of women agricultural laborers who don't own assets, get seasonal/casual employment and get less paid Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 is the most flouted law in the state.
- 3) Employment in agriculture is thus available for fewer days per year. It is therefore becoming essential for men to migrate in search of better-paid work. Women are filling this vacuum. Women are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very bad conditions because they cannot migrate as easily as men. Farmers, on the other hand, also seem to prefer women as agricultural workers. The farmer is faced with the increasing costs of production required for modern agriculture therefore they squeeze their labour costs by using lower-paid women workers.
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- 5) While earnings from agricultural work have not improved for women after post reform and in some cases brought new kinds of problems and demand. The women in Maharashtra, especially in rural sector are discriminated and disadvantaged in many aspects of employment such as employment diversification, quality of employment and wage earnings.
- 6) The varies policies announced in pre reform and post reform regarding male and female work participation and wage in Maharashtra have affected female workers diversely. Particularly during the last few years or so, most of agricultural commodities have lost international competitiveness due to low international prices. The exports of agricultural commodities have fallen. Simultaneously, there have been increased imports of edible oils and raw cotton which have depressed the domestic prices of these commodities' It is apprehended that the process of economic reforms will ultimately result in a situation in which multinational companies will dominate the agricultural scene in Maharashtra



7) In the wake of reform, not only agricultural exports have declined, but also rate of growth of agricultural output and employment. Consequently, both cultivating households as well as landless particularly women laborers have suffered a loss of income.

SUGGESTIONS

Inequality in work participation and wage in agriculture sector in Maharashtra the following suggestions and policy initiatives are recommended:

1. Promote female literacy through planned interventions by block level studies.
2. Provide more employment to the workers in the industrial and Tertiary sectors.
3. Provide innovative forms of irrigation to marginal and small farmers. The State to make any special provision in favor of women and children. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work for both men and women
4. There should be a separate law for women in the farming sector. not just in law, but in practice.
5. Awareness should be created among women involved in agriculture about the impact of globalization.
6. Unemployment situation during off season, alternate source of employment and consequently suggesting the strategies to improve the present situation. The present study would suggest a number of far reaching implications for the formulation of appropriate policies to generate employment in both agricultural and nonagricultural sectors, towards creation of better employment for women equality in wage.
7. Women should be given opportunities for technical education that can build their entrepreneurial skills for self-employment and wage employment.
8. Promote the role of women as leaders and members of institutions that govern women's labor rights, from the fields (with women's unions and organizations) to the highest levels of the legislative bodies (Ministries and Parliaments).

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