

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABORER'S IN TWO VILLAGES FROM KOLHAPUR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract:

Many countries are experiencing a “feminization of agriculture” or substantial increases in the female share of the agricultural sectors. Women and girls play an essential role towards the food and nutrition security of their families and communities through infant and young child feeding, the selection and preparation of food for their families, and the production of food for family consumption and for the market. The present study was carried out to study the Socio-economic condition of Women agricultural laborers' in two villages from Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. Survey and personal interviews were used for this. The studies indicated low socio economic status, poor working conditions and unawareness of their rights among women agriculture laborers. This needs undertaking awareness programs and providing alternate work opportunities for these women.

Key words: Agriculture, laborer, socio-economic

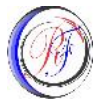
Introduction:

India is primarily an agriculture based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one fifth of the gross domestic product in India. On its health and proper functioning depends the overall health of Indian economy. A large and rapidly growing population makes it necessary to depend on agriculture for generating large number of employment opportunities. A large portion of laborers work in agriculture which also include Women .The number of Women agricultural laborers is increasing in some villages.

The present study was done to understand the socio-economic problem of Women agricultural laborers' in two villages viz. Rajapur and Khidrapur from Kolhapur district of Maharashtra.

Agricultural laborers are those persons who work on the land of others on wages for the major part of the year and earn a major portion of their income as a payment in the form of wages for works performed on the agricultural farms owned by others.

The first Agricultural Labor Enquiry Committee of 1950-51 regarded those workers as agricultural workers who normally worked for 50 per cent of more days on the payment of wages.



The second Agricultural Labor Enquiry Committee, 1956-57 accepted a broad view and included all those workers into agricultural laborers who were badly engaged in agriculture and allied activities like animal husbandry, dairy, piggery, poultry farming etc.

Agriculture laborers can be classified into two broad categories:

1. Landless Agricultural Laborer: The laborers don't possess land and can be further subdivided into:

- (i) Permanent Laborers attached to cultivating households
- (ii) Temporary or Casual Laborer

2. Small and Marginal Land-Owners: These are very small cultivators whose main source of earnings due to their small and marginal holdings is wage employment.

Aims and Objectives:

- 1) To study the causes for working as Women agricultural laborer
- 2) To study the social and economical condition of Women agricultural laborers'
- 3) To study the problems of Women agricultural laborers'

Sample:

48 Women agricultural laborers' in two villages viz. Rajapur and Khidrapur from Kolhapur district of Maharashtra.

Material and method:

- 1) Survey was done in the above mentioned villages.
- 2) A Questionnaire was given to the Women and they were interviewed personally

Result and Discussion:

1) The causes for working as Women agricultural laborer were found as below

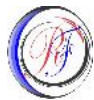
- a) Poverty
- b) Lack of education / skills
- c) Lack of other opportunities to work locally
- d) Less-earners and more no earners in the family
- e) Break up of joint family system
- f) Increase in indebtedness
- g) Death or inability of husband to earn the living

2) The social and economical condition of Women agricultural laborers'

Table I : Study of Women agricultural laborers'

Family Status

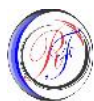
Sr. No.	Observation/ Criteria	Response	
		No.	%
1	Age group (years)		



	20 – 50	36	75
	Above 50	12	25
2	Education		
	Uneducated	17	35.41
	Primary education	31	64.58
3	Marital Status		
	Married	43	89.58
	Widow	03	06.25
	Divorcee/ Single	02	04.16
4	No. of family members		
	01	02	04.16
	03-05	28	58.33
	More than 04	18	37.5
	No. of Earners in the Family		
5	01	02	04.16
	02	46	95.83

**Table II : Study of Women agricultural laborers’
Socio- economic status**

Sr. No.	Observation/ Criteria	Response	
		No.	%
1	Caste category		
	Open	16	33.33
	SC/OBC/NT	32	66.66
2	Average working days		
	130-150	40	83.33
	150-200	08	16.66
3	Average working hours		
	03 hours	30	65.5
	06 hours or more	18	37.5
4	Approximate annual income		
	Rs. 10000-30000	36	75
	More than Rs. 30000	12	25
5	Small land owners	30	65.5
6	Landless	18	37.5
7	Additional/ any other source of income		
8	Yes	46	95.83
	No	02	04.16
	Availing bank services		
	Yes	32	66.66
	No	16	33.33
9	Loan taken from		
	Bank	Nil	



	Self- help groups	24	50
	Money lenders	14	29.16

Table III: Study of Women agricultural laborers’ Awareness of Saving/Insurance/other

Sr. No.	Observation/ Criteria	Response	
1	Village assembly	Nil	
2	Important Government Policies	Nil	
3	Life insurance	Nil	
4	Domestic violence and Harassment at work	Yes	05 %
		No	95%
5	Self-help groups	Yes	50%
		No	50%
6	Membership of Organization	Nil	

Table IV: Study of Women agricultural laborers’ Awareness of Health/Hygiene

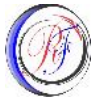
Sr. No.	Observation/ Criteria	Response
1	Potable drinking water	Nil
2	Balanced diet	Nil
3	Exercise	Nil
4	Proper rest	Nil
5	Medical facilities	Nil
6	Nicotine addiction	Nil

3) The problems of Women agricultural laborers’

- 1) Unskilled and Lack Training
- 2) Unorganized
- 3) Seasonal Employment
- 4) Low social status
- 5) Low Bargaining power
- 6) Low income

Discussion:

Women agricultural laborer’s under study are mostly uneducated, unskilled and unorganized. They are usually the only earner in the Family or work along with their husbands. Their husbands also work on daily wages and spend major share of their earnings on themselves for alcohol or other addiction (in 59.25% cases studied). They look after the children and elders in the Family along with their work. The wages are very low and the work is seasonal which gives a lot of burden on them to fulfill even the minimum needs. Those who are living singly also find it difficult to make both the ends meet. They don’t have their



own land and those who have a small land also work in others fields to earn the living and to reduce the expenses on labor's.

Most of them belong to reserved castes (66.66 %). They get debt from moneylenders who charge huge interests. They don't have bank accounts and nobody has asked for loan in the banks. Some of them earn money from additional source like cattle, sheep, hens or doing household work for other (Occasionally- mainly during festive season). Those who are members of self-help groups are only interested in loans for buying cattle.

There is no awareness of village assembly meetings, useful /important Government Policies, Life insurance, Domestic violence, Harassment at work, advantages of Organization etc. among them.

Suggestions:

The following suggestions can be made for the improvement of the socio-economic position of the agricultural laborers:

- Better Implementation of Legislative Measures
- Creating Alternative Employment
- Resettlement of Agricultural Workers
- Improvement the Bargaining Position
- Improvements in Agricultural Sector
- Better Credit Availability

Extensive efforts are needed to create the awareness of health, banking and finance, government schemes, advantage of organization etc. among the women agriculture laborer's.

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