



## HEALTH PROBLEMS OF WOMEN'S AGRICULTURE LABOUR IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study focus on "Health Problems Of Women Agriculture Labour in India." More than two thirds of the population of India is dependent on agriculture. The major arenas and activities that constitute women's lives and their impacts on women's health and well-being. Physical and mental health is very important for women agricultural labour. The present study has been descriptive the data for this study was obtained from secondary sources.*

**KEYWORD** : Health Problems, Women Agriculture labour.

### OBJECTIVES

- To Study of women agriculture labour in India.
- To study of Health problems of women agriculture labour in India.

### METHODOLOGY

The present research paper is health problems of women agriculture labour in India. The present study has been descriptive. The data for this study was obtained from secondary sources. The secondary data has been collected from various such as books, journals, reference books, unpublished PhD thesis and websites.

### INTRODUCTION

India has a national tradition bound to agriculture fertility. 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 of 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.

The green Revolution brought a modern approach to agriculture by incorporating irrigation systems, genetically modified seed variations, insecticide and pesticide usage, and numerous land reforms. It had an explosive impact, providing unprecedented agricultural productivity in India and turned the country from a food importer to an exporter.

The small farmer tradition of India can be drawn back to the first farm reforms of independent India. Women are in turn left to support the family structure and support small farm lifestyle. 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 heavily participate in ancillary agricultural activities.

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. Future more their lack of empowerment often results in negative externalities such as lower educational attachment for their children and poor familial health.



The main occupation is agriculture, because 70% of the population is involved in this occupation. Many women's in developing countries are occupied in agriculture. Women's involvement varies widely among different regions, ecological sub zones, farming system, caste, class and stages in the family cycle. The agricultural sector is the largest employer of women. Majority of the female workforce 84% works in rural India. In most farming systems, females participate in all phases of agricultural production, although their roles and control over resources and incomes varies greatly from place to place.

### **ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE**

When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership, Opportunities and choices, economics grow, food security is enhanced and prospects are improved for current and future generations. Women are the backbone of the development of rural and national economics they comprise 43% of the words agricultural labor force, which rises to 70% in some countries.

Women guarantee livelihoods, especially in rural areas. Rural women have to walk, moreover, long distances to carry water and fetch fire wood, which is harmful for the health of humans, causing high rates of infant and maternal mortality, reversing progress in education and endangering food sovereignty, as well as food security and nutrition. Agriculture is the main alternative for rural women, and it should come with better access to land resources for the prevention, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, combined with rural women learning how to deal with cultural resistance and adapting to various manifestations of this phenomenon.

Agriculture is the main alternative for rural women's, Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. Women play a vital role in building this economy. Rural women from the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nation including India. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies economically active women in the country.

Health and nutrition are important as in themselves and often are emphasized as critical components of basic needs in developing countries. Two broad categories of studies of health determinants are of particular interest. Those attempting to estimate the reduced from demand for health outcomes and health care goods, and those attempting to estimate the underlying health production function. Female labour has been an important segment of the workforce of India with the changing socio-economic scenario; women's productive roles have assumed new dimensions. Though green revolution technologies enhanced agricultural productivity, they also widened economic disparities and deepened gender discrimination in community life.

### **WOMEN AND HEALTH**

Despite the fact that women's mortality and life expectancy rates give us an idea regarding the macro strength of any analysis of women's health and welfare would lie in recognition of enormously varying socio-economic, cultural and geo-political context of their life. Redefining women's health Doyal (1995) argues that, contrary to traditional epidemiological methods of identifying the disease and exploring its causes, we should begin by identifying the major arenas and activities that constitute women's lives and their impacts on women's health and well-being.



In India, until the late 80s the female mortality rate was higher than the male mortality rate. In efforts to understand the gravity of the occupation related health problems of women in the country, the national commission on self employed women and women in the informal sector (1988) explored a variety of illnesses found amongst women works in various unorganized production sectors. They found a high incidence of a variety of illnesses including postural problems, problems of contacts with hazardous materials, heavy work, lack of safety measures, lack of rest, and deplorable work environment. In the agricultural sector, it was found that the women suffer from a variety of ailments such as generalized body ache, cough, respiratory allergies, injuries, toxicity, etc. “The mortality disadvantage of neglect of health, nutrition and other interests of women that influence survival. Even the WHO’s initiatives on women’s health which has a history of more than three decades, began with a focus on maternal health and family planning.

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND WOMEN**

Women psychological Health is much neglected area and we find very few references regarding this in the literature where mental health is largely defined as mental disease. Psychological stress arising out of a variety of factors including over burden of work, physical violence, lack of economic and emotional support and other pressures and denials have devastating effect on the mental as well as physical health of women.

Physical and psychological health, as basic human needs of man and women, in a study analyzing the socio-economic, cultural and, political constraints which limits women from meeting their health needs, argues that gender specific inequities of unequal burdens of domestic labour, relative powerlessness even in determining women’s own sexuality, unequal distribution of household resources, discrimination in wage work, political constraints and violence are barriers, which hinder the well-being of women.

### **WOMEN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS**

The invisibility of women’s work and its undervaluation in the development discourses has been discussed widely. The low value and the social status given to women’s manifold activities such as domestic labour, child care, and other remunerated employment including agriculture reflects the reinforcement of gender inequities at ideological and practical levels as well. While it is more enhanced in the operations such as transplanting weeding and harvesting where female labour is primarily employed. The debate on role of women’s domestic labour and its value has initiated serious discussions in and outside feminist and academic circles. This articulates the need for comprehensive studies at microlevel to explore the differentials in quality of life of people at various levels. Social determinates of perceived health and health problems among one of the socially deprived sections of society, the agricultural women workers.

### **PERCEIVED HEALTH PROBLEMS**

The higher incidence of chronic skeletal muscular and postural health problems such as joint pain, back pain, and respiratory diseases such as asthma were perhaps, indicative of their work related health hazards. Usually women work for longer hours than men and stooping in back breaking positions. The women of general malaise and abdominal pain which, they are afraid is caused by peptic ulcer, arising from acidity problems created by improper and irregular food habits, which were indicative of under nutrition and poor



health. The incidence of high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes was remarkably low. Thus, the general trends in the morbidity pattern reveal that their ailments were related more with poverty and occupation rather than with life style.

Use of pesticides was another source of work related health problems, though women respondents this not consider it important and causing much immediate to than. The employers seldom give any information to their women workers about the hazards of insecticides and their health impacts, acute or chronic. Use of high concentrations of pesticides would definitely have long term and fatal health implications for the workers concerned.

### **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

Reproductive health among the women workers constitutes another important area which needs particular attention. Compared to the load of general animals, the proportion of reproductive health problems such as abortion, still birth, and premature delivery is relatively high. Were lack of proper medical attention during fever and bleeding, death of the foetues, abdominal pain, drug induced and fever. Especially in conditions of poverty and deprivation endangers the health of women. However , apart from poverty and deprivation, the insensitivity if the health care system too adds to the ill health of women as it forces the women to undergo abortion for birth control instead of giving then other methods though disseminations of knowledge and provision of services in culturally feasible ways.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study of the poignant issues in the life of women agricultural workers. There was a high load of morbidity among them. A major proportion of the perceived health problems among them are constituted by chronic skeletal muscular problems. The lives of these women are plagued by high levels of occupational and often poverty- induced diseases, reproductive health problems.

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