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Participation of farm women in development of agriculture in Marathwada region of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Women in rural India account a significant share of wage labour in agriculture, typically providing crucial support for poor households. Their earning contribute significantly to household incomes, many of the agricultural activities that women perform go acknowledged as work, so that rural women are sometimes referred to as "invisible farmer". Farm women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including from crop production in which field operations like transplanting, earthling up, sowing behind plough, weeding, harvesting, storage up to marketing and food processing etc. Hence above study conducted on participation on women. The results revealed that Crop- wise and operation- wise employment of farm women for all crops who are engaged only in agricultural operation was 222.44 days while operation-wise employment for these category of women revealed that maximum proportionate employment was for weeding operation (30.80 per cent) followed by picking operation (14.16 per cent) and stubble collection (13.42 per cent). Employment of farm women who worked on their own as well as on others farm revealed that farm women of this category was employed for 123.07 days, proportionate employment on own farm and others farm was 49.38 and 50.52 per cent, respectively.

Key words : Farmwomen, Weeding, Picking, Hoeing, Stubble collection.

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy that has always been a way of life rather than a commercial avocation. It has been universally accepted that farmwomen play an important role in carrying out agricultural activities.

Women constitute nearly 50 per cent of agriculture work force in India, giving the highest degree of female participation in agriculture. There has been little realization about the contribution of women in economic activities. Women in rural India account for a significant share of wage labour in agriculture, typically providing crucial support for poor households. Although their earning contribute significantly to household incomes, many of the agricultural activities that women perform go acknowledged as work, so that rural women are sometimes referred to as "invisible farmer". Farm women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including from crop production in which field operations like transplanting, earthing up, sowing behind plough, weeding, harvesting, storage up to marketing and food processing etc.

Other allied activities like livestock rearing, poultry keeping, wool production, cultivation of horticultural crops, agro forestry, social forestry, fisheries etc., all cleaning operations like removal of stones, dust, dirt, drying of crops, dehusking or hand pounding of grains. Beside devoting so much of their time of household duties and performing almost all domestic duties single handedly.

The position has not different in Marathwada region. In this context it was felt necessary to conduct a study on participation of women in development of agriculture in Marathwada region with an objective to examine the crop wise and operation wise women employment pattern.

METHODOLOGY

Multistage random sampling technique was adopted. Parbhani and Hingoli districts where purposively selected from Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. From each selected districts two taluka were selected randomly. From Hingoli district, Basmath and Aundha taluka and from Parbhani district Jintur and Parbhani taluka were selected randomly. The detailed list of all villages in selected tahsil was obtained. Four villages from each taluka were selected randomly. From each of selected villages four female farmers were selected randomly. Thus, total effective sample size was sixty four (64).

Required cross section data was collected by personal interview method in specially designed schedule. The tabulated data were subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation. Simple statistical tools *viz.* Means, frequencies, percentages were employed to arrive at a meaningful conclusions. Data pertains for agricultural year 2004 - 2005.