

Research Paper :

Inter gender discrimination in wages of paddy cultivation

KANTA SABARWAL, SUSHMA KAUSHIK AND BEENA YADAV

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ABSTRACT

Present study an exploratory research was conducted to assess discrimination in wages faced by paddy women laborers for paddy related as well as additional wage activities. The study was conducted in purposively selected Kamal and Kaithal districts of Eastern zone of Haryana state as these districts have maximum area under paddy cultivation. The sample comprised of 200 labourers with equal number of males and females. The study indicated that inter district as well as interactivity wages discrimination was faced by women labourers. Although mean male as well female wages were higher in Kamal district than Kaithal district for various paddy activities, however, mean female wages were lower than their male counter parts in both the districts. In Kaithal district gap of 11.5-25 per cent was reported between mean male and female wages, however in Karnal district, the gap was between 15.0-30.0 per cent. For additional wage activities the gap was 11.0 -14.3 per cent in Kaithal district and 6.2-20.0 per cent in Karnal district.

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to:

KANTASABARWAL

Department of Home Science
Extension Education, College
of Home Science, C.C.S.
Haryana Agricultural
University, HISAR
(HARYANA), INDIA

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Agriculture sector continues to be an important component of Indian national economy with a contribution of about 22 per cent to the GDP. The sector provides direct employment to about 234 million farmers and farm labourers (Pawar, 2006). It is evident that both women as well as men play important role in agricultural production but the work burden of women is heavier than that of men. Available time use data indicate that women in various countries including India spend considerable time in agricultural activities. The daily average work of women during agricultural season is as long as 12-16 hours. In spite of active involvement of rural women, it has been strongly felt that agriculture production is marked by strong gender division and the labour market returns are lower for women than men. Labour market is either neutral ideologies associating female gender with inferiority. Employers always prefer to hire women due to their low wages. Men always prefer heavier and other such with respect to gender considering participation by women as residual being confined to work of low productivity or the labour market is patriarchal as the women are paid low wages not as a result of their productivity but as a result of activities which are treated as prestigious and more paying while women continue to perform tedious, monotonous and menial jobs.

Rice is the staple food of more than half of the world's population, most of who live in less developed countries. In terms of global food security requirements, it has been argued that rice production must be increased by 70 per cent to support the needs of the world's population by

2025 (Riveros, 1996). Women provide a source of cheap labour for rice cultivation. Women working in equal conditions on paddy fields earn two third less than men workers (Yasari, 2005), especially with respect to women working in rural areas. Improved rice production to feed current and future generations can be achieved only if the roles, responsibilities, needs and constraints of women, who carry out a considerable part of rice production are duly recognized. Hence, there is need to collect sex disaggregated data on information on men's and women's waging pattern in various paddy operations.

Though most, if not all, governments have passed legislation stipulating equal rights for men and women in the-field at work, including that of equal remuneration, the principle at equal pay for equal work has been difficult to implement for women. Thus, to give attention to inter gender differentials in wages for paddy related operations, the present study has been planned with the objectives to study the gender wise wage differentials in paddy cultivation and to explore the wage differential in additional wage activities.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected eastern zone of Haryana state since paddy is cultivated more in this zone. Two districts having maximum area under paddy *viz.*, Karnal and Kaithal were selected purposively. From each selected district, two blocks were randomly selected *i.e.* from Karnal district, Kamal and Nilokheri blocks and from Kaithal district Kaithal and