

Gender role in farm activities

J.R. RODGE AND C.M. BELLURKAR

ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken in Parbhani district of Marathwada region to correlate the selected variables and participation of rural women in farming activities. The results indicated that participation of women alone in farming activities was not cognizable, while it was quite notable as a joint venture with husbands. The correlation coefficient of rural women's participation in farming activities with different variables depicted that education and land holding were not significantly correlated, while age, occupation and family size were negatively significant, whereas type of family was correlated positively and it was highly significant. Income was not significant with participation of rural women in farming activities.

KEY WORDS : Rural women, Rural men, Participation, Farming activities, Post harvest activities

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INTRODUCTION

In India agriculture has always been a way of life rather than commercial vocation. In 70.00 per cent of the Indian population, farming is mainly a family occupation where both men and women of all ages take part in various activities related to production, processing and storage of farm produce.

Rural women play a vital role as house wives and co-partners in farming profession. As cultural and social endowment, they have the responsibility for all domestic tasks including cooking, fetching of water, washing, care of children and livestock. In addition they toil in the fields engaging various pre and post harvest operations. Majority of women work in marginal occupations to supplement family income by collection of fuel wood, fodder, practicing animal husbandry and marketing of many rural and forest produce (Srivastava, 1988). Rural women contribute about 36.00 per cent of the total employment of the agriculture.

Participation of woman in agriculture, especially in third world has been silently appreciated without much recognition (Prasad *et al.*, 1988). Thus, in reality they have remained invisible. The role of woman as an important work force, understanding wide variety of activities in farm is widely accepted, yet their role in decision making is not well identified. Unrecognizing of their participation may

be due to the variation in this role in different situation.

The present study was therefore under taken with the following objectives to find out the extent of participation of farm women in farming activities and to find out the correlation between personal characteristics of farm women with their participation in farming activities.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two villages, namely Bori and Zari located in Parbhani district of Marathwada region. A total of 150 rural housewives, 75 each from Bori and Zari villages belonging to land holding families were randomly selected. The interview schedule was formulated to elicit the specific information. Variables selected for the study were age, education, occupation, land holding, income, type of family and size of family of the respondents. The collected data were consolidated and tabulated for calculating the coefficient of correlation to indicate the relation between different variables with farm activities.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that maximum number of respondents (85.35 per cent) belonged to nuclear families and 69.36

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per cent had small families. Regarding land holding, it was observed that more than 50.00 per cent of the families had small land, while 44.67 per cent of them were having annual income between Rs. 5,000 to 10,000/-. Near about one third (36.66 per cent) of the women were in age group of 25 to 35 years. A thumping majority (83.32 per cent) of them were illiterate. As far as occupation of the respondents was concerned, it was noted that 38.67 per cent of them were employed outside as daily wage earner.

Data in Table 1 reveal the average participation of family members in farm activities. Maximum average participation of husbands alone was observed for soil testing (83.00 per cent) followed by irrigation (72.00 per cent), sowing (69.00 per cent), plant protection measures (68.50 per cent) and soil reclamation (66.00 per cent). The results are in line with the findings of All India Coordinated Research Project (Home Science, Parbhani centre) work (2009) for the activity irrigation.

The average participation for other activities, such as, inter cultivation, animal care and harvesting ranged between 41.00 to 50.00 per cent. Lower averages were denoted for post harvest activities and land preparation. Joint participation was reflected by higher averages for land preparation (91.25 per cent), post harvest activities (77.00 per cent), plant protection measures (71.50 per cent), irrigation (64.33 per cent), inter cultivation (60.66 per cent) and animal care (59.3 per cent). The similar findings were noted for animal care by All India Coordinated Research Project work (2001).

Involvement of women alone in farming activities, such as land preparation, sowing, inter cultivation, harvesting, post harvest activities and animal care ranged between 26.00 to 32.00 per cent. Meagre percentage of women alone was involved in the activities, such as soil testing, soil reclamation, plant protection measures and irrigation.

Maximum participation of other members was noted in sowing (28.25 per cent) followed by land preparation (15.75 per cent) and inter cultivation (15.66). Average participation ranging between 14.50 to 10.00 per cent were noted for the activities like plant protection measures, soil reclamation, irrigation, animal care and soil testing. The participation was low in post harvest activities and harvesting (7.37 and 4.00 per cent, respectively).

It is assessed that averages for joint participation were more for land preparation, post harvest activities, plant protection measures and inter cultivation, whereas husband's average participation dominated in soil testing, soil reclamation, sowing, irrigation and harvesting.

Table 2 denotes participation of rural families in post-harvest activities. As is evident from the table, percentage of husbands' participation alone was recorded more in the activities such as marketing (61.36 per cent), transportation (47.35 per cent), application of insecticides and pesticides (38.00 per cent) and storing vegetables and fruits (29.34 per cent).

Joint operations were observed more among 53.36 to 63.36 per cent families for the activities such as, drying of grains threshing, storing vegetables and fruits and preparation of storage bins whereas joint operations were ranging between 34.64 to 48.65 per cent for the activities like, marketing, selection of storage bins, application of insecticides and pesticides and transportation.

Women alone were engaged in the operations such as, drying (40.00 per cent), threshing (33.35 per cent), selection of storage bins (33.35 per cent) and preparation of storage bins (26.68 per cent).

Maximum participation of other members was noted for application of insecticides and pesticides (10.00 per cent) while minimum (2.00 per cent) for transportation and marketing. It is concluded that, joint participation of the couple was evidently notified more in the post-harvest

Table 1 Average participation of farm families in farm activities (n=150)

Sr. No.	Farming activities	Type of participation			
		Husband alone (%)	Husband and wife (%)	Wife alone (%)	Other family members (%)
1.	Soil testing	83.00	—	—	10.00
2.	Soil reclamation	66.00	48.00	—	14.00
3.	Land preparation	34.50	91.25	30.00	15.75
4.	Sowing	69.00	26.50	26.25	28.25
5.	Inter cultivation	41.66	60.66	32.00	15.66
6.	Plant protection measures	68.50	71.50	0.55	14.50
7.	Irrigation	72.00	64.33	1.00	12.66
8.	Harvesting	50.00	37.33	29.00	4.00
9.	Post harvest activities	37.50	77.00	27.37	7.37
10.	Animal care	49.83	59.30	26.83	12.33

Table 2 : Involvement of farm families in post-harvest activities (n=150)

Sr. No.	Post-harvest activities	Type of participation							
		Husband alone		Husband and wife		Wife alone		Other family members	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Threshing	5	3.33	85	56.69	50	33.35	10	6.63
2.	Drying grains	2	1.33	80	53.36	60	40.00	8	5.31
3.	Application of insecticides and pesticides	57	38.00	74	49.34	4	2.66	15	10.00
4.	Selection of store bins	21	13.97	72	48.02	50	33.35	7	4.66
5.	Preparation of storage bins	8	5.30	95	63.36	40	26.68	7	4.66
6.	Storing vegetables and fruits	44	29.34	91	60.66	9	6.00	6	4.00
7.	Transportation	71	47.35	73	48.65	3	2.00	3	2.00
8.	Marketing	92	61.36	52	34.64	3	2.00	3	2.00

activities.

Table 3 represents the correlation between rural women's participation in farming activities and different variables. It was noted that education, land holding and income level had no correlation with participation of rural

Table 3 : Correlation between different variables of rural women with farming activities

Sr. No.	Variables	Farm activities
1.	Age	-0.559**
2.	Education	-0.063 ^{NS}
3.	Occupation	-0.466**
4.	Land holding	-0.114 ^{NS}
5.	Income	0.043 ^{NS}
6.	Type of family	0.447**
7.	Family size	-0.521**

* - Significant, ** - Highly significant, NS=Non-significant

women and farming activities. The findings regarding education and land holding of farm women's participation are in conformity with the results stated by Singh *et al.* (1994).

It was also noted that age, family size and occupation was negatively yet highly significantly correlated with the participation of women in farm activities which denoted that with an increase in age, type of occupation and increase in the family size reflected in reduction of activities. With reference to the type of family, a positive highly significant correlation was found.

Conclusion:

It could be concluded that the participation of women alone in farm activities was not cognizable, while it was

quite notable as a joint venture with husbands. For pre-harvest activities, joint participation of the couple was evident. The correlation coefficient of rural women's participation in farming activities with variables depicted that education and land holding were not significantly correlated while age, occupation and family size were negatively significant in correlation, whereas type of family was positively and highly significant. Income was positively and not significantly correlated with participation of rural women in farming activities.

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