

Research Paper :

Inter gender discrimination in wages of paddy cultivation

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Accepted : October, 2009

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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 counterparts 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.

Key words : Gender discrimination, Wages, Women labourer

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

Pundari blocks were selected thus making a total of four blocks. From each selected block one village was selected randomly. In this way Keorak from Kaithal block, Pai from Pundari block and Uchana from Karnal and Shamgarh from Nilokheri block were selected. Thus, a total of four villages were selected. From each selected village, 50 labourers (25 males, 25 females) were selected, who were actively involved in paddy cultivation. Thus, a total of 200 labourers were selected randomly comprising equal number of males and females.

Open ended inventory was used for assessment of wages received by the respondents. Exact wages received by them were recorded on the basis of which mean wages received by male as well as female labourers were calculated. The mean wages were calculated district as well as activity wise. Difference in mean male and female wages was taken to measure per centage gap in wages. The data were collected personally by the researchers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation are presented below:

Gender wise wage differential in paddy cultivation :

It is evident from Table 1 that there was difference in mean wages in both the districts operation as well as gender wise for all the activities of paddy cultivation. As women labourers had no involvement in field preparation and marketing, therefore these two activities were not included. It was found that wages for male labourers in Kaithal district were comparatively lower for all the seven activities *i.e.* transplanting, irrigation, weeding, fertilizer application, insect pest control, harvesting, threshing, winnowing and storage of paddy than Karnal district. In case of wages of female labourers, it was again found that for fertilizer application equal wages were given in both the districts, however for rest six activities *i.e.*

transplanting, irrigation, weeding, insect pest control, harvesting, threshing, winnowing and storage female labourers of Kaithal district were paid less wages than Karnal district.

Activitywise inter gender analysis of wages highlighted the fact that female got 11.5 to 15.0 per cent less wages for transplanting of paddy. It was found that the mean wages of males were between Rs.475-500/acre and for female it was Rs.420-425/acre. Men were getting Rs.80-90/acre for irrigation and insect-pest control while females were getting Rs. 60-70/acre for these two activities indicating a gap of 22.2 -25.0 per cent in wages. Regarding weeding it was observed that the mean wages were Rs. 50-60/acre for male and Rs. 40- 50/acre for females indicating a gap of 16.7-20.0 per cent. For fertilizer application males were getting between Rs. 60-70/acre and females were getting Rs. 50/acre in both the districts. A gap of 16.6-28.0 per cent was found in male-female wages for fertilizer application.

For harvesting, threshing, winnowing and loading, the mean wages paid in of Kaithal and Karnal districts were between Rs. 1000-1200/acre for males and Rs. 900-1000/acre for females and a gap of 10.0-16.7 per cent was found in male female wages for this activity. Mean wages for males for storages were between Rs. 40-50/day but for female it was Rs. 30-35/day. Data in Table 1 further point out that in Kaithal district females were getting 11.5 - 25 per cent less wages as compared to males in various paddy cultivation activities while in Karnal district females were getting 15-30 per cent less wages as compared to males. Sankari and Uma (1995) also reported that woman's wages are lower than that of man and even if she handles physically strenuous task like transplanting, she gets 15-20 per cent lower wages than that of male worker. Concluding from the Table 1, it can be stated that the mean wages of female were less as compared to males in both the districts in all the activities of paddy cultivation.

Table 1: Gender wise wage differentials in paddy cultivation

Operation	Mean wages (Rs.)					
	Kaithal			Karnal		
	Male	Female	%age gap	Male	Female	%age gap
Transplanting	475	420	11.5	500	425	15.0
Irrigation	80	60	25.0	90	70	22.2
Weeding	50	40	20.0	60	50	16.7
Fertilizer application	60	50	16.6	70	50	28.0
Insect-pest control	80	60	25.0	90	70	22.2
Harvesting, threshing, winnowing and loading	1000	900	10.0	1200	1000	16.7
Storage (per day)	40	30	25.0	50	35	30.0

Additional wage activities undertaken by respondents:

Table 2 presents distribution of labourers engaged in additional wage employment besides agricultural labourers. These employment opportunities were mason, mason helper, pond cleaner, health worker/Dai, grain cleaner, white washer, ladies and gents tailor, *dari* maker and embroidery worker.

It was found that more females (72) than male (44) were found to undertake additional wage activities. Activity-wise distribution indicated that 10 male respondents were involved in mason work besides paddy cultivation. Equal number *i.e.* 5 each were acting as mason helper and white washer, 4 each were engaged as pond cleaner and embroidery worker. Only three and two male respondents were working as ladies tailor and *dari* maker, respectively.

It can further be inferred from Table 2 that maximum number of males were involved in construction work whereas female respondents were either working as embroidery worker or health worker *Jdai*, or involved in *dari* making, grain cleaning, and pond cleaning and

stitching. Thus, it reflects that female involvement was more as compared to male respondents in additional wage activities.

Mean wage differentials in additional wage activities:

Table 3 depicts that in both the districts males were not engaged in the additional wage earning activities such as health worker and grain cleaner while females were not engaged in building construction, mason helper, white washer and stitching of gents suits. Male members earned mean wages between Rs. 125 - 145 as mason and Rs. 85-100/day for working as mason helper. For pond cleaning, the mean wages for male were Rs. 70-80/day, while female meanwages were Rs. 60-65/ day. Regarding health worker /*dari* the females' mean wages were Rs. 150-200jcase and for grain cleaning females were getting Rs. 25- 30/ 40 kg of grain. Table further shows that regarding activities *viz.*, white washing and tailoring male mean wages Were Rs. 70-80/day and Rs. 125-150/suit in both the districts. For *dari* making males mean wages were Rs. 140-160/ *dari* and females wages Rs. 120-1501 *dari*. For embroidery work, male wages were Rs. 40-50/ heavy *duppta* and female wages were Rs. 35-40/heavy *duppta*.

Table further highlights that in Kaithal district females were getting 11- 14.3 per cent less wages in various additional wage activities in comparison to males, whereas in Karnal district females were getting 6.2-20 per cent less wages as compared to males. Conclusively, table shows that mean wages of females in various additional wages activities were also less as compared to males in both. the districts.

The study made a detailed analysis of inter gender and inter activity wage differential pattern in various paddy operations and additional wage earning activities. It was found that the mean wages of female were less as compared to males in both the districts in all the activities

Table 2 : Additional wage activities undertaken by respondents

Additional activities	Male (frequency)	Female (frequency)
Mason	10	00
Mason helper	05	00
Pond cleaner	04	11
Health worker / Dai	00	13
Grain cleaner / 40 kg	00	12
White washer	05	00
Tailor (ladies / suit)	03	11
Tailor (gents suit)	06	00
Dari maker	02	12
Embroidery worker	04	13
Total	44	72

Table 3 : Mean wage differential in additional wage activities

Additional Activities	Mean wages (Rs.)					
	Kaithal			Karnal		
	Male	Female	%age gap	Male	Female	%age gap
Mason	125	-	-	145		
Mason helper	85	-	-	100		
Pond cleaner	70	60	14.3	80	65	18.7
Health worker / Dai	-	150	-	-	200	
Grain cleaner / 40 kg	-	25	-	-	30	
White washer	70	-	-	80	-	
Tailor (ladies/ suit)	45	40	11.0	50	40	20.0
Tailor (gents suit)	125	-	-	150	-	-
Dari making	140	120	14.3	160	150	6.2

of paddy cultivation. Gap of 10.0-30.0 per cent was observed in mean male and female wages irrespective of districts. District wise gap indicated that in Kaithal district females were getting 11.5 - 25 per cent less wages in various paddy cultivation activities while in Karnal district the gap was between 15 - 30 per cent. Researchers like Yasodha (1993) and Sankari and Uma (1995) also reported that women suffer from feminization of wages and receive fewer wage than that of men even for physically strenuous task like transplantation. Thus, it is strongly felt that the legislation of actual pay for equal work needs to be implemented in true spirit and the awareness programme for 'women may be planned and implemented on sound footing to orient them regarding their right of equal pay for equal work.

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