



Comparison of extent of participation of urban, rural and tribal farm women in post-harvest activities

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ABSTRACT

Farm women constitute so significant part of working women population in our country that it necessitates a fuller understanding of their status and role not only as they now are but as they may be in future. They participate in most of the agricultural operations like sowing, irrigation, harvesting, dairy management, weeding, winnowing application of fertilizers, planting, threshing. After receiving the harvested crops in the home, it is a woman who carries all the post-harvest tasks. The study was carried out from two agro-climatic zones of Maharashtra. Nanded district was selected from Central Maharashtra Plateau zone and Nagpur district was selected from Central Vidarbha zone. This research consist sample of 410 farmwomen from urban, rural and tribal areas. The respondents were interviewed personally. In the present investigation, extent of participation of urban, rural and tribal farmwomen was compared. Extent of participation was measured as whether the activity was completely performed by the respondent or partially. The results showed that urban farmwomen were completely involved in the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level, retention of the produce for consumption and storage while they were performing the activities threshing and engagement of labourers partially. Rural women were found to be involved completely in the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level and retention of the produce for consumption whereas they were partially involved in the activities threshing and management of surplus produce at commercial level. It was noticed that tribal farmwomen were completely performing the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level, retention of the produce for consumption and management of the surplus produce at household level whereas their partial involvement was in retention of the produce for sale, post-harvest processing of produce at commercial level and management of surplus produce at commercial level

INTRODUCTION

An overwhelming majority of the women in rural India is associated directly or indirectly with agricultural

production, processing and distribution. About two third of the manual labour in farming is constituted by rural women. Irrespective of their degree of affluence, they provide 14 to 18 hour of productive physical labour every

day in a wide variety of activities directly connected with agriculture, allied and domestic chores (Manju, 2002). The women are also engaged in the post harvest operations like harvesting, grading, storing and preservation of farm produce. Once farm produce is brought to the house, further responsibility rests with women folk (Jadhav *et al.*, 2009). After receiving the harvested crops in the home, it is a woman who carries all the post-harvest tasks. It was commonly observed that the post harvest activities fall under women's purview.

It was seen that farm women participate in various physical drudgery prone operations in post-harvest production which included threshing/processing, marketing and bartering of produce, drying of produce by standing under scorching sun, winnowing in dust and sun for a long time, parboiling of rice by traditional arduous methods with hard physical labour, dehussing, shelling, pounding of cereals and pulses by hand and hand operated chakki.

Post harvest technology refers to different operations carried out after the harvest of crop for the purpose of preservation and enhancement of quality. Post harvest technology as a multi-disciplinary applied science and engineering involved scientific conservation of agricultural produce by eliminating available losses and making more nutritive foods and high value products. Generally 90 per cent of farm women are involved in various post harvest activities. Post harvest technology is important in minimizing losses, spoilage and cost in transportation, earning more profit or benefit from processed products and to raise the economic status of grower.

In order to have an in depth understanding of the participation pattern of farmwomen in post-harvest activities, the present study of women working in these activities from urban, rural and tribal areas was conducted with the following specific objectives to know the general profile of the respondents and to know the difference in extent of participation of urban, rural and tribal farm women in post-harvest activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out from two agro – climatic zones of Maharashtra. Nanded district was selected from Central Maharashtra Plateau zone and Nagpur district was selected from Central Vidarbha zone. This research consist total sample of 600 farm women. It was found that out of these 410 farm women were actually working

in post-harvest activities *i.e.* 30 women from urban, 191 women from rural and 189 women from tribal areas. These 410 farmwomen were selected for investigating their extent of participation in post-harvest activities. It was easy to get sample of farmwomen from rural and tribal areas but difficult from urban area. Hence, the localities of the urban area, where farming was done by the women, were selected.

Data were collected by administering the pre-tested interview schedule. All the respondents were interviewed personally by the investigator at work spot, which enabled her to get the first hand information. In the present study, extent of participation of the respondent was measured as whether the activity was completely performed by the respondent or partially. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for statistical analysis.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present investigation are presented below:

General profile of the respondents :

It is clear from Table 1 that majority of the women from urban (54.00 %), rural (46.00 %) and tribal (45.50 %) areas were from the category middle age *i.e.* 31-45 years.

The finding is comparable with the study of Bhamare *et al.* (2006) and Rathod (2008) who reported that majority of the Banjara women were middle aged *i.e.* in the age group of 36-50 years. This result is found to be in different line with that of Bhalerao (2002).

As far as education of the respondents was concerned, it was seen that more than one fourth (28.00 %) of the urban women were post educate. More than half of the rural (54.50 %) and tribal (54.00 %) respondents were educated up to school level. The study clearly indicates that educational level of the women in the study is fair. The results are contradictory with the studies of Mohanty (1995); Bhat (2001); Bhalerao (2002); Bhamare *et al.* (2006) and Bhojar *et al.* (2014) who noted that majority of the respondents in their studies were illiterate.

Major occupation of the selected women from rural (67.00 %) and tribal (79.50 %) areas was found to be farm labourers. These women were working on others' farms while one third (33.00 %) of the urban women were doing business related to farming activities like,

selling of agricultural implements, preparation of agricultural edible products at home (turmeric, chilli powder making, masale making etc.), dhal making, selling vegetables, flowers and garlands selling and selling preserves (papad, pickles, vermicelli etc.).

These findings in case of rural and tribal respondents are in line with the studies of Bhat (2001); Bhalerao (2002), Annual Report of AICRP – Extension Component (2003) and also Rathod (2008) who reported that majority of the respondents were having farming + farm labour as their occupation. The results in this case did not support with the results of Bhoyar *et al.* (2014) who found that majority of the urban respondents were engaged in service.

As far as family type was concerned, nuclear type of families were seen to be predominant in all the areas (urban - 66.00 %, rural - 50.50 % and tribal – 57.50 %). It is clear from the data that the trend of nuclear families has been increasing in rural and tribal areas also. Bhat (2001) and Bhalerao (2002) also reported that the percentage of nuclear families were more in a study from rural area whereas the same result was noticed by Bhoyar *et al.* (2014) in case of urban families.

It was observed that majority (65.50 %) of the urban families were small sized (up to 4 members) whereas the trend of medium sized (5-8 members) families was found in more than half of the selected rural (53.00 %) and tribal (58.00 %) families. These results are in line with Bhalerao (2002).

The annual income of the respondents' families was categorized under three income groups as up to Rs. 25,000/-, between Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 50,000/- and above Rs. 50,000/-. It was observed that a thumping majority of the rural (92.50 %) and tribal (98.50 %) and less than half (43.00 %) of the urban families had their annual income up to Rs. 25,000/-.

The result is same as Bhalerao (2002) and Rathod (2008), who mentioned that in their studies majority of the families, belonged to the lower income group. But the result is not matching to the result of Bhamare *et al.* (2006).

When the respondents were classified according to their landholding categories, it was noted that majority of the respondents from all the areas were landless (urban - 63.00 %, rural - 50.50 % and tribal 45.00 %). It may be due the reason that majority of the rural and tribal respondents were farm labour. The result is not supporting to the result of Bhamare *et al.* (2006) who reported that

majority of the respondents were having high land holding.

Extent of participation of the respondents in post-harvest activities :

Table 2 reflects that as far as the post-harvest activity, threshing was concerned, it was seen that complete participation of urban women was negligible (3.33 %) whereas it was also found that complete involvement of rural and tribal women was nil. But the partial participation of the women in this activity was noted as urban – 73.33 per cent, rural – 62.30 per cent and tribal – 55.55 per cent. It can be depicted from table that 44.44 per cent of tribal, 37.69 per cent of rural and 23.33 per cent of urban women were not found to be performing this activity. Overall it can be concluded that partial involvement of the women from all the three areas was dominant in this activity. Urban women's involvement was more than rural and tribal women.

Winnowing was the activity wherein complete involvement of urban women was less than three fourth (73.33 %), that of rural women was less than one fourth (24.60 %) and a meager (5.82) percentage was of tribal women. It can also be expressed from the table that partial participation of tribal respondents was observed slightly more than half (51.32 %), it was less than half (41.88 %) for rural respondents and less than one fourth (23.33 %) for urban respondents. It can be implied that no participation of tribal women was less than half (42.85 %), that of rural women was near about one third (33.50 %) and urban women's no participation was very less *i.e.* 3.33 per cent. From above findings, it can be said that in this activity urban women's complete and tribal women's partial participation was found and urban women's involvement was more.

The table also implies that complete involvement of less than three fourth (73.33 %) of urban women was noted in the activity cleaning while more than one third (38.21 %) and less than one third (31.21 %) rural and tribal women's complete participation was observed respectively in this activity. It is clear from the table that 23.33 per cent of urban, 38.21 per cent of rural and 51.85 per cent of tribal farmwomen were partially involved in this activity. Percentages of the women not performing this activity were less as rural –23.56 per cent, tribal – 16.93 per cent and urban –3.33 per cent. So it can be said that urban women's complete and tribal women's partial participation was more in this activity and urban

women were involved with majority in this activity.

It can be portrayed from the table that majority (83.33 %) of the urban women was completely involved in drying of the grains whereas less than half (40.83 %) of the rural and less than one third (32.80 %) of the tribal women were also found to be performing this activity completely. Partial involvement of 50.26 per cent of tribal women, 37.69 per cent of rural and 13.33 per cent of urban women

was also noted in this activity. It was observed that in this activity also no participation of women from all the three areas was less. Only 21.46 per cent rural, 16.93 per cent tribal and 3.33 per cent urban women were found to be not performing this activity. In drying also urban women's complete and tribal women's partial participation was dominant and urban women's participation was observed more.

Table 1 : General profile of the respondents							(n = 600)
Sr. No.	Particulars	Urban (n = 200)		Rural (n = 200)		Tribal (n = 200)	
		Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
1.	Age (Years)						
	18-30 yrs.	46	23.00	65	32.50	74	37.00
	31-45 yrs.	108	54.00	92	46.00	91	45.50
	46-60 yrs.	46	23.00	43	21.50	35	17.50
2.	Education						
	Illiterate	0	0.00	4	2.00	00	0.00
	Can read / write	8	4.00	74	37.00	83	41.50
	School level	52	26.00	109	54.50	108	54.00
	Jr. College/ Diploma	31	15.50	9	4.50	8	4.00
	Graduate	53	26.50	4	2.00	1	0.50
	Post Graduate	56	28.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
3.	Occupation						
	Farm labour	0	00.0	134	67.00	159	79.50
	Farming	32	16.00	96	48.00	110	55.00
	Farm related	63	31.50	15	7.50	4	2.00
	Service	63	31.50	5	2.50	7	3.50
	Business	66	33.00	13	6.50	3	1.50
4.	Family Structure						
	<i>Family Type</i>						
	Nuclear	132	66.00	101	50.50	115	57.50
	Joint	68	34.00	99	49.50	82	41.00
	Extended	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	1.50
	<i>Family size</i>						
	Small (Up to 4 members)	131	65.50	76	38.00	68	34.00
	Medium (5-8 members)	60	30.00	106	53.00	116	58.00
	Large (> 8 members)	9	4.50	18	9.00	16	8.00
5.	Family income (Rs.) Per year						
	Up to Rs. 25,000.00	86	43.00	185	92.50	197	98.50
	Rs. 25,001.00 to 50,000.00	76	38.00	13	6.50	3	1.50
	> Rs. 50,000.00	38	19.00	2	1.00	--	--
6.	Land holding						
	Landless	126	63.00	101	50.50	90	45.00
	Small (Up to 2.5 acres)	8	4.00	31	15.50	16	8.00
	Marginal (2.5 to 5 acres)	19	9.50	34	17.00	46	23.00
	Medium (5 to 10 acres)	19	9.50	15	7.50	37	18.50
	Large (> 10 acres)	28	14.00	19	9.50	11	5.50

It is evident from the table that an overwhelming majority (93.33 %) of the urban respondents was completely involved in the activity post-harvest processing of the produce at household level while more than half of the tribal (52.91 %) and rural (51.83 %) respondents were participating in this activity completely. As regards partial participation, it was noted that almost same percentages of the rural (10.99 %) and tribal (10.58 %) women and only 6.66 per cent of urban farmwomen were performing this activity. More than one third of the rural (37.17 %) and tribal (36.50 %) women had no participation in this activity whereas no woman from urban area was found who had not participated in this activity. Hence, it is clear that in this activity also urban women's participation was more whereas complete involvement of the women from all the three areas was observed.

The data in the table indicates that post-harvest processing of the produce at commercial level was carried out completely by more than one third (36.66 %) of the urban women while complete participation of rural (11.50 %) and tribal (3.70 %) women was less. When partial participation was seen, it was found that more than half of the tribal (62.96 %) and urban (60.00 %) respondents and less than half of the rural (47.64 %) women were performing this activity. More than one third of the rural (40.83 %) and tribal (33.33 %) and a meager percentage (3.33 %) of the urban women were not involved in this activity. In this case also partial participation of women from all the three areas was found to be dominant. Here urban women's participation was more.

A perusal of data furnished in Table 1 indicates that retention of the produce for consumption was the activity in which complete involvement of overwhelming majority of urban (93.33 %) women was found whereas 52.38 and 49.73 per cent of tribal and rural women, respectively were participating completely in this activity. The data in the table also implies that partial participation of women from all the three areas was observed very less as 12.56, 10.58 and 6.66 per cent of rural, tribal and urban,

(n = 410)

Sr. No.	Activity	Complete						Partial						No participation					
		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=191)		Tribal (n=189)		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=191)		Tribal (n=189)		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=191)		Tribal (n=189)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Threshing	1	3.33	0	0.00	0	0.00	22	73.33	119	62.30	105	55.55	7	23.33	72	37.69	84	44.44
2.	Winnowing	22	73.33	47	24.50	11	5.82	7	23.33	80	41.88	97	51.32	1	3.33	64	33.50	81	42.85
3.	Cleaning	22	73.33	73	38.21	59	31.21	7	23.33	73	38.21	98	51.85	1	3.33	45	23.56	32	16.93
4.	Drying	25	83.33	78	40.83	62	32.80	4	13.33	72	37.69	95	50.26	1	3.33	41	21.46	32	16.93
5.	Post-harvest processing of produce-																		
	Household level	28	93.33	99	51.83	100	52.91	2	6.66	21	10.99	20	10.58	0	0.00	71	37.17	69	36.50
	Commercial level	11	36.66	22	11.51	7	3.70	18	60.00	91	47.64	119	62.96	1	3.33	78	40.83	63	33.33
6.	Retention for Consumption	28	93.33	95	49.73	99	52.38	2	6.66	24	12.56	20	10.58	0	0.00	72	37.69	70	37.03
	Seed	9	30.00	9	4.71	13	6.87	0	0.00	29	15.18	25	13.22	21	70.00	153	80.10	151	79.89
	Sale	5	16.66	14	7.32	3	1.58	20	66.66	88	46.07	121	64.02	5	16.66	89	46.59	65	34.39
7.	Mgt. of surplus produce-																		
	Household level	0	0.00	93	48.59	99	52.38	2	6.66	26	13.61	16	8.46	28	93.33	72	37.69	74	39.15
	Commercial level	11	36.66	17	8.90	3	1.58	18	60.00	95	49.73	118	62.43	1	3.33	79	41.36	68	35.97
8.	Storage	28	93.33	93	48.59	98	51.85	2	6.66	34	17.80	30	15.87	0	0.00	64	33.50	61	32.27
9.	Marketing of produce	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.52	16	53.33	5	2.61	0	0.00	14	46.66	186	97.38	188	99.47
10.	Mgt. of revenue earned from sale of produce	0	0.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	16	53.33	3	4.18	5	2.64	14	46.66	182	95.28	184	97.35
11.	Engagement of lab.	5	16.66	5	2.61	8	4.23	22	73.33	19	9.94	11	5.82	3	10.00	167	87.43	170	89.94

respectively. The table indicates that more than one third of rural (37.69 %) and tribal (37.03 %) women were not involved in this activity. Complete participation of the women from three areas was dominant and among three, urban women's participation was more in this activity.

As far as retention of the produce for seed was concerned, it was noted from the table that complete involvement of the respondents from all the areas was less. Urban women completely involved in this activity were 30.00 per cent while percentages for tribal (6.87 %) and rural (4.71 %) women were negligible. It can be expressed that partial participation of rural women was 15.18 per cent and that of tribal women was only 13.22 per cent. No woman was found that was involved partially in this activity. It was noticed that majority of the women from all the areas were not participating in this activity with 80.10, 79.89 and 70.00 per cent from rural, tribal and urban respondents, respectively. While investigating, the selected respondents replied that they purchased the treated seed from the market. Hence they did not retain the produce for seed purpose. In this activity, no participation of women from all the areas was major but among three, urban women's participation was slightly more.

Complete involvement of the urban women in retention of the produce for the purpose of sale was 16.66 per cent and that of rural (7.32 %) and tribal (1.58 %) was negligible. It was noticed that majority of the urban (66.66 %) and tribal (64.02 %) women were performing this activity partially and less than half (46.07 %) of the selected respondents from rural area were also participating partially. Data of the table implies that less than half of the rural (46.59 %) and more than one third of tribal (34.39 %) women were found to be not participating in this activity while only 16.66 per cent of the urban women had no participation in this activity. Partial participation of women from all the areas with urban women's major involvement was observed in this activity.

As regards complete involvement of the women in management of surplus produce at household level, it can be seen that more than half (52.38 %) of the tribal women were performing this activity completely followed by the rural women (48.69 %) and none of urban woman was found to be participating in this activity completely. Partial involvement of the women from all the areas was negligible, as rural – 13.61 per cent, tribal – 8.46 per cent

and only 6.66 per cent of urban. From the table it can be observed that with an overwhelming majority (93.33 %) the urban women were found to be not participating in this activity while more than one third of tribal (39.15 %) and rural (37.69 %) women were not involved in the activity. It can be stated that tribal and rural women's complete involvement and urban women's no participation was observed in this activity.

It can be depicted that the activity management of surplus produce at commercial level was performed completely by more than one third (36.66 %) of urban women whereas a negligible percentage of rural women (8.90) and a meager percentage (1.58) of tribal women were also completely involved in this activity. More than half of the tribal (62.43 %) and urban (60.00 %) and less than half (49.73 %) of the rural women's partial involvement was observed. Figures in the table shows that no participation of 41.36 per cent of rural, followed by 35.97 per cent of tribal women was there in this activity. Only 3.33 per cent of urban women were found to be not participating in this activity. Hence it can be said that partial participation of the women from all the areas with urban women's major participation was there in this activity.

It can be portrayed that in the post-harvest activity storage, urban women were involved completely with a thumping majority (93.33 %) while 51.85 per cent of the tribal and 48.69 per cent of the rural women were also performing this activity completely. The women from tribal area were involved partially with 17.80 percentage followed by the women from rural area with 15.87 percentage. A negligible percentage (6.66) of the urban women was found to be participating partially in storage of the grains. Near about one third of rural (33.50 %) and tribal (32.27 %) women were not performing this activity. Percentage of no participation for urban women was nil. So the conclusion can be drawn that in storage activity complete participation of the women from all the areas was noted and urban women's dominant participation was also noticed.

It is a well known fact that women generally are not involved in the marketing activity due to the customs, social pressures etc. Results of the present investigation also surprisingly indicated that no urban and rural woman were completely involved in the activity marketing of the produce while a meager percentage (0.52) of the tribal women was performing this activity. It is clear that more

than half (53.33 %) of the women selected from urban area were performing this activity partially. Rural women's partial involvement was meager (2.61 %). It was also found that not a single woman from tribal area was involved in this activity partially. Table also implies that percentages of no participation for tribal (99.47) and rural (97.38) women were very high and that for urban women was more than half (46.66). Above results concluded that in marketing of the produce, urban women's partial and rural and tribal women's no participation was dominant.

Present investigation indicated more or less the same results as far as involvement of women in the activity, management of revenue earned from the sale of produce was concerned. Complete involvement of the selected women from all the areas in this activity was not noted. Only 0.52 per cent of the women from rural area were performing this activity completely. Partial involvement of more than half (53.33 %) of the urban women was observed whereas rural (4.18 %) and tribal (2.64 %) women were participating partially with meager percentages. A huge majority of tribal (97.35 %) and rural (95.28 %) women and less than half (46.66 %) of the urban women were not involved in the activity. It can be stated that in this activity also urban women's partial and rural and tribal women's no participation was dominant.

A perusal of data furnished in the table indicates that in the activity engagement of labour for the post-harvest activities, only 16.66 per cent of the urban women were completely involved whereas tribal (4.23 %) and rural (2.61 %) women's involvement was meager in this activity. It was noted that less than three fourth (73.33 %) of the selected urban women were performing this activity partially. Rural (9.94 %) and tribal (5.82 %) women's partial participation in this activity was negligible. It is evident from the table that majority of the tribal (89.94 %) and rural (87.43 %) and a less percentage (10.00 %) of the urban women were found to be not performing this activity. Hence, it can be stated that here also urban women's partial and rural and tribal women's no participation were noticed.

Overall it is inferred that urban women's involvement in majority of the post-harvest activities was observed more, compared to rural and tribal women. It may be due the fact that these activities are performed at the home. In actual farming, the urban women can not go on

their farms and work but after receiving the produce at home, they can participate in these activities.

Conclusion :

Urban farmwomen were completely involved in the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level, retention of the produce for consumption and storage while they were performing the activities threshing and engagement of labourers partially. Major areas of their no participation were management of surplus produce at household level and retention of produce for seed. Rural women were found to be involved completely in the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level and retention of the produce for consumption whereas they were partially involved in the activities threshing and management of surplus produce at commercial level. Areas of no participation of the rural farmwomen were marketing of produce and management of revenue earned from the sale of produce. It was noticed that tribal farmwomen were completely performing the activities post-harvest processing of the produce at household level, retention of the produce for consumption and management of the surplus produce at household level whereas their partial involvement was in retention of the produce for sale, post-harvest processing of produce at commercial level and management of surplus produce at commercial level and they were not participating in the activities marketing of produce and a management of revenue earned from the sale of the product.

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