

Gender analysis in agriculture production

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Women are not only reproductive agent of civilizations but also a strong living supporters of sustainable development of any society. Study shows that the contributions of women in the farm operation range between 36-40 per cent in general and 60-70 per cent of labour input is provided by them which increases up to 80 per cent in agriculture during the peak of season that is harvesting time. Gender issues are no more the complicated problem in today's world of science and technology as more labour saving devices, productivity increase and income contributing devices have come into existence to equip women more efficiently. Active participation in decision making process assists them in achieving more empowerment.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Gender analysis, Agricultural, Production, Decision making

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Woman is the key input of household at first, then partner in agriculture, industries and service sectors. According to United Nations publication on "Women challenges of 2002" they contribute 2/3 of the work's hours, earn only 1/3 of total income, owns less than 1/10 of the world resources and 1/100 of world's property. Women of the farm families work on an average seven to eight hours a day in the field, this is besides their routine duties of cooking, cleaning fetching water etc. Women perform varieties of tasks in agriculture such as weeding, fertilizer application, harvesting, threshing and other miscellaneous works. Women also participate in activities like, sowing, transplanting, manuring, growing vegetables etc.

In India, a pair of bullocks works for 1069 hrs, a man 1212 hrs and a women 3485 hrs in a year on a one hectare farm and the figure illustrates women's significant contribution to agricultural production. The purpose of the present study was that although they are significantly contributing in agricultural operations but not yet given any appreciation or recognition for their work. The women still remain as an invisible worker in society. The people normally think that the farmers should always be a man only. These are nothing but the facts of gender biasness and discrimination. That's why the position of women in employment, earning education, health status and decision

making opportunities are not up to the mark :

A report of social watch (2004) states that women suffer from hunger and poverty in greater numbers and to a great degree than men. In India maternal mortality rates in rural areas are among the world's highest accounting from 19 per cent of live births and 27 per cent of maternal death.

On the basis of the above facts, the study was designed with the following objectives :

- To analyse the farm women's role participation in agricultural operations.
- To asses the decision making power of farm women pertaining to farm and home issues.
- To study the farm women's perception on some selected gender issues in agriculture production.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Samastipur district of Bihar. In the first stage, out to 15 blocks, two blocks namely, Kalyanpur and Pusa, which have more or less similar socio-economic status were selected randomly. In the second stage of sampling, 30 respondents from 2 villages of each selected blocks were selected through simple random sampling method. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. The data thus collected were analyzed accordingly.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

Farm women participation in agricultural production:

The Government and the societies are recognizing women's role in different disciplines of life. In agricultural production, the participation level of women is almost 60 to

90 per cent.

Table 1 shows the form women participation in different agricultural operations. However, agricultural operations like transplanting, weeding were exclusively performed by women only. Other operations like seed clearing, wheat harvesting were another top ranking activities. Fodder collection and weeding operation are the highest ranking activities among woman.

Table 1 : Farm women participation in agricultural operations

Activities	Dominant role	Supporting role	No role
Field preparation	14.00	13.67	72.33
Paddy transplantation	31.66	26.67	41.67
Compost making	49.33	25.67	25.00
Carrying inputs of field	11.66	25.33	63.00
Manuring and fertilizer	3.33	29.33	67.33
Irrigating the crops	3.0	11.67	85.53
Construction	11.0	14.33	74.67
Weeding operation	59.67	37.00	3.33
Harvesting the crops	49.66	26.67	23.67
Thrashing operations	2.67	51.00	46.33
Vegetable and fruit production	68.33	29.33	3.33
Storage of farm produces	60.33	30.39	9.33
Food preservation	92.66	2.00	5.34
Cleaning and milling of farm produces	41.67	56.67	33.66
Tending farm cattle collecting fodder	92.00	2.33	5.67
Milking cattle	84.00	14.00	2.00
Selling/buying of livestock	69.67	13.33	17.00

Table 2 : Women's contribution in economic decision making

Stage of decision making	Male	Female	Jointly
Money management			
Keeping money	64.18	31.55	4.27
Going to bazaar	60.37	26.81	12.82
Buying/selling of major			
Livestock	38.99	3.02	57.99
Purchasing farm material			
Buying farm inputs	65.85	8.29	25.86
Buying farm implements	66.42	1.89	31.69
All farm materials	66.14	5.09	28.77
Purchasing decisions			
Buying food materials	42.23	24.41	33.36
Household items			
Disposal of farm produce	29.53	29.87	40.60
Selling of food grains			
Selling of vegetables	26.41	58.76	14.83
Selling of small animals	12.52	75.29	12.19
Borrowings			
Decision of taking loans	68.39	15.99	15.62
Decision of repaying loans	73.39	15.62	10.99
Saving and other capital transactions			
Of saving	70.25	11.35	18.40
All money related decisions	49.98	22.90	27.12

Table 3 : Women's perceptions on some selected gender issues in agriculture

Gender issues	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Average weighted mean score	Overall position stoma
Modern agricultural implements are designed mostly for women	19	33	48	0.7	Neutral
Women are agricultural workers but training designed for women are mostly non-agricultural	54	39	7	1.49	Neutral
Women farmers not attending training program because they are overworked in farm and home	89	10	1	1.87	Neutral
Women farmers are not allowed by men	59	22	29	1.40	Neutral
There are no special provisions for women workers	55	30	15	1.39	Neutral
Women don't take loan because they lack property	75	13	12	1.52	Neutral
Men think women are not worthy to take loan	41	31	28	1.12	Neutral
Taking loan is culturally specified as man's job	24	29	47	0.77	Neutral

It also shows that almost 95 per cent women were involved in dairy cattle management and food preservation work. The other task *i.e.* manuring and fertilizer application are still the male dominated activities and women's role is secondary, whereas in the activities like weeding and harvesting women's are in dominant role.

Women's contribution in economic decision making :

Another aspect taken into consideration in the present study is to access the decision making power of farm women in home and farm related issues. Table 2 illustrates the position of women in decision making.

Table 2 reveals that overall only 23 per cent women get an opportunity of independent decision in comparison to male (49.98%) which indicates their poor involvement in money management process. Whereas they were more involved in household economic decisions.

Women's perceptions on some selected gender issues in agriculture :

The perception of women on some selected gender issues were studied to generate their active participation in agricultural production (Table 3). The study showed that about 48 per cent women felt that modern agricultural implements designed were not for women. Again 54 per cent women complained that although women are agricultural worker, training programmes designed for them were non-agricultural and the training programmes related to farm fields were the pedagogy of male only. Almost 59 per cent women indicated that the reason behind not attending the training programme was that they were not allowed by their men counterparts.

Rural credit is essential for agricultural production and about 75 per cent women fully agreed that the lack of property for collateral prevents them from taking loan.

The neutral weighted mean score indicates that gender issues are no more problem of rural population in terms of credit facilities or agricultural implements but it is due to the lack of confidence, family pressure and customs etc. It

is therefore, needed to bring change in behaviour pattern and attitude of farm population whether in women themselves or in men and family. Kapoor (1998), Patel (1993) and Reddy (2002) have also made some observations on related aspects of the present investigation.

Conclusion :

On the basis of above study following suggestions are given to development agencies :

- Concentration should be made on developing women specific devices *i.e.* time and labour saving, productivity increasing and income contributing mechanical tiller for weeding and community flour grinder.
- Proper training should be arranged as most of women are not given proper wages because of their unskilled performance.
- Awareness should be created among women of their decision making power so that greater they involve themselves in activities decisions more the empowerment they may get achieved.

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