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WOMEN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN GULBARGA: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract:-Women are playing significant role in agricultural work and processes and more than half of the working population in agriculture are women. But, they are facing many problems such as exploitation from employers, no security for work and job, seasonal employment, lower wages, wage discrimination, etc. A sample survey of 142 women agricultural workers working in Gulbarga taluka in Karnataka was made with interview technique. The social aspects to a greater extent depends on work life of the women agricultural workers. It was concluded that there is need for social security schemes for women agricultural workers and self-employment is also suggested for these workers during off-seasons. It is also suggested to increase awareness among people on gender equality.

Keywords: Women Agricultural , Sociological Study , agricultural operations , Methodology.

1.INTRODUCTION

Women constitute nearly half of the adult population in India and 77% of them belong to the rural areas. The major occupation of rural women is agriculture and related activities, thereby contributing about three-fourth of the labour required for agricultural operations. Considering this background, prosperity and the growth of not only a nation but also the remaining half of the population depend on the status and development of its female population. In India, nearly 222.52 million (33.45%) are main agricultural workers and 22.09 million (3.22%) are marginal workers. Of these workers 177.55 million (79.80%) are males and 44.97 million (20.20%) are females, and of the marginal workers 3.54 million (15.57%) are males and 18.55 million (84.43%) are females. While the proportion of men in agricultural employment decreased from 70 to 64% between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of women remained virtually unchanged at above 80 percent. In India, agriculture accounts for 32 per cent of the national gross product. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities (National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, 2007).

Majority of women workers (66.8 percent) are employed in agricultural and allied sectors, such as fishing, crop production, animal husbandry, etc. according to 1991 census. Women employed in this sector are 80.7 per cent, compared to 62.7 percent for men. In rural areas, 89.5 per cent of total females employed are engaged in agricultural and allied industrial sector (Peter and Others, 2008).

The Statistics of Karnataka (Planning Commission, 2007) revealed the following information pertaining to gender-wise labour force in 1993-94 and 1999-2000:

**Persons in the Labour Force in Karnataka:
1993-94 and 1999-2000 (Figures in Percentages)**

Area	Gender	1993-94		1999-2000	
		Karnataka	India	Karnataka	India
Rural	Female	61.5	48.8	55.5	45.6
	Male	89.4	87.6	88.5	85.4
	Persons	75.7	68.8	72.2	66.2
Urban	Female	24.7	23.4	25.2	20.9
	Male	80.6	79.9	78.3	78.6
	Persons	53.8	53.3	52.7	51.1
Total	Female	49.8	42.0	45.4	38.5
	Male	86.5	85.4	85.0	83.5
	Persons	68.6	64.5	65.6	61.8

The present study is made to analyze the social aspects of women agricultural workers in Gulbarga taluka of Karnataka.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

To know the social background such as caste, age, etc of the women agricultural workers; and
To ascertain social life of women agricultural workers in Gulbarga taluka.

Scope and Methodology:

The present study is made in Gulbarga taluka in Karnataka state. Total 200 women agricultural workers were surveyed from different villages and as few of the interviews were incomplete due to rejection of the respondents to provide complete information, total 58 interviews were not considered and the collected primary data from total 142 women agricultural workers is analyzed and discussed as under.

1. Age-wise distribution of the Respondents:

Age is a considerable factor while determining the work that has to be made in agriculture. To a major extent, it is also a criterion to determine the wages that are paid to the agricultural labourers. As the present study covered about 142 women respondents, their age-group is as under:

Table No. 1. Age-wise distribution of the Respondents

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 18 Years	26	18.31
19-25 Years	33	23.24
26-35 Years	28	19.72
36-45 Years	36	25.35
Above 45 Years	19	13.38
Total	142	100

The study covered about 26 (18.31%) respondents of below 18 years of age group, about 33 (23.24%) of the respondents are of 19-25 years, about 28 (19.72%) of the respondents are of 26-35 years of age group, about 36 (25.35%) of the respondents are between 36-45 years of age group and remaining 19 (13.38%) are of above 45 years of age group.

2. Caste-wise distribution of the Respondents:

Caste is also an important determinant in deciding the occupations of the people. Caste is an essential factor to know especially in Indian culture, where there are innumerable castes and classes in the society. The various castes are grouped and the following table disclosed the caste-wise distribution of the respondents covered under the present study.

Table No. 2. Caste-wise distribution of the Respondents

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Scheduled Caste	33	23.24
Scheduled Tribe	21	14.79
Other Backward Classes	56	39.44
Others	32	22.53
Total	142	100

From the above table it is observed that about 33 (23.24%) of the respondents covered under the study belongs to Scheduled Caste, about 21 (14.79%) of the respondents belongs to Scheduled Tribe, about 56 (39.44%) of the respondents are from Other Backward Classes and the remaining 32 (22.53%) of the respondents are from other classes.

3. Education level of the Respondents:

Educational qualifications of the respondents help to know about their knowledge in their work. It is noted that in many of the studies the agricultural labourers are illiterates or possessed lower-education. The following table disclosed the education level of the respondents covered under the present study:

Table No. 3. Education level of the Respondents

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	68	47.89
Upto 5 th Standard	36	25.35
From 6 th - 10th Standard	32	22.53
Above 10 Standard	06	4.23
Total	142	100

The table revealed that of the 142 (100%) respondents covered under the study, a major portion that is 68 (47.89%) are illiterates, followed by 36 (25.35%) of the respondents are having education up to 5th Standard, about 32 (22.53%) of the respondents are having education between 6th Standard to 10th Standard and the remaining about 06 (4.23%) of the respondents are having education above 10th Standard.

4. Family Background:

It was asked to the respondents, from where they have come to these villages, whether they have rural or urban background. The responses of the women agricultural labourers covered under the study are presented in the following table:

Table No. 4. Family Background

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Rural	105	73.94
Urban	37	26.06
Total	142	100

It is observed from the above table that a major portion of the respondents, that is about 105 (73.94%) of the respondents are from rural background and the remaining 37 (26.06%) are came from urban background.

5. Marital Status of the Respondents:

Marital status of the respondents is an important factor in deciding the family background and such other information about the respondents. Hence, it was asked to the respondents about whether the respondents are single, married, divorcee or widow. The collected information is shown as under:

Table No. 5. Marital Status of the Respondents

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	29	20.42
Married	89	62.68
Divorcee	04	2.82
Widows	20	14.08
Total	142	100

Of the total 142 respondents covered under the present study about 89 (62.68%) are married, followed by 29 (20.42%) of the respondents are unmarried, about 20 (14.02%) are widows and the remaining 04 (2.82%) of the respondents are divorcees.

6. Equality in Marital Relations:

In many families, there is no equal status for women, as a sister, wife, daughter, mother or even grand daughter. In society, still the male members are preferred as superior having more authority in the family. Women are treated as subsidiary and unequal in the families. Hence, it is necessary to know whether the women agricultural labourers are treated as equal to husband in their families. For this purpose, it was asked to the women agricultural labourers that, whether women agricultural workers have equal partnership in marital relations between their husbands and themselves and also whether both husband and wife (respondents) respect each other equally in their families. The collected data is presented in the following table:

Table No. 6. Whether equal in Marital Relations with Husband

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	29	25.66
No	84	74.34
Total	113	100

It is noted from the above table that of the married women agricultural labourers covered under the present study, only 29 (25.66%) of the respondents are treated equal with husband in their families and the remaining 84 (74.34%) of the respondents are not treated equal in their families with their husbands.

7. Number of Children in the Family:

It was asked to the respondents, whether their families having children and give details about the number of children in their families. It also helps to know about the family welfare attitudes of the respondents. The following table disclosed the collected information from the respondents covered under the present study:

Table No. 7. Number of Children in the Family

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 2 children	58	40.84
3 to 5 children	48	33.80
Above 5 children	07	4.93
Not Applicable	29	20.42
Total	142	100

The collected information revealed that about 58 (40.84%) of the respondents have less than 2 children, followed by about 48 (33.80%) of the respondents have 3 to 5 children, about 07 (4.93%) of the respondents have above 5 children and for the remaining 29 (20.42%) of the respondents, this is not applicable.

8. Family background:

It was asked to the respondents, from where they have come to these villages, whether they have rural or urban background. The responses of the women agricultural labourers covered under the study are presented in the following table:

Table No. 8. Family Background

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Rural	105	73.94
Urban	37	26.06
Total	142	100

It is observed from the above table that a major portion of the respondents, that is about 105 (73.94%) of the respondents are from rural background and the remaining 37 (26.06%) are came from urban background.

9. Work Satisfaction of Women Agricultural Labourers:

To do any work, there is need for work and job satisfaction. Unless there is satisfaction in the work, the work done will not be good. Hence, work and job satisfaction play an important role in hard work, efficiency, productivity of any worker. The work satisfaction as stated by the women agricultural workers covered under the present study is stated as under:

Table No. 9. Work Satisfaction of Women Agricultural Labourers

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfactory	22	15.49
Satisfactory	57	40.14
Not Satisfactory	63	44.37
Total	142	100

The above table made it clear that relatively major portion of the women agricultural workers covered under the study expressed that they are not satisfied with their work. In particular, about 63 (44.37%) of the women agricultural labourers covered under the study stated that they are not satisfactory about their work, followed by about 57 (40.14%) of the respondents stated that their work is satisfactory and the remaining 22 (15.49%) of the women agricultural labourers are stated that their work is highly satisfactory.

10. Satisfaction in Social Life:

Social life and its satisfaction is one of the essential factors in every person's life. It will accelerate the economic life and work of the people. Hence, it was asked to the respondents, whether they are satisfied with their social life. The women agricultural labourers covered under the present study are responded as under:

Table No. 10. Satisfaction in Social Life

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Satisfied	46	32.39
Satisfied to a Greater extent	37	26.06
Not Satisfied	59	41.55
Total	142	100

Of the 142 (100%) respondents covered under the present study, about 46 (32.39%) of the respondents are stated that they are fully satisfied with the social life, about 37 (26.06%) of the respondents stated that they are satisfied to a greater extent in their social life and the remaining 59 (41.55%) of the respondents are not satisfied in their social life.

SUGGESTIONS:

Following suggestions are made from the present study.

1. Gender equality is essentially needed for women agricultural workers in family and society, as many of the respondents are not satisfied in their social life due to gender inequality.
2. There is also no satisfaction of women workers in agriculture as opined by majority of the respondents; there is lower wages, exploitation, job unsecured, etc. Hence, there is need to fix minimum wages to different agricultural works and processes by

the Government.

3. Awareness on Family planning is essentially need to be given to the women agricultural workers as there are more than two children in families of the respondents.

CONCLUSION:

Agricultural labourers constitute the major portion of the workforce in unorganized sector. These labourers have no status, lack of work security, lower wages, uncertain future, seasonal unemployment, etc. Further, in case of women agricultural labourers there are also problems such as exploitation, wage discrimination, inequality, etc.

As noted from the present study, the women agricultural labourers covered under the present study are illiterates. Hence, there is need for the empowerment of these labourers. Further, it is noted that the social status of these labourers is low and there is urgent need to uplift the social status of the women agricultural labourers. As already discussed the agricultural work is seasonal. As a result, the women agricultural labourers are unemployed during the off-seasons. In this way, the women labourers are facing problems of economic insecurity. For this purpose, there is need to assure employment by providing necessary assistance to the women agricultural workers by self-employment programmes.

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