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CONTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL WOMEN AND PROBLEMS FACED
BY THEM IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN NANDURBAR
DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA



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ABSTRACT

Rural women of Nandurbar district play a significant and crucial role in agriculture. They undertake different type of agricultural activities. About 70-80% of the rural women are involved in agricultural production and post harvest activities, The agricultural activities in which the women play a very leading role in the district are, cleaning of fields, field preparation, sowing, weeding, threshing, winnowing, intercultural practices, harvesting, picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains etc. but worldwide her hard work has mostly been unpaid and they remain invisible workers. Hence the present study was undertaken to determine the role

performance of rural women in various activities. A total sample of 120 tribal women were selected as respondents through random sampling technique with the objective of studying different activities performed and the problems faced by them in doing these activities. Relevant data were collected with the help of personal interview technique, field observation and case studies were framed. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

KEYWORDS : *Agriculture Activities, Problems, Tribal Women, Nandurbar District.*

INTRODUCTION

Women form the backbone of agriculture, in India, Comprising the majority of agricultural laborers; women have been putting in labour not only in terms of physical output but also in terms of quality and efficiency. Women are critical to the well-being of farm households. Aside from raising children, women are expected to prepare all meals, maintain the homestead, and assist in crop and animal production, all the while tending to the general health of their families. Perhaps, ironically, it is because women have so many responsibilities that they have been over-looked by agriculturalists and policy makers – it has been more convenient to label men as farmers and women as child raisers and cooks. In truth, women are involved in all aspects of agriculture, from crop selection to land preparation, to seed selection, planting, weeding, pest control, harvesting, crop storage, handling, marketing, and processing. Despite women's critical contribution to the family income through productive activities, no recognition is given to them as an important contributor and their

contribution is not recorded. They are still remained invisible workers. In addition there are many other problems which the rural farm women are facing such as, difficulties in carrying major agricultural operations, unhygienic condition in the field, time management between farm and household activities etc. Keeping the above background in mind an attempt was made to analyze the role performance and problems faced by farm women in agricultural operations.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra in the year 2013-14. A sample of 120 farm women was selected through random sampling technique. Selected respondents were interviewed personally using well structured interview schedule. Interview schedule was consisting of two parts. First part deals with background information of respondents and second part was constituted to find out different activities performed and problems faced by farm women in agriculture. The data thus collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical tool to infer results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 depicts that (41.67 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age group followed by young age (30.83 %) and old age (27.50 %) group. It was also revealed that around 51.66 percent of respondents were belonged to nuclear family and followed by (48.33%) were joint family. Result on family income shows that majority (60 %) of respondents were belongs to below Rs.20,000 followed by (16.67%) income group Rs. 20,000- 40,000,(15.83%)income group Rs. 40,000-60,000 and (7.50 %) income group above Rs. 60000 annually. Results on cast categories indicate that maximum (70%) were from schedule tribes followed by schedule caste (23.33%) and rest of respondents (6.67%) were belonged to other backward class and none of the respondents were from general. While looking at their educational status, results revealed that majority (90%) respondents were illiterate and only 10 percent of the respondents were literate. Result on land holding depicts that majority (57.50%) were had small scale land followed by medium scale (31.67%) and only 10.83 percent had large scale land.

Table 1. Demographic information of respondent

Variable	N=120		
	Categories	N	Percentage
Age	Young(<30)	37	30.83
	Middle(31-40)	50	41.67
	Old(>40)	33	27.50
Type of Family	Joint Family	58	48.33
	Nuclear Family	62	51.67
Annual Family Income(Rs.)	Below 20,000	72	60.00
	20,000-40,000	20	16.67
	40,000-60,000	19	15.83
	60,000 & Above	9	7.50
Caste	General	00	00
	OBC	08	6.67
	Schedule Caste	28	23.33
	Schedule Tribes	84	70.00
Education	Illiterate	108	90.00
	Literate	12	10
Land Holding	Small	69	57.50
	Medium	38	31.67
	Large	13	10.83

The data in Table 2 reveals that transplanting, cutting, picking, winnowing, drying of grains and cleaning of grains are the major farm operations where in women participation was 100 percent. It was observed that gap filling(98.33%),sowing(96.67%), Shifting produce to threshing floor(93.33%),Thinning(88.33%),Cleaning of field(85%),Raising nursery seedling (79.17%), Threshing(77.50%) operations in which the participation of farm women was more than 75 percent. The tasks Manure application (71.67%), Grading (67.50%), Storage (52.50%), Processing (51.67%) and Irrigation (43.33%), in which farm women was varied between 40-75 percent. Least involvement of farm women was found in marketing (3.33%) and Plant protection measures (2.50%).there was no no participation of farm women reported in ploughing and leveling.

Table 2 Participation of rural women in agriculture activities in Nandurbar District

S. No	Farm activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ploughing of field	00	00
2	Cleaning of field	102	85
3	Leveling of field	00	00
4	Raising nursery seedling (chilly, tomato, pea)	98	79.17
5	Sowing	116	96.67
6	Transplanting	120	100
7	Manure application	86	71.67
8	Fertilizer application	52	43.33
9	Weeding	120	100
10	Thinning	106	88.33
11	Gap filling	118	98.33
12	Irrigation	52	43.33
13	Plant protection measures (use of insecticides, pesticides)	03	2.50
14	Harvesting of crop and cutting of grass	120	100
15	Picking	120	100
16	Shifting produce to threshing floor	112	93.33
17	Threshing	93	77.50
18	Winnowing	120	100
19	Drying of grains	120	100
20	Cleaning of grains	120	100
21	Grading	81	67.50
22	Storage	63	52.50
23	Marketing	04	3.33
24	Processing	62	51.67

Farm women engaged in different agriculture activities and they suffer from various health problems showed in Table 3. Cent percent of the respondent feel that their diet is not balanced and unhealthy followed by Backache, headache, fatigue/restless (75.83%) and Unhygienic condition in the field (53.33%) While looking at their management problems, results revealed that majority (90%) respondents face great difficulty in managing the time between farm and home while 53.3% respondents face Difficulties in carrying major operations like crop harvesting /transplanting, rice cultivation /sowing etc. Result on Financial problems depicts that majority (95%) were face Lack of finance followed by lack of resources (85%) because of Low self confidence, lack of knowledge, belief

that women are subordinate to male counterparts, illiteracy, poor access of to farm information were the major constraints.

Table 3 Problems faced by rural women in Nandurbar District.

Problems	N=120	Percentage
Health problems		
Backache, headache, fatigue/restless	91	75.83
Unhygienic condition in the field	64	53.33
Need of healthy diet	120	100
Management problems		
Management of time between farm and home	108	90
Difficulties in carrying major operations like crop harvesting /transplanting, rice cultivation /sowing	83	69.17
Financial problems		
lack of resources	102	85
Lack of finance	114	95

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It may be concluded that the farm women play an important role in agricultural activities but their hard work is unseen. A study of farm women in different activities in Nandurbar district showed that women are actively engaged in all major agriculture related activities such as ploughing, cleaning and leveling of fields; raising nursery; sowing seeds, transplanting, manure and fertilizer applications, weeding, irrigation etc. Study also shows that majority of the women suffered from minor health problem, management problem and financial problem.

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