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Nature and extent of agricultural activities performed by women labour in Sindhudurg district of Konkani region (Maharashtra)

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Abstract

In the Konkani region women are engaged in all agricultural activities starting from application of manure, stubble picking, *rabbing*, sowing, transplanting, processing, cleaning and storage on joint activities with men. The consequent to out migration of male family member responsibility of the farm and agriculture gets automatically transferred to the women along with other household and outside work. In view of this the present study focus on the nature and extent of women involvement in agriculture and household activities. Women in study area are actively involved in rice cultivation. Their involvement in operation like collection of *rab* material (68.82%), transplanting (77.17%), weeding (74.46%) and harvesting (55.80%) is notable. However, their contribution in agriculture not considered as like men. It is revealed that per day 12.95 hours were devoted for domestic activities followed by 1.87 hours for agricultural activities. Whereas, farm women had only 9.18 hours as a leisure's time. This indicated the devotion made by women for family which is not appreciated at all. The study was conducted purposively in Sindhudurg district of Konkani region in Maharashtra as extent of migration is more in this district. From Sindhudurg district three tahsils viz. Sawantwadi, Kudal and Vengurla were selected randomly. From each tahsil four villages were selected randomly. From selected village ten respondents were selected randomly. Thus, the final sample consisted of 120 sample respondents. Data collected were analysed by using conventional statistical tools like mean, average, percentage and frequency.

Keywords: Women, average, frequency, Konkani region, migration, Sindhudurg

Introduction

The rural women work hard in agriculture than their counterparts. They are involved in most of the agricultural operations like application of manures, land preparation, sowing, dibbling, planting, transplanting, weeding, hoeing, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, threshing, shelling, winnowing, cleaning, storing food grains, feeding the cattle, looking after milch animal and poultry, kitchen gardening etc. So female workers face a double burden of doing 'unpaid' as well as 'paid work.' The evidence that women work apart from their low paid work is that they have to spend almost 10-12 hours per day on household chores, collection of wood, cooking, child care besides their contribution to agriculture production, animal husbandry and other related activities of the household for which the economic work of their labour is not valued.

The nature and extent of women's involvement in farming activities differs by geographical area. Likewise, the employment of women and management profession in agriculture varies greatly by region, type of agriculture, crops cultivated, and also by class and caste. Throughout the country women from high cast generally from land owing household do not involve in field work despite the fact that they are associated with the post-harvest within the house stead.

In the Konkani region women are engaged in all agricultural activities starting from application of manure, stubble picking, *rabbing*, sowing, transplanting, processing, cleaning and storage on joint activities with men. The consequent to out migration of male family member responsibility of the farm and agriculture gets automatically transferred to the women along with other household and outside work. In view of this the present study focus on the nature and extent of women involvement in agriculture and household activities.

Women comprise about 43 per cent of the global agricultural labour force and of that in developing countries, but this figure masks considerable variation across region and within countries according age and social class.

The labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men, and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibility related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water (Cheryl Doss 2011) [4].

Objectives

1. To identify the nature and extent of agricultural activities performed by women labour in Sindhudurg district of Konkan region.
2. To assess the time distribution of rural women in household activities.

Methodology

Study area

The study was conducted purposively in Sindhudurg district of Konkan region in Maharashtra as extent of migration is more in this district. From Sindhudurg district three tahsils viz. Sawantwadi, Kudal and Vengurla were selected randomly. From each tahsil four villages were selected randomly. From selected village ten respondents were selected randomly. Thus, the final sample consisted of 120 sample respondents.

Collection of data

The data were collected by survey method from the selected respondents. Interview Schedule (questionnaire) was used as a research instrument to elicit information on women work participation.

Analysis of data

Data collected were analysed by using conventional statistical tools like mean, average, percentage and frequency.

Result and Discussion

Role of rural women in farming activities

The rural women perform numerous labour-intensive jobs such as weeding, transplanting, collection of *rab* material, rabbing, threshing, winnowing, storage etc. Women are also expected to collect wood for fuel, bringing water, shed cleaning and other daily household activities. The data with respect to overall nature and extent of agricultural activities performed by farm women are presented in following section.

Operation wise participation of women in agriculture

It was observed that women spent 14.72 hours for preparatory tillage operations. Among the different tillage operations maximum time was spent on collection of *rab* material. The average 68.82 per cent hours spent for collection of *rab* material followed by rabbing (21.53%) and bed preparation (5.70%). This revealed that collection of *rab* material and rabbing is labour intensive operation performed by women.

Preparatory Tillage Operations

Table 1: Average participation of women in preparatory tillage operation (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Tillage operation	Time spent
1	Collection of Rab Material	10.13 (68.82)
2	Rabbing	3.17 (21.53)
3	Cleaning	0.29 (1.97)
4	Puddling	0.26 (1.77)
5	Ploughing	0.033 (0.22)
6	Levelling	0 (0)
7	Bed preparation	0.84 (5.70)
	Total	14.72 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

Cultivation operations

The Table 2 revealed that total time devoted to cultivation operations was 39.07 hours. The maximum (77.17%) time was spent on transplanting followed by sowing (12.80%) and fertilizer application (10.03%). The maximum time devoted to transplanting could be attributed to the fact that this operation is mainly performed by women labour, though it is a back breaking operation.

Table 2: Average participation of women in cultivation operation (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Cultivation operations	Time spent
1	Sowing	5 (12.80)
2	Transplanting	30.15 (77.17)
3	Fertilizer application	3.92 (10.03)
	Total	39.07 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

Intercultural operations

It is noticed from Table 3 that on an average 49.89 hours were spent for intercultural operations. Among the intercultural operations 74.46 per cent time was devoted to weeding followed by thinning (11.91%) and gap filling (11.41%). Very meagre time was spent on irrigation (1.52%) and spraying (0.70%) operations.

Table 3: Average participation of women in intercultural operation (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Intercultural operation	Time spent
1	Weeding	37.15 (74.46)
2	Irrigation	0.76 (1.52)
3	Thinning	5.94 (11.91)
4	Gap filling	5.69 (11.41)
5	Spraying	0.35 (0.70)
	Total	49.89 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

Harvesting

It is evident from Table 4 that 57.67 hours have been spent on harvesting and related activities. Among the different post-harvest operations farm women spent 55.80 per cent time on harvesting followed by threshing (15.61%) and transport (11.81%). The time spent on winnowing and storage accounted to 9.38 and 7.40 per cent respectively.

Table 4: Average participation of women in Harvesting operation (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Harvesting activities	Time spent
1	Harvesting	32.18 (55.80)
2	Transport of harvested crop	6.81 (11.81)
3	Threshing	9 (15.61)
4	Winnowing	5.41 (9.38)
5	Storage	4.27 (7.40)
	Total	57.67 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

The forgoing analysis implied that women in study area are actively involved in rice cultivation. Their involvement in operation like collection of *rab* material, transplanting, weeding and harvesting is notable. However, their contribution in agriculture is not considered as like men.

Processing activities

It is observed from Table 5 that 42.82 per cent hours were

devoted for collection of fruits and 57.17 per cent for drying/cleaning. While, very meagre time (0.005%) was devoted for sorting of fruits. The total time spent on fruit processing was worked out to 175.97 hours.

Table 5: Average participation of women in Processing activities (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Processing activities	Time spent
1	Collection of fruits/grading	75.36 (42.82)
2	Drying/Cleaning	100.61 (57.17)
3	Sorting	0.0083 (0.005)
	Total	175.97 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

Time distribution of rural women in household activities

Throughout the day women plays a vital role in household as well as agricultural activities. They make essential contribution to the household activities. Still the women work is not appreciated and not adequately recognized by the society. Total time devoted for domestic activities is depicted in Table 6

Table 6: Average time spent by women in Household activities (Figures in Minute)

Sr. No	Household Activity	Involvement
1	Home cleaning	22.79 (2.93)
2	Cooking	212.53 (27.35)
3	Sweeping	18.95 (2.44)
4	Shed cleaning	24.41 (3.15)
5	Bringing water	33.70 (4.33)
6	Backyard cleaning	18.91 (2.43)
7	Milking	6.16 (0.80)
8	Watering plants	3.95 (0.50)
9	Wood collection for fuel	57.75 (7.42)
10	Fodder collection	21.91 (2.81)
11	Utensil's cleaning	33.20 (4.27)
12	Laundry	89.54 (11.51)
13	Children care	42.33 (5.45)
14	Care of old family member	15.33 (1.97)
15	Drop children to school and pick up from school	3.04 (0.40)
16	Going to flour mill	26.66 (3.45)
17	Vegetable and fruits purchasing	20.45 (2.63)
18	Grain purchasing from PDS	55.87 (7.18)
19	Grocery shopping	13.16 (1.70)
20	Banking	21.15 (2.72)
21	Other	35.5 (4.56)
	Total	777.29 (100)

Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total

It was observed that women spent about 12.95 hours (777.29 minutes) per day on household activities. It is evident from Table 6 that maximum time i.e., 3.54 hours per day spent on cooking, followed by laundry (11.51%), grain purchase from PDS (7.18%) and fuel wood collection (7.42%) of the time spent per day on domestic work. It is observed from Table 6 that per day women spent on average 5.45 percent time for looking after children and cleaning of utensils (4.27%).

Table 7: Daily per family time distribution in different activities (Figures in hours)

Sr. No	Activity	Hours
1	Domestic activities	12.95 (53.95)
2	Agricultural Activities	1.87 (7.80)
3	Leisure's time	9.18 (38.25)
	Total	24 (100)

(Figures in parentheses represent percentage to total)

It could be seen from Table 7 showed that the per day time spent by women in household and agricultural activities and how much leisure time she has. The Table 7 revealed that per day 12.95 hours were devoted for domestic activities followed by 1.87 hours for agricultural activities. Whereas, farm women had only 9.18 hours as a leisure's time. This indicated the devotion made by women for family which is not appreciated at all.

Conclusions

Traditionally women have played an important role in agriculture-as farmers, co-farmers, wage labour and managers of farms. They have conventionally been producers of food from seed to kitchen. The most important, but most neglected human resource is that of farm women. Even though, the rural women have been playing the multiple roles she has not received due attention with regard to development of her personality. It is therefore, obvious that the success of all the rural development strategies depends, to a large extent, on the ability and involvement of the farm women. In order to improve the performance of diversified roles by farm women in agriculture, it is necessary to identify arts of farm operation in which they are deficient in knowledge and skill.

The study assessed the nature and extent of participation of women in farming activities. The extent of participation of women in agriculture is maximum during the harvesting season as carrying bundle of harvested crop to the threshing yard is a heavy task which is performed mostly by women.

The farm women hardly had 9.18 hours as a leisure's time. She is actively involved in domestic as well as agricultural activities. Her work for family member is continued till the night. Moreover, her work is not counted and considered as unproductive.

The farm operations like transplanting, weeding are back breaking. In view of this it is suggested to introduce mechanization in rice cultivation in the study area.

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