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## Problems faced by farm women in the use of drudgery reduction equipments

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### Abstract

Agriculture contributing more than 15 percent GDP to India economy is the biggest unorganized sector where large numbers of women are working for their livelihood. They are playing important role in most of the farm operation like land preparation, seed treatment, sowing, planting, weeding, intercultural operation, irrigation of crop, application of manures and fertilizers, protection of crop, harvesting, threshing, storage etc. Most of these tasks are tedious as well as time consuming as done manually or by traditional tools, which cause drudgery, physical & mental fatigue, monotony hardship, exploitation, pain, economic stress etc. Drudgery reduction is possible by the use of simple, scientific and appropriate drudgery reduction equipments but the use of such tools in the study area was negligible. Therefore this study was carried out in Alwar district of Rajasthan to investigate the problems and obstacles faced by farm women in the use of drudgery reduction tools. The study was conducted in two villages of one randomly selected gram panchyat from panchyat samiti Laxmangaarh. From each village, 25 farm women were selected randomly. Thus the sample of the study comprised of 50 farm women. Five drudgery reduction tools i.e. serrated sickle, wheel hoe, fertilizer broadcaster, maize sheller and kudali were selected for study. Finding shows that cost of the equipments was severe problem for majority of farm women. All most two-third farm women conformed that drudgery reducing tools take more time in use and continuous use of these tools create back pain. It was reported that sharp blade of the equipment restricts the use of tools. Rustiness of tools, getting handle loose, use of tools in clay soil was also faced either most severely or severe problem. On the same way majority of the farm women reported that wheel hoe does not remove the weeds properly. It was also concluded that Lack of labour, lack of technical knowledge, requirement of cleaning, more consumption of energy and time etc. problems were faced by a significant numbers of farm women as severe. Therefore it can be concluded that a large numbers of problems being faced by farm women so they are using these tools to a small extent.

**Keywords:** farm women, drudgery reduction equipments, agriculture

### Introduction

Agriculture is the way of life for people of India, a tradition which for centuries has shaped the thought, the outlook, the culture and economic life. Agriculture is the single largest production sector contributing more than 15 percent of GDP for India economy. Therefore, agriculture is important sector for all strategic planning for socio-economic development of the country. Rapid growth of agriculture is essential not only to achieve self reliance at national level but also for household food security and to bring about equity in distribution of income and wealth resulting in rapid reduction in poverty line (Shrivastava *et al* 2010) [3]. Agriculture is considered as the biggest unorganized sector where large numbers of women are working for their livelihood. According to the international labour organization (ILO, 2009) [1] women constitutes a high percentage of the labour force, about 428 million women are working in agricultural sector around the world. According to census, 2011 most of the employment in India is concentrated in the agriculture sector and in rural areas 81 percent female workers are engaged in agricultural and allied activities. Rural women form the most productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing countries like India. They are playing an important role in most of the farm operation like land preparation, seed treatment, sowing, planting, weeding, intercultural operation, irrigation of crop, application of manures and fertilizers, protection of crop, harvesting, threshing, storage etc. There is hardly any activity in agricultural production, except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. In some of the farm activities like processing and storage, women are dominant so strongly those men workers numerically insignificant.

Most of these tasks performed by women are tedious as well as time consuming. As most of these operations are done manually (using foot or hand) or by using traditional tools, they are

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slow and cause considerable fatigue and drudgery. Many of these operations are traditionally done in varying body posture some of which if done for long duration are not only inconvenient but also cause body pain. The farm women put in hard physical labour beyond their capacity. All these factors result in physical and mental fatigue, monotony hardship, exploitation, pain, economic stress etc. The plight of the women in this regard is alarming as they are constrained by illiteracy, poor health, unemployment, low technical knowhow and skill. The result is that women's needs for comfortable work participation remain neglected. Drudgery reduction is possible outcome that makes women work with improved productivity capacity and health. A desired change in the life of rural women, which is full of drudgery, can be brought by the use of application of simple, scientific and appropriate technologies.

There are growing number of available technology which can enhance women's productivity and income in agriculture sector but these technologies have not reached to the women. Therefore it is necessary that women become technologically empowered in agriculture sectors. It is possible to achieve this by up-gradation of their knowledge and skills about these technologies. Keeping in mind poor status of women in agriculture, present study was carried out.

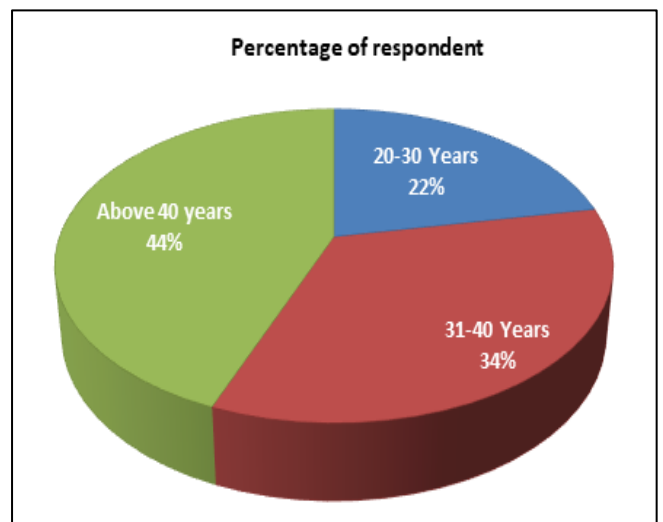
**Research Methodology**

The present study was conducted in Alwar district of Rajasthan. Alwar district was selected purposively and due to reasons that the student researcher is well acquainted with the local dialect of Alwar district which facilitated in collecting reliable and correct information from the respondents. Administratively the district is divided into fourteen panchayat samities, out of which one panchyat samiti Laxmangaarh was selected purposively. From the selected panchyat samiti one village panchayat Khohara-Malawali was selected randomly, out of this selected village panchayat two villages namely khohara and malawali was selected randomly. From each selected village, 25 farm women were selected

randomly. Thus the sample of the study comprised of 50 farm women. Random sampling technique was used for selection of the farm women from selected villages. According to requirement of study area five drudgery reduction tools i.e. serrated sickle, wheel hoe, fertilizer broadcaster, maize sheller and kudali were selected for study.

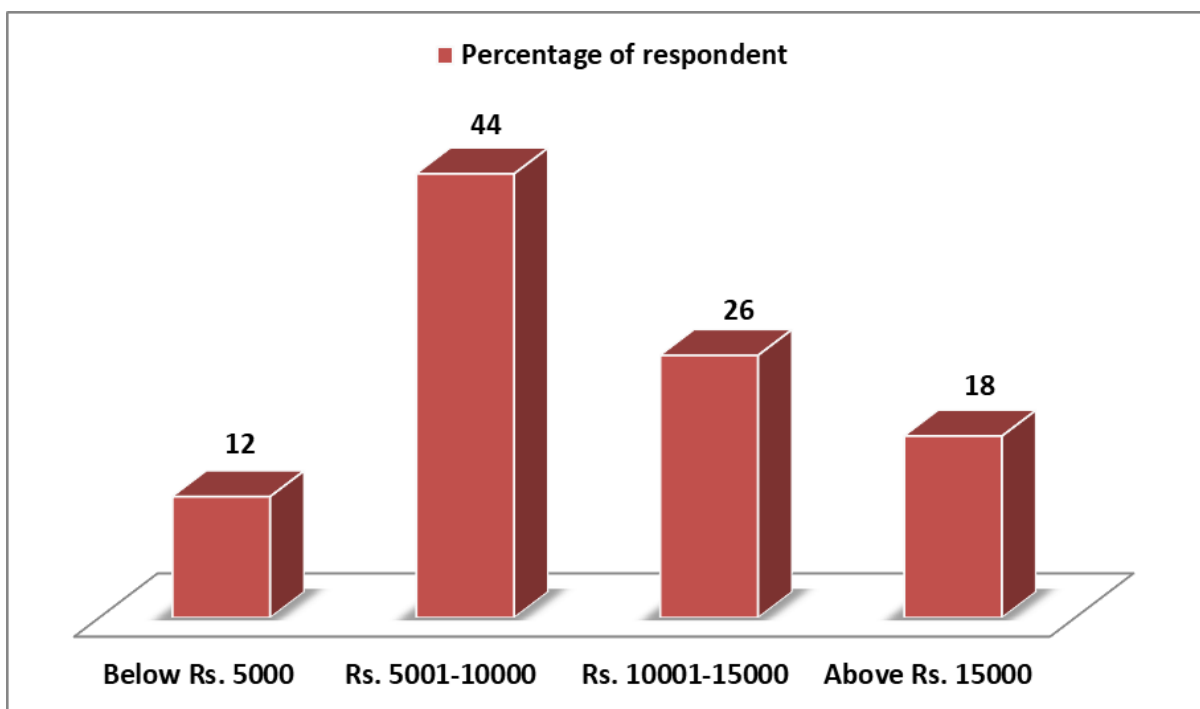
**Background Information of Respondents**

The present study has portrayed the background of the respondents specially age, education, caste, family type, annual income, occupation and farming work time etc. discussed by the following tables.



**Fig 1:** Distribution of respondents by their age

Figure 01 indicates distribution of respondents by their age group. Majority of the respondents (44%) were in the age group of above 40 years, while (34%) of the respondents were in the age group of 26-35 years and only (22%) of respondents were in the age group of 15-25years.



**Fig 2:** Distribution of respondents by their family income

Figure 02 shows that maximum numbers of respondents (44%) were having monthly income between Rs. 50001-10000, whereas 26 percent farm women having their income between Rs. 10001-15000 per month, only 18 percent respondent were having monthly income above Rs. 15000. A small number of farm women 12 percent was reported having income below Rs. 5000 per month. From the above data, it can be concluded that family income of the farm women was not good.

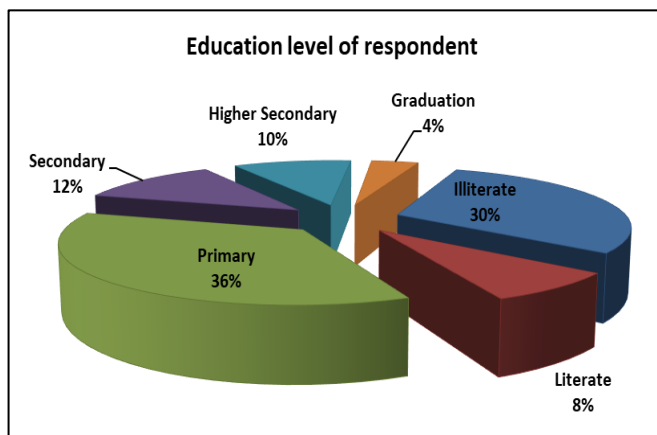


Fig 3: Distribution of respondents by their education level

The data presented in figure 03 indicate that majority of respondents' 36 percent were having primary level of education, but a large number of farm women (74%) were

either uneducated or educated up to primary educated. A significant number of respondents (30%) were illiterate. Only few 04 percent farm women had higher education. Overall it can be concluded that level of education of farm women was poor.

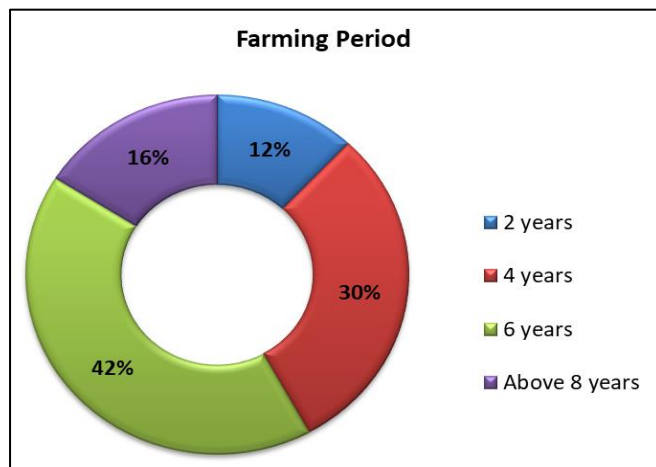


Fig 4: Distribution of respondents by their farming work time

The data presented in figure 04 indicate that majority of the respondents 42 percent were doing farming from 06 years followed 16 percent more farm women who was in farming since more than 08 years. A significant number of respondent (30%) were reported in farming from the 4 years while only 12 percent were doing from 2 years.

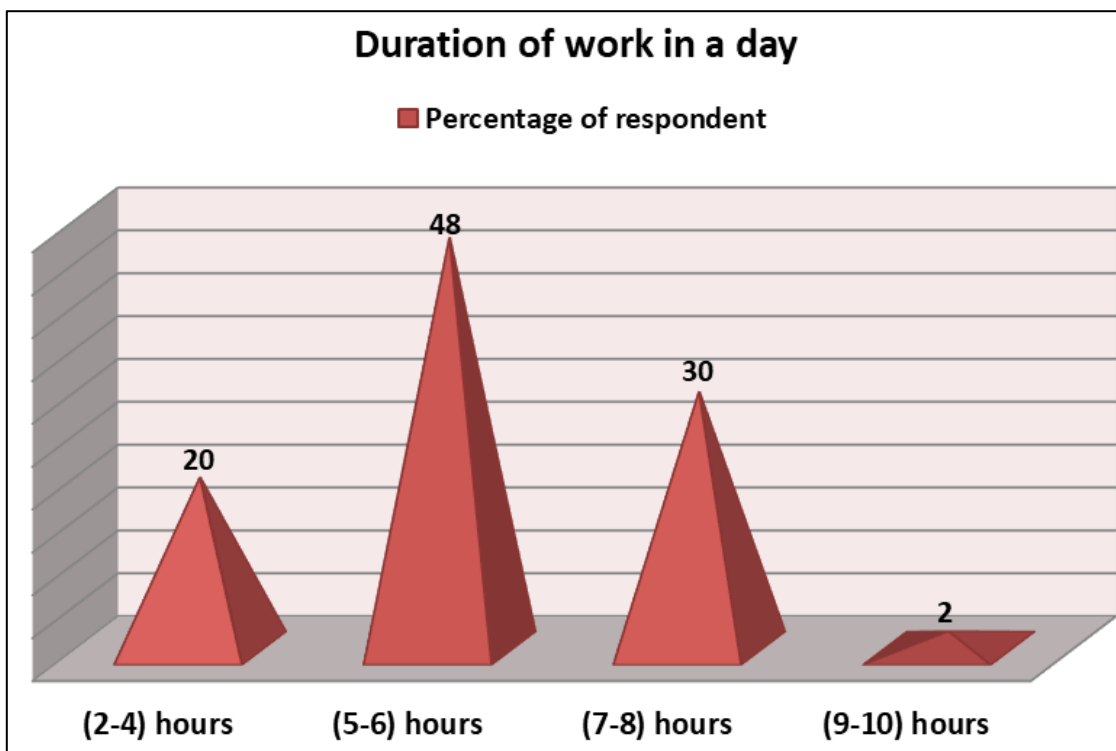


Fig 5: Distribution of respondents by their duration of work

The results in figure 05 indicate that 48 percent of the farm women were working 5 to 6 hours in a day at their farm, whereas 30 percent of the farm women were doing work in the fields 7 to 8 hours in a day. These numbers show that women spent a long time in their farm and fields. Only 20 percent of the respondents were found doing work 2-4 hours in field in a day.

**Result and Discussion**

In the present study, the term problems mean the barriers or obstacles, which were perceived by the respondents in using drudgery reduction tools. It is needless to mention that use of such equipments can be augmented by overcoming the perceived constraints. So it was felt necessary to overcome the perceived problems which prevented the farm women to

use drudgery reduction tools. In the present context, the problems faced by the respondents about drudgery reduction

equipments were identified and the results are presented in subsequent tables:

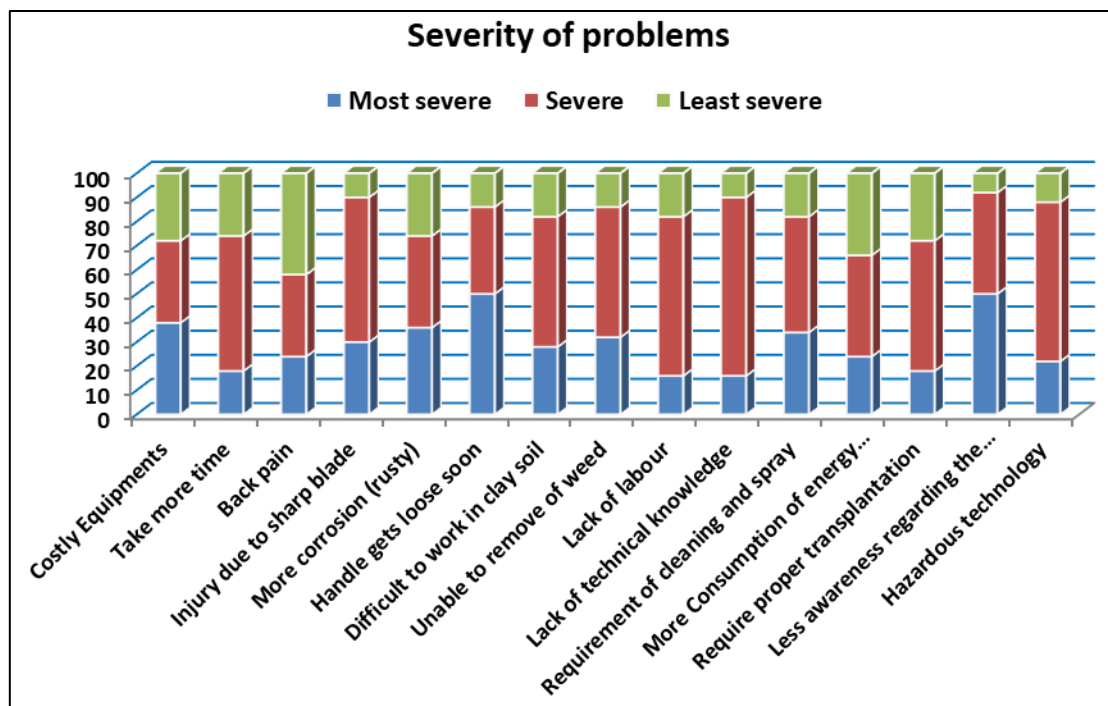
**Table 1:** Problems faced by farm women in the use of drudgery reducing equipments

N=50

S. No.	Problems	Frequency of importance					
		Most Severe		Severe		Least Severe	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Costly Equipments	19	38.00	17	34.00	14	28.00
2	Take more time	9	18.00	28	56.00	13	26.00
3	Back pain	12	24.00	17	34.00	21	42.00
4	Injury due to sharp blade	15	30.00	30	60.00	5	10.00
5	More corrosion (rusty)	18	36.00	19	38.00	13	26.00
6	Handle gets loose soon	25	50.00	18	36.00	7	14.00
7	Difficult to work in clay soil	14	28.00	27	54.00	9	18.00
8	Unable to remove of weed	16	32.00	27	54.00	7	14.00
9	Lack of labour	8	16.00	33	66.00	9	18.00
10	Lack of technical knowledge	8	16.00	37	74.00	5	10.00
11	Requirement of cleaning and spray	17	34.00	24	48.00	9	18.00
12	More Consumption of energy and time	12	24.00	21	42.00	17	34.00
13	Require proper transplantation	9	18.00	27	54.00	14	28.00
14	Less awareness regarding the amount of fertilizer	25	50.00	21	42.00	4	8.00
15	Hazardous technology	11	22.00	33	66.00	6	12.00

Table 01 reveals that cost of the equipments was most severe problem for 38 percent respondents followed by 34 percent who perceived as severe. While for 28 percent respondents the high cost of tools was not much severe problem. It was assumed as problem that these drudgery reducing tools take more time in use and the data conforms that 74 percent of the

respondents found it either most severe or severe problem for use. On the other hand for 26 percent farm women it was least severe. The continuous use of these tools create back pain was considered as constraint and it was reported that for 42 percent of farm women it was least severe problem. For 34 percent respondents it was sever problem.



**Fig 6:** Severity of the problems faced by farm women in the use of tools

The problem of injury due to sharp blade was perceived by 30 percent of the respondents as most severe followed by 60 percent as severe problem therefore it can be concluded that sharp blade of the equipment restricts the use of tools. The problem of rustiness of tools was faced most severely 36 percent respondents followed by 38 percent as severe problem. Most of the respondents faced the problem of getting handle loose as severe and most severe. Majority of

the respondents faced the problem either most severely or severely to use the selected tools in clay soil. It was also reported that 28 percent respondents face the severe problem with wheel hoe that it does not remove weeds. The same problem was faced by 54 percent farm women as severe. Lack of labour, lack of technical knowledge, requirement of cleaning, more consumption of energy and time etc. was also faced by a significant numbers of farm women as severe.

Therefore it can be concluded that a large numbers of problems being faced by farm women so they are using these tools to a small extent.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded that cost of the improved equipments was severe problem for majority of farm women. All most two-third of the respondents conformed that drudgery reducing tools take more time in use. The continuous use of these tools create back pain was considered as an important constraint by majority of farm women. From the findings above it can be concluded that sharp blade of the equipment restricts the use of tools. The problem of rustiness of tools, getting handle loose, use of tools in clay soil was also faced either most severely or severe problem by majority of respondents. On the same way majority of the farm women reported that wheel hoe does not remove the weeds properly. It was also concluded that Lack of labour, lack of technical knowledge, requirement of cleaning, more consumption of energy and time etc. was faced by a significant numbers of farm women as severe. Therefore it can be concluded that a large numbers of problems being faced by farm women so they are using these tools to a small extent.

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