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Sweta Sahoo
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Agricultural
Extension and Communication,
SOA, Bhubaneswar, Odisha,
India

Ashish Anand
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Extension
Education, OUAT,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Aliva Das
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Soil Science and
Agricultural Chemistry, Institute
of Agricultural Sciences, SOA
University, Bhubaneswar,
Odisha, India

Somyashree Mishra
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Plant Breeding
and Genetics, Institute of
Agricultural Sciences, SOA
University, Bhubaneswar,
Odisha, India

Swagat Subhadarshi
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Agronomy,
Institute of Agricultural
Sciences, SOA University,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Gayatri Sahoo
MSc. 2nd Year, Department of
Agricultural Extension and
communication, Institute of
Agricultural Sciences, SOA
University, Bhubaneswar,
Odisha, India

Corresponding Author
Sweta Sahoo
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Agricultural
Extension and Communication,
SOA, Bhubaneswar, Odisha,
India

Association between socio-economic profile and level of participation of rural women in farm activities in Bhadrak district of Odisha

Sweta Sahoo, Ashish Anand, Aliva Das, Somyashree Mishra, Swagat Subhadarshi and Gayatri Sahoo

Abstract

The present study was conducted in Bhadrak District of Odisha to find out the role of rural women in farm activities. A total of 120 respondents were selected randomly for the present study. The data were collected through a pre-structured interview schedule and later appropriate statistical analysis was done to find out the meaningful result. The results showed that the farm women were engaged in almost all farm related activities. However, they were actively participating in sowing, transplanting, weeding, winnowing, drying, packaging etc. but they were having less participation in activities like field preparation, manure and fertilizer application, irrigation, threshing, transportation, etc. The association between some selected independent variables with participation of women in farm related activities was also found. Education, mass media exposure and extension contact were found to be significantly related to participation of rural women in pre harvest and post harvest activities.

Keywords: Participation, pre structured, association rural women, farm related activities

1. Introduction

"If you teach a man to farm, his family will eat.
If you teach a woman to farm, the community will eat."

Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Agriculture needs manpower, if the manpower split into gender wise, amazing fact is that the women contribution is greater or equal to men (Chauhan, 2011) [4].

The International Development Community has recognized that agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in countries where it is the main occupation of the poor (Anselm, 2010). Agriculture is a driver of economic development and food security. According to the Penguin Atlas of Women in the World, women make up 40 per cent of the agricultural labour force in most parts of the world, while in developing countries they make up 67 per cent of the agricultural workforce (Singh, 2008) [13]. Therefore, strengthening and expanding women's roles and opportunities in agriculture promotes sustainable economic development. Gender inequalities are a measurable and significant limit on agricultural productivity and efficiency, undermining rural economic development.

On the basis of fact and data based research, it can be stated that increasing number of rural women in India are not simply housewives but are in fact farmers. We have today plenty of empirical evidence to show that women do participate practically in all regions, crop zones and at different stages of agricultural production. Many research studies depicted that rural women's contribution to the farm sector in respect of operations and decision making been ignored.

Women have played and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support system such as land, water flora and fauna. They have conserved soil through organic recycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of flora diversity and genetic resistance, therefore without the total intellectual and physical participation of women it will not be possible to popularize alternative system of land management and sifting cultivation (Chauhan, 2011) [4].

Rural women are the back-bone of the Indian Agriculture. Cultivations is the main occupation of rural women. No field operation is beyond her might. They are best in sowing, transplanting, weeding, manuring, harvesting, winnowing, threshing, storing, marketing, rearing livestock and poultry etc. In many of their operation they are more efficient than man. Women participation in farming system the all India pasture regarding the participation of both women and men in the farming system is generally as follows with minor regional variations (Bhagirathi, 2016) [2]. Though some of the operations are defined as gender specific, such as preparation of land, application of fertilizers, user of pesticides is done by men and some of the operation like transplanting weeding, compost making, storage is being normally done by women. However, there is no rigid role specification in actual practice. Ploughing is not normally done by women, but the preparation of land is done by hoeing as in shift cultivation practiced in hill areas, for transplanting normally women labours are preferred.

The participation of rural women in Agriculture depends on the land holding, size of the families and their class and caste. The extent of their participation also depends on the local cropping pattern and mode of Agriculture i.e., mechanized partially mechanized or fully labour intensive. The participation of rural women in Agriculture and home making activities assumes great, importance for economic development. The analysis on women's participation in the process of development has suggested that the majority of the women in developing countries remain isolated from the process of economic development. Because of this isolation from development activities, like technical knowledge, health care, family planning etc. rural women remain far behind.

Non availability of time is an important reason for non-participation of women in various agricultural and home making activities. The present study aims at exploring the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural and home making activities. This will serve as feedback for strengthening the existing development programmers and planning and making then more meaningful.

2. Research Methodology

The present study was conducted in the Bhadrak district of the Odisha state. They prominently and actively participate in various farming activities and contribute in their household economy. There are 07 tehsils and 07 blocks functioning in the District. Bhadrak rural block was selected by purposive sampling for the research due to more population of farm women. There are 169 villages in Bhadrak Rural Block. Out of these, 10 villages were selected for the present study. Those 10 villages were Jaggannathpur, Ramkrishnapur, Charampa, Gelpur, Govindpur, Harisankarpur, Jagadapur, Kasalpur, Olang, Sabrang. From total selected 7 tribal dominated villages, 120 respondents were selected randomly. The structured interview schedule was prepared for data collection. Descriptive research design was used for this study. The statistical tools such as frequency, percent and chi-square test were used to interpret the data and for drawing logical conclusion.

3. Results and Discussion

Women's role as food producers is related also to their role as mothers and nurtures and in sustaining their families and communities. Their work is integral to the quality of life of people. Most of the rural women labourers are landless,

homeless and belong to the socially and economically depressed classes of the society. Rural women in our society are exploited and denied their basic rights. Their inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights are not recognized in the society. Though, their socio-economic status, the nature and mode of work and the way of people's life have been changed along with the new development in the society. But the society particularly, rural society is not still ready to accept any change in women's role, work position and status because of the orthodox and conservative beliefs in villages. The rural women of Bhadrak District of Odisha are actively involved in various farm activities.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents:

N=120

S. No	Independent variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young (18-35)	63	52.50
		Middle (36-55)	48	40.00
		Old (above 55)	09	7.50
2.	Education	Illiterate	26	21.67
		Primary School	27	22.50
		Upper primary	32	26.66
		Secondary	18	15.00
		Higher Secondary	10	8.33
		Graduation and above	04	3.33
		Others	03	2.50
3.	Land holding	Below 1 acre	13	10.83
		1-2 acre	87	72.50
		2-3 acre	16	13.34
		Above 3 acre	04	3.33
4.	Annual income	Less than 75,000	44	36.67
		75,001- 1.5 lakh	62	51.66
		Above 1.5 lakh	14	11.67
5.	Family size	Upto 5	58	48.34
		5-10	46	38.34
		Above 10	16	13.32
6.	Family type	Nuclear	58	48.34
		Joint	62	51.66
7.	Mass media exposure	Low(6-7)	27	22.50
		Medium(7.1-8)	56	46.67
		High(8.1-9)	37	30.83
8.	Extension contact	Low(7-9)	21	17.50
		Medium(9.1-11)	55	45.84
		High(11.1-13)	44	36.66

From the table 1, it was concluded that 52.50 per cent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18 - 35 years i.e young age, 26.66 per cent of the respondents were educated up to upper primary. In terms of land holding, majority of the respondents i.e 72.50 per cent of the respondents had land holding of 1 to 2 acre and 51.66 per cent of the respondents have an annual income of 75,000-1.5lakh. 48.34 per cent of the respondents had family size up to 5 members and 48.34 per cent of the respondents have nuclear family.46.67 per cent of the respondents had medium level of mass media exposure and 45.84 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension contact.

3.1 Participation of respondents in various farm activities

Rural women were found to be actively involved in many farm related activities. Farm activities were categorized as pre-harvest activities, harvesting and post-harvest activities.

Table 2: Participation of respondents in pre-harvest activities

Sl. No.	Activity	Always(F)	Percentage	Sometimes (F)	Percentage	Never(F)	Percentage	Mean	Rank
1	Field preparation	03	2.50	35	29.17	82	68.33	1.34	VII
2	Rasing nursery	38	31.66	64	53.34	18	15	2.16	IV
3	Sowing	81	67.50	32	26.67	07	5.83	2.61	III
4	Transplanting	91	75.83	29	24.17	0	0	2.75	I
5	Manure and fertilizer application	32	26.67	69	57.50	19	15.83	2.10	IV
6	Irrigation	14	11.67	58	48.33	42	35	1.66	VI
7	Weeding	89	74.17	29	24.16	02	1.67	2.72	II

Table 3: Level of Participation in pre harvest activities

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low(10-12.3)	24	20.00
2	Medium(12.4-14.7)	52	43.30
3	High(14.8-17)	44	36.70
Total		120	100.00

From the above data, it is concluded that in pre-harvest activities women have medium level of participation i.e 43.30 per cent. Most of the women were involved in transplanting with a mean score of 2.75 which was ranked I followed by weeding with mean score 2.72 sowing with mean score of 2.61, raising nursery 2.16, manure and fertilizer application 2.10, irrigation 1.66 and women participation was least in case of field preparation with a mean score of 1.34.

Table 4: Participation of respondents in harvesting and post-harvest activities

Sl. No.	Activity	Always(F)	Percentage	Sometimes(F)	Percentage	Never(F)	Percentage	Mean score	Rank
1	Harvesting	38	31.67	68	56.66	14	11.66	2.2	IV
2	Threshing	07	5.83	45	37.50	68	56.67	1.49	VI
3	Winnowing	64	53.34	43	35.83	13	10.83	2.91	I
4	Drying	102	85.00	16	13.34	02	1.66	2.83	II
5	Grading	38	31.67	58	48.33	24	20.00	2.11	V
6	Packaging	58	48.33	53	44.17	09	7.50	2.40	III
7	Transportation	0	0	23	19.17	97	80.33	1.19	VII

Table 5: Level of Participation in harvesting and post harvest activities

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low(11-12.6)	28	23.33
2	Medium(12.7-14.3)	56	46.67
3	High(14.4-16)	36	30.00
Total		120	100.00

From the above data it was concluded that maximum women were involved in winnowing with a mean score of 2.91 which got the first rank followed by drying 2.83, packaging 2.40, harvesting 2.2, grading 2.11, threshing 1.49, transportation 1.19. The overall population in harvesting and post-harvest activities was found medium i.e 46.67 per cent.

3.2 Association between selected independent variables with level of participation

Table 6: Association between selected independent variables with participation of respondents in pre-harvest activities

Sl. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient value
1	Age	-0.49(NS)
2	Education	0.66(MS)
3	Caste	0.06(NS)
4	Annual income	0.13(NS)
5	Mass media exposure	0.91(HS)
6	Extension contact	0.99(HS)

-NS- Non-significant
 -MS-Mild significant
 -HS-Highly significant

From the above data, it is concluded that mass media exposure and extension contact had highly significant relationship with participation of women in pre – harvest activities, education had mild significance with participation

in pre-harvest activities whereas age, caste and income of respondents had no relationship with participation of respondents in pre-harvest activities.

Table 6: Association between selected independent variables with participation of respondents in harvesting and post-harvest activities

Sl. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient value
1	Age	-0.02(NS)
2	Education	0.93(HS)
3	Caste	0.52(MS)
4	Annual income	0.58(MS)
5	Mass media exposure	0.99(HS)
6	Extension contact	0.89(HS)

-NS- Non-significant
 -MS-Mild significant
 -HS-Highly significant

From the above data, it is concluded that education, mass media exposure and extension contact had highly significant relationship with participation of women in harvesting and post – harvest activities, caste and annual income had mild significance whereas age of respondents had no relationship with participation of respondents in harvesting and post-harvest activities.

4. Conclusion

It has been concluded from the study that majority of the respondents were in young age group, belonged to Hindu religion and most of them belonged to OBC. Most of them had semi- cemented house, lived in joint family. A majority of the respondents practised agriculture as their main occupation, owned land area of 1 to 2 acres. The study revealed that women’s overall participation was maximum in transplanting, weeding, sowing, drying of agricultural produce, storage, value addition. It was also concluded that mass media exposure and extension contact were significantly associated

with extent of participation of rural women involved in farm related operations.

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