

Women in Agriculture

Seema Yadav^{1*} and Shubham Mishra²

¹Department of Extension Education, RCA, MPUAT, Udaipur, ²Department of Extension Education, S.K.N. College of Agriculture, Jobner, Jaipur.

***Email-** seemayadavsy91@gmail.com

Abstract

The Indian economy is dependent on agriculture and more than 70 percent of our population living in rural areas is engaged in agriculture. Among the rural population, women are associated directly or indirectly with agriculture. Thus, farm women must be recognized as an important unit contributing to the economic growth of the country. Women play a vital role in agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. In Indian society, women have a multi-dimensional role. The largest numbers of women in India are engaged in farming operations either as cultivators or as supervisors or as agricultural labourers. Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction in rural areas. Women play critical, diverse roles in livestock and agricultural production in the rural economies of developing countries as unpaid workers.

Keywords: Role, Agricultural activities, rural women.

Our Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal once said that, “You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of women”. Therefore, we can say that growth and prosperity of any country can be measured by the status and development of its women. The Indian economy is dependent on agriculture and more than 70 percent of our population living in rural areas is engaged in agriculture. Among the rural population, women are associated directly or indirectly with agriculture. Thus, farm women must be recognized as an important unit contributing to the economic growth of the country. Women play a vital role in agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries.



In Indian society, women have a multi-dimensional role. Participation of women is not limited to agricultural activities only but they are contributing significantly towards livestock management. The largest numbers of women in India are engaged in farming operations either as cultivators or as supervisors or as agricultural labourers. Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction in rural areas. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2011), women farmers account for more than quarter of the world's population. Doss (2011) clearly showed that women comprise about 43% of the agricultural labour force globally. Rural women are the main participants in various agricultural operations like seed sowing, weeding, transplanting, harvesting, threshing, application of manure, storage of seeds and food grains and post harvest home level processing (Chayal, 2010). Moktan & Mukhopadhyay (2012) found that farm women had participated in all agricultural activities to a great extent. Apart from all these they are also involved in bringing fodder from field, chaff cutting, feeding and cleaning of cattle, maintaining cattle shed, compost making etc. Women play a significant role in the agricultural labor force and in agricultural activities (ESA, 2011). Livestock is considered a key asset for rural livelihoods. Rural women play critical, diverse roles in livestock and agricultural production in the rural economies of developing



countries as unpaid workers. In rural areas women's participation rate in agricultural and livestock management activities is high as compared to men (UNDP, 1997).

Agriculture can be a main engine of growth and poverty reduction. But the sector in many developing countries is underperforming, because women, who are a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles as farmers, labourers and entrepreneurs, almost everywhere, face more severe constraints that reduce their productivity. Most of the contributions made by women to the farm sector also go unaccounted as they are not directly paid. Women belonging to low socio-economic strata are actively engaged in agricultural labour. The picture of rural women is that of a submissive, illiterate, ignorant, assess female, who has been trapped in web of traditions and customs. Constraints encountered by rural women also affect by their socio-economic characteristics. Equitable access for rural women to educational facilities would certainly improve their performance and liberate them from their marginalized status in the society. So it is necessary to providing due recognition to women's work as well as access to education, extension services, information, land, credit facilities, resources, modern technologies and other relevant agricultural innovations will entice many women to agricultural productions and will help to reduce poverty among women farmers. They have no or very little power to take decisions due to many reasons like lack of education, lack of mobility, lack of control over resources, low level of awareness of their human rights, lack of credit facilities from the Government etc. (FAO, 2003 and Habib, 2000).

Education is an important weapon to fight ignorance, illiteracy, and unemployment and the educational facility should be provided to both males and females to enhance their capabilities at their door step in the rural areas. The provision of education will help the rural people to frame a positive attitude towards working women. This would help to raise the status and role of women is society in general and in their families in particular. Furthermore, the government must come forward to help the rural women and to provide them interest free micro-credit so that they may be able to start their business (related to livestock or poultry). The women shall be offered skills and enterprise development training for agriculture, so that they contribute better in improved agriculture. It is a fact that the women get confidence and courage and their economic contribution

enable them to participate in decision making process. There is a need to enhance women participation in decision making regarding agriculture and Livestock activities.

For the last few years, programmes for women have been receiving particular attention under community and rural development programmes. The desirable socio-economic development can be achieved only when women are educated and motivated to adopt new techniques.

References

Chayal, K.; Dhaka, B.L. and Suwalka, R. L. (2010). Women in agriculture. Journal of Humanity and Social Science. 5(1): 68-72.

Doss, C. (2011). The role of women in agriculture. Est. Working Vol.11(2).

FAO, (2011). Women in Agriculture -Making a Strong Case for Investing in Women. Rome: FAO.

Moktan, M.W. and Mukhopadhey, S.D. (2012). Nature and Extent of participation of farm women and their economic contribution in agriculture: A case study in hilly District of West Bengal. Indian Res. J. Ext. Edu. 12(2).

Agricultural Development Economics (ESA). 2011. The role of women in agriculture. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02. Available at <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>.

Enete, A.A., Nweke, F.I. and Tollens, E. (2002). Determinants of cassava cash income in female headed households of Africa. Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture, 41.

FAO. 2003. The uplift and empowerment of rural women in Pakistan, FAO, Rome. [Online] Available: <http://www.fao.org/sd/2003/kno506a-em.htm>.

Habib, N. 2000. Invisible Farmers: a study on the role of women in agriculture and the impact of pesticides on them in Punjab, Khoj Res. and Public. Centre, Lahore, Pakistan, 4.

UNDP. 1997. Human Development Report, Oxford University Press, New York. [Online] Available: www.fao.org.