SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FARM WOMEN AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN FARM OPERATION

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ABSTRACT

Women play a significant role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro-social forestry, fisheries etc. The nature and extent of woman's involvement in agriculture varies from region to region. A study was conducted to know the socio-economic status of the farmwomen and their contribution in farm operation in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. A total of 120 respondents from four villages of Community Development Block Majhgawan, Satna were personally interviewed. The study reported that majority of farmwomen were middle age group, illiterate, backward classes, having marginal land holding and having agriculture as a main occupation. Majority of farmwomen had knowledge of scientific method of grain storage, time of irrigation, and high yielding variety. The study also reported that carry load on head, harvesting, sowing behind plough and weeding were done by majority of farmwomen.

Key words: *Farmwomen; Socio-economic status; Knowledge; Contribution, Farm operation*

INTRODUCTION

Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro/social forestry fisheries etc. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture, no doubt, varies from region to region. Even with a region, their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub zones, farming systems, castes, classes, etc. Quite a large number of agricultural technologies are available, which can be utilized by anybody to his or her advantage. High yielding varieties and their production technologies with respect to sowing, nursery raising, and depth of sowing, seed treatment, placement of seeds and fertilizers, hoeing and weeding, seed rate and plant population, plant protection measures, cropping sequences, mixed farming etc. are women related farm operation. However, there are operation, like transplanting of paddy, threshing of paddy, dehusking of groundnut etc, in which mainly women are involved. Appropriate technologies for these and many other such operations can improve the efficiency and productivity of women and reduce their workload and drudgery.

Farmwomen population in our country required a fuller understanding of their status and role and not only now but as they may be developed in the future also. In this study socio-economic status of the farmwomen, level of knowledge of farmwomen in various crop practices and their contribution in farm operations have been highlited.

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive list of the farmers was prepared separately for all the four selected villages namely, Chaubeypur, Pathara, Paldeo, and Rajoula of Community Development Block Majhgawan, Satna (M.P) with the help of Village Development Officer and other sources, Again with the method of random sampling, a group of 30 respondents were drawn from each of the four villages. Thus, a total of 120 respondents were selected and personally interviewed with the help of specially structured schedule to collect the data. The information so collected was tabulated, analyzed interpreted and generalized with the help of appropriate statistical tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents: Socio-economic status is the position that an individual or a family occupies with reference to the prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, income, material possession and participation in the group activities of the community. In the present study, age, education, family size, type of houses, caste, size of land holding, annual income and occupation were studied and presented in Table 1. The data revealed that majority of respondents were in middle age group (38.33 per cent) followed by young age group (36.67 per cent) and old age group (25 per cent). Regarding education, it was found that only 28.33 percent respondents were illiterate, while 27.50 per cent were educated up to high school and above. It was found that majority of respondents (36.67 per cent) had Kachha house followed by Mixed (31.67 per cent) and Pacca (30.83 per cent). Table 1 also shows that 36.67 per cent respondents belonged to backward caste and 32.50 per cent belonged to higher caste. The schedule caste respondents were 30.83 per cent.

Regarding size of land holding, it was revealed that majority (around 70 per cent) were small and marginal farmers

together. Only 30 per cent respondents were in large category. It was also found that only 30 per cent respondents were earning Rs 10000 or more per annum. Majority (40 per cent) of respondents' main occupation was agriculture.

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of respondent

S.N.	Variables	Village				Total
		Chaubepur	Pathra	Paldeo	Rajoula	
1.	Age					
	Young	11 (36.67)	10 (33.33)	11(36.67)	12 (40.00)	44 (36.67)
	Middle	10 (33.33)	12 (40.00)	13 (43.33)	11 (36.67)	46 (38.33)
	Old	9 (30.00)	8 (26.67)	6 (20.00)	7 (23.23)	30 (25.00)
2.	Education					
	Illiterate	5 (16.67)	15 (50.00)	7 (23.33)	7 (23.33)	34 (28.33)
	Primary	7 (23.33)	5 (16.67)	6 (20.00)	7 (23.33)	25 (20.83)
	Middle	6 (20.00)	5 (16.67)	12 (40.00)	5 (16.67)	28 (24.16)
	HS & above	12 (40.00)	5 (16.67)	5 (16.67)	11 (36.67)	33 (27.50)
3.	Family Size					
	0-5	12 (38.70)	5 (16.67)	5 (16.67)	11(36.67)	33 (27.50)
	5-10	5 (16.12)	15 (50.00)	7 (23.33)	7 (23.33)	34 (28.33)
	10-15	6 (19.35)	5 (16.67)	12 (40.00)	5 (16.67)	28 (23.33)
	15&above	8 (25.80)	5 (16.67)	6 (20.00)	7 (23.33)	25 (20.83)
4.	Type of House					
	Kachha	18 (62.06)	11 (36.67)	8 (26.67)	7 (23.33)	44 (36.67)
	Pacca	5 (17.24)	14 (46.67)	7 (23.33)	11 (36.67)	37 (30.83)
	Mixed	6 (20.68)	5 (16.67)	15 (50.00)	12 (40.00)	38 (31.67)
5.	Caste					
	Higher	15 (50.00)	11 (36.67)	5 (16.67)	8 (36.67)	39 (32.50)
	Backward	7 (23.00)	13 (43.33)	10 (50.00)	14 (50.00)	44 (36.67)
	Schedule	8 (26.67)	6 (20.00)	15 (50.00)	8 (26.66)	37 (30.83)
6.	Size of land Holding					
	Marginal	16 (53.33)	5 (16.67)	15 (50.00)	5 (16.67)	41 (34.16)
	Small	8 (26.67)	14 (46.67)	7 (23.33)	14 (46.60)	43 (35.83)
	Large	6 (20.00)	11 (36.67)	8 (26.67)	11 (36.67)	36 (30.00)
7.	Annual Income					
	3500-6000	8 (26.67)	14 (46.67)	7 (23.33)	14 (46.66)	43 (35.83)
	6001-10000	16 (53.33)	5 (16.67)	15 (50.00)	5 (16.67)	41 (32.50)
	10,000above	6 (20.00)	11 (36.67)	8 (26.67)	11 (36.67)	36 (30.00)
8.	Occupation					
	Agriculture	18 (60.00)	7 (23.33)	12 (40.00)	11 (36.67)	48 (40.00)
	Service	5 (16.67)	8 (26.67)	11 (36.67)	7 (23.33)	31 (25.83)
	Mixed	7 (23.33)	15 (50.00)	7 (23.33)	12 (40.00)	41 (34.17)

(Figures in parenthesis are per centage)

The level of knowledge in various crop practices: In order to test the knowledge of modern cultivation technology by farmwomen, a knowledge test was developed for cultivation of four major crops (Wheat, Gram, Arhar and Bajara). Table 2 shows that majority of respondents (74.16 per cent) had knowledge of scientific method of grain storage followed by appropriate time of irrigation (70.83 per cent). The 62.50 per cent respondents had knowledge of high yielding varieties, whereas knowledge of recommended dose of fertilizers was possessed by 53.33 per cent respondents. The knowledge of method of soil and seed treatment was possessed by 49.16 per cent respondents, whereas knowledge of pesticides and

scientific method of weed control were possessed by about 45 per cent respondents.

Contribution of men and women in various farm operations: To study the involvement of men and women in various farm operations of four major crops viz. wheat, gram, arhar and bajara, data were collected from selected respondents in terms of field working day and presented in Table 3. Table shows that carry load on head was performed by 100 per cent respondents. Harvesting was done by 97.5 per cent respondents, while sowing behind plough was performed by 93.33 per cent respondents. It was also revealed that weeding by khurpi performed by 92.5 per cent women. Bullock ploughing, puddling by plough, spread work during field irrigation were performed by few women, while no women performed pesticide dusting.

Table 2. Knowledge of modern crop technology to farm women.

S.N.	Operations	No.	%age
1	Knowledge of high yield variety	75	62.50
2	Recommended dose of fertilizer	64	53.33
3	Appropriate time of irrigation	85	70.83
4	Different name of pesticides	55	45.83
5	Method of soil & seed treatment	59	49.16
6	Scientific method of weed control	53	44.16
7	Knowledge of scientific method of grain storage	89	74.16

Table 3. Contribution of farmwomen in farm operation

S.N	Operations	Women	%age
1	Pesticide dusting	0	0.00
2	Bullock Ploughing	5	4.16
3	Sowing behind Plough	112	93.33
4	Spread work during field irrigation	12	10.00
5	Weeding by Khurpi	111	92.5
6	Harvesting	117	97.5
7	Carry load on head	120	100.00
8	Puddling by plough	3	2.5

CONCLUSION

The study reported that majority of respondents were in middle age group (38.33 %) followed by young age group (36.67 %) and old age group (25 %). Only 28.33 percent respondents were illiterate, while 27.50 per cent were educated up to high school and above. 36.67 per cent respondents belonged to backward caste and 32.50 per cent belonged to higher caste. Majority of respondents had knowledge of scientific method of grain storage followed by appropriate time of irrigation. 62.50 per cent respondents had knowledge of high yielding varieties, whereas knowledge of recommended dose of fertilizers was possessed by 53.33 per cent respondents.

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