

## Factor Affecting the Participation of Rural Women in Agricultural Activities

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study was carried out in Hoshangabad, Babai and Kesla blocks of Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. A simple random sampling procedure was followed in order to obtain the appropriate sample of rural women. The total sample size was 144. The dependent variable was participation of rural women in agricultural activities. The independent variables were relating to socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits of rural women such as caste, education, marital status, farming experience, annual income, occupation, economic status, land holding, extension participation, extension contact, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities. The data were collected by personal interview technique with the help of structured interview schedule. The data were analyzed using statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis. The traits like education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities exhibited positive and strong correlation with level of participation and occupation of the rural women also positively related with level of participation. About 85.92 per cent variation in the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities was explained by all the 16 traits taken into consideration. Education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities significantly influenced the extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities.*

**Key words:** Farm women; Participation; Information;

**W**omen play a pivotal role in agriculture and in rural development. Empirical evidences suggest that women in rural areas are more adversely affected by poverty than men. Although women play an indispensable role in farming and in improving the quality of life in rural areas, their contributions often remain concealed due to some social barriers and gender bias. Indian rural women share substantial responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in most of the family related activities, farming related activities as well, besides their exclusive involvement in domestic chores. Therefore, the rural women are considered as backbone of India economy. Women usually contribute in harvesting of crops, weeding, threshing, field irrigation and post-harvesting processes. Moreover, 60 to 80 per cent of total agriculture operations are performed by

women. They work with male members and participate in different farming activities putting much more hours of productive manual labour daily. So, in assuring the rural women participation in agricultural activities the present study was envisaged with the objectives;

- (i) To explore the relationship between extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities and their selected traits, and
- (ii) To find out the factors affecting the participation of rural women in agricultural activities

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in purposively selected Hoshangabad, Babai and Kesla blocks of Hoshangabad district during 2010-11. A simple random sampling procedure was followed in order to obtain the

appropriate sample of rural women. The total sample size was 144. The dependent variable was participation of rural women in agricultural activities. The independent variables were relating to socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits of rural women such as caste, education, marital status, farming experience, annual income, occupation, economic status, land holding, extension participation, extension contact, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities. The data were collected by personal interview technique with the help of structured interview schedule. The data were analysed using statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data in Table 1 reveals the nature of relationship between socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits of rural women with their participation in agricultural activities. Based on the correlation analysis it was found that ten traits such as education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities exhibited positive and significant relationship with participation at 1% level of significance but, occupation shows positive and significant relation at 5% level of significance with participation.

The association of level of participation of rural women in agriculture activities with their caste, annual income, land holding and extension contact was found positive but not significant, while its relationship with marital status was although negative but not high enough to be statistically significant.

In correlation analysis, education was found to be significantly and positively correlation with the level of participation in agricultural activities. Education is certainly a mean to increase livelihood and also equally breeds on high expectations and ambitions. The positive correlation implies that for participation in agriculture, education might be a precondition. Higher the education, the higher would have been the expectations. In such a situation with an increase in educational level the degree of participation in agriculture had gone up.

**Table 1. Correlation coefficient ('r' value) of extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities with their selected traits**

Traits	'r' value
Caste	0.098
Education	0.349**
Marital status	-0.080
Farming experience	0.636**
Annual Income	0.075
Occupation	0.178*
Economic status	0.438**
Land holding	0.069
Extension participation	0.301**
Extension contact	0.103
Source of information	0.390**
Mass media exposure	0.336**
Level of aspiration	0.359**
Scientific orientation	0.484**
Attitude towards agriculture	0.220**
Knowledge about agriculture activities	0.404**

\* - Significant at p=0.05, \*\* - Significant at p=0.01

**Table 2. Partial regression coefficient ('b' value) of extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities on their selected traits**

Traits	'b' value	S.E. (b)	't' value
Caste	0.013	0.063	0.210
Education	0.171	0.075	2.281*
Marital status	-0.066	0.054	-1.228
Farming experience	0.566	0.162	3.495**
Annual Income	0.074	0.062	1.198
Occupation	0.033	0.019	1.745
Economic status	0.342	0.072	4.752**
Land holding	-0.115	0.103	-1.120
Extension participation	0.182	0.052	3.494**
Extension contact	0.016	0.011	1.447
Source of information	0.187	0.063	2.968**
Mass media exposure	0.184	0.089	2.071*
Level of aspiration	0.271	0.112	2.415*
Scientific orientation	0.320	0.097	3.294**
Attitude towards agriculture	0.278	0.073	3.815**
Knowledge of agri. activities	0.171	0.043	3.978**

\* - Significant at p=0.05, \*\* - Significant at p=0.01

*Srivastava and Srivastava (2010)* also reported positive and significant association of extent of participation with education.

The positive association of farming experience,

occupation, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities with level of participation indicating that these are playing decisively and positively in ushering the level of participation in agricultural activities.

Since simple correlation coefficient alone is not sufficient in ascertaining the intensity of association between characters, studies with partial regression coefficients are very useful in determining precisely such relationship. Regression analysis pertaining to level of participation of rural women in agricultural activities with socio-personal, socio-economic, communicational and psychological traits (Table 2) revealed that 85.92 per cent of variation in level of participation of rural women in agricultural activities was explained by all the sixteen traits of the respondents included in the study. Multiple  $R^2$  value of 0.8592 with highly significant. 'F' value revealed the significance of regression equation in the prediction of extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities. Out of sixteen traits, ten traits viz., education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, mass

media exposure, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agricultural activities had gone conspicuously effective in recording their substantive effect on level of participation of rural youth in agricultural activities. All these factors had positive and significant relationship with extent of participation of rural women in agricultural activities.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that, highly educated and highly experienced rural women having other sources of income, favourable attitude and more knowledge about agriculture should be approached to secure better participation in agricultural activities. The results of multiple regression analysis suggested that the traits namely education, farming experience, economic status, extension participation, source of information, level of aspiration, scientific orientation, attitude towards agriculture and knowledge about agriculture activities should be given more weightage in selection index for determining the level of participation.

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