

Drudgery Perceived by Women Labourers in Farm Operations

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ABSTRACT

The Present research investigation was carried out in Washim district of Maharashtra with Exploratory Design of Social Research. The list of villages was obtained from Washim and Risod Panchayat Samities. From the list, five villages from Washim and five villages from Risod was selected randomly. From each village, 10 women labourer were selected randomly. Thus a sample of 100 women labourer was selected for the present study. Findings revealed that majority of women labourer were faced most drudgery in the activities of stubble collection, sowing, threshing of crop, cutting of standing crop, and weeding. Further it was observed that majority of the (95.00%) respondents faced moderate drudgery, followed by 05.00 per cent of them who felt the work highly drudging. However, it is surprisingly to note that none of the respondents found in low category of drudgery. Findings of relational analysis revealed that the respondents with middle aged, average wages received, increasing in size of family, family type, working condition, and more distance of work place from residence, and pattern of employment had influenced on increase in the degree of drudgery involved in the farm operations as faced by women labourer. Further it was found that out of 13 variables, the family size, wages received, working conditions had significant, contribution in reducing the drudgery.

Key words : *Drudgery; Women labourer; Farm operations;*

According to 2011 census in India, there are 587 million women (48.53 % of the total population). Out of the total main worker's population, female workers comprise 25.51 per cent. About one-third of women do more work than men, is a matter of common knowledge, while their work remains largely under recorded, hence the real issue, therefore, is more serious. Despite their involvement in agriculture work in such a large magnitude, women have not been actively involved in the main stream of development and there is hardly any appreciation and recognition of their extensive contribution.

Drudgery is generally conceived as physical and mental strain, fatigue, monotony and hardships experienced while doing a job. It is certain, that if appropriate drudgery reducing farmstead implements are made available to the rural women, these would

contribute to reduction in drudgery, increase capability, productivity and consequently the greater workload thereby improved efficiency. Many agricultural operations and household activities performed by women involve a lot of physical strain, which create serious health problems in the long run. Since they are overburdened with so much work both on farm and home, there is chance of neglecting their health.

Thus, the burden shared by women for the socio-economic development is twofold, one on the domestic front and the other on the economic front. The difficulties of getting drinking water, fuel for cooking, health services etc. stand obstacles to run their domestic front smoothly. Besides, they have to adjust in a number of adverse situations while performing economic activities outside their home. According to an *International Labour Organization (1964)* estimation, women,

perform one third of the world's counted labour. While, performing various activities in agriculture by farm women labour, they experienced the physical strain and fatigue. In other words they have to face drudgery involved in various activities in farm operations. For better efficiency in farm operations, it is necessary that these works should derive satisfaction from their farm and that to with less fatigue, mental and physical strains.

Hence, it is felt necessary to probe in to the extent of drudgery involved in various activities in farm operations. Keeping this view, the present study entitled, "Drudgery Faced by Women labourer in Farm Operations" in Washim and Risod Panchayat Samiti of Washim district of Maharashtra state comprising of 5 villages from Washim and 5 from Risod Panchayat Samiti. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To study the drudgery involved in farm operations performed by women labourer, and
- ii. Relationship of selected characteristics of women labourer with drudgery involved in farm operations.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was planned to know level drudgery involved of women labourer in farm operations. An attempt was also made to know the drudgery of various farm operations and type involved in farm operations.

Drudgery: It has been operationally defined as physical and mental strain, fatigue, monotony and hardship involved in various activities in farm faced by women labour in farm operations. Accordingly statements related to the dimensions namely physical strain, mental strain, fatigue, monotony and hardship involved in farming activities performed by women labourers were framed after through discussion with Home Scientist (SMS) and Agronomist of KVK, Karda, Tal. Risod, Dist. Washim. The drudgery was measured against these statements on following continuums namely, average time spent in min., frequency of performance of farm activity, degree of difficult perceived while doing the farm activity, respectively.

- i. Time spent per day was calculated by average time spent on any farm activity with total number of days that particular activity was carried out.
- ii. Performance frequency score and difficulty score were calculated by multiplying frequencies with

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their relative score and dividing by total number of respondents.

The data were analysed and drudgery index for the activities performed by more than 60% the women was calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Drudgery Index (DI)} = \frac{X+Y+Z}{3} \times 100$$

Where,

X = Co-efficient of total time spent

Y = Co-efficient of performance frequency

Z = Co-efficient of degree of difficulty

- iii. Co- efficient of total time spent was calculated by dividing total time spent on each farm activity by the total time spent for all the activities of farm.
- iv. Co-efficient of performance frequency score and degree of difficulty was calculated by dividing each value by the maximum value in that category. Finally, Drudgery Index was found out by adding coefficient of total time spent performance frequency score and degree of difficulty and dividing by 3 and multiplied by 100.

The respondents were categorized into three categories viz. low, medium and high. The categorization was done on the basis of equal interval method.

Category	Index range
Low	Upto 33.33
Medium	33.34 to 66.66
High	Above 66.66

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Drudgery faced by farm women labourer in farm operations: The activity wise drudgery involved in various farm operations faced by women labourer were ascertained by the researcher on following point such as, average time spend on farm activities frequency of performance of farm activities, and degree of difficulty for doing farm activities.

It was revealed from the Table 1 that 57.00 per cent of women labourer expressed activity of stubble collection was most difficult, followed by 40.00 per cent of women labourer expressed activity of stubble collection was difficult and only 2.00 per cent of them expressed it was easy .100.00 per cent of the respondents carried out this operation seasonal and time spent on stubble collection was 367.8 min and frequency of the performance was 100.00 per cent for all farm operations.

Further look out the second operation or statement shows that majority of the respondents (33.00%) expressed that the activity of seed treatment was easy, followed by 20.00 per cent of respondents carried out this activity naturally. 19.00 per cent of the women labourer expressed this activity was very easy and 17.00 per cent and 11.00 per cent of them were expressed it as a most difficult and difficult, respectively and time spent on the seed treatment was 38.1 min. Regarding third operation or statement i.e. sowing of crop majority of the respondents (54.00%) expressed that sowing activity was most difficult, followed by 44.00 per cent of the women labourer were faced this activity was difficult and only 02.00 per cent of the them expressed it was easy. Time spent on sowing activity was 421.20 min. This operation also carried out by 100.00 per cent of the respondents as a seasonal.

A fourth statement shows that, (50.00%) of the respondents expressed activity of weeding was difficult followed by 48.00 per cent of the respondents were faced this activity most difficult. Only 2.00 per cent of the respondents expressed it as easy on difficulty score easy. For weeding time spent was 369.6 min. and 65.00 per cent of the respondents carried out this operation weekly, followed by 35.00 per cent of respondents were carried out fortnightly.

Further next operation or statement i.e. preparation of FYM, 26.00 per cent of respondents expressed this activity was easy followed by 23.00 per cent women

labourer were perceived difficult and 20.00 per cent of the respondents were perceived natural, followed by 17.00 per cent and 14.00 per cent of the respondents were considered most difficult and very easy. Time spent on this operation was 57 min. Frequency of the performance of preparation of FYM shows that, majority of the respondents (75.00%) were carried out this operation as seasonal, followed by 14.00 per cent of the respondents were fortnightly. 07.00 per cent and 04.00 per cent of the respondents were performed weekly and daily.

Sixth operation or statement shows that, majority of the respondents (46.00%) expressed that activity of spreading of FYM in the farm was most difficult, followed by 41.00 per cent of women labourer expressed this activity was difficult. 12.00 per cent of the respondent expressed this activity was easy and only 01.00 per cent women labourer were considered as natural on the difficulty score. For this activity time spent was 318.6 min.

The next operation or statement i.e. cutting of standing of crop it was found that majority of the respondents (49.00%) expressed activity of cutting of standing crop was most difficult and difficult. Only 02.00 per cent of the respondents were perceived this activity as easy. Time spent on this activity was 376.2 min.

The eighth statements shows that majority of the respondents (57.00%) expressed that activity of picking of matured pod by hand was difficult, followed by 45.00 per cent women labourer expressed this activity was

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to drudgery faced by farm women in farm operations

Statements	No. of FA*(%)	Av. time spent (min)	Degree of difficulty for doing farm activities				
			Very easy	Easy	Natural	Difficult	Most difficult
Stubble collection	100.00	367.8	-	02 (02.00)	-	41 (41.00)	57 (57.00)
Seed treatment	100.00	38.1	19 (19.00)	33 (33.00)	20 (20.00)	11 (11.00)	17 (17.00)
Sowing	100.00	421.2	-	02 (02.00)	-	44 (44.00)	54 (54.00)
Weeding	100.00	369.6	-	02 (02.00)	-	50 (50.00)	48 (48.00)
Preparation of FYM	100.00	57	14 (14.00)	26 (26.00)	20 (20.00)	23 (23.00)	17 (17.00)
Spreading of FYM to the farm	100.00	318.6	-	12 (12.00)	01 (01.00)	41 (41.00)	46 (46.00)
Cutting of standing crop	100.00	376.2	-	02 (02.00)	-	49 (49.00)	49 (49.00)
Picking of matured pod by hand	100.00	389.4	-	04 (04.00)	-	51 (51.00)	45 (45.00)
After harvesting crop	100.00	364.8	-	10 (10.00)	-	50 (50.00)	40 (40.00)
Preparing bundles	100.00	310.8	14 (14.00)	24 (24.00)	-	45 (45.00)	17 (17.00)
Threshing of crop	100.00	374.4	-	13 (13.00)	-	31 (31.00)	56 (56.00)
Winnowing	100.00	311.4	-	13 (13.00)	-	41 (41.00)	46 (46.00)
Filling seed	100.00	204	23 (23.00)	38 (38.00)	-	29 (29.00)	10 (10.00)

*FA=Farm activities;

most difficult. Frequency of the performance of picking of matured pod by hand shows that, majority of respondents (54.00%) carried out this operation was seasonal, followed by 23.00 per cent of the respondents were carried out this operation daily and 13.00 per cent women labourer performed this activity was fortnightly. Only 8.00 per cent and 2.00 per cent of the respondents performed this activity was weekly and daily, respectively. Time spent on this activity was 389.4 min.

Further the next operation or statement shows that, majority of the respondents (50.00%) expressed that activity of after harvesting crop bundles preparation was difficult, followed by 40.00 per cent of women labourer expressed this activity was most difficult. However, the 10.00 per cent of the respondents expressed this activity was easy. 61.00 per cent of the respondents perform this activity was seasonal, followed by 39.00 per cent of the respondent were perform daily and time spent on this activity was 364.8 min.

The tenth statement shows that, majority of the respondents (45.00%) expressed that activity of preparation of bundles was difficult, followed by 24.00 per cent respondents expressed this activity was easy. 17.00 per cent women labourer expressed activity of preparation of bundles was most difficult and 14.00 per cent respondents perceived this activity was very easy. Time spent on this activity was 310.8 min.

Next statement shows that, majority of the respondents (56.00%) expressed activity of threshing of crop was most difficult, followed by 31.00 per cent women labourer perceived thus activity was difficult and 13.00 per cent of the respondents expressed this activity was easy. For this activity time was spent 374.4 min.

Further next statement concluded that, majority of the respondents (46.00%) expressed activity of winnowing was most difficult, followed by 41.00 per cent women labourer perceived this activity was difficult and 13.00 per cent of the respondents considered this activity was easy. Time spent on this activity was 311.4 min.

The last statement concluded that, majority of the respondents (38.00%) expressed that activity of filling seed in gunny bag was easy, followed by 29.00 per cent of the women labourer perceived this activity was difficult and 23.00 per cent women labourer considered this activity was very easy, whereas, 10.00 per cent respondents were perceived as difficult. Time spent on this activity was 204 min.

However, very less percentage of women labourers did not perceived more drudgery in the activity namely seed treatment, preparation of FYM and filling seed in gunny bags.

Thus, it could be concluded that majority of women labourer were faced most drudgery in the activities of stubble collection, sowing, threshing of crop, cutting of standing crop, and weeding.

Drudgery Index Level : From Table 2, it was observed that majority of the (95.00%) respondents faced moderate drudgery, followed by 05.00 per cent of them who felt the work highly drudging. However, it is surprisingly to note that none of the respondents found in low category of drudgery.

Therefore, it could be inferred that majority of the respondents faced the work of farm operation as moderately drudging. The findings of this study borrow the support of the studies of *Kulkarni (1998)* and *Kaila (1999)* most of the workers suffer drudgery resulting in headache, eye infection, coughing and fatigue and other symptoms of ill health. *Sarada and Sudarshan Rao (2000)*, *Renuka Budiha (2007)*, *Suman Singh et al. (2008)*.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to level of drudgery index in farm operations (N=100)

Category	No.	%
Low	00	00.00
Medium	95	95.00
High	5	05.00
Total	100	100.00

Relationship of correlation coefficients of characteristics of respondents with drudgery:

Present study and in order to establish a relationship, if any, between various characteristics of women labourer and their drudgery faced by them in the work of farm operations, the correlation of independent variables with dependent variables were work out and tested for significance. The results so obtained are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that out of 13, nine characteristics viz. wages received, family size, working condition, family type, distance of work place from residence, pattern of employment and age found to have positive and highly significant correlation with drudgery at 0.01 level of probability, respectively and family annual income had negatively significant

correlation with drudgery at 0.05 level of probability whereas, duration of employment had positive and significant correlation with drudgery at 0.05 level of probability. This has led to the rejection of null hypothesis for wages received, family size, working condition, family type, distance of work place from residence, pattern of employment and age. The remaining four independent variables namely education, marital status, social participation, and working hours did not show any significant correlation with drudgery in activities performed by women labourer in farm operations. Therefore, the null hypothesis for these characteristics has been accepted. The findings of *Kulkarni (1998)*, *Jyostna Tathod (2000)* observed that the independent variable namely family size, distance of work place from residence were found to be positively and significantly correlated with drudgery.

Table 3. Coefficients of correlation of characteristics of respondents with drudgery

Variables	'r' values
Age	0.2797**
Education	0.04671
Marital status	0.1440
Family size	0.6068**
Family type	0.4507**
Family annual income	-0.2294*
Working conditions	0.5619**
Social participation	0.0371
Pattern of employment	0.3887**
Duration of employment	0.2167*
Distance of work place from residence	0.3942**
Wages received	0.7652**
Working hours	0.0091

**Significant at 0.01 level of probability

*Significant at 0.05 level of probability

Thus, from the above findings it could be interpreted that the respondents with middle aged, average wages received, increasing in size of family, family type, working condition, and more distance of work place from residence, and pattern of employment had influenced on increase in the degree of drudgery involved in the farm operations as faced by women labourer.

It is obvious that minimum wages received and increase in family size, joint family type results in more drudgery in the farm work because women labourer has to look after all family members, prepare their meals, wash cloths care of children etc., perform other

household work in addition to she has to go for the work at farm in time. So, ultimately she has to exert more inside and outside the house. Hence the similar trend has been mirrored in the findings of this study i.e. age is positively related with drudgery involved in farm. Secondly, working condition and pattern of employment of women labourer will result in more drudgery involved as it had to be performed in odd situation and there is no improved implement to perform them hence, physical strain was more and so the results are justified i.e. working condition and pattern of employment is positively correlated with drudgery. Further that, longer the distance of work place from the residence of women labourer will result in more physical exertion, fatigue and more time will be required for attending the work and because of this women labourer will feel the more drudging and so the results are justified i.e. the distance of work place is positively correlated with drudgery.

Multiple Regression Analysis: In order to ascertain the contribution of independent variables selected, towards the drudgery faced by women labourer, a multiple regression analysis was carried out and the results of this analysis are furnished in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis of independent variables with drudgery faced by women labourer in farm operations

Variables	Coeff.	S.E of 'b'	't' value
Age	0.0941	0.0896	1.0500
Education	0.1234	0.1007	1.2245
Marital status	1.6955	2.1567	0.7862
Family size	0.6436	0.2803	2.2961**
Family type	1.6560	1.3112	1.2629
Family annual income	-0.0000035	0.000003955	-0.8816
Working conditions	1.0276	0.3251	3.1608**
Social participation	-0.1194	0.2148	-0.5559
Pattern of employment	-4.1770	3.5133	-1.1889
Duration of employment	-0.0027	0.0124	-0.2191**
Distance of work place	4.1484	3.4576	1.1998
Wages received	0.3514	0.0391	8.9756**
Working hours	-0.8391	0.5450	-1.5398

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability $F = 23.34^*$

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability $R^2 = 0.7792$

All the thirteen independent predictor variables were fitted in the regression analysis. The results presented in Table 4, showed that the family size, working conditions and wages received were significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of probability and duration of employment

had negatively significant with drudgery at 0.05 level of probability. The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) showed that all thirteen predictor variables jointly explained 77.92 per cent variation in drudgery involved in farm work as faced by women labourer. 'F' values for 'R' were found to be significant at 0.05 level of probability. When the influence of an individual variable on the level of drudgery was studied, it was obvious that out of 13 variables, the family size, wages received, working conditions had significant, contribution in reducing the drudgery. It implies that married women labourer work in farm, if her wages improved and working condition are improved by providing facilities in the premises of farm operations, the drudgery of women labourer can substantially be reduced.

CONCLUSION

It was also found that farm women labourer had moderate drudgery in almost all the farm operations. So, as to reduce drudgery, on the strength of findings it is suggested that there working conditions specially in respect of health and hygienic be taken care off and wages for their work should be increased. Regularly their medical checkup be undertaken to minimize the effect of drudgery. Developed machinery or equipments should be provide to minimize physical strain or reduce drudgery in respect of threshing, weeding, sowing, cutting of standing crop, picking of matured pod, etc. It will help to reduce drudgery which will ultimately improve work satisfaction.

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