

Perceived Drudgery of Farm Women Involved in Agricultural Activities

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation aimed to study perceived drudgery of farm women involved in agricultural activities. Six villages viz., Bilkundi, Tukkanatti and Rajapur of Gokak taluk and Bastwad, Bendiwad and Jodahatti of Raibag taluk were purposively selected. Total one twenty farm women were selected using simple random sampling technique, twenty farm women from each village. The study illustrated that farm women were involved in wide range of agricultural activities. The result revealed that majority of the farm women involved in agricultural activities like Digging (79.00%), sowing (73.30%), manuring (70.00%), harvesting (64.00%) and drying (72.00%). Majority of the farm women perceived agricultural activities as difficult to perform. Drudgery perception of farm women in agricultural activities was significantly and negatively correlated with their yearly income (0.50) and socio-economic status (-0.56). The drudgery perception of farm women was significantly and positively correlated with the extent of agricultural activities performed by farm women (0.76).

Key words- Farm women; Drudgery; Drudgery Perception;

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. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as “economically active employment” in national accounts but they are essential to the wellbeing of rural households (Ekale et al., 2016).

A huge proportion of rural women involve in agricultural and allied fields like the crop production, irrigation, manuring, post harvest operations, agro/social forestry, livestock activities, fisheries, etc. The extent of women’s involvement and type of activities

performed by them in agriculture and allied fields varies greatly from state to state even within a state. The farmwomen lead hard lives and perform gruelling works in farm and homestead activities. This causes significant physical, mental exhaustion and other health problems. The foremost reason for all these problems are poverty, unawareness, hoary techniques of performing task, incompatibility of the technology and attitudinal constraints such as instinctive conservatism and confrontation to change. Hence, the present investigates the perceived drudgery of farm women involved in agricultural activities (Thakur et al., 2013)

METHODOLOGY

The research is carried out in purposively selected six villages viz., Bilkundi, Tukkanatti and Rajapur of Gokak taluk and Bastwad, Bendiwad and Jodahatti of Raibag taluk. Total one twenty farm women were selected using simple random sampling technique, twenty farm women from each village. Self structured questionnaire was used to elicit data regarding

demographic characteristics of farm women, Agricultural activities performed by farm women and perception of agricultural activities with regard to work load. Frequency, percentage and Carl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of farm women : The demographic characteristic of the respondents is presented in the Table 1. The age of farm women ranged from 15 to 55 years and above. The maximum number of farm women belonged to the young age group, i.e., 26 to 35 years (42.50%). 27.50 per cent of the farm women were between to the age range of 15-25 years. Only 5.80 per cent of farm women belonged to 55 years and above age group. Regarding family type majority of the farm women belonged to joint family (80.83%) and 19.17 per cent of farm women belonged to nuclear family. Majority of the farm women were illiterates (90.84%). Only 9.16 per cent of the respondents had studied upto 10th standard. Among the respondents 77.50 per cent were having less than 1 lakh yearly income. Only 3.34 per cent of the respondents were having more than 5 lakh yearly income. Regarding land holding, 14.17 per cent of the respondents possessed land between 6 – 10 acres and 85.83 of them did not possess any land.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of the respondent's demographic characteristics (N = 120)

Demographic characteristics	No.	%	
Age	15 - 25	33	27.50
	26 - 35	51	42.50
	36 - 45	18	15.00
	45 - 55	11	9.16
	55 and above	7	5.80
Family type	Joint	97	80.83
	Nuclear	23	19.17
Qualification	Illiterates	109	90.84
	SSLC	11	9.16
Annual Income (Rs)	<1 Lakh	93	77.50
	1-2 Lakh	18	15.00
	2-3 Lakh	9	7.50

Agricultural activities performed by farm women : Table 2 indicated that majority of farm women were performing agricultural activities viz., Digging (79.00%), sowing (73.00%), manuring (70.00%), harvesting of grain (64.00%) and threshing and winnowing (83.33%).

50 per cent of farm women were involved in post harvest operations, i.e. shelling and stripping each. 57.50 per cent of the farm women were involved in decortications. Only 20.83 per cent of farm women were involved in value addition activity. The results are in fine tune with a study conducted by *Singh and Alhawat (2014)* which pointed out that majority of the farm women were performing various agricultural tasks such as cleaning of field, raising nursery seedling, sowing, transplanting, harvesting of crop and cutting of grass, threshing, winnowing, cleaning and drying of grains.

It can be said that women are playing a noteworthy role in Indian agriculture in various parts of the country. Not only agriculture, other allied sectors such as animal

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of farm women in agricultural activities (N = 120)

Agricultural activities	No.	%
<i>Land preparation</i>		
Leveling and making ridges and furrows	75	62.50
Clod breaking	72	60.00
Digging	94	79.00
Ploughing	63	52.50
Harrowing	66	55.00
<i>Sowing and transplanting</i>		
Seed treatment	81	67.3
sowing	87	73.00
Transplanting	79	65.00
Seed production / vegetative propagation	76	63.33
layout and seed bed	68	56.66
Planting	74	61.66
<i>Crop care</i>		
Manuring / Fertilizer	84	70.00
Irrigation	70	58.33
Gap filling and resowing / thinning	65	54.16
Weeding and inter culturing	80	66.66
<i>Harvesting</i>		
Harvesting of grain	77	64.00
Picking and cutting	70	58.33
Vegetable plucking	44	36.66
<i>Post harvesting</i>		
Shelling	60	50.00
Stripping	60	50.00
Decortication	69	57.50
Sieving grain	38	31.66
Threshing and winnowing	100	83.33
Drying	86	72.00
Value addition	25	20.83

husbandry is also a domain where women are participating more actively than men. It is essential to mention here that farm women have to take the burden of family-work, child care, animal care etc. along with the agricultural work.

Perceived work load of farm women : Table 3 revealed the perception of farm women regarding work load while performing agricultural activities. Some activities were perceived as difficult to perform and moderate activity by farm women according to work load.

The results indicated that land preparation activities such as levelling and making ridges and furrows (98.33%), clod breaking (95.83%), digging (94.16 %) and ploughing (92.50%) were perceived as difficult to perform activities by majority of the farm women. Under Sowing, transplanting activities such as sowing (89.16%), planting (89.16%) and transplanting (87.50%) were perceived as difficult to perform by majority of the farm women while, layout and seed bed preparation (85.00 %) and seed production (75.00%) were perceived as moderate activities by majority of the farm women.

Under crop care activities weeding and inter culturing (98.33 %) were perceived as difficult to perform activities. While, irrigation (42.50%), gap filling and re sowing / thinning (41.67%) were perceived as moderate activities by the farm women. All the activities related to harvesting such as harvesting of grain, picking and cutting and vegetable plucking were perceived as difficult to perform by the majority of farm women. Regarding post harvesting operations, majority of the farmwomen perceived shelling, decortications, sieving of grain and stripping as difficult to perform activities. It can be concluded that most of the agricultural activities were perceived as difficult to perform by majority of the farm women. This can be due to inadequate posture, long duration of exhaustive and repetitive work and lack of sufficient rest. *Jahan and Khan (2015)* stated that women ranked harvesting, weeding inter-cultivation and threshing as the most drudgery prone tasks as per priority. Further, pointed out that work stress was higher in threshing and winnowing activities amongst post harvest operations due load carrying for much longer duration.

Relationship between demographic characteristics and perceived drudgery of farm women : Table 4 revealed relationship between demographic characteristics, health hazards and perceived drudgery

Table 3. Status of perception of farm women regarding agricultural activities/work load (N = 120)

Agricultural activities	Perception of farm women			
	Difficult		Moderate	
	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Land preparation</i>				
Leveling and making ridges and furrows	118	98.33	2	1.67
Clod breaking	115	95.83	5	4.17
Digging	113	94.16	7	5.84
Ploughing	111	92.50	9	7.50
Harrowing	90	75.00	30	25.00
<i>Sowing and transplanting</i>				
Seed treatment	51	42.50	69	57.5
sowing	107	89.16	13	10.84
Transplanting	105	87.50	15	12.50
Seed production	30	25.00	90	75.00
layout and seed bed	18	15.00	102	85.00
Planting	107	89.16	13	10.84
<i>Crop care</i>				
Manuring / Fertilizer	75	62.50	45	37.50
Irrigation	69	57.50	51	42.50
Gap filling and resowing/thinning	70	58.33	50	41.67
Weeding and inter culturing	118	98.33	2	1.67
<i>Harvesting</i>				
Harvesting of grain	110	91.66	10	8.34
Picking and cutting	108	90.00	12	10.00
Vegetable plucking	109	90.83	11	9.17
<i>Post harvesting</i>				
Shelling	117	97.50	3	2.50
Stripping	103	85.83	17	14.17
Decortication	110	91.66	10	8.34
Sieving grain	108	90.00	12	10.00
Threshing and winnowing	87	72.50	33	27.50
Drying	90	75.00	30	25.00

Table 4. Relationship between demographic characteristics and perceived drudgery of farm women (N=120)

Demographic characteristics	Perceived drudgery
Age	0.80**
Annual income	-0.85**
SES	-0.82**
Family type	-0.70**
Education	0.22 ^{NS}
Health hazard	0.78**

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance

NS – Non Significant

of farm women in agricultural activities. Perceived drudgery was significantly and negatively correlated with farm women's yearly income (-0.85) and socio-economic status (-0.82). This may be because farm women with high income and Socio Economic Status may not involve in rigorous agricultural activities and they may get their agricultural operations done by laborers. And may use more improved tools and equipment for performing various activities.

Age (0.80) of the farm women was significantly and positively correlated with drudgery perception of farm women regarding agricultural activities. This may be because as age increases the perception of agricultural activities as laborious and drudgery also increases. Education of farm women was not related with perceived drudgery in agricultural activities performed by farm women.

Family type (-0.70) was significantly and negatively correlated with perceived drudgery of farm women.

This indicates that as the number of family members increased the perceived drudgery decreases. Whereas, health hazard (0.78) was significantly and positively correlated with perceived drudgery of farm women. This reveals that more number of health problems hinders the farm women from involving in more number of agricultural activities and perceiving agricultural activities as tiresome and difficult to perform.

CONCLUSION

A large number of women are working in agriculture and performing strenuous tasks. Majority of the farm women belonged to young age group. Majority of the farm women perceived agricultural activities as difficult to perform.

Drudgery reducing tools and equipment are proved to be a boon for farm women. These tools and equipment reduced drudgery of farm women as well as increased their efficiency and work output.

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