

Role of Tribal Women in Agricultural Operations in Nandurbar District of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT: Tribal women in Nandurbar district play a significant role in agriculture operations. They are actively participating in all range of agricultural activities including cleaning the field, sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, Intercultural practices, cleaning of grains, drying of grains and so on. The rural women, besides looking after the family and performing all sorts of household activities, very actively remain busy from dawn to dusk in such agricultural operations which supplements their family income. But despite such a huge contribution, her role has yet not been recognized. Keeping in view these facts the present study has been designed to explore the involvement of tribal women and problems faced in performing agricultural operations. For the present study a total of 120 tribal women are selected from different villages through random sampling technique. A well designed and pre-tested interview schedule has been prepared to collect the information from the respondents. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the data and findings are shown with the help of table. The findings showed that picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains, storage, weeding, winnowing are the major farm activities performed by tribal women.

Key words: Agriculture, Involvement, Nandurbar District, Tribal Women

INTRODUCTION

The women play a significant and crucial role in various stages of agricultural operations starting from sowing of seeds to hand weeding, harvesting and post harvest activities. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture, no doubt, varies greatly from region to region. Even within a region, their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub-zones, farming systems, castes, classes and stages in the family cycle. In Nandurbar district according to 2011 census 69.3 per cent of total workers are engaged in agriculture. And the percentage of agricultural laborer among total women worker is 42.8 per cent. For the rapid and sustain development, it is need of the time to realize the importance of women in agriculture and give them reorganization which is lacking in their work and sacrifice. Female labor force is as efficient as male population and they perform household duties which are considered as part of their life and inborn duty. These works consume a lot of efforts and time in their daily life but all this hardship is unrecognized. They are still

remained invisible workers (Zaheer et. al, 2014). In addition there are many other problems which the rural farm women are facing problems such as difficulties in carrying major agricultural operations, unhygienic condition in the field, time management etc. keeping the above background in mind an attempt was made to analyze the involvement of tribal women in agricultural operations.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Nandurbar District of Maharashtra to analyze the role of tribal women and problems faced in performing agricultural activities. The Nandurbar district is situated between 730-310 and 740-320 East longitude, 210-000 and 220-030 North latitude. The district falls under three agro-climatic zones i.e., the western Maharashtra plain zone, western ghat zone and sub mountain (hilly) zone. The district is surrounded by Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Dhule district. Rural population accounts 85 per cent of the total population i.e. 1,137,202, out of which 69.3 per cent population of this district is tribal families live below poverty line. The economy

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of the district is dependent on agriculture. Nearly 60 per cent of the total population consists of small and marginal farmers. The main subsistence in this area is agriculture, which depends upon monsoon. The population of study consisted of tribal women involved in agriculture and allied activities. A sample of 120 tribal women was selected through random sampling. Selected respondents were interviewed personally using well structured interview schedule. Data were analyzed using statistic tool namely frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 depicts that (41.67%) of the respondents belonged to middle age group followed by young age (30.83%) and old age (27.50%) group. While looking at their educational status, results revealed that majority (90%) respondents were illiterate and only 10 percent of the respondents were literate. It was also revealed that around 51.66 percent of respondents were belonged to nuclear family and followed by (48.33%) were joint family. Results on land holding depicts that majority (57.50%) were had small scale land followed by medium scale (31.67%) and only 10.83 percent had scale land. Results on family income shows that majority (60%) of respondents were belongs to below Rs. 20,000 followed by (16.67%) income group Rs. 20,000-40,000 (15.83) income group Rs. 40,000-60,000 and (7.50%) income group above Rs. 60,000 annually .75 percent of the respondents were doing self cultivation followed by labour (11.67%), sharing basis (7.50%) and contract (1.67%).

Table 1
Background profile of the respondents

Sl.No	Variables	N=120		
	Category	Frequency	%	
1	Age	Young(<30)	37	30.83
		Middle (31-40)	50	41.67
		Old(>40)	33	27.50
2	Education	Literate	12	10
		Illiterate	108	90.00
3	Family Type	Joint	58	48.33
		Nuclear	62	51.67
4	Land Holding	Small	69	57.50
		Medium	38	31.67
		Large	13	10.83
5	Gross Income	Below Rs.20,000/-	72	60.00
		Rs.20,000-40,000/-	20	16.67
		Rs. 40,000-60,000/-	19	15.83
		Rs.60,000/- and Above	09	7.50
6	Cultivation Method	Self	90	75
		Contract	02	1.67
		Sharing Basis	09	7.50
		Labour	14	11.67

Participation refers to taking part in activities in various types of work often with others. If there is a need, there is participation. Rural women have very hectic life. Her work starts from dawn and ends at mid- night. In the study area, the tribal women take part in various pre and post harvest activities. The distribution of respondents according to their participation in various activities has been shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2 and fig 1 reveals that transplanting, weeding are the major farm operations where in women participation was 100 percent and done all the major operations by hand and sickle. This result is supported by Das (2011) in their paper “Work Participation of Women in Agriculture in Odisha”, where it has been found out that gap filling (98.33%), sowing(96.67%), thinning(88.33%), cleaning of fields(85%), raising nursery seedling(79.17%) operations in which participation of farm women was more than 75 percent. The tasks manure application (71.67%), Irrigation and Fertilizer application (43.33%) in which farm women was varied between 40-75 percent. least involvement of farm women was found in plant protection measures (2.50%).

Table 2
Involvement of Tribal Women in field Operations

Sl.no	Farm Operations	N = 120		Type of Implements Used
		Frequency	%	
1	Cleaning of field	102	85.00	Hand
2	Raising nursery seedling	98	79.17	Hand
3	Sowing	116	96.67	Hand
4	Transplanting	120	100	Hand
5	Manure application	86	71.67	Hand
6	Fertilizer application	52	43.33	Hand
7	Weeding	120	100	Hand/sickle
8	Thinning	106	88.33	Hand
9	Gap filling	118	98.33	Hand
10	Irrigation	52	43.33	Hand
11	Plant protection measures (use of insecticides, pesticides)	03	2.50	Sprayer

The above Table 3 and fig 2 shows that tribal women of Nandurbar district are largely involved in post harvest activities. These findings are similar to that of Borkakoty (2013) who states that nearly all the tasks connected with “post harvest operations are performed by rural women Golaghat District, Assam”. Cent percent of the respondents involved in Harvesting of crop and cutting of grass, Picking, Winnowing, Drying of grains, cleaning of grains done

mainly by hand followed by Shifting produce to threshing floor (93.33%), Threshing (77.50), Grading (67.50%), Processing (60.00%) , Storage (52.50%) and marketing (3.33%). Threshing operations were done by hand a very few used thresher for this purpose. Similarly they used traditional hand winnower for the task of winnowing.

Table 3
Involvement of Tribal Women in Post Harvest Operations

Sl.no	Post Harvest Operations	N=120		Type of Implements Used
		Frequency	%	
1	Harvesting of crop and cutting of grass	120	100	Sickle
2	Picking	120	100	Hand
3	Shifting produce to threshing floor	112	93.33	Head
4	Threshing	93	77.50	Hand thresher
5	Winnowing	120	100	Hand/ winnower
6	Drying of grains	120	100	Hand
7	Cleaning of grains	120	100	Hand
8	Grading	81	67.50	Hand
9	Storage	63	52.50	Kothi, kanagi, bags
10	Marketing	04	3.33	-
11	Processing	72	60.00	-

Farm women engaged in different agriculture activities and they suffer from various health problems showed in Table 4. Cent percent of the respondents feel that their diet is not balanced and unhealthy followed by backache, fatigue/restless (75.83%) and unhygienic condition in the field (53.33%) while looking at their management

Table 4
Problems Faced by Tribal Women in Nandurbar District

Sr.no	Problems	N=120	
		Frequency	%
<i>I Health Problems</i>			
1	Backache, headache, fatigue/restless	91	75.83
2	Unhygienic condition in the field	64	53.33
3	Unavailability of healthy diet	120	100
<i>II Management Problems</i>			
4	Management of time between farm and home	108	90.00
5	Difficulties in carrying major operations like crop harvesting/transplanting, rice cultivation and sowing	83	69.17
<i>III Financial Problems</i>			
6	Lack of resource	102	85.00
7	Lack of finance	114	95.00

problems, results revealed that majority (90%) respondents face great difficulties in carrying major operations like crop harvesting/transplanting, rice cultivation /sowing etc. result on financial problems depicts that majority (95%) were face lack of finance followed by lack of resources (85%) because of low self confidence, lack of knowledge, belief that women are subordinate to male counterparts, illiteracy, poor access of to farm information were the major constraints.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the study reveals the fact that tribal women of Nandurbar District play a significant and crucial role in agricultural activities but their involvement is not recorded. They still remained invisible workers. Their participation was maximum in pre and post harvest operations viz, Transplanting, cleaning field, sowing, Harvesting of crop and cutting of grass, picking, drying of grains and cleaning of grains and majority of the operations done by hand. A study also showed that majority of the tribal women suffered from minor health problems, management problem and financial problem.

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