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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN FARM ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED VILLAGES OF TEHSIL SURANKOTE OF POONCH DISTRICT, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is one of the primary sources in Jammu and Kashmir for the development of the economy. Jammu and Kashmir have a sole feature in the agricultural and prevalence of homestead and crop cultivation, etc. Women play a vital role in farm activities in Tehsil Surankote of District Poonch. A study has been conducted in the three villages of Surankote block namely Dandi Dhara, Gunthal and Sangla with an aim to know the woman involvement and participations in the agricultural activity and various problems related to it. Women take part in various activities such as rice cultivation, wheat cultivation, maize cultivation, horticulture, handicraft, sericulture, fisheries, seed cleaning, sowing, harvesting, transporting, watering, fodder cutting, cleaning of animal shed etc. The information is collected from 150 households in three villages with the help of multi-stage sampling. A woman has an equal opportunity, capabilities, and creation of resources in the area. This paper also analyses agricultural effect on the health of the women due to the workload and extreme weather conditions. They suffer from different ailments and diseases such as headache, back pain, body pain and vision problem. A woman performs multiple responsibilities in the society; of social work, of cultural activities, of domestic work and work in the field for agricultural purposes. Most of the women are associated with onion production and milk production and their export in the market because they are very poor and have a low income. A women's participation in villages is compared and equalled to man, and they have a right to the cultivation of different crops. The concentration of women in Poonch is very large. They engage themselves with different agricultural and farm activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Women play an important and curial role in agricultural development and other farm activates. They are involved in various activities like maize cultivation, rice cultivation, wheat cultivation, horticulture, fisheries production, commercial dairying, onion production, sericulture and other allied activities. As per the census of 2011, out of total female main workers, 55 percent are agricultural labor and 24 percent are cultivators in India. Based on the 2012 data, India is the fourth largest agricultural sector in the world. According to 2011 statistics, the average farm in India is about 1.5 acres, minuscule when compared to average 50 hectares in France or 178 hectares in United States and 273 hectares in Canada. In rural India, the percentage of women in agriculture for their live hood is as high as 84%.

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In 2009, 94% of the female agricultural labor force in crops cultivations were in cereal production, while 1.4% worked in vegetable production, and 3.72% were engaged in fruits, nuts, beverages, and spice crops in India. Women's participation rate in the agricultural sectors is about 47% in tea plantations, 46.84% in cotton cultivation, 45.43% growing oil seeds and 39.13% in vegetable production. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_agriculture_in_India According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Indian women represent a share of 21% and 24% of all fishers and fish farmers, respectively. The vast area of Jammu and Kashmir is under agriculture sectors but because of the poor soil texture and climatic variations, agricultural production is not good. 70% population of Jammu and Kashmir largely depends on the agriculture and 49% population works in the field. In Surankote Tehsil 26.48% women are cultivators, 22.35 % agricultural labor, 6.61% household and Industrial workers and 44.56% are other workers. The Surankote Tehsil is known as the Mini-Kashmir because of the various agricultural activities practiced there. Women of the areas under study are mainly associated with maize, rice, wheat, milk and onion production.

Some of them are associated with the handicraft, horticulture, and floriculture. The agriculture and farms production is very low mainly because of the lack of proper training and knowledge. Generally, these women don't know proper methods of agriculture and use of modern technology in the field of agriculture. They face many problems and challenges like lack of irrigation facilities, availability of hybrid seeds, fertilizers and other facilities. During data collection we noticed that these women also suffer from different ailments and diseases such as headache, back pain, body pain and vision problem because of workload and extreme conditions of weather and temperature.

Raju et al. (1991) also revealed in the similar study that rural women in our country shared abundant responsibilities and performed a wide spectrum of duties in raising the family, maintaining the household, attending to farm labour, rearing domestic animals and extending a helping hand in rural artisanship and handicrafts. In spite of discharging all these duties their involvement in decision making process specially related to money matters is low. In Jammu and Kashmir rural transformation and poverty alleviation were regarded as strategic factors in the development process right from 1947. It can be hypothesized that land reform of the 1950s was one of the key factors to engineer basic changes in the rural economy of the State. The State enjoyed the unique distinction of having introduced land reform (Bhat M.S. 1993).

Location Of Study Area: Poonch district lies between 33°-75' and 34°-00' north latitude and 73°-58' to 74°-33' east- longitude. Baramulla and Budgam districts are situated on its north and north-east, whereas Pulwama district is situated in its west. While in the south it is bounded by Rajouri district, the areas in its west and north-west are presently under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. Surankote townships are located some 27 kilometers to the south-east of Poonch city and 221 kilometers from winter capital Jammu. Surankote is a tehsil and municipal committee in the Poonch district of the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Comprised of 43 villages it is located between the Pir Panjal and ranges within the Himalayas. Twenty-four villages are located on the western slopes of main Pir Panchal range while 19 villages are found on the slopes of Rattan Panchal range. The climatic conditions resemble with that of Kashmir. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surankote>

Objective

- To know the involvement of women in agricultural and farm activities in the Study area.
- To analyze the concentration of women labor in maize, wheat, rice, onion and dairy farming in the sampling area.
- To study the effect of agriculture on the health of woman due to over load of work.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study multi-stage sampling has been used. In the first stage, three villages of Surankote tehsil Dandi Dhara, Gunthal and Sangla were selected for the purpose of women involvement in the agricultural activities. In the second stage a total of 150 respondents were selected randomly from these three villages for each activity who worked in the field and other activity. Thus a sample of 50 women respondents was taken from village Dandi Dhara, 50 respondents taken from

Gunthal and 50 respondents were taken from the Sangla village of block Surankote. The respondents' were interviewed as per the objective of the study and it was noticed that a number of respondents are involved in the farm activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the rural area of Jammu and Kashmir woman are illiterate and have a low income sources. They work in field to fulfill their commercial needs of daily life. Their husbands work outside the district.

Women Involvements in Maize Activity: Maize is cultivated in the hilly area of Jammu and Kashmir. Poonch is also a hilly district. Most of the women are associated with this activity. The maximum number of women i.e., 64% is associated with seed sowing in Sangla village. Digging under plants is 80%. In harvesting and threshing villages of Sangla and Dandi Dhara have same percentage of 64% and 84% respectively. The last activity of maize cultivation is storing of grains which has shown the involvement of 52% women in Sangla which is higher as compared to other two villages as shown in (Table 1) given below.

Woman Involvements in Wheat Cultivation: Women are also involved in the cultivation of wheat from sowing to storing of grains. The maximum percentage of woman involvement in Sangla for sowing, harvesting and threshing are 70%, 90% and 66% respectively. The maximum involvement in grain storing is shown by village Dandi Dhara which accounts for 64% as shown the (table 3) given below.

Woman Involvement in Onion Cultivation: Onion is one of the major seasonal crops cultivated in the study area. The women involvement is very large as compared to other crops cultivation. Large no. of women takes part in onion cultivation from preparing of field to storing of onion. They also export large no. of onion in the market. In activities such as field preparing, sowing, watering, weeding, harvesting, and storing the women involvement from Sangla is 90%, 80%, 84%, 76%, 80% and 90% respectively as shown in (table 4) given below.

Woman Involvement in Dairy Farming: Dairy farming is the commercial activity performed by women in their houses for milk, butter and curd. Maximum women are involved in dairy farm from fodder cutting to grazing of animals. The maximum percentage of women is noticed from Sangla and Dandi Dhara in fodder cutting which is 90% and from milking in Sangla which is 84%. In cleaning of animal sheds the maximum percentage is shown by Dandi Dhara which is 70%. In the last activity grazing of animals the maximum percentage shown in Sangla is 84% as shown the (table no 5) given below.

Effect of Agriculture on the health of woman: Agriculture provides a large benefit to women but it also affects their health in study area. During the field survey, we noticed that maximum women suffer from headache, back pain, body pain, vision problem, and joint problem etc. due to massive workload. 20% women from Dandi Dhara, 24% women from Gunthal and 30% women from Sangla suffer from headache. 44% women from Dandi Dhara, 34% women from Gunthal and 60% women from Sangla suffer from back pain. 58% women from Dandi Dhara, 44% women from Gunthal and 40% from Sangla suffer from body pain. 24% women from Dandi Dhara, 20% from Gunthal and 30% from Sangla are also shown to have various vision problems as shown in (table 6) given below.

Table 1. Woman Involvements in Maize Activity

| Serial no | Activity | Number of woman responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Snowing of Seed | 30 | 60 | 15 | 30 | 32 | 64 |
| 2 | Digging under Plants | 25 | 50 | 25 | 50 | 40 | 80 |
| 3 | Harvesting | 32 | 64 | 30 | 60 | 32 | 64 |
| 4 | Threshing | 42 | 84 | 35 | 70 | 42 | 84 |
| 5 | Storing | 20 | 40 | 10 | 20 | 26 | 52 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Table 2. Woman involvements in Rice Cultivation

| Serial no | Activity | Number of woman responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Ploughing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Watering | 10 | 20 | 8 | 16 | 15 | 30 |
| 3 | Field Preparing | 5 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 10 |
| 4 | Transplanting | 10 | 20 | 5 | 10 | 12 | 24 |
| 5 | Weeding | 15 | 30 | 3 | 6 | 21 | 42 |
| 6 | Harvesting | 20 | 40 | 15 | 30 | 30 | 60 |
| 7 | Storing of grains | 25 | 50 | 25 | 50 | 32 | 64 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey.

Table 3. Woman involvements in Wheat Cultivation

| Serial no | Activity | Number of woman responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Sowing | 30 | 60 | 20 | 40 | 35 | 70 |
| 2 | Harvesting | 42 | 84 | 32 | 64 | 45 | 90 |
| 3 | Threshing | 25 | 50 | 15 | 30 | 33 | 66 |
| 4 | Storing grains | 32 | 64 | 20 | 40 | 30 | 60 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Table 4. Woman Involvement in Onion Cultivation

| Serial no | Activity | Number of women responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Field Preparing | 40 | 80 | 42 | 84 | 45 | 90 |
| 2 | Sowing | 35 | 70 | 39 | 78 | 40 | 80 |
| 3 | Watering | 30 | 60 | 35 | 70 | 42 | 84 |
| 4 | Weeding | 32 | 64 | 30 | 60 | 38 | 76 |
| 5 | Harvesting | 37 | 74 | 25 | 50 | 40 | 80 |
| 6 | Storing | 30 | 60 | 40 | 80 | 45 | 90 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Table 5. Woman Involvement in Dairy Farming

| Serial no | Activity | Number of woman responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Fodder cutting | 45 | 90 | 40 | 80 | 45 | 90 |
| 2 | Milking | 40 | 80 | 32 | 64 | 42 | 84 |
| 3 | Cleaning animal sheds | 35 | 70 | 30 | 60 | 32 | 64 |
| 4 | Grazing | 30 | 60 | 25 | 50 | 42 | 84 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Table 6. Effect of Agriculture on the health of woman

| Serial no | Health Problem | Number of woman responses (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|----------------------------------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangala | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Headache | 10 | 20 | 12 | 24 | 15 | 30 |
| 2 | Back pain | 22 | 44 | 17 | 34 | 30 | 60 |
| 3 | Body pain | 29 | 58 | 22 | 44 | 20 | 40 |
| 4 | Vision Problem | 12 | 24 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 30 |
| 5 | Joint Problem | 20 | 40 | 22 | 44 | 25 | 50 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Table 7. Woman Involvement in other Activity

| Serial no | Other Activity | Number of woman responses in villages (n=50) | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| | | Dandi Dhara | | Gunthal | | Sangla | |
| | | | % | | % | | % |
| 1 | Watching TV | 10 | 20 | 35 | 70 | 40 | 80 |
| 2 | Handicraft | 20 | 40 | 20 | 40 | 30 | 60 |
| 3 | Horticulture | 12 | 24 | 15 | 30 | 12 | 24 |
| 4 | Knitting | 20 | 40 | 25 | 50 | 42 | 84 |
| 5 | Ant other | 5 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 30 |

Source:-Data based on Field Survey

Woman Involvement in other Activity: Women in study area also take part in various other activities like, watching TV handicraft, horticulture, knitting etc. The women watching TV in Sangla is 70% and taking part in the handicraft is 60%. In horticulture women involvement from Gunthal is 30%. In knitting and various other activity the maximum women are from Sangla as shown the (table no 7) given above.

Conclusion

Farm is the major source of income in the rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir. District Poonch is also a hilly District but various farms activities are performed by the woman. They play a vital role for development of economy through the farm and agricultural activities. The large number of women participation noticed during the field survey. Each woman works 5-6 hours in the field. Maximum percentage of woman works in the dairy farming and onion cultivation. Women are also affected due to the overlord and pressure of agriculture work. They suffer from different diseases and ailments like back pain, vision problems, headache and joint problem etc. Women also perform multiple responsibilities in the society. They spend time with their family, cultural and social activities. The production of crops is very low due to the poor texture of soil, climatic variation, and lack of fertilizers, hybrid verity of seeds and other communication. Women in study area are mostly illiterate; they don't know the new method of agriculture. For good production of crops we needs to aware them and provide all possible facilities.

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