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EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FARMER FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Ganesh Mohite¹ and Seema Baban Bhise²

¹Vice Principal and Research Guide, Balbheem College, Beed

²Research Scholar, Department of Maharashtra, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra

ABSTRACT

Women play an important role in all economic and crop production activities in the agricultural sector in Maharashtra. The women constitute almost half of the workforce engaged in agriculture. The rural women participate in a broad range of agricultural activities such as production, processing, preservation and utilization of food. Women also play a key role in the entire food system starting from the selection of seeds, sowing, manuring, drying, storing and feeding the family from the harvested product. Even though women contribute 60 to 80 % of the labour in agriculture and animal husbandry, their involvement in selection of suitable crops and adoption of innovative and good management practices, is very low. The major reasons may be lack of authority in decision making in agricultural land production, gender discrimination in the land, low percentage of education, lack of awareness about the new technologies in agriculture and the poor access to female extension professionals for consultation about their farm lands. Empowerment of women in developing India will lead the nation to a breaking issue of humanist thinking for globalization.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Agriculture, Management, Labour, Farm work.

INTRODUCTION

Women farmers are the veritable backbone of subsistence agriculture. Yet due to gender insensitivity they do not receive the desired recognition. Women farmer need and right have been a largely ignored and in many cases their condition is little better than that of farm labour. Therefore, the state felt the need to mainstream women farmer in development activities and utilisation their potential with adequate recompense. India being a fast-growing country, still remains as one of the country with farmers below poverty line in the world. It is prone to weather-related shocks and experiences high levels of food insecurity, particularly among rural populations and smallholder farmers. Agriculture is the main occupation in India giving employment to about 58 per cent of the people[1]. The contribution of agriculture and allied sector in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country has reached about 14 per cent in 2011 – 2012. Women play a critical role in agricultural growth in India, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. Women's empowerment is a socio-political concept that involves cognitive, psychological, economic and political dimensions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the need of Women's Empowerment.
2. To access the awareness Women's Empowerment in India.
3. To study the agriculture women's problem.
4. To study the role of women in agricultural sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

All the data used for the study will be collected from primary and secondary sources but most of the data will be generated through.

A. Primary data

Major part of the study is based on the survey method for which interview schedule will be prepared to generate the information from the respondents. Interview is the couple with observation technique.

B. Secondary data

Various reference books, Journals, Reports related websites and other related printed materials will be used for proposed research work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gulati (1984) work "Agricultural Labourers" trace that every fourth male rural worker is an agricultural labourer, one out of every two female rural workers is engaged as agricultural labourer. According to Gulati, (1984) one would therefore be justified in saying that knowing about women agricultural labourers is a

substantial part of the knowing about the Indian working woman particularly in rural India. Agriculture is the dominant occupation in rural areas and its activities are seasonal, many women join the labour force during the sowing and harvesting seasons and withdraw on the face of non-worth work (Acharya; Mathrani, 1992). The plight of women rural labour, it is a well-known fact that even after four decades of planning and development, majority of women are still concentrated in a narrow range of occupations, characterized by low level of skills and thereby low wages and incomes. Majority of them are engaged in agriculture and allied activities and they constitute a distinct minority among non-agricultural workers (Singh; Singh, 1992). According to Hirway (1992) employers including farmers, also prefer men to women as labourers since men can work for long hours on a continuous basis. Consequently, on one hand women cannot compete with men for that work that is available at present while, on the other hand, the work that would suit them is not available. Roy (1992) found that the incidence of women agricultural labourer is not only very high in Bihar, but there are wide variations among the different districts in this regard. Although there is large divergence in the incidence of women labour even within the plains of Bihar, it is generally higher there than in the plateau region, which has substantial proportion of scheduled tribes.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Agricultural technology has helped to pull millions of people out of poverty, but a gender sensitive approach is required to address some of the inequalities women face like time and labour constraints, including childcare, domestic violence and rape, lack of physical security during common tasks that require unsafe travel, like firewood and water gathering, land ownership laws and the tendency to let men control financial decisions. USAID reports that women are more likely than men to improve the health and nutrition of their families, and communities with women serving as strong leaders may fare better in events of climate disaster[7]. Providing equal access to land, markets and technologies can ensure safety and increase production.

Although women make up at least 43 percent of the agricultural labour force worldwide, they typically lack access to education, extension services, land and credit. And this gender inequality comes at a huge cost, not just for women, but society as a whole. Discrimination against women can undermine economic development by limiting food security for families and preventing women and girls from achieving greater opportunities in education. In addition, many agricultural research and development programs ignore the needs and hopes of women farmers.

INDIAN FARMER WOMEN PROBLEMS:

The women doing farm activity faces various problems which acts as the obstacles for her to empower the farm activities. In a farm land there are various farm tools and technologies which are not much known by the women farmers. When there is no much knowledge about the new technologies in agriculture, the women faces problem in doing farm work and have to depend on other external individual for support. The proper guide lines and support from the extension officers and KVK officials would support the women farmers to empower them in agriculture. Research from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization shows that if women had the same access to non-land resources as male farmers, they could lift 100-150 million people out of hunger. Thus, it is very important than awareness about the farm technologies should be disseminated to the farm women.

ROLE OF ICAR

ICAR takes the lead through the KVKs across the country, by launching the Idea of "Women empowerment in Agricultural Development". These women farmers form the village level Extension wing of KVK and work closely with ATMA. ICAR considers launching it on a pilot scale in a few states during the year and observe its impact. This process itself of selection of women farmers and awarding them will create greater awareness among the local officials and general public about the importance of empowering women.

CONCLUSION

Until women are given the same opportunities that men are entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potential. The greatest need of the hour is change of social attitude to women. Women are the backbone of agricultural workforce but worldwide her hard work has mostly been unpaid. She does the most tedious and backbreaking tasks in agriculture, animal husbandry, various agriculture activities and homes. Most of time women work does not recorded by the government. Due to various problems that are being faced by the women farmers, they are not able to contribute more to the agriculture of our country. The major obstacles start at their homes in the form of gender inequality, not able to decide by themselves in farm activities and lack of awareness about the latest technologies of agriculture. When a women empowers herself in agriculture, the nation starts developing faster and more widely. In extension activities the women is now the centre point and activities. This empowerment initiates a global level support for humanists thinking. Without women force in

agricultural it is not possible to complete any agricultural activity. Her enlightenment will change the face of rural India.

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