

PARTICIPATION OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

R. Mohanta

PhD Scholar, OUAT, Bhubaneswar
E-mail: rojalinmohanta9@gmailcom

Abstract: A study on “Participation of Tribal Women in Agriculture in Mayurbhanj District of Odisha” was undertaken in two blocks of Mayubhanj district of Odisha with 120 respondents to find out the extent of participation of tribal women in different farm operations. The data were collected through a structured interview schedule and were subjected to appropriate statistical analysis to reveal the following results: Tribal women were doing almost all the agricultural activities in their farm like levelling of field, nursery raising, sowing, transplanting, manureing, fertiliser application, plant protection measure, irrigation, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, storage, marketing etc. however, in more extent they involve in farm operations like transplanting, cleaning and drying of grains, harvesting, weeding, shifting produce to threshing floor, winnowing, fertiliser application etc. and less involvement in plant protection measure, marketing etc. similarly they also practise some allied agricultural activities from which they involve at maximum extent on kitchen gardening having highest mean score 2.76 (rank I) followed by goatary, dairy farming, poultry and duckery respectively.

Keywords: participation, tribal women in agriculture.

Introduction

Farmwomen are the backbone of Indian agriculture. Growing food has been an interminable saga of her life. It is a well recognized fact that more than 60 % of agricultural operations have been traditionally handled by women. Even cultural anthropological literature suggests that agriculture is invention of women.

Rural woman are extensively involved in agricultural activities. The nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. The mode of female participation in agricultural production varies with the land-owning status of farm household. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers (Vinod Kumar et al, 1985, p 277). Women are doing almost all the agricultural work starting from sowing of seeds to harvesting and processing the agricultural produce.

Despite their dominance of the labour force, women in India still face extreme disadvantage in terms of pay, land rights, and representation in local farmers organizations. Furthermore their lack of empowerment often results in negative externalities such as lower educational attainment for their children and poor familial health.

Looking the significant role of tribal women in agriculture and allied activities, the study on participation of tribal women in agriculture was undertaken keeping in view of increasing importance of involvement of tribal women in agricultural production programmes. Studies in this field so far had exhibited a little concern on tribal women's role in Odisha state. Hence, this study was conducted with an objective of ascertaining the extent of involvement of tribal women in agriculture. Like other rural women, tribal farmwomen also play an important role in agriculture. No field operation is beyond the reach of women. They take important decisions in the home and outside the home (Antoniades and Papayiannis. 2000). Keeping this fact in view the investigation on role of tribal farmwomen in agriculture in Mayurbhanj district was undertaken with objective of extent of involvement of tribal women in different farm activities.

Material and methods

The present investigation was carried out in the Mayurbhanj district of the Odisha state, which is the largest tribal district of the state. In selecting the district the main consideration was the agriculture as the main occupation of people living in such villages. From the Mayurbhanj district, the Eight villages namely- Sardha, Batgaudgaon, Nakuda, Kunjia, Badapasi, Badanai, Pantha, Hatimundi. were randomly selected for the study. From total selected 8 tribal dominated villages, 120 respondents were selected. The structured interview schedule keeping in view the objectives of the study was prepared. An interview schedule was used for the final data collection. Data were collected by arranging personal interview from the total selected 120 tribal farmwomen. As the study was concerned to find out the role performance of farmwomen in agriculture, ex-post-facto research design was used for this study. The statistical tools such as frequency, percent and correlation coefficient were used to interpret the data.

Result and discussion

The women are back bone of agricultural work force, but worldwide her hard work has mostly been unpaid. She dose the most tedious back-breaking tasks in agriculture, animal husbandry and homes. Women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. However the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro production systems.

Women are carrying out a number of activities inside and outside the home. This is more true in case of farm women who works with men folk in performing several farm operation as well as performing all the roles related to home living, family care and management. Farm

women plays a significant role in agricultural activities such as- seeding, transplanting, weeding, plant protection storage etc. The tribal women of Mayurbhanj district involve in almost all agricultural activities starting from seed sowing , nursery raising, transplanting to harvesting, storage, marketing, postharvest operations etc.

From the table 1.1. it is revealed that maximum farm women are involved in transplanting which got rank 1 with mean score 2.90. followed by drying of grains, cleaning of grains, harvesting, weeding, shifting produce to threshing floor, winnowing having rank II, III, IV, V, VI respectively, and likewise tribal women have less involvement in storage, marketing, levelling of field having rank XV, XVI, XVII and they do not involve in ploughing of field having mean score 1 and rank XVIII Similar result were reported by Chayal and Dhaka, (2010) . From this figure it is depicted that farm women are doing almost all work related to agriculture. About 90% of work done by women only.

1.1 Involvement in different farm activities

Sl no.	Items	Mean score	Rank order
1	Ploughing of field	1	XVIII
2	Levelling of field	2.03	XVII
3	Nursery raising	2.23	XIV
4	Sowing	2.27	XIII
5	Transplanting	2.90	I
6	Manureing	2.62	IX
7	Fertiliser application	1.73	VII
8	Weeding	2.82	IV
9	Thinning	2.72	VIII
10	Gap filling	2.59	X
11	Irrigation	2.36	XII
12	Plant protection measure	1.56	XI
13	Harvesting	2.85	III
14	Shifting produce to threshing floor	2.81	V
15	Threshing	2.36	XII
16	Winnowing	2.80	VI
17	Drying of grains	2.86	II
18	Cleaning of grains	2.86	II
19	Storage	2.18	XVI
20	Marketing	2.22	XV

From the table 1.2 it is depicted that tribal women are mostly involved in kitchen gardening having mean score 2.76 and rank order I, followed by goatary (II), dairy farming (III), then poultry (IV) which add value to their economic condition.

1.2. Involvement in allied activities

Sl no.	Activities	Mean score	Rank order
1	Dairy farming	2.36	III
2	Poultry	2.28	IV
3	Duckery	1.27	V
4	Goatery	2.73	II
5	Piggery	1	VI
6	Pisciculture	1	VI
7	Bee keeping	1	VI
8	Floriculture	1	VI
9	Kitchen gardening	2.76	I

The findings presented in the table 1.3. revealed that occupation, land holding, social participation, extension participation, annual income are significantly correlated with extent of participation of tribal women in different farm activities whereas age, education, family type, house type and cosmopolitaness are negatively correlated with extent of participation of farm women in different farm activities.

The findings indicates that age of the tribal women not correlated with their extent of participation, the probable reason might be with increase in age decrease in ability which leads to less participation in different farm activity.

The findings also revealed that education of tribal women not correlated with alternate livelihood system. The probable reason might be tribal women were dominated by their rules, culture, norms. They did not easily accept any things. They stick to their traditional method of cultivation practices.

Table 1.3. Relationship between independent variable of the respondents and their participation in agricultural activities n = 120

Variable no.	Independent variables	'r' values
1	Age	-0.05
2	Education	-0.065*
3	Occupation	0.023*
4	Family type	-0.048
5	Land holding	0.096**
6	House type	-0.034*
7	Social participation	0.137*
8	Extension participation	0.071**
9	Cosmopolitaness	-0.004
10	Annual income	0.038*

*=1% level of significance, **= 5% level of significance

Conclusion

Tribal women play a major role in the co-management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstitions, dominant roles in decision making, social evils and many other cultural factors. The participatory role of tribals in improving their living conditions by fully exploring natural endowments and alternative uses most find an appropriate place in strategic approach. The study clearly shows that tribal women play an important role in farm and nonfarm activities. They also make significant contribution in small and medium sized farm. The overall research showed that in farm activities participation of tribal women was found maximum in transplanting with highest mean score 2.90 and ranked value 'I', followed by cleaning and drying of grains, harvesting, weeding and shifting produce to threshing floor with mean score 2.86, 2.85, 2.82, 2.81 having rank position II, III, IV, & V respectively. In allied farm activities the participation of tribal farm women was maximum in kitchen gardening with highest mean score 2.76 and rank position I, followed by goatery and dairy farming with mean score 2.73 & 2.36 with rank position II & III respectively. There was very poor response in mushroom production, piggery and floricultural activity. In respect of their active involvement and participation in agriculture and allied farm activities, they have not recognised and appreciated. Besides efficiency in farm activities, there is a need for reduction of their drudgery specially in weeding, harvesting and postharvest operations to enable the tribal farm women to play an important role in agriculture and allied sector. They should be educated and train time to time to enrich their knowledge, skill, competency. Thus the tribal farm women can discharge their duties more effectively and efficiently to augment in agriculture and allied areas.

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