

Role of Women in Decision Making in Household and Agriculture Activities: A Case Study of Village Sanghi in Rohtak District, Haryana

Dr Satish Khasa

Assistant Professor

Department of Commerce

Government College for Women Gohana

Abstract

- In India, approximately 50 per cent share of total population contributed by women and they play an important role in growth of agriculture sector. We can say that women are the backbone behind agriculture and the allied activities. Women play an important role of wage labours, farmers, co-farmers, managers of farms, and family labours. Women participate in crop cultivation and also in allied areas like horticulture, livestock and fishers. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2011) “The number of women engaged in agriculture sector as percentage of economically active population is higher in Asian Countries”. Around 50 per cent of the food production are contributes by Asian Women. In words of Swaminathan (famous agriculture scientist) “It was women who first domesticate crop plants and there initiated the art and science of farming while men went out hunting in search of food. Women started gathering seeds from the native flora and began cultivating those of interest from the point of view of food, feed, fodder, fiber and fuel”. (Bibhu Santosh Behra 2013) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that in developing countries around 60 percent to 80percent of food produced by women. The primary objective of the study is to analyse the role women in decision making in household and agriculture activities. It has been found that women play an important role in decision making process. 39.47 percent of women agricultural labourer are supported by their male companion for the use of fertilizers, 23.70 percent were supported for the purchase of agricultural equipment’s and 57.90 percent were supported for changing crop patterns.

INTRODUCTION

In India, approximately 50 per cent share of total population contributed by women and they play an important role in growth of agriculture sector. We can say that women are the backbone behind agriculture and the allied activities. Women play an important role of wage labours, farmers, co-farmers, managers of farms, and family labours. Women participate in crop cultivation and also in allied areas like horticulture, livestock and fishers. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2011) “The number of women engaged in

agriculture sector as percentage of economically active population is higher in Asian Countries". Around 50 per cent of the food production are contributes by Asian Women. In words of Swaminathan (famous agriculture scientist) "It was women who first domesticate crop plants and there initiated the art and science of farming while men went out hunting in search of food. Women started gathering seeds from the native flora and began cultivating those of interest from the point of view of food, feed, fodder, fiber and fuel". (Bibhu Santosh Behra 2013) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that in developing countries around 60 percent to 80percent of food produced by women. Women don't like to go for work at a long distance and they prefer to do work which is time consuming near to their house. Women works at home and outside the home. In home women role as a mother, wife and daughter which can't be estimated. Women is a care taker of the family, outside the home women work with men. The role of women in the home and outside the home gives a significant contribution to productive system but in real world the male dominated society hasn't recognized their contribution.

GLOBALIZATION AND WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Globalization implied opening of economics to various nations, which facilitated Multi National Company's (MNC) to set up in and outside our country provide the basic access to important food & non-food items market. Agreement on Agriculture by World Trade Organization (WTO-AoA) completed the process of agricultural liberalization by opening the agriculture sector to free global markets. FAP (1996) emphasized that the goal of WTO-AoA was to establish universal food security by the year 2010. In Indian context, globalization implied opening up of the domestic economy to unequal players.

The globalization also has adverse effects on the livelihoods of the local farmers. It robs them off their local market. Women in agriculture has been drastically affected due to loss of control over agricultural production. It affected their work pattern, incomes and food security system of households. This has also led to change in other social processes such as migration, increase dependence on casual labour, increased health risks and exploitation. The women in agriculture activities have been affected due to WTO policies of trade liberalization due to three reasons mainly: firstly, the TRIPs agreement affects women's control over seeds, knowledge and their productive functions. The Agreement on Agriculture not only affects the income security aspects of women but also have secondary impacts such as increased violence against them. Secondly, women have to bear disproportionate costs of health hazards and displacement as the globalization pattern is shifting towards more capital and chemical intensive agriculture practices. Thirdly, women in agriculture face gender discrimination which led to lower returns for them and heavier work burden in food production. The dumping process and destruction of rural livelihood affects women the most as it further declines their already low incomes.

The introduction of revolution in agriculture sector in the form of green revolution has obliterated the traditional modes and has led to a drastic change in agricultural practices and traditional farming methods. MNCs in the agriculture sector have been given free hand which has further enhanced the shrinkage of traditional methods, rise in cost of production, traditional varieties replacement by HYV seeds and now

stagnating productivity. Globalization also has its adverse effects on plantation sector, with the sharp fall in international prices and unrestricted imports, the sector has been facing many challenges

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Maria (1984) conducted a study in six villages of West Bengal. Her study revealed that women were mainly engaged in weeding, transplanting, supervision, and store processing. Her study also revealed women participation in economic activities was low compared to men but the total number of hours of work done by women included household work were greater than that of men.

Chayal and Dhaka (2010) analyzed the participation of women in agricultural activities. The study focused primary data with a sample of 200 female workers from Bundy district of the state of Rajasthan. They found that the participation of women was maximum in cutting, shifting production to threshing, floor storage, picking, cleaning of grains. The study also emphasized the fact that the participation rate of women was influenced by various factors like land holding, family condition, educational level and age. Participation of women was least in ploughing of field, fertilizers, levelling of field, marketing operation and fertilizers application.

Godara and Rani (2015) focused on the women's role as agricultural cultivator in different districts of Haryana. Secondary data was used for analysis purpose. The study showed that women give their multi-dimensional contribution in terms of efforts and time which was not lower than men contribution. The study also found that in Haryana 62.5 per cent population lived in rural areas in which men and women were 53 per cent and 46.8 per cent respectively. The study revealed that from 2001 to 2012 share of agriculture working population to total working population in Haryana has been increased from 15.3 per cent to 17.1 percent. They also found that women status had been low by all indicators like social, economic and political. They suggested that government should give more efforts to encourage women and to raise their agricultural knowledge.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to analyse the role women in decision making in household and agriculture activities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data was collected on the basis of interview schedule method with the help of a questionnaire to find out the various problems faced by women labourers in village Sanghi. The researcher has adopted purposive sampling technique keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample of 80 women agricultural labourers from 589 total women labourer of village have been considered to conduct the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation is the main part of the research process. Analysis is the method of obtaining useful information from data collected through survey. Analysis is not completed without interpretation and interpretation cannot proceed without analysis. Both are related to each other. Interpretation means explaining the meaning of data. Interpretation demands fair and careful judgement.

Table – 1**Category of Respondents**

Caste/Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
General	46	57.50
Bc	14	17.50
Sc	20	25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey

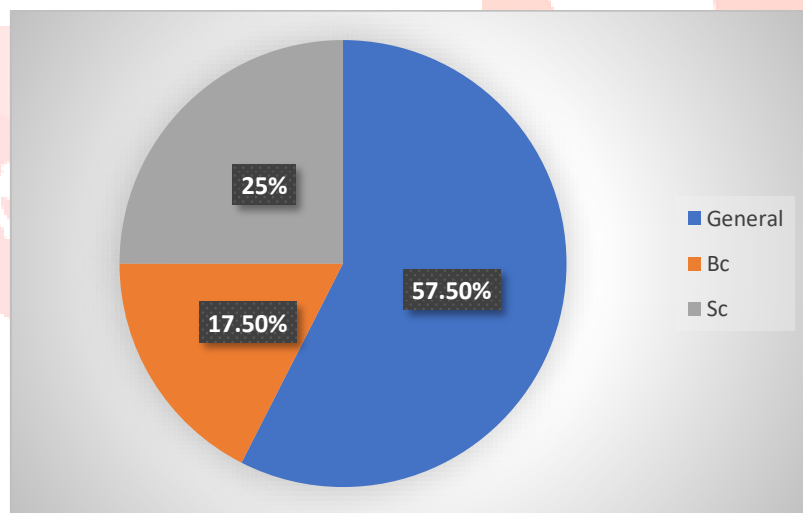
Figure – 1**Category of Respondents**

Table 1 and figure 1 shows that 57.50 per cent respondents belongs to General category, 25 per cent respondents belongs to Schedule caste and 17.50 per cent respondents belongs to Backward class. It is clear from the above table as well as from figure that General category constitute more than half of the total sample and it is more than double that of Schedule caste.

Table – 2

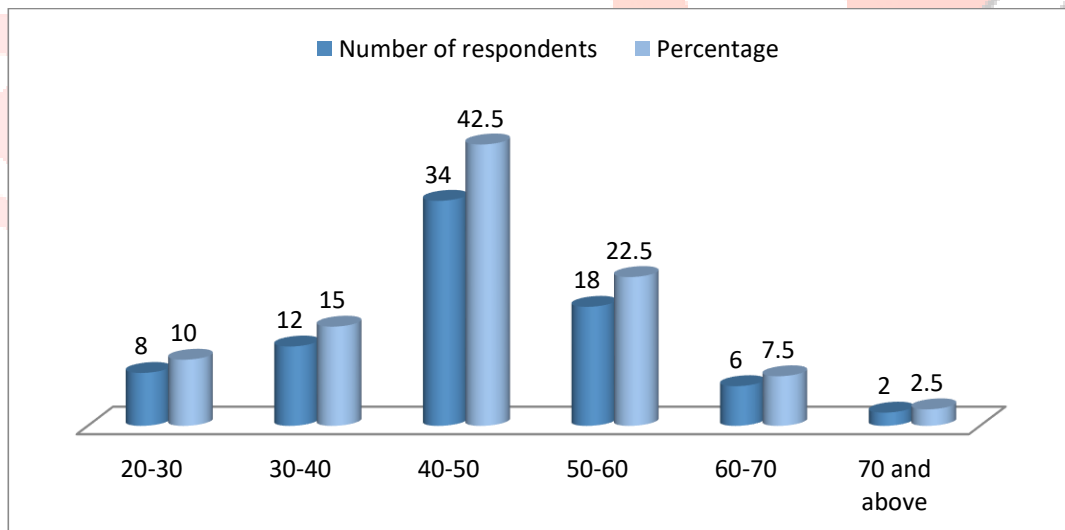
Age of Respondents

Age Group	Number of respondents	Percentage
20-30	8	10
30-40	12	15
40-50	34	42.50
50-60	18	22.50
60-70	6	7.50
70 and above	2	2.50
Total	80	100

Source: field survey

Figure-2

Age of Respondents



Age wise distribution of respondents in the village Sanghi has been shown by above table 5.2 and Figure 5.2. Above table shows that 10 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 20-30 years, 15 per cent belongs to age group 30-40, 42.50 per cent belongs to the age group 40-50, 22.50 per cent belongs to the age group 50-60, 7.50 per cent belongs to the age group 60-70 and only 2.50 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 70. It has been observed from the table that 42.50 per cent respondents belongs to the age group 40-50, which are engaged in agriculture are higher than other age group. In age group 50-60 second highest respondents are include after age group 40-50 and only 2.50 per cent respondents belongs to the age group 70 and above.

Table- 3

Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	2	2.50
Married	64	80
Divorcee	Nil	---
Widow	14	17.50
Total	80	100

Source : field survey

Figure - 3

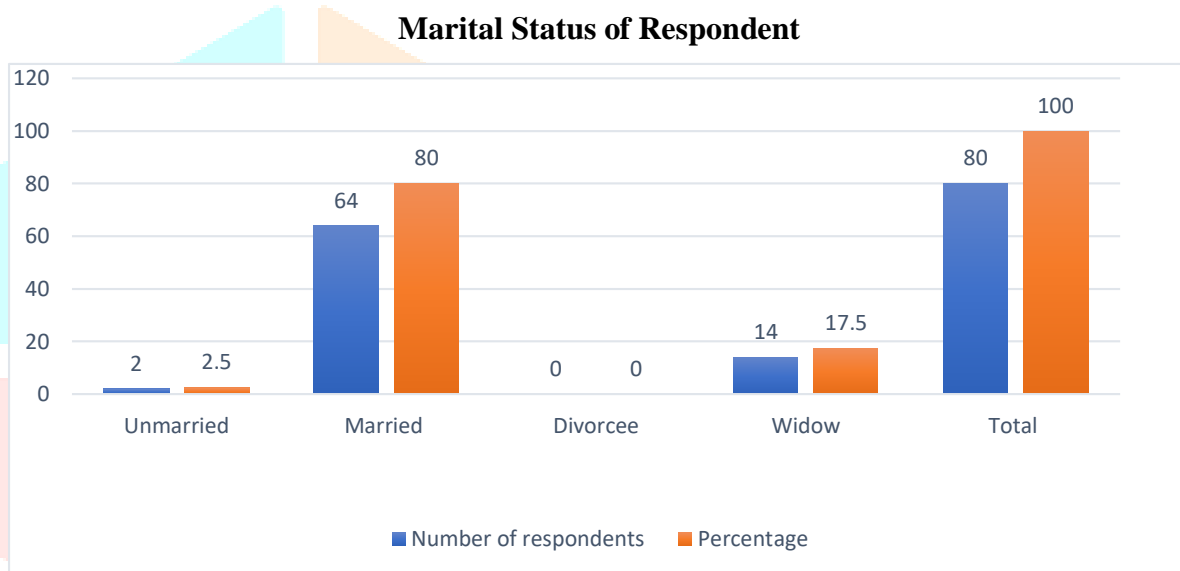


Table 3 and Figure 3 indicates the marital status of the respondents. It shows that 80 percent of the respondents are married, 2.50 per cent of the respondents are unmarried, 17.50 per cent of the respondents are widow. It is clear from the table and figure that none of the respondent is divorcee which engaged in agriculture sector. It is inferred from the above table and figure that majority of the respondents are married. It is concluded from the table and figure that respondents who are married largely involve in the agriculture sector.

Table-4

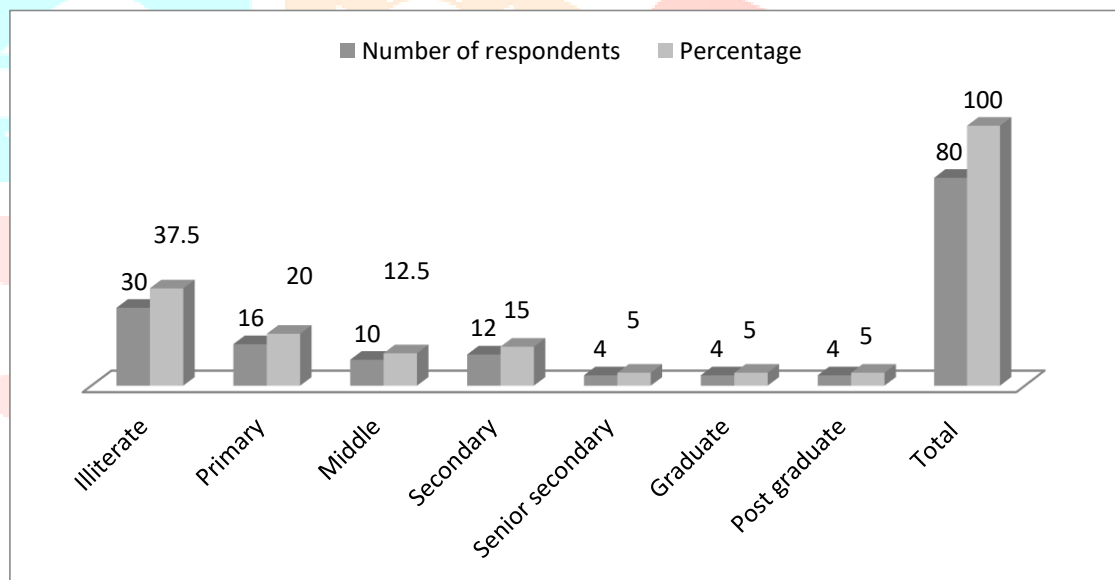
Educational Profile of Respondents

Education level	Number of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	30	37.5
Primary	16	20
Middle	10	12.5
Secondary	12	15
Senior secondary	4	5
Graduate	4	5
Post graduate	4	5
Total	80	100

Source: field survey

Figure -4

Educational Profile of Respondents



Distribution of the educational qualification of the respondents as shown by the table 5.4 and Figure 5.4. Among them 37.50 per cent respondents are those who were illiterate, 20 per cent respondents have completed only their primary education, 12.50 per cent respondents have middle education, 15 per cent respondents have secondary education and 5 per cent have senior secondary education. It is clear from the given table and figure that 10 per cent of respondents have completed their graduation and post-graduation. It is concluded from the table that majority of the respondents are illiterate (37.50). Percentage of degree holder is very less.

Table - 5

Annual Income of Respondents

Annual income (in rupees)	Number of respondents	Percentage
0- 50,000	22	27.50
50,000- 1,00,000	24	30
1,00,000- 1,50,000	4	5
1,50,000- 2,00,000	10	12.50
2,00,000- 2,50,000	8	10
2,50,000- 3,00,000	6	7.50
3,00,000 & above	6	7.50
Total	80	100

Source: field survey

Figure - 5

Annual Income of Respondents

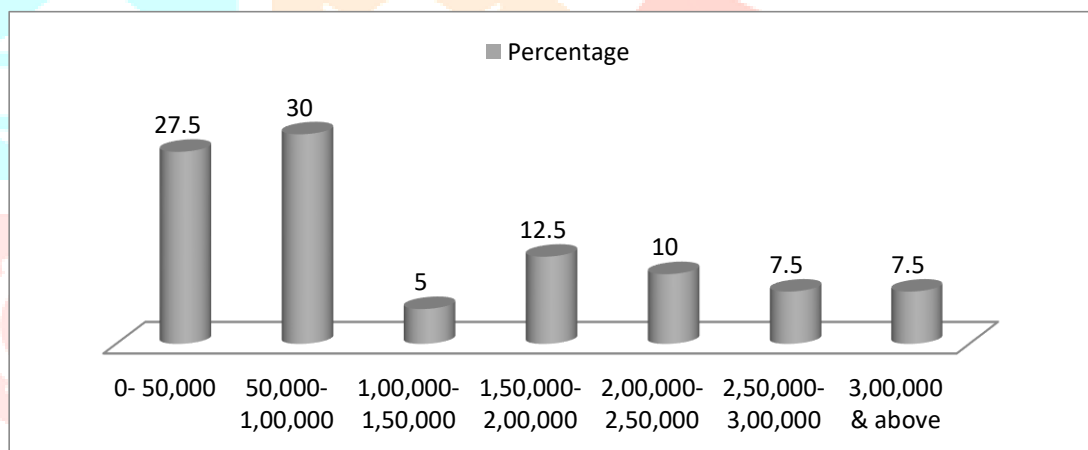


Table 5 and Figure 5 indicate the Annual income of the respondents. The study found that 27.50 per cent respondents were getting annual income between 0-50,000, 30 per cent getting annual income between 50,000-1,00,000, 5 per cent getting annual income between 1,00,000-1,50,000, 12.50 per cent getting annual income between 1,50,000-2,00,000, 10 per cent getting annual income between 2,00,000-2,50,000, and 7.50 per cent getting annual income between 2,50,000- 3,00,000 and 7.70 per cent getting annual income above 3,00,000. It is concluded from the figure and table that near about one third of respondents come under the income group 50000- 1,00,000 and 15 per cent respondents have the annual income more than 2,50,000 because women were not only engaged in agriculture sector but in some other activities too like tailoring, cosmetic shop, papad making etc.

Extent of respondent's involvement in decision making in household activities

Decision related to	Extent of respondents involvement in decision making in household activities			Participation index	Rank order
	Sole decision maker (x2)	Joint decision maker(x1)	Nil involvement (x0)		
House construction and house repair & maintenance	8 (10%)	62 (77.50%)	10 (12.50%)	78	
Purchase of food items	56 (70%)	20 (25%)	4 (5%)	132	2 nd
Buying and selling of domestic goods	26 (32.50%)	48 (60%)	6 (7.50%)	100	3 rd
Children education and carrier	6 (7.50%)	68 (85%)	6 (7.50%)	80	
Children marriage	8 (10%)	66 (82.50%)	6 (7.50%)	82	
Participation on social matters	8 (10%)	22 (27.50%)	50 (62.50%)	38	
Taking care for domestic use	54 (67.50%)	26 (32.50%)	0 (0%)	134	1 st
Savings and investments	10 (12.50%)	66 (82.50%)	4 (5%)	86	

Participation index = Sole decision maker x2 + Joint decision maker x1 + Nil involvement x0

Source: field survey

Above table shows the extent of respondent's involvement in decision making in household activities. Above table focused mainly on eight major domestic activities in which the role of women in decision making activities has been analysed. The data revealed that near about 30 per cent of decision related to domestic

activities are taken by women. While 59 per cent decision are jointly taken by family and 11 per cent of the respondents did not have any type of involvement in decision making related to domestic activities.

It can be concluded from the participation index that taking care for domestic use got the first rank with 134 score followed by purchase of food item and buying and selling of domestic goods with score 132 and 100 respectively got the second and third rank.

It is due to the women empowerment that the women's role in decision making in household activities has been increased over the period of time.

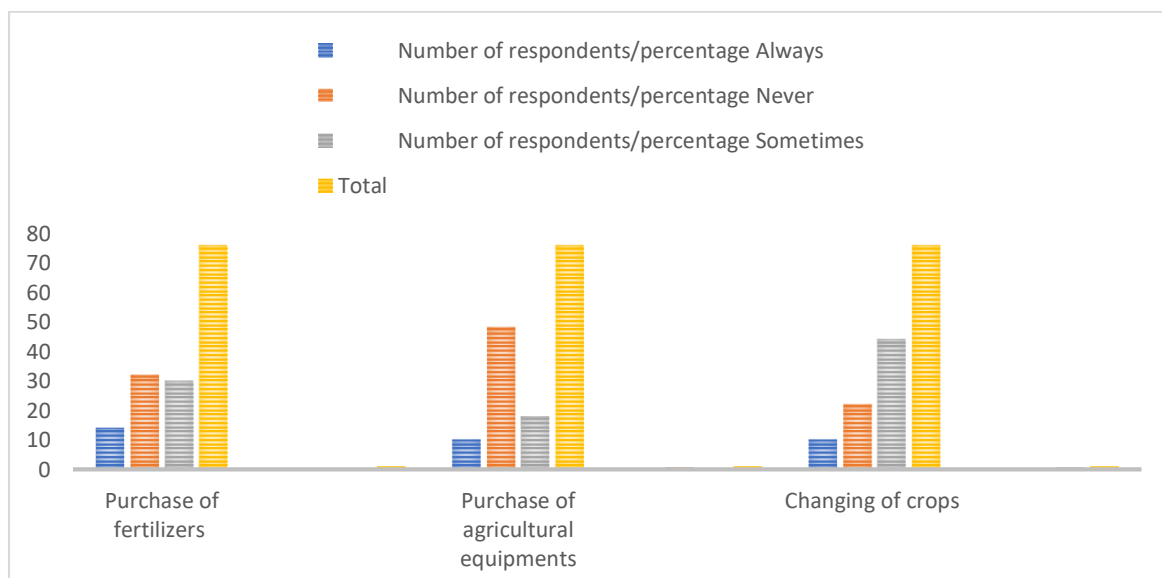
Table – 6
Decision Making in Agricultural Activities

Decision making areas	Number of respondents/percentage			Total
	Always	Never	Sometimes	
Purchase of fertilizers	14 (18.43%)	32 (42.10%)	30 (39.47%)	76 (100%)
Purchase of agricultural equipments	10 (13.15%)	48 (63.15%)	18 (23.70%)	76 (100%)
Changing of crops	10 (13.15%)	22 (28.95%)	44 (57.90%)	76 (100%)

Source: field survey

Figure-6

Decision Making in Agricultural Activities



Above table and figure shows the involvement of women's in decision making process in agriculture sector is increasing. Women's are spending their mostly time in field and their contribution in agriculture sector are not recognize up to that much level which they really deserve. But slowly - slowly importance of women's role in agriculture sector is start recognizing by male dominating society. 18.43 per cent of respondents said yes their decision is considered while decision regarding purchase of fertilizers is taken, 42.10 per cent of respondents said that they never take part in decision making related to purchase of fertilizers and 39.47 per cent respondents said they participated in decision sometimes not always.

13.15 per cent respondents said they were involved in decision making related to purchase of agricultural equipment's, 63.15 per cent respondents said they never involved in decision making and 23.70 per cent respondents said they sometimes take part in decision making not always.

13.15 per cent respondents said they were involved in decision making related to changing of crops, 28.95 per cent respondents said they never involved in decision making and 57.90 per cent respondents said they sometimes involved in decision making related to changing of crops not always.

Table – 7

Work Participation Index (WPI) of Women Agricultural Labourers

Activities	Extent of participation			Participatio n index	Rank order
	Regularly (x2)	Occasionally(x1)	Never (x0)		
Field preparation	14	30	36	58	
Cleaning of field	22	32	26	76	
Sowing	36	20	24	92	
Applying fertilizers	4	16	60	24	
Weeding	32	32	16	96	
Plant protection measures	18	38	24	74	
Cutting	40	22	18	102	3 rd
Irrigation	0	16	64	16	
Plucking	38	38	4	114	2 nd
Drying the grain	46	26	8	118	1 st
Storage	12	28	40	52	
Marketing	0	8	72	20	
Grading	4	12	64	8	

Participation index=regularly x2 + occasionally x1 + never x0

Source: field survey

Table 7 shows the large number of women are engaged in drying the grains, plucking and cutting, as their rank are I, II, and third respectively. Out of 80 respondents 46 (57.5 per cent) are regularly involve in drying of grains, 4 (5 per cent) respondents occasionally involve.

Plucking is considered as the second most participated activity of women agricultural labourers in the study area. 38(47.5 per cent) respondents are regularly involved in plucking, 38 (47.5 per cent) respondents are occasionally in plucking and 30 (25 per cent) respondents said they never did this activity.

Third most participated activity is cutting. 40 (50 per cent) said they regularly involved in this and 22 (27.5 per cent) respondents are occasionally involved in cutting.

It is concluded from above table that drying of grains is the major work performed by women agricultural labourers followed by plucking and cutting.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

FINDINGS

- It is found that 34 (42.50 per cent) out of 80 respondents represent the age group of 40-50, 18 (22.50 per cent) respondents represents the age group of 50-60 and 12 (15 per cent) respondents represent the age group of 30-40.
- The study reveals that 57.50 per cent respondents are from General category, 25 per cent are from SC category and 17.50 per cent are from BC category.
- The study finds that 64 (80 per cent) out of 80 respondents are married, 2 (2.50 per cent) respondents are unmarried and 17.50 per cent are widows. It is found from the present study that not a single woman is divorcee.
- Education level of respondents was not so high, 37.50 percent of respondents are illiterate, 20 per cent have primary education, 12.50 per cent have middle education (up to 8th standard), 15 per cent have secondary education and 5 per cent have senior secondary education. The study reveals that 10 per cent of respondents have achieved higher education which shows that few respondents are degree holders and still engaged in agricultural work.
- Annual income of 27.50 per cent of respondents lies between Rs. 0-50,000, 30 per cent lies between Rs 50,000-1,00,000 and 12 per cent lies between Rs 1,50,000-2,00,000.
- Work participation rate of women was high in drying of grains and followed by plucking.
- Women play an important role in decision making process. 39.47 percent of women agricultural labourer are supported by their male companion for the use of fertilizers, 23.70 percent were supported for the purchase of agricultural equipment's and 57.90 percent were supported for changing crop patterns.

SUGGESTIONS

- Education is the base of overall development of a person. It is necessary to provide education to women labourer for their better future.
- Better implementation of legislative measures.
- In the rural economy, labour work of working women is not measured in monetary terms.
- Create alternative source of employment so that they can work in the off season when they do not have any agricultural work.
- Legal forums is an effective tool through which women can overcome from the problems of discrimination, domestic violence, etc. Women should be aware about their rights, access to judiciary relief and redress,
- Structural change can be achieved if involvement of women in decision making is increased.
- Equal property rights should be given to women.
- Advancement in technology can help in utilizing resources efficiently and proper training must be provided to rural women so that they can take benefit of it.
- The work performed by women on field and off the field must be measured in monetary terms.

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