



# Socio-Economic Conditions of Agricultural Women Labour in Karnataka-A Case Study of Ulavathi Village of Bellary District.

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## Introduction:

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian Economy since 70% of its population is dependent on agriculture. It is the most important sector. Women in India are the backbone of the society and important human source. They play a significant role in agriculture and allied activities. Traditionally, women have always play an important role in agriculture as farmers co farmers, family labour, wage labour and owner's of the land. Women also undertake the activities like horticulture, live stock and dry land agriculture..

## Objectives:

- 1) To study the socio economic conditions of the women agricultural labourer in the Ulavathi village.
- 2) To analyze the present scenario of women agriculture labour.
- 3) Main streaming a gender perspective in the development process.

## Nature of data and methodology:

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data have been collected through door to door survey questionnaire schedule method.

The secondary data are from census of India 2011.

## About the Ulavathi village:

Ulavathi village is situated H.B.Halli taluk it is hundred kilometer away from the Bellary Dist. The total area of the village is 3930 hectares. There are 588 households and total population is 3101. Out of this male populations constitute 1544 and female population is 1557. Among these 35% of the population belongs to schedule caste and schedule tribes and 14 peoples are physically disabled.

Land Use : The geographical area of the village is 3930 hectares out of this total are 1665 hectares are not available for cultivation and 2265 hectares are used living purpose.

Irrigation: The major source of the irrigation in the village is tanks followed by other sources. The total irrigated land area is 2265 hectares.

Agriculture: The gross cropped area is hectares of which 2265 hectares irrigated. The main crops raised in this village are rice, maaze, ragi, vegetables, groundnut, sugarcane, sunflower, marigold flower, mulbary etc.

### **The role women in Agriculture:**

According to Mr. Swaminathan the famous agricultural scientist "Some historians believe that it was women who first domesticated crop plants and thereby 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, fodder, fibre and fuel". Women have played and continue to play key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora and fauna. They have protected the health of the soil through organic re-cycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of varietal diversity and genetic resistance. Therefore, without the total intellectual and physical participation of women, it will not be possible to popularize alternative systems of land management to shifting cultivation, arrest soil erosion and promote the care of the soil and the health of economic plants and farm animals. (Prasad and Singh-1992)

### **Multidimensional Role of Women:**

- 1) Agriculture: Sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant Protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing etc.
- 2) Domestic: cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel wood gathering, house hold Maintenance etc.
- 3) Allied activities: cattle management, fodder collection, milking etc. Mainly rural women's are engaged in agricultural activities in three ways depending on the socio-economic status of their family and regional factors.

### **Social and Economic status of women agricultural labour:**

The economic factors include wages, technology, irrigation, cropping pattern, farm size, economic development and urbanization etc and social factors are caste, education, migration, marriage, family size and sex discrimination etc.

1. The women agricultural workers represents a big proportion of all workers, they continue to receive lower wages than men. The wage differential prevailing in the society.
2. The class of women agricultural labour is the most exploited and oppressed in rural Hierarchy.
3. The effect of increased commercialization of agriculture are impeding on women labourers in certain more indirect ways while consumer goods, advertisements, televisions etc have invaded villages increasing seasonal migration in the village. One of the noticeable impacts of this is an increased desire for consumer goods. Spiraling demands for dowry are seen as one of the easiest and fastest ways to meet this desire.
4. In India male dominated society existed. The women do not involve in decision making and in the case of land holding, in equal land right existed in the society.
5. Lack of access to credit is the major problem in rural area. The rural people are poor, they do not have capacity to offer more loan facilities.
6. The rural workers still adopts the age old method in the agriculture production, This responsible for increasing cost and low level of production.
7. One of the important problem women labourer is their education level is very low and majority of them are illiterate.
8. With advent of the green revolution money wage rates started increasing However as prices also increased considerably the real wage rates did not increase much.
9. There is no provision for fixation of hours of work. At the time of sowing and Harvesting the agricultural workers have to work on the farms from dawn to dusk.

10. The wage for the women workers are very low.
11. Indebtness-because of low level of their incomes, agricultural workers have to seek debts off and on. The institutional agencies do not provide loans because of any security provided by them. The local money lenders charge a high rate of interest on them and exploit them in many ways.
12. There is no any leave or other benefits for them and basically they are un-organized.
13. Female agricultural workers are generally forced to work harder and are paid less than their male counter parts. At many places, wages paid to female workers are even less than the minimum wages.
14. The bias against female workers exists is most of the dry land areas.
15. The women agricultural labourer is one of adject poverty and desperate existence.

### **Government measures:**

From the 5<sup>th</sup> five year plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issue from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safe Guard the rights and legal entitlements on women. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seals in the local bodies of panchayaths and municipalities for women, laying strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instructions committing the source equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, The policy also takes note of the commitments of the 9<sup>th</sup> five years plan and the other sectoral policies relating to empowerment of women.

### **The National Mission for Empowerment of Women:**

The National Mission for empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched by the government of India on International Women day in 2010 with the aim to strengthen overall process that promote all-round development of women. It has the mandate to strengthen the inter-sector convergence facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and Socio-Economic development programmes across ministries and departments. The mission aims to provide a single window service for all programmes run by the government for women under aegis of various central ministries. In light with its mandate the mission has been named mission Purna Shakhi implying a vision for holistic empowerment of women. The National Resource Center for Women has been set up which functions as a National Convergence Centre for all schemes and programmes for women it acts as a central repository of knowledge, information, research and data on all gender related issues and is the main body servicing the national and states mission authority (National Mission for Empowerment of Women-2010).

### **Other Measures:**

1. The programme for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture. Livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.
2. The establishment of new and strengthening Micro Credit Mechanisms and Micro Finance Institutions will be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is enhanced.
3. All below poverty line women must have easy access to credit.
4. Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured.
5. Special measure will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradication of illiteracy, create gender sensitive educational system.
6. Reducing the gendre gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area.

7. Gendre sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereo typing as one of the causes of gendre discrimination.
8. To effectively meet problems of infant and maternal mortality and early marriage.
9. Strict registration of births and deaths would be ensured and registration of made compulsory.

### **Conclusion:**

The rural women in our society are exploited and denied their basic rights. Their inherent dignity and equal rights are not recognized in the society. Their socio economic status, the nature and mode of worked and the way of peoples life have been changed along with the new development in the society. Today woman have dual responsibilities within and outside the home. But the rural society is not still ready to accept any changing women's role, work position and status because of the orthodox and conservative belief in villages.

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