



Research Article

PARTICIPATION OF FARM WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN RAJKOT DISTRICT OF GUJARAT STATE

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Abstract: Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in our country where farm business has become a family enterprise in which both men and women take part evenly. The role of women is generally complimentary, not only in physical participation in agricultural activities, but also with respect to decision making. In most of the stages, women are actively involved in carrying out agricultural activities but women remained as “invisible workers”. It is necessary to know their role in agricultural activities as active workers. With this consideration, the study was undertaken. A study was conducted in Rajkot district of Gujarat state. Nine villages were selected from three talukas. Fifteen farm women from each village were selected. Thus, total 135 farm women were considered for study. The respondents (54.81 percent) had medium participation in agricultural activities followed by 23.70 percent and 21.49 percent of respondents had high and low participation in agricultural activities, respectively. The respondents had high participation in activities like harvesting and post harvesting, intercultural operations and sowing.

Keywords: Farm women, Participation, Agricultural activities

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Introduction

Agriculture is a key driver of India's long-term growth and food security. The significance of agriculture cannot be ignored because it constitutes the foundation of growth and stability of the entire economy. The sector is dominated by mixed farming where men and women contribute equally. Women in India are the backbone of the society and important resource in agriculture and rural economy. They make essential contributions to the agricultural development and allied and household activities and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. The role of women has always been a multi-dimensional and significant as women have performed well in case of agricultural activities, domestic activities, marketing activities as far as labour requirement is considered. Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post-harvest operations. There is hardly any activity in agricultural production, except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. Therefore, it is felt to know the pattern of participation of farm women in agricultural activities

Objective

The objective of this study was to access the pattern of participation of farm women in agricultural activities in Rajkot district of Gujarat state.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Rajkot district of Gujarat state. The study was conducted under ex-post facto research design. A multistage simple random sampling technique was followed for this study. Out of eleven talukas of Rajkot district, three talukas were selected for the study. Three villages of each selected taluka were purposively selected for the study. From each selected village, 15 farm women were considered as respondents. Thus total 135 farm women, who had at least experience of three years of cultivation, were considered as respondents for the study. For measuring the participation of farm women in agricultural activities, scale developed by Gondaliya (2011) was used with

Modification [1]. The extent of participation of farm women in agricultural activities was rated on the extent of women's participation in all selected agricultural activities. The respondents were asked at what extent they were involved in all the selected agricultural activities. Score was given to each response viz. 3 for “most frequently”, 2 for “frequently”, 1 for “least frequently” and 0 for “not at all”. The weightage mean score and percentage were calculated to assign the rank to all the activities. To measure the overall participation of farm women in agricultural activities, respondents were grouped into three categories with the help of mean and standard deviation. Keeping in view the objectives of the study and to draw logical conclusion, statistical test i.e., percentages and means were used for analyzing and interpretation of the data.

Results and Discussion

From the [Table-1], it is clear that more than half (54.81 percent) of farm women belonged to medium level of participation group with respect to agricultural activities followed by 23.70 and 21.48 percent of farm women belonged to high and low level of participation group, respectively.

Table-1 Distribution of farm women according to their overall extent of participation in agricultural activities, (n = 135)

| SN | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|---|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Low Level of Participation (up to 33.27 score) | 29 | 21.49 |
| 2 | Medium Level of Participation (33.27 to 47.35 score) | 74 | 54.81 |
| 3 | High level of Participation (above 47.35 score) | 32 | 23.70 |
| Total | | 135 | 100.00 |
| Mean = 40.31 | | S.D. = 7.04 | |

The fact that most of farm women were actively involved in some agricultural practices like harvesting and post harvesting, intercultural operations, sowing practices, irrigation management. While in other practices like marketing, land preparation, plant protection measures, they were less involved due to one or more reasons which led to make their participation up to medium level.

Table-2 Participation of farm women in agricultural practices, (n = 135)

| SN | Name of Agricultural Practice | Maximum Possible score | Obtained Score | Mean Score | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|----|---|------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------|
| 1 | Land preparation | 1620 | 285 | 0.528 | 17.59 | VIII |
| 2 | Sowing practices | 1620 | 926 | 1.715 | 57.16 | III |
| 3 | Nutrient management | 2025 | 638 | 0.945 | 31.51 | V |
| 4 | Plant protection measures | 2430 | 522 | 0.644 | 21.48 | VII |
| 5 | Irrigation management | 1215 | 512 | 1.264 | 42.14 | IV |
| 6 | Intercultural operations | 1215 | 865 | 2.136 | 71.19 | II |
| 7 | Harvesting and post harvesting activities | 2430 | 1867 | 2.305 | 76.83 | I |
| 8 | Marketing | 810 | 96 | 0.356 | 11.85 | IX |
| 9 | Policy matters | 2025 | 572 | 0.847 | 28.25 | VI |

The participation of farm women in the agricultural activities is presented in [Table-2]. It can be inferred from the data in [Table-2] that among nine practices, harvesting and post harvesting activities was on the first rank in relation to the participation of farm women with the mean score 2.305. Maximum (76.83 percent) number of farm women participated in the harvesting and post harvesting activities. The probable reason for this might be that most women used to participate in the activities like harvesting, collection of harvested crop, threshing, winnowing, storage of seeds, grading. Especially, the tasks like handling over the bundles to the feed, winnowing and grading were solely performed by farm women as this kind of tasks are more suitable to farm women due to easiness of these tasks. It was revealed from the data presented in [Table-2] that among all the agricultural activities, intercultural operations were on the second rank with the mean score 2.136. It was also found that near about three-fourth (71.19 percent) of farm women participated in various intercultural operations. This might be due to their higher participation in the activities like gap filling, thinning and weeding whereas, average participation in intercultural operations as these operations are considered as light task and are easy to perform for farm women. Further, it requires ample of time and patience and socially, it is considered that woman has more patience and her physique allows to perform light tasks easily and efficiently, so, they participated more frequently in the intercultural operations. It was found from [Table-2] that out of nine practices sowing practices was on the third rank with the mean score 1.715. It was found that near about three-fifth (57.16 percent) of farm women were involved in the sowing practices. The probable reason might be that the tasks like cleaning of the seeds was performed by farm women at home. It might also be due to their higher participation in the activities like sowing of seeds, seed treatment with bio fertilizers before sowing and also due to their remarkable participation in purchase of seeds and bio-fertilizer for seed treatment. It was revealed from the data in [Table-2] that the irrigation management was on the fourth rank with the mean score 1.264. It was observed that more than two-fifth (42.14 percent) of farm women participated in the irrigation management. The probable reason for this result might be their quite higher participation in irrigating the crop, preparation of furrows and installation of sprinkler and drip irrigation system in the field while relatively lower participation in irrigating the crop at critical stage of growth. It can be inferred from [Table-2] that the nutrient management was on the fifth rank with the mean score 0.945. It was denoted that near about one-third (31.51 percent) of farm women participated in the practices related to nutrient management. The probable reason for this might be that a greater number of farm women were engaged with the activities like application of FYM, fertilizers and micro nutrients while their participation was observed to be quite less in the purchase of fertilizers and micronutrient. It can be inferred from the data presented in the [Table-2] that among all agricultural practices, policy matters were on the sixth rank with the mean score 0.847. It was also observed that about one-fourth (28.25 percent) of farm women participated in the activities related to the policy matters. The probable reason for this kind of result might be that less number of farm women participated in the activities like purchase of farm implements, finance for farm operations, hiring of labourers, taking crop loans, payment of loans, because all of these activities were mostly performed by male members of family. It was found from [Table-2] that participation of farm women in plant protection measures was on the seventh rank with the mean score 0.644. About one-fifth (21.48 percent) of farm women participated in the plant protection activities. This might be due to their lower participation in the purchase of fungicide and pesticide while average participation in seed treatment with fungicide and spraying the pesticide and fungicide. With respect to land

preparation, the data in [Table-2] revealed that among all practices, land preparation was on the eighth rank with the mean score 0.528. It was also observed that only 17.59 percent farm women participated in activities related to land preparation. The probable reason behind this might be that land preparation activities like ploughing is considered to be one of the most strenuous task. Majority of farm women never participated in ploughing of field and clod crushing as these activities were pre-dominantly performed by men using tractors, either owned or hired. While some of farm women participated in the activities like removal of stubbles and land levelling. In case of marketing activities, it can be observed from the [Table-2] that it was on the ninth rank with the mean score 0.356. It was also found that only 11.85 percent farm women participated in the marketing functions which was the least among all the agricultural operations. This might be due to least participation of farm women in the activities such as selling of crop in the market, participating in the auctions. As marketing involves loading and unloading the produce which are considered strenuous and require muscle power, farm women rarely participated in those activities.

Conclusion

It was observed that participation of women was higher in the activities like harvesting and post-harvesting activities, intercultural operation, sowing practices. Their participation was quite less in the activities like marketing, land preparation, plant protection measures. Thus, their participation was medium in agricultural activities. Efforts should be made to increase their participation in agricultural activities like they should be informed about the latest agricultural technologies and practices, training should be organized specially for women, suitable farm implements should be designed for women.

Application of research: Participation of farm women in agricultural practices
Research Category: Agricultural Extension

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Ethical approval: This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.
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