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Participation of rural women in agriculture, dairy farming and household activities in Bikaner district of Rajasthan

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Abstract

Woman is an integral part of the human society. Women contribute one-third of the labor force required to carry out various farm operations and allied enterprises. A rural woman faces different stages in her life. Before marriage, she was a daughter; after marriage she was a dependent housewife; after that a dependent mother responsible for all of the household work, including cooking and rearing children, and caring for her husband and other family members. Due to social and traditional barriers, rural women are not able to work outside of their homes. She plays a key role in household activities. It is often argued that their contribution is undermined and decision making power is highly limited. In household management, majority of rural women are regularly engaged in food preparation, looking after all family members, preparing local beverages, cleaning of house, clean-up after meals, washing clothes, child care, fetching water, arrangement of fuel, sewing etc.

The respondents had medium participation in agriculture activities such as weeding, storage, drying of grains, leveling of field, milking of animal, care of animal, cow dung collection, care of animal and cooking feed (chat) in dairy farming activities and cleaning of home and preparation of food in household activities.

Keywords: Participation, rural women

Introduction

Women along men are the main actors in feeding the world. Because in many, if not, most, rural societies women are, in fact, farmers; often bear the major or sole responsibilities for crop production. "Dr. MS Swaminathan, The famous agricultural Scientist, some historians believe that it was women who first domesticated crop plant and thereby initiated the art and science of farming." In today's society, the role of women extends way beyond the home and the bringing up of children. Women have to perform the dual role of house wife and wage earner. Besides, looking after all the household work including the health care and education of children and family management as well, they also contribute to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied process. In agriculture they perform the pre-sowing, post sowing, harvesting and post harvesting operations. Similarly, their allied activities includes animal husbandry, livestock etc.

Women and girls engage in a number of agro-oriented activities ranging from seedbed preparation, weeding, horticulture and fruit cultivation to a series of post-harvest crop processing activities like cleaning and drying vegetables, fruits and nuts for domestic use and for market. Although the time devoted by both women and men in agricultural activities may, in several communities and agricultural situations, be taken to be almost equal, women are dominant within the domestic tasks. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities, but the nature and extent of their involvement differs with variations in agro-production systems.

Women in rural areas are equally involved in pre-harvest agricultural activities like preparation of soil, planting, weeding, harvesting etc., and post-harvest activities like storage of food grains. They are equally efficient in seed bed preparation, tilling, sowing, fertilizer application, fodder cutting, weeding, inter-culturing, transplanting husking, threshing, drying, storing cereals and fodder, selling produce and harvesting of crops, fruits and vegetables (Ahmed & Hussain, 2004) [6].

The present study was conducted in Bikaner district. There are seven panchayat samities in Bikaner district out of which two panchayat samities Bikaner panchayat samiti and

Lunkaransar panchayat samiti were selected randomly by lottery method. Three gram panchayats from Bikaner panchayat samiti and three gram panchayats from Lunkaransar panchayat samiti were selected by random sampling technique. Out of Six Gram Panchayats from two panchayat samities one village from each gram panchayat was selected randomly. A sample of twenty rural women from each village were selected who were actively involved in agricultural activities by simple random sampling technique. Interview Schedule was developed to collect the data regarding participation of rural women in agriculture, dairy farming and household activities.

Objectives of investigation

To study the extent of participation of rural women in agriculture, dairy farming and household activities.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Bikaner District of Rajasthan. There are seven panchayat samities out of which Bikaner and Lunkaransar panchayat samities were selected purposely looking to no such study has been conducted in the area earlier and the area was well known to the researcher. Out of forty gram panchayat in Bikaner panchayat samiti three gram panchayat were selected with lottery method namely Gussaisar, Gadhwala, Jalwala and thirty gram panchayat in Lunkaransar panchayat samities three gram panchayat were selected with lottery method namely Hansera, Dhierera, Bamanwali. One village selected from each selected gram panchayat selected on the basis of random sampling technique. Thus, six villages were selected for the present investigation. Twenty rural women from each village will be selected from farm family which were actively involved in agricultural activities by simple random sampling technique.

Results and discussion

Extent of participation of rural women in agriculture, dairy farming and household activities

The data on participation of rural women with respect to agriculture, dairy farming and household activities are depicted in following aspects:

Table 1: Ranking of respondents participation in agriculture activities

N=120				
S. no.	Activities	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Ploughing	2.29	.47	VIII
2.	Leveling of Field	2.59	.51	VI
3.	Preparation of Nursery for Seedling	1.34	.47	XVI
4.	Sowing	2.02	.20	XI
5.	Transplanting	2.60	.55	V
6.	Fertilizers Application	2.14	.37	IX
7.	Weeding	2.83	.37	II
8.	Irrigation	1.38	.48	XV
9.	Harvesting	2.14	.37	IX
10.	Picking	2.43	.51	VII
11.	Threshing	1.97	.15	XIII
12.	Drying of grains	1.03	.18	IV
13.	Cleaning of grains	2.84	.36	I
14.	Grading	2.05	.25	X
15.	Storage	2.79	.40	III
16.	Seed marketing	2.00	.00	XVII
17.	Seed selection	2.00	.00	XVII
18.	Farm credit	2.01	.12	XIV
19.	No. of hired labours and their wages	2.00	.00	XII

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that rural women's participation in cleaning of grains (mean score 2.84), weeding (mean score 2.83), storage (mean score 2.79) is very high having rank order I, II and III followed by drying of grains (mean score 2.65), transplanting (mean score 2.60), leveling of field (mean score 2.59), picking (mean score 2.43), ploughing (mean score 2.29), fertilizer application and harvesting (mean score 2.14), grading (mean score 2.05), sowing (mean score 2.02), no. of hired labours (mean score 2.00), threshing (mean score 1.97), farm credit (mean score 1.93), irrigation (mean score 1.38), preparation of nursery for seedling (mean score 1.34) having rank order IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI respectively. The activities in which rural women obtained the lowest score is seed marketing and seed selection (1.00 mean score) and ranked XVII.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their over all participation in agriculture activities

N=120			
S. No.	Category	f	%
1.	Low (less than 40.17) Mean Score	9	7.5
2.	Medium (40.17-42.63) Mean Score	69	57.5
3.	High (more than 42.63) Mean Score	42	35

Mean= 42.63
SD= 1.46

Table 2 shows that maximum respondents (57.5 %) had medium participation whereas 35 per cent were falling in the category of high participation. Only 7.5 per cent were coming in the lower category of participation places, respectively. It can be concluded that majority of respondents were mostly participated in weeding, storage, drying of grains, leveling of field. Whereas in seed selection and seed marketing there was no participation of rural women. The result was supported by the findings of Mishra *et al.* (2005) [9].

Table 3: Ranking of respondents participation in dairy farming activities

N=120				
S. No.	Activities	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Care of animal	2.09	.28	VIII
2.	Feeding of animal	2.48	.50	VI
3.	Types and quality of food	2.75	.43	IV
4.	Cooking feed (chat)	2.85	.44	III
5.	Watering to livestock	2.01	.12	X
6.	Storage of fodder	2.00	.00	XI
7.	Taking out animal for grazing	2.03	.18	IX
8.	Untying and raising	2.01	.12	X
9.	Milking of animal	2.97	.15	I
10.	Care of newborn calves	2.49	.50	V
11.	Care of sick animal	2.00	.00	XI
12.	Cleaning and bathing of livestock	2.00	.00	XI
13.	Control of external parasites	2.00	.09	XI
14.	Flooring of animal sheds	2.35	.47	VII
15.	Cow dung collection	2.94	.23	II
16.	Marketing of milk	1.99	.09	XII
17.	Hooves cutting	1.28	.45	XIII

The data presented in Table 3 (III) depicts that rural women's participation in milking of animal (mean score 2.97), cow dung collection (mean score 2.94), cooking feed (chat) (mean score 2.85), and types and quality of food (mean score 2.75) is very high with rank order I, II and III followed by care of

newborn calves (mean score 2.49), feeding of animal (mean score 2.48), flooring of animal sheds (mean score 2.35), care of animal (mean score 2.09), and taking out animal for grazing (mean score 2.03), watering to livestock (mean score 2.01), storage of fodder, care of sick animal, cleaning and bathing of animal and control of external parasites (mean score 2.00), marketing of milk (mean score 1.99) and hooves cutting (mean score 1.28) having rank order IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII respectively. Low level of participation in hooves cutting (mean score 1.28) with rank order XIII.

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents according to their over all participation in dairy farming activities

S. No.	Category	f	%
1.	Low (less than 39 MS)	6	5
2.	Medium (39.65-42 MS)	55	45.8
3.	High (above 42.77)	59	49.2

M=41.21

SD= 1.56

Table 4 showed that maximum respondents (49.2 %) had high participation whereas 45.8 per cent were falling in the category of medium participation. Only 5 per cent were coming in the lower category of the participation.

So it is reported that majority of rural women were mainly participated in milking of animal, care of animal, cow dung collection, care of animal and cooking feed (chat). The result was supported by the findings of Luqman *et al.* (2006) [1].

Table 5: Ranking of respondents participation in household activities

S. No.	Activities	Mean	SD	Rank
1.	Purchasing of food items	2.48	.54	VIII
2.	Buying good for home decoration of home	2.75	.45	III
3.	Cleaning of home	2.99	.09	I
4.	Decoration of home	2.40	.61	IX
5.	Washing of cloth	2.56	.49	V
6.	Preparation of food	2.88	.32	II
7.	Fuel arrangement	2.50	.57	VII
8.	Purchasing of ornaments	2.23	.44	XII
9.	Education of children	1.46	.51	XIII
10.	Buying and sell of home appliances	2.15	.44	XI
11.	Expenditure on different items	2.34	.49	X
12.	Going to children school function	1.03	.18	XIV
13.	Attending marriage, religious function, social functions	2.64	.48	IV
14.	Giving daan-dakshina	2.51	.50	VI

The data presented in Table 5 depicts that women's participation is very much high in cleaning of home and preparation of food was the main activity among household activities with the rank 'I' and 'II' and mean values are '2.99' and '2.88'. The other household activities which were being performed by rural women were buying good for home decoration of home (mean score 2.75), attending marriage, religious function, social functions' (mean score 2.64) and washing of cloth (mean score 2.56), giving daan-dakshina (mean score 2.51), fuel arrangement (mean score 2.50), purchasing food items (mean score 2.48), decoration of home

(mean score 2.40), expenditure on different items (mean score 2.34), purchasing of ornaments (mean score 2.23), buying and sell of home appliances (mean score 2.15), education of children (mean score 1.46) and going to children school function (mean score 1.03) having rank order III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV places, respectively.

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents according to their over all participation in household activities

S. No.	Category	f	%
1.	Low (less than 31)	19	15.8
2.	Medium (31.17-34)	79	56.8
3.	High (above 34.75)	22	18.3

Mean=32.96

SD= 1.79

Table 6 showed that majority (56.8%) of the rural women had medium participation in household activities. Whereas 18.3 per cent were falling in the category of high participation. Only 15.8 per cent were coming in the lower category of the participation. So it is concluded that majority of the rural women had mostly participated in cleaning of home and preparation of food. The result was supported by the finding of Mengistie and Jemal, (2012) [3].

Conclusion

From the above findings it can be concluded that in agriculture activities majority of respondents were mostly participated in weeding, storage, drying of grains, leveling of field. Whereas in seed selection and seed marketing there was no participation of rural women. It is reported that majority of rural women were mainly participated in milking of animal, care of animal, cow dung collection, care of animal and cooking feed (chat) in dairy farming activities. In household activities majority of the rural women had mostly participated in cleaning of home and preparation of food.

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