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## A study on socio-economic characteristics of the rural women in Balod district of Chhattisgarh

**Eshant Kumar Sukdeve, Hem Prakash Verma, Rupesh Khaparde and Payal Dewangan**

### Abstract

Rural development was earlier associated only with the agricultural economy but in recent years the off-farm rural economy is an integral part too. The study was conducted during the year 2015-16 in the Balod district of the Chhattisgarh State. Total of five blocks only three blocks namely Balod, Gurur and Doundi-Lohara, were selected on the basis of the maximum population for the present study. From each selected block, 3 villages (Total 3 X 3 = 9) were selected randomly. For this study, 15 rural women from each village were selected randomly, a total (15X3) 45 rural women from each block were selected. Thus, a total of 135 rural women from three blocks were selected randomly for the study. The data were collected by a personal interview with the help of a pre-tested structured interview schedule and analyzed through frequency and percentage. The results revealed that the majority of the rural women (57.70%) belonged to the young age group (below 35 years). Most of the respondents (25.18%) in the study area had illiterate, regarding the size of family that the majority (77.03%) of the rural women had small family size (up to 5 members). The maximum number of the respondents (50.38) percent rural women's had in the landless category, the Majority of respondent (83.70%) had no membership in any organization, and the majority (39.27%) of the rural women were involved in Agriculture + job/service.

**Keywords:** Women's, profile characteristics, off-farm, agriculture

### 1. Introduction

Rural development was earlier associated only with the agricultural economy but in recent years the off-farm rural economy is an integral part too. Off-farm sector can be defined as all those activities associated with wage work, and self-employment in activities that are not directly derived from crop and livestock production but located in rural areas. It may include manufacturing, agro-processing, accumulative (setting up a small business), adaptive in terms of switching from cash crop cultivation to commodity trading, coping, or survival as a response to conflict.

In India, Rural women play an imperative role in the farm and off-farm sectors. Though the emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India yet the situation is grim in the rural sector. Rural women are having an abundance of human and human resources to take up an enterprise but they lack in motivation and training to use their innovative brains. With the prevailing constraints empowering rural women particularly is a challenge. Rural women face lots of constraints as she is oppressed socially and culturally; having less access to everything, including food, resources, decision-making capacity, health care community support, and information. Lack of education, awareness and socio-cultural taboos against working outside combine to severely limit the women's participation in formal sector though unrecognized and unorganized yet rural women play a key role in agricultural production and allied field by working in production right from soil preparation till post-harvest and food security activities.

The total population of Chhattisgarh state is 25,545,198 of which male and female are 12,832,895 and 12,712,303. The sex Ratio is 991 i.e. for every 1000 males, which is below the national average of 940. The literacy rate in Chhattisgarh has seen an upward trend and is 71.04 percent. Out of the total population of Chhattisgarh, 23.24 percent of people live in urban regions and 76.76 percent of people live in the villages of rural areas. Over the past few years, rural women have been shying away from agriculture and globally there is an increasing interest in finding ways of engaging women in agriculture (IFAD, 2012; Paisley, 2013) [8].

The Government of India (GOI) officially defines women as persons between the ages of 13 and 35 years and it also varies depending on the program. For instance, the National Women Policy (NWP) of India considers the age group 10 to 34 years as women.

The United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), however, defined women as persons between 15 and 24 years of age for cross-country comparison and analysis. Agriculture generally, involves five stages viz., production, processing, storage, marketing, and consumption. In most of these stages, rural women can actively be involved. They are participating in most of the agricultural operations like ploughing, harrowing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, post harvesting activities and so on. Rural women participate in marketing where the trade or enterprise is highly/largely commercialized. Rural women play a key role in performing various tasks related to dairy and goatery enterprise like maintenance of cattle/goat shed feeding of animal/goats, collection of fodder for animals etc. off-farm activities have become an important component of livelihood strategies among rural households in most developing countries. It is often assumed that shrinking land availability is the main reason for the growing role of off-farm income among farm households in developing countries.

Since the production and productivity of the agricultural sector is low, farm households' income is not sufficient even to feed their families. Most of the women's are participating in off-farm activities mainly to supplement their agricultural income. Excess labor in the family and the seasonality of agriculture are the other key factors responsible for farmers to participate in off-farm activities. Large family in rural households results in declining farm size which in turn results in low level of per capita production and hence less income. The seasonality of agriculture causes a farm family to have

excess labour during the slack season, which induces them to engage in other off-farm activities.

## 2. Methodology

The study was conducted during the year 2015-16 in the Balod district of the Chhattisgarh State. Chhattisgarh state is divided into three agro-climatic zones namely, Chhattisgarh plains, Northern hills and bastar plateau. The Balod district was selected randomly. In Balod district namely, Balod, Gurur, Gunderdehi, Doundi and Doundi-Lohara. Out of a total of five blocks only three blocks namely Balod, Gurur and Doundi-Lohara, were selected on the basis of the maximum population for the present study. From each selected block, 3 villages (Total 3 X 3 = 9) were selected randomly. In this way, the villages, Tarri, Bharda and Bortara from Gurur block, Korguda, Gurami and Jatadah from Doundi-Lohara block and Tarod, Persahi and Baghmara from Balod block were selected randomly for the study. For this study, 15 rural women from each village were selected randomly, a total (15X3) 45 of rural women from each block were selected. Thus, a total of 135 rural women from three blocks were selected randomly for the study. The data were collected by a personal interview with the help of a pre-tested structured interview schedule.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The facts and findings derived after analyzing the information have been presented under following main heads.

**Table1:** Distribution of the respondents according to socio-economic characteristics

(n=135)			
S. N.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>			
1	Young (Below 35 year)	78	57.70
2	Middle (36 to 50 year)	53	39.34
3	Old age (Above 50 year)	04	02.96
<b>House type</b>			
1	Kuccha house	60	44.44
2	Pakka house	75	55.56
<b>Type of family</b>			
1	Nuclear	101	74.81
2	Joint	34	25.19
<b>Caste</b>			
1	Upper caste (general, open)	14	10.37
2	Middle (OBC)	57	42.23
3	Lower caste (ST, SC)	64	47.40
<b>Size of Family</b>			
1	Small (up to 5 members)	104	77.03
2	Medium (6 to 10 members)	27	20.00
3	Large (Above 10 members)	04	02.97
<b>Credit acquisition</b>			
4	Not acquired	129	95.55
5	Acquired (Short term)	00	0.00
6	Medium term	00	0.00
7	Long term (home renovation and buying of shop materials)	06	04.45

### 3.1 Age

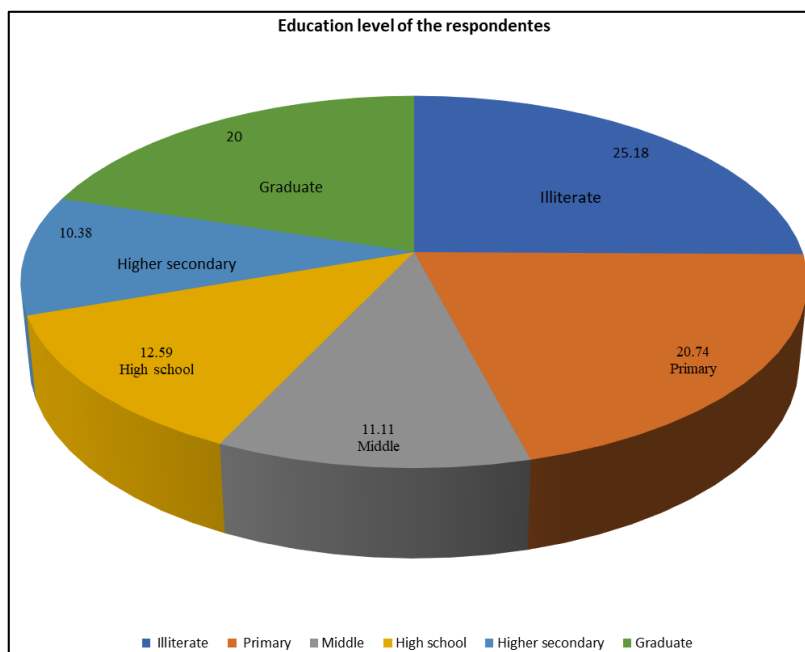
Table 1 shows that the majority of the rural women (57.70%) belonged to young age group (below 35 years), followed by 39.34 percent were under middle age group (36 to 50 years) and 02.96 percent were of old age group (above 50 years). Thus, it may be concluded that the majority of the respondents in the study area belonged to young age group.

These findings are similar to the findings of Kavitha and Reddy (2007) <sup>[9]</sup>, who reported that out of the total rural women, 55.83 percent were of the young age group, 34.17 percent belonged to middle age group and 10.00 percent were found in old age group. Mishra *et al.*, (2008) <sup>[16]</sup> also reported that very little difference respondents were distributed in young (58%), middle (27%) and old (15%) age categories

### 3.2 Education

Regarding the education of the respondents in Figure 1 the data shows that most of the respondents (25.18%) had illiterate, followed by 20.74 percent of had passed primary school and 20.00 percent had passed college and 12.59 percent had passed high school. However, 11.11 percent had

passed middle school and only 10.38 percent of the respondents had passed higher secondary school. The findings were that most of the respondents in the study area had illiterate. Gokhale (2002)<sup>[7]</sup>, Christain (2005)<sup>[6]</sup> and Kumar *et al.* (2007)<sup>[11]</sup> also observed similar findings in their study.



**Fig 1:** Distribution of the respondents according to their education level.

### 3.3 House Type

Regarding house type of the respondents, the data presented in Table 1 reveal that the majority (55.56%) of the rural women had pakka houses followed by 44.44 percent had kuccha houses.

### 3.4 Type of family

Regarding the type of family, the data presented in Table 1 reveal that the majority (74.81%) of the rural women belonged to nuclear family followed by 25.19 percent belonged to joint families. Chand *et al.* (2011)<sup>[4]</sup>, Lad *et al.* (2012)<sup>[13]</sup> and Koundal (2012)<sup>[10]</sup> also noted almost similar findings.

### 3.5 Caste

The data regarding the caste of respondents are presented in Table 1 which indicates that the majority (47.40%) of the selected rural women belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, followed by 42.23 percent of the respondents belonging to other backward class and only 10.37 percent of the respondents belonged to general category. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Savitha (2004)<sup>[20]</sup> and Biradar and Sridhar (2009)<sup>[3]</sup> also noted almost similar findings.

### 3.6 Size of family

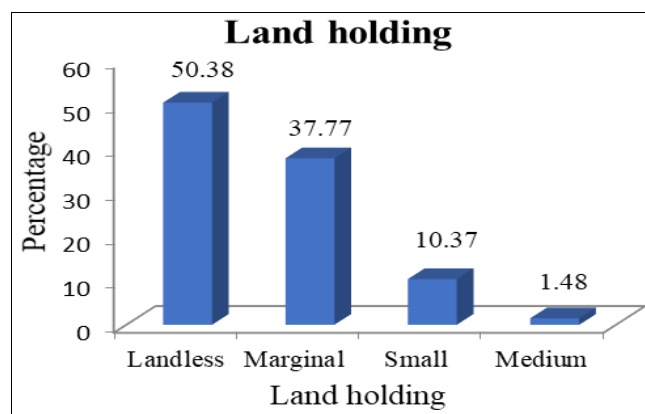
Table 1 indicated that the majority (77.03%) of the rural women had small family sizes (up to 5 members), followed by 20 percent with medium family size (6 to 10 members) and only 02.97 percent had large family size (>10 members). Singh *et al.* (2008)<sup>[21]</sup> and Lad *et al.* (2012)<sup>[13]</sup> also found almost similar findings.

### 3.7 Credit acquisition

Table 1 shows that the maximum numbers of the respondents (95.55%) had not acquired the credit, whereas, only 4.45 percent respondents had acquired the credit (long term) for the purpose of home renovation and buying of shop materials. Kushwaha (2005)<sup>[12]</sup>, Patel (2008)<sup>[19]</sup>, Lanjewar (2009)<sup>[15]</sup> and Lakra (2011)<sup>[14]</sup> noted almost similar findings.

### 3.8 Size of Land holding

Figure 2 indicated that the majority of the rural women (50.38%) were found under the landless, followed by 37.77 percent respondents belonged under marginal size of land holding, 10.37 percent had small, 01.48 percent was medium category and no rural women were under the large category. Savitha (2004)<sup>[20]</sup> and Lad *et al.* (2012)<sup>[13]</sup> noted almost similar findings.



**Fig 2:** Distribution of the respondents according to their size of land holding.

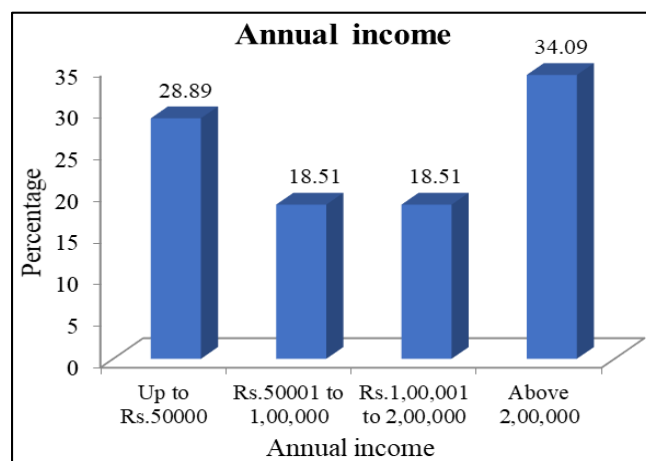
### 3.9 Annual income

It is very difficult to assess the average annual income of each individual, as they are not maintaining any records. An attempt was made to collect the annual income of the respondents through discussion and interpretation from different angles. As regard annual income the majority of the rural women (34.09%) were having their income above Rs.2,00,000 per annum, followed by 28.89 percent of rural women earned up to Rs. 50000 per annum, 18.51 percent rural women had an annual income ranging from Rs. 50001 to 1,00,000 and 18.51 percent ranging from Rs. 1,00,001 to 2,00,000. Lakra (2011) <sup>[14]</sup>, Mohanty *et al.* (2013) <sup>[17]</sup> noted almost similar findings.

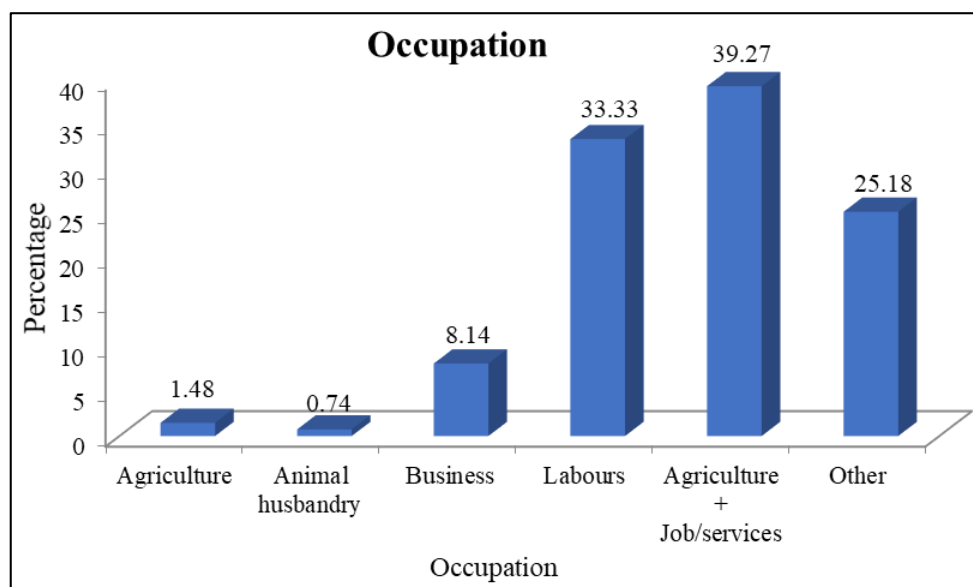
### 3.10 Occupation

Regarding involvement of respondents in various occupations the data is presented in Figure 4. Shows that the majority (39.27%) of the rural women were involved in Agriculture + job/services, followed by 33.33 percent were engaged in labour, while 25.18 percent of rural women were engaged in other works (handicrafts, fruit & vegetables selling etc.), 8.14 percent had involved in business work, 1.48 percent had adopted agriculture and only 0.74 percent were involved in

animal husbandry. Choubey (2000) <sup>[23]</sup>, Raghuwanshi (2005), Mandavkar *et al.* (2011) and Chaturvedani *et al.* (2015) <sup>[22, 25]</sup> also found almost similar findings.



**Fig 3:** Distribution of the respondents according to their annual income



**Fig 4:** Distribution of the respondents according to their occupation.

### 4. Conclusions

The results revealed that the majority of the rural women (57.70%) belonged to young age group (below 35 years). Most of the respondents (25.18%) in the study area had illiterate, regarding size of family that the majority (77.03%) of the rural women had small family size (up to 5 members). The majority (74.81%) of the rural women belonged to nuclear family followed by 25.19 percent belonged to joint families. The majority (47.40%) of the selected rural women belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, followed by 42.23 percent of the respondents belonging to other backward class and only 10.37 percent of the respondents belonged to general category. The maximum number of the respondents (50.38) percent rural women's had in the landless category, and house type of the respondents, the majority (55.56%) of rural women had pakka houses followed by 44.44 percent had kuccha houses. Regarding annual income majority of the rural women (34.09%) was having their

income above 2,00,000, the majority of respondents (95.55%) had not acquired credit and only 4.45 percent of respondents had acquired credit. The majority (39.27%) of the rural women were involved in Agriculture + job/service.

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