

A Study on Socio-Economic Status of the Farm Women of Tumakuru District of Karnataka State, India

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ABSTRACT

Farm women play a vital role in the agriculture. Socio economic conditions are indicators of life style of rural farming community. Farming is one of the traditional occupation from generation to generation involving more than 70 per cent of women. Women in rural area; participate in the agricultural activities such as agriculture labour, working in the family, dairying and many agricultural allied activities either directly or indirectly. Hence, the present study focuses on the socio economic status of the farm women. The investigation was performed on 300 farm women from Sira taluk of Tumakuru district selected randomly in the age group of 20-60 years, who were willing to participate in the study. A detailed schedule was formulated and used to elicit the information on various aspects related to the assessment of socio-economic status. The data revealed that 69.33 per cent of the farm women had involved in agriculture, animal husbandry (16.33%), silk worm rearing (10.67%), and poultry (3.67%). It was found that 21.67 per cent of the farm women earn more than Rs. 6032 per month followed by 45.33 per cent of them earning between Rs. 6032 - 12114, whereas, 33 per cent of them earn less than Rs. 6032. From the present study it was concluded that farm women contribute significantly to family income but they should also be integrated into the mainstream through better education, health and other support facilities.

Key words: Social status, Economical status, Farm women, Income, Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

Rural women perform a variety of roles, of which are of greater economic significance². Swaminathan, the famous agricultural scientist describes that it was woman 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, feed, fodder, fibre and fuel. Women have played and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora and fauna.

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They have protected the health of the soil through organic recycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of varietal diversity and genetic resistance. That 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, agro/ social forestry, fisheries, etc. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture, no doubt, varies greatly from region to region. Even within a region, their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub-zones, farming systems, castes, classes and stages in the family cycle. But regardless of these variations, there is hardly any activity in agricultural production, except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. Studies on women in agriculture conducted in India and other developing and under developed countries all point to the conclusion that women contribute far more to agricultural production than has generally been acknowledged. Recognition of their crucial role in agriculture should not obscure the fact that farm women continue to be concerned with their primary functions as wives, mothers and homemakers. It may not be out of place to mention here that considering their dual responsibilities within and outside the home, it would be in the fitness of things that more and more in the village training is organized for rural farm women to suit their convenience with due realization that institutional training is important in its own place. In order that farm women get a fair deal at the hands of change agents, one of the remedial measures that needs to be undertaken is to induct a sizeable number of well-trained women personnel in training and extension programmes of agricultural development agencies at all levels and more so at the grass-root level¹. Hence, the present study aimed to determine the socio economic status of the farm women.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Locale of the study

The location of the study was Sira taluk of Tumakuru district in Karnataka state. The

female farm workers were interviewed to collect information on nutritional and health status of farm women.

Selection of sample

The investigation was performed on 300 farm women selected randomly in the age group of 20-60 years, who were willing to participate in the study were taken from study area.

Data collection

A detailed schedule was formulated and used to elicit the information on various aspects related to the factors such as age, education, marital status, size of family, type of family, occupation, income, housing condition, land holding, livestock possession, house hold material possession and household expenditure pattern were collected by well-structured questionnaire through personal interview method.

Statistical analysis

The data was quantified, classified and tabulated and expressed in frequencies percentages and standard deviation was carried out.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic profile of the farm women

For this study a total 300 subjects were selected. In this investigation efforts were made to study the socio-economic characteristics of subjects such as age, education, marital status, family size, family type, income, housing condition, livestock possession, household material possession and the data has been presented in Table 1.

Age

Age wise distribution of the subjects revealed that more number of the farm women (47%) were in the age group of middle age, 25 per cent of farm women comes under the age group of young and 28 per cent were aged more than 51 years of age group (old).

25 per cent of farm women were found to be in young adulthood category (less than 30 years) of age group have some physical vigour than the middle and older farm women. Whereas, 47 per cent of farm women were found to be in middle age category (31 to 50 years), farm women of middle age were more enthusiastic and had more family responsibilities than young and older ones.

The present results were in concurrent with the results of Srivastava and Singh⁸ (2014) who reported that approximately half of the women 45.16 per cent were below 30 years of age, while, 29.03 per cent were between 30-50 and 25.80 per cent were above 50 years of age.

Education

Regarding education level of farm women, 33.67 per cent were illiterates (Cannot read and write), followed by 26.33 per cent of them had primary school (1 to 4th standard) education, 19 per cent of the respondents had middle school (5 to 7th standard) education, 9.67 per cent of them had studied up to high school (8 to 10th standard), 8.33 per cent had studied pre university course (11 to 12th standard) and only 3 per cent of farm women were graduates (Above 12th standard).

With regard to education level of the respondents it was observed that 33.67 per cent of the farm women belonged to the category of illiterate, whereas, more number of farm women had acquired primary and middle school education. For this reason, the government and other voluntary agencies are working for promotion of women welfare and development government is putting maximum efforts to provide education to all through adult education and other programmes. The results are in consonance with the findings of Mugadur and Hiremath⁵ who reported that illiteracy in farm women was 13.33 per cent.

Marital status

Majority of the subjects (70.33%) were married, whereas, 29.67 per cent of farm women were unmarried respectively. The fact that married women of reproductive age take part in this type of occupation is a matter of public health concern both to the women and their unborn babies. The results are in consonance with the findings of Saghir *et al*⁷., who reported that majority (76.5%) of the rural women were married followed by 17.5 per cent who were unmarried.

Type of family

Most of the farm women were living in nuclear family (89%) followed by joint family type (11%).

The results revealed that majority of the farm women (89%) were living in nuclear family. Nuclear family system was more

prevalent among the farm women. This could be observed widely in lower socio-economic society particularly in rural India. The results are in line with the findings reported by Srivastava and Singh⁸ who reported that that nuclear family system was predominant in the village as 74.14 per cent were in nuclear and 25.80 per cent were living in joint family system.

Size of the family

About 24.67 per cent of the farm women had 1-4 members in their family and this family size considered as small family. 61 per cent possessed medium size family as they had 5-8 members in family, and it was clearly observed that 14.33 per cent of the farm women families having large family size (i.e. eight) and above members, results are in the line of Upadhyay and Desai¹⁰ who reported that majority (68.33%) of the farm women were from big family (more than 4 members), small family (up to 4members) 31.87 per cent.

Family occupation

Majority of the farm women were engaged in agriculture since long. The data revealed that 69.33 per cent of the farm women had involved in agriculture, 16.33 per cent farm women were engaged in animal husbandry, 10.67 per cent of farm women were affianced in silk worm rearing activities. Whereas, only 3.67 per cent of farm women had bird rearing occupation. Agriculture was the main occupation of farm women. These results are in similar line of Devaki *et al*³., reported that majority 61 per cent of the farm women were involved in agriculture and dairy activities.

Income

It was found that 21.67 per cent of the farm women earn more than Rs. 6032 per month followed by 45.33 per cent of them earning between Rs. 6032 - 12114, whereas, 33 per cent of them earn less than Rs. 6032.

45.33 per cent of the farm women were getting medium income followed by low income earners (33%) and high income earners (21.67%) respectively. The reason for this might be farm women were more skilled workers. The above results are in line with findings Mamta and Devi⁴ who revealed that 50 per cent of women had \leq 5,000 income.

Housing condition

About 16.67 per cent farm women were living in kutcha houses, whereas, 58.67 per cent farm women families were living in mixed house (partially kutcha + pucca house), while 24.67 per cent farm women were living in pucca house,

Majority of the farm women were living in mixed house (partially kutcha +

pucca house) (58.67%), followed by pucca house (24.67%), whereas, kutcha house 16.67 per cent. Same results were also observed in Tewari⁹ who reported that 46 per cent farm women were found having their houses of pucca type, 35 per cent were residing in mixed type and 14 per cent were found living in kutcha type of houses.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the farm women (n=300)

Characters	No.	%
Age (years)		
< 30	75	25.00
31 to 50	141	47.00
> 51	84	28.00
Education		
Degree	09	3.00
PUC	25	8.33
High school	29	9.67
Middle school	57	19.00
Primary	79	26.33
Illiterate	101	33.67
Marital status		
Married	211	70.33
Unmarried	89	29.67
Type of family		
Joint	93	11.00
Nuclear	207	89.00
Size of the family (members)		
Small (up to 4)	74	24.67
Medium (5-8)	183	61.00
Large (>8)	43	14.33
Family occupation		
Agriculture	208	69.33
Poultry	11	3.67
Sericulture	32	10.67
Animal husbandry	49	16.33
Monthly income (Rs.)		
< 6032 (LIG)	99	33.0
6032 - 12114 (MIG)	136	45.33
> 12114 (HIG)	65	21.67
Housing condition		
Kutcha house	50	16.67
Mixed house (Partially kutcha + pucca hosue)	176	58.67
Pucca house	74	24.67

Land holding

As per the results indicated in Table 2, 13 per cent of farm women were landless, 35 per cent of the respondents had up to 2.5 acres of land, among respondents 32.67 and 12.67 per cent had 2.6 to 5.0 and 5.1 to 10.0 acres of agriculture land respectively, whereas, only

6.67 per cent of respondents land holding was more than 10 acres.

The data in Table 2. showed that more number of farm women (13%) were landless farmers, followed by small (35%), medium (32.67%) respectively, whereas, 6.67 per cent of farm women were large farmers (had more

than 10 acres of land). The reason could be scattered land holding. These results were in similar line of Tewari⁹, reported that in land holding category 22 per cent farm women belonged to category of small (2.5-5.0 acres) farmers.

Livestock possession

The multiple responses about livestock possession is presented in Table 2. It was found that majority 32 per cent of the farm women possessed sheep rearing activity, followed by poultry (24.33%), goat (17%), cow (21.67%) and buffalo (7.67%) of farm women engaged themselves in rearing of animal as well as birds for their livelihood.

It was found that (32%) of the farm women possessed sheep followed by poultry (24.33%), goat (17%), cow (21.67%) and buffalo (7.67%). Because this fetches them

little economic support for their family which can be noticed in low socio-economic groups living in rural India.

Household material possession

As per results shown in Table 2, the most (19.67%) of the respondents possessed television followed by 16.33 per cent respondents had bicycle, 3.33 per cent respondents were possessed motor cycle for their daily or occasional use.

The data revealed that (19.67%) of farm women families possessed television followed by 16.33 per cent farm women were having bicycle, 3.33 per cent in both groups were possessing motor cycle. This might be due to the fact that 50 per cent of the respondents were having considerably moderate income.

Table 2: Possession of Land, Livestock and House hold materials

Characters	No.	%
Land holding		
Landless	39	13.00
Up to 2.5 acres	105	35.00
2.51 to 5.0 acres	98	32.67
5.1 to 10.0 acres	38	12.67
More than 10 acres	20	6.67
Livestock possession @		
Buffalo	23	7.67
Cow	65	21.67
Goat	51	17.00
Sheep	96	32.00
Poultry	73	24.33
House hold material possession @		
Television	59	19.67
Bicycle	49	16.33
Motor cycle	10	3.33

@Multiple respondents

Household expenditure pattern

The amount of total income spent monthly and annually on food and non-food items are shown in Table 3. Higher expenditure on food items was observed in the study area. Farm women spent more money on education of their children, followed by celebrating festivals and ceremonies, clothes, household

equipment, routine maintenance of the house, health and transport.

These results are in parallel line of Rahaman and Sousa-poza⁶ who studied on food consumption and nutritional status of vulnerable people rearing livestock, reported that food cost was 43 per cent of total income.

Table 3: Household expenditure pattern of the farm women

Sl. No.	Particulars	Expenditure during average month (in Rs.)	SD
1	Food and grocery items	2500	353.12
2	Clothing	500	128.95
3	Education	1500	152.42
4	Household equipment, furniture and routine maintenance of the house	500	103.60
5	Health	200	20.78
6	Transport	150	22.28
7	Communication	100	8.69
8	Recreation and culture	80	12.31
10	Restaurants and hotels	100	8.71
11	Miscellaneous goods and services	150	28.03
	Total	5780	838.89

CONCLUSION

The involvement of women in agriculture depends on a number of factors such as the type of activity, socioeconomic status of the family, the particular geographical area, and whether the agricultural production is of cash crop or sustenance. Farm women contribute significantly to family income but they should also be integrated into the mainstream through better education, health and other support facilities.

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