

Development Goals with Special Reference to Women in Agriculture in Sri Lanka and India

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Abstract:

The present paper highlights the development goals with special reference to women in Agriculture in India and island country Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, Gender role difference in paddy cultivation are perceptible in the routine by women of time-consuming and labour-intensive household tasks, while men do the ploughing, sowing, threshing, and transporting of goods to market. Women engage in 30% of all the tasks. In dry land farming, about 65% of tasks are done by women. All traditional farm women are engaged in processing and preparing food and in other domestic and child-rearing chores. The involvement of women in agricultural production has increased over time as waged labourers, unpaid family workers, and workers exchanging labour for goods and services. The extent of women in waged labour is related to a family's wealth, land supply, and family status. Women generally receive 10-20% less in wages for the same work as men. Women's role is affected by the crop seasons. During slack seasons, women are able to spend more time on home-based activities. The total annual hours spent on work by women is about 32% greater than for men. Women have many more roles than men. Substitution for women's work is largely fulfilled by children. Almost 173 wives out of the 200 study families identified their priority as the well-being of the family. Village social organizational roles are largely fulfilled by men. In contrast to other prior research, couples both decide on the division of the day's work and shop and visit together. Men sell excess agricultural products and give the cash to wives. Credit and insurance matters are handled by men. Only 3% of women had opportunities for further training. The prospects for development of agro-based cottage industries for women are greater in dry zones. "Gender role differences can be reduced by removing the social stigma of domestic work" and increasing women's free time. The main land India is an Agrarian based country almost 70 percent of farmers and farm women engaged in agriculture and other farm activities. The paper also emphasis on similar farm women engaged in similar activities in India.

Keywords: Gender Issues, Rural Population, Female Role, Women in Development, Agricultural Development, Agricultural Workers, Time Factors, Women, Developing Countries, Sociocultural Factors, Population Characteristics, Demographic Factors.

1. Introduction

The archaeologists, anthropologists, social and agricultural scientists in general have the same opinion that it was women who started cultivation of crops and domestication of animals and thereby initiated the major art and science of farming. The fact that in developing countries, farming has continued to absorb more than two thirds of the female work force as compared to less than ten percent in the industrialized marketing economies and less than 25% per cent of the centrally planned industrialized economies, is sufficient indication of what agricultural development has done to that section of population which initiated the production of food for the benefit of humanity and thereby engineered the way of civilization of the human race. Regarding the role of women in various sectors of agriculture, an estimate of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 1986) states that the percentage of women in agriculture labour force is 46 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, 31 percent in Caribbean. The census of India counted 49 million women in agriculture in 1961 but only 26 million in 1971. Rural Women form the most important (ILO-2008 Report.)productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. Agriculture, the single largest production attempt in India, contributing 25 percent of GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity. Agriculture sector employs 4/5th of all economically active women in the country (Agriculture Census of India, 2010). 48 percent of India's self-employed farmers are women. There are 75 million women engaged in dairying as against 15 million men and 20 million in animal husbandry as compared to 1.5 million men (Agriculture Census of India, 2010). More than simply supplying labour, women possess detailed knowledge of agriculture and use of plant and plant product for food, medicine and animal feed. Women today are central to the selection, breeding, cultivation, preparation & harvest of food crops.

1.1 Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the role of farm women and to assess their role performance in Agriculture and other allied activities in India and Srilanka.
2. To study the differential level of knowledge of farm women regarding breeding, feeding, management and health care in the study area.
3. To study the perceived training needs of farm women regarding dairy farming and other farm activities in India and Srilanka.
4. To study the relationship of socio-personal, psychological variables with role performance and perceived training needs in relation to farm activities and farm practices.

1.2 Status and Role of Women in Agriculture in India:

In India, 84% population of the total working women earns its source of revenue in the field of agro-production and subsidiary activities. In tea production, 47 per cent; in cotton cultivation, 48.84 per cent; in oilseeds 45.43 per cent and in the field of vegetable production 39.13 of the labour is directly contributed by women (*EU-FTA And The Likely Impact On Indian Women: Centre For Trade And Development*). In human societies, the unequal distribution of labour and its discriminatory importance have both been used to sow the seeds of gender discrimination. In the domestic work related to agriculture women do most of the labour, but their contribution is not recognized at all, and hence they are paid almost nothing. As per a time study, Indian women spend some 25 hours a week on their domestic chores and about 5 hours a week on upkeep and care, and in the community service work. And after this, they invest their 30 hours in an unpaid labour work. It is clear case, which proves that

present growth policies (we must not call them development policies) are the key force in widening gender based disparities.

In India, about 74 percent of the entire female workforce is engaged in agricultural operations, but the nature and extent of women’s involvement in agricultural operations varies greatly from region to region. Further, male farm workers are relatively free during off-season; however, farm women work during these periods too. The challenge to the sustainability of a production system lies in integrating technology, work, and resources (financial and social) effectively with gender so that both women and men can play an active role in improving the productivity, profitability, stability, and sustainability of major farming systems. These calls for various issues involved and approaches needed to remove gender inequity and increase the participation of farm women. At the same time, as they care for their children, manage family nutrition, and seek alternate sources of income, rural women in most parts of the developing world carry a majority of the responsibility for the production of food for their families. For household subsistence as well as for the market, they produce, gather, and process a wide variety of food. Farm women in India involve in almost all farm activities including transplanting, harvesting, post harvest activities such as threshing, drying and livestock management like shed cleaning, fodder collection and milking etc in different parts of India and the health hazards are also been reported.

The following table shows the health hazards faced by farm women in India.

Types of Health Hazards Faced by Farm Women in India (2003-2004)	
Activities	Health Hazards Reported
Farm Activities	
Transplanting	50%
Harvesting	26.5%
Post Harvest Activities	
Threshing	50%
Drying	33%
Parboiling	67%
Livestock Management	
Shed Cleaning	47%
Fodder Collection	23%
Milking	27.5%

Source: (Department of Agricultural, Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India.).

Year: Period of fiscal year in India is April to March, e.g. year shown as 1990-91 relates to April 1990 to March 1991. Units: (a) 1 Lakh (or Lac) = 100000.

(b) 1 Crore (or Cr.) = 10000000.

Women animal health workers pilot community animal health services a fully active cadre of women community animal health workers, or Pashu Sakhis, set up by the South Asia Pro Poor Livestock Policy Programme, is providing regular preventive health care services in a cluster of villages in the Khargone District of Madhya Pradesh. The main task of Pashu Sakhis is to promote improved livestock management practices and preventive veterinary care against major small ruminant diseases (Peste des Petits Ruminants, Enterotoxaemia, Foot and-Mouth, Goat Pox, etc.). Pashu Sakhis maintain vaccination records and monitor and report disease outbreaks. They are linked to government veterinary hospital and dispensaries

in the area. The programme has produced a low-cost and eco friendly model of goat shelter, which has been accepted by the Indian Government for replication across the country, wherever raw material is available. A similar model of poultry extension agents, Murgi Sakhis, is being successfully implemented under the same initiative, improving village poultry production and health practices in Jhabua District. Community response to the two models of service is extremely positive, helped by demonstrated reductions in animal and bird mortality, improved returns, and savings on veterinary care costs. Project: coordinated by the SAPPLPP Core Team, with FAO technical and

1.3 Status and Role of Women in Agriculture in Sri Lanka:

Even though the important role of women in agriculture, customary laws and traditional social norms have been prejudiced in favour of men, which constitute a barrier to women's impartial access to resources. Though contributing a major part of their lives to providing services and support the opportunity to be placed in decision making roles or have control over assets is limited. Despite their routine and expected domestic work, women are very actively involved in agriculture production. Gender role stereo types imbedded in the perceptions of a patriarchal society, its policymakers, administrators and employers and internalized stereotyping by both men and women are reflected in the social and economic policies and political participation. Women have been disadvantaged by perceptions of men as bread earners, producers and community leaders and the normative relegation of women to their reproductive role to dependency and subordination have affected their visibility and actual contribution and inhibited their decision making power especially in agriculture. Technology and mechanization have not only usurped women's traditional roles in agricultural production but also impacted on post harvest activities such as crop drying milling etc that were traditional important activities handled by women. The scenario of Sri Lankan farm women also no exception. Majority of farm women in Sri Lanka also engaged in different farming and house hold activities.

While agriculture is still the major form of employment for rural women in Sri Lanka, these women are seen as housewives, not as farmers. As a result, they receive little training or extension support. Without access to information, these women face limited economic opportunities. Lifelong Learning for Farmers has the potential to provide rural women with information and access to credit. With small, low-interest loans, women can engage in self-employment projects that generate income and improve livelihoods for families and entire communities.

Women's contribution to subsistence production (farm/income generating activities) is counted as unpaid family work. It is estimated that over 56% of the women work as unpaid family workers (UNDP, 2016) with women's participation in planting, weeding and post harvest work high. However, improvement in farm practices and technology adoption/mechanization has somewhat reduced this contribution. Gender division of labour in paddy/Chena cultivation (van der Molan, 2001). Women constitute the major labour force in plantation agriculture at 56% and at 42% of the total female labour force, form the largest labour group in Sri Lanka. Women's work is intensive and time consuming. It has been observed that when men collect the family's estate income and as it grows larger, they feel less need to work, so labour less on the estate, requiring women to labour more to generate family income. Nearly 68% women in agriculture work in plantations and more than 70% of rural women in subsistence production (Wickremasinghe, 1994). Also noted has been the fact that women's workload has increased with expansion of plantations, changes to Chena and dry land farming with men concentrating on cash crop production and opting for wage labour where possible, thus increasing women's responsibilities for home maintenance and

household/home garden crop production. Women play a major role in both vegetable cultivation and floriculture in the Western and upland Central and Uva provinces being actively involved in land preparation, seeding, planting, weeding harvesting and preparation for market. In the dry zone areas they do contribute to seeding, weeding, harvesting and irrigation under agro wells and pump irrigation. In both cases transport to market and marketing is handled by males with women restricted mainly to stall sales of produce.

1.3.1 Women farmers in livestock and poultry:

Livestock is an integral component of farming systems in Sri Lanka and women play a major role in raising livestock and poultry. The diminution of grazing livestock and moving to stall feeding due to stress on land has resulted in women apathetic livestock programmes with improved stock that include to non family income. This compensate for their less partaking in crop production. Cattle and goat raising projects have proved to be successful income generating performance for poor rural women. While women attend to the actual rearing and milking of animals, data shows that it is mainly the men who register for and handle supplies to milk collection centers (NLDB, 2016). With regard to milk production there is several female lead the family groups actively pursuing this for livelihood. This also provides balanced nutrition for the family.

2. Conclusion

Both in India as well Sri Lanka the women play a vital role in farming activities as well house hold course. Many women farmers in their respective countries contribute in farm/income generating activities by involving different farming activities; it may be paddy/Chena cultivation activities in Sri Lanka or Farm women in India involve in almost all farm activities including transplanting, harvesting, post harvest activities such as threshing, drying and livestock management like shed cleaning, fodder collection and milking etc in different parts of India.

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