

## **A Study the review of Socioeconomic Analysis of Female Agricultural Labours in India**

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**Abstract-** One of the world's emerging nations, India boasts the second-largest arable landmass. A large portion of India's population relies on agriculture for their livelihood. When compared to men, women in nations like India confront more restrictions and have a weaker economic & social standing. They have a hard time moving. Working on fields is just one of many responsibilities that rural women shoulder, along with tending to the home, cooking, and watering the crops. Their lives are certainly not easy. However, national accounts do not consider the many tasks done by rural women to be "economically active employment," even though they are crucial to the prosperity of rural households. In India, women represent 24 percent of the workforce in the agricultural sector and 41.1% of the workforce overall.

**Keywords-** Agricultural Sector, Women, Labours, Socioeconomic, Literature Review

### **INTRODUCTION**

India's agricultural sector<sup>1</sup>, which comprises the country's largest private businesses, has been and will remain the engine of growth for the country's economy. Consequently, the fact that agriculture's once dominant role in the economy has been steadily dwindling is cause for concern. As of 2013 about half of India's worker force was engaged in agriculture<sup>2</sup>. To improve people's capabilities through things like better education, healthcare, and social services, a country must first experience robust economic growth. This improves people's chances of making money in the future. Yet not everyone in society has shared equally in the benefits of economic expansion. Whatever the level of economic growth, the advantages will only accrue to a small minority of the population unless there is a progressive public policy push to ensure that everyone, regardless of their social status, caste, or gender, benefits equally. Only if agricultural expansion contributes to general economic growth can it be sustained. There is empirical evidence that "developing countries which have achieved sustainable economic

growth are usually the countries in which the rate of agricultural growth exceeds population growth" (HDR in South Asia, 2002)<sup>3</sup>. There has been a rise in the number of people of color working in agriculture, but they are still unable to raise their standard of living because they are paid so little while spending full days in the field. There are several issues that today's agricultural workers must contend with. Therefore, it is crucial to address this problem in order to raise their living conditions. Agriculture is crucial to the growth of any society and economy. As a result, encouraging the sector's rapid, sustained, and widespread expansion is a top focus. Growth must be sped up, and improving yielding or productivity is the key given the shrinking worker force in agriculture. There needs to be significant effort put into addressing the worker shortage and its causes. Improved seed types, comprehensive extension services, & farm mechanization remain three major areas of intervention and concentration in India, where crop yields are still barely 30–60% of the best crop yields obtainable on farms in industrialized and other developing nations.

## **AGRICULTURAL LABOUR**

Agricultural labor is not as easily defined as industrial labor. The rationale behind this is that a distinct wage-dependent workforce cannot emerge in the agricultural sector until complete capitalism takes root there. Many small & marginal farmers also work part-time on other people's farms to augment their income, which further complicates the difficulty of defining agricultural labor. "Those people who are engaged in raising crops on payment of wages" was the definition given by the First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee 1950–1955. But other people just work for wages for a portion of the year, rather than all of it. homes should be referred to be agricultural labor homes if half or more of the members work in agriculture for pay. As stated by the National Commission on Labour, "an agricultural labourer is one who is fundamentally unskilled and unorganized and has little for its livelihood, other than personal labour." Those whose primary means of subsistence are wages are thus included in this group.

## **WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

Women play several different roles in Indian society. They are crucial to the progress being made as well. In recent years, community & rural development initiatives have placed an emphasis on women-focused programming. Only by encouraging & inspiring women generally to try new things can the economy and society progress in a way that everyone wants. The majority of Indian women work in the agricultural sector, either as cultivators, supervisors, or workers. Seeding, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, applying

manure, storing seed & food grains, and post-harvest processing are all activities in which they play a vital role. In addition to these tasks, they are also responsible for cutting chaff, feeding and washing the cattle, maintaining the cattle shed, & making compost. About three-quarters of the worker in agriculture comes from women. In addition to their typical domestic duties, they also help out in agricultural endeavors. Women's contributions to the agricultural sector<sup>4</sup> are mostly unrecognized because they are not typically compensated monetarily. In every size of farm, the female worker force contributes more to agricultural output than the male. As a result of her extensive contributions to agriculture as a manager, decision maker, and worker, women are now widely regarded as equal partners with men in the agricultural sector. The position of women in rural areas is rising steadily.

### **INCREASING STRENGTH OF FEMALE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

Women in India's agricultural work endure significant pay discrimination because their services can often be replaced by those of their own families. Wages are not paid even at the minimum required by law. Women who work in agriculture are paid far below minimum wage. Disparities in pay are widespread, and women are disproportionately affected by them due to variables such as the precarious nature of work, lack of legal knowledge, weak bargaining power, job insecurity, and migration. Consequently, a rural woman has several obstacles that prevent her from effectively contributing to the development process, despite the fact that she is an equal partner of man in agriculture. They don't realize how much it affects their ability to raise a family and grow food. They think everyone is created with a purpose and that no one is inherently better than the other. An Indian lady typically lacks the drive to better herself. The number of women working in agriculture<sup>5</sup> has increased dramatically in recent years. When this rate of increase is examined across time, it becomes clear that women have been pushed into farming as a result of a lack of alternative employment options. Agricultural workers, particularly women, face a number of socioeconomic challenges due to factors such as their low social standing, the lack of structure in their work, the seasonality of their worker, the scarcity of alternative employment opportunities, rural indebtedness, and population growth. Meanwhile, various measures adopted by the Central and State Governments from the time of independence onward [including the implementation of the Minimum Wage Act-1948 and MGNREGA<sup>6</sup>, the abolition of agrarian slavery, forced worker, bonded worker, the zamindari system, the fixing of ceilings on agricultural land holdings, the organization of worker cooperatives, land reclamation and settlement, the special area programme, and the

provision of housing sites have directly or indirectly sought to improve the living conditions of the rural poor.

## **CLASSIFICATION AND GROWTH OF WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOUR**

Indian agriculture is predominantly rural. Women constitute a substantial portion of the agricultural labour force and form a large and handicapped section of the rural community. The bulk of women agricultural labour come from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Caste categories. Women in general have been attending to pre-harvest and post-harvest operations like land preparation, sowing seeds, transplantation, weeding application of fertilizers, harvesting, processing, except ploughing and levelling the field. Several of these operations are exclusively carried out by women only. As such the work of women agricultural labour is mostly concentrated in the months of July, August, and September. Many types of agricultural labourers fall under the following categories.

1. The landless women;
2. The near-landless women;
3. The small peasant women; and
4. The rich peasant women.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**K. Anitha et al. (2021)**<sup>7</sup> Women's history and advancement in India is thoroughly documented. The study's primary objective is to learn more about the challenges faced by female agricultural workers in Srivaikundam Taluk. The primary data for this study was acquired through the use of a standardized questionnaire. In addition, we have gathered secondary material from a wide variety of sources, including reports, journals, periodicals, newspapers, books, magazines, and more. One hundred participants were chosen at random using a judgmental sampling technique for the primary data collection.

**Dr. Gautam P. Kanani et al. (2020)**<sup>8</sup> India's economy is primarily agricultural and is in the process of developing. Sixty percent of its households rely on agriculture for their primary source of income, while 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. In nations where farming is the main source of income, agriculture is a powerful force for economic development and poverty alleviation. In many third-world nations, women are the primary

providers of food. In contrast to women, about 63% of all economically employed men work in agriculture. Women are widely recognized as playing crucial roles in many facets of agricultural development, especially but not limited to primary crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post-harvest operations, etc. Women do the bulk of the work on farms, at around 70%. Women farmers' potential for increased output is severely constrained by unequal access to resources. This article demonstrates the vital role that women play in the agricultural sector. It also sheds light on the challenges they encounter, such as limited access to productive resources that fail to acknowledge her as a fully participating, contributing member of society.

**S.M. Subbulakshmi et al. (2019)<sup>9</sup>** Women have a crucial role in India's agricultural sector. Women account for 84% of the rural work force in India, but for 33% of the farmers and 47% of the agricultural workers. In 2011, women made up 33% of farmers and 47% of agricultural workers, making up 75% of the agricultural sector employment. Most of these women lived in rural areas of India. Using a sample of 600 rural women in the Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu, this research examines the factors that led them to work in agriculture. The researcher employed KMO & Bartlett's Test, factor analysis, Structural Equation Modeling, and regression weights to determine the normality of the data and draw conclusions from the study's findings. Factors like having to, wanting to, being able to, and being supported in addition to overall happiness all play a role in whether or not women choose to pursue agriculture as a career. The path analysis model implies that the combination of external pressures and internal motivations to enter the agricultural workforce is what eventually leads to rural women's satisfaction with their work in the field. There is a call for a shift in cultural perceptions of women's roles in agriculture, and for policymakers to do their part by improving the conditions under which farmers' wives toil.

**R. Rajanbabu et al. (2019)<sup>10</sup>** There is a gender pay gap in the agricultural worker industry, especially for women. Women do agriculture's most worker-intensive tasks like transplanting and weeding at a higher rate than men do, but they are paid less than men for their efforts. The minimum wage needs to be effectively implemented. The goals of this paper are threefold: i) to assess the financial standing of women in agriculture in the Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu; ii) to determine the living conditions of women in agriculture in the study area; and iii) to analyze the borrowing habits and goals of women in agriculture. Fifty women who work in agriculture are being studied here. With the use of a piloted interview schedule, data was gathered from respondent households regarding wages, employment, income, borrowing, and

other factors. The findings indicate that making elementary school mandatory is an urgent priority in the fight to increase female literacy. They don't learn anything else to broaden their employment options. However, it's encouraging to see that workers have come to value education and are sending their kids to school against their will.

**Sangeeta Bhattacharyya et al. (2019)<sup>11</sup>** The demographic dividend has provided India with an abundance of human resources. When compared to the rest of the globe, India's population ranks second. More than two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people call rural areas home (60.84% according to the 2011 Census conducted by the Government of India). Out of an estimated 15.61 billion rural families, 57.8 percent, or 9.02 billion, work in agriculture (NSSO, 2012-13). Indian agriculture is in a dire state, despite the fact that a large percentage of Indians depend on it for their living. As farming becomes increasingly unprofitable, more and more farmers are leaving the industry, young people are moving to the cities. Low productivity, land and irrigation problems, pressure from urbanization and population growth, natural disasters, price swings, market risks, and economic instability are only some of the problems plaguing India's agricultural sector. The rising frequency of farmer suicides is tragic evidence of this. Increases in agricultural productivity and income are needed to combat the problem of "hidden unemployment" among India's agricultural worker force. This is especially pressing now, as the sector is at a crossroads. Increased education and training in the agriculture industry may help alleviate this issue.

**Soorya Vennila et al. (2019)<sup>12</sup>** This paper examines women's involvement in agricultural irrigation in all 32 districts of Tamil Nadu, and it finds strikingly high rates of participation in three geographically distinct districts: Kanyakumari, Nilgiris, & South Arcot. In order to provide a steady supply of agricultural workers and ensure food security, the study posed the question, "How does modern agriculture support female participation?" Several studies were conducted using different approaches to investigate the causes of the disproportionate number of women working in irrigated farms. The study determined that this trend emerges from the current pattern of worker supply, which is dominated by landowning farm women or workers. This is because men increasingly choose for higher-paying skilled occupations, resulting in a shifting worker pattern. Additionally, matrilineal property ownership, increased cropping intensity, women's multitasking, and the concerted effort of women's groups (SHGs) in accessing micro-credits all play a role. More women are entering the agricultural worker force as a result of changes brought about by subsidies and incentives.

**Nagarathnamma K S et al. (2018)**<sup>13</sup> A current estimate places agriculture's contribution to GDP at around 20%. About two-thirds of the country's population relies on it for their primary source of income. The expansion of India's agricultural sector is crucial to the country's economic success. Agricultural development is highlighted in all plans, according to India's planners. As the population rises, more and more agricultural goods will be produced to feed it and to supply the expanding industrial sector. Agriculture has the potential to alleviate the issue of joblessness as well. In light of this background, the purpose of this study is to provide a socioeconomic framework for the role of women in the agricultural worker force. Fifty samples were used in the current investigation, which was a pilot project. The researcher gathered information by giving out questionnaires and conducting interviews with agricultural women workers. It's safe to say that the economic and social situation of women workers is dire. According to the data, they make less than \$1,000 a month, have substandard housing, and are mostly middle-aged women with two or three children. Their husbands also worked as farm workers, so that was another source of cash. So, while all respondents come from a financially disadvantaged background, those highlighted above are the most impoverished.

**Seema Yadav et al. (2018)**<sup>14</sup> Women's contributions are not limited to farming alone; they also play an important role in the care of cattle. This research investigates women's involvement in the agriculture sector in great detail. Because of this, rural women are vital to the success of farms and the agricultural processes that occur on them, including planting, transplanting, weeding, fertilizing, protecting plants, harvesting, processing, storing, etc. Many of these procedures are performed exclusively by women. The city of Jaipur served as the study's primary location in Rajasthan. The Jaipur district was chosen from among the other four districts in the Jaipur area. Two panchayat samities, Dudu & Jalsu, were chosen at random from the specified district using basic random selection. Five villages were chosen at random from each of the panchayat samities that were chosen. The same method was used to pick 120 participants from 10 different communities.

**Dr. P. Suresh Babu et al. (2018)**<sup>15</sup> Research shows that agriculture is a significant source of both national & household income, but that women in the workforce face unique challenges due to discrimination, low wages, and a lack of opportunity. Women in agriculture by ensuring they have equitable access to resources like land, inputs, knowledge, financial backing, markets, & employment. Initiate change so that women can fully participate in the economy. Himachal Pradesh's government is dedicated to its stated aims, one of which is ensuring that women receive equal pay for their work as agricultural workers.

**Dr. R. H. Pavithra et al. (2017)**<sup>16</sup> In rural India, women participate in all aspects of farming, from planting seeds to hand-weeding, harvesting to post-harvest care. The nature of rural women's work has shifted over time as a result of technological advancements in agriculture that have caused a dramatic shift in the worker-land use pattern. Managing cattle, poultry, and other animals accounts up a significant portion of women's time in the agricultural sector. Female worker and economic contributions to households are often misrepresented, however. Women's contributions to the economy are often downplayed or ignored because they are categorized as "household work." This paper makes an effort to analyze the economic and social circumstances of women who work in agriculture and to propose solutions to the problems they face.

**Government of Himachal Pradesh (1966)**<sup>17</sup> conducted a socio-economic study of Pangi sub-division in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, in order to study the extent and purpose of debt among the sample households. The results of the study revealed that out of 200 sample households; 61 households were under debt to the tune of Rs.21, 757.50. Thus on an average the amount of loan per indebted family had been worked out Rs.356.68. About 72.5 per cent households took loans mainly for meeting out the household requirements, 3.25 per cent for educational purpose, 9.68 per cent for marriage, and death ceremonies, 6.45 per cent for medical care and 8.06 per cent of the sample households had taken loans for other purposes.

**Kumar (2007)**<sup>18</sup> used twenty development indicators & sectoral PCA to investigate the inter-district of Himachal Pradesh from 1991 to 2001. He came to the conclusion that high hill districts had benefited more from development than mid and low hill districts. Despite facing the worst environment in the country, tribal communities of Himachal Pradesh are supposedly performing better than many low and middle hill districts, in contrast to other states where tribal areas are typically backward. The high level of development in these tribal & mid to high hill regions can be attributed to the favorable agro-climatic conditions that are ideal for growing various crops.

**Chakraborty (2009)**<sup>19</sup> did research on discrepancies within and across states in India and found that inequality in per capita state domestic product tends to rise. Standard outcome measures of health & education have inherent upper limits, which explains why state-level indices of human development exhibit diminishing dispersion. This suggests that differences in per capita income should be our primary concern, rather than differences in social variables. Disparity in non-income dimensions, both within and within states, he noted, has several

important features. This study analyzed two popular allocation rules—population-weighted utilitarianism & R-squared—and claimed that their ethical implications differ across evaluation spaces in the context of federal resource allocation among subnational organizations. His research showed that, in fact, India's human development budget follows some normative guidelines.

**Sindhu (2010)<sup>20</sup>** researched the level of pay discrepancy in Indian industries & found that the structure of wages in Indian industries has changed significantly throughout the years. The industrial sector in India has undergone reorganization as a result of economic reforms & globalization in the country's economy. Both the labor and product markets in India are currently being contested by international corporations and domestic enterprises. Although both labor productivity & wage rates have increased as result of modernization and the introduction of skilled workers & professional managers, wage disparities have grown both within and across the sub-sector due to the substantial variations in labor productivity. Wages in India's industrial sector are based on labor productivity, according to the study.

## **CONCLUSION**

Labor welfare has taken center stage in the ongoing socioeconomic transition. Women who work as domestic workers in rural areas are often overlooked and face significant economic hardships. In regions where traditional practices discouraged women from working outside the home, agricultural labor was disproportionately underrepresented among women. There were fewer female agricultural laborers in regions that were highly urbanized, had a high prevalence of female literacy, and where agriculture was heavily mechanized. Due to low female literacy & limited career choices in the non-agriculture sector, many communities had a moderate proportion of female agricultural labourers. Women in the workforce do not have access to the same privileges enjoyed by women in the organized sector, such as flexible scheduling, safe working conditions, paid time off for childbirth, health insurance, etc. There has been little change in the working conditions of women in India's agricultural sector compared to many decades before. There is a lot more to women's contributions to agriculture than just acknowledging them, according to most surveys done in different nations.

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