

Role Of Rural Women In Agriculture And Economy Of Assam

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Abstract

Women are exactly help of the mature population. They include one-third of labour force but drink two third of words. Working hours and yet take home only one tenth of the income and own only one percent of world correctly. The wealth and growth of a Nation depend on the Status .Of its women as they not only comprise nearly half of its population but also stress growth of the remaining half of the population. The middle role of women in agriculture, allied occupations and house hold behavior have however been under estimated and undervalued in Assam. In Assam women play an important and crucial role in agriculture. And allied fields including crop production livestock production, horticulture post harvesting operations agro/social forestry fishing Tea planting etc. The life and extent of women's involvement in agriculture vary really from regions to regions. Even in the region, their participation varies widely among different biological, sub-zones forming system caste, lessons and socio-economic status of families etc. Although with same problems of women's today they contribute a lot of the state's economy like men. Women participation in agriculture is harmfully affected by modern method of women and decrease of their activities. Innovation of agriculture has provided women with better income earning opportunities in same areas, but as displaced them from their customary roles in others.

Keywords:-Economy, Rural Women, Agriculture, Population, Labour

Introduction

Women are almost half of the adult population. They comprise one third of labour force but consume two-thirds of world working hours and yet earn only one tenth of the income and own only one percent of the world property. The prosperity and growth of a nation depend on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of its population but also influence growth of the remaining half of its population but also influence the remaining half of the population. The crucial role of women in agriculture allied occupations and house hold activities have however been underestimated and undervalued. In Assam various fields of agriculture engaged by women such as tea agricultural estate work, crops production, lives stocks production, horticulture, floriculture, social forestry, fisheries etc. 75% female population are engaged in agriculture. In Assam total population is 31169273 out of them Women is 15214344 and then total population nearly 82% of people engaged in agriculture in Assam whose one third are women.

Objective:-

- To know the present agricultural status of women in agriculture
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- To study the role of women in economy of Assam.
- To study the roles and problem faces by women in agriculture.

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data and practical study only.

Various Roles of women in Assam agriculture :-

Women play an important and vital role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production live stock production, horticulture, post harvest, operations agro/social forestry fishing tea plantation etc. The Nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture vary from region to region. Even with in a region their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub-zones farming systems, caste, classes and socio-economic status of families etc. Regard less of these variations there is hardly any activity in agricultural production except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. ILO (1979) reported that if a total range of women's actual economic activities were to be taken into account all over Assam, women

work for very long hours in market and non-market economy and more so in the rural in Assam. It is the nature and type of their work and the long run hours which raise fundamental economic and social issues. These issues are related to the stage of technological development of an economy as well as the existing division of labour between men and women in the society

The various technological transitions followed by major change in the economic processes and construction of the country played a major role in defining the socio-psychological status of both men and women in Assam. Changes in technology are the product of men & women in Assam changes in technological are the product of men's efforts to improve his physical & psychological well being and survival. The development and introduction of technology in a society lets loose economic and other forces which compel man to change and adopt his interpersonal behaviour to new environment. This obviously leads to new definition of role and status. Agrarian Indian society eventually relegated women to the exclusive role of the house wife. To which ever community or caste she belonged. Her dominant space was at home. The role of man was to manage the internal interface with the environment while she could encroach on managed the internal interface of the home. Neither could encroach on the other's space or domain, power authority and decision making regarding community caste and social/political issues rested exclusively with the males. Farm women's involvement in decision making regarding farm and home related tasks does not seem to be uniform across the rural women of varying socio-economic strata. Rural women in general do have certain things in common still there are intra-economic status variations. farm the existencies of biology and social situations but are rather deeply rooted in myths legend and the religious rites and rituals of our culture, philosophers sages and theologians have at one time or the other paid attention to women and their socio-personal status.

Above the roles women's played in Assam agricultural development and allied fields like flowering, poultry, planting, crops, production, live stock production, horticulture, post harvesting operations agro-based industries, like tea, coffee, social forestry, fishing etc actively done by women.

Problems of women in Assam agricultural :- Women's participation in agricultural is adversely affected by modern methods of cultivation which results in gradual displacement of

women and shrinking of their activities. Modernization of agriculture has provided women with better income earning opportunities in some areas but has displaced them from their traditional roles in others. Such a negative impact on employment could cause much distress particularly to families where the total family income is small and hence needs to be supplemented by the earning of both husband and wife. Some women continue their struggle to find freedom from dependent controlling and patronising-relationships. Their attempt is to redefine their role include acting upon the system and to create a legitimate space for themselves. In some mechanism women faces problems to hundle of them to due to lack of education and proper training, mane over some families restricted to women in coming out from their home. With improve agriculture technology accompanied by full mechanization has negatively affected the women from lower castes, lower income groups who, were either land less or had small land holding by reducing the demand for employment in peak season as reported by Kaur (1986).

In sum it is believed that women are often victims of their own restricted vision and Indian women still have to discover a third identity which is neither male nor female but human. This identity encompasses the other two identities and is a liberating and life giving force which can revitalise not just women but society at large. III. Finding There is hardly any activity in agricultural prod except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. The crucial role of women in agriculture and allied occupation and house hold activities have however been under estimated and recognition of their extensive contribution by and large, they have remained as "invisible workers". This study investigates the nature and extent of involvement of rural women and men in agriculture and home activities as well as the extent of exposure of modern crop technology to farm women. It prepares a comparative drudgery index for agricultural operation and examines the impact of mechanization on form women in terms of and employment zdisplacement, work hood and income. The author has also studied the various fields in activation of major crops role of women in decision making in farming and the utilization pattern of saving in the family. Providing insight into a typical agrarian profile of farm women the study suggests several far reaching implications to the planners, policy makers administrators scientists and change agents for transforming an agricultural based rural society.

Role of rural women in economy of Assam

- The state Assam has 54% of cultivable land considering its total land size. However, the sown areas are only 35.8% out of total land size. Moreover, out of total cultivable land, 67.56% areas come under the sown area. Considering the total sown areas in the state, 11.5% land is used for the tea plantation. This 11.5% is assumed as a baseline for the classification of low and high tea planting area.
- The percentage of the area covered above state average is considered as high tea plantation districts (Cachar, Darrang, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh) and lower than state average is considered as low tea planting district (Dima Hasao, Karbi-Anglong, Kamrup, Nagaon, Goalpara and Lakhimpur) in the state. The state Dibrugarh has highest tea plantation area by total sown area with almost 91%, and Dima-Hasao has lowest tea plantation areas with only 6% out of net sown area. (The important point to note is here that due to unavailability of district-level information in 1993/94 round of NSS, the classification of HTPD and LTPD could not be made possible. Therefore, the female WPR rate in these two classifications only considers the 2005–06 and 2012–13 rounds of NSS data).
- In the state Assam, the descendants of the tea garden labourer mostly consisting of Adivasi population from Chota Nagpur region are also classified as OBC in Assam. And, more than 28 tribal communities of the state are classified as OBC community in the state. The tea tribes of Assam have been traced as the descendants of Adivasi communities such as Munda, Oraon, Santhal and other tribes of mainland India (found in present-day Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). All this Adivasis of the mainland India is referred as STs in their home state but not in the state Assam.
- The size of the population is almost 5 million in the state or almost 20% of total state population . Of this, it is estimated that more than 11 lakh work in the state's 800-odd tea gardens and hence called the tea garden tribes. The tea garden labourer and the tribe of Assam constitute 96 different communities in the state, and all of those belong to OBC community in the state .
- **Socio-economic status of agricultural women** : Majority 56.08 per cent of farm women of the study areas belonged to

middle age group i.e. 25-45 yrs. Large majority (92.66%) of farm women were married. 45.75 per cent of farm women belonged to general caste. 42.33 per cent of farm women belonged to the category of marginal farmer. 39.51 per cent of farm women had education upto middle school. 45.427 per cent farm women had mixed type of house. 45.50 per cent of the farmwomen's family occupation was farming. Majority (78.89%) of farm women belonged to nuclear family. The data reveals that majority (63.95%) of farm women belonged to small family. Cent per cent of farm families possessed hoe and hand tools, followed by desi plough (98.08%) and bullock (97.25%). Majority 61.91 per cent.

- **Time utilization pattern of rural agricultural women:** In peak period farm women spent an average of 5:27 hours on farm activities followed by 3: 7 hours in kitchen, 3 hours in social and recreational activities followed by 2: 6 hours on kitchen work; 3:5 hours on entrepreneurial and farm related activities, 2 hours on house keeping in slack period. Further, it reveals that farm women had more leisure time in slack period. This is in agreement with the findings of Suman (1999) and Anonymous (2002). It is seen that women perform more of the reproductive and domestic tasks than do men, in addition to their agricultural activities. When the time spent on farm activities was added to farm women's other responsibilities, women's working days became very long. This might be due to less access to labour saving, gender specific technologies by the farm women. This is consistent with the findings of Batish and Naurial (1999) who stated that the dual domestic and productive workload took up rural women's whole day.
- **Training attended by farm women** Studies shows that 42.67 per cent of farm women had attended training on fruits and vegetables preservation followed by 3.92 per cent and 29.76 percent on kitchen gardening and nursery raising. Further, 16.50 per cent attended training on SRI method, 11.50 per cent on floriculture. Very less per cent of farmwomen 9.33 per cent attended training on mushroomcultivation and on Pineapple and Banana cultivation (9.50%). The less percentage of attendance in farm women attended training programme might be due to lack of suitable time, overloaded work and immediate need which can support additional income. Moreover, they were not considered as a participant in agricultural training programme. Problem faced by farm

women in attending training: The data presented in studies reveals that lack of awareness of the extension programme and lack of suitable venue for extension training /meetings were ranked I and II problems faced by the farm women for attending extension training of which mean score were 1.42 and 1.38. It is assumed that farm women might not be informed about the date and venue of extension programme. This is in line with Rao and Sarada (2007). Further, organization of training in peak season of agriculture was ranked as III problem with mean score 1.35. In this period they were unable to attend the extension training programme for actively involved in farm activities. This finding is in agreement with Hassan (2009).

➤ **Measures:-**

Agriculture is however, getting rapidly modernised in two ways in our country. Firstly - In mechanism with accelerated installation of tube wells pump sets diesel engines and Secondly - by improved agriculture technologies like high yield variety (HYV) seed fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides (Punia 1980) mechanization is used in one or two operations in almost all the crops like maize wheat, cotton, bajra and rice etc. In crops cultivation, there is mechanization in different operations by the use of rice transplanter etc. Though education women from the better off socio economic strata become aware of the existing social disparities and of the condition of women in general particularly of those belonging to socially and economically deprived groups. It is there imperative from time to time societies, cultures, systems and individuals realign and redefine themselves in ways that are relevant to contemporary needs. Men and women need to respond to the call of their being to generate new meaning create new landmarks pave new paths and envisage new patterns of relationships. Agriculture is however modernized in our country due to technological advancement.

Conclusion

There is hardly any activity in agricultural production except ploughing in which women are not actively involved and played actively all other farm-activities decision making and saving activities in the households. So women have a greater role in agriculture and economic activities in Assam. The findings

presented in this study show that farm women belong to low socio-economic status. More than fifty per cent of farm women contributed labour independently in cleaning (57.17%), transplanting (56.08%), harvesting (55.75%) and winnowing (52.08%). Joint participation were observed in retention of grain for consumption (69.66%) and storage of grain (67.75%). Majority (87.50%) of farm women independently participated in weaving and cooking (84.83%). 55.82 per cent of farm women had medium level of participation. It is seen that women perform more of the reproductive and domestic tasks than do men, in addition to their agricultural activities. When the time spent on farm activities was added to farm women's other responsibilities, women's working days became very long. This might be due to less access to labour saving, gender specific technologies by the farm women. This is consistent with the findings of Batish and Naurial (1999) who stated that the dual domestic and productive workload took up rural women's whole day.

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