



## **FEMALE AGRICULTURAL WORKER: A STUDY OF HARYANA STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Agriculture is the primary occupation of rural women; around 90% of them work in agriculture or related fields. This study examined the role of women in India's Haryana state's agricultural production. The growth rate of female agricultural workers throughout time is being examined using the secondary data collected for the project. There are still a number of challenges that call for the creation of particular laws and programs to deal with them. Gender-aware agricultural education and the promotion of research, development, extension, and services are necessary to adequately recognize the many responsibilities played by women farmers. The variables are explained using the percentage technique. The study's goals are to: (i) examine the role of women in the agricultural industry; and (ii) examine the types of work that women workers conduct. Regions differ in the type and degree of women's participation in agriculture. When it comes to agricultural labor, women are less likely than men to participate. In order to improve their family's financial situation, women must work for meager pay.

**Key Word:** Agriculture, Economic-Development, Socio Economic Factors

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

As a developing nation, India relies heavily on the agricultural sector to generate income; 56% of the rural population makes their living from this industry. The majority of the nation's population relies significantly on this industry for their economic security. About half of the population is female, and they have contributed significantly to the expansion of the agricultural industry. Women can be considered the progenitors of the agricultural industry and related operational operations. Women work as wage workers, family workers, co-farmers, farmers, and farm managers. They have been participating not only in crop cultivation but also in allied areas such



as fisheries, livestock and horticulture. Women constitute one-third of the labor force and consume 2/3 of the world working hours and yet own only 1 per cent of the world property and earn only tenth of the income. In Asian countries the number of women engaged in this sector as a percentage of economically active population is higher. Asian women contribute to about 50 per cent of the food production (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2011). According to renowned agricultural scientist Swaminathan, "men went hunting in search of food, but women were the ones who first domesticated crop plants and thus initiated the art and science of farming." From the perspective of food, feed, fodder, fiber, and fuel, women began collecting seeds from the local flora and growing those that caught their attention. The rise in women's involvement in agricultural, particularly in developing countries, is referred to as feminism in agriculture. Some historians believe that women were the first to domesticate crop plants, which marked the beginning of farming as an art and science. Women started gathering seeds from the indigenous flora and growing those that were valuable for food, feed, fodder, and fiber while males went hunting for nourishment. Agriculture is a cornerstone of the Indian economy, accounting for 7.32 percent of total GDP in 2018 and growing at a rate of 3.4 percent. Agriculture employed 48.8 percent of the Indian workforce in 2011-12. Women make up 45.3 percent of the agricultural labour force, but many of them are still invisible. As a result, women make up a significant portion of our agricultural workforce and play a multifaceted role in agricultural activities such as sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertiliser application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, and storing, as well as domestic activities such as cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel wood gathering, and household maintenance, as well as allied activities such as cattle management, fodder collection, and so on. Rural women are primarily involved in agricultural operations in one of three ways, depending on their family's socioeconomic level and regional variables. They work as paid labourers, cultivators who work on their own land, and managers of various areas of agricultural production, such as labour supervision and post-harvest operations. Women are in charge of household food and nutrition security, 90% of food production hoeing and weeding, 80% of food storage and transportation work, more than 90% of post-harvest management, including food processing, providing water and energy, and more than 60% of harvesting and marketing (Ghosh et al. 2014). Seventy percent of rural families in India own animals. In rural India, it is a



source of employment, particularly for women. The production of milk, meat, wool, and eggs has the potential to provide significant new jobs. More than 30 million small farmers work in the milk industry alone. Gender equality is more prominent in the livestock sector, where women account for 71% of the workforce. There are 75 million women working in the livestock industry, compared to 15 million men. Women are well-versed in livestock behaviour as well as local feeds. (Census of Population and Housing, 2011). The process of a country's economic development is the utilisation of both natural and human resources. The availability and efficiency of human resources, or labour, is critical to the manufacturing process. Women have been actively involved in the process of productive activity since the beginning. With changes in the social and economic environment, the nature and type of labour have to alter as well. Despite the fact that gender notions and sexual division of labour are at the heart of the distribution of activities between men and women, gender is a social and cultural construct. The participation of women in various economic activities is influenced by a variety of socioeconomic circumstances. As a result, there is interregional as well as intercommunity diversity in terms of women's economic engagement. The term "feminization of agriculture" refers to a significant growth in women's involvement in the agricultural industry. The feminization of agriculture, in broad terms, refers to women's increasing participation in the agricultural labour force, whether as self-employed farmers, unpaid family labourers, or agricultural wage workers (Cornheil 2006). However, other scholars have characterised feminization of agriculture as having two dimensions: more female engagement and increased casualization of labour (Standing 1999). Social scientists, researchers, and policymakers are increasingly interested in feminising agriculture. As a result, a more extensive empirical investigation of numerous issues related to feminization of agriculture is required. The foundation of empirical analysis must be a thorough examination of relevant literature in the field of investigation. This would aid in the development of an intellectual and practical solution to the problem through the use of scientific methods and the continuation of previous efforts. Various concerns relating to agricultural feminization have been identified, and a study of the current literature on these topics has been conducted.

### **1.1 Feminization of Agriculture:**

The term "feminization of agriculture" refers to women being more involved in agricultural

activities. The terms "feminization of agriculture" were defined by Katz (2003) and Deere (2005).

- ❖ An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labour force relative to men, either because more women are working in agriculture or because fewer men are working in agriculture; in other words, an increase in the percentage of women who are economically active in rural areas.
- ❖ An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labour force relative to men, either because more women are working in agriculture or because fewer men are working in agriculture.
- ❖ Feminization of management occurs in two ways: first, when women become the primary decision-makers on the farm, and second, when women gain greater access to agricultural income (or dominate the execution of specific agricultural activities in which income is collected, such as crop marketing) [Breuw et al (2008)].

More women are working; fewer males are working; and the percentage of men and women working in agriculture is decreasing. However, the rate of decline in males is faster than in women, resulting in a widening of the gender gap in agricultural workers. Women's engagement in on-farm as well as managerial activities was also taken into account in the study.

## **1.2 Feminization and Participation of Women in Agriculture**

The widespread involvement of women in the workforce is referred to as the "feminization of labor." Four feminization trends were recognized by Guy Standing (1989). First, feminization refers to the unprecedented number of women joining the formal labor market in industrialized nations. Second, feminization involves women taking on roles that have traditionally been filled by men. Third, feminization reduces discrimination based on sex. Lastly, the rise in "static jobs" is a result of feminization. Nonetheless, some scholars argue that the emergence of the workday, task marketization, and the actualized gender division of labor are often associated with feminization (Bakan & Stasiulus, 1999). According to Cohen (1994), sex segregation has become more entrenched in Canada as a result of feminization. "Global Feminization through Flexible Labor: A Theme Revisited," written by Standing in 1999, altered his perspective on feminization. More women are being forced into hazardous employment as a result of the increased emphasis on casualization. As per "Rural India: Feminization of Agriculture," Indian women work five hours

more each day than males, particularly in rural areas, where they also bear the unseen burden of childrearing and housework. Most rural women are from marginalized, small-scale farming households. They supply the majority of farm labour, working 14 to 18 hours per day in productive physical labour. However, women's average earnings have continually been lower than men's. The incomes of 94 percent of women employees in the unorganised sector are significantly lower. Except for intense physical labour, women are more capable of performing other farming tasks than males. Despite their dedication, there has been widespread salary inequality, with women being paid half as much as men.

### **1.3 Causes of Feminization of Agriculture**

Globally, agricultural feminization is growing in popularity. The feminization of agriculture has been the subject of numerous studies. Research on the causes of feminization in agriculture can be categorized along two ideological lines: neoliberalism and Marxism. Neo-liberals' demand-driven logic states that the introduction of the 'Green revolution' package, which raises the number of labor days needed for agricultural tasks typically performed by women, is primarily to blame for the rise in demand for female labor (Walker and Ryan 1990). According to Binnet (1992), the expansion of agriculture led to a rise in the demand for non-agricultural products and services, which in turn caused males to migrate away from farming and into non-agricultural jobs, hence creating opportunities for women in agricultural employment. The majority of the researchers acknowledged that estimating the contribution of women in agriculture is difficult because most agricultural households have both men and women active in crop production. It is possible to allocate production by gender by assuming that certain crops are cultivated by women and others by men, and then combining the value of the women's and men's crops to estimate the proportion of women. Research on women in agriculture has shown that women-headed households and women-cultivated plots have produced lower yields and avenues (World Bank 2001). If women took over the farm, production would fall to the point where national food security would be threatened, according to a 2001 UNDP study. In addition to having access to inputs, women may be less productive for a number of reasons, such as carrying twice as much work. Women are expected to perform additional tasks including housework and child care (Peterman et al., 2010).



## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Data Source**

Both primary and secondary data were used in this investigation. The two main sources of secondary data are the Indian Census and the National Sample Survey Organization. In addition to them, information was obtained from a number of sources, such as publications and reports by individual reporters, the directorate of statistics' fundamental agricultural statistics, and agricultural census reports. Nevertheless, these sources do not provide enough information to analyze women's involvement in agriculture. Consequently, primary data has been collected to fulfill the goals of the study. The basic data was gathered by doing a field investigation. One Agricultural Development Officers (ADO) circle has been chosen from each district. Three villages were chosen from each of the ADO circles, with the goal of representing varied socioeconomic conditions.

### **2.2 Tools used:**

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed in this study to meet the objectives and answer the research questions. Secondary data was analysed to confirm the trend of women's participation in the agriculture industry. We must rely on the data provided by the NSSO and the Indian census for agricultural employees. Agricultural workers in India are divided into two categories: cultivators and agricultural labourers, according to the Indian census. Rural male and female participation in agricultural activities as cultivators and agricultural labour has been studied. The trend in women's participation in agriculture has been computed at the national and state levels, and the compound growth rate has been calculated to validate the trend. The gender gap has also been calculated. The study comprises rice farming, horticulture, and livestock management to verify the nature and scope of women's participation in agriculture. Data was obtained from both adult male and female family members of the sample families for this purpose. The total number of man days committed by male and female household members to various sorts of rice and horticultural crop production activities has been tallied, and the proportion of male and female involvement has been determined to determine their level of involvement. Scores have

been provided to each activity in the livestock management activity based on the level of involvement of men and women.

### 3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Women have been active in both domestic and food production operations from the dawn of civilization. Women's labour market involvement varies according to economic, social, cultural, and demographic factors. Table -1 show the labour force participation of male and females in rural and urban areas based on census data. The rate of rural women working has increased from 25.6 in 1961 to 30.02 in 2021, as shown in the table. However, for males, it is essentially the same for both years.

**Table 1: Work Participation Rates in India**

Year	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	female
1	2	3	4	5
1961	53.5	25.6	56.4	14.7
1971	58.2	31.4	52.4	11.1
1981	53.6	15.5	48.9	7.1
1991	53.8	23.2	49.1	8.3
2001	52.5	26.7	48.9	9.2
2011	52.4	30.9	50.8	11.5
2021	53.03	30.02	53.76	15.44

### 4. CONCLUSION

Women's work is often overlooked. They are engaged in activity of such a nature that the investigators are unaware of it. The majority of women in rural areas work in agriculture. In both India and Haryana, census data shows that the percentage of rural women working in agriculture is higher than the percentage of women working in non-agricultural jobs. The percentage of rural women active in agriculture is also higher than the percentage of rural men, according to NSSO



data. The disparity between the percentage of rural women and men engaged in agriculture continues to widen. On the basis of secondary evidence, it may be stated that in Haryana, a creeping feminization of agriculture is taking place. The scope and trend of feminization in agriculture in Haryana were investigated in this study. The study sheds information on the type and breadth of women's participation in work, as well as the farm's decision-making process. It has also discovered many elements that influence women's engagement levels and examined the impact of women's participation on agricultural productivity. One district is chosen from each agro-climatic zone after conferring with the state agricultural agency. One Agricultural Development Officers (ADO) circle has been chosen from each district. To give proper acknowledgment to the many roles played by women agriculturists, agricultural education should be gender aware, and research, development, extension, and services should be encouraged. Various training programmes can help women farmers transition to entrepreneurship. The feminization of agriculture in India is difficult to prove empirically. The lack of comparable employment data throughout time is the key reason for this. Over time, the definitions of labourers have evolved. Only primary workers are classified as cultivators and wage labourers in census data from 1991. However, both the main and marginal censuses of 2001 show this. The study's findings are based on the information and opinions provided by the respondents. As a result, the likelihood of prejudice and bias cannot be overlooked. Collecting data for female agricultural labourers is a challenge in and of itself, given women's job is often unseen in nature. As a result, the information gathered for female workers is contingent on the respondent's competence and desire.

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