

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

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SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

SUMMARY

A view at the literature related disclosed that there is no uniformity in the extent to which the female participate in gainful activity. Variations have been observed in the labour force participation in their socio-economic conditions and high rate of female labour force have been found in low income areas.

It is also observed that the female employed in the agricultural sectors as they are not protected by legislation on working conditions and wages resulting in wage discrimination and working long hours beyond the stipulated hours of work.

The present study therefore, is an attempt to understand the problems of the female agriculture labourers and in the selected villages of Ankola taluk in Karwar district. It is a notable feature that the problems of female agriculture labourers are quite different from the other women working in the other sectors. Nature of work, hours of work, payment, etc., are quite different though female labourers get part time and full employment.

Within the limitation of the data available on this subject, it is only possible to draw certain broad and tentative generalisations

regarding the agricultural workers. Though there are number of studies on female workers in agriculture sector, focus on the problems of female agriculture labourers are relatively less. The problems relating to their family situations and various kinds of hardships at the work place are analysed in the present study.

VI.1 BACKGROUND OF FEMALE AGRICULTURE LABOUR

In the first place, it can be seen that the large share of female agriculture labourers belong to the younger age group. There is no limit for the type of work and the data indicate that the youngest one was 13 years old. Irrespective of age, parents have encouraged them when they are physically fit. All the respondents in our data are Hindus. Among them, forward caste constitute 1.33 percent, backward caste 76 percent and scheduled caste 22.67 percent. It is usually assumed that scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are likely to enter into this type of occupation. But contrary to that, our data confirms all castes have entered into this lower level work. Marital status usually observes that married women are likely to enter into work than unmarried, because the responsibility in the family to an unmarried women is limited as compared to married women, our data confirms that most of them are married. Migration is low (12 percent) among the respondents and most of them belong to the same area. The literacy rate among the female labour are less as most of them belong to illiterate category. Among the educated, majority fall in the age group of 23 to 32 years age group. As such there is no much improvement in the educational status among the women folk as a very

insignificant number have crossed primary education even in the young age group. Family size of the respondents, show that majority (57.33 percent) have 4 to 6 members. A large proportion (91.33 percent) interviewed come from nuclear family. Information regarding number of earning members discloses that 96 percent have atleast 2 or more earning members. None of the spouses of the respondents are engaged in commendable job.

VI.2 LIVING CONDITION

Analysis of the living condition of the female agriculture labour reveals that majority (77.33 percent) of the respondents are having kachha houses. More number of scheduled caste women are living in kachha houses. A comparison of castes, reveals that forward caste women have a better housing architecture with tiled (100 percent), brick wall (50 percent), cement floor (50 percent) and 5 to 6 rooms (100 percent). The condition of the houses of other two castes are similar in nature with tiled roof, mud wall, mud floor and less rooms. Regarding the location of houses, scheduled caste people live in the scheduled caste colony and do not mix with other caste people. It shows the rigidity of casteism is still existing in rural areas. More than 60 percent of the houses are not electrified. Water is tapped through different sources like well, river, tap, handpump, etc., for their use and cannot depend on any one source due to seasonal changes. Significant proportion (94.67 percent) of the respondents are not having bathroom facility. They bathe in open air, or use river and canals to perform washing and bathing. Most of the respondents

are using toilet in open air. A negligible proportion (2 percent) of the respondents have separate toilet facility. Though a majority (81.33 percent) possess land, which is cultivable, it is not adequate for their living and are seeking work outside in order to compensate for the maintenance of the family. On the whole, the housing and living conditions of the female agriculture labour is not satisfactory.

VI.3 OCCUPATIONAL ASPECT

Employment of poor female is indispensable for the survival of individual families as well as for the maintenance of wider economic systems. Females contribute substantially to the family apart from their domestic responsibilities.

Sources of the employment in agricultural sector could be of any sort as no hard and fast rules are followed. Most of the respondents' (84 percent) nature of work is planting, weeding, harrowing and grass cutting. The female workers do not know the use of scientific method and carry out only traditional method of work. The agriculture farm-work consists of different activities and they are performing all the activities and there is no specific and fixed time schedule for the agriculture farm workers irrespective of the season. During slack season, most of them collect fuel and sell it in the market and generate income. Most of the respondents (83.33 percent) do not get employment the whole year and depend upon the seasons. However, many get work on an average 300 days in a year. Majority (50.67 percent) get wages between Rs. 11 to 12. There seems to be

variation in wages and there is no uniformity in the wage structure. More than 70 percent of the respondents are doing work on the basis of time. Majority (60 percent) do not have their own implements for self employment. A good portion (20.27 percent) of the employed are in 33 to 42 age group. As far as the opinions about their employers are concerned, majority (90.67 percent) have good opinion and said that the landowners are co-operative and there is not much exploitation. Further, they opined that they are getting correct wages, limited hours of work and sympathetic towards them indicating a cordial relation existing between the landlord and the workers. Nearly 65 percent are satisfied with their work. A large proportion (83.33 percent) of respondents are employed at present. More than three fourth opined that they wish to do other job besides agriculture as they feel agriculture work is very tough and fetches low wages and only seasonal employment. One half of them are willing to take other occupation, as they find wide scope in non-agricultural work. Some of them feel that agriculture work is monotonous, hard and less paying.

VI.4 ATTACHED LABOUR

Information regarding attached labours shows that an overwhelming proportion (92 percent) of the respondents are not attached towards landlord. The analysis further shows that nobody has any lengthy contract. The length of their work, in case of more than 70 percent with the present employer, is not more than 5 years, showing that no one has lifelong contract and is for short period. Most (58.33 percent) of the contracts are oral. This means that the

employers are flexible in their approach and do keep faith on the worker. An overwhelming percentage (83.33 percent) are attached either for having borrowed money from the landlord or due to their traditional commitment (16.67 percent). Half of them (50 percent) are allowed to seek work elsewhere during contract period. However, the other half (50 percent) are not allowed to deviate from the work. On the other hand, 58.33 percent are forced to continue their present job as they have mutually agreed to remain on job till the termination of the contract period. While, the remaining respondents have liberty to give up their job at any time. Majority of the respondents (58.33 percent) do not have any condition for repayment of loan. It seems that the contract is on the basis of mutual understanding and reciprocity. Most of the respondents (58.33 percent) do not leave the job even after repayment of loan. Many feel that they are well adjusted with their work and they have faith in their employers. Half of the respondent's (50 percent) family members also have to work in the landlord's farm. For the other half however, there is no such binding.

VI.5 ECONOMIC ASPECT

The general opinion is that female agriculture labours are the lowest paid employees in the agriculture sector due to their nature and less significant duties. It is true as far as the present study findings are concerned. The maximum amount the female agriculture worker receives is above Rs. 2400 per year. Majority (54.67 percent) of the female labourers' yearly total income ranges between Rs. 801 to

Rs. 1600. Only 1.33 percent of the female agriculture labourers are paid above Rs. 2400. The data confirms that the economic background of the respondents is poor which naturally has forced them to enter into this unorganised sector and share the financial burden of the family. The family income lies in the range of Rs. 2001 to Rs. 4000 for few and between Rs. 4001 to Rs. 6000 for the majority of them. The data shows that economic background of the respondent's family is poor inspite of more earning members in the family. Higher income group (100 percent) has pakka houses whereas, the housing condition is deplorable among the less income group. Most of the respondents yearly agricultural wages range between Rs. 801 to Rs. 1600. The income from agriculture varies and though many of them get maximum number of working days, which seem to be inadequate. The maximum proportion (20 percent) of the respondents get Rs. 101 to Rs. 150 from farm work. Majority of the respondents (47.33 percent) get upto Rs. 300 from non-agriculture work. Around 45 percent spend on an average between Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 per month. Among all the income groups the expenditure by and large varies in the range of Rs. 501 to Rs. 1500 except the group of Rs. 2401 and above. But among those who are drawing more than Rs. 2000, the expenditure is comparatively less and ranges between Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000. Perhaps this may be due to small family size. Most of them (73.33 percent) save some amount which is not very large. However, it can be said that they however, develop saving habit. 73.64 percent respondents save in view of future exigency. Income has an influence on the saving habit of the respondents as far as the present data is concerned. Those drawing lesser than Rs. 800 comparatively have lesser tendency to save. As

their annual income increases, the savings also increase proportionately. The youngest age group (13 - 22) in our data constitute comparatively more in saving. Majority (65 percent) of the respondents have fallen in debt. The magnitude of debt is high especially in the middle age group. The proportion of indebtedness is high irrespective of their employment status. Except those having 7 to 8 members in the family have some debt. Among those, who do not have any debt constitute family with 7 to 8 members and those with 5 to 6 members constitute 50 percent. The notion of higher the number of family members in a family higher is the level of income is true as regards our sample is concerned. Income is an influential factor as far as indebtedness is concerned. Among the low income group, indebtedness is high and among the higher income group, it is low. Significant proportion (84.62 percent) of the respondents have borrowed either for purchasing provisions like cloth and materials, marriage or festivals. A major proportion (69.24 percent) of female workers have borrowed money only for maintaining day-to-day expenses. Whereas, 43.97 percent have not borrowed large amount. Those who have borrowed more than Rs. 3000 constitute only 5.55 percent. Backward caste and scheduled caste respondents have fallen in debt whereas, the forward caste workers are not indebted.

VI.6 FEMALE AS HOME MAKER AND AT WORK

The analysis depicts that though the female workers work full time in the fields still they are able to devote their time to look after their children. Many of them (74.67 percent) expressed dissatisfaction

with the amount of the time they are able to spend on their families especially, during the season time. They further opined that they cannot avoid going for work because they have to avail the opportunity during the seasons, to supplement the family income. Considering the time spent in managing household work, one half of them are able to devote only 3 to 6 hours daily to look after their daily chores. Majority (75.33 percent) of the husbands do undertake domestic work along with other family members besides children, grand-mother and other family members. When the wife is working outside, the responsibility needs to be shared between the wife and the husband. It is notable that from the data, the spouses of the respondents are mutually adjusting and share domestic responsibility to enable them to avoid conflict between the housework and outside work. The respondents feel as a consequence of there employment they neglect their families. However, the other half of the respondents do not feel their work to be of any hindrance. They feel that they are able to combine their dual responsibilities of house and work equally well. Many (52.67 percent) like to remain as housewife alone since they feel that their outside work is the root cause of conflict in the household work. Most of them (84 percent) have preferred agriculture work to have a better standard of living. It is obvious that in order to improve the standard of living, their economic condition should be improved. Nearly 85 percent family members of the respondents approve their working outside the house. This brings to the fact that the family members do like the female member to go out for earning bread and supplement the family earning. It is also noticed that 60 percent respondents feel that their children too should follow the same work in

future. Most of them (69.33 percent) think that more the children in the family it would enable to enhance the family income. 88 percent female agricultural workers feel that women have better status in the society when they work outside. Almost among all the castes, majority of the respondents agree that working women enjoy better status in the village. Though majority among the illiterates (87.50 percent) and primary educated (87.09 percent) agree that working women have a better status in society, still some have reservation towards it. But, among the other educated groups disagreement is nil. A substantial proportion (88.67 percent) of the husbands view favourably the work of their spouses.

VI.7 SOCIAL INTERACTION OF FEMALE AGRICULTURE LABOUR

The present study has well demonstrated that the female labours tend to develop friendship with their own age group or to the next age group. Similar is the case as regards education is concerned. Though scheduled caste and backward caste workers have the tendency to develop friendship with all caste groups, forward caste workers have reservation in having friends with lower caste people. Majority (62 percent) of the respondents spend their leisure time by attending their personal work. It is obvious for a working women that they have little time to devote to their family and hence, they concentrate on their personal work whenever, they get spare time.

VI.8 ATTITUDE OF THE FEAMLE AGRICULTURE WORKERS

Our data shows that 88.67 percent of the respondents agree that women should work only if the family income is not sufficient. Many (87.33 percent) have realised that educating children is good as they feel education is the only way that contributes to the elevation of their position. Low income group has less agreement towards educating their children. More than half of the respondents feel that they can have better protection if they live together in one family. The agreement is high among the scheduled caste (64.71 percent). A vast majority (79.19 percent) of the young age group, i.e. 13 - 22, disagreed with the statement that joint family gives better protection for women and children. Nearly 60 percent prefer to be in nuclear family as they feel they have greater independence and more status. An overwhelming majority (86 percent) agreed that divorce system should not be there. More than 85 percent opined that divorce system should not be there irrespective of their education. A majority (81.33 percent) proportion disagree with the concept of intercaste marriage. Among the backward caste and scheduled caste, majority disfavour the idea of intercaste marriage. Our data shows that among the BC and SC the agreement is 91.23 percent and 82.35 percent respectively towards women education. On comparing the castewise opinion, disagreement is high among scheduled caste and among the forward caste none disagreed. It shows that the value of children education among the scheduled caste respondents has not percolated to greater extent.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study depicts that the living condition of the agriculture labours is not satisfactory. Most of them are deprived of the minimum facility. They lack in good housing, adequate water, proper bathroom and toilet facilities.

Though, all the castes have entered into this type of job, representation of backward and lower caste people is dominant in our study.

The system of attached labour is presented in this area but very few are in the hands of the landlords. However, the magnitude of exploitation seems to be less.

The economic condition demonstrates that most of the women bear the brunt of poverty. Regarding their work, they do not get full employment and have to perform different activities with no prescribed time. They are paid less and are not protected by any legislation. Many have fallen in debt. They have taken up this employment to strengthen the economic condition of the family.

The influence of employment is also felt on the family composition and the way the domestic responsibilities are shared in the household. Working women have to remain away from their homes practically for the whole day and as a consequence of this, it appears that there is a greater co-operation and sharing of domestic

responsibilities between husband and wife and other members of the family. However, there is a feeling among the respondents that they are not able to do justice to their family. Women may work but they still feel that home and children are their prime responsibilities.

Female agriculture labours like to form intimate friendship with those whose education and occupation are similar to that of their own. But forward castes still have some reservation in making friends with lower caste people. The gap still seems to be unbridged.

The present study reveals the fact that, the majority of the female agriculture labours are found to have unfavourable attitude towards divorce system and intercaste marriage irrespective of education, caste and age. But comparatively, lower class and young aged respondents seem to agree to same extent. However, the agreement towards educating children and educating women folk exposed a positive response irrespective of caste, education or age. This is a landmark in the changing attitude of the rural mass especially, among the downtrodden.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above mentioned findings the researcher would like to put forward following suggestions.

[1] IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE :- In Ankola taluk agriculture is seasonal with a result that the female agricultural

labourers remain out of employment during the off-season. Hence, the cultivation should be regulated and planned in such a manner that the agricultural labourers may be kept employed throughout the year. This will be possible through intensive cultivation, expansion of irrigation facilities and growing three to four crops in a year.

[2] REHABILITATION OF LANDLESS AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS :-

The landless labourers must be rehabilitated by providing them with land. The barren land should be reclaimed, made fit for cultivation and distributed to them.

[3] FIXATION OF HOURS OF WORK :- The hours of work of the female agricultural labourers should be fixed up under law. In view of this following points are suggested :

- i) The hours of work should be fixed according to different places and seasons.
- ii) The hours of work should not exceed 10 to 12 for women respectively.
- iii) An overtime should be paid beyond 8 hours duty.
- iv) The hours of work should be fixed up into shifts, not in one condition.
- v) The women and children should not be employed in the night.
- vi) The employers should maintain register for attendance and payment of wages.

- vii) Working hours should be 10 in summer, 11 in season and 9 in winter.
- viii) The system of attached labour should be completely weeded out.

[4] FIXATION OF MINIMUM WAGES :- In order to improve the condition of female agricultural labourers, minimum wages should be fixed up by the Government. Each female labourer must get atleast that amount which is essential to maintain her and her family.

[5] PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILD LABOURERS :- Certain measures should be taken to ensure that the women workers employed in agricultural undertakings be protected before and after the child-birth. This should be at par with the International Draft Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference of Washington for women employed in industry and commerce. Such measures should include the right to enjoy leave from work before and after the child-birth, and to grant benefit during the said period. This should be paid either out of public funds or by means of system of insurance. The work should be stopped two months before and at least one month after the child-birth.

[6] PROVISION OF MEANS OF RECREATION :- In order to make the life of the female agricultural labourers happier, it is essential to undertake the task of providing ample means of recreation in the villages for instance, setting up of Kirtan Mandalies, cultural programmes, provision of film shows, reading rooms, etc.

[7] PROVISION OF SOCIAL AMENITIES :- In order to improve the efficiency and standard of living, it is essential that proper arrangements are made for organising vocational, technical and elementary education.

[8] PROVISION OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS :- The five giants viz., want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness hold under their grip the lives of these people.

[9] DEVELOPMENT OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES :- In order to solve the problem of unemployment of female agricultural labourers, it is essential that greater emphasis should be laid on the development of cottage industries in the village so that they may find employment in these cottage industries during the off-season.

[10] FEMALE'S EDUCATION :- Functional literacy programme should be developed for girls and women, who have left school or never gone to school. Government must encourage parents through aid and motivation so that girls are spared at least for primary education, transport and communication facilities should be provided in far-flung areas. Supplies of fuel and drinking water and family welfare centres should be provided wherever necessary.