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Comparison of Extent of Participation of Urban, Rural and Tribal Farmwomen in Farming Activities

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Abstract:

Farm women constitute so significant part of working women population in our country that it necessitates a fuller understanding of their status and role not only as they now are but as they may be in future. They participate in most of the agricultural operations. The study was carried out from two agro – climatic zones of Maharashtra. Nanded district was selected from Central Maharashtra Plateau zone and Nagpur district was selected from Central Vidarbha zone. This research consist sample of 409 farm women from urban, rural and tribal areas. The respondents were interviewed personally. In the present investigation, extent of participation of urban, rural and tribal farmwomen in farming activities was compared. Extent of participation was measured as whether the activity was completely performed by the respondent or partially. The results showed that urban women's complete participation was noticed in the activities weeding, harvesting and land preparation while they were partially involved in engagement of labour and in money matters. Rural women's complete involvement was observed in weeding, land preparation and manure & fertilizer application (by hand) and partial involvement in sowing and harvesting. It was also noted that tribal women were completely involved in weeding, land preparation and manure & fertilizer application (by hand) and the activities in which they involved partially were harvesting and sowing.

Keywords: Comparison, extent, farming activities, farmwomen, participation

1. Introduction

Farm women constitute so significant part of working women population in our country that it necessitates a fuller understanding of their status and role not only as they now are but as they may be in future. The prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and development of its women as they constitute half of its population and play crucial role in agricultural and livestock production, household economy and market activities. The largest number of working women in India is engaged in farming operations either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers. They participate in most of the agricultural operations. It is established beyond doubt that women always participate in agricultural activities like sowing, irrigation, harvesting, dairy management, weeding, winnowing application of fertilizers, planting, threshing in addition to their daily household chores. In villages, farm women are fully occupied and overburdened with three fold responsibilities of farm, agriculture and livestock management. It is understood that the women's responsibility in agriculture is far more than male because of their involvement in multifarious activities. The studies undertaken earlier do not reflect a clear and complete picture as to the nature and extent of farm women's participation in farming and allied activities. Much additional research is needed for a comprehensive and distinctive understanding their role as farm workers. In order to have an in depth understanding of the participation pattern of farm women, the present study of women from urban, rural and tribal areas working in farming activities was conducted with following specific objectives –

- To know the general profile of the respondents.
- To study the difference in extent of participation of urban, rural and tribal farmwomen in farming activities.

2. Methodology

The study was carried out from two agro – climatic zones of Maharashtra. Nanded district was selected from Central Maharashtra Plateau zone and Nagpur district was selected from Central Vidarbha zone. This research consist sample of 409 farm women 30 from urban, 190 women from rural and 189 women from tribal areas. It was easy to get sample of farm women from rural and tribal areas but difficult from urban area. Hence the localities of the urban area, where farming was done by the women, were selected. Data were collected by administering the pre-tested interview schedule. All the respondents were interviewed personally by the investigator at work spot, which enabled her to get the first hand information. In the present study, extent of participation of the

respondent in farming activities was measured as whether the activity was completely performed by the respondent or partially. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for statistical analysis.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. General Profile of the Respondents

It is clear from table 1 that majority of the women from urban (54.00 %), rural (46.00 %) and tribal (45.50 %) areas were from the category middle age i.e. 31-45 years. This result was found to be in a different line with that of Bhalerao (2002) while it was comparable with the study of Bhamare *et al.* (2006) and Rathod (2008) who reported that majority of the Banjara women were middle aged, i.e. in the age group of 36-50 years.

As far as education of the respondents was concerned, it was seen that more than one fourth (28.00 %) of the urban women were post educate. More than half of the rural (54.50 %) and tribal (54.00 %) respondents were educated up to school level. The study clearly indicates that educational level of the women in the study is fair.

SN	Particulars	Urban (n = 200)		Rural (n = 200)		Tribal (n = 200)	
		Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
1	Age (Years)						
	18-30 yrs.	46	23.00	65	32.50	74	37.00
	31-45 yrs.	108	54.00	92	46.00	91	45.50
	46-60 yrs.	46	23.00	43	21.50	35	17.50
2	Education						
	Illiterate	0	0.00	4	2.00	00	0.00
	Can read / write	8	4.00	74	37.00	83	41.50
	School level	52	26.00	109	54.50	108	54.00
	Jr. College/ Diploma	31	15.50	9	4.50	8	4.00
	Graduate	53	26.50	4	2.00	1	0.50
	Post Graduate	56	28.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
3	Occupation						
	Farm labour	0	00.0	134	67.00	159	79.50
	Farming	32	16.00	96	48.00	110	55.00
	Farm related	63	31.50	15	7.50	4	2.00
	Service	63	31.50	5	2.50	7	3.50
	Business	66	33.00	13	6.50	3	1.50
4	Family Structure						
	<i>a) Family Type</i>						
	Nuclear	132	66.00	101	50.50	115	57.50
	Joint	68	34.00	99	49.50	82	41.00
	Extended	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	1.50
	<i>b) Family size</i>						
	Small (Up to 4 members)	131	65.50	76	38.00	68	34.00
	Medium (5-8 members)	60	30.00	106	53.00	116	58.00
	Large (> 8 members)	9	4.50	18	9.00	16	8.00
5	Family income (Rs.) Per year						
	Up to Rs. 25,000.00	86	43.00	185	92.50	197	98.50
	Rs. 25,001.00 to 50,000.00	76	38.00	13	6.50	3	1.50
	> Rs. 50,000.00	38	19.00	2	1.00	--	--
6	Land holding						
	Landless	126	63.00	101	50.50	90	45.00
	Small (Up to 2.5 acres)	8	4.00	31	15.50	16	8.00
	Marginal (2.5 to 5 acres)	19	9.50	34	17.00	46	23.00
	Medium (5 to 10 acres)	19	9.50	15	7.50	37	18.50
	Large (> 10 acres)	28	14.00	19	9.50	11	5.50

Table 1: General profile of the respondents

The results are contradictory with the studies of Mohanty (1995), Bhat (2001), Bhalerao (2002), Bhamare *et al.* (2006) and Bhojar *et al.* (2014) who noted that majority of the respondents in their studies were illiterate.

Major occupation of the selected women from rural (67.00 %) and tribal (79.50 %) areas was found to be farm labourers. These women were working on others' farms while one third (33.00 %) of the urban women were doing business related to farming activities like, selling of agricultural implements, preparation of agricultural edible products at home (turmeric, chilli powder making, masala making etc.), dhal making, selling vegetables, flowers and garlands selling and selling preserves (papad, pickles, vermicelli etc).

The findings in case of rural and tribal respondents are in line with the studies of Bhat (2001), Bhalerao (2002), Annual Report of AICRP – Extension Component (2003) and also Rathod (2008) who reported that majority of the respondents were having farming +

farm labour as their occupation. The results in this case did not support with the results of Bhoyar *et al.* (2014) who found that majority of the urban respondents were engaged in service.

As far as family type was concerned, nuclear type of families were seen to be predominant in all the areas (urban - 66.00 %, rural - 50.50 % and tribal - 57.50 %). It is clear from the data that the trend of nuclear families has been increasing in rural and tribal areas also. Bhat (2001) and Bhalerao (2002) also reported that the percentage of nuclear families were more in a study from rural area whereas the same result was noticed by Bhoyar *et al.* (2014) in case of urban families.

It was observed that majority (65.50 %) of the urban families were small sized (up to 4 members) whereas the trend of medium sized (5-8 members) families was found in more than half of the selected rural (53.00 %) and tribal (58.00 %) families. These results are in line with Bhalerao (2002).

The annual income of the respondents' families was categorized under three income groups as up to Rs. 25,000/-, between Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 50,000/- and above Rs. 50,000/-. It was observed that a thumping majority of the rural (92.50 %) and tribal (98.50 %) and less than half (43.00 %) of the urban families had their annual income up to Rs. 25,000/-. The result coincides with the finding of Bhalerao (2002) and Rathod (2008), who mentioned that in their studies majority of the families, belonged to the lower income group. But the result is not matching to the result of Bhamare *et al.* (2006).

When the respondents were classified according to their landholding categories, it was noted that majority of the respondents from all the areas were landless (urban - 63.00 %, rural - 50.50 % and tribal 45.00 %). It may be due the reason that majority of the rural and tribal respondents were farm labour. The result is not supporting to the result of Bhamare *et al.* (2006) who reported that majority of the respondents were having high land holding.

3.2. Extent of Participation of the Respondents in Farming Activities

It can be illustrated from table 2 that as far as the farming activity land preparation was concerned, it was seen that majority of the rural (85.26 %) and tribal (83.06 %) women and more than half (56.66 %) of urban women were found to be engaged completely while 16.93 per cent of tribal, 12.63 per cent of rural and only 10.00 per cent of urban women were involved partially in this activity.

Exactly one third (33.33 %) of the urban and very negligible percentage (2.10) of the rural women were not participating in this activity. It can be said that all the women from tribal area participated in the activity land preparation either completely or partially. Participation of rural and tribal women was better than urban women in this activity because the urban women were involved more in farm related activities than actual farming. Complete participation of the women from all the areas was observed in this activity. The result is found to be varying with the results of Ingle and Kohad (1990) and Vidhale *et al.* (1993) who noted that majority of the respondents have indicated partial participation in the activity land preparation.

From the table it can also be illustrated that in the activity seed/variety selection, percentage of the urban women participating completely was 10.00 whereas very meager percentage (0.52) of the women from rural area was participating completely in this activity. It was also observed that there was no woman from the tribal area participating in the activity seed/variety selection completely. It can be seen that 30.00, 5.78 and 2.64 per cent of the women from urban, rural and tribal areas respectively were partially involved in this activity. Percentages of no participation from the three areas were found to be higher as 97.35 per cent from tribal, 93.68 per cent from rural and 60.00 per cent from urban area.

It was seen that women from urban area were engaged more than rural and tribal areas in this activity and no participation of the women from all the areas was dominant.

It can be expressed that there was no woman from all the three areas, participated completely in the activity seed treatment while percentages for partial involvement were very negligible i.e. 3.33 from urban, 2.11 from tribal and only 0.52 from rural area. A thumping majority of the women from all the three areas were found to be not participating in this activity. It can be stated that 99.47 per cent rural women, 97.88 per cent tribal women and 96.66 per cent urban were not involved in the activity. It can be said that there was poor participation of the women from all the areas in the activity seed treatment. When the reason was asked to the respondents, they replied that nowadays already treated seeds are mostly used by the farmers.

As far as the activity sowing was concerned, it was seen that the women from urban and rural areas were not participating completely in this activity while tribal women were involved completely with very meager (1.05) percentage. As regards partial involvement, it can be illustrated that more than three fourth of the rural (83.68 %) and tribal (77.77 %) women were participating in the activity sowing whereas it was also found that only 10.00 per cent urban women's partial participation was there in the activity sowing. It means that a huge majority (90.00 %) of urban women was not doing the activity sowing. It was also seen that more than one fifth (21.16 %) of tribal and less than one fifth (16.31 %) of the rural women were found to be not participating in sowing. So it is clear that partial involvement of rural and tribal women was dominant in the activity sowing. Because it was seen that women took part in dropping the seeds behind the plough. While man controls the bullock the woman walks along with man and keeps putting seeds in dibbler.

It can be stated that in the activity nursery raising, no urban woman was involved completely and partially while complete involvement of tribal (6.34 %) and rural (2.10 %) women was found very poor. Partial participation of rural (5.72 %) and tribal (0.52 %) women in this activity was also negligible whereas no participation of urban women was cent percent and that of tribal (93.12 %) and rural women (92.10 %) was also high.

The same results were observed in case of transplanting. No urban woman was involved completely in transplanting. Complete participation of tribal and rural women was found to be 7.40 and 6.84 per cent respectively. It was observed that 10.00 per cent of urban and rural women each and only 1.05 per cent of tribal women were involved partially in this activity while a huge majority of

the women from all the three areas were not participating in this activity (tribal – 91.53 %, urban – 90.00 % and rural – 83.15 %). The reason for maximum no participation may be due to the fact that the activities nursery raising and transplanting are carried out where the rice is grown. The zones selected for the study are those where rice is not a major crop.

In the activity manure and fertilizer application by hand, urban women's complete participation was not found whereas more than half of tribal (69.31 %) and rural (51.57 %) women were performing this activity completely. It can be noted that more than one third (36.84 %) of rural, slightly more than one fourth (25.39 %) of the tribal and less than one fifth (16.66 %) of urban women's partial involvement was seen. It is clear from the table that majority (83.33 %) of urban women were not participating in this activity. Percentages of no participation of rural (11.57) and tribal (5.29) women were less. It can be stated that complete involvement of tribal followed by rural women was more in the activity fertilizer application by hand. During investigation it was noted that in Vidarbha zone this activity was performed only at the time of sowing by the females. It means females participated in this activity only at the time of sowing.

It was noted that from table that the activity insect and pest control through spraying was neither completely nor partially performed by the urban and rural women. Complete (2.11 %) and partial (11.11 %) involvement of tribal women was negligible in this activity. Cent percent women from urban and rural women and 86.77 per cent tribal women were not participating in the above said activity. Non-participation in application of pesticides and insecticides might be attributed to lack of skill in spraying techniques.

Application of traditional fertilizers, i.e. organic fertilizers was also studied. It was found that no urban woman was completely involved in this activity. It was surprising to note that more than two third (69.31 %) of the tribal women were involved completely in the application of traditional fertilizers. Negligible percentage (5.26) of rural women was also performing this activity completely. As far as women's partial involvement in this activity was concerned, it was seen from the table that 25.39 per cent of tribal, 12.10 per cent rural and only 3.33 per cent of urban women were participating. Majority of urban (96.66 %) and rural (82.63) women while a negligible percentage (5.29) of tribal women were found to be not performing this activity. It can be said that tribal women were involved with majority in this activity. It can be also stated that use of organic fertilizers is still more in tribal area under this study.

Irrigation or water management was the activity in which complete as well as partial participation of the women from all the three areas was found to be very less. It was observed that only 13.33 per cent urban, 1.57 per cent rural and 1.05 per cent tribal women were completely involved in this activity while it can be depicted that 20.00 per cent urban, 11.05 per cent rural and 3.70 per cent of tribal women were found to be performing this activity partially. Percentages for no participation in this activity can be noted from table which indicates that 95.23, 87.39 and 66.66 for tribal, rural and urban women respectively were not involved in this activity. Basically, this is a heavy job; hence women's participation might not be noticed. It can be depicted that urban women were involved more in this activity than rural or tribal women. Irrigation is the activity which requires management. Due to more level of education, involvement of urban women might be seen in this activity.

SN	Activity	Complete						Partial						No participation					
		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=190)		Tribal (n=189)		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=190)		Tribal (n=189)		Urban (n=30)		Rural (n=190)		Tribal (n=189)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Land preparation	17	56.66	162	85.26	157	83.06	3	10.00	24	12.63	32	16.93	10	33.33	4	2.10	0	0.00
2	Seed / variety selection	3	10.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	9	30.00	11	5.78	5	2.64	18	60.00	178	93.68	184	97.35
3	Seed treatment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.33	1	0.52	4	2.11	29	96.66	189	99.47	185	97.88
4	Sowing	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.05	3	10.00	159	83.68	147	77.77	27	90.00	31	16.31	40	21.16
5	Nursery raising	0	0.00	4	2.10	12	6.34	0	0.00	11	5.78	1	0.52	30	100.0	175	92.10	176	93.12
6	Transplanting	0	0.00	13	6.84	14	7.40	3	10.00	19	10.00	2	1.05	27	90.00	158	83.15	173	91.53
7	Manure & fertilizer application (By hand)	0	0.00	98	51.57	131	69.31	5	16.66	70	36.84	48	25.39	25	83.33	22	11.57	10	5.29
8	Insect and pest control thru spraying	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	2.11	0	0.00	0	0.00	21	11.11	30	100.0	190	100.0	164	86.77
9	Traditional method	0	0.00	10	5.26	131	69.31	1	3.33	23	12.10	48	25.39	29	96.66	157	82.63	10	5.29
10	Irrigation/water management practices	4	13.33	3	1.57	2	1.05	6	20.00	21	11.05	7	3.70	20	66.66	166	87.36	180	95.23
11	Weeding	22	73.33	173	91.05	173	91.53	5	16.66	17	8.94	16	8.46	3	10.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
12	Harvesting	21	70.00	46	24.21	39	20.63	6	20.00	140	73.68	149	78.83	3	10.00	4	2.10	1	0.52
13	Engagement of labour	6	20.00	18	9.47	15	7.93	19	63.33	35	18.42	42	22.22	5	16.66	137	72.10	132	69.84
14	Credit/loan -																		
	i) Source	0	0.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	15	50.00	9	4.73	3	1.58	15	50.00	180	94.73	186	98.41
	ii) Amount	0	0.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	15	50.00	9	4.73	7	3.70	15	50.00	180	94.73	182	96.29
15	Repaying - i)																		
	Amount	0	0.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	15	50.00	9	4.73	6	3.17	15	50.00	180	94.73	183	96.82
	ii) Mode	0	0.00	1	0.52	0	0.00	15	50.00	9	4.73	3	1.58	15	50.00	180	94.73	186	98.41

Table 2: Extent of participation of the respondents in farming activities

Researches have shown that weeding is a major activity of participation of farm women in Maharashtra. Present investigation also implies the same result. It is depicted from table that a huge majority of tribal (91.53 %) and rural (91.05 %) women were completely involved in weeding activity while less than three fourth (73.33 %) of the urban women were also performing this activity completely. Partial involvement of urban, rural and tribal women was 16.66, 8.94 and 8.46 per cent respectively. It was also found that 10.00 per cent of the urban women were not participating in weeding. Cent percent involvement of rural and tribal women was noticed in this activity. It can also be stated that complete participation of the selected women from all the three areas was dominant as far as weeding was concerned.

It can be portrayed that in the activity harvesting, less than three fourth (73.33 %) of the urban women were involved completely whereas complete participation of rural (24.21 %) and tribal women (20.63 %) was found to be less than one fourth. As far as partial involvement was concerned, it was seen that more than three fourth (78.83 %) tribal, less than three fourth (73.68 %) rural and one fifth (20.00 %) of urban women were performing this activity. It can be also observed that 10.00 per cent urban, 4.2 per cent rural and only 0.52 per cent of tribal women were not involved in harvesting. So it can be said that majority of the selected respondents from all the three areas were performing the activity harvesting. Complete involvement of urban and partial performance of rural and tribal women was noticed in harvesting.

It can be expressed that in the activity engagement of labour, complete involvement of the women from all the three areas was found to be less. Only 20.00 per cent of urban, 9.47 per cent of rural and 7.93 per cent of the tribal women were performing this activity completely. It is also clear that less than two third (63.33 %) urban, more than one fifth (22.22 %) of tribal and less than one fifth (18.42 %) of rural women were found to be partially involved in this activity while 72.10, 69.84 and 16.66 per cent of rural, tribal and urban women respectively were not participating in the activity. It can be concluded that urban women's involvement was better in this activity. Their partial involvement was found. Engagement of labour is the decision making activity. Due to better level of education, urban women's involvement might be more.

Researches have indicated that due to illiterateness or low educational level, women especially from rural and tribal areas are deprived from taking decisions regarding money matters. In this investigation also it was dominantly seen that in handling financial matters a huge majority of the women were not involved. From the table it can be depicted that not a single woman from urban and tribal areas was completely involved and only 0.52 per cent of women from rural area were found to be involved completely in procuring source for credit or loan. But half (50.00 %) of the urban women were performing this activity partially whereas partial participation of rural (4.73 %) and tribal (1.58 %) women was very negligible. It was noticed that a thumping majority of tribal (98.41 %) and rural (94.73 %) women and half (50.00 %) of the urban women were not performing the activity.

Urban women's partial involvement found to be more due their better level of education.

The same results were noted incase of procuring amount for credit or loan. With a meager per cent (0.52) the rural women were completely involved while none of the respondents was completely involved from urban or tribal areas. Half (50.00 %) of the urban women were performing this activity partially whereas partial participation of rural (4.73 %) and tribal (3.70 %) women was very negligible. A huge majority of tribal (96.29 %) and rural (94.73 %) women and half (50.00 %) of the urban women were not participating in this activity. Urban women's partial participation was better.

In case of repaying of amount it can be expressed from the table that only 0.52 per cent of rural women were involved completely while not a single woman from urban and tribal areas were involved completely in this activity. Regarding partial participation, it was clear that 50.00 per cent urban, 4.73 per cent of rural and only 1.58 per cent of tribal women were involved. Percentages for no participation were 98.41, 94.73 and 50.00 of tribal, rural and urban women respectively. Majority of the urban women were found to be participating partially in this activity.

Complete involvement of rural women in repaying mode was very meager (0.52 %) and that of urban and tribal women was not found while half (50.00 %) of the urban and very less percentages of rural (4.73) and tribal (1.58) women were performing this activity partially (table2). A huge majority of tribal (98.41 %) and rural (94.73 %) and half (50.00 %) of the urban women were found to be not performing this activity. Here also urban women's partial involvement was noted more, compared to other two areas.

The results are in line with the results of Manju Suman (2002) and Annual Report of AICRP-Extension Component (2003).

In the gist it can be said that no participation of urban women in majority of actual farming activities is due to the reason that they were involved in farm related activities like dairy management, goat rearing, poultry keeping, selling of agricultural implements, preparation of agricultural edible products at home (turmeric, chilli powder making, masale making etc.), dhal making, selling vegetables, flowers and garlands selling and selling preserves (papad, pickles, vermicelli etc.).

Broadly it can be inferred that the farming activities in which actual participation is there on the farms, like land preparation, sowing etc. urban women's participation was found to be less. It may be due the reason that they are living in the cities and it is difficult for them to work on the fields.

They participated in the activities which they could perform from their homes. They participated in the activities in which decision making is needed like, in case of money matters. They could perform these activities due to their higher educational level. Rural and tribal women's participation was almost same in the farming activities. In some activities rural women's involvement observed more and in some activities tribal women were found to be involved more.

4. Conclusions

Urban women's complete participation was noticed in the activities weeding, harvesting and land preparation while they were partially involved in engagement of labour and in money matters. Rural women's complete involvement was observed in weeding, land preparation and manure & fertilizer application (by hand) and partial involvement in sowing and harvesting. It was also noted that tribal women were completely involved in weeding, land preparation and manure & fertilizer application (by hand) and the activities in which they involved partially were harvesting and sowing. The activities in which the urban farmwomen were not involved were found to be nursery raising and insect and pest control through spraying while rural farmwomen were not participating in insect and pest control through spraying and seed treatment. Activities for no participation for tribal farmwomen were seed treatment and seed / variety selection.

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