

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

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Abstract

In this paper we draw available empirical evidence to study in which areas and to what degree women participate in agriculture. Aggregate data shows that women comprise around 81% of agricultural labour force in India and around 43 percent of the agricultural labour force globally and in developing countries. Women's are engage in a number of agro-oriented activities. In rural areas it is found that women's are spending around 80% of their time for domestic activities and agriculture and allied activities in India. Overall the labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men, and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water. It is in this background that the present paper tries to explain the significance of women participation in agriculture sector and the amount of injustices and exploitation prevailing with them especially in the area of more work but less paid. The paper is organized into five sections. Section two presents a brief review of literature and on the basis of gaps found in the past studies the present study is justified. The third part presents the measurement of role of women in agriculture. The fourth segment is given to rights and privileges of women in India. The fifth and final part is related to conclusion and policy recommendations

Key words: Women, labour participation rate, employment, market access, wage rate.etc

JEL Classification: J21, J31, J43

1. Introduction

India is a predominantly an agricultural economy with 60- 65 % of her population living in villages and earn their livelihood through agriculture and allied activities. Rural population of India is around 68.84% in 2011. The size of India's Population was estimated at 1221.91 million in 2011 with the annual compound growth rate of 1.7 per cent. To keep pace with the present population growth and consumption pattern, food grain requirement of India has been estimated to be 300 Mt by 2025. Thus, actual annual agricultural growth should be at 6.7% to meet a demand projection which is a matter of challenge. Over the years we have seen that both men and women are participating actively in agricultural operations specially in rural areas. Though, women contribute significantly in farming activities, they hardly gets any recognition.

Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock, social forestry, fisheries etc. women contribute around 50-60% of the labour force in farm production in India. It is most unfortunate that the role of women in agriculture has so far not been highlighted. By and large they have remained invisible workers. It is not an exaggeration, that women in India are the backbone of food security. There is a greater involvement of women under various agricultural operations along with house arrangement. Out of the total 329 million hectares geographical area of the country, net sown area is 142 million hectare. It is estimated that women are responsible for 70 percent of actual farm work and constitute up to 60 percent of the farming population. Over the years women cultivators are typically and wrongly characterized as economically inactive and women cultivator play only a supportive role in agriculture as farmers' wives.

In India women are engaged in a number of agro-oriented activities ranging from seedbed preparation, weeding, horticulture and fruit cultivation to a series of post-harvest crop processing activities like cleaning and drying vegetables, fruits and nuts for domestic use and for market. Although the time devoted by both women and men in agricultural activities may, in several communities and agricultural situations, be taken to be almost equal, women are dominant within the domestic tasks. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities, but the nature and extent of their involvement differs with variations in agro-production systems.

Rural women are often dependent on the natural environment for their livelihood. Maintenance of households and women's livelihoods are, therefore, directly impacted by

climate-related damage to or scarcity of natural resources. Limited rights or access to arable land further limits livelihood options and exacerbates financial strain on women, especially in women-headed households. Poor women are less able to purchase technology to adapt to climate change due to limited access to credit and agricultural services (for example, watering technology, farm implements, climate-appropriate seed varieties and fertilizers). Damage to infrastructure that limits clean water, hygienic care, and health services can be especially detrimental to pregnant or nursing women (10-15% of all women, at any given point) as they have unique nutritional and health needs. Public and familial distribution of food may be influenced by gender and make women and girls more susceptible to poor nutrition, disease and famine, especially when communities are under environmental stress. Increased time to collect water (due to drought, desertification or increased salinity) and fuel (due to deforestation or extensive forest kill from disease infestations) decreases the time that women are able to spend on education or other economic and political enterprises, and increases their risk of gender-based violence.

It is in this background that the present paper tries to explain the significance of women participation in agricultural sector in India. This paper is organized into five sections. Section two presents a brief review of literature and on the basis of gaps found in the past studies the present study is justified. The third part presents the measurement of role of women in agriculture. The fourth segment is devoted to rights and privileges of women in India. The fifth and final part is related to conclusion and policy recommendations.

2. Review of literature:

World development report 2008 noted that around 95 % of developing country population living on less than \$1 a day using 2005 population numbers. Approximately 70 % of this are women. Experience shows that if women rather than men are targeted with resources, the end result is that welfare benefits will accrue directly to them and their children. However, providing women with access to resources alone without giving due regard to changing or challenging gender power relations may not lead to empowerment of women. To achieve a holistic change in the overall economic, social and political circumstances of women, different strategies are required which includes advocacy, access to resources capacity building and organizational issues, etc.

Kachroo (2005) in her study has examined the economic contribution of female labour in farm and non-farm sector towards family income in rural Jammu and Kashmir State. A three stage

stratified random sampling procedure was followed with two development blocks of Jammu district *viz.*, R.S.Pura and Bishnah. The study revealed that the percentage share of rural women in cultivation income was 43.86 per cent in R.S.Pura and 47.93 per cent in Bishnah. In dairy farming, their contribution was highest, that of 73.83 per cent and 74.66 per cent in R.S.Pura and Bishnah respectively. The wage employment of these farm women was either nil (R.S.Pura) or negligible (Bishnah-5.80%) as compared to their male counterparts. The share of females in total agricultural income was 44.76 per cent in R.S.Pura and 50.44 per cent in Bishnah. This implies that women do not lag behind in contributing the agricultural income at par with men.

Yadav and Kaushik (2006) have conducted a study in Rewari district of Haryana state on the role and performance of farm women in wheat crop. The study revealed that the total days of different activities in a season ranged from one day to 20 days. The total time spent by women was maximum on harvesting (75 hrs), followed by weeding (50 hrs), irrigation (24 hrs) and storing (10.5 hrs). Least time was spent on threshing, winnowing, plant protection, fertilizer application and sowing (less than 10 hrs/season). The study concludes that as women mostly do jobs that are tedious, monotonous and requiring manual labour while technical activities are taken over by men, women need to be trained in technical aspects as well to handle farming operations independently.

Dhillon *et al.* (2007) conducted a study in three agro-climatic zones of Punjab on the involvement of farm women in agricultural and allied activities. Multistage stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample of 120 farm women. The results of the study showed that the age of the farm women ranged between 24-56 years. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 35-45 years. Majority of the respondents were illiterate. Majority of the farm women (42.5 %) belonged to the families having 0-6 family members. Majority of the families in zone-III (62.5%) were holding large farm size of more than 10 acres, followed by zone-I (37.5%) and zone-II (22.50%).

Vithob *et al.* (2008) in their study examined the wage differences between male and female agriculture labourers and their migration. The study has been done in Shorapur taluka of Gulbarga district in Karnataka. The study revealed that some jobs are reserved to female labourers in agriculture *viz.* chilli, cotton, groundnut picking, transplanting and weeding. The slack season wage rate was Rs.15 to 20 per day and the peak season wage rate was Rs.25 per day

for female labourers. The study suggests that provision of irrigation and adoption of labour intensive cropping patterns may help to improve the conditions of female labourers. Also there is a need for comprehensive policy and minimum wage to promote welfare of the rural female labour class in the study region.

Not only the studies related to women workforce participation in agriculture are limited but the studies are mostly specific to particular region. No such effort has so far been made to make an in depth analysis at the macro level viz. for the country as a whole. The present study tries to fill the gap.

3. Measurement of role of women in agriculture in India:

Some Historians believe that it was woman who first domesticated crop plants and thereby initiated the art and science of farming. While men went out hunting in search of food, women started gathering seeds from the native flora and began cultivating for the interest of food, feed, fodder, fiber and fuel. Women have played and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora and fauna. They have protected the health of the soil through organic recycling and promoted crop security through the maintenance of varietal diversity and genetic resistance. Therefore, without the total intellectual and physical participation of women, it will not be possible to popularize alternative systems of land management to shifting cultivation, arrest gene and soil erosion, and promote the care of the soil and the health of economic plants and farm animals.

Despite their importance to agricultural production, women face severe handicaps. They are in fact, the largest group of landless labourers with little real security in case of break-up of the family owing to death or divorce; inheritance laws and customs discriminate against them, land reform and settlement programmes usually give sole title and hence the security needed for obtaining production credits to the husband. Agricultural development programmes are usually planned by men and aimed at men. Mechanization, for example alleviates the burden of tasks that are traditionally men's responsibility, leaving women's burden unrelieved or even increased. The excess burden of work on women (.the double day of the farm work plus house work) also acts as a stimulus to have many children so that they can help out with chores from an early age. Extension workers almost exclusively aim their advice at men's activities and crops. In some regions, this bias may depress production of subsistence food crops (often women's crops) in

favour of increased production of cash crops (often men's crops) so that family nutrition suffers. It may not be out of place to mention here that considering their dual responsibilities within and outside the home, it would be in the fitness of things that more and more in the village training be organized for rural farm women to suit their convenience. In order that farm women get a fair deal at the hands of change agents, one of the remedial measures that needs to be undertaken is to induct a sizeable number of well trained women personnel in training and extension programmes of agricultural development agencies at all levels and more so at the grass-root level.

a) Multi-Dimensional Role of Women:

- (i) Agriculture: Sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing etc.
- (ii) Domestic: Cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel wood gathering, household maintenance etc.
- (iii) Allied Activities: Cattle management, fodder collection, milking etc.

Mainly rural women are engaged in agricultural activities in three different ways depending on the socio-economic status of their family and regional factors. They work as:

- (i) Paid Labourers
- (ii) Cultivator doing labour on their own land and
- (iii) Managers of certain aspects of agricultural production by way of labour supervision and the participation in post harvest operations.

However the participation of women in different sectors of economy varies according to age and population size as shown below (Table-1).

(Table-1) Age-specific labour Participation Rate in India according to usual status
(Principal and subsidiary status) (in% age 15-59)

Age	2004-05				2009-10			
	Rural Male	Rural female	Urban Male	Urban female	Rural Male	Rural female	Urban Male	Urban female
15-19	52.9	33.1	38.1	14.4	39.0	19.5	26.3	8.5

20-24	89.1	43.5	76.9	25.0	81.3	31.4	68.2	19.7
25-29	98.2	53.0	95.7	26.1	97.5	40.4	94.7	22.2
30-34	98.8	59.3	98.7	30.8	99.0	43.4	98.5	23.9
35-39	99.1	64.2	98.4	34.0	99.2	49.7	99.1	27.8
40-44	98.5	62.7	98.3	31.7	99.4	49.8	98.7	25.6
45-49	98.2	6.6	97.6	26.9	98.4	49.7	97.9	23.1
50-54	96.3	56.2	93.9	25.9	96.7	48.5	94.8	22.8
55-59	93.1	50.9	83.2	21.8	93.4	41.1	85.5	19.1
60 above	64.5	25.4	36.6	10.0	64.7	22.6	34.2	7.0
15-24	68.9	38.2	57.0	19.7	56.7	25.4	46.3	14.2
15 and above	85.9	49.4	79.2	24.4	82.5	37.8	76.2	19.4

Source: NSSO Report No 515 on Employment and unemployment situation in India, 2004-05 and key indicators of Employment in India, 2009-10

(Table-2) Percentage change of age-specific labour participation rate in India according to usual status (from 2009-10 to 2004-05)

Age	Rural Male	Rural female	Urban Male	Urban female
15-19	-13.9	-13.6	-11.8	-5.9
20-24	-7.8	-12.1	-8.7	-5.3
25-29	-0.7	-12.6	-1	-3.9
30-34	0.2	-15.9	-0.2	-6.9
35-39	0.1	-14.5	0.7	-6.2
40-44	0.9	-12.9	0.4	-6.1
45-49	0.2	43.1	0.3	-3.8
50-54	0.4	-7.7	0.9	-3.1
55-59	0.3	-9.8	2.3	-2.7
60 above	0.2	-2.8	-2.4	-3
15-24	-12.2	-12.8	-10.7	-5.5

15 and above	-3.4	-11.6	-3	-5
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Source: NSSO Report No 515 on Employment and unemployment situation in India, 2004-05 and key indicators of Employment in India, 2009-10

Table 1 gives a detail of labour force participation rate for different age-wise. Table 2 shows that expect urban male at the age group of 55-59 labour force participation rate at all age group in both sexes has reduced between 2004-05 and 2009-10 but when we see the sexwise decline in LPWR, it is very high in female comparison to male. The reasons for such a huge decline in labour force participation Rate for women need to be explored. It is doubtful as a whether an increase in women attending educational for a fall in the female LFPR for women has decreased for all age above of 15. In the case of men, there have been 13.9% in rural and 11.8% in Urban LFPR decline in the mainly for the age group 15-19 and 20-24 because of an emphasis on education. For the other age groups LFPR has remained more or less constant, with marginal changes. Thus a decline in the LFPR for urban males can be explained mainly by an increase in the proportion of men in the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups undergoing educations. This cannot be said for womens, where the LFPR for every age group has declined. This is shown in table 2 the decline in female LFPR across all age groups indicates that there must be some other factor inhibiting women from participating in the labour market. The decline in the LFPR for women, irrespective of age might be because of a decline in overall employment opportunities. In 2004-05, there had been an increase in female LFPR, compared to earlier rounds of the NSSO survey. But subsequently with a fall in employment opportunities overall these women could not find employment and withdrew from the labour market. In this regard social orthodoxy may have played a role in pushing out women rather than men from the labour force. Additionally, with the financial crisis of 2008, exports from India suffered adversely. Women have been working in the exports industries in large number of women from the labour force was also result of falling employment opportunities. Nonetheless, the increase in the proportion of young men and women undergoing education is a welcome development however; the point of worry is that when these youth offer themselves in the job market open unemployment in the economy –generating potential of the economy remains low.

b) Participation in agriculture:

Women play an important role in all dimensions of agricultural production -- in certain regions, women's time input equals men's, while in other regions traditions restrict their work to the household where they are involved in crop processing and are in charge of household maintenance. In most cases, women's efforts are non-monetized although they make large labour contributions to a range of marketed products such as dried fruits, fuel wood, dairy products and handicrafts. In 2004-05 the participation of women in agriculture was around 81.4 % while as for men it was around 66.2 percent this reflects the fact that important role of women should not be unnoticed especially in agricultural sector of the economy as shown in the following Table-3

Table-3: Rural male and female workers engaged in agriculture

Category	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08	2009-10	% change from 1993-94 to 2009-10
Male	73.7	71.2	66.2	66.5	62.8	-10.9
Female	84.7	81.1	81.4	83.5	79.3	-5.4

Source: Based on sectoral employment data from respective NSSO surveys (2010)

Table-3: Among rural workers, females have always been more likely to be engaged in the primary sectors, most of which is agriculture less in the secondary sectors. For example in 1994-95 84.7 percent of female workers were engaged in primary sectors, compared to 73.7 percent of male. By 2009-10, these percentages had gone down for both males and females as a consequence of the rise of the rural non-farmer sector. However, for males' engagement in the primary sector had gone down to 62.8%, or by 11%, while for females they had gone down to 79.3 %, or about 5%. Clearly the feminization of agriculture is increasing over time significantly.

The participation of rural women in agriculture is increasing in spite of scientific and technological developments. The share of farmwomen in agricultural operations has been shown in the following.

c) More Work, Less Pay:

Women are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very bad conditions because they cannot migrate as easily as men. The dependence of women's labour on family

farms, especially during the peak periods of sowing and harvesting, has become very common. About 15 years ago, agricultural work was considered acceptable for poor tribal women, Muslim women today even, who were traditionally bound by rules of purdah go out to work for wages in the fields in certain areas. Farmers, on the other hand, also seem to prefer women as agricultural workers. The farmer is faced with the increasing costs of production required for modern agriculture. He finds that he can squeeze his labour costs by using lower-paid women workers. For instance, women are preferred to men in Parganas village of (West Bengal) by the owners because they are docile, require lower wages and are less lazy than men. Similarly, the work of women within family-based agriculture is preferred because it is cheaper than hiring labour. Women agricultural workers, although they represent a big proportion of all women workers, continue to receive lower wages than men. The Ministry of labour puts the difference at 60 per cent of men's wages. Despite of a significant contribution the wages and the daily earning of the women from agriculture and related activities had remain low that further worsen their conditions in India as shown in the following Table- 5.

Table-6: Average daily wage rates for agricultural and non-agricultural Occupations in India

Occupation	Sex	June 2001
Plugging	Female	42.16
	Male	66.10
Sowing	Female	41.58
	Male	57.92
Weeding	Female	43.26
	Male	51.23
Transplanting	Female	47.03
	Male	58.28
Harvesting	Female	45.77
	Male	55.67
Winning	Female	44.08
	Male	51.94
Threshing	Female	44.22

	Male	52.64
Picking	Female	-
	Male	-
Cane crushing	Female	39.32
	Male	56.98

Source: Men and Women in India (2001). Ministry of statistics

d) Women in Decision Making:

The decision making process is an important segment of every household because it makes implementation of a plan or programme quite easy. In rural areas of the country, both husband and wife are jointly responsible for making decisions on matters like family obligations, specific housing charges and purchase of household articles. However, women's suggestions are not given due consideration in the decisions pertaining to agricultural sector and important family matters. It is because the majority of women are illiterate, have little time to know about the latest techniques of framing and restricted mobility due to several cultural taboos.

Table-7: Decision Making Pattern of Rural families

Activity	Decision making pattern (percentage)		
	Male share	Female share	Joint by male and female
Adoption of HYVs	83	-	17
Use of fertilizers/plant Protection measures	80	-	20
Purchase of farm Machinery	72	-	28
Purchase and sale of animals	21	-	64
Sale of milk and milk products	11	-	78
Procurement of Credit	50	-	50

Marketing Farm Produce	32	6	62
Investment of added profit	26	7	67

Source: Bala (2003), Tribune, 20th September, New Delhi.

Table-8: Involvement of Women in Decision Making (Household Related Activities)

Decision – making item	Male	Female	Male+Female
Food	36.9	32.4	30.5
Clothing	38.4	28.3	33.2
Education of children	55.2	22.0	22.7
Health	60.4	17.9	21.6
Marriage of children	69.4	8.2	.22.3
Saving and investment	83.5	7.0	9.3
Purchase of asset	81.3	4.1	14.5

Source: Sarmishta choudhary (2004), "Invisible Activities of rural Women", kurukshetra

Table-9: Decision - Making in Agricultural Activities

Decision – making item	Male	female	Male+female
Purchase of fertilizer	90.2	2.9	6.8
Purchase of animal	93.1	-	6.8
Purchase of agriculture equipments	92.1	1.9	5.8
Changing of crop	96.0	-	3.9
Selling of crop/vegetables/ cereals	83.9	10.7	5.3

Source: Sarmishta choudharyS (2004), "Invisible Activities of rural Women", kurukshetra

Moreover, women's exclusion from public life keep them out of the decision making process related to various rural developmental activities such as the utilization of loans and subsidies under the various Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) schemes. Women also fail to get loans sanctioned for agricultural development or various schemes under Rural

Employment programme (REP) women have no representation in the Agricultural Marketing Committees and other similar bodies. The governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO) also prefer men for these purposes. Thus, the ideology of segregation and seclusion of women helps in keeping them out of the various decision making process concerning the various facts of rural development.

e) Women: The Foundation of the Dairy Industry:

Dairying is an occupation that supports the livelihoods of many women, especially the rural poor in India. About 75 million women as against 15 million men are engaged in dairying in India (GoI, 2001). Women contribute 71% of the labour force in livestock farming and the majority of landless cattle keepers in rural areas are women. Women have greater control over this resource, compared to other resources like land in the village. Cattle also act as financial reserves in crisis situations, and thus reduce vulnerability. The majority of the rural poor still depend on agricultural labour, which does not offer a year round earning opportunity, and livestock rearing supplements their income. Dairying provides regular cash income for the household, which is used especially on food and education of children. The contribution of dairying to the total income ranges between 50-80% in the families surveyed in four southern states (Ramkumar and Rao, 2001).

Women perform the tasks of collecting fodder, collecting and processing dung. Women undertake dung composting and carrying to the fields. Women also prepare cooking fuel by mixing dung with twigs and crop residues. Though women play a significant role in livestock management and production, women's control over livestock and its products is negligible.

Women are well aware of each animal's behaviour and production characteristics. Women are knowledgeable about local feed resources and are able to identify beneficial grasses, weeds and fodder trees for feeding of dairy animals. While the contribution of women to the animal's management is recognized, the experiences of women regarding animal diseases and their perceptions are ignored. Now there is some realization about the knowledge possessed by women and the need to improve their knowledge, skills and awareness.

4. Rights and Privileges of Women in India:

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt positive measures in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio-economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensures equality before the law, equal protection of law, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution, are of specific importance in this regard.

1. Equality before law for women (Article 14)
2. The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion race caste sex, place of birth or any of them {Article 15 (i)}
3. The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children {Article 15 (3)}
4. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39 (a)]; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39 (d)](31)
5. The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and or maternity relief (Article 42)
6. The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health (Article 47)
7. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women {Article 51 (A)(e)}
8. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat {Article 243D (3)}
9. Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayat at each to be reserved for women (Article 243D (4))
10. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by

direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality {Article 243T (3)} etc.

5. Conclusion and policy recommendations:

In this paper we collate the empirical evidence on women's roles in agriculture, setting the stage for subsequent analysis on gender differences in agriculture and the potential gains from removing these gender differences. The main findings are: Women comprise more than 80 percent of the Indian agricultural labour force and of that in developing countries, but this figure marks considerable variation across regions and within countries according to age and social class. The labour burden of rural women exceeds that of men, and includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water. The contribution of women to agricultural and food production is clearly significant. However, it is impossible to verify empirically the share produced by women because agriculture is usually a venture among household members and involves a range of resources and inputs that cannot be readily assigned by gender. Women's participation in rural labour markets show much heterogeneity at the regional level, but women are over represented in unpaid, seasonal and part-time work, and the available evidence suggests that women are often paid less than men, for the same work.

Recommendations for Mainstreaming Women in Agriculture

To ensure the usefulness and relevance of the research and extension programmes to women, the following criteria must be considered while planning the programme.

- The Planning of extension programmes must be based on accurate and appropriate data, which reflect the true status and need of women farmers. Build in reliable database by conducting base-line Surveys or local need assessment before initiating women specific programmes.
- Women's development must be viewed as part of the development of the total community, and must be provided with adequate resources at all levels. Make efforts to prepare the main target group as farmwomen who work with their own hands & secondary target group could be husbands so as to modulate the household approach.

- Training for women should also concentrate on the skills needed for motivation, employment, leadership and participation.
- Group approaches, compared to methods of extension that are geared to individuals, have the potential to extend the research and extension efforts to women farmer and to increase the impact of the extension work. Women Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs), Self-help Groups (SHGs) emerged as one of the major strategies in development of women.
- To provide a framework and a platform for continuity, Animators and Facilitators should be employed from the local women leaders. They could then work as “Krishak Mahila Mitra Kisan” or “para-professionals”.
- Women’s programmes should provide income to women and power, which accompanies it to empower women farmers.
- Training and extension programmes for women must meet the need for increased managerial, organizational, entrepreneurial and decision-making skills, along with the technical skills, related to production, post harvest processing, value addition, marketing small scale industries etc.
- Women’s programme must recognize and address health, nutrition and family planning issues also.

Women labour has a special significance in agriculture. According to the UN report women represent half of the world’s population and one third of the official labour force, but they receive only 1 per cent of the world’s income and own less than 1 per cent of the world’s property. Women are a vital agent in Indian economy, even as studies point towards ‘statistical purdah’ or ‘economic invisibility’ manifest in selective under-documentation of their endeavors.

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