



WOMEN LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE: A STUDY OF THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN KURKI AND HIRETOGLERI VILLAGES OF DAVANGERE DISTRICT IN KARNATAKA

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Abstract: *Agriculture is an indispensable part of Indian economy. The direct contribution of agricultural sector to the national economy is reflected by its share in total GDP, total employment and so on. It still remains the most acceptable fact that agriculture continues to play an important role in the socio-economic development of the country. Women are an inseparable part of Indian economy in general and Indian agriculture in particular. Hence this paper systematically tries to analyze the socio-economic conditions and contribution of agricultural working women to socio-economic development. The study has been confined to two villages namely, Kurki and Hirethogleri geographically placed in Davangere district of Karnataka state. Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people in the villages and the lands are irrigated lands based on canal irrigation. In order to accomplish the objectives, the study has made use of primary data collected through field survey. A well structured questionnaire has been used to collect the necessary information about the crucial parameters of the study. The results of the study have been illustrated using tables and graphs.*

Key words: *Socio-economic conditions; Socio-economic development; Agricultural women labour; Kurki; Hirethogleri; Davangere district.*

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“You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women”

- **Pandith Jawaharlal Nehru**

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been the oldest activity practiced by the people in civilized world. Though many of the developed countries have moved away from agriculture to industrialization as their main stay of economic activity there is no ruling out of agriculture as part of the basic economic activity in any part of the world there are still certain parts of globe where agriculture is predominantly influential in determining well being of the people. The recognition of the role women play in agriculture and rural society is fundamental to agricultural and rural development. More importantly, recognising and supporting this role is crucial for the development of women and the fulfilment of their economic potential.

India is also such a country, where about 70% of the labour force is employed in the agriculture sector. Although in the recent years the share of agriculture in gross domestic product is coming down, still agriculture is the predominant sector of the economy and impacts the well being of the other sectors.

Women are the back bone of the agricultural force. The majority of the employed women are engaged in agricultural work. According to the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), 60 out of 100 women are engaged in agricultural work. If at all there is any enterprise, since the dawn of civilization, in which women played a significant role or participated in large numbers, it is nothing but agriculture. This is because agriculture has largely been a family enterprise.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the paper are as follows;

- 1 To study the socio economic conditions of agricultural women labour in Kurki and Hirethogleri villages of Davangere District.
- 2 To examine the pattern of income, expenditure and savings of agricultural women labour in Kurki and Hirethogleri villages of Davangere District.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data have been collected through questionnaire schedule and the secondary data from various Census Reports. In each village we have selected a sample size of 50 respondents and the total



sample size for both the villages is 100 respondents and the respondents are only women, since the study is based on agricultural women labor and their socio economic conditions. The main objective of the study is to analyze the socio economic conditions of agriculture women labour through their social structure, economic well being, and so on. Data relating to family size, caste composition, level of literacy, land holding size, employment, wages, total income of the family, savings and borrowing, type of housing, ownership of housing, are collected through personal interview with the help of a structured questionnaire.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

The results and discussion of the survey carried out in both the villages has been explained in the following tables;

Table 1: Age of the Respondents in both the Villages

| Age Group of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 15-25 | 8 (16%) | 5 (10%) |
| 26-35 | 16 (32%) | 12 (24%) |
| 36-45 | 10 (20%) | 18 (36%) |
| 46-55 | 8 (16%) | 10 (20%) |
| 55 & > | 8 (16%) | 5 (10%) |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 1 gives information about the age of respondents in the both the villages. In Hirethogleri village, more number of agricultural women labour are belonging to the age group of 26 - 35 years. In Kurki village, majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 36-45. Very few women belong to the age group of 15-25 in both the villages; only 18 women are in the age group of 46-55. However there are 28 women in the age group of 36-45, but there are very few women working in agriculture who belong to the age group of 55 and above



Table 2: Caste Composition of the Respondents in both the Villages

| Social Status of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Scheduled Caste (SC) | 14 (28%) | 11 (22%) |
| Scheduled Tribe (ST) | 33 (66%) | 12 (24%) |
| Backward Community (BC) | 3 (6%) | 27 (54%) |
| Other Communities (OC) | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 2 shows the Caste composition of respondents in both the villages. The families belonging to ST group are more in Hirethogleri village as compared to Kurki village. Respondents belonging to BC community are more in Kurki village as compared to Hirethogleri village.

Table 3: Family Pattern of the Respondents in both the Villages

| Family status of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Single | 6 (12%) | 0 |
| Married | 37 (74%) | 40 (80%) |
| widow | 5 (10%) | 10 (20%) |
| separated | 2 (4%) | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 3 presents the family status of the respondents in both the villages, majority of the respondents in both the villages are married, few of them are widows and some are separated from their husbands and families.

Table 4: Family Structure of Respondents in both the Villages

| Family Pattern of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Extended Family | 10 (20%) | 7 (14%) |
| Nuclear Family | 40 (80%) | 43 (86%) |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 4 throws light on the family structure in both the villages majority of the respondents in Hirethogleri as well as in Kurki villages lived in Nuclear families, only 20% and 14% of the respondents lived in extended family system.



Table 5: Educational Status of the Respondents in both the Villages

| Educational Status of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|--|---------------------|--------------|
| Illiterate | 23 (46%) | 22 (44%) |
| Signature Literate | 10 (20%) | 7 (14%) |
| Primary school | 6 (12%) | 14 (28%) |
| Higher Primary School | 8 (16%) | 2 (4%) |
| High School | 2 (4%) | 4 (8%) |
| PUC | 1 (2%) | 1(2%) |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 5 is showing the educational status of the respondents in both the villages. In Hirethogleri village, more women are illiterate as compared to Kurki village. There are 10 women who are signature literate in Hirethogleri village as compared 7 in Kurki village. Only 6 women have studied up to primary school in Hirethogleri village and the number is more in Kurki village, 14 and 2 women have studied up to High school in Hirethogleri village and 4 of them in Kurki village. The number of women who have reached the level of Pre-university and Degree is also very few.

Table 6: Economic Conditions of the Respondents in both the Villages.

| Earners | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 2 (1W, 1M) | 33 | 27 |
| 3 (2W, 1M) | 4 | 11 |
| 4 (2W, 2M) | 11 | 7 |
| 5 (2W, 3M) | 2 | 1 |
| 6 (3W, 3M) | -- | 4 |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 6 gives a picture of economic condition of the respondents in both the villages. In both the villages, 2 earners (includes sample women respondents and male) are more in Hirethogleri village 4 earners are more when compared to Kurki village. 3 earners are more in Kurki village, there are no 6 earners in Hirethogleri village but Kurki Village has 4.

Table 7: Duration of Wages of the Respondents in both the Villages.

| Duration of Wages | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Daily | 48 (96%) | 48 (96%) |
| Weekly | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) |
| Fortnightly | 0 | 0 |
| Monthly | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) |

Table 7 shows the duration of wages of the respondents, majority of the respondents are getting wages daily in both the villages. This implies that they are daily wage workers. The



numbers of sample respondents obtaining daily wages in Hirethogleri village and Kurki village is 48 and only one of them obtaining wages weekly and monthly in both the villages.

Table 8: Income level of the Respondents in both the Villages

| Income level of Respondents (Per month) | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| 2500 -3500 | 12(24%) | 11(22%) |
| 3500-4500 | 36(72%) | 38(76%) |
| 4500-5500 | 1(2%) | 1(2%) |
| 6000> | 1(2%) | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 8 implies that with regard to Income level of respondents in both the villages, majority of the respondents in both the villages have an income of 3500-4500 per month, and 24% in Hirethogleri, 22% of respondents in Kurki village belong to the income level of 2500-3500 per month. And 4% of the respondents in both the villages earn more than 4500 rupees per month.

Table 9: Type of House of the Respondents in both the Villages

| House type of Respondents | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Cemented House | 0 | 4 (8%) |
| Government House | 21(42%) | 9 (18%) |
| Hut | 4(8%) | 0 |
| Tile House | 25(50%) | 37 (74%) |
| Total | 50 | 50 |

Table 9 is giving information about the type of houses where respondents are staying. In both the villages most of the families are staying in Tile houses. In Hirethogleri village 21 families are staying in government provided houses and in Kurki only 9 are staying in Government houses. Some families are also staying in Huts in Hirethogleri village and some families have the luxury of staying in cemented house.

Table 10: Landholding Size of Respondents in both the Villages

| Land holding size of Respondent | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| <1 | 11(22%) | 4 (8%) |
| 1-2 | 7 (14%) | 16 (32%) |
| 2-3 | 0 | 4 (8%) |
| 3-4 | 0 | 4 (8%) |
| 4-5 | 0 | 3 (6%) |
| 5-6 | 0 | 0 |
| 6-7 | 0 | 0 |
| No land | 32 (64%) | 19 (38%) |
| Total | 50 | 50 |



Table 10 provides information about the land holding size of the respondents. In Hirethogleri village around 11 respondents have less than 1 acre of land and 7 of them have 1-2 acres of land, 32 of the respondents have no land. In Kurki village 16 respondents have 1-2 acres of land 4 of them have 2-3 and 3-4 acres of land, 3 of them have 4-5 acres of land and 19 of the respondents are without land.

Table 11: Sources of Borrowing of loans by Respondents in both the Villages.

| Source of Borrowing Money | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Banking | 1(2%) | 8 (16%) |
| Private Finance | 1(2%) | 2(4%) |
| SHGs | 4 (8%) | 3(6%) |
| Relatives & Friends | 0 | 2(4%) |
| Total | 6 | 15 |

Table 11 presents the various sources of borrowing of loans by the respondents in both the villages. In Hirethogleri village, totally 6 of the respondents have borrowed loans 4 of them have borrowed from SHGs and 2 of them from private finance and Banks respectively. In Kurki village, 15 of the respondents have borrowed loans, 8 of them from Banks, 2 of them Private finance, 2 of them from SHGs and 2 of them from relatives and friend.

Table 12: Purpose for borrowing of loans by the Respondents in both the Villages.

| Purpose of Borrowing | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Marriage | 0 | 1(2%) |
| Medical treatment | 0 | 1(2%) |
| Household Expenditure | 3(6%) | 1(2%) |
| Purchase of Agro material | 0 | 7 (14%) |
| Construction of House | 1(2%) | 1(2%) |
| Purchase of Auto / Tractor | 1(2%) | 2 (4%) |
| Other purpose | 1(2%) | 1(2%) |
| Total | 6 | 14 |

Table 12 provides information on purpose of loans taken by the sample respondents. In Hirethogleri village 2 of the respondents have taken loans to meet their household expenditure where as in Kurki village 7 of the respondents have taken loan to purchase agriculture material such as fertilizers, seeds equipments etc. this means that, sample respondents of Kurki village are in a better position when compared to Hirethogleri village.



Table 13: Savings of the Respondents in both the villages

| Mode of Savings | Hirethogleri | Kurki |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Banks | 1(2%) | 2(4%) |
| Chit funds | 8(16%) | 9(18%) |
| Other sources | 1(2%) | 5(10%) |
| Total | 10 | 16 |

Table 13 gives details about the savings of the respondents in both the villages. In Hirethogleri village 10 of the respondents save money out of which 8 of them save it in Chit funds, 1 of them in Banks and 1 of them in other sources. In Kurki village 16 of the respondents save money out of which 9 of them save it in Chit Funds, 5 of them in other sources and 2 of them in Banks.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study clearly gives the picture of socio economic condition of agriculture women labour (sample respondents) in two villages i.e. Hirethogleri and Kurki village of Davangere district in Karnataka. The study also tells about the income, savings and expenditure pattern of the sample respondents.

In Kurki village majority of the respondents belong to backward community (BC) caste group. In Hirethogleri village, majority of the respondents belong to schedule tribe (ST) category. The family structure in both the villages is mostly nuclear family.

The illiterate population was more in Hirethogleri village. Education wise, Kurki village was better placed than Hirethogleri village. Most of the families of the respondents in both the villages had one male and one female breadwinner. Majority of the sample respondents out of the total were daily wage workers and their livelihood depended on the daily wages that they earned.

The respondents belonging to the income level of 3500-4500 is more in both the villages, whereas the next best income level group is 2500-3500. But overall analysis says that the income level which is an indicator of economic well being is better off in Kurki village rather than in Hirethogleri village.

The respondents living in government constructed houses is more in Hirethogleri village and people staying in tile houses is more in Kurki village. Only in Kurki village four of the respondents were living in cemented houses, as said earlier this signifies that the Kurki village is economically stronger than Hirethogleri village. The number of respondents having



their land was more in kurki village, but in Hirethogleri village 32 of the total respondents did not have any land.

The major source of borrowing loans was through banks in Kurki village, but in Hirethogleri village it was through self help groups operating in the village. Most of the loans of the respondents were for the purchase of agricultural material like seeds, tractors, equipments, fertilizers and so on. The largest mode of savings in both villages was chit funds.

Therefore, the analysis of the collected information through survey shows that the economic conditions of agricultural women labour is not satisfactory and still there is scope for change in attitude, government support, policy measures and implications that can go a long way in improving the social and economic conditions of women in both Kurki and Hirethogleri villages.

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