

Participation Pattern Of Farm Women In Post Harvesting

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Abstract: Post harvesting is an important component of farm activities and is mostly performed by women. They play a vital role in subsequent processing and storage of the produce. In order to understand the present participation pattern of farm women in post harvest activities a study was conducted in 4 blocks of district Ganderbal in Kashmir division. The study conducted on 200 farm women from each block (20 villages) reveals that almost all women take active part in post harvest handling of the agricultural produce till its final milling and use. The results varied as per the age, marital status, educational status and family income of the participants but the women were found to contribute substantially in drying, sorting, packing, milling and storage. Study points towards a need to technically arm women in post harvest know-how so as to help in reducing losses during storage. This shall not only reduce economic losses but help in maintaining family food security.

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2

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Introduction

Agriculture is family enterprise where each member plays an important role in production and post production activities. Women play the most vital role in post production besides her role related to activities of life. Rural women constitute the invisible work force which keeps the family and the rural economy alive. Women do have a specific role in post harvest activities yet they often do not receive proportionate social and economic benefits when improvements in the cultivation at the field are initiated.

Farm women constitute so significant a part of the working 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 developed in the future. Such understanding will mirror, at least allocation of their time to all types of activities within and outside the homes, the magnitude of their contribution. In a study in district Doda of J&K state by Salathia et al, 2004 it was reported that 75% of women respondent had significant role in harvesting, 100% had an active role in storage of grains. New technology has often been developed without the consideration of women's need. Recently, research efforts have developed a number of machines including post harvest equipments, micro-rice mills, harvesting machines developed by IRRI and cassava processing equipment developed by Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Sandangi et al (1996) reported that farm women spent 0.63hours per week in post harvest operations. Women participation of 42.2% in drying and storage

and 21.6% in cleaning is also an indicator of a large number of women participating in post harvest activity. However the participation was very low in marketing of produce (Sidhu, 2007). Reducing post harvest losses for achieving and sustaining food security is the focus; as such there is a need to take care of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of produce. An effort has been made in this study to understand the role of women belonging to different age groups of district Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir in post harvest operation so as to know their present participation status. The data will enable to develop capacities of these women in this important area of activity.

Women had been and continue to play a key role in the conservation of basic life support systems such as land, water, flora and fauna. It is known that women were the first agriculturists, while men were out, hunting and tending livestock. Women were engaged in homestead cultivation as well as food gathering activities.

They are engaged in farm operations as cultivators, assistants to male cultivators and agricultural labourers and are actively involved in pre-sowing, post-sowing harvesting and post-harvesting operations as well as allied activities. Women belonging to low socio-economic strata are actively engaged in agricultural labour. They also show their involvement in planning, decision making and supervisory activities.

They have an important role in agriculture development and allied fields including crop

production, live stock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro/social forestry, fishing etc. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture vary from region to region. Even in region their involvements vary among ecological sub zones, farming systems, caste, classes and socio-economic status of families etc. (Swaminathan 1985). Regardless of these variations there is hardly any activity in agriculture production except ploughing in which women are not actively involved.

Women play a distinctive and accepted role in the process of earning a livelihood for the family in both the marketing of products of agriculture and handicrafts. Majority of farm women are engaged in farm activities like sowing, transplanting, harvesting and post harvesting operations. Most of the farm women are found engaged in dairy activities, poultry keeping, goat rearing, sericulture and horticultural operations. Some of them are found engaged in small scale industries and income generating activities also (P. Sumathi 2008).

Methodology

The present study has been carried out in district Ganderbal in Kashmir division. This district has been selected keeping in view the active role played by women of Ganderbal in post harvest agricultural activities. There are four blocks i.e. Lar, Ganderbal, Wakura and Kangan which comprise of 125 villages.

The villages selected from each block are:

- Kangan: Wusan, Kangan, Kachnambal, Chatergul and Preng.
- Lar: Manigam, Lar, Watlar, Benhama and Repora.
- Ganderbal: Baderkund, Nunner, Saloor, Duderhama and Arampora.
- Wakura: Wakura, Batwina, Dab, Zazna and Manasbal.

Selection of Sample

200 farm women were selected on the following criteria:

- a. 200 farm women represent the said 20 villages.
- b. Each village is represented by 10 households on the basis of:

Land holding of more than 3 kanals

The farm women were interviewed while working in their fields. A well meaning survey questionnaire was framed, on the basis of the objectives. Respondents were interviewed and

elaborate discussions were held with them. Based on these discussions, the questionnaires were filled.

Selection of variables

The variables were selected for the study under following two broad headings:

A) Independent variables.

B) Dependent variables.

(A) Independent variables

These variables are related to the general information of a farm women respondent: the inputs about the age, marital status, educational back ground, size of the family, annual income and the total possession of land(irrigated or un-irrigated).

(B) Dependent variables

The participation in post harvest operations has the following dependent variables:

Scoring- To study the participation profile, the participation was further classified and scored.

Statistical Analysis: The data was analyzed using numbers and percentages. The percentages were worked out using number of women participating in any activity. The mean score was calculated using the formula

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{\text{Score obtained per activity} \times (\text{From the number of participant in that activity})}{\text{Number of participants in that activity}(n)}$$

Results And Discussion

The data has been discussed under the following heads:

1. Distribution of respondents as per age in post harvesting.
2. Distribution of respondents as per marital status.
3. Distribution of respondents as per educational status.
4. Distribution of respondents as per annual family income.

The table on the given agricultural activities reflects that 96.50% of respondents of all the age groups have participated. 100% participation has been recorded in drying activity, 99.50% in sorting and packing, 96% in dehusking, 94% in storage, 93.50% percent in milling and 93% in the activity of grinding. The highest participation in the given set of operations in 33.41% ratio has been by the age group of 30-40 years followed by the age group of 40-50 years with 32.21% participation. The respondents in 50-60 years and 10-20 years of age groups have registered lowest participation of 6.09% and 4.07% in these operations.

Table I. Participation of women as per age in post harvest activities (N=200; row percentage; multiple choice)

Activity	Age										Total	
	10-20		20-30		30-40		40-50		50-60			
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Drying	8	4.0	49	24.5	66	33.0	65	32.5	12	6.0	200	100.00
Sorting	8	4.0	49	24.6	66	33.2	64	32.2	12	6.0	199	99.50
Packing	8	4.0	49	24.6	66	33.2	64	32.2	12	6.0	199	99.50
Milling	8	4.3	46	24.6	62	33.2	60	32.1	11	5.9	187	93.50
Dehusking	8	4.2	46	24.0	65	33.9	61	31.8	12	6.3	192	96.00
Grinding	8	4.3	43	23.1	63	33.9	60	32.3	12	6.5	186	93.00
Storage	7	3.7	46	24.5	63	33.5	61	32.4	11	5.9	188	94.00
Total		4.07		24.27		33.41		32.21		6.09		96.50

Table II Participation of women as per marital status in post- harvesting (N=200; row %age; multiple choice)

Activity	Marital Status						Total	
	Married		Un Married		Widowed			
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Drying	164	82.0	25	12.5	11	5.5	200	100.00
Sorting	163	81.9	25	12.6	11	5.5	199	99.50
Packing	163	81.9	25	12.6	11	5.5	199	99.50
Milling	151	80.7	25	13.4	11	5.9	187	93.50
Dehusking	156	81.3	25	13.0	11	5.7	192	96.00
Grinding	151	81.2	25	13.4	10	5.4	186	93.00
Storage	154	81.9	24	12.8	10	5.3	188	94.00
Total		81.56		12.90		5.54		96.50

In the post-harvest operations all the respondents whether married, unmarried and widows have taken part in all the activities. In the given data 96.50 percent participation has been recorded in the given sample of 200 respondents.

In drying activity 100 percent participation has been recorded followed by 99.50 percent (each) in the activity of sorting and packing. 96 percent

participation has been recorded in dehusking, 94 percent in the Storage and 93.50 percent in the milling. The married respondents with 81.56 percent have registered maximum participation followed by the unmarried respondents with 12.90 percent participation. Widows again in the given set of post-harvest activities have registered lowest 5.54 percent participation.

Table III Participation of women as per educational status in post- harvesting activities (N=200; row %age; multiple choice)

Activity	Education				Total	
	Literate		Illiterate			
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Drying	68	34.0	132	66.0	200	100.00
Sorting	67	33.7	132	66.3	199	99.50
Packing	68	34.2	131	65.8	199	99.50
Milling	65	34.8	122	65.2	187	93.50
Dehusking	64	33.3	128	66.7	192	96.00
Grinding	62	33.3	124	66.7	186	93.00
Storage	65	34.6	123	65.4	188	94.00
Total		33.99		66.01		96.50

In the phase of post-harvesting the respondents have expressed 96.50 percent participation. In the drying operation 100 percent, in sorting and packing 99.50 percent each, in dehusking 96 percent, in Storage 94 percent and in milling it has been 93.50

percent participation. 66.01 percent illiterate respondents are engaged most in the given set of activities while as literate have the recorded least 33.99 percent participation.

Table IV Annual family income of women and their participation in post harvest activities (N=200; row %age; multiple choice)

Activity	Annual Income										Total	
	Rs.10,000-50,000		Rs.50,000-1,00,000		Rs.1,00,000-1,50,000		Rs.1,50,000-2,00,000		Rs.2,00,000-2,50,000			
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Drying	37	18.5	49	24.5	62	31.0	35	17.5	17	8.5	200	100.0
Sorting	36	18.1	49	24.6	62	31.2	35	17.6	17	8.5	199	99.5.0
Packing	37	18.6	49	24.6	61	30.7	35	17.6	17	8.5	199	99.5.0
Milling	34	18.2	45	24.1	58	31.0	34	18.2	16	8.6	187	93.5.0
Dehusking	36	18.8	48	25.0	59	30.7	32	16.7	17	8.9	192	96.0
Grinding	34	18.3	46	24.7	57	30.6	32	17.2	17	9.1	186	93.0
Storage	34	18.1	46	24.5	60	31.9	33	17.6	15	8.0	188	94.0
Total		18.37		24.57		31.01		17.48		8.58		82.21

The respondents of different annual family income groups have shown 82.21 percent engagement in the all activities mentioned in the given sample of 200 respondents. 100 percent participation is in drying followed by 99.50 percent (each) in the activities of sorting and packing, 96 percent, 94 percent, 93.50 percent and 93 percent role has been expressed by the participants in the activities of dehusking, storage and milling. The maximum role is by annual income group of Rs. 1, 00,000 - 1, 50,000. The minimum role of 8.37 percent is by annual income group of Rs. 2, 00,000 to 2, 50,000.

Conclusion

Women play an important role in post harvest operations especially in drying, sorting and packing, dehusking, storage and milling of grains proving that they are a major contributor to the family food and economic security. The variation in participation pattern can be attributed to the age, marital status, educational status and family income of the participants.

Recommendations

The high level of participation of women in activities like drying, storage and cleaning of grains makes it necessary to lay stress on transfer of technical know-how on these aspects to women. The technical guidance will help in enhancement of their capabilities which in turn will lead to reduction in losses during storage. With more and more men taking up additional income generating activities along with farming, the women should be made efficient in handling those other post harvest

activities independently in which they work jointly with men. This will enable women to play pro-active role in post harvest operations.

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