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## Contribution of female labour in family income in northern hills of Chhattisgarh

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### Abstract

Women spend a substantial part of their time not only in various activities directly related to agriculture but also in the management of livestock, poultry, etc. Women are engaged in sowing, transplanting, and irrigation, hand weeding, harvesting and post-harvest activities. While they perform more than 90% of transplanting and harvesting, they do not participate at all in ploughing, spraying insecticides and other pesticides, using tractors and power tillers, or purchasing inputs. For this study a total of 150 households were randomly selected using snowball sampling technique method. The selected respondents were interviewed personally using pre-tested well-structured interview schedule. The finding showed that an average household of the sample earns Rs 32407.59 per annum from agriculture followed by Rs 11070.71 from NREGA. In vegetable production female labour percentage contribution is highest i.e. 67.77% in family income followed by poultry i.e. 58.34%. Overall, percentage contribution of female labour in family income is 42.36 %.

**Keywords:** snowball sampling, female labour, family income

### Introduction

Women in India are the backbone of the society and important resource in agriculture and rural economy. They make essential contributions to the agricultural development and allied and household activities and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. These activities include producing agricultural crop, cleaning animals, preparing food, working in rural enterprises, engaging in trade and marketing, caring family members and maintaining their homes. About 63% of all economically active men are engaged in agriculture as compared to 78% of women. Traditionally, women have always played an important role in agriculture as farmers, co-farmers, wage labours and managers of farms. They have conventionally been producers of food from seed to kitchen. They carry the heavier work burden in food production and because of gender discrimination, get lower returns for their work. The multiple role of women leads to a significant contribution in real terms to the productive system. But it is unfortunate that her role is not adequately recognized and properly her contribution not qualified in the male-dominated society. They have been underrepresented in the development process. However, the true picture of female work and their contribution to family expenditure is usually not clearly presented. Many economically productive activities performed by women go unrecorded as such or are subsumed within 'domestic work'. Feminisation of India's Agricultural Workforce" states that the increased involvement of women in agriculture may be due to our migration of males from low paid agriculture to high paid industry. (Chandra Sekhar 1999) [2]. Despite efforts made over the years to improve coverage of women's work in rural areas by proper inclusion of unpaid productive work, there has been only marginal improvement. The definition of cultivators in the census relies on ownership of land so that even though women actually cultivate they are seen as family labour. Hence this fact is not reflected in the proportion of men and women cultivators, which make some people, dispute that there is feminisation of agriculture in India (Krishnaraj 2005) [3]. Female agricultural workers contribute significantly in household income on all farm sizes and their earnings are crucial for the small and landless households. The proportionate contribution of females declined with increasing farm size. As regards decision-making, status of female agricultural workers is found to be poor. Female workers belonging to big farm households had a better say compared to others in this respect (Tuteja 2000) [4].

### Methodology

Korea and Surajpur district from North Hill of Chhattisgarh was selected purposively for study. Two blocks Baikunthpur and Khadgawan from Korea district and Ramanujnagar and Bhaiyathan from Surajpur district was selected randomly for the research work. Thereafter

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group of villages from each block was selected randomly. After complete enumeration of villages 150 households [marginal, small and medium farmers] was randomly selected using snowball sampling technique method. It was difficult to find women working as a agriculture labour of large size farm households, so we have taken only three categories of farmers i.e. marginal (0 to 1 ha.), small (1 to 2 ha.) and medium (2 to 4 ha.). Only those households having (at least one) woman worker and are engaged in agriculture as well as at least one of the allied sector i.e. Dairy, Poultry, Goatry etc. will be chosen for listing and their basic details will be collected. Percentage analysis was used to find out the distribution of agriculture income and share of female workers in household income. The share of female workers in family income is calculated as a proportion to their share in total labour used by the family in agriculture.

## Result and Discussion

The estimates of per household family income in different farm sizes from different sectors are shown in Table 1. Agriculture is the major source of income for sample households. Income earned by agriculture from raising crops on land used for agricultural purposes and by working as a hired labour in other farms by performing agricultural activities is termed as income from agriculture. This is arrived at by deducting cash expenditure from gross value of output. Cash expenditure includes costs on human and animal labour,

cost of hired machinery (e.g tractor), irrigation charges, and expenses on seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. This concept of family income is taken from studies of family income by Parthasarathy and Ramarao (1974) [6].

The differences in income from samples in different farm sizes are shown in the Table 1. Overall, agriculture share is highest in total family income i.e., 55.19% which ranges from 37.78% for marginal category to 74.65% for large category supported by finding of Chandrshekar *et al.* (1999). Second major sector is NREGA which overall contributes 18.85% in total family income which ranges from 12.93% for large category to 24.00% for marginal farm size households. An average household of the sample earns Rs 32407.59 per annum from agriculture followed by Rs 11070.71 from NREGA.

Table 2 shows percentage contribution of female labour in family income. The share of female workers in family income is calculated as a proportion to their share in total labour used by the family in agriculture. As can be seen from the table, overall in vegetable production female labour percentage contribution is highest i.e. 67.77% followed by poultry i.e. 58.34%. Overall the proportional contribution of female workers is positively related to farm size, i.e., the proportional share of female workers increases with increasing farm size which contrary's the findings of Goswami (2013) [1] and Tuteja (2000) [4] they found proportionate contribution of females declined with increasing farm size.

**Table 1:** Sources of family income (Rs. / household)

Sectors	Marginal	Small	Medium	Overall
Agriculture	17123.8 (37.78)	28734.53(46.33)	51364.37 (74.65)	32407.59 (55.19)
Vegetable	1877.4 (4.14)	2078.31(3.35)	2361.09 (3.43)	2105.62 (3.59)
Dairy	3478.4 (7.67)	3307.14(5.33)	2849.52 (4.14)	3211.70(5.47)
Goatry	1465.91(3.23)	1400.00 (2.26)	1235.29 (1.80)	1367.07 (2.33)
Poultry	118.1 (0.26)	80.00(0.13)	47.06 (0.07)	81.75 (0.14)
Service	5454.55 (12.03)	8533.33 (13.76)	0.00 (0.00)	4662.63 (7.94)
NREGA	10878.00 (24.00)	13440.00 (21.67)	8894.12 (12.93)	11070.71 (18.85)
Others	4929.55(10.88)	4442.24 (7.16)	2058.88 (2.99)	3810.22 (6.49)
Total	45325.98(100.00)	62015.55 (100.00)	68810.33 (100.00)	58717.29 (100.00)

**Note:** Figure in the parenthesis indicate the percentages to total income.

In total, percentage contribution of female labour of marginal size farm is 33.59%, in small farm category it is 38.48% and for medium size farm house holds female labour contribution is 51.63% in family income. Overall, percentage contribution of female labour in family income is 42.36%. Percentage contribution of female labour is increasing with farm size due to higher percentage contribution of female labourers in agriculture and allied sectors and lack of alternative employment opportunities for labours in sampled area.

**Table 2:** Percentage contribution of female labour in family income

Sectors	Marginal	Small	Medium	Overall
Agriculture	45.57	51.07	55.93	52.67
Vegetable	62.88	69.92	69.78	67.77
Dairy	52.82	57.61	60.74	56.81
Goatry	60.53	59.59	54.28	58.33
Poultry	71.55	45.39	47.17	58.34
Service	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
NREGA	28.43	33.33	26.67	29.94
Others	6.92	10.76	17.14	10.25
Total	33.59	38.48	51.63	42.36

## Conclusion

Female workers contribute significantly to household income

and their earnings are crucial especially for landless and marginal farm households. The proportionate contribution of females is, however, found to increased with increasing farm size. This is because the participation rate of women in agriculture is mostly governed by the size of holding. As females are major contributors in agriculture and allied sectors their participation increases with farm size. Moreover, a large percentage of women are also found to be engaged in agriculture because agriculture is an occupation which provides work opportunities to women, irrespective of their age, level of education, or any formal training (women between the age group 15 to 60 years; illiterate women to graduates, were found to be engaged in agriculture). Since women contribute a large percentage to total family income, women should be taken as active partners in the development process. Capacity building and skill formation should therefore be made an integral part of any development programme to make it more meaningful. Since domestic and subsistence labour is unpaid, therefore women must be included in development which generates income, yet suits their needs.

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