

Chapter-VII

Summary and Conclusions

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Indian women live in rural areas, comprising around 5, 00,000 villages. They contribute to the production of about half of our food. They are involved in operation like planning, weeding thinning, manure spreading, harvesting and storage. A woman of landless family also works as a daily wage earner at somebody else's farm. The majority of the rural women sustain their livelihood by working on land in a number of ways. Based on this, rural women are classified as landless women, near landless women and small peasant women. A large number of rural women primarily sustain their livelihood by working as wage labourers and agricultural farmers. A high proportion of working forces in India are employed in the unorganized sector mainly in Agriculture, livestock and forestry. Working women are manifested in agricultural activities. The nature of work in agriculture which women labourers perform exposes especially in south India, rice transplanting is done primarily by women labourers. This increases their susceptibility to a number of ailments such as intestinal and parasitic infections, arthritis rheumatic joints, and Lucy bile. Having analyzed the participation of women in Indian Agriculture, the conclusion can be made to say that women's contribution is very high in Indian agriculture.

7.1. Need and Relevance of the Present Study:

The research gaps identified from earlier studies reveal that the development strategies and poverty eradication programmes required an entirely new way of thinking in which the stereo typing of women and men no longer limits their choices, but given way to a new philosophy that regards all people as an essential agents of change, and that views development as a processing enlarging choices of both not just one. Providing equal rights and equal access to resources and opportunities to

women, general equality becomes an essential aspect of human development. Especially women have not been treated on par with men in every aspects of life, though their role is crucial for the sustenance of family as well as of the society and also for development of economy as a whole. The gender roles can differentiate the position of women inferior as seen in all the countries. But the degree of subordination varies according to the development, on the one hand and the ownership of means of productivity, on the other, the dissemination against women is more pronounced in the developing countries in view of the prevalence of poverty.

Some of the earlier studies on rural women confined themselves to selected issues connected with the status of rural women, employment of rural women, agricultural women workers, rural development programmes for women, anti poverty alleviation programmes for rural women and rural women illiteracy. But these studies could not given either full information regarding the roots of poverty of rural women or the strategies, which help to promote the socio-economic status of the rural women. The present study attempts to analyze new approaches to improve the socio-economic status of agricultural women workers. Some of the research studies confined themselves to an evolution study of rural development programmes or poverty elimination programmes as a whole. No attempt has been made to study separately the experiences or strategies involved in capacity building or promoting socio-economic status of agricultural women workers of the Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh.

The present study, an attempt is made to examine the factors influencing the socio-economic status of the agricultural women workers in Visakhapatnam district. The existing literature on status of women are biased towards economic rather than social up liftment of women, who are weak in capabilities in the existing rural scenario. Enhancement of

capabilities of agricultural women workers is possible only if they are less burdened with child bearing and rearing, better health, less domestic burdens for acquiring water and fuel improving the educational status. The research gap is expected to be filled by the present study which attempts to identify the factors influencing socio-economic status of agricultural women worker households. The present study aims at understanding the factors determine the socio-economic status of a total of 400 agriculture women workers who are selected 200 agriculture women worker households from relatively advanced Pendurthi mandal and another 200 selected agriculture women worker households from the relatively interior Devarapalli mandals of the Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh.

7.2. Major Findings and Inferences of the Study:

The following are some of the major conclusions and inferences of the study:

7.2.1 Inferences drawn from the Profile of the Study Area:

The profile of the study area shows that a higher proportion of the geographical area is covered with forest and uncultivable land, consequent of which the gross cropped and net area shown are limited. The main sources of irrigation are also not at the required level hence; the net area irrigated is also less. The cropping pattern reveals that a major proportion of gross cropped area is used for the production of food grains. The cropping pattern reveals that a major portion of the gross cropped area is used for the production of food grains in the district. Agriculture is the predominant sector and it is contributing higher proportion of both income and employment. The analysis relating to the basic features of the selected district ultimately reveal that it is having higher extent of area and rural population. Due to this reason on the front of household demographic, economic, social indicators as well as

the availability of infrastructure facilities in Visakhapatnam district is lagging behind though it is having much industrial potential.

The analysis relating to the profile of the selected mandals of the study ultimately reveals that among the two selected mandals, though the Devarapalli mandal is relatively big in terms of geographical area when compared to Pendurthi mandal, the available geographical features as well as resource base and other infrastructural facilities are concerned Pendurthi mandal is in the lead position. The main reason is that the area is having the semi-urban features. The village profile analysis reveal that several infrastructural facilities like road net work, power supply, communication and banking facilities in the selected mandals and villages are concerned, there is significant improvement in the Pendurthi mandal particularly in the semi-urban areas of the villages when compared to the Devarapalli mandal particularly in the interior villages. This situation is revealed in the village analysis that the villages selected from the Pendurthi mandal semi-urban areas are far ahead in having infrastructure and other facilities when compared to Devarapalli mandal and particularly in the villages in the interior areas. Inter mandal and area disparities are found significantly in the study area relating to the macro economy of the district, mandal villages and households are concerned. The analyses ultimately reveal that on the front of macro economic indicators the district covered under the study is far behind. Similarly the selected mandals and villages are also having very limited infrastructure facilities.

7.2.2 The analysis relating to the role of rural women in Indian

Agriculture:

Women are the backbone of the village economy of rural India. Women take up different works to eke out their livelihood and the majority of the rural women depend on unorganized sector like

agriculture. Many of them are landless, homeless and belong to the socially depressed class of the society despite the seasonal poor nature of employment in the field of agriculture for labourers since the beginning of this century. Indian women live in rural areas, comprising around 5,00,000 villages. They contribute to the production of about half of our food. They are involved in operation like planning, weeding thinning, manure spreading, harvesting and storage. A woman of landless family also works as a daily wage earner at somebody else's farm.

A large number of rural women primarily sustain their livelihood by working as wage labourers and agricultural farmers. A high proportion of working forces in India are employed in the unorganized sector mainly in Agriculture, livestock and forestry. Working women are manifested in agricultural activities. The nature of work in agriculture which women labourers perform exposes especially in south India, rice transplanting is done primarily by women labourers due to this women's contribution is very high in Indian agriculture.

The recent trends relating to female work participation rates in Indian agriculture explains that the work participation rate of women in India steadily rose from 14.22 per cent in 1981 to 22.27 in 2001 and to 25.7 in 2011. It is much lower than that of the male work participation rates in both urban and rural areas. The raise in work participation rates of rural women has been steeper from 15.92 in 1981 to 30.79 in 2011. While it is from 7.18 to 11.89 during the same period for urban women. In Andhra Pradesh, female work participation rates are relatively low when compared to male work participation rates in rural as well as in urban areas. However, female work participation rates in rural areas are relatively higher when compared to urban area in the period of 1981 to 2011. Work participation rates for men and women in Andhra Pradesh are relatively higher when compared to all India rates.

7.2.3 Analysis relating to the Socio-Economic, Demographic and Living Standards of the selected agriculture women worker households:

The prevailing conditions relating to demographic and social conditions like, literacy and health status of the selected agriculture women worker households and their family members are in very poor state. The following are some of the major conclusions relating to the prevailing demographic and social indicators of the selected agriculture women worker households. On the front of demographic analysis of selected agriculture women worker households the findings relating to composition of the selected agriculture women worker households shows that, nearly 90 per cent of the households are in the age groups of 15 to 55. The analysis pertaining to age composition of the family members of the selected agriculture women worker households indicate that 60 per cent of the family members are within the working range of 15 to 55. Children are at the extent of 35 per cent and old agers constitute only 5 per cent of the total family members.

The sex-wise distribution of total family members of the selected agriculture women worker households reveal that female members are relatively lower than male members. The household average family size is 4.93 and the family size is relatively higher among the households selected from the Devarapalli mandal than the sample households selected from the Pendurthi mandal. The households with more than 7 agriculture women worker households are around 20 per cent in total households and they are more among the selected agriculture women worker households of Devarapalli mandal. The analysis relating to the family size also shows that nearly 60 per cent of the families have more than 5 members. The families with 7 persons and more are recorded in

cases of selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapalli mandal.

The analysis pertaining to the variations in immunization, family planning practices and delivery practices and morbidity pattern in terms of general health problems, reproductive health problem and mental health problems among selected agriculture women worker households and their family members reveal that, the percentage of children fully vaccinated is higher among sample selected households from Pendurthi mandal than the sample women households of Devarapalli mandal. Similarly vaccine-wise coverage is also higher in the case of selected agriculture women worker households from Pendurthi mandal than selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapalli mandal. The proportion of institutional deliveries is higher among the selected agriculture women worker households from Pendurthi mandal than selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapalli mandal.

The knowledge of family planning methods is very limited among the selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapalli mandal than the selected agriculture women worker households from the Pendurthi mandal. Higher proportion of the selected agriculture women worker households are from Pendurthi mandal aware of male and female sterilization, respectively. Knowledge about spacing method is low among selected women households of Devarapalli mandal, but exists marginally among the households from Pendurthi mandal. The proportion of women knowing sources of supply of male and female sterilization is relatively higher among the selected women worker households from Pendurthi mandal than selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapalli mandal. A large majority of selected agriculture women worker households from Pendurthi mandal have undergone family planning operations than the selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapalli mandal.

In the case of morbidity pattern, the incidents of anemia and malaria fever is higher among the selected agriculture women worker households of Pendurthi mandal, while the incidence of aches and pains, acute anemia and diarrhoea are higher in case of the selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapallii mandal. On the whole the proportion of those suffering from diseases is much lower among the selected agriculture women worker households of Pendurthi mandal than the selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapallii mandal.

The proportion of respondents suffering in terms of reproductive health problems is more among the selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapalli mandal than the selected agriculture women worker households of Pendurthi mandal. 14.25 per cent of selected Pendurthi mandal agriculture women workers suffered by reproductive tract disorders, 8.11 per cent menstrual disorder and 15 per cent suffered by infections, following tubectomy, while 29.27 per cent of selected Devarapalli mandal women suffered from menstrual disorder, 14.96 per cent suffered from reproductive tract disorder in the case of selected agriculture women worker households. Reproductive health problems are relatively higher among the Devarapalli mandal than the selected agriculture women worker households from Pendurthi mandal. The proportion respondents to pay attention to mental health are relatively higher among selected agriculture women worker households from the Pendurthi mandal than the selected agriculture women worker households from the Devarapalli mandal. Among the various systems like traditional medicines, homeo medicines, allopathic medicines, home and ayurvedic medicines, a large majority of households utilized allopathic in both the selected mandals. The proportion of respondents among the selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapalli mandal who use home medicines and traditional medicines

is relatively higher than the selected agriculture women worker households from the Pendurthi mandal.

The analysis relating to the prevailing conditions relating to child schooling and adult education reveals the following observations. The proportion of male adults attending to adult literacy programmes is relatively higher among the selected agriculture women worker households from Pendurthi mandal. There are large differences also in the percentage of children going to school between sample selected from Pendurthi and Devarapalli mandals. Majority (90 per cent) of children are going to school regularly among the respondents from Pendurthi mandal, while 60 per cent is going to the schools in case of the households from the Devarapalli mandal.

It is surprising to find out the percentage of male adults who can read and write among those who are attending to literacy centers is higher out of total male adults of the respondents. Most of their time, they used to attend the agricultural works and they do not attend any programme, hence, proportion of the women adults attending to such programmes is less than that of male adults in both the selected mandals. On the whole, the proportion of female adults attending to literacy centers is relatively lower among the selected agriculture women worker households from Devarapalli mandal.

The analysis ultimately reveals that the selected agriculture women worker households have expanded avenues for improve their socio demographic conditions by way of adoption of family planning methods and have awareness about promoting their health and literacy levels. The use of contraceptive methods by the agriculture women workers indicates the improvement of the control of agriculture women workers over their reproductive choice. On the whole, it is clear that the agriculture women workers are able to improve control over their freedom

to move and interact, leadership, and reproductive choices, to some extent. Thus there is improvement to some extent with regard to social status. But, there is no improvement in the power with dimension of social status.

The present study reveals that the premise that women status is high when they contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities holds good. Although they lack control of material and social resources, their contribution to subsistence economy give them important and irreversible position. It may be concluded as it is observed that ecology and environmental factors existing in rural areas under study have given these women a special economic power, and an elevated status. However, there are certain domains in which men continue to dominate, as is culturally required. Moreover, community still is in the hands of men. There is a kind of duality observable here. Men dominate in public, in social and religious affairs, and continue to play the role of the head of the family and breadwinner, women enjoy a greater say in their family life, they have a greater deal of social freedom and several of their actions are tolerated.

The analysis relating to economic status and living standards of the selected agriculture women workers from the study area reveal that the occupation status of spouses of respective agriculture women workers are ascertained and analyzed, the pattern of distribution by and large resembles the general pattern as is noticed in rural India. Agriculture and allied activities (animal rearing etc.) are providing the livelihood to agriculture women workers spouses. In case of both the selected mandals majority respondent's main occupation is agriculture works. The employment in agriculture is largely seasonal in character. Therefore, majority of the agriculture women worker households stated that they are also depending on subsidiary occupations like artisans, shop owner, non-agricultural labourers and other services. It is clear

from the data that compared to Pendurthi mandal women, in case of the Devarapalli mandal majority of the households are depending on subsidiary occupations.

The analysis relating to working days shows that out of 400 sample women 85 per cent are able to get the work about 100 man days in a year and 14.33 per cent from 100-200 man days. If we look into the monthly availability of working days, the selected agriculture women worker from Pendurthi mandal still in forefront in getting more number of working days in a month. 43.33 per cent of them are able to get 16-30 days working day and 56.67 per cent of their income is confined with working days of 15 days only. The working days which are available on weekly, month and annual basis are not sufficient. Majority of the sample from the Devarapalli mandal are unable to get maximum number of working days. Still the poverty exists in the interior villages selected from Devarapalli mandal in spite of implementing a number of welfare and developmental programmes by state and central Governments.

The income patterns of the selected agriculture women worker households reveal that, in case of Pendurthi mandal women workers out of 200 respondents, majority of the respondents i.e., 29.33 per cent are earning Rs.5,000 to Rs.10,000 from agriculture. 3.33 percent are earning less than Rs.5000 from agriculture. 11.33 per cent are earning above Rs.40,000 from agriculture. In case of Pendurthi mandal out of 200 respondents only 69 respondents are earning non-agriculture income also. In this mandal majority of the respondents percent are earning below Rs.5000. Very less percentage of respondents are earning Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000. In case of Devarapalli mandal women majority of the respondents i.e., 39.33 per cent are earning in between of Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000. Very less number of respondents are earning below Rs. 5,000. 6.00 per cent are earning above Rs.40,000 from agriculture.

The information relating to details about buying assets and durable goods by the selected agriculture women workers from the two selected mandals reveal that, out of the total sample agriculture women workers, the proportion of women selected from Pendurthi mandal who bought assets and durable goods is much higher than the women selected from the Devarapalli mandal. In case of Pendurthi mandal nearly 43 per cent of sample agriculture women workers bought small asset like field or ground for various purposes, and 64 per cent bought durable goods, it is important to note that during the same period, the women selected from the Devarapalli mandal also bought small assets and durable goods.

The particulars of savings levels of the sample agriculture women workers reveal that whatever the income which is gained may be spent on consumption and remaining amount will be saved for further needs of the family members. Out of 400 sample agriculture women workers nearly 37.67 per cent opined that there is an improvement in saving level due to the government programmes, nearly 62.33 per cent of the sample agriculture women worker opined that there is no improvement in their saving in spite of gaining additional employment through government programmes in recent times.

The asset pattern of the households reveal that as high as 90 per cent of agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal are reported to own assets such as furniture, TV, fan, etc. Around 80 per cent agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal reported to own live-stock. Asset in the form of land are possessed by just 2 per cent and houses possessed by 7 per cent. In terms of value of assets, land topped the Rs.30,000, followed by houses Rs.25,000, in the distribution of agriculture women workers in terms of valuable assets

possessed. The analysis pertaining to the use of durable goods used by the sample households is considered as an important indicator of living standards of the selected agriculture women workers. In this context, the asset pattern of the selected agriculture women worker households reveal that out of the total sample agriculture women workers, the proportion of agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal bought furniture (30.00 %) and other things 10 per cent, television (12.00 %). The selected agriculture women workers of Devarapalli mandal also able to purchase durable items but the extent of purchasing the durables are very limited when compared to their counterparts of the Devarapalli mandal. This indicates the life styles of the selected agriculture women workers in case of both the mandals.

The mandal wise distribution of housing conditions of households indicate that all the households put together 53.67 per cent possesses their own houses and 46.67 per cent are living in the government colony houses. 5 per cent households are living in thatched houses, 47.66 per cent of the households are living in tiled and RCC roof houses. Among all the sample households the households selected from the Pendurthi mandal are relatively having more in own tiled and RCC roof houses, the households selected from Devarapalli mandal are residing in the Government colony houses. More number of Devarapalli households are living in the RCC roof houses. As a whole the housing conditions in the Pendurthi mandal sample women are relatively in good condition. Almost all the houses are electrified.

The analysis of educational awareness among the sample households reveal that, in the selected 400 agriculture women worker, nearly 26.67 per cent of the agriculture women workers from Devarapalli mandal and 32 per cent of agriculture women workers from Pendurthi mandal are having awareness of education 68 per cent of selected Pendurthi sample agriculture women worker and 73.33 per cent of

selected agriculture women workers from Devarapalli are not having awareness about education. In the field survey they expressed their view that did not created any sort of environment for the accumulation of knowledge through basic education.

The particulars relating to decision making relating to the selected agriculture women worker households reveal the possibilities of decision making by the selected agriculture women workers whether independently or they depend on some other sources shows that 69.67 per cent of the sample agriculture women workers are unable to take decision on their own with regards to economic transactions and they are used to depend upon others for taking the final decision. The remaining 30.33 per cent of sample agriculture women worker are able to take wise decision independently to improve their economic status. The agriculture women workers who are not able to take timely decisions are more in proportion in the case of the Devarapalli mandal rather than their counterparts in the Pendurthi mandal. There is a need to organize certain awareness programmes particularly on decision making issues in the interior rural villages.

The analysis relating to decision making process of the selected agriculture women worker households reveal that the selected agriculture women worker households are taking advice from their husband, parents, village elder and other sources. Majority of the members i.e., 71.67 per cent of the sample agriculture women workers are taking advice from their husband while taking a decision on any household economic activity. 13.33 per cent of sample agriculture women workers depending on their parents for taking a decision about the household economic activities. Others are taking advices from the village elders that possess rich experience in different fields. Thus, it is evident that majority of the sample households seeking help and encouragement from their family members.

The present study has conducted a survey on the information and knowledge of various socio-economic development programmes. Among the sample agriculture women workers who have information on various Government schemes for poverty elimination and employment generation. The particulars derived from the attitudinal survey of the sample agriculture women workers on information of various Government schemes for Poverty elimination and employment generation Programmes reveal that 10 per cent of the sample agriculture women workers reported that they have information about NREGA, followed by SHGs, girl child and other programmes. The proportion of sample agriculture women workers who have information on various programmes is higher in case of the households of the Pendurthi mandal than that of agriculture women workers selected from the Devarapalli mandal. Among the total members the agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal have information on SHGs, NREGA, ICDS, Deepam and Kishora Balika Padhakam. On the whole, the women selected from the Pendurthi mandal have more knowledge about various poverty elimination and employment generation programmes.

The percentage distribution of sample agriculture women workers participation in various Government Programmes reveal that out of the total sample agriculture women workers, 70 per cent are participating in Self-Help Groups and NREGA programmes and remaining of them are participating in ICDS programme and village development programme committees. Among the agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal, many of them are participating in village developmental committees (Gram Sabhas), motherhood committees and school committees. On the whole, the proportion of sample women participating in various Governmental programmes is much higher among the agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal than the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli

mandal. This reflects the positive situation of women's participation and emancipation in various Governmental programmes. In addition to that the women have taken initiative in improving their socio-economic status by participating in Government programmes like family welfare, environment awareness, public health, sanitation, clean drinking water, clean and green programmes through various committees, aimed at the implement of their villages. Their participation in different government activities have improved socio-economic status of women to such an extent that, among the sample women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal 7 members elected to some political position. In case of the selected agriculture women worker household's women from the Pendurthi mandal 11 women are elected to some political position.

The analysis pertaining to the various governmental programmes per capacity-building among the selected agriculture women workers reveal the following. The proportion of the agriculture women workers who have information and knowledge on various programmes for women empowerment is higher among the selected agriculture women workers of Pendurthi mandal than the selected agriculture women workers households among the Devarapalli mandal. Because the eligibility criterion for any developmental programme is that they should belong to any type of the Self-Help Groups programme in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly the proportion of selected agriculture women workers from Pendurthi mandal who are participating actively in SHG activity are much higher, they are participating actively in developmental comities like village development committees ,ICDS and school committees rather than the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal .

A large proportion of selected agriculture women workers from the Pendurthi mandal who are participating in the proceedings by sharing views with officials and sharing views members effectively are relatively higher than the women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal. It

shows that their assertiveness and self-esteem has increased after joining into SHGs programme. It is important to note that there is a lot of difference of agriculture women workers selected in talking various problems and declining with officials of the Government, after being the members of SHGs. The proportion of respondents who attended capacity building training is much higher in the selected agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal than the agriculture women workers selected from the Devarapalli mandal. The proportion of agriculture women workers having knowledge about computers and internet is relatively higher among the selected sample from Pendurthi mandal rather than their counter parts selected from Devarapalli mandal.

The analysis relating to the economic status and living standards of the selected agriculture women workers reveal that the selected sample seen to have embarked on the non-traditional tasks like marketing and non-traditional enterprises. The women have improved control over their labour to this extent. On the whole, it is clear that agriculture women workers are able to improve control over their labour, resources, savings, credit and income and freedom to move and interact to some extent. Thus there is improvement to some extent with regard to economic power to dimension of empowerment. However, the economic and living conditions are not much encouraging in the interior villages selected from the Devarapalli mandal and found in relatively better position in the semi urban villages of Pendurthi mandal.

7.2.4 Analysis relating to the Factors determining relative Socio-

Economic Status of the selected Sample households:

An attempt is made in this study, to compare the socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers selected from interior Devarapalli and relatively advanced Pendurthi mandals. In this study we

have tried to capture the state of the three core variables by decomposing them in to six variables: literacy levels, family size, work participation, health status, income, and consumption expenditure. Since Socio-economic status is framed as binary outcome (as empowered or not empowered), discrete choice model is used to analyze the determinantes of women socio-economic status. Among the discrete or categorical choice models, Probit model is found to be appropriate for this study.

Probit regression model is undertaken using STATA for three set of data: data collected from agriculture women worker from relatively interior Devarapalli and relatively advanced Pendurthi mandals separately and for the aggregate data. The iteration log found in each of the three regression shows that all models converged so quickly. The likelihood ratio chi-square of the three models tells us that the models are statistically significant, that is, they fit significantly better than a model with no predictors.

When we see the result from each model separately, demographic variable (or household size) has a positive and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals, but it has more effect on socio-economic status of agriculture women workers selected from the relatively interior Devarapalli mandal than that of agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal. This can be seen from the z-score values of the variable in the regression result for agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals: household size increases the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal by 0.0037 whereas its effect on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi Mandal is 0.0027 only.

Lack of health and education on the other hand, has a negative and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women

workers selected from both the Devarapalli and Pendurthi mandals but it has more effect on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from the relatively advanced Pendurthi mandal. This can be seen from the z-score values of the variables in the regression result for agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals. For instance, illiteracy decreases socio-economic status of agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal by (-) 0.275 whereas its effect on agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal is (-) 0.215 only. Similarly, or low calorie intake (a health variable) has a negative and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from both the Devarapalli and Pendurthi mandals, but it has more effect on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal rather than the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal. Again this can be seen from the z-score values of the variable in the regression result for the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals: low calorie intake decreases socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal by (-) 0.358, whereas its effect on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal is (-) 0.235 only.

All economic variables (work participation, income and Consumption expenditure), however, have the expected positive and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals. For instance, work participation has a positive and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals, but it has more effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from the Devarapalli mandal than that of the agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal. This can be seen from the

z-score values of the variable in the regression result for the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals: while the z-score of work participation on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal is recorded as 0.139, its z-score on the socio-economic status of agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal is 0.121 only.

Similarly, income has a positive and significant effect on socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals, but it has more effect on the socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal than that of the sample agriculture women workers from the Pendurthi mandal. This can be seen from the z-score values of the variable in the regression result for agriculture women workers selected from both the selected mandals: while the z-score of income on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal is 0.399, its z-score on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal is 0.299 only.

Similarly consumption expenditure has a positive and significant effect on socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals, but it has relatively more effect on the socio-economic status of agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal than that of the sample agriculture women workers selected from the Pendurthi mandal. This can be seen from the z-score values of the variable in the regression result for the agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals: while the z-score of consumption expenditure on the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers selected from Devarapalli mandal is 0.302 its z-score on the socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers selected from Pendurthi mandal is 0.243 only.

Finally, determinants of the socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals was carried out using pooled data. We have merged the data collected from both the selected mandals and estimated the z-scores of Probit model. The result is quite similar to the separate studies in the sense that the economic and demographic variables have been shown to have a positive and significant (at 1 %) effect on the socio-economic status of the sample agriculture women workers, whereas the social variable has the expected negative and significant effect on the socio-economic status of all the sample agriculture women workers selected from both the mandals at the aggregate level.

7.3. Major Conclusion:

The major findings of the study indicate that the socio-economic status of the selected agriculture women workers are in the selected mandals of the Visakhapatnam district is improving. However the improvements in the socio-economic status of agriculture women workers are characterized as peripheral. The rural areas of Visakhapatnam district are under the process of transformation to achieve higher levels socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers. But the improvement in the indicators relating to socio-economic status is significantly found among the sample agriculture women workers selected from the semi urban natured villages of Pendurthi mandal. The change is very limited among the sample agriculture women workers living in the relatively interior villages of the Devarapalli mandal.

The inferences of the study indicate that the inter-area/mandal variations relating to the socio-economic status of agriculture women workers are quite prevalent in the study area. This study reveals that the selected agriculture women workers selected from the relatively interior

villages of Devarapalli mandal have yet to experience the benefits of different development programmes intended for them to improve their indicators relating to the socio-economic status. Hence the study advocates the need for the governmental and non-governmental financial agencies to make concentrated efforts and to implement a comprehensive strategy with an optimum mix of both area and target group approaches to accelerate the pace of structural change among the agriculture women workers living in the relatively interior rural areas.

The major inferences derived from this study ultimately justifies the formulated hypothesis that, inter area differences are prevalent in relation with the socio-economic and demographic indicators of the selected agriculture women workers in the study area and the agriculture women worker living in the relatively interior Devarapalli mandal need much intensive development policy packages to improve their levels socio-economic status.

7.4. Policy Suggestions:

Based on the major findings of this study, towards further promoting socio-economic status of the selected agriculture women workers in the interior rural areas of the Devarapalli mandal, the following suggestions are made:

1. In view of various problems faced by agriculture women workers, improvement in their socio-economic status is essential not only to improve their quality of life styles but also improving their families and villages. In this regard the exploitative traditional hierarchical relations have to be replaced by empowered local institutions.
2. To promote the socio-economic status of the agriculture women workers, creation of support institutions are needed to cater the needs of skill improvement and capacity building among them.

3. Promoting the Socio-economic status of agriculture women workers needs social, cultural, financial, skill and knowledge empowerment. Unless all these vital aspects are integrated and greater vision is developed among the agriculture women workers, the sustainable progress in their socio-economic status cannot ensure.

4. To promote awareness and to motivate the agriculture women workers about their socio-economic status, functional literacy has to be carefully formulated to suit changing scenario in rural areas to empower local rural communities and traditional institutions.

5. Through all means of media, information, education and communication activities concerning agriculture women workers issues must be strengthened. This includes the establishment of gender-relevant and culturally sensitive information, education and communication plans and strategies related to promoting their socio-economic status.

6. The analysis points out that to reduce the intensity of problems associated with the improvement of socio-economic status of agriculture women workers in the interior rural areas the government should focus special attention to the creation of more extent of basic infrastructure facilities on a priority basis in the interior rural areas.

7. Proper understanding of the problems of agriculture women , continuous dedicated field work, guidance, adoption of bottom up strategy with total transparency, participatory management and genuine empowerment of local agriculture women are essential for making them as partners in the development and to reduce the difference relating to their socio-economic status.

8. The analysis points out that to reduce the intensity of problems associated with the improvement of socio-economic status of agriculture women workers, the government should focus special attention to the creation of more extent of income and employment generation activities on a priority basis in the interior rural areas.

9. There is needed to take cognizance of the traditional values and practices of respective agriculture women workers while implementing rural development porgrammes like micro finance through effective implementation of MGNREGA for the improvement of socio-economic status of the interior rural areas.