

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter represents the major findings and summary of the present research work which shows achievement of the proposed objectives. Few possible future recommendations/suggestions are also included in this section. Also, future scope of the present work is mentioned at the end of this chapter.

6.1 CONCLUSION

Gujarat is amongst the fastest growing states of India with total 18.8 million hectares reporting area and out of this 11.4 million hectares area is used for the cultivation purpose. Gujarat female work participation rate is 23.4%, 17.78% females work as cultivators and 47.14% as agricultural labourers in comparison to only 20.27% male agricultural labourers. Such a high participation of females in agriculture encourages to study about their working conditions.

This study was conducted in Bhavnagar, Kheda, Narmada, Patan, Sabarkantha, Tapi, Surendranagar and Vadodara districts to cover all four agro-climatic zones of Gujarat state. Socio-economic characteristics of these districts' female agricultural labourers reveal that majority of the workers belonged to 31-40 years age group with primary level education, 83% were married, and most of them were from joint family with 6-8 members in a family. Total 77% females were having more than Rs.1,00,000 annual family income. Female agricultural labourers were involved in almost all the agricultural activities, but very few were involved in ploughing and pesticides related work. Almost all the respondents liked to work in agriculture sector because they could earn more wages in it than other non-farm work.

Relation between various factors were also studied in this research which revealed that education is not related with agricultural wages, but to understand the modern technology, to get information related to agriculture sector and to be aware about their legal rights, females should get proper education and training. Hypotheses also revealed that age, family type, work hours, amenities, support from employers, wages per day do not affect liking or disliking of agricultural work; but it depends on the size of the family and working conditions. For the overall satisfaction from the work liking of agriculture work does not matter but amenities and support from the employers matter.

6.2 FINDINGS

Major findings of the study are mentioned below.

1. As far as working conditions are concerned, most of the females worked for 6-8 hours a day on the field and 45% of them get three breaks during work hours but for 1-4 hours' daily work, they do not get any break. Also, in terms of time duration 46% respondents get more than 75 minutes total break.
2. Average wages of the respondents were between Rs.100-200 a day and they also receive extra wages for extra work. Only 36% responded that males get more wages than females for their work.
3. In terms of type of work, working hours and breaks, female labourers were satisfied with working conditions. As far as wages are concerned dissatisfaction was noticed.
4. Though wage discrimination was observed, it was for different types of work and female labourers were fine with that and responded that there should be same wages for same type of work but wage differentiation is acceptable if nature of work is different.
5. Female agricultural labourers face few problems and constraints at work. Few females had to bring their children with them at work because they did not

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have any other family members at home to take care of their children. Also, they did not get any facility on the field for their children. So, this could be injurious for children and also it might affect the attention and productivity of workers.

6. Very few female respondents had exposure to pesticides which resulted into skin related issue. Only few responded that male co-workers' attitude towards women was bad, but majority of males support and encourage female workers.
7. Most of the employers provided tea/snacks to the workers and very few provided meals to them. There was an absence of restroom facility, accommodation facility.
8. Few employers provided first-aid facility and 75% responded that their employers provided compensation for injuries. Most of the respondents responded that they were treated well by their employers. All the employers provided clean drinking water to the employees.
9. None of the employers provided washroom facilities to female labourers which results into unhygienic working conditions and this might lead to infection issues. Also, labourers did not get any facility or support from employers during bad weather conditions.

It was observed from the study that working conditions of female agricultural labourers is still poor in the state despite of development in agriculture sector. In the state, work hours of the workers are fixed but wages are less in comparison to other states of the country which is very disappointing situation. There is no any washroom facility and restroom facility provided to females. So, for long day work the ladies have to go in open fields. During hot weather or rainy season, labourers have to bare it as break hours are more but there is no any shed or restroom facilities for them.

Thus, working conditions of agricultural labourers should be improved by providing basic facilities to them during work hours which in turn increase their satisfaction and productivity in work and it is the win-win situation for both employees and employers and in general for the community and state economy.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS

From the above conclusion, few suggestions have been derived to improve the socio-economic and working conditions of agricultural labourers who are mostly landless and work as casual labourer and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The appropriate authorities can be suggested to look into the following:

6.3.1 Provide education, training and equal employment opportunities

- In rural areas, higher education facilities should be provided and there should be awareness programs to increase number of females in higher education.
- Educated females can easily understand new methods and technology of agriculture which reduces drudgery in work.
- Government should establish agricultural education centres and extension services specifically for females.
- Training camps should be arranged regularly in villages not only for farm women but for female labourers also.
- Females who want to earn more, they should be provided with an opportunity to perform ploughing operation and proper training should be given to them.
- They should be given knowledge and information about use and risk of pesticides.

6.3.2 Formulate specific policies for female labourers

- An unorganised sector's females are still suffering and working in poor work conditions.

- Policy makers should keep these women in mind while forming a policy.
- New policies should be formed or old policies should be revised and there should whole heartedly implementation of the policies for the betterment of female labourers.

6.3.3 Update existing policies and formation of new law/act

- As per the Government of Gujarat notification dated 6th March, 2012 minimum wages for casual agricultural labourers should be Rs.120 which is low in current economic scenario.
- It should be revised and there should be proper implementation of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 without any kind of gender discrimination.
- Government of India has launched the Shauchalaya Yojana under Swachchh Bharat campaign to promote cleanliness and healthy lifestyle. In agriculture, labourers are spending 6-8 hours on the field where they are not having any washroom facilities.
- Government should include this point in the scheme and employers should start building toilets in nearby areas of the farms, because defecation in open field leads to infection and other diseases.
- Government should make gender specific laws for safeguarding women's rights and conditions.
- Kerala has 'Kerala Agricultural Workers Act, 1974'. Same way all other states should also have specific Agricultural Workers Act for the betterment of agricultural labourers.
- The Maternity Benefits Act provision should be extended to the unorganised sector's females also.

6.3.4 Suggestions for employers

- Employers should provide some shed or restroom facilities for the labourers and specifically for their accompanying children for their safety from any field injuries, rain or hot temperature.
- Employers should provide safety equipments to pesticide workers.
- Employers should provide first-aid facility for medical emergencies to reduce danger of injury. Also, all the employers should give compensation for all types of injuries.

Male co-workers, employers, family members and society, all should respect role of women in agriculture and their contribution should be recognised and appreciated.

6.4 BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

This study will be beneficial for the three main groups that is agricultural labourers, their employers and the government as below.

- This study will benefit the female agricultural labourers working on the field.
- It will also help the employers to increase the work satisfaction level of labourers by providing them better work conditions which will result in more efficiency and productivity of workers.
- This study will help the government to revise policies for the betterments of female labourers in agriculture sector.

If all the basic facilities are provided to the agricultural labourers, then it will increase their efficiency. Agriculture sector will become more productive which will result into increased GDP growth of the country.

6.5 FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are few future possibilities for the further expansion in current study.

- There should be practical use of the results of this study form actually improving the working conditions of female agricultural labourers.
- In future, this study can be extended by visiting more districts for data collection to get more exact idea about the conditions of female agricultural labourers.
- Inter-districts or inter-states comparative studies can be conducted in future to suggest ways to improve conditions of females in less developed districts/states.
- Studies about the Gujarat female agricultural labourer's participation in decision-making process can be conducted and studies about role of educational institutes, extension services and mass media in farm women empowerment can be conducted in future.
- A comparative study on the role, status of male and female agricultural labourers can be conducted to get more insights about gender discrimination.
- Studies to identify training needs and suitable training methods for Gujarat female agricultural labourers can be conducted.
- Studies on the ways of capacity building and empowerment of these labourers can be also done.

So, all the mentioned studies can be conducted in future to get more detailed ideas about the women agricultural labourers.