



**STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE AGRICULTURAL  
SECTOR - A SELECT STUDY IN PRAKASAM  
DISTRICT OF A.P.**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study analyses the Status of Women in the Agricultural Sector by conducting a study on Prakasam District of A.P. The study throws light on the analysis of socio-economic conditions of women workers in the agriculture sector. The study adopts descriptive research design and Random Sampling Technique. Both Primary and Secondary data were used for the analysis of the subject matter in issue. The study found that most of the agriculture women are working as casual and hired labourers. Majority of the women expressed that they do not get same wages for same work as men get. Suggestions were made by basing on the findings of the data analysis in order to uplift the status of the women in agricultural sector.

**KEY WORDS:** Agricultural sector, Poverty, Unemployment, Empowerment, unorganized sector.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The religious traditions and social institutions have a deep bearing on the role and status of women. At the socio-political plain, women suffered from the denial of freedom

even in their homes, repression and unnatural indoctrination, unequal and inferior status, rigid caste hierarchy and untouchability. Consequently, most women were reduced to

dumb cattle and had lead to inhuman beastly life. Women form about half of the population of the country, but their situation has been grim. For centuries, they have been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices. The most widespread and de-humanizing discriminations and assault against women are on the psychological level. The female psyche is being crushed at the very childhood. The female psyche is brutalized long before bodily violence is inflicted on her. They are conditioned to accept inferior positions in society. Rural poverty is one of the important characteristics of India and nearly 45 percent of rural people are below poverty line. Most of them are just surviving with day-to-day earnings. The condition of women in India is more miserable in every field of social life. They are paid half of three-quarters of the money while their male counterparts earn for the same job. Agriculture is the largest sector of the rural economy and is a family enterprise, since 56 percent of its population is dependent on it in India . India's economic security is heavily dependent on agriculture. In terms of employment, it is the most important sector. Women in India are the back bone of the society and important human resource. They play a significant and crucial role in agriculture and allied operations and house hold activities. Traditionally, women have always played an important role in agriculture as farmers, co-farmers, family labour, wage labours and managers of farms.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Romila Thapar, another outstanding historian of early India has given some important information regarding slavery and women workers in her various works. S.Jaiswal's paper have thrown light on slavery and discusses the possible connections between

women's status and their involvement in production within the framework of what she perceives as an emerging class divided society and postulates links between the kinship structure and the modes of production.

Examining the strengths and status of informal sector women workers in the context of globalization, Kalpagam observes a process of casualisation of women labor force, feminization of agriculture and growth of rigidities in getting non agriculture organized sector jobs for women.

The macro trends of urban women workers in the 1990's are looked into by Jayati Gosh [2001]. Unemployment and underemployment are its salient features- also unpaid unrecognized work done at home.

## **3. NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Women were exploited to a greater degree as they were paid less compared to men for similar nature of work and hours spent on work. The conditions of the work in the unorganized sector were unsatisfactory and the problems confronted by them were acute, and that their illiteracy, poverty and indebtedness forced them to work for lower wages and under unjust conditions. Hence, there is every need to analyze the exiting lacunas in this area and it is felt to study the status of women in the agricultural sector in India which falls under the class of "unorganized sector".

## **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To assess the working environment of agricultural women and problems of women in farm activities.
2. To analyze the socio-economic conditions of women workers in the agriculture sector.
3. To suggest various measures in order to improve the status of women in Indian agricultural sector.

## **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To carryout the research problem with more seriousness the present study has adopted the descriptive research design.

To carryout the present research work, Prakasam District was selected to study the status women in agriculture sector.

The study has applied Random Sampling method in selecting District Mandals and Villages. For the field study two mandals (i.e. Inkollu and Pamur Mandals of Prakasam District) have been chosen. From Inkollu Mandal, Nagandla and Pusapadu villages and from Pamur Mandal, Chinthalapalem and Mopadu villages were selected for the sampling purpose.

Interview schedule method was adopted and 440 respondents, (from each mandal - 220 respondents/ 110 respondents from each village) have been taken for the study and primary data was collected from these respondents.

Spot interviews with elder persons of the sample villages were also conducted for estimating valuable information.

The secondary data was collected from relevant journals, reports, research notes and various books to strengthen the theoretical frame work.

While analyzing the data simple statistical tools like simple percentages, simple averages, cross tabulation have been used wherever and whenever necessary.

## **6. LIMITATIONS**

1. The study has been confined to four villages representing two Mandals of Prakasam District in Andhra Pradesh. Hence the results are hopefully representative.
2. The focus of the study is restricted to socio - economic perspectives of women workers in Agricultural Sector.

## **7. PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA**

Prakasam district is one of the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. A district geographical feature of the district is the varied nature of plains and rocky hills. The areas near the coast are plain and fertile while the other parts are stony plains and hills with dry shrub forests. The district has variety of soils like black cotton, red soil, and red sandy loamy and sandy loamy. The average rain fall is 751mm. The district can be termed as warm district. The maximum temperature in summer is 45 degrees. The duration of winter in the district is very short. The district is located between 78.43-80.25 Eastern longitude and 14.57 -16.17 Northern latitude. The geographical area is 1762600 Hectares.

There are 3 revenue divisions in the district. 1. Ongole, 2.Kandukur and 3 Markapur and 56 Mandals. Prakasam District is an administrative district in Coastal Andhra region of Andhra Pradesh. It occupies an area of 17,626 Km<sup>2</sup> (6,805 sq mi) and had a population of 3,392,764 (2011 Census). The district headquarters are located at Ongole, the largest city in the district.

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an area of 17,626 square kilometers (6,805 sq mi), comparatively equivalent to Indonesia's Seram Island.

Telugu is the language spoken here. Cumbum mandal showed very good growth indicators in the 2011 census. According to census of India. Cumbum mandal has been

recognized as the second highest in literacy in Prakasam district literacy having 73.55% literates after Ongole Mandal. Also Cumbum mandal is the third highest in sex ratio in Prakasam district havng 1031 female population per 1000 males.

**8. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY**

**Table No.1 Age – wise Particulars of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Age. Pariculars	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	16-25 Years	38 (17.27)	32 (14.54)	70 (15.90)
2	26-35 Years	62 (28.18)	66 (30.00)	128 (29.09)
3	36-45 Years	88 (40.00)	82 (37.27)	170 (38.63)
4	46 Above	32 (14.55)	40 (18.18)	72 (16.36)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>440</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table No.2 Educational Status of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Educational Status	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	Illiterate	108 (49.09)	94 (42.72)	<b>202</b> <b>(45.91)</b>
2	Primary Education	46 (20.90)	64 (29.09)	<b>110</b> <b>(25.00)</b>
3	Secondary Education	38 (17.27)	28 (12.72)	<b>66</b> <b>(15.00)</b>
4	Intermediate	22 (10.00)	18 (8.18)	<b>40</b> <b>(9.09)</b>
5	Degree & above	06 (2.72)	16 (7.27)	<b>22</b> <b>(5.00)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>440</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table - 3 Type of family of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Type of Family	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	Joint Family	26 (11.81)	14 (6.36)	<b>40</b> <b>(9.09)</b>
2	Nuclear Family	194 (88.18)	206 (93.63)	<b>400</b> <b>(90.91)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>220</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>440</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table No.4 Sources of Irrigation of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Source of Irrigation	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	Rainfall	34 (15.45)	24 (10.900)	58 (13.18)
2	Canal	-	98 (44.54)	98 (22.17)
3	Tank	96 (43.63)	52 (23.63)	148 (33.63)
4	Well	70 (31.81)	18 (8.18)	88 (20.00)
5	Bore Well	20 (9.09)	28 (12.72)	48 (10.90)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>440 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table - 5 Subsidiary Occupation of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Occupation	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	Non - Agricultural Labourers	38 (30.64)	46 (28.05)	84
2	Traders	28 (22.58)	58 (35.36)	86 (29.16)
3	Artisans	24 (19.35)	16 (9.76)	40 (29.86)
4	Services	22 (17.74)	38 (23.17)	60 (13.88)
5	Other	12 (9.67)	06 (3.66)	18 (6.25)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124 (100.00)</b>	<b>164 (100.00)</b>	<b>288 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table - 6 Type of House of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Type of House	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	Hut House	18 (8.18)	06 (2.72)	24 (5.45)
2	Tiled House	122 (55.45)	88 (40.00)	210 (47.73)
3	Slab	66 (30.00)	102 (46.36)	168 (38.18)
4	Rented	14 (6.36)	24 (10.88)	38 (8.63)
5	<b>Total</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>440 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

**Table - 7 Land Particulars of the Respondents**

Sl.No.	Acres	No. of the Respondents		Grand Total
		Pamur Mandal	Inkollu Mandal	
1	>1	14 (6.36)	08 (3.63)	22 (5.00)
2	1-3	68 (30.90)	84 (38.18)	152 (34.54)
3	3-5	82 (37.27)	68 (30.90)	150 (34.09)
4	5-8	32 (14.54)	42 (19.09)	74 (16.81)
5	8 above	24 (10.90)	18 (8.18)	42 (9.45)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>220 (100.00)</b>	<b>440 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Study

## 9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ✧ It is observed that age and sex composition of the population indicates that 38.63 percent population in the age group of 36-45. Most of the agriculture women about 55 percent of there are in between 36-46 age group.
- ✧ It is observed that most of the agriculture women belongs to backward class
- ✧ The marital status of the respondents shows that about 37 percent unmarried, widows, separate and divorce women's existing in agriculture field.
- ✧ In this study area, 9 percent Agriculture families are living in joint family system. While remaining 91 percent Agriculture families are in nuclear family system.
- ✧ The study observed that about 25 percent agriculture women did their primary education and 45.9 percent agriculture women are illiterates. To compare the various mandals of the agriculture women most of the illiterates are found in Pamur mandal. It is also observed that Pamur mandal are well advanced in their secondary education as compared to other mandal.
- ✧ The study observes that most of the agriculture women have houses with tiles and 19 percent agriculture women did not possess any type of houses.
- ✧ The study also explores the fact that about 73 percent of agriculture women have less than 5 acres of land
- ✧ The source of irrigation particulars of the agriculture women were found that the major source of irrigation is from tanks. Thus canal irrigation was not found in Pamur mandal but tank irrigation is high when compared to Inkollu
- ✧ It is observed that about 81.82 percent respondent's occupation is agriculture and 18 percent respondents are agriculture labourers.
- ✧ The study observes that about 288 respondents were doing subsidiary occupation to generate additional income
- ✧ The study depicts that in selected two mandals the residents were achieving the Average yield of 5 to 8 quintals per acre
- ✧ The study explores the fact that among the hired labour, child labour and Casual labour wages have huge Wage differences.

- ✧ The study observes that most of the agriculture women are working as casual and hired labourers. This family labourers are found in Pamur Mandal
- ✧ It is revealed that the most of the agriculture women have borrowed money from non institutional sources by paying more interest rates.
- ✧ It is observed that decision making in Agricultural Activities is very less but it is high in Inkollu Mandal.
- ✧ Majority of the women expressed that they do not get same wages for same work as men get.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Majority of women in rural India are enjoying husband's help in domestic work and from other family members and thereby enjoying higher status in the society, than their traditional status, due to change in social roles, social values, increase in education, awareness and awakening towards their rights and development of science and technology. But this glaring trend is not with all the women in rural settings. A high percentage of women are still far behind from this enjoyment.

## 11. SUGGESTIONS

- ↳ Intensification of Agriculture through adoption of double and multiple cropping practices that would increase the prospects of employment on the farms.
- ↳ Ensuring education and knowledge awareness programmes clubbed with skills enhancement and technical Know-How.

- ↳ Creating ample working opportunities with a paradigm shift towards alternative skills.
- ↳ Increasing decision-making power, gender awareness as well as encouraging motivation programme and community initiatives.
- ↳ Facilitating need-based training.

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