

Women Employment through Sericulture (In Anantapur District)

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Abstract—Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. But the sector is underperforming in many countries in part because women, who are often crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy, face constraints that reduce their productivity. In this paper we draw on the available empirical evidence to study in which areas and to what degree women participation in agriculture. Aggregate data shows that women comprise about 43 percent of the agriculture labor force globally and in developing countries. But this figure marks considerable variation across regions and within countries according to age and social class. In any discourse on sociology and anthropology, one fact that clearly emerges is that women can generally be trusted to perform their duties with utmost care and attention. This is more so in the case of agriculture and allied activities. No wonder women are playing a very important role in the sericulture industry. Their qualities like maternal instincts and loving care of those under their charge prove to be very helpful in the successful breeding of silk worms. The sericulture industry has opened up phenomenal employment avenues and helped women to become important players in the decision-making process—whether in the household or in the community at large. The activity involvement of women is very essential for the success of the any community development initiative. The unequal status of women is owing to a vicious circle in which they have caught up with low levels or absence of literacy coupled with low levels of skills leading to low level of employment and low wages, containing them very often to marginal categories of work or unpaid work.

Keywords: women employment, society, sericulture, agriculture, labor.

1. INTRODUCTION

The international development community has recognized that agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in countries where it is the main occupation of the poor. But the agricultural sector in many developing countries is under programming in part because women, who represent a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles as farmers, laborers and entrepreneurs, almost everywhere face more severe constraints than men in access to productive resource. Efforts by national government and the international community to achieve their goals for agricultural development, economic growth and food security will be

strengthened and accelerated if they build on the contributions that women make and take steps to alleviate these constraints. Women labor force participation in the organized sector has increased only marginally from 11 percent in 1971 to 12.4 percent in 1979 and to a meager 19% in 2011. Only urban women in all walks of life have reached top positions. On the whole, women in countries to toil in labor-intensive jobs such as wage labor carry water, cleaning and storage of grains, hand shelling of groundnuts, picking of leaves and fruits etc., more than 90% of working women are still employed in the unorganized sector. According to the report ashram Shakti there is no doubt that the women's contribution to the family and national economy is much more than their actual earning. However, in the context of national development women's participation in the economic activity is predominant. The economic role played by women cannot be isolated from the frame-work of development. In rural areas, their work in the context of socio-economic setting includes a number of activities. It is universally accepted that farm women play an important role. In carryout agricultural activities, household industry and the service sector. In agricultural sector, sericulture occupies predominant place so as to provide more employment opportunities to the rural women. The present paper is focused, mainly, on generation of employment, income for women through sericulture in a drought hit district like Anantapur.

Sericulture is a labor intensive agro-based non-farm activity ideally suited to a predominantly agricultural state like Andhra Pradesh. The state has the vast potential for sericulture development. The main development has been in the Rayalaseema region of the state where climatic conditions are suitable for sericulture development. On an average, during one year, five crops of cocoons can be harvested in the traditional areas and four crops in the non-traditional areas like Telengana and coastal Andhra. Sericulture offers tremendous scope for improvement of socio-economic conditions of the small and marginal farmers. At present in Andhra Pradesh around 6.90 lakhs people are employed in sericulture directly and its ancillary industries. The area under mulberry cultivation in the state was only two hectares in 1953, and it

went up to 16,hectares in 1956.at phenomenal increase work place in the mulberry area from 1975-76 to 2011-12,which accounts for 1214 hectares to 73,807.86 hectares in the state. It is worth mentioning that, sericulture is concentrated in the Rayalaseema districts of Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool. Especially, Anantapur and Chittoor Districts, sericulture is highly concentrated. These two districts are adjoining to Karnataka state which is often called the silk state of India. Around 80 percent of the area under mulberry cultivation in the state is found in the four districts of Rayalaseema region. This paper contributes to the gender debate in agriculture by assessing the empirical evidence in the some areas that has received much attention in the literature:

- How much of the agricultural labor in the developing world is performed by women?
- Do women face discrimination in rural labor markets?

2. OBJECTIVES

- To study the percentage of women participation in agriculture sector.
- Impact of agriculture sector on women empowerment.

3. METHODOLOGY

Secondary data has been consulted for the purpose of study the data will be generated by text books and internet sources on the concept.

4. CONCEPT

Sericulture is an extremely labor intensive industry and occupies a pivotal position from the point of providing employment and additional income to weaker section. In this context, the transformation of sericulture industry from subsistence type of operation to a modern scientific system requires the attention of all major players like policy makers, administrators, and personnel associated with the industry. Here, the word personnel mainly refers to women laborers who are the full-time workers and who look after silkworm rearing and management and whose contribution is more than that of men in this area. It has been reported that women contributed about 50% and 60% of labor to mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing respectively.

It has been rightly observed by that economic development has been one of the main objectives of many governments of countries around the world. And, improving the socio-economic condition of women has also been an important aim in their development programmes. In this context, and in India, sericulture has found to be very helpful in meeting the development objectives of the government. This is because it is labor intensive, and provides employment and income to many people, both in rural and urban areas. As such, it is of particular significance in anti-poverty programmes.

Women are mostly favored because of their industrious nature. They are employed in a mulberry garden or silkworm rearing or in a grain age or in weaving or in a garment-making factory, and so on. As mentioned earlier, sericulture offers a vast scope to augment the family income. Women are actively engaged in the mulberry fields for removal of weeds and in leaf plucking. The leaf plucking is a skilled and delicate operation. The workers must have full knowledge about which leaves to be plucked to suit different ages of silkworms. Women go to the fields in the morning for plucking the mulberry leaves and return to the rearing house before noon. However, their work has not always been properly recognized or suitably rewarded .cultural factors have complicated the proper evaluation of the quantum and quality of women's contribution. This includes elements such as structure of work in each society, segregation of women and men in specific occupations, and the division of labor.

5. TOOLS

- The hand hoe still remains the key farm implement in all of the countries of the study.
- It was estimated there in 1997 that almost 90percent of farmers use hand tools and human labor only, that draft power is used on only 8percent of the cultivated land, and tractor power on only 2 percent.
- It has been adopted by everyone in central Senegal for weeding, displacing more traditional hoes.

6. SCOPE

- The consultant advised that, given the factor of culture and traditional that surround tools used by rural people, research based on normal interviews would probably not provide the frank and full information needed;
- Focus group discussions would bring together 8-12 people of similar, educational, economic and social level who share the same lifestyle and problems.
- The agricultural economy in these areas was mainly at subsistence level, with consequent limitations in the availability of resources for investment in improved production technology.
- Focus group discussions would be backed up by key in format interviews with people in governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors concerned with agricultural production, related gender issues, and farm mechanization.
- The study was generally conducted in areas of relatively poor agriculture, where there had been a high level of male exodus to find work in urban areas, and where women, therefore, were assuming an ever-increasing role in farm work.

7. METHODS

This article is based on the data collected from Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh; this study is a qualitative micro-level study of sericulture being practiced in that district. The primary data were collected through a structured household schedule, informal interviews using detailed checklists, key informant interviews, case studies, and observation from all respondents in the village. Quantitative information with regard to the technological development, land holding, demographic aspects, cropping pattern, and irrigation systems were collected by using household schedules and the district statistical handbook. Secondary data and information were collected from the annual reports of the department of sericulture, Andhra Pradesh; the studies and reports brought out by the CSB, Bangalore; centre for economic and social studies (CESS), Hyderabad; Indira Gandhi memorial library, university of Hyderabad, ISEC, Bangalore; NIRD, Hyderabad; and CSRTI, Mysore.

8. ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

Anantapur is the southern-most district of the Rayalaseema region, located to the west of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. This district is located in the rain-shadow region of Andhra Pradesh and receives an average annual rainfall of 522mm, the second lowest in India. It is one of the poorest districts in country. Recurring droughts are a common phenomenon in this district, which was one of the thirty-one districts identified by the government of India as being prone to agriculture-related suicides in 2006. It is also one of the 17 districts identified as centers for human trafficking in A.P.

Based on the provisional population from the 2011 Indian census, Anantapur has total population of 4,083,315 (2,064,98 males and 2,018,387 females). According to the data, the population density is 213 per sq km, compared with 190 in 2001.

The overall literacy rate in Anantapur District, according to the 2011 census, is 64.28% as opposed to 56.13% in 2001, and is lower than the average A.P state and national literacy rates (67.7% and 74.04% respectively).

Both male (74.09%) and female (54.31%) literacy rates in the Anantapur district are also lower than the A.P state and national averages the district is divided into 63 Revenue mandals, which are now called taluks, spread across 3 Revenue Divisions: the Anantapur (20 taluks), Dharmavaram (17 taluks), and Penukonda divisions (26 taluks). There are 929 inhabited revenue Villages and 3,360 hamlets in the districts, according to the 2001 census.

As per the 2001 census, the overall literacy rate among SC is 44.48%, compared with 44.52% among ST. There is a marked difference between male (55.90%) and female literacy (32.48%) in scheduled castes. Likewise, in 2001, female literacy (30.29%) in scheduled tribes was lower than male literacy (57.22%).

In terms of gender ratio in Anantapur, there are 977 females for every 1000 males, compare with 958 in the 2001 census. This is lower than the A.P state average (992), but higher than the national average (940). There are 426,922 children (221,539 males and 205,383 females) between the ages of 0 and 6. According to 2011 census, the child gender ratio of 927, compared with 959 in 2001. The drastic fall in the number of girls is alarming. Of the total geographical area of 19.13 lakh hectares, the total net area sown as per the 2008-09 statistics was 10.82 lakh hectares (56.61%). The district occupies the lowest position in terms of irrigation facilities with 1.45 lakh hectares (14.08%) of gross irrigated area, which consists mainly of undependable tube wells and tanks. Anantapur farmers are largely dependent on drought-prone, rain-fed agriculture.

9. EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN SERICULTURE IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

At present the sericulture industry is providing direct livelihood for more than 3.10 lakh persons in Anantapur district. The involvements of hired labor are high and the demand for labor is increasing every year. Family labor involvement is decreasing in sericulture activities as there is an improvement in the living standards of the sericulturists.

10. WOMEN EMPLOYMENT THROUGH SERICULTURE IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

In Anantapur district, for each farm the nature and intensity of farm work done by family members as well as hired labor of all categories has been analyzed in the study. Employment in sericulture has been divided into two heads viz.

1. Mulberry cultivation-ploughing, plantation, weeding, irrigation, pruning, carrying, the leaves, leaf harvest etc.,
2. Silk-worm rearing-preparation of chawkie, silk worm rearing, cocoon harvesting, silk twisting and reeling and marketing etc., details of labor involvement both men and women in sericulture have been collected through field study and presented in the following paragraph.

Labor requirements for limited establishment of one acre mulberry garden are nearly 160 man days. During the second year onwards the requirement of labor on one acre mulberry farm increases slightly up to 170 man days. But the rearing of 1,200 DFLS generates 450 man days per annum. An important finding is that the percentage of family labor is gradually decreasing and dependence on hired labor has been increasing with an added demand for skilled labor.

11. STUDY AREA

Anantapur is one of the most backward and drought prone districts among six districts in the country, which is situated in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Here the average rain fall is less than 500 mm per year. Hence sericulture is a boon

for poor farmers of Anantapur. Mulberry being a drought resistant plant and ensuring high returns and with the implementation of DPAP and six point formula from 1975-76 onwards mulberry acreage has increased rapidly in Anantapur District. The district occupies first place among mulberry raw silk producing districts in Andhra Pradesh, the mulberry acreage of Anantapur district was 500 acres during 1976-77 and it rise 78,950 acres by the end of 2011-12. engaging about 41,325, farmers and getting net annual income of 30,000/- to Rs.40,000/- from one acre of mulberry garden. In order to place the sericulture industry on the lines of expansion, various infrastructural facilities such as seed farms, chawkie rearing unite, and grainges, silk warm hatchery centers, cocoon markets and research centers have been provided. With all these facilities unemployment is reduced. Especially women unemployment is reduced with the initiation and development of this rural non-farm activity with its various programmes and schemes.

12. TIME ALLOCATION

In addition to rigorous agricultural work that is undervalued and underpaid, women are also responsible for the well-being of the household. They care for their children, provide unusually take part in subsistence agriculture, and do chores around the house. Based on time allocation studies, which pinpoint exactly how a woman's hours are spent throughout the week, Indian women spend about 25 hours in a week doing household chores and five hours in caring & community work. Besides the 30 hours of unpaid work, women spend the same amount of time as men carrying out agricultural work. Daughters typically supplements or substitute for mother's unpaid work around the household. Considered female tasks, the opportunity cost of girls' time for school is higher than that of sons. Girls do significantly more housework than boys, which compromises their schooling.

13. FINDINGS

- This study was instigated by the international for agricultural development (IFAD). and when attempts had been made to introduce new tools for cultivating or other operations; they had often been rejected by rural people.
- As a first step, however, a study was required to establish the social, cultural, economic, and technical context for attempts to improve the production tools used on the land by African women.
- The government agreed to finance the cost of an international consultant for a period of three months to conduct such a study.
- It must be stressed that this study used a qualitative research approach its aim was not to gather statistical or numerical information, and where groups of rural people were asked provide such information
- For example the number of days women spend in the field doing various operations –it was mainly to ascertain their

perceptions of their work and thereby identify which operations, seen from their point of view, should perhaps take priority for possible improvements.

14. SUGGESTIONS

- To introduce the new technology in agricultural sector
- if training is given to the women ,this will help them to perform the task more skillfully

15. CONCLUSION

In this article, a sociological understanding of the sericulture development, as studied by the scholars of the different disciplines across the states of India, has been provided. Sericulture is best suited to a country like India, where manpower and land resources are in surplus. It generates direct and indirect employment in various ways. More and more farmers in India have taken up sericulture activity and this activity, which was once confined to only five states to all states of India. Of all the states, Karnataka has emerged as the leading producer of silk –accounting for more than 50% of the mulberry silk production in the country. Andhra Pradesh, though not a traditional state in silk production, occupies the second place in the country. It is worth mentioning that the sericulture has been perceived as a boon because of its prospects in the drought prone areas of Anantapur district. It has madedent in employment the agricultural labor especially women labor because of its potentialities resulting in higher income to the sericulture family with less capital in a short period of time. However, it is still missing the scientific approach and because of their illiteracy and pre-occupation with the domestic work. As it is sericulture has been contributing a lot by providing employment opportunities leading to income generation to the agricultural labor especially for women. Sericulture should enable them to free themselves from the shackles of ignorance and dependence by providing them institutional support, periodic training and constant and continuous persuasion with up to date scientific information.

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