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Women in Agriculture: Socio-Economic Perspectives from South Karnataka

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Abstracts

The study focuses on the challenges faced by women in agriculture, including educational backwardness, poverty, deprivation, ill-health, and lack of opportunities for economic, political, and social development. The study highlights the potential of women in agriculture and the need for their recognition as progressive farmers. The research methodology includes a survey of 150 female agriculturalists in South Karnataka, and the results show a significant relationship between the selected districts and the level of social recognition received by female agriculturalists. The study concludes that the socio-economic development of women agriculturalists has not reached a certain level, and there is a need for policies and programs to address the challenges faced by women in agriculture. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the role of women in agriculture and the importance of their recognition and support for rural development.

Keywords: *Socio-economic status, Female Agriculturalists, South Karnataka, Rural Women*

JEL Classification Code: I3, J16, R1, O13

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1. Introduction

Agriculture is a crucial sector in Karnataka's economy, and women play a pivotal role in various aspects of farming and rural life (Sunitha et al., 2018). Women in rural Karnataka have been actively involved in agriculture, contributing significantly to food production. While their roles were often relegated to subsidiary tasks like weeding and harvesting, over time, their engagement has expanded to encompass broader responsibilities, including land ownership, decision-making, and agribusiness ventures. The involvement of female agriculturalists has a positive impact on Karnataka's agricultural sector (Kumar Rathod et al., 2011). Improved agricultural productivity due to their knowledge of traditional farming practices. Diversification of crops and agribusiness, leading to increased income and rural development(Chandra Deogharia, 2018). Preservation of agricultural biodiversity through seed-saving practices. Enhanced food security and nutrition through their contribution to both cultivation and household management(Sunderland et al., n.d.).

2. Review of literature

This is a case study on the socio-economic status of farm women in Faizabad District of Uttar-Pradesh, India. Rural women constitute 80% of the total women population in India and are capable of playing a pivotal role in the rural economy. However, they face challenges such as educational backwardness, poverty, deprivation, ill-health, and lack of opportunities for economic, political, and social development. The study highlights the potential of women in agriculture and the need for their recognition as progressive farmers. The study also indicates that family conditions affect girls' education and dropout rates (Tewari and Dwivedi, 2011)

Article deals with socio-economic characteristics of women farmers and their impact on family nutrition in Kakiyeye Village, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study found that home gardening and farm ownership should be encouraged among women farmers to enhance proper nutrition of the family. The study also revealed that women empowerment (financially) for sustainable development towards economic security is necessary to equip them with the capacity to live meaningfully (Okwori et al. 2012)

The article, written by Dr. MunMunGhosh and Dr. ArindamGhosh (2014), highlights the growth trend of female participation in agriculture across various Indian states. Despite being a significant part of the workforce, many women remain invisible in the industry. The research sheds light on potential reasons for this invisibility and the need for further investigation into the issue.

The study explores the ecological and socio-economic aspects of women's contribution to the agricultural sector in the region. The study highlights the challenges faced by women farmers and the technological gap between rural women and developmental programs (Bordoloi, 2021).

A case study of Karimnagar district in Andhra Pradesh, India, that examines the socio-economic conditions of women working in agriculture. It includes a review of select and recent studies on women's employment and labor utilization, covering aspects such as women's participation, technology, cropping patterns, irrigation facilities, economic contribution, migration, education, and discrimination. The study concludes with an analysis of the economic contribution of agricultural working women to household income and the pattern of expenditure and savings of agricultural women labor in the study area (Abidin and Prasetyani, 2021).

A study conducted on the socio-economic status of farm women and the constraints they face in agriculture and allied systems in Jammu District. It highlights the challenges faced by women in the agricultural sector, such as lack of financial resources, suitable equipment, and market malpractices. The article emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to improve the situation of women in agriculture and promote gender equality in rural areas. Overall, it provides valuable insights into the socio-economic factors affecting the participation of women in agriculture and the policy measures that can be taken to address these challenges (Sneha et al. 2022).

3. Research gap

A research gap in the study of the socio-economic status of female

agriculturalists in South Karnataka is the limited empirical investigation into the specific barriers and opportunities that affect their access to agricultural resources, economic decision-making power, and overall well-being within the context of local socio-cultural and economic dynamics.

4. Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

4.1. Objectives of the Study

- To study the demographic characteristics of female Agriculturalists in South Karnataka.
- To examine the social status of female agriculturalists in South Karnataka.
- To figure out the level of economic empowerment of female agriculturalists in the South Karnataka.

4.2. Hypotheses of the Study

H_{01}: There is no significance difference between place of resident and range of monthly income among female agriculturalists in South Karnataka.

H_{02}: There is no significance difference between place of resident and level of social recognition among female agriculturalists in South Karnataka.

5. Research methodology

5.1. Materials and Methods

The study focuses on the Socio-economic status of female agriculturalists and issues related to female agriculturalists in South Karnataka. The present study is empirical in nature and data collected from selected districts in South Karnataka. The population of the study is unknown so equal numbers of female agriculturalists were selected from selected districts in South Karnataka. South Karnataka includes 15 districts out of 15 districts 6 are selected based on highest female agriculturalists. The convenience sampling technique has been used for the purpose of obtaining the sample units for the study.

Table 1: Sample Respondents from the selected districts of South Karnataka state

Sl. No.	Name of district	Frequency	Percent
1	Bengaluru Rural	25	16.67
2	Tumakuru	25	16.67
3	Mandy	25	16.67
4	Kolar	25	16.67
5	Hassan	25	16.67
6	Mysuru	25	16.67
Total		150	100

Source: Author's Own Compilation

For the purpose of the study 25 numbers of respondents were selected from the selected districts of the south Karnataka. Data is collected through questionnaire using interview schedule method. The primary data of the study is presented with the help of tables, graphs and charts, and analyzed and interpreted with descriptive statistics. Further, the correlation has been observed between demographic variables with socio-economic factors to analyze the result lucidly.

5.2. Locale of the Study

The present study is conducted on the selected districts of South Karnataka. The 6 districts were selected i.e. Bengaluru rural, Tumakuru, Mandya, Kolar, Hassan and Mysuru. From each districts 25 female agriculturalist were selected for data collection.

6. Data Analysis

In order to fulfill the objectives laid in this paper, the results of the field survey are depicted in the subsequent tables

The table 2 represents the sample female agriculturalists mostly are in age group of 25 years to 45 years of age. It means the female agriculturalists of Karnataka are mostly young.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Female Agriculturalists

Sl.No.	Particulars	Groups	Frequency	Percent
1	Age Group	18 - 25 Years	22	14.67
		25 - 35 Years	51	34.00
		35 - 45 Years	55	36.67
		45 - 55 Years	13	8.67
		55 Years and above	9	6.00
Total			150	100.00
2	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	85	56.67
		Primary	27	18
		Matriculation	19	12.67
		Intermediate/PU	11	7.33
		Graduate	6	4
		Post Graduate	2	1.3
Total			150	100
3	Marital Status	Unmarried	2	1.33
		Married	148	98.67
Total			150	100
4	Social Category	Unreserved	38	25.33
		OBC	69	46.00
		SC	32	21.33
		ST	11	7.33
Total			150	100
5	Religious Belief	Hindu	143	95.33
		Muslim	5	3.33
		Christian	1	0.67
		Buddist	0	0.00
		Other	1	0.67
Total			150	100

Source: Primary Data

The table also shows 56.67% of the respondents were illiterate, 18% got primary education and remaining 25.33% were studied matriculation and above. The study shows that 98.67 % of female agriculturalists of Karnataka are married and rest 1.33% are unmarried.

The table also shows in the total 150 respondents 25.33% of respondents related to unreserved social category,

46% related to OBC, 21.33% are belongs to SC and remaining 7.33% respondents belongs to ST community. It also shows religious belief of the respondent's majority of the female agriculturalists are Hindu i.e.95.33% and remaining 4.67% belongs to other religion like Muslim, Christian and other.

Table 3: Female agriculturalists Family and agriculture profile

Sl.No.	Particulars	Groups	Frequency	Percent
1	Family Type	Nuclear	146	97.33
		Joint	4	2.67
Total			150	100
2	No. of Family Members	Up to Two	28	18.67
		Two to Five	73	48.67
		Five to Eight	36	24.00
		Eight and Above	13	8.67
Total			150	100
3	Family Support	Yes	108	72.00
		No	42	28.00
Total			150	100
4	Resident Location	Urban	12	8
		Rural	138	92
Total			150	100
5	Years of Existence	Less than 5 years	26	17.33
		5 years to 10 years	55	36.67
		10 years to 20 years	61	40.67
		above 20 years	8	5.33
Total			150	100

Source: Primary Data

The table 3 projects that 2.67% of the female agriculturalists are from joint family member and remaining 97.33% of the respondents from the nuclear family. Around 18.67% female agriculturalists cited that they have up to two members in their family. Whereas 48.67% of female agriculturalists state that they have up to five members in the respective family. 24% of the respondents have up to eight members in the respective family and 8.67% of the respondents have the above eight members in their family. In addition, table 3 depicts that 72% of the female agriculturalists get support from their family members and 28% of respondents do not get family support for agricultural activities and also its state that majority of the respondents are located at rural area. it is also analyzed that 17.33% of female agriculturalists have less than 5 years of experience in agricultural activities; followed by 36.67% respondents have five to ten-year experience, 40.67% respondents have ten to twenty years of experience and only 5.33% of respondents have above 20 years of experience.

Table 4: Monthly income of Female Agriculturalists

Sl.No.	Income (in Rs.)	Frequency	Percent
1	up to 5000	28	18.66
2	5000–10000	32	21.33
3	10000–15000	42	28
4	15000–20000	25	16.67
5	20000–25000	16	10.67
6	above 25000	7	4.66
Total		150	100

Source: Primary Data

The study found (Table 4) that 18.66% of the female agriculturalists of selected districts in Karnataka earn up to Rs.5000 p.m., followed by 21.33% earns Rs.5000 to Rs.10000 p.m., 28% respondents earns Rs.10000 to Rs.15000 p.m., 6.67% respondents earns Rs.15000 to Rs.20000 p.m., 10.67% respondents earn Rs.20000 to Rs.25000 p.m., and only 4.66% of the respondents earns above Rs.25000 p.m. from the agricultural activities.

Table 5: Social Recognition for the female agriculturalists

Sl. No.	Recognition Level	Frequency	Percent
1	Low	102	68
2	Medium	40	26.67
3	High	8	5.33
Total		150	100

Source: Primary Data

The table 5 shows that 68% of the respondents have low level of social recognition, around 26.67% of the respondents have medium level of social recognition and only 5.33% of the female agriculturalists have the high level social recognition.

Table 6: Socio-economic factors to measure status of female agriculturalists

Sl.No.	Factors	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1	Better education for children	Yes	61	40.67
		No	89	59.33
Total			150	100
2	Access to Good healthcare facilities	Yes	55	36.67
		No	95	63.33
Total			150	100
3	Better clothing for family	Yes	112	74.67
		No	38	25.33
Total			150	100
4	Community Participation	Better	30	20
		Same as earlier	120	80
Total			150	100
5	Income of household	Improved	72	48
		Same as earlier	78	52
Total			150	100
6	Savings from income	Yes	15	10
		No	135	90
Total			150	100

7	Insurance policy purchased for own life and dependent family members	Yes	28	18.67
		No	122	81.33
Total			150	100
8	Assets creation	Yes	9	6
		No	141	94
Total			150	100
9	Housing situation	Improved	35	23.33
		Same as earlier	115	76.67
Total			150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 indicates the various factors to measure the socio-economic status of female agriculturalists of south Karnataka. The study projects that 40.67% of sample female agriculturalists responded for better education for their children. Similarly, around 36.67% of respondents responded that they can be avail better healthcare facilities. Also, around 74.67% of female agriculturalists responded that they can afford better clothing for their families regularly. With respect to the community participation, around 20% respondents responded that their community participation has improved.

In case of household income, 48% of female agriculturalists state that it has been improved due to their involvement in agricultural activities. However, only 10% respondents cited that they were able to save money from their agriculture income. Similarly, only 18.67% female agriculturalists purchased insurance policy and rest are not at all insured. Only 6% respondents stated that they purchase the asset others are not. However, 23.33% of the female agriculturalists have responded that their involvement in agricultural activities has improved their housing situation in the locality.

7. Results and Discussion

To test both the hypothesis of the present study chi square test has been applied to test the null hypothesis. Subsequently few inferences have also been drawn with the help of cross tabulation.

Table 7: Crosstab between selected district and Monthly income

Sl.No	District Name	Range of Monthly income						Total
		Up to Rs.5000	5000 - 10000	10000-15000	15000 - 20000	20000 - 25000	above 25000	
1	Bengaluru Rural	3(12)	4(16)	9(36)	6(24)	2(8)	1(4)	25(100)
2	Tumakuru	4(16)	4(16)	7(28)	5(20)	3(12)	2(8)	25(100)
3	Mandya	6(24)	4(16)	6(24)	4(16)	3(12)	2(8)	25(100)
4	Kolar	3(12)	5(20)	8(32)	4(16)	4(16)	1(4)	25(100)
5	Hassan	7(28)	7(28)	6(24)	3(12)	2(8)	0(0)	25(100)
6	Mysuru	5(20)	8(32)	6(24)	3(12)	2(8)	1(4)	25(100)
Total		28 (18.7)	32 (21.3)	42 (3)	25 (16.7)	16 (10.7)	7 (4.7)	150 (100)

Source: Primary Data; (** Value in parentheses is in percentage)*

The Table 7 reflects that 36 percent of female agriculturalists of Bengaluru rural district earn monthly income up to Rs.15000 and only 4 percent of them earn more than Rs. 25000. In Tumakuru district 28perccent of the respondents are earn up to Rs.20000 but only 8 percent respondents earn above Rs.25000. Overall stable shows majority female agriculturalists earn up to Rs.15000 in other districts and less percentage respondents earn above Rs.25000.

The Chi-square result on table 8 state p>0.05 (25, N-150). Hence we accept the Null Hypothesis.

Thus, there is no significant relation exists between the selected districts and the level of monthly income earned by the female agriculturalists in South Karnataka.

Table 8: Result of Chi-Square Tests on Selected Districts and Monthly Income

	Value	Df
Chi-square	12.1935	25
P Value	0.9849	25
N of Valid cases	150	

Source: Authors own Compliance

The table-9 shows the relation between selected district and Social recognition.

Table 9: Crosstab between Selected District and Social Recognition

Sl.No.	District	Level of social recognition			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
1	Bengaluru Rural	19(76)	5(20)	1(4)	25(16.67)
2	Tumakuru	20(80)	3(12)	2(8)	25(16.67)
3	Mandya	15(60)	8(32)	2(8)	25(16.67)
4	Kolar	12(48)	12(48)	1(4)	25(16.67)
5	Hassan	17(68)	6(24)	2(8)	25(16.67)
6	Mysuru	19(76)	6(24)	0(0)	25(16.67)
Total		102(68)	40(26.67)	8(5.33)	150(100)

Source: Primary Data; (** Value in parentheses is in percentage)*

All the district female agriculturalists level of social recognition is low very few female agriculturalist level of social recognition is high.

Table 10: Result of Crosstab between Selected districts and Social Recognition

	Value	Df
Chi-square	11.15	10
P Value	0.3458	10
N of Valid cases	150	

Source: Authors own Compliance

The Chi-square result on table 10 states p<0.05(10, N=150). Hence we reject the null hypothesis.

Thus, there is significant relation exists between the selected districts and the level of social recognition received by the female agriculturalists in South Karnataka

8. Conclusion

Woman role in agricultural activities is unaccountable in India but their contribution play a significant role in

development of agriculture. One of the key finding of this study is socio and economic development of the women agriculturalist is not reach up to the certain level. Government needs to take initiatives and lunch separate schemes for women agriculturalists to promote their socio-economic status.

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