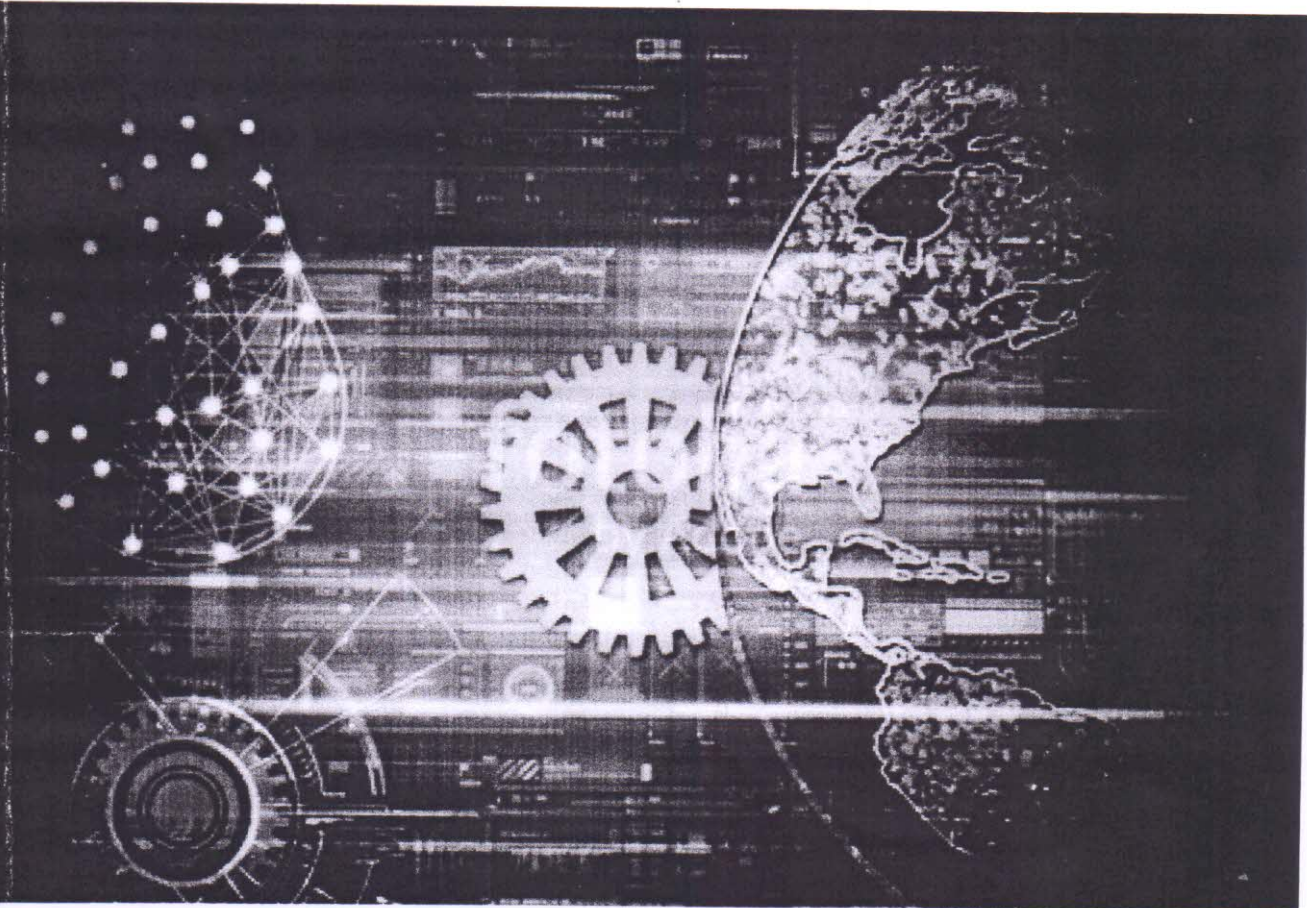


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CONTENTS

Sl. No.	Title of the Articles	Authors Name	Page No.
1	Rituals in Tank Construction : A Cultural Study	Ramanjinamma .P.O	1
2	An Overview of Higher Education System in India: Importance and Development	Dr. M.N.Murthy	4
3	Challenges and Opportunities of Higher Education Sector in India: An Analytical Study	Siddappa .E	9
4	Women Labour in Agriculture – Changing Pattern	Andanemma .K. Math	15
5	Status of Higher Education in Karnataka: Present Scenario of Growth and Development	Adinarayana	22
6	Data and Network Security	Dr. R. Suchithra	26
7	Economic Empowerment of Weaker Sections through Bank Credit	Dr. K.N.Sreenivasaiah	31
8	Employee Perceptions towards Performance Management Practices	Manjulamma .B.S & Dr. Usha Devi .N	37
9	E-Learning and Its Impact on Higher Education	A.G. Veerabhadrapa	43
10	An Analysis of Higher Education in India: Before and After Independence	Vedalakshmi .G	46
11	Regional Inequality in Foreign Direct Investment Flows to India: The Problem and the Prospects	R. Shekar	51
12	Federal System in India: A Judicial Exposition	Dhanunjaya .M.B	54
13	Poverty-the Effect of Poverty on Education in India	Kittappa	59
14	Promotion of Higher Education through the Concept of Community College in Modern India	Govindaraju .N	62
15	Historical Study on ICT for Teachers in Undergraduate Education	Shylaja .G	66
16	The Role of Higher Education in India	Nagappa .G.	70

WOMEN LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE – CHANGING PATTERN

ANDANEMMA. K. MATH

Research Scholar

Department of Economics, Karnatak University, Dharwad

Abstract

In recent years female work force participation rate India has been increasing after reform period. Karnataka is leading in service sector growth which has helped women labourers. Agriculture labourers in Karnataka has more unique pattern compared to national level. The present study focuses on women agriculture labourers in Karnataka where marginal agriculture labourers has been increasing since 1991 compared to male counterpart due to globalization effect. The study evaluated female work participation rate and labour force participation in rural area where in the cohort of 1-24 age group females work participation has declined due to more enrolment ration and education effect. The association of illiteracy rate and female agriculture labourers' participation rate showed inverse relation and in recent years, female literacy rate slowly increasing in the rural area consequence under 25 age female person's work participation declined. The study concludes that wage rate and education is the major factors affecting on female agriculture labour force participation in rural Karnataka.

Keywords: Work Participation, Female Labour Force, Female Agriculture Labourers, Literacy rate, Distribution of agriculture labourers.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of understanding the socio-economic conditions of women agricultural labourers at village level, the pertinent question for a policy maker is: What is the pattern of change in women agricultural labourers at macro scale? The answer is not straight because, the pattern of change is not same across the geographical boundaries. Hence there is a need to understand the changing pattern in women agricultural labourers at macro level before investigating the issues at micro level. The present study explores the changing pattern of women agricultural labourers at state level and at district level of Karnataka.

Review of Literature

Sharma (1982) conducted field study in Punjab state which is advanced state in agriculture where role of female agriculture labourers is less and in Himachal Pradesh state which is a hilly state where male labourers has migrated much hence role female agriculture labourers is high. **Duvvury (1989)** reviewed literature on women in agriculture, highlighting the lacunae and pointing to possible areas of fruitful future research. The impact of technological change and the process of capitalist agriculture has had unequivocally negative implications for women of agricultural labour and marginal peasant households. They constitute the poorest of the poor and have been a target of various governmental programmes in the drive to alleviate poverty. **Jha (1997)** examined the socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers and female workers after new economic policy in 1990s. In their field studies in some villages of Purnea district in Bihar, real wages for agricultural labourers have declined by 15% to 25% during 1991 to 1997. They argue that new economic reforms took the hindmost attitude fits in well with the so-called reform-strategy of the relentless marketers.

Kapadia (1997) studied on poverty in rural Tamil Nadu specifically women agriculture labourers. It focused on access to employment run the risk of implicitly being an approach that neglected the gender dimension of poverty. In the context of

inequitable gender relations within households, poor women may have access employment, but still be sharply subordinated, so that they have very little control over their earnings.

Tuteja (2000) has conducted a study on the effect of contractual lab arrangements in agriculture on women workers in rural Haryana. The study highlights urgent need for assessing and modifying labour policy and rectifying the neglect analysis of women worker's position after the prevalence of contractual lab arrangement. The study of Vepa (2005) analysed the declining economic stake of women in agriculture despite their increasing contribution benefit.

Chavan and Bedamatta (2006) examined the trends in agricultural wages w comparison to male-female agriculture labour force in India from 1964-65 to 1999-20 using data from Agricultural Wages in India and Rural Labour Enquiry in 1990s. It fou that the differences between the average wages of male and female agricultu labourers have widened over the years. Fourth, the daily wages of male agricultu labourers exceeded the minimum wage levels in most states, while those of women w below the minimum in most states.

Yadav and Kaushik (2006) concluded that as women mostly do jobs that : tedious, monotonous and requiring manual labour while technical activities are tak over by men, women need to be trained in technical aspects as well to handle farmi operations independently. **Sundaram (2007)** in their study principally focused on t changes in the size and structure of the workforce especially male and female ag. culti labour force and the changes in labour productivity, wages and poverty in India in t first quinquennial of the 21st century. To understand women's work status in India's ru areas and to examine the trends and nature of women's employment,

Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) examined the women employment status rural India. The study analysed data from large-scale national surveys. The paper argu for policy interventions to increase work opportunities and enhance wages for ru women workers.

Srija and Vijay (2015) examined how agricultural economy transformed to industrial economy, a decline in participation of female labour force and its experier has been in India especially among rural females who account for the major share of t rural population. The study found that the womenfolk in India are being mostly illitera or with low levels of education face shortage of work in the home turf and ha inhibitions in working as manual labour in the non-agricultural sector. From the literat review, there are number of studies on agriculture and labour force, which are based agricultural work, wages and economic contributions of working women to househ income and pattern of expenditure and savings of agricultural women labour a awareness of social security measures of agricultural women and their role in decis making. In the backdrop of literature, the present study overviews the trends a pattern of women workers in India and Karnataka state. The study attempts to exam the role and position of female agriculture labourers in rural area in Karnataka.

2. Research Methodology

The study period is post reform period and data on work participation are tak from various rounds of employment and unemployment by NSSO. The study uses sim average, percentage, growth rates, CAGR as analytical tool for analysis and comparis The present study is based on secondary data sources, which are taken from Cen data, published by Registrar General of India, New Delhi used for National, Karnat state. The labour force, employment in agriculture sector along with women agricultu labour force is taken from 66th Round of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organizatio Socio-Economic Survey; Karnataka at a Glance; District at a Glance reports published

Government of Karnataka are used for secondary data analysis. Agricultural Commission Reports, various Economic Survey reports from Government of India and Government of Karnataka are utilized in the study.

1. WOMEN AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN INDIA

Workforce Participation Rate

Although female WPR is less than half of the male WPR, the increase in female WPR in last three decade is more than the increase in male WPR. Table 3.1 shows that the growth in female WPR was more in 1981-91 and during 1991-2000. However during 2000-11 periods there has been marginal increase in female WPR. Though female WPR is 25.7 in India in 2011, there are huge inter-state variations. Highest female WPR is found in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi has lowest female WPR. Table 3.2 presents the different categories of states by female WPR. The details of female WPR are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.1: Workforce Participation Rate, India

Census	Male WPR	Female WPR	Total WPR
1981	52.4	19.8	35.6
1991	51.5	22.3	37.1
2001	51.8	25.6	39.2
2011	53.3	25.7	39.8

Source: Census, Various Issues.

Table 3.2: Three categories of States by Female WPR, 2011

Work Participation Rate	States
Below 20 per cent	Delhi, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala
20 to 30 per cent	Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, Tripura, Goa, Gujarat
Above 30 per cent	Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

Table 3.3 shows the percentage share of male and female workers. In 1981, the percentage share of female workers was about 26 per cent which has increased to around 31.2 per cent in 2011.

Table 3.3: Percentage of Male and Female Workers, India

Census	Male Workers	Female Workers
1981	74.1	25.9
1991	71.4	28.6
2001	68.4	31.6
2011	68.8	31.2

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

Table 3.4: Male and Female WPR

Sl. No.	State	Male WPR	Female WPR
1	Andhra Pradesh	57.0	36.2
2	Arunachal Pradesh	49.1	35.4
3	Assam	53.6	22.5
4	Bihar	46.5	19.1
5	Chhattisgarh	55.6	39.7
6	Delhi	53.0	10.6
7	Goa	56.8	21.9

8	Gujarat	57.2	23.4
9	Haryana	50.4	17.8
10	Himachal Pradesh	58.7	44.8
11	Jammu & Kashmir	48.1	19.1
12	Jharkhand	49.8	29.1
13	Karnataka	59.0	31.9
14	Kerala	52.7	18.2
15	Madhya Pradesh	53.6	32.6
16	Maharashtra	56.0	31.1
17	Manipur	51.6	38.6
18	Meghalaya	47.2	32.7
19	Mizoram	52.4	36.2
20	Nagaland	53.4	44.7
21	Northeast	52.9	34.2
22	Odisha	56.1	27.2
23	Punjab	55.2	13.9
24	Rajasthan	51.5	35.1
25	Sikkim	60.2	39.6
26	Tamil Nadu	59.3	31.8
27	Tripura	55.8	23.6
28	Uttar Pradesh	47.7	16.7
29	Uttarakhand	49.7	26.7
30	West Bengal	57.1	18.1
India		53.3	25.7

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

Table 3.5 presents the distribution of women workers across different occupations. The highest share of women workers in most of the states found to be agricultural labourers. Though the share varies from about 2.9 per cent in Himachal Pradesh to around 62.5 per cent in Bihar, along with the share of cultivators, we can see that Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. Around 70 per cent of the total female working force is engaged in agriculture. **In Karnataka, around 62.5 per cent of women are involved in agricultural activities.** However, 43.5 per cent of the total women workers are employed as agricultural labourers.

Table 3.5: Occupational Pattern among Women Workers in India

Sl. No.	States	Cultivators	Agricultural Labours	Household Workers	Other Workers
1	Andhra Pradesh	20.09	55.76	7.04	17.11
2	Bihar	23.18	62.57	5.92	8.33
3	Chhattisgarh	44.47	44.09	2.00	9.44
4	Gujarat	27.97	39.13	2.74	30.16
5	Haryana	43.67	21.10	3.11	32.12
6	Himachal Pradesh	85.81	2.95	1.42	9.82
7	Jammu & Kashmir	54.66	5.22	10.08	30.04
8	Jharkhand	43.03	39.60	5.61	11.76
9	Karnataka	24.71	43.45	6.68	25.16
10	Kerala	4.85	21.54	7.07	66.54
11	Madhya Pradesh	43.29	40.44	5.36	10.91
12	Maharashtra	35.84	41.14	3.65	19.37

13	Orissa	20.11	53.90	8.53	17.46
14	Punjab	13.94	17.80	7.15	61.11
15	Rajasthan	67.00	16.19	2.85	13.96
16	Tamil Nadu	18.96	44.81	8.71	27.53
17	Uttar Pradesh	36.05	39.65	8.34	15.96
18	West Bengal	14.08	32.18	17.69	36.05
	India	32.93	38.87	6.46	21.75

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

Workers are classified either as main workers and marginal workers. Main workers refer to workers engaged in economically productive activity for at least 183 days throughout the preceding year and marginal workers refer to workers engaged in economically productive activity for less than 183 days in the previous year. Table 3.6 shows that proportion of male main workers has decreased while there has rise in marginal male workers over the two decades. Percentage of female main workers has slightly increased but the percentage of female marginal workers has declined drastically.

Table 3.6: Main and Marginal Workers across Gender (in percentage)

Census	Main Workers		Marginal Workers	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1991	77.5	22.5	19.6	80.4
2001	76.7	23.3	39.1	60.9
2011	75.4	24.6	49.2	50.8

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

In 2011, Out of the total women agricultural labourers in India, 49.8 per cent of them were found to be working as marginal agricultural women labourers.

Table 3.7: Share of Main and Marginal Female Agricultural Labours, 2011

Sl. No.	State	Main Female Agricultural Labours	Marginal Female Agricultural Labours
1	Andhra Pradesh	72.58	27.42
2	Bihar	37.47	62.53
3	Chhattisgarh	40.59	59.41
4	Gujarat	46.49	53.51
5	Haryana	35.50	64.50
6	Himachal Pradesh	31.17	68.83
7	Jammu & Kashmir	12.33	87.67
8	Jharkhand	19.54	80.46
9	Karnataka	64.83	35.17
10	Kerala	62.39	37.61
11	Madhya Pradesh	44.26	55.74
12	Maharashtra	77.81	22.19
13	Odisha	20.68	79.32
14	Punjab	44.14	55.86
15	Rajasthan	32.57	67.43
16	Tamil Nadu	71.91	28.09
17	Uttar Pradesh	32.14	67.86
18	West Bengal	33.86	66.14
	India	50.19	49.81

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

Table 3.7 presents the main and marginal women agricultural labourers in major states. It can be inferred that in northern states, share of marginal agricultural labourers are more than in southern states. This shows that there is a share of women agricultural labourers in North India find employment in agricultural fields for a very less number of day in a year. In Karnataka, out of the total women agricultural labourers, 65 per cent of them are main agricultural labourers and the remaining 35 percent of them are marginal agricultural labourers.

Table 3.8: Share of Females in Total Marginal Agricultural Labours in India

Sl. No.	State	Male Marginal Agricultural Labours	Female Marginal Agricultural Labours
1	Andhra Pradesh	35.66	64.34
2	Bihar	59.01	40.99
3	Chhattisgarh	36.88	63.12
4	Gujarat	27.29	72.71
5	Haryana	50.69	49.31
6	Himachal Pradesh	53.42	46.58
7	Jammu & Kashmir	69.88	30.12
8	Jharkhand	47.29	52.71
9	Karnataka	33.11	66.89
10	Kerala	56.70	43.30
11	Madhya Pradesh	41.05	58.95
12	Maharashtra	38.38	61.62
13	Odisha	40.17	59.83
14	Punjab	53.63	46.37
15	Rajasthan	31.03	68.97
16	Tamil Nadu	43.59	56.41
17	Uttar Pradesh	59.14	40.86
18	West Bengal	58.10	41.90
	India	47.26	52.74

Source: Computed from Census, 2011

To understand the marginalization of women agricultural labourers in detail, the share of women marginal agricultural labourers out of total marginal agricultural labourers is looked into. Table 3.8 shows that women attain the major share in total marginal agricultural labourers. The share of women marginal workers out of total marginal workers is found to be highest in Gujarat (72.7 per cent) and lowest in Jammu and Kashmir (30.1 per cent).

In Karnataka, out of total marginal agricultural labourers, 67 per cent are women and 33 per cent of them are men. Hence it can be inferred that women are more marginalized in agricultural labour work throughout India in general and Karnataka in particular.

4. CONCLUSION

Women form an important part of the Indian workforce. According to Census 2011, the total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million comprising of 111.8 million in rural areas and 38.0 million in urban areas. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 61.5 million are agricultural labourers. Agricultural workers comprise the largest segment of unorganized workers who are extremely vulnerable to exploitation because of illiteracy, social backwardness, etc. Hence there is a need of detailed micro-level investigation on women agricultural labourers.

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