

Assessing the Gendered Control, Use and Ownership over Agricultural Resources: A Case Study of Akhnoor Tehsil of Jammu District, Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Gender differences in control, use and ownership of resources is well manifested in agriculture sector. This proves to be a hindrance in the process of agricultural development as women make significant contributions to this sector especially in the developing countries. The contribution of women is as crucial as that of men; women are engaged as cultivators as well as agricultural labourers. In this paper the gendered differences in the control, use and ownership over various agricultural resources have been assessed. Primary survey has been conducted in order to collect the required information with respect to the selected resources. Data was collected for both men as well as women population engaged in agricultural activities. A well-structured schedule was constructed to collect the primary data. The gathered data was analyzed with the help of SPSS Software. Gender gaps were observed in the use, control and ownership of the agricultural resources in the study area. Of both the genders, women lagged far behind men in the control, use and ownership of almost all the agricultural resources taken under consideration.

Key words: Gender differences, Agricultural resources, Control, Ownership, Gender gap

Gender roles and responsibilities being influenced by our societal set up, has its reflection in almost all aspects of our lives. One of its major manifestation is in the agricultural system. In this system gender is the organizing principle with differentiating roles for both men and women. A thorough understanding and acknowledgement of the gender dynamics in the agricultural set up should be part of every planning approach directed towards agriculture development. Many researchers have highlighted the importance of empowered men and women farmers in the agricultural enterprise as they have proved to be more productive by making most of the opportunities presented to them in their respective fields. They have voiced for measures to recognize and strengthen women's contribution to agriculture [1].

Women undertake three main types of roles in our society i.e., reproductive role, productive role and community management role. In spite of this multi-dimensional contribution of women to her household and the community its status remains low and unrecognized [2]. In the agricultural scenario women form an integral part in almost every part of the world. They work as farmers as well as agricultural labourers. They are highly involved in the post-harvest processing and storage of agricultural products. They even play a crucial part in the marketing of crops in some areas. Hence, women play a crucial role in achieving household food security and nutrition and in order to achieve this objective

their inputs can be valuable in various farm related decisions [3].

A large proportion of women in developing countries are engaged in agriculture. In the low-income Asian countries, their proportion ranges from 60 to 80 percent. This high percentage of economically active population is faced with the challenge of limited access to productive resources which as a result hinders the adoption of new technologies for this sector [4]. The women's access and control over the various productive resources is not the mere outcome of biological differentiation but an expression of cultural norms [5]. Women's monetary gains are considered to be a threat to the male ego and women when engaged in daily household chores leads to the under evaluation of their work as that is not monetarily productive [6]. Access to various resources like land, capital, labour etc is essential element of the income generating power of the agricultural workers and development of this sector [7]. The financial strain on women is the result of improper availability and access to these key productive resources [8].

The State of Food and Agricultural Report of FAO highlights that one of the main reasons for the underperformance of the agricultural sector in developing countries is the gender specific constraints faced by women in agriculture. Women face lack of access to productive resources and opportunities in comparison to their male counterparts. This gender gap when closed leads to an increase in the total agricultural output by 2.5 to 4 percent in the developing countries which in turn can feed 12 to 17 percent of the people facing hunger. This statistic presents us with the importance of attaining gender equality in agriculture as it has

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the capacity to reduce world hunger, achieve food security and increasing agricultural production.

Geographically the gender dynamics also shows some characteristic variations as was observed in the case of integrated farming system of the hilly and plain parts of Tripura. The former have higher access and control of women over the resources as compared to the latter. This was however lower than that of male farmers [9]. Compared the Tarai and Bhabhar zone with Hill zone of Uttarakhand and presented that in the case of former men enjoyed independent access and control over productive resources on the other hand in the latter case both men and women enjoyed equal access and control [10]. However, the men shared complete responsibility in crop production and post-harvest activities in the first zone whereas the women had complete responsibility in the hilly zone. In the case of Southern Nigeria female farmers only have access to water resource whereas male farmers have access to almost all the other productive resources. Control over crop production resources showed a similar trend. Interestingly, women farmers have higher rate of bank loans as compared to their male counterparts in this particular region [11]. It is alarming that women are noticeably unaware of their land ownership status especially in the Southeast Asian Countries like Myanmar, Thailand, Phillipines and Indonesia [12].

Small scale women farmers and agriculture workers form an indispensable part of Indian Agricultural System yet their contribution remains invisible. Being the drivers of the agriculture in India yet they have a very little market presence. Women farmers in India have a lack of knowledge of new production technologies and information of market functioning and its access [13]. Women-key to food security states that the state of land ownership for women farmers is disappointing throughout the world [14]. The regions like Latin America despite of enjoying a comparatively higher access to farmland than the lesser developed regions of Western Asia and Northern Africa have a small percentage of women landholders i.e., only 25 percent. The impact of gender-neutral programs and policy interventions is not same for rural female and male farmers [15]. Even the gender

sensitive land reforms are resulting to be unsuccessful due the patriarchal set up of the society. In order to mitigate this issue, the traditional leaders are to be more engaged in the planning process [16]. This has now become a question of fundamental human rights in addition to being a subject of development and academic considerations. Projects and programs targeting the women farmers can only be fruitful if a greater stress is being given to gender issues and asset ownership in design, implementation and evaluation process of the respective projects [17].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tehsil Akhnoor is the study area to carry out this research work. Akhnoor tehsil lies on the right bank of river Chenab and forms the western part of District Jammu. This study is entirely based on primary data. The primary data was collected with the help of a structured schedule. For these 8 villages were randomly selected which accounts to 4 percent of the total villages. A total of 200 respondents were questioned wherein 25 respondents were randomly selected from each village. Out of the 200 respondents 100 were men and 100 were women. The male and female respondents were selected from different households practicing agriculture. For data analysis participation percentages were calculated for men as well as women for different indicators. The gender gaps were calculated using the formula given by a working paper of CGIAR authored by Smriti Rao which indicates a ratio of female to male measure.

$$\text{Gender Gap} = \frac{f}{m}$$

Where;

f = percentage of women's participation

m = percentage of men's participation

If Gender Gap is

< 1, it indicates gender gap in favour of men.

> 1, it indicates gender gap in favour of women.

= 1, it indicates no gender gap.

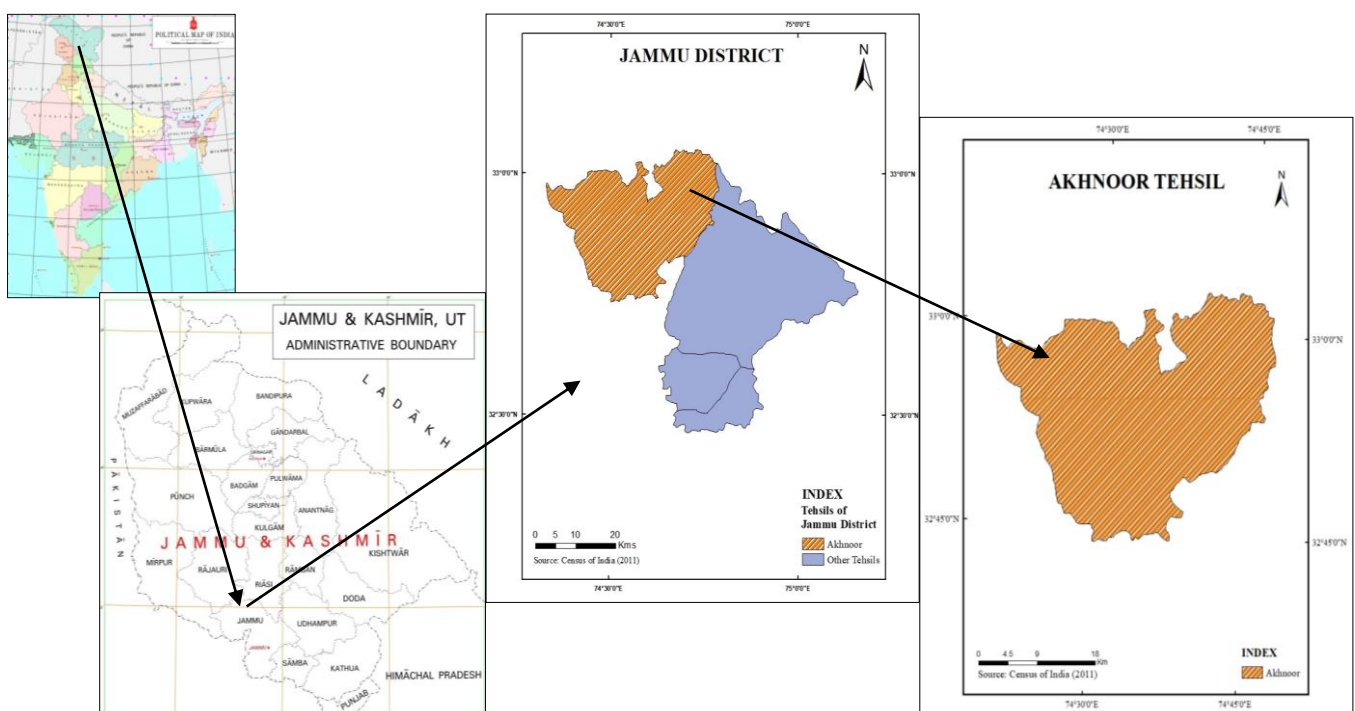


Fig 1 Study area

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results and conclusions were drawn from the primary data collected. For the male respondents mean age is 48 years whereas for the female respondents the mean age is 41 years. The respondents belonged to General, SC and OBC categories. The average agricultural landholding for the sample respondents is 10.24 kanals. In case of the literacy status of the respondents it was observed that 36 percent of the respondents (male and female) were illiterate. Only 4 percent of male and 12 percent of female respondents are graduate or above. The results have been analyzed under the following three categories:

Table 1 Ownership of agricultural resources

Category	Gender	Participation percentage	Gender gap
Land ownership	Male	64	0.19
	Female	12	

Ownership of agricultural resources

Ownership of land resource has been accounted for in this study. In this case the proportion of men and women who own land either solely or jointly has been recorded. In case of livestock ownership, a joint ownership pattern was reported. There was no individual ownership of livestock even if the women got that as a gift from their maternal home. The above (Table 1) reveals the ownership status of agricultural land wherein 64 percent of the male respondents were the owners whereas only 12 percent females own land, that too in the

cases where the females were widowed. Otherwise, there was no instance of female ownership over the land as a part of social norm. A gender gap of 0.19 was calculated which shows a high gender gap in favour of men.

Control of agricultural resources

Respondents control over land and livestock resources has been assessed in this category. In case of control over land resources data has been recorded for sole or joint participation of men and women in decisions regarding choice of crops, inputs etc. In the case of control over livestock resources data has been analyzed for proportion of men and women who either solely or jointly participate in decisions regarding sale and purchase of livestock. It can be interpreted from (Table 2) that gender gap in control over agricultural resources is also in favour of men. In case of decision-making regarding sale/purchase of livestock the gender gap is 0.41 which shows high dominance of men over women. For the crop choice and inputs related decision making, the gender gap which stands at 0.52 is moderately in favour of men.

Table 2 Control of agricultural resources

Category	Gender	Participation percentage	Gender gap
Sale/purchase of livestock	Male	95	0.41
	Female	38.8	
Crop vhoice	Male	84	0.52
	Female	44	
Inputs	Male	84	0.52
	Female	44	

Table 3 Use of agricultural resources

Category	Sub-category	Gender	Participation percentage	Gender gap
Usage of agricultural outputs	Sale of Crop produce	Male	86	0.65
		Female	56	
	Own Consumption of Crop Produce	Male	84	0.81
		Female	68	
	Sale of Livestock Produce	Male	75	1.17
		Female	88	
Usage of financial assets	Own Consumption of Livestock Produce	Male	60	1.46
		Female	88	
	Bank Account	Male	96	0.83
		Female	80	
	Kisan Credit Card	Male	42	0.02
		Female	4	
Usage of human workforce in various activities	Sowing of Crop	Male	92	0.61
		Female	56	
	Cultivation Inputs	Male	92	0.16
		Female	15	
	Harvesting	Male	76	0.68
		Female	52	
	Fodder Cutting	Male	75	0.95
		Female	72	
	Fodder Feeding	Male	75	1.02
		Female	76	
	General Care	Male	75	1.02
		Female	76	
	Milk and Milk Processing	Male	56	1.36
		Female	76	
	Agricultural Labourer	Male	20	0.60
		Female	12	

Use of agricultural resources

In order assess the use parameter, use of land, livestock, labour and financial assets were taken into account. Use of

land resource includes men and women who participate solely or jointly in the decisions pertaining to the use of crop produces. Similarly, decision making in the use of livestock

produce was accounted for. In the case of use of financial asset proportion of men and women having individual or joint bank account as well as having access to Kisan Credit Card was recorded. It also includes the human workforce which is responsible for carrying out various agricultural activities. From the (Table 3) given in the previous slide it can be interpreted that in the case usage of crop output the gender gap is in favour of men implying the men's dominance in the usage of crop output. On the other hand, for livestock output the gender gap is in favour of women which shows greater women's participation and inclusion in decision making for the usage of livestock output. As far as the financial inclusion and the usage of financial assets are concerned again there is a gender gap in favour of men. However, the gender gap is alarming for the usage of micro credit assets like Kisan Credit Card. It stands at 0.02 which is highly biased and an implication of the status of land ownership.

For the usage of human resource in crop cultivation gender gap is moderately in favour of men for sowing and harvesting whereas it is very high at 0.16 in favour of men for the cultivation inputs such as usage of pesticides, weedicides, fertilizers etc. In livestock management rural women have greater involvement; however, their participation is limited in marketing of livestock, barn preparation and delivery assistance etc. [18]. The trends in gendered human resource utilization in the livestock rearing are a deviation from the

usual as it is slightly in favour of women for fodder feeding, general care and milk processing. Gender gap is in favour of men for fodder cutting. For agricultural labour the gender gap is 0.60 which is in favour of men.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from the above research work that the ownership of land is highly biased towards men with an alarming gender gap of 0.19. In the control over the agricultural resources the gender gap favours men despite the fact that the participation of women in crop cultivation and livestock rearing is significant. The scenario in the usage of agricultural resources presents a mixed but implicative outcome, wherein the usage of human workforce in livestock rearing is dominated by women besides dominating participation in selling and consumption of livestock produce. Hence, this research substantiates the fact that Women and men have their separate spaces of authority. Agricultural development and women empowerment are both interconnected. Agricultural development if aptly targeted can certainly contribute to the upliftment of women's status and also if the developmental programs target the gender inequality issues in the agrarian society can consequently lead to enhancement of agricultural sector.

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