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# **Analysis of Women's Economic Engagement in the Agricultural Economy and Factor Affecting it: A Case Study of Fatehabad District of Haryana**

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## **Abstract**

The study analysed women's contribution to agricultural activities in small, medium and large farm sizes and also examined the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in the agricultural sector.

**Keywords:** agricultural activities, women empowerment, decision making, participation, productivity, performance, development

## **Introduction**

The Indian economy is an agricultural-based economy in a way that more than 50% of employment opportunities are generated by the agricultural sector of the economy. The agricultural sector does not provide direct income to people, but it also supports the industrial and services sector through backward and forward linkages. Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including the pre and post-harvesting crop production activities, livestock management activities, and horticulture and domestic activities. As per the literature, the increased cost of labour and migration of men to the industrial sector for better employment opportunities is leading to increased participation of women in agricultural activities in India. But many studies find that despite the performance of all agricultural activities by females, the role of women in decision-making regarding field activities is still limited. This is mainly constrained by the patriarchal society in the Indian economy. The status of rural women in Indian society is defined by their community, traditions, culture of the family, household income, caste and many other socio-economic aspects. Women usually face seclusion and exclusion depending on socio-cultural norms of patriarchy that finally limit their access to development and empowerment. Women are mostly engaged in unpaid and unacknowledged activities that lead them to be the most underprivileged with no recognition. The exclusion of women from the decision-making process has resulted in the loss of large productive potential. Being a

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traditional society it was also hypothesized that demographic, social, economic and cultural factors would interfere with women's economic activities. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of various socio-economic factors on women's participation in agricultural activities.

### **Socio-Economic Factors affecting the Women Contribution in Agricultural Sector:**

The Socio-economic factors that affect the women's contribution in the agricultural sector in Fatehabad have been presented.

34% of women respondents have agreed to the fact that due to performing domestic responsibilities, the performance of women in agricultural activities has not been up to the mark. The number of working males in the family also affects the women's contribution to the agricultural sector because most of the agricultural activities are performed by men, which decreases the need for women in farm operations, and the number of people in the family also affects the women's contribution to the agricultural sector. Most of the respondents agreed that the farm size, education, income of the husband, and family size have highly affected the contribution of women in the agriculture sector. Women have also stated that participation has decreased with the increase in farm size. In low-income families, women work in farm operations to meet their family needs, but in high-income families women have been restricted to domestic activities. With higher education females migrated to another employment sector for better job opportunities. 44% of respondents agreed that the years of working experience affected the women's contribution to agricultural activities.

### **The regression analysis of selected socio-economic indicators that affect women's participation in the agricultural sector**

The regression analysis of selected socio-economic indicators that affect women's participation in the agricultural sector

The regression analysis has been carried out to identify the factors influencing women's participation in the agricultural sector. Multiple regression analysis has been employed to estimate the impact of the explanatory or selected independent variables on women's participation in the agricultural sector. Multicollinearity within explanatory or selected socio-economic variables was examined by using a correlation matrix. Analysis of variance has also been done to establish the significance of the regression analysis.

### **Coefficient of correlation matrix of selected socio-economic variables**

There is no high pair-wise correlation among selected explanatory socioeconomic variables except farm size and education, which was 0.44%, family income at 0.13% and farm size at 0.37%, marital status, and family income at 0.26% and family size and marital status 0.53%, the result shows that there is no problem of multicollinearity with the regression analysis.

(Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). The mean value of age is 35.99, the maximum is 78 years, the minimum is 16 years, and the Standard deviation (SD) is 10.8. The mean value of women respondents' education is 7.69, with a maximum of 15 (P.G.) years, and the minimum is 0 (illiterate) with 5.05 SD. The mean value of family income is 5.42 with the value 2.32 S.D. Similarly, farm size has a mean value of 6.52. The maximum value of farm size is 27, with a minimum value of 0 (landless), having 4.51 SD. In the case of the husband's income, 1.69 values of dispersion from its mean value is 1.32. The mean value of the number of the marital status of the respondents is 1.87 with 0.84 SD. Similarly, the family size has a mean value of 5.4 while the deviation from its mean value has been observed as 1.47. The maximum size of the family was 14 and the minimum size was 3.

### **Coefficients of Selected Socio-Economic Variables of Regression Analysis**

Table 6 explains the women's participation and all predictors are directly related to one another. The coefficients of all predictors or selected variables were found negative and statistically significant. The largest beta coefficients (-0.40 and -0.33) have been found and statistically significant in the case of the husband's income and marital status of women. Due to married family responsibilities, married women are more involved as compared to unmarried women in the agricultural sector in the study area. This indicates that these variables make a strong contribution to explaining the women's participation. The coefficient of the age of respondents has been found negative and statistically significant at a 1% level of significance. The value of the coefficient is -0.193, which can be described as if the age is increased by 1 year, then women's participation shall decrease by -0.19%. These results show that the impact of education on rural women's participation has been found negative but statistically significant in Fatehabad. In the case of income, the results indicate that with the increase in family income, women's participation has decreased in the agricultural sector. Income has a statistically significant contribution in the selected independent variables at a 1% level of significance. It has also been revealed that the relationship between women's participation and farm size has statistically significant with a beta value of -0.183.

It can be concluded that women have been dropping out of agricultural activities with increasing farm size and income in Fatehabad. The 't' value of family size shows that family size is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of selected socio-economic variables. The women's marital status influences their level of participation in the agricultural sector. It is significantly associated with a beta 0.33 value. It is also shown by the results that the tolerance value is less than 0.10 while the value of variance inflation factors has been registered above 0.10 showing that it has not violated the multicollinearity assumptions in selected socioeconomic factors in Fatehabad.

## Conclusions

Based on the facts, it is quite evident that almost all the women in the selected area are actively involved in performing domestic as well as agricultural activities, such as crop production, livestock farming and poultry farming to supplement their own needs and contribute to the household's rural economy. Women are performing different types of agricultural activities in small, medium and large farm sizes. However, more than 50% of agricultural ventures on small farms and 40% on medium farms are performed by women, but their contribution is underestimated in the family due to the parochial society. Various social-economic factors influence (85.4%) women's participation in the agricultural sector in the district of Fatehabad in Haryana state. From the findings of the study, it is concluded that academic institutions and researchers should focus on the ground realities and find some relevant policies to increase the participation of women in the agricultural sector. Participation in the true sense means not only providing employment opportunities and income for women but also access of women to the factors of production, familiarity with new technology, and power to take decisions in the agricultural sector. In this context, women stimulated analysis is considered necessary to understand women's capabilities to exercise choices related to their economic, social and political phenomena in society. It also requires a careful modification of the social norms, legal frameworks, and policies that lead to gender equality to ensure women's equal availability of resources and their futures, which leads them to develop in their true sense with empowerment. Based on the findings of the study and the respondent's opinions, the following suggestions are made.

- Some need assessment training and surveys should be conducted to identify the women's direct needs, desires, abilities and contributions, as well as recording the true data with a discussion with the women themselves before conducting any capacity-building training and developmental programs in the agriculture sector
- Credit facilities must be provided for the women to enhance their production capabilities and to increase their income, savings and investment in the study area.
- Education and skill developmental program for crop production, animal husbandry and poultry farming are required in the study area with valuable information and experience sharing regarding the various aspects that directly and indirectly affect the women's contribution to the agricultural sector.
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