



# Women Agricultural Workers and Their Impact in Home Environment: A Case Study under Kakodonga Development Block at Golaghat District, Assam

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## Abstract:

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The contribution of women is considerable. Statistical data are available regarding their participation in agricultural and allied activities, but their impact on the home environment has been ignored. The present study was undertaken to discover what this impact was and to determine the factors associated with the involvement of women in agricultural and allied activities. A multistage, stratified random sampling technique was used to select 50 farm women practicing agricultural farming in Kakodonga development block of Golaghat district, Assam. Data were collected using structured interview schedule. Mean score were calculated to see the extent of the impact and factors associated with the participation of women. The results revealed that the majority of respondents were middle aged (70%), belonged to the age group 35-45 years. Most of these women had education up to high school. The majority of farm women (87%), belonged to nuclear family system and most of them had family size 0-6 members. In terms of family life the positive impact of women's participation in agriculture and activities was low while in education of children, household standard, and economic and social status it was medium. The prime factor was a feeling of responsibility.

**Key Words:** Participation, Women, Home Environment, positive impact, household standard

## Introduction:

The prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and development of its Women, as they not only constitute nearly half of its population, but also positively influence the growth of remaining half of the population. As per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55 percent were agricultural labourers and 24 percent were cultivators. However, only 12.8 percent of the operational holdings were owned by women, which reflect the gender disparity in ownership of land holdings in agriculture. Moreover, there is concentration of operational holdings (25.7 percent) by women in the marginal and small holdings categories. The workforce participation rate for rural females is significantly higher at 41.8 percent against urban women participation rate of 35.31 percent (MoSPI, 2017). Globally, there is empirical evidence that women have a decisive role in ensuring food security and preserving local agro- biodiversity. Women from rural areas are engaged in farm operations as cultivators, assistants to male cultivators and agricultural labourers. Women are actively involved in pre-sowing, post-sowing, harvesting and post-harvesting operations as well as allied activities. They perform numerous labour intensive jobs such as weeding, hoeing, grass cutting, picking, cotton stick collection, separation of seeds from fibre, keeping of livestock and its other associated activities like milking, milk processing, preparation of ghee etc. Women belonging to low socio-economic strata are actively engaged in agricultural labour. They also show their

involvement in planning, decision-making and supervisory activities. In today's society the role of women extends way beyond the home and the bringing up of children. Women have to perform the dual role of housewife and wage earner. Both roles made heavy demands on women's time and energy. The participation of women greatly helps to supplement the family income but the dual role they play as income generator as well as homemaker does have some negative impact on the family too. Thus, the present study was undertaken to determine the impact of women's participation on the home environment from their participation in agriculture and allied activities and the factors associated with their involvement.

### Objectives:

Following are the objectives of the study.

- (1) To study about the social background of women.
- (2) To discover the impact of women agricultural workers on home environment.
- (3) To determine the factors associated with the involvement of women in agricultural activities.

### Hypothesis:

The study is based on the hypothesis that participation of women in agricultural and allied activities has positive impact on home environment.

### Materials and Methods:

The study was conducted among farm women practicing agricultural and allied activities in Kakodonga development block of Golaghat district. A sample size of 50 respondents was selected by applying sample random sampling technique. Data were collected using structured interview schedule. The impact on the home environment was studied on a three point continuum scale and the responses awarded arbitrary weights such as 2, 1, and 0 to responses of always, sometimes and never. The impact was categorized as low (1-40 scores), medium (41-80 scores) and high (80 and above scores) on the basis of the scores obtained by respondents.

### Results and Discussion

#### Personal profile of the Respondents:

The Table 1, revealed that majority of the respondents were middle aged (70%) followed by old (22%) and young (8%). Their educational status reveals that most of the farm women had education up to high school (52%) followed by middle school (18%), Collegiate (14%), Primary school level (10%) and illiterate (6%). Nuclear family was seen among 88% of the respondents. The Table also reveals that the majority respondents (84%) belonged to families with 0-6 members.

#### Positive Impacts on Family Environment:

Data in Table 2 illustrates the impact of Women's participation in agricultural and allied activities. Farm Women felt that their participation enabled them to play an important part in decision making, have a better standard of living and be recognized as an individual within the family. The total and mean scores revealed a low level of impact on family life. Farm Women felt the impact on their children's education to a large extent, as they were able to provide them with better educational facilities by buying books and stationery, as well as chances to get an education outside the village. The overall mean scores (1.08) revealed that the impact on children's education was medium level. Farm Women were of the opinion that their participation in agricultural activities meant their families were able to afford better transport, better clothing, better utensils, a greater number of appliances and better house furniture. The Scores indicated that there was medium level of impact on household standard. Regarding the impact on economic status of the family the table reveals that the income received from agricultural and allied activities were spent on the upliftment of the economic status of the family and thus their impact was medium on it. As regards the impact on the social status of the family, farm women felt that they were able to spend more money on social rituals and had better interaction with people in the village. Thus, their impact was medium on the social status. Thus, positive impact of Women's participation in agricultural and allied activities was low in

terms of family life and medium for the education of children, household standard, economic status and social status. Negative Impact on Family life:

Table 3, indicates a negative impact of women's participation. Farm women noticed a negative impact on their personal health since they had less leisure time to relax, fatigue due to a double workload, uneconomic working position and frustration when their work was not recognized. The average mean scores revealed a high level negative impact of women's participation on their personal health.

Table 3, also shows the negative impact on children. Farm women felt that they were unable to help their children with their studies and that consequently their children lacked interest in their studies because the women were busy performing agricultural and allied activities in addition to their household responsibilities. The scores indicated a medium level of negative impact on children. With regard to the negative impact of women's participation in agricultural and allied activities on family life, farm women felt that their work was not recognized, no credit was given to the wives' financial contribution and there was less leisure time to spend with family members in entertainment. The scores showed a medium level of impact on family life.

Data in table 3 also showed the negative impact on the women's social life. Farm women felt a low level of impact as they were unable to participate in social function. The scores showed a low level of negative impact of women's participation in agricultural and allied activities on their social life.

Thus, the negative impact on women was found to be high on personal health, medium on children and family life and low on social life. Factors Associated with Participation of women in Agricultural and allied Activities:

Table 4, shows that the first and foremost factor for participation of women in agricultural and activities was a feeling of responsibility. Economic necessity was associated to a high extent while economic independence was associated to a medium extent. Other factors were associated to a low extent. The scores showed medium level of association of factors with women's participation in agricultural and allied activities.

Table: 1. Personal Profile of the Respondents.

N=50

Sl. No.	Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Old (46-56 years)	11	22.00
		Middle (35-45 years)	35	70.00
		Young (24-34)	4	8.00
2	Education	Illiterate	3	6.00
		Primary	5	10.00
		Middle School	9	18.00
		High school	26	52.00
		Collegiate	7	14.00
3	Nature of family	Family type		
		Nuclear	44	88.00
		Joint	6	12.00
		Family Size		
		0-6 members	42	84.00
		6-8 members	5	10.00
		8 and above	3	6.00

Table-2: Positive Impact of participation of women in agricultural and allied activities on the home environment.

N=50

Impact	Total Score	Mean Score
1. Impact On Family Life		
i) Recognized as individual in family	21	0.42
ii) Play important role in decision making	35	0.70
iii) Better standard of living	30	0.60
iv) Assumed more participation of family in social, cultural, and political activities	12	0.24
Overall mean score		0.49
2. Impact on Education of Children		
i) Better facilities	67	1.34
ii) Chance to get education outside village	60	1.20
iii) Raised educational standard of family	55	1.10
iv) Able to provide newspapers & magazines to children	34	0.68
Overall mean score		1.08
3. Impact on household standard		
i) Acquired more appliances	50	1.00
ii) Better, adequate furniture	52	1.04
iii) Better, adequate Utensils	65	1.30
iv) Better, adequate clothing	67	1.34
v) Better transport	70	1.40
Overall mean scores		1.22
4. Impact on Economic status		
i) Independent income	50	1.00
ii) Supplementation of income	72	1.44
iii) Acquired personal/household assets as per choice	55	1.10
iv) Financial Security for future	65	1.30
v) Help in clearance of family debt.	50	1.00
Overall mean Score		1.17
5. Impact on social status		
i) Better Social interaction	55	1.10
ii) Achieved a position/Status in society	50	1.00
iii) Able to spend money on social rituals	62	1.24
Overall mean scores		1.11

Table 3: Negative Impact of women's participation in agricultural &amp; allied activities on home environment.

N=50

Impact	Total score	Mean score
1. Impact on personal health		
i) Less leisure time	95	1.90
ii) Fatigue due to double work load	92	1.84
iii) Uncomfortable working position	85	1.70
iv) Frustration form lack of recognition of work	87	1.74
v) Effect on physical health	85	1.70
vi) Lack of time for medical check-up	82	1.64
vii) No time for personal care	87	1.74
	81	1.62



viii) Insufficiency in performing work		
Overall mean score		1.74
2. Impact on Children		
i) Unable to help their studies	58	1.16
ii) Lack of interest in studies	50	1.00
iii) Children delinquent in behaviors	52	1.04
iv) Lack of interest in household activities	49	0.98
v) Indulgence in bad habits	53	1.06
Overall mean score		1.05
3. Impact on family life		
i) Less interaction with family members	62	1.24
ii) Unable to attend to needs of		
Husband -----	50	1.00
Children -----	55	1.10
In-laws -----	52	1.04
Guests -----	43	0.86
iii) Non recognition of work	62	1.24
iv) No credit to wives financial contribution	72	1.44
v) Less leisure time for entertainment of family	62	1.24
Overall mean score		1.83
4. Impact on Social life.		
i) Participation in social function	35	0.70
ii) Negative social attitude towards women's participation	24	0.48
Overall mean score		0.59

Table 4: Factors associated with the participation of women in agricultural & allied Activities  
N=50

Factors	Total Score	Mean Score
1. Feeling of responsibility -----	100	2.00
2. Economic necessity ----	87	1.74
3. Income supplementation ----	35	0.70
4. Economic independence ----	65	1.30
5. Large family to support ----	38	0.76
6. To avoid unpleasant environment ----	32	0.64
7. No one else to share such activities with husband ---	27	0.54
8. No male earning member in family ----	31	0.62
9. Bad habits of male members ----	25	0.50
Overall mean score		0.98

#### Conclusion:

Women's participation in agricultural and allied activities had positive as well as negative impact on their home environment. Thus, our hypothesis is partially fulfilled. A feeling of responsibility was the prime factor associated with participation of women in such activities.

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