International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS)
Available online at: http://euroasiapub.org
Vol. 7 Issue 10, October 2017, pp. 393~398
ISSN(o): 2249-7382 | Impact Factor: 6.939

Female Workforce Participation and Gender Gap in Agriculture in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

Women's participation in the agricultural labour force (38.87 and 55.67%) in India and the State of Tamil Nadu, India (Census of India, 2001) plays a distinctive role in earning a livelihood for the family. The objective of the study is to examine the pattern of women workforce in agricultural activities in Cuddalore District Tamil Nadu and is based on secondary data are taken from the census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011. With respect to the gender gap, the participation gap has been narrowed but remuneration and advancement gap between male and female workers still exists. With the emerging commercialization of agriculture and introduction of new technologies, capacity building of women workforce is important for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and improving the rural livelihood security.

Key Words: Women's participation, agricultural labour, gender gap, livelihood security

INTRODUCTION

Women are 48.5% of the general population of India and agricultural sector is the largest employer of women. According to official statistics (National Sample Survey 68th round), in the rural areas, 59% men work in agriculture, but the figures are 75% for women. Women's participation in agriculture has been growing relative to men who not only implies increased dependence of women on agriculture but also reiterates their crucial role in the sustainable growth and future of this sector. Mahapatra (2002) highlighted that women's economic productivity is a critical factor, as the dependence of the family on their contribution to household resources increases with the poverty status of the household. Valipour (2014, 2015) also used

the important indices of rural population to total population and total economically active population in agriculture to estimate the values of area equipped for irrigation.

Agriculture is the main occupation and 68% of the population is engaged in agriculture and related activities in Tamil Nadu, India. Rice is the major food crop and staple food of the state. Other important crops are Jowar, Bajra, maize, ragi, small millets, pulses, tobacco, cotton and sugar cane. Women agricultural workers constitute a large majority of the workforce in Tamil Nadu, India. The main agricultural operations performed by women in paddy cultivation are transplanting, weeding harvesting, sowing, harvesting and threshing of other crops like Sorghum, Groundnut, Cotton and Maize. The participation in ploughing minimum and rest of other all agricultural work is carried out by women labour.

The movement of men out of agriculture has led to an increase in women's share of the agricultural workforce and an expansion of their role in the sector. However, with labour absorption in agriculture on the decline, particularly in terms of paid jobs, more than two-thirds of women workers are self-employed, working as managers and helpers on the family farm without any remuneration.Those who continue to work as casual labour earn wages less than the statutory minimum. Women in agriculture face increasing responsibility for ensuring household food security under adverse economic conditions and intensification of their work burden (Aruna, 2010).

Closing gender gaps is thus not only a matter of human rights and equity; it is also one of efficiency (GlobalGender Gap Report, 2012). The Global Gender GapIndex examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes): economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. In the present study, one variable under the first category of the sub-indexes was analysed in terms of female work force participation.

The need for gender statistics in formulating policies and programs can hardly be over-emphasized. To understand women’s work force participation in agriculture and the gender gaps this paper analyses the data from the census reports of India, 1991, 2001 and 2011 with the following main objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the gender gap in total workers in Cuddalore District between 1991 and 2011.
2. To identify the gender gap in cultivators and agricultural labourers in Cuddalore District between 2001 and 2011.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data taken from the census of India1991, 2001 and 2011. The analysis of data from the 1991, 2001 and 2011 census was undertaken to gain an understanding of the increasing or decreasing trends of women agricultural workers in Cuddalore District.

The variables in the study have been defined and derived in the following manner:

1. Worker: Based on the definition of work in census 2011, a worker is a person who has participated in any economically productive activity with or without compensation or profit. Work participation rate: Is defined as the number of workers per hundred population
2. Gender gap: The difference between the female-male participation was calculated to find the gap between the sexes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Proportion of total Population in Cuddalore District (1991, 2001 and 2011)

Table-1

Gender Gap in Total Population 1991, 2001 and 2011

Year	Total	Change	Male	Change	Female	Change
1991	4878433	-	2478944	-	2399489	-
2001	2280530	-2597903	1148729	-13302115 (-11.5)	1131801	-1267688 (-11.2)
2011	2605914	325384	1311697	162968 (1.2)	1294217	162416 (1.3)

Sources: census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011
Note: Figure in parentheses are decadal growth rate

Table-1 shows the gender gap in total population in Cuddalore District. It can be observed that the total population in 1991 is 4878433, and it is decreased to 2280530 in 2001 and further increased as 2605914 in 2011. There is negative change (-2597903) between 2001 and 1991 and there is a positive change (325384) between 2001 and 2011. With respect to male population in 1991 is 2478944 and it is decreased to1148729 in 2001and increased to 1311697 in 2011, the change is negative (-1330215) between 2001 and 1991 and positive (162968) between 2001 and 2011. Likewise female population in 1991 is 2399489 and it is decreased to 1131801 in 2001 and increased to 1294217 in 2011, the change between 1991 and 2001 is (-1267688) and between 2001 and 2001162416. This may be because of South Arcod district is bifurcated and Cuddalore district is formed during this period. The decadal growth rate in the year 2011 is greater for

female than male it shows that the gender gap is reduced during 2001 to 2011 among the total population.

Table-2

Gender Gap in Total Worker 1991, 2001 and 2011

Year	Total	Change	Male	Change	Female	Change
1991	2130722	-	1367502	-	763220	-
2001	974966	-1155756	640889	-726613 (-11.3)	334077	-429143 (-12.8)
2011	1169880	194914	749633	108744 (1.5)	420247	86170 (2.1)

Sources: Census data in 1991, 2001 and 2011
Note: Figure in parentheses shows decadal growth rate

Table-2 shows the Gender Gap in total workers in Cuddalore District. It can be observed that the total workers in 1991 are 2130722, and it is decreased to 1367502 in 2001 and it is increased to 1169880 in 2011 and the change between 1991 and 2001 is negative (-1155756) and between 2001 and 2011 is positive 194914. According to the male workers in 1991 census 1367502 and it is decreased to 640889 in 2001 and it is increased to 749633 in 2011 the change in male workers between 1991 and 2001 is -726613 and between 2001 and 2011 is 108744. With respect to female workers in 1991, it is 763220 and it is decreased to 334077 in 2001 and it is increased to 420247 in 2011, the change between 1991 and 2001 is -429143and between 2001 and 2011 is 86170.The decadal growth rate is greater for female than male. Thus the female is going to work largely than male.

Table-3

Gender gap in total cultivator1991, 2001and 2011

Year	Total	Change	Male	Change	Female	Change
1991	675544	-	542358	-	133186	-
2001	190482	-485062	134665	-407693 (-30.3)	55817	-77369 (-13.9)
2011	165170	-25312	116027	-18638 (-1.6)	49143	-6674 (-1.4)

Sources: Census data in 1991, 2001 and 2011
Note: Figure in parentheses shows decadal growth rate

Table 3 shows the gender gap in cultivators of Cuddalore District. It can be observed that the total cultivator in 1991 is 675544, and it is decreased to 190482 in 2001 and further, it is decreased to 165170 in 2011. The change between 2001 and 1991 is -485062and from 2001 and 2011 is -25312. With respect to male cultivator in 1991 is 542358 and it is decreased to 134665 in 2001 and further decreased to 116027 in 2011. The change is negative (-407693) during 2001 and 1991 and the change is negative (-18638) during 2001 to 2011. According to female

cultivator in 1991 is 133186 and it is decreased to 55817 in 2001 and also it is decreased to 49143 in 2011. The change between 1991 and 2001 is -77369and it is-6674between 2001 to 2011.The decadal growth rate shows that it is negative for both male cultivators (-1.6) and female cultivators (-1.4). It depicts that the cultivator's population is decreased over the decades and further there is a gender gap in that.

Table-4

Gender gap in total Agricultural labour1991, 2001and 2011

Year	Total	Change	Male	Change	Female	Change
1991	878386	-	465412	-	412974	-
2001	454614	-423772	236740	-228672 (-9.7)	217874	-195100 (-9.0)
2011	539412	84798	279253	42513 (1.5)	260159	42285 (1.6)

Sources: census data in 1991, 2001 and 2011
Note: Figure in parentheses shows decadal growth rate

Table-4 shows the gender gap in agricultural labourers in Cuddalore District. It can be observed that the agriculture labour in 1991 is 878386, and it is decreased to 454614 and it is increased to 539412 in 2011. The change between 1991 and 2001 is -423772 between 2001 to 2011 is 84798. And about the male agriculture labour, it is 465412 in 1991 and it is decreased to 236740 in 2001and it is increased to 279253 in 2011. The change is -228672 from 1991 to 2001 and it is 42513 from 2001 to 2011. About the female agriculture labour, it is 412974 in 1991 and it is decreased to 217874 in 2001 and it is increased to 260159 in 2011, the change between 1991 and 2001 is -195100 and the change are 42285 between 2001 and 2011. The decadal growth rate greater for female, it shows that female are participating more in agriculture than male.

CONCLUSION

In the study, it was observed that the proportion of both populations, total workers, cultivators have fallen for males and females and the proportion of agricultural labour is fallen for males and rises for females in 1991, 2001 and 2011. The proportion of women agricultural labour is higher than males in all the selected years. One of the reasons could be that more males have moved out of the agricultural labour force but women still tend to be employed as wage labour in agricultural activities. It is imperative, therefore, to provide technical knowledge and skills to build the capacity of women agricultural labour to harness their potential to contribute towards sustainable agricultural growth.

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