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Rural women's socio-economic empowerment in drought condition: A study

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi rightly remark that real India resides in rural part of the nation. Indian socio-economical systems still depend on agriculture. Villages are surviving on it. And this whole agriculture system has given birth by women. Still maximum agricultural work are executed by women's hand. Rural economy is depend on agriculture and agriculture depend on water system. Still 80% rural area is totally depend on rain fall. Modern water saving irrigation system are not reached and enriched. Drought can have economic, social, health, and environmental effects on women in developing countries. Drought contributes top decreased household food supply and little or no crop surplus for sale. When stocks are used up, few resources are available for the purchase of food. Male labor migration increases during drought and may become permanent. Prostitution in urban areas and forced marriages increases. Drought can deplete pastures and reduce livestock counts. Women are left to till the fields by hand and must reduce the area cultivated. Aid programs can offer food or money in exchange for work. Child labor may be reduced, but mothers must compensate and fetch water and firewood or wash dishes. Diets are supplemented by drinkable water. In rural area women are usually exploited by our male dominated system. Naturally women are forced for bringing water from long distance. Drought also affected on women health severely. In such critical condition women must be boosted by given positivity, motivation, emotional support and by providing important daily resources. This article is attempted to analyze women's condition in drought and understanding what many efforts are made to make them empower and fight with the crucial condition. Women are also exhausted to maintain family. Mostly they have to pay attention for nourishment the children in the family. So for fighting drought like natural calamity women must be supported. This article analyze government, NGO and other initiatives taken for the empowerment of women in drought prone area.

Keywords: Rural women's, socio-economic

Introduction

Rural women face many problems in drought condition. Family health, water scarcity, bringing water from long distance, fodder for cattles and cultivation of crops all these works are executed by women in rural area. It can be stated that without the contribution of women and their participation none of above work is possible. Drought affect adversely on all systems of rural life. Women suffered from more crucial conditions life they lost their employment, suffer from mental stress of surviving family, children's education, marriages of family members and traditional rituals. Thus rural empowerment is not possible without the empowerment of rural women. There has been long history of the drought in Marathwada of Maharashtra state. It occurs once or twice in 5 to 7 years. The water is being supplied through 70 blocks as scarcity affected.

Empowerment involves developing confidence in their own capacities. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economics, achieve gals for development and sustainability and improve quality of life for women, men, family and community.

Deficit rainfall in Marathwada Region

Marathwada is the only region in the central and South India where the region had below normal rainfall deficit being 12% Bid(-27%) and Latur(-22%) were in deficit rainfall category districts, rest of the six were in normal category. Bid with 412.2 mm had the lost rainfall.

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Agriculture Production

The overall agriculture yield in Kharif and Rabi season is decreased to a considerable extent in 2018-19. At the beginning of Kharif season, there was just 25% water stock in major dams in the region, which further depleted 18% in December 2018. The Kharif crop was withered by the drought and hence many farmers did not sow winter crops all major crops including maize, soya, cotton, mosiambi, pulses, groundnut suffered due to poor rainfall. According to officials in 2017-18 the committee received 63,31000 quintal agriculture produce which has been reduced to 4995000 quintal in 2018-19.

Farmer's Suicide

According to experts, farmers commit suicide mainly due to crop failure, lack of water for irrigation, poor market prices etc. from 2013 to 2019 total 15356 farmer suicide took place. Below is the district wise statement showing the farmer suicide cases (396 in total) between 11 January to 28 February 2019. Dhule – 23, Jalgaon – 22, Ahmednagar – 25, Yavatmal – 40, Buldhana – 3.

Study Area

Marathwada region of Maharashtra is the focuss of study, but due to some limitations five villages from Ambajogai taluka of Beed district are selected for study. Out of five villages 35 women selected as sample of study. These villages are nearby Ambajogai taluka place. The name of the villages are as follows – Yelda, Morfali, Chichkhandi, Kuranwadi and Dagadwadi. These villages are located in hilly area. Drought affect adversely on the village community. The women selected as a sample for study were belongs to the age group of 18 to 35.

Objectives

1. To understand the condition of rural women in drought prone area.
2. To analyses the effects of drought on rural womens socio – economic situation.
3. To study the impact of drought on rural women's overall development.

Methodology

The Drought impact on rural women's socio – economic condition assessment study is carried – out by 5 village's studies. The data of farmer's suicide is acquainted from the local Newspaper. Total 35 women interviewed. Purposive sampling method is used for data collection for understanding drought and its effect on rural area secondary data is used for secondary data collection books newspaper and government websites are referred.

Drought effect on rural women

Women status in Marathwada

Women in Marathwada are far backward as compare to global index. The rate of female feticide is very high. Marathwada region includes Aurangabad, Beed, Hingoli, Jalna, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad and parbhani districts. The sex ration of the region is 932, Literacy rate is 76.27%

Influencing factors in changing women status

Poverty

Out of 35 household's women respondent said that they are working in farm and other related work. 31 women

respondent had annual income below 1 lakhs from all family sources. Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world. Due to Object poverty women are exploited as domestic helps and wives whose incomes are usurped by the man of the house. If poverty were not a concern; then the girl child will be able to follow her dreams without concerns of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and no education or work.

Migration

The migration of females in the rural areas within the same districts is more than their urban counterparts. In rural areas the percentage of temporary migrated persons for the industry division 'agriculture' is highest for males as well as females.(509 and 71.2 percent respectively). In rural area due to unavailability of water workers do not find employment. For employment like sugarcane cutting and other work they migrate for a season. Out of 35 women respondent 24 said that every year they do seasonal migration for employment. In migration period usually from November to June they shifted to Western Maharashtra districts like Sangli, Kolhapur, Pune, Satara and Karnataka districts also. In winter time the women especially suffer very hard. The hard work family responsibility make them weak.

Employment and daily wages

In drought period it is very difficult to get an employment in near distance. Because in agriculture crops failed and without water there are no work in farm. Instead of that daily wages for women are given very low. Because the employer himself suffered from economic crisis in drought. 24 women respondent said that they lost their employment and become absolute jobless. They said that in other work if they get engaged for a while, get only 100 Rs. per day. It become very challenging to survive in such a crucial period.

Health and safety

The health and safety concern of women are paramount for the wellbeing of rural community. The maternal mortality report of India stands of 301 per 1000, with as many as 78000 women in India dying of childbirth complications. Women respondents said that, the histotomy surgery is plasticized in this area. It naturally affect adversely on their health. Out of 35 women respondent 19 women have less weight as per BMI. 6 women are suffering from severe Anemia. In the villages visited have no private clinic or medical facility. Naturally these women victimized by superstition. Women safety is the big issue to think on it. The women are victims of domestic violence and addiction of the male members of the family. 100% respondent said that they are suffering from domestic violence.

Nutrition

There is need of focused attention would be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of rural women special efforts are need to tackle the problem of the micro and macro nutrient deficiencies especially amongst pregnant women. Widespread use of nutrition education would be made to address the issues of imbalance.

Social Empowerment

Women must be educated for their social benefits including awareness about the existing social problems. Good

recognition in the family and community and their active participation in the decision making is the social empowerment. They participate very little in the politics and public life. Therefore they must give chance to serve community to fulfill welfare needs. Social empowerment also includes – Safe drinking water, public sanitation, street light, public participation. Child marriage rate is very high in these villages. All respondents said that they got married between the age group of 14 to 18 years.

Education empowerment

India has about 54% for women and 76% for en gross literacy rate. Girl child are not given preference for education. Due to child marriage they discontinue their education 82.14% women respondent said that they couldn't attend even matric level education because of early marriage.

Economic empowerment

There are very few women in rural area holding high position in the government offices. Women can prove better if they are given opportunity. Even women can be successful in business if they supported by providing ideas and resources. Women are required to encourage to start small business in order to have their own source of income. 80% women respondent demanded skill training and economic support to start business for livelihood.

Conclusion

Equal access to education for women and girls in rural community will improve their social status. Eradication of child marriage should be given high priority in drought prone area. There in need to create gender sensitive public education system. Rural women are hard worker so they must participated in public life and government's welfare programs. They are demanding skill training and micro economic support to stark livelihood business. So that should be the focus area of their empowerment. In drought period they are more exhausted for bringing water from long distance. Government shall take measure steps to reduce their pain. Child marriage is the big problem in Marathwada region. Public awareness complain should be run with the help of women SHGS. Women's traditional knowledge about healthcare should be encouraged.

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