



The Role of Women in Decision-Making Related to Agricultural Activities in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract:

In Jammu and Kashmir, participation of women in decision-making related to agricultural activities has long been a controversial topic since ages. Although women have a significant impact in the agriculture sector, still they are frequently neglected and excluded from decision-making. Women are responsible for farming and other agricultural labour but their contribution in decision-making such as cultural norms, and patriarchal attitudes that favour men in leadership roles. In recent years, many efforts have been taken to empower women and to give them a greater voice in decision-making related to agricultural activities such as training programmes and community-based organizations that will focus on the empowerment of women. However, as studies have shown empowering women can result in higher productivity, better food security, and better living conditions, there has been an increment in the value of women's input in decision-making. This review paper seeks to examine the existing level of women's involvement in agricultural decision-making in Jammu and Kashmir and to pinpoint the obstacles standing in the way of their full participation. Additionally, it looks at the possible advantages of having more women participation in decision-making and offers tactics for fostering greater equality in Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural sector.

Keywords: Agriculture, Women Empowerment, Challenges, Decision-Making.

Introduction:

Agriculture is a key component of the Indian economy, employing around 50% of the workforce and accounting for approximately 17% of India's GDP (Deshpande, 2017). India is a major producer of agricultural products such as wheat, rice, sugarcane, cotton, jute, cereals, groundnuts, and tea. The country also produces a lot of spices, fruits, vegetables, and milk. Agriculture in India is primarily dependent on monsoon rains, which supply irrigation for crops. The country's soils and climates are diverse, permitting the growth of a wide range of crops. The main farming season in India is the Kharif season, which lasts from June to October and is characterized by significant rains. The Rabi season, which lasts from October to March is drier and cooler. Agricultural practices in India vary greatly based on geography and crop type (Sangral, 2015). Traditional farming methods, such as the use of oxen for ploughing, are still employed in many locations; however, contemporary techniques and technologies, such as irrigation system and genetically modified seeds, are also used. The Indian Government has undertaken a variety of agricultural programmes and regulations, including measures to enhance crop yields and improve farmers' livelihoods. Despite these efforts, the sector confronts obstacles such as low productivity, restricted access to capital and technology, and climate change effect (Kumar et al., 2009).

Objectives:

1. To explore and analyze the challenges faced by women in decision-making related to agricultural activities.

2. To review the existing research on the current state of women's participation in agricultural decision making in Jammu and Kashmir.

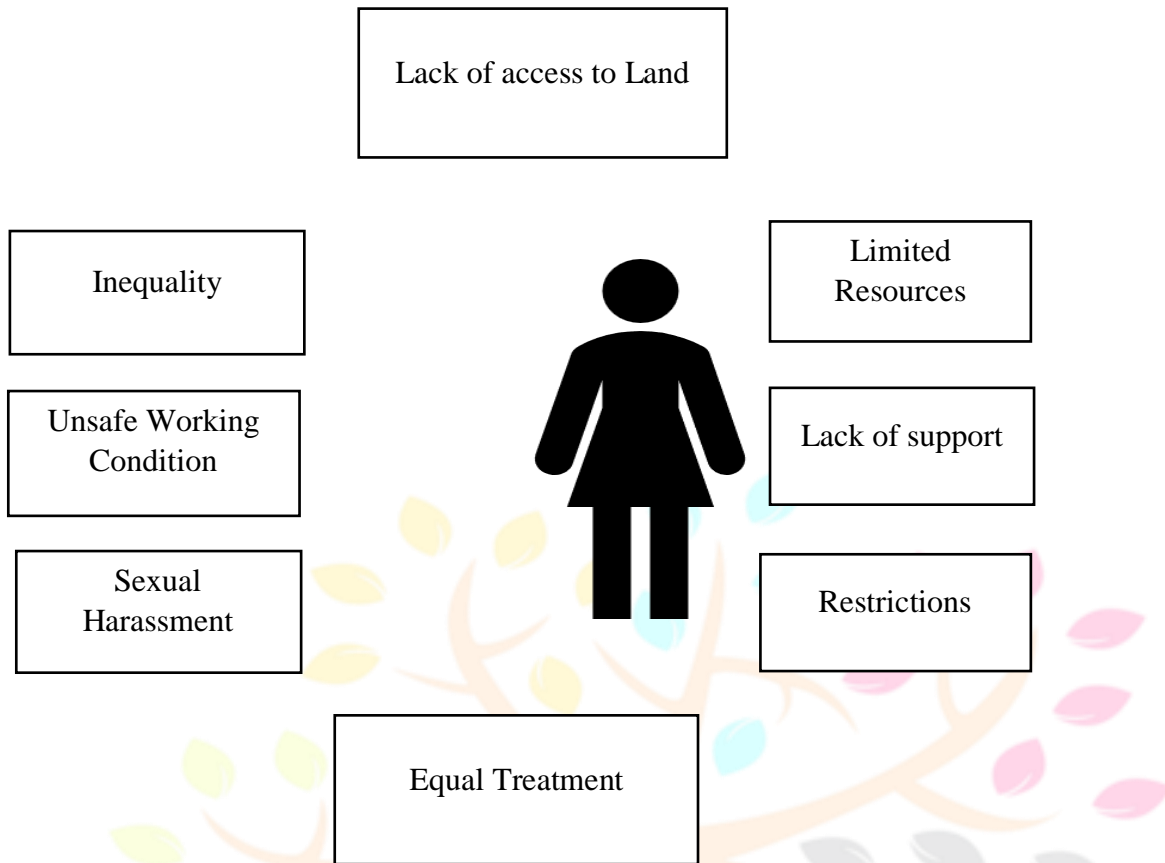
Status of Women in Agriculture in India:

Throughout the decades, women in India have played an essential part in agriculture. Their contributions, however, have frequently been noticed and appreciated. Women are responsible for a variety of agricultural jobs in various parts of India, including planting, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest activities such as threshing and storing. They also frequently play an essential part in the marketing and sale of agricultural products. Despite their crucial role in agriculture in India, women face numerous problems and barriers, including a lack of access to education, credit, and other resources. Furthermore, they frequently confront societal and cultural restrictions that limit their ability to participate in decision-making and fully contribute to the agriculture industry (Patil & Suresh Babus, 2018).

Women are incredibly active in agriculture in India and do a variety of tasks like planting, harvesting, and crop care. However, individuals frequently encounter obstacles while trying to take part in decision-making processes for agricultural activities (Godara et al., 2014). This may be brought on by societal and cultural conventions that prevent them from fully participating in such activities, a lack of access to knowledge and information, or both. In India, initiatives have been made to remove these obstacles and increase the role of women in agriculture. For instance, the government has put in place initiatives to help women farmers get resources and training, and non-governmental organizations are also trying to boost women's involvement in agricultural decision-making (Kumari, 2018). Generally, it is critical to acknowledge the achievements of women in agriculture and to make sure they have the chance to engage in discussions about such activities. This may contribute to enhancing the viability and efficiency of Indian agriculture. Hurdles, such as limited access to resources, financing, and education. Additionally, they frequently encounter societal and cultural obstacles that restrict their ability to fully participate in decision-making and contribute to the agriculture industry (Kumari, 2018)

Status of Women in Agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir:

Women have always been extensively involved in agricultural activities in Jammu and Kashmir, including decision-making. However, due to cultural and social conventions that limit their capacity to participate completely in the agricultural growth, their participation in formal decision-making processes may be constrained. This may result in lack of representation for women in debates of agricultural policy and decision-making (Aggarwal et al., 2013). To solve this problem and advance greater gender equality in Jammu and Kashmir's agriculture industry, initiatives are being made. For instance, the State Government has put in place programmes to support women and promote their involvement in agricultural decision-making. For women to effectively participate in agricultural development, these programmes frequently incorporate training and capacity building. In Jammu and Kashmir, women must participate in decision-making processes relating to agriculture because they may provide vital views and insights into these debates. The productivity and sustainability of farming in the area may be increased by fostering gender equality, which would eventually be advantageous for the entire neighbourhood. Farming women comes in a variety of forms, including managers, employees, and farmers. All facets of farming, including planting and caring for crops, caring for livestock, managing the farm's finances and business operations, and more, may involve women. Women can work in a range of farming jobs, including crop production, animal breeding and care, aquaculture, horticulture, and gardening, on both small family farms and major commercial operations. The success and sustainability of agriculture around the world depend heavily on the efforts of women in the farming sector (Alvi et al., 2021)

Problems Faced by Women While performing Agricultural Activities:

While working on farms, women encounter several issues, some of these issues consist of:

- **Inequality in pay and opportunities:** Women frequently earn less money for performing the same tasks on farms as men do. They receive fewer growth opportunities and frequently experience prejudice.
- **Unsafe working conditions:** Farms may be physically taxing and dangerous places, and women may lack access to the same safety gear or safeguards as males.
- **Sexual Harassment and abuse:** Women who work on farms may be subjected to harassment and violence by male coworkers or managers.
- **Limited resources for education and training:** Many women who work on farms have limited access to these options, which might hinder their ability to develop their jobs and enhance their abilities.
- **Lack of support for family care:** Without access to child care or other supportive services, women may find it difficult to balance their labour on the farm with obligations of caring for their families.
- **Restrictions on women's access to resources and decision-making authority:** Women may have fewer restrictions on their ability to access resources including land, financing, and technology, as well as less decision-making authority on the farm (Aggarwal et al., 2013)

Review of Literature:

Due to lack of resources women face a huge number of challenges while working in the farms. Women not only face workplace burden but also they face the domestic burden. Many a times women restrict themselves from taking part in the decision-making process due to less education and knowledge. This review of literature is based on the challenges faced by women while performing the agricultural activities.

(Amin et al., 2009), Women who work in agriculture frequently have to manage the duties of maintaining a farm and caring for their families, which is referred to as having a dual responsibility. This can entail chores like planting and harvesting crops, caring for livestock, handling the farm's finances, and caring for the home and raising children. This dual obligation can be difficult since it might take a lot of time and effort, and it might also

cause stress on the body and the mind. However, women are crucial to the food security and economic growth of their families and communities as well as to the agriculture sector.

(Nain & Kumar, 2010), In India, women have always been heavily involved in agriculture, including decision-making. However, due to societal, cultural and access issues with knowledge and resources, their ability to participate in and have an impact on agricultural decision-making may be constrained. Through programmes and initiatives emphasizing education, skill development, and resource access, there have been recent efforts to empower women in the area with the aim of expanding female participation and power in the agricultural sector.

(Lal & Khurana, 2011), Women have had a limited influence in agricultural decision-making. However, there have been initiatives in recent years to improve women's participation in agricultural decision-making and give them more influence. This has been accomplished through several activities, including the provision of education, training, and access to resources and data. Additionally, several organizations operating in Jammu and Kashmir have been actively supporting the involvement of women in agriculture through initiatives that place a strong emphasis on their capacity development and empowerment. Despite these advancements, there is still a lot of gender prejudice in Jammu and Kashmir, which prevents women from participating as much in the agriculture sector.

(Jagerskog, A., Jonch Clausen, 2012), studies have found that women in agriculture often have less or no access to the resources as compared to men. Gender disparities will always remain a significant issue in the agriculture sector. In most of the cases, women are working as an unpaid labourer and they have a very limited control over land ownership. This research suggests that empowering women can lead to the increase in the agricultural productivity and economic growth in the agriculture sector.

(Mohapatra, 2012), In Agriculture, women face a lot of issues which are unsafe for their mental and physical health while working in the farms, they are more often exposed to the dangerous chemicals, weather conditions may vary, excessive physical work without any training or practice which may harm them in different ways. In the workplaces, women are always on higher risk of sexual harassment and violence. These are the major problems women are facing while performing the agricultural activities. Awareness programmes and camps should be performed in the remote areas to aware the women for their rights.

(Sharma, 2013), Women in agriculture often face a variety of challenges and barriers that can limit their productivity and income-earning potential. No or limited access to resources and information, lack of legal rights, social and cultural barriers, physical limitations, discrimination and violence, technical limitations. Due to these barriers women are always behind and to overcome these challenges, efforts such as providing educational and training, implementing laws and policies that support gender equality and promoting societal and cultural change can help to empower women farmers and to improve their livelihood.

(Patil & Suresh Babus, 2018), Traditionally, women have been heavily involved in agricultural tasks like planting, harvesting, and processing food crops. They have, nevertheless, had a limited influence on agricultural decision-making. Men have traditionally had a disproportionate amount of decision-making authority and control over land and other resources, which has made it difficult for women to fully engage in and profit from agricultural activities. However, there have been initiatives to improve women's involvement in decision-making and resource ownership in Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural sector in recent years. These initiatives include expanding the availability of education, training, and extension services as well as giving women access to credit and other financial aid options.

(Pathak, 2022), Women have played a significant role in agricultural production and household practices in many cultures around the world. Despite their important role in agriculture and households, women often have limited access to resources and opportunities, such as land ownership, education, and training. This can make it more difficult for them to increase their productivity and improve their livelihoods. However, in recent years there have been efforts by government, NGOs and international organizations to empower women by providing them resources and opportunities to improve their livelihood and access to credit and markets. This also includes efforts to change social norms and policies that discriminate against women and to promote gender equality in agricultural and rural development.

Findings:

There has been a significant amount of research conducted on the role of women in decision-making related to agricultural activities in Jammu and Kashmir. Here are some key findings from this literature:

- Women in Jammu and Kashmir have traditionally played a significant role in agricultural activities, including planting, weeding, harvesting, and processing. However, their participation in decision-making related to agricultural activities has often been limited.
- Research has found that men tend to have more control over resources and decision-making in agricultural households, leading to a gender gap in terms of access to resources and decision-making power.
- There is evidence to suggest that increasing women's participation in decision-making can have positive impacts on agricultural productivity and household food security.
- Research has also shown that cultural and social norms can be major barriers to women's participation in decision-making. Addressing the norms and promoting gender equality is crucial for increasing women's participation in decision-making.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, participation of women in the agriculture sector and in decision-making plays an important role. When it comes to planting, harvesting, and taking care of livestock, women are crucial to food production. They also oversee the running of the home, which includes chores like cooking, cleaning, and gathering firewood and water. Women frequently encounter major obstacles to resources and opportunities, such as limited access to land ownership, education, and training, despite their key roles in agriculture and households. They may find it challenging to boost their output and enhance their quality of life as a result. Women's access to decision-making positions and political participation may be constrained by gender stereotypes and social norms. In order to empower women, efforts are being made to provide them with resources and opportunities, alter discriminatory attitudes and policies, and advance gender equality in rural and agricultural development.

Although women are working hard in the agricultural sector, they often face significant barriers to accessing resources and opportunities, as well as discrimination and biases. This can result in not being able to fully participate in decision-making and not getting the recognition and support they deserve for their contributions. Despite these challenges, many organizations and the Government have been working to empower women in agriculture through various initiatives such as providing training, micro-finance and extension services, changing discriminatory laws and policies, and promoting gender equality in agricultural and rural development.

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