

Rural Women's Contribution Towards on- Farm, Off-Farm and Subsidiary Activities

Prarthana R¹, Bhagyalaxmi ², Manjula N³, Purushotham R.Vand Neethu J S⁴

^{1,4}M.V.Sc. scholar, ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, Bareilly, UP

³Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka

^{2,4}M.Sc. student, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka

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History believes that women was first domesticated crop and animal husbandry, she initiated art and science of agriculture and agribusiness. We believe God is everywhere but not visible likewise no agribusiness or agriculture enterprise runs in the absence of women, but her contribution goes unnoticed. Here an attempt is made to through light on women contribution in agriculture and agribusiness.

Agribusiness:

It is “sum total of all operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies, production activities on the farm and storage processing and distribution of farm commodities and items made from them.

Concept of Agri Business

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy because of its high share in employment and livelihood creation. It supports more than half a billion people providing employment to 52 per cent of the workforce. Its contribution to the nation's GDP is about 20.2 per cent in 2021-22. It is also an important source of raw material and demand for many industrial products, and a variety of consumer goods.

Agri-premiership is defined as generally sustainable, community oriented, directly marketed agriculture. Sustainable agriculture denotes a holistic, systems-oriented approach to farming that focuses on the interrelationships of social, economic and environmental process. Accordingly, a women entrepreneur is defined as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women”.

Factors That Are Plunged Women to Agri-Business

In traditional societies, women were confined to the four walls of houses performing household activities, but in modern era they have come out of the four walls to participate in all sorts of activities. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity & employment of all business enterprise. Women in India is plunged into agri-business for both pull and push factors.

- **Pull factors:** Factors which encourage women to start an occupation or venture with an urge to do something independently
- **Push factors:** Factors which compel women to take, up their own business to tide over their economic difficulties and responsibilities

Need and Importance of Women in Agri-Business

Need

History and experience over a period of time shows that women are considered to have a good entrepreneurial quality because of the following reasons-

- Enhance awareness
- Self confidence
- Increased social interaction
- Inherent leadership qualities
- More participation in social meetings
- Involvement in political activities
- Identity and status in society
- Sense of achievement
- Establishing own credit idea
- Involvement in solving problems
- Decision making capacity in family and community
- Economic independence, greater freedom and mobility

Importance

- Women is the main source of off-farm employment in rural areas
- Women has a positive impact in removing the poverty and responsible for export of high-value agri-food produces in rural areas

- Women creates off-farm employment opportunities in agro-industrial companies located in rural areas, improving the income of rural households through wage employment and spillover effects that can increase on-farm agricultural productivity through greater liquidity to purchase inputs and increased capacity to adopt technologies.
- It helps to forge the necessary link between the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, which in turn can catalyze the development of broader manufacturing industries by providing material inputs for food processing, textiles and bio-fuels

Contribution of Women in on-Farm, Off-Farm and Subsidiary Activities

Women contribute to agriculture through multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and laborers. About 60–80% of the food produced in India can be attributed to the efforts of rural women. Rural women are also engaged in on-farm and off-farm and subsidiary fields including.

On Farm Activities:

- **Agro- produce processing units:** Rice mills, Dal mills, Decorticating mills etc.
- **Agro- produce manufacturing units:** Sugar factories, Bakery, Strawboard units etc.
- **Agro-inputs manufacturing units:** Fertilizer manufacturing plants, insecticides production units, food processing units, agricultural implements etc.
- **Agro-service centers:** Workshops & service centers for repairing and serving the agricultural implements.

Off- Farm Activities:

- Cloth stitching
- Knitting
- Embroidery
- Cloth printing
- Carpet making
- Envelope & plastic bag making
- Agarbatti & candle making
- Distilled water making
- Oil extraction

Subsidiary Activities:

- Dairying
- Sericulture
- Goat rearing
- Floriculture
- Poultry farming
- Sheep rearing
- Vegetable cultivation
- Nursery farming
- Horticulture
- agro/social forestry,
- post-harvesting operations
- fishing

Contribution of Women in Agriculture and Allied Fields

Sl. No.	Crop/sector/area	Percentage of contribution of women
1	Production of major crop	75.00%
2	Cereals production	94.00%
3	Horticulture	79.00%
4	Vegetable production	01.40%
5	Fruits and nuts	03.72%
6	Post harvest	51.00%
7	Tea plantation	47.00%
8	Cotton cultivation	46.84%
9	Oil seeds	45.43%
10	Sericulture	42.00%
11	Forestry	49.00%
12	Animal husbandry	79.00%
13	Dairy	70.00 %
14	Poultry	16.4%
15	Fisheries	24.00%
16	Food sector	60.00%
17	Manufacturing	29.00%

18	Self employed	48.00%
19	Self-help groups	90.00%
20	Agriculture labour	47.00%
21	Mushroom	62.50%
22	Vermicompost	48.00%
23	Textiles	20.50%
24	Food products	23.50%
25	Tobacco	20.50%
26	Beverages	14.40%
27	Leather and related	39.40%
28	Wood and cork	11.30%
29	Paper and paper products	11.40%
30	Machinery and equipment	04.00%
31	Rubber and plastics	10.80 %

(Rathore and Joshi 2019)

Conclusion

The need for bringing women to the mainstream of economic development of our country is because of their proven success in all fields, where ever they got the opportunity. Traditionally, women, be it mother, wife or sister, used to be the in charge of the household management. With the successful contribution of women in the fields of on and off activities also, allied sector. Further, she can extend her contribution in the following services sectors viz., agricultural input and production, seed supply, farm equipment manufacturing, pesticide and fertilizer supply, bio pesticides and bio control agent.