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**A STUDY ON SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN  
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN MELACHAMANGALAM  
PANCHAYAT IN TIRUPATTUR TALUK, TIRUPATTUR  
DISTRICT**

**Dr. K. Sivakumar<sup>1</sup>, Ms. M. Ramani<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract**

*Agriculture is the vertical backbone of a country. In developing countries like India, agriculture continues to absorb and employ 2/3 of the female work force but fails to give them recognition of employed labor. Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture varies greatly from region to region. This study aims to investigate the economic status of female workers in micro level. This study has made an attempt to find social status, cultural background, nature of employment, income, expenditure pattern are some of the major problem encounter by female agricultural workers in Melachamangalam Panchayat. Women agricultural workers were facing many socio – economic problems. Still they are suffering from poverty, inequality, lack of women empowerment, etc. To look into the socio-economic status of the women agricultural workers, this survey was made in Melachamangalam Panchayat Tirupattur Taluk in Tirupattur district. Totally, 50 women agricultural workers were interviewed to collect the primary data. The important objectives of this study are; to study the socio – economic status, to analyze the various problems encountered and to give remedial suggestions to improve the standard of living of the sample respondents. In this study primary and secondary data were used to collect data from the sample respondents. To collect primary data purposive random sample methods have been used to identify the sample respondents in the study area with well – structured interview schedule. Simple percentage tables, bar diagrams, simple pie charts.*

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor of Economics,  
PG & Research Department of Economics,  
Sacred Heart College (Autonomous),  
Tirupattur, TN.  
<sup>2</sup> PG Student,  
PG & Research Department of Economics,  
Sacred Heart College (Autonomous),  
Tirupattur, TN

### **Introduction:**

Women's involvement in agriculture varies widely among different regions, ecological sub zones, farming system, caste, class and stages in the family cycle. Generally it is stated that poorer the family greater the involvement of women in the agricultural activities. Despite women's significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields, they have virtually no access to agricultural information, services or production assets and have very limited control over their earnings. In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors, as productions, concentrated efforts will be made to ensure the benefits of training, extension and various programmers will reach them in proportion to their numbers. The agricultural sector is the largest employer of women. Majority of the female workforce (84 per cent) works in rural India.

This study aims to investigate the economic status of female workers in micro level. This study made an attempt to find social status, cultural background, nature of employment, income, expenditure pattern which are some of the major problems encountered faced female agricultural workers in Melachamangalam Panchayat. Women are equally working with men in agricultural sector, but still there are some wage differences between male and female labourers for the same type and nature of works. Women agricultural workers were facing many socio – economic problems.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following are the important objectives of this study;

1. To study the socio – economic status of the sample respondents in Melachamangalam Panchayat;
2. To give remedial suggestions to improve the standard of living of the sample respondents in the study area.

### **Methodology**

In this study primary and secondary data were used to collect data from the sample respondents. To collect primary data purposive random sample methods have been used to identify the sample respondents in the study area with well – structured interview schedule. Simple percentage tables, bar diagrams, simple pie charts have been used.

### **Women In Agricultural**

The dignity of women activities largely depends on the availability of employment for them. The casual essence of employment, absence of opportunities to progress, lack of required skills, segregation of work, unequal wages, and corrupt surroundings of work, commercialization and mechanization of agriculture are some of the problems that have oppressed the female agricultural laborers'. Women's presence in the labor market is purposeful by her family situation, education, growth in job opportunities and the normal leveled of fiscal action. Female work presence in agriculture depends on a severity and related growth of agriculture

**Table No. 1 Title: Participation rate of women in agricultural sector in India**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Total Population of India                                    | 1210.85 million |
| Rural Population   | 833.7 million   |
| Urban Population   | 377.1 million   |
| Work Participation Rate                                      | 39.8 %          |
| Percentage of female cultivators to total workers            | 24 %            |
| Percentage of female agricultural labourers to total workers | 41.1 %          |

*Source: Census of India 2011*

**Table No. 2 Title: State – Wise Women Participation in Agricultural & Non – Agricultural Activities:**

| State            | Total Female Workers | Percent of Female workers in Agriculture | Percent of Female workers in Non – Agricultural Activities |
|------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| HIMACHAL PRADESH | 630521               | 82.47                                    | 17.53  |
| MANIPUR          | 229137               | 55.59                                    | 44.41  |
| NAGALAND         | 279166               | 82.66                                    | 17.34  |
| ANDHRA PRADESH   | 9585381              | 73.44                                    | 26.56  |
| RAJASTHAN        | 4595570              | 81.07                                    | 18.93  |
| MADHYA PRADESH   | 5046293              | 79.45                                    | 20.55  |
| KARNATAKA        | 5467914              | 61.11                                    | 38.89  |
| TAMIL NADU       | 7454473              | 59.30                                    | 40.70  |
| MAHARASHTRA      | 10331758             | 74.53                                    | 25.47  |
| GUJARAT          | 3544508              | 57.12                                    | 42.88  |
| ORISSA           | 1584529              | 60.47                                    | 39.53  |
| TRIPURA          | 170238               | 52.78                                    | 47.22  |
| ASSAM            | 1265065              | 42.47                                    | 57.53  |
| PUNJAB           | 1409704              | 24.51                                    | 75.49  |
| BIHAR            | 3541857              | 83.56                                    | 16.44  |
| WEST BENGAL      | 3528612              | 32.62                                    | 67.38  |
| UTTAR PRADESH    | 4999389              | 65.87                                    | 34.13  |
| KERALA           | 1776280              | 21.27                                    | 78.73  |

*Source: Census of India 2011*

**Review of Related Studies:**

G. Chandrashekhar (2008) had studied about the impact of globalization of women agricultural workforce, a discriminated lot the major findings of a research project commissioned by the international union of food and agricultural workers (IUF) to study about the impact of globalization on farm workers in India. Landowners seem to prefer women as they are able to pay less and find them a docile and dependent workforce. Based on discussion with agricultural laborers' unions in ten states, the study has highlighted the need to resist invasion of agriculture by the corporate sector. Farid et.al (2009) discussed the major role of women in farming and non – farming activities especially in post-harvest operations, homestead gardening, livestock and poultry rearing and non – agricultural activities is to meet the family needs and to enhance the family income. Bala (2010) cited in his working paper regarding engagement and participation of women workers in almost all activities of agriculture but there is discrimination in wages even if they do same type of work as male labour. By linking the knowledge and information flow amongst women socio economic progress can be achieved (Dhaka et. al, 2012). Chandrama Goswami (2013) made a case study of female agricultural workers Assam. The main objective of this study is to find out the contribution of women agricultural workers to family income in the farm household of Assam. The data for study have been collected from 140 households of Darrang district of Assam by taking sample villages. The share of female workers in family income is calculated as a proportion to their share in total labour used by the family in cultivation. Dr. Mun Mun Ghosh, Dr.

Arindam Ghosh (2014) they analyzed of women participation in India agriculture their main objectives are to study the trend of women participation in agriculture as cultivator and agricultural laborers' in India states. To accomplish the requirement of the research work secondary data have been recorded.

**Analysis:****Table No. 3 Title: Community of the Respondents**

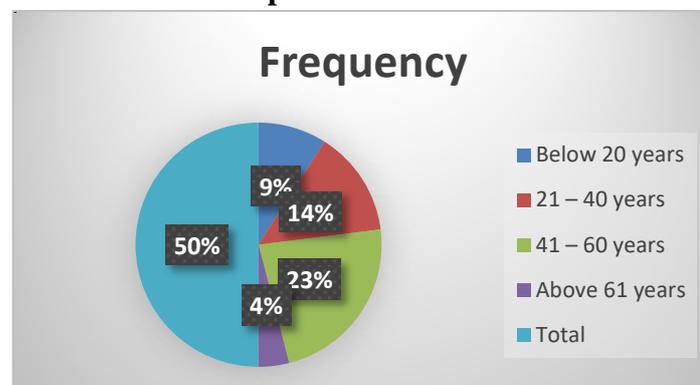
| Particulars  | Frequency | Percentage   |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| BC           | 5         | 10.0         |
| MBC          | 43        | 86.0         |
| ST           | 1         | 2.0          |
| Others       | 1         | 2.0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: The Primary Data

**Table No. 4 Title: Daily Wage of the Respondents**

| Particulars  | Frequency | Percentage   |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Below 100    | 11        | 22.0         |
| 101 – 200    | 29        | 58.0         |
| Above 201    | 10        | 20.0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: The Primary Data

**Diagram No. 1 Title: Age of the Respondents**

**Table No. 5 Title: Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

| Particulars      | Frequency | Percentage   |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Primary          | 24        | 48.0         |
| Middle           | 11        | 22.0         |
| Higher Secondary | 12        | 24.0         |
| Degree & Others  | 3         | 6.0          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

*Source: Primary Data*

**Table No. 6 Title: Monthly Income of the Respondents**

| Particulars  | Frequency | Percentage   |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Below 2000   | 13        | 26.0         |
| 2001 – 4000  | 29        | 58.0         |
| 4001 – 6000  | 7         | 14.0         |
| Above 6001   | 1         | 2.0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

*Source: The Primary Data*

**Table No. 7 Title: Total Expenditure (Per Month)**

| Particulars  | House     | Food      | Health    | Education | Others    |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Below 1000   | 46        | 36        | 47        | 43        | 44        |
| 1001 – 2000  | 4         | 11        | 3         | 4         | 3         |
| 2001 – 3000  | -         | 2         | -         | 3         | 3         |
| Above 3001   | -         | 1         | -         | -         | -         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> |

*Source: The Primary Data*

**Table No. 8 Title: Suggestions to Improve Women Agricultural Workers**

| Particulars  | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Increase wage for agricultural works                     | 17        |
| Increase the no of days of MGNREGP work                  | 10        |
| Increase and the availability of drinking water          | 13        |
| Introduce more insurance schemes for agricultural labour | 12        |
| Increase Rural infrastructure                            | 14        |
| Increasing and introduce various pension plans           | 11        |
| Improve health and hospital facilities                   | 14        |
| More Women Empowerment training                          | 11        |
| No suggestions   | 18        |

*Source: The Primary Data*

### Major findings of the study:

1. The respondents are ranging between 46 % (41- 60 Years) of the women are contributing more for their family needs in actively participating in the concerned work.
2. The 42 (84%) of the respondents are married. The Marital status of the respondents is one of the variables because the married women get some moral protection and support from the family
3. Majority 24 (48%) of respondents' educational qualification are primary. Education status of the respondents is one of the important factors for the women to join in the agricultural work. A poor educational standard leads to poverty which forced women community to do work more.
4. The majority of the respondents 29 (58%) have the daily wage of Rs. 101 – 200 because the daily wage income is an important factor to maintain their standards of living of the people. It also helps them to save money by women agricultural workers. In the rural areas people are going to the regular farm.
5. The majority of the respondents 29 (58%) have the monthly income of Rs. 2001 – 4000 because the monthly income is an important factor to maintain their standards of living of the people. It also helps them to save money by women agricultural workers. In the rural areas people are going to the regular farm and non – form works.
6. (74%) of the respondents said to that they are account for the bank. The bank is an important factor for the women

agricultural workers because it gives loan to the agricultural and offering more benefits through the bank.

7. This study shows that majority of the respondent are spending below Rs. 1000 for the health per month. In the study area people take own medicine and majority of the people are taking treatment and medicines in the government hospital.
8. Majority of the respondents (86%) are spending about below Rs. 1000 on education per month because most of the people have admitted their children in the nearby government schools
9. The majority 88% of the respondents had the minimum others spend per month pattern due to the family income were almost constraint.

#### **Conclusion:**

The women agricultural working members have socially and economically improved in the status of the life. Women agricultural workers are very useful to the rural and agricultural development of the nation. More support to the women agricultural workers enable to make an improvement of the rural families. These women agricultural workers are socially and economically underdeveloped in the study area. This agricultural work is very helpful to the rural women and improvement of the women status, improvement of knowledge, skills and others. Hence the central and state governments must introduce more schemes and plans to improve their working conditions and works. These are very useful to the rural women for the overall development.

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