



Economic empowerment of Rural women in India: an Overview

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Abstract

In spite of our society is a patriarchal society women play a critical role in Indian economic escalation particularly in agriculture, the socio-economic deprivation of women is characterized by their limited access to resource, services and employment. As a result a large number of women are economically dependent on their spouse. Female Labour Participation Rate relatively more in rural areas than urban in the country and Andhra Pradesh. Despite, some social norms, unpaid labour in the family, child care, backwardness in utilizing employment opportunities and literacy, etc are making hindrances for women in the path of empowerment, they will slowdown the pace only women economic empowerment, but, these obstacles cannot prevent women to reach their destination.

Key Words

Empowerment, Child Care, Unpaid Labour, Land Size, Labour Participation Rate.

Introduction

The building of a race and its shape will depend on the role of woman. Woman plays copious roles in a family and in a society. She is an architect of the society. The ability of a woman is not a supplementary source to the society, it is the main stream. Women are pivotal to the monetary advancement of nation (Namala Sundhya Rani 2021). She is the centre for all round development of the society.

Economic empowerment of women is a multidimensional multiple and cyclical effective factor. Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate, contribute to and benefit from growth process in ways which recognized the value of their contribution respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate fairer distribution of the benefit of growth (Eyben and others, 2008) Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society (Sweden Ministry) UNO recognized the importance of the economic empowerment of women as a pre-requisite for sustainable development, pro poor growth and the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Though women are pivotal for the economic development of the nation, many socio-economic structural hindrances are preventing their advancement. Despite being their largest share of labour their work is not valued by the society and the decision to control over income and final product goes to the men. Not only has this, women in rural areas living in an oppressive culture that denies their right to participate in decision making

on final output. Therefore, the socio-economic deprivation of women is characterized by their limited access to resource, services and employment. As a result a large number of women are economically dependent on their spouse (Mengisties Mossie, 2013) Women performed 66 per cent of the world work and 50 per cent of food, yet earn only 10 per cent of income and one per cent of the property (Bill Clinton former president of USA 2009). There has been mounting interest in empowering women where the working labour force has been growing in low income countries but it is relatively lower than high income countries. The World Bank reported that the total labour force in the world is 3.62 Billion in 2023. The female Labour Force Participation Rate in low income countries declined in 2023 compare to 2016. They accounted for 43.2 and 43.6 respectively. The Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLPR) is also lower in low income countries relatively high income countries. FLPR in higher income countries represented 44.1 in 2016 and 44.9 in 2023.

Indian economic escalation is agro centric. Female workers are predominantly in agriculture. The annual Periodical Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Report 2023 showed the female employment rate (person) in rural area under age group 15 year and above was 57.5 for 2021 – 2022 it is more than male. The data pertaining to Andhra Pradesh under the same group showed that 51.7 for 2020-2021 it was relatively more than urban female employment.

Review of literature

Namal Sandhya Rani (2021) conducted a study and found that women strengthening and financial advancement are firmly related. The study emphasized the significance of financial advancement that strengthening women capacities. Women are pivotal to the monetary advancement of nation. The study suggested macro approach to women empowerment Kabeer (2017) conducted a study and found that economic empowerment of women can lead to poverty reduction especially in developing countries. Further the study emphasized that economic empowerment can enhance women's access to resource including education healthcare and property which improve their overall wellbeing and reduce poverty Shabber Ahmed (2016) conducted a study on Socio-Economic empowerment of rural women and found that the need for adopting broad based approach that addresses planning adequate resource allocation programme design and formulate targeted intervention.

Esther Duflo (2012) found that women empowerment and economic development are closely related. In one direction development can play major role in driving down inequality between men and women, in the other direction empowering women may benefit development. The interrelationships are probably too weak to be self sustaining and that continues policy commitment to equality for its own sake, may be needed to bring about between men and women Brush De Bruin and Weller (2009) conducted a study and found that women entrepreneurs face unique challenges including limited access to finance market information and net work. However the study found that women entrepreneurs have a significant impact on their community's economic growth. They recognize the need for more integrated and comprehensive approach to women's economic empowerment that addresses the structural barriers to women full participation in the economy.

Need of the study

In spite more studies were conducted on economic empowerment of women, there is a need to review the status of the women's empowerment particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh where agriculture is a major occupation. It helps to drive the Government initiations to work effectively.

Objectives

1. To study land ownership scenario of women in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
2. To study Employment scenario of women in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
3. To study literacy scenario of women in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

The frame work helps to drive the research in proper manner. It guides the researcher to do the research in the right way. The analysis in this paper was completely based on secondary data which are available in Government published reports.

Research Design

The entire state of Andhra Pradesh was taken in to consideration. The data pertaining to the state was compared with the data related to India and analysed and concluded.

Data

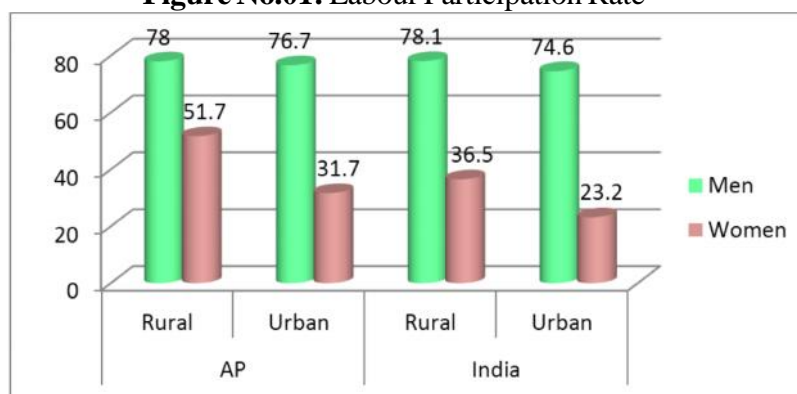
Secondary data have been available in Government Reports namely Agriculture Report 2015-16, Government of India, Socio Economic Survey 2023, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Analysis

Employment

Emplyment (labour participation) is one of the fundamental and more effective devises which empower women. Let us see the category wise employment(labour participation) scenario regarding rural area of the country and the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Figure No.01: Labour Participation Rate



(Source: Soci-Economic Survey, 2022-23, GoAP)

The above figure has visualised that Women labour participation rate relatively men is less in both A.P and India. But, when it compares to Urban it is better in A.P and India too. The women labour participation rate in A.P and India is 51.7 and 36.5 respectively. In the case of urban area the rate pertaining to A.P and India is 31.7 and 23.2 correspondingly. The women labour participation rate in the state of Andhra Pradesh reletvely more than India in not only in rural but also urban.

Table No.01: Category wise Rural employment scenario

(In Percentage)

Sl. No.	Type of Employment	Andhra Pradesh		India	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Self employed	45.4	37.2	59.7	64.8
2	Regular salaried	15.5	5.8	13.6	9.1
3	Casual	39.1	53.0	26.8	26.2
4	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: PLFS 2020-21, MoSPI, GoI)

The casual workers in women are more comparatively male in rural Andhra Pradesh and rural India also but in India its percentage is lesser than the state of Andhra Pradesh. The table No.01 has ascertained this. Self employed women are more than men in India it accounts for 64.8 and 59.7 respectively. A note worthy point in the table that the variation between men and women in the case of regular salaried employees in rural Andhra Pradesh is around 10, whereas in India we cannot find such huge gap.

Land

Land is a main income stream particularly in rural area. It drives women towards empowerment.

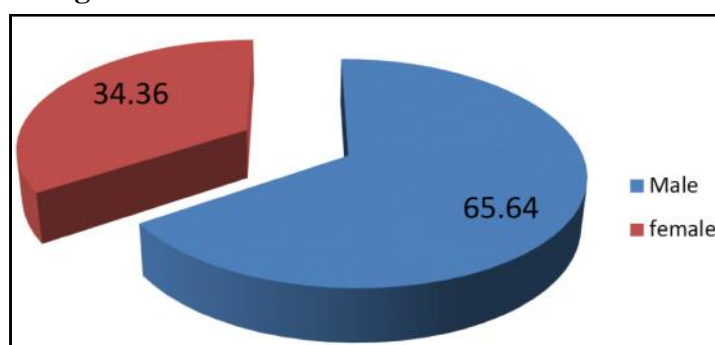
Table No.02: Land holder in rural Andhra Pradesh

(No's in '000)

Sl. No.	Category	No. of land holders			Percentage	
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	Marginal	4049	1854	5903	68.59	31.41
2	Small	117	475	592	19.76	80.24
3	Semi medium	574	194	768	74.74	25.26
4	Medium	149	39	188	79.26	20.74
5	Large	11	3	14	78.57	21.43
	All	4900	2565	7465	65.64	34.36

(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

Figure No.02: Land holder in rural Andhra Pradesh



(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

Above table has shown that despite 80.24 per cent of females has come under small land holder, majority of females has been recognised as marginal land holders. The data (in No's) pertaining to small as well as marginal land holders are 475 and 1854 respectively. The overall scenario of land holder of both genders are shown in the figure No.02. it has revealed that just 36.34 per cent of female land holders are there in Andhra Pradesh, remaining belongs to men land holders.

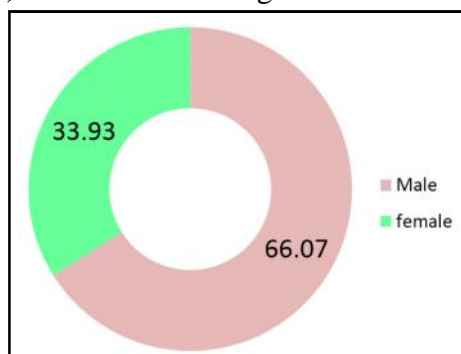
Table No.03: Caste wise land holders in Rural Andhra Pradesh

(No,s in '000)

Sl. No.	Category	Scheduled cast			Scheduled Tribe		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Marginal	375	199	574	176	87	263
2	Small	77	35	112	61	26	87
3	Semi medium	26	11	37	32	10	42
4	Medium	3	2	5	10	2	12
5	Large	0	0	0	1	0	1
	All	481	247	728	280	125	405

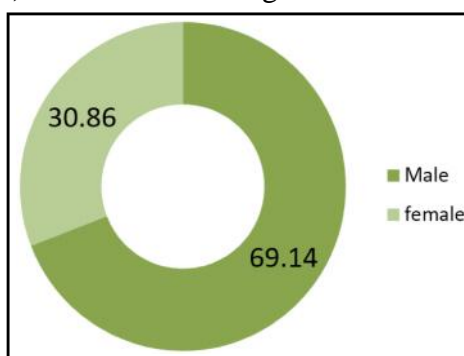
(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

Figure No.03(a): Land holder belongs to SC in rural Andhra Pradesh



(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

Figure No.03(b): Land holder belongs to ST in rural Andhra Pradesh



(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

Despite the number of land holders in the table No.03 has been decending order in both genders majority of females relatively men contain marginal land in both communities. The scenario has taken as a whole in community has shown that the percentage of women land holders belong to SC and ST are 33.93 and 30.86 respectively. In the case of men the percentages of the same communities are 66.03 and 69.14 accordingly.

The degree of women empowerment depends not only on the number of women land holders but also on size of land.

Table No.04: Average size of land

Sl. No.	Gender	Andhra Pradesh			India		
		All Categories	SC	ST	All Categories	SC	ST
1	Men	0.97	0.69	1.13	1.10	0.79	1.43
2	Women	0.85	0.66	0.92	0.90	0.68	1.23
3	Total	0.97	0.68	1.07	1.08	0.78	1.40

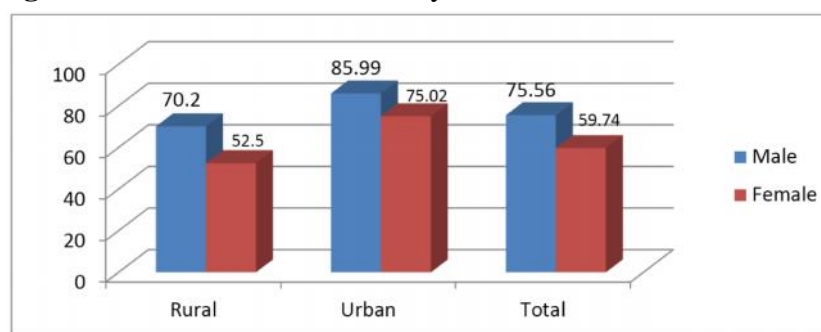
(Source: Agricultural Survey 2015-16)

According to Agricultural Survey 2015-16 average size of land in Andhra Pradesh has shown in above table as 0.97. It is less than country's average. In women it is slightly less than the country. It accounts for 0.85 and 0.9 respectively. The variation in average land size of SC women is just 0.03, where as in men it is 0.1 per cent. The variation belongs to ST women is compare to men is more. It is 0.31 per cent. The variation in the case of men regarding same community is 0.1 per cent.

Literacy

All researches has unanimously agreed that there is a positive correlation between literacy and production irrespective of gender.

Figure No.04: Gender wise Literacy Rate in Andhra Pradesh in 2011



(Source: Census 2011, GoI)

Above figure has shown gender wise literacy rates related to rural and urban. The figure helps us to understand the literacy scenario that exists in Andhra Pradesh in 2011. Women literacy in A.P is obviously less than urban. Women literacy rate accounted for 59.74, where as men it was 75.56 as a whole. The variation in rural literacy rate between men and women is two digits. Their literacy rates were 70.2 and 52.5 respectively. We can find same scenario in urban area also but the magnitude of variation was better in urban than rural.

Some Government Programme

The Government has implemented many programmes for empowering women. For instance The Government of Andhra Pradesh has distributed 30.2 lakh house pattas to women at free of cost and Rs. 595.46 crore distributed to 3455031 SHG members.

Decision

In spite of economic empowerment in women is relatively less than men in employment opportunities, land holders and size of land literacy, etc, they are empowering due to capturing the opportunities in said area.

Conclusion

Income is the key driving factor for women economic empowerment. The labour participation rate is one of the income generating factors for women. The female labour participation rate in Andhra Pradesh is relatively greater than the country and infact, the rate is increasing gradually. The number regarding land holders and average land help women's economic empowerment. Though the average land size related to women is less than country's average, there is no much variation. Literacy rate defenately encourages women's economic empowerment. The female literacy rate needs to improve, but it is in bad, it is improving. Some factors which are working in opposite direction slowdown the pace of women empowerment particulaly in rural areas in the country and Andhra Pradesh such as child care, unpaid family works, illiteracy, health conditions, etc. However, women's empowerment is increaing.

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