

## Role of Tribal Women in Farm Activities

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### ABSTRACT

*In most societies, women have varied roles to play while still clinging to their cultural beliefs. Agriculture, for instance, is one activity where women have been seen to participate actively. In India women participate in agriculture for varied reasons. In Indian tribal communities there are distinct social-cultural groups with special traditions, customs, and marriage systems. More often than not the requirements of tribal people tend to be limited and there are few of them. A larger population of the tribal people often engages in agriculture. This research paper discloses the role played by women in the tribal communities in India. The main activity related to the Indian tribal people is agriculture, and, as such, there are certain roles assigned to both genders. From the findings, an increase in the sources of information means there is a higher performance of the role for tribal women in farm activities. In that regard, an extension worker often carries out activities for the tribal women through conducting home and farm visits as well as holding meetings for group discussions. The research concludes that tribal women need to be more educated so that their role performance is increased for the betterment of agriculture.*

**Key words:** Role of tribal women; Role performance; Farm operations; Constraints.

The main Indian economic base revolves around agriculture. The development of agriculture, therefore, means improvement of all farming sectors within the community irrespective of people being poor, rich, educated, illiterate, tribal, or non-tribal. The non-tribals are often more modernized because they have all the opportunities and social contacts for varied information media. On the other hand, tribal villages find themselves on the hills and forests, and as such they remain more delinked from the sources of information. In that regard, the extension of education is more important to them because they live in remote regions. It has been thought that the tribal people should be dragged into the mainstream economy by the government. Noteworthy is the fact that tribal communities are deemed the weakest section of the population in India (Headey, Chiu & Kadiyala, 2012).

From the point of view of education, the tribal people are left behind with the level of illiteracy among the tribal women relatively low and standing at 24.03%. They constitute a rather small but quite a significant part as far as the population of India is concerned. The situation of tribal people in India portrays a complicated picture. This is because they entail separate socio-cultural groups with distinct traditions, marriage system, and customs. Men and women are important people in any society. Women do play an integral role as they are the pivots that hold the family, society, and the whole human race together. Tribal women take up an important place in the socioeconomic structure of individuals living in the hilly regions, especially the tribal belts. In the Indian set up, women contribute to the farming sector though their importance has been misunderstood by most policy makers. In terms of agricultural production, tribal women have a significant role to play (Headey, Chiu & Kadiyala, 2012).

Because of the growth of industries in India, male labor has received more consideration than that of

women. For that reason, the females have increasingly dominated the agricultural labor because their men have shunned agriculture for other jobs in factories. Women have resorted to being in the farms in order to take care of their crops as well as looking after their children. In those farms women often engage in small activities such as applying manures, fertilizer application, preparation of lands, harvesting, seed grading, irrigation, plant protection, winnowing, dibbling, cattle feeding, milking, and mulching among other activities. Out of all the activities mentioned, women often do almost 75 per cent of them. Not only do women play an integral role in agricultural production, but they also enhance the effective use of agricultural goods, implementing improved sanitary practices as well as cooking chores (Matous, Tsuchiya & Ozawa, 2011).

In essence, tribal women play their individual roles in homemaking as well as active participation in the psychological and socioeconomic environment. That is to say women perform varied roles. The major restraints facing tribal women include the lack of communication facilities. Women are not known as partners to men in agriculture, and, thus, the tribal women are not incorporated into the effort of bringing fresh technology to the farms despite their considerable involvement in agriculture. In this case, agriculture acts as a labor contributor in terms of resource management and decision making. When trying to develop tribal communities agriculturally, it is important to know what role the women play in day-to-day life. The current studies confirm that tribal women have played an important role in agriculture, and as such, still have the likelihood of doing even better. In this regard, it is imperative to recognize the current place held by tribal women from the agricultural perspective, as well as the roles they play, the different problems they face, and the need for improvement (Matous, Tsuchiya & Ozawa, 2011).

Tribal people manifest special characteristics.

For instance, they live in isolated areas on the hills, in the mountains, and forests. They trace their origin from the most age-old ethnological population section. Also, tribal people often restrain their settlements and residence to planned areas albeit with certain exceptions. Additionally, they have their special dialect without script and profess to primitive religions. Each tribal group bears certain distinguishable cultural features, abide by a particular name, and exhibit a simple life. They have little or no link with the markets in the city. The tribal women have higher statuses than those from other communities. Finally, the tribal people often produce for consumption as opposed to distribution for economic purposes (Headey, Chiu & Kadiyala, 2012).

### METHODOLOGY

Like all other studies, this research cannot fail to have a methodology. This presents the materials and methods that have been used in coming up with the study in question. To bring forth a more comprehensive methodology, it has to be divided into varied subtopics. The first one is concerned with the location of the study, which is perhaps important because the study must have an area that it serves. When conducting a research on tribal people, it would be important to do that in a place where they are found. Thus, for instance, This study was carried out in a tribal area known as Dharni Panchayat Samiti found in Melghat Tahsil, Amravati district in Maharashtra State. In terms of geography, Dharni Tahsil has the territory of about 79600 hectares. The actual area under cultivation is 43,500 hectares, whereas 4,100 hectares of the land cannot be cultivated.

Fifteen respondents from each selected village were selected. Thus, from ten selected villages of Dharni Panchayat Samiti, 150 respondent tribal women were selected and considered as a sample in the study. This was followed by data collection, which was done through questionnaires. The latter provided accurate data because the respondents were asked varying questions with regard to farming activities in relation to women. After acquiring the data, they were selected, measured, and the variables were categorized. The information obtained is then classified and

tabulated for explanation. Such data will be analyzed on the basis of the results received. Lastly, the data were statistically analyzed for deductions were made on the role of tribal women in agricultural activities.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in Table 1 indicated that 80 per cent of the tribal women had medium level of role performance in agricultural activities, while only 3.34 per cent of tribal women had low level of participation in farm activities. The outcomes have indicated that with increased sources of information, there was an increased performance role of tribal women as far as farm activities are concerned. In this respect, there is a wider scope for extension officers to conduct operations for tribal women by undertaking home as well as farm visits and group discussions. The main aim behind this is to take care of the significant variables involved in increasing the tribal woman's role in farm activities. For that reason, the extension agencies could organize training programs, especially for tribal women working in agricultural technology, as well as extend an opportunity of attending exhibitions, demonstration for the access of information and the possibility to participate in group meetings (Satyavathi, Bharadwaj & Brahmanand, 2010).

**Table 1**  
**Tribal women's level of role performance in farm operations'**

Sr. No	Levels	Frequency (N=150)	Percentage
1	Low (up to 63)	05	03.34
2	Medium (64 to 88)	120	80.00
3	High (89 and above)	25	16.66
	<b>Total</b>	150	100.00

With regard to the performance in farming operations, it is observed that about 88.88 per cent of tribal women have low sources of information and had a relatively medium performance of roles with regard to farming activities. (Table 2)

**Table 2**  
**Relationship between the information sources of tribal women and their levels of role performance in farm operations.**

Sr. No.	Information sources	Frequency (%)	Performance in farm operation		
			Low	Medium	High
1.	Low (up to 7)	09 (06.00)	01 (11.12)	08 (88.88)	00 (0.00)
2.	Medium (8 up to 16)	129 (86.00)	03 (3.33)	103 (79.84)	23 (17.83)
3.	High (17 and above)	12 (08.00)	01 (8.33)	09 (75.00)	02 (16.67)
	<b>Total</b>	150 (100.00)	05 (3.33)	120 (80.00)	25 (16.67)

*Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.*

At the same time, 75 and 79.84 per cent of tribal women respectively who come from medium and high level sources of information had a moderate level of role performance in farming activities. Additionally, 17.83 per cent of tribal women from moderate information source levels had a high role performance rate in farm activities. It is noteworthy that 16.67 per cent of tribal women from high information source levels had high role performance in farm activities. A statistical analysis shows that there is an important relationship between the sources of information and the role performance of the tribal women in the operations on farms at 0.01 probability level. The sources of information aid tribal women in increasing their farm operations efficiency. The findings have also revealed the significance of information sources. In the event the agricultural efficiency is to be heightened, the increase of sources of information is highly felt.

**Table 3**  
**Constraints faced by tribal women while performing farm operation**

Sr. No.	Constraints	Frequency (N=150)	Percentage
1.	Difficult to spare time for the farm operations due to domestic work.	69	46.00
2.	Being women it is difficult to perform certain farm operations	59	39.33
3.	Lack of opportunity to attend meetings, exhibition and demonstrations for getting information	120	80.00
4.	Lack of education which hampers their ability to understand technical information	75	50.00

*Multiple choice responses*

The data depicted in Table 3 revealed that, in case of constraints faced by the tribal women while performing different farm operations great majority of respondents faced the constraints lack of opportunity to attend meetings, exhibition and demonstrations for getting information (88.00%), followed by half of tribal women faced the constraint lack of education which hampers their ability to understand technical information, nearly half (46.00%) were faced the difficult to spare their time for the farm operations due to domestic work and 39.33 per cent women being women it is difficult to perform certain farm operations, respectively.

### CONCLUSION

Tribal women do have a huge role to play in agriculture as presented by the study in this paper. However, when these women get educated, it will very likely to affect their role performance. Tribal women have been known to conduct so many activities in the farms. However, there is every likelihood of enhancing their performance in the farms. The tribal women are known for their activities, which range from mulching to applying fertilizers among many other things. In essence, they play an important role and as such they need more education for quite a number of issues as a means of improving their functionality in farm operations. There is an important aspect of women that may just not go away because they are used to the farms. It is something they find natural in them. It is indeed true that tribal women have a big role to play in farm operations from time to time.

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