

Proceedings of the Consultation regarding Gender Study in Agriculture by Punjab State farmers & Farm Workers Commission,

10th January 2019, IIC, New Delhi

Women play a pivotal role in agriculture and are involved in diverse activities, but the generalization of roles undermines policy relevance and planning. Punjab State Farmers and Farm Workers Commission is mandated to take up issues relating to agriculture and allied activities. The role of women in agriculture is one of the issues that the Commission is looking into to have gender policies based on sound data and analysis. The Commission organized a consultation on gender study in agriculture on 10th January 2019 at India International Centre.

The list of participants is as per Annexure-I.

2. Chairman, Punjab State Farmers & Farm Workers Commission, while welcoming the participants, outlined that the objective of the consultation is to get a broad perspective of the gender issues in agriculture and identify the matters/ issues that need to be studied from a policy perspective. The participants were requested to present their views.

3. **Dr. Rupinder Kaur**, while giving the background and sharing her work in gender, said that the gender inequality is increasing, and the present mechanism of data collection at the national level cannot record the views/opinions and data of the women. She said that in the present socio-cultural milieu, the women could not identify their activities. She suggested that women's participation in the informal sector and the invisibility of women in the data should be looked into. She also suggested taking up a study of farmers suicide in the State and its effect on the household.

4. **Dr. Samanpreet Kaur** suggested using ICTs to increase awareness amongst the women about various schemes and socially relevant issues.

5. **Dr. Baljinder Kaur Sidana** said that Krishi Vigyan Kendras of PAU are involved in imparting skill training, for various activities, to the women in the rural area. She

suggested that for improving the economic condition of the women focus should be on value addition and processing. She suggested that the type of training and extension required for women should also be studied.

6. Dr. Anupama Uppal said that activities performed by women are different from men, and in this regards, firstly, work in the context of women, particularly in the field of agriculture, has to be defined. She said that NSSO defines various types of workers, but the household works by the women is not recognized as economic activity esp. in the animal husbandry sector. If these activities are considered as work, then the women participation is much higher. She said that there is a need to study; what is work for women, delineation of women's activities and evaluation of activities on an economic basis to figure out the actual contribution of women. She said that the rural-urban linkages and their effect on women working outside households/ in agriculture has to be looked into.

7. Dr. Navsharan Singh stressed upon the enumeration of women's role to place women in the policy arena. She suggested that; status of women from small and marginal households who have left farming, suicide by women farmers, the status of women affected by suicide, work status and wages of women labourers should be studied. She highlighted that the women working on the farms are hidden in statistics.

8. Dr. Sanghmitra Acharya said that the morbidity of the women workers in the agriculture and animal husbandry sector should be looked into. She said that matter of financial inclusion/social exclusion of women, even when they are the entrepreneurs/producers, should be enquired. She suggested that both the qualitative and quantitative methodology should be used for the study of gender.

9. Dr. Aasha Mehta said that efforts should be to mainstream gender in policies of the State. She suggested that the study should be about bringing the change with a focus on most poor and should identify ways to; improve their wage, ensure extension activities reach the intended, and point out vulnerabilities created by suicides.

10. Ms. Renana Jhabvala suggested having an employment study to identify how to increase women's employability and bring out scalable models. She mentioned about training and handholding of newly elected women sarpanches in the State. She said that the study based on secondary data could be taken up separately.

11. Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti said that a single study would not cover all the aspects; hence, there should be multiple studies covering different aspects, qualitative and quantitative. She said that the impact of agricultural technologies on women employment and health needs to be captured. She mentioned that the impact of pesticides is far more on women than men. She said that vulnerabilities have to be looked into to identify what can be done at the policy level to address them. This can also cover the intra-district migration, as to the status of women opting for migration vis-a-vis women who opt for MNREGA employment. One study can bring out the reasons as to why SHGs have failed to take off in the State. She suggested that land rights for women also need to be looked into because, at the country level, the share of women landholding has increased while it is lowest in Punjab. She said that the ways to provide relief to women of suicide affected families should also be studied.

12. Shri. Ashish Bahuguna suggested the study should try to set terms of reference so that it can be replicated at the pan India level. He said that instead of having only a women work participation study, a study on work participation could be done. In this study, the main focus could be on women. He said that the study should be comparative on various issues like technologies, climate change, migration, groundwater level, cropping pattern and their impact on women participation in the workforce. He suggested using secondary data to do trend analysis and have a clear picture of the present situation. He further suggested that the Commission should have a social scientist to handle various aspects, including gender issues.

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Annexure-1

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List of participants

1. Shri Ajay Vir Jakhar, Chairman, PSFC.
2. Dr. H.S Sidhu, Consultant, PSFC.
3. Shri. Ashish Bahuguna, IAS (Retd.)
4. Dr. Rupinder Kaur, Assistant Professor, PAU, Ludhiana.
5. Dr. Baljinder Kaur Sidana, Assistant Economist, PAU, Ludhiana.
6. Dr. Sanghmitra Acharya, Professor, JNU, Delhi.
7. Dr. Anupama Uppal, Professor, Pbi. University, Patiala.
8. Dr. Navsharan Singh, Senior Programme Specialist, IDRC, Delhi.
9. Dr. Samanpreet Kaur, Assistant Research Engineer PAU, Ludhiana.
10. Dr. Aasha Mehta, Professor (Retd.)
11. Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti, Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA).
12. Ms. Renana Jhabvala, Self Employed Women Association.
13. Ms. Kanupriya Dalwia.