

## Status of Women Empowerment in Agriculture: A Reality of Bundelkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

*Agriculture is the main occupation and lifeline of Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. Here women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in multiple directions like production of crops, rearing of animals, care and management of physical & natural resources as well as family matter, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture as well as the recognition and acceptance of women are not found in Bundeli-society. Looking the potentialities of women in agricultural and allied activities an attempt to made highlight the woman contribution and their competency as well as level of women empowerment were identified in this region. Study was conducted in purposively selected four districts of Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. The findings of the study showed that women participation and interaction in farmers training, market visit and other organizational activities were found very less compared to men and statement receiving highest & first rank i.e. 90.5 per cent while attachment and keenly observation more in women compare to men regarding farm, house, animal, etc. received overall ranked second with 90 per cent average agreeeness. Study also reveals that only 6 per cent women were strongly empowered with excellent achievements while, 51 per cent women disempowered with inadequate achievements. The woman empowerment in agriculture index (WEAI) showed poor value i.e. 0.404 out of 1.0. It means majority of women belongs to disempowered women but have few achievements status.*

**Key words:** Agriculture, Empowerment, Index, status and Women;

Women play important role in agricultural growth in developing countries. The study of Hema Pandey (2004) also reported that rural women are responsible for half of the world's food production and produces between 60-80 per cent of the food in most developing countries. India is developing country and most of the agricultural and household work is performed by women. Due to socio-economic condition of society women play significant role in agricultural production in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. In Bundelkhand society commonly known as 'Bundeli society' women are responsible for multiple roles in household tasks such as care of family members, collection of water, fodder, fuel, forest products, crop production activities and tending

the animals. Except above women continue to function as seed gatherers, seed conservers and possess the knowledge of plants that cure. They use their traditional knowledge in selecting, preserving and conserving seeds and planting materials for subsequent use as well as play a predominant role in feed selection to best breed selection. But they suffer from several socio-economic obstacles & constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. There are several issues which indicate poor empowerment of women in this pocket regarding agricultural issues.

FAO also advocated that if women access is increases in the area of land ownership, technology adoption, financial services, education and market, then

agriculture production will be raised and world hunger population reduces up to 10-15 crores in the world. Bundelkhand region is also required above strategy for empowering women and reducing poverty. Thus, this region requires special attention in terms of women empowerment in agriculture. Looking the potentiality of women in agriculture and allied activities in Bundelkhand region a study was planned in 2013 with following objectives.

1. To find out the Contribution and Competency of rural farming Women as compare to men.
2. To know the status of Women Empowerment in Agriculture.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected four districts of Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh namely (Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba and Jhansi during 2013 from each district, one block was selected randomly through lottery method. Thus, block Dakor (Jalaun), Sarila (Hamirpur), Charkhari (Mahoba) and Mauranipur (Jhansi) were selected to study the ground realities of women. One village and their 25 male & 25 female were also randomly selected from each block through lottery method. Thus, total 200 respondents (100 male & 100 female) were randomly selected. The data were collected through pre-tested schedule and opinion was recorded for women contribution & competency and interaction regarding innovation. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed in the light of objectives

To know the women's empowerment scenario in this region an index known as Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) was used. The WEAI collaboratively developed by the United States Agency for International Development, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative during July 2011 to February 2012 for conducting a pilot survey of three countries- Bangladesh, Guatemala, and Uganda. The WEAI is an innovative instrument for measurement of women's empowerment status. It measures the five domains of empowerment of women. It includes agricultural production, resources, income & credit, leadership and time (Table 1) and they comprise ten indicators. Each domain is weighted equally, as are the each of the indicators within a domain..

**Table 1. The five domain of Empowerment in the WEAI.**

Domain	Indicators	Weight
Production	Input in productive decision	1/10
	autonomy in production	1/10
Resources	Ownership of assets	1/10
	purchase & sale, or transfer of assets.	1/10
Income & credit	Control over use of income	1/10
	Access to and decision on credit	1/10
Leadership	Group member	1/10
	Speaking in public	1/10
Time	Workload	1/10
	Leisure	1/10

Each indicator contains five statements regarding empowerment with score value range form 0.02 to 0.10. It means ten indicators contain 50 statements & their score value ranges from 0.20 to 1.0. Based on score value obtained after collection of data (from all 100 women) grouped into five categories (i) Strongly empowered with excellent achievements, (ii) empowered with good achievements, (iii) not yet empowered by already have adequate achievements, (iv) disempowered women but have few achievements and (v) disempowered women have inadequate achievements. Finally weighted average was calculated to know the empowerment level from following formula.

$$\text{Weighted average (wa)} = \frac{\sum wx}{\sum w}$$

Where,

$$\sum w = \text{total of weight}$$

$$\sum wx = \text{weight X rating}$$

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

*Contribution and competency of rural farming women:* Table 2 play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields reveals that women participation and interaction in farmers training, market visit and other organizational activities was found very less compared to men having ranked first according to man views with 89 per cent ; while on the basis of total agreeance per cent this statement received highest & first rank i.e. 90.5 per cent. On the basis of men agreeance (87 per cent) favors that attachment and keenly observation more in women compare to men regarding farm, house, animal, etc. with rank IInd, women also support this status with 93 per cent, as IInd ranked .Singh ,et.al also reported that need to redesign women oriented training and other extension services.

**Table2. Comparative Opinion of Bundeli Men and Women regarding Women Contribution and Competency in Bundelkhand region (N = 200 (100 men & 100 women))**

Opinion statement	Opinion responses					
	Men		Women		Average	
	Yes	No.	Yes	No.	Yes	No.
Most of the family management activities are generally done by women	79 (79) [III]	21 (21)	97 (97) @I	03 (03)	176 (88) (III)	24 (12)
Women farmer have capacity to execute all type work of farming system	48 (48)	52 (52)	72 (72)	28 (28)	120 (60)	80 (40)
Attachment & keenly observation are more in women compare to men regarding farm, house, animals, etc.	87 (87) [II]	13 (13)	93 (93) @II	07 (07)	180 (90) (II)	20 (10)
Women participation and execution is more in all farm and non-farm activities during crop and non crop season	62 (62)	38 (38)	79 (79)	21 (21)	141 (70.5)	59 (29.5)
Care and management practices of cattle, buffaloes, goats, hens etc, are mostly done by women	66 (66)	34 (34)	72 (72)	28 (28)	138 (69)	62 (31)
Women have more practical knowledge compare to men regarding agriculture and allied activities	45 (45)	55 (55)	52 (52)	48 (48)	97 (48.5)	103 (51.5)
Women voice in family matter commonly heard through their men	75 (75) [V]	25 (25)	90 (90) @IV	10 (10)	165 (82.5)	35 (17.5)
All the decisions regarding farming system management generally taken by men.	79 (79) [III]	21 (21)	77 (77)	23 (23)	156 (156)	44 (22)
Women participation and interaction in farmers training, market visit and other organizational activities is very less compared to men.	89 (89) [I]	11 (11)	92 (92)	08 (08)	181 (90.5) (I)	19 (9.5)
Uneducated women have more working habit regarding farming activities than educated women	65 (65)	35 (35)	72 (72)	28 (28)	137 (68.5)	63 (31.5)
Educated women taken right decision compare to uneducated women & men regarding farming system and allied activities	52 (52)	48 (48)	68 (68)	32 (32)	120 (60)	80 (40)
In this region, rural women are generally treated as family & farm labor/ worker in crop and non- crop season.	55 (55)	45 (45)	67 (67)	33 (33)	122 (61)	78 (39)
Women contribute a much larger share of their earning to family maintenance than men.	58 (58)	42 (42)	92 (92) @III	08 (08)	150 (75)	50 (25)
Women receive very less amount for personal annual expenditure than men.	78 (78) [IV]	22 (22)	86 (86)	14 (14)	164 (82)	36 (18)
Women has more knowledge & their application related to indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) as compare to men	53 (53)	47 (47)	59 (59)	41 (41)	112 (56)	88 (44)

\* rank under [] shown men agreeance ranked.

\* rank under @ shown women agreeance ranked.

\* Figure in parentheses denote per centage.

\* rank under () shown average agreeance of men &amp; women.

Most of the family management activities are generally done by women having 79 per cent agreeance by men with ranked IIIrd and 97 per cent women agreeance with ranked first with average rank IIIrd. *Prasad and Singh (2011)* also proved that women.

All decisions regarding farming system management generally taken by men having 79 per cent men agreeance with ranked IIIrd. Women received less amount for personal annual expenditure compare to men had ranked IVth with 78 present agreeance to men.

**Table 3. Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) for selected area (N = 100)**

Empowerment levels	Weight of rating (X)	Weight (w)		W X	Weightage average
		N	%		
Strongly empowered with excellent achievement	1.0	6	6	6.0	0.404
Empowered with good achievements	0.8	11	11	8.8	
Not yet empowered but already have adequate achievements	0.6	13	13	7.8	
Disempowered women but have few achievements	0.4	19	19	7.6	
Disempowered women have inadequate achievements	0.2	51	51	10.2	
Total	-	100	100	40.4	

FAO, IFAD and other international agencies are also estimated that women account for 70-80 per cent household food production in the developing countries but receive only 2 to 10 per cent of agriculture support services. Women voice in family matter commonly heard through their men have Vth ranked with 75 per cent agreeeness opinion of men and IVth ranked with 90 per cent agreeeness opinion of women. For care and management practices for domestic animals was mostly done by women having 66 per cent men agreeeness while 72 per cent women agreeeness. *Badiger, C & Huilgal, S. (2004)* also report that farm women participation was 80 per cent in fodder collection, 82 per cent in fodder transportation, 100 per cent in animal grazing, 92 per cent in cleaning of cattle shed and other allied activities. For statement related to uneducated women have more working habit regarding farming activities than educated women, 65 per cent men were agreed as against 72 per cent women agreeeness followed by 58 per cent men & 92 per cent women with ranked IIIrd agreed about women contributed a much amount larger share of their earning to family maintenance than men. A study in Bundelkhand showed that women early awaken than men while they sleep at late night compare to men (*Annonymous, 2012*). Due to social setting of the society women performs all the household activities including family management and animal rearing while men not taken more work responsibility. About 52 per cent men and 68 per cent women agreed as educated women generally taken right decision compares to uneducated women and men regarding farming system and allied activities. About 55 per cent men and 67 per cent women agreed that in Bundelkhand region women generally treated as family and farm labor/worker in crop and non-crop season. Women has more knowledge and their application related ITKs compare

to men with agreeeness per centage 53 for men side and 59 from women side. Women have more practical knowledge compare to men regarding agriculture and allied activities with agreeeness per centage 45 and 52 for men & women respectively.

*Status of Women Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA):* To know the status of women empowerment in this region collected data were rated and tabulated as shown in Table -3. It indicate that 51 per cent weight showed that disempowered women have inadequate achievements with poor X value i.e. 0.2 followed by disempowered women but have few achievements with fair X value i.e. 0.4; not yet empowered but already have adequate achievements with good value of X i.e. 0.6; empowered with good achievements (very good X value i.e.0.80 and strongly empowered with excellent achievements (excellent X value 1.0) with weighted per cent 19, 13 11 and 06, respectively. The women empowerment in agriculture index on the basis of five domains showed poor value i.e. 0.404. It means average women of all four study districts have near to disempowered with few achievements. While IFPRI studies reveals that in Uganda 62.7%,Guatamale77.2% and in Bangladesh 68.1 women were not yet empowered but already have adequate achievement with five domain value of 0.898,0.678 and 0.899,respectively.

## CONCLUSION

Present study concluded that women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development but their participation and interaction in farmers training, market visit and other organizational activities was found very less compared to men. Women's attachment and keenly observation more in women compare to men regarding farm, house, animal, etc. Most of the family

management activities are generally done by women. Thus, Women contribution and competency is more in Agriculture and household activities while the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) showed disempowered situation. It means, women need specific attention in this region regarding domains like production, resource, income & credit and leadership & time for their empowerment.

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