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### Profile and constraints faced by rural women in performing activities related to farm operation

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#### Abstract

Rural women play an essential role in agricultural operations, contributing significantly despite facing numerous challenges. This study investigates the constraints faced by rural women in farm-related activities and explores solutions for improving their participation. Conducted in Baksha block of Jaunpur district, Uttar Pradesh, the study involved 200 rural women respondents from 10 randomly selected villages. Using a descriptive research design and the Garrett Ranking Technique, the study identified excessive household responsibilities (Rank I, 85.50%), fear of inability (Rank II, 71.00%) and lack of guidance (Rank III, 50.00%) as the major constraints. Recommendations from respondents included equitable treatment within families (Rank I, 66.00%), access to training (Rank II, 58.50%) and reduced household burdens (Rank VIII, 40.50%). The findings emphasize the need for systemic interventions, including educational opportunities, skill development programs and family support mechanisms. Addressing these issues is crucial for empowering rural women, enhancing agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable rural development.

**Keywords:** Rural women, agricultural activities, constraints, empowerment, Garrett ranking technique, sustainable agriculture, skill development

#### Introduction

Women in India are the backbone of the society and important resource in agriculture and rural economy. Women contribute about 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the labour required for agricultural operations. Their involvement in agricultural operations is besides their usual domestic work. Most of the contributions made by women to the farm sector also go unaccounted as they are not directly paid. The contribution of female labour is towards agricultural production is always more than the male labour in all types of land holding in size. The jobs traditionally done by the rural women are mainly the kitchen gardening, harvesting, seedling raising and transplanting. Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Agriculture needs manpower, if the manpower split into gender wise, amazing fact is that the women contribution is greater or equal to men (Chauhan, 2011) [2]. That is reason that right from the day the country become independent, it has been trying hard for rural development. The primary aim of the former government was to raise the income of the families of the rural poor through generation of employment Opportunities so that they could move above the poverty line (Hadagali *et al.*, 2014) [3].

Agriculture is a driver of economic development and food security. According to the Penguin Atlas of Women in the World, women make up 40 per cent of the agricultural labour force a most parts of the world, while in developing countries they make up 67 per cent of the agricultural workforce (Singh 2008) [7]. Therefore, strengthening and expanding women's roles and opportunities in agriculture promotes sustainable economic development. Gender inequalities are a measurable and significant limit on agricultural productivity and efficiency.

#### Challenges faced by rural women in agriculture sector

- Women have not equal land rights. They hardly enjoy land ownership rights directly in their names.
- Women perform all un-mechanized agricultural tasks and perform multiple tasks which add more burdens to them due to lack of equipment and appropriate technology.
- Woman has little control over decision-making process, either inside the home or outside of that.
- Only a few women access of agricultural productive resources such as land, animals and machinery.
- Poor women farmers are less able to purchase machines/equipments to adapt to climate change due to lack of access to credit and agricultural services.
- Women farmers in agricultural sector suffer from high illiteracy rate among them. They do not know their

legal rights.

- Women earns less wages, especially in joint, informal and private sector.

**Research Methodology**

The present study was conducted in Jaunpur District of Uttar Pradesh, known for its diverse agricultural activities and cultural significance. Jaunpur, it is located 228 km Southeast of the state capital Lucknow. 65 km northwest of Varanasi, Jaunpur district has Six administrative subdivisions divided into 21 blocks. Among these, Baksha block was purposively selected due to its predominant agricultural engagement and accessibility for the researcher. Out of 99 villages in Baksha block, 10 villages—Buxa, Gopalpur, Saddopur, Babura, Umarchha Utarukalan, Lakanipur, Khampur, Belapar and Churawanpur randomly selected. A total of 200 rural women actively participating in agricultural activities were chosen as respondents, with 20 respondents from each village, ensuring a representative sample.

A descriptive research design was employed to achieve the objectives of the study. This design is suitable for understanding existing conditions without manipulating the environment, enabling the collection of authentic information about respondents. Data collection was conducted using the survey method, employing a structured interview schedule developed for this purpose. Field visits and home interviews ensured comprehensive and accurate data collection from the selected respondents across the villages. Constraints faced by rural women related to participation were prioritized by using Garrett Ranking Technique. In this method the farmers were asked to rank the given constraint according to the severity of the problem. In analysis, rank 1 means most important problem and rank 8 means least important problem.

**Results and Discussion**

**Age**

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Age

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Young (Below 28 years)	36	18.00
2	Middle (28 to 45 years)	136	68.00
3	Old (Above 45 years)	28	14.00
Total		200	100.00

The data in Table 1 indicates that the majority (68.00%) of respondents were in the middle age group (28–45 years), followed by 18.00% in the young age group (below 28 years) and 14.00% in the old age group (above 45 years). These findings align with studies by Gadhe (2004) <sup>[10]</sup>, Chayal and Dhaka (2010) <sup>[8]</sup> and Rathod et al. (2011) <sup>[12]</sup>, highlighting that individuals in their productive years dominate agricultural activities.

**Education**

**Table 2:** Distribution of Respondents by Education

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Illiterate	104	52.00
2	Primary School	44	22.00
3	Secondary School	28	14.00
4	Higher	24	12.00
Total		200	100.00

Table 2 shows that a majority (52.00%) of respondents were illiterate, while 22.00% had attended primary school, 14.00% secondary school and only 12.00% had attained higher education. These results underscore the need for targeted educational interventions to empower rural women, consistent with Rathod et al. (2011) <sup>[12]</sup>.

**Marital Status**

**Table 3:** Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Married	156	78.00
2	Unmarried	20	10.00
3	Divorced	4	2.00
4	Widow	20	10.00
Total		200	100.00

As shown in Table 3, the majority (78.00%) of respondents were married, followed by 10.00% each who were unmarried or widowed and 2.00% who were divorced. These findings are consistent with Gadhe (2004) <sup>[10]</sup> and Fabiyi et al. (2007) <sup>[9]</sup>, reflecting the dominance of married individuals in agricultural roles.

**Family Type**

**Table 4:** Distribution of Respondents by Family Type

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Nuclear Family	140	70.00
2	Joint Family	60	30.00
Total		200	100.00

Table 4 reveals that the majority (70.00%) of respondents were from nuclear families, while 30.00% belonged to joint families. This reflects a shift toward nuclear family structures in rural areas, as observed in studies by Chayal and Dhaka (2010) <sup>[8]</sup>.

**Family Size**

**Table 5:** Distribution of Respondents by Family Size

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Up to 5 Members	136	68.00
2	More than 5 Members	64	32.00
Total		200	100.00

As indicated in Table 5, 68.00% of respondents had families with up to five members, while 32.00% had larger families with more than five members. This finding aligns with More (2000) <sup>[11]</sup> and Chayal and Dhaka (2010) <sup>[8]</sup>, showing the prevalence of smaller family sizes in rural areas.

**Occupation**

**Table 6:** Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Agriculture + Horticulture	30	15.00
2	Agriculture + Animal Husbandry	106	53.00
3	Agriculture + Poultry	48	24.00
4	Agriculture + Fisheries	16	8.00
Total		200	100.00

Table 6 illustrates that the majority (53.00%) of respondents were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, followed by 24.00% in agriculture and poultry, 15.00% in agriculture and horticulture and 8.00% in agriculture and fisheries. These results indicate a diversified occupational strategy, consistent with studies by More (2000)<sup>[11]</sup> and Rathod et al. (2011)<sup>[12]</sup>.

### Constraints faced by rural women in performing activities related to farm operation and their suggestion for better participation

#### Constraints

The constraints reported by the rural women in respect of participation in agricultural activities indicated that the constraints are of varied type and various intensity also. The details of constraints were listed in table below.

**Table 7: Constraints Faced by Rural Women in Performing Agricultural Activities**

Sl. No.	Constraints/Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1	Maximum time devotion in household work	171	85.50	I
2	Afraid of inability	142	71.00	II
3	Lack of proper guidance	100	50.00	III
4	Biasness of family	95	47.50	IV
5	Lack of family support and guidance	80	40.00	V
6	Lack of adequate information about work and problems	63	31.50	VI
7	Lack of cooperation between family members	55	27.50	VII
8	Lack of confidence	46	23.00	VIII

The results indicate that rural women face several constraints in participating in agricultural activities, ranked according to their intensity and prevalence. The most significant constraint was maximum time devotion to household work (Rank I, 85.50%), which limits their engagement in farming. This was followed by fear of inability (Rank II, 71.00%), reflecting a lack of confidence and skills and lack of proper guidance (Rank III, 50.00%), highlighting the need for mentorship and advisory services. Biasness of family (Rank IV, 47.50%) and lack of family support and guidance (Rank V, 40.00%) underscore the societal and familial barriers rooted in patriarchal norms. Additionally, inadequate information about work and problems (Rank VI, 31.50%) and lack of cooperation between family members (Rank VII, 27.50%) further

restrict women's participation. Lastly, lack of confidence (Rank VIII, 23.00%) points to the necessity of empowerment initiatives. These findings align with previous studies by Afzal (2009)<sup>[11]</sup> and Patil and Sawant (2016)<sup>[6]</sup>, emphasizing the need for systemic interventions to address these constraints and enhance the role of rural women in agriculture.

#### Suggestions to overcome the constraints faced by rural women in participation of agricultural activities

Suggestions confronted by rural women in respect of improving their position for further development may be considered as feedback to overcome the constraints. Suggestions were presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Suggestions Expressed by Rural Women Regarding Participation in Agricultural Activities**

Sl. No.	Suggestions/Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1	There should be equity between family members	132	66.00	I
2	Partial teaching facilities should be available after work	117	58.50	II
3	Proper work training should be given	111	55.50	III
4	Work preference should be given to rural women	96	48.00	IV
5	There should be cooperation between family members	95	47.50	V
6	There should be family support and guidance	87	43.50	VI
7	There should be proper inspiration for work	84	42.00	VII
8	Should stop maximum time devotion in household work	81	40.50	VIII

The suggestions expressed by rural women regarding their participation in agricultural activities, ranked by frequency and intensity, are presented in Table 8. The most frequently suggested improvement was equity between family members (Rank I, 66.00%), indicating the need for fair treatment and inclusion of women in decision-making processes. This was followed by the need for partial teaching facilities available after work (Rank II, 58.50%), emphasizing accessible education opportunities for rural women. The third most significant suggestion was proper work training (Rank III, 55.50%), highlighting the importance of skill enhancement programs. Work preference for rural women (Rank IV, 48.00%) and cooperation between family members (Rank V, 47.50%) were also deemed crucial. Additional suggestions included

family support and guidance (Rank VI, 43.50%), proper inspiration for work (Rank VII, 42.00%) and reducing maximum time devotion to household chores (Rank VIII, 40.50%). These findings align with those of Patel (2015) and Parmar (2016)<sup>[5]</sup>, indicating a persistent need for systemic changes to empower rural women in agricultural activities.

#### Conclusion

The study highlights the significant role of rural women in agricultural activities, emphasizing their contributions and the challenges they face. The majority of respondents were middle-aged, illiterate and from nuclear families, reflecting the demographic and social structures of rural areas. Their engagement in diversified occupations, such as agriculture

combined with animal husbandry and poultry farming, underscores their adaptability and potential for economic contribution. However, women face multiple constraints, including excessive household responsibilities, lack of confidence, limited guidance and familial bias, which hinder their effective participation in agriculture.

To overcome these challenges, rural women suggested equitable treatment within families, access to education and training and prioritization in agricultural work. These recommendations point to the urgent need for systemic interventions, including skill development programs, family counseling and structural support to reduce household burdens. Addressing these issues will not only empower rural women but also enhance agricultural productivity and rural development. The findings align with previous research and underscore the necessity for collaborative efforts from policymakers, community leaders and families to create an enabling environment for rural women's active participation in agriculture.

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