Role Of Women In Agriculture: A Micro Level Study

E.Krishna Rao♦

India has a predominantly agrarian economy. 70% of her population is rural; of those households, 60% engage in agriculture as their main source of income. It has always been India's most important economic sector. In this important agricultural sector woman plays a vital role, because it is largely a household enterprise. Women in India are major producers of food in terms of value, volume and number of hours worked. Nearly 63 percent of all economically active men are engaged in agriculture as compared to 78 per cent of women. Almost 50 percent of rural female workers are classified as agricultural labourers and 37% as cultivators. About 70 percent of farm work was performed by women. It is observed that women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including, main crop production, live-stock production, horticulture, post-harvesting operations, agro/social forestry, fishing etc.; it is a fact long taken for granted but ignored since ages.

There is also an increasing trend towards feminisation of agriculture owing to conflicts and rural - urban migration. As in all such situations, women are worst affected by the conditions of chronic hunger and poverty. While they spend far more time in agricultural activities than men, they are paid much lower wages for the same work. Since they do not have legal title to land, and since they do not control the "breaking in" activity of ploughing, women are not given the status of farmers in their own right. This situation continues even though the high rates of male out-migration in the dry land areas have made women's role in agriculture more visible than before. If we look into the history, we find that men have usually had first choice of jobs.

♦ **Ph.D Scholar Department of Economics, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad**

The Author is thankful to his Research Supervisor Prof.G.Nancharaiah,Vice-Chancellor, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Central University, Lucknow

Certain jobs have remained closed to women simply because men preferred these jobs and succeeded in reserving the same for themselves. It is for this reason that women are usually found doing low-prestige, hazardous, arduous, monotonous, repetitive and dirty jobs. Such tedious and laborious jobs as transplantation, weeding, harvesting and processing are mostly done by women. Certain cultural factors also determine division of labour between these sexes. For instance the feeling that woman should be assigned easier and lighter tasks because they are physically not as strong as men. In this way the women are discriminated as well as exploited in this prominent sector. In the agricultural sector, the women position deteriorated from cultivator to agricultural labour.

The status of women in Andhra Pradesh agriculture:

As per 2001 census women constitute 49.43% of the total population at Andhra Pradesh state level. Out of total 408.74 lakhs literates, women literates registered 169.26 lakh as against 239.08 lakhs male literates, in terms of percentages 51.17% of women population are literates as against 70.85% of male population that is more than 48%% of women population are illiterates as against 29.15% of general population. The work participation rate of females, defined as the percentage of female participation in the work of total female population was 56% as against 85.3% of male work participation in 1995-96.It is also to be noted that as per 2001 census 65% of women main workers depend on primary sector while only 26% percent of male workers depend upon primary sector. More than 25.4% of women main workers were reported as agricultural labour as against only 9.02% percent among male main workers (Statistical Abstract of Andhra Pradesh, 2000).

The changes in the position and priority of women in agriculture during 1971-2001 at Andhra Pradesh state level could be seen from the Tables 1.2 and 1.3. It is evident from these tables that during 1971 to 2001 there was an increase in the percentage of women main workers, while the male main workers percentage has decreased. The women cultivators in total main workers increased from 19.73% to 22.17% between 1971- 2001, while percentage of women agricultural labourers also increased from 18.19% to 25.47% during the same period. In case of male main workers the percentage of cultivators declined from 26.57% to 18.23%, while the agricultural labourers slightly increased from 5.60% to 9.02% during the same period. Thus there is some marginal improvement in the female workers as cultivators, but still there is a wide gap between male and female cultivators. The women population is almost all equal to the men but the economic status of women is significantly lower

than men. As per 1991 NSSO report out of 1000 cultivators, number of women cultivators declined from 385 to 224 while the male cultivators decreased from 401 to 306 during 1971 to 1991. Between the same periods the women agricultural labourers increased from 391 to 603, while their counter part male increased from 217 to 306. This indicates that the growth of women agricultural labourers is high than the male agricultural labourers, means the women gives priority as field labour than the cultivator in agriculture. With this background in this paper an attempt has been made

(i) To study the role of women in agriculture and changes in their position at micro level, that is village level

(ii) To study the gender discrimination in land, labour and wage market.

Table: 1.1. Literacy levels among male and female

	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Male population (%)	50.48	50.59	50.62	50.71	50.57
Female population (%)	49.52	49.41	49.38	49.29	49.43
Sex ratio	981	977	975	972	977
Male literacy rate (%)	30.2	33.2	39.3	55.1	70.85
Female literacy rate (%)	12.0	15.8	20.4	32.7	51.17

Source: various issues of population census of Andhra Pradesh, Govt.of. Andhra Pradesh

Table: 1.2. Percentages of male and female population in total main workers

	1971		1991		2001	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Cultivators(%) in total main labourers	26.57	19.73	19.99	19.97	18.23	22.17
Ag..labourers(%) in total main labourers	5.60	18.19	7.74	20.89	9.02	25.47
Total main workers (%)	71.16	28.84	65.36	34.64	69.3	32.7

Source: statistical abstract of Andhra Pradesh, 1971-2001, directorate of economics and statistics, Govt.of. Andhra Pradesh

Table: 1.3. Distribution of workers by industrial classification (per 1000 population)

Category	1961		1971		1981		1991	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
Cultivators	412	385	374	194	369	238	306	224
Ag.l labourers	217	391	277	631	265	591	306	603

Source: Various issues of NSSO reports, govt.of.india

Socio and Economic Conditions of the selected hamlet:

For the purpose of study we selected a hamlet namely Jammula Palem from Prakasam district. The present study is based mainly on primary data on labour employment and wages and operational holding etc relating to period 1988 to 1998. The data was collected from the village by interviewing ninety five heads of the selected households, which is 13% of 760 households. These households were selected on the basis of "random sampling method". Jammula palem is a multi-caste village, inhabited by bramhin, kamma, muslim, komati, yadava, kamsali and mala castes. Kammas are politically and economically dominated caste in the hamlet. This hamlet is totally an agriculture settlement. The total hamlet constituted with 760 households. Out of 760-households landless were 260 households (200 from SCs and 60 from other castes) and remaining 500 households had land A very important feature was noticed that the total scheduled caste (200 house holds constitute about 26% of total households) households depended upon their labour work for their subsistence because no one had land after the agricultural season they used to go for work in tobacco companies. Out of 500 land holders, 238 were marginal farmers, 182 were small farmers, 60 were medium farmers and 20 are large farmers. The total arable area of the hamlet is about 1329 acres. The major crops of this hamlet are Tobacco, Eucalyptus, Paddy, Sesamum and subable.

Out of selected 95 households, who were interviewed, landless households were 33, small farmers were 20, medium farmers' households were 9 and large farmers' households were 3. Here we have divided sampling households into five groups such as (1) Landless labourers (those who were not having land) (2) Marginal farmers (who having 0.1 acres –2.5 acres of land) (3) Small farmers (who were having 2.5 acres-5 acres of land) (4) medium farmers (who were having 5 acres-10 acres of land) and (5) Large farmers who had 10 acres and above land).

The total hamlet is constituted with 3585 persons. Out of 3585, 1789 (49.9%) are males and the rest of 1796 (50.09%) are females. By social group among the total population 1160 are SCs of which 49.15% are males and 50.86% are females (**table: 1.11**). Male literacy level (55.25%) is more than the female literacy (44.74%) level in 1998-99 irrespect of social group in the hamlet. Out of 1160, SC persons 549 literates (59% male and 41% female) and 611(40%male and 60% female) peoples illiterates. Among BCs out of 719 persons 392 are literates (60% male and 40% female) and 327 are (40% male and 60% female) illiterates, where as out of 1706 OC persons 885 are (51% male and 49% female) literates and 821 are (49.4% male and 50.5%female) illiterates during 1998-99. In this hamlet BC (54.52%) and OC (51.8%) social group literacy level is higher than the SCs (47.32%) literacy level. Interestingly it is noted that in all social groups the women literacy rate is low than the males. it is observed from the field survey most of the parents are not interested to send their girl Child to school as they prefer to send her for labour work in agricultural fields as well as in Tobacco companies. This is one of the main reasons for low literacy rate of the females in this village.

Table: 1.4 Population particulars of selected hamlet

Social group	SC	BC	Others	Total
No.of.hh	200(26.31)	130(17.1)	430(56.57)	760(100)
Male	570	363	856	1789(49.4)
Female	590	356	850	1796(50.09)
Total population	**1166(32.5) (100)**	**719(20.0) (100)**	**1706(47.53) (100)**	**3585(100.0)**
Literates	**549 (47.08)**	**392 (54.52)**	**885 (51.87)**	**1826(100.0)**
Male	324	235	450	1009(55.25)
Female	225	157	435	817(44.34)
Illiterates	**611 (52.40)**	**327 (45.4)**	**821 (48.12)**	**1759(100.0)**
Male	246	128	406	780(44.34)
Female	365	199	415	979(55.65)

Source: Household Survey by Author, 2000, V.A.O, Jammula Palem, Note: figures in parenthesis indicates the percentages

Table: 1.5 Social group wise percentages of literates and illiterates in selected hamlet

Social group	Percentage in total population of SCs		Percentage in total population of BCs		Percentage in total population of OCs		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Literates	59.0	40.9	59.9	40.0	50.8	49.1	55.25	44.74
Illiterates	40.2	59.1	39.1	60.8	49.4	50.5	44.34	55.65
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Household Survey by Author,2000,V.A.O,Jammula Palem

Land Market Discrimination:

Table-1.6 Landholdings of selected hamlet

Size of holdings	1989-90			1994-95			1998-99		
	Male	Female	total	Male	Female	total	Male	Female	total
Marginal	178	50	228	200	35	235	213	25	238
Small	137	32	172	152	28	180	162	20	182
Medium	84	5	89	51	14	65	48	15	60
Large	26	3	26	20	--	20	17	--	20
Total	425 (82.52)	90 (17.4)	515 (100)	423 (84.6)	77 (15.4)	500 (100.0)	440 (88.0)	60 (12.0)	500 (100.0)

It can be seen from the table 1.6 that the land distribution inequalities at village level since 1989-90 to 1998-99. In 1989-90 women cultivators constituted about 17.4% of total cultivators, while males constitute about 82.5% of total cultivators. By 1998-99 the percentage of women cultivators declined to about 12%

while the percentage of male cultivators' percentage increased to 88%. It is interestingly noted that in 1989-90 there were 3 large farmers, but by 1998-99 no one of the large farmer recorded in the village. And also these women large farmers became as marginal and small farmers. We found from the field survey that, whenever their family in problems or in debt their husbands prefer to sell the land which was registered on the name of his wife. And also the women farmers are not actively participating in the process of farm activity due to illiteracy, ignorance and not knowing mechanization techniques. But they are active in the management and supervision.

Labour Market:

In this village there are three prominent crops such as Tobacco, paddy and Plants. We calculated the labour requirement for each crop gender wise from 1989-90 to 1998-99. In tobacco cultivation 61 labourers were employed per acre in 1989-90 and it declined to 59 labourers per acre in 1998-99. Out of 61 labourers the male labourers were 28 and female labourers were 33 in 1989-90, in 1998-99 it declined to 27 male and 32 female workers per acre. It shows that the female workers are more in tobacco cultivation. The reasons for domination of female workers in the process of Tobacco cultivation are varied. Firstly the lower wage rate than males for female workers is one of the important reasons. The wage of Rs.19/- for female worker in grading whereas it was Rs 45/- for male worker for the same work in 1989-90 and it increased to Rs25/- for female and Rs 60/- for male worker. Secondly, the female labourers are specialized in some aspects relating to the processes of tobacco cultivation. For example, the grading of tobacco for which the female labourers are more efficient than their counterpart- male labourers .The data also shows that in some operations like, plantation and cutting leaves male and female labourers are engaged in the same proportion. It is also found that out of the total number of workers employed in tobacco cultivation the percentage of women workers is around 54%, while men workers is the remaining 46% in 1998-99(Table; 1.7).

Table: 1.7: Per acre labour requirement for different operations of Tobacco cultivation in 1989-90, 1994-95 and 1998-99.

Operation	1989-90			1994-95			1998-99		
	Male	Female	T.N.L	Male	Female	T.N.L	Male	Female	T.N.L
To spread manure	1(3.70)	---	1(1.69)	1(3.70)	---	1(1.69)	1(3.70)	----	1(1.69)

Plantation	5(18.51)	6(18.75)	11(18.64)	5(18.51)	6(18.75)	11(18.64)	5(18.51)	6(18.75)	11(18.64)
Weedout and others	----	5(12.5)	5(6.77)	----	4(12.5)	4(6.77)	----	4(12.5)	4(6.77)
Tilling	2(7.40)	----	2(3.38)	2(7.40)	---	2(3.38)	2(7.40)	----	2(3.38)
To spread fertilizers	1(3.70)	----	1(1.69)	1(3.70)	---	1(1.69)	1(3.70)	----	1(1.69)
Pumping pesticides	6(18.51)	----	6(8.47)	5(18.51)	---	5(8.47)	5(18.51)	----	5(8.47)
Cutting leaves	9(33.33)	12(37.5)	21(35.59)	9(33.33)	12(37.5)	21(35.59)	9(33.33)	12(37.5)	21(35.59)
Curing	2(7.40)	----	2(3.38)	2(7.40)	---	2(3.38)	2(7.40)	----	2(3.38)
Grading	2(7.40)	10(31.25)	12(20.33)	2(7.40)	10(31.25)	12(20.33)	2(7.40)	10(31.2)	12(20.33)
Total	28(100.0) 45.76	33(100) 54.23	61(100) 100.0	27(100.0) 45.76	32(100.0) 54.23	59(100) 100.0	27(100.0) 45.76	32(100.0) 54.23	59(100) 100.0

Source: Household survey by Author, *Note*: Figures in brackets indicate the percentages, T.N.L=Total Number of Labourers

In paddy field around 47 were employed (23 are male and 24 are female) per acre in 1994-95 and it declined to 43,out of which 19 were male and 24 were female labourers in 1998-99. Among the different operations, the transplantation requires more labourers than any other operations (10 labourers). The transplantation operation requires 23.25 % of total labourers. For the purpose of spreading manures, fertilizers and pesticides male labourers are employed only. In the case of weed out only female (5 workers) are employed. For reaping operation mostly female labourers are employed. For heaping, 3 male workers and 1 female worker are employed because the heaping operation is very hard task (table 1.8).

The total labour requirement per acre is quite less in the case of plants cultivation. The total per acre labour requirement is 31. Out of 31, the majority of laborers are employed on cutting operation, which, is around 48.38% followed by plantation operation, which employed 29.03% of total labor requirements per acre (table 1.9). From the gender point of view, we found that in some operations the concentrations of female workers are quite high. However the table 4.22 for plant cultivation shows quite contrary to it. The over all operations of plants cultivation's show the domination of male workers. But in some operations such as plantation and weedout female workers are more than male workers. This is because plantation and weedout operation of plant cultivation is not as hard as other operations which female workers can carryout without difficulty.

Table: 1.8 Per acre labour requirement of different operations of paddy cultivation in 1989-90, 1994-95 and 1998-99

Operation	1989-90	1994-95			1998-99		
	Male Female T.N.L Not Available	Male	Female	T.N.L	Male	Female	T.N.L
Spread manures		1(1.34)	---	1(2.12)	1(5.26)	----	1(2.32)
Tilling		4(17.39)	---	4(8.51)	2(10.52)	---	2(4.65)
Transplantation		1(4.34)	9(37.5)	10(21.27)	1(5.26)	9(39.13)	10(23.25)
Weedout		--	5(20.83)	5(10.63)	---	5(21.73)	5(11.62)
Apply fertilizers		2(8.69)	---	2(4.25)	2(10.52)	----	2(4.65)
apply pesticides		6(26.08)	---	6(12.76)	4(21.05)	----	4(9.30)
Plucking		1(4.34)	---	1(2.12)	1(5.26)	----	1(2.32)
Harvesting		1(4.34)	7(29.10)	8(17.02)	1(5.26)	7(30.43)	8(23.25)
Heaping		3(13.04)	1(4.16)	4(8.51)	3(15.78)	1(4.34)	4(6.97)
Threshing		**4(17.39)**	**2(8.33)**	**6(12.76)**	4(21.05)	2(8.69)	6(11.62)
Total		**23(100) 48.93**	**24(100) 51.06**	**47(100) 100**	**19 (100) 44.18**	**24(100) 55.81**	**43(100) 100.0**

Source*: Household survey*, Note: *Figures in bracket indicate the percentages. T.N.L= Total Number of Labourers*

Wage rates for different crops: -

To calculate the wage rates per day we have interviewed 3 local *Mutamastries*, 8 labourers and 20farmers (i.e. 8 marginal, 5 small, 5 medium and 2 large) additional to the samples. In many areas, the market wages are lower than minimum wages and minimum wages fixed in many states, in turn, are lower than minimum subsistence wage. Although different state governments have revised the minimum wages, the wages fixed still remain very low for the unorganized workers. In most cases the statutory minimum wages fixed and their revisions do not seem to have taken into consideration the minimum requirements of a worker's family to rise above the poverty line. In many states, the actual wages are 50 percent of the minimum subsistence wage. According to some calculations, a fair wage works out to Rs 125 per day providing, minimum wages, which forms part of employment security (Mahendradev, 2001).

Table: 1.9: Per acre labour requirement for different operations of plants cultivation in 1989-90, 1994-95 and 1998-99.

Operation	1989-90			1994-95			1998-99		
	Male	Female	T.N.L	Male	Female	T.N.L	Male	Female	T.N.L
To apply	1(5.88)	---	1(3.57)	1(5.55)	----	1(3.12)	1(5.55)	----	1(3.12)

manure									
Plantation	3(17.64)	4(36.36)	7(25.0)	4(22.22)	5(38.4)	10(31.2)	4(22.22)	5(38.4)	10(31.2)
Weedout and others	---	2(18.18)	2(7.14)	----	3(23.0)	3(9.3)	----	3(23.0)	3(9.3)
Tilling	2(11.76)	---	2(7.14)	2(11.1)	----	2(6.25)	2(11.1)	----	2(6.25)
To apply fertilizers	1(5.88)	---	1(3.57)	1(5.55)	----	1(3.1)	1(5.55)	----	1(3.1)
Cutting	10(58.82)	5(45.45)	15(53.57)	10(55)	5(38.4)	15(48.38)	10(55.5)	5(38.4)	15(48.38)
Total	17(100) 60.71	11(100) 39.28	28(100) 100	18(100) 58.06	13(100) 41.93	31(100) 100	18(100) 58.06	13(100) 41.93	31(100)

Source: Household survey by Author,
Note: Figures in brackets indicate the percentages, T.N.L=Total Number of Labours

With this back feed let us examine the wage situation in the selected hamlet in 1998-99. The over all wage variation is quite high in case of tobacco cultivation. Average wage per day for plant cultivation for male workers was Rs. 60/- whereas it was Rs.45/ for female worker in 1998-99, in paddy field male labour is getting per day on an average Rs 65/- and female labour is getting Rs 46/-,whaere as it is Rs 69/- and Rs 50/- in tobacco field during the same period. In the case of paddy and tobacco also wages are unequal between male and female worker but the variation is less than the variation in plant cultivation. The highest amount of wage per day is being paid to the male worker for cutting leaves (Rs. 80/-) and curing (Rs. 75/-) of tobacco cultivation. And the lowest amount wage of Rs 25/- per day is given to the female workers for grading tobacco.

Wage determination:

The farmers with the consultation of *mutamastris* generally determine the wage rates after the plantation is over in the hamlet for all crops such as Tobacco, Paddy and plants. It is found that, each labour group is having one *Mutamastri*, who controls the entire group. He sends the labour to the work as per requirement. The decision of employment totally depends upon the *Mutamastris*. And there is no direct relation between the workers and farmers regarding work and payment. The *Mutamastri* is working as mediator. Here we observed from field survey that farmers in front of *Mutamastris* after the end of plantation season would determine the wages. The wages increase is totally depending upon the farmers grace and not demand. Here *muta mastri* will not play any active role in the determination of wages. Sometimes he requests the farmers to increase the wages, they may or may not agree to his proposal.

In the determination of wages large farmers (*land lords*) play vital role. If they agree to increase the wages, only remaining farmers will agree to increase the wages. It is interestingly observed that, in this village out of six *Mutamastries* none of them are women. And also no women representative will participate in the wage determine practice. It may happen due to high illiteracy of women and no awareness about their rights. The passive role of women in wage determination system may also be one of the reasons for low wages of women, because no one is taking care about the women equality.

Wage discrimination

In tobacco, paddy and plants fields male labourer were getting on average Rs 57.66/-, Rs 55.9/- and 50.12 in 1994-95 and Rs. 66.42/-, Rs, 63.12/- and Rs.60/- per day in 1998-99, where as female worker were getting Rs 41.25/-, Rs 44.6/- and Rs 34.0/- in 1994-95 and Rs. 43.75, Rs 45.00 and Rs.37.5 per day in 1998-99 respectively for same work and for same working hours. In this context we can easily understand in tobacco fields male labourer are getting more wages than other fields, similarly female workers are getting more wages in paddy fields than other crops.

In tobacco fields male worker gets wage Rs 50/- and female worker gets 45/- at the plantation operation, similarly child male labour gets Rs. 30/- and child female labour gets only Rs. 25/- per day for the same operation in 1998-99. In paddy cultivation for transplantation male worker gets Rs. 60/- and female worker gets Rs. 50/- per day. Here there is no child labour in paddy. For the pumping of pesticides in tobacco fields and paddy fields male labourer paid a wage of Rs.70/- per day in 1998-99.In case of cutting operation, male and female workers are being paid same wages Rs.75/- for tobacco cultivation. But in paddy cultivation there is a slight difference between male and female labour wages for reaping operation. For reaping, male worker is paid Rs.55/- and female worker is paid Rs.50/- per day. For crops (tobacco, paddy and plants) male labour wages are more than female labour wages on an average. Similarly tobacco male labourers are paid higher wage of Rs 66/- per day while paddy female labour is paid a wage of Rs 45/- per day, which is more than in other crops. If we observe the average wages of Tobacco, Paddy and plants, Tobacco labourer are paid higher wage around Rs 60/- per day than other crops such as paddy (around Rs 58/-) and plants (around Rs 51/-) in 1998-99 it is observed from the study that since 1989-90 to 1998-99 the labour wages has been increasing slightly in all fields such as tobacco, paddy and plants.

If we compare the number of male workers and female workers employment in both the crops there would be a significant variation. In tobacco cultivation 27 male workers and 32 female workers are getting employment per acre, whereas it is 19 males and 24 females in paddy cultivation.

In tobacco cultivation on an average a male worker gets Rs 67.85/- and a female worker gets Rs 43.75/-, whereas it is Rs63.12/- and Rs 47.0/- per day in paddy cultivation. This shows that the wage discrimination is very high between male and female workers in tobacco and paddy cultivation.

Table: 1.10 Per day wage for different operations of cultivation of Tobacco and plants (in Rs) in 1989-90

Year	*Paddy*			*Tobacco*			*Plants*		
	Male	***Female***	***Average***	***Male***	***Female***	***Average***	***Male***		***Average***
1989-90	---	---	---	56.5	39.69	47.40	49.23	36.36	44.16
1990-91	---	---	---	57.53	40.36	48.24	51.23	37.72	45.92
1991-92	---	---	---	59.92	41.81	50.27	51.47	37.72	46.06
1992-93	---	---	---	62.32	43.93	52.39	53.17	39.54	47.81
1993-94	---	---	---	63.78	43.96	53.06	55.23	40.45	49.42
1994-95	62.60	42.5	52.33	65.74	46.18	55.13	55.82	41.54	50.19
1995-96	62.75	43.45	52.39	65.74	46.18	55.13	56.55	41.61	50.24
1996-97	63.28	44.95	53.51	67.33	47.68	56.60	57.94	42.76	51.16
1997-98	63.39	46.54	54.20	68.92	49.18	58.21	59.5	44.38	53.15
1998-99	65.0	46.87	54.29	69.62	50.0	58.98	60.68	45.38	54.25

Source: Household survey by Author ,note: we have calculated the averages for all operations such as spread manures, spread fertilizers, plantation, weedout, tilling, pumping pesticides, cutting leaves ,curing, reaping, grading, heaping, threshing, plucking for all crops i.e. tobacco, paddy, plants for male and female labourers

Employment opportunities for different social groups:

We also calculated the labour employment days per acre by social group for different operations of different crops. It could be seen from the tables that in all crops more female labour is using than male labour. The female labourers are specialized in some aspects relating to the process of tobacco and paddy cultivation. For example, the grading of tobacco and plantation of paddy for which the female labourers are most efficient than their counter part male labourers. The labour

requirement vary from crop to crop. Paddy crop require (per acre) 43 labour for entire processing where tobacco crop need 59 labourers and plants cultivation need only 31 labourers. In the hamlet social status is also plying a pivotal role in getting employment opportunities. For one acre of paddy crop cultivation farmer require 43 labourers, out of total labours they are utilizing 18 from SC and 25 from other social group (BCs & OCs). In case of tobacco cultivation their requirement is 59, out of which 22 from SCs and 37 from other social labourers. For plant cultivation they need 31 labourers out of which 11 from SCs and 20 from other social group. In total these three crops required 133 labourers per one acre cultivation, out of which 51 SCs and 82 others are getting employment. This shows that SC and other social group labourers are not getting equal employment days in the hamlet. Other social group laboures are getting nearly 31 employment days more than SCs. The SC *Mutamastri* reported that, at the time peak season only, they are getting regular employment. After that the formers are giving first priority to the BCs, if they require more then only the SC labourers will get employment. One can easily say that the social status is one of the main factors to get labour employment in the hamlet. But here the dalit women discriminated in two ways one is as a women another one as a dalit.

Table: 1. 11 Social group wise employment days in different fields

Social group	Paddy			Tobacco			Plants		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
SCs	8	10	18	9	13	22	6	5	11
Others	11	14	25	18	19	37	12	8	20
Total	19	24	43	27	32	59	18	13	31

Source: Household Survey by Author, 2000, V.A.O, Jammula Palem

Conclusions:

In Andhra Pradesh women population growth is equally to the men population but their rights and economic conditions are worse than the men. Women suffer from hunger and poverty in greater numbers and to a great degree than men. Even in global era women is limited to the living premises in rural India. Even today, they are the major partner in almost all the agricultural activities and operations, be it sowing, transplanting, weeding, rouging, picking, plucking, harvesting or threshing, but are discriminated.

In the selected village it was found that the woman plays a vital role in the process of tobacco, paddy and plants cultivation on an average. However they were paid lower wages than men. There was a significant variation in male and female workers' employment. In tobacco cultivation 27 male workers and 32 female workers are getting employment per acre, where as it is 19 males and 24 females in paddy cultivation. However in case of wages there is a considerable variation between male and female workers in both the fields for same work and for same working hours. In tobacco cultivation on an average a male worker gets Rs 67.85 and a female worker gets Rs 43.75, whereas it is Rs 63.12 and Rs 47.0 per day in paddy cultivation. This shows that the wage discrimination is very high between male and female workers in both the crops. One reason why women workers in general are paid less than men is their poor collective bargaining capacity. Their education levels is also very low, because families are far less likely to educate girls than boys, and far more likely to pull them out of school, either to help out at home or from fear of violence. It is also found that, the women cultivators also declined significantly during the study period in the selected village. The women pushed from farmer designation to agricultural labour.

It is suggested that, the women must be organized to gain leverage in their relationship with the government, landowners and traders. Women farmers are generally invisible to the public agriculture agenda. Despite the fact that women contribute more labour to Indian agriculture than men, land remains almost solely in male hands. This is both a symptom and a cause of their lack of voice and consequent neglect. Few government schemes include landless women as beneficiaries; most exclusively target men. Thus women do not benefit from public agriculture development efforts. For example, although women constitute more than half of India's landless labour, neither the government's social forestry scheme nor their nursery scheme has a specific role for landless women. Women must, therefore, collectively demand to be actively included in all government schemes.

REFERENCES

Baud,I.S.A, Forms of production and women's labour : gender aspects of industrialization in India and mexico, sage publications, New Delhi, 1992

Bhagirah Dash "Role of Women in Agriculture", Yojana, November, 2000, Pp 35-37

Hilda Kahne, "Women Role in the Economy: Economic Investigation Research wheels" in Jane Roberts Chapman (Edits) Economic Independence for Women: the foundation for Equal Rights

IndiraDevi.M, Women-Education-Employment, family Living, a study of emerging hindu wives in urban India, Gian publication, New Delhi, 1987

Jains Barry, "Compensatory Wage for women Production workers at Risk" in Ann H. Stromberg and others (Edits) Women and Work: An Annual Review, Vol: 2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995, Pp: 69-92

Kalpagam, Labour & Gender: Survival in Urban India, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1994

Mandal Ganakadharshini,Assistant Statistical Officer,Tangutur, 1990-91 to 1998-99

Mandal statistical hand books, 1991-92 to 1998-99, mandal agricultural officer, Prakasam District, Tangutur

Mandal statistical Report, Assistant statistical Officer, Tangutur, 1998-99 Assistant Statistical Officer Records (Adanguls: Land holdings),Tangutur

Neetha.N, Women and Labour Market: a macro economic study, V.V.Giri national labour Institure, Noida, 2000

Population Census Report of Tangutur, 1991, Assistant statistical Officer, Tangutur

Population Census, 1991, 2001, Govt. of. India

Prasad, C and Others, review of research studies on women in agriculture in India: implications for research and extension, ICAR, New Delhi, 1988

Statistical Abstract of Andhra Pradesh, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2002, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of. Andhra Pradesh

Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt, Gender, work and Space, rout Ledge Publications Laondon and New Delhi, 1995