ABSTRACT

Topic: Gender Division of Labour in Agricultural Households in Rural Punjab

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The present study is intended to find out how work is distributed among men and women of different age categories, types of families, marital status and agrarian strata, in agricultural households of rural Punjab. The gender division of labour has been studied in terms of time allocation for work and leisure for men and women. An attempt has been made to ascertain whether disparities exist in the way of work distributed between gender groups.

The study is essentially a descriptive study and avoids specific hypothesis for the reason that very few studies on Punjab are available in the chosen field of work. However, certain working hypotheses have been kept in mind while conducting the study. The primary data has been collected from three villages of Patiala district of Punjab. A random sample has been drawn at different stages i.e. at the level of village selection, household selection and the selection of the respondents. The technique of interview schedule, case studies and observations has been used to collect the primary data.

The study has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is introductory chapter which includes the statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, conceptual and theoretical frame work and the methodology of the study. The second chapter presents a review of literature both of Indian and foreign studies. The third chapter deals with the setting and the sample. It provides a brief introduction of Punjab state, Patiala districts and the villages under study. It also provides the socio economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as description of the dwelling units in the village. The fourth chapter provides glimpses of Punjabi society and every day life in Punjab villages. The fifth chapter includes a detailed analysis of the average time spent on different types of activities by men and women respondents of the selected villages. The time spent on various activities has been correlated with the age categories, marital status, type of families and agrarian strata. The sixth chapter presents the qualitative data based on observations and case studies related to gender wise work pattern in the selected villages. The last chapter is that of findings and conclusions.

The findings of the study reveals that men spent a significantly higher time on agricultural production activities as compared to women, as women of upper economic strata do not participate at all in agricultural activities. However, women of lower economic strata are involved in a number of agricultural tasks due to economic compulsions. As regards household work, the study reveals that it is confined only to women and there is hardly any male participation in such work which can be attributed to the practice of patriarchy and socio cultural norms of rural Punjab. The study also reveals that the women respondents spent considerable time taking care of children, sick and elderly in addition to household work. Thus, women have lesser time available to them for leisure time activities as compared to men. The major conclusion of the study that there is gender inequality in the distribution of work and this is more striking in case of women of lower economic strata. Thus, the economic inequality leads to gender inequality in the division of work.