

## Women in Agriculture of Assam.

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### Abstract

Women are almost half of the adult population. They constitute one-third of labour force but consume two-thirds of world working hours and yet earn only one tenth of the income and own only one percent of world property (United Nations 1975). The prosperity and growth of a Nation depend on the Status and devt. Of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of its population but also influence growth of the remaining half of the population. The crucial role of women in agriculture, allied occupations and house hold activities have however been underestimated and undervalued in Assam. In Assam women play a significant and crucial role in agriculture devt. And allied fields including crop production livestock production, horticulture post harvesting operations agro/social forestry fishing Tea planting etc. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture vary greatly from regions to regions. Even in the region, their involvement varies widely among different ecological, sub-zones forming system caste, classes and socio-economic status of families etc. Although with same problems of women's today they contribute a lot of the state's economy like men. Women participation in agriculture is adversely affected by modern method of women and shrinking of their activities. Modernization of agriculture has provided women with better income earning opportunities in some areas, but as displaced them from their traditional roles in others.

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### I. Introductions

Women are almost half of the adult population. They constitute one third of labour force but consume two-thirds of world working hours and yet earn only one tenth of the income and own only one percent of the world property (United Nations 1975). The prosperity and growth of a nation depend on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of its population but also influence growth of the remaining half of it population but also influence the remaining half of the population. They crucial role of women in agriculture allied occupations and house hold activities have however been underestimated and undervalued. In Assam various fields of agriculture engaged by women such as tea plantation work, crops production, lives stocks production, horticulture, floriculture, social forestry, fisheries etc. 1/3 female population are engaged in agriculture. In Assam total population is 31169272 out of them Women is 15214345 And then total population nearly 80% of people engaged in agriculture in Assam whose one third are women.

**Objective:-** (i) To know the present status of women in agriculture. (ii) To study the working fields of agriculture by women, (iii) To study the roles and problem faces by women in agriculture.

### II. Methodology

The study is purely based on secondary data and empirical study only.

**2.1. Various Roles played by women in Assam agriculture:-** Women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production live stock production, horticulture, post harvest, operations agro/social forestry fishing tea plantation etc. The Nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture vary from region to region. Even with in a region their involvement varies widely among different ecological sub-zones farming systems, caste, classes and socio-economic status of families etc. (Swaminath 1985) Regard less of these variations there is hardly any activity in agricultural production except ploughing in which women are not actively involved.

**2.2 ILO(1979)** reported that if a total range of women's actual economic activities were to be taken into account all over Assam, women work for very long hours in market and non-market economy and more so in the rural in Assam. It is the nature and type of their work and the long run hours which raise fundamental economic and social issues. These issues are related to the stage of technological development of an economy as well as the existing division of labour between men and women in the society.

The various technological transitions followed by major change in the economic processes and structure of the country played a major role in defining the socio-psychological status of both men and women in Assam. Changes in technology are the product of men & women in Assam changes in technological are the product of men's efforts to enhance his physical & psychological well being and survival. The development and introduction of technology in a society lets loose economic and other forces which compel man to change and adopt his interpersonal behaviour to new environment. This obviously leads to new definition of role and status. Agrarian Indian society eventually relegated women to the exclusive role of the house wife. To which ever community or caste she belonged. Her dominant space was at home. The role of man was to manage the internal interface with the environment while could encroach on managed the internal interface of the home. Neither could encroach on the other's space or domain, power authority and decision making regarding community caste and social/political issues rested exclusively with the males. Farm women's involvement in decision making regarding farm and home related tasks does not seem to be uniform across the rural women of varying socio-economic strata. Rural women in general do have certain things in common still there are intra-economic status variations. The roles women play in society and the images we have of them have developed not simply farm the existencies of biology and social situations but are rather deeply rooted in myths legend and the religious rites and rituals of our culture, philosophers sages and theologians have at one time or the other paid attention to women and their socio-personal status. Above the roles women's played in Assam agricultural development and allied fields like flowering, poultry, planting, crops, production, live stock production, horticulture, post harvesting operations agro-based industries, like tea, coffee, social forestry, fishing etc actively done by women.

**2.3 Problems of women in Assam agricultural :-** Women's participation in agricultural is adversely affected by modern methods of cultivation which results in gradual displacement of women and shrinking of their activities. Modernization of agriculture has provided women with better income earning opportunities in some areas but has displaced them from their traditional roles in others. Such a negative impact on employment could cause much distress particularly to families where the total family income is small and hence needs to be supplemented by the earning of both husband and wife. Some women continue their struggle to find freedom from dependent controlling and patronising-relationships. Their attempt is to redefine their role include acting upon the system and to create a legitimate space for themselves. In some mechanism women faces problems to hundle of them to due to lack of education and proper training, mane over some families restricted to women in coming out from their home. With improve agriculture technology accompanied by full mechanization has negatively affected the women from lower castes, lower income groups who, were either land less or had small land holding by reducing the demand for employment in peak season as reported by Kaur(1986). In sum it is believed that women are often victims of their own restricted vision and Indian women still have to discover a third identity which is neither male nor female but human. This identity encompasses the other two identities and is a liberating and life giving force which can revitalise not just women but society at large.

### III. Finding

There is hardly any activity in agricultural prod except ploughing in which women are not actively involved. The crucial role of women in agriculture and allied occupation and house hold activities have however been under estimated and recognition of their extensive contribution by and large, they have remained as "invisible workers". This study investigates the nature and extent of involvement of rural women and men in agriculture and home activities as well as the extent of exposure of modern crop technology to farm women. It prepares a comparative drudgery index for agricultural operation and examines the impact of mechanization on form women in terms of and employment displacement, work hood and income. The author has also studied the various fields in activation of major crops role of women in decision making in farming and the utilization pattern of saving in the family. Providing insight into a typical agrarian profile of farm women the study suggests several far reaching implications to the planners, policy makers administrators scientists and change agents for transforming an agricultural based rural society.

**3.1 Measures:-** Agriculture is however, getting rapidly modernised in two ways in our country.

**Firstly** - In mechanism with accelerated installation of tube wells pump sets diesel engines and

**Secondly** - by improved agriculture technologies like high yield variety (HYV) seed fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides (Punia 1980) mechanization is used in one or two operations in almost all the crops like maize wheat, cotton, bajra and rice etc. In crops cultivation, there is mechanization in different operations by the use of rice transplanter etc. Though education women from the better off socio economic strata become aware of the exiting social disparities and of the condition of women in general particularly of those belonging to socially and economically deprived groups. It is there imperative from time to time societies, cultures, systems and individuals realign and redefine themselves in ways that are relevant to contemporary needs. Men and women

need to respond to the call of their being to generate new meaning, create new landmarks, pave new paths and envisage new patterns of relationships. Agriculture is however modernized in our country due to technological advancement.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

There is hardly any activity in agricultural production except ploughing in which women are not actively involved and played actively all other farm-activities, decision making and saving activities in the households. So women has a greater role in agriculture and economic activities in Assam.

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