

Health problems faced by farm women while transplanting wheat

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ABSTRACT

Women carry out most of the farm activities in harsh climatic conditions which leads to various types of health problems. The unhealthy environment, poor diet, repetitive motion, static postures, dependence on muscular force and strength that make the work too much laborious. Women involved in such work load everyday results in various kinds of health problems in them. Most of the activities done by women require constant bending or squatting leaving them with severe pain in body parts.

Key Words : Health problem, Unhealthy environment, Poor diet, Static postures

INTRODUCTION

In rural India, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total female labour. In their varied roles as agricultural labourers, de jure landowners, defacto households heads, or as self cultivators and managers of their homesteads, women are the invisible backbone of the Indian agriculture (Ahmed, 2004). Women play a vital role in the field of agriculture, food security, horticulture, processing, nutrition, sericulture, fisheries, and other allied sectors. Rural Women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Women carry out most of the farm activities in harsh climatic conditions which leads to various types of health problems. The unhealthy environment, poor diet, repetitive motion, static postures, dependence on muscular force and strength that make the work too much laborious. Mukhopaddhyay *et al.* (2007) reported that awkward posture, force, repetitive activities and inadequate rest are some of the risk factors which causes health problems. Many of the agricultural activities are drudgery prone to varying degree. Even women suffer from different health problems which adversely affect their working efficiency and family welfare. Women have shorter time to rest than men and environmental degradation is increasing women's workload (Awumbila and Momsen (1995). Women involved in such work load everyday results in various kinds of health

problems in them. Most of the activities done by women require constant bending or squatting leaving them with severe pain in body parts. Nagarkoti and Maurya (2014) studied that fatigue, burning sensation in hands and feet, high fever, body ache (waist, head and body) and stomach ailments prevalent among hill farm women. Mariama and Janet (2000) reported that many of the farm activities are drudgery prone to varying degree. Even women suffer from different health problems which adversely affect their working efficiency and family welfare. Women have shorter time to rest than men and environmental degradation is increasing women's workload.

Objective :

To find out health problems faced by farm women while wheat transplantation.

METHODOLOGY

Locale of the study :

The study was conducted in five villages Dhindar, Noorganj (Noorpur), Sarna, Rawali, Milk chakarpur of Muradnagar Block, Ghaziabad District, U.P. The sample size was comprised of 125 farm women aged between 25-60 years to identify the workers involved in wheat cultivation. 25 farm women from each village were selected for data collection. Self structured questionnaire was used for eliciting information regarding occupational hazards, type of activity performed, health problems encountered during work of farm workers. Information was collected by personal interview method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is revealed from Table 1 that majority 32.8% were facing problems related to body ache/pain. 18.4% and 13.6% were facing healthy diet and anemia problems and 10.4 % of farm women faced physical injuries while performing agricultural tasks whereas minimal percentage *i.e.*, 7.2, 5.6%, 4.0% and 2.4% of workers were facing problems related to headache, blood pressure, fatigue and looh respectively while doing agricultural tasks.

Table 1 : Distribution of workers according to the problems faced while doing agricultural tasks

Total respondents=125		
Problems	Women workers	
	Frequency (n=125)	Percentage (%)
Dehydration	5	4
Body ache/pain	41	32.8
Headache	9	7.2
Need of health diet	23	18.4
Blood pressure	7	5.6
Physical injuries/sickness	13	10.4
Looh	3	2.4
Anemia	17	13.6
Fatigue	5	4

Table 2 shows that majority of the farm women *i.e.*, 43.8% were facing respiratory/asthma problem. 30% and 21.2% were facing diarrhea and vomiting problem whereas 18.8%, 16.25%,

Table 2 : Distribution of workers according to the health problems faced by pesticides		
Total Respondents=125		
Pesticidal health problems	Women workers	
	Frequency (n=125)	Percentage (%)
Respiratory problem/asthma	35	43.8
Skin sensitization	11	13.8
Vomiting	17	21.2
Nausea	13	16.25
Diarrhea	24	30
Excessive sweating	15	18.8
Abdominal pain	10	12.5

13.8 % and 12.5% were facing sweating, nausea, skin sensitization and abdominal pain respectively.

Conclusion :

Women with poor health and nutrition are more likely to give birth to unhealthy babes with poor health. They are also less likely to be able to provide food and adequate care to their children. It is concluded from the study that majority the women suffered from minor health problems. Government should organize trainings about health safety measures and awareness programmes related to nutrition education so that they perform their on farm activities in better way.

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