



ROLE OF WOMEN IN JASMINE CULTIVATION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD: A STUDY IN RURAL TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Floriculture has become a significant part of India's agricultural diversification and rural development in India. Jasmine has a great place among other flower crops in Tamil Nadu which are highly demanded for religious, cultural, and commercial reasons. One of the biggest producers of jasmine in India is Tamil Nadu state, where the key fields are located in districts such as Madurai, Dindigul, Salem and Tirunelveli. Jasmine planting offers many jobs and income to rural families, especially women. This paper explores the role of women in the production of jasmine and their contributions to sustainable livelihoods in rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

The women contribute significantly at different phases of jasmine production including land preparation, planting, irrigation, weeding, pruning, pest control, harvesting, sorting, garland production, and marketing. They are actively engaged, thus lowering labour costs and increasing productivity in the farms. Research indicates that a large proportion of agricultural labour is represented by women, who provide almost 46 per cent of agricultural labour, as well as agricultural and related activities, such as floriculture, including jasmine plantations, among others. Jasmine farming has become a source of livelihood in most rural regions guaranteeing regular income through daily harvests and demand.

Small and marginal communities are particularly characterised by the economic value of the jasmine cultivation. Jasmine is a permanent crop that may bring farmers income throughout the year. In another study in Tamil Nadu, farm women who cultivated jasmine made a profit and thereby improved their families' living standards, in terms of health and asset accumulation. This shows the potential of jasmine farming as a viable source of income for rural women.

KEYWORDS: Women empowerment, Jasmine growing, Floriculture, Sustainable livelihood, Rural development, Tamil Nadu.

1. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector in India is significant in socio-economic growth of the country particularly in the rural regions where a significant percentage of the population relies on farming as a source of their livelihood. The diversification to high value crops like fruits, vegetables and flowers is a recent indication of a strategy that has gained relevance in enhancing income of farmers and providing rural job opportunities in the last few decades (Birthal et al., 2013). Following the growing demand of flowers as an element of religious, cultural, ornamental, and commercial exploits, floriculture has become one of the most lucrative industries in the agricultural industry (Tech, 2022).

Jasmine is one of the figurehead flower crops grown in India because of its smell, beauty, and value of money. Jasmine flowers are commonly employed in making garlands, perfumes and cosmetics also in offering religions. Jasmine flowers have gained value in the domestic and foreign markets and hence it is a very crucial commercial crop in India.

Among the states that grow jasmine, Tamil Nadu has the best jasmine districts like Madurai, Dindigul, Tirunelveli and Salem which are highly known to produce jasmine in large amounts. The success in the cultivation of jasmine in the regions has been due to the favourable climatic conditions and

the traditional knowledge of the farmers. Jasmine farming has also generated job opportunities to thousands of rural households and it also contributes a lot to the rural economy.

India is an important country where women are involved in agricultural practices. They play an important role in crop production, livestock management and post harvest activities. The role of women in floral crops such as jasmine is also high as there are numerous activities such as picking and making garlands that cannot be done by machines only but by hand and the way the flowers are handled. Not only do they help to increase agricultural productivity by engaging in jasmine farming but also boost the household income levels and the livelihood security of the rural communities.

2. JASMINE AS A FLORICULTURE CROP

Floriculture is the science of flower and decorative plants which are grown in gardens, floral displays, perfumes, and other commercial applications (Singh, 2006). India has experienced a high rate of growth in the floriculture industry both in local demand and export market. The farmers are also embracing flower cultivation as an alternative to the conventional crop production due to the higher incomes and the employment generated.



Jasmine is a very popular loose flower that is grown in India. The flower has a very powerful smell and is commonly used in garlands, bouquets, perfumes and hair ornaments. The productivity of jasmine has also increased remarkably over the past few years due to scientific cultivation practices and better varieties (Jawaharlal et al., 2012).

Jasmine has been known to thrive well in well-drained soil, moderate water, and warm climate. The crop is perennial in nature and upon planting the crop can bear flowers in several years (Bhattacharjee & De, 2010). Due to the frequent harvesting of jasmine flowers every day in the flowering period, the crop ensures that farmers get steady earnings.

3. ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF JASMINE GROWING

Jasmine plantation is a significant part of the Tamil Nadu rural economy. The crop offers jobs to the farmers, agricultural labourers, and even traders of flowers. Jasmine flowers are picked daily and hence farmers get constant revenue during flowering (Kaviarasan et al., 2015).

It has been demonstrated through research studies that the jasmine production is economically viable to the small and marginal farmers. The crop has very low land demands and yields more returns than a number of the traditional crops. Its profitability is further enhanced by the increasing demand of jasmine flowers in the local markets and the export markets (Thangamayan et al., 2019).

Moreover, several value-added industry involves production of garlands, perfume extractions, and decorations of flowers because of jasmine cultivation. These operations create more sources of employment and boost the earnings of the rural families.

4. THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN GROWING THE JASMINES

In rural Tamil Nadu, women are very significant in the production of jasmine. They especially participate in labour-intensive tasks which involve handling of flowers with utmost care. In most of the villages, women are the largest segment of the workforce in the jasmine farming.

There are various processes of jasmine production that involve women and they include:

- Sowing seedlings and transplanting seedlings.
- Weeding and irrigation
- Maintenance of crops and pruning.
- Harvesting flowers
- Sorting and grading flowers
- Decorating with garlands and flowers.

Selling flowers in the local markets.

The jasmine flowers are normally collected early in the morning when the buds are fresh. This is a tedious job that women do since it takes a lot of patience and skill to pick the flowers without breaking the buds.

The involvement of women in jasmine cultivation does not only lead to farm output but also significant in enhancing socio-economic well-being of the rural family. Jasmine farming by women gives income that is used to cover household costs, including food, education, health and housing.

5. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT VIA JASMINE CULTIVATION

Various development projects have encouraged jasmine to grow as a source of income to the women in the country who live in rural areas. Research indicates that women farmers can be greatly empowered by training, planting of materials and technical assistance, which can greatly enhance their livelihood.

As an example, an initiative undertaken by agricultural extension institutions was to send jasmine plants to women farmers and educate them in better farming techniques. The outcomes demonstrated that female farmers could earn more money on the cultivation of jasmine and improve their living conditions. The money they earned through jasmine farming was used to repair houses, acquire household commodities and enhance the health and education levels of the family members. These results suggest that the cultivation of jasmine can be a good idea in empowering women in rural areas and alleviating poverty in rural communities.

6. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD AND JASMINE CULTIVATION

Sustainable livelihood entails the capacity of the individuals or households to earn a constant income and enhance their living standards under the management of the resources at hand.

Jasmine culture promotes sustainable livelihood in a number of ways:

6.1 Employment Generation

Jasmine farming creates job opportunities among the rural labourers especially the women. There is a daily labour needed in activities like harvesting flowers, garland making, and marketing.

6.2 Regular Income

Jasmine flowers are harvested on a regular basis unlike seasonal crops hence farmers and other agricultural workers receive continuous income.

6.3 Small Land Requirement

Jasmine can be grown on small areas of land, and hence is appropriate to the small and marginal farmers.

6.4 Value Addition

Value added like garland making, perfume production add more value to the jasmine flowers and earns more people employment.

Therefore, the production of jasmine is important in enhancing the livelihoods security and alleviating poverty in the rural regions.

7. JASMINE FLOWERS MARKETING

Marketing jasmine is a significant point in the production process of jasmine as they are very delicate flowers that have to be sold soon after growing.

Marketing behaviour studies on the marketing behaviour of jasmine growers have revealed that most of the farmers market their flowers via commission agents within the local markets. The reason why farmers prefer this kind of system is that they receive instant payment and their access to



markets is easy. Nevertheless, reliance on the intermediaries tends to decrease the profit margin that farmers get.

The farmers can be allowed to get better prices on their produce by enhancing the market infrastructure, transport infrastructure and the direct marketing systems.

8. CHALLENGES OF JASMINE CULTIVATION

Although it has an economic advantage, there are various challenges associated with the production of jasmine; these hinder its production in terms of productivity and profitability.

The jasmine farmers are experiencing major problems which include:

- Fluctuation in prices in flower markets.
- Pest and disease problems
- Labour shortages
- Lack of technical knowledge
- Scarcity of irrigation plants.

Improved cultivation methods like drip irrigation, fertigation and integrated pest management can be adopted in order to increase the productivity and lower the cost of production.

9. CONCLUSION

The significant farming operations in Tamil Nadu is jasmine cultivation, which has not only helped in generating income and employment on a rural basis. The crop is valuable in economics and it gains sustainability as it is harvested on a daily basis. Women are important in the production of jasmies, and they are involved in different farm and after harvesting. Their participation does not only enhance agricultural production but it also helps economic empowerment of the rural families. Jasmine farming is a sustainable one while provides livelihood as it creates jobs, enhances the living standard of the family, and sustains value-added services. The difficulties that come with the issue of, however, include marketing limitations, fluctuation in prices, and limited technical expertise at need to be dealt with to enhance the profitability and sustainability of jasmine farming.

The area of activities in Tamil Nadu can be enhanced further by encouraging women to join in the jasmine crop cultivation by way of training programs, the funding assistance and better market accessibility. Rural entrepreneurship is also influenced by the role women play in cultivating jasmine. A large number of women are involved in self-help groups (SHGs), where they jointly manage the production, marketing and small businesses of flowers, and flower trading. The activities increase women's financial autonomy and decision-making power in both the household and the community. Engagement in the floriculture business also enhances women's social visibility and leadership in rural development programs. Nonetheless, women who practice jasmine farming face several setbacks. These are the fluctuations in prices in the flower markets, the inaccessibility of credit and training, the absence of modern technology and reliance on middlemen in marketing. These problems can be addressed through government programs, skills training, and better market connections to increase productivity and income levels. Sustainable livelihoods can also be enhanced by policies that empower women farmers, such as subsidies for floriculture within horticulture development programs.

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