

PROBLEMS WITH WOMEN'S WORK IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN GUNTUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

Avutupalli Thilothama^{1*} and Matcha Yamuna^{2**}

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

^{2**}Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract:

The World Economic Forum's 'Global Gender Gap Report, 2022' emphasizes that the differences in women's economic involvement and employment are a clear indication of the continuous difficulty in attaining gender equality. Globally, women continue to have less opportunities to participate in the labor market, according to the International Labour Organization's 'Women at Work, 2016' study. Due to fewer employment possibilities brought on by this decreased involvement, there is a greater chance of unemployment, salary disparities, poor working conditions, and occupational or sector-based segregation. In addition, women are often involved in unpaid caring and household responsibilities. Many rural women not only experience economic impoverishment but also a lack of access to vital information. Within India's national economy, rural women play a crucial and productive role in the workforce. Even with India's notable economic and technological achievements, discrimination against women—especially those living in rural areas—remains a serious problem. Women continue to comprise a disproportionate share of the people living in persistent poverty across the country. Research on women's status in Indian society has found that their important contributions to their families are frequently overlooked. More recently, there has been an increasing awareness that advancing women is essential to reducing poverty in a country. Without women's full participation, a nation's economic development journey would remain incomplete and unbalanced. One essential condition for the country's economic and social success is the empowerment of women.

Keywords: Women, Agriculture, Labour, Wage, Health and Malnutrition

Introduction

In India, the agriculture industry is crucial to the maintenance of livelihoods as well as the creation of jobs and revenue. Women carry out a wide variety of tasks in this broad industry. In addition to helping out around the house and with caregiving, they are essential members of the agricultural workforce. They actively participate in a range of agricultural operations, including marketing, livestock management, sowing, harvesting, and land preparation. Like in other parts of the world, agriculture is one of the oldest economic sectors in India and involves a significant number of women. More than 80 percent of women who are economically active work in agriculture or similar fields. This trend has persisted over the last 75 years and has played a major role in the greater labor force participation rates in rural regions relative to metropolitan areas. Although they contribute significantly to the production of half of the

world's food, women own very less land, have difficulty obtaining financing, and frequently receive less attention from agricultural consultants and programs. Despite making up one-third of the workforce worldwide, women are more likely to be unemployed and work in low-paying jobs. In terms of illiteracy, women continue to outnumber males by almost three to two. Although about 90 percent of countries have organizations dedicated to promoting women's advancement, women's representation in decision-making bodies remains inadequate. In India, women have consistently faced discrimination from men in terms of human resource development, disregarding their true and potential contributions to overall national progress, especially in the agricultural sector.

The female agricultural laborers are a major but often overlooked group of workers at the heart of the rural landscape in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. This thesis conducts a comprehensive study with the goal of highlighting their experiences and shedding light on the challenges they meet while working in the agriculture sector. This study intends to uncover significant insights regarding women's participation in agriculture, particularly in the Guntur area of Andhra Pradesh, by thoroughly examining the numerous facets of their duties.

Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture has been the foundation of human civilization, spanning continents and promoting economic growth and subsistence worldwide. By increasing crop yields and ensuring global food security, the Green Revolution's transformative consequences in the middle of the 20th century further highlighted the significance of agriculture. In India, the agricultural sector assumes a role of unmatched importance, providing livelihoods for a significant portion of the people and contributing significantly to the country's economy. With a robust agricultural base, Andhra Pradesh leans extensively on farming as a crucial support system for its rural communities. Grasping the historical and present significance of agriculture, particularly considering the influence of the Green Revolution on Indian farming and the vital role played by women in Andhra Pradesh's agricultural panorama, stands as a fundamental requirement for well-informed policy formulation and the advancement of fair development.

Agricultural Women in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh has the biggest percentage of India's 20.4 million active landholdings owned by women, accounting for 12.6 percent of the total, according to the Agriculture Census of 2015–16. According to a comparison of the Periodic Labour Force Surveys from 2004–

05 and 2017–18, the percentage of rural women in Andhra Pradesh engaged in temporary work increased from 48.7% to 52.2 percent. The percentage of workdays that women contributed to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Andhra Pradesh in 2017–18 was 59.6 percent, which was somewhat higher than the national average. Nonetheless, this percentage is still much lower than Kerala's, which stands at an astounding 90.8 percent. As per the PLFS data from 2017-18, the majority of rural women in Andhra Pradesh are involved in agricultural activities, constituting a substantial 76.9 per cent of the workforce¹⁹. According to the 2019 Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Livestock Holdings in Rural India, Andhra Pradesh holds the distinction of having the greatest proportion of households burdened with debt among all the states in the country.

Statement of the Problem

According to the World Economic Forum's 'Global Gender Gap Report' (2022), the current state of progress toward gender equality highlights the ongoing difficulty of resolving gender differences in women's employment and economic participation. As stated in 'Women at Work,' published by the International Labour Organization in 2016, possibilities for women to participate in the labor market are still lagging behind globally. Women decreased participation usually manifests as fewer work opportunities, which increases their susceptibility to unemployment, wage inequality, lower-quality employment, sectoral or occupational segregation, and taking on unpaid caregiving or household duties.

Many writers have emphasized the importance of feminizing Indian agriculture. Numerous studies conducted at the field and district levels have found that women are more involved in agriculture in the twenty-first century than they were in previous eras. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that inaccurate descriptions of women's job positions have underestimated their actual contributions to agriculture. 6. Policies must be created to address the issues faced by female employees. Women's empowerment has been the subject of numerous studies. Studies on the "problems of women workers in agriculture sector" are few and far between. Against this background, the present study is taken up to bridge the gap in the existing literature with an aim to study the problems of women workers in the agriculture sector in general and particularly that of Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the unique characteristics that characterize agricultural workers in India is essential before any attempt is made to create a reasonable plan for raising the living

conditions of these workers, who are at the bottom of the social and economic scale. Given its position as a driver of economic growth, attention to the female workforce is extremely important. One measure of a country's capacity for faster development is its labor force participation rate. This emphasis is also essential in emerging nations as women's participation in the work force helps households deal with economic shocks. Women wield considerable influence in shaping both familial and societal structures, often with their contributions going unnoticed, and their untapped potential in mainstream economic sectors. Achieving comprehensive empowerment for women requires providing education on areas such as health, social well-being, financial independence, and political involvement. Moreover, within the agricultural sector, the pivotal role played by women is widely recognized.

The Indian government's 2020–21 Economic Survey Report states that although the primary sector which includes mining and agriculture contributes just around 16 percent of GVA, it employs over 43 percent of the labor force. This suggests that there is a significant chance to create worthwhile jobs in these industries. The percentage of female-operated farms increased from 11.7 percent in 2005–06 to 14 percent in 2015–16, according to the All-India Report on Agriculture Census. This suggests that women are becoming more involved in the management of agricultural properties. Between 2005–06 and 2015–16, the average size of operational holdings dropped from 1.23 hectares to 1.08 hectares. In 2015–16, male-operated holdings were greater at 0.79 hectares than female-operated holdings, which were 0.68 hectares.

Objectives of the Study

1. To discuss the problems of women workers working in agriculture sector in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh; and
2. To suggest measures to resolve the problems of women workers in Low Wages and gender discrimination the agriculture sector.
3. To discuss the problems of women workers working in Respondents Opinion on Problem of Health and Malnutrition and Sexual harassment in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh; and

Methodology

Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh is the universe of the study and was selected purposively being the native district of the researcher. The study uses both primary data and

secondary data. Primary data is collected using the structured interview schedule as per the research objectives.

A multi-stage sample design is adopted for selection of respondents in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. At the first stage, from each of the four Revenue Divisions of the Guntur district, namely, Guntu, Tenal, Narasaraope, Gurazal, two Mandals were selected randomly. Machavaram and Veldurthy Mandals from Gurazala revenue division, Bollapalle and Ipur Mandals from Narasaraopet revenue division, Krosuru and Achampet Mandals from Guntur revenue division, Nagara and Karlapalem mandals from Tenali revenue division were selected for the study, in the second stage from each of the eight Mandals, two Villages were selected randomly, i.e., 16 villages were selected for conduct of the study. In the third stage, from each Village, 40 agricultural women workers from different social categories were selected. Thus, from 16 villages of 8 mandals, a total sample size of 640 respondents was selected for conduct of the study.

Sample Selection from Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh

Revenue Division	Mandals selected	Villages selected	Number of Respondents
Guntur	Krosuru	Dodleru	40
		Bayyavaram	40
	Achampet	Pedapalem	40
		Konduru	40
Tenali	Nagaram	Pedapalli	40
		Pudiwada	40
	Karlapalem	Peddagollapalem	40
		Perali	40
Narasaraopet	Bollapalle	Remidicherla	40
		Vellaturu	40
	Ipur	Muppalla	40
		Kotcherla	40
Gurazala	Machavaram	Pillutla	40
		Pinnelli	40
	Veldurthy	Srigiripadu	40
		Uppalapadu	40
Total Respondents			640

Primary Data

To gather primary data, a structured interview schedule was employed as a research tool. The researcher conducted field visits to 16 villages spanning 8 mandals and directly

interacted with the respondents. By personally engaging with the participants, the study ensured a comprehensive and firsthand data collection process, capturing the diverse experiences and perspectives of the respondents.

Low Wages

Table:1 presents a diverse range of opinions on the issue of low wages among women agricultural labourers. In Guntur revenue division, the majority (45.60% agreed, and 36.90% strongly agreed) indicate that low wages are a problem. This situation stands in contrast to Tenali revenue division, where an overwhelming 76.30 per cent of respondents strongly agreed to the problem of low wages. In Narasaraopet revenue division, the data revealed a mix of perspectives. While 38.10 per cent of respondents agreed and 23.80 per cent strongly agreed that low wages are a significant issue, a substantial minority of 21.90 per cent disagreed. Gurazala revenue division showed that 51.90 per cent strongly agreed with the statement, whereas 38.80 per cent were neutral. The overall aggregation reveals that 47.20 per cent strongly agree that low wages are a problem, while 23.00 per cent agree and 20.90 per cent being neutral.

The Chi-Square test indicates a significant association with a Pearson value of 234.817 at 9 degrees of freedom and a p-value of less than 0.001. This implies that low wages is found to be one of the problems of agricultural labour in the opinion of vast majority of the respondents. In conclusion, low wages are found to be one of the problems of agricultural labour in the opinion of vast majority of the respondents.

Table:1 Respondents Opinion on the Problem of Low Wages

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	-	12 (7.50)	16 (10.00)	73 (45.60)	59 (36.90)	160 (100.00)
Tenali	-	-	30 (18.80)	8 (5.00)	122 (76.30)	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	-	35 (21.90)	26 (16.30)	61 (38.10)	38 (23.80)	160 (100.00)

Gurazala	-	10 (6.30)	62 (38.80)	5 (3.10)	83 (51.90)	160 (100.00)
Total	-	57 (8.90)	134 (20.90)	147 (23.00)	302 (47.20)	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	234.817	9	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	253.801	9	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.728	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Gender Disparity in Agricultural Wages

Table:2 explores the nuanced opinions regarding the gender disparity in wages among women agricultural labourers. In Guntur revenue division, 36.30 per cent of respondents agree and 30.60 per cent strongly agree that gender disparity in wages exists. On the other hand, Tenali revenue division had 40.60 per cent who strongly agree, 26.30 per cent agree, but notably, 31.30 per cent strongly disagreed. In Narasaraopet revenue division, a noteworthy 38.80 per cent agree, 11.30 per cent strongly agree while 26.30 per cent remain neutral, and another 22.50 per cent disagree. In Gurazala revenue division, a staggering 73.10 per cent of respondents strongly agree with the issue of gender disparity in wages, far exceeding any other division and only 15.60 per cent agree. Overall, 38.90 per cent strongly agree and 29.20 percent agree, indicating a majority of respondents (68.10%) affirm the issue. However, 14.40 per cent strongly disagree, and 10.90 per cent disagree, showcasing a broad range of opinions.

The Chi-Square test yielded a Pearson value of 338.319 with 12 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance level of less than 0.001. This statistical result indicates that the observed differences across the revenue divisions are highly significant. In conclusion,

majority of the respondents are of the opinion that gender disparity in agricultural wages is one of their problems, despite of inter-regional variations in perceptions.

Table:2 Respondents Opinion on the Problem of Gender Disparity in Wages

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	22 (13.80)	31 (19.40)	-	58 (36.30)	49 (30.60)	160 (100.00)
Tenali	50 (31.30)	3 (1.90)	-	42 (26.30)	65 (40.60)	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	2 (1.30)	36 (22.50)	42 (26.30)	62 (38.80)	18 (11.30)	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	18 (11.30)	-	-	25 (15.60)	117 (73.10)	160 (100.00)
Total	92 (14.40)	70 (10.90)	42 (6.60)	187 (29.20)	249 (38.90)	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	338.319	12	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	355.233	12	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.046	1	.830
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Long Distance between Home and Workplace

Table:3 elucidates the perceptions of respondents on the problem of long distances between home and workplace across diverse revenue divisions. In Guntur revenue division a

considerable 36.90 per cent of respondents strongly disagree with the notion that distance poses a problem and 26.90 per cent agree. In the case of Tenali revenue division, 58.10 per cent disagree that long-distance commuting is problematic, followed by 23.10 per cent who agree. Narasaraopet revenue division reveals a dominant 45.60 per cent who strongly disagree, countered by a 22.50 per cent who agree. Gurazala revenue division exhibits 48.80 per cent who disagree and 24.40 per cent who agree, echoing a similarly polarized pattern as seen in Narasaraopet but with a higher disagreement quotient. On an aggregate level, the largest category is 'Disagree' (38.40%), followed by 'Strongly Disagree' (31.10%) and 'Agree' (24.20%). The lack of strong linear associations suggests that the distance problem is not universally perceived.

The Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests both demonstrate a highly significant p-value of less than 0.001, thereby underlining the statistical significance of these disparities in perspectives. The Linear-by-Linear Association, however, shows an insignificance with a value of 0.364, suggesting no clear trend in the data. It may be concluded that long distance between home and workplace is not one of the problems of women agricultural labour in the opinion of majority of the respondents.

Table:3 Respondents Opinion on the Problem of Long Distance between Home and Workplace

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	59 (36.90)	38 (23.80)	20 (12.50)	43 (26.90)	-	160 (100.00)
Tenali	30 (18.80)	93 (58.10)	-	37 (23.10)	-	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	73 (45.60)	37 (23.10)	14 (8.80)	36 (22.50)	-	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	37 (23.10)	78 (48.80)	6 (3.80)	39 (24.40)	-	160 (100.00)
Total	199 (31.10)	246 (38.40)	40 (6.30)	155 (24.20)	-	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	86.936	9	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	95.403	9	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.825	1	.364
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Lack of Basic Facilities at Workplace

The data presented in Table:4 shows perception of respondents on the lack of basic facilities at the workplace across different revenue divisions. In the Guntur revenue division, 71.90 per cent of respondents disagree that the lack of basic facilities is a problem, while 18.80 per cent holding a neutral position. In Tenali revenue division, opinions are more evenly spread with 43.80 per cent disagreeing, 42.50 per cent remaining neutral, and 13.80 per cent agreeing. In the Narasaraopet revenue division, the situation mirrors that in Guntur, with 71.30 per cent disagreeing that the lack of facilities is an issue while 25.60 per cent remaining neutral. In the Gurazala revenue division, 51.20% disagree, but a noteworthy 26.90% agree, while 21.90% remain neutral about lack of basic facilities at workplace. On an aggregate level, the most significant proportion of respondents (59.5%) 'Disagree' with the notion that basic facilities are lacking, followed by 'Neutral' at 27.20 per cent, signifying what Émile Durkheim would call 'mechanical solidarity,' where similarities in workplace conditions create a sense of collective conscience.

The statistical significance of both the Pearson Chi-Square ($p < .001$) and Likelihood Ratio ($p < .001$) tests suggests a non-random distribution of opinions across revenue divisions. The Linear-by-Linear Association value of .003 provides evidence of a linear trend, indicative of a systematic variance in opinions among the surveyed population. In conclusion, lack of basic facilities at the workplace is not one of their problems in the opinion of majority of the respondents.

Table:4 Respondents Opinion on the Problem of Lack of Basic Facilities at Workplace

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	-	115 (71.90)	30 (18.80)	15 (9.40)	-	160 (100.00)
Tenali	-	70 (43.80)	68 (42.50)	22 (13.80)	-	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	-	114 (71.30)	41 (25.60)	5 (3.10)	-	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	-	82 (51.20)	35 (21.90)	43 (26.90)	-	160 (100.00)
Total	-	381 (59.50)	174 (27.20)	85 (13.30)	-	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.669	6	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	72.238	6	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.031	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Health and Malnutrition Problem

Table:5 offers a robust examination of the respondents' perspectives on problems of health and malnutrition across four revenue divisions. In the Guntur revenue division, the data reveals a heterogeneity of views: 30 per cent agree that health and malnutrition is a problem, while a near equal proportion (24.40%) disagree. Tenali revenue division, on the other hand, exhibits a clear majority (53.80 per cent) who disagree that health and malnutrition are issues

of concern. Narasaraopet intriguingly has a significant 41.30 per cent who are neutral on the issue. Coupled with 8.10 per cent who strongly agree. In Gurazala revenue division, a preponderance of respondents (40.60%) disagree with the assertion that health and malnutrition are problematic, but also substantial 31.90 per cent are neutral. At a macro level, while 35.80 per cent disagreed, 26.10 per cent were neutral and 24.40 per cent agreed on the problem of health and malnutrition.

The Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests both demonstrate highly significant values, with p-values less than .001. The Linear-by-Linear Association indicates a meaningful linear relationship with a p-value of .003. In conclusion, health and malnutrition as one of their problems is agreed by just little over one fourth of the respondents, showing the pronounced lack of awareness on adequate nutritional requirements.

Table:5 Respondents Opinion on Problem of Health and Malnutrition

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	33 (20.60)	39 (24.40)	34 (21.30)	48 (30.00)	6 (3.80)	160 (100.00)
Tenali	1 (0.60)	86 (53.80)	16 (10.00)	57 (35.60)		160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	9 (5.60)	39 (24.40)	66 (41.30)	33 (20.60)	13 (8.10)	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	26 (16.30)	65 (40.60)	51 (31.90)	18 (11.30)		160 (100.00)
Total	69 (10.80)	229 (35.80)	167 (26.10)	156 (24.40)	19 (3.00)	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	145.423	12	<.001

Likelihood Ratio	162.878	12	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.591	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Lack of Role in Decision Making in the Family

Table:6 tries to map the opinions of respondents on the problem of their lack of role in decision-making in the family across various revenue divisions in Andhra Pradesh. In the Guntur revenue division, a significant 60.60 per cent of respondents remained neutral, while 28.70 per cent agreed that there exists a lack of role in decision- making for women within the family. For the Tenali revenue division, an overwhelming 87.50 per cent of respondents were neutral that women have a limited role in family decision-making. In Narasaraopet revenue division, 61.90 per cent and 20.60 per cent respondents gave neutral and agree responses respectively. The Gurazala revenue division offers a more diverse set of responses, with 45 per cent neutral, 26.90 per cent disagreeing, and 14.40 per cent agreeing.

Statistically speaking, both the Pearson Chi-Square and the Likelihood Ratio tests reveal high significance levels ($p < .001$). Moreover, the Linear-by-Linear Association corroborates this with a high statistical significance ($p < .001$), affirming the presence of ordered categories in respondents' attitudes. It may be concluded that only 19.10% of respondents perceive lack of decision-making in family as a problem, while 63.70% remain neutral. This ambivalence could be due to systemic gender imbalances and internalised patriarchy as argued in the light of standpoint theory and the framework of hegemonic masculinity.

Table:6 Respondents Opinion on the Problem of Lack of Role in Decision Making in the Family

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	-	17 (10.60)	97 (60.60)	46 (28.70)	-	160 (100.00)

Tenali	-	-	140 (87.50)	20 (12.50)	-	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	-	28 (17.50)	99 (61.90)	33 (20.60)	-	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	22 (13.80)	43 (26.90)	72 (45.00)	23 (14.40)	-	160 (100.00)
Total	22 (3.40)	88 (13.80)	408 (63.70)	122 (19.10)	-	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	147.673	9	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	159.360	9	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	53.818	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Table:7 illuminates' perceptions of women agricultural workers regarding the problem of sexual harassment at workplace across different revenue divisions in Andhra Pradesh. In the Guntur revenue division, 53.10 per cent of respondents agreed that sexual harassment is prevalent at the workplace, with an additional 8.80 per cent strongly agreeing. In Tenali, a strikingly different picture emerges: 65 per cent of respondents are neutral, 22.50 per cent agreeing and only a nominal 1.30 per cent strongly agree with the statement. The Narasaraopet revenue division presents another compelling case with 56.30 per cent of respondents agreeing and 9.40 per cent strongly agreeing with the problem of workplace harassment. In the Gurazala revenue division, 45 per cent agreed and 48.80 per cent are neutral.

Both Pearson Chi-Square and the Likelihood Ratio tests showed significance at $p < .001$. However, the Linear-by-Linear Association value is not significant ($p = .718$), which

suggests that there isn't a clear linear trend in the perceptions across divisions. When amalgamated, 44.20 per cent agreed and 5.50 per cent strongly agreed that workplace sexual harassment is prevalent, but an almost equal 44.80 per cent of respondents are neutral, reiterating the cultural sensitivity and stigma associated with it. It may be concluded that sexual harassment at workplace is one of their problems in the opinion of majority of the respondents.

Table:7 Respondents Opinion on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Revenue Division	Opinions of the Respondents					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Guntur	-	4 (2.50)	57 (35.60)	85 (53.10)	14 (8.80)	160 (100.00)
Tenali	-	18 (11.30)	104 (65.00)	36 (22.50)	2 (1.30)	160 (100.00)
Narasaraopet	-	7 (4.40)	48 (30.00)	90 (56.30)	15 (9.40)	160 (100.00)
Gurazala	-	6 (3.80)	78 (48.80)	72 (45.00)	4 (2.50)	160 (100.00)
Total	-	35 (5.50)	287 (44.80)	283 (44.20)	35 (5.50)	640 (100.00)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	80.103	9	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	83.021	9	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.130	1	.718
N of Valid Cases	640		

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represent percentages to row total.

Source: Computed from the Primary Data.

Conclusion

The study on the problems of women labour in the agriculture sector of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, reveals the multiple layers of challenges that women agricultural workers continue to face despite their significant role in sustaining the rural economy. Women constitute a vital workforce in agricultural operations such as sowing, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest activities, yet their contributions remain under-recognized and undervalued. The findings indicate that women labourers are burdened with issues of wage disparity, seasonal and irregular employment, lack of job security, and inadequate access to institutional support systems. Their wages are consistently lower than those of male labourers, reflecting the persistence of gender discrimination within the sector. In addition, women workers face hardships due to the absence of proper facilities in the workplace, long working hours, and dual responsibilities of both domestic chores and agricultural labour. The lack of access to land ownership, agricultural credit, modern technology, and training programs further restricts their productivity and economic empowerment. Social constraints such as illiteracy, traditional gender roles, and limited mobility also act as barriers to their overall development. The impact of mechanization and declining agricultural opportunities has made their situation more precarious, pushing many women into underemployment or migration.

Addressing these issues requires a multidimensional approach. Ensuring equal wages, legal protection, and improved working conditions must be a priority. Skill development programs, access to credit, women-centric cooperative societies, and self-help groups can provide alternative livelihood opportunities and financial independence. Policy frameworks should focus on integrating women into decision-making processes, promoting gender equity in agriculture, and providing targeted welfare measures like maternity benefits, healthcare facilities, and social security schemes. Ultimately, the sustainable development of agriculture in Guntur district depends on recognizing and strengthening the role of women labourers. Empowering them through education, skill enhancement, and institutional support will not only uplift their socio-economic status but also contribute to the growth of the agricultural sector and the rural economy at large. Addressing the problems of women labourers is not merely a matter of welfare but an essential step toward achieving inclusive and equitable rural development.

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