

CHAPTER -VI
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

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Summary of Findings.

The general information about the respondents related to the socio-economic variables revealed that maximum of respondents belonged to active working age group of 20-40 years. Average age of the respondents was 35.8 years. Only 23 per cent of respondents were literate, ranging from only 1.8 per cent in most backward region D to 41.5 per cent in most advanced region A. Nuclear type of families dominated joint families, more so in advanced region. Average family size was 7, reflecting a large size. Majority of the respondents belonged to intermediate castes followed by untouchables, upper castes and lower castes. Agriculture and allied pursuits was the prime occupation of majority of respondents. Majority of families were concentrated in lower categories of either landless or upto 5 acres of land and only 0.6 per cent had more than 16 acres of land. About 33.2 per cent families had annual income of upto Rs.5000/- and highest income group of above Rs.25000/- comprised of only 6.5 per cent of household. Majority of respondents had medium level of socio-economic-status. Level of social participation of the respondents was found to be very low.

Study revealed a high level of agricultural technology. Advanced regions showed a higher adoption of agricultural technology and as the advancement of the region decreased, so also decreased the level of adoption of new agricultural technology. Income and size of landholding were found to

be highly associated with level of adoption of new agricultural technology followed by caste and highest education in the family.

Work force participation of females was found to be very high as 77.6 per cent of the respondents were participating in the work force. Index of female labour force participation was found to be highest in backward regions with less irrigation facilities and less use of improved agricultural technology, and it went on decreasing with the increasing progressiveness of the region. Employment status of females was found to be differing in the different socio-economic strata. Educational status of women was most significantly related with participation of women in work force followed by level of agricultural mechanization, family income and caste. Number of women participating in the work force decreased among those having high level of agricultural mechanization, having high income level from high castes and educated. In upper castes, the concept of not working of women as a symbol of status was still continuing. Among Intermediate castes, women from Jat Sikh families were not working outside, because of cultural forces. Among untouchables also some cases were noticed where women have ceased to work outside in imitation of upper castes, as their husbands have moved to services. Thus they are withdrawing themselves from the labour force and are also trying to restrict their movements unlike other females of lower castes as a symbol of status.

Majority of the respondents (98.8%) were engaged in agriculture either as agricultural labourers (37.9%) or cultivators (60.9%). Only 0.3 per cent of respondents were engaged in service. Occupational distribution of all females of the selected households also revealed similar trend. Thus primary sector constituted the main sphere of female employment.

Regional differences were evident in the occupational distribution of females. In both regions of Karnal, maximum of females were working as agricultural labourers, while in both regions of Bhiwani, majority of females were working as cultivators. Thus in progressive regions, number of cultivators went down and number of agricultural labourers increased. Only in progressive regions, women were engaged in tertiary sector of the economy.

Caste was found to be a determining factor in the work pattern of females. Those working as agricultural labourers were either from untouchables or from lower castes. From upper castes no women worked as agricultural labourer and objection to working for wages remained among intermediate castes also. Although family labour exchange among the different families of same caste was prevalent at upper and intermediate level but it was only at the low level of hierarchy that women worked for wages.

Impact of new agricultural technology was evident only among 26.9 per cent of respondents who were now working either for less or more number of days compared to earlier.

Maximum impact was evident in most advanced region A, where 47.4 per cent of respondents were affected, followed by region B (8.21%), C (3.3%) and in region D no impact was evident.

Women from different socio-economic-strata were being affected differently by the new agricultural technology. Different factors which determined the effect of new agricultural technology on women were caste, status of worker, income level, landholding and level of farm mechanization.

Impact of agricultural technology was found to be different according to the status of worker. As those who were getting more employment were all agricultural labourers (19%), whose employment has been increased due to the improved agricultural practices which increased the demand for labour in peak seasons because of low level of mechanization. This trend was observed in only one village of advanced region. Among those who were now getting employment for lesser number of days, there were three categories of women which included 22.2 per cent of women who were working earlier on own farms but now they have withdrawn themselves from the labour force, 21.2 per cent of women cultivators whose work load has been reduced due to mechanization of agriculture and 21.2 per cent of agricultural labourers who are now getting work for lesser number of days due to full mechanization of agriculture which was evident only in one village of advanced regions where combine harvesters have been introduced.

Thus improved agricultural technology accompanied by partial mechanization has affected women from all socio-economic backgrounds positively, either by relieving the women cultivators who were from high socio-economic strata, from upper or intermediate castes, high income level and having large landholdings or by increasing the employment of women who were from lower socio-economic strata, lower castes and untouchables, lowest income group and having either no or uneconomic landholding which forced them to work as agricultural labourers. Full mechanization of agriculture has both positive and negative impact on women from different socio-economic strata. On the one hand, it has freed women completely, who were earlier working on own farms and who belonged to upper socio-economic strata, who have withdrawn themselves from employment and this free time they were utilizing in other areas where a clear trend in the improvement of their status was evident. On the other hand it has negatively affected the women from lower castes, lowest income groups who were either landless or having uneconomic landholding by reducing the demand for employment in peak season and women marked by lack of access to new skills and knowledge were first to be replaced. Thus these women are being marginalized to periphery and this marginalization can mean something worse for women than men as they are marked by lack of mobility and access to training opportunities which can prepare them for employment in the modernized sector.

In spite of the equal remuneration Act, differentials in wages of men and women continue unprotested. Labour surplus conditions and lack of consciousness and organization among women led to their poor bargaining power and forced them to work for the available wages. None of the respondents had ever been included in the agricultural training, which is a great drawback in our extension programmes. Women who have less access to training opportunities lack the skills, required by modernized agriculture thus they are being pushed to non-mechanized operations and with full mechanization are likely to be completely thrown out of employment.

Improved household technology has still not trickled down to majority of rural women, as level of improved household technology was found to be very unsatisfactory in majority of cases and only in 4.7 per cent cases, level of improved household technology was high.

Majority of women who had either medium or high level of improved household technology were from advanced regions, upper caste groups, high income brackets, high socio-economic status, from educated families, from families with service or agriculture as their main occupation and were themselves educated. Economic status of family was found to be most highly related with level of improved household technology, followed by socio-economic status, highest education in the family, education of the respondent, main occupation of family and caste was least related having

minimum value of C (.25). Although income level of the family was found to be associated with level of improved household technology in all the four regions at one percent level of significance but in region A, it was most significantly related with maximum value of C (.66) followed by region B (C-.59), C (C-.50) and region D (C-.48). Thus in advanced regions importance of relieving the women from the drudgery of home work was realized, provided the family had the capacity to buy as compared to backward regions, where even if the family had higher level of income, it was not necessary that level of household technology would also be high, thus reflecting the neutrality towards women's work. Similarly socio-economic-status was most highly related with level of household technology in advanced regions, and as the progressiveness of the region decreased, so also decreased the extent to which high socio-economic status led to high level of household technology, reflecting the neglect of female drudgery in the backward regions. Average working day for women came out to be 13.2 hours, which reflects the miserable plight of rural women. In most advanced region A, average working hours were 12.9 and it went on increasing as one moved to backward regions with 13.3 in region B, 13.8 in region C and 14.9 in region D. Thus in backward regions, women worked for more number of hours.

Farm work consumed maximum time of women. Average time devoted to farm work was 2.6 hours, ranging from 1.8 hours in advanced region A to 2.9 hours in most backward

region D. thus as the progressiveness of the region increased, time devoted to farm work by women decreased.

Next to farm work, maximum time was devoted to food preparation, which consumed on an average 2.4 hours. Main activities which consumed most time were cooking food and fetching water. Water supply was available at home only in 12.9 per cent of cases. In all other cases (87.1%) women have to go a long way to fetch water from wells on their heads.

Cooking food was another activity which consumed much time. Only a few families had stove (33.1%), Heater (29.9%) and Gobar Gas Plant (3.24%). Rest of the families relied exclusively on Cow-dung and firewood, which was a great hazard for the health of the women who were continuously exposed to the smoke. In-door kitchen was available only in 52.4 per cent of cases, and in all other cases food had to be cooked in open in all seasons. Caste and outside working of women were significantly associated with amount of time devoted to food preparation.

Cleanliness of the home was devoted 2.1 hours per day on an average ranging from 2.4 hours in advanced region A to 1.7 hours in most backward region D. Caste and income were found associated with amount of time devoted to cleanliness.

Next to cleanliness, care of animals was devoted on an average 1.8 hours a day. Maximum time to animal care was being devoted in backward region and it went on decreasing

with the progressiveness of the region. In majority (66.1%) of cases females were responsible for care of animals. In both regions of Bhiwani, females alone were responsible in more number of cases, while this number was small in both regions of Karnal, more so in the advanced region A. This was partly due to the fact that in Karnal, dairy has been adopted as a profession in some cases and as it became commercial and so on a large scale, it has gone into the hands of males (either family members or servants.) High income level was found associated with less responsibility of females in animal care and vice-versa, more so in the advanced regions.

Clothing was given less attention with 1.4 hours on an average devoted to it daily. In advanced region more time was devoted to it than in backward regions. Sewing of clothes was not done at home in majority of cases (65%), even if the family income was meagre, because of lack of ability and skills and due to non-availability of sewing machines in some cases. Other aspects like washing, ironing of clothes was given more time in advanced regions. Upper caste women devoted maximum time to it followed by intermediate castes, untouchable and lower castes.

Child care was not getting much attention. Only 1.4 hours on an average were devoted to care of children ranging from 1.5 in advanced region A to 1.2 in most backward region D. Type of family and outside working of the women was found associated with amount of time devoted to

child care.

Processing of grains was devoted 0.9 hours daily. Caste was significantly associated with the amount of time devoted to grain processing. Majority of respondents from intermediate castes devoted maximum time to grain processing followed by upper castes, lower castes and untouchables.

Flour grinding consumed on an average 0.4 hours ranging from 0.2 hours in advanced region A to 0.4, 0.6 and 0.9 in region B, C and D. Thus as the backwardness of the region increased so also increased the number of hours devoted to flour grinding and number of women who were grinding the flour at home manually. On the whole in 41.1 per cent of cases, flour was being grounded in home wholly or partly by hand driven chakkis which reflects the backwardness and drudgery of rural women in modern times.

On the whole, maximum amount of time was devoted to farm work followed by food preparation, cleanliness, animal care, clothing, child care, grain processing and flour grinding. An attempt to find out the leisure time of the respondent revealed that 59.1 per cent of respondents did not get any leisure time, 11.0 per cent got $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 hours, 26.5 per cent were getting 2-3 hours and 2.5 per cent of respondents got even more than three hours of leisure time. Respondents getting 2,3 and more than three hours of leisure time were either from the old age group who had daughter-in-laws to work, or they were from poor nuclear families and were unemployed or these were from upper

classes with all kinds of facilities in their homes and also not working outside. For the rest of women, work started from early morning till late at night.

A regional analysis revealed that more women from region A (most advanced) and region D (Most backward) were getting leisure time than from region B and C. In region A, those women were from upper castes who were not working in the fields and also had good level of home technology, but in region D, those were mostly from lower castes, who were idle and not getting employment. As caste was found associated in all the four regions with leisure time of the respondent, but significance was more in region A and D than in B and C.

Level of household technology was highly significantly related with leisure time of respondents as it had maximum value of C (.41), followed by income (C-.36), occupation (C-.34), age (C-.30) and caste (C-.28). Outside working of women was also significantly associated with leisure time of the respondents but it could not be compared because of different degrees of freedom. Thus majority of women getting leisure time were having high level of improved home technology, high income level, from older age group, upper castes, not working outside home and belonging to families having service as the main occupation.

Thus it is seen that as the socio-economic level of the family increased, on the one hand women's participation in the work force decreased and on the other hand level of

household technology also improved, thus relieving women from drudgery of the home and farm. While for those who are at the lower end of socio-economic ladder, outside working which is a necessity for them, is accompanied by lack of improved technology in the home, thus making their plight more miserable.

Knowledge of the respondents regarding improved household technology was found to be very low. Mean knowledge score was 1.9, reflecting a low level of knowledge. Mean knowledge score came out to be maximum in region A (2.4) and as the backwardness of the region increased so decreased the knowledge score. Majority of the respondents who had either medium or high level of knowledge were having high level of exposure to means of communication, educated, from upper income brackets, older age groups, upper castes and families having educated persons. Level of exposure to communication means affected most the level of knowledge of women about improved household technology followed by education, highest education in the family, economic status of family, age and caste of the respondents.

A detailed analysis revealed that sewing machine, stove and electric iron are the three items about which majority of respondents had high knowledge as mean score was between 3-4. Next group of devices about which respondents had medium level of knowledge with mean knowledge score ranging between 2-2.19 were electric heater, gohar gas plant, pressure-cooker, refrigerator, electric grinder

and cooking gas. About all other items included under improved household technology, respondents had low or very low level of knowledge.

An attempt to find out the items perceived as most important by the respondents revealed that water supply got the first rank i.e. it was perceived as most essential by the rural women and majority of the respondents felt that provision of water supply in the home will reduce their burden to a greater extent. Next in rank were stove, electric heater, cooking gas, gohar gas plant and pressure cooker. Respondents, were mainly curious about the technologies related to food preparations especially for cooking. The need for relieving the women from drudgery of cooking on chulha was mentioned repeatedly by majority of respondents.

Electric grinder got the 7th rank followed by washing machine, electric kettle and electric iron coming on the 8th, 9th 10th position. Refrigerator was ranked 11th followed by geyser, juice extractor and knitting machine coming on 12th, 13th and 14th rank order.

Regarding the reasons for non-adoption of improved household technology, most mentioned reason was the economic difficulties followed by complexity in use as a hindrance for the adoption of improved home technology. Lack of awareness came on third position as a reason for non-adoption followed by those who said that other family members who were the main decision makers in the family were not conscious and did not realize the need for any

such technology and least number of respondents mentioned uncertainty about the results as a reason for non-adoption of improved technology.

Role of women in decision-making related to farm activities revealed that although considerable evidence of joint decision-making was apparent, but husband tended to assume the major role. Various factors found to be associated with the role of women in farm decisions were level of agricultural technology, income, farm size, participation of women in farm operations and family type arranged in the descending order of significance of relationship. Women had a relatively greater say in decision making related to farm aspects in families characterized by low level of agricultural technology, low income, small farm size participation of women in farm work and nuclearity.

Regarding the next area of decision-making i.e. home management, it was found that females were highly concentrated in decisions related to daily food articles, clothing and kitchen articles, while in other two areas of food on festive occasions and other household articles, male domination was apparent, although in some cases, females also dominated. But on the whole this was female dominated domain.

Third area of decision-making i.e. decisions related to social obligations also showed a relatively high role of women. In this area, dowry was more or less a female domain followed by decisions related to age at marriage of

son or daughter and decisions related to mate selection and other expenditure on marriage. Age and education of women affected positively her say in above areas, and highest education in the family affected negatively the relative say of women in those areas.

Regarding the decisions related to education of children it was found that education of boys was predominantly a male domain while in areas of education of girls females also had important role. Education and level of exposure of the respondent were found to be associated significantly and positively with role of women in decisions related to education of children.

An arrangement of all the decision-making areas on a continuum of male domination to female domination revealed that decisions related to farm came on the top at the male domination end of the continuum and moving towards the female domination end of the continuum are the decisions related to education of boys, expenditure on marriage, selection of mate, food on festive occasions, household articles, education of girls, age of marriage, clothing, dowry, kitchen articles and daily food articles.

Access of the respondents to mass-media channels of communication was low, as respondents had access only to Radio. Other means like newspaper and magazines were not in use. A little more than half of respondents (53.1%) had access to this important source of mass media, reflecting a breakthrough in the mental isolation of the

respondents through mass-media channels of communication. A regional analysis revealed that in advanced regions, more number of respondents had access to this source and the number went on decreasing with the increasing backwardness of the region.

Contacts of the respondents with various development agents were found to be poor. More progressive was the region, higher was the number of respondents contacting various development agents. Study indicated that Radio was the most utilized sources was compared to various development agents, because it did not require going out from ^{home} which is considered to be a violation of the seclusion, more so in the women from upper castes. Present study revealed that access of women to Radio (only mass media utilized by women) was hindered by traditional forces and due to non-recognition on the part of other family members about the needs of women to have knowledge of the world outside. In many cases, even if the Radio was available in the home it was not considered good for women to switch on the Radio.

Frequency of urban contact of the respondents which was used to measure the extent of geographic isolation of respondents was found to be satisfactory. Respondents from progressive regions which were also nearer the city had high exposure to urban areas as compared to respondents from backward villages which were away from the city.

A composite index of access of women to communication technology, which reflected both their geographic

and mental isolation revealed a low access of women to communication technology, thus reflecting the low status of women. Respondents from progressive regions which were also near the city had high access to communication technology as compared to backward regions.

Various factors were found to be affecting the access of women to communication technology. Level of education of the respondents was found to be most significantly related with level of exposure of the respondent, followed by economic status of family, socio-economic-status, age and caste of the respondent. Education, income, socio-economic status and caste were found to be positively related while age of the respondent was inversely related with the level of exposure of the respondents to communication technology. Present study found that women who were illiterate, from low income groups, low socio-economic-status, lower castes and from older age group were having less access to communication technology.

Level of exposure to communication technology and knowledge of women about some important legislations related to women was found to be related significantly. Regarding the knowledge of the respondents about the law related to minimum age at marriage, it was found that majority of the respondents were not even aware that such a law existed, 10.5 per cent were aware of law and only 7.2 per cent of respondents were aware about the contents also, thus reflecting a very low level of awareness about such an important legislation. A large majority (86.5%) of the

respondents were unaware about the legislation of widow re-marriage, reflecting a very poor response. Awareness about the dowry prohibition act was present among majority (66%) of respondents, although only 0.7 per cent knew the contents of the law also. Majority of respondents (62%) were aware about the legislation of divorce but only 9.7 per cent knew about the legal grounds for divorce. Highest awareness was present regarding the law of inheritance, which introduced equal rights of succession between male and female heirs. Thus maximum awareness was present regarding the law of inheritance followed by Dowry Prohibition Act, law related to Divorce, Minimum Age at Marriage. Least number of respondents were aware ^{of} Widow Remarriage Act. Level of exposure to communication means was found to be most highly related with level of knowledge of the respondents about all the legislations mentioned above. Majority of respondents having high level of exposure, also had high level of knowledge about different legislations, thus reflecting the role of communication in informing the respondents about such important legislations concerning women. Maximum impact of the means of communication was evident in advanced regions which were also near to the city, as maximum number of respondents from these regions were aware about all the legislations and this number went on decreasing in backward regions which were away from the city. Various factors like education, caste, income, age, and socio-economic-status have affected

the level of exposure of the respondents that in turn affected the knowledge of the respondents about various legislations. On the whole knowledge of women about various legislations was very low especially among those having low level of exposure to communication means.

An attempt to find out the age at marriage of the respondents revealed it to be very low. Mean age at marriage came out to 14.4 years, ranging from 16.8 years in advanced region A to 12.1 in backward region D.

Age considered suitable for marriage of girls was below 18 years in 54.3 per cent cases and the notion of marrying the girls with the onset of puberty to preserve their purity was prevalent among these respondents, who considered that a father who could not get his daughter married before puberty will commit a grave sin. They link onset of puberty with preparedness for maternity. About 45.7 per cent respondents opposed early marriages, showing a slight pre-ponderance of modernity over traditionalism. Proportion of violation with the legal age was lower in desired age at marriage as compared to actual marriage age, thus indicating a good trend. Education and caste of the respondent appear to have exercised a powerful influence. As one moved from scheduled castes to upper castes and from illiterates to educated respondents, the mean age showed an increasing trend both in regard to actual and suitable age at marriage.

Attitude of the respondents towards widow remarriage was found to be favourable in majority of cases (81.35).

Greater access to means of communication favourably affected the attitude of respondents towards widow remarriage. Leviratic marriage were accepted by majority of respondents except in some cases of Brahmins and Banias.

Although knowledge about the law of Widow Remarriage was low among lower castes, but widow remarriage as a part of custom was much prevalent among them as compared to upper castes.

Attitude of the respondents towards dowry prohibition act was favourable in 55.2 per cent cases and only 39.2 per cent had unfavourable attitude as majority of them thought that it was the only security which a girl had in the in-law's home, it was prestige symbol or mutually beneficial for both the partners. Advanced regions had greater majority who were in favour of this act. High level of exposure to sources of communication was highly associated with favourable attitude towards the act.

Majority of respondents had unfavourable attitude towards divorce and still the concept of 'Union for life' was very much dominating the thinking of majority of respondents. Level of exposure to communication means was related significantly with the attitude towards divorce. Majority of upper caste respondents had shown a favourable attitude.

Although majority of respondents were aware about the law of succession, which introduced equal rights of succession between male and female heirs, but 43.4 percent

had unfavourable attitude towards it, as they said that it would destroy love and affection between brothers and sisters. Other two most endorsed reasons were- the girls get share in husbands' property and that conflict arose within the family. Respondents were greatly conscious of the after-effects of the law which had conferred rights to the daughters, yet a large number (56.4%) favoured the enactment of this law and said that it increased the prestige of the girls. High level of exposure was found related significantly with favourable attitude towards the legislation.

An attempt to study the educational aspirations of respondents for their daughters revealed that educational aspirations of the respondents were high as compared to actual situation. Educational aspirations and level of exposure was found to be significantly and positively related.

Political status of the respondents was found to be very low. Only 25.4 per cent of respondents decided themselves about the person to vote, all others were casting vote according to wishes of male members of family. Level of political awareness was found to be low in the majority of cases, especially among those from backward regions and having low level of exposure to communication means.

Access of women to health services for general health problems reflected a low level of usage of health facilities by women, thus reflecting their low status.

Majority of respondents having low level of utilization were from backward regions, lower caste groups,

illiterate and having low level of exposure to means of communication. Level of exposure to communication means was found to be most significantly related with the usage of health services followed by educational level and caste of the respondent.

Access of women to modern health services for pre-natal care and child birth was found to be very low as only 25.7 per cent of respondents made use of modern health services either for pre-natal care or at the time of delivery. Out of those only 17.7 per cent of respondents were having high access to health facilities, as they were regularly using these services in pre-natal period, and also at the time of delivery. Mid-wife emerged as the main figure who was used at the time of delivery in majority of cases (74.3%). In these cases, none was consulted in pre-natal period, unless and until some problems arose and in that case also they consulted village mid-wife, in whom they had tremendous faith and conviction, reflecting the backward and traditional health care system for the rural women, at the time of child birth, which is crucial time for child and mother and is responsible for high infant and maternal mortality. Majority of the respondents who were utilizing modern health services for pre-natal care and child birth were educated, from younger age groups, upper income brackets and upper caste groups, and were having high level of exposure to means of communication, thus indicating that women who are at the lower end of socio-economic strata are the most

backward in this context and vice-versa. The third indicator of access of women to health technology i.e. access to family planning services revealed that 39.7 per cent respondents had adopted family planning. Family planning co-efficient came out to be 45.1, which is very high. Family planning co-efficient was higher in advanced region A and went on decreasing with the increasing backwardness of region. Various factors found to be related with the adoption of family planning were age, which was found to be most significantly related having maximum value of C (.37) followed by education (C-.27), level of exposure (C-.24), socio-economic-status (C-.24) and income level (C-.21). Caste as a factor did not explain the adoption of family planning by the respondents. Thus access of women to the right of voluntary motherhood was found to be relatively low in backward regions, among those who were illiterates, with less exposure to information sources, from older age groups, having low income level and low socio-economic status.

Although only 39.7 per cent were the adopters, yet majority expressed approval of family planning. Reasons given for the non-adoption of family planning were; opposition from husband (24.6%) and other elders of family (22.7%) and the notion that health will be adversely affected (20.7%). Fear of child-mortality was also given as a reason for non-adoption of family planning (18.5%) and desire for the son was given as a reason for non-adoption by 19.6 per cent of the respondents who did not have any

son. Main sources of information about family planning as mentioned by majority of respondents were friends, neighbours and relatives (60.5%) followed by family planning clinics (15.5%), Radio (15.5%), and various development agents (8.5%). Actual family size as measured by the number of children born to the respondent revealed a very high fertility level. Average number of children born per respondent was 5.6. Fertility was found to be highest in region D (6.5) which was at a great distance from city and was ~~most~~ backward and level of fertility went on decreasing as the distance of region from city and backwardness decreased with 5.6, 5.5 and 4.8 in regions C, B and A.

Age of the respondent was found to be positively related with the level of fertility of the respondent. Education, income, socio-economic-status and caste were negatively related. Majority of respondents having high level of fertility were from older age groups, lower income brackets, lower caste groups, low socio-economic-strata and were illiterate and having low age at marriage.

Child mortality was found to be very high as in majority of cases (61.3%), number of children died was from 1-3 and only in 25.9 per cent cases, no child had died. Average number of children died was 2.5. Number of children born and number of children died was significantly and positively related at one per cent level of significance, indicating fertility and mortality to be highly related.

fertility value index which reflected both ideal

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family size and composition as perceived by respondents was found to be medium in majority of cases, thus reflecting an appreciation for the need for family planning. Majority of the respondents having high fertility value index were from advanced regions, of younger age, having high level of exposure, high socio-economic status and were educated. Education, level of exposure and socio-economic status were found to be positively associated and age was found to be negatively associated with fertility value index of respondent.

Regarding the desired family size, it was found that majority (56.2%) favoured upto three children and 37.3 per cent favoured 4 children. Average ideal size of the family came out to 3.4.

Family composition as perceived desirable by the respondents revealed a marked preference for sons. Only 1.4 per cent of respondents indicated the desired size of the family, irrespective of the desired sex-composition. All others had a desired sex-composition, which if not achieved led to larger families, even if the respondent favoured small family.

Implications

Findings of the study clearly indicate that position of women is being affected by the technologies related to agriculture, home, communication and health. The degree and direction of impact is different on women from different socio-economic strata. The trickle down process has still not occurred in terms of gains of modern technology, thus creating a void within this underprivileged section of women.

where women from lower socio-economic strata have been doubly disadvantaged firstly for being a member of underprivileged sections of society and secondly for being a member of underprivileged sex. Thus their access to fruits of development has been conditioned by factors of class and sex. To rectify the situation and to stop the unhealthy trend, a number of strong steps need to be undertaken.

First and foremost step for successful rural development planning and programme implementation is the recognition of the vital role of women in the socio-economic life of rural society. Rural development based on growth with equity will require full integration of women. The first exercise in this direction should be to destroy the 'invisibility barrier' and look closely at what women do and how these roles are affected by the development process. As the study revealed that 77.6 per cent of females were working outside, but the census data revealed a small percentage (11.7% in 1971) of women as economically active. This is because it excludes all those women whose primary activity is home work, no matter for how long they are working in the field. As what is the primary activity of females is generally interviewed by census workers from male members of the family, who out of general bias or unconsciously tell that 'she does housework'. The enumerator, on the other hand without further probing may try to reduce his work by classifying most women as housewives. This underestimates the economic contributions of women. Thus

the definition of a worker should be made inclusive to include any person who is engaged in some economic activity for a given span of time per day and questions for asking this aspect should be so framed as to elicit the actual situation.

Majority of the women were engaged in agriculture, thus in the unorganized sector of the economy which is beyond the purview of most of laws. Wage discrimination was prevalent and majority of women were not even conscious of this discrimination. Here, the plight of women can be attributed to the lack of organization, ignorance, illiteracy and poverty which leads to lack of bargaining power. There is practically no labour organization to champion the cause of the unorganized, underprivileged and exploited women labour class. Steps need to be undertaken to organize the female labour force.

This apart, further mechanization of agriculture is likely to displace a larger number of women in the near future, which will prove added leisure time for some who are from the upper socio-economic-strata but a loss of employment for those from low socio-economic-classes, for whom employment is a necessity. The problem of arresting the decline in women's employment, ignored so far by planners, needs special considerations, breaking through the myth that colours official policies. As large majority of women are not marginal or supplementary earners, and in some cases they are sole supporters of the families.

Their increasing displacement may have serious consequences, as new opportunities in the organized sector cannot automatically help this class because of their illiteracy and lack of skills to adapt themselves to the changing production systems.

There is urgent need of evolving and using labour intensive technologies. In the process of crop production, labour use can be increased by adopting multiple cropping, relay cropping and vegetable cultivation. Mixed farming specially on the small farms increases employment opportunities as well as the farm income to a large extent. Mechanization of certain operations is essential for meeting the timely requirements of crops but complete mechanization at this juncture of time is not desirable and is likely to displace labour and women are the first to be jettisoned.

One of the most important means of achieving improvement in the status of women could be to secure for them a fair share of employment opportunities. Certain self-employment projects which can cater to the needs of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled clientele are paper mache, basket, weaving, dari/niwar making, grinding nasalas, embroidery, stitching, knitting, preservation of fruits and vegetables, bakery, making utility articles out of local resources, making washing detergents such as soap, surf, vim etc. Raw materials and equipments, financial and technical assistance must be made available to women. Above all, a well knit marketing system is essential, which should

involve government agencies at the top level, village co-
operatives in the middle and self-selling at the bottom level.
The promotion and development of rural industries would consti-
tute a major step in raising the economic status of women
as these are most suited to women because of lightness of
operations, feasibility of being done at leisure hours,
convenient to women folk after or while attending to domestic
chores in their homes.

Women have expressed preference for training in activi-
ties which can raise their earning ability rather than
in mere literacy programmes and training by women with
adequate professional background is one of the most strik-
ing needs. Mahila Mandals and other voluntary agencies
should be encouraged to take-up socio-economic programmes for
providing wage and self-employment to women. The progress
of Mahila Mandals has been far from satisfactory. The empha-
sis has been mostly on social and cultural programmes and
very little economic context has so far been given. These
organizations have not yet been recognized as an integral
part of the total rural development effort. Adequate
attention should be paid to offer technical and managerial
assistance to these agencies so that they would prepare
viable economic projects for attracting institutional
finance and market their products. They should be linked
with cooperatives and federations for marketing of products.
There is urgent need for coordination between social wel-
fare board and Khadi and village industries commission

at the central and state level, for technical guidance, ^{financial} training facilities, assistance and selling outlets. Industries based on agricultural products like sugar mill, flour-mill, oil-mill, dal-mill, rice-sheller, cotton-ginning, guar gum etc. be established in rural areas, so as to provide employment to women whose access to these is hindered by their lack of geographical mobility.

Landless labourer women should be the chief beneficiaries of income generation and should be the prime target group of organizers with social welfare concerns. Their participation in such programmes is often limited or prevented by the social structure in the village, their generally low mental dexterity and the very organization of the programmes themselves with regard to location, duration, payment and timing of work.

Besides child care, nutrition and family health, rural women could be trained in dairy and poultry, farming and village industries. A big gap in our extension programmes has been the exclusion of women from programmes related to agriculture and animal husbandry inspite of the big contribution made by women in these spheres. Recognizing the vital role of women in agriculture and animal husbandry, they should be made an integral part of these training programmes, so that they can adapt to these modernizing occupations. This will be a vital and most neglected factor in raising women's earning capacity.

Improved household technology has reached only a few women from privileged sections and majority of women from

low socio-economic groups are still in a day long toil working with age old tools. The desired change in their life can be brought about by the use and application of simple scientific technologies.

Best means of helping rural women will be to provide them with basic technologies of accessible water points, electricity, biogas and simple technological improvements in processing and preparation of food in the home. Most basic technologies which can relieve women from hard work as perceived by respondents were of clean water, as majority of women had to fetch water from long distances by spending a lot of time, and energy. Provision of water points from well to taps by using ~~wind mill~~, electric motors or by installing hand-pumps could be a step in the right direction. This aspect has been much ignored. How often the aspect of irrigation benefit is perceived in the irrigation plan so that women are also given some support? This aspect has been much ignored. In designing the irrigation plan, some scrutiny may be made to see its impact on women in terms of access to water.

Next in preference were technologies that would make food preparations easy, which in majority of cases was carried on the traditional chulha, built in an open area. It was a continuous health hazard. The cooking activity can be made less hazardous and simplified by popularizing simple technologies like smokeless chulha, solar cooker, bio-gas etc. Systematic campaigns for popularising the

gobar gas plants must be organized by the Zila-Parishad, State department of Agriculture, agricultural universities and other agencies. If possible the initial construction cost should be liberally subsidized. The energy crisis facing the country fully justified such a measure. The model village gas plant is economic only for a family of moderate size, having five to six members and possessing five or six healthy grown up animals. In rural areas, large sized models could be installed and operated on community basis.

Kaccha house and absence of provisions of different household-tasks also made the work of rural women difficult, as women were mainly responsible for plastering and maintenance of kaccha houses. The construction of roads, improved houses, covered drains and installation of dustbins etc. will help the women a lot and save their time and effort.

Simple intermediate technology on the improvement of existing methods by simplification and reduction of the time needed for tasks seems likely to yield greater benefits for more rural women, whose work load means a working day longer, often considerably longer than that of men.

Study revealed that as one moved to upper socio-economic strata, on the one hand women ceased to work outside home and on the other hand they had improved household technologies which facilitated their work, but in the lower strata, outside working of women, which was a necessity

for them was accompanied by lack of improved technology in the home, thus making their plight more miserable. Thus the need is to devise low cost appropriate technologies for these women, who cannot avoid working outside and at the same time do not have income high enough to purchase the household equipments.

Opening up of domestic unit of production is the only way by which labour-saving technologies can be made economically feasible to most women. Women's home related production and maintenance activities are all carried out separately. They spend long hours and much efforts on repetitive-operations. Each woman does the same job inside her own house and for her own family. Such technologies may be related to organized water-supply, more economic utilization of energy, drying of food crops, saving cooking time (i.e. by common supply of solar heated water), cleaning and sieving operations or any other activity common to the households. By sharing duties and responsibilities, women's resources may gradually become better utilized for their own benefits as well as for that of society as a whole.

Implementation of such technologies will necessarily meet with social and other constraints. The majority of women have to meet with material shortages that lead to a lack of awareness that any change is possible, so resistance also from women is to be expected. But women's common interest in organizing their activity so as to satisfy their own needs better as well as those of their

family must gradually be developed. Reducing time spent on household duties will give women the opportunity to take up training or education, the learning of new skills or income generating activities. By adopting the basic technologies, rural women will not only increase their productive capacity but could be helped to help themselves to produce goods and services for minimum needs.

There is need to change the unjust and obsolete attitude of men towards women in matter of household work. People should be educated to understand the drudgery of women and the need for relieving women from it, as in some cases increase in income was found not associated with high level of improved home-technology may be due to the belief of people that women is suited to work with primitive tools and need not be given any attention and that investment in home will not give any returns, while in agriculture, it will be profitable.

Knowledge of women about improved home technology was found to be very poor. A major effect would have to be made to educate rural women about the existing resources, ways and means to supplement these to their optimal advantage. They have to be made conscious about their drudgery and the need to alleviate it.

If Home Science Colleges want to make domestic life management education available to young rural women they will have to orient the courses of study to requirements and activities of village life. Methods of raising the

productivity of the household work must be explored. Knowledge about the improved home technology must be disseminated through extension personnel.

Finally action-oriented research with emphasis on the existing potentials of local technologies will have to include not only technologists but also social scientists. Different institutes engaged in development of simple technologies like agricultural universities, ICAR and its' research stations, IIT's, central leather institutes, central food and technological research institute, social work research centre etc. have to pool their efforts with planners, administrators, social workers, scientists and governmental & voluntary agencies for achieving success in the venture of ameliorating the lot of rural women who have suffered a lot throughout ages. It will also require social consciousness and experience on behalf of researchers and planners. Moreover since women are more likely to focus on women, and are better qualified to identify problems of their sisters, the increased recruitment of female professionals into research and planning is of utmost importance.

Access to communication technology was found to be poor in majority of cases, while only a few had high access to it, thus leading to widening of 'knowledge gap' between different sections of women. Knowledge of women about various legislative provisions made for their betterment was found to be unsatisfactory. No amount of legislation can improve the lot of rural women until and

unless women themselves are aware about these laws and have favourable attitude about these. First thing to be attempted will be to make women aware of their rights and to change the attitude of both men and women and of society in general, to social objectives sought to be achieved by legislation. As revealed by the present study, mass media would be the most important source for this task in the absence of mass education which at present is costly and not readily attainable. Radio has been found to be the most used source of information for rural women. Radio listening clubs should be organized through Mahila Mandals and listening should be followed by discussions. It should be ensured that women from lower socio-economic strata should also take advantage of the services of Mahila Mandals and should be their active members. Various women development agents who have been found to be important source of information for women should also consider it their duty to inform women about the various legislative provisions which government has made for the upliftment of women and should convince them about its' objectives and intentions.

Usage of health facilities for general health problems and for pre-natal and natal care was found to be low, thus reflecting the poor health status of rural women. This reflected the society's attitude towards the health needs of the rural women and lack of awareness on the part of women themselves. Majority of rural women still relied on the traditional source of mid-wife in whom they

had tremendous faith and conviction.

The programme of training the village mid-wife already in force would need to be actively expanded as it will constitute a step toward modernizing rather than alienating from the traditional health care system. Even Vaidis and Hakims with inadequate qualifications could be taught first-aid, nutritional principles and elementary immunizations with adequate stock of medicines to treat common ailments. They form part and parcel of the community and have been traditional institutions in whom the rural community has tremendous faith and conviction.

Although majority of the respondents approved of family planning, but the ideal sex-ratio was found to be great hindrance in the adoption of family planning. Until and unless attitude of respondents towards a preference for the male child is changed, no amount of effort can succeed. Higher mortality among children was also found associated with higher fertility level. Reduction of mortality among children through the provision of health facilities and by educating women about health needs of mother and child would be a great step towards reducing the fertility. Labourer women were most reluctant towards sterilization, as they could not do without daily earnings which have to be stopped for some days. Compensation for the loss of wages during sterilization operations should be paid to the daily wage earners. There should be incentives for those women who accept family planning in the form of a token or certificate to

ensure them higher priority in health care facilities for both mother and their children. Such a step will promote greater acceptance of small family and correct the social attitude towards these practices than giving of cash incentives. The qualifications for recruitment of personnel for these services in rural areas need to be gradually raised, as the spoiled cases are the greatest hinderance for others to adopt family planning. Attempts should also be made to obtain the services of older and mature women in rural areas. Mass campaigns for family planning should also aim to improve the prevailing social attitudes regarding fertility and metabolic hereditary disorders and the sex of the child for which the women is generally blamed. Correct information in these matters would go a long way to improve the status of women.

No amount of effort will solve the problem, unless and until women themselves are initiated into a thinking-reflecting-questioning-acting process. This cannot be achieved until women can be hauled out of their acceptance of the anachronism of tradition to demand a better deal from family and society. Only and only education has this power.

Role of education becomes more important in view of the widening gulf between the sexes. Earlier, ignorance and superstition were characteristics of both sexes, when neither went to school. But now when male school leaver can regard themselves the representative of the

new enlightenment, their prestige in family is enormously enhanced, while the relative status of women declines, who remain in the old universe of superstition and ignorance.

The reasons for variations in social attitudes and the consequent slow progress of women's education are both social and economic which are intensified by the inadequate facilities and ambivalent attitude regarding the purpose of girls' education. Maximum respondents wanted the girls to be educated upto primary to be able to read and write. But rural women have not been able to realize the importance of at least a good standard of literacy for a girl in order to equip her better for her role as wife, mother and house keeper. This is the main socio-logical hinderance against the acceptance of education for women. This is what needs to be changed by concerted propaganda emphasizing the important role that education can play in improving the mental facilities of a girl in order to fit her better for her traditional role in rural society.

Programmes for education should aim at higher enrolment and retention of girls in school, to lower down the drop out rate for girls which is perhaps highest in the world. This would require Balwadi-cum-creches attached to the schools to enable the girls to attend schools. Otherwise, they would have to stay at home to look after the younger brothers and sisters in the absence of mothers at work. Other incentives like uniforms, free books and stationery etc. already in force would need to be

effectively expanded. Women teachers should be appointed in rural areas to encourage girl's education. There should also be a system of part-time education for girls who cannot attend school on full time basis, and it should provide education to girls at a time convenient to them. There should be multiple entry system for girls who could not attend school earlier or had to leave before becoming functionally literate.

The claims of the formal educational system which can cater to the needs of only a minority for a long time, will have to be balanced against the claims of eradication of illiteracy. An alternative system of adult education already in operation needs to be accelerated to provide basic education to adult women, particularly in the 15-25 age group. Educational system is the one area where major change is needed in the content and organization of education so that it can counter-act traditional belief in the inequality of sexes.

All means of communication and information as well as all cultural media should recognize as a high priority, their responsibility for helping to remove the attitudinal and cultural factors which still inhibit women's development. Culture and tradition, biology as well as economic stress have tended to generate disparity between males and females within the family and between different sections in the utilization of the benefits of development. It is the fault of the development planning that it has

not designed itself to improve the access of those who are less easy to reach so that they may not be deprived. It is the access planning that seems to be necessary to integrate women in the development.

If development is to be defined not merely as economic growth, but as a process for socio-economic change directed towards satisfaction of basic human needs, reduction of inequalities and strengthening of self reliance, then technologies to facilitate such development and to emphasize women's needs must be a main concern for any development strategy.