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Female Farmers selected Mental Stress Indicators

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Abstract

Some studies show that women farmers experience more psychological distress than men. Stress can negatively affect physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, act and how we handle stress. Several studies reported that chronic stress among farming communities might lead to physical problems (e.g., headaches, sleep problems), mental problems (e.g., anxiety, anger, depression, suicidal thoughts, an increase in isolation), and cognitive issues (e.g., memory loss, inability to make decisions). The objectives of research are to assess the selected mental stress among the female farmers, to find out the mental stress indicators of female farmers to carry out this research a sample of purposely selected one hundred fifteen rural female farmers in the age group of 18-55 years were enrolled to carry the research using five point scale through interview prepared by AICRP unit (HDFS department). Level of stress influenced by different factors. Half of the respondents were faced highly stress due several indicators like climate change ,health ,marketing inclusion etc. About 60% farm women were highly stress due to concerns about the continued viability of farming. Others factors like Bad weather, Unpredictable weather, Unplanned disruptions, Concerns about market conditions, Filling out government forms also half of the respondents got highly stress. This research help to upcoming researchers to find out the coping strategies towards wellbeing of mental health of farm women.

Key Words *:Mental stress, Women farmer ,health ,climate change,marketing inclusive stress*

Introduction

It is widely reported that levels of stress, anxiety, and other mental disorders within the farming community exceed those of the general population .Recent United Nations (UN) figures, for example, show that women now comprise 43% of the global agricultural workforce (Doss 2011) In India, 57.8% of rural households are engaged in agriculture. Women farmers have been the backbone and play a significant role in the agricultural sector, including contributing to the production of major crops, livestock, horticulture, postharvest activities, agro/social forestry, fisheries, etc.

Some studies show that women farmers experience more psychological distress than men. Stress can negatively affect physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, act and how we handle stress. Several studies reported that chronic stress among farming communities might lead to physical problems (e.g., headaches, sleep problems), mental problems (e.g., anxiety, anger, depression, suicidal thoughts, an increase in isolation), and cognitive issues (e.g., memory loss, inability to make decisions)

For any kind of ecosystem functioning and placing role of human at the epicentre of ecological services, it has got both structural and operational stress. The aftermath of green revolution, even though its glorious success, has offered both physical and psychological stress when three lakh farmers in India committed suicide , then certainly it can infer that the very ecosystem is suffering from functional and ecological stress. The incoming of toxic materials into an agro-ecosystem and its subsequent entry into the food chains has gone so deleterious that it merits a unique genre of ecological study. The farm women who have been ceaselessly and relentlessly in exposure with polluted ecosystem, are also under serious psychological stress. The lack of empowerment, entitlement and proper scientific orientation, they are consciously or unconsciously being exposed to the coercive ecosystem and its functioning, just to end up with fragile health and vulnerable psychic dispositions

Objectives

1.To assess the selected mental stress among the female farmers.

2. To find out the mental stress indicators of female farmers.

Methodology

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A sample of purposely selected one hundred fifteen rural female farmers in the age group of 18-55 years were enrolled for carrying out the research study. These sample female farmer were enrolled from five operational villages of AICRP-Home Science of Parbhani district viz Asola, pokarni, Pandhari, Katneshwar and Ukhalad. Prior to the initiation of the experiment, enrolled rural female farmer selected mental stress and its indicators were assessed by using interview scheduled developed by AICRP-HDFS unit. Then five point scale such as No stress(01) less stress(02),sometimes stress(03),stressed(04) and highly stress(05) were assess used to using various mental stress indicators of farm women. The collected data were pooled, analysed, tabulated and discussed to study frequencies and per centages of selected mental stress among the female farmers in the farm.

Tools used for the Research

Mental Stress scale : Selected mental stress among the rural female farmers assessed by using five point scale No stress(01) less stress(02),sometimes stress(03),stressed(04),and highly stress(5) which comprises of total 34 items and its indicators were assessed by using interview schedule developed by AICRP-HDFS unit. It include various selected indicators such as health related issues, decision making, emotionality and economic stress indicators which influencing the mental stress among the female farmers in the farm.

Findings

Table 1 Family background information of selected rural farm women

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S. No	Variables	Rural farm women 100% (115)
	Age of the Respondent	
a)	Young (18-35 yrs)	37.39 (43)
b)	Middle (36-55 yrs)	51.30 (59)
c)	Old (above 55 yrs)	11.30 (13)
2)	**Religion**	
a)	Hinduism	88.69 (102)
b)	Muslim	0.86 (1)
c)	Christianity	-
d)	Others	10.43 (12)
3)	**Caste/category**	

a)	General (GM)	16.52 (19)
b)	OBC	34.78 (40)
c)	SC	10.43 (12)
d)	ST	38.26 (44)
e)	Others	-
4)	**Marital Status**	
a)	Married	93.04 (107)
b)	Unmarried	0.86 (1)
c)	Widow	5.21 (6)
d)	Divorcee	0.86 (1)
e)	Separated	-
5)	**Family Head**	
a)	Male	93.91(108)
b)	Female	6.08 (7)
6)	**Family Type**	
a)	Nuclear	73.04 (84)
b)	Joint	24.34 (28)
c)	Extended	2.60 (3)
7)	**Family Size**	
a)	Small (1-4)	62.62 (72)
b)	Medium (5-6)	22.60 (26)
c)	Large (>6)	14.78 (17)
8)	**Occupation**	
a)	Agriculture alone	56.52 (65)
b)	Agriculture + Allied activities (Animal husbandry, Fisheries etc.)	20.17 (17)
c)	Agriculture + Labourer work	20.86 (24)
d)	Agriculture + Allied activities + Labourer work	5.25 (6)
e)	Agriculture + Business	1.72 (2)
f)	Agriculture + Service	0.86 (1)
g)	Any others	-

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 1 indicates the family background of rural farm more than half of the respondents (51.30%) comes from within the middle age category of 36–55 years, followed by 37.39 per cent in the younger age group of 18–35 years, while only 11.30 per cent were above 55 years of age. With regard to religion, the respondents were predominantly Hindus (88.69%), with a very small proportion being Muslims (0.86%) and 10.43 per cent practicing other religions, whereas no representation from Christianity was recorded. In terms of caste composition,

most women belonged to Scheduled Tribes (38.26%) and Other Backward Classes (34.78%), while others were from General (16.52%) and Scheduled Castes (10.43%) categories. This highlights the fact that a large proportion of farm women came from socially and economically disadvantaged segments of society. As far as marital status is concerned, an overwhelming share of respondents were married (93.04%), while only small percentages were widowed (5.21%), unmarried, or divorced (0.86% each). Family leadership was largely male-dominated (93.91%), with only 6.08 per cent of households being headed by females, reflecting the prevalence of patriarchal decision-making patterns.

In relation to family type, nuclear families dominated (73.04%), while 24.34 per cent lived in joint families and just 2.60 per cent in extended families. Family size distribution showed that over 62 per cent belonged to small-sized families with 1–4 members, 22.60 per cent to medium-sized families (5–6 members), and 14.78 per cent to large families of more than six members. Examination of occupational structure revealed that over half (56.52%) of the respondents depended solely on agriculture for their livelihood. About one-fifth (20.86%) combined agriculture with wage labor, and 20.17 per cent practiced agriculture along with allied activities such as livestock rearing or fisheries. A small group (5.25%) engaged in agriculture supplemented by both allied activities and labor work, while only a negligible proportion diversified into agriculture with business (1.72%) or service (0.86%).

Table 2 Stress indicator related to climate change while performing farm operations by female women in the farm

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Sr. No.	Particulars	Percentages of farm women		
		Highly stressed	Sometime stressed	Very less /No stressed
1	Bad weather	53.04 (61)	36.52 (42)	10.43 (12)
2	Complying with environmental regulations	39.13 (45)	57.39 (66)	3.48 (4)
3	Unpredictable weather	56.52 (65)	32.17 (37)	11.30 (13)
4	Concerns about the continued viability of farming	60 (69)	26.08 (30)	13.91 (16)
5	Unplanned disruptions	54.78 (63)	23.47 (27)	21.74 (25)
6	Significant reduction in production due to diseases/pests/weeds	54.78 (63)	27.83 (32)	17.39 (20)
7	Hazardous materials in the farm	52.17 (60)	33.04 (38)	14.78 (17)

	(fumes/dust/chemicals/powders)			

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 2 depicts about the stress indicators related to while performing various activities/operations in the farm climate change. More than half of the farm women were faced high stressed (53.04%) followed by sometime stressed about (36.52%) and (10.43%) were faced low stressed due to bad weather. Above half of the farm women (57.39%) were faced sometime stressed about followed by highly stressed about (39.13%) and (3.48%) were faced low stressed due to complying with environmental regulations due to changed climate. While unpredictable weather ,most of the farm women were faced highly stressed which (56.52%) and followed by some time stressed about (32.17%) and low stressed about(11.30%).Which disturbing the whole cyclke of particular production in the field.

Above the average farm women faced highly stressed (60%) due to concerns about the continued viability of farming followed by some time stressed (26.08%) and low stress about (13.91%) .Due to the unplanned disruptions ,most of the farm women faced highly stressed about (54.78%) followed by sometime stressed about (23.83%) and low stressed about (21.74%).Due to climate change indicator ,there is a significant reduction in production due diseases, pests, weeds then farm women were faced highly stressed about (54.78%) followed by some time stressed about (27.83%) and (17.39%)of low stressed .Due to hazardous materials in the farm like fumes, dust, chemicals, powders, farm women faced highly stressed about (52.17%) followed by sometime stressed (33.04%) and (14.78%) showed used less stressed. While performing farm operations. Jagadish Roy et al., (2005) conducted the study on understanding stress in woman the objectives of past studies were to examine the stress levels among farm women and to identify key factors contributing to it. The methodology generally adopted ex post facto designs, mixed-method approaches, and stratified random sampling using structured interviews. The findings interpreted that most farm women experienced medium levels of stress, largely due to environmental concerns, heavy workload, and lack of rural amenities. Overall, studies concluded that socio-economic, demographic, and environmental conditions collectively influenced their stress experiences

Table 3 Stress indicators related to Health of female farmers working in the farm

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Sr.	Particulars	Percentages of farm women

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No.		Highly stressed	Sometime stressed	Very less /No stressed
1	Personal illness during busy periods	52.17 (60)	20.86 (24)	26.95 (31)
2	Risk of injury in the field	49.56 (57)	34.78 (40)	15.65 (18)
3	Farm-related accidents	29.56 (34)	17 (14.78)	55.65 (64)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Stress indicators related to Health of female farmers working in the farm

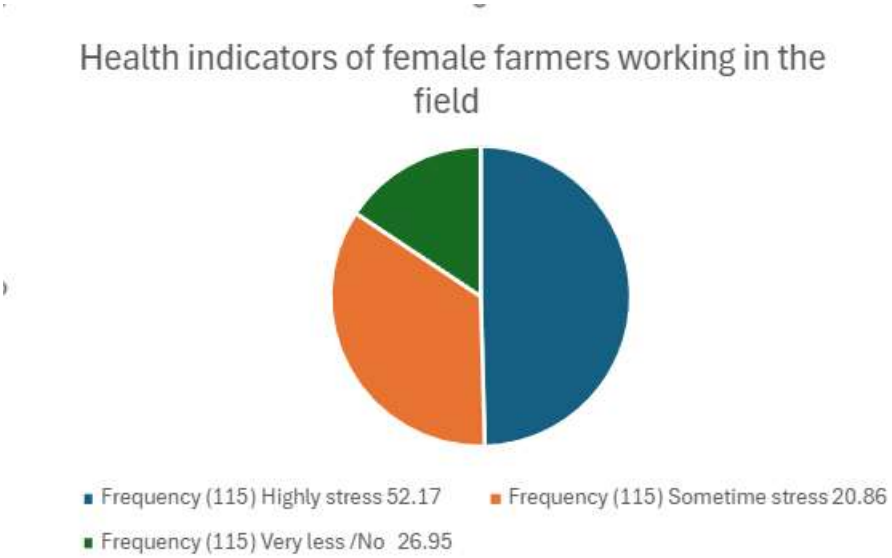

Table 3 Stress indicators related to health of female farmers working in the fa

It is revealed from the table 3 that health is a very important indicator of the anyone's mental soundness. Most of the farm women i.e,(60%) were undergone stress for sometimes, followed by (26.96%) highly stressed due to personal illness during busy periods in the farm followed by 24.00% reported, very less percentage of stress due to their personal illness. While about the risk of injury in the field. while performing various farm operations(49.57%) i.e, half of the farm women reported about the stress for sometimes .While 15.67% of the farm women reported about highly stressed situations due to the risk of injury in the field. While 34.79% of the farm women revealed about the risk of injury in the field due to the various tools, machineries , equipment etc .As per the reports of respondents ,it indicates that more than half of the farm women i.e, (55.65%) revealed that they were highly stressed due to farm related accidents such as various injuries ,cuttings, fracture's

,rashes, eye injuries ,muscle fractures etc .While 29.56% were reported about the stress for sometimes followed by 14.78% comes under less stress due to farm related accidents

Overall more than half of the women reported their stress due to various stress indicators related to health which directly, indirectly is affecting on their mental stress.

Table 4 Stress indicators related to market inclusion while performing farm operations in the farms

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Sr. No.	Particulars	Percentages of farm women		
		Highly stressed	Sometime stressed	Very less /No stressed
1	Concerns about market conditions	53.04 (61)	31.30 (36)	15.65 (18)
2	Deciding when to sell products	51.31 (59)	38.26 (44)	10.43 (12)
3	Long distances to services, shopping, and health care	49.56 (57)	40.86 (47)	9.56 (11)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Marketing plays a vital role in agriculture ,its work as efficient connect to agricultural products from the farm to the consumer by overseeing activities like production,planning,grading,packaging,transportation,storage,processing,distribution and sales. Table 4 revealed about the stress indicator related to market inclusion indicators of farm women working in the field .Most of the farm women were faced highly stressed (53.04%) followed by some time stressed (31.30%) and (15.65%) were showed low stressed due to their concerns about market conditions. While confusion on deciding when to sell products, farm women were faced highly stressed about (51.31%) followed by sometime stressed about (38.26%) and low stressed about (10.43%) .Due to the long distance to

services, shopping, and health care practices because of these women were faced highly stressed about (49.56%) sometimes stressed followed by (40.86%) and (9.56%) of low stressed.

Over all most of the farm women stress related to market inclusion indicator due to lacking of so many facilities related to household work along with farm work.

Stress indicators related to market inclusion while performing farm operations in the farm.

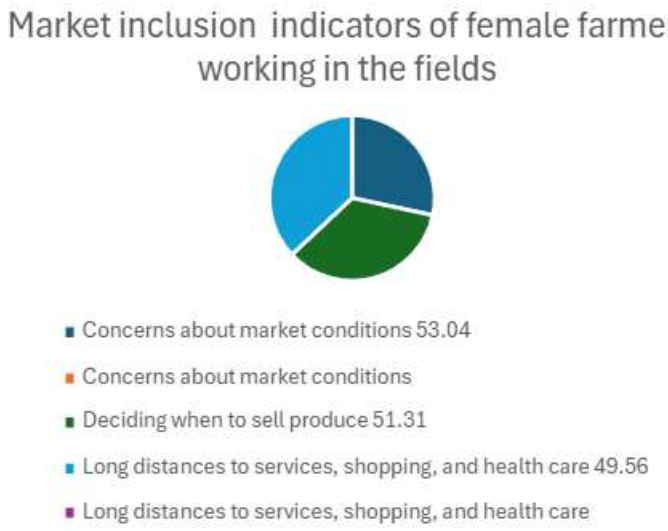

Table 5 Stress indicators related to Government policies in the farms

n-115

Sr. No.	Particulars	Percentages of farm women		
		Highly stressed	Sometime stressed	Very less /No stresssed
1	Filling out government forms.	54.78 (63)	39.13 (45)	6.09 (7)
2	Adjusting to new government rules and policies	53.04 (61)	38.26 (44)	8.69 (10)

3	Changes in the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy)	52.17 (60)	34.78 (46)	7.83 (9)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 5 revealed about the stress related government policies indication of female farmers working in the field. Government policies are essential as well as awareness and adaptation of policies also play major role for welfare of women in agriculture. Half of them were highly stressed (54.78%) followed by some time about (39.13%) and low stress by (6.09%) due to the filling out government forms. While adjusting to new government rules and policies also majorly farm women were highly stressed about (53.04%) followed by (38.26%) and (8.69%) by low stressed . Due (34.78%) and to changes in the CAP(common Agricultural Policy) ,half of the farm women were faced highly stressed about (52.17%) followed by sometime stressed about (34.78%) and low stressed by (7.83%).

Conclusion

Level of stress influenced by different factors. Half of the respondents were faced highly stress due several indicators like climate change , health ,marketing inclusion etc. About 60% farm women were highly stressed due to concerns about the continued viability of farming. Others factors like Bad weather, Unpredictable weather, Unplanned disruptions, Concerns about market conditions, Filling out government forms also half of the respondents got highly stress.This reserch help to upcoming reseschers to find out the coping strategies towards wellbeing of mental health of farm women.

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