



AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN AWARENESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Women are primary providers of household food, fuel and water for cooking, heating, drinking and washing. Women have direct contact with the natural environment as they collect essential items like fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs, fuel wood, fodder, water etc. for their every day needs. They are fully aware that their livelihood and family welfare is linked to the potential of sustainable resource base and therefore, environment is to be conserved to meet their long - term needs. The study examines awareness and causes of rural women about environmental degradation and losses due to agricultural practices in Haryana. The present study is conducted in Haryana state and two districts Bhiwani and Karnal were selected, purposively. The result of the present study indicated that most of the respondents had medium to high level of awareness about the environment degradation in Bhiwani and Karnal districts. The most important thing is that women are interested to know the impact of environment degradation on human, animals, plants health and agriculture production.

KEYWORDS : Women, Environment Degradation, Awareness, Agriculture practice.

INTRODUCTION:-

In rural areas, a woman's life is dependent on nature, as she has to carry on her family through managing and using natural resources. Women are primary providers of household food, fuel and water for cooking, heating, drinking and washing. Women have direct contact with the natural environment as they collect essential items like fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs, fuel wood, fodder, water etc. for their every day needs and women are responsible for collecting water and for controlling its use. Mostly rural families depend on nature for their livelihood and women are the key persons in using, managing and protecting the natural resources hence, there is a close linkage between women and natural environment. As a farmer women produce foods and agricultural products. Their tasks in agriculture and animal husbandry as well as in the household make them daily managers of the living environment. Therefore, they are more concerned about environmental degradation than men are as they are responsible for the well - being of their families. They are fully aware that their livelihood and family welfare is linked to the potential of sustainable resource base and therefore, environment is to be conserved to meet their long - term needs. So there is need of time, they have more concern about and better understanding of their immediate environment. That is why the study of women and environment assumes, particular significance when done so from the gender perspective.

ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION:-

Degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; ozone depletion and the destruction of marine environment. Environment degradation is a situation in which a part of the natural environment is damaged. We can say any damage to the land, water, the air, loss of biodiversity and a loss of natural resources in an area/surrounding and destruction of ecosystem and the extinction of plant and animal species are also the example of environment degradation. It is caused in a variety of ways, predominantly by human actions; however, natural events also cause destruction results in the deterioration of an environment. Some anthropologic cause which are responsible for environmental degradation such as urbanization, coal pollution, polluting industrial wastes, plastic pollution, indoor - air pollution, groundwater exploitation and municipal and bio - medical wastes etc. When the environment becomes less valuable or damaged, environmental degradation is said to occur.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:- To examine awareness and causes of rural women about environmental degradation and losses due to agricultural practices in Haryana.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:- The present study was conducted in Haryana state and two districts Bhiwani and Karnal were selected, purposively. From each district, three blocks were selected randomly. Further, two villages were selected from each block

making a total of 12 villages. From each village, ten women were selected randomly, making a total sample of 120 women. Hence, one hundred twenty women were interviewed for the study. Three blocks from each district i.e. Hisar and Kaithal were selected, purposively. From Bhiwani three blocks namely Dadri-1, Siwani and Bwani khera and from Kaithal, blocks Nilokheri, Assandh and Indri were selected, randomly. Thus, six blocks were selected for the study. Out of the six selected blocks, two villages from each block were selected, randomly. Thus a total number of twelve villages namely, Jamalpur and Jita Khere from block Bwani Khera, Achina and Bond Khurd from block Dadri-1, and Siwani Khera and Rupana from block Siwani while Jalmana and Uplana from Assandh, Panjo Khera and Shahpur from Indri block and Sultanpur and Butana from Nilokheri block were selected, randomly also. The study about the awareness, causes of environment degradation from agriculture and public sector, ten women from each of twelve villages were selected, randomly. The information collected through the responses of the respondents, were suitably coded, tabulated and analyzed to draw meaningful inferences by using statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentages, weighted mean scores, 'Z' score, and rank order.

AWARENESS STATUS OF THE WOMEN REGARDING ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION:-

Awareness is considered to be the first stage of an innovation and play an important role in decision - making process. A high level of awareness about the technical nature of improved agricultural and domestic technology would lead to a higher adoption because awareness is prerequisite to adoption. Once acquired and accumulate in the mind of the women awareness both undergo and produce change in the thinking process. The result of this active functioning of awareness has been seen in the outward behavior of the women i.e., adoption of improved technology. The present study has attempted to ascertain the awareness level of with women with regard to the environment degradation.

Table 1 Women's Awareness towards environment degradation (n=120)

Sr. No.	Statements	Awareness Level			Total Weighted Score	Weighted Mean Score
		Fully aware (%)	Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)		
1.	Do you know how pollution affects your health?	115 (95.83)	5 (4.16)	00	355	2.95
2.	Do you know air pollution?	109 (90.83)	11 (09.16)	00	349	2.90
3.	Soil pollution	106 (88.33)	14 (11.66)	00	346	2.88

4.	Water pollution	106 (88.33)	14 (11.66)	00 (0.00)	346	2.88
5.	Do you know about environment degradation?	104 (86.66)	16 (13.33)	00 (0.00)	344	2.86
6.	Any other pollution	86 (71.66)	25 (20.83)	9 (7.50)	317	2.64
7.	Types of environment degradation	58 (48.33)	42 (35.00)	20 (16.66)	278	2.31

Source: Field Survey

The data analyzed indicated that majority of the women had awareness about the environment degradation and has been presented in Table 1. It was revealed that, 95.83 percent of the women were fully aware, 4.16 percent were aware while there was not even a single woman who was not aware about 'Pollution affected the health'. It was found from the data that 90.83 percent women were fully aware whereas, 9.16 percent women were aware while there was not even a single women who was not aware with the statement 'Do you know air pollution'. However, majority of the respondents 88.33 percent were fully aware whereas, 11.66 percent of respondents were aware while there was not even a single respondent who was not aware with the statement 'Soil pollution'. It was observed that 88.33 percent respondents were fully aware whereas, 11.66 percent were aware while there was not even single who not aware about the 'Water pollution'. It was revealed that 86.66 percent of the respondents were fully aware whereas, 13.33 percent of the respondents were aware while, there was not even a single respondent who that was not aware about the statement 'Do you know about the environment degradation'. It was found that majority of the respondents (71.66%) were fully aware whereas, 20.83 percent were aware and 7.50 percent of the respondents were not aware about 'Any other pollution'. It was observed that 48.33 percent were fully aware whereas, 35.00 percent were aware and 16.66 percent of the respondents were not aware about 'Types of environment degradation'.

Table 2 Causes of Environment Degradation

(N= 120)

Sr. No	Causes	Total Weighted Score	Weighted Mean Score	Rank Order
	Environment degradation due to			
1.	Air pollution	356	2.96	I
2.	Water pollution	356	2.96	I
3.	Cutting forest	356	2.96	I
4.	Soil pollution	353	2.94	II
5.	Noise pollution	335	2.79	III

Source: Field Survey

The data from the Table 2 revealed that 'Air pollution', 'Water pollution' and 'Cutting forest' was considered very serious cause of environment degradation by the respondents and ranked Ist with mean score 2.96, followed by 'Soil pollution' which was ranked IInd in order with mean score 2.94. However, 'Noise pollution' was ranked IIIrd having mean score 2.79.

Table 3 Losses based on agriculture

(n=120)

Sr. No	Losses	Total Weighted Score	Weighted Mean Score	Z Score	Nature of Seriousness
1.	Deeper level of ground water table leads to irrigation scarcity	356	2.96	1.35	VS

2.	Quality deterioration of crop produce	353	2.94	1.23	VS
3.	Fertilizers cause toxicity in food products	353	2.94	1.23	VS
4.	Pesticides/ insecticides enter in the body through the consumption of foodgrain, fruits and vegetables etc. and cause health risk	351	2.92	1.11	VS
5.	Loss of chlorophyll in plants (chlorosis)	289	2.40	-1.94	NSS
6.	Green house gases effect	261	2.17	-3.29	NSS

Source: Field Survey

The Table 3 revealed that the 'Deeper level of ground water table leads to irrigation scarcity' (Z score = 1.35) and 'Quality deterioration of crop produce' and 'Fertilizers cause toxicity in food products' (Z score = 1.23) were considered as very serious losses due to agricultural activities by the respondents as per the 'Z' score. The data revealed that 'Pesticides/insecticides enter in the body through the consumption of foodgrain, fruits and vegetables etc. and cause health risk' (Z score = 1.11) and 'Loss in chlorophyll in plant (chlorosis)' (Z score = -1.94) were found serious losses. 'Green house gases effect' (Z score = -3.29) was found as serious loss.

CONCLUSION:-The study was conducted in districts, selected purposively based on maximum number of respondents. The study highlighted that majority of the respondents were in middle to old age groups, belonged to medium to high education status, with high mass-media exposure. It was concluded from the observation that most of the respondents had medium to high level of awareness about the environment degradation in Bhiwani and Karnal districts. The most important thing is that women are interested to know the impact of environment degradation on human, animals, plants health and agriculture production. It was also found that women were interested to know more about the effects of degraded environment on human, animals and plants health because women know that degraded environment causes severe diseases.

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