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A COMPREHENSIVE INSIGHT INTO THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC STATUS AND DRUDGERY ON OVERALL HEALTH STATUS OF AGRARIAN WOMEN IN DOIWALA DEHRADUN UTTARAKHAND 2012

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Women are the backbone of agricultural workforce but worldwide her hard work has mostly been undervalued. They do the most tedious and back-breaking tasks in agriculture, animal husbandry and homes. This study aims to understand the linkages between socio-economic status, workload, income generation & energy consumption on health status of agrarian women in rural Uttarakhand.

The study was conducted in the Doiwala block of Uttarakhand on randomly selected 475 agrarian women aged 18-45 years. The survey was conducted to incorporate information on socio-economic profile, calorie intake, daily workload on the status of their general health including Basal Metabolic Index (BMI) and prevalence of anemia using a semi-structured questionnaire. The data entry & analysis was done using SPSS software.

The study revealed that total income of agrarian women is highest in women above 35 years engaged in multiple crop production. The younger age group

seem less interested in agriculture as an occupation option as compared to older age groups. The percentage of women pursuing agriculture for income generation is lowest (13%) in the age group less than 25 years and increases with age. The highest percentage of anemia (62%) is in mothers between 26-35 years of age compared to other age groups. Among the respondents women below the age group of 25 years are taking the highest calories with calorie intake being as low as 1000 calories per day among women of elder age groups. The health status of women working as farm laborers is worse than farm owners. The study revealed that 90% of the younger age group women had better BMI as compared to 10% women among older age groups.

Lower age groups with better education status distribute their time well between rest & engaging in recreational activities but have low income due to single crop cultivation. The older age groups have better income generation due to multiple crop production but

longer working hours, lack of use of agricultural drudgery reducing tools, poor diet pattern, large family size & lack of knowledge on self-care aggravate their health problems. These reasons also affect their calories intake which has significant impact on their BMI. Anemia and related symptoms of breathlessness and tiredness were highest in middle age groups. They have poor health seeking behavior due to long working hours and low income. Hence there is an imperative need among agrarian women to change their capacity to work using tools to decrease drudgery, increase knowledge, enrich their skills and improve their economic status. Education regarding economic benefits of multiple nutritionally rich crops interspersed with cash crops should be imparted to women of all ages. Stress on health education for nutrition, self-care, time and work management skills, using tools and consuming at least 40% of their produce themselves should be encouraged amongst them.

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