



Original Article

Hurdles of Rural Social Problems of Rural Women

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Despite these hardships, rural women demonstrate remarkable resilience. Many have taken initiatives to improve their livelihoods and contribute to community development. However, systemic changes are necessary to ensure their empowerment and inclusion in the development process.

Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the general information and demographic profile of rural women.
2. To assess the social and cultural hurdles faced by rural women.
3. To identify the economic and financial hurdles impacting them.
4. To assess the infrastructure and service hurdles among rural women.

Research Methodology:

Research methodology refers to the systematic and scientific approach used to collect, organize, and analyse data in order to answer research questions effectively and ethically. It ensures that the study is reliable, valid, and transparent in its approach.

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive research design to provide a detailed account of the challenges faced by rural women. This design is suitable for understanding social issues and identifying patterns within a specific population.

Study Area: The research was conducted in **Kamtha village**, located in the Gondia district. The village represents a typical rural setting where traditional norms and limited resources influence women's lives.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: A total of **259 rural women** were selected for the study. The sample was chosen to ensure representation across different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and occupations. Appropriate sampling techniques (such as random or purposive sampling) were used to select participants.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews. The questionnaire included questions related to demographic details, social conditions, economic status, and access to infrastructure and services. Interviews helped in gaining deeper insights into personal experiences and challenges.

Data Analysis: The collected data was systematically organized and analyzed using statistical and descriptive methods. Percentages, averages, and comparative analysis were used to interpret the findings and identify major trends and issues.

Result And Discussions:

Table 1.1 Age of the Rural women

Sr. No.	Age of the Respondent	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Upto 20 years	30	11.58
2	21 yrs. to 30 yrs.	39	15.05
3	31 yrs. to 40 yrs.	83	32.04
4	41 yrs. to 50 yrs.	98	37.86
5	51 yrs. to 60 yrs.	09	3.47
	Total	259	100

It is revealed from the above table that most of the respondents belongs to (37.86%) 41 yrs. to 50 yrs. age group whereas 31 yrs. to 40 yrs. had 32.04%, whereas 15.05% belongs to category of 21 yrs. to 30 yrs., 11.58% comes into the category of upto 20 years, 3.47% belongs to 51 yrs to 60 yrs respectively.

Table 1.2 Education of the Respondent

Sr. No.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	13	5.01
2	Std. 1-5	89	34.36
3	Std. 6-10	111	42.85
4	Std. 11-12	37	14.28
5	Graduation	09	3.47
	Total	259	100

The above table indicated that most of the respondents had education upto std. 6-10 (42.85%), 34.36% had education upto Std.1-5, 14.28% had education upto Std. 11-12, and 5.01% rural women found to be illiterate whereas negligible percentage i.e. 3.47% had completed their graduation.

Table 1.3 Type of family of the rural women

Sr. No.	Type of family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear family	60	23.17
2	Joint family	199	76.83
		259	100.0

The above table reveals that 76.83% women belongs to joint family system prevailing in the society whereas 23.17% living in the nuclear families.

Table 1.4 Social and cultural hurdles of rural women

Sr. No.	Social and cultural hurdles	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Patriarchal norms	63	24.32
2	Gender-based violence	117	45.17
3	Restricted mobility	30	11.58
4	Dowry	49	18.93
	Total	259	100

It is revealed from the above table that 45.17% rural women had higher risk of domestic violence and abuse due to power imbalances and lack of oversight. 24.32% had deep-rooted gendered expectations and patriarchal structures limit women's rights and participation in community decisions. 18.93% had the hurdle of dowry whereas 11.58% had lack of safe transportation for women and access support networks.

Table 1.5 Economic and financial hurdles of rural women

Sr. No.	Economic and financial hurdles	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Limited land ownership	70	27.02
2	Unequal pay	111	42.85
3	Lack of credit & financial literacy	38	14.67
4	Lack of market access	40	15.46
	Total	259	100

Economic challenges significantly hinder the empowerment of rural women. The study reveals that:

- 42.85% face unequal pay, indicating gender discrimination in wages despite similar or greater workloads.
- 27.02% lack land ownership, which limits access to credit, agricultural benefits, and government schemes.
- 15.46% struggle with lack of market access, preventing them from expanding their income-generating activities.
- 14.67% lack financial literacy and access to credit facilities.

These findings demonstrate that financial dependence and lack of economic opportunities are major barriers to women's independence. Without ownership of assets and financial knowledge, women remain economically vulnerable and excluded from development opportunities.

Table 1.6 Infrastructure and service hurdles of rural women

Sr. No.	Infrastructure and service hurdles	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Poor healthcare access	66	25.48
2	Inadequate sanitation	69	26.64
3	Limited education	48	18.54
4	Poor infrastructure	76	29.34
	Total	259	100

It is seen that 29.34% rural women faced hurdle like lack of reliable electricity, transportation, and clean water further complicates daily life and economic opportunities. 26.64% had lack of proper sanitation facilities, including access to clean toilets, affects rural women's health and safety. 25.48% had limited access to quality healthcare, including maternal and reproductive health services is a significant issue whereas 18.54% rural women had low literacy rates and limited access to quality education, particularly higher education, create further barriers to personal and economic growth.

Conclusion:

The study clearly demonstrates that rural women continue to face multiple and interconnected challenges that hinder their overall development and empowerment. Despite progress in gender equality at the global level, the situation at the grassroots level remains largely unchanged. One of the most critical findings is the persistence of social and cultural barriers, particularly gender-based violence and patriarchal norms. These deeply ingrained practices restrict women's freedom, limit their participation in decision-making, and perpetuate inequality. Economic challenges further intensify their vulnerability. Unequal wages, lack of land ownership, and limited access to financial resources prevent women from achieving financial independence. This economic dependency often reinforces their subordinate position within the household and society.

Infrastructure and service-related deficiencies add another layer of hardship. Poor access to healthcare, sanitation, education, and transportation not only affects women's physical well-being but also limits their opportunities for personal and professional growth. Additionally, the burden of unpaid domestic work disproportionately falls on rural women, leaving them with little time or energy to pursue education, employment, or self-development. During times of crisis—such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or health emergencies—these vulnerabilities become even more pronounced, as women often have the least access to resources and support systems.

However, despite these challenges, rural women exhibit remarkable resilience and strength. Many women actively contribute to their households and communities, often acting as key agents of change. Their ability to adapt and persevere highlights the potential for empowerment if provided with adequate support.

Recommendations:

To address these challenges, the following measures are essential:

- Improving access to education and promoting higher education for girls
- Strengthening legal awareness and protection against gender-based violence
- Ensuring equal wages and economic opportunities
- Enhancing access to credit and financial literacy programs
- Developing rural infrastructure, including healthcare, sanitation, and transport
- Promoting women's participation in decision-making at household and community levels

At last, empowering rural women is not only a matter of social justice but also a key driver of sustainable development. Addressing their challenges through inclusive policies and targeted interventions can significantly improve their quality of life and contribute to overall societal progress.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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