

Original Research Article

Analysis of the Trends of Ownership Pattern According to Intersectionality of Gender and Social Categorization in Karnataka, India

ABSTRACT:

In India, accessing land ownership faces challenges such as tenancy, land markets, and limited women's access, compounded by gender inequity. Despite farm women's proficiency in agriculture and household management, gender disparities persist, restricting resource access. This paper focused on ownership trends in Karnataka, utilizing gender-segregated data from the past five agricultural censuses. Over time, operational holdings and areas operated by farm women increased, contrasting with a decline among men. Although the total average area decreased, women still held smaller plot portions. Examining social categories, the paper notes higher participation by women in Scheduled Caste land holdings, though their plot sizes are smaller compared to Scheduled Tribe women. Similarly, among social classes, more women own land in the marginal and small farmer categories, indicating a growing interest in land ownership. This reflects women's proficiency in succession acts. Male agricultural landholdings declined due to urbanization and labour shortages. Among Karnataka and India as a whole, farm women's participation in land ownership in Karnataka is higher. While the data shows a positive trend with increasing female-owned holdings, a noticeable gap persists in average holding sizes, indicating gender-related inequalities. The paper addresses gender disparities in agriculture, citing social stigma and a lack of legal knowledge as barriers. Empowering women farmers is crucial, and policy interventions facilitating land, credit, and resource access are essential for balanced and sustainable agricultural development.

Keyword: *Gender inequity, Ownership Pattern, Karnataka, Women*

INTRODUCTION:

India's economy is often characterized as agrarian, heavily reliant on the agriculture sector for sustenance and livelihoods, with rural women serving as the unsung heroes. These women play a crucial role in not only agricultural production but also contributing to the economic and social fabric of rural communities. Beyond traditional farming duties, they manage households, preserve indigenous knowledge, and engage in diverse income-generating activities, showcasing the multifaceted nature of their contributions. Despite their pivotal role, gender inequity poses significant challenges, limiting access to resources and requiring immense effort from these women. To foster sustainable growth in India's rural areas and propel agricultural expansion, it is imperative to equip farm women with essential tools, encompassing education, resources, and gender-sensitive regulations. Recognizing and supporting these women extends beyond a matter of social justice; it is instrumental in ensuring the overall livelihood security of households.

In general, there are some of the major key issues in accessing land ownership are tenancy, land markets, women access to land and implementation of existing laws.

Issues regarding tenancy regulations: The landowner was harmed prior to and during independence because of the tenants' ability to bargain. As a result, many states have prohibited tenancy and implemented limitations and rules. According to China's experience, land tenancy will play a larger

role and raise incomes in a developing economy (Rozelle et al., 2002). There is additional opportunity in the rental land markets (Janvry et al., 2001). The abolition of intermediary tenures, redistribution of land via land ceilings and regulation of tenancy are the three major land reforms legislation were enacted in most of the states of India after independence, due to the strict rules and regulations renters are evicted, and landlords switch them out in schemes to keep them from acquiring rights (Appu, 1997).

Issues related to land sale markets: Some studies (two in Punjab, one in U.P., and one in M.P.) show that land sale transactions often work to limit small and marginal farmers' access to land due to ability to finance for land purchases, Government policies favoring large landowners and High transaction costs (Rawal, 2001).

Issues related to women's access to land: Women's agricultural land access enhances the country's rural livelihood. In India, where males migrate for increased non-agricultural economic prospects and women make up a significant portion of the rural population, the impact on livelihoods is particularly noticeable (Agarwal, 2003). Thus, achieving gender equality in land rights serves as both a self-sufficient goal and a potent tool for ending poverty (Human Development Report, UNDP, 1997). But still, there are some non-conventional indicators that show gender disparity. In terms of the Human Development Index (2021), the value is 0.633, a decrease of 0.009 from the previous year. The Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (2021) value is 0.475. The Gender Development Index (2021) value is about 0.849, and the Gender Inequality Index (2021) value is about 0.490, which is decreased by 0.003 as compared to the previous year. These all show the gender gap in various dimensions, which leads to gender disparity.

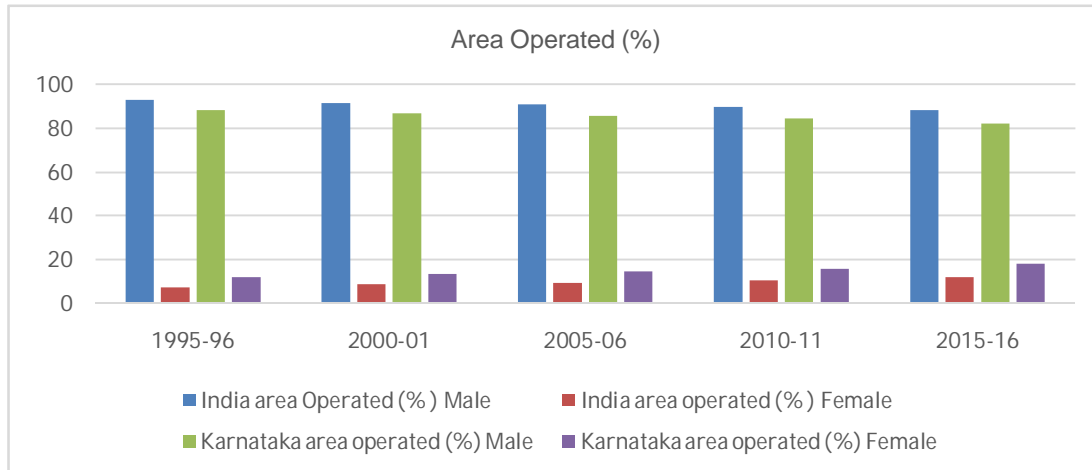
Issues related to the implementation of laws: In India, about 82% of people were Hindu and the remaining were Muslims. Some laws were made for both: The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 and the Muslim Personal Laws of 1937. In both of the laws, it didn't give more importance to women, but in the Hindu Succession Amendment Act of 2005, This law grants girls the same rights to their ancestors' property as sons and recognizes daughters as coparceners by birth in the family. Another option for giving women security and the assets associated with property rights while also serving as a stepping stone toward ownership is for an NGO to buy land and lease it to a women's group or cooperative (Velayudhan, 2008). Government wasteland and ceiling surplus land have made up the majority of the land that states have dispersed. Government estimates indicate that as of 2000, governments had allocated to chosen beneficiaries more than 14 million acres of wasteland and more than 5 million acres of surplus land under the ceiling (Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, Annual Report 2000-2001). But the study conducted by RDI (West Bengal, Assam) discovered a number of families that claimed to have obtained government-allocated land following the policy's introduction and who claimed that the land had been given exclusively to the male head of household (Brown et al., 2002).

METHODOLOGY:

Here secondary data is collected from the past five agricultural censuses (1995–96, 2000–01, 2005–06, 2010–11, 2015–16), which includes gender-segregated data about the number of operational holdings, area operated, and total average area expressed in percentage, which is the number, amount, rate, etc., expressed as part of a total of 100. This measure was used for a simple understanding of numeric values with different groups. For calculating the percentage, the frequency of a particular set was divided by the total number of observations multiplied by 100.

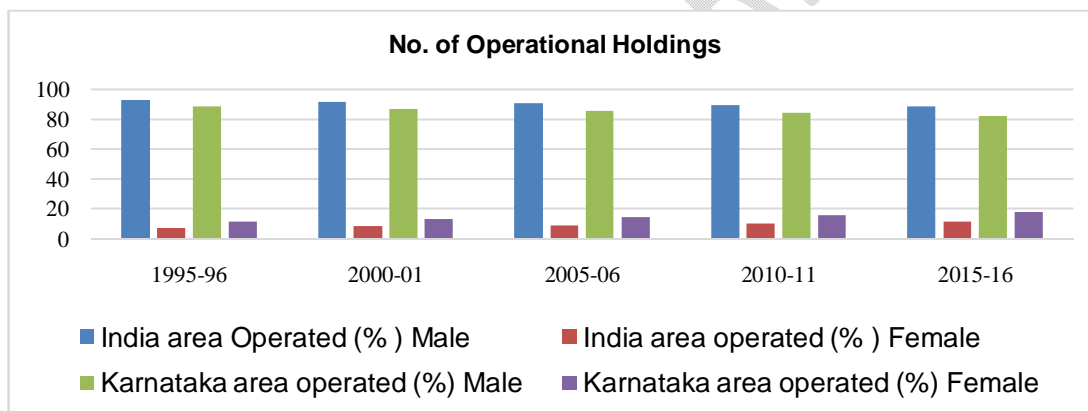
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

This purpose is an effort to provide a picture of the distribution of women's land ownership in Karnataka using information from past five agricultural censuses. A greater awareness of the current state of the female agricultural land ownership trend in Karnataka in comparison to the country as a whole may result from such an endeavour. To determine whether land ownership, a non-traditional indicator, has any bearing on the particular development experience of women in Karnataka, a comparison of the trend of land ownership among females in Karnataka with that of their counterparts across all of India is made. This objective is broken up into three portions with that goal in mind.



(Source: Agriculture Census 1995-96, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2010-11, 2015-16.)

Fig. 1: Agricultural Land Ownership Patterns by Gender in Karnataka (%)



(Source: Agriculture Census 1995-96, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2010-11, 2015-16.)

Fig. 2: Agricultural Land Ownership Patterns by Gender in Karnataka (%)

In this paper it tells that in Karnataka, agricultural land ownership pattern, the representation of women in terms of operational holdings, operated land area, and average size of land holdings was not as remarkable as that of men.

The participation of women in comparison with operational holdings and area they operate has been decreasing, whereas for men, their share in these aspects has seen a slight increase. However, both men and women have experienced a decline in average size of their land holdings over time.

From above Table 1, When comparing Karnataka to the nationwide scenario, it becomes evident that the share of women in terms of operational land holdings and areas they operate has increased over time, whereas the share of men in these aspects has declined. However, the average size of land holdings for both men and women has decreased from 1995–96 to 2015–16.

In Karnataka, more women are involved in managing and owning agricultural land compared to the national average. Over the years, the number of women owning land in Karnataka has been steadily increasing. In 1995–96, 14.38% of operational land holdings were owned by women in Karnataka, while at the national level, it was only 9.54%. However, in Karnataka, this percentage kept growing, reaching 20.12% in 2015–16. Nationally, the increase was smaller, going from 10.72% to 13.98% between 2000–01 and 2015–16. This shows that more women in Karnataka are becoming involved in agricultural land ownership compared to the rest of the country.

In Karnataka, more women have actively worked on agricultural land over the years. Back in 1995–96, 11.70% of the total operated area was managed by women, and this increased to 15.70% by 2010–11. The latest census also shows a slight rise in the area managed by women in Karnataka. Comparing this to the national average, both Karnataka and the whole of India have seen small increases in the share of operated areas managed by women. In 1995–96, it was 7.23% in Karnataka and 8.48% nationally, and it gradually increased to 11.83% in Karnataka and slightly less at the national level by 2015–16. This suggests that more women in Karnataka are actively involved in working on agricultural land compared to the national average.

The amount of land that both men and women own on average has been gradually decreasing over the years (Table 1). When we compare the average size of land owned by women to that owned by men, men generally have more land, measured in hectares. In 1995–96, women, on average, had 1.06 hectares of land, which decreased to 0.9 hectares in the recent census period. This trend aligns with a study by (Gaddis et al., 2022). In simple terms, both men and women own less land on average now, and men still tend to own more than women.

Table 1: Transformation in Land Ownership Patterns in India and Karnataka from 1995 to 2016: A Breakdown by Gender and Social Category (%)

| India | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|------|----|-------------------|------|----|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------------------------|-----|----|-------------------|-----|----|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Year | SC | | | | | | | | | ST | | | | | | | | |
| | No. of operational holding(%) | | | Area Operated (%) | | | Average size of Holdings (ha) | | | No. of operational holding(%) | | | Area Operated (%) | | | Average size of Holdings (ha) | | |
| 1995-96 | 1.1 | .84 | 00 | 3 | .67 | 00 | .93 | .71 | .91 | 2.7 | .3 | 00 | 3.6 | .44 | 00 | .86 | .62 | .84 |
| 2000-01 | 0.2 | .81 | 00 | 1.9 | .07 | 00 | .88 | .71 | .86 | 1.1 | .9 | 00 | 2.3 | .44 | 00 | .17 | .53 | .76 |
| 2005-06 | 9.1 | 0.9 | 00 | 0.9 | .08 | 00 | .84 | .69 | .83 | 0.4 | .65 | 00 | 1.5 | .53 | 00 | .66 | .45 | .64 |
| 2010-11 | 7.7 | 2.3 | 00 | 9.6 | 0.4 | 00 | .82 | .68 | .8 | 8.7 | 1.3 | 00 | 0 | 0 | 00 | .54 | .34 | .52 |
| 2015-16 | 6.6 | 3.4 | 00 | 8.3 | 1.8 | 00 | .79 | .68 | .78 | 7.3 | 2.7 | 00 | 8.9 | 12 | 00 | .43 | .23 | .4 |
| Karnataka | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995-96 | 5.77 | 4.23 | 00 | 7.58 | 2.42 | 00 | .46 | .25 | .43 | 5.57 | 4.4 | 00 | 7.4 | 2.6 | 00 | .02 | .74 | .98 |
| 2000-01 | 3.81 | 6.1 | 00 | 5.89 | 4.1 | 00 | .33 | .13 | .3 | 4 | 6 | 00 | 5.8 | 4.2 | 00 | .8 | .57 | .76 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------|----------|----|------|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | 9 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 005-06 | 2.36 | 7.6 4 | 00 | 4.40 | 5.6 0 | 00 | .1 | .25 | .25 | 2.6 | 7.4 | 00 | 4.4 | 5.6 | 00 | .69 | .48 | .65 |
| 010-11 | 1.34 | 8.6 6 | 00 | 3.26 | 6.7 4 | 00 | .05 | .18 | .18 | 1.8 | 8.2 | 00 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 00 | .52 | .36 | .49 |
| 015-16 | 9.00 | 1.0 0 | 00 | 0.31 | 9.6 9 | 00 | .07 | .14 | .14 | 9.4 | 0.6 | 00 | 0.8 | 9.2 | 00 | .42 | .31 | .4 |

(Source: Agriculture Census 1995-96, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2010-11, 2015-16)

(Note: M- male, F- female and T- total)

In India, when it comes to people from scheduled castes, about 80% of the land and operational holdings are owned by men, while women from the same community only own around 20%, as shown in Table 2. This pattern is the same in both Karnataka and the entire country. Over the years, there has been a rise in the number of operational holdings and the land area managed by scheduled caste women. On the other hand, scheduled caste men have experienced a decrease in these aspects. In simpler terms, most of the land and operational holdings among scheduled castes are owned by men, but the trend is changing slowly with more women getting involved.

In Karnataka, the change in the proportion of land ownership among scheduled caste individuals is more noticeable compared to the entire country of India. In India, the trend for scheduled caste men shows a decrease in the share of operational holdings and land area managed from 1995–96 to 2015–16. In the earlier period, scheduled caste men held 91.06% of operational holdings, which decreased to 86.57% in the later period. Similarly, the share of land area operated by them decreased from 93.03% to 88.25%. It's important to note that while the average size of landholdings for scheduled caste women in India was initially smaller than that of men, there was a gradual decline in the average size for both groups over time. Simply put, in Karnataka, changes in land ownership among scheduled-caste individuals are more noticeable than in the entire country. In India, scheduled caste men are gradually owning less land over the years, and both men and women from this group have smaller average landholdings.

In India, there's significant inequality in land ownership among scheduled tribe individuals, favouring men. As shown in Table.2, the majority of landholdings and land area were owned by scheduled tribe men, but these numbers have been decreasing over the years, from 92.7% to 87.28% for the number of landholdings and from 93.56% to 88.85% for the land area, between 1995–96 and 2015–16. On the other hand, there's been a noticeable increase among scheduled tribe women in both the number of landholdings (from 7.3% to 12.72%) and the land area managed (from 6.44% to 11.15%) during the same period. Looking at the average size of landholdings, there's a consistent decrease for both male and female members of the scheduled tribe population. In Karnataka, average landholding size for scheduled tribe men went down from 2.02 hectares to 1.42 hectares over the years, and for women, it decreased from 1.74 hectares to 1.31 hectares. This decline is also seen nationally among scheduled tribe individuals, where average landholding size in 2015-16 was 1.43 hectares for males and 1.23 hectares for females, compared to 1995-96 figures of 1.86 hectares for males and 1.62 hectares for females. In simpler terms, men from scheduled tribes in India have historically owned most of the land, but numbers are decreasing, while there's a noticeable increase in land ownership among women from the scheduled tribe community. Additionally, the average size of landholdings for both men and women in this community is decreasing over time.

Unlike scheduled caste individuals, scheduled tribe men in both Karnataka and India have experienced a continuous decrease in both the number of landholdings and the area of cultivated land they manage over the years. On the flip side, scheduled tribe women have shown the opposite trend, with an increasing number of landholdings and expanded areas of cultivated land. In simpler terms, while land ownership and cultivation have been decreasing among scheduled tribe men, women from the same community are gaining more land and cultivating larger areas.

Even though the average size of landholdings is decreasing for both scheduled tribe men and women in Karnataka and India, men still tend to have larger landholdings than women. However, when we compare women from scheduled tribes to women from scheduled castes, scheduled tribe women actually have larger average landholdings. This indicates that fewer women, particularly from scheduled tribes, have access to larger agricultural land holdings. On the other hand, scheduled caste women have smaller average landholdings compared to women from other categories, suggesting that a higher number of them have limited access to agricultural land. In simpler terms, while landownership is decreasing for both men and women in scheduled tribes, men generally have larger landholdings. Among women, those from scheduled tribes have larger landholdings compared to their counterparts in scheduled castes, where more women have smaller landholdings.

For the development of schedule cast and schedule tribe, it's essential to consider their implications for the livelihoods of both social categories. The 2020 Amendment to Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1961, doesn't explicitly address caste issues; this statement is supported by (Iyer & Kunale, 2022).

Table 2: Landholding Size Distribution in India and Karnataka, 2015-16: Gender Segmentation (In Percent)

| INDIA | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| Size class | No. of Operational Holdings (%) | | | Area Operated (%) | | |
| | M | F | Total | M | F | Total |
| Marginal | 67.9 | 72 | 68.47 | 23.7 | 28.19 | 24.23 |
| Small | 17.74 | 16.97 | 17.63 | 22.71 | 26.02 | 23.1 |
| Semi-Medium | 9.8 | 8.05 | 9.55 | 24.08 | 23.54 | 24.02 |
| Medium | 3.97 | 2.66 | 3.79 | 20.75 | 16.65 | 20.26 |
| Large | 0.6 | 0.32 | 0.56 | 8.76 | 5.6 | 8.39 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| KARNATAKA | | | | | | |
| Marginal | 53.77 | 59.52 | 54.93 | 16.94 | 21.33 | 17.72 |
| Small | 25.86 | 24.16 | 25.52 | 26.15 | 27.99 | 26.48 |
| Semi-Medium | 14.23 | 11.82 | 13.74 | 27.41 | 25.98 | 27.16 |
| Medium | 5.48 | 4.04 | 5.19 | 22.46 | 18.92 | 21.83 |
| Large | 0.67 | 0.47 | 0.63 | 7.04 | 5.78 | 6.81 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

(M- male, F- female, Source: Agriculture Census, 2015-16.)

Looking at Table.3, a clear trend becomes apparent as we move to larger land size categories: there's a decrease in the proportion of operational holdings and operated areas linked to females in both Karnataka and across India. Interestingly, when comparing female land ownership in India to that in Karnataka, there's a somewhat fairer distribution among all Indian females. This includes both the number of operational holdings and the corresponding operating area. In simpler terms, as we look at larger land sizes, the percentage of land owned and managed by women decreases in both Karnataka and India. However, the distribution appears somewhat more balanced at the national level compared to Karnataka.

In Karnataka, the ownership of land is noticeably concentrated in the small-sized category. However, for women across India, the concentration is more evident in the marginal size category. This could be because many women might be hesitant to claim land. In simpler terms, in Karnataka, smaller plots of land are more commonly owned, while across India, women tend to own land in the smallest size category, possibly because many women are hesitant to assert their land ownership. which is supported by the study Brown et al. (2002).

In general, from all the above tables, it is identified that women's agricultural land ownership, irrespective of social category and social class, improved every year in terms of accessibility to land, which is followed by,

From the fiscal year 1995–96 to 2015–16, there's been a consistent trend in the total number of operational holdings. The overall number of holdings has gradually decreased, and throughout this period, a higher percentage of holdings have been owned by women compared to men each year. This suggests that the proportion of female-owned holdings has increased over time, as supported by (Agarwal, 1994).

The total land under operation by these holdings has slightly decreased over the years. Similar to the trend in the number of holdings, there has been a noticeable shift towards a greater proportion of land being managed by female-owned holdings, indicating a relative increase in women's control of land in agriculture.

This change can be attributed to several factors. Societal norms have evolved, allowing women to take on more active roles in economic activities, especially in agriculture. This has led to a growing trend of women participating in farming and owning agricultural land.

The empowerment and education of women have played a crucial role in their involvement in agriculture and land acquisition. Better access to education and empowerment programs has enabled women to make informed decisions about farming and finances, giving them more control over agricultural activities and land assets. However, according to (Swaminathan et al., 2012), improvements in women's decision-making may not always translate into equal decision-making within couples. Additionally, even women who own land may not always have full authority over it or the resources it generates, as noted by (Mukund, 1999).

Government and organizational initiatives have further encouraged this shift by implementing policies that support women's participation in agriculture and land ownership. These policies include land reforms, inheritance laws, and improved access to credit and resources, collectively enhancing women's control and access to land.

Economic changes also play a role in altering landownership patterns. Evolving agricultural practices and changing economic conditions lead families to recognize and allocate land assets based on the recognized value of women's contributions to farming.

The entrepreneurial spirit of women in agriculture is notable, as many showcase their skills to seek opportunities for improving livelihoods and contributing to family income. This has resulted in an increased prevalence of women owning land.

In specific regions, targeted land redistribution programs aim to promote gender equity by allocating land directly to women or encouraging joint ownership with male family members. Women's self-help groups have become important entities, providing support to female farmers, enhancing their skills, facilitating credit access, and promoting collective decision-making, ultimately contributing to an increase in women's land ownership.

The growing recognition of women's labor and contributions to agriculture has led to a realization of their inherent right to landownership and control over agricultural assets. Despite the positive trend, it remains essential to continue addressing gender disparities and promoting women's empowerment in agriculture for more equitable and sustainable rural development.

CONCLUSION:

Overall, the data shows a positive trend, with more women getting involved in and owning agricultural holdings. However, despite the increasing percentage of female-owned holdings, there is still a noticeable gap in the average size of holdings between men and women. This difference suggests the presence of gender-related inequalities in both land ownership and access to resources in agriculture, as supported by a study by (Agarwal et al., 2021). It's important to address these disparities to promote gender equality in agriculture and empower women farmers. Implementing policies and interventions that make it easier for women to access land, credit, and agricultural resources is crucial for achieving a more balanced and sustainable path for agricultural development.

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