

Involvement of Farm Women in Decision- making In Agriculture

K. Chayal, B. L. Dhaka, M. K. Poonia, S. V. S. Tyagi and S. R. Verma

*Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Post Box No.4, Bundi 323001, Rajasthan, India
E-mail: kesarchayal@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT Women play a significant and crucial role in agriculture. They undertake various activities in agriculture such as cleaning of fields, field preparation, sowing, intercultural practices, weeding, harvesting, picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains etc. But it is unfortunate that they remain invisible workers. However, their involvement as decision- makers regarding these activities is questionable. Hence the present study was conducted to determine the contribution of farm women in decision-making in agriculture. A total of 120 farm women were selected as respondents through multistage random sampling technique. Relevant data were collected with the help of personal interview technique. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Analysis of the data showed that involvement of farm women in decision- making process in agriculture was very low. It is because the majority of farm women are illiterate, have little knowledge about the latest techniques of farming, face dominance by males and restricted mobility due to several cultural taboos.

INTRODUCTION

Women are key players in agriculture and allied fields. Rural women play key role by working with full passion in production of crops right from the soil preparation till post harvest activities (Ahmed and Hussain 2004). Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, caring for family members and maintaining their homes (SOFA Team and Cheryl Doss 2011; Arshad et al. 2010). It is estimated that women are responsible for 70 percent of actual farm work and constitute up to 60 percent of the farming population (Choudhary and Singh 2003). Despite women's critical contribution to the family income through productive activities, no recognition is given to them as an important contributor and their contribution is not recorded. They are still remained invisible workers. Over the years women cultivators are typically and wrongly characterized as economically inactive and women cultivator play only a supportive role in agriculture as farmers' wives (Samanta 1994). Women must given full chance to participate in decision making as they are actively engaged in home and farm activities. Women's active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development of the country. In this back drop, a study has been undertaken to find out involvement of farm women in decision making process in agriculture.

Objective

To study the involvement of farm women in decision making process in agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Bundi district of Rajasthan in the year 2012. A sample of 120 farm women was selected through multistage random sampling technique. In first stage Bundi block was select purposively. In second stage two villages namely Bhurpura Ojha and Samberba were selected purposively. In third stage 120 farm women were selected randomly from selected villages. Selected respondents were interviewed personally using well structured pre tested interview schedule. Interview schedule was consisting of two parts. First part deals with background information of respondents and second part was constituted to find out extent of women's involvement in various decision making areas in agriculture. The data thus collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical tool to infer results

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents were analyzed and presented in Table 1. It is evident from the results that majority (52.50 %) of the respondents fell within the middle age group followed by young age (30.83%) and old age (16.67%) group. It was also observed that majority (65.83%) of respondents were belonged

to nuclear family and followed by (34.17%) were from joint family.

Table 1: Socio-personal characteristics of respondents (n=120)

Variable	Categories	Number	Percent
Age (years)	Young (<30)	37	30.83
	Middle (31-40)	63	52.50
	Old (>40)	20	16.67
Type of Family	Joint family	41	34.17
	Nuclear family	79	65.83
Caste	General	7	5.83
	Other backward class	51	42.50
	Schedule caste	20	16.67
Education	Schedule tribes	42	35.00
	Illiterate	68	56.67
	Literate	33	27.50
	Primary	09	7.50
Land Holding	Middle	06	5.00
	Graduation	4	3.33
	Small	42	35.00
	Medium	61	50.83
	Large	17	14.17

Results on caste categories indicate that majority of the respondents (42.50%) were from other backward castes followed by schedule tribe (35.00%), schedule caste (16.67%) were and general (5.83%). Further, results revealed that 56.67% of respondents were illiterate while 27.50% literate, 7.50% primary, 5.00% middle and 3.33% were graduate. Results on land holding revealed that majority (50.84%) of the respondents had medium size land holding followed by small (35.00%) and large (14.16%) size land holding.

Involvement of farm women in decision making in agriculture was analyzed and presented in Table 2. The perusal of the results reveals that farm women's involvement in decision making process in agriculture field quite minimal. Results indicate that marketing of agri-inputs and farm produce, manure/ fertilizer application type and manure/ fertilizer application were the activities wherein involvement was very poor. Similar results were also presented by Sharma et al. (2013). The tasks in which farm women's participation was less than 30 percent were sowing method, storage, selection of crop, selection of seed variety, irrigation, weeding were the major activities. Mishra et al. (2008) also reported that in selection of seed variety involvement of farm women was only 29 percent. In field preparation involvement was 40.83. Involvement of farm women in harvest-

ing operation was 51.67 percent. More or less similar results were also presented by Katiyar et al. (2008) and Dawit Tsegaye et al. (2012).

Table 2: Involvement of farm women in decision making in agriculture (n=120)

S. No.	Farm activities	Involvement of farm women	
		Frequency	Per cent
1.	Preparation of field	49	40.83
2.	Sowing method	29	24.17
3.	Selection of crop	35	29.17
4.	Selection of seed variety	34	28.33
5.	Manure/ Fertilizer type	13	10.83
6.	Manure/ Fertilizer application	15	12.50
7.	Irrigation	28	23.33
8.	Weeding	23	19.17
9.	Harvesting	62	51.67
10.	Storage	24	20.00
11.	Marketing of agri inputs and produce	11	9.17

Factors affecting involvement of farm women in decision making process were identified and presented in Table 3. It is clear from the results that age of farm women was positively and significantly correlated with level of involvement of farm women in decision making. Damisa and Yohanna (2007) also reported that older women participated more in decision making process in the different areas of agriculture than their younger age group counterpart. Involvement in farming decisions was also influenced by type of family. The size of farm was also positive and important in explaining the role of women in farming decisions. If the size of farm is large the resources requirement is also increased those women were more involved who had large farm as compare to those with smaller farm. These findings are supported by Damisa and Yohanna (2007) and Enete and Amusa (2010). Education of farm women was found effective in the

Table 3: Factor affecting involvement of farm women in decision making (n=120)

S. No.	Personal variables	Coefficient of correlation (r)
1	Age	0.390*
2	Type of family	0.360*
3	Land holding	0.295*
4	Education level	0.280*
5	Caste	0.100 ^{NS}

*Significant at 5 percent level of significance;

^{NS}Non significant

Table 4: Major social constraints against women's involvement in farming decisions (n=120)

Constraints	Low		Moderate		High	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiteracy	14	11.67	43	35.83	63	52.50
Poor access to farm information	20	16.67	42	35.00	58	48.33
Traditional cultural	25	20.83	50	41.67	45	37.50
The belief women are less informed than man and they are only subordinate to male counterparts	15	12.50	36	30.00	69	57.50
Low self confidence of women in making farm decisions	6	5.00	23	19.17	91	75.83
Lack of knowledge about farming.	17	14.17	33	27.50	70	58.33

participation of farm women in agricultural decision making process. Lastly caste was found not have any significant influence on the level of women's involvement in farming decisions.

Constraints faced by farm women in their involvement in decision making process were identified and presented in Table 4. It is obvious from the table that low self confidence of women in making farm decisions (75.83%), lack of knowledge about farming (58.33), belief that women are subordinate to male counterparts (57.50%), illiteracy (52.50%), poor access of farm women to farm information (48.33%), are the major constraints which obstructed the women to involve in farming decision process. Traditional cultural were perceived as moderate constraint by the respondents.

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that farm women are actively involved in agricultural operations but their involvement in decision making in agriculture is very poor. Low self confidence, lack of knowledge, belief that women are subordinate to male counterparts, illiteracy, poor access of to farm information were the major constraints perceived by farm women in decision making process. The study also revealed that age, family income, land holding, education were the major factors that influenced the involvement of farm women in decision making process in agriculture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that to improve the productivity of agriculture involvement of farm

women in decision making needed to increase. This requires capacity building of farm women regarding latest technical know how, agriculture information acquisition and processing.

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