

Focusing on the Involvement of Women Dairy Farmers in Decision Making Process at Manipur

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ABSTRACT

In the light of sustainable development there is a need to focus on the alternative livelihood for the empowerment of the rural women and sustainability of the development dimensions. In this aspect, dairy enterprise is one of the important sources of income in which women plays an integral part to supplement their family expenditure. Under such a situation, the study envisages the degree of involvement of women dairy farmers in decision making process regarding managing the dairy enterprise and factors associated with it. The study was conducted at three blocks in Manipur State. Purposive, multi-stage and simple random sampling procedures were followed in the present study. Total hundred women dairy farmers were selected as the respondents for final data collection. The decision involvement index is the concerned predicted variable in the present study. Other than these 19 predictor or independent variables were considered to characterize the predicted variables in a consulted way. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The data were processed into the statistical tools like frequency, percentage, range, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, coefficient of correlation, multiple regression analysis etc. The results showed that the majority of the respondents are under the group of low level of involvement in decision making. The results indicated that the variable management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the involvement of women in decision making process regarding dairy farming and also is negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the decision making involvement of women in dairy farming. All the variables put together had explained only 28% variations embedded within the variable decision involvement index and it also indicates the inclusion of more number of contextual variables in the present study.

Key words: *Involvement of women; Dairy farmers; Decision making; Management orientation;*

Dairy farming plays a vital role in sustaining the rural livelihood although the phenomena of migration, malnutrition or ill healths are widely prevented in rural India. But still of the dairy base products are making rapid strides in eliminating poverty by substantially contributing to economy the vast resources of livestock's in the country play an important role in National economy as well as the socio-economic development of millions of rural household. Rural women, besides doing hard household chores, also undertake the taxing job of cattle rearing (Vallapureddy, 2013). Women's active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development

of the country (Chayal et al., 2013). Rural women contribute a share of more than 75 per cent in animal husbandry operations like feeding, milking and sale of milk (Sangeetha Upadhyay and Desai, 2011). Farm women mostly engaged in agricultural and dairy related activities to support their family income and meet the educational need of their children. Women roles in decision making in animal husbandry, dairy and other economic productive activities are very significant. They contribute 69 per cent of labor required for these activities. In rural areas both the husband and wives join the decision making on the matters like family obligation related aspect. However, women suggestion

are not given due consideration in decision partnering to farming and important family matter. Women perform the task of collecting fodder, collecting and processing dung, preparing the cooking fuel, livestock management and production, milking and controlling over livestock and its products. *Mulugeta & Amsalu (2014)* stated that although rural women played a proactive role in livestock management and household decisions, their contributions were neglected and their decision making power is still restricted. Increasing the capacity of rural women is a necessary step toward allowing them equal right and power with men. In such a research niche, there is a need to re-emphasize the role of farm women in livestock rearing, farm activities and in decision making process. Thus there is a need for a conceptual and theoretical framework that can fully explicate the relationship of women's involvement in dairy decision making process. Keeping all this in view, the present study makes an attempt to assess the involvement in decision making process of farm women in dairy farming and the factors associated with it.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Manipur, one of the north-eastern states of India. Purposive, multi-stage and simple random sampling procedures were followed in the present study. The districts Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal were selected purposively due to the active involvement of the farm women in the dairy farming for its management and marketing with the active cooperation of the Youth Voluntary Union and Friendship dairy cooperative. Three blocks namely Imphal east I, Imphal west I including Thoubal were selected randomly from the selected districts. From the three selected blocks the two villages in each block were randomly selected. The selected villages were Khaidem Leikai, Kontha Ahallup, Patsoi, Sangaiprou Maning Leikai, Thoubal Wangmataba and Thoubal Kshetri Leikai. An exhausted list of women dairy farmer of the selected villages was prepared with the help of the Block officials, Panchayat officials and dairy cooperative members. From this exhausted list 100 proactive dairy women farmers were selected as the respondents for final data collection. The decision making involvement index is the concerned predicted variable in the present study. Other than these 19 predictor or independent variables were considered to characterize the predicted variables

in a consulted way. The data were collected with the help semi structured interview schedule through personal interview method. The data were analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as Frequency, Percentage, Range, Mean, Standard deviation, Coefficient of variation, Coefficient of correlation, Multiple regression analysis etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the distribution of the women dairy farmers in Manipur according to their involvement in decision making in dairy activities. The results show that the majority of the respondents are under the group of low level of involvement in decision making, 26.39-47.22 (86%) followed by medium level of decision-making involvement group, 47.23-68.06 (9%) and low level decision-making involvement group, 68.07-88.90 (5%) respectively. The mean score of total distribution is 39.38 and standard deviation of the distribution is 12.47. The coefficient of variation value within the distribution 31.66% signifies the medium consistency level of the distribution for the variable 'involvement in decision making in dairy activities'. Hence, it is evident from the finding that although the women members in most of the families in Manipur state are engaged in dairy farming, but, still they have less opportunity to participate in decision making process related to the dairy farming. Similar results found in the research conducted by *Bhagwan and Soma (2012)*.

Table 2 depicts coefficient of women involvement in decision making process regarding the dairy farming with 19 predictor variables. It is found that the variable

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their involvement in decision making (Y)

Category	Score	No.	%
Low	26.39-47.22	86	86
Medium	47.23-68.06	9	9
High	68.07-88.90	5	5
Statistics	Range = 26.39-88.89 SD=12.47	Mean = 39.38 CV=31.66%	

management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the involvement of women in decision making process regarding dairy farming. The result is against the research outcome delivered by *Gondalia and Patel (2005)* during their similar type of research. *Management orientation and decision making involvement of women in dairy farming* : Management orientation is conceptualized as the orientation of an

Table 2: Correlation coefficient (r) of decision making involvement of women in dairy farming with 19 causal variables

Variables (X)	(r)
Age (X ₁)	-0.047
Caste (X ₂)	-0.157
Education (X ₃)	-0.104
Family Education Status (X ₄)	0.013
Family Annual Income (X ₅)	-0.080
Land Holding (X ₆)	-0.019
Farm power (X ₇)	0.109
Asset Possession (X ₈)	0.012
Livestock possession (X ₉)	0.131
House type (X ₁₀)	-0.128
Extension Worker Communication (X ₁₁)	-0.016
Mass media exposure (X ₁₂)	-0.040
Mobility of women (X ₁₃)	-0.158
Risk preference (X ₁₄)	-0.089
Economic motivation (X ₁₅)	0.017
Attitude (X ₁₆)	-0.041
Management orientation (X ₁₇)	-0.378**
Awareness and knowledge (X ₁₈)	-0.031
Profit from dairy (X ₁₉)	0.019

** Significant at 1% level of significance

individual in case of planning, managing the whole process and marketing of the products from the enterprise. It considers the decision related to activity to be conducted, from the contingency planning, the application of the scientific practices in a better way, managing the situation and sending the product to market. In the study area women plays a very limited part in place of decision making on planning, managing and marketing mostly dominated by the male members. Mostly male members apply their decisions without considering the decision of women in case of planning, managing and marketing related to their own dairy farming. So, management orientation plays a positive role in case of decision making by the male counterpart of the family in dairy farming and women are deprived to make plan, manage the enterprise and market the products. That is why the variable management orientation is negatively and significantly associated with the women involvement in decision making process in regarding dairy farming. It may be remark that still women of the study area is in deprived state of mind in case of taking decision related to dairy farming, though they have a strong and sound management orientation.

Table 3 reflects the multiple regression analysis of

the decision involvement index with 19 predictor variables. From the table it is observable that only the variable management orientation is negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the decision making involvement of women in dairy farming. *Management orientation and decision making involvement of women in dairy farming* : Management orientation is the psychological trait of an individual towards planning, production and marketing of any enterprise. It plays a pivotal role in case of developing and managing an enterprise in a better way. Management orientation is related to making sound decisions about establishment and running an enterprise smoothly and marketing of the product in an efficient manner to earn profit. In case of dairy farming, management orientation consists of making decisions on setting up of the dairy farm, management and health care practices of cattle rearing and selling of milk and dairy products. In the study area it is found that the valuable decisions regarding planning, managing and marketing regarding the dairy enterprise are mostly taken by the male members of the family. Though women takes decision independently in case of feeding, watering and cleaning of the cattle shed but they are less involved in decision making related to dairy farming. That is why the variable management orientation is negatively and significantly contributing towards characterizing the decision making involvement of women in dairy farming. One unit change of the variable management orientation is delineating the 0.435 unit change in the predicted variable, decision making involvement.

The R² value being 0.282, it is to infer that the nineteen predictor variables put together have explained 28.2 per cent variation embedded with the predicted variable decision making involvement. Still 71.8 per cent variations embedded with predicted one are unexplained.

CONCLUSION

In the present context women empowerment through different livelihood avenue generation is a lime lighted issue in a patriarchal society. Mostly the male counterparts of the family are shouldering the responsibility of taking pluralistic decisions. The deprivations from the women counterpart of the family is very much observable in the country like India. One school of thoughts is that though the women are not taking part in decision making outside the household level but it is observable in many aspect that they are playing pivotal role in case of supporting the male counterpart

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of Decision Involvement Index (Y) with predictor variables.

Variables	Standardized regression coefficient (\hat{a})	Unstandardised regression coefficient (B)	S.E of 'B'	t-value
Age (X_1)	-0.092	-0.154	0.202	-0.762
Caste (X_2)	-0.167	-12.108	7.664	-1.580
Education (X_3)	-0.123	-1.393	1.519	-0.917
Family Edu. Status (X_4)	0.090	1.695	2.265	0.749
Family Annual Income (X_5)	-0.043	-0.039	0.126	-0.309
Land Holding (X_6)	-0.093	-1.229	1.584	-0.776
Farm power (X_7)	0.137	1.403	1.153	1.217
Asset Possession (X_8)	0.009	0.010	0.162	0.064
Livestock possession (X_9)	0.170	0.778	0.512	1.518
House type (X_{10})	-0.163	-3.595	2.538	-1.417
Ext. Worker Comm. (X_{11})	-0.007	-0.034	0.637	-0.054
Mass media exposure (X_{12})	0.127	0.846	0.972	0.870
Mobility of women (X_{13})	-0.052	-0.403	0.992	-0.406
Risk preference (X_{14})	-0.063	-0.449	0.830	-0.541
Economic motivation (X_{15})	-0.101	-1.005	1.028	-0.978
Attitude (X_{16})	-0.023	-0.180	0.851	-0.212
Management orientation (X_{17})	-0.435	-2.113	0.550	-3.841**
Awareness and knowledge (X_{18})	0.017	0.384	2.627	0.146
Profit from dairy (X_{19})	0.110	0.123	0.136	0.902

** Significant at 1% level of significance * Significant at 5% level of significance

R²=0.282

in appropriate and timely decision regarding inside and outside activities. Decisions related to purchasing or selling of animals, buying of feed, selling of milk and marketing of dairy products is mostly made by the male members of the family. Though most of the activities related to dairy farm practices are performed by women but often their opinion is not considered in case of planning and managing of the dairy farm as they have less access to information regarding improved dairy

management practices. So there is an urgent need to organize some awareness generating programmes and training sessions by the government and extension personnel to overcome the barriers faced by rural women during the decision making process in dairy farming. In addition to that, emphasis should be given to improve their managerial ability and motivate the women farmers to engage more physically and mentally to enhance the productivity.

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