WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN BEHAVIOURAL PROCESSES REGARDING CROP LIVESTOCK FARMING PRACTICES

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In changing world perspective the agriculture is focusing more and more attention in gender issues. The empowerment is the basic requirements in placing the women on a right gear of development and progress. Traditionally, Indian women have a history of participation and development in the agriculture, livestock and household activities and keep increasing for every ensuing time. As the farm enterprises had gone more and more diverse, the participation of women in agricultural avocation was gearing up proportionately. The women participation and involvement in agriculture and household activities makes it more significant in terms of its quantitative and qualitative achievements. A latent and implicit but formidable participation of women in the production of rice and its management had been observed in several locations (Mukhopadhyay, 1987). In rural India, women shoulders bear numerous responsibilities right from household to farming activities. As so far the rural social system is concerned, the role of women as rural labour force is inevitable. Also the sharing of power in several decision making processes acquires a different dimension for the women. 'Not only in reality household is a more complex and dynamic social entity which may change its composition and goals over the time as family members and dependents of varying age groups and sexes engage in various activities to meet the specific responsibilities assigned to each. The astounding fact is that in the household decision making process women envisages the perfect role.

Sometimes the hard and committed works done by the women are either being overlooked in face of unsurmountable gender bias and gender oppression. Now the situation so demands for fullest participation in different behavioural processes of their involvement in various socio-cultural settings (Kalhan & Brar, 1967). Thus the present study envisages exploring the various behavioural processes of women's participation relating to different on farm and off farm or household activities.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in some women dairy cooperative societies under Kishan Milk Union-II of North 24 Pargana district in West Bengal. The purposive and random sampling techniques were adapted to draw the sample from the Universe. Kishan Milk Union II was selected purposively. Five PWDCS were selected randomly from Kishan Milk Union II. An exhaustive list of members in PWDCS was prepared. Twenty members from each of the randomly selected five Primary Women Dairy Cooperative Societies under Milk Union were randomly selected as the respondents for the study. The women's participation in several behavioural processes like decision making, planning, perceptual process and interactional process was operationalized and measured as dependent variable with the help of five point rating scale. The thirteen independent variables were operationalized and measured to explain the causal relationship. The data were collected with the help of structured schedule and processed into simple correlation and multiple regression analyses.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Coefficient of correlation between the various predictor variables and the predicted variable had shown the women's participation in different behavioural processes regarding household and farming operations (Table - 1).

Table 1 : Correlation coefficient between different behavioural components and involvement of women and independent variables related to their socio economic characteristics

Correlation coefficient of dependent variable

Independent variables	Planning Process	Decision making process	Perceptual process	Participatory process	Interactional process	Total women's participation in behavioural process
Age (X_1)	0.2860**	0.2799**	0.2823**	0.2865**	0.2873**	0.2882**
Occupation (X_2)	0.0102**	-0.0803**	- 0.1348**	- 0.2251**	- 0.0152**	- 0.1809**
Caste (X_3)	-0.1641**	0.1419**	0.1843**	0.1986**	0.1137**	-0.2337**
Education (X_4)	0.4321**	-0.3777**	0.3923**	0.3943**	-0.3893**	0.3456**
Family size (X_5)	0.1483**	-0.0555**	0.0534**	0.0540**	0.6014**	0.3257**
Income (X_6)	0.3992**	0.4345**	-0.0630**	0.2751**	-0.1462**	0.3765**
Herd size (X_7)	0.2776**	0.2954**	0.2765**	0.1139**	0.0004**	0.2897**
Average Lactation yield (X_8)	0.2923**	0.2785**	0.2984**	0.2885**	-0.3756**	0.2770**
Land holding (X_9)	0.2721**	0.3567**	-0.2786**	0.2889**	-0.3456**	0.3213**
Social participation (X_{10})	0.2789**	0.2897**	-0.2787**	-0.2789**	0.2783**	0.2782**
Mass media exposure (X_{11})	0.2777**	-0.4321**	0.2778**	0.2876**	-0.3999**	0.2899**
Fatalism (X_{12})	-0.1069**	0.1224**	-0.1073**	0.2697**	-0.1329**	-0.0812**
Faith (X_{13})	0.2897**	0.2873**	-0.0421**	-0.0452**	-0.2875**	0.2812**

* Significant at 5% level

** Significant at 1% level

The variable age of the respondents showed a positive and significant association with the women's participation. Generally rational, experienced, thoughtful minded and elderly aged women are likely to contribute favourably towards building up the active participation for exposing themselves in various behavioural processes. The variable education of the respondents showed a positive and significant correlation with the women's participation as because education brought about a desirable change in knowledge, skill and attitude, which in turn led to develop their participation in their behavioural processes.

The variable family size revealed positive and significant association with the women's participation. More positive interaction among the family members might have accelerated the process of participation regarding household and farming operations. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Shahsalani (1990).

The income of the respondent had also positively and significantly associated with the women's participation. Generally, economically sound persons have been more exposed to information and develop cosmopoliteness, which ultimately influence them to participate in various participatory processes relating to behaviour.

The variables land holding, herd size and average lactation yield had positively and significantly correlated with the women's participation. These all are the economic status symbol in rural areas. The higher value of the variables helps to possess progressiveness, innovativeness, modern values and outlooks, which helps to participate in behavioural processes strategically.

Table 2 : Multiple regression analysis of selected independent variable with women's participation in different behavioural processes

Independent variables	Regression coefficient	Standard error
Age (X_1)	1.603*	0.580
Occupation (X_2)	-4.538**	3.783
Caste (X_3)	-1.813*	2.333
Education (X_4)	3.410**	1.913
Family size (X_5)	6.917**	3.066
Income (X_6)	0.213	0.223
Herd size (X_7)	-2.037*	1.230
Average Lactation yield (X_8)	0.001	0.002
Land holding (X_9)	0.632	0.573
Social participation (X_{10})	0.348	0.896
Mass media exposure (X_{11})	-1.069*	1.034
Fatalism (X_{12})	-0.021	0.329
Faith (X_{13})	2.382**	1.714

$R^2 = 0.763$

* Significant at 5% level

** Significant at 1% level

The variable mass-media exposure and social participation also exhibited positive and significant association with the women's participatory process. The exposure to mass-media and participation in social organization both helps to build an information endowment and communication background for better participation in differential behavioural processes. A composite information embededness helps the individual to enjoy a greater credibility which ultimately them towards intensive participation.

The variable faith had also showed a positive and significant correlation with the women's participation. Faith on others usually increases the competency, confidence and knowledge level of individuals which influences to concretise a better communication environment and help the individuals to participate in a better way.

The multiple regression analysis delineated the effect of causal variables on women's participation in behavioural processes. The age, education and family size of the respondents had a positive and significant effect on the participation of women in their behavioural processes.

These three variables generally provide physio-mental strength, knowledge, comprehension, experiences, perception and interactive environment to the individuals, which help them for effective participation in behavioural processes.

The R^2 value being 0.763 implies that all the predictor variables explain 76% of the variations of predicted variables, women's participation in various behavioural processes.

CONCLUSION

The women's participation in behavioural processes of household and farming activities is a composite and complex psychological phenomenon and the appropriate responses occur through the contribution of numerous interactions among the several predictor variables. Hence the study was helped to construct the policy of women's participation in behavioural processes which were adequately explained by the different roles of several socio-personal, socio-economic and socio psychological variables. The study had identified three very important variables viz. age, education and family size of the respondents which had already indicated the area of future intervention and development of women's participation process.

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