

Decision Pattern Among Women Performing Agricultural Activities

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Kota district of Rajasthan to know the decision pattern among those women who perform and involve themselves in each and every activity related to agriculture. The sample of the study was selected randomly from five tehsils of Kota district namely Sangod, Kherabad, Sultanpur, Ladpura and Itawa. A total of 308 farm women who have attended at least three trainings programme organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kota in the year 2008-10 were selected for the study. The result of decision by the rural women pertaining to agriculture production, animal husbandary, horticulture, agriculture engineering and house hold matters were very less inspite of their significant contribution in all the activities. On the basis of data it can be revealed that farm activities like sale and purchase of land, selection of seeds, fertilizers, weedicides, insecticides and taking of loan & advances women's decision on the whole was negligible. The study revealed that women played a major role in the agriculture production while in financial matters the involvement of women was relatively less and the elder members of the family took decisions. Only separated and widow women & those not having young male members in the family were taking the decision related to agriculture matters.

Key words: Farm women; Agriculture production; Training programme; Household matters;

Rural women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and in the allied fields including in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro-social forest and fisheries etc. Though women performed more than four- fifth of agriculture work, their decision were accepted only in less than one- third of the case. Female playing a major or equal role was the highest in the selection of crop variety, while in financial matters, the involvement of females was relatively less. The participation of female labourers are more in operations such as fodder collection, cleaning of cattle shed, milking of animal and preparation of milk products. Female continued to carry on specific farm activities to transplanting, plant protection operation, harvesting and post harvesting along with other work like seed treatment, spraying of insecticides, fungicides, weedicides, winnowing and harvesting is performed by farm women. Therefore the study was conducted to know the women's role in decision making on production, consumption, investment and household matters.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kota district of Rajasthan. There are five Tehsil in Kota District namely Sangod, Kherabad Sultanpur, Ladpura & Itawa. Women from all five Tehsils regularly attend training organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kota. The sample was selected randomly on those women who have attended training from KVK during last 3 years from 2008-10. For studying the extent of decision by rural women in their family, structured interview schedule was administered in the year 2011 on 308 farm women, who have attended at least 3 training programs organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kota. Trainees were those women who have attended trainings of agriculture, animal science, horticulture, agriculture engineering and home science trainings. Age, educational level, exposure to media, their past experience of the training, marital status, type & size of family, land holdings and attendance in the trainings were few variables of the study. For interpretation of data frequencies, percentage, mean and were calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 indicated the decision making pattern of the farm- women in the areas of agriculture and plant protection, animal science, agriculture engineering and horticulture. The data makes it evident that the elder in the family mainly took decisions. This is not surprising because the joint family system is still prevalent where women have no role to play in decision making. *Khanduri, et al (2011)* mentioned that this is a unique situation of the rural Garhwal of Uttarakhand, where women perform more than 80 per cent home and farm activities but their participation in decision-making has been less than 20.91 per cent. It shows that there was a clear-cut gender bias in the society, which explains traditionally subjugated status of women, as well as their role in decision-making process. These gender biases shall improve with the improvement in the education of women in rural areas of Uttarakhand. Middle age groups and above age groups participated more in the decision making process in different areas of agriculture and level of participation was also high as compared to younger age group.

Further analysis of the data revealed that in farm activities like sale and purchase of land, purchase of seeds, fertilizers and weedicides, insecticides and taking of loan and advances, women's decision on the whole was almost negligible. *Mishra et al (2009)* also found out that husbands consulted always their wives in respect

of the practices namely application of manure in the field, type of vegetable, harvesting time and grading. *Gondaliya, et al (2012)* mentioned that in case of all of major activities such as sowing practices, nutrient management, crop protection and harvesting and post harvest activities majority of the farm women have taken joint decision with family members or with husband while independent female decision was negligible. Discussions were made with them regarding the selection of seeds, type of pesticides and time of harvesting but decisions were mainly taken by men.

This table also indicated the decision making pattern in the area of animal science. Less than half (42.86) per cent of farm- women have given their opinion that elders played a major role in taking decisions regarding artificial insemination followed by calving, food and vaccination of the animals. Farm- women performed maximum work related to animal care but they were not involved in decision making process. It ultimately affects their participation in the training. Smt. Ramkali (Dhakadkhedi), 32 years, accepted that "In spite of my contribution in all the activities at home related to animal care I was neither involved in any discussion, nor my opinion was taken into consideration". The decision was always taken by the elders in the family. Only separated and widow or those who were not having young male members in the family were taking the decisions related to agricultural matters. Those who were working on

Table 1: Decision making in the area of Agriculture / Plant Protection / Animal Sc. / Agriculture Eng / Horticulture (N = 308)

Categories	Selection of seeds	Quality of seeds	Type of pesticides	Time of harvesting
Only Self	70(22.73)	60(19.48)	71 (23.05)	59(19.16)
Joint	84(27.27)	94(30.52)	85(27.60)	85(27.60)
Elder	104(33.77)	114(37.02)	110(35.71)	120(38.96)
Not Applicable	50(16.23)	40(12.98)	42(13.64)	44(14.28)
Categories	Vaccination	Calving of animals	AI	Food for animals
Only Self	49(15.91)	49(15.91)	47(15.26)	50(16.24)
Joint	95(30.84)	99(32.14)	99(32.14)	101(32.79)
Elder	124(40.26)	128(41.56)	132(42.86)	133(43.18)
Not Applicable	40(12.99)	32(10.39)	30(9.74)	24(7.79)
Categories	Maintenance of tractor/ Pumpsset	Drudgery reducing implements	Fertilizer in fruit plants	Distance in two plants
Only Self	48(15.58)	45(14.61)	10(3.25)	19(6.17)
Joint	108(35.06)	105(34.09)	80(25.97)	89(28.90)
Elder	133(43.18)	138(44.81)	190(61.69)	172(55.84)
Not Applicable	19(6.18)	20(6.49)	28(9.09)	28(9.09)

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate per centage.

daily wages, it was not applicable to them. Table also revealed the decision making pattern of the farm-women in the area of agricultural engineering. Regarding the maintenance of tractor and pump-set, in 43.18 per cent families the decision was taken by the elders. Around 45 per cent of farm- women were of the opinion that their husband discussed with them what type of agricultural tools to be used for sowing, leveling, and threshing of the crops but maintenance of this machinery, implements and equipments were decided by the elders in the family. It was not applicable to those women who were not working in fields. According to *Dawit et al (2012)*, the roles of rural women in final decision making on purchase/sell of farm implements was quite minimum which reported by 6 per cent of the respondents. For selecting the drudgery reducing implements 45 per cent women were taking their own decision and purchased them according to their own choice.

Similarly the decision making pattern of respondents in the area of horticulture, regarding Kitchen gardening 52.93 per cent of farm- women agreement showed that decisions were taken by the elders in the family. The elders decided the time and quantity of fertilizers to be used followed by development of kitchen gardening, distance between two plants and the width of pits. It showed that technical talks were not discussed to the female members in the family. It was not applicable to those farm- women who were not having land for planting fruit plants and developing kitchen gardening.

As indicated in Table 2 regarding the decision making pattern in the area of home science, more than half (50.97%) of farm- women were taking self -decision for daily preparation of meals followed by preservation

Table 2. Decision making in Home Science (N = 308)

Categories	Preservation of fruits & veg.	Food to be cooked	Income of the family	Saving in the family
Only Self	148 (48.05)	157 (50.98)	151 (49.02)	130 (42.21)
Joint	105 (34.09)	102 (33.12)	106 (34.02)	106 (34.42)
Elder	45 (14.61)	49 (15.90)	51 (16.56)	50 (16.23)
NA	10 (3.25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	22 (7.14)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate per centage.

of fruits and vegetables (48%) in the season and income of the family (49%). It showed that although women earned and saved the money by working in the fields but their decisions were still centered to the kitchen only. Further analysis of the data revealed that education plays an important role in the decision making pattern in the family. Women have accepted that income of the family from all the sources were discussed jointly but the amount of saving and means of saving were decided by elders in the family. The farm- women played a major role in the agriculture production, while in financial matters the involvement of females was relatively less.

The result in Table 3 showed correlation between dependent variables viz. knowledge, adoption of advanced technologies in agriculture and improvement in the skills of farm- women with set of independent variables viz. age, educational level, marital status, type of family, size of the family, land holdings, past experience of trainings, exposure to media, contacts with experts, attendance in the activities of the center and perceived needs of the farm- women for advanced technologies of agriculture, which played an important role in decision making ability of the women in the family.

The results revealed that positive correlation was found in knowledge with age, educational level, marital status, family size, past experience of trainings, exposure to media, contacts with experts and perceived needs of farm- women. It indicated that if the rural women were young, educated up to at least primary level, exposed to different media and perceived the need of training then it would affect their knowledge, which might be due to their more energetic and enthusiastic attitude and free time to learn new aspects of agriculture, which ultimately leads them to be more capable of taking decision. The findings also revealed that the knowledge of the women was significantly correlated with their age, educational level, exposure to media and their past experience of training at 1 and 5 per cent level of significance. It showed that although women were having knowledge but the family members did not give them weightage to them to include in decision making.

The result showed that independent variables viz. age, educational level, marital status, exposure to media and contacts with experts were positively correlated with the adoption of advanced technologies of agriculture. It indicates that young married women who were exposed to T.V. and radio and had some contacts

Table 3, Correlation between Knowledge, Adoption and Improvement in skills with Independent Variables of women in decision making (N = 308)

Independent Variables	Knowledge	Adoption	Advance in skills
Age	.02178**	.7356**	.10605
Education	.11915*	.00535	-.01588
Marital Status	.04032	.08134	.04877
Type of Family	-.04972	-.02659	-.04033
Size of Family	.05419	-.00297	-.01694
Land holdings	-.07516	-.01772	-.03335
Past experience of trainings	.16178**	-.12245*	-.02491
Exposure to media	.36266**	.04866	.09045
Contacts with experts	.05737	.01017	.02049
Attendance in activities	-.05169	-.51720**	-.45282**
Perceived needs of farmwomen	.05541	-.29431**	-.21591**

Legend: *Significant. at 5% level and

**Significant at 1% level

with the extension personnel, scientists, agriculture supervisors etc. adopt the advanced technologies of agriculture more easily than others. Findings revealed the significant correlation in the age, past experience of training, attendance in different activities of the center and perceived needs of farm- women with the adoption of advanced technologies of agriculture at 5% and 1% level of significance.

The findings indicated that improvement in skills of farm- women was significantly correlated with their attendance in the activities of the center and their

perceived needs at 1% level of significance. This table also showed the positive relationship between improvement in the skills and age, marital status, exposure to media and contacts with experts. It indicates that young, married women exposed to T.V. & radio, conceptually listened the educational talks delivered by the scientist of the centre and had intimacy with experts might be more motivated and showed improvement in their skills, which definitely give them exposure to take decision.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from the above study that the amount of saving and means of saving were decided by elders in the family. The farm- women played a major role in the agriculture production. They got knowledge, skill and adopted the technologies of agriculture while in financial matters the involvement of females was relatively less and the elder family members took decisions. Only separated and widow or those who were not having young male members in the family were taking the decisions related to agricultural matters. It could also be concluded that those women were young, experienced and those participating in each activity were more capable to take decision related to agriculture aspects. In the women training programme, it is essential to train and motivate adult women in the initial stage because, they are participating in decision making or they are decision maker in the family and would not permit young women to go out from their village, unless they liked and relish the situation and the programme.

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