

Participation of Rural Women in Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

In Jharkhand vegetable covers about 81.55% area and 84.57% production of total horticultural crops with productivity of 15.35 tonnes/ha. Jharkhand has lower productivity of vegetables as compared to all India average of 16.18 tonnes / ha. Bhindi, brinjal, cauliflower, cabbage, tomato, onion, potato and french beans are major vegetable crops grown. Rural women of Koylanchal participate in various practices of vegetable cultivation. In vegetable cultivation, women perform a variety of tasks both in cultivation as well as marketing. Practices related to vegetable cultivation have now been considered as a family enterprise in which husband and wife participate to share work and pleasure both. Thus, it is expected that all decisions related to practices of vegetable cultivation are also taken jointly. The study focused on rural women of Koylanchal in what extent they participate in decision making process. Women of Koylanchal of low economic category were found to participate in more practices related to vegetable cultivation. Formation of self help group, Mahila Mandal need to be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skill, so that their participation in various practices of vegetable cultivation will not only remove drudgery and also provide adequate nutrient supplements. Thus, there is a great need for involving rural women of Koylanchal in vegetable cultivation as cash crop and their skills in the activities which they are vitally concerned.

Key words: Participation; Decision making; Rural women;

Rural women of Koylanchal participate in various practices of vegetable cultivation. In the vegetable growers, women perform a variety of tasks both in cultivation as well as marketing. With the advent of science and technology, the rural society is witnessing unprecedented changes in all spheres of life; Consequently, the members of families involved in vegetable cultivation are called upon to make certain adjustments which involve series of decisions. Practices related to vegetable cultivation have now been considered as a family enterprise in which husband and wife participate to share work and pleasure both. Thus, it is expected that all decisions related to practice of vegetable cultivation are also taken jointly. So, a study was undertaken to know how far rural women of Koylanchal participate in decision making process.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Koylanchal with two-stage random sampling. Initially a total of 10 villages were selected from 20 villages which are exposed with

various extension programmes of Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Dhanbad. A list of the women involved in the practices related vegetable growing from each village was prepared and 20 percent of the names from each list were selected at random.

The selected women were interviewed with a structured schedule developed for this purpose. To delineate the performance of women, their actual behaviour in vegetable growing activities and decision making was studied considering their performance expected to be performed in respective fields. Each women was to indicate the frequency with which she performed each item on a four point continuum viz. most often, sometimes, rarely and never. Total score of each item was calculated based on score assigned to these categories which was multiplied by the weight of that role given according to rank. The relationship between the performance and certain socio-personal and socio-economic variables was computed through zero order correlation co-efficient. The data thus obtained were statistically analyzed.

RESEULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, 14 practices related to vegetable growing have been identified in which the women of Koylanchal actively participated.

Table 1. Participation of women in vegetable production

S. No.	Practice	F	%
1.	Seed storage	105	52.5
2.	Nursery management	127	63.5
3.	Seedling preparation	57	28.5
4.	Field preparation	57	28.5
5.	Transplantation	83	41.5
6.	Irrigation	25	12.5
7.	Weeding	81	40.5
8.	Staking	16	12.5
9.	Plant protection	9	04.5
10.	Harvesting	33	16.5
11.	Grading	81	40.5
12.	Packaging	7	07.5
13.	Marketing	29	14.5
14.	Seed production	15	07.5

Participation of women: Table 1 reveals that rural women participated in larger numbers in the practices like nursery management (63.5%), seed storage (52.5%), transplantation (41.5%), weeding (40.5%), grading (40.5%).

Decision making process : Table 2 shows that there are five ways in which vegetable cultivators generally take decisions about various practices related to vegetable production. Majority of the vegetable cultivators decide on their own about the area of various vegetable to be grown. This is followed by the decisions

to determine the amount to be marketed. In case of women, majority take their own decision towards selecting variety of pickle to be prepared, since pickles are used for domestic consumption. In regards to decisions taken by men and women together, the highest percentage of responses were found in the case of seedling preparation (51%) and field preparation (49%) followed by taking loan (45%). From these findings it is clear that involvement of rural women of Koylanchal is relatively higher in those practices which are consider for house wives to perform. Further, 39% of men decide the matter concerning the use and quality of manure to be used. Friends, neighbors and local leaders were consulted (33%) mostly while taking decisions on type and quality of manure for cultivation.

Consultation in decision making : Table 3 reveals 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. The highest percentage of responses were found in the case of seedling preparation (49%) followed by taking loan (45%). It indicates that wives have always been consulted for those activities in which they participate largely.

Wives have been consulted seldom in the activities like field preparation and transplantation. But in the practice like type of vegetable, manure quality, harvesting etc. wives mostly have not been consulted by their husbands in which husbands took their independent decisions probably these need exposure to the information of cosmopolite source.

Table 2. Distribution of women in the process of decision making.

Sr. No.	Practices	Husband	Wife alone	Husband & wife	Relatives	Others*
1.	Seed Storage	54 (27)	62 (31)	78 (39)	4 (2)	2 (1)
2.	Nursery management	42 (21)	92 (46)	56 (28)	6 (3)	4 (2)
3.	Seedling preparation	66 (33)	24 (12)	102 (51)	4 (2)	6 (3)
4.	Field preparation	36 (18)	52 (26)	108 (49)	8 (4)	6 (3)
5.	Transplantation	88 (44)	24 (12)	66 (33)	8 (4)	14 (7)
6.	Irrigation	46 (23)	34 (17)	86 (43)	24 (12)	10 (5)
7.	Weeding	70 (35)	16 (8)	64 (32)	10 (5)	40 (20)
8.	Staking	12 (6)	112 (56)	36 (18)	22 (11)	18 (9)
9.	Plant protection	74 (37)	8 (4)	72 (36)	18 (9)	28 (14)
10.	Harvesting	56 (28)	14 (7)	68 (34)	26 (13)	36 (18)
11.	Grading	62 (31)	10 (5)	56 (28)	16 (8)	56 (28)
12.	Packing	50 (25)	22 (11)	84 (42)	32 (16)	12 (6)
13.	Marketing	60 (30)	32 (16)	88 (44)	16 (8)	4 (2)
14.	Seed production	80 (40)	6 (3)	20 (10)	62 (31)	30 (15)

* Friends, Neighbour and local leaders

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to frequency of consultation in decision making.

S. No.	Practices	AC	SC	NC
1.	Type of vegetable	84 (42)	36 (18)	80 (40)
2.	Seedling preparation	98 (49)	38 (19)	102 (51)
3.	Field preparation	32 (16)	96 (48)	94 (47)
4.	Transplantation	28 (14)	88 (44)	78 (37)
5.	Application of manure/fertilizer	112 (56)	64 (32)	24 (12)
6.	Harvesting time	82 (41)	35 (17)	85 (43)
7.	Grading	66 (33)	16 (8)	108 (54)
8.	Taking loan	90 (45)	30 (15)	82 (41)

AC=Always consulted SC=Seldom consulted
 NC=Never consulted

Relationship between performance in practices and decision making and certain variables: Table 4 reveals that out of the 10 variables only six were significantly associated with performance in the practice related to vegetable cultivation. The variables caste, education, socio-economic status and urban contact were negatively related and Social-participation and contact with subject matter specialist of KVK were found to be positively related. This indicates that women belonging to Kurmi caste with lower socio-economic status, less formal education and having less urban contact performed various activities more efficiently in comparison to other women. The variable viz., caste, age, education and family norm were negatively related but social participation was positively related. This indicates that women belonging to middle aged group Kurmi caste having less formal education and possessing

nuclear family performed better role in decision making process than other women. *Sharma and Singh (1970), Mukherjee et.al, (1973), Rani et. al, (1982) and Sharma et. al, (1970)* also reported that women belonging to middle age group having no formal education, coming from lower caste having less urban contact, possessing small land holding, performed farm operations efficiently in larger proportions than others.

Table 4: Correlation between performance of women with socio economic variables

S.No.	Variables	Performance*	Performance**
1.	Age	0.0358	-0.0265*
2.	Caste	-0.0408**	-0.0032**
3.	Education	-0.0740**	-0.0610*
4.	Family size	0.2230	0.2427
5.	Family norm	0.1473	-0.1148**
6.	Occupation	0.2100	0.1290
7.	SE status	-0.1924*	0.0867
8.	Social participation	0.0412**	0.0364*
9.	Urban contact	-0.0175*	0.0573
10.	Contact with KVK	0.2300*	0.1413

* Performance in vegetable cultivation activity
 ** Performance in decision making process

CONCLUSION

Women of Koylanchal of low economic categories were found to participate in more practices related to vegetable cultivation whereas women of high and medium economic categories were found to participate more in allied activities. Formation of SHGs, Mahila Mandal need to be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skill, so that their participation in various practices of vegetable cultivation will not only remove drudgery and supplement nutrient requirement. Thus there is a great need for involving rural women of Koylanchal in vegetable cultivation as cash crop and upgrading their skills in the activities which they are vitally concerned.

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