



E-ISSN: 2278-4136
P-ISSN: 2349-8234
JPP 2018; SP4: 124-127

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(Special Issue- 4)
International Conference on Food Security and
Sustainable Agriculture
(Thailand on 21-24 December, 2018)

Farm women's role in decision making process in vegetable cultivation operation in Saahibganj District of Jharkhand

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Abstract

Decision making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities. Every decision making process produces a final choice, which may or may not prompt action. In other word, decision making is the process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values, preferences and beliefs of the decision maker. The women's contribution to the farming sector in respect of participation and decision making has largely been ignored. Though women performed more than four- fifth of agricultural work, their decision were accepted only less than one-third of the case. The present study was conducted in Udhwa block of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. A list of vegetables growing villages was prepared. Out of these only five villages were selected randomly due to major vegetable growing area. A representative sample of 110 vegetable growers was drowing from the selected villages. During the research study, it was observed that majority of farm women had always taken decision making regarding selection of crop, quantity of seed, sowing time of seed, weeding, use of manures, harvesting, picking and seed storage. They were rarely involved in decision making regarding nursery management, field preparation, selection of variety, irrigation, seed treatment and marketing and use of fertilizers, plant protection measures as it required more scientific knowledge skill.

Keywords: Decision making, Farm women, Vegetable cultivation etc.

Introduction

Decision making is the process of consciously choosing courses of action from available alternatives and integration of them for the purpose of achieving the desired goal. It is well known fact that the success of rural development process largely depends upon policy maker because of increasing imbalance generation out of development the participation of people at large irrespective of sex. The problem of involving women's participation in the development process is now catching the attention of planner's process. Although the legal and constitutional provision for equal status they have been traditional put in a weak position in Indian society and have subordinate role to play. Thus, women's participation in decision-making is the prerogative of the males as head of the farm families. It also appeared that any decision taken was strongly influenced by the attitude and opinion of their female partners. Therefore, a proper understanding of the complexity of the decision-making process in rural farm families and ascertaining the role of farm women in the process will help in tonning up agricultural, vegetables cultivation, modernization in the country as well as transformation of rural family life. Women's participation in the decision –making process has a significant impact on their improved status and greater role in society. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. However, the nature and extent of their involvement differ with the variations in agro-production system. The mode of female participation in agricultural production varies with the land-owning status of farm households. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. The women in the backbone of agriculture workforce but worldwide her work had mostly been unpaid. In the vegetable growers, women perform a variety of tasks both in cultivation as well as marketing.

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Methodology

The present study was conducted in Udhwa block of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. A list of vegetables growing villages was prepared. Out of these only five villages were selected randomly due to major vegetable growing area. A representative sample of 110 vegetable growers was drawn from the selected villages of the block and data were collected with the help of an pretested interview schedule. The

collected data was classified and tabulation and interpretation were made with the help of statistical tools like per cent age, average, and correlation co-efficient were applied.

Result and Discussion

Socio-personal and economic profile of the respondents

The socio personal and economic profile of respondents was studied in depth, and is presented in following Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-personal and economic profile of the respondents

Sl.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Range
1.	Age group of respondents				
	18 -26	44	58.66	31.69	18-45
	27-35	23	30.66		
	36 -45	08	10.66		
2.	Education of respondents				
	Illiterate	27	36.00	2.10	
	Can read only	08	10.66		
	Can read & write	12	16.00		
	Primary	06	8.00		
	Middle	07	9.33		
	High	10	13.33		
	Above matric	05	6.66		
3.	Caste				
	General	30	40.00		
	Backward	42	56.00		
	(Annexure-I, Annexure-II) Schedule caste	03	4.00		
4.	Type of family				
	Nuclear	40	53.33		
	Joint	35	46.33		
5.	Size of the family				
	Small (upto 4 members)	14	18.66		
	Medium (5-8 members)	30	40.00	7.6	
	Large (more than 8 members)	31	41.33		
6.	Occupation of respondent				
	Agriculture labourer	3	4.00		
	Caste occupation	2	2.66		
	Business/independent	4	5.33		
	profession Service	3	4.00		
	Housewife	75	100.00		
7.	Size of land holding				
	Land less	27	36.00		
	Marginal (upto 2.50 acres)	31	41.33		
	Small (2.51 to 5.00 acres)	14	18.66	3.39	
	Medium (5.1 to 10.00 acres)	03	4.00		
	Large (more than 10.00 acres)	0	0.00		
8.	Livestock possession				
	No animal	19	25.33		
	1 to 4 animals	53	70.66	1.41	
	5to 8 animals	3	4.00		
9.	Family income per annum				
	Below poverty line 11,000	1	1.33		
	Very low 11,001 to 25,000	11	14.66		
	Low 25,001 to 50,009	43	57.44	6026.66	
	Medium 50,001 to 75,000	13	17.33		
	High 75,0001 and above	7	9.33		
10.	Type of house				
	Katcha	30	40.00		
	Mixed	12	16.00		
	Pucca	33	44.00		
11.	Social participation				
	No membership	31	41.33		
	Member of one organization	32	42.66	0.74	
	Member of more than one	12	16.00		
	Organization				
12.	Cosmopolitaness				
	Low	33	44.00		
	Medium	36	48.00	4.33	
	High	06	8.00		

Age

It is clear from the table I that a maximum of 58.66 per cent of the respondents are in the age group of 18- 26. The lowest percentage of respondents is in the age group of 36-45. Thus, on the while, 90 per cent respondents are not more than 35 years. The table further indicates that mean age of the respondents is 31.69.

Education of Respondents

All the selected respondents were grouped into seven categories on the basis of education i.e. illiterate, can read only, can read and write, primary, middle, high and above matric. The table 1 reveals that 36.00 per cent of the respondents were illiterate 16.00 percent respondents can read and write, 13.33 per cent respondents of them were matriculate followed by 10.66 per cent can read only, 9.33 per cent and 8.0 per cent respondents who were educated upto middle and primary level respectively. While only 6.66 per cent of them were above matric. Thus, altogether only 20 per cent of the respondents are matriculate and above. The literacy among the respondents is not very encouraging.

Caste

Caste was another variable under study. More specifically, respondents were classified as General, Backward caste (Annexure-I, Annexure-II) and schedule caste categories. Frequency distribution of respondents on the basis appears in Table 1.

It is clear from the table 1 that 56.00 per cent belong to backward caste. Backward caste includes both annexure-I and annexure-II. 40.00 per cent of the respondents belong to General Caste. But, representation of other castes is also conspicuous as represented by 4 per cent of schedule caste

Type of family

Family type is one of the important social factors which affects the type of activity as well as the decision making process in the family. It has been assumed that nuclear family makes decision more quickly and takes more responsibilities and risk as compared to joint family resulting in larger participation of nuclear family Therefore, this variable was also included in the study. Conforming this fact the table 1 reveals that a majority of 53.33 per cent respondents belonged to nuclear type of family and rest 46.33 per cent had joint family showing the declining trend of joint family system even among rural society.

Size of Family

An observation of this table 1 indicates that 41.33 per cent of the respondent have medium sized family i.e. having more than 8 members in the family. While 40.00 per cent have medium and only 18.66 per cent have small family. Hence it can be inferred that majority of respondents have large and medium sized family.

Occupation of the respondents

It has been revealed from the table 1 that all most all respondents had engagement in their household activities, while 5.33 per cent of them were also engages as Business/independent profession. It was followed by 4.0 per cent who were service holders. 4.0 per cent respondents engaged in agricultural labourer and only 2.66 per cent of them were engaged in their respective caste occupation.

Size of land holding

It is observed in the table 1 that majority of the respondents

(41.33 per cent) possessed marginal size of land while (36.00 per cent) was landless i.e. they did not have land at all for cultivation. It was followed by 18.66 and 5.33 per cent respondents who were from small and medium farm families respectively. None of the respondents have large size of land holding.

Livestock possession

It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents (70.66 per cent) possessed 1 to 4 animals. While 25.33 per cent of them didn't possess any animal like cow, buffalo, goat and hen. Only 4.00 per cent of them possess 5 to 8 animals. Hence it can be concluded that most of the beneficiaries were having 1 to 4 animals under their possession.

Family income per annum

The income of the respondent's family ranged from 11,000 to more than 75001. Maximum percentage of the respondents (57.33 per cent) belonged to low income group followed by 17.33 per cent respondent belonged to medium income group. 14.66 per cent respondents belong to very low income group while 9.33 per cent respondents had their annual income ranged from 75001 and above. Only 1.33 per cent respondent had their annual income up to 11,000. Hence it is concluded that more than half of the respondents were having income level 25,001 to 50,000 per annum.

Type of house

From the table 1 it is clear that 44.0 per cent respondents had pucca type of house followed by 40.00 per cent respondents had Katcha type of house. Only 16.00 per cent respondents had mixed type of house. The result revealed that most of the respondents having their better house.

Social participation

Participation of respondents had been seen in different organization such as Panchayat, Co-operative society, youth club, Mahila Mandal and others. The findings revealed that majority of respondents (42.66 per cent) were the members of one organization. 41.33 per cent respondents were not the members of any social organization only 16.00 per cent respondents were members of more than one organization. Therefore, it can be said that the amount of social participation among the majority of respondents are only in one organization.

Cosmo politeness

It can be observed from the table that 48.00 and 44.00 per cent respondents had medium and low levels of Cosmo politeness score respectively. Only 8.00 per cent respondents had high level of Cosmo politeness scores. The mean of 4.33 is indicative of the fact that the farmers in general had low level of Cosmo politeness. Thus, it can be inferred that almost all of the respondents were having low to medium level of Cosmo politeness. This might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were illiterate, low monthly income who might not be having access to mass media sources such as magazine, radio, newspaper etc.

Table 2: Distribution of farm women according to their extent of decision making

SL.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to16)	35	31.81
2.	Medium (17 to 22)	60	54.54
3.	High (Above 22)	15	13.63
	Total	110	100.00

The data presented in table 2 indicates the distribution of respondents according to their role of decision making. It is clear from data that out of the total 110 respondents, 54.54 per cent had medium role in decision making, 31.81 per cent had low and 13.63 per cent had high role in decision making. Thus, it can be concluded that majority 54.54 per cent respondents had medium role in decision making process related to vegetable operation.

Table 3: Distribution of farm women according to their extent of decision making process related to vegetable cultivation operations

Sl. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Nursery management	49	44.54	X
2.	Land preparation	26	23.63	XV
3.	Selection of seed	65	59.09	VII
4.	Seed treatment	95	86.36	IV
5.	Sowing time of seed	99	90.00	III
6.	Gap filling	89	80.90	V
7.	Plant protection measures	71	64.54	VI
8.	Irrigation	41	37.27	XII
9.	Weeding	111	100.90	II
10.	Use of manure	48	43.63	XI
11.	Use of fertilizer	58	52.72	IX
12.	Use of insecticide and pesticide	39	35.45	XIII
13.	Picking	115	104.54	I
14.	Transportation	59	53.63	VIII
15.	Marketing	32	29.09	VIV

It is evident from the table 3 that 104.54 per cent women were participating in the picking practices, as compared to other activities in the farm operations followed by weeding 100.90 per cent, sowing time of seed 90.00 per cent, seed treatment 86.36 per cent, gap filling 80.90 per cent, plant protection measures 64.54 per cent, selection of seed 59.09 per cent, transportation 53.63 per cent, nursery management 44.54 per cent, use of manure 43.63 per cent, irrigation 37.27 per cent, uses of insecticide and pesticide 52.72 per cent, marketing 29.09 per cent and land preparation 23.63 per cent. This findings are also supported by the findings of Singh, D.K., Thakur, P.S., Singh, D. and Kumar, A. (2015) ^[6]. "Role of decision making process of farm women regarding vegetable operation." Vol. 51, No. 3&4, (62-65)

Table 4: Relationship of selected socio-personal and economic variables with decision making process of farm women in vegetable cultivation operation

Variables	Value of correlation coefficient (r)
1. Age (X ₁)	-0.3138**
2. Education of respondents (X ₂)	0.3098**
3. Caste (X ₄)	0.0070
4. Family type (X ₅)	0.2194
5. Family size (X ₆)	0.1166
6. Occupation of respondents (X ₇)	0.1254
7. Land size (X ₉)	0.2810**
8. House type (X ₁₀)	-0.1149
9. Possession of animals (X ₁₁)	-0.0455
10. Social participation (X ₁₂)	0.6082**
11. Income (X ₁₃)	0.6924**
12. Cosmo politeness (X ₄)	0.4585**

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

The table4 reveals that out of twelve variables studied, as many as six variables were found statistically correlated with

the decision making process of farm women in vegetable cultivation operation These variables are age, education of respondents, land size, social participation, income and cosmo politeness. Further, all the six correlated variables were found to be highly significant at 0.01 level of probability and 0.05 level of probability with the decision making process of farm women in vegetable cultivation operation

Conclusion

The study about the role of farm women in decision making process related to vegetable cultivation operation concluded that majority of the farm women had moderate participation in decision making process, related to vegetable cultivation operations. During the research study, it was observed that majority of farm women had always taken decision regarding selection of crop, quantity of seed, sowing time of seed, weeding, gap filling, harvesting, picking and seed storage. The areas in which farm women rarely involved in decision making are nursery management, field preparation, selection of variety, irrigation, seed treatment, marketing and use of fertilizer and manure, plant protection measures and use of insecticide and pesticide as it required more scientific knowledge and skill.

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