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## Decision making behaviour of farm women in paddy cultivation of Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

Women are involved both in production as well as in processing of paddy crops. The role of farm women in paddy cultivation practices is remarkable. They are involved in most of the decision making activities in paddy cultivation practices. Hence, the study on 'decision making behaviour of farm women was taken up with the objective to study their extent of decision-making in paddy cultivation and to identify their constraints in the decision making activities. The study was conducted in Orathanadu and Thiruvonam blocks of Orathanadu Taluk in Thanjavur District with sample of 120 farm women selected based on proportionate random sampling procedure. Extent of decision-making nature, majority of the farm women were found to be in medium level of decision making in paddy cultivation aspects

**Keywords:** Farm women, decision-making behavior and paddy cultivation

### Introduction

Decision making is the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to solve a specific problem. Decision making is the process of making choices by setting goals and gathering information. Decisions need to be capable of being implemented, whether on a personal or organizational level. Women play key roles in agriculture and allied fields. It is estimated that women are responsible for 70.00 per cent of actual farm work and constitute up to 60.00 per cent of the farming population (Choudhary and Singh 2003) <sup>[3]</sup>. Women participation in the decision making process has a significant impact on their improvement status and greater role in society (Begum 2002) <sup>[2]</sup>. The participation is potentially important to bring equality between women and men in order to achieve sustainable development (Hindin, 2000; Musokotwane, 2001) <sup>[4, 5]</sup>.

Women must be given full chance to participate in decision making as they are actively engaged in home and farm activities. Women's active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development of the country. The government has been implementing various programmes for women such as soil and water conservation, nursery management, dairy development, social forestry, sericulture, mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, lac cultivation etc. in order to strengthen the women sector and to make them confident and enhance their decision making ability. Agricultural women face several problems while taking decisions on various farm operations. Survey was undertaken to identify the problems confronted by the agricultural women while performing the farm operations by various researchers. The present study will throw light on the decision-making behaviour of farm women and constraints faced by the women in making decisions for different agricultural operations in paddy cultivation.

Women laborers' participation in crop production is not marginal or insignificant. Priyanga (2013) <sup>[6]</sup>. Observed that majority (43.33 per cent) of the respondents belonged to low level decision making category in farm activities of the paddy cultivation. Abhilashsharma *et.al* (2014) <sup>[1]</sup>. Indicated that the higher number of farm women (58.33 per cent) were in low category of decision making. The need for a detailed study on their nature of decision making and constraints of farm women in making decision in crop production and off-farm activities was felt to empower the rural women. By considering these in mind, the present investigation was taken up to study the extent of decision making behaviour of farm women in paddy cultivation.

### Methodology

Orathanadu and Thiruvonam blocks of Thanjavur district were selected for the study. A list of villages of both of the two selected blocks was obtained from the concerned Block Development Officers. The women population in these villages was also obtained. Based on the highest women population, six villages from each block were identified for the study.

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A sample size of 120 was fixed for the study considering the limitations of time and other resources. Based on the proportionate random sampling method, one hundred and twenty respondents were identified from the selected twelve villages. To assess the extent of decision, the respondents in the study area were asked under three dimensions namely self- decision, collective decision, forced decision by elder male members / husband. The score assigned to assess the extent of participation was as follows. Self- decision-3, Collective decision-2 and Forced decision- 1.

The results obtained from the above study as well as discussion have been summarized under following headings

### Overall decision making behaviour

It is observed from Table 1 that about three-fourth (72.50 per cent) of the farm women belonged to medium level of decision- making category in farm technology of the paddy cultivation while about one-fifth (19.17 per cent) of the respondents fell under low level category and about one-tenth (8.33 per cent) of the respondents fell under high level decision making category.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to their overall decision making behaviour of farm women in paddy cultivation n=120

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	23	19.17
2	Medium	87	72.50
3	High	10	8.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is to be noted that most of the farm operations in the study area are invariably decided by the male members in the family. Though female members are involved in almost all farm activities in paddy cultivation with medium level of decision-making role was performed. Because decision is normally done by male members in paddy cultivation, illiteracy of farm women, medium level of self-confidence, lesser urban contact, lesser women empowerment and increased home making activities might be the reasons for the low decision – making nature of women in various farm activities.

### Practice wise decision making behaviour of farm women paddy cultivation technology

**Table 2:** Practice wise decision -making behaviour of farm women in paddy cultivation n=120

S. No	Technology	Decision making					
		Self-decision		Collective decision		Forced decision by eldest male/ husband	
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
I	Season	56	46.66	30	25.00	34	28.33
II	Selection of varieties	23	19.16	43	35.83	54	45.00
III	Seed treatment						
	Mean per cent		27.49		25.41		47.08
IV	Time of sowing	69	57.50	34	28.33	17	14.16
V	Nursery management						
i	Fertilizer management for nursery						
	Mean per cent		63.83		21.83		14.33
VI	Main field preparation						
	Mean per cent		78.75		14.58		6.66
VII	Irrigation management						
	Mean per cent		45.83		28.75		25.41
VIII	Fertilizer management for main field						
	Mean per cent		27.50		36.94		35.56
IX	Weed management						
	Mean per cent		45.83		20.83		33.33
X	Pest management						
	Mean per cent		20.56		40.83		38.61
XI	Disease management						
	Mean per cent		21.66		35.83		42.49
XII	Harvesting						
	Mean per cent		52.08		28.33		19.58
XIII	Post-harvest operations						
	Mean per cent		29.72		42.08		28.19
XIV	Marketing	9	7.50	21	17.50	90	75.00

With regard to the 'Selection of season for paddy cultivation', decision by the farm women was followed in majority of the farm families (46.66 per cent) followed by decision by the farm male members (28.33 per cent) and collective decision is employed in 25.00 per cent of the farm families.

With regard to the 'Selection of paddy varieties', the decision by the farm men was employed in majority (45.00 per cent) of farm families, followed by collective decision employed by the farm families (35.83 per cent) and decision by the female members (19.16 per cent).

With regard to the 'Seed treatment', decision by majority of the male members (47.08 per cent) followed by decision of

the farm women (27.49 per cent) and collective decision employed by 25.41 per cent farm families was adopted.

With regard to 'Time of sowing', decision by about fifty per cent of farm women (57.50 per cent) followed by collective decision by the employed by 28.33 per cent of the farm families and decision by the male members 14.16 per cent was adopted.

With regard to the decision-making ability of 'Nursery management', more than half of the decisions are by farm women (63.83 per cent) followed by collective decision employed by 21.83 per cent of farm families and decision by the male members in (14.83 per cent) families in nursery management.

In 'Main field preparation', decision by the more than three-fourth of farm women (78.75 per cent) followed by collective decision by 14.58 per cent farm families and decision by male members of 6.66 per cent was followed.

In 'Irrigation management', about half of the respondents (45.83 per cent) adopted self-decisions followed by collective decision employed by 28.75 per cent of farm families and decision by farm men (25.41 per cent).

With regard to the 'Fertilizer management for main field', collective decision was employed in majority of the farm families (36.94 per cent), followed by decision by farm male members (35.56 per cent) and decision by the female members (27.50 per cent).

In 'Weed management', decision by the farm women was followed in majority of the farm families (45.83 per cent), followed by decision of male members (33.33 per cent) and collective decision employed by farm families (20.83 per cent).

With regard to the 'Pest management', collective decision was employed in more than half of the farm families (40.83 per cent), followed by decision by the farm men (38.61 per cent) and decision by farm women (20.56 per cent).

In 'Disease management', decision making was done by most of the farm men (42.50 per cent) followed by collective decision employed by farm families (35.83 per cent) and decision by the farm women (21.66 per cent).

With regard to the 'Harvesting', decision is done more than fifty per cent of farm women (52.08 per cent), followed by collective decision employed by 28.33 per cent farm families and decision by the farm men 19.58 per cent. In the case of 'Post harvest operations', collective decision was employed in majority of the farm families (42.08 per cent) followed by the decision by the farm women (29.72 per cent) and decision by the male members (28.19 per cent).

In case of 'Marketing', decisions by the farm man was employed primarily (75.00 per cent), followed by collective decision employed by the farm families (17.50 per cent) and decision by the farm women (7.50 per cent) of marketing. In the study area is decision making behaviour of farm women in paddy cultivation.

### Conclusion

The finding of the study implies that women were less dominated in decision making activities. So, there is a need for strengthening the extension work by government and non-government organizations to ensure a continuous flow of information to the rural women to overcome the obstacle in paddy farming practices and to enhance their productivity.

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