

Participation of Rural Women in Decision Making Process in Agriculture

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in Nagpur district. An exploratory design of social research was used. The two panchayat Samities namely, Hingana and Saoner were purposively selected from Nagpur district. From selected each panchayat samiti 50 rural women were selected for the present study. Thus from two panchayat samiti 100 woman respondents were selected by simple random sampling method from ten villages of Nagpur district of Maharashtra State. The majority of the respondents were using more localite sources of information like neighbours, relatives/friends and progressive farmers. In case of extent of participation in decision making process in agriculture it was observed that respondents were only consulted in the area of preparation of land (52.00 %), method of sowing (47.00 %), proper time sowing (44.00 %), selection of crop (36.00 %) and crop varieties to be sown (36.00%) respectively. The respondents opinion were considered while decision making in the area, harvesting of crop (42.00%), followed by storage of farm produce (34.00%) and use of labours (30.00 %) respectively. The respondents were actively involved in final decision in area of use of labour (42.00 %), storage farm produce (40.00 %), harvesting of crops (31.00%) and intercultural operations (30.00 %) respectively. Nearly equal proportion of respondents 39 and 35 per cent had high and medium level of overall participation in decision making process in agriculture. Majority of respondents reported that reasons for non participation in decision making were male dominance (56.00 %), lack of technical knowledge (52.00%), education (39.00%), agricultural development policies (37.00 %) and control over resources (34.00%), respectively.

Key words : Rural women; Participation; Decision making

Women constitute half of our population and play a vital role in the development of family, the community and the nation. Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. However the nature and extent of their involvement differs with variations in agro-production system. In some area women also bear the ultimate burden of farm suicides. Women play a crucial role in agricultural development. From the ancient time usually male take an active part in decision making in agriculture. In recent times women are playing pivotal role in agricultural occupation as a manager, decision maker and skilled worker (Chaudhary et al., 2003). In agriculture, right decision at right time is most important. Considering the importance of rural women in agriculture this study was carried out during the year 2011-2012, with following specific objectives.

1. To study personal, socio-economic characteristics of rural women.
2. To study the extent of participation of rural women in decision making process in agriculture.
3. To study the reasons for non participation of rural women in the decision making process in agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study an exploratory design of social research was used. In Nagpur district there are 13 panchayat samities. Out of these, two Panchayat samities namely, Hingna and Saoner were purposively selected. From selected each panchayat samiti 50 rural

women were selected for the present study. Thus from two panchayat samiti 100 women respondent were selected by simple random sampling method from village Mondha, Panjari, Ukhali, Khairi and Junawani of Hingna Panchayat Samiti and Sawarmendha, Sillori, Brahmपुरi, Bhendala and Gadegaon of Saoner Panchayat samiti of Nagpur district of Maharashtra State. The data were collected from 100 respondents by personally contacting and interviewing the respondents with the help of pretested interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I) Characteristics of respondents

The data with respect to various personal, socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents have been studied and furnished in Table 1

The distribution of respondents in Table 1 shows that over two fifth of respondent rural women (43.00%) were belonged to middle age (36-50 years) followed by, 32.00 per cent of respondents were in young age groups (up to 35 years). The relatively higher proportion of respondents (39.00%) had education up to high school level, followed by over one fourth of respondents had primary school (29.00%) education. The meagre per cent of respondents (05.00%) were illiterate. In case social status factor caste, majority of respondents (69.00%) belonged to Other Backward Class (OBC), followed by 13 per cent of respondents were belonged to Schedule Caste and 7 per cent were Schedule Tribe category. By and large majority of respondents belonged to Other Backward

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their characteristics.

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Category	Respondents (N = 100)	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (Years)	Young (Up to 35 yrs.)	32	32.00
		Middle (36 - 50 yrs.)	43	43.00
		Old (Above 50 yrs.)	25	25.00
2	Education	Illiterate (0)	05	05.00
		Primary school (1 - 4)	29	29.00
		Middle school (5 -7)	15	15.00
		High school (8 -10)	39	39.00
		College (Above 10)	12	12.00
3	Caste	Higher caste (General)	03	03.00
		Other Backward Class (OBC)	69	69.00
		NT/ VJ/SBC	07	07.00
		Scheduled caste (SC)	14	14.00
		Scheduled tribes (ST)	07	07.00
4	Family Size	Small (1- 3 members)	09	09.00
		Medium (4 - 6 members)	72	72.00
		Big (above 6 members)	19	19.00
5	Land holding	Marginal (Up to 1.00 ha)	25	25.00
		Small (1.01 - 2.0 ha.)	45	45.00
		Semi medium (2.01 - 4.0 ha)	17	17.00
		Medium (4.01 - 10.0 ha)	11	11.00
		Big (Above 10.00 ha)	02	02.00
6	Occupation	Agriculture + Labour	25	25.00
		Agriculture	58	58.00
		Agriculture + subsidiary	13	13.00
		Agriculture + services	04	04.00
7	Annual income	Low (upto Rs. 50000/-)	17	17.00
		Low Medium (Rs. 50001/- to 100000/-)	44	44.00
		Medium (Rs. 100000/- to 150000/-)	25	25.00
		Medium high (Rs. 150,000/- to 200000/-)	05	05.00
		High (Above Rs. 200000/-)	09	09.00
8	Social participation	No participation	52	52.00
		Participation in one organisation	33	33.00
		Participation in more than one organisation	15	15.00
9	Farming experience	Lower (Upto 10 years)	19	19.00
		Middle (11 to 20 years)	54	54.00
		Upper (Above 20 years)	27	27.00
		Total	100	100.00

Class. The majority of respondents (72.00%) belonged to medium size of family (4-6 members). Relatively higher proportion of respondents (45.00%) belonged to small (1.01 to 2.00 ha) land holding, followed by one fourth of respondents (25.00%) had marginal (up to 1.00 ha) land holding. The 17 and 11 per cent of respondents had medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha) and semi medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha) land holding, respectively.

The majority of respondents (58.00%) had agriculture as their occupation, whereas one fourth of respondents (25.00%) had agriculture and labour as their occupation. By and large majority of rural women occupation was agriculture. Over two fifth of respondents (44.00%) had low medium annual income in the range of Rs 50000/- to 100000/- followed by one fourth of respondents (25.00%) had medium annual income of Rs 100000/- to 150000 /-. The 17 per cent of

respondents had annual income in the range up to Rs 50000/- and 09 per cent of respondent had high annual income in the range above Rs 200000/- . It was observed that majority of respondents (52.00%) were not participating in any social organization. Whereas one third of respondents (33.00%) were participating one social organisation. The 15 per cent of respondents were participating in more than one social organisation like Self Help Group, Mahila Mandal, and Gram Panchayat, etc. Majority of the rural women (54.00%) had middle level (10 to 20 years) farming experience, followed by 27 per cent respondents had high (above 20 years) farming experience.

10) Source of information

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their sources of information.

Sr. No.	Sources of information	Frequency (N = 100)		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
A	Localite sources			
i	Sarpanch	04 (04.00)	30 (30.00)	66 (66.00)
ii	Relatives / Friends	16 (16.00)	48 (48.00)	26 (26.00)
iii	Neighbours	21 (21.00)	44 (44.00)	35 (35.00)
iv	Progressive Farmers	10 (10.00)	31 (31.00)	59 (59.00)
v	Others	00 (00.00)	11 (11.00)	89 (89.00)
B	Cosmopolite sources			
i	Gram Sevak	03 (03.00)	11 (11.00)	86 (86.00)
ii	Agricultural Assistant	02 (02.00)	09 (09.00)	89 (89.00)
iii	Block Level Officers	00 (00.00)	12 (12.00)	88 (88.00)
iv	Private company persons	04 (04.00)	19 (19.00)	77 (77.00)
v	Others	00 (00.00)	03 (03.00)	97 (97.00)
C	Mass media			
i	Radio	00 (00.00)	11 (11.00)	89 (89.00)
ii	Television	04 (04.00)	27 (27.00)	69 (69.00)
iii	Newspaper	00 (00.00)	16 (16.00)	84 (84.00)
iv	Krishi Melawa	00 (00.00)	13 (13.00)	87 (87.00)
v	Others	00 (00.00)	04 (04.00)	96 (96.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

In case of information sources of respondents from localite sources, neighbours and relatives/ friends were always contacted as sources of information expressed by 21 and 26 per cent of respondents respectively. Whereas relatives/ friends (48.00%), neighbours (44.00%), progressive farmers (31.00%) and Sarpanch (30.00%) were sometime contacted for obtaining information about agriculture. In case of cosmopolite sources of information meagre per cent of rural women respondents were always contacted with private company persons (04.00%), Gram Sevek (03.00%) and Agriculture Assistant (02.00%). A great majority of respondents 89, 88, 86 and 77 per cent of respondents had no contact with Agricultural Assistant, Block Level Officers, Gram Sevek and private company persons for obtaining agricultural information. In case of mass media source none of the respondents always use these sources except Television (04.00 %). Whereas Television (27.00 %), Newspaper (16.00 %), Krishi Melava (13.00 %) and Radio (11.00 %) were the sources which were sometimes used for agricultural information expressed by the respondents. A great majority of rural women never used the mass media like Radio (89.00 %), Krishi Melava (87.00 %), Newspaper (84.00 %) and Television (69.00 %). These findings were supported by the findings of Pande and Trika (1990).

By and large rural women were using more localite sources of information like neighbours, relativities/ friends and progressive farmers.

use of labours (19.00 %), harvesting of crop (17.00 %), sale of produce (13.00 %), storage of farm produce (11.00 %) and purchase of agri. machinery/implements (10.00 %) respectively.

In decision making process respondents opinion were considered in agriculture were, harvesting of crop (42.00%) followed by, storage of farm produce (34.00%), use of labours (30.00 %), sale of farm produce (27.00 %), selection of crop (26.00%), use of intercultural operation (26.00 %). Whereas less than one fourth of respondents opinion were considered in the area of preparation of land (22.00 %), use of fertilizers (20.00 %), proper time of sowing (17.00 %), credit /finance availability (16.00 %), crop varieties to be sown (12.00 %), plant protection measures (12.00%) and method of sowing (11.00 %), and purchase of agricultural machinery and implements (04.00 %), respectively.

In case of extent of participation of rural women actively involved in final decision making area were use of labours (42.00 %), storage of farm produce (40.00 %), harvesting of crops (31.00 %) and intercultural operations (30.00 %). Whereas the less than one fifth respondents were as the involvement in final decision making area were proper time of sowing (19.00 %), selection of crop (17.00 %), sale of produce (16.00 %), use of fertilizers (14.00 %), preparation of land (12.00%), crop varieties to be sown (10.00%) credit/ finance availability (09.00 %), method of sowing (09.00 %) plant protection measure (08.00%)

Table 3. Overall sources of information categories

Sr. No.	Category	Respondents (N=100)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (up to 4.12)	52	52.00
2	Medium (4.13 -9.32)	34	34.00
3	High (above 9.32)	14	14.00
	X = 6.72 SD =2.60 Total	100	100.00

From Table 3 it was observed that majority of rural women (52.00 %) had low level sources of information, followed by 34 per cent of respondents how had medium level of sources of information. Whereas, 15 per cent of respondents had high level sources of information.

From Table 4 it was observed that incase of extent of participation of rural women in decision making over one third of the respondents were only consulted in the area preparation of land (52.00 %) followed by, method of sowing (47.00%), proper time of sowing (44.00 %), selection of crop (36.00 %), crop varieties to be sown (36.00 %) respectively. The rural women were only consulted in areas like intercultural operation (27.00 %), plant protection measures (23.00

and purchase of agril. machinery /implements (07.00 %), respectfully.

It was observed that there were non participation of respondents in decision making process in agriculture area were, purchase of agricultural machinery and implements (79.00 %), plant protection measures (57.00%), credit of financial availability (43.00 %), crop varieties to be sown (42.00 %), use of fertilizers (36.00 %), sale of farm produce (44.00%) and method of sowing (33.00 %). The less than one third of respondents had no participation in decision making process in the area of selection of crop (21.00%) proper time of sowing (20.00%) storage of farm produce (15.00%) harvesting of crop (10.00%) and use of labours (09.00%) respectively.

This indicates that, extent of participation of rural women in decision making were high in the areas of use of labours (91.00%) followed by, harvesting of crop (90.00%), preparation of land (86.00%), storage of farm produce (85.00%), intercultural operations (83.00%), proper time of sowing (80.00%), selection of crop (79.00%), method of sowing (67.00%), sale of farm produce (66.00%), use of fertilizers (64.00%), crop varieties to be sown (58.00%), and credit/finance availability (57.00%) respectively.

By and large rural women were participated in decision making process in agriculture in different ways in majority of areas. They were only consulted in the areas of preparation of land, method of sowing, proper time of sowing, selection of crop and varieties to be sown. The rural womens' opinion were considered

while decision making process in the areas, i.e, harvesting of crop, storage of farm produce and use of labours respectively. The respondents were actively involved in decision making areas like, use of labours followed by, storage of farm produce, harvesting of crop and intercultural operations, respectively. Thus, the rural women were playing important role in decision making process in agriculture.

Over all participation of respondents in decision making process in agriculture.

In the present study participation in decision making process is defined as the involvement of rural women in decision making process in relation to different agricultural activities. For measurement of it teacher made test was developed. It was measure on four point continuum as No participation, Only consulted,

Table 4. Extent of the participation of rural women in decision making process in agriculture

Sr. No.	Decision making area	Extent of participation				Total (N=100)
		No	Only consulted	Opinion considered	Actively involved in final decision	
1	Preparation of land	14 (14.00)	52 (52.00)	22 (22.00)	12 (12.00)	100 (100.00)
2	Selection of crop	21 (21.00)	36 (36.00)	26 (26.00)	17 (17.00)	100 (100.00)
3	Crop varieties to be sown	42 (42.00)	36 (36.00)	12 (12.00)	10 (10.00)	100 (100.00)
4	Credit/finance availability	43 (43.00)	32 (32.00)	16 (16.00)	09 (09.00)	100 (100.00)
5	Proper time sowing	20 (20.00)	44 (44.00)	17 (17.00)	19 (19.00)	100 (100.00)
6	Method of sowing	33 (33.00)	47 (47.00)	11 (11.00)	09 (09.00)	100 (100.00)
7	Use of fertilizer	36 (36.00)	30 (30.00)	20 (20.00)	14 (14.00)	100 (100.00)
8	Use of labours	09 (09.00)	19 (19.00)	30 (30.00)	42 (42.00)	100 (100.00)
9	Intercultural operation	17 (17.00)	27 (27.00)	26 (26.00)	30 (30.00)	100 (100.00)
10	Plant protection measures	57 (57.00)	23 (23.00)	12 (12.00)	08 (08.00)	100 (100.00)
11	Harvesting of crop	10 (10.00)	17 (17.00)	42 (42.00)	31 (31.00)	100 (100.00)
12	Storage of farm produce	15 (15.00)	11 (11.00)	34 (34.00)	40 (40.00)	100 (100.00)
13	Sale of farm produce	44 (44.00)	13 (13.00)	27 (27.00)	16 (16.00)	100 (100.00)
14	Purchase of agril. machinery/implements	79 (79.00)	10 (10.00)	04 (04.00)	07 (07.00)	100 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Opinion considered, Actively involved in final decision and scored 0, 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The sum of participation score was worked out to be the extent of

participation in decision making. This was measured with the help of following formula.

$$\text{Participation in Decision Making Index} = \frac{\text{Actually obtained participation score}}{\text{Maximum obtainable participation score}} \times 100$$

The respondents were then categorized on equal interval basis.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to over all of participation in decision making in agriculture:

Sr. No.	Participation Levels	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 33.33)	26	26.00
2	Medium (33.34 to 66.67)	35	35.00
3	High (Above 66.67)	39	39.00
	Total	100	100.00

It was observed from Table 5 that nearly equal proportion of rural women 39 and 35 per cent had high and medium level of over all participation in decision making process in agriculture respectively. The 26.00 per cent of respondents had low level over all participation in decision making process in agriculture.

Table 6. Reasons for non participation of respondents in decision making process in agriculture

Sr. No.	Reasons for non participation	Respondents(N= 100)		Rank
		Freq.	Percentage	
1	Age	30	30.00	VI
2	Education	39	39.00	III
3	Male dominance	56	56.00	I
4	Lack of technical knowledge	52	52.00	II
5	Cultural norms	24	24.00	VIII
6	Control over resources	34	34.00	V
7	Poor economic condition	22	22.00	IX
8	Lack of confidence	27	27.00	VII
9	Agricultural development policies	37	37.00	IV
10	Others (Ill health, time availability, etc.)	20	20.00	X

Multiple choice responses

The data depicted in Table 6 showed that majority of respondents reported reasons for non participation in the decision making process in agriculture were male dominance (56.00 %), lack of technical knowledge (52.00 %), education (39.00 %), agricultural development policies (37.00 %). and control over resources (34.00%) respectively. Where as respondents were age (30.00%), lack of confidence in rural women (27.00 %), cultural norms (24.00%), poor economic condition (22.00 %) and others reasons like ill health, time availability (20.00%) respectively. These are the reasons reported by the rural women for non participation of in decision making process in agriculture.

Table 7. Relationship of personal, socio-economic characteristics of respondents with extent of participation in decision making process.

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Correlation coefficient (r)
1	Age	0.1439 NS
2	Education	0.1121 NS
3	Caste	0.2471**
4	Family size	0.25610**
5	Land holding	0.4213**
6	Occupation	0.5134**
7	Annul income	0.3146**
8	Social participation	0.2632**
9	Farming experience	0.4212**
10	Source of information	0.2627**

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability NS- Non significant

It was evident from Table 7 that coefficient of correlation between characteristics of respondents namely, caste, family size, land holding, occupation, annual income, social participation, farming experience and sources of information had positive and significant relationship with extent of participation of rural women in decision making process in agriculture. Whereas age and education of respondents had not significant relationship with extent of participation of rural women in decision making process in agriculture.

CONCLUSION

Rural women were using more localite sources of information like neighbours, relative/ friends and progressive farmers. While taking decision in agriculture relatively large per cent of women were

only consulted in decision making process in the area of preparation of land, method of sowing, proper time of sowing, selection of crop and crop varieties to be sown. Secondly, opinion of rural women were considered in the major area, harvesting of crop, storage of farm produce and use of labours. Rural women were actively involved in final decision in areas, use of labours, storage of farm produce, harvesting of crop and interculture operations. As rural women were participated in decision making process in agriculture the extension functionaries may organized specialized training programmes and other extension programmes especially for rural women for effective transfer of technology and overall development of agriculture.

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