



Research Article

ROLE OF WOMEN IN FARM DECISION MAKING

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the main occupation as far as its potential prospects in India are concerned. Progress of agriculture will help for rural reconstruction and development. From time immemorial, women played different roles in their home activities as wives in their personal lives with their husbands, as mothers in their responsibilities for the development of their children and as home makers' in-charge of the operation of their homes. In addition, women also played a pivotal role in agriculture and livestock management. In modern agriculture too, women continued to share a number of farm operations with men. So the present study was conducted to assess the role of women in farm decision making in Chakur and Nilanga tahsils of Latur district. The results proved that majority (60.00 per cent) of the respondents played medium role in farm decision making while 20.83 per cent and 19.17 per cent of the respondents played low and high role in farm decision making, respectively.

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INTRODUCTION

Role of women in farm decision making has to be studied because women share abundant responsibilities and perform wide spectrum of duties in home and farm activities. Moreover, their involvement as a key person now days cannot be neglected. According to the 2011 census of India, there are 741.7 (72.22 per cent) rural population out of which 127.6 (31.7 per cent) are cultivators, 107.5 (26.7 per cent) agricultural labour. Women constitute 48.27 per cent of country's population. Further, recent studies revealed that 50 to 90 per cent of agricultural operations were carried out by women only. Role has been operationally defined as the 'actual functions' performed by farm women in relation to their position in the household. Rural women work hard and earn less and have little or no access to technology training. They are not aware of their rights or privileges. Their work should not be confined to 3 'C's cooking, caring and child bearing but should be trained in 3 'H's education of hand, head and heart. A general survey of farm operations in which women are engaged include application of manures, land preparation, seed grading, sowing, dibbling, planting, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, weeding, thinning, harvesting, threshing, shelling, hulling, winnowing, cleaning and storing grains, feeding the cattle, looking after milch animals and poultry, kitchen gardening etc. Like this farm women play important role in decision making in farm activities.

Their opinion and suggestions also carry weightage at the time of decision making about farming operations. It was, therefore, considered to be worthwhile to study the 'Role of women in farm decision making' alongwith the following specific objectives.

1. To study the personal and socio-economic characteristics of women.
2. To assess role of women in farm decision making.
3. To find out the relationship between personal and socio-economic characteristics of women and their role in farm decision making.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Chakur and Nilanga tahsils of Latur district. Three villages from each taluka and twenty women from each village were selected randomly. In this way total six villages from two talukas were selected to comprise total 120 respondents. The information was collected through personal interview so as to get the required data. The data were tabulated and analyzed by using frequency, percentage, standard deviation and statistical tests like correlation coefficient and multiple regressions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal and socio-economic characteristics of women

It was noticed that majority (72.50 per cent) of the respondents were from middle age group. The percentage of respondents

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educated up to primary school level was 75.00, maximum number (43.44 per cent) of the respondent were having semi-medium land holding. Regarding the annual income, majority of the respondents (77.50 per cent) were belonged to medium annual income category and 47.50 per cent respondent had medium social participation. Most of the respondents 55.83 per cent were from nuclear family and 35.84 per cent respondents were from higher caste category. Regarding mass media exposure 65.00 per cent of the respondents were having medium exposure, 65.00 per cent of respondents were having medium sources of information. This finding is in line of the findings of Aswar Unnati (2008) and Bansode Smita (2007).

Table 2 also described that women had taken decision jointly with other female members in agricultural related activities like employing self as a labour (14.17 per cent), employing family labour (23.34 per cent, employing wage labour (12.50 per cent), crops to be grown (9.18 per cent), number of crops to be grown and area under each crop (18.56 per cent), selection of seed (20.83 per cent), use of fertilizer (16.66 per cent), amount of fertilizer to be used (19.17 per cent), irrigation (15.00 per cent), means of irrigation (20.00 per cent), plant protection (15.83 per cent) and in post harvest protection (14.17 per cent), respectively.

Sr.No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age		
	Young	16	13.33
	Middle	87	72.50
2.	Old	17	14.17
	Education		
	Illiterate	23	19.17
	Primary School (1 st to 4 th)	90	75.00
3.	Middle School (5 th to 7 th)	03	02.50
	High School and above (8 th to 12 th)	04	03.33
	Land Holding		
4.	Marginal	20	16.67
	Small	41	34.15
	Semi-medium	52	43.34
	Medium	07	05.84
5.	Annual Income		
	Low	10	08.33
	Medium	93	77.50
6.	High	17	14.17
	Social Participation		
	Low	43	35.83
7.	Medium	57	47.50
	High	20	16.67
	Type of Family		
8.	Nuclear	67	55.83
	Joint	53	44.17
	Caste		
9.	Lower (SC & ST)	37	30.83
	Middle (Baniya, Marwadi, Muslim, OBC and NT 1-4)	40	33.33
	Higher (Maratha, Brahman)	43	35.84
10.	Mass Media Exposure		
	Low	22	18.33
	Medium	78	65.00
11.	High	20	16.67
	Use of Sources of Information		
	Low	21	17.50
12.	Medium	78	65.00
	High	21	17.50

Role of women in farm decision making

Perusal of Table 2 reveals that the sub area related with Agricultural activities - the decision making role related to employing self as a labour 34.17 per cent women took self decision, followed by jointly with other female members and jointly with male head of family by 14.17 per cent and 50.00 per cent women, respectively. Similarly, Table 2 describes that women had taken self decision in agricultural related activities like employing self as a labour (34.17 per cent), employing family labour (30.83 per cent), employing wage labour (37.50 per cent), crops to be grown (40.83 per cent), number of crops to be grown and area under each crop (32.48 per cent), selection of seed (29.70 per cent), use of seed (30.83 per cent), use of fertilizer (25.84 per cent), amount of fertilizer to be used (25.00 per cent), means of irrigation (27.50 per cent), plant protection (30.00 per cent) and in post harvest operation (37.50 per cent), respectively.

Table 2 also reveals that farm women took decisions jointly with male head of family in Agricultural related activities like employing self as a labour (50.00 per cent), employing family labour (45.00 per cent), employing wage labour (49.17 per cent), crops to be grown (48.33 per cent), number of crops to be grown and area under each crop (47.30 per cent), selection of seed (49.17 per cent), use of seed (50.84 per cent), use of fertilizer (55.84 per cent), amount of fertilizer to be used (54.17 per cent), irrigation (55.84 per cent), means of irrigation (51.67 per cent), plant protection (53.34 per cent) and in post harvest protection (47.50 per cent), respectively. Further, Table 2 portrays that the sub area related with livestock activities - the women took self decision in the areas of types of livestock to be kept (38.33 per cent), number of livestock to be kept (36.67 per cent), feeding of balanced ration (38.33 per cent), vaccination (28.33 per cent), castration (26.67 per cent), artificial insemination (30.00 per cent), treatment of sick animals (30.00 per cent) and in all livestock rearing decision (25.83 per cent), respectively.

Table 2. Sub areas activity wise role of women in farm decision making

Sr.No.	Sub areas	Self decision		Jointly with other female members		Jointly with male head of family		No participation		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
A.	Agricultural related										
1.	Employing self as a labour	41	34.17	17	14.17	60	50.00	2	1.66	120	100.00
2.	Employing family labour	37	30.83	28	23.34	54	45.00	1	0.83	120	100.00
3.	Employing wage labour	45	37.50	15	12.50	59	49.17	1	0.83	120	100.00
4.	Crops to be grown	49	40.83	11	9.18	58	48.33	2	1.66	120	100.00
5.	Number of crops to be grown and area under each crop	39	32.48	22	18.56	57	47.30	2	1.66	120	100.00
6.	Selection of seed	35	29.17	25	20.83	59	49.17	1	0.83	120	100.00
7.	Use of seed	37	30.83	21	17.50	61	50.84	1	0.83	120	100.00
8.	Use of fertilizer	31	25.84	20	16.66	67	55.84	2	1.66	120	100.00
9.	Amount of fertilizer to be used	30	25.00	23	19.17	65	54.17	2	1.66	120	100.00
10.	Irrigation	35	29.16	18	15.00	67	55.84	-	-	120	100.00
11.	Means of irrigation	33	27.50	24	20.00	62	51.67	1	0.83	120	100.00
12.	Plant protection	36	30.00	19	15.83	64	53.34	1	0.83	120	100.00
13.	Post harvest operation	45	37.50	17	14.17	57	47.50	1	0.83	120	100.00
B.	Livestock related										
1.	Types of livestock to be kept	46	38.33	18	15.00	55	45.84	1	0.83	120	100.00
2.	Number of livestock to be kept	44	36.67	15	12.50	60	50.00	1	0.83	120	100.00
3.	Feeding of balanced ration	46	38.33	19	15.84	54	45.00	1	0.83	120	100.00
4.	Vaccination	34	28.33	18	15.00	67	55.84	1	0.83	120	100.00
5.	Castration	32	26.67	18	15.00	69	57.50	1	0.83	120	100.00
6.	Artificial insemination	36	30.00	15	12.50	68	56.67	1	0.83	120	100.00
7.	Treatment of sick animals	36	30.00	16	13.34	67	55.80	1	0.83	120	100.00
8.	All livestock rearing decisions	31	25.83	19	15.84	69	57.50	1	0.83	120	100.00

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their whole role in decision making

Sr.No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low	25	20.83
2.	Medium	72	60.00
3.	High	23	19.17
	Total	120	100.00

Table 4. Relationship between the characteristics of women and their role in farm decision making

Sr.No.	Independent variables	Correlation of coefficient (r value)
1.	Age	0.385**
2.	Education	0.420**
3.	Land holding	0.658**
4.	Annual income	0.737**
5.	Social participation	0.614**
6.	Type of family	-0.135 NS
7.	Caste	0.143 NS
8.	Mass media exposure	0.394**
9.	Use of sources of information	0.435**

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

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis of independent variables with the role of women in farm decision making

Sr.No.	Independent variable	Regression Coefficient (bi)	Standard error (S.E.)	't' value
1.	Age	0.0273	0.0253	1.0802 NS
2.	Education	-0.0433	0.2332	-0.1884 NS
3.	Land holding	-0.2790	0.3887	-0.7178 NS
4.	Annual income	0.0339	0.0116	2.9215**
5.	Social participation	0.1809	0.0818	2.2106*
6.	Type of family	-0.6418	0.4140	-1.5503 NS
7.	Caste	0.1514	0.3258	0.4648 NS
8.	Mass media exposure	0.2598	0.1098	2.3652*
9.	Use of sources of information	0.1909	0.1155	1.6527 NS

R² = 0.644, F value = 22.1019

* = Significant at 0.05 level of significance

** = Significant at 0.01 level of significance

NS = Non-significant

Table 2 also describes that farm women took decisions jointly with other female members in livestock related activities like types of livestock to be kept (15.00 per cent), number of livestock to be kept (12.50 per cent), feeding of balanced ration (15.84 per cent), vaccination (15.00 per cent), castration (15.00 per cent), artificial insemination (12.50 per cent), treatment of sick animals (15.84 per cent), respectively. Table 2 also reveals that, farm women took decisions jointly with male head of family in livestock related activities like types of livestock to be kept (45.84 per cent), number of livestock to be kept (50.00 per cent), feeding of balanced ration (45.00 per cent), vaccination (55.84 per cent), castration (57.50 per cent), artificial insemination (56.50 per cent), treatment of sick animals (55.80 per cent) and in all livestock rearing decision (57.50 per cent), respectively. (Nikhade, D.M. (1988), and Kulkarni, M.V. and (1991))

Overall role of women in farm decision making

It will be inferred, from Table 3, that majority (60.00 per cent) of the respondents played medium role in farm decision making while 20.83 per cent and 19.17 per cent of the respondents played low and high role in farm decision making, respectively.

Correlation analysis

It is observed from the Table 4, that out of nine independent variables age, education, land holding, annual income, social participation, mass media exposure and use of sources of information had established the positive and significant relationship with farm decision making of women at 0.01 level of probability. While, type of family and caste had not shown any relationship with farm decision making.

Multiple regression analysis

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5. It is revealed from the data presented in Table 5 that multiple regression analysis showed 64.40 per cent variation in the role of women in farm decision making was explained by all the independent variables under the study.

Out of nine variables only annual income, social participation and mass media exposure contributed positive significant effect on the role of women in farm decision making. While, age, caste and source of information had not contributed the effect on role of women. Education, land holding and type of family had negative effect on role of women in farm decision making.

Conclusion

It was noticed that majority of the respondents were from middle age group, educated up to primary school level, were having semi-medium land holding. Regarding the annual income, majority of the respondents were belonged to medium annual income category and had medium social participation. Most of the respondents were from nuclear family and higher caste category. Near about half of the respondents were having medium exposure and medium sources of information. Majority of the respondents played medium role in farm decision making. Out of nine variables only annual income, social participation and mass media exposure contributed positive significant effect on the role of women in farm decision making

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