

Participation of Rural women in Decision making Pattern on farm and Household related activities

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ABSTRACT

In Indian Society both husband and wife participate in different household activities. Their role are generally complementary not only in physical participation in farm but also in the decision making process concerning major land use activities. Women play a pivotal and potentially benefiting role in all-round growth of resource poor farm families. But often they are neglected in decision making on farm and house hold matters which are mostly managed by them. Participation in decision making process especially in economic activities is an indication of empowerment. The present study attempts to investigate the level of women economic empowerment in resource poor farm families by analyzing their extent of participation in decision making on farm and house hold related economic activities. The study was conducted in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. Out of sixteen blocks three blocks i.e. Salempur, Bhatpar Rani and Bhatni were selected for this study. From each block three villages selected and from each village ten resource poor farm families were selected randomly from nine villages, thus a total 90 couples (180 respondents) were selected for the purpose of the study. The study revealed that wives played a major role to jointly decide purchasing or hiring of land (41.11 - 42.22%), borrowing for agriculture (35.55 - 40.00%) and selling of produce (20.00 - 38.88%). Decisions for milking and processing of milk, utilization of dung and sale of milk and milk products were dominantly taken by wives (86.66%, 54.44% and 17.77% respectively), where purchase and sale of animals (37.77 - 40.00%), type and number of animals to be kept (30.00 - 37.77%) and adoption of new animal husbandry practices (28.88 - 33.33%). Household economic decisions on building new house, household purchasing, selected of occupation for children, Marriage of the children, education of children and financial activities were mainly taken jointly (36.66-41.11%, 34.44-35.55%, 33.33-34.44%, 24.44-32.33% and 24.44-30.00% respectively). The findings of the study indicate higher level of women economic empowerment in animal husbandry and household sectors.

Key Words- Economic empowerment, Resource-poor farm families, Household related economic activities, Participation, Rural women and decision making.

Received 13.12.2018

Revised 20.01.2019

Accepted 21.02.2019

CITATION OF THIS ARTICLE

A R Kumari, D. P. Singh, M. K. Pandey and R. N. Prasad. Participation of Rural women in Decision making Pattern on farm and Household related activities. Int. Arch. App. Sci. Technol; Vol 10 [1] March 2019 : 208-213

INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment especially economic empowerment is very important as it gives security to a woman. It is very crucial for progress of the society. Women play a pivotal and potentially benefiting role in all-round growth of resource-poor farm families. But often they are neglected in decision making on farm and household matters which are mostly managed by them. Participation in decision making process especially in economic activities is an indication of empowerment .In Indian society; both husband and wife participate in different household activities. Their role are generally complementary, not only in physical

participation in farm but also in the decision making process concerning major land use activities. In some of these activities, women take sole or joint decisions. Joint decisions were made in purchase and sale of land and management of animals where independent decisions were made in storage and marketing of produce [14]. Women played a major role in land management decision making process [15]. Women were found to take 73 per cent decision concerning household consumption, 55.74 per cent production decision and 38.74 per cent in investment decision making in land management [10, 12]. Tripathi [16] also observed that women of the household made 20 per cent land use decisions. In male headed household, 15 to 34 per cent of the females played major roles in land management decision making where their decisions were accepted in regard to farm production activities [13].

Globalization has offered tremendous opportunities for overall growth and development of both men and women. It has altered the socio-economic status, life style and life condition of women. Globalization has given women a stronger voice. People are more accepting of women's rights. There has been an increased emphasis on women's rights at the grass roots level. Women started to participate in social activities and their economic conditions have also improved. Even there, women at village level are not getting the benefits of the developmental programmes. Women influence the farmer in many ways. She influences the farmer in selection of crop, developing the farm with irrigation and other facilities, adoption of latest technologies, timely harvesting, a sifting the farmer in post harvesting and storage, timely marketing of the produce and in savings for the future. In spite of all these, women are not given proper attention. But the globalization has provided many ways and means for the overall development and empowerment of women.

A resource-poor farmer cannot be entirely dependent on outside laborers to work in his farm, instead all the able family members including the females of the family have to be involved themselves in various farming practices. Though women bear a crucial and potentially benefiting role in all round growth of resource poor farm families, they face indirect negligence and economic insecurity rendering their very simple but necessary wants to fulfill. Often they are not asked to take any decision in farm and household matters which are mostly managed by them. Participation in decision making especially in economic matters is a clear indication of empowerment. In the present study, an attempt has been made to investigate the level of women economic empowerment in resource-poor farm families by analyzing their extent of participation in decision making on farm and household related economic activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. Out of sixteen blocks, three blocks i.e. Salempur, Bhatpar Rani and Bhatni were selected for this study. From each block three villages selected and from each village ten resource poor farm families were selected randomly from nine villages, thus a total 90 couples (180 respondents) were selected for the purpose of the study. A comprehensive list of important economic activities pertaining to farm (Crop cultivation and animal husbandry) and house hold activities was prepared in consultation with the experts, available literature and farmers of non-sampling area. The possible combinations taken for decision making were husband (H), Wife (W), along with spouse (HW) and in consultation with others i.e. including children, family members and relatives, neighbors and fellow progressive farmers and experts. Data were collected with the help of a pretested structured interview schedule by personal interview method. Appropriate statistical tools were used for analysis of data. In order to measure the extent of association or agreement between husbands and wife responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present study, participation of wives of the selected farm families in decision making on crop cultivation, animal husbandry and household related economic activities was delineated by taking into consideration both husband's and wife's responses.

Women participation in decision making on crop cultivation related economic activities: There are many decisions involved in crop cultivation related economic activities starting from selection of cropping pattern and cultivars to adoption of innovation. The data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 reveal an overall picture of decision making pattern

observed in farm households. Decision regarding selection of cropping pattern and cultivars was found mostly taken by husband (64.44%). Capital allocation to different crops was reported mainly decided by husband (57.77%) followed by both husband and wife (17.17-25.55%). Decision regarding procurement of inputs (type of inputs to be procured and the source of procurement of input) was found mainly taken by husband (70.00%).

Table 1. Decision making pattern on crop cultivation related to economic activities [Husband's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Selection of cropping pattern and Cultivars	58	64.44	0	0.00	3	3.33	29	32.22
Capital allocation to different crop	52	57.77	2	2.22	23	25.55	13	14.44
Procurement of inputs	63	70.00	1	1.11	4	4.44	22	24.44
Selling of produce	28	31.11	3	3.33	18	20.00	41	45.55
Purchasing or hiring of land	19	21.11	4	4.44	37	41.11	30	33.33
Borrowing for agriculture	31	34.44	2	2.22	32	35.55	15	16.66
Adoption of innovation	29	32.22	0	0.00	11	12.22	50	55.55

Decisions related to selling of produce like place of sale and quantities of sale were mainly taken jointly (20.00-38.88%) followed by husband alone (31.11%). The individual husband decision was observed lower in this case, because it was reported as the most important decision taken by the resource-poor farm families as profit is involved in this decision and collective decision used to be beneficial in this case. Purchasing or hiring of land was mostly decided jointly (41.11-42.22%) followed by husband alone (21.11%). Decisions pertaining to borrowing for agriculture (source, quantity, mode of repayment involved etc.) were predominantly taken jointly (35.55-40.00%) followed by husband alone (34.44%). Adoption of innovations regarding improved farming practices was mainly decided in consultation with others (45.55- 55.55%). The major finding coming out from the above results is the higher degree of collectivity in decision making pattern and this will increase the degree of rationality in decisions which is most important for the resource-poor farm families. Some deviations were found in district regarding decision making pattern of farm households in crop cultivation related economic activities. Husband and wife joint participation in taking decision regarding purchase or hiring of land and borrowing of agriculture.

Table 2 . Decision making pattern on crop cultivation related to economic activities [Wife's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Selection of cropping pattern and Cultivars	41	45.55	6	6.66	10	11.11	33	36.66
Capital allocation to different crop	43	47.77	7	7.77	16	17.77	24	26.66
Procurement of inputs	40	44.44	5	5.55	14	15.55	31	34.44
Selling of produce	33	36.66	9	10.00	35	38.88	13	14.44
Purchasing or hiring of land	28	31.11	7	7.77	38	42.22	17	18.88
Borrowing for agriculture	30	33.33	2	2.22	36	40.00	22	24.44
Adoption of innovation	21	23.33	3	3.33	25	27.77	41	45.55

The overall finding of the study regarding decision making pattern in crop cultivation related economic activities finds some correspondence with the following studies. Roy (2015) reported that males were dominant decision maker in the areas of selection of cropping pattern and cultivars, capital allocation to different crops and procurement of inputs whereas decisions were mainly taken jointly in case of purchasing or hiring of land, selling of produce and borrowing for agriculture. Mishra *et al.* [5] reported higher extent of joint decision making in case of marketing of produce. Baba *et al.* [4] observed that men performed the dominative role in various decisions related to economic activities of vegetable cultivation while the role of women in majority of the cases was supportive in nature. Singh and Srivastava [6] found very low or negligible role of female members in decision making regarding farm credit, investment of added profit and adoption of innovative technologies. Sharma *et al.* [2] observed higher number of farm women in low

category of decision making regarding agricultural operations. Tiwari and Tripathy [1] reported that women's decision was negligible in farm activities like sale & purchase of land and taking of loan & advances.

Women participation in decision making on animal husbandry related economic activities: Data presented in Table 3 and Table 4 give an idea about decision making pattern in animal husbandry related economic activities. It can be concluded that wives relatively dominated their spouses in decision making on this part. They mainly took decisions regarding milking and processing of milk by deciding type and quantity of milk processing (86.66%) followed by utilization of dung in terms of quantity and type (54.44%) and quantity and place of sale of milk and milk products (47.77%).

Table 3: Decision making pattern in animal husbandry related economic activities [Husband's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Type and number of animals to be kept	31	34.44	24	26.66	27	30.00	8	8.58
Milking and processing of milk	12	13.33	57	63.33	16	17.77	5	5.55
Purchase of feed, dairy utensils, concentrates	19	21.11	33	36.66	28	31.11	10	11.11
Purchase and sale of animals	27	30.00	20	22.22	34	37.77	9	10.00
Sale of milk and milk products	25	27.77	46	51.11	15	16.66	4	4.44
Utilization of dung	14	15.55	53	58.88	11	12.22	12	13.33
Adoption of new animal husbandry practices	26	28.88	15	16.66	30	33.33	19	21.11

Majority of the wives reported that milk is the major nutritional source in their family and milk products like *ghee* is mainly prepared for family consumption. Feeding of children and other family members was entirely taken care of by wives. As a consequence, the wives mainly used to decide how much quantities of milk and *ghee* should be retained for family consumption and how much quantities of these should be given for sale. The greater involvement of wives in animal husbandry activities increased their economic decision making ability. Joint decision was found predominant in case of purchase and sale of animals which deals with type and number of animals to be purchased/sale (37.77-40.00%) followed by type and number of animals to be kept (30.00-37.77%) and adoption of new animal husbandry farming practices which includes adoption, rejection, discontinue etc. (28.88-33.33%). Individual husband decision was observed predominant in case of type and number of animals to be kept (34.44%) followed by purchase and sale of animals (30.00%) and adoption of new animal husbandry practices (28.88%). Consultation of others was mostly taken in case of adoption of new animal husbandry practices (21.11-31.11%). The decision making pattern in animal husbandry related economic activities varies from District to District. In Deoria district joint decision was taken in case of purchase of feed and concentrates, sale of milk and milk products.

The overall finding of the study regarding decision making pattern in animal husbandry related economic activities shows communality with some findings of the following researchers. Upadhyay and Intodia [7] also reported predominant joint participation in deciding type and number of livestock to be kept. Shetter *et al.* [11] observed that decision pertaining to the number of animals to be reared was mostly made by both men and women. Pandey *et al.* [9] reported that females mainly decided the type and quantity of milk products to be prepared. Chauhan [3] found that tribal farm women play dominant role in making decisions related to animal husbandry enterprise.

Table 4: Decision making pattern in household related economic activities [Wife's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Type and number of animals to be kept	30	33.33	20	22.22	34	37.77	6	6.66
Milking and processing of milk	3	3.33	78	86.66	4	4.44	5	5.55
Purchase of feed, dairy utensils, concentrates	33	36.66	18	20.00	24	26.66	5	5.55
Purchase and sale of animals	24	26.66	19	21.11	16	40.00	11	12.22
Sale of milk and milk products	18	20.00	43	47.77	22	24.44	7	7.77
Utilization of dung	4	4.44	49	54.44	33	36.66	4	4.4
Adoption of new animal husbandry practices	22	24.44	14	15.55	26	28.88	28	31.11

Women participation in decision making on household related economic activities: It can be observed from Table 5 and Table 6 that individual husband participation in decision making on household related economic activities was not found predominant in any activity and their relatively higher involvement in financial activities was observed in taking decision regarding building new house (37.77%) followed by household purchasing (32.22%) and education of children (22.22%).

Table 5: Decision making pattern in household related economic activities [Husband's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Building new house	34	37.77	12	13.33	37	41.11	7	7.77
Household purchasing	29	32.22	16	17.77	32	35.55	13	14.44
Education of children	20	22.22	25	27.77	22	24.44	23	25.55
Selection of occupation for children	15	16.66	27	30.00	31	34.44	17	18.88
Marriage of the children	16	17.77	18	20.00	26	28.88	30	33.33
Financial activities	43	47.77	17	18.88	22	24.44	8	8.88

Husband-wife joint participation was found predominant in decision making regarding building of new house that deals with deciding place, process, type, renovation, etc. (36.66-41.11%) followed by household purchasing which includes type, place of purchase, mode of payment, etc. (34.44-35.55%), selection of occupation for children which involves deciding type of occupation, place of occupation, etc. (33.33-34.44%), education of children in term of selection of school, selection of private teacher, level of education to be given, etc. (24.44-32.22%) and financial activities related to saving, borrowing, repayment, etc. (24.44-30.00%). Marriage of the children was found mainly decided in consultation with others involving family members and relatives (33.33-43.33%).

Table 6: Decision making pattern in household related economic activities [Wife's response (N=120)]

Activities	H		W		HW		Others	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Building new house	28	31.11	20	22.22	33	36.66	9	10.00
Household purchasing	23	25.55	30	33.33	31	34.44	6	6.66
Education of children	19	21.11	26	28.88	29	32.22	35	38.88
Selection of occupation for children	22	24.44	31	34.44	30	33.33	7	7.77
Marriage of the children	15	16.66	24	26.66	12	13.33	39	43.33
Financial activities	32	35.55	23	25.55	27	30.00	8	8.88

The overall finding of the study regarding decision making pattern in household related economic activities finds some conformity with the following studies. Chauhan [3] found predominant joint participation amongst tribal households in decision making regarding construction of new house, children's marriage and selling & purchasing of ornaments. Tiwari and Tripathy [1] reported higher degree of joint decision making in household related financial matters like income of the family and savings in the family.

CONCLUSION

There are many matters where rational decisions are sought. These matters include establishment matters, farm management matters, child related matters, social and religious matters as well as financial matters like saving, borrowing, repayment, etc. If the rational and proper decisions are not taken in these matters, a family face problem, which adversely affects the family living. Again, analysis of decision making pattern in household activities reveals a clear picture of the position and importance of every member in the family and identifies the key decision maker of the family in household related activities. Analysis of women participation in decision making on farm and household related economic activities of a resource-poor farm family is essential to delineate the level of women economic empowerment in that family. Here an attempt had been taken in this direction. From the present study it can be summarized that males were dominant decision

maker in the areas of selection of cropping pattern and cultivars, capital allocation to different crops and procurement of inputs whereas decisions were mainly taken jointly in case of purchasing or hiring of land, selling of produce and borrowing for agriculture. Most of the decisions related to animal husbandry were taken either by wives or jointly. Decisions regarding milking and processing of milk, utilization of dung and sale of milk and milk products were dominantly taken by wives, where purchase and sale of animals, type and number of animals to be kept and adoption of new animal husbandry practices were mainly decided jointly. Decisions for building new house, household purchasing, education of children, selection of occupation for children and financial activities were mainly taken jointly by husband and wife. Considering the extent of involvement of female members of the family in decision making process of farm and household related economic activities, it can be inferred that there is satisfactory level of women economic empowerment in resource-poor farm families and the findings of the study imply the necessity of training and capacity building of the women folk in the areas where they are key decision maker so that they can make right decisions.

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