

Participation and decision making pattern of farm women in agriculture

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Agriculture can be an important engine of growth and poverty reduction. 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 agriculture work, their decision were accepted only less than one-third of the case. The present study was attempted to ascertain the extent of participation and decision making pattern of farm women in agricultural activities. The present study was carried out in villages of Pali district of Rajasthan by selecting 120 Farm women. The findings of the study revealed that more number of farm women found to have high level of participation in agricultural operation 53.57 per cent followed by the medium participation (33.73%) and low participation (15.20%) in agricultural operations, respectively. The study also revealed that the higher number of farm women (57.11%) were observed in low category of decision making which was followed by 27.74 per cent and 15.15 per cent, respectively in case of medium and high decision making process. Study further revealed that age, education, size of family, size of land holding, social participation, extension participation, information seeking behaviour, cosmopolitanness, economic motivation, exposure to training and management orientation factors had significantly influenced the participation and decision making pattern of farm women. The study also revealed that the socio-economic factors found to influence the agriculture operation and decision making of farm women positively and significantly.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Farmwomen, Agricultural operations, Extent of participation, Decision making

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Decision-making and accurate performance of all activities helps in making an enterprise more viable, feasible and profitable. Before performing any operation task a person thinks over various options available to him/her and selects only those which are simple, profitable, compatible and relatively better. If a person before implementing a task also plans and decides about various activities, can produce excellent results.

But in case of agriculture, due to gender bias, farmwomen, a significant contributor in various activities is being kept away from the role of decision maker. It is a well-known fact that women play a significant and crucial role in agriculture development and allied field including in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro-social forestry and fishery etc. The nature and extent of women's

involvement vary widely among ecological sub zones, farming system, caste, classes and socio-economic status of families etc. in the developing countries, women in rural areas perform a variety of functions in the farm households. They act as farm producers, wage earners, care takers of the family, looking after nutrition and post harvest managers (Bakaguru, 1992). With so much of contribution by women in on farm and off farm activities it is unfortunate that agrarian Indian society relegated women to the exclusive role of doing worker rather than decision maker. Power authority and decision-making issues seem to rest exclusively with the males and eventually women acquired a role slowly, which lost its dignity, respect and values. Women's contribution to the farming sector in respect of operation and decision making has largely been ignored. Very few scientific and empirical attempts have been made in Pali district of Rajasthan to examine the actual participation and decision making efficiency of women with respect to farm and other farm supporting activities.

This phenomenon is particularly true in the case of study area where women, apart from actual participation in other subsidiary activities and having decision making capabilities regarding farm production. It is, therefore, pertinent to examine the relative contribution of women in crop production and subsidiary activities, in the process of operation and in decision making to account for their economic contribution at the farm level. Such study essential to assess the contribution of women in economy of the area so that hidden obstacles in uplifting the status of women could be identified and suitable suggestions could be given to overcome these obstacles. Keeping the above facts in mind present study was conducted with the objective to study was to ascertain the extent of participation and decision making pattern of farm women in agricultural operations in Pali district.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was conducted in Sojat block of Pali district of Rajasthan in the year of 2014-15 at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Pali-Marwar. The block has 10 agriculture extension officers (AEOs) circle were selected randomly. The headquarter village of these AEO's circle was simultaneously selected for the study. A village wise list of farm women was prepared and 12 farm women from each village were selected through random sampling method. Thus, the total sample drawn

was 120 respondents. The data were collected through a structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Data were collected personally by the researcher through a structured and pre tested interview schedule. The researcher personally approached the respondents and explained to them about the purpose of this study. After establishing rapport with the respondents, the farm women were interviewed and their responses were recorded in the interview schedule. The scale consists of 17 statements of agricultural operations and decision making process. The responses of respondents were obtained in 3 points continuum namely low, medium and high. The scoring was assigned in the order of 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The researcher personally approached the respondents and explains to them the purpose of this study. After establishing rapport with the respondents, the farm women were interviewed and their responses were recorded in the interview schedule. The present study, the role of farm women and decision making pattern was analyzed with the help of methodology explained by Hedges (1963).

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

Extent of participation pattern of farm women:

It is clear from Table 1 that more number of farm women were found to have overall high level of participation in agricultural operations *i.e.* 53.57 per cent followed by medium participation with 30.73 per cent and low participation of 15.70 per cent. Also found higher participation of farm women in agricultural activities. Further data revealed that the farm activities in which farm women obtained the highest score at high level of participation were weeding (mean score 2.52), selection of seed variety (mean score 2.23), harvesting (mean score 2.57), winnowing process (mean score 2.59), seed treatment (mean score 2.63), plant protection (mean score 2.5), sowing (mean score 2.67), manure and fertilizer application (mean score 2.57), collection of harvested crops (mean score 2.38) and soil treatment (mean score 2.49). The activities in which farm women obtained the highest score at medium level of participation were grain storage (mean score 2.17), soil testing (mean score 2.27), threshing process (mean score 2.13), seed processing (mean score 2.17), irrigation management

(mean score 2.13) and preparation of land (Mean Score 1.94). The activities in which farm women obtained the highest score at low level of participation was marketing (mean score 2.09). The study of Ghosh (2000); Badiger and Huilgal (2004); Sharma and Badodia (2016); Singh *et al.* (2005) and Yadav *et al.* (2005) also found higher participation of farm women in agricultural activities in this respect the present study is conformity with these findings.

The perusal of data presented in Table 2 revealed that the farm women participated in decision making process in each and every farm activities. The data indicated that the higher number of farm women (57.11%) were observed in low category of decision making followed by medium category of decision making with (27.74%) and high category of decision making (15.15%) also found that the more number of farm women in agricultural activities taken low decision making involvement. The activities in which farm women achieved the highest score at low level of decision making process were highest score at medium level of decision making process were threshing process (mean score 1.90), seed processing (mean score 1.95), irrigation management (mean score 1.90) and preparation of land (mean score 1.98). Thus, none of the farm women had an opportunity to get themselves involves into high level

of decision making. Hence, there is a need to involve farm women in decision at higher level and give them opportunity to express their views. The study of Kalpana (2000); Goswami *et al.* (2004); Praveena (2005); Kavita (2006); Bhattacharjee (2015); Kumar *et al.* (2016); Pandey *et al.* (2014) and Tuli *et al.* (2015) also found that the more number of farm women in agricultural activities taken low decision making involvement, in this respect the present study is conformity with these findings.

Influence of socio-economic characteristics of farm women in agriculture operations and decision making pattern:

In order to study the relative influence of socio-economic characteristics of farm women in agricultural operations and decision making pattern, the values of standard partial regression co-efficient (β -values) were calculated and are presented in Table 3. The study of standard partial regression co-efficient between socio personal characteristics of farm women and the agricultural operations revealed that out of all economic factors, only four factors, namely caste, socio-economic status, mass media exposure and innovativeness (β -values 0.212^{NS}, 0.113^{NS}, 0.108^{NS} and 0.137^{NS}) were found to non-significant. Study also revealed that socio-economic

Table 1 : Distribution of women according to their extent of participation in agricultural activities				(n=120)
Area of activities	Extent of participation			Mean score
	Low	Medium	High	
Weeding	10	38	72	2.52
Selection of seed variety	28	36	56	2.23
Harvesting	10	32	78	2.57
Soil testing	21	46	53	2.27
Winnowing process	11	27	82	2.59
Seed treatment	10	25	85	2.63
Plant protection	11	30	79	2.57
Sowing	08	24	88	2.67
Manure and fertilizer application	11	30	79	2.57
Threshing process	28	48	44	2.13
Seed processing	22	56	42	2.17
Grain storage	16	26	78	2.52
Irrigation management	28	49	43	2.13
Collection of harvested crops	18	39	63	2.38
Preparation of land	40	47	33	1.94
Marketing	35	39	46	2.09
Soil treatment	13	35	72	2.49
Overall average	18.83	36.88	64.29	2.38

Figure in parentheses shows per cent to total

factors, whose β -values were found to be positive and significant were age (1.338*), education (0.755*), size of family (0.966*), marital status (0.844*), size of land holding (2.370*), social participation (1.776*), extension participation (0.590*), information seeking behaviour (1.865*), cosmopolitanness (0.611*), economic motivation (0.878*), exposure to training (0.678*) and management

orientation (0.790*). This clearly shows the influence of these characteristics on agricultural operations. On the other hand, in case of decision making pattern only two factors namely caste and marital status (β -values 0.023^{NS} and 0.213^{NS}) were found to be non-significant. Thus, the factors did not influence decision making pattern of farm women.

Area of activities	Decision making pattern			Mean score
	Low	Medium	High	
Weeding	82	25	13	1.43
Selection of seed variety	70	30	20	1.58
Harvesting	74	35	11	1.48
Soil testing	64	34	22	1.65
Winnowing process	84	26	10	1.38
Seed treatment	85	24	11	1.38
Plant protection	85	22	13	1.40
Sowing	81	26	13	1.43
Manure and fertilizer application	89	19	12	1.36
Threshing process	38	56	26	1.90
Seed processing	28	70	22	1.95
Grain storage	76	28	16	1.50
Irrigation management	40	52	28	1.90
Collection of harvested crops	80	22	18	1.48
Preparation of land	35	53	32	1.98
Marketing	73	24	23	1.48
Soil treatment	81	20	19	1.48
Overall average	(68.53)	(33.29)	(18.18)	(1.49)

Figure in parentheses shows per cent to total

Socio- economic characteristics	Agriculture preparation - values	Decision making pattern - values
Age	1.338*	1.433*
Education	0.755*	0.876*
Caste	0.212 ^{NS}	0.035 ^{NS}
Size of family	0.966*	2.213*
Marital status	0.844*	0.267 ^{NS}
Size of land holding	2.370*	1.244*
Social participation	1.776*	0.632*
Extension participation	0.590*	0.722*
Information seeking behaviour	1.865*	0.579*
Socio-economic status	0.113 ^{NS}	0.461*
Mass media exposure	0.108 ^{NS}	0.899*
Cosmopolitanness	0.867*	0.611*
Economic motivation	0.878*	0.788*
Innovativeness	0.137 ^{NS}	0.603*
Exposure to training	0.678*	0.433*
Management orientation	0.790*	0.544*
Coefficient of determination (R ²)	71.08%	81.33%

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS=Non-significant

In case of decision making pattern correlation study further revealed that socio-economic factors, whose β -values were found to be positive and significant were, age (1.433*), education (0.876*), size of family (2.213*), size of land holding (1.244*), social participation (0.632*), extension participation (0.722*), information seeking behaviour (0.589*), socio-economic status (0.461*), mass media exposure (0.899*), cosmopolitanism (0.661*), economic motivation (0.788*), innovativeness (0.603*), exposure to training (0.433*) and management orientation (0.544*). Thus these factors had significantly influenced the decision making pattern of farm women. The findings confirm with the findings of Tiwari and Tripathi (2014), Pandey *et al.* (2011); Sharma *et al.* (2014) and Sharma and Badodia (2016).

Conclusion :

On the basis of results in the study it may be concluded that high number (53.57%) of farm women were found to have overall high level of participation in agricultural operations. On the other hand, the farm women participated in decision making process in each and every farm activities. The data clearly indicated that the higher number (57.11%) of farm women were observed in low category of decision making process. Study further revealed that age, education, size of family, size of land holding, social participation, extension participation, information seeking behaviour, cosmopolitanism, economic motivation, exposure to training and management orientation factors had significantly influenced the participation and decision making pattern of farm women.

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