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Decision making behaviour for empowerment of tribal and non-tribal farm women of Odisha

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Abstract

Decision making is a cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities. Participation of farm women in the decision making is a critical aspect in the process of empowerment of the farm women. Hence the present research study was undertaken to find out the decision making behaviour for the empowerment of farm women of Odisha. 240 farm women were selected as respondents and relevant data were collected with the help of personal interview schedule. Ex-post facto and survey research design was adopted in this research study. Multistage random sampling procedure was adopted for data collection. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Analysis of the data showed that the farm women need to be sufficiently exposed to all the latest developments and proceedings so that they feel empowered and take part in all decision making process about procurement of inputs, marketing of produce, financial and other aspects.

Keywords: Decision making, empowerment, farm women

Introduction

In the agricultural production process, end users or farmers are very important. The farming community comprises three district groups – farmers, farm women and young farmers including boys and girls. Participation of women in agriculture in developing countries has been silently appreciated without much recognition and recording their contributions. They have not been prepared for active involvement in the development process. By and large, they are remained as invisible workers. Since 1970s, a global concern for the emancipation of women in general and farm women in particular has been expressed in so many ways aiming at improving the working environment of women and raising their standard of living.

Indian women have a multifunctional personality. She is the pivot around whom the whole household revolves. Hard working and dedicated, she shares most of the duties and responsibilities of a family. Housekeeping, child rearing, assisting in agriculture and industry, cattle rearing are parts of her duties. Most of the rural women do not find a place in the planning & mechanism of development. Though women make a substantial contribution to the family income through home-based activities, this is usually treated as supplemental and hence it goes unnoticed. Since a long time, it is generally believed all over the world that the place of women is at home. However, this institutional belief has been radically transformed particularly since the beginning of the twentieth century due to political, economical and social changes in the attitude and out-look of the people towards women and their role in the society.

Research Methodology

The present research study was undertaken in Ganjam (non-tribal) and Jharsuguda (tribal) districts of Orissa State. A total number of 240 farm women equally from each district covering 8 villages from 4 blocks were interviewed personally by the researcher to find out the decision making for the empowerment of farm women. Ex-post facto and survey research design was adopted in this research study. Multistage random sampling procedure was adopted for data collection.

Results and Discussions**1. Decision making role in procurement**

Timely arrangement of inputs is essential for successful implementation of any activities. Often it is observed that the male member in the family usually decide on procurement of inputs excepting household materials. The reason being the allocation of resources is usually done by the male members because of patriarchal family nature. The procurement of input is very crucial because of the scarce resources. The time, mode and source of procurement along with quantity and price require sufficient analysis for which the farm women in decision

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making process are of equal role with their male counterparts. It is being observed that the farm women are usually not consulted towards taking decisions on procurement of inputs.

Attempt was therefore made in the study to assess the role of farm women in decision making process about procurement of inputs.

Table 1: Role of farm women in decisions towards procurement of inputs.

S. No.	Decision	Not consulted		Consulted but not implemented		Consulted and implemented		Mean score	
		Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1	Inputs to be procured	45.00	72.50	10.00	19.17	45.00	8.33	2.00	1.36
2	Quantity procured	45.00	66.67	10.00	19.17	45.00	14.17	2.00	1.48
3	Source of procurement	50.00	66.67	8.33	19.17	41.67	14.17	1.92	1.48
4	Mode of procurement	50.00	62.50	8.33	23.33	41.67	14.17	1.92	1.52
5	Time of procurement	50.00	62.50	8.33	23.33	41.67	14.17	1.92	1.52
6	Price of inputs	53.33	62.50	10.00	23.33	36.67	14.17	1.83	1.52

(Figures are in percentage except mean score)

A sharp contrast of findings had been observed on role of farm women in decision making process between tribal and non-tribal respondents on various activities and procurement of inputs. It had been observed that the tribal farm women had good involvement as they not only consulted for decision but also the decisions were being implemented. Since inputs were the basic requirements for undertaking any activity, it was observed from the table that the non-tribal respondents were not being consulted as observed from the table. Majority of the respondents in non-tribal district had stated that they were not being consulted in all the aspects of procurement of inputs. Similarly, around 50% of the respondents in tribal district stated for being not consulted on different aspects of procurement of inputs. The findings brought to the fact that the farm women were not being considered experienced about various aspects of the procurement of inputs for which they were not being consulted. It might also be another fact that the farm women had not feel themselves competent for which they were not being interested to take part in the decision making process about procurement of inputs although majority of the respondents in both the districts involved in

family decision making process including planning on input arrangement.

The findings therefore concluded that, the farm women were not much involved in procurement of inputs due to less knowledge and skills. It was therefore suggested that the farm women need to be sufficiently exposed to all aspects of procurement of inputs so that they feel empowered and take part in all decision making process about procurement of inputs.

2. Decision making in marketing of produce

It is confirmed that the farm women are more involved in harvesting and post harvesting operations than raising crops. It is more found in tribal district. Farm women are exclusively engaged in harvesting, drying, cleaning, grading and sorting of the produce including marketing. Time and place of the marketing of the produce are positively related with the monetary gain. Moreover, quantity of product to be retained for family consumption and marketing are usually decided by the farm women. Therefore, farm women have more role and involvement in marketing of the produce. Attempt was also made in the study to verify the hypothesis mentioned above.

Table 2: Role of Farm women in decisions about marketing of produce.

S. No.	Decision	Not consulted		Consulted but not implemented		Consulted and implemented		Mean score	
		Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1	Quantity to be sold	54.16	67.50	6.67	20.00	39.17	12.50	1.85	1.45
2	Trader selection	59.17	62.50	9.17	19.17	31.67	18.33	1.73	1.56
3	Price fixation	56.67	48.33	9.17	24.17	34.16	27.50	1.78	1.79
4	Time of disposal	61.67	62.50	5.83	19.17	32.50	18.33	1.71	1.56
5	Mode of disposal	55.00	50.83	6.67	21.67	38.33	27.50	1.83	1.77
6	Value addition	60.83	65.83	5.83	16.67	33.33	17.50	1.73	1.52

(Figures are in percentage except mean score)

As observed from the table, majority of the respondents in both the districts had not been consulted in any aspect of the marketing of the produce. It confirmed that the farm women had no decision making power in marketing of the produce although they involved much in harvesting, cleaning, grading, storing and preserving the produce. The mean score value indicated no significant difference in various aspects of the marketing of the produce which symbolized the dominance of the male counterparts in disposal of the produce in both the districts.

Farm women were taking all measures for quality and safe storage of the produce. They had also equal responsibilities in maintenance of the family particularly house hold activities. Unless they had decision making role in disposal of the produce, they could not have the scope for better maintenance of the family due to no access to the financial resources. It

might be another reason that the farm women had no sufficient knowledge about sale price of the commodity, traders to be contracted and market to be located. But they had definitely some idea about time and quantity to be sold as they had better idea about family consumption. It was therefore suggested that the farm women should be exposed sufficiently about different aspects of the marketing of the produce so that they would feel empowered and take in the decision making process towards marketing of the produce.

3. Decision making in financial aspects

Access to the financial resources is the determinant of empowerment. Economic empowerment largely depends upon financial involvement. Budgeting on home, enterprise, inputs, credit, and above all savings are important factors for development. Appropriate decision on these aspects is very

crucial. Involvement of farm women on budgeting is quite important in the family. It is usual phenomenon that farm women are not much consulted in taking decisions towards

financial involvement. Attempt was made in the study to assess the role of farm women in decision making towards financial involvement.

Table 3: Role of farm women in financial decision making

S. No.	Activity	Not consulted		Consulted but not implemented		Consulted and implemented		Mean score	
		Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1	Family budgeting	61.67	65.83	5.00	21.67	33.33	12.50	1.72	1.47
2	Enterprise budgeting	55.83	65.83	10.00	21.67	34.17	12.50	1.78	1.47
3	Credit requirement	55.00	57.50	10.83	21.67	34.17	20.83	1.79	1.63
4	Source of credit	62.50	57.50	4.17	21.67	33.33	20.83	1.71	1.63
5	Mode of repayment	61.67	55.83	5.00	16.67	33.33	27.50	1.72	1.72
6	Saving	60.84	62.50	5.83	16.67	33.33	20.83	1.73	1.58
7	Saving utilization	65.83	62.50	5.00	16.67	29.17	20.83	1.63	1.58

(Figures are in percentage except mean score)

The respondent had very poor role and involvement in financial decision making as observed from the table. Women were more involved in maintenance of the family. But the study revealed that, 61.67% of the respondents in tribal district and 65.83% in non-tribal district were not being consulted towards family budgeting. Similar findings were also observed in enterprise budgeting, and credit requirement where more than 55% of the respondents were not consulted. Women in the family were much concerned about saving for development of the family for which they sacrificed much. Therefore, they should be involved. But more that 60% of the respondents in tribal district and more that 55% in non-tribal district were not being consulted. Similarly, women were

taking better decisions about savings and its utilization. But around 65% of the respondents on both the districts were not being consulted. It was interesting to observe that more number of respondents in the tribal district were consulted and their decision implemented in financial decision making process than non-tribal district.

Decision making role of an individual is the function of multiple factors particularly social, psychological, economic and communication variables. These variables directly or indirectly influence the individual to involve in the family decision making process. Attempt was therefore made in the study to analyze the relationship between these variables with decision making role of the farm women.

Table 4: Influences of Socio-economic variables on decision making process

S. No.	Variables	Family decision		Procurement		Marketing		Finance		Asset creation	
		Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1	Age	0.822**	0.925**	0.876**	0.786**	0.825**	-0.490**	0.724**	0.085	0.678**	-0.493**
2	Education	-0.065	0.649**	-0.116	0.577**	0.005	-0.278*	0.178	0.104	0.247*	-0.210*
3	Family size	-0.361*	0.185	-0.358*	-0.184	-0.281*	-0.659**	-0.277*	-0.688**	-0.265*	-0.587*
4	Family type	-0.034	-0.605**	-0.018	-0.317*	0.026	0.630**	-0.069	0.366*	-0.097	0.644**
5	Social participation	-0.073	-0.255**	-0.053	0.128	0.050	0.696**	0.136	0.537*	0.168	0.540*
6	Cosmopolitaness	0.584*	0.514*	0.610**	0.689**	0.695**	0.121	0.764**	0.472*	0.765**	0.095
7	Housing pattern	0.278*	0.410*	0.349*	0.109	0.219*	-0.558**	0.098	-0.313*	0.043	-0.419*
8	Holding size	0.025	0.129	-0.027	-0.088	-0.090	-0.480*	-0.110	-0.415*	-0.108	-0.294*
9	Annual income	0.015	0.241*	0.009	-0.084	0.028	-0.658**	0.130	-0.492*	0.167	-0.342*
10	Occupation	0.219*	0.398**	0.232**	0.400*	0.218*	-0.073	0.239*	0.212*	0.240*	-0.040
11	Social Trait	0.727**	0.504**	0.665**	0.677**	0.741**	0.063	0.744**	0.388*	0.742**	0.006
12	Economic trait	0.893**	0.817**	0.861**	0.953**	0.894**	-0.054	0.843**	0.536**	0.813**	0.003

* Significant at 0.05 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

As revealed from the table age, cosmopolitaness, occupation, social trait and economics trait had positive and significant relationship in the decision making process of all the aspects of the respondents of the tribal district as mentioned in the table. It indicated that better the status of these independent variables better was the decision making role of the tribal women. Family size had negative influence over decision making process of all aspects indicated that less the family size better was the decision making role. Education had only positive relationship with asset creation. Family type, social participation, holding size and income found to have no significant relationship with any decision making process. Housing pattern had positive relationship in decision making process on family affairs, procurement and marketing.

In non-tribal district, age and education of the respondents had positive and significant relationships with decision making in family affairs, procurement and negatively with marketing and asset creation. Family size had negative

relationship with decision making process at marketing, financial and asset creation. Family type had negative relationship with decision making process of family affairs, procurement and positively with other decision making process. Social participation had significant relationship with decision making process. Consompliteness had significant and positive relationship with decision on family affairs, procurement and financial aspects. Housing pattern had negative relationship with decision making process on marketing, financial, asset creation and positively on family affairs. Holding size had also negative relationship with decision making process about marketing, financial and asset creation. Holding size and income had negative relationship with decision making process on marketing, financial and asset creation. Occupation had significant and positive relationship with decision making process on family affairs, procurement and financial aspects.

All most all the socio-personal variables had significant influence in increasing the decision making role the farm women in both the districts. But, younger age, small family size, better cosmopolitaness, occupation, social and economic trait and to some extent better housing pattern had much influence in the decision making role in the tribal district. But mixed responses were observed for the respondents in the non-tribal district. It confirms that since the farm women of the tribal district were much involved in the farm activities having poor socio-economic status, their family decision making role could be increased with increase of their socio-economic status. At the same time, farm women in non-tribal district were comparatively advanced and conscious for their family earnings as well as better socio-economic status; so, mixed results were obtained for influencing family decision making role.

However, younger age, education, less family size, cosmopolitaness, better housing pattern, occupation, social and economic traits were the major independent variables contributing much towards involvement of the farm women in family decision making process.

Conclusion

It was concluded that the farm women were not much involved in procurement of inputs due to less knowledge and skills. Farm women had no decision making power in marketing of the produce although they involved much in harvesting, cleaning, grading, storing and preserving the produce. In respect to decision making in financial aspects it was observed that they had very poor role and involvement in financial decision making. It can be concluded that, the farm women need to be sufficient exposed to the latest developments so that they feel themselves competent and develop interest to involve in the family decision making process.

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