



Gender, Participation in Decision Making of Farm Activities- A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Agriculture is a cornerstone of many economies worldwide, yet gender disparities in agricultural activities and decision-making processes persist. The present study was conducted in Milkipur block of Ayodhya district in Uttar Pradesh to find out decision making activities performed by men and women in farm activities and understand gender role in deferent activities. The major outcome of the study were the majority of respondents (58.82%) belong to the middle age group (30 to 50 years) belongs to the nuclear family (77.45%) and most of them (60.78) were illiterate. After analysis of data it was clear that most of the decisions related to farm activities as number of crop, area for each crop, its variety, seed treatment practice, fertilizer application, irrigation timings and plant protection measures were taken by husband only (78.77%) followed joint decision (12.7%) taken with their wife or other family members. The decisions related to animal husbandry like number and breed of draught and milch animals were mainly taken by men (68.02%) followed by joint decision (20.84%). In the same manner decisions related to money matters again dominated by men with average 69.12 percent followed by joint decision with average 23.04 percent. In all criteria only few women were found who take their own decisions with average percentage of 6.26, 11.28 and 7.84 respectively.

Introduction

Decision making refers to the process in which people make choices or decisions on goals, policies strategies and major measures of agricultural production. In Indian society; both husband and wife participate in different household and farm activities. Men typically engage in activities that are considered more labor-intensive and market-oriented, such as land preparation, irrigation, and the use of machinery. They are also more likely to control financial resources and access to credit, which further consolidates their dominant position in agricultural decision-making. In many regions, men are also responsible for selling produce at markets and negotiating prices, which positions them as the primary economic decision-makers in the household.

Agriculture remains a vital sector, particularly in developing countries, where it serves as the primary source of livelihood for a significant portion of the population. Despite the critical role of women in agriculture, gender disparities in labor division and decision-making are widespread. Major decisions related to crop selection, purchase of inputs, and financial matters were typically made by men. Women's input was often

sought for tasks considered an extension of their domestic roles, such as kitchen gardening and small-scale animal husbandry.

Women are regarded as better half 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 (Kumari et al 2019). Women play a significant role in agriculture, the world over. Rural women play a key role in agricultural sector production by working with full passion in production of crops right from the soil preparation till post-harvest and food security activities (Ahmed and Hussain, 2004). It is estimated that women are responsible for 70 percent of actual farm work and constitute up to 60 percent of the farming population (Chaudhary and Singh, 2003).

However, women's contributions are frequently undervalued and underreported due to socio-cultural norms that prioritize men's roles in agriculture. Women often work longer hours than men, balancing agricultural duties with household responsibilities such as fetching water, collecting firewood, and caring for children and the elderly. So in the light of above the following objectives were planned-

Objective of the study

1. To find out the basic information of the respondents
2. To study the decision making practices for farm activities by rural male and female.

Review of literature

Pandey S. et al (2011) studied 200 hundred far families from eight villages of Jhansi district of Bundelkhand district and found that decision regarding food, feed and fodder production male farmer mainly taken 23 decision out of total 25 decision. In case of animal husbandry and household aspects, most of the decision i.e. 10 out of 14 decisions and 12 out of 16 decisions were mainly taken by both male and female farmers by consulting each other. The overall participation pattern in animal husbandry and household aspect also indicated that both male and female farmers by consulting each other to taken most of the decision 49.21% and 58.40% respectively.

Mihiret and tadesse (2014) studied in Yilman Densa District, Amhara Region, Ethiopia and found that rural women regularly engaged and participated in critical farming activities including weeding, seed preparation, selling agricultural commodities, and harvesting. The level of their participation is limited in plowing farm land, spreading chemicals, and crop protection activities. Most rural women did not have any role in decision making with regard to purchase/sale of farming implements, land preparation and determination of type and amount of chemicals (pesticides, herbicides) used. Rural women's participation in farm management decision making is quite minimal. Lack of experience, illiteracy, false assumption about the role of rural women in agriculture, shortage of technical knowledge/skills, and limited extension service are the main determinant factors affecting the participation of rural women in decision making process in the study area. Thus, all the possible opportunities should be created for rural women to improve their level of participation and decision making in farming activities. Well organized and integrated awareness creation strategy should also be designed and facilitated by stakeholders to minimize the social, cultural, and economic factors affecting rural women's decision making ability.

Chayal k. et al. (2013) found that rural women undertake various activities in agriculture such as cleaning of fields, field preparation, sowing, intercultural practices, weeding, harvesting, picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains etc. But it is unfortunate that they remain invisible workers. However, their involvement as decision-makers regarding these activities is questionable

Anuradha R.K. et al. (2023) revealed from their study that a high number of farm women (52.07%) were observed in low category of decision making which was followed by (27.84%) medium and (20.07%) high

categories of decision making. This is because of male dominance, no knowledge about improved technology, and lack of education.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Milkipur block of Ayodhya district. 3 villages were selected randomly and 10 percent population from each village was selected randomly. So, total 102 respondents were selected to conduct the study. A well structured and pre tested survey schedule was utilized for interviewing personally. The tubular method and percentage were used to analyze the data.

Result and discussion

The present study aimed to identify the basic information of the respondents which may affect the decision making power of them. Table 1.1 revealed that majority of respondedents (58.82%) were belongs to middle age group followed by young age group and old age group with 22.55 percent and 18.63 percent respectively.

In the present social system of the nation where structure of the family has been continuously change. This study also depict that most of the respondedents (77.45%) belonged to the nuclear family and remaining 22.55 percent were having joint family.

Table 1.1 Percentage distributions of respondents on the basis of socio economic

S. No.	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Age group	
(a)	Young (below 30)	22.55
(b)	Middle (31-50)	58.82
(c)	Old (above 51)	18.63
2.	Type of family	
(a)	Joint	22.55
(b)	Nuclear	77.45
3.	Education	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	60.78
2.	Primary	13.73
3.	Middle	7.84
4.	High school	5.88
5.	Intermediate	7.84
6.	Graduation and above	3.92

It is evident from the above table 1.2 that majority of respondents (60.78) were illiterate followed by 13.73 percent respondents were educated up to primary level, whereas very few (3.92%) women found as graduate and above qualifications.

Table 1.2 Involvement of male and female in decision making related to farm activities .

S. No.	Decision related activities	Husband only		Wife only		Jointly	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Number of crop and area for crop	88	86.27	3	2.94	11	30.78
2.	Crop Variety	79	77.45	5	4.90	18	17.65
3.	Seed treatment	84	82.35	6	5.88	12	11.00
4.	Fertilization application	81	79.71	5	4.90	16	1.69
5.	Irrigation frequency and time	68	66.67	11	10.78	23	22.55
6.	Plant protection measures	82	80.19	8	7.84	12	11.00
	average		78.77		6.26		12.7

To ascertain the role of male and female in making the decision related to farm activities table 1.2 reveals that the decision related to number of crops and area under each crop are mainly taken by husband only(86.27%), followed by the decisions taken jointly. Only 2.95 percent families found where decision were taken by wife only which was negligible. The decision regarding the variety of crops is generally taken by husband. In 77.45 percent cases crop varieties were selected by husband only followed by decision taken jointly (17.65%) and the decision taken by wife only (4.90%). Seed treatment related decision were again taken by husband only (82.35%), followed by jointly (11.76%). Only 5.88 percent women decided it on their own. The decisions related to application of fertilizers was taken by husbands only with 79.41 percent followed by decision taken jointly (15.69%) and then taken by wife only (4.90%). Further decision related to timing and frequency of irrigation are also taken by husband only (66.71%) followed by decision take jointly (22.6%). Here 10.78 percent families are found where decisions are taken by women only. The decision related to plant protection measures were again taken by husbands only followed by jointly (11.76%) and very few (7.84%) are found where these decision were taken by wife only. If here observed the average, the majority of decisions related to farm were taken their husbands only (78.77%), followed by 12.70 percent families were found where decisions taken jointly and negligible percentage (6.21%) were found where these decisions were taken only by women.

Table 1.3 Decision making related to animal husbandry.

S. No.	Decision related activities	Husband only		Wife only		Jointly	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Number of draught animals	77	75.50	6	5.88	19	18.63
2.	Breed of draught animals	73	71.57	8	7.84	22	21.57
3.	Number of milch animals	66	64.71	13	12.75	23	22.55
4.	Breed of milch animals	61	61.78	14	18.63	21	20.59
	Average		68.02		11.28		20.84

In Indian culture animal husbandry is a major part of our agriculture system. To know the role of male and female in this activity and their decision related for animal husbandry the above data were analyzed. Table 1.3 depicts that decision related to number of drought animal is a pre- dominating (75.75%) male domain with husband only followed by joint decision with his wife. The decision related to selection of breed of drought animals is again dominated by husband only with 71.57 percent followed by joint decision with 21.6 percent. Only 5.9 percent and 7.8 percent women were found who take decision for the number and breed of drought animals.

Further the decision related to milch animals was taken in majority of cases the husband only (64.7%) followed by joint decision (22.6%) and decision made by wife only (12.8%). As for drought animal, the decision related to breed of milch animal was again taken by husband only with majority (60.8%) followed by joint decision taken with wife and only 18.60 percent women had taken decision to select the breed of milch animal on their own.

Table 1.4 Decision making related to financial matter.

S. No.	Decision related activities	Husband only		Wife only		Jointly	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Planning of budget	61	59.80	14	13.73	27	26.47
2.	Buying of required articles	68	66.67	8	7.84	26	25.49
3.	Buying and selling of agricultural produce and extra land	76	74.51	4	3.92	22	21.57
4.	Buying and selling of cattle	77	75.49	6	5.83	19	18.63
	Average		69.12		7.84		23.04

To ascertain the role of male and female in making the decision related to finance or money matters, the above table reveals that decisions related to budget planning were taken by husband only with majority (59.80%) followed by decision taken jointly(26.47%). There were only 13.73 percent women were found who take the decision related to budget planning herself. In the next criteria the decision related to buying of required article were taken by majority of husband only (66.67%) followed by joint decision with their wife (25.49%) and only 7.84 percent women were found to take the decision by herself.

The decisions related to selling of agricultural produce and extra lands are generally taken by husband only(74.5%) followed by the decision taken jointly (21.6%) and decision taken by wife only (3.9%). Again the decision related to buying and selling of animals was dominated to husband only (75.49%) followed by jointly (18.63%). Here again only 5.83 percent women were found who take the decision on their own.

So, on an average the majority of decisions related to money were taken by husband only (69.12%) followed by decision taken jointly (23.04%) with their wife. Very few women (7.84%) were found to take their own decision in financial matter of the family.

Summary and conclusion

Involvement of male and female in agricultural activities is almost equal but women have other responsibilities to take care of their household chores and their children also. But they pay more effort and time to perform their work. Illiteracy, lack of awareness and financial dependency were the main reason to get their own identity. Women's participation in the decision-making process has a significant impact on their improved

status and greater role in the society. Their participation is potentially important to bring equality between women and men in order to achieve sustainable development (Anuradha r.k. etall 2023)

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