
FARM MANAGEMENT IN RURAL AREAS: ROLE OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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Abstract: Indian economy is primarily based on agricultural and allied activities. In general, rural women in addition to participating in different farm operations and activities also help in decision-making with regard to farm practices, operations and household affairs. Successful management of the farm and family is totally dependent upon taking the right decision at the right time and execution of the same with proper zeal and ability. Thus, women have a considerable role in decision making in home as well as in farm affairs and thus play an important role in the development process. A study was taken up by the researchers with the objective of examining the role of women in decision making process of farm management. The study was conducted in Warangal district of Telangana state. Four villages in Warangal district were selected and from each village 30 families were selected as the sample, thus making it a sample size of 120 families. The data were tabulated and subjected to averages, percentages and chi-square. The findings of the study reveal that level of involvement of majority of the sample women in decision making with regard to farm input, area allocation for crops and marketing and disposal of farm produce is low.

Keywords: Farm management, Rural women, Decision-making and involvement

Introduction: The role of women has always been a multi-dimensional and significant as women have performed well in case of agricultural activities, domestic activities, marketing activities as far as labour requirement is considered. The decision-making process is an important segment of every household because the functioning of family resource management depends on the efficiency of decision-making progress. So, women's involvement in decision-making process has been of great importance because women play an important role. Rural women play a significant role in domestic and socio-economic life of the society. Indian rural women, in addition to participating in different farm operations and activities also help in decision making with regard to farm practices, operations and household affairs. Successful management of the farm and family is totally dependent upon taking the right decision at the right time and execution of the same with proper zeal and ability. Thus, women have a considerable role in decision making in home as well as in farm affairs and thus play an important role in the development process.

In rural society, there has been noticed a considerable fluctuation regarding the decision-making power of women. The state like Punjab and Haryana show positive role of women in decision-making process in many of the families. But it has become insignificant and negligible in rural families due to illiteracy of women. The contribution of rural women has not taken seriously because it is considered very disgraceful to accept the decision of women. This is because the abilities of women have been neglected and undermined as the responsibility of forming the policies is always regarded the job of male traditionally. How far, the role of women in

decision-making process has been noticed in positive manner is the major concern of our study. Thus to know the actual situation of women, their role in decision-making in different agricultural activities need to be properly looked into.

Review of Literature: The study done by Khan, M., et al., 2012 highlights the role of the invisible working hands of women in the field of agriculture, who are working side by side with the farmers and contributing a lot towards agricultural development. In addition, to the acknowledgement of the greater participation of rural women in agriculture activities, the study also brings the hidden talents of rural women to limelight and signifies the potentials of rural women for proper harnessing and the resultant improvement in farm income and productivity. M.A. Damisa and M. Yohanna, 2007 conducted a study in Zaria area of Kaduna State to examine the level of participation of rural women in the decision making in different areas of agriculture and to study the factors influencing their participation in the decision making process in farm management and concluded that the level of her participation in farm management decision making is quite low.

Objectives of the study: The present study was taken up with the objective of examining the role of women in farm management decision making process.

Methodology: This study was conducted in Warangal district of Telangana state. Four villages in Warangal district were selected and from each village 30 families were selected as the sample, thus making it a sample size of 120 families.

Out of the 120 samples, 30 samples were selected from each size group of farmers viz. Landless, Small, Marginal and Large size groups having holding size of

0.01 to 2.00 ha, 2.01 to 4.00 ha and above 4.01 ha respectively. Thus the sample for the study consisted of 120 families from Warangal district of Telangana state. The data were collected with the help of questionnaire specially designed for the purpose. The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire specially designed for the purpose. The data pertains to the agricultural year 2015-2016. The data of the sample families were complied according to the size group of farms.

Decision making function: Chi-square test was used to quantify the decision making process of farm women. The following formula was used:

$$\chi^2 = (1/n_1n_2) \sum (a_{ini} - b_{ini})^2 / (a_i + b_i)$$

Where, i= landless, small, marginal, large (four size groups of farms)

χ^2 = chi-square statistic

n_1n_2 = product of number of women workers

n_1 = Total number of workers involved in decision making

n_2 = Total number of workers not involved in decision making

a_1 = number of women workers involved in decision making of landless group

b_1 = number of women workers not involved in decision making of landless group

a_2 = number of women workers involved in decision making of small-size group

b_2 = number of women workers not involved in decision making of small-size group

a_3 = number of women workers involved in decision making of marginal-size group

b_3 = number of women workers not involved in decision making of marginal -size group

a_4 = number of women workers involved in decision making of large-size group

b_4 = number of women workers not involved in decision making of large -size group

Results and Discussion:

1. **Working Members of Sample Families:**

The information relating to working members of sample families is given in table 1. It is observed from the table that the average number of workers in the landless families, small, marginal and large were 3.15, 3.20, 4.23 and 4.02 respectively. On an average, the number of workers was 3.65 per family.

S. no.	Size Groups	Size limit (Ha)	No.of cultivators
1	Landless	-	30
2	Small	0.01 to 2.00	30
3	Marginal	2.01 to 4.00	30
4	Large	Above 4.00	30

2. **Decision making regarding Purchase of Farm Input:**

A large number of inputs are home produced while others are required to be purchased from market. Some of the inputs have to be used at

the proper time, in certain quantities and a few with some skills. Therefore, there are several decisions like purchase of fertilizers, insecticides, weedicides, seed and farm machinery are to be taken in this regard. The extent to which women of different size groups influence such decisions on sample farms was tested through the statistical test and the data are presented in table -2. The chi-square value 4.9 shows that there is non significant relationship. On an average nearly 37.8 percent women workers are involved in decision-making.

Table 2. Involvement of women in decision making regarding purchase of farm inputs

Size Group	Involvement in decision making				Total
	Involved		Not Involved		
Small size	16	53.3	14	46.6	30
Marginal	10	33.3	20	66.6	30
Large	8	26.6	22	73	30
Total	34	37.7	56	62.3	90

Chi-Square = 4.91 (Non -Significant)

The women workers from the small size group are involved in decision making to the extent of 53.3 which was greater than marginal and large groups, where the extent of involvement or participation in decision-making was 33.3 and 26.6 percent respectively.

3. **Decision making regarding crops to Grow:**

It was generally considered that women from economically low status i.e. from size-small ate consulted in decision-making regarding crops to grow, while those from economically better status are not consulted with regard to taking up several crops on the farms. This is because the women from medium and low economic status tend to always plan for different requirements of their families and therefore it was expected that they would be involved in decision making to a larger extent in that respect.

Table 3 Involvement of women in decision making regarding crops to grow

Size Group	Involvement in decision making				Total
	Involved		Not Involved		
Small size	16	53.3	14	46.6	30
Marginal	10	33.3	20	66.6	30
Large	7	23.3	23	76.6	30
Total	33	36.7	57	63.3	90

Chi-Square = 6.02 (Significant at 1 percent level)

From the above table, it can be observed that the women from the marginal and large size group were involved in the decision making process regarding the crops to grow.

4. **Decision regarding Area Allocation of Crops:** Decision regarding area allocation of crops was considered to be taken up by men of the family, but even then the women are consulted in the transaction related to area allocation for the crops. This was tested through a statistical test. The chi-square test gives the result 5.76 which is not significant.

Table 4 Involvement of women in decision making regarding Area Allocation

Size Group	Involvement in decision making				Total
	Involved		Not Involved		
Small size	16	53.3	14	46.6	30
Marginal	11	36.6	19	63.6	30
Large	7	23.3	23	76.6	30
Total	34	37.8	56	62.3	90

Chi-Square = 5.76 (Non -Significant)

From the above table, it can be observed that the overall level of about 38 percent of the women were involved in decision making regarding the allocation of crops. Women from the marginal and large size group were involved to a lesser extent when compared to small size group in the decision making process regarding area allocation of crops.

5. **Decision regarding Marketing (disposal) of Farm Produce:** The very important decisions in

farm business are the marketing or disposal of farm produce. The decision regarding disposal of farm produce are dominated by men. The result of chi-square test applied to work out the extent of involvement and participation in decision regarding disposal of farm produce is given in table-5.

Table-5. Involvement of women in Decision making regarding marketing (disposal) of farm produce.

Size Group	Involvement in decision making				Total
	Involved		Not Involved		
Small size	16	53.3	14	46.6	30
Marginal	11	36.6	19	63.3	30
Large	8	23.3	22	73.3	30
Total	35	38.8	55	61.1	90

Chi-Square = 4.58 (Non -Significant)

It can be observed from the above table, that the results are non-significant with the chi-square value of 4.58.

Conclusion: It can therefore be concluded that though the women participation in decision-making of farm management is low. To overcome this, short duration training programmes should be conducted in decision-making process. This will improve knowledge and skill of women workers and also decision-making.

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