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Role and Contribution of Rural Women in Vegetable Production

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Salempur and Bhatpar Rani Blocks of Deoria district in Uttar Pradesh to ascertain women participation in vegetable production. 120 houses having land for vegetable cultivation were selected. 60 rural women from 60 houses selected from each block. Female respondents from each house were interviewed. The data were collected personally through structured interview schedule. Data collected included the extent of participation and decision making of women in various activities of vegetable production. Study revealed that in vegetable cultivation various intervention points are addressable. Women were involved in operations such as cleaning of land, sowing of seed, transplanting of vegetable nursery, hoeing and weeding, scaring of birds and rodents, harvesting and processing of vegetable and storage of seed. Non participation of women in various operations was due to more fatigue, requirement of more muscle power, lack of knowledge and awareness with respect to decision making. It was observed that women played only supportive role and less participation of women in decision making could be attributed to customs, traditions, social barrier, their illiteracy, ignorance and less participation in extension programmes. Women' education, technical training and adequate extension facilities can create a positive impact leading to a better tomorrow.

Key Words: - Rural women, Participation, Vegetable production.

INTRODUCTION

Vegetable cultivation has become highly commercialized but still there is a wide gap between current production and potential productivity. With the view to achieve a high level of production, it is not only enough to develop farm innovations but is also necessary to transfer the latest technology from the research system to ultimate users i.e. farmers and farm women. Women play a significant and crucial role in vegetable production. It is most unfortunate that the role of women and their contribution in farm activities are yet to be recognized. Although they perform almost all the activities in farm buy by and large they have been remained as invisible workers. Vegetable cultivation in Deoria district has a vast potential of improving the economical status of farming community. It has been observed that in a farming family, the participation of women in decision making as well as in the implementation and management of farm planning was very poor, although the contribution towards total land and labour is significant. Therefore, the study was carried out to determine the extent of women participation in different activities and the role in decision making, in vegetable cultivation so that suitable interventions can be planned and undertaken in future.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh state. Out of twenty blocks, two blocks namely Salempur and Bhatpar Rani were selected and from each block, 10 villages were selected. A total of 120 women respondents were selected from twenty villages of these two blocks. A structured schedule was used to collect the data by personal interview method. The data collected included information related to different farm activities and decision making used for vegetable production. The data were processed, tabulated and presented in the form of table.

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Table 1. Participation of women in various activities of vegetable Production. (N=120)

Sr. No.	Activities	Frequency	Per cent
1.	**Land preparation**		
	Ploughing	0	0.0
	Cleaning of field	120	100.0
	FYM application	0	0.0
	Forming ridges and furrows	0	0.0
2.	**Pre sowing and sowing operations**		
	Seed treatment	26	21.7
	Sowing of seed	120	100.0
	Plant treatment	0	0.0
	Raising vegetable nursery	29	24.2
	Nursery after care	68	56.7
	Transplanting of vegetable nursery	120	100.0
3.	**Intercultural operations**		
	Irrigation	19	15.8
	Hoeing and weeding	120	100.0
	Fertilizer application	64	53.3
	Pesticide and weedicide application	13	10.8
	Scaring of birds rodents and animals	120	100.0
4.	**Harvesting and post harvesting operations**		
	Vegetable harvesting	120	100.0
	Storage of seed	8	6.7
	Marketing	28	23.3
	Vegetable processing	120	100.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic characteristics

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were presented in table 1. The majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group (53.3%) followed by young age (30.0%) and old age (16.7%) group. It was also revealed that majority (63.3%) belonged to nuclear family followed by joint family (36.7%). Results on cast categories indicated that maximum (63.9%) of respondents were from backward caste followed by schedule caste (27.2%) and only (6.7%) belonged to general caste. Regarding educational status, it was found that majority (54.4%) were illiterate followed by educated up to fifth class (29.4%) and only (16.2%) were having middle and above level of education in the study area. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the main occupation of respondents (64.4%) followed by 21.7, 8.9 and 5.0 per cent in agricultural, animal husbandry and service professions, respectively.

It was also revealed that majority (63.9%) of respondents were from middle income group (Rs 10,000/- to Rs.30,000/-) followed by high income group (27.2%) and only 8.9 per cent were low income group. The data (Table 1) revealed that most of the respondents (47.8%) had land holding size less than 1 ha., 1 to 2 ha. (36.6%) and 15.6 per cent were landless. In this situation income from

Table 2. Socio economic characteristics of farm women in vegetable production.

Sr. No.	Parameter	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young (< 25 years) Middle (26-50years) Old (>50 years)	54 96 30	30.0 53.3 16.7
2.	Type of family	Nuclear Joint	114 66	63.3 36.7
3.	Caste	General OBC Schedule caste Schedule tribes	12 115 49 4	6.7 63.9 27.2 2.2
4.	Education	Illiterate Primary Middle and above	98 53 29	54.4 29.4 16.2
5.	Main occupation	Agriculture AH Agriculture +AH Service	39 16 116 9	21.7 8.9 64.4 5.0
6.	Annual income	Low (belowes 10,000) Medium(Rs 10,000- 30,000) High (above Rs 30,000)	16 115 49	8.9 63.9 27.2
7.	Land Holding	Landless Marginal (<1hecture) Small (<1-2hecture)	28 86 66	15.6 47.8 36.6

Table 3. Decision making of women in different operations of vegetable Production.

(N=120)

Sr. No.	Operations	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Land selection	22	18.3
2.	Selection of crops to be grown	25	20.8
3.	Method of cultivation	11	9.2
4.	Selection of farm machinery and its implementations	9	7.5
5.	Varietal selection	20	16.7
6.	Fertilizer selection and application	7	5.8
7.	Choice of irrigation	32	26.7
8.	Sale of vegetable produce	39	32.5
9.	Storage of seed	74	61.7
10.	Vegetable processing	108	90.0

livestock production play a major role for their subsistence in such type of rural area.

Participation of women in vegetable production activities

The data (Table 2) indicated that different activities performed by female were cleaning of land, sowing of seeds, transplanting of vegetable nursery, scaring of birds, rodents and animals and harvesting. In vegetable processing, cent percent women showed their participation. These findings were in agreement with those reported by Baba *et al* (2010) for the study in Jammu Kashmir. Above fifty per cent of women involved in nursery management and fertilizer application while 24.2 and 21.7 per cent participated in raising vegetable nursery and seed treatment, respectively.

Non participation of women in ploughing, forming ridge and furrows was due to hard labour and in plant protection, due to lack of awareness and knowledge. Similar case has been reported by Srivastava and Singh (2011) for their study in Ballia. Non participation in various agricultural activities was due to drudgery faced in operations by farm women.

Role of women in decision making

The data (Table 3) indicated that it was highest (90.0%) in vegetable processing followed by 61.7 per cent engaged in storage of seed and 32.5 per cent participation in selling of vegetable produce. Choice of irrigation (26.7 %), selection of crops to be grown (20.8%), land selection (18.3 %), varietal selection (16.7%), method of cultivation (9.2%), selection of farm machinery and its implements (7.5 %) and lowest (5.8%) in fertilizer selection and application. The study further revealed that women has played only supportive role. Less involvement of women in decision making could be attributed to customs, traditions, social barrier and illiteracy, ignorance and less participation in extension programmes. These findings were in conformation of Baba *et al* (2010) for their study in Jammu Kashmir.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that in vegetable production on commercial scale, women participation was found more prominent in sowing of seed, transplanting of vegetable nursery, hoeing and weeding, scaring of birds and rodents, vegetable harvesting and processing. With respect to decision making, women played only supportive role. Women' education, technical training, adequate extension facilities for women can create a positive impact leading to a better tomorrow.

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