



# Role of Women in Decision Making Regarding Agricultural Activities in Sahibganj District of Jharkhand

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## ABSTRACT

The 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 agricultural work, their decision were accepted only less than one-third of the case. The present study was conducted in Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. There are 9 block namely Rajmahal, Barharwa, Sahibganj, Taljhari, Borio, Barhet, Mandro, Udhwa and Pathna. Twenty five women from each block were selected, thus making a total sample of 225. To study the extent of decision by rural women in their family, structured interview schedule was administrated in the year 2017 on 225 farm women, who have attended at least 3 training programme at KVK. It was found that the farm women participated in decision making process in each and every farm activities and the elder in the family mainly took decisions. This is not surprising because the joint family system is still prevalent where women have no role to play in decision making. In case of selection of seeds, quality of seeds, type of pesticide, time of harvesting, vaccination, calving of animals, AI, foods of animals, maintenance of tractor/pump set, drudgery reducing implements, fertilizer in fruit plants, distance between two plants and selection of fruit plants, all decision were taken by elder person of the family. In all these cases women's decision was almost negligible. Further, more than 50 per cent of decision in the area of home science were taken by the women such as preservation of fruits and vegetables (84.44%) and food to be cooked (88.44%). The data about income of the family (44.44%) and saving in the family (40.00%) showed that although women earned and saved the money by working in the field but their decisions were still centered to the kitchen only. It was also concluded that in financial matter, the involvement of women was less.

**Key Words:** Activities, Agricultural, Decision making, Empowerment, Women.

## 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 resources 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 in every household activities and

gives excellent performance most of the time. It may be related to household activity or for the decision-making at household or any other level. 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 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

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**Table1. Decision making role of women in the area of agriculture/plant protection/animal science/ agricultural engineering/horticulture (n=225)**

Sr. No.	Particular	Self	Per cent	Joint	Per cent	Elder	Per cent	Not Applicable	Per cent
1.	Selection of seeds	50	22.22	55	24.44	100	44.44	20	08.88
2.	Quality of seeds	25	11.11	62	27.55	113	50.22	25	11.11
3.	Types of pesticides	32	14.22	56	24.88	108	48.00	29	12.88
4.	Time of harvesting	55	24.44	56	24.88	95	42.22	19	08.44
5.	Vaccination	10	04.44	50	22.22	130	57.77	35	15.55
6.	Calving of animals	25	11.11	52	23.11	103	45.77	45	20.00
7.	AI	30	13.33	56	24.88	105	46.66	34	15.11
8.	Feed for animals	50	22.22	53	23.55	102	45.33	20	08.88
9.	Maintenance of tractor	10	04.44	55	24.44	125	55.55	45	20.00
10.	Drudgery reducing implements	35	15.55	56	24.88	115	51.11	19	08.44
11.	Fertilizer in fruits plant	25	11.11	35	15.55	130	57.77	35	15.55
12.	Planting distance	44	19.55	56	24.88	112	49.77	13	05.77
13.	Selection of fruit plants	52	23.11	56	24.88	113	50.22	04	01.77

neglected and undermined as the responsibility of forming the policies is always regarded the job of male traditionally. The study was, therefore, conducted to know the role of women in decision making in various activities in Sahibganj District of Jharkhand.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. There are 9 block namely Rajmahal, Barharwa, Sahibganj, Taljhari, Borio, Barhet,

Mandro, Udhwa and Pathna. Twenty five women from each block were selected, thus making a total sample of 225 who have attended training during last 4 years from 2013-2016. For studying the extent of decision by rural women in their family, structured interview schedule was administrated in the year who have attended at least 3 training programme at KVK. Trainees were those women who have attended training of agriculture, horticulture, agriculture engineering and home science. Age, education level, exposure to media, there past

**Table 2. Decision making role of women in the area of home science (n=225)**

Sr. No.	Particular	Self	Per cent	Joint	Per cent	Elder	Per cent	Not Applicable	Per cent
1.	Preservation of fruits and vegetables	190	84.44	10	04.44	15	06.66	10	04.44
2.	Food to be cooked	199	88.44	12	05.33	10	04.44	04	01.77
3.	Income of the family	100	44.44	60	26.66	49	21.77	11	04.88
4.	Saving in the family	90	40.00	70	31.11	60	26.66	05	02.22

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**Table 3. Correlation between knowledge, adoption and improvement in skill with independent variables (n=225).**

Sr. No.	Independent variable	Knowledge	Adoption	Improvement in skill
1	Age	-0.215	0.017	0.010
2.	Caste	0.844**	0.265	0.336*
3.	Education	0.995**	0.846**	0.791**
4.	Marital status	0.061	0.218	0.020
5.	Family size	-0.132	0.218	0.068
6.	Occupation	0.950**	0.126	-0.086
7.	Family type	-0.183	0.133	0.013
8.	Family income	0.941**	0.829**	0.808**
9.	Size of land holding	0.965**	0.880**	0.799**
10.	Cosmo politeness	0.933**	0.834**	0.798**
11	Social participation	0.918**	0.844**	0.703**

\*\*Significant at 1 per cent level of significance ( $p \leq 0.01$ )

experience of the training, marital status, type and size of family, land holdings, and attendance in the trainings were few variables of the study. For interpretation of data frequencies, percentage, mean were calculated.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data (Table 1) indicated that the elder in the family mainly took decisions. This is not surprising because the joint family system is still prevalent where women have no role to play in decision making. Khandari *et al* (2011) mentioned that this is a unique situation of the rural Garhwal of Uttarakhand, where women perform more than 80 per cent home and farm activities but their participation in decision making has been less than 20.91 per cent. It showed that there was a clear-cut gender bias in the society, which explains traditionally subjugated status of women, as well as their role in decision making process. These gender biases shall improve with the improvement in the education of women in rural areas of Uttarakhand. Middle age groups and above age groups participated more in the decision making process in different areas of agriculture and level of participation was also high as compared to younger age group.

The data (Table1) revealed that in case of

selection of seeds, quality of seeds, type of pesticide, time of harvesting, vaccination, calving of animals, AI, foods of animals, maintenance of tractor/pump set, drudgery reducing implements, fertilizer in fruit plants, distance between two plants and selection of fruit plants, all decision were taken by elder person of the family. In all these cases women's decision was almost negligible. This findings were in line with the findings of Tiwari and Tripathi (2014). Mishra *et al* (2009) also reported that husbands consulted always their wives in respect of the practices namely application of manure in the field, type of vegetables, harvesting time and gardening. Gondaliya (2012) mentioned that in case of major activities such as sowing practices, nutrient management, crop protection, harvesting and post harvest activities, majority of the farm women have taken joint decision with family members or with husband while independent female decision was negligible. Discussion of seeds, types of pesticides and time of harvesting but decision were mainly taken by men.

The data (Table 2) indicated that the more than 50 per cent decision making role of farm women in the area of home science were taken by the women such as preservation of fruits and vegetables (84.44%) and food to be cooked (88.44%). Income

of the family (44.44%) and saving in the family (40.00%) showed that although women earned and saved the money by working in the field but their decision were still centered to the kitchen only. It was also concluded that in financial matter the involvement of women was less.

It was evident from the (Table 3) that the variables *viz.*, caste, education, family income, size of holdings, cosmo politeness, and social participation were found to be positively and significantly correlated with the level of knowledge. It showed that although women were having knowledge but the family members did not give them weight age to them to include in decision making. It was also evident that the five variables, education, family income, size of land holding, cosmo politeness and social participation were significantly and positively correlated with the level of adoption of advanced technologies of agriculture. It indicates women who were exposed to T. V. and had some contacts with the extension personnel, scientist, agriculture supervisors etc. adopt the advanced technologies of agriculture more easily than others.

In the case of skill the variables like caste, education, family income, size of land holdings, cosmo politeness and social participation were found to be positively and significantly correlated. It indicates women exposed to T. V. & radio, conceptually listen the educational talks delivered by the scientist of the centre and had intimacy with experts might be more motivated and showed improvement in their skill, which definitely give them exposure to take decision.

### CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that high number 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 elder in the family mainly took decisions. This is not surprising

because the joint family system is still prevalent where women have no role to play in decision making. In case of selection of seeds, quality of seeds, type of pesticide, time of harvesting, vaccination, calving of animals, AI, foods of animals, maintenance of tractor/pump set, drudgery reducing implements, fertilizer in fruit plants, distance between two plants and selection of fruit plants, all decision were taken by elder person of the family. In all these cases women's decision was almost negligible. It was found that the more than 50 per cent decision making role of farm women in the area of home science were taken by the women such as preservation of fruits and vegetables (84.44%) and food to be cooked (88.44%). Income of the family (44.44%) and saving in the family (40.00%) showed that although women earned and saved the money by working in the field but their decision were still centered to the kitchen only.

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