

Decision Making Behavior of Farm Women in Agriculture Activities in Belgaum District of Karnataka

Rekha B Karabhari*, Dhananjay C. Chougala** and Maruti N. Malawadi***

Abstract: Farm women in Belgaum district play a significant role in agriculture operations. They are actively participating in all range of agricultural activities including cleaning the field, sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, Intercultural practices, cleaning of grains, drying of grains and so on. The rural women, besides looking after the family and performing all sorts of household activities, very actively remain busy from dawn to dusk in such agricultural operations which supplements their family income. But despite such a huge contribution, her role has yet not been recognized. Keeping in view these facts the present study has been designed to explore the involvement of farm women in decision making in agricultural activities. For the present study a total of 120 farm women were selected from different villages through random sampling technique. A well designed and pre-tested interview schedule has been prepared to collect the information from the respondents. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the data and findings are shown with the help of table. The findings showed that involvement of farm women in decision making in agriculture was very low. It is because the majority of farm women had lack of knowledge about farming, traditional belief systems and Male dominance.

Key words: Agriculture, Involvement, Belgaum District, Farm Women

INTRODUCTION

The women play a significant and crucial role in various stages of agricultural operations starting from sowing of seeds to hand weeding, harvesting and post harvest activities. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, caring for family members and maintaining their homes (Chayal *et al.* 2013). Despite women's critical contribution to the family income through productive activities, no recognition is given to them as an important contributor and their contribution is not recorded. They are still remained invisible workers.

Belgaum is situated in the Northwest part of the Karnataka state. The district is bordered by Maharashtra state to the North, Bagalkot district in

the East, Dharwad & Uttar Kannada districts in the South, Goa and Maharashtra state in the west. The main economic activities of the district are sugar and jaggery cultivation and processing, milk production, agriculture, vehicle construction, weaving, leather industries. Total geographical area of the district has 13,433 sq.km. Belgaum district lies between the north latitudinal parallels of 15° 21' and 16° 57' minutes and east longitudinal parallels of 74° 05' and 75° 28'. In rural areas of Belgaum district, women play a major role in agricultural production. Women must given full chance to participate in decision making as they are actively engaged in home and farm activities. Women's active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development of the country. Keeping in these points in mind, the present study was under taken to find out the participation and decision making process of rural women in farming activities.

* Subject Matter Specialist (Home Science), Programme coordinator and Subject Matter Specialist (Agronomy), ICAR- Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Tukkanatti, E-mail: karabharirekha85@gmail.com

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Belgaum district of Karnataka to explore the involvement of farm women in decision making process in agriculture activities. A total 120 rural farm women who were actively involved in farming practices were selected for the study. The data was collected through personal interview method and subjected to statistical analysis. The statistical tool like frequency and percentage were used for analyzing the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed and presented in Table 1. It is evident from the results that majority (51.66%) of the respondents fell within the middle age group followed by young age (30.83%) and old age (16.67%) group. It was also observed that majority (56.66) of the respondents were belonged to nuclear family and followed by (43.33%) were from joint family. results revealed that 34.10% of respondents were illiterate followed by 28.34% primary, 20.90% secondary, 10.90% higher secondary and 5.90% were graduates. Results on farm land size revealed that majority (52.50%) of the respondents had medium size land holding followed by small (33.33%) and large (14.16%) size of land holding. most of the respondents (53.30%) had between 5-10 years of farming experience followed by 27.50% of respondents had less than 5 years of experience and 13.33% had between 10-20 years of experience in farming. however, only 5.83% of the respondents had more than 20 years of experience.

Involvement refers to taking part in activities in various types of work often with others. Rural women have very hectic life. Her work starts from dawn and ends at mid- night. In the study area, the farm women take part in decision making in agriculture activities. The distribution of respondents according to their participation in various activities has been shown in Table 2 and figure 1.

The Table 2 and Fig. 1 reveals that farm women's involvement in decision making process in agriculture field quite minimal. Comparatively

Table 1
Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

		N=120	
Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age(years)	Young (below 30)	37	30.83
	Middle (31-40)	62	51.66
	Old (above 40)	21	17.50
Educational level	Illiterate	41	34.10
	Primary	34	28.34
	Secondary	25	20.90
	Higher secondary	13	10.90
	Graduation	07	05.90
Type of family	Joint family	52	43.33
	Nuclear family	68	56.66
Farm land size (acre)	Small	40	33.33
	Medium	63	52.50
	large	17	14.16
Farming experience (years)	Less than 5	33	27.50
	5-10	64	53.30
	10-20	16	13.33
	More than 20	07	05.83

Table 2
Involvement of Farm Women in Decision Making in Agriculture

Farm activities	N=120	
	Frequency	Percent
Preparation of field	69	57.5
Sowing method	47	39.17
Selection of crop	33	27.5
Selection of seed variety	28	23.34
Manure/ Fertilizer application	25	20.84
Irrigation	34	28.33
Weeding	38	31.67
Harvesting	73	60.83
Storage	42	35
Marketing of agriculture inputs and produce	21	17.50

larger percentages of farm women were noted for higher level of involvement in decisions related to Harvesting (60.83%), Preparation of field (57.5%), Sowing method (39.17%), Storage (35%) Weeding (31.67) and Irrigation (28.33). These are high important than other tasks such as Selection of crop (27.5%), Selection of seed variety (23.34%).

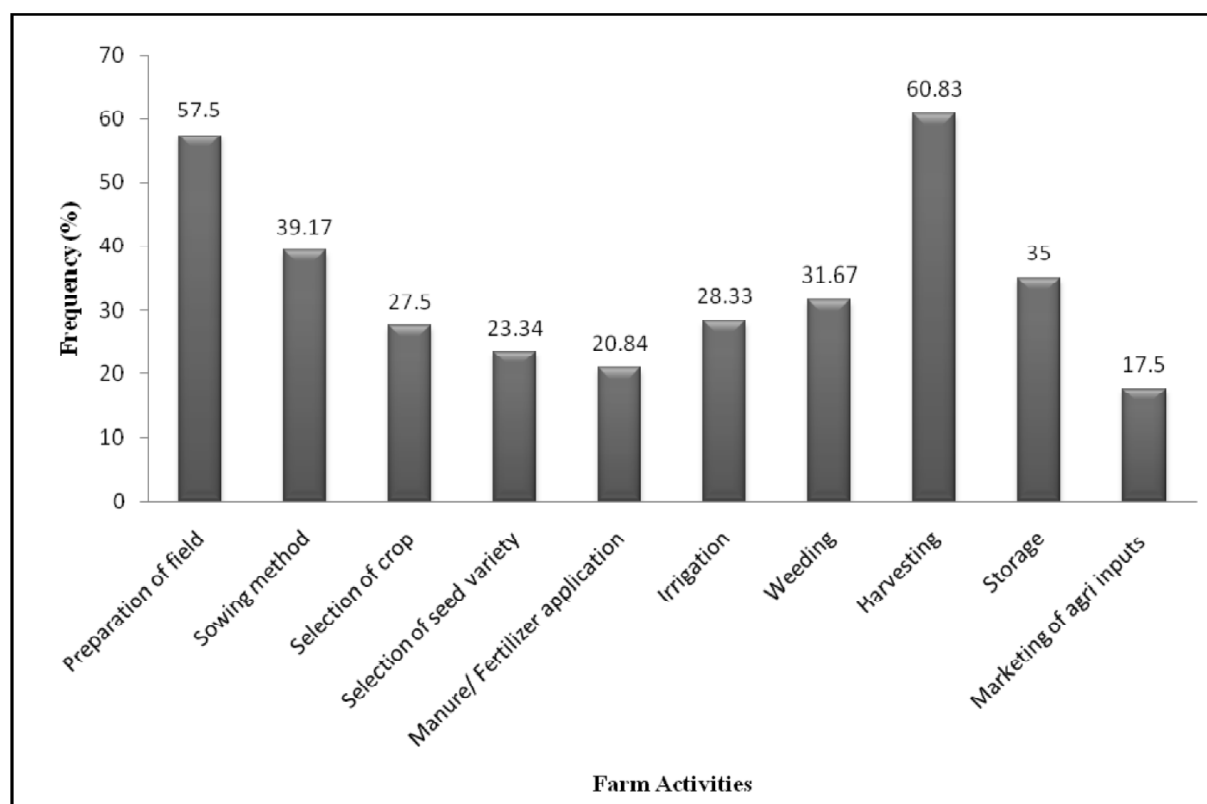


Figure 1: Involvement of Farm Women in Decision Making in Agriculture

According to the study conducted by Sharma *et al.* (2013%) Manure/ Fertilizer application (20.84%), Marketing of agriculture inputs and produces (17.50%) were the activities wherein involvement was very poor.

Table 3
Factors affecting involvement of rural women in decision making

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of experience	64	53.33
Illiteracy	38	31.66
False assumption about the role of farm women in agriculture	53	44.16
Shortage of technical knowledge/skills	60	50
Cultural norms	75	62.50
Male dominance	80	66.66
Lack of knowledge about farming	85	70.83
traditional belief systems	92	76.66

Table 3 and fig. 2 depicts that various factors affecting rural women involvement in decision-making process in farming activities Traditional belief systems (76.66), Lack of knowledge about farming (70.83%), Male dominance (66.66%), Cultural norms (62.50%) were the main determinant factors, as disclosed by almost all respondents, affecting the participation of rural women in decision making process in the study area. Results showed that the level of rural women's participation in the decision making is limited or under recognized due to the stated socially and culturally formed structures (Damsia, 2007). Other factors that can affect rural women's participation in decision making were Lack of experience (53.33%), Shortage of technical knowledge/skills (50), False assumption about the role of rural women in agriculture (44.16%), Illiteracy (31.66) as reported by the respondents and similar results found in the study conducted by Aazami *et al.* (2011).

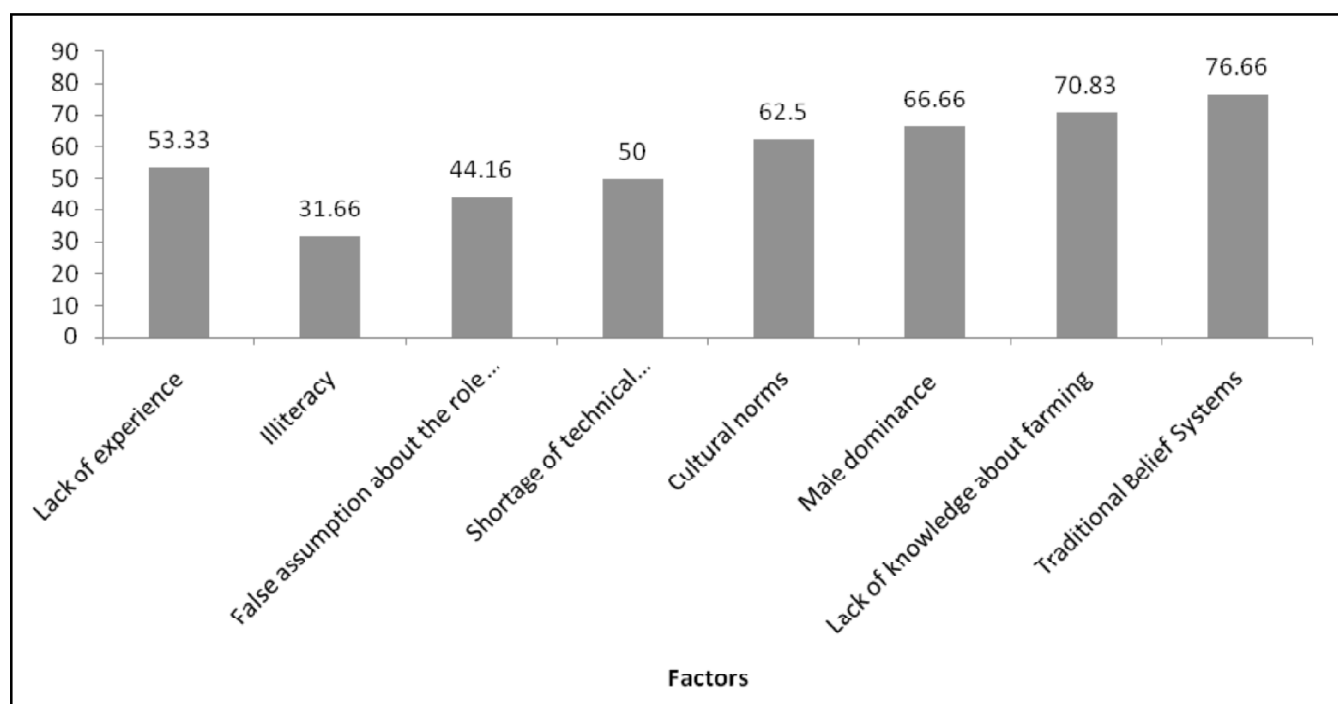


Figure 2: Factors Affecting Involvement of Rural women in Decision Making

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be concluded that farm women were regularly engaged and participated in critical farming activities including Selection of crop, weeding, Sowing, land preparation and harvesting. But their involvement in decision making in agriculture is very poor. Traditional belief systems, Lack of knowledge about farming, Male dominance, and Cultural norms were the major constraints perceived by farm women in decision making process. Thus, all the possible opportunities should be created for rural women to improve the 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 that affecting rural women's decision making pattern of farm women.

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