Research Paper

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Participation of Tribal Women in Decision Making in Agriculture

Education

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Chikhaldara tahsil (Melghat) of Amravati district in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra State. This area was purposively selected for the study regarding decision making behavior of tribal women, because 76.00 per cent population of Korku tribe belonging to this region. A list of tribal women from randomly selected villages was prepared. They were arranged alphabetically and thus total 120 tribal women were selected randomly as respondents for the study. The findings revealed that more than half (52.50%) of the respondents had medium extent of participation, while 26.67 per cent and 20.83 per cent of the respondents had high and low extent of participation in decision making in farming. In the present study an exploratory research design of social research was used.

Introduction

There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the conditions of women are improved; it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing"- Swami Vivekananda.

In a recent survey conducted by Anthropological Survey of India, under the `People of India Project' 461 tribal communities have been identified all over the country out of which, 174 are subgroups. According to 2011 census, tribal population in India was 104.3 million. Schedule tribe population constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population of India. Tribal population in Maharashtra state was ranked at third position with 105.10 lakhs tribal population which accounts to 9.3 per cent to the total population of the state. In Maharashtra nearly 47 scheduled tribes has been representing. This population is largely concentrated in 14 districts, mainly divided into three parts.

Sahyadri Region: Which include six districts of Konkan and Pune Revenue division.

Satpuda Region: Nasik and Amravati Revenue division and part of Marathwada Revenue division.

Gondwana Region: Districts of Nagpur Revenue divisions and part of Marathwada Revenue division.

The 75 per cent of Korku tribe are found in Melghat of Amravati district of Satpuda Region. Melghat comprises of mainly two tahsils of Amravati district namely Dharni tahsil and Chikhaldara tahsil having about 75% and 76% tribal population, respectively. Agriculture has become the main occupation of Korku tribe. (Source: Reports on Korku Adivasis in Melghat Region of Maharashtra, 2004.).

The participation by tribal women in co-operation with their husband in decisions making not only affects family but farm business too. Therefore, women are considered as backbone of Indian economy. Women usually contribute in harvesting of crops, weeding, threshing, irrigation, plant protection, use of biofertilzers, supervision, post harvest operation etc. (Parshuramkar, 2003). Women work with male members and participate in farming activities putting much of hours of productive manual family labour, in Korku family women's always work much more than males. After all this, she is not considered an important element in decision making. Hence with the objective to know the extent of participation of tribal women in decision making this study was conducted.

Methodology :

The present study was conducted in Chikhaldara tahsil (Melghat) of Amravati district in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra State. This area was purposively selected for the study regarding to decision making behavior of tribal women, because of 76.00 per cent population of Korku tribe belonging to this region. From the list of 197 villages, 10 villages were selected by 'N'th method of randomization for the study. The list of tribal women from randomly selected villages was prepared. They were arranged alphabetically and thus, total 120 tribal women were selected randomly as respondents for the study.

Results and Discussions:

Table 1. Practice-wise extent of participation of the respondents in decision making on the sub areas of crops

Sr. No.	Sub areas of crops	N.A.	Participation in decision making				Total
			W	H+W	F	N.P.	
1	Crops to be grown on farm	00 (00.00)	54 (45.00)	42 (35.67)	22 (18.33)	02 (01.67)	120 (100)
2	Area allocation to crops on farm	00 (00.00)	52 (43.33)	46 (38.33)	20 (16.67)	02 (01.67)	120 (100)
3	Cropping pattern	00 (00.00)	51 (42.50)	45 (37.50)	22 (18.33)	02 (01.67)	120 (100)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentage to total) N.A. = Not applicable, W = Wife, H+W = Husband and Wife, F = family, N.P. = No participation.

Table 1 reveals that majority of women participate in decision making in respect of crops to be grown (45.00 %), area allocation to crops (43.33 %) and cropping pattern (42.50 %) followed by participation of husband (35.67 %, 38.33 % and 24.17 % respectively). The percentage of family decisions ranged between 16.67 per cent to 18.33 per cent and only 01.67 per cent respondents had no participation in decision making in these aspects.

These findings lead to conclude that the farm women were dominating in the decisions related to crops. This might be because, they are well aware of the families requirements for food grain, demand for crop produce, economics of crop production and resource availability.

Transplanting / planting / sowing

The observations in respect of practice-wise extent of partici-

pation of the respondents in decision making on sub-areas of transplanting / planting / sowing are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Practice-wise extent of participation of the respondents in decision making on the sub areas of transplanting / planting / sowing.

Sr. No.	Sub areas of transplanting/ planting/sowing	N.A.	Participation in decision making				Total
			W	H+W	F	N.P.	
1	Time of sowing seed in field	01 (00.83)	53 (44.17)	52 (43.33)	12 (10.00)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
2	Age of the seedlings at the time of transplanting	01 (00.83)	54 (45.00)	51 (42.50)	12 (10.00)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
3	Spacing between seedlings of field crops	01 (00.83)	55 (45.83)	54 (45.00)	8 (06.67)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
4	Methods of transplanting	01 (00.83)	53 (44.17)	50 (41.67)	14 (11.67)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages to total)
N.A. = Not applicable, W = Wife, H+W = Husband and Wife, F = family, N.P. = No participation.

Table 2 shows that in the decision making areas like 'time of sowing seed in field' and 'method of transplanting' 44.17 per cent of the wife themselves participate in the process of decision making, followed by husbands and wife decision (44.33 % and 41.67 %) respectively. While in the decision making areas namely 'age of seedlings at the time of transplanting' and 'spacing between seedlings in field crops' 45.00 per cent and 45.83 per cent of the wife themselves took decisions respectively, followed by joint decisions (42.50 % and 45.00%) respectively. The percentage of the family decision taken by family members was 10.00 per cent and 06.67 per cent respectively. Only 01.67 per cent respondents had not participated in decision making and nearly all the sub-areas where applicable to the respondents.

It become clear from above results that in all the four sub areas of decision making on transplanting / planting / .sowing the respondents were playing dominant role.

Intercultural operations

Table 3. Practice-wise extent of participation of the respondents in decision making on the sub areas of intercultural operations

Sr. No.	Sub areas of intercultural operation	N.A.	Participation in decision making				Total
			W	H+W	F	N.P.	
1	Weeding time	03 (02.50)	57 (47.50)	45 (37.50)	15 (12.50)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)
2	Time of fertilizer application	02 (01.67)	53 (44.17)	44 (36.67)	19 (15.83)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
3	Method of irrigating the field crops	89 (74.17)	07 (05.83)	23 (19.17)	01 (00.83)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages to total
N.A. = Not applicable, W =Wife, H+W = Husband and Wife, F = family, N.P. = No participation.

Table 3 reveals that in the sub-area 'weeding time' 47.50 per cent wife participate in decision making, followed by joint decision of husband and wife participation (37.50 %) and 12.50 per cent of family participation in decision making. Only 2.50 per cent respondents were under non-applicable category.

In the sub area 'time of fertilizer application', 44.17 per cent wife participates in decision making, followed by joint decision of husbands and wife (36.67 %), family (15.83%) and 01.67 per cent respondents came under non-applicable category and no participation in decision making respectively.

Sub area like 'method of irrigating the field crops' was not applicable to 74.17 per cent respondents, 19.17 per cent joint participation in decision making was observed, whereas, wife participation was only 5.83 per cent.

Thus it can be concluded that the tribal women play crucial role in the decision making in intercultural operation.

Inputs use

Table4. Practice-wise extent of participation of the respondents in decision making on the sub areas of inputs use.

Sr. No.	Sub areas of inputs use	N.A.	Participation in decision making				Total
			W	H+W	F	N.P.	
1	Area allocation for different varieties	02 (01.67)	55 (45.83)	51 (42.50)	11 (09.17)	01 (00.83)	120 (100.00)
2	Procurement of seed	01 (00.83)	53 (44.17)	50 (41.67)	14 (11.67)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
3	Use of improved seeds	01 (00.83)	54 (45-00)	51 (42.50)	12 (10.00)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
4	Varieties of fruit crops to be planted	85 (70.83)	11 (09.17)	20 (16.67)	04 (03.33)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)
5	Varieties to be sown	01 (00.83)	55 (45.83)	44 (36.67)	18 (15.00)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
6	Number of seedlings / grafts of fruit crops to be planted	85 (70.83)	10 (08.33)	20 (16.67)	05 (04.17)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)
7	Quality of fertilizer to be used	01 (00.83)	55 (45.83)	54 (45.00)	08 (06.67)	02 (01.60)	120 (100.00)
8	Manures to be used	01 (00.83)	54 (45.00)	52 (43.33)	11 (09.17)	02 (01.67)	120 (100.00)
9	Quantity of manures to be used	02 (01.67)	54 (45.00)	51 (42.50)	12 (10.00)	01 (00.83)	120 (100.00)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages to total)
N.A. = Not applicable, W = Wife, H+W =Husband and Wife, F = family, N.P. = No participation.

Table 4 reveals that in the sub-areas of inputs use namely 'area allocation for different varieties', 'varieties to be sown' and 'quantity of fertilizer to be used' 45.83 per cent wife participate in each, followed by husband and wife participation (42.50%, 36.67% and 45.00% respectively) in decision making. Very few respondents (00.83 % to 01.67 %) had no participation in decision making.

In the sub areas like 'use of improved seeds', 'manures to be used' and 'quantity of manures to be used' 45.00 per cent respondent themselves participate in decision making in each sub-area followed by husband and wife's participation (42.50 %, 43.33 % and 42.50 %, respectively). These areas were not applicable to only 00.83 per cent to 01.67 per cent of the respondents.

The two sub areas of decision making on inputs use namely 'varieties of fruit crops to be planted' and 'number of seedlings / grafts of fruit crops to be planted' were not applicable to majority of the respondents (70.83 % each). Respondents participation in these areas were less (09.17 % and 08.33 % respectively).

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It can be discerned from these findings that the tribal women were playing important role with regard to decision on use of varieties, fertilizers, manures etc.

Harvesting

Table 5. Practice-wise extent of participation of the respondents in decision making on the sub-areas of harvesting.

Sr. No.	Sub areas of harvesting	N.A.	Participation in decision making				Total
			W	H+W	F	N.P.	
1	Time of harvesting of fruit crops	88 (73.34)	12 (10.00)	18 (15.00)	02 (01.67)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)
2	Time of harvesting of field crops	08 (06.67)	52 (43.33)	40 (33.33)	19 (15.83)	01 (00.83)	120 (100.00)
3	Methods of harvesting of field crops	08 (06.67)	53 (44.17)	40 (33.33)	18 (15.00)	01 (00.83)	120 (100.00)
4	Implements / tools to be used for harvesting fruit crops	88 (73.34)	14 (11.67)	17 (14.17)	01 (00.83)	00 (00.00)	120 (100.00)

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages to total)

N.A. = Not applicable, W = Wife, H+W = Husband and Wife, F = family, N.P. = No participation.

It is observed from Table 5 that in sub area 'harvesting time of fruit crop' majority of respondents (73.34 %) were under non-applicable category. In this area, husband and wife's participation was 15.00 per cent, followed by wife participation 10.00 per cent, while almost negligible (01.67 %) family participation was observed in decision making.

If we observe time of harvesting of field crops we noticed that this sub area was not applicable to 06.67 per cent respondents and very less (00.83 %) respondents were not participating. Husband and wife's participation in this sub-area was less (33.33 %) as compared to women's participation (43.33 %) while family participation was 15.83 per cent,

In the sub area 'method of harvesting of field crops' 06.67 per cent respondents were under non-applicable category. 00.83 per cent respondents had not participated, followed by Husband and wife joint participation (33.33%), wife participation (44.17%), while family participation was 15.00 per cent in decision making was observed.

In implements or tools to be used for harvesting fruit crops 73.34 per cent respondents were observed under non-applicable category. No respondent was observed under no participation category. 11.67 per cent participation of wife was observed in decision making. 14.17 per cent husband and wife jointly participated and very less family participation i.e. 00.83 per cent was observed in decision making in this sub area.

These findings make it clear that the decisions regarding harvesting of crops are also taken mainly by the tribal women.

Extent of participation of tribal women in decision making in Farming

Table 6. Distribution of the respondents according to their level of Extent of participation in decision making

Sr. No.	Categories	Range	Respondents (n=120)	
			Number	Percentage
1	Low	Upto 33.33	25	20.83
2	Medium	33.34 to 66.66	63	52.50
3	High	Above 66.67	32	26.67
	Total		120	100.00

It is seen from Table 6 that more than half (52.50%) of the respondents were from medium level of extent of participation. Whereas, 26.67 per cent and 20.83 per cent of the respondents were from high and low level of extent of participation in decision making respectively.

From the above findings it is concluded that, majority of the respondents had medium level of participation in decision making in farming. In other words, the tribal farm women were getting half share in decision making on farming. Many factors like kind of decision required to be taken, risk involved in the decision, repercussion of decision etc. might be responsible for deciding their role in decision making. So also, their personal characteristics might have been playing some role in their involvement in decision making process.

These findings were in consistent with the findings of Seema Sirohi (1985), Tikhade (2001), Devi et al. (2002), Nita Divekar (2010) and Megha Landage (2011).

Conclusion:

It was gratifying to note that majority of the decisions were being taken by the tribal women, followed by their husbands. Though this findings is indicative of the important position of the tribal women in decision making, it is suggested that the tribal women should be motivated to consult other knowledgeable members in the family and outside the family, so as to minimize the risk and help them to take quality decisions on significant issues related to farming and subsidiary occupations.

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