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Problems and suggestions regarding involvement of rural women in farm and home decision making activities in Valsad district of South Gujarat

Preeti Tetarwal, OP Sharma and Vinod Kumar

Abstract

All six talukas of Valsad district were covered under the present study. Two villages from each selected taluka and ten members from each village were selected randomly. Thus, total 120 respondent rural women were selected. Major problems faced by respondent rural women were “Involvement of rural women in decision making process is ignorant due to male dominant society”, “Social taboos, superstitions, traditions and customs hinder involvement of rural women in decision making activities”, “Stereotyped gender roles discourages rural women in involvement of decision making activities”, “Lack of desired cooperation from family members in the involvement of decision making activities”, and “No or low income is an obstacle in involvement of rural women in decision making activities”. Suggestions to overcome the problems as perceived by rural women were “All the myths should be eliminated by bringing awareness which hinders the involvement of rural women in decision making activities”, “Desirable cooperation of the family members should be provided in involvement of rural women in decision making activities”, “Concept of gender equity should be encouraged in the society for ensuring equal opportunities for rural women”, “Desirable support of the family members should be there for rural women in involvement of farm and home activities” and “Rural women should actively be involved in income generating activities”.

Keywords: Rural women, involvement, decision making activities, problems, suggestions

1. Introduction

Women in rural areas are important entity in bringing about the transformational, economical, environmental and social changes that are essential for sustainable development. Decision making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several possible alternative options. It is a reasoning process based on assumptions of values, preferences and beliefs of the decision maker. It could be either rational or irrational. Involvement of rural women in decision making will enhance productivity, efficiency; sustainable development, food security, and family development in society while also play a significant role in modernizing Indian agriculture. Rural women know that how resources are used and managed, they are more likely to make decisions that benefit their families and communities. Also a greater level of economic involvement among women has a favorable impact on their socio-economic status.

2. Research Methodology

The *ex-post-facto* research design was used in the present investigation. The study was conducted in Valsad district of South Gujarat during the year 2022-2023. Valsad district consists of six talukas viz. Valsad, Vapi, Pardi, Umbergaon, Kaprada and Dharampur. All the six talukas were selected for the present study. Two villages were selected randomly from each selected taluka. In this way total twelve villages were selected for the present study. Ten rural women from each selected village were selected as respondents following simple random sampling technique for present study. Thus, a total of 120 rural women were selected as respondents for the study. After finalizing the research design and interview schedule, the data were collected by using the personal interview method. Respondent rural women were interviewed at their farm or home.

2.1 Application of the Garret's Ranking Technique

Problem faced by the rural women and suggestions perceived by them are ranked by making use of Garrett's Ranking Technique. This technique was given by Garret and Woodworth

(1969) [4]. It is used to rank the preference mentioned by the respondents on different factors and aspects. It is used to find the most significant factor which had influenced the respondent in their practices. Founded on the Garret's Ranking technique, the study had the respondents rank to the different factors and outcome based on their impact thereby converting into score value by help of the following formula:

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{(R_{ij}-0.5)}{N_j} \times 100$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents

N_j = Number of variable ranked by j^{th} respondents

With the help of Garrett's Table, the percent position estimated is converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of each individual are added and then total value of scores and mean values of score is calculated. The factors having highest mean value is considered to be the most important factor.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Problems as perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making

Problems are difficulties perceived by the rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making. Garrett's ranking technique was used to identify and rank the problems. The collected data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Problems as perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making (n = 120)

Sr. No.	Problems	Garrett's score	Garrett's Mean Score (MS)	Rank
1.	Inadequacy of rural women about technical know-how of modern farming activities	6823	56.86	VIII
2.	Involvement of rural women in decision making process is ignorant due to male dominant society	7472	62.27	I
3.	Low level of education hinder full involvement in decision making activities	6965	58.04	VI
4.	Quotidian work at home adversely affect the involvement of rural women in farm and home decision making process	4691	39.09	XII
5.	No or low income is an obstacle in involvement of rural women in decision making activities	7075	58.96	V
6.	Lack of awareness among rural women about decision making process	4729	39.41	XI
7.	Lack of recognition of women as farmers by the society	6874	57.28	VII
8.	Stereotyped gender roles discourages rural women in involvement of decision making activities	7186	59.88	III
9.	Fear of social acceptance limits the involvement of rural women in decision making activities	6606	55.05	IX
10.	Lack of technical and management skills to perform specific farm technologic activities	6570	54.75	X
11.	Social taboos, superstitions, traditions and customs hinder involvement of rural women in decision making activities	7290	60.75	II
12.	Lack of exposure to sources of useful farming information	4479	37.33	XIV
13.	Lack of knowledge regarding marketing aspects of agricultural produce	4593	38.28	XIII
14.	Lack of desired cooperation from family members in the involvement of decision making activities	7173	59.78	IV

The data presented in Table 1 reveal that the problem "Involvement of rural women in decision making process is ignorant due to male dominant society" which was the most important problem perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making according to the responses of the rural women ranked at first position (62.27 MS) followed by "Social taboos, superstitions, traditions and customs hinder involvement of rural women in decision making activities (60.75 MS)", "Stereotyped gender roles discourages rural women in involvement of decision making activities (59.88 MS)", "Lack of desired cooperation from family members in the involvement of decision making activities (59.78 MS)", "No or low income is an obstacle in involvement of rural women in decision making activities (58.96 MS)", "Low level of education hinder full involvement in decision making activities" and "Lack of recognition of women as farmers by the society (57.28 MS)" which were ranked at second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh positions, respectively according to the responses of the respondents rural women.

While, the problem "Inadequacy of rural women about technical know-how of modern farming activities (56.86 MS)" was ranked at eighth position followed by "Fear of social acceptance limits the involvement of rural women in

decision making activities (55.05 MS)", "Lack of technical and management skills to perform specific farm technologic activities (54.75 MS)", "Lack of awareness among rural women about decision making process (39.41 MS)", "Quotidian work at home adversely affect the involvement of rural women in farm and home decision making process (39.09 MS)", "Lack of knowledge regarding marketing aspects of agricultural produce (38.28 MS)" and "Lack of exposure to sources of useful farming information (37.33 MS), which were ranked at ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth positions, respectively.

3.2 Suggestions to overcome the problems as perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making

In order to overcome the problems faced by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making, it is necessary to seek the opinion of the rural women regarding suggestions. Therefore, rural women were requested to offer their valued suggestions to overcome the problems faced by them in their involvement in farm and home decision making. Garrette's ranking technique was used to identify the positions of suggestions. The collected data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Suggestions to overcome the problems as perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making (n=120)

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Garrett's score	Garrett's Mean Score (MS)	Rank
1.	Appropriate technical guidance regarding scientific farming should be provided to rural women	6823	56.86	VIII
2.	Concept of gender equity should be encouraged in the society for ensuring equal opportunities for rural women	6823	59.65	III
3.	Efforts should be made to increase level of education among rural women	6965	58.04	VI
4.	Desirable support of the family members should be there for rural women in involvement of farm and home activities	7087	59.06	IV
5.	Rural women should actively be involved in income generating activities	7075	58.96	V
6.	Rural women should be aware of their decision making roles in the family	4729	39.41	XII
7.	Family and society should be encouraged to accept women as farmers	6874	57.28	VII
8.	Gender mainstreaming should be ensured among society	5265	43.88	XI
9.	Recognition of the worth of women's involvement in different decision making activities	6606	55.05	IX
10.	Training sessions should be organized for rural women regarding technical and management skills to be perform related to farm technologic activities	6605	55.04	X
11.	All the myths should be eliminated by bringing awareness which hinders the involvement of rural women in decision making activities	7482	62.35	I
12.	More access to information sources should be arranged to provide farming information for rural women	4479	37.33	XIV
13.	Capacity development programmes among rural women to understand marketing aspects of agricultural produce	4593	38.28	XIII
14.	Desirable cooperation of the family members should be provided in involvement of rural women in decision making activities	7425	61.88	II

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that "All the myths should be eliminated by bringing awareness which hinders the involvement of rural women in decision making activities (62.35 MS)" which was the most important suggestion to overcome the problems perceived by rural women in their involvement in farm and home decision making according to the responses of the rural women and ranked at first position followed by the suggestions "Desirable cooperation of the family members should be provided in involvement of rural women in decision making activities (61.88 MS)", "Concept of gender equity should be encouraged in the society for ensuring equal opportunities for rural women (59.65 MS)", "Desirable support of the family members should be there for rural women in involvement of farm and home activities (59.06 MS)", "Rural women should actively be involved in income generating activities (58.96 MS)", "Efforts should be made to increase level of education among rural women (58.04 MS)" and "Family and society should be encouraged to accept women as farmers (57.28 MS) which were ranked at second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh positions, respectively.

Furthermore, suggestion "Appropriate technical guidance regarding scientific farming should be provided to rural women (56.86 MS)" was ranked at eighth position according to responses of rural women followed by the suggestions "Recognition of the worth of women's involvement in different decision making activities (55.05 MS)", "Training sessions should be organized for rural women regarding technical and management skills to be perform related to farm technologic activities (55.04 MS)", "Gender mainstreaming should be ensured among society (43.88 MS)", "Rural women should be aware of their decision making roles in the family (39.41 MS)", "Capacity development programmes among rural women to understand marketing aspects of agricultural produce (38.28 MS)" and "More access to information sources should be arranged to provide farming information for rural women (37.33 MS)" which were ranked at ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth positions, respectively.

4. Conclusion

In the light of the above findings, it may be concluded that major problems faced by respondent rural women were "Involvement of rural women in decision making process is ignorant due to male dominant society", "Social taboos, superstitions, traditions and customs hinder involvement of rural women in decision making activities", "Stereotyped gender roles discourages rural women in involvement of decision making activities", "Lack of desired cooperation from family members in the involvement of decision making activities" and important suggestions perceived by them were "All the myths should be eliminated by bringing awareness which hinders the involvement of rural women in decision making activities", "Desirable cooperation of the family members should be provided in involvement of rural women in decision making activities", "Concept of gender equity should be encouraged in the society for ensuring equal opportunities for rural women", "Desirable support of the family members should be there for rural women in involvement of farm and home activities".

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