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A study on the participation of tribal women in decision making related to farm activities

Anugrah Sakshi and Ayush Emmanuel Lal

Abstract
The present study was conducted in Kishanganj District of Bihar to find out the participation of tribal women in decision making in various farm activities. A total of 124 respondents were selected randomly for the present study. For collecting data 16 different activities of farming were selected and these were presented to the respondents to give their comments in a four-point continuum *viz* self-decision, with husband, with family members, and only husband through a pre-structured interview schedule later appropriate statistical analysis was done to find out the meaningful result. The result showed that the maximum participation in decision making of tribal farm woman was in land preparation which got rank 'I' with a weighted mean score of 2.44 followed by labor engaged and storage of grains which got rank 'II' with a weighted mean score of 1.98 each whereas tribal farm women played recessive role in making decisions related to what fertilizer to use, the quantity of fertilizer and marketing. Age and family size were found positively associated with participation in decision making while education, landholding, annual income, family type, and social participation had no significant association.

Keywords: Tribal women, decision-making and farm activities

Introduction
Agriculture in India is the backbone of the country and it plays an important role in the economy. According to the periodic labour force survey, 2019-20 by the government of India about 45.6 percent of the total workforce is engaged in agricultural and allied sector activities. Above 80 % of the Indian population, either directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. Thus, agriculture remains a vital development tool and engine of growth for poverty reduction as an economic activity, as a livelihood, and as a provider of environmental services.

But the agricultural sector in India is underperforming, in part because women, who represent a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles as farmers, labourers, and entrepreneurs, almost everywhere face more severe constraints. Women have a decisive role in ensuring food security and preserving local agro-biodiversity.

Today about 86.1 million women work in the agriculture sector which constitutes 60 percent of all women workers in the country (NITI Ayog, 2022) [3] also, the agricultural workforce in rural areas comprises 55.4 percent of men and 75.7 percent of women (nurture. farm, 2021) [4]. But women still have to face disadvantages in terms of decision making, even though they make up the majority of the workforce. Additionally, their lack of empowerment frequently has unfavorable externalities, such as poorer familial health and lower educational achievement for their children.

The decision is the root of all human activities. Decision making is important because much of the success of any enterprise and particularly farming depends upon how the family takes the decision. Decision is one of the sequences, present decision has its root in the past and reflects the nature of the future.

Realizing the importance of ascertaining the nature and extent of intensity of role of tribal farm women in different farm activities and decision making related to agricultural activities present study was undertaken.

Objectives
1. To access the participation in decision making of the respondents in different farming activities.
2. To determine the association between selected the socio-economic profile of respondents with participation in decision making.

Research Methodology

The involvement of tribal women is measured in terms of their participation in decision making in various farm activities. Descriptive research design was used to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. A multi-staged purposive cum random sampling design was followed for selection of sample for the study. The present study was conducted in the Kishanganj district of the Bihar state, which is one of the tribal districts of the state as population of Schedule Tribe (ST) is 3.8% of total population. The State has a total of twenty-nine (29) Scheduled Tribes and all of them have been enumerated at 2001 census. Out of twenty-nine (29) STs, Santal is the most populous tribe, having a number of 367,612, constituting 48.5 percent of the total ST population of the State (censusindia.gov.in). At the district level, more than three fourth tribal population of Kishanganj are Santal therefore santal tribe was selected purposively. There are 7 blocks in the selected district out of that Kishanganj block was selected purposively as per the existence of maximum tribal population. From the block out of 67 villages 7 tribal dominated villages namely, Balubadi, Lambabasti, Tupamari, Bhediadangi, Khadibasti, Simalbadi, and Bastakhola were selected randomly for the study. For the selection of respondents, a list of tribal farm women from each selected village was prepared and from the list, 10 percent of tribal farm women were selected from all 7 villages by random sampling method.

To measure the participation in decision making 16 different activities of farming were selected and these were presented to the respondents to give their comments in a four-point continuum *viz* self-decision, with husband, with family members and only husband. Later statistical tools such as frequency, percent, weighted men score, and chi-square test were used to interpret the data and for drawing logical conclusions.

Result and Discussion

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents were analyzed and presented in Table 1. The study revealed that the highest percentage of tribal farm women belonged to the young age (50.00) group of 20 to 35 years of age. This might be due to that the tribal farm woman of this age group were more involved in agriculture operations than other age groups. Regarding the level of education majority of tribal women i.e., 59.67 percent were illiterate. This may be due to the limited availability of education facilities and time or inadequate support from the family for education. This study finds support from (Wakle *et al*. 2003) [8]. In case of land holding, the finding revealed that the maximum tribal farm i.e., 50 percent of women were having landholding of below 1 acre. Similar findings were also revealed by (Dhruw 2020). 67.74 percent of the tribal woman had an annual income of 50,001- 1,00,000. The reason behind this can be that they are mainly small and marginal farmers and are able to get major earnings from only one crop in a year. Similar finding was also revealed by (Pramila 2014) [6]. Maximum tribal women i.e., 51.62 percent had family size of up to 5 members. the majority of tribal farms i.e., 74.42 women belonged to the nucleus family type. This shows that the trend of the nucleus family system is more prevalent in santhali tribal areas. Most of the tribal women i.e., 51.61 percent had low social participation. Similar results were revealed by (Warkade 2010) [9].

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents

n=124

S.NO.	Independent variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young (20-35)	62	50.00
		Middle (36-55)	46	37.17
		Old (above 55)	16	12.90
2.	Education	Illiterate	72	59.67
		Primary school	22	17.74
		Junior high	12	9.67
		High school	10	8.04
		Higher secondary	06	4.86
3.	Landholding	Below 1 acre	62	50.00
		1-2 acre	48	38.70
		2.1-3 acre	08	6.50
		Above 3 acres	06	4.80
4.	Annual income	Upto 50,000	30	24.20
		50,001-1 Lakh	84	67.74
		Above 1 lakh	10	8.06
5.	Family size	Up to 5 members	64	51.62
		More than 5 members	60	48.38
6.	Family type	Nucleus	96	74.42
		Joint	28	22.58
7.	Social participation	No participation	11	8.87
		Low	64	51.61
		Medium	31	25.00
		High	18	14.52

From table 2. The study revealed that the maximum participation in decision making of tribal farm women was in land preparation which got rank ' Ⅰ ' with a weighted mean score of 2.44 followed by labor engaged and storage of grains which got rank ' Ⅱ ' with a weighted mean score of 1.98 each followed by quantity of seeds, time of harvesting, method of application having rank Ⅲ, Ⅳ and Ⅴ respectively. Likewise, tribal farm woman has minimum decision making in farm

activities like what herbicide to use, what fertilizer to use, and quantity of fertilizer having rank X, XI and XII respectively and they are rarely participating in decision making for marketing which got ranked XIII with weighted mean score of 1.46.

Table 2 also shows that out of a total of 124 respondents, among maximum farm activities majority of decision making is done by only husband whereas only 13 i.e., 10.48 percent of tribal farm women were taking self decision in quantity of seeds and 4 i.e., 3.24 percent in land preparation followed by storage of grains (3.22%), selection of seed (1.61%) and plant protection measures (1.6%).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on participation in decision making in various farm activities.

n=124

S. No.	Farm activities	Self decision	With Husband	With family members	Only Husband	Weighted mean score	Rank
		F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)		
1	Land preparation	4 (3.24)	77 (62.09)	13 (10.48)	30 (24.19)	2.44	I
2	Selection of seed	**2** (1.61)	26 (20.96)	20 (16.12)	76 (61.31)	1.6	IX
3	Selection of variety	0 (0)	34 (27.4)	18 (14.5)	72 (58.1)	1.69	VII
4	Quantity of seed	13 (10.48)	23 (18.54)	21 (16.95)	67 (54.03)	1.81	III
5	Sowing time of seed	0 (0)	34 (27.40)	18 (14.50)	72 (58.10)	1.69	VII
6	What fertilizer to use	0 (0)	24 (19.35)	16 (12.90)	84 (67.75)	1.51	XI
7	Quantity of fertilizer	0 (0)	21 (16.93)	17 (13.70)	86 (69.10)	1.47	XII
8	What herbicide to use	0 (0)	28 (22.6)	12 (9.7)	84 (67.7)	1.54	X
9	Method of application	0 (0)	40 (32.25)	14 (11.3)	72 (58.1)	1.77	V
10	Plant protection measures	2 (1.6)	32 (25.8)	16 (12.9)	74 (59.7)	1.69	VII
11	Number of irrigation	0 (0)	32 (25.80)	20 (16.10)	72 (58.10)	1.67	VIII
12	Labor engaged	0 (0)	53 (42.75)	16 (12.9)	55 (44.35)	1.98	II
13	Time of harvesting	0 (0)	39 (31.45)	19 (15.32)	66 (53.23)	1.78	IV
14	Storage of grains	4 (3.22)	50 (40.32)	10 (8.06)	60 (48.40)	1.98	II
15	Marketing	0 (0)	20 (16.1)	18 (14.5)	86 (69.10)	1.46	XIII
16	Land purchasing	0 (0)	49 (39.51)	22 (20.9)	22 (17.75)	1.71	VI

Table 3: Association between selected independent and participation of tribal woman in decision making for various farm activities.

n=124

S. No.	Variables	Calculated values
1	Age	16.450*
2	Education	2.065 NS
3	Land holding	1.144 NS
4	Annual Income	8.871 NS
5	Family size	6.012*
6	Family type	2.113 NS
7	Social participation	4.358 NS

* = Significant at 0.05 level NS = Non significant

The findings presented in table 3 reveal that the age of tribal women is significantly associated with participation in decision making, the probable reason might be that majority of tribal women were young aged. Similar results were found by (Brijbala *et al*. 2003) [1]. The family size of tribal women is also significantly associated with participation in decision making as smaller the members in the family more collective decisions are made. Similar results were found by (Rizwana *et al.* 2006) [7]. Whereas education, land holding, annual income, family size, and social participation are insignificantly associated with participation in decision making.

Conclusion

The conclusion can be drawn from the present study that maximum tribal farm women participated in decision making in land preparation, labor engaged and storage of grains whereas maximum independent women decision making was done in quantity of seeds, land preparation and storage of grains. Tribal farm women play recessive role in making decision related to what fertilizer to use, quantity of fertilizer and marketing. Age and family size were found positively associated with participation in different farm activities whereas; education, landholding, annual income, family type and social participation had no significant association.

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