RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Decision-making pattern of rural women beneficiaries of National Rural Livelihood Mission in Rewa district of M.P.

■ **Aparna Singh, Sanjay Singh, Nirmala Singh and Ajlan Khan**

SUMMARY : Involvement of rural women in decision-making process has been of great importance because they perform every household activity and major farm activities with great devotion and excellent capabilities. Keeping this in view, the present study was conducted to know the level of involvement of rural women in the decision-making process in agriculture and allied activities. The present study was conducted in Rewa district of M.P. since the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) project has been running in the district since 2015 for improving the livelihood and empowerment of women. Hence, the sample of the study was consisted of 120 rural women beneficiaries of National Rural Livelihood Mission. The study revealed that 45.00 per cent of the total respondents exhibited low level of decision making pattern followed by 30.83 per cent had medium and only 24.16 per cent had high decision making ability in farming and allied activities The study suggests that the rural women should be actively involved in awareness and capacity building programmes of rural and agricultural development for enhancing their involvement in decision-making process.

How to cite this article : Singh, Aparna, Singh, Sanjay, Singh, Nirmala and Khan, Ajlan (2018). Decision-making pattern of rural women beneficiaries of National Rural Livelihood Mission in Rewa district of M.P. *Agric. Update*, **13**(1): 88-92; **DOI : 10.15740/HAS/AU/13.1/88-92.**

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The decision-making process is indispensible segment of every household because the effective functioning of family resource management greatly depends on the efficiency of decision-making progress. Involvement of rural women in decision-making process has been of great importance because they perform every household activity and major farm activities with great devotion and excellent capabilities. However,

in rural community there has been observed a considerable fluctuation regarding the decision making pattern of rural women. The contribution of rural women has not considered to the desired extent because majority of the females have not provided opportunities to take important decisions related to household and farm activities. Decision making is the process of consciously choosing courses of action from available alternatives and integration of them for the

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purpose of achieving the desired goal. It is well known fact that the success of any rural development process and planned change largely depends on the participation of people at large irrespective of sex. The problem of involving women's participation in the development process is now catching the attention of planners and policy maker because of increasing imbalance generation out of development process. Therefore, a proper understanding of the complexity of the decision-making process in rural farm families and ascertaining the role of farm women in the process will help in transformation of rural family life.

In order to strengthen the rural women and make them confident and enhance their decision making ability, Government of India has been implemented various programmes for rural women on various fields such as soil and water conservation, nursery management, dairy development, social forestry and other income generating and livelihood activities related to agriculture and allied sectors like sericulture, mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, lac cultivation etc. In context to Rewa district of M.P., National Rural Livelihood Mission has been running in the district since 2015 for improving the livelihood of women and enhancing their decision making as well. Considering the importance of this mission in involvement of rural women in decision making process, this study was conducted to know the level of involvement of rural women in the decision-making process in agriculture and allied activities and also to study the factors influencing their participation in the decision-making process.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Rewa district of M.P. since the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) project has been running in the district since 2015 for improving the livelihood and empowerment of women. Presently the NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission project) is running in all the nine blocks of Rewa district, namely Rewa, Raipur Karchuliyan, Sirmour, Teonthar, Jawa, Gangeo, Mauganj, Hanumana and Naigarhi. Out of these blocks Rewa block was selected on the basis of higher number of rural women SHGs (Self help groups) under NRLM project. A cluster of villages consisting five villages *viz.*, Kitvariya, Karhiya, Bisar, Bhitwa, Mandhi of Rewa block was selected due to higher concentration of SHGs members. In Rewa

block, the majority of the SHGs have been found to be involved in income generating activities *viz.*, vegetable production, masala processing, agarbatti making, tailoring, kirana stores, vermicomposting, goatry, dairy enterprise etc. for their livelihood. From this block five villages were selected for the study on the basis of higher number of rural women SHGs members. From these selected villages a village wise list of SHGs members of NRLM was prepared. Out of this list members of rural women SHGs were selected through proportionate random sampling method to make a sample of 120 respondents. Hence, finally the sample was consisted of 120 respondents. The researcher collected the primary data personally by interviewing the selected respondents with the help of structured and pre - tested interviews schedule. The secondary data were obtained from the various government offices and publications.

An interview schedule was designed for collecting the relevant information of selected variables. The data were collected personally with the help of pre tested interview schedule. The researcher personally contacted the respondents. They were assured that the information given by them would be kept confidential and it would only be used for the academic purposes.

Data collected were qualitative as well as quantitative. The quantitative data were interpreted in terms of percentage and qualitative data were tabulated on the basis of approved categorization method. The relationship of selected independent variables with dependent variable was ascertained with the help of person's product moment correlation co-efficient.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present study as well as discussions have been summarized under following heads:

Decision making pattern of rural women beneficiaries of National Rural Livelihood Mission regarding farming and allied activities :

As stated earlier decision making is the process to decide upon each course of action and choose wisely the best out of the many alternatives. In the present study the decision making pattern was measured with the help of an index. To measure decision making pattern of rural women they were requested to record their responses regarding the decision making pattern in various selected

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farm operations and entrepreneurial activities. The scale consists of 20 statements. The responses of respondents were obtained in 3 points continuum namely no decision, decision making in consultation with others and self decision. The scoring was assigned in the order of 2, 1 and 0, respectively. On the basis of total score obtained by the respondents they were categorized and are given in Table 1.

Table 1 : Respondents and core

Sr. No.	Category	Score range
1.	Low	Upto 10
2.	Medium	10-14
3.	High	Above 14

In the present study involvement of rural women in decision making regarding farming and allied activities has been ascertained. Distribution of rural women in respect to their decision making pattern in agricultural and allied activities and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 reveals that In case of farming activities it was observed that the decision making pattern of rural women was found to be highest in storage (1.14) followed

by weed management (1.11), land preparation (1.06), harvesting and threshing (1.03), application of manure and fertilizer(0.97), plant protection measures (0.85), water management (0.84), methods of sowing (0.80), selection of seed variety and seed treatment (0.77) and soil testing and soil treatment (0.43).

As far as farming allied activities were concerned involvement of rural women in decision making seemed to be highest in value addition (1.14) followed by marketing (0.90), seed management (0.62), vegetable production (0.53), fruit production (0.50), Vermi composting (0.43), nursery preparation (0.40), livestock production management (0.28), poultry farming (0.15) and fish farming (0.12).

This finding is similar to the findings of Singh and Sharma (2003), Kunwar (2004) and Warkade (2010).

Table 3 exhibits that out of 120 respondents, 45.00 per cent respondents exhibited low level of decision making pattern followed by 30.83 per cent had medium and only 24.16 per cent had high decision making ability in farming and allied activities. The results reported by Chayal *et al.* (2013) Godara *et al.* (2014) are in line with

Table 2 : Involvement of rural women in decision making regarding farming and allied activities

Sr. No.	Activities	Decision making pattern			Total score	Mean score	Rank
		Self	Jointly	Not at all			
Farming activities							
1.	Land preparation	40	48	32	128	1.06	III
2.	Soil testing and soil treatment	10	32	78	52	0.43	X
3.	Selection of seed variety and seed treatment	25	43	52	93	0.77	IX
4.	Methods of sowing	26	44	50	96	0.80	VIII
5.	Weed management	49	36	35	134	1.11	II
6.	Plant protection measures	31	41	48	103	0.85	VI
7.	Application of manure and fertilizer	35	47	35	117	0.97	V
8.	Harvesting and threshing	45	34	41	124	1.03	IV
9.	Water management	31	39	50	101	0.84	VII
10.	Storage	50	37	33	137	1.14	I
Allied activities							
1.	Seed management	22	31	67	75	0.62	III
2.	Marketing	34	41	45	109	0.90	II
3.	Fruit production	15	31	74	61	0.50	V
4.	Vegetable production	20	24	76	64	0.53	IV
5.	Vermi composting	15	22	83	52	0.43	VI
6.	Livestock production management	10	14	96	34	0.28	VIII
7.	Poultry farming	5	9	104	19	0.15	IX
8.	Fish farming	4	7	108	15	0.12	X
9.	Nursery preparation	12	25	83	49	0.40	VII
10.	Value addition	54	40	26	148	1.14	I

Table 3 : Overall involvement of rural women in decision making process in farming and allied activities

Sr. No.	Extent of decision making pattern	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Low	54	45.00
2.	Medium	37	30.84
3.	High	29	24.16
	Total	120	100.00

Table 4 : Correlation between selected characteristics of the respondents and their decision making pattern in relation to farming and allied activities

Sr. No.	Characteristics	'r' value
1.	Age	0.07
2.	Caste	0.10
3	Size of family	0.13
4.	Education	0.23*
5.	Social participation	0.082
6.	Annual income	0.23*
7.	Size of land holding	0.26*
8.	Cosmopolitness	0.22*
9.	Source of information	0.28*
10.	Risk orientation	0.26*
11.	Economic motivation	0.25*
12.	Achievement motivation	0.35*
13	Decision making in home affairs	0.24*

* indicates significance of value at P=0.05 level of probability

the present findings.

Relationship between selected characteristics of the respondents and their decision making pattern in relation to farming and allied activities :

As earlier stated the present study attempted to assess the role of selected characteristics of the respondents and their decision making pattern in relation to farming and allied activities. The relationship of selected characteristics with decision making pattern were ascertained with the help of person's product moment correlation coefficient ('r' value). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 depicts the 'r' value indicating the relationship between profile of the respondents with their decision making pattern in farming and allied activities. The characteristics namely, education, size of land holding, farming experience, source of information, mass media exposure, contact with extension agencies, economic motivation, risk orientation and decision making in home affairs had significant relationship with their decision making pattern in farming and allied enterprises at 5% level of significance. The result also exhibits that age,

social participation, size of family and caste of the respondents did not establish significant relationship with their decision making pattern in farming and allied enterprises. Similar results were reported by Dubey (2007), Sharma (2008) and Warkade (2010).

Conclusion :

On the basis of the findings of the study it may be inferred that involvement of the rural women in decision making process observed to be significantly higher regarding the activities *viz.*, storage, value addition, weed management land preparation, harvesting and threshing. The decision making pattern of rural women as regards other farm and allied activities was found to be significantly low. The study also revealed that higher percentage of the respondents exhibited low level of decision making pattern. In the light of the above observations of the study suggests that the rural women should be actively involved in awareness and capacity building programmes of rural and agricultural development. There should be also provision of exposure visits of rural woman so that they may gain new skills and experiences. Motivational camps may also be very

useful in accelerating rural women empowerment

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