

## Role performance of women in decision making of vegetable cultivation in Poonch district

■ Neerja Sharma, Arun Gupta<sup>1</sup>, R.K. Arora and Sanjay Kher

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (S.K.U.A.S.T.), POONCH (J&K) INDIA

<sup>1</sup>Division of Vegetable Science and Floriculture, Faculty of Agriculture, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Chatha, JAMMU (J&K) INDIA

Email : neeraj1975@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

Rural women of Poonch, in addition to their daily work routine, consisting of, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic chores, are also heavily involved from crop production to livestock rearing, they participate in various practices of vegetable cultivation. In vegetable cultivation, women perform a variety of tasks both in cultivation as well as marketing. Practices related to vegetable cultivation have now been considered as a family enterprise in which husband and wife participate to share work and pleasure both. Thus, it is expected that all decisions related to practices of vegetable cultivation are also taken jointly. The study focused on rural women of Poonch in what extent they participate in decision making process. Women of Poonch of low economic category were found to participate in more practices related to vegetable cultivation. Formation of self-help group, Mahila Mandal needs to be encouraged to increase their knowledge and skill, so that their participation in various practices of vegetable cultivation will not only remove drudgery and also provide adequate nutrient supplements. Thus, there is a great need for involving rural women of Poonch in vegetable cultivation as cash crop and their skills in the activities which they are vitally concerned.

### INTRODUCTION

Development of women in rural areas is the major thrust area of many rural development programmes implemented by the government as they not only constitute nearly half of its population, but also influence growth of the remaining half of the population. Despite, women are poorer than men mostly because they are deprived of equal rights and opportunities, denied of the access to the financial/economic resources and the status in the society. Moreover, women are illiterate and have little time to know about the latest advances in vegetable production. Women are generally engaged in multiple occupations ranging from unpaid family labour to self-employed in their home or village or outside to generate income for themselves. In Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) women constitute nearly half (47.15%) of the total population that form about 29

per cent of total labour force (Baba *et al.*, 2010). Out of the total of 10.74 lakhs female workers, 15.45 per cent are engaged in agricultural sector either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. Rural women of district Poonch participate in various practices of vegetable cultivation. In the vegetable production, women perform a variety of tasks both in cultivation as well as marketing. With the advent of science and technology, the rural society is witnessing unprecedented changes in all spheres of life; consequently, the members of families involved in vegetable cultivation are called upon to make certain adjustments which involve series of decisions. Practices related to vegetable cultivation have now been considered as a family enterprise in which husband and wife participate to share work and pleasure both. Thus, it is expected that all decisions related to practice of vegetable cultivation are also taken jointly. So, a study was undertaken to know how far rural women of Poonch

district participate in decision making process.

## METHODS

The study was undertaken in Poonch district of Jammu, J&K state to analyse the participation of women in vegetable production and decision making. District Poonch of Jammu & Kashmir state is located along the south western Indo-Pak LOC and situated between 33° 25' to 34° North latitude and 73° 25' to 74° 33' East longitude. The district Poonch is situated at a height of 3300 MSL and spread over an area of 1674 sq kms with geographical area of 1.14 lac hectares. It is surrounded by the Line of Control (LoC) on three sides and is separated from Kashmir Valley by the mighty Pir Panjal range in the north. The women of district Poonch have to perform all the duties with hill variation. Agriculture being primary and others like animal husbandry and goat, sheep rearing as secondary occupation. Because of difficult terrain, small and scattered land holdings make women involvement more significant as they manage a wide range of farming activities. Poonch district has made a commendable progress in vegetable production from about 3096 metric tons in 2000-01 to over 40341 metric tons in 2009-10 (Anonymous, 2010). This scenario signifies that vegetable cultivation in Kashmir has a vast potential of improving the economic status of farming community especially women folk that is highly engaged in various activities involved in its cultivation. Thus, an attempt has been made in this paper to examine the pattern of gender participation in different activities

and decisions involved in vegetable cultivation. The population of study consisted of farm women involved in agriculture and allied activities. A sample of 150 farm women was selected through proportionate random sampling. Selected respondents were interviewed personally using well structured pre-tested interview schedule. The data thus obtained were statistically analyzed.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The participation of selected respondents in vegetable farming activities was analyzed and presented in Table 1, which revealed that storage and processing were the major operations wherein the participation of women was comparatively more. The probable reason might be the expertise of respondents in estimating the quantity required for family consumption and also their knowledge as well as experience on storage practiced earlier. Singh *et al.* (2004) and Chayal and Dhaka (2010) also reported that the farm operations in which the participation of women was 100 per cent were cleaning the produces, cutting, picking, storage and processing. It was observed that cleaning of field, weeding, thinning, seed production processes and nursery raising the participation of women was more than 90 per cent. The least involvement of farm women was found in ploughing of field (40%) marketing (4.6 %) and plant protection measure (10.7 %). This might be to avoid the ambiguity and criticism in case of any loss incurred and more over lack of technical knowhow. These results are in close conformity with

Sr. No.	Activities	Male		Female	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Ploughing of field	90	60.0	60	40.0
2.	Cleaning of field	28	18.6	122	84.6
3.	Leveling of field	78	52.0	72	48.0
4.	Raising nursery for seedling	12	8.0	138	92.0
5.	Sowing	24	16.0	126	84.0
6.	Transplanting	15	10.0	135	90.0
7.	Manure application	84	56.0	66	44.0
8.	Fertilizer application	127	84.6	23	15.4
9.	Weeding	24	16.0	126	84.0
10.	Thinning	42	28.0	108	72.0
11.	Gap filling	31	20.6	119	79.4
12.	Irrigation	123	82.0	27	18.0
13.	Plant protection measures	134	89.3	16	10.7
14.	Seed production processes (Cutting, Picking, Shifting production to threshing floor, Threshing, Winnowing, Drying of seeds, Cleaning of seeds and grading)	12	8.0	138	92.0
15.	Storage	22	14.6	128	85.4
16.	Marketing	128	85.4	22	14.6
17.	Processing	20	13.3	130	86.7

those of Chayal and Dhaka (2010).

### Decision making process :

Table 2 shows that vegetable cultivators generally take decisions about various practices related to vegetable production. Majority of the vegetable cultivators decide on their own about the area of various vegetable to be grown. This is followed by the decisions to determine the amount to be marketed. In case of women, majority take their own decision towards storage (83.3%), seed production processes (81.3 %),

processing (80 %), thinning (60%), nursery raising (58.6) and weeding (58.6%). With regards to decisions taken by men and women together, the highest percentage of responses were found in the case of ploughing of field (63.3%), leveling of field (42.6%), transplanting (40%), cleaning of field (37.3%) and sowing of seed (37.3%). From these findings it is clear that involvement of rural women of Poonch was relatively higher in those practices which are considered for house wives to perform. Similar findings have been reported by Mishra *et al.* (2009) and Baba *et al.* (2010).

Sr. No	Activities	Male	Female	Joint
1.	Ploughing of field	45 (30)	10 (6.7)	95 (63.3)
2.	Cleaning of field	28 (18.6)	66 (44)	56 (37.3)
3.	Leveling of field	78 (52)	8 (5.3)	64 (42.6)
4.	Raising nursery for seedling	12 (8)	88 (58.6)	50 (33.3)
5.	Sowing	66 (44)	28 (18.6)	56 (37.3)
6.	Transplanting	34 (22.7)	56 (37.3)	60 (40)
7.	Manure application	38 (25.3)	78 (52)	34 (22.7)
8.	Fertilizer application	92 (61.3)	25 (16.6)	33 (22)
9.	Weeding	32 (21.3)	88 (58.6)	30 (20)
10.	Thinning	30 (20)	90 (60)	30 (20)
11.	Gap filling	95 (63.3)	38 (25.3)	17 (11.3)
12.	Irrigation	108 (72)	22 (14.7)	20 (13.3)
13.	Plant protection measures	115 (76.6)	25 (16.7)	10 (6.7)
14.	Seed production processes (Cutting, Picking, Shifting production to threshing floor, Threshing, Winnowing, Drying of seeds, Cleaning of seeds and grading)	24 (16)	122 (81.3)	4 (2.7)
15.	Storage	18 (12)	125 (83.3)	7 (4.7)
16.	Marketing	112 (74.6)	22 (14.6)	16 (10.7)
17.	Processing	28 (18.6)	120 (80)	2 (1.3)

Sr. No.	Practices	Always consulted	Seldom consulted	Never consulted
1.	Choice of vegetables to be grown	82 (54.7)	42 (28)	26 (17.3)
2.	Arranging of inputs	45 (30)	77 (51.3)	28 (18.7)
3.	Purchase of tool and implements	78 (52)	52 (34.7)	20 (13.3)
4.	Adaption of high yielding varieties	52 (34.7)	74 (42.7)	24 (16)
5.	Arranging of manures	68 (45.3)	62 (41.3)	20 (13.3)
6.	Purchase of manures and fertilizers	66 (44)	56 (37.3)	32 (21.3)
7.	Purchase or sale of land	78 (52)	28 (18.7)	44 (29.3)
8.	Seedling Preparation	82 (54.7)	38 (25.3)	30 (20)
9.	Field preparation	92 (61.3)	44 (29.3)	14 (9.3)
10.	Transplantation	95 (63.3)	45 (30)	10 (6.7)
11.	Harvesting time	88 (58.7)	42 (28)	20 (13.3)
12.	Grading	95 (63.3)	38 (25.3)	17 (11.3)
13.	Participating in training programmes	62 (41.3)	54 (36)	34 (22.7)
14.	Taking loan from banks/ land lords	72 (48)	38 (25.3)	40 (26.7)

**Table 4 : Training needs assessment of women in vegetable cultivation**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Male		Female	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Choice of vegetable seeds	42	28.0	45	30.0
2.	Preparation of field	10	6.7	5	3.4
3.	Nursery raising	28	18.6	16	10.6
4.	Irrigation to fields	4	2.6	8	1.0
5.	Manures and fertilization	22	14.7	24	16.0
6.	Uprooting and transplantation	4	2.6	14	9.3
7.	Intercultural operations	15	10.0	-	-
8.	Application of pesticides	5	3.4	-	-
9.	Picking & harvesting	12	8.0	5	3.4
10.	On farm sale of produce	2	1.3	18	12.0
11.	Preparation of produce for sale	4	2.6	15	10.0
12.	Market sale	2	1.3	-	-
	Total	150	100	150	100

**Consultation in decision making :**

Table 3 reveals that husbands consulted always their wives in respect of the practices namely choice of vegetables, grading, purchase of tool and implements, purchase or leasing of land, transplanting, harvesting time and taking loan from banks. The highest percentage of responses were found in the case of transplanting and grading (63.3%), field preparation (61.3%) and choice of vegetables to be grown and seedling preparation (54.7%) It indicates that wives have always been consulted for those activities in which they participate largely. Wives have been consulted seldom in the activities like arranging inputs, adaption of high yielding varieties and arranging of manures. These findings are in close conformity with those of Mishra *et al.* (2009).

**Training need assessment:**

Participation in extension programmes is also considered an important factor affecting the role of women in decision making. It is due to the fact that the access of women to any kind of training was very less as social and religious taboos dominate the other favourable factors in the study areas. Information regarding training needs in various areas of vegetable cultivation as perceived by male and female respondents is given in Table 4. Choice of vegetable seeds to be grown whether hybrids or open pollinated varieties about 28 per cent of sample male respondents followed by nursery

sowing which also requires technical knowhow revealed training need in these areas. Similarly about 30 per cent of the women felt need for trainings in choice of vegetables but did not feel any need of training in case of chemical application and market sale of vegetables, indicating that they were not willing to take part in these activities because of cumbersome and complex procedures of these activities.

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