

Extent of participation of rural women in decision making related to poultry farming

■ Poree Saikia, Manju Dutta Das and Pompei Saikia

Department of Extension Education, College of Home Science, Assam Agricultural University, JORHAT (ASSAM) INDIA
(Email : poreesaikia@gmail.com)

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to know the participation of rural women in decision making related to poultry farming and to carry out the study, Jorhat district of Assam, was selected purposively. Eight villages under two Blocks were selected at random. Thus, total of 120 rural women were selected for the study. Findings revealed that out of the total respondents, 37.5% belonged to middle age group. Majority of the respondents (80.0%) were married, farming as main occupation (75.0%), had kutchha type of houses (56.7%) and belonged to nuclear families (68.3%). Fifty per cent of the respondents did not have membership in any formal and non-formal organizations. About 33.4% of respondents were found to have High School level of education. Findings revealed that about 80.00 per cent of the respondents took independent decision in keeping of nest boxes followed by cleaning of nest boxes (73.3%), breeding of birds (61.67%) and selection of feed (57.50%). A large percentage of the respondents took decision jointly in the activities such as identification of site (75.33%), quantity of produce to be marketed (70%) and disease control measure (67.50%). The data also revealed that there was no relationship between involvement in decision making and selected independent variables.

INTRODUCTION

Livestock contributes a higher share of income to rural households and improves food security. Livestock includes dairy, poultry, piggery, sheep rearing etc. Poultry farming has gained much importance as a subsidiary income of the farmers. It plays an effective role in improving the socio-economic status of the rural people by increasing their income besides providing nutritious food through meat and egg. Poultry keeping has been big and large a typical women's area of animal production, both in history and in present time. Studies have shown that women often devote more time (16 – 18 hours) against men in agricultural and livestock production (Mc Corckle, 1987). In India also, women share abundance of responsibilities and wide spectrum of duties in maintaining their home, farm and animals. Thus, they constitute the influential centre of families, vital section of societies and backbone of the nation. Women contribute 60 to 80% of the labour in animal husbandry (Yonas *et al.*, 2007). Despite their role in different activities of poultry

farming, their involvement in decision making process still seems questionable. The level of women participation in decision making process not only varies from region to region but also from one activity to another activity (Tipilda and Panhwar, 2008). We know that decision making is the root of all human activities. Hence, success and development of farming and family living depend upon how well the family makes its decisions and contribution of women in such decision as the manager of her family as valuable. Decision making capabilities of rural women leads to overall empowerment. Thus, to throw light on the real picture of decision making pattern of rural women, the present study was under taken with the following objectives.

- To study the selected personal and socio-economic characteristic of rural women.
- To analyze the decision making pattern of rural women in different activities of poultry farming.
- To study the relationship between the selected independent variables and decision making of rural women in

poultry farming.

METHODS

The study was carried out in Jorhat district of Assam. For selecting the representative samples for the study, a multistage purposive-cum-stratified random sampling method was adopted. Two Blocks namely, Jorhat Development Block and North West Development Block were randomly selected. Then four villages from each block were selected randomly. Thus, total numbers of villages were eight. Then fifteen women were randomly selected as the final sample from each village after preparing a list of rural women fulfilling the criteria such as having the habit of rearing poultry within the age group of 20 – 50 years. Thus, total 120 respondents were selected for the present study.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present study are summarized below according to objectives of the study:

Personal and socio-economic characteristics of the rural women :

The data presented in Table 1 reveal that nearly 37.5 per cent of the rural women belonged to the age group of 30 – 40 years. As regard to the marital status, it was revealed that majority of the rural women (80.0%) were married. Finding also revealed occupation of the head of the family, of majority (75.0%) of the rural women was farming. 45 per cent of the rural women belonged to OBC/MOBC and were from nuclear family (68.3%). In term of family size, nearly 48.3 per cent of the rural

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their personal and socio-economic characteristics				
Sr. No.	Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage
1.	Personal characteristics			
	Age	Younger-20-30	40	33.30
		Middle-30-40	45	37.5
		Older- 40-50	35	29.2
	Marital status	Unmarried	19	15.8
		Married	96	80.0
		Widow	5	4.2
2.	Socio- economic characteristics			
	Occupation of head of the family	Daily wage earner	10	8.3
		Farming	90	75.0
		Business/service	20	16.7
	Caste	SC/ST	37	30.8
		OBC/MOBC	54	45.0
		General	29	24.2
	Family type	Nuclear	82	68.3
		Joint	27	22.5
		Extended	11	9.2
	Family size	Small	44	36.7
		Medium	58	48.3
		Large	18	15.0
	Education	Illiterate	2	1.7
		Can read and write	16	13.3
		Primary level	25	20.8
		Middle School level	30	25.0
		High School level	40	33.4
	Organizational membership	Higher School level	7	5.8
		No membership	60	50.0
		Member of one organization	57	47.5
		Member of more than one organizations	-	-
		Office bearer of an organization	3	2.5

Contd Table 1

Table 1 contd....

Land holding	Small-<5 bigha	48	40.0
	Medium-5 to 10 bigha	41	34.2
	Large-> 10 bigha	31	25.8
Type of house	Katcha house	68	56.7
	Mixed house	29	24.2
	Pucca house	23	19.1
Material possession	Low-1-7	27	22.5
	Medium- 8-14	71	59.2
	High-15-21	22	18.3
Poultry size	Small-10-29	90	75.0
	Medium-30-49	23	19.2
	Large-50 and above	7	5.8
Socio-economic status	Low	57	47.5
	Medium	20	16.7
	High	43	35.8
Closeness with extension contact	Never	116	96.7
	Sometime/occasionally	4	3.3
	Regular	-	-
Mass media exposure	Never	86	71.7
	Sometime	34	28.3
	Regular	-	-

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents according to their involvement in decision making pattern on poultry farming

Sr. No.	Category	Type and extent of participation (%)		
		Independent involvement	Joint involvement	No involvement
1.	Identification of site	10.50	75.33	14.17
2.	Construction of poultry house	2.50	40.00	57.50
3.	Type of bird to be reared	36.67	45.00	18.33
4.	Selection of the colour of chick	15.00	19.17	65.83
5.	Collection of raw material	2.50	47.50	50.00
6.	Employment of hired labour	0.83	20.00	79.17
7.	System of rearing birds	49.17	26.67	24.16
8.	Purchase of new chick	8.33	43.34	48.33
9.	Selection of feed	57.50	26.67	15.83
10.	Purchase of feed	12.50	21.67	65.83
11.	Extension of house	11.67	26.67	61.66
12.	Keeping of nest boxes	80.00	17.50	2.50
13.	Cleaning of nest boxes	73.33	20.00	6.67
14.	Breeding of birds	61.67	30.83	7.50
15.	Vaccination	9.17	61.67	29.16
16.	Disease control measures	8.33	67.50	24.17
17.	Consultations with veterinary doctors regarding sick birds	8.33	57.50	43.17
18.	Contacting extension personnel for advice	0.83	8.34	90.83
19.	Consultation with wholesaler for selling of farm produce	3.33	45.00	51.67
20.	Rate at which the produce should be sold	5.00	7.50	87.50
21.	Quality of produce to be marketed	15.00	70.00	15.00

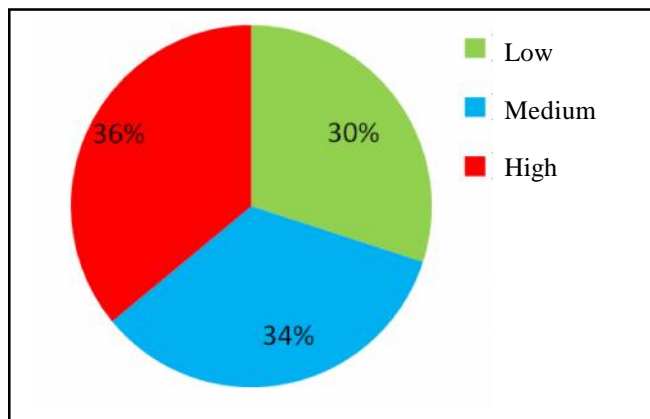


Fig. 1 : Distribution of respondents according to level of decision making in poultry farming

women belonged to the medium group of family *i.e.* up to 5 – 8 members. In case of education, about 33.4% of the rural women had education up to High School level. In respect to organizational membership, 50 per cent of the rural women did not have any membership in any organization. The findings also revealed that majority of the respondents (75.0%) possessed small poultry size. Nearly 47.5% of the respondents were from the low socio-economic status group.

Decision making pattern of rural women in different activities of poultry farming :

The result of this study is presented in the Table 2, which reveals that majority of the respondents took independent decision in the activities like keeping the nest boxes (80.00%) followed by cleaning of nest boxes (73.33%), breeding of birds (61.67%) and selection of feed to be provided (57.50%)

The data also reveals that a large percentage of the respondents took decision jointly in the activities such as identification of site (75.33%), quality of produce to be marketed (70%), disease control measures (67.50%), vaccination (61.66%) and consultation with veterinary doctor regarding sick bird (57.50%).

From Table 2 it is also evident that the contribution of women in decision making was very less in the activities such as employment of hired labour and contacting extension personnel for advice (0.83%) followed by collection of raw materials and construction of poultry house (2.50%), consultation with wholesaler for selling of farm produce (3.33%), rate at which produce should be sold (5.00%) and extension of house (11.67%).

Table 3 : Association of involvement in decision making with selected independent variables

Sr. No.	Independent variables	X ²	d.f.
1.	Age	2.757	4
2.	Education	1.643	2
3.	Organizational membership	2.034	2
4.	Family size	0.502	4
5.	Family type	0.161	2
6.	Poultry size	1.395	2

The findings further showed that sizable percentage (36 %) of respondents had high level of involvement in decision making, regarding poultry farming, followed by 34 per cent in medium level and 30 per cent had low level of involvement. This might be due to the fact that in rural areas women, rear poultry as a source of their income to support the family in need. Hence, decision regarding poultry farming was taken by the rural women.

The data in Table 3 reveal that there was no significant relationship between decision making and selected independent variables.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the decision making pattern of rural women was high. Thus, poultry farming increases the importance of women in their families and decision making process leads to empowerment of women. Moreover, these findings might help the extension workers to include a higher percentage of rural women in their regular extension activities, as to make them aware, motivate, impart knowledge and skill about new technologies. Because with the right assistance, they can strengthen their capacities besides adding to the family income and national productivity

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