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Constraints faced by farm women in decision making in Chilli cultivation in Bhadradri Kothagudem district of Telangana state

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Abstract

"A nation would not march forward if the women are left behind"

-Swami Vivekananda

Women in the agricultural sector represent a significant demographic category. Since an enormous 84% of women in rural India are thought to rely on agriculture for their living, the role and contribution of women are no longer in question [FAO, 2007]. They undertake various activities in agriculture such as cleaning of fields, field preparation, sowing, intercultural practices, weeding, harvesting, picking, cleaning of grains, drying of grains etc. In agriculture sector Decision making play a key role, where women have great importance. But it is unfortunate that they remain invisible workers. Hence the study conducted to determine Decision making pattern of farm women in Chilli cultivation. Total sample of 120 farm women were selected randomly and *ex-post facto* research design was used for the study. Data was collected by conducting personal interview technique and was analysed by using relevant statistical tools. Analysis of the data showed that constraints faced by the respondents in decision making pattern. Most of the women farmers are illiterate (95%) due to the low levels of education they are unable to take the decisions, male dominance in farm decision making(90.83%), lack of needed knowledge regarding farming(75%) and Lack of guidance for taking decisions(74.17%) are the constraints mostly faced by farm women in Chilli cultivation.

Keywords: Agriculture, decision making, farm women, chilli cultivation

Introduction

The process of socioeconomic development depends heavily on agriculture. About 58 percent of the population in India relies solely on agriculture for their means of subsistence, and this number rises to about 70 percent in rural areas (IBEF, 2021) [8]. In India, 80 percent of agricultural households are either marginal or small farmers; for these families, farming is not simply a business, but also a way of life, to which all family members, including children, contribute in one way or another. In India, agriculture establishes societal norms, gender roles, and family traditions.

Around 20% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is accounted for by the agriculture sector, which is important to the country's economy. Approximately 62 percent of India's population depends on it for existence (Gupta and Nagar, 2017) [7]. Given that it accounts for around 20.19 percent of India's GDP (DAC&FW Annual Report, 2020–21), agriculture is a vital sector of the country's economy. Agriculture was initially practised solely for domestic purpose, but as time went on, new technologies and advancements were produced to improve crop output, and people began to make money from farming as well. However, in addition to environmental risks, a number of adversities have also evolved in socioeconomic domains (Bhatt *et al.*, 2019) [3].

Women in agriculture

Whether employed traditionally or industrially, for subsistence or as agricultural labourers, women in the agricultural sector represent a significant demographic category. Since an enormous 84 percent of women in rural India are thought to rely on agriculture for their living, the role and contribution of women are no longer in question. It is safe to assume that women make up a significant fraction of the work force in agriculture and in some civilizations produce up to 80% of the food crops, despite the lack of specific statistics and the fact that data varies depending on the geographical setting [FAO, 2007] [5]. These data do not take into consideration work in the nation's cattle, fisheries, and other ancillary food production sectors.

Growingly more women are working in agriculture, which accounts for around 18 per cent of India's GDP and is the country's largest producing sector. 4/5 of all economically engaged women in the nation work in the agricultural sector, and 48% of farmers in India who are self-employed are female. 20 million women work in animal husbandry compared to 1.5 million males, and there are 75 million women who work in the dairy industry alone.

Women's work in agriculture includes being alone farmers of their own farms, doing household chores for free, working in the fields, and working for pay or no pay for other farmers and rural enterprises. They are

involved in the production of both crops and animals on a financial and commercial level. They cultivate crops for nourishment and profit and regularly manage mixed agricultural duties like harvests, domesticated animal care, and fish farming. These women are seen as a characteristic of the labour in agriculture (FAO, 2010) [6]. India is the dominant country in Southern Asia, and there, little more than 30% of women work in agriculture on a regular basis.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reports that while the percentage of the labour force engaged in agriculture fell over the 1990s, the percentage of women engaged in agriculture increased, especially in developing nations. Nearly half of the labour force in some places, like Asia and Africa, are women.

The agricultural industry is being "feminised," according to this tendency. This "casualization" of employment, unproductive crop production, and distress migration of males "for higher casual work in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors" are the causes of this feminization of agriculture, which forces women to accept low-paying informal work in agriculture.

In rural India nowadays, practically all women can be called

"farmers" in some way, whether they are employed as agricultural labourers, unpaid employees in family farms, or a combination of the two. This goes beyond the traditional market-oriented restricted definition of "Productive workers." Additionally, as men are drawn away into higher-paying professions, many farm tasks that were formerly done by men are now being done by women. Thus, "feminization of agriculture" is a trend that rural India is currently experiencing.

Materials and Methods

The state of Telangana is purposively selected for present research because it is the 2nd position in production of Chillies in India after Andhra Pradesh. Bhadradi Kothagudem district was purposively selected out of 10 districts which are higher in production of Chillies. Out of 23 blocks of Bhadradi Kothagudem district, two blocks i.e., Cherla and Dummugudem are randomly selected. Four villages are randomly selected from each block. A random sample of 15 farmers from each village was selected as respondents of present study. Thus, a total of 120 women farmers were chosen as respondents in present study.

Table 1: Representation of Sample selection for farm women in decision making in Chilli cultivation

S. No.	District	Mandals	Villages	No. of respondents
1.	Bhadradi Kothagudem	Cherla	Chimalapadu	15
			Gampalle	15
			Kesavapuram	15
			Kothapally	15
		Dummugudem	Arlagudem	15
			Dummugudem	15
			Bandarugudem	15
			Narsapuram	15
	Total	2 Mandals	8 villages	120 respondents

Percentage analysis: It refers to a special kind of rate, percentages are used in making comparison between two or more series of data collected from the respondents. A percentage is used to show the relationship between the series.

Percentage = (No. of respondents/ Total No. of respondents) * 100

The Percentage was calculated to measure variables. Percentage analysis was used in descriptive analysis for making simple comparison.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussions have been summarized below.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to the constraints faced by women farmers in decision making pattern of Chilli cultivation. (n=120)

Sr. No.	Constraints	Respondents (n=120)		
		Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Lack of confidence in farm improvement decision making	80	66.67	8
2	Lack of needed knowledge regarding farming	90	75.00	3
3	Lack of information about improved technology	66	55.00	11
4	Non-co-operation from other family members in seeking information about improved technology	49	40.83	17
5	Inability in diagnosing the problems	73	60.83	9
6	Lack of timely information about the solution	61	50.83	13
7	Inability to solve problem with available resources	42	35.00	18
8	Avoidance from decision making due to no financial earning	82	68.33	7
9	Lack of knowledge about the availability of resources	87	72.50	5
10	Male dominance in farm decision making	109	90.83	2
11	Non participation in decision making process due to the drudgery	52	43.3	15
12	Illiteracy	114	95	1
13	Lack of confidence in taking part in decision making process	84	72.50	6
14	Lack of guidance for taking decisions	89	74.17	4
15	Low status of women in family	62	51.67	12
16	Suspicious about anticipating the possible repercussions of the decision taken	50	41.67	16
17	Avoidance of the women's decision by other family members	69	57.50	10
18	Lack of information about selection of government schemes and Agri business	59	49.17	14

According to the Table 2, each constraint's frequencies were determined, from those frequencies, percents were computed. Each constraint was then ranked according to its percent. According to the table, the most frequent constraints were Illiteracy (95%) majority of the women are not educated. Educating women will help them to choose appropriate choice for their problem. Women can be educated by giving trainings, conducting method demonstration etc., illiteracy is a big problem for women and men farmers it should be avoided for their better living and second most constraint from the table is male dominance in farm decision making (90.83%) it is mostly seen in people living in rural societies, women has no chance to speak and give solution to the problem, they only restricted to field work no chance in decision making.

Men farmers have whole control on Decision making and machinery where women restricted to field work and house hold work. In farming men and women should have equal rights in every operation they do in the field. Third constraint is lack of needed knowledge regarding farming (90%), Lack of confidence in taking part in decision making process.

Conclusion

The study concludes that although farm women play a vital role in Chilli cultivation, their participation in decision making is significantly constrained. Illiteracy (95%) emerged as the major barrier, followed by male dominance in farm decisions, lack of farming knowledge, inadequate guidance, and low confidence levels. These socio-economic and cultural factors limit women's autonomy despite their substantial contribution to agricultural activities. The findings highlight the need for literacy improvement, gender-sensitive extension services, training programs, and equal participation in farm decisions to empower women and ensure sustainable agricultural development.

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