



# PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL OPERATION IN GHAZIPUR DISTRICT OF UTTAR PRADESH

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*Abstract: This study analyzed women's participation and decision making process in farming activities in Saidpur Block of Ghazipur district, India. In rural India, women's role in the household is greatly defined by social structure and familial ties. Arranged marriages specific to each caste system, determine their economic worth, and are expected early on in a woman's life. 36 village panchayat were selected from Saidpur block. From each village, approximately 10 farm women were selected proportionately making the total size of 360 rural women. Most rural women farmers sampled in this study were in the middle age group between 36-50 years; predominantly on nuclear families; and from SC and ST and OBC households. Women participation in farming activities decreased with the increase of education levels. Large number of women respondents was engaged in agricultural labours. Education of farm women was found effective in the participation of farm women in agricultural decision making process. Respondents of forward castes participated in farming decisions with greater frequencies than SC and ST. Although, the decision making score was higher among the male farmers, most decisions were taken jointly by both female and male participants indicating the development of social status of the farming women.*

*Keywords: Farm women, Extent of participation Decision making, agriculture.*

## Introduction

India has a national tradition bound to agriculture fertility. In the North, the Indus valley and Brahmaputra region are critical agricultural areas graced by the Ganges and monsoon season. Agriculture in India defines familial tradition, social relations and gender roles. Female in the agricultural sector, whether through traditional means or industrial, for subsistence or as an agricultural laborer, represents a momentous demographic group. Agriculture is directly tied to issues such as economic independence, decision-making abilities, agency and access to education and health services and this manner has created externalities such as poverty and marginalization, and compounded issues of gender inequality (Habib, 2001).



In rural India, women's role in the household is greatly defined by social structure and familial ties. Arranged marriages specific to each caste system, determine their economic worth, and are expected early on in a woman's life. Depending on caste and economic class a woman's role can be determined as one of more in the public eye or predominantly of seclusion; a life in which women are expected to care for children and maintain the household. The typical rural Indian household is a patriarchal and partilocal one, in which a husband, or in his stead the oldest son will make the decisions for a family. Women are capable and have great potential but still then it is seen that the objectives to empower women has not been achieved **Sulaiman et al (2003)**. It also stated that various indicators were contributing to the status of the women, i.e. decision making role, control over resources, income and literacy being the prominent ones. Accordingly, the present investigation entitled “**Participation of rural women in agricultural operation in Ghazipur District of Uttar Pradesh**” has been undertaken with the following specific objective.

#### **Objective:**

- To determine the nature and extent of participation of rural women in farm operations.

#### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in purposively selected district of Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. One block namely Saidpur was selected for the selection of respondents. 36 village panchayat were selected from Saidpur block. The list of all the villages of Saidpur village was obtained from Block office of Saidpur. There are 164 villages in Saidpur block. Out of these 36 villages were be selected randomly for the present study. For the present study, all those women of the selected villages of the Saidpur block of the Ghazipur, who were participating in agricultural operation and home making activities, were considered as respondents. 10 farm women were selected randomly from each village making the total sample size of 360 respondents from 36 villages.

#### **Findings**

##### **Extent of participation of rural women in farm operations**

Rural women in India as well as in Uttar Pradesh, play a pivotal role in farming enterprise. They are actively participating in all range of activities related to agricultural activities. Rural women remain busy from dawn to dusk in various agricultural activities including pre-harvest, post-harvest process. Their participation is well dispersed but less perceived, because of insufficient data to show



their active involvement in various agricultural activities. Keeping in view these facts, the present study had been designed to explore the extent of their participation in various agricultural activities.

**Table: 1 Distribution of the respondents according to their extent of participation in agricultural activities:**

S.N.	Activities of crop operations	Extent of participation		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Nursery bed preparation	195 (54.17)	110 (30.55)	55 (15.28)
2	Care of seedlings	150 (41.67)	140 (38.89)	70 (19.44)
3	Transplanting	90 (25.00)	190 (52.78)	80 (22.22)
4	Preparatory tillage	170 (47.22)	110 (30.56)	80 (22.22)
5	Ploughing	120 (33.33)	198 (55.00)	42 (11.67)
6	Harrowing	100 (27.77)	150 (41.67)	110 (30.56)
7	Spacing	70 (19.44)	185 (51.39)	105 (29.17)
8	Sowing	40 (11.11)	250 (69.45)	70 (19.44)
9	Fertilizer and FYM application	70 (19.44)	190 (52.78)	100 (27.78)
10	Irrigation	65 (18.05)	200 (55.56)	95 (26.39)
11	Weeding	95 (26.38)	110 (30.56)	155 (43.06)
12	Plant protection measures	50 (13.89)	200 (55.56)	110 (30.56)
13	Harvesting	70 (19.44)	180 (50.00)	110 (30.56)
14	Processing	110 (30.56)	180 (50.00)	70 (19.44)
15	Storage	75 (20.83)	115 (31.94)	170 (47.22)
16	Marketing	200 (55.56)	110 (30.56)	50 (13.88)

The above table shows that participation of women in decision making in agricultural related matters such as the purchase of agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and insecticides. Mostly decision in agriculture related matters are taken by male members. Less than one third women



respondents said that their opinion is given weight in these matters. About 31 percent respondents said that they do not participate in decision making in these matters. Another 34 percent said that they are merely informed or consulted to some extent. However, in case of marketing of agricultural produce, the participation of women in decision making is significant as mostly they store the agricultural produce.

Gender participation in agricultural practices is as old as farming itself. In rural areas women's participation rate in few of the agricultural activities is found to high. The farm women mostly engaged themselves in light works and easy working for them like weeding, harvesting, winnowing etc. But they are performing all activities in some extent. In detail the overall extent of participation of rural women in different agriculture activities was presented in table given below.

**Table: 2 Distribution of the respondents according to overall participation in agricultural activities.**

S.N.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 11 score)	92	25.56
2.	Medium (12 – 22 score)	163	45.27
3.	High (Above 22 score)	105	29.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data presented in table showed that higher percentage of the rural women 45.27 per cent found to overall medium participation group followed by high participation group 29.17 per cent and low participation group 25.56 per cent respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that in study area, most of the rural women were found to overall medium participation group.

#### **Decision making pattern of rural women with respect to farm and agricultural activities**

It appeared that any decision taken was strongly influences by the attitude and opinion of their partners, therefore, a proper understanding of the complicity of the decision making process in rural families and ascertaining the role of rural women in the process will helps in toning up agricultural modernization in the country as well as transformation of rural family life. In detail regarding distribution of rural women in respect to their decision making pattern on agricultural activities was presented in table given below.



**Table: 3 Participation of rural women in decision making process related to farm and agriculture activities.**

S. N.	Decision Making Areas	Decision making process			
		Independent Female Decision	Decision with Husband	Decision with Relatives	No decision
1	Selection of varieties	52 (14.44)	180 (50.00)	83 (23.05)	45 (12.5)
2	Quantity & type of fertilizer (s) to be used	71 (19.72)	128 (35.56)	95 (26.38)	66 (18.33)
3	Intercultural operations	120 (33.33)	156 (43.33)	49 (13.61)	35 (9.72)
4	Purchase of agricultural implements	56 (15.56)	185 (51.38)	98 (27.22)	21 (5.83)
5	Borrowing money for agricultural operations	49 (13.61)	198 (55.00)	97 (26.94)	16 (4.44)
6	Use of family members in agricultural operation	96 (26.67)	121 (33.61)	110 (30.56)	33 (9.17)
7	Hiring of engagement of labourers	39 (10.83)	145 (40.28)	109 (30.27)	67 (18.61)
8	Harvesting of crops	102 (28.33)	129 (35.83)	97 (26.94)	32 (8.88)
9	Produced retained for seed purposes	68 (18.89)	155 (43.05)	98 (27.22)	39 (10.83)
10	Marketing of the produce	57 (15.83)	152 (42.22)	141 (39.17)	10 (2.78)
11	Advancing loan to others on agriculture activities	70 (19.44)	109 (30.28)	99 (27.5)	82 (22.78)

In rural areas due to certain socio-personal factors the rural women are not found able to make their decision in respect of agriculture activities but the data of study revealed that they are participated in decision making process in respect of all activities in some extent. In detail the overall extent of decision making process of rural women in different agriculture activities was presented in table given below.

**Table: 4 Distribution of rural women according to their decision making pattern in agricultural activities.**

S.N.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low (Up to 11 score)	104	28.89
2.	Medium (12 – 22 score)	183	50.83
3.	High (Above 22 score)	73	20.28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.00</b>



The data presented in table showed that highest percentage of the rural women with (50.83 per cent) were in medium decision making group followed by low decision making group with 28.89 per cent. Only 20.28 per cent women were in high decision making group, respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that in study area, most of the rural women were performed overall medium decision regarding agricultural activities.

### **Socio-personal characteristics and their relationship with the decision making pattern of rural working women.**

Regression analysis confirms our findings (Table 5). Thus, age and Person days spent on agriculture are found to have a strong positive impact on DMI, while family income has a negative impact. Caste, status of women in family and education has an expected positive impact on DMI, but regression coefficients are not significant. Size of family also has a negative impact, but not statistically significant. The value of R square is 0.28. This indicates that the factors determining women participation in decision making are quite complex and depend upon a number of socio-economic factors including traditional social and cultural values.

**Table: 5 Linear Regression between Decision Making Index and Socio-Economic Variables**

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>T value</b>	<b>P&gt;t</b>
Constant	18.292970	7.016450	2.890	0.004
Age	0.640798	0.090154	6.110	0.000
Caste	2.199857	2.029740	1.080	0.280
Occupation	1.602343	1.171908	1.570	0.173
Education	0.821884	0.582760	1.410	0.160
Size of family	-0.506255	0.381336	-1.330	0.186
Income	-0.000013	0.000006	-2.310	0.022

No. of observations=180, F (7, 232) =14.37, Adj R-squared=0.3814

### **Conclusion**

It was found that the women in the study area do not enjoy a high degree of autonomy in decision making in the family in spite of their significant contribution to economic activities. It was observed that the farm women managed the land preparation, sowing, irrigation, weeding, harvesting of forage crops like berseem, oat in rabi and sorghum in kharif including processing and storage of seed. It was also observed that large holding women did less work in agricultural activities in



comparison to women belong to land less, marginal and medium size holdings. Education and improvement in their economic independence will help in increasing women's involvement in decision-making in family. This can be concluded with the facts that women participation in agriculture is increasing with time and women are now acknowledged with the status of "agricultural worker". Though discrimination of wages and in working status still prevails for women labour but due to implementation of various policies and initiatives taken by government the invisibility of women as an agricultural worker is plummeting and will further diminish in future.

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