



Research Article

DECISION MAKING POWER IN FINANCIAL AND MARKET TRANSACTIONS - A GENDER DIFFERENCE STUDY

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Received: July 31, 2018; Revised: August 10, 2018; Accepted: August 11, 2018; Published: August 15, 2018

Abstract: In recent times, the rural households have come to occupy an important position in development studies. Because it was seen as the social mechanism through which, to at least to some degree, all individuals' welfare and decisions are determined based on assets and resource availability. The social, economic and cultural conditions of the area determine women's participation in financial and market transactions. Women's involvement in these transactions is influenced by region, farming systems, caste, creed, religion, occupation, education and income groups. In most parts of the country, women of higher caste and socioeconomic status are not allowed to participate in on-farm activities. In poor families, the women are the main performers in the field and income earned by them goes directly into the food basket of the family. An exploratory research design was adapted to study the decision making on various household related, farm related activities and data was collected through structured interview schedule. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 40 households each from JC Agraharam and Pamidipadu villages of Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh, thus comprised total eighty households. Results revealed that decisions related to savings, sources of savings, loans and sources of loans were taken by male respondents, but decisions related to repaying of amount and amount to be saved were decided jointly. Use of cash, credit and sources of credit were mainly decided by males.

Keywords: Farming systems, financial and market transactions

Citation: Venkata Sushma G. and Vijaya Lakshmi V., (2018) Decision Making Power in Financial and Market Transactions - A Gender Difference Study. International Journal of Agriculture Sciences, ISSN: 0975-3710 & E-ISSN: 0975-9107, Volume 10, Issue 15, pp.- 6880-6882.

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Introduction

According to the 2001 census of India, about 74 percent of women were involved in agriculture and allied activities out of a total female working population [1]. The data showed that there was a sharp decline of 11 percent of women in the agriculture sector in comparison to the 1991 census. But, agriculture in India is still a family enterprise where the family participates as a unit and the share of women is half of the human resource in farming. The social, economic and cultural conditions of the area determine women's participation in home and farm activities which is varied due to caste, religion, region, socio-economic status, occupation and education [2]. In most parts of the country, women of higher caste and socioeconomic status are not allowed to participate in on-farm activities. In poor families, the women are the main performers in the field and income earned by them goes directly into the food basket of the family. Women play a major role for the contribution to the economic development and social transformation. Nearly 78 percent of women in rural areas are engaged in agricultural and allied activities. Women had an active role and extensive involvement in crop production, livestock production, forest resource management and fishery processing. Decision-making and accurate performance of all activities helps in making an enterprise more viable, feasible and profitable. Before performing any operation/ activity/ task a person thinks over various options available to him/her and selects only those which are simple, profitable, compatible and relatively better. In case of agriculture, due to gender bias, farmwomen, a significant contributor in various activities is being kept away from the role of decision maker. In the developing countries, women in rural areas perform a variety of functions in the farm households. They acted as farm producers, wage earners, care takers of the family, looking after nutrition and post-harvest managers [3]. With so much of contribution by women in farm and off farm activities it is unfortunate that agrarian Indian society relegated women to the exclusive role of doing worker rather than

active decision maker. Power, authority and decision-making issues seem to rest exclusively with the males and eventually women acquired a role slowly, which lost its dignity, respect and values.

Material and Methods

The present study provides the detailed information about the "Decision Making Power in financial and market transactions - A Gender Difference Study". An exploratory research design was adopted to study the information related decision making power in financial and market transactions. A total of eighty households (Pamidipadu- 40 households, JC.Agraharam-40 households) were selected from the two villages of Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh to study Gender decision making power in financial and market related activities in the selected rural households. Eighty men and eighty women were selected from the two villages out of which forty men and forty women were selected from JC.Agraharam village and forty men and forty women were selected from Pamidipadu village. The key informants for the study were the principal couple – head of the household and spouse within the household. The household inventory asked about the financial and market related transactions in terms of use of agricultural produce, disposal of produce, borrowing loans, saving and other capital transactions.

Results and discussion

Financial and market related transactions were studied in terms of use of agricultural produce, disposal of produce, borrowing loans, saving and other capital transactions. It was clearly indicated from the Table 1 that nearly fifty percent of the male respondents were allowed to take decisions related to agricultural produce followed by 20 percent joint decisions in both the villages. Decisions related to disposal of produce were taken by 55 percent males regarding selling of food grains.

Table-1 Distribution of sample according to the decisions related to financial and market transactions

SN	Decision related areas	Jc Agraharam (n=74)			Pamidipadu (n=68)			Total (N=142)**		
		Men(%)	women(%)	Joint(%)	Men(%)	women(%)	Joint(%)	Men(%)	women(%)	Joint(%)
A	Use of agricultural produce									
1	Selling or keeping for domestic consumption	15(37.50)	5(12.50)	14(35.00)	26(65.00)	0(-)	2(5.00)	41(51.25)	5(6.25)	16(20.00)
2	Amount allocated for domestic consumption	16(40.00)	8(20.00)	10(25.00)	26(65.00)	0(-)	2(5.00)	42(52.50)	8(10.00)	12(15.00)
3	Means of marketing	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	0(-)	28(70.00)	0(-)	27(33.75)	30(37.50)	4(5.00)
4	Where to market	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	28(70.00)	0(-)	0(-)	55(68.75)	2(2.50)	4(5.00)
5	How much quantity to market	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	28(70.00)	0(-)	0(-)	55(68.75)	2(2.50)	4(5.00)
6	How to market	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	28(70.00)	0(-)	0(-)	55(68.75)	2(2.50)	4(5.00)
7	Savings for next period	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	28(70.00)	0(-)	0(-)	55(68.75)	2(2.50)	4(5.00)
8	Use of by-product	27(67.50)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	28(70.00)	0(-)	0(-)	55(68.75)	2(2.50)	4(5.00)
9	Fodder for cattle	3(7.50)	24(60.00)	2(5.00)	11(27.50)	2(5.00)	2(5.00)	14(17.50)	26(18.30)	4(5.00)
B	Disposal of produce									
1	Selling of food grains	14(35.00)	2(5.00)	11(27.50)	30(75.00)	0(-)	0(-)	44(55.00)	2(2.50)	11(13.75)
2	Selling of vegetables	0(-)	2(5.00)	0(-)	0(-)	6(15.00)	0(-)	0(-)	8(10.00)	0(-)
C	Borrowing loans									
1	Decision on taking loans	17(42.50)	3(7.50)	8(20.00)	17(42.50)	5(12.50)	14(35.00)	34(42.50)	8(10.00)	22(27.50)
2	Sources of loans									
a	Banks	13(32.50)	1(2.50)	7(17.50)	17(42.50)	0(-)	10(25.00)	30(37.50)	1(1.25)	17(21.25)
b	Money lenders	9(22.50)	2(5.00)	3(7.50)	2(5.00)	0(-)	3(7.50)	11(13.75)	2(2.50)	6(7.50)
c	Friends/relatives	1(2.50)	0(-)	1(2.50)	0(-)	0(-)	1(2.50)	1(1.25)	0(-)	1(1.25)
3	Decision on repaying	10(25.00)	2(5.00)	16(40.00)	11(27.50)	4(10.00)	21(52.50)	21(26.25)	6(7.50)	37(46.25)
4	Amount to be taken	18(45.00)	3(7.50)	7(17.50)	12(30.00)	5(12.50)	19(47.50)	30(37.50)	8(10.00)	26(32.50)
D	Savings and other capital transactions									
1	Deciding on savings	12(30.00)	2(5.00)	16(40.00)	5(12.50)	5(12.50)	24(60.00)	17(21.25)	7(8.75)	40(50.00)
2	Amount to be saved	12(30.00)	2(5.00)	16(40.00)	6(15.00)	4(10.00)	22(55.00)	18(22.50)	6(7.50)	38(47.50)
3	Sources of savings									
a	Banks	10(25.00)	1(2.50)	1(2.50)	10(25.00)	1(2.50)	10(25.00)	20(25.00)	2(2.50)	11(13.75)
b	SHG's	1(2.50)	4(10.00)	0(-)	2(5.00)	11(27.50)	6(15.00)	3(3.75)	15(18.75)	6(7.50)
c	Chit fund companies	0(-)	0(-)	0(-)	1(2.50)	0(-)	1(2.50)	1(1.25)	0(-)	1(1.25)
E	Credit									
1	Use of cash and credit	23(57.50)	1(2.50)	6(15.00)	14(35.00)	7(17.50)	14(35.00)	37(46.25)	8(10.00)	20(25.00)
2	Bank	10(25.00)	0(-)	1(2.50)	18(45.00)	1(2.50)	11(27.50)	28(35.00)	1(1.25)	12(15.00)
3	Money lenders	20(50.00)	2(5.00)	4(10.00)	6(15.00)	4(10.00)	5(12.50)	26(32.50)	6(7.50)	9(11.25)
4	Friends/relatives	2(5.00)	0(-)	1(2.50)	0(-)	0(-)	0(-)	2(2.50)	0(-)	1(1.25)

Note: *Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages, [**The total sample size was 160, out of which only 142 of the respondents owned agricultural land and remaining 18 (9 men and 9 women) did not possess any agricultural land, hence did not take any decisions on financial and market related transactions. So, the total sample was N=142].

Decisions related to savings, sources of savings, loans and sources of loans were taken by male respondents, but decisions related to repaying of amount and amount to be saved were decided jointly. Use of cash and credit and sources of credit were mainly decided by males in Jc Agraharam and Pamidipadu villages. The results were on par with the study done by Carlsson *et al.* [4] in rural china on household decision making in rural china: using experiments to estimate the influences of spouses. The study focused that many economic decisions were made jointly within the households and husbands had a stronger influence than wives. In Jc Agraharam village, decisions related to use of agricultural produce like selling or keeping for domestic consumption, amount allocated for domestic consumption, means of marketing, where to market, how to market, and savings for next period were mainly taken by males followed by joint decisions and female decisions. Regarding decisions related to disposal of produce like selling of food grains, 35 percent of males followed by 27.5 percent joint decisions were taken. About 42.5% of male respondents were allowed to take decisions regarding loans followed by 20 percent joint and 7.5 percent females. Only 32.5 percent of male respondents were allowed to take decisions related to sources of loans mainly from the banks followed by money lenders in Jc Agraharam village. Decisions related to repaying of loans were entirely decided jointly but decisions related to amount to be taken were mainly decided by 45 percent males. Savings and other capital transactions were mainly decided jointly. Most of the savings were in banks where decisions were mainly taken by the male respondents. More than half of the male respondents were allowed to take decisions about credit related issues. In Pamidipadu village, decisions related to agricultural produce like selling or keeping for domestic consumption, amount allocated for domestic consumption, means of marketing, where to market and others were mainly taken by male respondents. Regarding decisions related to disposal of farm produce, 75 percent male

respondents were allowed to take decisions. About 42.5 percent of males and 35 percent of joint decisions were taken regarding loans and sources of loans. Decisions related to amount to be taken and repaying were mainly taken jointly in Pamidipadu village. About 60 percent of joint decisions were taken regarding savings, amount to be saved and sources of savings. Decisions related to credit like use of cash and credit (35%) and sources of credit i.e. from banks (45%), followed by money lenders (15%) were mainly decided by male respondents in Pamidipadu village.

Conclusion

Decision making involves the selection of a course of action from among two or more possible alternatives in order to arrive at a solution for a given problem. The results of this study also proved that there was gender difference in decisions related to disposal of produce which was taken by 55 percent males regarding selling of food grains. Decisions related to savings, sources of savings, loans and sources of loans were taken by male respondents, but decisions related to repaying of amount and amount to be saved were decided jointly.

Application of research: Policy making

Research Category: Rural development, Economics

Abbreviations: SHG- self-help Group

Acknowledgement / Funding: Author thankful to Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, Telangana 500030, India

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Research project: Short term trail

Author Contributions: All author equally contributed

Author statement: All authors read, reviewed, agree and approved the final manuscript

Conflict of Interest: None declared

Ethical approval: This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.

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