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A study on decision-making behaviour of 'Meitei women' in agriculture in Thoubal district of Manipur

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the decision-making behaviour of Meitei women in agriculture in Thoubal district of Manipur. The study was conducted in Khangabok block of Thoubal district in the year 2023-2024. Descriptive research designed was applied for this study. The primary data was collected from 120 respondents by personal interview method using pre-structure interview schedule. Participation of the women was measured by asking 14 questions in respect of decision-making. Finding showed that 58.34 per cent of the respondents have medium participation level in decision-making, followed by 20.83 per cent of the respondents having medium participation level in decision-making and 24.17 per cent of the respondents having low medium participation level in decision-making respectively. It was revealed that out of nine independent variables, i.e. age, education, occupation, annual income, land holding, farming, mass media exposure, risk bearing capacity, extension contacts and social participation are positively and significantly correlate with participation of women towards decision-making behaviour.

Keywords: Participation, decision-making behaviour, Meitei women

Introduction

In psychology, decision making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several possible alternative options. The decision-making process is a reasoning process based on assumptions of values, preferences and beliefs of decision maker. Decision making is simply the process of making a choice. Indian rural women have always been an important and prominent partner in sustainability of agriculture sector.

Agriculture and allied sectors are unique because of their diversity and location specific requirement, decussating of technologies to a range of agro-ecological conditions. Women contribute almost half of our country's population and have been the major components of the working force since from the beginning of agriculture. Their contribution to the economic growth has been quite substantial. Farm women play many roles inside as well as outside their home. She spends about 304 days of her life span only in the kitchen annually, which remains unaccounted in the national income estimates. Farm women have always worked along with men infields and have helped them in other vocation such as handicrafts, small scall cottage industries etc. Sunil B. (2021) [3].

The participation of farm women in decision making was worked out based on the member of women who have taken part in particular aspect of decision under the major heads of organizational, production and marketing decisions. Women took some decision in the farm solely or independently while some other decisions were taken jointly with their male counterparts. In the case of those respondents who did not take part in decision making, their male counter parts were the major decision makers. Goswami *et al*., (2010) [1].

In a small state like Manipur, women contribute productive work force in the economy of the state. In Manipur, women are moral responsible to all maintenance of household. Besides from caring and brought up of children, women are indulging to preparation daily meals, maintain the home garden, and assisting in crop and animal production. Women are involved in all aspects of agricultural operations, from crop selection to land preparation, to seed selection planting, weeding, pest control, harvesting, crop storage, handling, marketing, and processing. In rural areas both the husband and wives join the decision making on the matters like family obligation related aspect. However, women suggestion is not given due consideration in decision partnering to farming and important family matter. Thus, the identification of role of women in decision making process of various farm and non-farm activities is very important in view of above facts and notions the present study will be carried out with the specific objectives *viz*., to analyse relationship between decision making behaviour of the Meitei women in agriculture and their socio-economic and psychological characteristics.

Justification of the study

The findings of the present study will help the participation of Meitei women in decision-making that is existing among the women in Thoubal district, Manipur. It will enable to

investigate its appropriate approach to trace out the constraints due to lack of agricultural education and training, adequate working conditions, wage gaps, market place discrimination and land-owning rights.

Objectives

- To assess the socio-economic profile of the respondents.
- To determine the participation of Meitei women in agriculture related activities.
- To establish the relationship between the selected independent variables with participation.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Thoubal district of Manipur. Descriptive research design was followed for the present study as it describes the characteristics or phenomenon that is being studied. Multi stages sampling was followed for the present study for the selection of samples required. Manipur has 16 districts and out of which Thoubal district was selected. There are three blocks in Thoubal district, out of which Thoubal block was selected purposively based on maximum area of women participation. Khangabok village was selected from Thoubal block and a total number of 120 respondents were randomly selected proportionately on the basis of women participation.

Methods used for data collection

A pre-tested structured interview schedule focused towards the objectives of the study was developed for data collection. Survey method of data collection with the help of a pre-structured interview schedule was used. The collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed in light of the objectives.

Data statistical analysis

The data collected from the respondents was converted to 3 point score (Likert Scale) and tabulated. The evaluation of the data and the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was done using Mean, Frequency, Percentage and Correlation.

Results and Discussion

Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents (N=120)

Sl. No.	Attributes	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young (below 35 years)	50	41.66
		Middle (36-55 years)	65	54.17
		Old (above 55 years)	5	4.17
2	Education	Illiterate	23	19.17
		Primary school	22	18.33
		Junior high school	19	15.83
		High school	34	28.33
		Intermediate	11	9.17
		Graduate and above	11	9.17
3	Occupation	Agriculture	21	17.50
		Agriculture + labour	24	20.00
		Agriculture + Business	53	44.17
		Agriculture + Service	22	18.33
4	Annual income	Below Rs. 1,00,000	45	37.50
		Rs. 1,00,000 to Rs. 3,00,000	52	43.33
		Above Rs. 3,00,000	23	19.17
5	Land holding	Up-to 1 acre	46	38.33
		1-2 acre	52	43.34
		Above 2 acres	22	18.33
6	Mass media exposure	Low	10	8.33
		Medium	65	54.17
		High	45	37.50
7	Risk nearing capacity	Low	12	10.00
		Medium	60	50.00
		High	48	40.00
8	Extension contacts	Low	24	20.30
		Medium	52	43.33
		High	44	36.37
9	Social participation	Low	16	13.33
		Medium	59	49.17
		High	45	37.50

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that majority (54.17%) middle age (36-55 years) followed by 41.66 per cent of the respondents are young age (below 35 years) and 4.17 per cent of the respondents are old age (above 55 years). It also indicated that 28.33 per cent of the respondents were educated up-to high school level of education, 19.17 per cent of the respondents were illiterate, 18.33 per cent of the respondents had primary school, 15.83 per cent of the respondents had junior high school, followed by 9.17 per cent of the respondents with intermediate and graduate and above. It was revealed that 44.17 per cent of the respondents were engaged in agriculture business only,

20.00 per cent of the respondents were engaged in agriculture and labour, followed by 18.33per cent of the respondents were engaged in agriculture service, and 17.50 per cent of the respondents were doing agriculture only. It was found that 43.33 per cent of the respondents have income above 1 lakh to 3 lakh followed by 37.50 per cent of the respondents has income below 1 lakh and 19.17 per cent of the respondents has income above 3 lakh rupees. It was revealed that 43.34 per cent of the respondents have land holding between 1-2 acre, followed by 38.33 per cent of the respondents has land holding up to 1 acre and 23.33 per cent of the respondents has land holding of 1-2 acre. It was found that majority (54.17%) of the respondents have medium level of mass media exposure, followed by 37.50 per cent of the respondents having high level of mass media exposure and 8.33 per cent of the respondents have low level of mass media exposure. Majority (50.00%) of the respondents have medium level of risk bearing capacity, followed by 40.00 per cent of the respondents having high level of risk bearing capacity and 10.00 per cent of the respondents have low level of risk bearing capacity. It was revealed that 43.33 per cent of the respondents have medium level of extension contacts, followed by 36.37 per cent of the respondents having high level of extension contacts and 20.30 per cent of the respondents have low level of extension contacts. It was found that majority (49.17%) of the respondents have medium level of social participation, followed by 37.50 per cent of the respondents having high level of social participation and 13.33 per cent of the respondents have low level social participation.

Participation in in agriculture related activities:

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on participation of Meitei women in agriculture related activities. (N=120)

Sl. No.	Statement	Response					
		Fully participate		Partially participate		Not participate	
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
1	Participate in meeting related to agricultural planning and management?	16	13.33	104	86.67	0	0
2	Involve in decision making related to allocating resources for agricultural activities?	58	48.33	62	51.67	0	0
3	Participate in decision making about crop selection?	25	20.83	69	57.50	26	21.67
4	Participate in programs for enhancing the Meitei women in agricultural decision making?	93	77.50	27	22.50	0	0
5	Participate in training or support in community for agricultural and decision-making?	8	6.67	87	72.50	25	20.83
6	Participate in agricultural related discussion that is influence by traditional or cultural factors?	1	0.83	93	77.50	26	21.67
7	Lack of knowledge stop you from participating in decision making?	33	27.50	66	55.00	21	17.50
8	Participate in promoting Meitei women in agricultural decision-making at your community?	92	76.67	26	21.67	2	1.67
9	Participate in enhancing the leadership and decision-making capabilities of women in agriculture sector?	1	0.83	96	80.00	23	19.67
10	Participate in using latest technology program to enhance women's participation in agricultural practices?	1	0.83	28	23.33	91	75.83
11	Participate in various activities in agriculture like field preparation, weeding, harvesting?	2	1.67	107	89.17	11	9.17
12	Participate in contributing budgeting decision for agricultural inputs and expenses?	8	6.67	5	4.17	107	89.17
13	Participate in decision about market access, pricing, and the overall agricultural value chain?	11	9.17	0	0	109	90.83
14	Participate in monitoring and evaluating the success of agriculture decisions?	48	40.00	15	12.50	57	47.50

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that majority (86.67%) of the respondents are partially participate in meeting related to agricultural planning and management and 13.33 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It was revealed that the majority (51.67%) of the respondents are partially participate in decision making related to allocating resources for agricultural activities and 48.33 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It was observed that majority (57.50%) of the respondents are partially participate in decision making about crop selection, followed by 21.67 per cent of the respondents are not participate and 20.83 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It stated that majority (77.50%) of the respondents are fully participate in programs for enhancing the Meitei women in agricultural decision making, 22.50 per cent of the respondents are partially. It shows that majority (72.50%) of the respondents are partially participate in training or support in community for agricultural and decision-making, 20.83 per cent of the respondents are not participate and 6.67 per cent are not participate. It was revealed that majority (72.50%) of the respondents are partially participate in agricultural related discussion that is influence by traditional or cultural factors, 21.67 per cent are not participate and 0.83 per cent are fully participate. It shows that the majority (55.00%) of the respondents are partially participate in decision making that stops you from lack of knowledge, 27.50 per cent of the respondents are fully participate and 17.50 per cent of the respondents are not participate. It was observed that majority (76.67%) of the respondents are fully participate in promoting Meitei women in agricultural decision-making at your community, 21.67 per cent of the respondents are partially participate and 1.67 per cent of the respondents are not participate. It revealed that majority (80.00%) of the respondents are partially participate in enhancing the leadership and decision-making capabilities of women in agriculture sector,

19.67 per cent of the respondents are not participate and 0.83 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It was observed that majority (75.83%) of the respondents are not participate in using latest technology program to enhance women's participation in agricultural practices, 23.33 per cent are partially participate and 0.83 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It revealed that majority (89.17%) of the respondents are partially participate in various activities in agriculture like field preparation, weeding and harvesting, 9.17 per cent of the respondents are not participate and 1.67 per cent of the respondents are fully participate. It was observed that majority (89.17%) of the respondents are not participate in contributing budgeting decision for agricultural inputs and expenses, 6.67 per cent of the respondents are fully participate and 4.17 per cent of the respondents are not participate. It revealed that majority (90.83%) of the respondents are not participate in decision about market access, pricing, and the overall agricultural value chain and 9.17 per cent are fully participate. It was observed that 47.50 per cent of the respondents are not participate in monitoring and evaluating the success of agriculture decisions, 40.00 per cent are fully and 12.50 per cent are partially participate.

Table 3: Overall participation level of respondents towards of Meitei women in agriculture related activities:

Sl. no	Participation level	Response	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (18-23)	25	20.83
2	Medium (24-29)	70	58.34
3	High (30-35)	25	20.83
Total		120	100.00

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that majority (58.34%) of the respondents have medium participation level, 20.83 of the respondents have high participation level and 20.83 of the respondents have low participation level. Similar finding was also reported by Ram *et al*., (2013) [2].

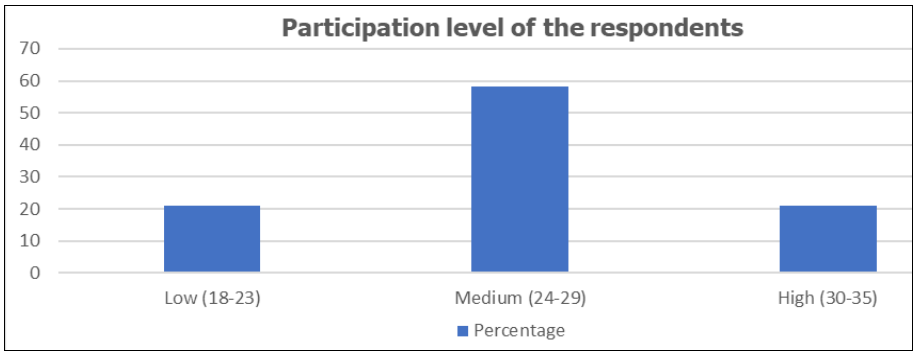

Fig 1: Overall distribution of respondents based on the participation level in agriculture related activities.

Association between Selected Independent Variables with the participation of respondents towards of Meitei women in agriculture related activities

Table 4: Association between selected independent variables and participation of Meitei women in agriculture related activities

Sl. No.	Variables	Pearson's correlation coefficient
1	Age	0.6933**
2	Education	0.6995**
3	Occupation	0.6423**
4	Annual income	0.6867**
5	Land holding	0.6546**
6	Mass media exposure	0.7777**
7	Risk bearing capacity	0.6933**
8	Extension contacts	0.7205*
9	Social participation	0.7502**

* = Significant at p = 0.05%, **= Significant at p = 0.01%, NS= Non-significant

The data presented in Table 4 revealed that out of nine independent variables, i.e. age, education, occupation, annual income, land holding, mass media exposure, risk bearing capacity, extension contacts and social participation are positively and significantly correlated with participation of Meitei women in agriculture related activities.

Conclusion

It is concluded that most of the respondents are middle age (36-55 years), majority of the respondents were educated up-to High school level of education, majority of the respondents were engaged in agriculture business only, majority of the respondent income is between 1 to 3 lakhs rupees, majority of the respondent land holdings are between 1-2 acres, majority of the respondents have medium level of mass media exposure, majority of the respondents have medium level of risk bearing capacity, majority of the respondents have medium level of extension contacts and majority of the respondents have medium level of social participation. Majority of the respondents had medium level of participation towards decision making behaviour of Meitei women, followed by high and low level of participation towards decision-making behaviour of Meitei women. Subsequently, all of the selected independent variables, i.e. age, education, occupation, annual income, land holding, mass media exposure, risk bearing capacity, extension contacts and social participation were positively significant with participation towards decision making behaviour of Meitei women.

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