

Pattern of Decision Making of Irula Tribal Farm Women in Nilgiris District

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ABSTRACT

A Study was undertaken to find out the pattern of decision making of the Irula tribal farm women of Nilgiris district in farm and home. The study revealed that Irula tribal farm women took self decision in the case of irrigating fields (85.00) followed by using plant protection measures (83.33) in case of farm management and in cases like selection and preparation of food (100.00), and decorating the house (70.00). They had least participation in decisions like construction of new house (63.33) followed by borrowing and giving loans (38.33).

Farmwomen are the backbone of Indian agriculture. Growing food has been an interminable saga of their life (Suganthi, 2013). Like other rural women, tribal farm women also play an important role in agriculture. Farmwomen play vital role within home as housewives in managing the domestic affairs and they work as co-partners in the farming profession. No field operation is beyond the reach of women (Indumathy, 2013). They have been playing significant role in Home, farm and Allied activities (Das et al., 2011). The day of the tribal farm women is starting from early morning and ending in late evening. They remain engaged with home, crop and livestock management throughout the day (Chauhan, 2009). This study was therefore designed to explain the decision making pattern of tribal farm women related to home, farm and animal husbandry practices. Results of the study reveal that tribal farm women play dominant role in making decisions related to animal husbandry

enterprise. Whereas, they had least participation in decisions regarding farm operations. It is surprising to note that except home decoration, in most of the areas of home management the decision was dominated by male/husband. It indicates that the development of any family in Indian context ignoring the farm women is out of the imagination. It's an uphill task for government, policy makers and for all to empower the farm women.

METHODOLOGY

Nilgiris district was selected for the study by simple random sampling based on the highest tribal population percentage recorded in the district. Out of four blocks in Nilgiris district, Kotagiri and Udhagamandalam blocks were purposively selected because of the prevalence of more number of tribal farm communities. Among the six tribal communities, Irula community was selected

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for the study because this community is actively engaging themselves in farming. A sample of 60 tribal farm women from the Irula tribal community were considered as the respondents of the study. The response of respondents regarding the decision making was collected in “By self without consulting”, “Consulting the spouse or elder”, “Consulting

all the family members”, “Help others in decision making” and “No participation in decision making”.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the Irula tribal farm women regarding their decision making pattern in farm management are presented

Table 1.
Decision Making Pattern of Irula Farm Women in Farm Management (n=60)

Sl. No.	Decision making Areas	By self Without consulting		Consulting the spouse/ elder		Consulting all the family members		Help others in decision making		No participation in decision making	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Introducing a new crop variety	26	43.33	34	56.67						
2.	Borrowing money for farm operations	13	21.67	47	78.33						
3.	Buying farm equipment/machinery			60	100.00						
4.	Quantity and type of fertilizers to be used on the farm	37	61.67	23	38.33						
5.	Subscribing farm publications									60	100.00
6.	Hiring farm labourers	14	23.33	46	76.67						
7.	Adopting new farm practices	35	58.33	25	41.67						
8.	Deciding about area under each crop	20	33.33	40	66.67						
9.	Selection of seeds	9	15.00	51	85.00						
10.	Irrigating fields	51	85.00	9	15.00						
11.	Using plant protection measures	50	83.33	10	16.67						
12.	Selling surplus farm produce	14	23.33	46	76.67						
13.	Buying/selling land			17	28.33					43	71.67
14.	Maintenance of cattle	49	81.67	11	18.33						
15.	Selling of milk and milk products	11	18.33	49	81.67						
16.	Buying and selling cattle			36	60.00					24	40.00
17.	Size of the poultry			23	38.33					37	61.67
18.	Selling eggs and poultry birds			23	38.33					37	61.67

in Table 1.

The data on decision making pattern of the Irula farmwomen with respect to farm management from the above table clearly depict that the Irula tribal farm women took self-decision in the case of irrigating fields (85.00), using plant protection measures (83.33) followed by maintenance of cattle

(81.67) and quantity and type of fertilizers to be used on the farm (61.67). The tribal women consulted with their spouse or elders in decisions related to buying farm equipment/machinery (100.00), selection of seeds (85.00) followed by selling of milk and milk products (81.67) and borrowing money for farm operations (78.33).

But the Irula tribal women had least

participation in case of decisions like subscribing to farm publications (100.00) followed by buying/selling land (71.67). This finding is supported by Chauhan (2009).

The decision making pattern of Irula tribal

women in home management is given in Table 2.

It indicates that the self decisions were made by the Irula farm women in case of

Table 2.
Decision Making Pattern of Irula Farm Women in Home Management (n=60)

Sl. No.	Decision making Areas	By self Without consulting		Consulting the spouse/ elder		Consulting all the family members		Help others in decision making		No participation in decision making	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Construction of new house			22	36.67					38	63.33
2.	Household repairs	17	28.33	43	71.67						
3.	Decorating the house	42	70.00	18	30.00						
4.	Deciding education of children	18	30.00	42	70.00						
5.	Deciding occupation of children			43	71.67	17	28.33				
6.	Settling marriage of children			27	45.00	33	55.00				
7.	Purchasing household articles	37	61.67	23	38.33						
8.	Selection and preparation of food	60	100.00								
9.	Borrowing and giving loans			37	61.67					23	38.33
10.	Deciding manner of saving	21	35.00	39	65.00						
11.	Attending religious ceremonies/functions			13	21.67	47	78.33				
12.	Attending social gatherings in the village			18	30.00	42	70.00				

Selection and preparation of food (100.00), decorating the house (70.00) followed by purchasing household articles (61.67). The Husband dominated decisions were found in cases like household repairs (71.67) followed by deciding occupation of children (71.67).

The Irula women consulted all the family members only in the case of attending religious ceremonies/functions (78.33), attending social gatherings in the village (70.00) followed by settling marriage of children (55.00). Most of the Irula women did not participate in decisions like construction of new house (63.33) followed by borrowing and giving loans (38.33). The main reason

behind their lack of participation in these decisions is that most of the Irula community do not construct their own houses, as they depend on the government fully for their construction of house. The findings of the present study were similar to findings earlier reported by Praveena et al., (2005).

CONCLUSION

The inference can be drawn from the findings that adivasi farm women were taking self-decision in case of decorating the house and selection and preparation of food. Rural farm women do not play dominant role in making important decisions related to farm

management whereas the decisions regarding animal husbandry enterprise were dominated by them.

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