



# DECISION MAKING OF TRIBAL WOMEN OF FARMING COMMUNITY OF MEGHALAYA ■

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## ABSTRACT

A sample of 150 respondents was selected using Proportional Random Sampling Method. The women participation in decision making was found medium level. Further the decision making of the tribal farm women significantly and positively correlated to agriculture progressiveness, knowledge in agriculture and social participation, whereas it was negatively correlated with age and family size. Out of total 11 socio-economic variables selected to analyze their effect on decision making, the variables age, education, family size and period of experience in agriculture were found to be significant. The education and experience in agriculture are positively influence the decision making behaviours of the tribal women, whereas age and size of family negatively influence the decision making behaviours of the tribal women. Hence, it can be concluded that the emphasis on education of women in farming community is needed in order to increase their role in decision making on agricultural farms.

**Key Words :** Correlates, Participation, Decision making, Tribal farm women

The process of decision making is one of the most complex mechanisms of human thinking, as various factors and courses of action intervene in it, with different results. Orasanu and Connolly (1993) defined it as a series of cognitive operations performed consciously, which include the elements from the environment in a specific time and place. Narayan and Corcoran-Perry (1997) consider decision making as the interaction between a problem that needs to be solved and a person who wishes to solve it within a specific environment. Meghalaya is predominantly an agrarian economy. The important crops of the state are potato, rice, maize, pineapple, banana etc. Tribal people constitute majority of Meghalaya's population. Agriculture and cattle rearing are their main occupations. One of the unique features of the State is that a majority of the tribal people follows a matrilineal system in which lineage and inheritance are traced through women. However, the male line, particularly the mother's brother, may indirectly control the ancestral property since he may be involved in important decisions relating to property including

its sale and disposal. Thus, the identification of role of woman in the decision making process of various farm and non-farm activities is very important in view of above facts and notions the present study was carried out with the specific objective *viz.*, to analyze relationship between decision making behaviour of the tribal women in agriculture and their socio-economic and psychological characteristics.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present study was conducted in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. Out of total seven blocks of district, Rongram block was selected randomly and this block consist of eighty villages, from which five villages were randomly selected. Separate list of tribal farm women for each village was prepared through consultation with the villagers and local leaders. From the list of the tribal farm women, finally, samples of 150 respondents were selected by the method of proportional allocation. To measure the attitude and economic motivation

of the respondents scale developed by Singh (1993) was used. The decision-making behaviour of the tribal farm women was calculated from the pooled scores of decision-making pattern, extent of participation and time of decision-making. For determining factors affecting decision-making of women in farming, correlation and regression analysis was performed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

### Tribal farm women in decision making :

The behavioral characteristics of the farm women in respect to decision-making pattern, extent of participation and time of decision-making were analyzed and presented in Table 1.

Decision-making pattern and extent of participation of the farm women was studied on fourteen different practices of agriculture. The results showed that majority of the farm women had medium level of participation with 76.66 per cent in decision-making pattern, 80.66 per cent in the extent of participation and 84 per cent in time of decision making. It was followed by 12.68 per cent and 16.66 per cent of farm women in the high category of decision-making pattern and extent of participation. Which shows medium level of decision making behavior of women in farming, which slightly inclined to high level.

### Correlation between decision making and socio-economic variables :

In order to visualize how socioeconomic characteristics of farm women related with their decision-making behaviour correlation was undertaken and results presented in Table 2.

The correlation analysis between decision-making pattern and socio-economic characteristics of farm women indicates positive and significant correlation between decision-making pattern and education, agriculture progressiveness, knowledge in agriculture and social participation (Table 2). Similarly correlation co-efficients between education, agriculture progressiveness, knowledge in agriculture, social

participation, average annual income and the extent of participation in decision making were found positive and significant. Whereas negative and significant correlation co-efficient ( $r = -0.177$ ) shows that women participation in decision making in smaller families are better than the larger families. The correlation values between time of decision-making and education, knowledge in agriculture, social participation and attitude towards modern agriculture were found to be positive and significant, indicating its movement in the same direction. However, negative and significant correlation values were found in case of age and family size to the time of decision-making. Correlation co-efficients between education and decision-making behaviour was found to be positive and significant, indicating that as the level of education increases, the decision-making behaviour of the farm women also increases. This finding can also be supported by the findings of Lakshmi *et al.* (1996). This correlation can also be explained with the findings of Kishore *et al.* (1999) and Sarkar and Pradhan (2004).

### Decision making of tribal farm women :

Further to identify the significance of each of socioeconomic variables on decision making behavior of tribal women in agricultural farm, regression analysis was performed and the results obtained are presented in Table 3.

### Decision making pattern :

It is evident from the table that age, education, family size and agriculture experience were found to be significant at 1 per cent. However, out of these four significant variables, regression co-efficient of two variables such as age and family size are negative showing that the dependent variable decision making pattern is inversely related to these two variable. Hence, it can be concluded that smaller the family size and in younger age women have better role in decision making. Further the higher level of education and more experience in agriculture has higher impact on decision making pattern. The  $R^2$  value reveal that 43.10 per cent variation in the dependent variable

Sr. No	Behavioural components	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Decision-making pattern	Low	16	10.66
		Medium	115	76.66
		High	19	12.68
2.	Extent of	Low	4	2.68
		Medium	121	80.66
		High	25	16.66
3.	Time of decision-making	Low	0	0
		Medium	126	84
		High	24	16

decision-making pattern is explained by eleven selected independent variables.

**Extent of participation in decision making :**

In case of the extent of participation regression coefficient (b values) for the age and education were found to be positive and significant at 0.01 level of probability. This showed that higher the age or education, the higher level of participation in decision making. This is obvious that the older people in Indian society get weight in decision making.

**Time of decision-making :**

For this dependent variable most of the independent variables were turned out to be insignificant. The

independent variable education was found significant at 0.01 level of probability and attitude towards modern agriculture was significant at 0.05 level of probability indicates that these variables affect the time of decision-making by tribal women.

**Decision-making behavior :**

Multiple regression analysis of the selected independent variables and dependent variable decision-making behavior of tribal women was performed (Table 3). It is observed that the decision-making behaviours of tribal women were significantly affected by age, education, family size and agriculture experience. The age of the respondents and the decision-making behaviour as seen in the table had negative

**Table 2: Correlation coefficient between decision making and independent variables**

Sr. No.	Socio-economic variables	Correlation co-efficient (r)		
		Pattern of decision making	Extent of participation	Time of decision making
X <sub>1</sub>	Age	-0.383**	0.055 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.184*
X <sub>2</sub>	Education	0.366**	0.484**	0.504**
X <sub>3</sub>	Family size	0.365**	-0.177*	0.006 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>4</sub>	Size of the land holding	0.088 <sup>NS</sup>	0.049 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.170*
X <sub>5</sub>	Agriculture progressiveness	0.169*	0.228**	0.086
X <sub>6</sub>	Knowledge in agriculture	0.241**	0.431**	0.332**
X <sub>7</sub>	Social participation	0.289**	0.175*	0.166*
X <sub>8</sub>	Average annual income	0.095 <sup>NS</sup>	0.166*	-0.013
X <sub>9</sub>	Attitude towards modern agriculture	0.007 <sup>NS</sup>	0.020 <sup>NS</sup>	0.179*
X <sub>10</sub>	Economic motivation	0.125 <sup>NS</sup>	0.122 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.036
X <sub>11</sub>	Agriculture experience	-0.043 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.127 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.134

\* and \*\* Indicate significance of value at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively, NS = not significant

**Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of selected independent variables on the decision making pattern**

Sr. No.	Independent variables	Regression Coefficient 'b'			
		Decision-making pattern	The extent of participation in decision-making	Time of Decision making.	Decision-making behaviour.
X <sub>1</sub>	Age	-0.349**	0.061**	-0.002 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.289**
X <sub>2</sub>	Education	2.070**	0.827**	0.161**	3.049**
X <sub>3</sub>	Family size	-7.643**	-0.690 <sup>NS</sup>	0.074 <sup>NS</sup>	-8.216**
X <sub>4</sub>	Size of the land holding	1.161 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.019 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.117 <sup>NS</sup>	1.028 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>5</sub>	Agriculture progressiveness	0.619 <sup>NS</sup>	0.129 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.015 <sup>NS</sup>	0.722 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>6</sub>	Knowledge in agriculture	-0.744 <sup>NS</sup>	0.295 <sup>NS</sup>	0.013 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.434 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>7</sub>	Social participation	2.639 <sup>NS</sup>	0.001 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.086 <sup>NS</sup>	2.531 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>8</sub>	Average annual income	1.041 <sup>NS</sup>	0.291 <sup>NS</sup>	0.016 <sup>NS</sup>	1.345
X <sub>9</sub>	Attitude towards modern agriculture	0.304 <sup>NS</sup>	0.061 <sup>NS</sup>	0.068*	0.440 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>10</sub>	Economic motivation	6.406 <sup>NS</sup>	0.761 <sup>NS</sup>	-0.151 <sup>NS</sup>	6.885 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>11</sub>	Agriculture experience	7.424**	-0.111 <sup>NS</sup>	0.090 <sup>NS</sup>	7.237**
	R <sup>2</sup> =	0.431	0.364	0.370	0.436
	F =	9.561	7.231	7.379	9.760

\* and \*\* Indicate significance of value at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively, NS = not significant

significance, which indicates that as the age increases, decision-making behaviour of the tribal farm women decreases and vice-versa. Family size of the respondent was found to have negative and significant influence on the decision-making behaviour of the farm women. Thus, leading to the conclusion that larger the family size lesser is the decision-making behaviour of farm women and vice-versa. The reason for this may be high rate of illiteracy prevalent among the elder women. Similar findings were reported by Patki and Nikhade (1999). The negative value of regression co-efficients for two variables age and family size indicates that the tribal women of younger age or belonging to smaller family were having better decision-making behaviour. Similarly, the positive regression co-efficients for independent variables education and agriculture experience shows that these variables have direct influence on decision-making behaviour of tribal women.

#### Conclusion :

From the above findings it can be concluded that farm women of West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya of low economic categories but have greater participation in agricultural activities whereas, women of high and medium economic categories were found to participate more in allied activities. Out of total 11 socio-economic variables selected to analyze their effect on decision making, the variables age, education, family size and period of experience in agriculture were found to be significant. The education and experience in agriculture are positively influence the decision making

behaviours of the tribal women whereas, age and size of family negatively influence the decision making behaviors of the tribal women. Hence, it can be concluded that the emphasis on education of women in farming community is needed in order to increase their role in decision making on agricultural farms.

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