



PARTICIPATION AND ITS DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF WOMEN IN FARMING ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF SARTANG TRIBE IN WEST KAMENG DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The present study is mainly focus on participation and its decision making process of Sartang women in farming activities. Women are considered merely as unrecognized family helpers even though they carryout whole process of agricultural activities. It is really very difficult to carryout multiple tasks like caring of children, family members, household activities etc. along with the farming activities. Practicing of agriculture differs from region to region likewise; the Sartang people have their own traditional way of cultivation. To make an overview of the women participation in agriculture and its decision making process, this effort has been initiated by the investigator to cover the various aspects of farming activities.

Keywords: Sartang; Women; Farming; Traditional; Unrecognized

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is considered as an important aspect for the growth and development of society. In every nook and corner it has been seen that most of the rural women are engaged in agriculture. The *Sartang's* of West Kameng District are confine in such a mountainous region where the fertility of soil is best supportive for crop cultivation. Thus, most of such ethnic groups is depend on agricultural activities for their livelihood. Now a days due to awareness of education and emergence of modern technologies women have more aware of using insecticides

and pesticides. Before few years back women were mostly uneducated and unskilled, they did not have any knowledge regarding using of chemicals in their farm activities which results low production in agriculture. In many rural societies, women eat less food than men do, especially when the food is scarce, such as just before the harvest, or when the workload increases without a corresponding increase in the food intake." (Roodkowsky,1979). Women provide one half of the labour in rice cultivation in India (Unnevehr and Stanford, 1986). In the plantation sector women are the crucial labourers (Shivaram, 1988). Women carryout their task since from dawn to dusk, which shows that they are spending such a hectic life. The present study is specially concentrated on the women participation in farming activities.

STUDY AREA

West Kameng District is located in the western most part of Arunachal Pradesh. The headquarter Bomdila is located in 8000feet above the sea level. The name is derived from the Kameng River a tributary of the Brahmaputra that flows through the district. West Kameng district occupies an area of 7422 Km². The topography of the study area is mostly mountainous of Himalayan origin. The inhabitants of the district comprises mainly of Monpa, Sartang, Miji (Sajalong), Sherdukpen, Aka and Bugun (Khawa).

OBJECTIVE

Following objectives have been formulated for the present study

- (i) To study the participation of women in agriculture.
- (ii) To investigate the decision making process of women in farm activities.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

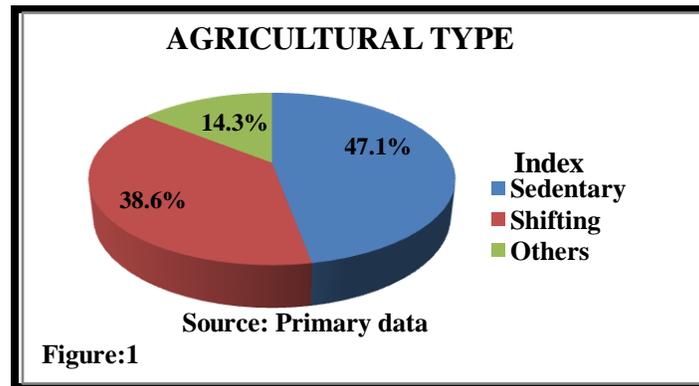
This study is mainly based on primary data collection through formulation of questionnaire. The investigator has selected 70 households sample from six villages through a random sampling technique . All the data have been analyzed through the SPSS software for generating appropriate result. Various photographs have been clicked for better interpretation of various aspects of the study area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

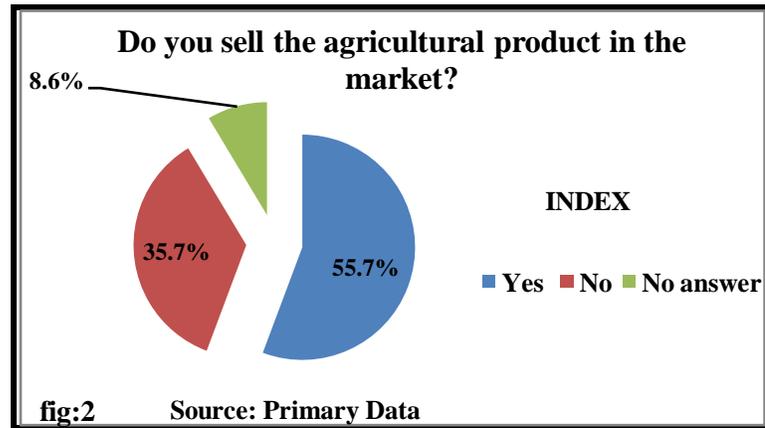
This paper examines the participation of *Sartang* women and its decision making process in agriculture in West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh. At present women have put their foot in varied areas and have made remarkable name and identity for themselves in the society. Women occupy a central role in food production, food processing, food preparation, food preservation and other agricultural products. In some of the interior region where there is lack of transport and communication and there is a situation where men have been forced to migrate in search of work. Women often have the sole responsibility for farming and raising the children at that hard time. The women participation in any activities is depend on the degree of freedom accorded to them in the family and society.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

Women play a pivotal role in agriculture all over the world. Modernization of agriculture has provided women with better earning opportunities by applying various modern techniques such as insecticides and pesticides but the installation of wells, tube wells are absent in the locality. Women engage in agriculture perform all the process of farming activities which includes clod breaking, throwing seed, levelling fields, weeding and harvesting, fertilising, collection of the produce etc. As it is already cited that agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. Sartang women are very skillfull and hardworking, so most of the agricultural tasks are carried out by them. There are various type of agriculture practice in the locality such as shifting/ Jhum, sedentary and others which includes small gardens nearby the house. According to the data it shows that sedentary cultivation is 47.1%, shifting cultivation 38.6 % and others include 14.3%. It clearly visualise that most of the people having permanent cultivation but few years back they were totally depend on shifting cultivation.



The main agricultural products of the study area are rice, maize, wheat, paddy, potato, sweet potato, tomato, cabbage, beans, soya beans, Pumpkin, cucumber, variety of chillies, spinach, ginger, brinjal, garlics, local turmeric etc. Some of these products are for self subsistence and some for commercial purpose. Tomato cultivation is newly practice in the concern region which require more modern chemical. The dominant agricultural product in such region is maize and it needs lots of labour for cultivation. Still the Sartang women use to follow their traditional way of cultivation. Especially for maize cultivation they never use any modern chemicals rather they use to collect the leaf of oak tree (*Sorbo in local term*) from the forest and drop over the field. When I asked one of the women that “Is it necessary to collect the oak leaf from the forest for agricultural field?” She replied,“ it is not necessary but if we drop it over the agricultural field, we don’t have to clean the field again and again, because it is used for fertilizer as well as it decreases the growth of grass which may damage the crop.”This is really a difficult task to collect and carry the leaf from forest and dropping over the field through baskets eventhough most of the labour engaged in such activities are women. Specially during the collection of these leaves only women have to collect it through a tool locally known as *sorbo khae*, male member never use to collect but they can help during the carry and dropping over the field. This process needs lots of tools which are mostly made of bamboo. Due to better transportation in the locality, womenfolk use to export their farming products in neighbouring areas for sell. Following data showing the response of respondent regarding selling of farm products, which has 55.7% yes, 35.7% no and 8.6 % did not replied.



It is important to note that the agricultural work is carried out through the group cooperation locally termed as *Brompu*. It means working together specially in farming through rotation system. Example: if ABC helps D in one day the next time D has to help ABC for her work again. Following photograph showing the participation of group of working women in maize field during the agricultural season.

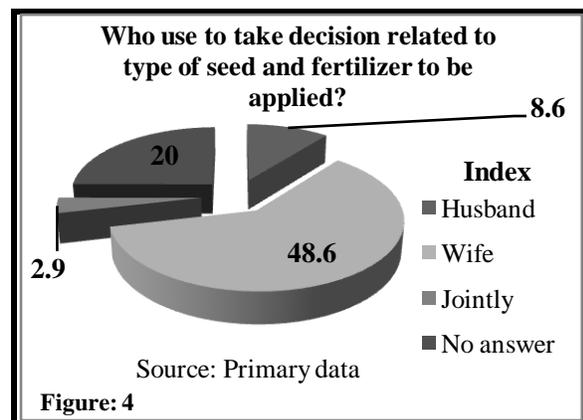
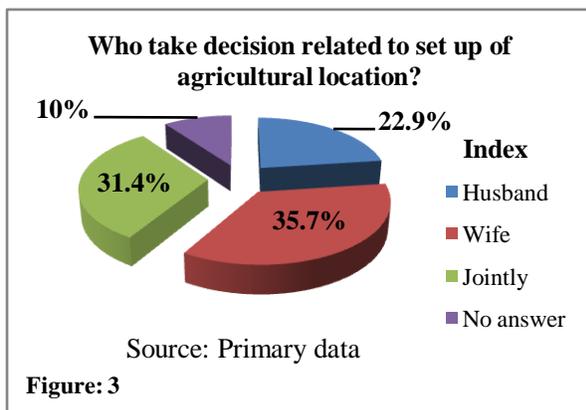


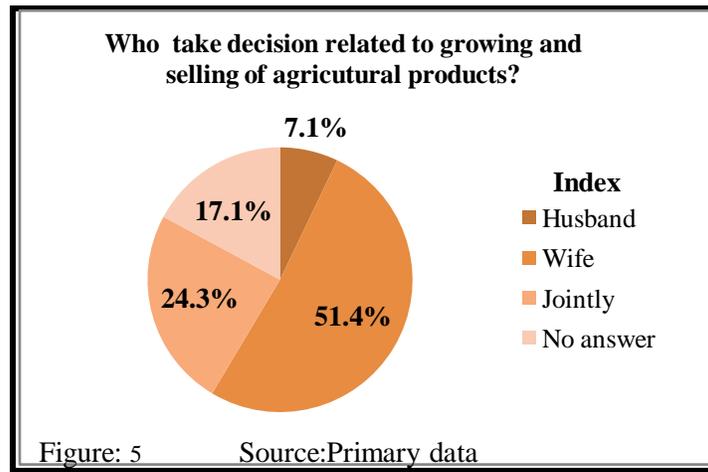
Source: Photograph taken during field survey which showing working women in maize field.

Horticulture is one of the rural economies which also require more labour throughout the year, which includes plantation, putting cow dung and urea in the field, weeding spraying, plucking fruit, packing of the fruit and lastly marking etc. By looking over this, horticulture is mostly male dominated work but in plantation, manuring, and ploughing the fields, women participate equally with the male members. Besides women also helps at the time of plucking and packing the fruit.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF WOMEN IN FARMING ACTIVITIES

We can analyze women decision making process through how much freedom they are accorded from the family members and society. Likewise, in terms of agricultural activities decision is an important aspect to carry out the work. I have been analyzed some of the decision taken by both husband and wife related with farm activities. Sometimes women are bound within their customary laws due to which unable to take part in some activities. But in Sartang society most of the decision related with agricultural activities are taken by women in the family. Following data have been analyzed to highlight an overview of decision taken within the family. Decision in terms of set up of agricultural location, 22.9% husband, 35.7% wife, 31.4% jointly, and 10% did not replied. Decision taken related to type of seeds and fertilizer to be applied, 8.6% husband, 48.6% wife, 2.9% jointly and 20% has no answer. Decision made in growing and selling of products, 7.1% husband, 51.4% wife 24.3% jointly and 17.1 % has no response.





CONCLUSION

The women position in the family is related to the occupation whether she is engage in any gainful work or not. According to the government records their contribution is more in agriculture than men. It has been seen that majority of women carry out the farming activities in rural areas. In addition to it, most of the decision related with agriculture such as growing and selling of product, type of seeds to be applied, choosing of agricultural location etc. are taken by female members within the family. It is also an interesting to note that still they use to follow their traditional way of farming despite modern chemicals. Tomato cultivation has newly emerged in the locality which needs lots of caring, modern chemicals and required more male labour. But in concern region women are equally participated with male member during the whole process of such cultivation. In a nutshell, Women play a very important role in farming activities and their participation in it is highly appreciated.

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