

## **A Study on Decision Making Pattern in Farm and Non-Farm Activities by the Farmers of Shimoga District in Karnataka**

The process of decision-making is an integral part of all human activities. Every walk of the life is the manifestation of decision taken by individuals. Today, agriculture is regarded as one of the riskiest professions. So, the farmers of today need to be more choosy than ever before about the type of crop they grow, the inputs they use, the markets where they sell their produces, and so on. Decision making, thus, plays a vital role in the day to-day life of farmers and farm families.

The farm families have to make a number of different types of decisions, because they face multi-dimensional kinds of problems. In practice, it has been that male dominates the scene in decision-making regarding farm activities,

By knowing the decision-making patterns of farmers in a proper farm as well as non-farm activities, the change agents and other concerned with agricultural development can direct their efforts towards developing the level of understanding of the farmers by enabling them to collect all possible information about the innovations. Further, they can relate them to the earlier situations and select the best alternative, in order to help the farmers obtain sustained and increasing production for a long period of time by improving decision making skills of farmers. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken to study the decision-making pattern of farmers in farm activities and user non-farmers.

The study was conducted in five villages of Karnataka state, which were selected based on total cultivated area they had during the year 2002. The selected villages were Beguru, Baganakatti, Malavalli, Guddadatumminakatte and Karnalli. In all, 150 farmers were selected

from the above mentioned five villages through proportionate random sampling. The data were collected with the help of a pre-tested interview-schedule.

In all, six farm activities (choice of crop and varieties, choice of cropping pattern, choice of manures and fertilizers and their use, choice of plant protection measures and chemicals and their use, marketing of crop produce and, livestock and their care) and four non-farm activities (purchasing activity, financial management, education and related issues, and marriage and related issues) were selected as decision making activities. Under each of the decision-making activity selected, respondents were assessed of their decision making pattern. The three decision-making patterns considered in this study are as below.

Self-decision, consultative decision and decision by others.

Respondents were categorized under each category of decision-making pattern based on frequencies and percentages. Vis-a-vis of the farm and non-farm activities considered for the study.

Findings of this study indicated that regarding farm activities, farmers took more of self-decisions than consultative decisions or decisions by others in case of choice of crop and varieties choice of cropping protections manures, fertilizers and their use; plant protection chemicals and their use; marketing of crop produce, and live stock and their use. The probable reason for this might be that farmers still today feel that the performance of taking such crucial decisions lies with themselves.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of their decision making pattern of regarding farm activities (N=150)

Farm activities	Self decision	Consultative decision	Decision by others
Choice of crop and varieties	81 (54.00)	62 (41.33)	7 (4.67)
Choice of cropping pattern	75 (50.00)	64 (42.67)	11 (7.33)
Manures, fertilizers and their use	79 (52.70)	59 (39.33)	12 (8.00)
Plant protection chemical and their use	68 (45.33)	74 (49.33)	8 (5.33)
Marketing of crop produce	82 (54.67)	55 (36.67)	13 (8.67)
Livestock and their care	63 (42.00)	70 (46.67)	17 (11.33)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate respective percentage

A perusal of the findings presented in table 1 clearly indicated that self-decision was high in case of marketing of crop produce (54.67%) and low in case of livestock and their care. Consultative decision was high in case of plant protection chemicals and their use (49.33%), and low in case of marketing of crop produce (36.67%). Decision by others was high in case of livestock and their care (11.33%), and low in case of choice of crop and varieties (4.67%). The probable reason for this might be that majority of the respondents considered marketing of crop produce as critical decision-making area while, livestock and their care is still considered as women's job in the family; and hence, farmers play less role in such decision-making activity. Regarding plant protection chemicals and their use, consultative decision was high; thus, indicating the farmers may have less knowledge a proper this issue; and hence, they consult others as they do not have much confidence to take their own decisions.

The findings were in partial agreement with the findings of Nimbalkar and Thorat (1984).

At the same time, decision-making pattern of farmers in non-farm activities indicated that self decisions were more than consultative decisions or decisions by others, in the cases

of; purchasing activity (62.00%), financial management (58.00%) and education and related issues (42.00%) (Table 2). The probable reason for this might be that the head of the household having the major responsibility in carrying out activities of the family naturally rely on his experience and knowledge rather than believing on others words regarding purchasing activity, financial management and education and related issues.

Self- decision was, however low in case of marriage and related issues (42.00%). Consultative decision was high in case of marriage and related issues (54.67%), and low in case of purchasing activity (29.33%). Decision by others was high in case of purchasing activity (8.67%) and low in case of marriage and related issues (3.33%). The probable reason for this might be that since purchasing activity involves money aspects, farmers do not want to take risks; and hence take self-decision in such areas. However, in case of marriage and related issues, majority of the respondents relied on consultative decision, as such matter needed more of consultation instead of taking decision on their own.

The findings were in partial agreement with the findings of Susheela *et al.* (1990).

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Table 2. Distribution of respondents on the basis of their decision making pattern regarding non farm activities (N=150)

Non farm activities	Self decision	Consultative decision	Decision by others
Purchasing activity	93 (62.00)	44 (29.33)	13 (8.67)
Financial management	87 (58.00)	56 (37.33)	7 (4.67)
Education and related issues	81 (54.00)	61 (40.67)	8 (5.33)
Marriage and related issues	63 (42.00)	82 (54.67)	5 (3.33)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate respective percentage

There is a need to educate the farmers about the importance of joint decision-making in both farm and non-farm activities. Also, the women should be made aware of their position in family and their rights in taking decisions

regarding both farm and non farm activities, through various training programmes conducted by various departments. Since, women constitute the major working force in the agriculture/animal husbandry sector in rural area.

Department of Agricultural Extension Education  
University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad-5

S.K. MADHU  
D.M. CHANDARGI

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