Role Expectation and Role Performance of Rural Women in Farm Management (a Study in Valsad District of Gujarat State)

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The study on rural women's role in farm management was undertaken keeping in view of the increasing importance of involvement of rural women in agricultural production programmes. Studies in this field so far have exhibited a negligible concern for a systematic study on rural women's role in India as well as in Gujarat State. Hence this study was conducted with an objective of ascertaining the role expectations and role performances of rural women in farm management and to elucidate the factors affecting the role performance.

The study was conducted in eight randomly selected villages of Navsari taluka of Valsad district which is considered as rice bowl of Gujarat State. Ex-post-facto research design was adopted with purposive and stratified random sampling procedures. In all 120 rural women (40 from low economic group, 40 from medium economic group, and 40 from high economic group), 120 rural husbands and 60 experts were interviewed for the purpose of the study.

It was found out from the study that four roles, namely, allied agriculture, harvest and post-harvest, inter cultivation and presowing and sowing in order were expected to be performed by rural women in farm management. Thirty five sub-roles were delineated under these four major roles. These four major roles were considered as role expectations for finding out the actual role performance of the rural women.

There was significant difference regarding perception of role expectation by experts, rural women, and their husbands. The role performance of rural women in farm management was low and average and none recorded high performance, i.e., above 60 per cent. The low economic category of rural women performed more work in farm activities, the medium and high economic categories of rural women performed more work in allied agricultural activities but there was no significant difference in role performance between these categories of rural women when both agricultural and allied agricultural activities were considered together.

Caste, education, land holding, socio-economic status, urban contact and conservatism value were negatively and significantly associated whereas leadership status and family norms were positively and significantly associated with the farm role performance of rural women. The multiple regression fitted with seventeen independent variables have explained variation of 48.17 per cent on the farm role performance of rural women. However, education (negatively) and family size (Positively) emerged as significant variables in predicting the role performance of rural women in farm management.

The time utilization study of rural women revealed that on an average they spend 15.83 per cent of their time for agricultural activities and remaining 84.17 per cent for allied agricultural, household, social and leisure time and resting activities. The medium and high economic categories of rural women spent more time for allied agricultural activities whereas the low economic category of rural women spent more time for agricultural activities.

These findings could be utilized by development agencies for motivating the rural women in order to perform their roles effectively in farm management.

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