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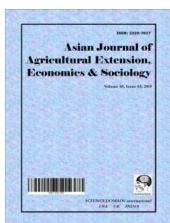
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Socio-Personal Profile of Tribal Women or Tribal Families in Relation to Degree of Belief and Decision Making Pattern in Animal Husbandry Practices

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author SS under the guidance of author MKM designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and the first draft of the manuscript. Author MKM was the major advisor of author SS, managed the analyses of the study, managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Madhya Pradesh (MP) is a tribal dominated state and the tribal peoples still follow their traditional occupation of rearing cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs and desi fowls. The present study was undertaken with the objective of studying the socio-personal profile of tribal women in Animal Husbandry Practices in relation to the degree of belief and decision making pattern of tribal women in animal husbandry practices. One hundred tribal families were selected through randomized proportionate sampling from all the four village viz., Kadamtola, Payari No.1, Chhulha and Pondi of Anuppur District of Madhya Pradesh. It was found that age, literacy and years of experience in animal husbandry were positively and significantly correlated with degree of belief and decision making pattern of tribal families in animal husbandry practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India has been the homeland of large number of ethnic groups and their mosaic culture. It is believed that the tribal communities were the earliest inhabitants of our land, who are now popularly designated as the *Adivasis*. The tribal population of MP constitutes around 23% of the total tribal population of India and holds first rank among all the States/Union Territories in terms of Schedule Tribe (ST) population. Traditionally, the tribals of MP have been living in the fastness of forests, hill slopes, plateaus, in remote and exclusive areas with poor resource endowment and little outside contacts. Customarily, the tribal households still follow their traditional occupation of rearing cattle, buffalo, pigs, goats and desi fowl which provide a source of income to sustain their livelihood. But they are sparsely documented and studied. These indigenous practices may be an alternative or complementary to modern technology and can generate ideas for future research. Indigenous knowledge in animal husbandry exists as beliefs that are transferred from generation to generation through folklore of people. These are mostly unwritten and are only recorded in the human mind. [1] defined indigenous knowledge as unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area. Some of the synonyms of indigenous knowledge according to [2] were 'traditional knowledge', 'folk knowledge', 'local knowledge' and 'wisdom of the elders'. Evidently, the livestock rearing and management related activities still continue predominantly to be the responsibility and domain of the tribal women. Considering these reasons the present

study was conducted with the objective of studying the socio-personal profile of tribal women in Animal Husbandry Practices in relation to the degree of belief and extent of decision making pattern of animal husbandry practices.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Anuppur block of Anuppur district (MP). Four villages namely Kadamtola, Payari-1, Chhulha and Pondi were selected randomly from the Anuppur block. A total number of 100 tribal households (having at least four livestock) were selected on the basis of random proportionate sampling. The data were collected by a pre-tested interview schedule through personal interview method. The desirable data related to socioeconomic characteristics viz. Age, Education, Occupation, Herd size and Years of experience directly by personal interview through structured type of interview schedule. Degree of belief was measured as the level of agreement or disagreement of the tribal farmers in the various indigenous animal husbandry practices. The respondents were individually rated over all the beliefs on a five point continuum viz., strongly agree, agree undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with respective weighages of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. Decision making pattern was operationalized as a continuous mental process of reasoning which consists of thinking, doing and primarily concerned with selecting an alternate action from the available ones. In the present study, the decision making pattern of tribal women were studied into five categories i.e. no response, spouse only, all family members, housewife and spouse jointly, house wife only and scored as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 respectively.

Table 1. Variables with their empirical measurements

S. No.	Variables	Measurements
Independent variables		
1.	Age	Chronological age in completed years
2.	Education	Index developed by Trivedi (1963)
3.	Occupation	Through schedule
4.	Herd size	Cattle equivalent score
5.	Year of experience	Through schedule
Dependent variables		
6.	Decision making pattern	Through schedule
7.	Degree of belief in the selected indigenous animal husbandry practices	Through schedule

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-personal Profile of Tribal Animal Husbandry Farmers

(i) Age

The tribal women according to their age were categorized into three groups, i.e., young, middle and old. A perusal of Table 2 shows that majority (65%) of tribal women belonged to middle age group (30-45 yrs.), while 23 per cent was from young age group (< 30 yrs.) and 12 per cent hailed from the old age group i.e. more than 45 yrs. In the case of traditional animal husbandry practices, among middle and young age categories there were more weak believers than strong believers, whereas among the old there were more strong believers (75%) than weak believers (25%). That means youngsters are generally not interested in indigenous practices of animal rearing.

(ii) Education

The findings in the Table 2 reveals that majority (92%) of the tribal women were illiterate, followed by only 8 per cent respondents literate. In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the literates, weak believers were more (68.48%) as compared to strong believers (31.52%). But among illiterates (75%) were strong believers and the rest weak believers (25%). Literates seem to be weak believers and are not interested in indigenous practices.

(iii) Occupation

It can be observed from Table 2 that majority of respondents (72%) were labourer. A mere 15 per cent and 13 per cent respondent earned through agriculture and animal husbandry, respectively. None of the respondents had business or service in the study area. The present study shows that, in most of the cases, the families had more than one occupation for their source of income. The earnings from all sources of income were, however, pooled in the family. Contrary, strong believers were more (83.33%) than weak believers (16.66) among the labourers. In the overall sample there were 20 percent strong believers and 80 percent weak believers regarding indigenous agriculture practices. However, there were 30.77 percent strong believers and 69.23 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices. In the past the livelihood of tribal

people was dependent solely upon cultivation, animal husbandry and sale of forest produce. But today, the situation seems to have changed since this study brought to light the fact that for majority of the respondents major occupation is non-agriculture or non animal husbandry job. This observation agreed with that of Velluva [3]. Strong believers of indigenous animal husbandry practices were more among the non-agricultural category. This is in spite of the fact that non-agricultural category included petty businessmen / traders, nonagricultural laborers and government servants.

(iv) Herd size

A cursory look at the Table 2 shows that majority (66%) of the respondents had small herd size, followed 24 per cent and 10 per cent had medium and large herd size, respectively. In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the small herd size category, 59.09 percent were strong believers and 40.09 percent were weak believers. Among the medium herd size category, 37.5 percent were strong believers and 62.5 percent were weak believers. In the large herd size category 30 percent strong believers and 70 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices.

(v) Year of experience

In the case of indigenous animal husbandry practices, among the highly experienced group, strong believers (65.88%) were more than weak believers (34.62%). But among the low experience group there were more weak believers (84.62%) than strong believers (15.38%). In the medium group, there were 48.57 percent of strong and 51.43 percent weak believers regarding indigenous animal husbandry practices.

3.2 Degree of Belief of Tribal Farmers in The Various Indigenous Animal Husbandry Practices

Degree of belief was measured as the level of agreement or disagreement of the tribal farmers in the various indigenous animal husbandry practices. The respondents were individually rated over all the beliefs on a five point continuum viz., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with respective weighages of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to profile (n=100)

Variables	Category	No. of respon-dents	Percen-tage	Animal husbandry practices			
				Strong believers		Weak believers	
				Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
i. Age	Young (<30 yrs.)	23	23	3	13.04	20	86.96
	Middle (30-45 yrs.)	65	65	23	35.38	42	64.62
	Old (>45yrs.)	12	12	9	75	3	25
ii. Education	Illiterate	92	92	29	31.52	63	68.48
	literate	08	08	06	75	2	25
iii. Occupation	Labor	72	72	60	83.33	12	16.66
	Agriculture	15	15	3	20	12	80
	Animal Husbandry	13	13	4	30.77	9	69.23
	Service	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
iv. Herd size	Small <10	66	66	39	59.09	27	40.90
	Medium 10-20	24	24	9	37.5	15	62.5
	Large	10	10	3	30	7	70
	> 20						
v. Years of experience	Low	39	39	6	15.38	33	84.62
	< 20 yrs.						
	Medium	35	35	17	48.57	18	51.43
	20-40 yrs.						
	High	26	26	17	65.38	9	34.62
	>40 yrs.						

3.3 Decision Making Pattern of Tribal Farmers in Animal Husbandry Practices

Decision making pattern was operationalized as a continuous mental process of reasoning which consists of thinking, doing and primarily concerned with selecting an alternate action from the available ones. In the present study, the decision making pattern of tribal women were studied into five categories i.e. no response, spouse only, all family members, housewife and spouse jointly, house wife only and scored as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 respectively. The women of the household are involved in various activities at home and outside home. In order to find out to what extent does a tribal women take decisions alone, jointly with her spouse, collectively with her family members or leaves it to her spouse to take decisions and has no say whatever, the level of participation with respect to decision making pattern was studied on different A.H. related activities i.e., feeding, breeding, health care, management and marketing and the result is presented as below.

In the study the Table 3 shows that, the participation of tribal women in decision making was cent percent in the areas of care of new born calf and colostrums feeding. In the areas of treatment and care of sick animals, management, marketing activities of the livestock production were, by and large, decided jointly by the tribal women and spouses. Similar findings were reported by Savitha [4] and Avinashlingam [5].

Interestingly, majority of the respondents were unable to take decision in artificial insemination/natural service, pregnancy diagnosis, deworming and vaccination of animals which indicates very low level of knowledge regarding improved breeding and health care practices of livestock. A positive and significant relationship was observed with respect to age, occupation, herd size and information source utilization of respondents with decision making pattern of tribal women. Similar observations were reported by Agarwal [6] and Khandekar [7].

3.4 Zero Order Correlation Analysis between Socio-Personal Variables and Degree of Belief and Decision Making Pattern of Tribal Women

In order to determine the relationship between the independent variables with degree of belief

and decision making pattern, the values of correlation coefficient (r) were computed and tested for their statistical significance (Table 4).

A perusal of table 4 shows that age of the respondents was positively and highly significantly ($P < 0.01$) correlated with the degree of belief and decision making pattern of tribal women in A.H. activities. It indicated that as the age increased their faith in indigenous animal husbandry practices and involvement in decision making pattern was also increased. The older women took more independent decisions as compared to young generation.

It was further observed in Table 4 that education did not have significant relationship with the degree of belief and decision making pattern of the respondents indicating that illiterates had a more favorable attitude towards indigenous animal husbandry practices and eventually they were the majority among strong believers of indigenous animal husbandry practices.

Interestingly, the occupation was found to be positively and highly significantly ($P < 0.01$) correlated with the decision making pattern of respondents. While occupation positively and significantly correlated with the degree of belief. The possible reason may be the respondents who were mainly involved in A.H. had more experience in this particular enterprise and were in a position to take decision by themselves.

Similarly, a positively and highly significantly relationship was observed with respect to herd size in the decision making pattern. While result indicated that the respondents are positively and significant with respect to herd size in the degree of belief in indigenous animal husbandry practices.

Degree of belief tribal farmers in indigenous animal husbandry practices and in decision making pattern in animal husbandry practices was positively and highly significantly correlated with years of experience in animal husbandry. This agreed with the findings of Bimal [8]. The highly significant correlation could be because more experienced dairy farmers had comparatively more faith in indigenous animal husbandry practices.

Table 3. Decision making pattern of tribal households in feeding practices N=100

S. no.	Activities	Wife alone		Husband alone		Jointly		No Response	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Feeding practices								
	Feeding of balanced ration	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
	Feeding of concentrate	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
	Feeding of mineral mixture	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
	Feeding of green fodder	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
	Colostrums feeding	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Supplementary feeding	0	0	0	0	21	21	79	79
2.	Breeding practices	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	A.I/Natural service	6	6	0	0	16	16	78	78
	Pregnancy diagnosis to be done or not	4	4	0	0	14	14	82	82
	Selection of animals in case of natural service	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
	Treatment of animals with breeding problems to be done or not	7	7	9	9	23	23	61	61
3.	Health care practices	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	Regular deworming	0	0	0	0	10	10	90	90
ii	Vaccination(s) to be done or not	0	0	0	0	28	28	72	72
iii	Treatment and care of sick animals	6	6	0	0	94	94	0	0
4.	Management practices	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	Care of new born calf	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
ii	Weaning to be done or not	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
iii	Number of animals to be kept	0	0	0	0	70	70	30	30
iv	Animals to be kept in open or in shed	0	0	0	0	90	90	10	10
v	Shed to be disinfected or not	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
vi	Number of times the animals is to be milked	48	48	0	0	0	0	52	52
5.	Marketing practices	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Whether milk to be sold or not	14	14	0	0	78	78	8	8
	Quantity to be sold	12	12	0	0	68	68	20	20
	Rate of which they are to be sold	6	6	10	10	64	64	20	20
	Taking loan for purchase of animal	0	0	0	0	26	26	74	74
	Types of animals to be purchased	12	12	10	10	78	78	0	0
	Place of purchase	14	14	8	8	68	68	0	0
	Utilization of money earned from animal husbandry	0	0	0	0	94	94	6	6

Table 4. Correlation analysis between independent variables and decision making pattern of tribal women N=100

Variable no.	Independent variables	Degree of belief (r)	Decision making pattern (r)
X ₁	Age	0.586**	0.672**
X ₂	Education	ns	ns
X ₃	Occupation	0.007	0.006
X ₄	Herd size	0.024	0.561**
X ₅	Years of experience	0.021	0.402**
		0.512**	0.542**

**P<0.01, *P<0.05, NS- Non-Significant

It is concluded that, the overall role performance of tribal women in A.H. practices was more than

the men folk and they also contribute noticeably to this sector as invisible workers.

4. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the results of the study the conclusions are drawn and that Tribal women are the major and important forces in performing the major portion of the animal production activities. Mostly, they regarded as the supplies of free labour to the family farm enterprises and are the key contributors to the economy by combating poverty through direct and economic returns.

Result revealed a complete picture of differential work distribution and decision making pattern. Proper attention is needed for improving the knowledge and skills of tribal women in A.H. activities to empower them economically. Findings are very significant and useful for the extension workers, NGOs, planners and administrators to promote self employment in tribal areas. It is concluded that, the overall role performance of tribal women in A.H. practices was more than the men folk and they also contribute noticeably to this sector as invisible workers.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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