

## **PARTICIPATION AND DECISION PATTERN OF KARBI WOMEN IN FARM RELATED ACTIVITIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study was carried out in the Hill Zone of Assam. A total of 500 respondents were randomly selected from two blocks of the Karbi Anglog district. The data were collected through interview technique and from their background profile found that more than half were of lower middle age group, married and engaged in farming but had a low socio-economic status. In farming activities joint participation with male was highest followed by independent participation whereas joint participation with family dominated the picture in post harvest activities decision were taken jointly followed by independent decision taken by female. While comparing the data with national and state level, it was found that independent and joint with female participation in post harvest activities was highest in the Hill zone, and the same was lowest at national level. In decision making pattern joint decision was highest in both hill zone and state whereas independent male decision ranked 1 at national level.

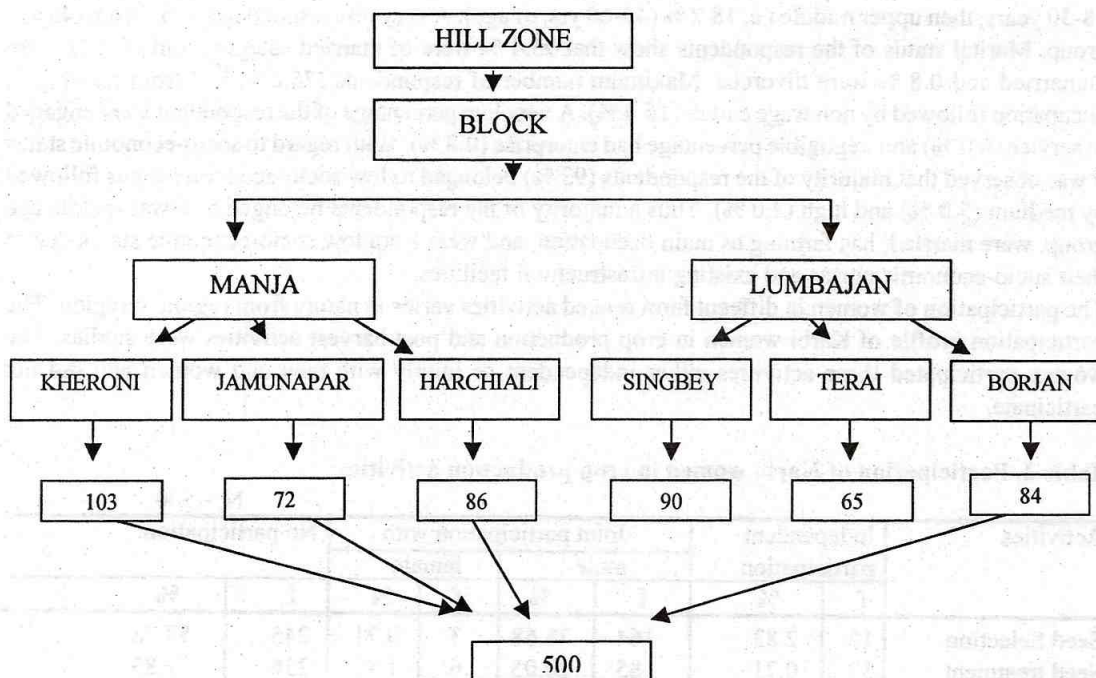
### **INTRODUCTION**

Farmwomen play a significant role in agriculture operation in addition to their work at home. The contribution of farmwomen to agriculture can never be under-estimated. In traditional village community, the women have been playing a distinctive accepted role in the process of earning a livelihood by participating in both production and marketing of agriculture and handicraft products. Amongst the six different agro-climatic zones of Assam the Karbi women of the hill zones are engaged in enormous number of activities like farming, livestock management and production, collecting fuel, food, fodder and water and so on Karbi women play an important role in jhum cultivation. They clean the land, sow seeds and harvest the drops. Traditionally it is believed that women are engaged in transporting, harvesting, threshing and winnowing activities, in order to establish their role in terms of participation and decision making in farm related activities. The study was undertaken to find out the socio personnel profile of Karbi, the extent of participation of Karbi women in farm related activities and decision making pattern of Karbi women in farm related activities.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in six villages of Manja and Lumbajan blocks of the Karbi Anglong district of the hill zone of Assam. A total number of 500 respondents from different land holding categories of farmers i.e. Large -123, medium-94, small -106, marginal-132 and no land -45 were proportionately and randomly selected.

## Sampling design



Data were collected with the help a well-structured interview schedule and through PRA technique.

**Table 1. Profile of Rural women in Hill Zone of Assam.**

Profile Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (18-30 yrs.)	128	25.6
	Lower middle (31-45 yrs.)	273	54.6
	Upper middle (46-60 yrs.)	91	18.2
	Old (above 60 yrs.)	8	1.6
Marital status	Unmarried	3	0.6
	Married	477	95.4
	Widow	16	3.2
	Divorcee	4	0.8
Occupation	Non wage earner	80	16
	Farm Labour	8	1.6
	Farming	378	75.6
	Service	30	6.0
	Enterprise	4	0.8
Socio-economic status	Low (below 30.00)	465	93.0
	Medium (30.01 -50.00)	25	5.0
	High (Above 50.0m0)	10	2.0

It was observed (table 1) that the most of the respondents i.e. 54.6 % were of lower middle age, which is young energetic and productive age group, followed by young i.e. 25.6 % under the age group of 18-30 years, then upper middle i.e. 18.2 % (46-60 yrs. of age). A very few respondents were from old age group. Marital status of the respondents show that 95.4 % were of married category, only 0.6 % were unmarried and 0.8 % were divorcee. Maximum number of respondents (75.6%) had from farming as occupation followed by non wage earner (16.0 %). A very low percentage of the respondent were engaged in service (6.0 %) and negligible percentage had enterprise (0.8 %). With regard to socio-economic status it was observed that majority of the respondents (93 %) belonged to low socio-economic status followed by medium (5.0 %) and high (2.0 %). Thus a majority of the respondents belonged to lower middle age group, were married, has farming as main occupation, and were from low socio-economic status due to their socio-economic norms and existing infrastructural facilities.

The participation of women in diffeent farm related activities varies in nature from region to region. The participation profile of Karbi women in crop production and post harvest activities were studies. The women participated these activities either independent or jointly with men and women and did not participate.

**Table 2. Participation of Karbi women in crop production activities.**

N = 500

Activities	Independent participation		Joint participation with				No participation	
			male		female			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Seed Selection	12	2.83	164	38.68	3	0.71	245	57.78
Seed treatment	3	0.71	85	20.05	6	1.41	330	77.83
Land preparation for nursery	3	0.71	165	38.91	8	1.89	248	58.49
Nursery raising	2	0.47	139	32.78	5	1.18	278	65.57
Land preparation for transplanting	3	0.71	138	32.55	10	2.36	273	64.38
Application of Manure, fertilizer	3	0.71	87	20.52	33	7.78	301	70.99
Transplantation	8	1.89	58	13.68	98	23.11	260	61.32
Water management	3	0.71	64	15.09	33	7.78	324	76.42
Weeding	7	1.65	67	15.8	27	6.37	323	76.18
Plant protection Measure	5	1.18	46	10.85	68	16.04	305	71.93
Harvesting	11	2.59	30	7.08	98	23.11	285	62.22
Any other	8	1.89	19	4.48	19	4.48	3788	9.15
	68	1.34	1052	20.87	757	14.88	3201	62.91

Under the crop production twelve different activities were taken into account to study the type and extent of participation.

The data revealed that joint participation with family was maximum and equal in transplantation and harvesting i.e. 23.11 %. In rest of the activities i.e. seed selection (38.68 %), land preparation for nursery raising (38.91 %) were performed jointly with male members, rather than performing independently. In all the activities percentage of no participation was high especially in the activities like see treatment, nursery raising land preparation for transplanting, application of manure and fertilizer, water management, weeding and plant protection measure.

Only a small portion of Karbi women participate in some crop production activities like harvesting transplanting and seed selection and land preparation for nursery raising by cleaning the jhum land table 2. Some of the activities such as manuring, water management, weeding and plant protection measures are either not needed or not taken by majority of the farmers of the hill zone. The respondent expressed the lack of knowledge regarding the procedures and benefit of seed treatment as the amount lost is 'negligible' as they consider.

**Table 3. participation in post harvest activities**

N = 500

Activities	independent participation		Joint participation with				No participation	
	f	%	male		female		f	%
			f	%	f	%		
Threshing	15	3	269	53.8	15	3	201	40.2
De husking	115	23	50	10	227	45.4	108	21.6
Cleaning	269	53.8	27	5.4	118	23.6	86	17.2
Shelling	157	31.4	19	3.8	202	40.4	122	24.4
Grading	92	18.4	70	14	56	11.2	282	56.4
Dry and storage For household Consumption	173	34.6	98	19.6	186	37.2	43	8.6
Parboiling/ Processing	121	24.2	23	4.6	97	19.4	259	51.8
Marketing	27	5.4	102	20.4	87	17.4	284	56.8

Traditionally farm women participation in different post harvest activities. More than 53.8 % of the respondent participation jointly with male threshing 40.2 % of them never participates in threshing. In dehussing activity 45.4 % of the respondents participation jointly with female, 23 5 of them participate indepently and 21.6 % never participate in this activity. In cleaning activity independent participation is higher (53.8) than others. In the activity of shelling 40.4 % of the respondents participate jointly with female. No participation was highest (56.4) in grading as the expressed that they had no idea of grading. Table 3. Drying and storage for household consumption activity 37.2 % of the respondents participate jointly with female and 34.6 % of them perform independently. Parboiling and processing activity are not performed by half of the respondents. It is revealed that 56.8 % of the respondents never go for marketing, but 20.4 % of them sometimes participate jointly with male in marketing activity. In general, overall participation of Karbi women in post-harvest activity was high in comparison to crop production activities.

**Table 4. Average score on participation in crop production activities**

Crop production Activities	State		National		Hill Zone	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Joint with male	1.8	III	2.37	II	3.09	II
Joint with female	2.5	II	1.83	III	1.49	III
Always independently	1.3	IV	0.42	IV	1.19	IV
No participation	4.86	I	5.48	I	6.12	I

The Table 4 depicts the average score on participation in crop production activities in state, National and Hill Zone. It has been found that nop participation ranked Hill Zone and I in state, National. In crop production activities joint participation with male ranked II in National and Hill Zone whereas in the state level it ranked III.

**Table 5 Average Score on participation in post harvest activities**

Post Harvest Activities	State		National		Hill Zone	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Joint with male	7.5	I	7.48	I	7.09	I
Joint with female	1.4	IV	2.37	III	1.49	IV
Always independently	2.05	III	1.55	IV	4.01	II
No participation	3.15	II	5.20	II	3.25	III

In post harvest activities, participation jointly with male ranked Hill Zone and I in state, National. Whereas independent participation ranked II in hill zone, III in state level, IV in National level, which may be attributed to the fact that Karbi women were performing the PHT independently more than the women at the state and much more than the women at National level.

***Decision making pattern in farm related activities of Karbi women***

Decision-making is a mental process based on conscious and unconscious reasoning or in simple word, it is a matter of course. The process of decision-making runs through several stages before the final decision. This was studied for farm related activities, which included 13 sub areas.

Out of all the activities, in pre sowing, crop care and nurturing, sale of produce and marketing, purchase of agricultural land, farm input and implements, the percentage of joint decision pattern was more prevalent than independent making pattern as can be seen from table 6. These data further show that independent female decision is also higher in the activities like harvesting and post-harvesting activities, quantitative retention of farm produce for consumption, retention of seed, seed treatment and storage. Independent male decision is lower in almost every activity which indicates the role and extent of empowerment of Karbi women in all the farming activities from the table 6, it is clear that joint decision is higher in all the farm related activities as Karbi women discuss about their farm related activities with the male members of the family and they took decision jointly.

**Table 6. Decision making pattern in farm related activities**

Decision Activities	Independednt decision				Joint decision		No decision	
	Male		Female					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Pre sowing	103	24.29	60	14.15	260	61.32	1	0.24
Sowing	96	22.64	61	14.39	267	62.67	0	0.0
Crop care and nurturing	92	21.07	55	12.97	264	62.26	13	3.07
Harvesting and post harvesting activities	75	17.69	166	37.15	180	42.45	3	0.71
Quantitative retention of farm produce for consumption	76	17.92	198	46.70	147	34.67	3	0.71
Retention for seed	72	16.98	155	36.55	196	46.23	1	0.24
Seed treatment and storage	73	17.22	107	25.23	239	56.37	5	1.18
Sale of produce/marketing	68	16.04	61	14.39	289	68.16	6	1.41
Prurchase of Agrl. Land/farm inputs implements	69	16.27	49	11.56	269	63.44	37	8.73
Obtaining bank loan for farming	76	17.27	35	8.25	238	56.13	75	17.69
Repayment of loan	73	17.22	42	9.91	209	49.29	100	23.50
Employment and management of hired labours	85	20.05	41	9.67	188	44.34	110	25.9
Sekking employment as farm labour	114	26.89	37	8.73	184	4.39	89	20.9
	1072	19.45	1067	19.36	2930	53.16	443	8.0

**Table 7. Average Score on Farm related decision**

Decision Activities	State		National		Hill Zone	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Independent Male	2.4407	III	4.28	I	1.19	II
Independent Female	1.3847	IV	1.16	IV	1.19	II
Joint decision	6.0667	I	4.26	I	5.3	I
No decision	3.1080	II	3.29	III	0.8	III

The average decision making pattern in farming revealed that joint decision ranked -I in state in hill zone, but at the national level it ranked -II. Independent male decision varies from state level, national in hill zone it is ranked -IIIrd, 1st and 2nd respectively. The data further shows that independently male independent female decision making pattern occupied equal ranks as far as zone is concerned whereas independent male ranked -I at national levels, which may be attributed to the male dominated society at the national level.

It can be concluded that Karbi women participated jointly with male members in crop production activities and in post-harvest activities. However, in decision taken by female. While comparing the data with the national level and the state level, it was found that independent and joint decisions were made in hill zone. This proved that the women folk of the state and the hill zone work as equal partners whereas the male dominates the society in other of the country.