

Animal Husbandry Decision-Making Patterns of Women in Agriculture

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ABSTRACT: Rural women are crucial decision-makers when it comes to animal husbandry techniques. It was deemed worthwhile to research rural women's contributions to animal husbandry and their participation in decisions on animal husbandry techniques. This research paper explores the crucial role of rural women in decision-making related to animal husbandry. The research is based on a sample of 340 respondents from Dewas district, Madhya Pradesh, India, and highlights the variations in decision making across different practices viz. breeding, feeding, fodder production, management practices, milk products making, marketing, housing facility, health care practices, daily practices, financial practices and profit utilization. This knowledge can guide policymakers and stakeholders in designing interventions and strategies to enhance the involvement of rural women and promote their active participation in decision-making processes. The active involvement of rural women in decision-making processes related to animal husbandry is critical for sustainable agricultural practices and rural development, and this research provides valuable insights to facilitate the same.

Keywords: Animal husbandry, Breeding, Decision-making, Economics, Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in the global economy and provides food security for the world's population. In rural areas, women play an essential role in animal husbandry practices, including decision-making related to animal health, breeding, feeding, and marketing (Tekale, 2012). However, their contribution is often overlooked, and their decision-making patterns are not well understood (Chayal *et al.*, 2009). In addition to farming, women play a crucial part in household administration and animal management in rural India. They run the household, yet it is thought that their job is unproductive, disorganised, and undocumented. Agricultural development programmes have historically centred on males as producers and because of misconceptions about the role of women in agriculture, women in rural areas have not received as much development support as men have, both in absolute and relative terms. The involvement of women in decision-making reflects the status of every person, which rises with more involvement up until the final choice. Only 59% of the gender gap in economic possibilities has been addressed globally, according to the World Economic Forum in 2016. Rapid development in policies to enhance women's empowerment and to quicken the process of economic gender equality are at the forefront of discussion in every corner of the world. In addition to the fact that gender equality is a top priority since it is a vital development objective, women's economic engagement is also "part of the

growth and stability equation" (Srivastava *et al.*, 2023; Geetha *et al.*, 2023). However, in recent years, women's status and roles have been continuously changing. Women now play a significant role in choosing the household resources that they especially use. However, when we focus on positions of decision-making, the positive consequences of gender equality and diversity become much more obvious. Involving both men and women in decision-making broadens perspectives, fosters innovation and creativity, diversifies the pool of skills and competencies, lessens conflicts, enhances the decision-making process, and may better represent the interests of the all cooperatives. For making policy for rural women their participation level must be known; decision making patterns, individual or joint decision, etc.

This research paper aims to explore the animal husbandry decision-making patterns of women in agriculture, shedding light on decision making across different practices viz. breeding, feeding, fodder production, management practices, milk products making, marketing, housing facility, health care practices, daily practices, financial practices and profit utilization. By understanding their decision-making patterns, we can identify ways to support and empower women in agriculture, improve animal health and productivity, and promote sustainable livestock practices. The research paper is based on qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, conducted in rural areas with a

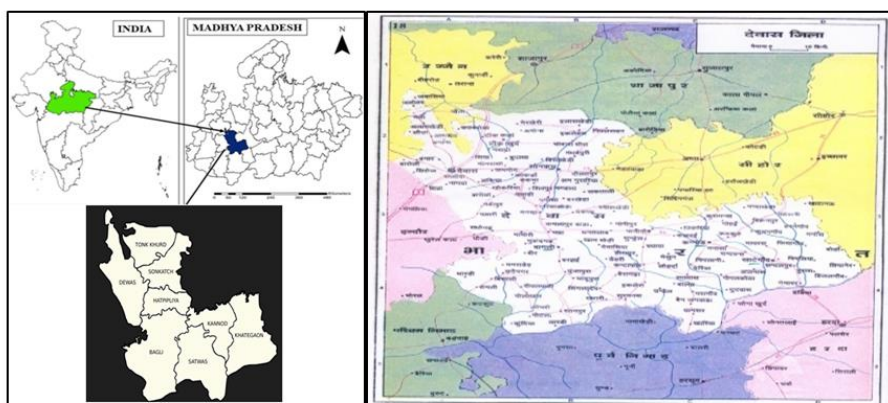
diverse sample of women engaged in animal husbandry practices.

Rural women involvement in decision making in Pakistan Tehsil Jhang was studied by Arshad *et al.* (2010) with a sample of 120 female respondents was chosen at random using the multistage random sampling method. They found about 66% of the respondents were happy with their current level of participation in livestock management decision-making. Approximately 75% of respondents thought that men dominated decision-making. Chauhan (2011) conduct a study on tribal farm women in agricultural and animal husbandry in Gujarat. He concluded that farmwomen made their own decisions for home management, including choosing and preparing meals (70.83%) and decorating the house (79.17%). The majority of farm management decisions were made by the wives' husbands, and women entirely controlled animal husbandry. Sarma and Payeng (2012) carried out a study in Assam's Sonitpur area. 140 randomly selected farm women from 14 villages in 7 developmental blocks of the district were personally interviewed to gather the data. They conclude that the majority of activities involve farm women making decisions either on their own or in partnership with their husbands. Most farm women were reported to be making decisions on their own in regards to issues like whether or not to feed concentrates (48.57%), how much concentrate to feed (56.43%), whether or not to feed green fodder (32.86%), how much crop residue to feed (62.86%), and whether or not to chaff or not (34.26%). Some studies reported that women's participation in decision making is positively associated with agricultural productivity and suggests that the lack of access to information, technology, and markets are the primary constraints to women's participation in decision-making (Raghunathan *et al.*, 2019). Thus,

interventions that enhance women's access to information, technology, and markets can contribute to increased agricultural productivity (Sraboni and Quisumbing 2018). Women's participation in dairy production positively impacts household food security and income and increasing women's participation in dairy production requires addressing social norms that limit their participation in decision-making processes (Job *et al.*, 2020). Previous research indicates that enhancing women's participation in decision-making processes in animal husbandry activities can lead to improved agricultural productivity, increased economic growth, and enhanced food security (Kumar *et al.*, 2019). The findings of this research paper provide insights into the complex decision-making processes of farm women and highlight the need for gender-sensitive policies and interventions to support women's participation and leadership in the agricultural sector.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodology will be designed to collect primary data through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with farm women involved in animal husbandry activities. The data will be analyzed using qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the role of women in animal husbandry activities and provide insights into improving agricultural production systems. Study was conducted in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh. Dewas district is spread over 7020 Sq. km. of Madhya Pradesh. A sample of 340 farm women was selected. The data was collected with the use of a questionnaire. Independent variables and measurements were taken as per specified standards.



Location map of Dewas district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Decision making pattern of the farm women about breeding practices

The present paper reveals that women are involved in making decisions about various aspects of breeding practices, such as the selection of breed, selection of adult, breeding program, heat detection, artificial insemination, pregnancy diagnosis, and rearing of calves (Fig. 1). The results show that women are

making independent decisions in some aspects of breeding practices, such as selecting a breed, selecting an adult, breeding programs, and heat detection. However, it is also concluded that in some cases, women's decision-making was limited by social norms and traditional family structures. Specifically, the decision related to artificial insemination and pregnancy diagnosis was often made in consultation with their husband or family members.

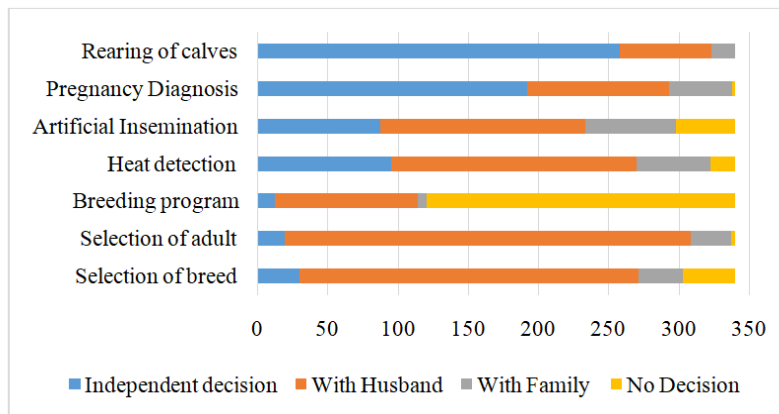


Fig. 1. Decision making pattern of the farm women about breeding practices.

B. Decision making pattern of the farm women about feeding practices

The results shows that the majority of the farm women make independent decisions in all feeding practices (Fig. 2). For the selection of feed, 52.65% of women make independent decisions, while 28.82% make decisions with their husbands, and 15.88% make decisions with family members. Only 2.65% of women reported not making any decision in this regard. Regarding the feeding schedule of young calves, a higher percentage of women (77.94%) reported making independent decisions, with only 18.24% making decisions with their husbands and 2.94% with family members. For feeding schedules of pregnant animals and dry animals, the percentage of women making

independent decisions was 65.29% and 74.71% respectively. In contrast, a higher percentage of women reported making decisions with their husbands for pregnant animals (26.18%) and dry animals (19.71%). In the case of feeding schedules of milch animals, 67.94% of women made independent decisions, while 15.00% made decisions with their husbands and 11.77% with family members. Regarding time and frequency of feeding, 59.11% of women reported making independent decisions, while 23.82% made decisions with their husbands and 14.71% with family members. The results indicates that farm women are actively involved in making decisions related to feeding practices in animal husbandry, with the majority making independent decisions.

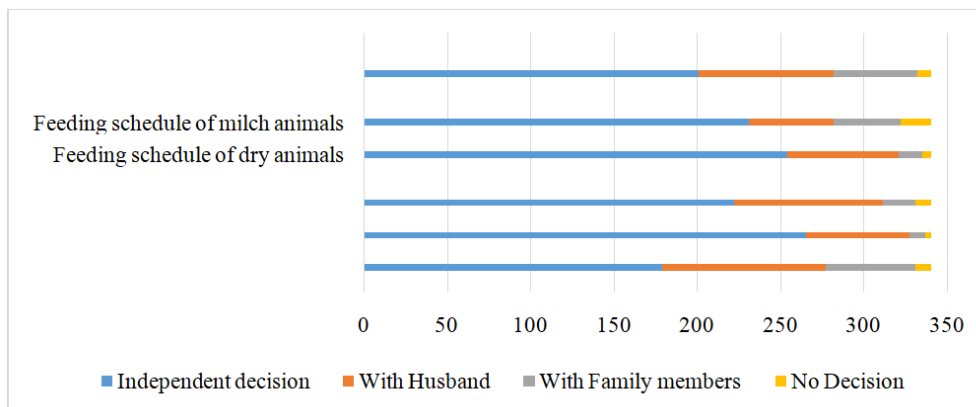


Fig. 2. Decision making pattern of the farm women about feeding practices.

C. Decision making pattern of the farm women about fodder production

The results show that the majority of the women (58.24%) made decisions about fodder crops with their husbands, followed by 20.38% of women who made decisions with family members (Fig. 3). Only 7.64% of women made self-decisions, and 17.19% of women did not make any decision about fodder crops. Regarding the selection of varieties of fodder crops, the majority of women (60.19%) made decisions with their husbands, followed by 23.52% of women who made decisions with no one. Only 16.24% of women made

self-decisions, and a small proportion of women (6.37%) made decisions with family members. The results showed that a large majority of women (42.35%) made self-decisions related to the drying of fodder crops. However, for the storage of fodder crops, the majority of women (49.12%) made decisions themselves. For silage-making, the majority of women (44.70%) made self-decisions, followed by 30.00% of women who made decisions with their husbands. The results suggest that women's decision-making patterns about fodder production are influenced by their social roles and relationships with family members.

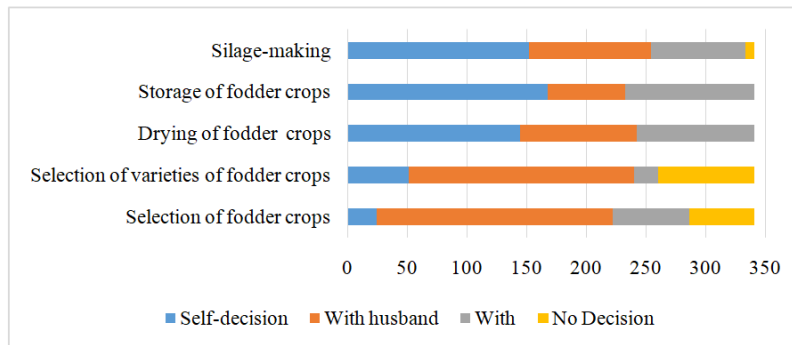


Fig. 3. Decision making pattern of the farm women about fodder production.

D. Decision making pattern of the farm women about management practices

The results indicate that the majority of women made independent decisions about animal housing (26.18%) and dung for fuel (80.00%). In contrast, the majority of women made decisions with their husbands regarding milk to sell (32.06%) and dung for manure (6.18%) (Fig. 4). Similarly, the majority of women made decisions with their family members about animal housing (27.07%) and dung for manure (15.00%). Regarding milk management practices, the results

showed that the majority of women made independent decisions about milk for family consumption (84.39%), followed by milk to sell (45.59%). In contrast, a small proportion of women made decisions with their family members about milk for family consumption (9.42%) and milk to sell (21.18%). Regarding gobar gas production, the majority of women made independent decisions (49.71%), followed by decisions with family members (24.12%). A smaller proportion of women made decisions with their husbands (23.34%).

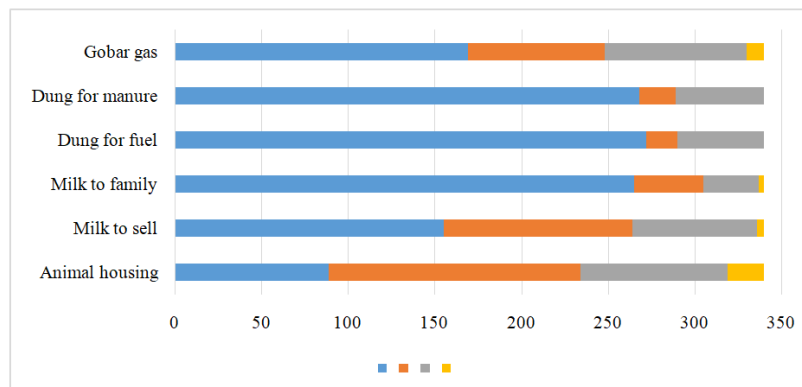


Fig. 4. Decision making pattern of the farm women about management practices.

E. Decision making pattern of the farm women about milk product making

The decision-making pattern of farm women about milk product making is presented in Fig. 5. The majority of the women (87.65%) reported making the decision

independently about ghee-making. Similarly, for buttermilk, curd, and milk product making, a significant proportion of the women (74.71%, 71.17%, and 26.18% respectively) reported making decisions independently.

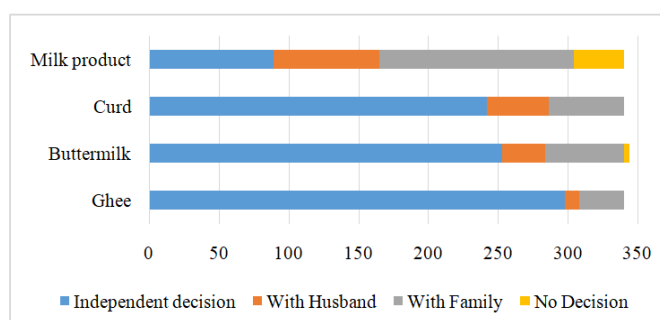


Fig. 5. Decision making pattern of the farm women about milk product making.

F. Decision making pattern of the farm women about marketing practices

The decision-making pattern of farm women about various marketing practices related to animal husbandry (Fig. 6). The majority of the respondents made

independent decisions related to remunerative price of milk (87.65%), store milk in summer season (71.17%), selling milk (57.06%), purchase of milch animal (40.88%), and purchase of concentrated feed (49.12%). On the other hand, the majority of the respondents

made decisions with their husbands regarding regular collection of milk (29.12%), selling of animal (32.94%), and selling of FYM (45.88%). The decisions related to these practices were made with family

members for remunerative price of milk (9.41%), regular collection of milk (23.24%), selling of animal (30.00%), and selling of FYM (25.59%).

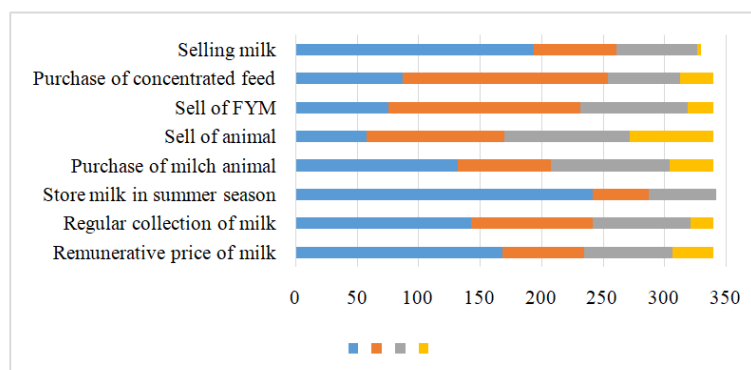


Fig. 6. Decision making pattern of the farm women about marketing practices.

G. Decision making pattern of the farm women about housing facility

Farm women's decision-making pattern about housing facilities showed that the majority of women made independent decisions regarding the arrangement of traditional housing (56.76%) and repair of sheds

(38.82%) with their husbands' involvement. However, for scientific housing, the majority of women made decisions with family members (42.06%) (Fig. 7). These findings suggest that women have significant decision-making power in managing the housing facilities for their livestock.

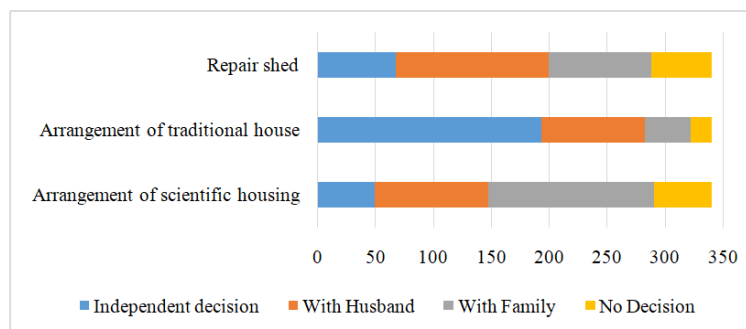


Fig. 7. Decision making pattern of the farm women about housing facilities.

H. Decision making pattern of the farm women about health care practices

Regarding the cost of medicine, the majority of farm women (45.88%) reported making decisions with their husbands, followed by decisions made independently (20.29%), decisions made with family members (28.82%), and no decision (5.00%) (Fig. 8). This indicates that farm women consider the cost of medicine an important factor and prefer to involve their husbands or family members in making decisions about it. With regard to ensuring an adequate supply of medicine from hospitals, a slightly higher percentage of farm women (44.71%) reported making decisions with

their husbands, followed by independent decision-making (22.35%), decisions made with family members (30.00%), and no decision (2.95%). This suggests that farm women are aware of the importance of an adequate supply of medicine and prefer to involve their husbands or family members in making decisions about it. In terms of arranging veterinary care, a significant percentage of farm women (52.65%) reported making decisions with their husbands, followed by decisions made independently (19.71%), decisions made with family members (25.29%), and no decision (2.35%). This highlights the important role that husbands play in decisions related to veterinary care.

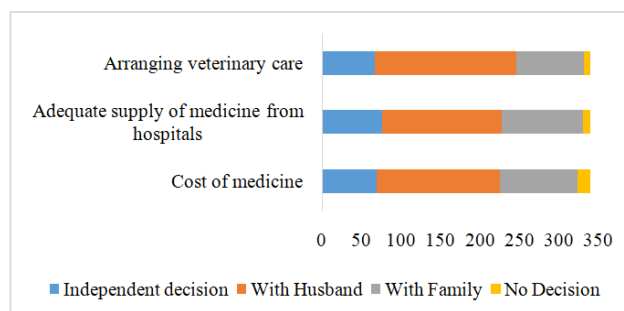


Fig. 8. Decision making pattern of the farm women about health care practices.

I. Decision making pattern of the farm women about daily practices

The majority of farm women made independent decisions regarding daily animal care practices such as cleaning the animal shed and utensils, bathing the

animal, and making dung cake (Fig. 9). However, decisions regarding milking, feeding, chaffing of fodder, soaking feed, and watering animals were more likely to be made in consultation with their husbands or family members.

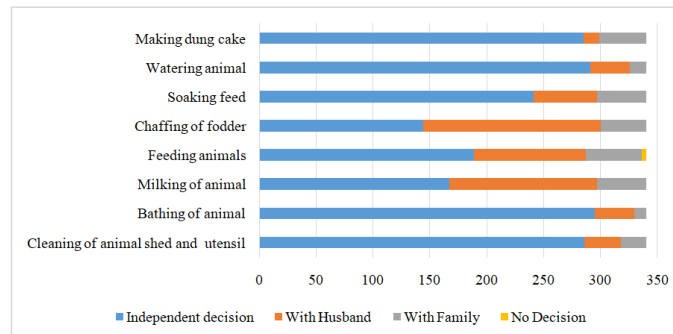


Fig. 9. Decision making pattern of the farm women about daily practices.

J. Decision making pattern of the farm women about financial practices

The results indicate that a majority of the farm women (74.71%) make financial decisions with their husbands, while 14.41% make independent decisions. In contrast, only 8.82% of farm women make decisions with family members, and 2.06% do not make any decision at all (Fig. 10).

Regarding the perception of loan interest, the majority of farm women (72.94%) make decisions with their husbands, while only 3.53% make independent decisions. Additionally, 13.53% of farm women do not make any decision regarding the perception of loan interest.

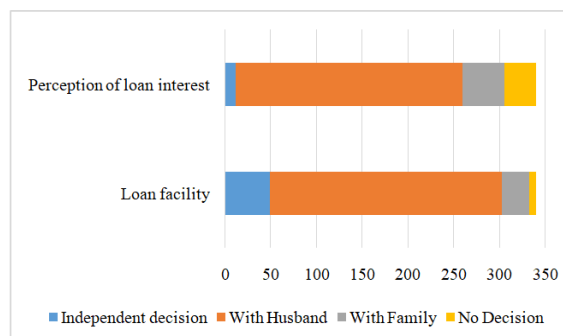


Fig. 10. Decision making pattern of the farm women about financial practices.

K. Decision making pattern of the farm women about profit utilization

The results indicate that the majority of farm women (75.29%) make decisions about children's education with their husbands, while only 8.82% make independent decisions. Additionally, only 11.76% of farm women make decisions with family members, and 4.12% do not make any decision at all (Fig. 11). Regarding the utilization of profits for household purposes, the data show that 31.47% of farm women make independent decisions, while 30% make decisions

with their husbands, and 28.82% make decisions with family members. Only 10.88% of farm women do not make any decision regarding the utilization of profits for household purposes. Regarding the renovation of houses, the data indicate that 25.59% of farm women make independent decisions, while 49.12% make decisions with their husbands, and 23.53% make decisions with family members. Only 1.76% of farm women do not make any decision regarding the renovation of houses.

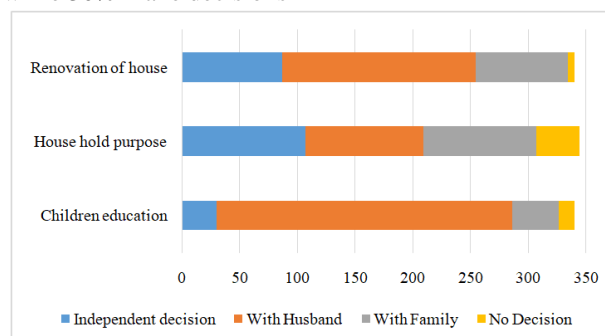


Fig. 11. Decision making pattern of the farm women about profit utilization.

CONCLUSIONS

This research paper highlights the crucial role played by women in animal husbandry practices in rural areas and sheds light on their decision-making patterns related to animal health, breeding, feeding, and marketing. The findings reveal that women make independent decisions in various aspects of animal husbandry practices such as breeding programs, selection of breeds, and selection of adults. However, their decision-making is limited in some areas such as pregnancy diagnosis and artificial insemination, where consultation with their husband or family members is common. The results indicate that enhancing women's participation in decision-making processes in animal husbandry activities can lead to improved agricultural productivity, increased economic growth, and enhanced food security. Therefore, gender-sensitive policies and interventions are required to support and empower women in agriculture by providing them with access to information, technology, markets, and addressing social norms that limit their participation in decision-making processes.

FUTURE SCOPE

The Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh was selected for the current research. There is a scope of other districts and states may conduct studies comparable to the one under examination.

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Conflict of Interest. None.

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