CHAPTER VII

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The main purpose of this chapter is to summarize the whole research effort, draw conclusions from the findings and give recommendations based on this study.

Punjab is predominantly an agrarian state having an area of 50,362 sq. Km. Out of its total population of 243.59 Lakh, 66.08% is rural. Women constitute 47.09% of its total rural population of 160.96 lakh and only 19.3% of the total of 35.5 Lakh Cultivators & Agriculture Labourers of Punjab (Statistical Abstract of Punjab).

Most of the rural population is entirely dependent on agriculture which is considered as a highly male dominated profession. For long, women have been the ‘unseen partners’ in agriculture in Punjab. Their role has been confined to that of daughters or farmwives. However, with changing times, women are stepping out of stereotypical roles and openly taking charge of farmlands in the state. In the state which ushered in the Green Revolution during the 1960s, women are now managing farms, deciding cropping patterns, exploring marketing avenues and setting new and innovative trends in the business of food technology. The increasing list of awards bagged by women is a pointer to the changing agricultural scenario in the state. They are no longer just known as wives or daughters of farmers. They no longer restrict themselves to small jobs on the field. Today, more and more women in Punjab are boldly running farm operations to reap rich returns.

With the spread of education and awareness, women from rural areas are today making their presence felt in various jobs and professions and subsequently contributing towards the economic well being of their families.

But as far as the traditional and most common profession of people of rural Punjab i.e. Agriculture is concerned, their role continues to be ignored. Women of farming families are generally not perceived as contributing towards agriculture.

In spite of being Workers, they are never treated as Earners. This holds even more true in case of house wives.
Hence, this study was especially aimed at identifying the activities related to various crop as well as subsidiary enterprises in which women played a significant role. The study also strived to know the role women played decision making in the agriculture sector of Punjab. In view of the above, the present study was carried out with following specific objectives:

1. To study the extent of participation of women in agricultural sector.
2. To study the perception of women regarding their effectiveness in agricultural sector as compared to that of men.
3. To study the factors affecting the extent of participation of women in decision making process in relation to different agricultural activities.

METHODOLOGY

The universe of study was the state of Punjab comprising 20 districts, 141 blocks and 77 tehsils. Punjab is divisible into six agro-climatic regions (Deptt. of Agricultural Meteorology, PAU, Ludhiana) viz., Sub-Mountain Undulating Region, Undulating Plain Region, Western Plain Region, Western Region, Flood Plain Region and Central Plain Region.

The central plain region was taken as the area for the present study as this region, 70 to 80 Kms in width, cuts through the state from northwest to southeast. The region covers 18000 sq Kms which represented about 36% of the total area of Punjab. The region covered parts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Bhagat Singh Nagar, Ferozepur, Barnala, Sangrur and Patiala districts.

Three districts of Punjab i.e. Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana were selected on the basis of convenience sampling for the study from the Central Plain Region of Punjab. These districts were selected for the study as they, apart from being economically very important, also represented all the three regions viz. Majha, Doaba and Malwa regions of Punjab.

Further, two blocks from each district were selected for the study on the basis of random sampling. They were Majitha and Tarsikka from Amritsar, Adampur and Bhogpur from Jalandhar and Doraha and Jagraon from Ludhiana.
Further, five villages from each block were selected using random sampling technique. Ten respondents i.e. married female members, of farming families from each of the villages were selected using convenience sampling for the purpose of the study. Only one respondent per family was taken for study. Sample Size of the study was 300.

This study was mainly based on the primary data collected from women of farm families with the help of a well drafted, structured and pre-tested questionnaire.

As the sample for the study was to be taken from among the women folk of the farming families of the rural Punjab, the questionnaire was first translated into Punjabi and then used to get the relevant data for the study. After initial scrutiny, incomplete and casually filled questionnaires were rejected and again the corresponding villages were visited so as to have ten properly and completely filled questionnaires from all the thirty villages. The study was exploratory in nature. Data was analysed using percentage method. Factor analysis was also employed.

The study was divided into two parts viz.
A. Subsidiary Enterprises, which included Dairy, Mushroom Cultivation, Bee Keeping, Agri – Processing, Poultry and Kitchen Gardening
   And
B. Crop Enterprises, which included Paddy, Wheat, Maize, Cotton, Potato, Peas and Fodder

Various activities related to these enterprises were covered in the study.

FINDINGS

The main findings that have emerged from the study are as follows.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Subsidiary Enterprises**

As different subsidiary enterprises involved different activities, the data was tabulated for different subsidiary enterprises practiced in Punjab. These subsidiary enterprises gave the farming community a chance at diversifying their agriculture apart from offering them with an alternate occupation and hence a source of income. These enterprises also gave them an opportunity to utilize their different available resources viz. time, space
(especially in-house), money and most importantly the domestic work force (women and children) to the maximum in order to generate more income as well as to make these resources feel more useful and contributing towards their family’s financial obligations. These subsidiary enterprises mainly included dairy farming, mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, agri-processing, poultry and kitchen gardening. Following were the results regarding the same.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Dairy Farming**

Women played a very important role in all the activities involved in dairy farming like site preparation, fodder feeding, watering, grazing, milking, storage of milk, conversion, marketing, site maintenance, cattle maintenance and pre and post delivery care and their extent of participation in these activities was very high. Also, women were found to be relatively very effective as compared to men in all the activities involved in dairy farming like site preparation, fodder feeding, watering, grazing, milking, storage of milk, conversion, marketing, site maintenance, cattle maintenance and pre and post delivery care of cattle, though men were also found to be equally effective in site preparation and marketing of milk.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Mushroom Cultivation**

Mushroom cultivation witnessed a great extent of participation of women in most of the activities involved in it especially spawning, management of beds, picking and packing. Their participation in compost making and marketing was relatively quite low. Also, mushroom cultivation witnessed a very high effectiveness of women in most of the activities involved in it especially spawning, management of beds, picking and packing. Their effectiveness in compost making and marketing was found to be relatively low.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Bee-Keeping**

It was found that women had a very important role to play in bee-keeping with most of them participating to a great extent in frame management, extracting, storing and selling honey. Also, it was found that women were much more effective in storage of honey as compared to that of men and equally effective in the activities of frame
management, honey extraction and sale of honey, though they were found to be not very effective in the purchase of bee-hives.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Agri-Processing**

Women were found to play a very important role in the agri-processing enterprise. They participated to a great extent in all the activities related to the enterprise like purchase of raw material, making, management, storage and sale of produce. Also, in activities related to agri-processing, women were found to be very much more effective in the purchase of raw material, making of the products, management of the production process and storage of the products. Even in case of sale of the products, they were not found to be less effective than men.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Poultry**

Poultry was found to be another enterprise that witnessed a very high extent of participation of women especially in rearing of chicks, egg collection and storage and their sale. Poultry also witnessed a very high effectiveness of women especially in rearing of chicks, storage of eggs and their sale than that of men. Women were also found to be as effective as men in the procurement of chicks and the egg collection.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Kitchen Gardening**

The extent of participation of women in kitchen gardening was to a very large extent and was witnessed across all the activities involved like site preparation, purchase of inputs, sowing, irrigation, hoeing, manureing and picking of the produce. Also, the effectiveness of women in picking was very high as compared to that of men whereas they were found to be equally effective in sowing, irrigation, hoeing and applying manure. Their effectiveness was found relatively less in site preparation and input purchase process regarding kitchen gardening.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in Crop Enterprises**

Crop enterprises form the very important and primary part of the agriculture sector. The study aimed at identifying the various activities involved in crop enterprises such as paddy, wheat, maize, cotton, potato, peas and fodder in which women had a high extent of participation and a high degree of effectiveness. Following were the results regarding the same.
Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Paddy

Women played a very important role in the cultivation of paddy as its sowing, harvesting, threshing and storage of paddy were the main activities that witnessed a very high extent of participation by women. In other activities like purchase of inputs, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing, participation of women was to a very low extent also, sowing, harvesting and storage of paddy were the main activities related its cultivation which women thought they performed better than men. In all the other activities like purchase of inputs, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection, threshing and marketing of paddy women were found to be relatively very less effective.

Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Wheat

It was found that in case of wheat, women participated to a great extent as far as its harvesting and storage was concerned. The participation of women was found to be very low in case of other activities related to wheat such as input purchase, sowing, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection, threshing and marketing. Also, it was found that women considered themselves better performers as far as its storage was concerned and did not find themselves any less effective than men in its harvesting. They found men somewhat better at threshing whereas they found their effectiveness to be very low in case of other activities related to wheat such as input purchase, sowing, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing.

Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Maize

As far as maize was concerned, women participated to a great extent in its harvesting, threshing and storage whereas the role of women was very little in case of input purchase, sowing, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing of the same. Also, it was found that women found themselves to be much more effective as compared to men in its harvesting, threshing and storage whereas
women found themselves very less effective in case of input purchase, sowing, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing of the same.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Cotton**

It was found that women had a very high extent of participation in picking (harvesting), ginning (threshing) and storing of cotton, high extent of participation in the application of manure and fertilizers and plant protection and very low participation in the input purchase, sowing, irrigation and marketing of cotton. Also, it was found that women found their effectiveness very high in picking (harvesting), ginning (threshing) and storing of cotton; nearly as good as that of men in the application of manure and fertilizers and plant protection and very low in the input purchase, sowing, irrigation and marketing of cotton.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Potato**

Women had a very high extent of participation in the sowing, picking, grading and storage of potatoes whereas the participation of women was found to be very low in case of input purchase, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection practices and marketing of potatoes. Also, it was found that women had a very high opinion about their effectiveness in the sowing, picking, grading and storage of potatoes whereas the effectiveness of women was found to be very low in case of input purchase, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection practices and marketing of potatoes.

**Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Peas**

The cultivation of peas witnessed very high extent of participation in the picking and packing of peas whereas input purchase, sowing, irrigation, application of manure & fertilizers, plant protection and marketing of peas witnessed low participation of women. Also, the cultivation of peas witnessed very high effectiveness of women in the picking and packing of peas and also in plant protection, though to a quite lesser extent, whereas input purchase, sowing, irrigation, application of manure & fertilizers and marketing of peas witnessed very low effectiveness of women.
Extent of Participation and Perceived Effectiveness of Women in the Cultivation of Fodder

Cultivation of fodder had a very high involvement of women in the harvesting and chopping activities whereas other activities involved in the cultivation of fodder like purchase of inputs, sowing, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing witnessed very low level of participation of women. Also, the cultivation of fodder witnessed the effectiveness of women being as good as that of men in the harvesting and chopping activities whereas other activities involved in the cultivation of fodder like purchase of inputs, sowing, irrigation, application of manure and fertilizers, plant protection and marketing witnessed very low level of effectiveness of women as that of men.

Role of Women in Decision Making in Agriculture Sector

Women were found to play an important role in the decision making process regarding purchase of farm machinery, number of livestock to be kept, kind of livestock, diversification, expansion, sources of finance and making other investments. They were found otherwise to play a very small role in the decision making regarding crop selection, place of purchase of inputs, selection of brand or variety of inputs, adopting a plant protection method, time of sale of produce and place of sale of produce.

Factors affecting Role of Women in Decision Making in Agriculture Sector

Factor analysis applied to the responses of the respondents extracted eight factors. Educational qualification was found to be the most important factor that decided and affected their role in decision making explaining 8.423% of the variance. Five statements were loaded on this factor. All the statements referred to the education of the women like education made one respected in the family, educated families respected women more and educated people were generally decision makers. The implication was that the respondents found education to be a very important factor that decided the role women played in the decision making process.

The second important factor that affected the role of women in decision making and explaining as high as 8.097% of the variance was found to be the financial status of the family. Four statements were loaded on this factor and all the statements were found to be highly correlated and referred to the financial status of the family like financially
sound families respected women more and financially sound families involved more in decision making. Hence financially sound families were found to be involving women more in decision making.

The next important factor found to be affecting the role of women’s participation in the decision making process was wife’s occupation. The factor explained 7.782% of the variance. Seven statements were loaded on this factor which were highly correlated and referred to the wife’s occupation like earning women had relatively more say in the family’s financial decisions and working women were more independent. The implication was that earning women participated more in decision making.

The next factor that affected the role of women in the decision making process was found to be the type of family i.e. whether the family was a joint or a nuclear one. The factor explained a variance of 7.371%. Five statements were loaded on the factor. They were found to be highly correlated and pointed towards the type of the family like larger the family, lesser was the importance of women in decision making and husbands consulted wives more in nuclear families. The variables of this factor implied that women participated more in decision making in nuclear families where as in joint families, their role in decision making was restricted to a lesser extent.

Husband’s status was found to be the next important factor that affected the role of women in decision making. Five statements were loaded on the factor and explained a variance of 7.025%. All the statements referred to the status of husband like wife of an idle husband was respected less and importance of wife was directly related to that of her husband. The implication was that wife of a husband enjoying a high status in the family participated more in decision making.

The next important factor that affected the role of women in decision making was found to be the age of women. Four statements were loaded on the factor which explained 6.170% of the variance. All the statements referred to the age of women like age meant experience and elder women were generally consulted regarding family issues. The variables of this factor implied that older women participated more in decision making as compared to younger ones as they were seen as source of wisdom as well as experience.
Dowry and financial status of the girl’s parents was found to be another factor that affected the role of women in the decision making. This factor explained a variance of 5.629%. Five statements were loaded on the factor which referred to the dowry and financial status of the girl’s parents like girl’s financially sound parents were respected more by her in-laws and people were generally dowry seekers. This implied that women having financially very well off parents or those bringing a good amount of dowry were involved relatively more in decision making by their in-laws.

The last important factor found affecting the role of women in decision making was their children and their gender. This factor explained a variance of 4.207%. Four statements were loaded on the factor which referred to children and their gender like childless women were given less importance and mothers having male children were given more importance. The variables of this factor implied that a woman’s importance and hence her participation in decision making was directly related to her ability to bear children and her participation in decision making increased even more in case she had male children. Hence women with only female children was given relatively less importance which decreased even more in case the woman was childless.

CONCLUSION

Punjab is predominantly an agrarian state having an area of 50,362 sq. Km. Most of the rural population is entirely dependent on agriculture which is considered as a highly male dominated profession. For long, women have been the ‘unseen partners’ in agriculture in Punjab. In spite of being workers, they are never treated as earners. This holds even more true in case of house wives. Hence, the study of role of women in agriculture sector becomes even more important so as to identify the various activities related to different subsidiary and crop enterprises in which women had high participation and also to know their perception regarding their effectiveness in the same as compared to that of men, apart from studying their role in decision making in the related activities and identifying the factors affecting the same.

Women were found to be highly participative in various activities related to different subsidiary and crop enterprises. Also, women were found to perceive themselves more effective only in those activities in which they had a high level of
participation. Women were found to be participating more in activities which were indoor and less vigorous.

Role of women, as per their extent of participation and perceived effectiveness, was found to be more in case of subsidiary enterprises as these were undertaken in addition to the primary segment of agriculture i.e. crop enterprises where men were involved more and women were employed only as a helping partners where as in case of subsidiary enterprises, women were also found to be the main participants and practitioners.

Educational qualification of a woman emerged as the most important factor affecting her participation in decision making. More educated a woman was, more was the role she was supposed to play in the decision making process. Apart from this, better financial status of the family and her own occupation and hence her own earning capacity helped her have a bigger role in decision making. Also, women were found to play a bigger role in nuclear families than in joint families. Women with husbands having a higher status in family also enjoyed more importance. Apart from these, older women, women with financially sound parents and with children, especially male, participated more in the decision making process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the results, following recommendations have been made:

- As women thought of themselves as more effective in those activities in which their involvement was high, women should be involved in more and more activities as that would lead to their becoming more confident in other activities also.
- Men should leave those activities to women even more, in which women expected themselves to perform better than men.
- As women found themselves good, even better than men, in most of the activities related to subsidiary enterprises, more and more farming families, especially small, should take up these as this will lead to their better economic conditions.
• Farm families must educate their girl children as that will lead to their being respected more by their husband and his family. Also, women will be able to contribute more by taking up various jobs, professions and even farming.

• Small and marginal farming families should respect their women folk and should involve them more and more in various farming practices, other activities and also in decision making in the family.

• As earning women were found to be respected and consulted more by their families, women should try and take up some jobs and activities through which they can earn for their families.

• Women should constantly encourage and help their spouses in facing their social and professional problems.

• In case of matrimonial alliances, people should value a girl’s education and her other skills and abilities rather than dowry.

• Government should establish agricultural education centers exclusively for women and hold training camps for women regularly in villages.

• People should motivate and help women to get education and training relating to agricultural and other allied activities so that women could take up these and earn for their families.

• People must shun their bias against the girl child as it is leading to female foeticides and discrimination against mothers of girl children.

• Men should recognize and respect the role of women in Agriculture sector and appreciate their contribution in the welfare of family as well as in the farm sector at the macro level.