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Female Participation in Decision Making Process in Family Matters in District Faisalabad–Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Women have a special position in all societies and no society can progress with out women. Women's participation in every field of life is very important. But Pakistani society is conservative to some extent. Like many other third world countries, Pakistan has also a male-dominated society and women's participation in decision making process is very low. So the present study was planned to assess a sociological study of female participation in decision making process in family matters in district Faisalabad. A sample of 120 respondents was selected from two randomly selected rural areas of District Faisalabad through simple random sampling technique. The data revealed significant role of women in decision making. However, there is lot of room for enhancing such role, for which, some suggestions have been made.

Key Words: Female participation; Decision making; Family matters

INTRODUCTION

Women are an important integral part of every human society. The progress of any nation and society depends greatly upon women participation in all fields of life. Generally, in the developing countries they are considered dependent. Women are encircled by the age old customs low literacy level, under paid labour and an unbroken cycle of child birth in urban and mostly in rural areas women are considered economically unproductive individual and their role in rural as well as urban areas is not recognized. Therefore, women need to make more concerted efforts to get their role recognized (Kharal, 2000).

Pakistan's total population is 150 million; females are 49% and the house wives being 29.33%. Women who constitute about half population of the country, their cooperation or participation in different fields of life is every important. Education is a favorable factor in determining change in the role of female. The education level and socio-economic characteristics are more affected in decision making process in family maters (Economic Survey, 2004-05).

Women have different roles such as mother, wife, daughter and sister which she performs at different stages of her life. The women being a wife have the only duty of bringing up children and she is forced to do everything. These all duties are a carry-over of the tribalcum-feudal society, where in the women are considered as property (Batool, 2002).

This study was planned to explore the female participation in decision making process in family matters particularly in rural areas. The objectives of the present study were to (i) study the effects of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, (ii) identify the types and extent of various matters of family in which female involves and consults, (iii) find out if education and cast are related with female participation in decision making, and (iv) suggest measures to improve the participation of women in decision making.

METHODOLOGY

This study explains the socio economic characteristics of rural women. This study was conducted in rural areas of district Faisalabad. A sample of 120 respondents was selected from two randomly selected villages of district Faisalabad. The data were collected with the help of a well-designed interview schedule, which were analyzed statistically to draw the conclusions and to formulate suggestions for the improvement of the participation of female in decision making process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their income is presented in Tables I and II. Majority (85%) of the respondents were house wives (Table III). It was encouraging to note that 90.8% of the respondents were consulted by their husbands in family matters (Table IV). Regarding family matters, it was found that 67.5% of the respondents participated in educational matters, 61.7% in career and 52.5% in marriages of their children (Table V). It is evident from Table V that 43.3% of the respondents participated in supervision of house, 41.7% were independent of shopping of daily items, 45.0% took part in house decoration, 46.7% were participated in purchase of household items, 58.3% were independent in visiting of friends and relatives, and 35.0% of the respondents were

Table I. Distribution of the respondents according to their age, caste, marital status, education level and type of family

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 35	54	45.0
36-45	43	35.8
46 and above	23	19.2
Total	120	100.0
Caste		
Arian	63	52.5
Jatt	31	25.8
Rajput	10	8.3
Any other*	16	13.4
Total	120	100.0
Marital status		
Married	120	100
Unmarried	0	0
Total	120	100.0
Family Type		
Nuclear	74	61.7
Joint	46	38.3
Total	120	100.0
Education		
Illiterate	22	18.3
Primary	15	12.5
Middle	14	11.7
Matric	34	28.3
FA/F.Sc.	16	13.3
BA/B.Sc. and above	19	15.8
Total	120	100.0

**Include gujjar, malik and ansari*

Table II. Distribution of the respondents according to their family's annual income

Annual Income	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 100000	36	30.0
100001-200000	49	40.8
200002 and above	35	29.2
Total	120	100.0

Table III. Distribution of the residents according to their occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
House wife	102	85.0
Working women	18	15.0
Total	120	100.0

Table IV. Distribution of the respondents according to their consultation by their husbands

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	109	90.8
No	4	3.3
Some time yes and some time no	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

independent in relation with community. A huge majority (95.0%) of the respondents had an opinion that their husbands should give them a right of making important decisions (Table VI). The chi-square value shows a

Table V. Distribution of the respondents according to their participation in decision making in different family matters

Statement	Often	Some time	Never	Total
Education of children	81 (67.5)	28 (23.3)	11 (9.2)	120 (100.0)
Career of the children	74 (61.7)	28 (23.3)	18 (15.0)	120 (100.0)
Marriages of the children	63 (52.5)	39 (32.5)	18 (15.0)	120 (100.0)
Supervision of house	58 (43.3)	44 (36.7)	18 (15.0)	120 (100.0)
Shoping of daily items	50 (41.7)	42 (35.0)	28 (23.3)	120 (100.0)
House decoration	54 (45.0)	42 (35.0)	24 (20.0)	120 (100.0)
Purchase of hold items	56 (46.7)	38 (31.7)	26 (21.7)	120 (100.0)
Visiting of friends and relatives	70 (58.3)	47 (39.2)	3 (2.5)	120 (100.0)
Relation with community	42 (35.0)	64 (53.3)	14 (11.7)	120 (100.0)

Table VI. Distribution of the respondents according to their opinion that their husbands should give them a right of making important decisions

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	114	95.0
No	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

significant association between education of the respondents and their power in decision making process. Gamma value shows a positive relationship between the variables. So the hypothesis "higher the education of the respondents higher will be power in decision making process," is accepted.

The chi-square value shows a non-significant association between family type of the respondents and their power in decision making process. Gamma value shows a positive relationship between the variables. So the hypothesis "respondents of nuclear family system had more power in decision making process." is rejected.

In Pakistan women are regarded inferior to men and permitted low level of activity in social and economic domains. Results of this study have indicated the significant role of women in decision making, which have an impact on the national economy. This has also been endorsed earlier by (Shah, 1986) who concluded that economic decision concerns with economic activity and social decision relates to life style of the family. Normally, rural women in Pakistan work for 12 to 16 h a day in on farm, off-farm and home activities through out the year. She assists her husband in various farm operations at the farm as well as off the farm. In the conduct of such activities, she does not receive any economic benefit. Thus, the women contributions to the family, national economy, return from the farm and intensive labour input are not reflected in the

Table VII. Association, between education of the respondents and their power in decision making process

Education	Power in decision making process			Total
	Never	Sometime	Often	
Illiterate	7	6	9	22
	31.8%	27.3%	40.9%	18.3%
Primary	5		10	15
	33.3%		66.7%	12.5%
Middle	4	4	6	14
	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	11.7%
Matric	6	6	22	34
	17.6%	17.6%	64.7%	28.3%
FA/FSc and above	1	4	30	35
	2.9%	11.4%	85.7%	29.2%
Total	23	20	77	120
	19.2%	16.7%	64.2%	100.0%

X^2=20.117 d.f. = 8 Significant = 0.010* Gamma = .434
* = Significant

Table VIII. Association, between family type of the respondents and their power in decision making process

Family Type	Power in decision making process			Total
	Never	Sometime	Often	
Nuclear	11	12	51	74
	14.9%	16.2%	68.9%	61.7%
Joint	12	8	26	46
	26.1%	17.4%	56.5%	38.3%
Total	23	20	77	120
	19.2%	16.7%	64.2%	100.0%

X^2=2.567 d.f. = 2 Significant = 0.277^{NS} Gamma = -.258
NS= Non-Significant

national statistics (Verman, 1994). It is generally argued that well organized and smart women can manage the family in a better way. Moreover, participation of women in various matters creates a sense of self-confidence among them. Women of different socio-economic characteristics have different level of participation in decision making process. The educated women have a high level of participation in decision making (Perveen, 1980).

In the predominantly household based system of production, domestic labour is not readily separable from productive labour. Women work with their husbands in the management of their estates. They also contribute to different important productive activities (Oakley, 1976).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It is concluded that by encouraging women role and status in society and providing them education, rights to participate in decision making can be enhanced. The following suggestions are made in the light of the results and observations of the study to improve the existing status and role of women.

1. Proper educational faculties should be provided for females without discrimination in the rural areas.
2. Govt. should given proper chance to women to make better use of their productive capabilities in different fields.
3. Women rights in family need protection.
4. Male and female discrimination should be eliminated by the government and society.

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