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## An assessment of involvement of rural women as domestic decision maker

**Dr. Babita Verma, Shabnam and Dr. Preeti Singh**

### Abstract

The status of woman in society is a significant indicator of the socio-economic development of a region. The important parameters regarding women, such as freedom of movement, involvement in family matters, her decisions considers in family living are chosen to ascertain the women empowerment in the present study. Structured interview schedule was followed to conduct the study. The study was focused with the main objective to identify age, education, occupation, type of family, material possession and their involvement in decision making related to family matters. For the present study Ayodhya district was selected purposively and further Milkipur block were again selected purposively due to convenience of the researcher. Total 102 respondents were selected from three randomly selected villages. 10% population was randomly selected from each village. The study shows the majority of respondents belong to middle age group and most of them were illiterate housewives. They had performed all her household chores with very limited support of equipment's mostly with traditional methods. Women as the decision maker in rural community only serves as an adviser in family matters and it was found as male dominating criteria.

**Keywords:** Indian mustard, path coefficient analysis

### Introduction

It is historic that women play significant role in societal development and ensure the stability, progress and long term development of nation. They play the role of mother, caretaker in family affairs, farmer, educator, entrepreneur etc. Globally women contribute immensely to agricultural development comprising about 43% of the world's agricultural labor force. Women also play the role of decision maker in home.

The status of women in the society is a significant indicator of social advancement. Women position is clearly better today on all most every social indicator like life expectancy, level of nutrition and medical care, enrollment in school, level of employment etc. However, there has been a sudden spent in crime against women.

During the recent years, female representation appears to be increasing at local level and minimal at central level. The 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment which makes position of reservation is a glorious epitome of women political empowerment at gross root level. The amendment envisages the introduction of Panchayati Raj system throughout the country and reservations of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> seats for women in Panchayats and municipal bodies. The amendment is not only on illustrative example, which emphasizes on democratization, but also a step accomplishes grater justice in political participation.

In India, where the position of women in the family is better in cities as compare to rural and slums. They are treated as an equal partner but when it comes to taking major decisions, it's the male who have the female say, whereas the women has to accept a sub servant status in the family. In the rural areas women have a low level of literacy and education, which are turn to affects the attitude of men and women's consciousness of their own rights a privileges dictate a lower status for the female.

The UN 4<sup>th</sup> world conference on women held in September 1995 in Beijing, China in its platforms for action called upon government to ensure women equal access and full participation in power structures and decision making. It also called for government to increase women capacities to participate in decision making and leadership. Keeping in view the above observation the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic status and education of rural women.
2. To study the role of rural women as domestic decision maker.

## Review of literature

According to Reddy and Narayan (1987) [7] Role of women in strengthening a family financially, they also perform significant home making duties and fulfills various important responsibilities according to their socio economic status. As a member of a family and as a part of the society, women are involved in various professions with various nature, which are governed by different factors.

P. Purnima *et al* (2021) [1] found that power of women in decision making was historically limited primarily due to patriarchal ideology. Her study reveals that about 45% of the women enjoyed equal status in the family with regard to taking various decisions. The educational level and employment status of women was observed to be most important factor determining their empowerment and involvement in decision making in all spheres of domestic life.

The mentioned perceptions of empowerment are not similar with the initiation and realization of empowerment for decision making phases, (Alkire *et al* 2013) [2] including the occurrence, practice and usefulness of choice (Longwe, 1995) [3], since these are related with the personalized and circumstantial perceptions of empowerment. Here also revealed that overall empowerment and the involvement in decision making procedure will empower women, which will progressively govern economic growth significantly (Joshi, 2014) [4]. This perception is very helpful to realize several crucial issues which induce and facilitate empowerment.

Vergheese, (2011) [8] studied women empowerment in Oman, which is grounded upon five autonomous variables via considering women empowerment as the dependent variable. According to this report, the women in Oman are superior as the domestic decision-makers. They are also good at economic decision making than social empowering decisions. In a parallel study, Das, (2011) [5] reported different limitations of women empowerment in Karbi tribes of Assam, which are related to societal, political, economic, technical and spiritual. He also mentioned that 'lack of knowledge about new technology and information' is one of the key reason responsible for the deprived women empowerment in this community.

**Research methodology:** In order to substantiate the planed objectives, the relevant information was collected from Milkipur block of Ayodhya district purposively, further 3 villages were selected randomly and 10 percent population from each village was selected randomly. So, 102 respondents were randomly from selected villages. A well structural and pre-tested survey schedule was utilized for interviewing personally. Tubular method and percentage were used to analyze the data.

**Results of the study:** The present study aimed to identify the socio-economic status of rural women which may affect the decision making power of them. Table 1 revealed that majority of women (58.82%) were belongs to middle age group followed by young age group and old age group with

22.55 percent and 18.63 percent respectively.

In the present social system of the nation where structure of the family has been continuously change. This study also depict that most of the women (77.45%) belonged to the nuclear family and remaining 22.55 percent were having joint family. It is also evident from the same table that 51.96 percent women were house wives and 48.04 percent women were engaged in farm activities or worked as agriculture labor.

**Table 1:** Percentage distributions of respondents on the basis of socio economic

S. No.	Respondents	Percentage
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age group</b>	
(a)	Young (below 30)	22.55
(b)	Middle (31-50)	58.82
(c)	Old (above 51)	18.63
<b>2.</b>	<b>Type of family</b>	
(a)	Joint	22.55
(b)	Nuclear	77.45
<b>3.</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	
(a)	Agriculture labor	48.03
(b)	House wife	51.96
<b>4.</b>	<b>Material possession</b>	
(a)	Gas stove	96.7
(b)	Refrigerator	2.9
(c)	Transistor	59.8
(d)	Television	24.5
(e)	Fan	71.6
(f)	Sewing machine	65.7
(g)	Cycle	67.9
(i)	Scooter/Motorcycle	27.8
(j)	Car	4.9
(k)	Tractor	6.9

The above table 1 shows that nearly all respondents (96.1%) had gas stove for cooking purpose. Majority of respondents had fan (71.6%), Bicycle (67.9%), Sewing machine (65.7%) and transistor (4.5%). It was also found that nearly some quarter of respondents had television (24.5%) and motorcycle at their home. Very few of them had four wheeler (6.9%), Tractor (4.9%), and Refrigerator (2.9%). Here it is clear that advanced facilities were scared in rural the areas.

**Table 2:** Distributions of respondents on the basis of education

S. No.	Education	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	60.78
2.	Primary	13.73
3.	Middle	7.84
4.	High school	5.88
5.	Intermediate	7.84
6.	Graduation and above	3.92

It is evident from the above table 2 that majority of respondents (60.78) were illiterate followed by 13.73 percent respondents were educated up to primary level, whereas very few (3.92%) women found as graduate and above qualifications.

**Table 3:** Distributions of respondents on the basis of decision related to socio-religious rituals

S. No.	Decisions	Husband only (%)	Wife only (%)	Jointly (%)
1.	Call and send back daughter to in laws	10.78	51.96	37.25
2.	Attending ceremonies	65.69	13.73	20.59
3.	Kind and amount of charity	23.53	21.51	54.90
4.	Going to religious gathering	26.47	31.37	42.16
5.	Going to Mahila Mandal	6.86	54.90	38.24
	Average	26.67	34.69	38.63

To determine the participation of woman in making the decision pertaining socio-religious rituals, the question related different activities were asked to ascertain whether the decision only by husband, by wife or were taken by both the husband and wife.

It can be inferred from the table that decision of calling and sending back daughter to the house of there in laws, decision was mostly taken by wife followed decision taken jointly and decision by husband only (37.25% and 10.78%), respectively. The decision of attending ceremonies was generally made by husband (65.69%), followed decision made jointly (10.59%) and decision made by wife (13.73%). The decision on the kind and amount of charity was pre dominantly taken by

husband and wife jointly (54.9%) followed by decision taken by husband only (23.53%) and (21.6%) by wife only. The decision for attending the religious gathering was mostly taken jointly (42.2%) followed by decision made by wife only (31.4%) and decision made by husband only (26.5%). The decision on going to Mahila Mandali was generally taken by wife only (54.9%) followed by decision taken jointly (38.22%) and by husband only (6.9%).

On average, majority of decision related to socio-religious rituals were taken jointly (38.63%) followed by those taken by wife only (34.69%) and these taken by husband only (26.69%).

**Table 4:** Distributions of respondents on the basis of decision related to children

S. No.	Decisions	Husband only (%)	Wife only (%)	Jointly (%)
1.	Children's purchases	7.84	56.86	35.29
2.	School for children	31.37	22.35	46.08
3.	Level of education for children	40.20	32.35	27.45
4.	Occupation of children	55.88	17.65	26.47
5.	Marriage of children	74.50	6.86	18.63
	Average	41.91	27.25	30.78

To determine the decision making process for the children revealed that in related to the children's purchases, women play the major role by taking decision either on their own (56.86%) or jointly (35.29%) and the husband take the decision in few cases (7.84%). While selecting the school for children generally the decision taken jointly by the husband and wife both (46.08%) followed by decision taken by husband only (31.37%) and wife only (22.35%). The level up to which the children will get education in majority of cases, was determined by husband only (40.20%) followed by decision taken by wife only (32.35%) and the decision taken by jointly (27.45%). The decision of selecting the occupation of children is generally taken by husband only (55.88%) followed by decision taken jointly and decision taken by wife only (26.47%) and (17.65%), respectively. The marriage of children is mostly decided by the husband only (74.50%), followed by decision taken jointly and by the wife only (18.63%, 6.86% respectively). The cases where the decision is taken by wife only where due the fact that these families added by widow mother.

On average, majority of decision related to the children were taken by husband only (41.91%) followed by those taken jointly (30.78%) and those taken by wife only (27.25%).

### Conclusion

'A nation cannot march forward if the women are left behind'. The empowerment of women has been recognized as

crucial in overall development of the country. The education of rural women is very important for making wise decision for the family and can prove their capability in the society spatially in rural background. The present study shows that most of the domestic decisions are taken jointly by husband and wife both but in some criteria like education, occupation and marriage of children was decided by male head of the family.

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