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PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN JOINT FAMILY AND NUCLEAR FAMILY

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted to study the participation of women in decision making in joint families and nuclear families. It is presumed that all important decisions in the family are taken by male heads of the families and participation of women in decision making is normally ignored. The involvement of women in decision making is necessary because one half population is female in India. A sample of 500 women respondents was selected from the five blocks of the District Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand) through simple random sampling method. The result reveals that participation of women in decision making in nuclear families is greater almost in all respects compare to joint families. The main objective of this study is to make comparison between joint family women and nuclear family women in participation of women in social decision making in family matters.

KEYWORDS

decision making, joint family, nuclear family, social, status

INTRODUCTION

Women occupy an important status in family life, particularly in India, since time immemorial. As the literature reveals women use to enjoy a very high status such as economical, social and political during Vedic period which deteriorated during Medieval and British period till introduction of various laws favoring women and a number of agitation by several social activist-Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, Guru Nanak Dev and etc. The status of women deteriorated to the extent that their life were confined to four walls of the house and they had no say in any decision-making. Decision-making is all pervasive. Be it a business organization or government organization or a club or even a family. In families a number of decisions are taken in various situations and circumstances. They may be economic, social, political, religious and professional decisions. But it is presumed that all important decisions in the family are taken by male heads of the families and participation of women in decision-making is normally ignored but in course of time owing to various women emancipation movements. Status of women has improve at the society has started recognizing her role in important family matters. In this paper a humble attempt is made to study the status of women in family life regarding their participation in social decision-making in various areas. But during the course of time the structure of family has also been changing its shape. Decade back, the structure of families was normally in the form of joint family but owing to industrialization and development in technology, infrastructure, communication, transportation, impact on western culture of Indian society etc. gave rise to nuclear family. Therefore it is desirable to study the degree of participation of women in social decision-making in joint families and nuclear families separately.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Malkit (1998) conducted study on decision making power among women, related to social obligations, which include decisions regarding age at marriage, mate selection, dowry, expenditure on marriage and education of children also showed relatively high role of women, dowry was more or less a female domain with 78.3 percent, women having high role in it, followed by decisions related to age at marriage of son and daughter.
2. M. U. Rashid, M. M. Islam (2011) concluded in their studies that women play significant decision-making role in education, social and development aspects of the family leaving comparatively less participation in economic activities of the family. Nearly half of the respondents had medium participation in the family decision making role, while the rest of women had high and low participation in equal proportion. They found that education qualification of women helps to play significant role in family decision-making.
3. Kiani. M (2012) he found out in his study that women of the new generations compare to women of the old generations who have been married for a short time had lower participation in family decisions. Men's education prepares the ground for their change of attitude and acceptance of new norm. Thus it increase men's participation in doing household chores and women's participation in family decisions change the pattern of the family decisions and adjust the structure of patriarchal power pyramid.
4. Jan M., Akhtar S. (2008) concluded in their study that women possess low decision-making power in their families, married and unmarried women holds egalitarian decision-making power related to their health of children. Women possess familial decision-making power related to education of children and marriage of their children. Married and unmarried women mainly possess non-specific decision-making power for participation in local government and masculine decision-making power in choice for income generating activity. Married and unmarried women also hold familial decision-making power for visiting to their relatives. Women also possess masculine decision power visiting to their friends and familial decision making power for sale and purchases of property.
5. Acharya D.R., Bell J. S., simkhanda P., Teilingen E. R. V., Regmi P. R. (2010) concluded in their study that many factors affects the ability of women to take part in the decision-making process in the household. Women from middle and lower class have the least decision-making power, which suggests involving them in education and decent employment to minimise their dependency on the family members and husband/father. In the household, husband –wife relation are central to women's autonomy in decision-making, and improved communication between them can deserve sustained support. Women are excluded from decision-making by more than just lack of education.
6. Zafar S., Batool Z., Bano S., found in their study that by encouraging women role and status in society and providing them education, rights to participate in decision-making can be enhanced. They suggested (i) proper education facilities should be provided for females without discrimination in the rural areas (ii)

- Government should give proper chance to women to make better use of their productive capabilities in different fields (iii) women rights in family need protections (iv) male and female discrimination should be eliminated by the government and society should improve the existing status and role of women.
7. Sharma S., Rao P. K., Sharma R. (2013) find out that women participate in all type of farm activities and do more work as compare to male workers but their participation in decision-making related to farm and income generating activities is low. They also concluded that decision related to buying and selling land, machines and other agricultural implements, improvement of harvest and livestock management were mainly taken by the head of the family or husband.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the participation of women in social decision making in family matters.
- To make comparison between joint family and nuclear family women in view of (1).

HYPOTHESIS

- Null hypothesis H_0 = There is no significant difference in decision-making by women in joint family and nuclear family.
- Alternative hypothesis H_1 = There is significant difference in decision making by women in joint family and nuclear family.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To know the participation of women in social decision making the study was conducted in five blocks namely- Jaspur, Kashipur, Bazpur, Sitarganj and Khatima District of Udham Singh Nagar which is one of the district of Uttarakhand. The sample size were 500 head women in the families out of which 250 were head of the joint families and 250 were head of the nuclear families to assess women's participation in social decision making. The data were collected with the help of questionnaires/interview schedule. Some respondents were not able to understand the question of the questionnaires than the head of the family women were explain the broad objective of this study by the researcher in easy understandable form. Secondary data related to women's decision-making were obtained from various publications book, websites, published and unpublished research paper, article, newspapers and journals.

To measure the role of women in social decision-making, a five point rating scale was developed and five types of responses No participation, low participation, medium participation, high participation and very high participation in social decision-making were obtained from the respondents. The corresponding scores assigned to each response were 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. After collecting the data the chi-square test was used in numerical table and value of chi-square was ascertained on the basis of degree of freedom. The rejection and acceptance of the hypothesis was decided on the basis of significance/insignificance of the relevant statistic at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the sake of this study social decisions assumed that such decision are taken by elder male member of the family and role of women in this regard is almost ignored. Therefore, the study focuses at looking into the extent to which women have their say in social decisions of the family. For the sake of this study a few selected social activities have been taken like- marriage, widow remarriage, relation maintain with blood-relatives, friends and their families, business partners and colleagues and join the social organizations like- NGO and other.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN DIFFERENT FAMILY MATTERS

| S.no | Decision-Making | Family women | | | | (chi-square) |
|------|---|--------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------------|
| | | Joint n=250 | | Nuclear n=250 | | |
| 1. | Marriage | N | % | N | % | 85.512 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 17 | 6.8 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 2 | 55 | 2.2 | 17 | 6.8 | |
| | 3 | 111 | 44.4 | 130 | 52 | |
| | 4 | 57 | 22.8 | 88 | 35.2 | |
| | 5 | 10 | 04 | 15 | 06 | |
| 2. | Widow remarriage | | | | | 42.482 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 33 | 13.2 | 16 | 6.4 | |
| | 2 | 75 | 30 | 56 | 22.4 | |
| | 3 | 102 | 40.8 | 114 | 45.6 | |
| | 4 | 35 | 14 | 49 | 19.6 | |
| | 5 | 5 | 02 | 15 | 06 | |
| 3. | Maintain social Relation with blood-relative | | | | | 26.7839 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 03 | 1.2 | 00 | 00 | |
| | 2 | 32 | 12.8 | 23 | 9.2 | |
| | 3 | 125 | 50 | 107 | 42.8 | |
| | 4 | 77 | 30.8 | 105 | 42 | |
| | 5 | 13 | 5.2 | 15 | 06 | |
| 4 | Maintain social Relation with friends and their family | | | | | 24.6596 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 15 | 06 | 05 | 02 | |
| | 2 | 37 | 14.8 | 22 | 8.8 | |
| | 3 | 98 | 39.2 | 105 | 42 | |
| | 4 | 90 | 36 | 100 | 40 | |
| | 5 | 10 | 04 | 18 | 7.2 | |
| 5 | Maintain social relation with business partner and colleagues | | | | | 26.1181 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 05 | 02 | 03 | 1.2 | |
| | 2 | 43 | 17.2 | 22 | 8.8 | |
| | 3 | 112 | 44.8 | 120 | 48 | |
| | 4 | 80 | 32 | 87 | 34.8 | |
| | 5 | 10 | 04 | 18 | 7.2 | |
| 6 | To Join social organizations like- NGO and other | | | | | 18.5323 ^{HS} |
| | 1 | 08 | 3.2 | 04 | 1.6 | |
| | 2 | 47 | 18.8 | 26 | 10.4 | |
| | 3 | 100 | 40 | 110 | 44 | |
| | 4 | 75 | 30 | 89 | 35.6 | |
| | 5 | 20 | 08 | 21 | 8.4 | |

1=No participation, 2=low participation, 3=medium participation, 4= high participation, 5= very high participation

Table value at 0.01=13.2767, 0.05=9.4877, with 4 df.

^{HS}= highly significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

1. **Marriage-** In the joint family women participation is high till first and second score which is no and low participation, but in nuclear family women participation is high in medium, high and very high scores. The chi-square value reveals that there is highly significance difference between the joint family and nuclear family women regarding decision making about marriage.
2. **Widow remarriage-** The majority of joint family women respondent participation is highest in the third score but it is less than nuclear family women respondents. In fourth and fifth score nuclear family women respondents participation is high compare than joint family women. It shows that nuclear family women participation is high than the joint family women.
3. **Social relation with blood relatives-** The joint family women respondent participation is high in third score than nuclear family women. It reveals that majority of joint family women take decisions with their husband/father but nuclear family women take more decisions along with their husband/father.
4. **Social relation with friends and their family-** The joint family women takes no and low participation in decision making and nuclear family women take part in medium, high and very high decision making about to maintain social relation with friends and their families.
5. **Social relation with business partners and colleagues-** In the joint family women take few decisions about maintaining their relation with friends and their family because male member of the family take decisions behalf of them. But in the nuclear family women have more freedom to decisions about maintain their relation with friends and their family.
6. **Joining social organizations-** Similarly in this area joint family women have minimum freedom to take decision about joining social institution but nuclear family women have more freedom to join the social institutions.

CONCLUSION

Woman is the most important part of the family but there is very high difference between a joint family women and a nuclear family women. There is significant difference between the joint family women and nuclear family women regarding decision making about marriage, widow remarriage, maintaining social relation with blood-relatives, friends and their families, business partners and colleagues and joining the social organizations. Thus the above discussion reveals that participation of women in decision making in nuclear families is greater, almost in all respect as compared to joint families. This might be due to the obvious fact that in comparison to joint families women in nuclear families have less control of their in-laws and other elderly members. In nuclear families the husband happens to be the head of the family and takes almost all decisions but consultancy and advice play an important role in reaching the final decisions. In nuclear families wives act as true consultant and advisor because no other member in the family is capable of extending their advice, this results in high participation of women in decision-making in nuclear families.

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