

## Research Note

### Participation of Rural Women in Decision Making Activities and Its relation to their caste and religion

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Received 18 May. 2016, accepted on 03 Aug. 2016

#### ABSTRACT

An Idea which is gaining momentum these days is that Increased participation of women in decision making at all levels will help to adjust the goals pursued through the development of country Keeping the above views, an attempt has been made by the investigator to know the actual position of women in decision making in rural areas and relation to their cast and religion of decision making. For this purposes Faizabad district Millipore block was selected randomly in the second stage. Out of 35 villages 25% women (50 women) of the village namely Amaniganj was selected randomly for present study. It was found that the mostly women's were taking decision in the area of clothing, food and religious activities and least were in the area of communication. Women belongs to the Hindu families, upper cast, were actively engaged in decision making in comparison of Muslim families, lower cast, Significant differences between two groups were observed regarding religion ( $t=2.063p<0.05$ ), cast ( $t=2.145p<0.05$ ).Effect of caste on decision making power of women was more in comparison to religion.

**KEY WORDS:** Participation, Decision making, family activities, caste, religion,

A decision is a choice between two or more alternatives. It can be regarded as an identifying and choosing alternative based on the value and preference of a decision-maker **Harris, (2008)**.

With the changing outlook of the society towards women and her role in various activities both inside and outside the family system, the traditional chauvinistic role of the father as one to possess the best decision making ability in the family has also undergone drastic transformation. Women, in most part of the world today are no longer compelled to be under the garb of veils and are coming out in the open, shouldering responsibilities in various kinds of decision making and standing at par with men at every tread. This attitude was a thought completely undreamt of four or five decades back when the men of the family were the sole bread earners and the only person involved in the role of any sort of decision making. Education has contributed to a great extent in opening up wide spheres of knowledge both for men and women, whereby people's superstitions regarding the women as the weaker sex has encountered a considerable change. Women are no longer confined to the four walls of the house and take active role in the family decision making, whether it is finances, or earning money, running the household or making decision about the future of her children.

Studies have revealed an increasing number of cases where the role of women in the family decision making is primary or at least shared equally with the men. Their role in controlling family finances and making decision as to where the various expenses should be incurred has come to the

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forefront with researches depicting 37 per cent men dealing with the same individually, 28 per cent with their wives and 30 per cent solely controlled by women.

Another direction to the role of women in the family decision making process has been lent by the role of parenting children. Unlike days of yore, when rearing up children was the duty of the mother, as the male members were busy outside, today, with women taking active part in the professional genre, fathers are taking equal Interest in the family and molding their child's life.

But Gender equality in democratic government is still uneven; in most of the world, women are under-represented in positions of power (**Anonymous, 2011**). There are various family matters on which men generally take decision. Women are quite often even not consulted this is because of the feeling among women are incapable expressing their decision, due to illiteracy and other reasons **Tipilda and Panhwar,(20080)**. About 50 percent of the women do not feel free to take a sick child to doctor without the approved of her husband or parent in law and about 70 per cent do not make decision regarding the purchase of their own or their children clothing **Kishore (2011)**.

Country like India cannot any appreciable progress until and unless women in India especially rural women's educated and from domestic thrallldom. India will progress to its destined great heights of wealth and greatness only when all the women (urban and rural) participate in re construction.

To find out the effect of religion and caste on decision making power of rural women ,researcher selected the Faizabad district as she was the resident of this area. Out of 13 blocks Milkipur block was selected randomly in the second stage. From which village namely Amaniganj was selected. Again 25% women (50 women) of that village were selected randomly. Thus the study was carried out on a sample of 50 women's.

**Table -1: Distribution of the respondents according to their religion in family decision making activities**

Decision making	Religion N=50				Statistical value	
	Hindu (n=37)		Muslim (n=13)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Education	8.41	1.32	6.69	2.92	2.892	<0.05*
Development of child	7.95	1.89	7.15	2.63	1.184	>0.05
Foods	8.84	0.49	8.54	1.60	1.035	>0.05*
Clothes	7.97	1.78	9.00	0.00	2.004	<0.05*
Home Management	7.00	1.51	6.00	1.66	2.004	<0.05*
Social Activities	8.51	1.08	8.54	1.60	0.076	>0.05
Religious Activities	8.92	0.63	8.54	1.60	1.224	>0.05
Women empowerment	5.73	1.59	5.69	0.99	0.085	>0.05
Communication	4.38	1.36	3.08	0.27	3.390	<0.05*
Sharing work	8.76	0.79	8.00	1.84	2.067	<0.05*
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.46</b>	<b>6.23</b>	<b>71.23</b>	<b>11.52</b>	<b>2.063</b>	<b>&lt;0.05*</b>

Above table reveals the mean scores regarding women decision making of various activities according to their religion. The mean score in the areas of education (8.41), development of child (7.95)

food (8.84). Home management (7), religious activities (8.92) women empowerment (5.73), communication (4.38), sharing of work (8.76) and total (76.46) were found to be more among the Hindu women as compared to Muslim women while the mean score regarding decision making of clothes (9.00), social activities (8.54) were found to be more in Muslim women as compared to Hindu women.

Statistically, significant difference regarding mean score of decision making of education ( $t=2.892$ ;  $P<0.05$ ), clothes ( $t=2.065$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), Home management ( $t=2.004$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), communication ( $t=3.390$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), sharing of work ( $t=2.067$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and total ( $t=2.063$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) were observed between Hindu and Muslim women. While in significant difference were observed regarding mean score of development of child ( $t=1.184$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), food ( $t=1.035$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), activities ( $t=1.224$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), women empowerment respondents

**Table -2: Distribution of the respondents according to their cast in family decision making activities**

Decision making	Caste N=50				Statistical value	
	Upper (n=16)		Other (n=34)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p
Education	8.63	0.78	7.65	2.32	1.642	>0.05
Development of child	9.00	0.00	7.15	2.37	3.091	<0.05*
Foods	8.81	0.53	8.74	1.07	0.246	>0.05
Clothes	8.31	1.16	8.21	1.76	0.206	>0.05
Home Management	7.00	1.54	6.62	1.63	0.782	>0.05
Social Activities	8.69	0.69	8.44	1.42	0.664	>0.05
Religious Activities	8.88	0.48	8.79	10.2	0.333	>0.05
Women empowerment	5.81	1.74	5.68	1.30	0.296	>0.05
Communication	4.81	1.18	3.68	1.21	3.104	<0.05*
Sharing work	8.64	0.98	8.58	1.29	0.30	>0.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.63</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>73.44</b>	<b>9.29</b>	<b>2.145</b>	<b>&lt;0.05*</b>

Above table highlights the mean score regarding decision making of various family activities according to their caste. Home management (7.00), Social activities (8.69) religious activities (8.88) women empowerment (5.81), communication (4.81), sharing of work (8.69) and total (78.63) were observed to be more among the upper caste women as compared to other caste women.

Statistically, significant difference regarding mean score of decision making of development of child ( $t=3.091$ ;  $P<0.05$ ), communication ( $t=3.104$ ,  $P<0.05$ ), total ( $t=2.145$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) were observed between upper caste and other caste respondents. While insignificant difference were observed regarding mean score of education ( $t=1.642$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), food ( $t=0.246$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), clothes ( $t=0.206$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), Home management ( $t=0.782$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), social activities ( $t=0.664$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), religious activities ( $t=0.333$ ,

$p > 0.05$ ), women empowerment respondents ( $t = 0.296$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and sharing of work ( $t = 0.301$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) between upper caste and other cast respondents.

It can be concluded from the above table that most of the respondents were actively engaged in the decision making activities related to the food, clothes, religious rites, and development of children. and least involvement were in the area of communication, empowerment of women, as per the findings indicated that most of the women did not participate in allied activities. Major homestead and allied activities were performed independently and jointly with female members of the family. **Seema et al (2000)** and **David (2006)** Significant differences between two groups were observed regarding religion ( $t = 2.063$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), cast ( $t = 2.145$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found. So it can be said that education and freedom in the family plays crucial role in decision making of rural women.

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