

Role of Education Influencing Ability of Women in Decision Making

Dr. Varsha R. Bhujbal

L.A.D. & Smt.R.P.College for Women
Nagpur

Abstract:

Empowerment of any section of a society is a myth until they are conferred equality before law, the foundation of freedom, justice and fraternity is based on the recognition of the inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights to all the members of the society. The universal declaration of human rights adopted and proclaimed by the general assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948, envisaged in article 2 that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this declaration on any kind.

Empowerment has been used to represent a wide range of concepts and to describe a proliferation of outcomes. The term has been more often to advocate for certain types of policies and intervention strategies than to analyze them, as demonstrated by a number of documents from the United Nations, the association for women development, the declaration made at the micro credit summit and other organization.

Empowerment of women is a gradual and complicated process. it involves changing the way of thinking of the whole society. In most societies always believed that women are less important than men. It is not easy to change these ancient attitudes of the society. Various movements and programmes are being carried out by the government, voluntary organization and by lot of social activities for women's development and gender equality. To get gender equality we must give importance to these factors like education, employment, economic independence, empowerment, self-confidence and decision making. The present paper would like to explore the Role of education influencing ability of women in decision making.

Key words: Education, Decision Making, Women Empowerment

Introduction:

With the changing outlook of the society towards

women and her role in various activities both inside and outside the family system, the traditional, male 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. The women, on the other hand, were meant to bear the encumbrance of childbirth and rearing and bringing up children along with the responsibility of looking after the home front and the myriad needs of the husband. 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.

Objective:

" To know the Role of education influencing ability of women in decision making

Research Methodology : The present paper is based on secondary data and discussion with experts.

Review : Anjali Kurane, conducted an empirical research and published an article, in 2012 she conducted field study in Pune City of Maharashtra and examine issues as socio cultural, educational, economic and political and also the role of mass media in women's development. It is seen that

women with the attainment of education and better economic status are found to be developing new and modern outlook and opinions. They have started questioning the traditional image of a submissive woman and are trying to come out of it by asserting their rights through participation in the decision making process in the family, opposing many traditional customs, beliefs and practices, having a positive attitude towards role fluidity between husband and wife and also towards education, employment, economic independence, political participation and so on. On the whole, an overall change is observed in the position of women.

KamlaNath state that women are still unequal to men, but the last quarter of a century has seen tremendous improvement in their status through progress in education, in having better health and longevity of life and entry into jobs in the organized sectors. While we have found no direct correlation between the increase in education with female work participation rate and representation in legislatures, education does lead to individual development and creates awareness about individual rights and is thus empowering at the individual level.

Roth (2001) in his study found that wives tend to under-report their household decision making power. In couples with both partners educated and in couples in which women work for pay both partners were significantly more likely to report that both of them participate in the final decision than was case in couples without education or in which the wife did not work for pay. Decision making power of women as measured in this study was significantly related to the household having a plan for what to do in case of maternal emergency, but was not associated with place of childbirth or with having a postpartum checkup. Women play a crucial role in the economic welfare of the family. Women perform different tasks depending on their socio-economic structure, number of members in the family, the nature of professions they are involved in and many other factors (Reddy and Narayan, 1987). The authoritarian Characters the traditional joint family entails decisions making powers concentrated in the position of the eldest male members

Discussion:

Education, a necessity for women:

It is indisputable that the education of women is an absolute necessity. This has been realized by all those responsible for India's policy formulations. the education commission of 1964-65 wrote: "for full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and of molding the character of the children during the most impressionable year of infancy the education of women is even of greater importance that that of men".

Role played by educated women:

The educated women have come to play a greater role in our public life lately a greater role in our public life lately. Greater numbers of them have entered into various jobs, we find more women participating in politics, in social life, in economic life. More girls go to schools and colleges today than ever before. But the educated women have not been able to provide any leadership to the uneducated masses. They have not shown any interest in the upliftment of oppressed classes of women. There has not been any group of educated women, which has consciously tried to accelerate the pace of social change in our society. They have usually adhered unquestionably to the outdated and antisocial customs and traditions. In many educated women, what one sees is a superficial westernization, a social superiority complex and attitudes of these so called educated women are backward and reactionary. Their contribution to society appears to be nil. Education and knowledge do not seem to have liberalized energized and revolutionized her life.

The present education system is also alienated from the needs of the community. it is not community orientated. What is taught in the class room has little relevance in terms of the society outside the classroom. What is taught in the schools and colleges and that what should be taught in terms of the social reality. This is perhaps the main reason why the educated people become the victims of a useless education and are unable to benefit themselves or society with their obsolete tools of learning and lack of skills that go by the name of education today. (pg.no.19, Rajesh)

Components of Empowerment :

Empowerment process is one where women find the time and space of their own and begin to re-examine their life critically and collectively. Women alone cannot undertake the process of empowerment; men must be involved in the process. Empowerment of women would create a new world of equality between men and women.

According to the National Policy of Education, Government of India (1986) women become empowered through collective reflection and decision making. Its parameters are building a positive self-image and self-confidence, developing the ability to think critically, building up group cohesion and fostering decision making and action, ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change, encouraging group action in order to bring out change in the society, providing the wherewithal for economic independence.

The components of empowerment are, women and men's sense of internal strength and confidence to face life, the right to make choices, the power to control their lives within and outside the home, the ability to influence the direction of social change towards the creation of a more just social and economic order nationally and internationally.

Empowerment of women also means an extension of choices in personal life regarding education, employment, marriage, etc. increasing choices in women's life depends on the support given by family members, institutional agencies and community.

The indicators of women empowerment are important to recognize or identify her as an empowered person. The indicator of women empowerment can be classified into qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Qualitative indicators are:

- * Self-confidence-understand what she wants to express it and try to get it, feel proud of herself, having a positive self-image, articulation.
- * Awareness about health, nutrition, legal rights, political activities, government policies and programs.

- * Less burden of work and more leisure time
- * Changing role and responsibilities within the family
- * Decrease in violence within the family
- * Changing attitudes towards tradition and customs like child marriage and dowry
- * Physical mobility-walk freely within the village go to the city or town to banks, post office , go for shopping cinema and exhibition and visit relatives
- * Become member of a women's group or some other people's organization
- * Self-identity (positively)
- * Having decision making power within the family regarding number of children, education of children, marriage of the children, budgeting of the family, income and purchase or sale of family property
- * Changing attitude towards women's participation in politics, and wished to and willingness to participate in the politics themselves. Control over individual and family income
- * Access to resources like land, house, jewelry sit etc.
- * Access to and have information, knowledge and skill

Quantitative indicators

- * Raising the acts bar for marriages
- * Reduction in fertility rate or number of children
- * Becoming beneficiaries of development programs
- * Visible changes in physical status/ nutritional status
- * Improvement in literacy level
- * Becoming members of a political party or local self-government. (Ravi pg.19)

Empowerment through education:

Education is the process that liberates mind. It is a lifelong process of learning and development. Education is the most important instrument for improving women's position in society all over the world. It develops the personality of the individual, makes them eligible to fulfill certain political, economic and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status.

Education is aimed at making women more competent and active unite in the process of socio-economic and political development.

The study conducted by Anjali Kurane on the topic " issues in women's development the data revealed that for the majority 62.2 percent of the respondents, the chief responsibility of making decisions about the education of children was taken by both husband and wife while for a few (3.6%) respondents it was the husband who took the decision. There is a significant change in making decision regarding the education of children. A woman is also involved in the decisions regarding the education of children.

Women in Decision Making:

Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including political decision making at all levels and in all processes will be ensured for the achievement of the goal of empowerment. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in all decision making bodies at every level, in the private and public sectors, including the legislative, executive, judicial, local, corporate, statutory bodies as also advisory commissions, committees, boards, trust its affirmative action such as reservation/ quotas including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary, on a time bound basis. (Kurane pg.82)

Women's role in family Decision Making:

The decision-making in the family is one of the ways of female empowerment. Participation in the decision-making process in household matters, considers that a female is accounted for, in the family. In all societies, the issue of women's participation and their participation economically, socially and culturally is considered to be important. Family decision-making has changed over the last several decades. Changing roles of women, increasing women's education, and increasing participation of women in the labor force are important keys for family decision-making changes. In nearly all developing countries, women are more likely to be illiterate. Almost all women in every society marry and have children, women's dedicated bond to family and household responsibilities means that they have fewer opportunities to assume public roles in the society. They must fit into schooling, jobs, or political activity

around those family roles. However, women usually have less power than men, even within the family. Although the level and rate of taking part in all societies is not the same, today in Iran with the increase in women's education, change in occupational status and residential style which results in living in cities and new regions, the answer to the question of who makes decision in family can be completely different from the past because the status of women's family participations has changed as compared to the past. The recognition of effective factors on women's involvement in family is among the important debates in Family Studies. In the previous generation, the link between the man and woman, especially in traditional marriages was mainly based on arranged marriages.

Nowadays, the duty of men and women is not fixed as they used to be in the past. The other alternate refers to changing the situation of women and their authority over men. Now, women's power in family life is more effective than ever. Women have different roles to play such as a mother, wife, daughter, and sister, which they perform at different stages of their lives. A woman being a wife has only the duty of bringing up children, and they are forced to do everything at home. All these duties are a carry-over of the tribal cum-feudal society, in which the women are considered as property.

It is a common knowledge to all of us that the roles of women in both decisions making at the household level and economic contribution to household income are insignificant, particularly in developing countries. In developing countries, society is male dominated in terms of participation in household decision making as well as in terms of economic contribution. It is a traditional belief that generally males make all major household decisions and at the same time they contribute to household income more than females, and thus, our society is highly male dominated, which is popularly known as gender bias against female. But if we systematically analyze these two aspects of male dominance, this traditional belief may seem to be wrong.

Difficulties in this path/ weak areas:

Despite of these and others attempts though the policy, academic and activist intervention

education still remains a very weak area for women, the socio-cultural prejudices are practices do not seem to break or change perceptibly. The major factor is the persistent socio cultural norms and socialization processes.

Suggestions for the development of women education:

- * Encouragement of information education
- * Promotion of education at door or distance education/ correspondence courses
- * Encouragement of anti-poverty movement
- * Promote the philosophy of gender equality and gender justice.

Conclusion:

Women must be educated not only for the service they render to humanity as the first education of children, but ultimately, for the special contribution women must make to the creation of a just world order, an order characterized by such some passion, vigor and scope which has never been seen in human history. The empowering, role of education, training and skill development among women accepted by the society and enormous infrastructure for provision of the above facilities are being provided in the public and the private sector considering the need and demand for these acquisitions.

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