



Decision making role of women in family: Does working status matter

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Abstract

Gender equality and women empowerment are certainly the most debated topic of the era and there exists a very rich literature on the same. However, the role of such equality and empowerments in acquiring the decision making role in the family is less explored. India has witnessed a swift growth and development in the recent past along with increased role of women in all spheres. Regardless of such significant achievements of women, traditional values have a great restricting influence on female's decision making process. Even the earning women are in no way accessed the key role in the family as a decision maker. Thus the study assesses the decision making power of women in the family and compare them with the case of a non-working category. The results are obvious and not surprising that, the working life hasn't given any advantage for the women in the family while come to decision making and management.

Keywords: women, working women, decision making, family

Introduction

India has experienced rapid growth and development in the past years in many spheres. This is deplorable considering the important role played by women in the socio-economic growth of the country. The Indian development model has yet to fully incorporate the important role played by women for propelling the socio-economic growth of the country. Current governments at state and central level must understand that no nation can progress unless its women are given equal access to opportunities and adequate safety and security. Across the globe, educating women and giving them the ability to stand on their own feet has been a priority. In India, social evils and a rising rape rate are confronting women in urban and rural areas, regardless of which political party is at the helm. Women are not being given a chance to become stronger in the political sector. The Women's Reservation Bill of 2013 is being vociferously opposed on the grounds that it will deny opportunities to persons of other groups. When it comes to legislations which aim to reduce gender inequity, India has a long way to go.

The Background

Today, there is no profession that remains a bastion of men. Women are now set to outshine men in their occupational achievements. Indian women are now employed in diverse types of jobs, like Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, and Engineers. Despite remarkable achievements of Indian women, traditional values seem to exert a great restricting influence on female employment. Indian society considers women as the central element of the family structure. That is why women's entry into any profession has a direct bearing on the very foundations of traditional relations. Working women are in no way relieved from their household chores. In accordance with established customs it is only the women who must prepare food, an exceptionally laborious process in Indian conditions,

store and preserve vegetables and fruit and other products, wash the dishes, clean the house and to do all laundry. Thus the study seeks into the decision making power of women in the family.

Objectives

1. Assess the decision making power of women in the family.
2. To find out the income and expenditure pattern of the working and non-working women in the study area.

Methodology

The research methodology adopted for carrying the study is mainly designed as a descriptive and empirical work based on primary and secondary data. Respondents in this study are daily wage earners from Chennai district of Tamil Nadu and the systematic random sampling method have been employed to collect data. Primary of data of 150 respondents have been collected from the field and out of this 150 respondents, 75 women were working and 75 women were nonworking. Respondents belonged to different religions and communities and both married and unmarried have been included in the study. Appropriate statistical tools have been used for the empirical analysis. The study used diagram, tables and some simple statistical techniques such as per cents, average and Cross -tabulation, Chi-Square Tests, Independent Sample t-test, oneway ANOVA.

Review of Literature

Although there is a rich literature on women studies, specific literature on decision making and role of women in the family are rare to find. However, few studies pertaining to women's role in family such as marriage, satisfaction of working women, balancing of work and family are highlighted here as the background of the study. Amin Rattani (2012) found that both men and women play vital roles in a society and

performance of these roles is based on their social and cultural norms and values. Distribution of these roles is for the development of a society. However, it is important that the society should secure their human rights and should save those who are vulnerable

Naila Usman *et al.* (2012) [1] observe that it is the working women whose satisfaction level is higher and it is mainly due to the fact that women earn and hence their satisfaction level is higher. Mankani *et al.* (2012) [2] observe a contrast idea that rural women who were not working had better mental health as compared to women who are working in farm lands. It is contrast in urban area where working women had better mental health states than that of non-working women. Therefore it can be stated that the socio economic status showed positive and significant relationship with mental health of working women. Kaur *et al.* (2012) [4] found that working women have low anxiety with highest life satisfaction when compared to the non-working married women. The non-working married females are less satisfied with their lives and their anxiety level is also higher. Hundeker *et al.* (2015) [3] also state that emotional competence was higher in both urban employed and non-employed women. Rural employed and non-employed women were incompetent with their emotions. Emotional competence influences the potentialities for learning and developing the emotional literacy necessary for quality of life, life satisfaction and overall happiness.

In contrast, Revati *et al.* (2012) [5] observe that There were significant difference in mental health among working and non-working woman results indicate the non-working woman have better mental health to compared working woman. There were significant difference depressions among working and non-working woman. Thus the study concludes that the depression of non-working woman is lesser than that of the working woman. Delina *et al.* (2013) [6] found that weekly hours of work and the stress associated with work were very important determinants of employees’ work–life balance, alongside their occupations, age and caring responsibilities. Conflicts in work-life balance of working women affects their health who report more stress, headaches, muscle tension, weight gain and depress than their male counterparts. Juggling between the obligations towards the families and expectations of the organization and constant struggle to maintain a balance between work and family can have serious implications on the life of an individual by affecting their well-being and overall quality of life. Shiva (2013) [7] has also stated that women face several challenges to balance work family. Neha Mittal (2012) [8] has also estimated the women working in the unorganized sector are having lot of problems.

Kiran Sahu *et al.* (2014) [9] study show that highly educated working and non-working married women can perform well in their married life and they are free from depression as compared to educated working and non-working women. Marriage may have important influences on mental health. A happy marriage may provide substantial emotional benefits. For many people, marriage creates an important sense of identity and self-worth. Moreover, a spouse may provide emotional intimacy and support, fulfilling an essential human need for connection. Consequently, married people may be happier, more satisfied, and less depressed than those who are

unmarried. These emotional benefits may, in turn, improve their physical health, by reducing the stress, depression, and other mental health problems can take on physical well-being. Jyothi Tiwari *et al.* (2012) [10] observe that there is a difference in the marital adjustment of working and non-working women. Non-working women were found to have better adjustment than women who work outside their homes. Marital adjustment was found to be better in women aged between 30 and 40 years as compared with women aged between 20 and 30 years. It was also found that women from nuclear families were having better marital adjustment than women from joint families.

The Discussion

While talking about decision making in any family as an institution, the headship of family matters a lot. As the table 1 describes, the scenario here is as expected as the female headship of family is rare (30%) and if the women is not working then the share of female headship is exactly half (10%) compared to working women(20%). The Chi-square analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between working status of women and headship of the family since the p-value is 0.041.

The table 2 describes the chi-square test for analysis for general particulars regarding family type viz able to balance the nuclear and joint family, ration card type, bank account and vehicles type of the respondents. The description clearly shows that majority of respondents (46.7% and 44% working and nonworking women respectively) belong to nuclear families -

Table 1: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square test between the Working Status and Head of the Family

Working Status of Women		Head of the Family		Total
		Male	Female	
Working Women	Count	55	20	75
	% of Total	36.7%	13.3%	50.0%
Non-Working Women	Count	65	10	75
	% of Total	43.3%	6.7%	50.0%
Total	Count	120	30	150
	% of Total	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.167	1	.041		
Continuity Correction ^b	3.375	1	.066		
Likelihood Ratio	4.232	1	.040		
Fisher's Exact Test				.065	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.139	1	.042		
N of Valid Cases	150				

Source: Computed from the field survey.

Note: Second rows are in per cents.

and the remaining 6% and 3.3% (working and non working women respectively) belong to the joint families. The Pearson chi-square test shows the value of 1.261 with 1 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.262 which is more than the acceptance level of 0.05 or 0.10 per cent level of significance. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant

difference in the family type of working and non-working women. The chi-square test for should the working respondents able to balance both type of family shows that majority of (40.7%) of the working women are able to balance both the nuclear and joint family, whereas only 9.3% of non-working women are able to balance both type of families. The Pearson chi-square test shows the value of 102.809 with 1 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 per cent level of significance. Therefore, it concludes that there is significant difference in ability to balance both type of family between working and

non-working women. While come to the analysis for type of ration card of the respondents, 48.7% of non-working women and 46% of working women are above poverty line, leaving 4% of working women and 1.3% of non-working women under below poverty line. The chi-square test value of 2.113 with 1 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.146 which is more than the acceptance level of 0.05 or 0.10 level of significance indicate that there is no significant difference in the type of ration card among the working and non-working women. Majority of (49.3%) of the working women have bank account and

Table 2: Chi-Square test for general particulars of the respondents

Variables		Working Women	Non-Working Women	Pearson Chi-Square Test Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-Sided)
Family Type	Joint	9 (6.0%)	5 (3.3%)	1.261	1	0.262
	Nuclear	66 (44.0%)	70 (46.7%)			
Able to balance both	Yes	61 (40.7%)	14 (9.3%)	102.809	1	0.001
	No	0 (0.0%)	75 (50.0%)			
Ration Card Type	Above	6 (4.0%)	69 (46.0%)	2.113	1	0.146
	Below	2 (1.3%)	73 (48.7%)			
Bank Account	Yes	74 (49.3%)	1 (0.7%)	.340	1	0.560
	No	73 (48.7%)	2 (1.3%)			
Vehicles	Two Wheeler	20 (13.3%)	7 (4.7%)	7.656	2	0.022
	Four Wheeler	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)			
	No Vehicles	54 (36.0%)	67 (44.7%)			

Source: Computed from the field survey.

Note: Second rows are in per cents.

The same majority (48.7%) of the non-working women do not have bank account. The chi-square value shows the value of 0.340 with 1 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.560 concludes that there is no significance difference in the bank account of the working and non-working women in the study area. Majority of (44.7%) of the non-working women do not have any vehicles, whereas only 36% of the working women are reported with no vehicles. The chi-square test value of 7.656 with 2 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.022 concludes that there is significant difference in the vehicles among the working and non-working women.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation between Working Status of Women and Decision Making in Family.

Working status of women		Decision Making		Total
		Yes	No	
Working Women	Count	49	26	75
	% of Total	32.7%	17.3%	50.0%
Non-Working Women	Count	21	54	75
	% of Total	14.0%	36.0%	50.0%
Total	Count	70	80	150
	% of Total	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%

Source: Computed from the field survey.

Note: Second rows are in per cents.

The table 3 depicts the cross-tabulation between working status of women and the decision making in the family. It clearly shows that majority of (53.3%) of the women are not a decision maker in their family, of which a lion share of 36% are non-working women. The counterparts 46.7% of the women are decision makers in their families, of which majority (32.7%) are working women. Thus it concludes that

majority of the working women are the decision maker in a family and working status has a connection with decision making power in the family.

Table 4 represents the descriptive statistics and one way analysis of variance for the decision making and dependence level of the respondents' family. The first row and the last row labeled between groups and within groups of each column give the variability due to the varied decision maker in the family of the respondents. Likewise for each variables, between groups and within groups have been placed in the first row and last row. The ANOVA table results for decision maker in the family shows the F-value of 24.093 with 1 and 148 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 % level of significance and concludes that there is no significant difference in the decision making between the working women and Non-working in the family among the respondents in the study area. The ANOVA results for handling important issues in the family shows the F-value of 5.060 with 4 and 145 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 % level of significance and concludes that there is no significance differences in handling the importance issues in the family between the working and non-working women in the study area. The ANOVA results for husband allowed the respondents to take important decision in the family shows the F-value of 167.304 with 1 and 148 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 % level of significance and concludes that there is no significant difference in handling in the important issues in the family between the working and non-working women in the study area. The F-value for dependence on husbands' income shows the value of 89.235 with 1 and 148 degrees of freedom and the

corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 % level of significance and concludes that there is no significance difference in the dependence on husbands' income between the working and non-working women in the family. The F-value for rights to spend money on own shows the value of 167.304 with 1 and 148 degrees of freedom and the

corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than. 01% level of significance and concludes that there is no significant relation to spend money on own between the working and Non-working women in the study area. The ANOVA results for get permission

Table 4: One-way Analysis for Decision making and dependence level in the respondents' family

Variables		Working women	Non-Working women	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SS	DF	MS	Statistical Inferences
Decision Maker in the family	Between Groups						5.250	1	5.250	F= 24.093 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	Yes	49	21	70	1.30	.462				
	No	26	54	80	1.68	.471				
	Total	75	75	150	1.50	.502				
	Within Groups						32.250	148	.218	
Handling important Issues in the family	Between Groups						4.593	4	1.148	F = 5.060 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	No response	1	0	1	1.00					
	Self	26	6	32	1.19	.397				
	Father	12	12	24	1.50	.511				
	Husband	32	52	84	1.62	.489				
	Mother in law	0	0	0	0	0				
	Others	4	5	9	1.56	.527				
	Total	75	75	150	1.50	.502				
	Within Groups						32.907	145	.227	
Husband allow to take important decision in the family	Between Groups						19.898	1	19.898	F = 167.304 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	Yes	52	0	1.00	52	.000				
	No	23	75	1.77	98	.426				
	Total	75	75	1.50	150	.502				
Dependent on husband's Income										F = 89.235 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level F= 167.304 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level F = 26.909 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
Rights to spend money on own	Within Groups						17.602	148	.119	
Get permission from husband to spend your income										
Dependent on husband's Income	Between Groups						14.106	1	14.106	F = 89.235 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	Yes	41	0	1.00	41	.000				
	No	34	75	1.69	109	.465				
	Total	75	75	1.50	150	.502				
	Within Groups						23.394	148	.158	
Rights to spend money on own	Between Groups						19.898	1	19.898	F= 167.304 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	Yes	52	0	1.00	52	.000				
	No	23	75	1.77	98	.426				
	Total	75	75	1.50	150	.502				
	Within Groups						17.602	148	.119	
Get permission from husband to spend your income	Between Groups						5.769	1	5.769	F = 26.909 Sig = 0.001** Statistically Significant at 1% level
	Yes	20	0	1.00	20	.000				
	No	55	75	1.58	130	.496				
	Total	75	75	1.50	150	.502				
	Within Groups						31.731	148	.214	

Source: Computed from the field survey.

from husband to spend their income shows the F-value of 26.909 with 1 and 148 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.01 % level of significance and concludes that there is no significant

differences in getting permission from the husband to spend their income between the working and non-working women in the study area.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation between working and non-working women in family economic affairs management

Working status of women		If no					Total
		No response	Father	Husband	Mother in Law	Others	
Working Women	Count	22	14	37	0	2	75
	% of Total	14.7%	9.3%	24.7%	0.0%	1.3%	50.0%
Non-Working Women	Count	3	6	63	1	2	75
	% of Total	2.0%	4.0%	42.0%	0.7%	1.3%	50.0%
Total	Count	25	20	100	1	4	150
	% of Total	16.7%	13.3%	66.7%	0.7%	2.7%	100.0%

Source: Computed from the field survey.

Note: Second rows are in per cents.

The table 5 describes the cross-tabulation between working and non-working women as who will manage the economic affairs in the family and the results clearly shows that majority of (66.7%) of the respondents from both category says that husband will take care of the economic affairs in their family. The remaining 16.7% of the respondents in both categories didn't respond to the question and a 13.3% of them say that their father will take care of the economic affairs in the family, of which 9.3% are working women and 4% are non-working women. Thus the table concludes domination of male in economic affairs of the family as that majority (80%) of the economic affair managers are either husband or father in the respective family.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the female work force participation is an important driver of growth and development of a country and the female work force participation has been increased over the period of time. However the study reveals that the majority of the women are not a decision maker in their family, of which a lion share is constituted by non-working women. Thus it concludes that majority of the working women are the decision maker in a family and working status has a connection with decision making power in the family. In the same style, there is a significant relationship established between working status of women and headship of the family. In addition, working women are able to balance both type of families and they are financially inclusive indicating economic health and majority of them own a vehicle too indicating the economic empowerment.

The study concludes that there is no significant difference between the working and non-working women in the family in cases of handling in the important issues in the family, dependence on husbands' income, spend money on own and getting permission from the husband to spend their income. This is proving the male domination in family decision making regarding any affairs. Surprisingly, majority of women says that husband or father will take care of the economic affairs in their family, irrespective to their working status, concluding domination of male in economic affairs of the family by passive consent of the women in the family.

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