

EDUCATION AND DECISION MAKING OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study shows that decisions taken alone by the women are the highest among maternal grandmothers and lowest in mothers' generations. Decisions by the husband are the highest for paternal grandmothers and lowest in mothers' generations. Combined decision making by both husband and wife is very high among all the two generations, the highest among paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers as in the case of expenditure on food, highest among mothers on children's education. Women who are educated were able to take decisions more than the uneducated women to some extent.

Key words: decision making, women empowerment, intergenerational, education, generation

Introduction

Decision Making

One of the significant concepts of 'Empowerment' is that of 'Decision making'. Decision-making is the process by which individuals and groups identify, combine and integrate information in order to choose one of several possible courses of action. The emphasis and need for study of women's decision-making power is emphasized by the International Conference of Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo in 1994 as a part of improving women's status/empowerment. According to UN in 1995, "the empowerment and autonomy of women

and improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is highly important end in itself. Improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life. The full participation and partnership of both men and women is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibility for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household.” (UN, 1994)

The path breaking work of Blood and Wolfe gives a direction of decision-making power and area in connection with the resources being possessed by an individual person. Resource includes not only the income of the person but also the educational attainment and the occupation. It further continues that in a family if a person has more resources he/she will have more resources to exercise in making decisions of the family. (Blood and Wolfe, 1960). Decision making power of a woman within the family has been looked upon as one of the important factors which can influence the life of the women herself as well as others. (Rothschild, 1983).When women are more empowered then they can broaden their mind resulting to better decision making capability

The study is an intergenerational study of three generations of grandmothers, mothers and daughters. In the first phase, I collected data of daughters, mothers and grandmothers. The grandmothers selected were fathers’ mother, i.e., patrilineal side. As they are not from the same lineage as this data did not give the intergenerational changes from grandmothers to mothers to daughters. So, after completing the analysis of the collected data, I went back again for field work in developing countries to collect the data of the mothers’ mother, i.e. matrilineal side. The study now includes the three generations of both paternal and maternal grandmothers, mothers and daughters in order to know amongst them who are able to live a better life and make decisions of their own , i.e. which is more empowered

Sample size

The sample was selected on a purposive sampling basis. The sampling method is chosen as it helps to judge the researcher as to which respondents’ best fit the criteria of the study. The study would be an intergenerational study of three generations of women of 100 daughters, 100

mothers and 100 grandmothers (each for both maternal and paternal). Selected daughters were of 15-32 years of age, mothers were 38-60 years of age and grandmothers were 58-94 years of age. So, altogether total data collected was numbered to 400, which was a tough job and was very time consuming. Among the sample of paternal grandmothers, 33 per cent had died and only 67 per cent were still alive. In case of maternal grandmothers, 39 per cent had died and only 61 percent were still alive. The information for each grandmother who had died was based on the feedback given by the members of her family.

Educational Qualification

Table 1 show that the percentage of middle, higher secondary, postgraduate, engineering, Medicine, Veterinary, Agriculture and Law has increased in the daughters’ generation. Majority of the mothers had been educated up to secondary and graduate level while majority of the paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers were illiterate and few of them had been educated up to middle and secondary level.

Regarding the educational level of the daughters, 15 per cent had completed their middle school, 5 per cent in secondary level and 25 per cent in their higher secondary level. While 21 per cent are graduate and 11 per cent post graduate. Whereas 2 had completed engineering and 3 are undergoing the engineering training courses, 1 had completed medicine and 6 are undergoing medicine courses, 2 had completed veterinary and 2 are undergoing veterinary courses, 1 had completed agriculture and 2 are undergoing agriculture courses and 1 was practising law and 3 are undergoing law courses.

Table 1: Educational Qualification of Paternal Grandmothers, Maternal Grandmothers, Mothers and Daughters

Educational Qualification	FPGM	FMGM	FM	FD
Illiterate	91	89		

Middle	6	8	4	15
Secondary	3	3	35	5
Higher Secondary			16	25
Graduate			32	21
Post Graduate			6	11
Engineering			1	5
Medicine			2	7
Veterinary				4
Agriculture			1	3
Law			1	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Notes:

FPGM= Frequency of Paternal Grandmother.

FMGM= Frequency of Maternal Grandmother.

FM= Frequency of Mother.

FD = Frequency of Daughter.

Decision Making

The following data will help to examine the impact of education on decision making in the family. It will substantiate to a certain extent whether education leads to empowerment of women. The table 2 will show the data of all the paternal grandmothers, maternal grandmothers, and mothers under study with regard to decision making on expenditure of food, clothes, construction of house, buying movable/immovable property and children's education. The mothers, paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers were given three choices decision made by their husband, wife or both. If the decision is taken by wife or by both husband and wife, then the woman is involved in decision making.

Table 2: Decision Making -Paternal Grandmothers, Maternal Grandmothers and Mothers

Decision	Paternal Grandmother	Maternal Grandmother	Mother	Total
1. Expenditure on food				
Self	10	14	9	11
Husband	35	37	41	37.7
Both	55	49	50	51.3
2.Expenditure on clothes				
Self	34	34	19	29
Husband	40	27	32	33
Both	26	39	49	38
3. Construction of house				
Self	3	5	8	5.3
Husband	60	56	40	52
Both	37	39	52	42.7
4.Buyingmovable/immovable property				
Self	2	4	7	4.3
Husband	57	58	39	51.3
Both	41	38	54	44.3
5. Children's education				
Self	2	5	5	4
Husband	64	60	31	51.7
Both	34	35	64	44.3
N	100	100	100	300

Importance of Education and Employment

52 of the paternal grandmothers and 68 of the maternal grandmothers who were illiterate wished their children to be well educated. 48 of the paternal grandmothers and 32 of the maternal grandmothers wished their children to be well educated and get jobs according to their capacities. While 13 of the unemployed mothers wanted their children to get lucrative jobs. 26 of the mothers wanted their children to be well educated and get lucrative jobs while 74 of the mothers wanted their children to be well educated even though job was not a priority. Further, 24 of the daughters were of the opinion that education is necessary more than getting a job. Interestingly 60 of the daughters said that they would like to be well educated and get employment. While 16 of the daughters said that education and employment were equally important in order to fulfill their parent's dreams and to become economically independent and stand on their own feet.

Discussion

Table 2 shows that in decisions on expenditure of food by the women under study, the involvement of the husband and wife (51.3 per cent) is the highest and women took less decision (11 per cent). A higher proportion of paternal grandmothers (55 per cent) took the decision in consultation with their husbands. However, it is also found that there is not much difference between the maternal grandmothers and mothers' generation. In the case of expenditure of clothes, the husband and wife take most of the decisions together. The highest is taken in the mothers' generation (49 per cent) and the least in the paternal grandmothers' generation (26 per cent).

Table 2 shows that most of the husbands (52 per cent) took the major decisions for construction of house while the women (53 per cent) the least. While the highest number of mother decides with their husband (52 per cent). However, there is slight difference in the paternal (37 per cent) and maternal grandmothers (39 per cent) generation. Decision for buying movable/immovable property is taken mostly by the husbands (51.3 per cent) and the least by the women (4.3 per cent). It is also found that decision taken by both husband and wife there is not much difference between the paternal (57 per cent) and maternal (58 per cent) grandmothers'.

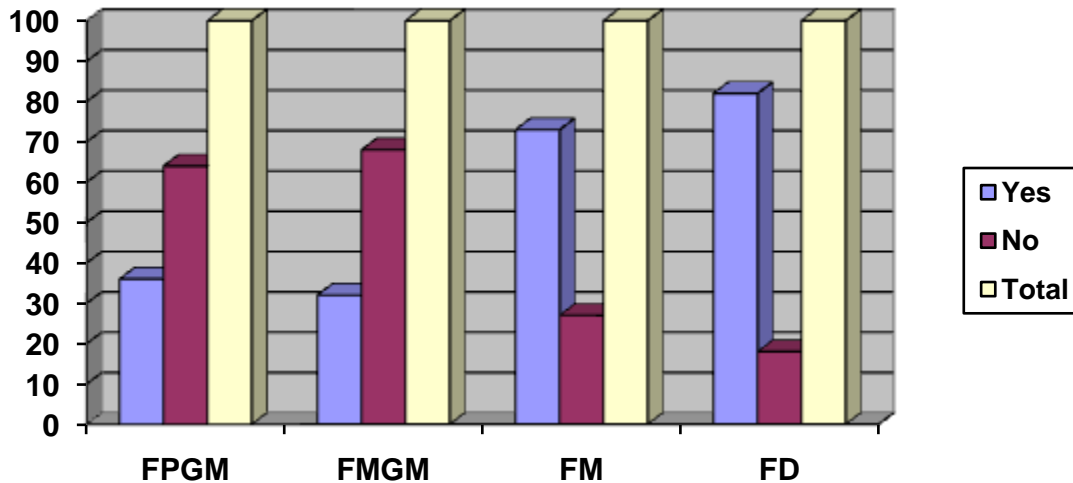
However, the highest number of mothers' (52 per cent) took the decision in consultation with their husbands in this respect. This finding suggests that in this decision women are not ignored. Decision taken by paternal grandmothers' husband (64 per cent) in children's education is the highest and 2 (per cent) of the paternal grandmothers in children's education is the lowest. Again decision taken by maternal grandmother's husband (60 per cent) in children's education is the highest and 5 (per cent) of the paternal grandmothers in the children's education is the lowest. We can conclude that decision taken by mother and her husband (64 per cent) on children's education is the highest and 5 (per cent) of the mother's in the children's education is the lowest. Gender inequality is a universal phenomenon. Even in societies where women are active participants in production, they are dominated by males. This saying is indicative of male success in mystifying the position of women to legitimize male roles (Nongbri, 1994). Some may argue that because women inherit property and determine descent they enjoy a high social status. But so long as men control the levers of power and decision making women would remain subservient to men

Power relations in the Family

Table 3: Power relations in the Family -Paternal Grandmothers, Maternal Grandmothers and Mothers

Enjoy	FPGM	FMGM	FM	FD
Yes	36	32	73	82
No	64	68	27	18
Total	100	100	100	100

Chart 3 : Power relations in the Family -Paternal Grandmothers, Maternal Grandmothers and Mothers



Notes:

FPGM= Frequency of Paternal Grandmother

FMGM= Frequency of Maternal Grandmother

FM= Frequency of Mother

FD= Frequency of Daughter

The above table reveals that 36 percent of the paternal grandmothers enjoyed more power than males in the family, which decreases, to 32 in the maternal grandmother’s generation, which increases remarkably to 82 in the daughter’s generation. Amongst the grandmothers, 5 of paternal and 3 of the maternal grandmothers enjoyed more power than males in the family. While 64 of the paternal grandmothers did not enjoy more power than the males in the family, which increases, to 68 in the maternal grandmother’s generation that decreases to 27 in the mothers generation and again decreases to 18 in the daughter’s generation.

Conclusions: This study presents the general information that was gathered with the help of questionnaires from all the paternal grandmothers, maternal grandmothers, mothers and daughters of this study. An attempt was made to gather objective, quantitative data as well as to secure information of a qualitative nature. The data are also shown on how educational level of a

woman relates to their life-style and on the development process of a family and in the society at large. Majority of the paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers were illiterates and were educated only up to secondary level.

If we compare the educational level of the daughters, mothers with that of the paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers we find a remarkable increase in the level of education within three generations. Majority of the paternal and maternal grandmothers were illiterate because of lack of importance given to education and lack of support.

Majority of the mothers and daughters enjoy more power than the male in the family from the paternal and maternal grandmothers. Majority of the mothers and daughters enjoy more power than the male in the family from the paternal and maternal grandmothers. Majority of the grandmothers have to do according to the wish of their husband. Regarding taking decisions, even though majority of the daughters are still students if their opinions are justified their parents are also agreeable to do as per liking of the daughters.

Table 2 shows that (i) decisions taken alone by the women are the highest among maternal grandmothers and lowest in mothers' generations. (ii) decisions by the husband are the highest for paternal grandmothers and lowest. in mothers' generations (iii) Combined decision making by both husband and wife is very high among all the two generations, the highest among paternal grandmothers and maternal grandmothers is in the case of expenditure on food, highest among mothers on children's education.

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