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Participation of Employed Women in Decision Making in Family Affairs in District Nowshera, Pakistan: A Case study of Village Pura-District Nowshera Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The study conducted in Akbar Pura village, located in the District Nowshera of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aimed to investigate the participation of employed women in decision making within their families. A sample of households with employed women was randomly selected, representing twenty-five percent of the total households. The study found that the employed women in the area were actively involved in various family matters and were consulted by their husbands. The results of the study indicated that all the respondents were literate, married, and belonged to the young age group; they were primarily employed in the public sector. Additionally, the majority of the respondents lived in nuclear family systems and had the freedom to utilize their earnings. The areas where the employed women were involved in decision making included the education of children, purchasing household items, arranging marriages

for their children, managing their children's careers, house decoration, and visiting friends and relatives, while the respondents were generally consulted in family matters, the degree of consultation varied depending on the specific issue at hand. The study concluded that in order to enhance women's participation in decision making, it is important to establish proper educational opportunities and implement training programs in rural areas. These measures would promote women's economic independence and increase their role in the decision-making process. In summary, the study conducted in Akbar Pura village revealed that employed women in the area were actively involved in decision making within their families. The findings highlighted the importance of providing educational opportunities and training programs to empower women economically and enhance their participation in decision making.

Keywords: Job Constraints, Working Women, Rural Areas, District Nowshera Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan

1. Introduction

In all human society women are most important part. In all areas of life every social and nation strongly depends on women's participation, they are considered dependent in developing countries. In urban areas mostly in rural areas, women's are surrounded by the ancient customs low level of literacy in paid labor and continues cycle of birth, women's role in rural areas and in urban areas are not recognized and considered as economically non-productive individual, to get their role recognized women's need to make a joint effort (Kharal, 2000) [4].

The men is not nourished the deserved money of women's in our culture because it is against their "Ghairat" (honor). Therefore, females are less favored than male and need for improving their economic status and socio culture. Education becomes an essential and necessary component of their life for going up gradation of social status, because through education she knows their legal rights and also the quality prevails, between both male and female on front of Allah (Zafar, 1986).

Feminism has been concentrated of humanism and the rights of all women are human rights. They have equal respect, job and it life chances, freedom of opinion expression and right to pursuit necessary what they consider for itself suitable (Qais, 1994) [3].

The educated women can redeem the best role in a society. They have the good understanding of the life and can handle the problems and matters of a bitterly. They can take part more actively in the decision-making treat and it can do a big service to the nation for the better management of their homes. In the recent years, the process of industrialization and modernization has changed considerably the women's role (Eliot, 1978) [1].

As quoted by Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah “unless your women’s are side by side with men a nation cannot rise to the height of glory, we are victims of evil customs. The poor women’s are shut up with in the four walls of the houses as prisoners and it is crime against the humanity. In the whole world there is no sanction for the deplorable condition, in which our women’s home to live. In any spheres of life you should take your women’s along with you as comrades”.

In an uncertain situation Decision-making is a volitional action as a result in sequence actions leading to achievements of a goal by transforming initial information. at all levels of data process, Decision-making is the central process and psychological control within a system of purposeful acting (Sharma, 1992) [6].

In most of countries especially in countries of third world, the women when a girl's child has a low status and enjoys less benefits, opportunities and rights of the infancy as compared to the boy's child. At a very young age the women experience inequality and they find it very difficult of conquering this inequality. This behavior spreads to her place of work where they confront the inequality and do not assure the ambience (Rizvi, 1980) [5].

In Pakistan, generally the women are considered to be lower than men and are less allowed under the level of the activity in economic and social spheres. They are even abstained of the participation in the critical decision. The male dominated society permissions very little for her social and economic independence. Social decision related to life style of the family and Economic decision concerned with economic activity (Shah, 1986) [7].

Pakistani rural women live in a small have in an isolated setting. Women usually give birth to an average of seven children and expectancy of her life is short. Due to poor environmental conditions women faces constant threat of infectious and communicable diseases. Actually, she is born in poverty, lives in poverty and finally dies in poverty (Zareen and Lubna, 2004).

The specific objectives of the present studies are (i) to identify various family matters in which women are involved and are consulted (ii) to study the participation of employed women in decision making and (iii) to give some suggestions to improve the participation of women in decision making.

2. Research Methodology

Village Akbar Pura comprises of 2200 households (GoP,1998) Mohallah Mia Gan and Mohallah Saidan were randomly selected for the study and to select a reasonable sample size a preliminary informal survey of the area was conducted in which it was found that 350 households had working women. Out of total 350 household, 90 (45 samples from each Mohallah) working women were randomly selected which is 25% of the whole.

3. Results and Discussions

This section includes age, marital status, literacy status, husbands Literacy Status, family size, family type and occupation.

Age

Table 1: Distribution of the Sampled Respondents on the basis of Age Group

| Mohallah | Age Group | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|------|----------|------|-----|-----|
| | 25-30 | | 31- 35 | | 36-40 | | Above 40 | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 30 | 33.33 | 9 | 10 | 2 | 2.22 | 4 | 4.45 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 31 | 34.44 | 7 | 7.78 | 4 | 4.44 | 3 | 3.33 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 61 | 67.78 | 16 | 17.78 | 6 | 6.66 | 7 | 7.78 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 1 shows that out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Mia Gan 33.33 % were in the age group of 25-30 years, 10 % were in 31 – 35 years, 2.22 % were in 36-40 years and 4.45 % were above 40. From Mohallah Saidan out of the total sampled respondents (45), 34.44% were in the age group of 25-30 years, 7.78% were in 31 – 35 years, 4.44 % were in 36-40 years and 3.33 % were above 40. This result shows that majority of the young women were doing job because in young age people have more enthusiasm of doing work and to prove themselves as Khan (1991) stated that Age is an important factor influencing the adoption behavior of respondents he further stated that in young age people adoption power is more as compared to old age.

Literacy Status

Table 2: Distribution of the Sampled Respondents on the basis of Literacy Status

| Mohallah | Level of Education | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-------|----------|-------|---------------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Higher Secondary | | Graduate | | Post Graduate | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 9 | 10 | 21 | 23.33 | 15 | 16.67 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 10 | 11.11 | 25 | 27.78 | 10 | 11.11 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 19 | 21.21 | 46 | 51.11 | 25 | 27.78 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 2 reveals that all the respondents were literate. Out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Mia Gan 10% have higher secondary level, 23% have graduated level and 16.67% were above graduation level. While out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Saidan 11.11% have higher secondary level, 27.78% have graduate level and 11.11% were above graduation level. The result shows that majority of respondent were graduate and utilizing their education by doing jobs and supporting their families economically as Anwar (1998) in his study states that through education female get awareness, knowledge, more respect and participation in more certain affairs. Javed (1996) also found that educational levels positively influence the persons to get various services i-e if the individuals are highly educated then they have more potential and enthusiasm to study and get services.

Husbands Literacy Status

Table 3: Distribution of the Sampled Respondents on the basis of Education Level of House Hold

| Mohallah | Level of Education | | | | | If Literate, Level of Education | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-------|----------|-------|-----|---------------------------------|----|----------|----|---------------|----|-------|----|-------|
| | Illiterate | | Literate | | All | Higher Secondary | | Graduate | | Post Graduate | | All | | |
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | | |
| Mia Gan | 5 | 5.56 | 40 | 44.44 | 45 | 50 | 20 | 25.64 | 9 | 11.53 | 11 | 14.11 | 40 | 51.27 |
| Saidan | 7 | 7.78 | 38 | 42.22 | 45 | 50 | 12 | 15.38 | 10 | 12.82 | 16 | 20.51 | 38 | 48.73 |
| Total | 12 | 13.34 | 78 | 86.66 | 90 | 100 | 32 | 41.02 | 19 | 24.35 | 27 | 34.62 | 78 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 3 shows that out of the total sampled respondents (90) most of the households head were educated out of which 13.34 % were illiterate and 86.66 % were literate, out of total literate respondents (40) from Mohallah Mia Gan 25.64 % were educated up to higher secondary level 11.53% were graduate, 14.11% were post graduate. While out of the total literate respondents (38) from Mohallah Saidan 15.38% were educated up to higher secondary level 12.82% were graduate, 20.51% were post graduate. Education is the act of separation from the mixture; the whole family will effect if the house hold head is educated as Battle and Lewis (2002) in their study stated that education is the only instrument which can be helpful in bringing change in the lives, earnings and wellbeing of the people positively. Ali (1972) also states that Education plays an important role in the development of society. It is considered as an essential tool that could be helpful for the quick spreading and acceptance of any skill.

Family Size

Table 4: Family Size of the Sampled Respondents in the Study Area

| Mohallah | House Hold Size | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|------|-----|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|-----|
| | 3-4 | | 5-6 | | 7-8 | | Above 8 | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 3 | 3.33 | 14 | 15.56 | 6 | 6.67 | 22 | 24.44 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 0 | 0 | 17 | 18.89 | 10 | 11.11 | 18 | 20 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 3 | 3.33 | 31 | 34.45 | 16 | 17.78 | 40 | 44.44 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4 Shows that out of the total sampled respondents from Mohallah Mia Gan 3.33% having family size of 03-04, 15.56% having family size of 05-06, 6.67% having family size of 07-08, and 24.44% having family size of above 8, while out of the total sampled respondents from Mohallah Saidan 0% having family size of 03-04, 18.89% having family size of 05-06, 11.11% having family size of 07-08, and 20% having family size of above 8. As the result shows that majority of the respondents having family size of above 8 because of belonging to rural area they like more and more children, As Lewis (2005) in his study stated that an important factor for the country as well as for the individuals, relatives and society is the family size and therefore they prefer large family size. Majoribanks (1998) in his study states that various researchers have considered socio-economic position, parental involvement and large size of family in rural areas as a vital component.

Family Type

Table 5: Family Type of Sampled Respondents in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Types of Family | | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Nuclear | | Joint | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 33 | 36.67 | 12 | 13.33 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 20 | 22.22 | 25 | 27.78 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 53 | 58.89 | 37 | 41.11 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The first step of socialization and strongest bond is family. All over the world there are many families' types but three types are very common, joint, extended and nuclear. The Table 5 shows that out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Mia Gan 36.67% are from nuclear family system and 13.33% are living in Joint family system. Out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Saidan 22.22% are from nuclear family system and 27.78% are living in Joint family system. The study shows that mostly nuclear family exits in the study area as Mujahid (1991) in his study identified various cultural and economic factors that affect women's decision-making power. Urban women, women in nuclear families, educated women and working women generally have more decision-making power.

Types of Working Organization

Table 6: Types of Working Organization of Employed Women in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Types of Working Organization | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Private | | Public | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 14 | 15.56 | 31 | 34.44 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 22 | 24.44 | 23 | 25.56 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 36 | 40 | 54 | 60 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

To fulfill their basic needs of life all people work for their survival. They do different types of work and engaged with different organization that may be private or public, to fulfill these needs. Table 6 shows that out of the total sampled respondents from Mohallah Mia Gan 15.56% are from private organization, 34.44% are from public organization. While out of the total sampled respondents from Mohallah Saidan 24.44% are from private organization, 25.56% are from public organization. The result shows that majority respondents are engaged with public sector where the

salaries are low mostly females like to work in public sector because there male interaction is low as Zahra (2003) stated that males have a psychological negative attitude about females work, although they cannot ignore the worth of added income.

Designation of Respondents

Professional records of the respondents are collected in order to access how their profession helps them in improving their socio-economic conditions, besides managing their domestic activities.

Table 7: Designation of Employed Women in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Designation | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|------|---------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-----|-----|
| | LHW | | Teacher | | NGO Worker | | Nurses | | Others* | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 4 | 4.44 | 10 | 11.11 | 16 | 17.78 | 5 | 5.56 | 10 | 11.11 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 3 | 3.33 | 8 | 8.89 | 13 | 14.44 | 6 | 6.67 | 15 | 16.67 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 7 | 7.77 | 18 | 20 | 29 | 32.22 | 11 | 12.23 | 25 | 27.78 | 90 | 100 |

Others* Bankers, Police Women and Vocational Teacher

Source: Field Survey, 2013

In different organization, to perform their roles and duties people have different designation. According to designation, the Table 7 shows that out of the total sampled respondents from Mohallah Mia Gan 4.44 % are LHW, 11.11 % are teachers, 17.78 % are NGO workers, 5.56% are Nurses and 11.11% belongs to other categories, while from Mohallah Saidan out of the total sampled respondents, 3.33 % are LHW, 8.89% are teachers, 14.44% are NGO workers, 6.67% are Nurses and 16.67% belongs to other categories.

Table 9: Types of Husband Job of Sampled Respondents in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Husband Job | | | | | | If Yes Type of Work | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|---------------------|------|-----|------|--------------|------|-------|------|-----|-----|
| | Yes | | No | | All | | Govt | | NGO | | Own Business | | Other | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 43 | 47.8 | 2 | 2.22 | 45 | 50 | 23 | 27.7 | 4 | 4.81 | 6 | 7.22 | 10 | 12 | 43 | 50 |
| Saidan | 40 | 44.4 | 5 | 5.56 | 45 | 50 | 13 | 15.7 | 2 | 2.41 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 18.1 | 40 | 50 |
| Total | 83 | 92.2 | 7 | 7.78 | 90 | 100 | 36 | 43.4 | 6 | 7.22 | 16 | 19.3 | 25 | 30.1 | 83 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 9 shows that out of total house hold head from Mohallah Mia Gan 47.80 % are on job in which 27.70% are doing govt job, 4.81% are working in NGO sector, 7.22% are having own business, 12.00% are engaged in other jobs, and 2.22% having no job, while in Mohallah Saidan 44.40% are on job in which 15.70% are doing govt job, 2.41% are working in NGO sector, 12.00% are having own business,

Family members are mostly like the teaching field as they conceive teaching is suitable for female due to bounded society the male have objection on interaction of female with male so in teaching profession there are low chances of this interaction.

Duration of Job

Table 8: Duration of Job of Sampled Respondents in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Job Duration | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|------|---------|-------|---------|------|-----|-----|
| | 01 - 05 | | 06 - 10 | | 11 - 15 | | 16 - 20 | | 21 - 25 | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 23 | 25.56 | 15 | 16.67 | 2 | 2.22 | 5 | 5.56 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 28 | 31.11 | 6 | 6.67 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8.89 | 3 | 3.33 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 51 | 56.57 | 21 | 23.34 | 2 | 2.22 | 13 | 14.44 | 3 | 3.33 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The Table 8 indicates that out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Mia Gan 25.56 % are doing job from 1- 5 years, 16.67% are 6-10 years, 2.22% are from 11 -15 years 5.56% are from 16 -20 years, 0% from 21- 25 years. While out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Saidan 31.11% are doing job from 1- 5 years, 6.67% are 6-10 years, 0% are from 11 -15 years 8.89 % are from 16 -20 years, 3.33% from 21- 25 years. The studies shows that majority of the sampled respondents are doing jobs and are supporting their families in monitory terms.

Types of Husband Job

18.10% are engaged in other jobs, and 2.22% having no job. Labor and employment is a very essential element of our everyday life as westover (2010) stated that the value of life depends mainly on our occupation profession that helps in earning income.

Job Reasons

Table 10: Reasons of Job of Sampled Respondents in the Study Area

| Mohallah | Reasons | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Poor Economic Condition | | Have a Busy life | | Both | | All | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Mia Gan | 29 | 32.22 | 12 | 13.33 | 4 | 4.44 | 45 | 50 |
| Saidan | 13 | 14.44 | 25 | 27.78 | 7 | 7.78 | 45 | 50 |
| Total | 42 | 46.66 | 37 | 41.11 | 11 | 12.22 | 90 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 10 show that out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohallah Mia Gan 32.22% are working due to poor economic condition 13.33% are doing job to have busy life 4.40 % are working due both the reasons, while out of the total sampled respondents (45) from Mohalla Saidan 14.44% are working due to poor economic condition 27.78

% are doing job to have busy life 7.78% are working due both the reasons.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that a majority of the respondents were literate and belonged to a young age

group, actively involved in the public sector. They predominantly resided in nuclear family systems, enjoying autonomy over their earnings. The study also highlighted that the women were primarily consulted by their husbands in family matters, although the extent of consultation varied depending on the specific issue. They played a significant role in decisions related to children's education, marriages, careers, household purchases, house decoration, and social interactions with friends and relatives. However, in matters concerning household income, house supervision, daily shopping, community relations, and economic decisions, their consultation was relatively less frequent.

Based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature and field experience, the study puts forward several recommendations to enhance the status and role of women in rural areas:

1. Education is a crucial factor in fostering a positive attitude. Therefore, it is imperative to provide women in rural areas with accessible and quality education facilities. This will contribute to elevating their status and role within both society and their families.
2. Education has a positive influence on the decision-making process, as it enhances women's awareness, knowledge, and respect, leading to increased participation in family matters. Thus, it is vital to ensure that proper educational opportunities are available to women in rural areas without any discrimination.
3. Efforts should be made by society and the government to eliminate discrimination between males and females, and creating an inclusive and equitable environment that values and respects women's rights is essential for fostering gender equality.
4. Initiation of training programs focused on various skills such as sewing, poultry farming, kitchen gardening, knitting, etc., would empower women economically and enhance their role in the decision-making process. These programs would enable women to become self-reliant and contribute to the economic well-being of their families.

In summary, the study emphasizes the provision of education, elimination of gender discrimination, and the implementation of training programs as key measures to improve the status and role of women in rural areas. By addressing these factors, women can be empowered to actively participate in decision-making processes, fostering positive societal change.

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