

Awareness among Adolescents Towards Maternal Empowerment

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ABSTRACT The present investigation was undertaken to assess the awareness of children of working and non-working mothers towards their mother's educational, occupational and political status on a sample of 200 children (11-15 yrs) enrolled from randomly selected urban middle income families of Palampur town of District Kangra of H.P. Self-structured interview schedule was prepared, pre-tested and used to assess the awareness of children towards their mother's empowerment. The results revealed that there was significant difference of awareness between children of working and non-working mothers towards their mother's education. Chi-square value revealed significant difference between both children of working and non-working mothers towards their mother's political interest. A significant difference was found among boys and girls of non-working mothers towards their occupational status.

INTRODUCTION

Woman is the true and best companion of man. By birth she is gifted with equal physical and mental capacities as man. In recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the fact that women who formed one half of the society cannot be ignored at all. The trend of demeaning women consciously or unconsciously and restricting them to stereotyped roles need to be changed by making people aware of the fact that Indian women need to be respected and honoured as equal partners in the society.

An increasing role of women in building the nation is extremely vital. She provides the services without any payment and yet she is considered economically dependent on their husbands and other male members in the family. Today women have entered diverse fields, attained success and gained popularity. Education enhances women's capabilities in patriarchal social setting. It contributes to an increase in confidence, exposure to the outside world and decision making power within the household. Together, these capabilities would have an important impact on women's empowerment, which is assessed by their educational status, economic independence, increasing political awareness, participation in decision-making process and psychological strength.

According to Chandra (1997) empowerment means the manifestation of the redistribution of

power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance. Education enables women to become aware of her rights, have access to health services, more political involvement and have economic independence for personal satisfaction and shouldering the responsibilities for the need and comfort of male members of the family and children.

Children are the future citizens who have an important role to play in leading the country on progressive path. A status of women in the family is the indicator of her status in the society. An awareness of children regarding their mother's status is of significant importance in improving the status of women both inside and outside the family. What children perceive in family and society about the roles and status of women reflects the traditional socio-cultural beliefs. Aronson (1980) is of the view that people often adjust their attitudes and values in accordance with the realities of their social situation.

There exist a gender difference in the attitude of children regarding status of women because of the rearing practices and socialization pattern for boys and girls. Occupational status of the mother also generates the difference of perception regarding the status of women among children of working mothers and children of non-working mothers.

Women's status in the society improves only if status of women in the family improves. Not only men should be aware of the status of wom-

en but also children, who can challenge old values, fight against age-old tenets and norms, express their ideas and effect change in the society. These children are the foundation of our society. They will responsible not only for the well-being of family but also make a major contribution to the development of society if they acquire a positive attitude towards the status of women.

Therefore it is very essential that children should be aware of their mother's status, so as to move towards a society where women will be eulogized religiously, empowered legally, emancipated socially, enriched economically and enhanced personally at least at the dawn of 21st century (Sapru 1989). Hence the study was undertaken with the objective to assess the children's awareness towards political, economic and educational status of their mothers and to compare the awareness of adolescents having working and non-working mothers and boys and girls towards their mother's interest in politics and their mother's educational and economical status.

The present study was an attempt to find out the awareness level among adolescents towards their mother's status. Although research is available in India regarding the awareness of youth (both male and female) towards the status of women but none of the studies were available on awareness level of young children regarding their

mother's status in Indian literature. Therefore this study is the first of its kind and an endeavour in this direction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: The sample for the present study comprised of school going boys and girls of 11-15 years belonging to middle class families of Palampur town of District Kangra of H.P. Palampur was purposively selected because of the maximum concentration of educational institutions in that area and the easy availability of the respondents.

Sampling Technique: For the selection of sample list of schools in Palampur town was obtained from education department. After enlisting the schools two Government and two private schools were selected randomly from the list of schools. In the initial stage preliminary survey was conducted in the selected schools of Palampur town of H.P. A preliminary survey proforma sought information regarding name, age, gender, and mother's occupational status. In all 400 preliminary survey proforma were distributed personally from which 367 were received back. Out of those 197 children were found to be of working mothers (107 boys and 90 girls) similarly 170 children were of non-working mothers (84 boys and 86 girls) were eligible for the

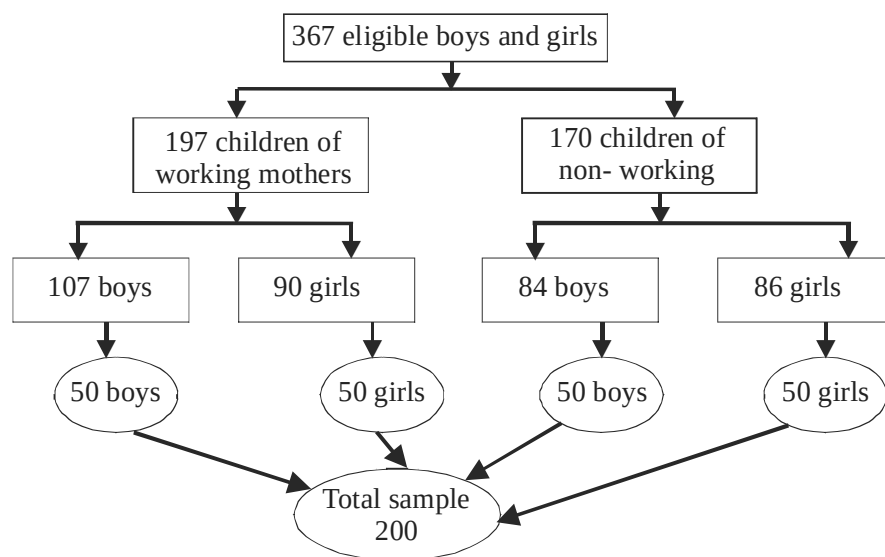


Fig. 1. Eligible sample available and number of sample selected for the present study

investigation. Since the available sample was larger so the final sample was randomly selected as indicated in Figure 1. Thus the total sample comprised of 200 children (100 boys and 100 girls). Out of which 50 male and 50 female children were of working mothers and similarly 50 male and 50 female children of non-working mothers.

Tools Used for Data Collection: A self-structured tool was prepared and pretested by the investigator having four parts

- 1) Preliminary survey proforma
- 2) Background information proforma
- 3) Awareness scale for children having working mothers
- 4) Awareness scale for children having non-working mothers

The tool measured the awareness level of children regarding their mother's status in three areas. (mother's educational status, mother's involvement in politics and mother's economic status). The questions were to be answered in Yes/No by giving reasons. Questions were left open to generate the reasons from children. Consequently data were collected by contacting the respondents personally at schools or at home.

Data Analysis: Data were systematically coded and tabulated under different headings. Coding was done on the basis of sample. For data analysis the statistical method i.e. Chi-square value were calculated to find out the difference of awareness level between children of working and non-working mothers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women are the grossly neglected section of society. This neglect of the women and their oppression is seen in all the fields like education, political and health. Women are facing formidable social barriers and prejudices since time immemorial. However, inspite of stiff opposition women have emerged from the shadows and ensure their place in the sun. This has been made possible by the remarkable upsurge of interest in the women in both family and society. Family, which is the basic structure of society, comprised of husband, wife and their children. Children's awareness towards the status of their mother is an important aspect to study, which will be helpful in understanding the present status of women and change in future scenario of women's status.

As indicated in Table 1, 100 per cent adolescents having working mothers and 100 adolescents having non-working mothers were aware that education is necessary for women in relation to their status in the society. It is due to the reason that adolescent's consider education as a significant aspect in women's life because it makes women an aware citizen and can help manage her roles efficiently. The data also revealed that quite a significant number of adolescent having i.e. (88%) and (73%) of working and non-working mothers respectively were aware that education helps in decision making and managing household efficiently. The results are in line with

Table 1: Awareness among adolescents regarding the educational status of mothers

S. No.	Particulars	Adolescents having working mothers		Total (%)	Adolescents having non-working mothers		Total (%)
		Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	
1	Education necessary for women	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	100.0	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	100.0
2	Education helps in decision making and managing house efficiently	41 (82.00)	37 (74.00)	78.0	32 (64.00)	41 (82.00)	73.0
3	Can go for higher studies	22 (44.00)	19 (37.00)	41.0	9 (18.00)	12 (24.00)	21.0
4	Knowledge regarding current affairs	39 (78.00)	32 (64.00)	71.0	20 (40.00)	18 (36.00)	38.0

Chi-square = 10.291*

d.f = 3, Prob = 0.163

*Significant at 5%

Chi-square value reveals significant difference between awareness level of adolescents having working and non-working mothers towards their mother's educational status

Figure in parentheses indicate percentage of the total sample

Manimeklai (2002) who found that education opportunities to women enhance their status in household through greater privileges in decision-making. He found that women tend to enjoy greater or equal status in their households, only if they are educated, and if their relative contribution to household income is sizable. Further small percentage (21%) children having non-working mothers and less than half i.e. (41%) children having working mothers want their mother's to pursue higher education. It is because of the reason that children having non-working mothers want their mothers to work outside, on the other hand children of working mothers want their mothers to have a better job. Whereas the children who did not want their mothers to go for higher studies was due to the fact that their mother's age was not suitable for pursuing higher education and secondly the mother's should look after their families rather than educating themselves. Seventy one per cent adolescents having working mothers and 38 per cent having non-working mothers were aware of their mother's knowledge regarding current affairs. The difference in possessing knowledge regarding current affairs might be due to the fact that working mothers were kept themselves up-to-date to the current situations rather than non-working mothers because of their job demands which want them to be well aware in every field.

Table 2 indicates the awareness among adolescents towards their mother's involvement in politics. The results revealed that 67 per cent adolescents having working mothers were aware that their mothers took interest in politics.

Whereas only 29 per cent adolescents having non-working mothers were aware that their mothers had no interest in politics. It was found that more number of adolescents having working mothers i.e. 44 per cent were aware that their mothers are the member of Mahila Mandal's, Club or any Voluntary organization. Almost all 98 per cent children of both working and non-working mothers were aware that their mothers make use of their right to vote and majority decided themselves about whom to vote for in elections. The results are also in consistent with Iyyampillai (2001) who examined the status of women both inside and outside the home. He found that women knowledge regarding reservation in local bodies was largely known and majority of women decide themselves whom to vote for in elections and the interference of husbands in the voting behaviour of their wives was limited. Chi square revealed a significant difference of awareness between adolescents having working mothers and adolescents having non-working mothers regarding their mother's interest in politics. Adolescents having working mothers were more aware than adolescents having non-working mothers towards their mother's interest in politics.

Table 3 reveals the awareness among adolescents towards the occupational status of their working mothers. The results reveal that 82 per cent boys and 62 per cent girls were aware that their mothers enjoy equal status and opportunities at work as that of their father. More than half that is 70 per cent boys and 72 per cent girls were aware of their mothers having personal

Table 2: Awareness among adolescents towards their mother's involvement in politics

S. No	Particulars	Adolescents having working mothers		Total (%)	Adolescents having non-working mothers		Total (%)
		Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	
1	Takes interest in politics	29 (58.00)	38 (76.00)	67	12 (24.00)	17 (34.00)	29
2	Member of Mahila mandal/Vol org/Club	24 (48.00)	20 (40.00)	44	17 (34.00)	15 (30.00)	32
3	Make use other right to vote	48 (96.00)	50 (100.00)	98	50 (100.00)	48 (96.00)	98
4	Vote for in election with her choice	42 (84.00)	43 (86.00)	85	43 (86.00)	40 (80.00)	83

Chi-square = 12.029*

d.f = 3,

Prob = 7.285E-03

*Significant at 5%

Chi-square value reveals significant difference between awareness level of adolescents having working and non-working mothers towards their mother's involvement in politics

Figure in parentheses indicate percentage of the total sample

Table 3: Awareness among adolescents towards the occupational status of their working mothers

S. No	Particulars	Adolescents having working mothers					
		Boys			Girls		
		Yes	No	(%)	Yes	No	(%)
1	Have equal opportunities at work	3 (82.00)	47 (18.00)	50 (100.00)	31 (62.00)	19 (38.00)	50 (100.00)
2	Neglects family	3 (6.00)	47 (97.00)	50 (100.00)	16 (32.00)	34 (68.00)	50 (100.00)
3	Mother should have personal account	35 (70.00)	15 (30.00)	50 (100.00)	36 (72.00)	14 (28.00)	50 (100.00)
4	Keep money for personal expense	47 (94.00)	3 (6.00)	50 (100.00)	46 (92.00)	4 (8.00)	50 (100.00)

Figure in parentheses indicate percentage of the total sample

account. 94 per cent boys and 92 per cent girls said that their mother's keep money for personal expenses. Awareness in the field of economic status projected no significant difference between boys and girls of working mothers. Majority of children were aware of the fact that women at work like men should enjoy equal opportunities, because women are equal to men. Adolescent children do not approve of the statement such as "your mother neglects family" and reason might be that employment results in increase in family income and make women extend her recognition in society. Whereas 32 per cent girls and 6 per cent boys approve of the neglect faced due to their mother's employment. Results are supported by the study conducted by Malik and Katyal

(1993) on girls of ninth and tenth standard of working mothers and non-working mothers. Results showed a significant difference between the frustration levels of daughters of working mothers and non-working mothers.

Table 4 clearly reveals the awareness among adolescents towards the occupational status of their non-working mothers. The results indicate that 30 per cent boys and 58 per cent girls were aware that their mother's felt that she should be working. Whereas (28%) boys and (52%) girls said that status of family improves if mother work outside. It was found that 78 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls were aware that their mother's employment results in better authority. Seventy per cent boys and 78 per cent girls were aware

Table 4: Awareness among adolescents towards the occupational status of their non- working mothers

S. No	Particulars	Adolescents having working mothers					
		Boys			Girls		
		Yes	No	(%)	Yes	No	(%)
1	Mother should work	15 (30.00)	35 (70.00)	50 (100.00)	29 (58.00)	21 (42.00)	50 (100.00)
2	Status of family improve if mother work outside	14 (28.00)	36 (72.00)	50 (100.00)	26 (52.00)	24 (48.00)	50 (100.00)
3	Employment results in better authority of women	39 (78.00)	11 (22.00)	50 (100.00)	25 (50.00)	25 (50.00)	50 (100.00)
4	Need financial independence	35 (70.00)	15 (30.00)	50 (100.00)	39 (78.00)	11 (22.00)	50 (100.00)
5	Father should give salary to mother	47 (94.00)	3 (6.00)	50 (100.00)	47 (94.00)	3 (6.00)	50 (100.00)
6	Should have personal account	21 (42.00)	29 (58.00)	50 (100.00)	29 (58.00)	21 (42.00)	50 (100.00)
7	Keep money for personal expense	44 (88.00)	6 (12.00)	50 (100.00)	43 (86.00)	7 (14.00)	50 (100.00)

Chi-square = 26.980* d.f = 11, Prob = 4.626E-Q

*Significant at 5%

Chi-square value reveals significant difference between awareness level of boys and girls of non-working mothers
Figure in parentheses indicate percentage of the total sample

that women need financial independence. Results are supported by Vijayapriya (2001) who reported that adolescents strongly feel that women need economic independence and should contribute to the family income and assume equal responsibilities to improve the standard of living. It was found that 42 per cent boys and 58 per cent girls were aware that their mothers should have personal account. Whereas 88 per cent adolescent boys and 86 per cent girls were aware that their mother's should keep money for personal expense. Christopher (2001) found that (82.6%) of women respondents had enjoyed freedom in keeping money for personal expenses. There was significant difference of awareness between adolescent boys and girls towards the economic status of their mothers.

There was no significant difference in the awareness level of children of working and non-working mothers. Results are in line with Namita (2002) study which reveals that 63 per cent children reported a high level of approval towards their mother's employment. Hence the support of family members helps women to maintain a balance between office and domestic responsibilities. Similarly Nanda and Jain (1991) found that children had favourable opinion regarding their mother's employment and the most common reason was to add to the family income and to get recognition in the family.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that even adolescent children of working and non-working mothers do not possess sufficient knowledge regarding their mother's status. Also family and society is inadequately equipped to meet the challenges. Their lack of adequate knowledge regarding their equal rights and equal status of women results in low status both inside and outside the family. Women supremacy should

not be restricted within the family domain. Her power should extend to societal and political spheres and should have primary importance in public affairs and community decision-making. Therefore it is very essential that children should be aware and should have positive attitude towards the status of women. It is imperative to educate the community on the whole about the necessity to preserve the dignity of women and it should start from children, who will help improve the status of women making a societal change which automatically help bloom the hopes and aspiration of women.

Hence every sector of the society, the governmental organizations, business, industry, leaders and policy makers etc should involve in effective working and advocacy in variety of programmes which help children to develop positive attitude and high awareness level regarding the status of women.

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