

GENDER ROLE OF HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

(A case study Namobudda Kavre)

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Abstract

Gender roles in household decision making refer to the traditional division of responsibilities and decision-making power between men and women within a family or household. Historically, many societies have adhered to traditional gender roles, where men are often considered the primary decision-makers, particularly in matters related to finances and major family decisions. Women, on the other hand, have often been assigned the roles of managing the household, taking care of children, and dealing with domestic matters. However, it's important to recognize that gender roles are not fixed and vary significantly across cultures, regions, and individual households. Moreover, over time, many societies have witnessed a shift in traditional gender roles, with more emphasis on gender equality and shared decision making.

The main purpose of this research was to understand the perception of people regarding the evolvement of gender roles in any household decision making. A Descriptive Cross Sectional study method was used. Altogether, 40 respondents were selected through purposive sampling method. questionnaires, Face to face interview, Informal focused group discussion; Key informant interview method was used using Structured Questionnaire to collect data from respondents. Data analysis was done through MS Excel.

It is revealed from the research Gender roles in household decision making refer to the traditional division of responsibilities and decision-making power between men and women within a family or household. Historically, many societies have adhered to traditional gender roles, where men are often considered the primary decision-makers, particularly in matters related to finances and major family decisions. Women, on the other hand, have often been assigned the roles of managing the household, taking care of children, and dealing with domestic matters. However, it's important to recognize that gender roles are not fixed and vary significantly across cultures, regions, and individual households. Moreover, over time, many societies have witnessed a shift in traditional gender roles, with more emphasis on gender equality and shared decision making

Key words: gender, role, household, status, decision making

Introduction

Gender roles in household decision-making refer to the traditional division of responsibilities and decision-making power within a household based on gender. Historically, these roles have often been defined by societal norms and expectations, with men assuming the dominant role in decision-making while women take on more domestic and caregiving responsibilities. However, it is important to note that gender roles can vary significantly

across cultures, societies, and individuals, and they have been evolving over time. Traditionally, in many societies, household decision-making was often associated with the male members of the family. This concept, known as patriarchy, positioned men as the primary decision makers, particularly in matters related to finances, major purchases, and important family decisions.

Traditionally, decision-making was primarily understood within the context of office management. However, it is now viewed as a sociological process involving households and institutions interconnected through roles. Family decision-making consists of planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation, with active participation of women at the family level (**Subedi, 1993**). However, it is essential to recognize that these traditional gender roles have been shifting in many societies. Factors such as increased gender equality, changing societal attitudes, and the pursuit of individual aspirations have contributed to a more diverse landscape of household decision-making. Many couples now share decision-making responsibilities based on their skills, interests, and personal preferences, rather than strictly adhering to traditional gender roles. Today, there is a growing recognition of the importance of equal partnership and shared decision-making within households. Many couples strive to make joint decisions, taking into account the input and perspectives of both partners. This collaborative approach allows for a more inclusive and balanced distribution of power and fosters a healthier and more egalitarian household dynamic.

It is worth noting that gender roles and decision-making patterns can still vary widely, depending on cultural, socioeconomic, and individual factors. While progress has been made toward greater gender equality, there are still instances where traditional gender roles persist, and certain communities may adhere more closely to these norms than others. Ongoing efforts to challenge stereotypes, promote gender equity, and empower individuals to make decisions based on their abilities and interests contribute to the ongoing evolution of gender roles in household decision-making.

Research Problem

While progress has been made in challenging traditional gender roles in household decision-making, the problem of gender roles in household decision-making revolves around the traditional, gendered division of responsibilities within families, where men are often considered the primary decision-makers while women are expected to focus on domestic tasks and caregiving. This disparity in decision-making power can have far-reaching consequences for individuals and society as whole.

Women are involved in most activities and decision-making related household and other activities. As women do not have the land little and lack of other source of income, women are depended upon their husbands. Thus, when it comes to using access to land resources the women have the accessibility but when it comes to Control of benefits of the resources (**Ghimire, 2009**). One key issue arising from this gender imbalance is the limited agency and autonomy experienced by women. When women are excluded from decision-making processes, their perspectives, preferences, and needs often go unheard or undervalued. Women often lack access to the financial resources and social networks necessary to run for political office or to make the most of other opportunities to participate in public, political, economic or social life. Inequalities in access to education or training can also undermine women's confidence to participate in decision making as well as their opportunities to do so. The same barriers apply to local level decision making spaces and processes (**Gender and**

development Network, 2015) This exclusion can reinforce gender stereotypes and perpetuate inequality, as women's contributions to important decisions regarding finances, education, health, and other aspects of family life are marginalized. Furthermore, the gender role of household decision-making can hinder women's economic empowerment. Limited involvement in financial decision-making can leave women financially dependent on their male counterparts, leading to vulnerability and lack of control over their own economic well-being. This can hinder women's ability to pursue professional aspirations, build financial security, and contribute to long-term economic growth. The problem also extends to men, as they may face undue pressure and expectations to be the sole decision-makers, often burdened with the responsibility of providing for the family. This rigid gender role can lead to stress, mental health issues, and strained relationships within the household.

Additionally, the gendered division of decision-making perpetuates societal norms and expectations, reinforcing the notion that certain roles and responsibilities are inherently male or female. This can limit opportunities for personal growth, hinder the development of diverse perspectives, and prevent the exploration of alternative family structures that may better suit individual preferences and circumstances. Addressing the issues of gender roles in household decision-making requires a shift towards more equitable and inclusive practices. It involves challenging traditional gender norms, promoting gender equality in both public and private spheres, and fostering open dialogue within families to ensure that decisions are made collectively, considering the diverse perspectives and needs of all family members. Empowering women to participate in decision-making processes enables them to have a greater say in shaping their own lives, fostering more balanced and harmonious households, and contributing to a more just and equitable society overall.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was gender roles in household decision-making and find out the factors influencing the division of decision-making responsibilities within households based on genders.

Research Methods and Materials

. This study was generally based on primary and secondary data .Many research and journal articles were taken as secondary information where field work data collection methods schedule questionnaire, interview method, case study method also was applied for data collection and for data analysis Altogether, 40 sample had been selected through purposive sampling, scheduled questionnaires were filled in order to generate a conclusion about the gender role of household decision making. Face to face interview, Informal focused group discussion to collect data from respondents. Data analysis was done through MS Excels.

Result and Discussion

This chapter present the collected data from the survey in tabulated form which had been further analyzed and interpreted. The main objective is to know about the gender roles in making household decision making practices in Namobudhha, Nepal.

General Information

Table no 1 Marital Status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
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Married	35	87.25
Unmarried	2	5
Widow	1	2.5
Separate	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 1 represents the marital status of respondents. As shown in the figure, 87.25 percentage of the respondents were married, 5 percentage were unmarried, 2.5 percentage were widow and 5 percentage were separate. This shows that majority of people were married.

Table 2 Education Status of respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Non formal	2	5
Primary (up to 5)	2	5
Lower secondary up to 7	1	2.5
Secondary up to 10	3	7.5
SLC pass	17	42.5
Intermediate	12	30
Bachelor and above	3	7.5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 2 represents the level of education. As shown in the figure, 42.5 percentage were SLC passed, 30 percentage were Intermediate passed, 7.5 percentage were secondary level, 7.5 percentage were bachelor and above, 5 percentage were non formal. Similarly, 5 percentage were primary up to 5 passed and 2.5 percentage were lower secondary passed. This clearly shows that majority respondents were SLC passed out.

Table 3 Husband status of education

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Non formal	5	12.5
Primary up to 5	0	0

Lower secondary	0	0
Secondary up to 10	0	0
SLC pass	20	50
Intermediate	10	25
Bachelor and above	5	12.5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 3 represents status of education of Husband. As shown in the table 50 percentage were SLC passed out, 25 percentage were Intermediate, 12.5 percentage were bachelor and above and 12.5 percentage were non formal. This shows that majority were SLC passed out.

Table 4 Occupation status of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	5	12.5
Business	10	25
Household work	10	25
Service	2	5
Others	6	15
Total	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 4 represents the occupation of own self. As shown in the figure, 25 percentage were involved in business, 25 percentage in household work, 12.5 percentage in agriculture, 5 percentage in service and 15 percentage in others.

Table 5 Physical Working status of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	35	87.5
Wife	5	12.5
Others	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 5 represents the working land amongst husband and wife as shown in table 75 percent of the respondents were husband working in land and 25 percent of respondents were wife. We can observe the majority of husband who works in the land. It shows traditional working system on household levels

Table 6 Access income of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	20	50
Wife	20	50
Mother-in-law	0	0
Father-in-law	0	0
Others (Specify)	0	0
Total	40	100

Source: field survey 2023

Table 6 represents the who keeps income amongst husband and wife.

As shown in figure, both husband and wife have equal contribution for keeping the income. It shows the changing role of gender.

Table7 Keeps saving

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	15	37.5
Wife	25	62.5
Total	40	100

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Source: field survey 2023

Table no 7 represents the who keeps saving among husband and wife.

As shown in figure, 37.5 percent of the respondents were husband investing for livestock and 62.5 percent of respondents were wife. We can observe the majority of wife keeps saving.

Table 8 Ownership of property

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
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Male	22	55%
Female	18	45%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field survey, 2023

As per the table 8, can conclude that the male respondent's own property majorly (55%) and female percentage is 45%. The majority is gained by male respondents.

Table 9 Type of property

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Land	20	50%
Cash	14	35%
Housing	5	12.5%
Investment	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field survey, 2023

The Table represents that mostly owned property is land (50%). Further, the percentages of cash, housing and investment are 35%, 12.5% and 2.5% respectively.

Table 10 Decision making status (Child raising)

Spouse	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	20	50
Wife	20	50
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 10 represents the child raising decision making amongst husband and wife .The shows decision making activities related to child raising and the percentage of spouse who engage in each activity. As per the figure, both husband and wife are equally involved (i.e., 50%-50%).

Table 11 Buying goods

Spouse	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	13	32.5
Wife	27	67.5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table no 11 represents the buying food decision making amongst husband and wife the table indicates that 32.5 percentage of the respondents were husband that buys food and 67.5 percentage of the respondents were wife that buys food.

Table 12 Expenses in home

Spouse	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	30	75
Wife	10	25
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table no 12 represents the decision making in expenses in home amongst husband and wife As shown in the figure, 75 percentage of the respondents were husband that help in the expenses in home while 25 percentage of the respondents were wife that help in the expenses in home. The majority here in the table shows that husband are more involved in the expenses in home.

Table 13 Decision on Children's marriage

Spouse	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	20	50
Wife	20	50
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Table no 13 represents the decision making in children's marriage amongst husband and wife the following figure interprets the equal involvement in decision making of children's marriage of both respondents' husband as well as wife (i.e. 50%).

Conclusion

Gender roles in household decision making refer to the traditional division of responsibilities and decision-making power between men and women within a family or household. Historically, many societies have adhered to traditional gender roles, where men are often considered the primary decision-makers, particularly in matters related to finances and major family decisions. Women, on the other hand, have often been assigned the roles of managing the household, taking care of children, and dealing with domestic matters. In today's world, we see that both men and women are treated equally. Women are engaged in outdoors activities and equally educated and empowered as men. And men are also involved in household chores. In the past, women are dominated and they are involved only in household activities. But nowadays women are more literate and they are also involved in different external activities and family decision. From the report, we can clearly see that both gender role are equally involved in household decision making activities. Men and Women are equally involved in child raising, saving, and taking financial decision, food making and expenses in home. In modern households, decision making and household activities are increasingly becoming collaborative and based on individual interests, skill and preferences rather than strictly adhering to traditional gender norms. Many couple now share decision making power and divide household tasks based on their strength and availability rather than solely on gender.

Overall, it is observed that both roles have been evolving in many social and financial activities with more emphasis on equality and share responsibilities. By challenging traditional gender roles, we can foster healthier and more balanced relationships within households' activities. Both genders have been treated equally in both financial and household decision making activities.

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