

# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Decision making is a basic process that underlies all functions of family resource management. Since decisions are universal to all human endeavor, the process is fundamental to management of all areas of work in the family. In fact management is one of the areas that provides integrated framework through which purposeful decision is oriented (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1975).

It includes both, decision making and implementing as a part of the whole managerial process. Decision making plays an important role in the management of our day to day activities. Successful management of work is dependent upon decision making. Hence, the art of decision making is a valuable tool in management (Swanson, 1983). A plan is made before the activity taken place, decisions are taken at every stage to reach the final plan (Irene, 1972). Since decision making is an integral part of planning it helps us to manage the task properly. Decision making appears both in formulating and making adjustments in the plan when it is put into effect. Rather the process of management is the way decisions are translated into actions.

Implementation as the second component of management includes the initiation of tasks, control of resources, supervision and checking on the way of carrying out of tasks. A well-developed plan allows the sequence of action to

proceed until expected results are accomplished. Through controlling, the planned activities are adhered to while controlling the activities, checking and adjusting is done in terms of use of resources. Therefore decision implementing is also frequently an individual and group thinking process. It is stated by Gross and Crandall (1971) that decision making is a mental activity, in part, but not completely. Seeking alternatives, a component part of most decision-making models may involve considerable physical activity. Certainly the implementation of family decisions (assuming that the decisions were to take action) requires mental activity but gets decidedly interlaced with nonmental activity. Even though implementation of a decision is carried out by others, the decisions taken must be communicated to the implementers for successful implementation of the plans.

People's participation in decision making and decision implementing are learned processes that can be improved upon. Decision making is the major process used in management of activities. It is a process which requires the decision maker to think about alternatives, then make a choice. Households as a whole system, subsystems and small groups make many decisions but often experience difficulties in negotiating and arriving at a choice acceptable to all. Individual members and subsystems of the household have control over certain types of decisions and not others.

**Women's role in decision making related to farm household management : a present scenario.**

All over the world, it is primarily women who are engaged in and manage household production. The productive activities carried out mainly by women within the household sector are of critical importance for society's survival, growth and development. Since women's contribution to economic development is vital, there is a need of proportionate increase in her involvement in decision process, because the success and progress of any production depends upon the plans made and decisions taken. Women's active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development of the country (Punia, 1992).

Increasing women's involvement in decision making is a desirable goal in the face of the existing low extent of such participation at all the various levels of organizations. In recent times, questions have been raised regarding the small voice women have in decision making, the less than equal attention women have received in plans and its implementation. The success of planned change programmes largely depends on the rational decision making by women. Recognizing this, all development agents have been approaching man not the women, because the influence of women on decision for the development of the family has not been recognized. Therefore, it is necessary to bring forth the role of women in decision making for the growth and development of family and the nation as a whole.

Role of a women in decision making related to family building processes becomes rather important because major responsibility of rearing the family falls upon her. Increasing the role of women in decision making will also be a great step towards ensuring women, their rights and therefore improving their position in the family. But the current global attempt on the relationship between women's position and participation in the management process has so far tended to suggest that majority of women in developing countries remain isolated specially from the economic decisions.

As far as the decision making role of the rural women was concerned, it was observed that the established pattern of family life in rural areas is patriarchal which gives the man a dominant and exclusive right of decision making both in the field and the home. Decisions related to the farm and homes are intimately interrelated to the success of farm business and well being of farm family.

During last two decades a great deal of energy has been devoted to understand the decision making practices within the agricultural households. Decisions taken in such houses influence the productivity of each plot of land and in the aggregate national productivity. It is observed that extent of involvement of most of the women in decision process, specially in the economic decisions in rural society is low. Women's economic role affects her position in the family. In small tribal societies, where there is hardly any difference between the economic role of the men and women there is no

perceptible discrimination against women's position in the family, whereas rural women carry tremendous responsibilities and their contribution to farm and family make a big impact on rural development, but her responsibilities in money matters is very low. Therefore, there is a need to remove discrimination in the involvement of men and women in all family matters. Women who form one half of the society and whose role in building the nation is extremely vital should not be ignored when decisions are made.

Realizing the importance of women in rural development, it was strongly recommended that :

"Rural women who play prominent role in rural employment, should be given equal power in decision making process." (Ghai 1984, pp.17).

Rural women in our country share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the family, maintaining the household, attending to farm labour, tending domestic animals and extending a helping hand in rural artisanship and handicrafts. In spite of discharging all these duties her involvement in decision making process specially related to money matters is low (Verma, 1978).

Another important area is the role of women in decision implementation. It is observed that sometimes the decisions are made properly and are not implemented well. If the plan is well developed, it allows a continuous sequence of actions

unless and until the expected results are not accomplished. While implementing the plans, women perform some of the tasks, control, supervise others and ask for help. While controlling they check and make adjustments during implementation. Checking takes place as actions proceed. It determines whether or not desired outcomes are feasible. Initiation, control and supervision of the farm, the micro-enterprise and the home are areas which need to be integrated for greater understanding. Better implementation of plans at micro level can have an effect on the whole nation.

Women play an important role in initiation, control and supervision of farm production, horticulture, livestock and in productive work (Census, 1971). When we examine the implementation role of women in the extensive farming and non farming sector and the quantity of work they do on the farm and in the home it is obvious that they contribute approximately half, if not more, to the economic development of the country. In families where husbands work out and stay away for longer time, women had to implement the plans and hence initiate and supervise the activities (Husain et. al., 1988). But regarding controlling of resources, specially the money resource, men mostly retain control of the income, since they most often sell the field crops. Women generally sell the crops with son and / or other men and therefore money is also controlled by them. Due to husband's dominance in the marketing of products of any type, women could not get the chance to control money resource independently (Rathschild, and Mahmud, 1989).

Despite women's critical contribution to the family income through productive activities, no recognition is given to them as an important contributors and their contribution is not recorded.

The overview of some of the studies conducted in India showed considerable variation in women's involvement in decision making process in different parts of the country, due to the position of women, specially in modern societies. The states like Punjab and Haryana show positive role of women in decision process in most of the families. But in primitive societies the pattern of participation on decisions is traditional where the head of the family or male members make the decisions. In urban families, family type, education level, and employment status of women influence positively to more involvement of women in decision making. (Loutfi, 1987, Husain, Saadat and Sarwar, 1988). Since more number of nuclear families are observed in urban areas, it is seen that wives' involvement in decisions was full. Full involvement here means that final decisions are taken in agreement of both husband and wife. The degree of involvement in decisions of those wives whose education is equal to or higher than their husbands was higher than those whose education was somewhat lower (Agarwal, 1986; Sander, 1986; Ahsan, et al., 1988). Thus women's education plays an important role in decision making.

Husbands and wives having same profession are more cooperative than those who have different profession. The



reason may be more understanding and a feeling of equality between husband and wife being in the same profession. Women's participation in decisions increases when both of them are earning more or less equally. Thus employment status influences women's involvement in decision making.

In rural families type and size of family, caste, size of land holding, socio-economic status of families, education level of rural women, their employment status and relational position effect her involvement in decision making. Besides this women's role become negligible where the decisions increase in complexity in rural families due to illiteracy of women. (Husain, et al., 1988, Islam, Maziful and Ahmed, 1988).

Recognition should be given to women, as an important person in decision making. They should not only be used as labourers, but should be given equal opportunity to participate in decision making in the family. If women are simply considered as workers, they have little claim on resource such as credit and improved inputs but if they are seen as managers or co-managers in production area, their claim on the resources and their involvement in the plans to use resource will be strengthened. Since, they play key role in production they should be the first persons to work for decisions and plans, which in the later stage help them to initiate the work. Implementation of decisions became difficult job, when the plans/decisions were made by one person and the actual work was done by another person.

Unfortunately, until very recently farm women's roles in decisions and other responsibilities have been overlooked, inspite of the fact that all types of production were undertaken by women.

Since increased productivity is related to management decisions, it is important to understand not only who is doing the work, but who is making decisions. If decisions of carrying out the work is taken by a different person then the one who initiates the work, it will certainly affect the output to a certain extent. Hence, the women should be given equal chance to make the decisions and follow up the actions. The decision making interactions should be between the male and female members equally which would help them to carry out the work easily (Cloud, 1988).

#### **Rationale for the study**

Rural women are the most silent participants in the economic life of developing countries. Women in the lowest classes and castes are deprived by their poverty, illiteracy and ill health of the means to escape from a short life of drudgery and fatigue. The successful development cannot be pursued without participation of rural women; condemning them to low productivity, menial jobs, underutilise human resources and thus retards the process of growth. Therefore need is to bring improvements in their conditions of work, their access to productive resources and their participation in decision-making at all levels. In other words, to achieve substantial

growth in production depends partly on women, and progress towards equality of women in involvement in plans/decisions.

Uneven distribution of the benefits increased inequality between different sections of the population and between men and women. When development introduces or increases inequality within the rural subsystem, women at least the poorest ones, become doubly underprivileged, first as members of rural poor and then as women. The hill region of Uttar Pradesh provides an excellent example of the importance and magnitude of women through their active participation in agricultural development and allied fields including, in the main crop production, livestock production, horticulture and many income generating activities. Their role in agriculture is so significant that without them almost nothing could be done on the farms as traditionally majority of male workers of the region do not participate in working on the farm except ploughing the fields. Moreover, migration of male workers to the plains has also increased the workload of the women workers.

But inspite of the important contribution made by the women of hill regions in the economic development, their involvement in decisions related to production of any type is low. They have no power to take decisions related to production which require technical knowledge and large investment. Men play a leading role in major decision making for farming and other household activities (Singh, Sharma and Singh, 1988; and Bhati and Singh, 1987).

If women have to participate in activities and manage both farm and house, which improves the family's economic condition, they must be given full chance to participate in decisions. Hence, there is a need to find out involvement of women in various decisions. An important point to be considered, therefore, is to examine the tasks in which women are generally engaged, and at the same time whether they take decisions related to those tasks.

A number of studies have been conducted on the decision making role of women in many parts of India, reported by Agarwal, (1981), Sethi, (1982), Reddy, (1986) and Dak, (1988). But not much information was found on the decision making role of the women in Uttar Pradesh, specially of the rural areas of hill regions. Hence the present study was undertaken.

Since empirical data are limited about women of hill region of Uttar Pradesh hence, there is a need for in-depth empirical investigation to provide answers to queries like the following : To what extent women of hill regions are involved in decisions related to various tasks ? To what extent they implement the decisions i.e. initiate the work, control and supervise the work ? Which factors affect her involvement in decision making ? Whether her role in money matters (like management, and control of her earnings, freedom to use her earnings) is considered important in decision making ? Does her resourcefulness and her ordinal position increase her involvement in decision making ?

### **Statement of the problem**

The present investigation is an attempt to assess the involvement of the rural women of hill region of Uttar Pradesh, in decision making and decision implementing process in management of resources for the household, farm, livestock and income generating activities.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the background characteristics of the respondents.
2. To assess the selected personality traits of the respondents influencing extent of participation in decision making process.
3. To find out the extent of respondents' involvement in decision making process related to management of resources to (a) household (b) farm (c) livestock (d) income generating activities.
4. To find out the extent of respondents' involvement in decision ~~implementation~~, control and supervision of activities in different areas.
5. To identify the factors influencing the respondents' decision making and decision ~~implementation~~.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Rural women participate in all types of household, farm, livestock and income generating activities.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

The following specific hypotheses were formulated to assess the relationships between the variables under study.

**Hypothesis 1 :** Respondents' extent of involvement in decision making is the function of their :

- (A) Personality traits
- (B) Age
- (C) Education
- (D) Employment Status
- (E) Women as Heads of the Family
- (F) Family's size of Land holding
- (G) Family Type
- (H) Family's socio-economic status
- (I) Relational position in family
- (J) Ordinal position in Family
- (K) Exposure to Developmental Programmes

**Hypothesis 2 :** There is a significant association between the respondents' selected personality traits and extent of involvement in decision making.

**Hypothesis 3 :** There is a significant association between decision implementing of respondents by participation in household, farm, livestock and income generating activities and

- (A) Age
- (B) Education
- (C) Employment
- (D) Women as head of the family
- (E) Caste
- (F) Size of the Land Holding
- (G) Family Size
- (H) Type of the Family
- (I) Income of the Family
- (J) Socio-economic Status
- (K) Relational Position in the family
- (L) Ordinal position in the family.
- (M) Exposure to Rural Development Programmes

**Hypothesis 4 :** There exists a significant relationship between the extent of respondents' involvement in decision making and involvement in decision implementing in the areas of household, farm, livestock and income generating activities in the family.

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

1. This study was limited to 3 blocks of hill region of Nainital District of Uttar Pradesh.
2. The sample consisted of only 200 households.