

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION LEVEL OF WOMEN TOWARDS FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: In the present study an attempt is made to see the perception level of women towards family environment. As rapid societal growth and development are taking place in all spheres of life, the women right is believed to be the most potent factor for women empowerment and accordingly the perception of family environment is the prerequisite for exercising women right in initially at home in the family. Keeping in mind with this aim a small study about the perception of family environment was conducted in Dibrugarh Town of Assam. In this study, mainly two aspects being covered- one is studying the perception level of women about family environment. 2ndly, identifying key factors for making family environment more healthy and happier. A scale for study of perception of family environment with little modification was used for data collection. The findings reveals that women empowerment is one of the key factors for bringing desirable changes in the society. Majority of women folk have medium level of perception followed by low and high level to the extent of 27.5% and 17.5 respectively. Many social and situational factors are responsible for this result. The key factors which contribute for sustainable, healthy and happier family environment identified as love and affection, respect and care for elders, mutual trust and co-operation among family members, proper budgeting etc. Thus, from the findings it is concluded that women empowerment is just possible for bringing desirable changes in the society.

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Introduction: There is a saying "Charity begins at home." When we talk about women's empowerment, first of all, it is absolutely necessary that women folk should be conscious about their own rights in civil society. From time immemorial, home is the fundamental unit of human civilization and family is the first training group in human race. Housewives being the king pin in family structure should not only be aware and conscious about their own rights but also be favoured to exercise their right as and when necessary in a sophisticated manner inside the family in the capacity of either as mother, mother-in-law or sister and sister-in-law for the greater interest of the family. Opportunity for exercising right by the women folk at family level is possible in a conducive family environment. For healthy family environment to exist women folk should intervene appropriately with a very clear and strong perception of family environment. Thus, what do or not to do, depends largely in bringing clarity about the family and relative environment in the perceptual world of women folk. Through this clarity, women will get courage and will be able to solicit necessary support from the family members to manifest a strong will power in exercising their right in various social, economic, cultural and environmental context both in their respective on family environment and also off family environment. Thus it is in this context, a study on perception of women about family environment was conceptualized by the researched.

Objective:

1. To study the level of perception of women toward family environment.
2. To make an inventory of the key factors of healthy family environment.

methodSample: The size of the sample is 80 and random sample technique was followed by making use of the scale of studying the perception level of family environment.

Procedure: The study was conducted in Dibrugarh Town which was selected purposively. Further out of good number of units and geographical areas where the employees of Assam Medical College in one side and Dibrugarh University on the other side are residing in the quarters is selected purposively. The selection of the respondents was done by following random sampling technique restricting sample size to eighty. A scale for studying the perception of family environment was used with modification. Obtained perception score was analysed with the help of parametric statistics like mean and standard deviation and the level of perception was determined by classifying perception score as high on the basis of the score which is more than mean plus one standard deviation of the perception score. The level is considered medium with score lies between mean plus one standard deviation & mean minus one standard deviation. Finally, low perception level was determined based on the score which is less than mean minus one standard deviation. Focused group discussion technique was employed with the help of Women Self-help Group located in Dibrugarh Town, operating in the study area to ascertain the key

factors of healthy family environment with a brain storming session.

Results And Discussion:

(a) Perception of family environment is operationally defined as the interpretation of the structure, function, component including roles and responsibilities of the family received as sensory inputs through sensory organs by an individual family member to have knowledge and experiences about the family.

(b) As perception of family environment is considered as a pre-requisite of enabling the women to exercise her right initially in the family environment and gradually outside the family environment.

It reveals that only 17.5% of the sample respondents are having high perception about family environment whereas 55% are having medium level of perception followed by 27.5% as low level. The possible reasons attributing this results are some of the respondents live in a nuclear family and unable to perceive the holistic picture of the family in true sense. In the era of communication & information technology where mind is constantly exposed to outer world through electronic & mass media, the very nuance of family concept is lost in the process and human being is more and more dragged towards a mechanical and materialistic environment and most of a time mechanically like a robot. However many families in the study area are equidistance from tradition and modernity. Respondents incidentally selected from those families have medium level of perception score. However, it was interesting on the part of the researcher to observe the response made by the respondents in the context of the various statements included in the family environment scale. Altogether fifty statements were included reflecting both positive and negative aspects of family environment in equal number, i.e. 25 positive and 25 negative statements. Irrespective of positive and negative statement, the first three statement having highest score are in descending order of score obtained from the respondents are statement no. 1. We enjoy during dining together, statement no. 7. All members of the family are expected to be together at least once in a day, statement no. 5, In our family everyone is encouraged to play and interact with the neighbour. These statements are emerged as high score obtaining statement because in a family the primary kinship relation exist which is also reinforced through emotional attachment among the family members. That is why at the level of family each and every member enjoy the togetherness because of strong 'we' feeling and 'belongingness' and it is more evident in common venture for common family objective rather than individual endeavour for specific self oriented objective.

Similarly, the three no. of statements obtaining low scores in ascending order are statement no. 17 family members many time stay out without informing at home followed by statement no. 49 whenever any work comes up everyone tries to get out of the situation and finally the statement no. 23 we are careful not to hurt any one in the family by making thoughtless remarks. This may be due to the reason that in state capital of Orissa the no. of original inhabitants are comparatively less than the no. of migrants who have come over here from villages and setter here more or less in a nuclear family structure. That is why, any member who stays out without informing any one among the rest of the family members does not create tension, anxiety and question the safety and security in a over populated town which is definitely not a very healthy sign of healthy family environment. On the same token shifting of responsibility in nuclear family is limited in most of the cases to maximum two adult members and hence creating problems between wife and husband and consequently will have negative impact upon their children. These together add fuel to unhealthy family environment. Irrespective of nuclear and joint family system thoughtless remark made by some members at other members always pollute the family environment and hence score is low.

In relation to the 2nd objective of the study, following key components have been identified as the factors for creating family environment happy and healthier. From above distribution of factors(which may facilitate family environment happy) reveals that love and affection, good health and hygiene, budgeting among family members are top three factors contributing immensely for good family environment. Of course, absence of jealousy and presence of transparency and saving are no doubt the other contributing factors for healthy family environment but are at the lower side of the primary list of the respondent.

Conclusion: However, in the Dibrugarh Town of Assam is well known as an industrial prone area where the no. of nuclear families are increasing day by day, as a result, making aware of the perception level of women folk about family environment. It is true that women should first of all be made conscious and be informed about their rights and duties at various facts of life. Once it is done(i.e., conscious, aware and encourage), they will find out their way to exercise their right irrespective of the level in which they exist. Support from family is no doubt necessary and hope will come gradually once the rest of the family members feel the good effect of such empowerment of female. More over, the male counter part of the female folk in the family has a lot to do in this regard and will harness the sweet fruits

ultimately. Disparity, superstition etc. should be eliminated from our mind and body.

Table representing key factors that facilitate Family Environment Happy

Sr. No.	Factors/ Catalyst	Rank
1.	Love and affection	I
2.	Mutual trust & cooperation between family members	VII
3.	Transparency	IX
4.	Budgeting of expenditure	III
5.	Savings	VIII
6.	Free from debt	IV
7.	Discipline	V
8.	Absence of Jealousness towards outsiders	X
9.	Good health & hygiene	II
10.	Respect & care for the elders	VI

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