

THE DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN IN VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, A.P.

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Abstract: Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio declining female ratio in the last few decades. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard in rights and legal entitlements of women. The average age of the respondents is less than the average age of the husbands 47.5 years. It indicates that long distance migration is less and most of the migration stream comes from the short distance. Thus occupations which are associated with unorganized work are associated with illiteracy or lower level of education and all other occupations which are official in nature are associated with higher level of education. The average time taken to get the present job is 2.7 years. The average age of the first child is 18.16 years. The average age of the second child is 20.94 years. The study shows that the type of marriage of the respondents, out of 343 respondents who are married majority 294 (85.7 per cent) respondents had arranged marriage. A question is also asked whether they divorce intend to remarry. Out of 14 respondents 12 (85.7 per cent) said they can not say and the remaining 2 (14.3 per cent) answered positively. The average value of the assets possessed by the respondents is Rs 3.8 lakhs. Out of 349 respondents 217 (62.1 per cent) do not possess a house of their and the remaining 132 (38.9 per cent) possess the house, whose value is a maximum of Rs 10 lakhs. The average value of the house possessed by the respondents family is Rs. 5.3 lakhs. The average value of the property owned by the respondents is Rs 1.1 Lakh. The average age of first conception is 32 years and the average age of first child is 18 years. The average age of second conception was 27 years and the average age of second child is 21 years. Almost cent per cent of the respondents immunized their children. Only 71 per cent of the respondents taken prenatal care. 35 per cent of the respondents giving breastfeed to their child upto 9 months. In modern society not breastfeeding a child have become a fashion. Majority of the respondents i.e. 88 per cent are spending their salary for themselves. The average annual income earned by the family is 2.6 lakhs. The average expenditure is 66,437/-. The savings are very low, i.e., only 18,757/-. The average debt of the respondent is 8,798/-. Majority of the respondents i.e., 73 per cent are having white or pink ration card. The main objectives of the present paper are To examine the demographic and social and economic characteristics of women through a sample study in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, A.P.

Introduction: Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio declining female ratio in the last few decades. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in all most all parts of the country. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights / Fundamental duties Directive Principles. India is the second largest populous country in the world and the women in the country account for about half of the human resources. But, the vast human potential is still kept unutilized, under - utilized and misused to a larger extent mainly because of poor access to health, literacy and employment. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard in rights and legal entitlements of women. During five year plans priority has given to women development However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes. The agricultural sector is a crucial component of the Indian economy. Women are an integral part of agriculture. Agricultural policy is still dominated by the false view that 'farmers are men' women are only housewives. Yet very rarely do women get the recognition for their perpetual contribution in agriculture in the rural economy. Their work is concerned as secondary by and large by policy makers.

According to census 20 per cent of the working women are involved in agriculture operations. A large number of these women are burdened with the double burden of work and are vulnerable to exploitation.

Objectives: The main objectives of the present paper are To examine the demographic and social and economic characteristics of women through a sample study in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, A.P. and to suggest some policy measures for improving the status of women in India.

Primary data was collected from Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh in the year 2013, by using simple random technique.

Analysis : Age is one of the important demographic component and the future growth of population depends upon its age and sex structure. The average age of the respondents is less than the average age of the husbands 47.5 years. Until recent times joint family was commonly prevalent in India and there has been a change during the last two or three decades. Majority belong to nuclear family.

The average number of brothers the respondents are having is 1.44. The average number of male children surviving is 1.46 and female children is 1.16. It reveals that the migration is more from these three neighbouring and it is nominal from all other districts. It indicates that long distance migration is less and most of the migration stream comes from the short

distance. Thus occupations which are associated with unorganized work are associated with illiteracy or lower level of education and all other occupations which are official in nature are associated with higher level of education. The average time taken to get the present job is 2.7 years. The fact that working women suffer certain indignities at work places is altogether a different question. In rural society, women have been working on farms and it was never a stigma. 75 per cent of the respondents husbands got married before their husband attained the age of 28 years. The average age of the respondents at the time of the marriage is 23.6 years. It indicates that there exists a high correlation between women's education and love marriage. This shows that they do not feel strongly about their decision in taking divorce. The average age of the first child is 18.16 years. The average age of the second child is 20.94 years.

Home deliveries are more dangerous and hence there is every need to motivate women in favour of hospital deliveries. Whether it is first or second delivery, it is always safe to have delivery in the hospital. All the respondents should be properly cautioned and educated. The study shows that the type of marriage of the respondents, out of 343 respondents who are married majority 294 (85.7 per cent) respondents had arranged marriage. A question is also asked whether they divorce intend to remarry. Out of 14 respondents 12 (85.7 per cent) said they can not say and the remaining 2 (14.3 per cent) answered positively.

The antenatal care is as important as the prenatal care. So there is need to motivate parents towards anti natal care also. Only 57 (16.6 per cent) took maternity leave for the second conception. The average days of maternity leave used is 110 days. On the whole most of the respondents feel that their health is not upset because of dual work. However, there are 49 (41.1 per cent) who cannot say whether there are double standards or not. So there is no clear evidence to prefer a single male child or a single female child.

Education: Education is one of the important social variables. There exists high correlation between education of the women and her status in the society. On the whole It can be concluded that the educational qualifications are more among the husbands as compared to respondents (wives). It is observed that higher the educational level more the prevalence of nuclear family system. The study also conforms the same. Thus higher educational level having more the asset of the family and vice versa. However there exists jealousy and harassment among the people with higher educational level.

More educated people felt that work is associated with social stigma. Thus we can say that higher the educational level, lower the percentage of people feeling that possession of gold is a social status. Higher the education, more the hospital deliveries and so on. Higher the educational level, more the preference for

the nuclear family and so on. The harassment is more among the less educated women as compared to higher educated people. Almost all in the present days still only a few have such technical qualifications. This a clear gender discrimination and should be eliminated at least in the case of health. However, in some places baby sitters are available, but they are very costly. So they leave job. Hence, after birth of a child the women will leave the employment and look after children till the children attain their school going age

Asset is an important source of income to the family. More is the value of the asset more is the income capacity and better is the social and economic status in the society. The average value of the assets possessed by the respondents is Rs 3.8 lakhs. Out of 349 respondents 217 (62.1 per cent) do not possess a house of their and the remaining 132 (38.9 per cent) possess the house, whose value is a maximum of Rs 10 lakhs. The average value of the house possessed by the respondents family is Rs. 5.3 lakhs. The average value of the property owned by the respondents is Rs 1.1 Lakh.

However, the differences between the religious groups is marginal. Thus, there exists a positive relationship between salary of the respondents and savings of the respondents. It is surprising to note that the higher salary level some people did not immunized their children because of Governmental efforts irrespective of in income level people are coming forward to immunize their children. Thus occupations which are associated with unorganized work are associated with illiteracy or lower level of education and all other occupations which are official in nature are associated with higher level of education. The average time taken to get the present job is 2.7 years. The fact that working women suffer certain indignities at work places is altogether a different question. In rural society, women have been working on farms and it was never a stigma.

Efforts are being made seriously to implement reservation for women in parliament and other employment opportunities. Already, 1/3rd reservations are implemented for women in government service and for elective posts at panchayat level. On the whole the study reveals that there is an important in the women status in the recent times. But there is every need to empower them in social, economic and political fields.

Major findings of the studies: An analysis of secondary data reveals that sex discrimination exists in the society in a large measure. Women are discriminated on socio, economic and political grounds inspite of the best efforts made by the government to improve the status of women in India. The status of women in any country can be measure through education, employment, to spend the income earned by them and the decision making power. In all these aspects Indian women are lagging behind. Even though there are improvement in these variables. Gender empowerment measure and Gender development measure are considered as better indicators of

development of women as suggested by the UNDP.

The empowerment of women is considered to be an important phenomenon for the overall social and economic development of women in the country. The study reveals that the average age of the respondent is 42.5 years where as a husband's average age is 55 years. So, the women 7.5 years younger than men. The study reveals inter-religious marriages are very common. More Christian and Muslim women are getting married to Hindu or Muslim men. The Hindus are better educated as compared to Christians.

The illiteracy is more among SCs as compared to OCs. There has been a change in the type of family in the recent times. Nuclear family is spreading very fast now a days. The average number of brothers the respondents are having is 1.44 as against 1.47 sisters. The average number of male children surviving is 1.46 where as the female it is only 1.16. The difference is attributed high prevalence of mortality and discrimination of female child. Majority of the respondents belong to A.P. State and interstate migration is nominal. Among the migrants, Krishna District dominates. Majority of the respondents are got marry and late marriages are very common. The average age of marriage, the respondents is 23.6 years.

The divorce/separation rate is high, indicating that better educated and employed women do not hesitate to divorce. Most of the respondents though had arranged marriages 14.3 per cent of the respondents had love marriage which is high by any standard. It seems that there exists high correlation between women's education and love marriage. Most of the love marriages are with in the same case or community. The widowhood is very high. The average age at the widowhood is 38 years. Majority of the widowed revealed that they support to marry a widower. The average age at the time of divorce is 30 years. Majority of the separated respondents are not getting maintenance allowance. Majority of the respondents felt divorce is a last resort to be adopted in there is a problem in marital life. The main reason for divorce is financial problems.

Majority of the respondents said that they are aware of the legal age of the marriage but majority are not able to answer correctly. Majority of the respondents felt that main purpose of the marriage is companionship. Majority felt that there is not have freedom to move freely in the society. 97 per cent of the respondents are aware of 1/3rd reservation to women. Majority wanted in two male children and there is one female child. It indicates sex discrimination. Almost cent per cent of the respondents are aware of the AIDS. The main suggestions for improving the women in India are education and employment. 50 per cent of the respondents felt they can undergo family planning operation without single male child. 76 per cent of the respondents are aware that they have property right in the family, but they are not utilized. 76 per cent felt giving dowry is a must to a girl to get marry. 85 per cent

of the respondents felt woman is first enemy to other woman. 98 per cent of the respondents voted in the last general elections. This percentage is much higher as compared to participation of general population in the general elections. 82 per cent of respondents felt that there is no safety in the society to send the girls for higher education. 50 per cent of the respondents are not using family planning methods. Only 42 per cent felt that India is not over populated.

The average age of first conception is 32 years and the average age of first child is 18 years. The average age of second conception was 27 years and the average age of second child is 21 years. Almost cent per cent of the respondents immunized their children. Only 71 per cent of the respondents taken prenatal care. 35 per cent of the respondents giving breastfeed to their child upto 9 months. In modern society not breastfeeding a child have become a fashion. Majority of the respondents i.e. 88 per cent are spending their salary for themselves. The average annual income earned by the family is 2.6 lakhs. The average expenditure is 66,437/-. The savings are very low, i.e., only 18,757/-. The average debt of the respondent is 8,798/-. Majority of the respondents i.e., 73 per cent are having white or pink ration card. The study covered most of the occupied groups which as lecturers, engineers, bank managers and fish, eggs and toys selling people and vegetable vendors. 87 per cent of the respondents in the organized sector had additional technical qualification i.e. computer or typing. The women did not feel working both at home and office is not burden some. The average no of . years worked by the respondents is 10 years. The occupational mobility is very less. Majority are dissatisfied with the present job. People with higher education for facing harassment both either from employee or from colleagues. The percentage of people reported harassment is less educated and low occupational categories. 77 per cent of the respondents are not willing to leave the job after marriage. The employment curve for women the unimodel curve but not a bimodal curve as is observed in advanced countries. Majority of the respondent felt that they are getting whole hearted support from the family members or husband. Asset is an important aspect of economic empowerment. The average value of the assets possessed by the respondents is only 3.5 lakhs. The average rental value of the house resided by the respondents is 24.20. The average value of the property owned by the respondents them selves is only 1.1 lakh. The high income is associated with more age of puberty and high age of conception and so on. The respondents immunized their children irrespective of their education and income.

Suggestions:

- The education is a key factor for social empowerment. There is every need to provide more educational facilities especially, for women of disadvantaged groups and remote areas and in the urban slums.
- The dropout rates are very high among girls as

compared to boys, especially after the secondary level of education. So, more schools exclusively for girl in remote rural areas and urban slums to be promoted.

- Even among the highly better placed women as for as occupation is concerned do not have full positive attitudes towards empowerment of women. Better empowerment of women requires better education, better employment and more freedom to spend their earnings and decision making power, especially in the field of family planning and adoption of small family now.
- Now a days the privatization is increasing and most of the poor people are not able to spend more on girls education. So more govt. women educational institutions should be started.
- The assets possessed by the respondents is very low and hence there is every need to encourage women to have better assets. If possible the government can waive registration fees for the property transferred or possessed by the women.
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- There is lot sex discrimination and it is to be curbed at the earliest. The discrimination is more in juvenile level. The infanticide and feticide is to be reduced.
- The average age at marriage is still low. The majority are getting married even before the prescribed legal age of marriage i.e., 18 years. More women should be encouraged for delayed marriage which has positive impact in reducing the fertility.
- Child mortality is very high among girls as compared to boys. Hence more attention should be paid for declining child mortality especially among girls.
- The maternal mortality is also very high. Hence there is need to reduce the maternal deaths by encouraging more institutional deliveries and creating awareness among the women for better prenatal and antenatal care. There is also need to improve a nutritional standards of the women and child since poor nutrition is a main cause for high death rates in the society.

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