



# Gender Inequality In Household Works And Decision-Making (A Form Of Gender Inequality In Karunabari CD Block Of Lakhimpur District)

Samim Sultana Ahmed\*

\*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh, AP

**Citation:** Samim Sultana Ahmed (2024). Gender Inequality In Household Works And Decision-Making (A Form Of Gender Inequality In Karunabari CD Block Of Lakhimpur District), *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1) 5747 - 5752  
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i1.9238

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Male and female are both equal and play a key role in creating and developing their families in their respective areas and in society in general. Nonetheless, the fight for equality became one of the movement's core concerns worldwide. Women contribute a significant part of the GDP of a country or a region, yet, they are not treated as equal with men in many aspects of life. Yet, the status of women in decision making remains very poor. The traditional role of women as a home works remained unchanged. Sorry to say but it is the reality that decision making pattern regarding domestic activities revealed it to be more or less male domain. In domestic activities women showed low level of participation in household decision making. Mostly women are ignoring in decision making pattern in the family or household. The aims and objectives of the present study are to examine the status and role of women in decision making in context of economic, political, social issues of the family in the study area. The researcher will attempt to depict the awful picture of the gender inequality that is committed mostly against women in household decision making and household works in the study area. The present research on "Gender inequality in household works and decision-making: A Form of Gender Inequality in Karunabari CD Block of Lakhimpur District" is an empirical research where information are collected through both primary and secondary sources.

## Introduction:

Male and female are both equal and play a key role in creating and developing their families in their respective areas and in society in general. Nonetheless, the fight for equality became one of the movement's core concerns worldwide. There is no differentiation of rank in the disparity between sex and physical form. A woman is the man's counterpart, not the lower. In India, women have long been considered to be an oppressed section of society and for centuries they have been neglected. The son's birth is celebrated as the daughter's child is full of suffering. Kids are taught to be diligent and thorough. But girls' being homebound and shy is welcomed. Both of these differences are sexual and social differences. This has a negative impact on sustainability goals and thus limits economic growth. It obstructs the overall well-being because it can adversely affect society as a whole to prevent women from participating in social, political and economic activities.

The issue is that the cultural and belief structure in India plays an important role in gender disparity. You begin to consider the equal of men and women, and many of India's centuries-long cultural pride must be reflected and reconfigured. Any suggestions of change or addressing discrimination are seen as a strike at the heart of their political, societal or ethnic culture for many Indian families practicing sex discrimination. In a more thorough analysis, gender inequality is largely linked to two questions: The transfer of surname, lineage and Social security. While the first question (where the son is called, but your daughter doesn't) is of interest to many Indians, there is a second question, of more practical significance. Despite their old age, most Indians don't prepare well. A son is regarded as economic protection as an aged, despite the social expectation of a child getting married and moving to another home. The daughter-in-law is connected to the health of food. In a country with a growing population and limited land, life with the son and his family thus ensures sharing of resources. As you get older, it ensures cultural, physical, nutritional and emotional

security. This is a more dire scenario now than it was in past decades. Families would continue to produce children until the birth of their sons. A girl was and is born, but foeticide was not as rampant. It is not so rampant. Families with many kids and a combination of boys and girls were often seen. The younger children would be boys (girls born while waiting for the son), while the oldest children were girls. The importance of only two children (shown in advertisements as a boy and a girl) was widely expressed during the 1980s and 1990s family planning and population control campaign. Many Indian families have realized that they can provide fewer children with resources and ideally have only two children. But if a girl is the first child, and a boy is the second, it isn't a question. It's okay if both the kids are boys too. What if the second child is also a girl is the greatest fear. This is why many families (and often financially good families) use female (illegal, but rampant) fetish. If that is not the case, the woman has to bring the third child into being, in the expectation that the third child will be a son. When all else fails and some families opt for a male child as their last resort. Only when the married woman becomes a mother does she become valued and (relatively more) empowered. This dominance, though, only takes place when a son's mother (but not when a daughter's mother). Through taking the son worldwide, it has assured politically, socially more influential than the family of the bride the cultural, lineage and food security as well as the power equations of the family for a long time (Khan. S: 2020). Gender differences found in adulthood are in part a product of an individual's family environment during childhood. The leading difference studied by economists has been the gender wage gap. In both developed and developing countries alike, wages for female adults are significantly lower than their male counterparts (World Bank 2001, OECD 2008).

In the present study, we define patriarchy as "a system of power in which male privilege and superiority over women are manifested, institutionalised, and self-reproducing across a society as a whole" (Shepherd L.J. 2019). Lerner G. (1986) as cited in Chowdhury FD (2009) defines patriarchy as a historical creation which places the family as a core unit and basic foundation of social organisation by assembling gender roles for different sexes at households. Although the exact definition of patriarchy is contested, we find it a useful concept because power relations between genders are constructed at household level through (re)construction and (re)production of gender roles (Lerner G.:1986) and gender (re) performativity (Butler J: 2011), particularly on the aspect of gender socialisation practices in the families. In other words, households are important sites of self-reproduction for patriarchy.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aims and objectives of the present study are to examine the status and role of women in decision making in context of economic, political, social issues of the family in the study area. The researcher will attempt to depict the awful picture of the gender inequality that is committed mostly against women in household decision making and household works in the study area.

With the above objectives, an attempt has been made to find out different factors responsible for gender inequality and what type of remedial measures are needed to remove and control such type of inequality against women.

### **Methods and Materials:**

A total of 120 household were purposely selected from different parts of Karunabari CD Block of Lakhimpur District. The present research on "Gender inequality in household works and decision-making: A Form of Gender Inequality in Karunabari CD Block of Lakhimpur District" is an empirical research where information are collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected by conducting face to face interviews with the individual through interview schedules & secondary data were collected from newspapers, government's report, journals, internet etc. To examine intensity of the problems the case study method was applied. Editing, classification, tabulation and interpretation of data have been done with the help of appropriate procedures and statistical measurements. MS Excel was used to analyse the raw data, frequency tabulation, cross tabulation and diagrammatic presentation of data.

### **Observations & Analysis:**

In order to find out the gender inequality in household works and decision-making some queries were taken from the household. The following discussion will give an idea that what type of Gender inequality is going on in household works and decision-making in the study area:

### **Details of work carried out by men and women in household:**

Despite the growth of women in employment since the mid-1900s, American society still plays a major part in traditional gender roles. Many women will pursue their educational and career goals to raise a family, while their husbands are the first to win. Some women, however, decide to work and play a perceived gender role in cleaning the house and taking care of children. While there is evidence that women tend to be the primary caregiver in family life even though they work in full-time jobs, some families may spread their work out more equally. These indicators reveal that, as opposed to men who work 12 minutes daily in childcare activities, women working outside the home often have 18 additional hours a week in a household or childcare environment. One Van Hooff study found that modern couples don't divide items like household

activities along gender lines deliberately but can rationalize and justify them. One reason is that women have more expertise and energy in the household and others argue that men's work is more challenging (Khan. S: 2020).

Table 01 shows the gendered division of labour among the household under study. Looking at the following list of activities, it is evident that women take on greater responsibilities within the household, but these activities fall in nonmarket categories and do not earn income for the family that's why their social status, position and sacrifices for the family are still not calculating. Women's work remains unrecognized and formally unorganized despite the fact that women's contributions to the family are vital; in many cases women are the breadwinners and work longer hours than men (UNDP 1995). This underestimation reflects women's lower status in the family and locality; they have very little or no say in household decision-making.

**Table-01** Showing Work carried out by Men and Women:

Sl.	Household Activities	No. of Respondents		Total
		Men	Women	
1	Cooking	0	120 (100)	120 (100)
2	Fetching Water for Drinking	1(0.83)	119 (99.16)	120 (100)
3	Cleaning the House	5 (4.17)	115 (95.83)	120 (100)
4	Washing Clothes	4 (3.33)	116 (96.67)	120 (100)
5	Cleaning Utensils	5 (4.17)	115 (95.83)	120 (100)
6	Child Care	20 (16.67)	100 (83.33)	120 (100)
7	Drying of grain	5 (4.17)	115 (95.83)	120 (100)
9	Grinding of Grains (Rice, Masala, Corn etc.)	80 (66.67)	40 (33.33)	120 (100)
10	Caring of Poultry and cattle rearing	90 (75)	30 (25)	120 (100)
11	Kitchen Gardening	115 (95.83)	5 (4.17)	120 (100)
<b>Total</b>		<b>324 (27)</b>	<b>875 (73)</b>	<b>1200 (100)</b>

*Source: Compiled by the author*

(Note: The figures in the brackets indicate percentage of the total)

It is apparent that 73.9 percent household activities were carried out by women which are more than men. Women tend to do more household chores than their male partners.

Division of labour between male and female within households is evident when we look at the daily household tasks performed by family members in the study area. Apart from paid work outside the household, male members perform certain tasks such as planting paddy in fields, market-related work, dropping children off at school, grazing cattle, and major repair work at home. On the other hand, women work in and outside the household for most of the day and throughout the year. They perform such activities as prepa

ring meals 3 times a day, cleaning and mopping, washing utensils and clothes and keeping house, looking after children, the elderly, and the sick, fetching water, fuel wood, and fodder, caring for livestock (feeding and milking cattle and cleaning the cowshed), weaving and stitching, drying of grain and storing food grains. This is not an exclusive list of activities. Moreover, women also engage in multitasking, which makes their work even more challenging. It has been found that labour is gender specific, women work for longer hours than men, and they contribute significantly to household. But still their status are ignoring in the household. Throughout history, women have generally been restricted to the role of a homemaker; that of a mother and wife. In the present study it is seen that women spent more time and work than men in household chores. Women tend to do more household chores than their male partners. It has been observed that women do household chores every day while men do closer to one or two hours in a day. Women did the numbers of the domestic duties in the household which is uncountable. When both individuals in the couples were in full-time employment, women were found to be five times more likely than men to doing household chores.

### **Decision making pattern of men and women in household:**

Women contribute a significant part of the GDP of a country or a region, yet, they are not treated as equal with men in many aspects of life. Yet, the status of women in decision making remains very poor. The traditional role of women as a home works remained unchanged. Sorry to say but it is the reality that decision making pattern regarding domestic activities revealed it to be more or less male domain. In domestic activities women showed low level of participation in household decision making. Mostly women are ignoring in decision making pattern in the family or household. It has been observed that the participation of women in domestic activities was not so high. The following table shows the decision making pattern of men and women in household.

**Table-02** Showing Decision Making pattern of Men and Women in Household

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Household related Decision</b>	<b>Wife</b>	<b>Husband</b>	<b>Jointly</b>	<b>Along With Family</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>	<b>Total</b>
a	Construction of New House	--	40 (33.33)	20 (16.67)	10 (8.33)	50 (41.67)	120 (100)
b	Purchasing Household Articles	---	60 (50)	50 (41.67)	10 (8.33)	---	120 (100)
c	Any Repairing Works in House	---	70 (58.33)	40 (33.33)	10 (8.33)	---	120 (100)
<b>Money Related Decision</b>							
a	Deciding saving of money	---	70 (58.33)	50 (41.67)	---	---	120 (100)
b	Buying daily necessities	---	75 (62.50)	45 (37.50)	---	---	120 (100)
c	Taking or giving loan	---	110 (91.66)	10 (8.33)	---	---	120 (100)
d	Selling or buying of articles	---	100 (83.33)	20 (16.67)	---	---	120 (100)
<b>Participation in Political Related Decision</b>							
a	Choosing of leader	---	50 (41.67)	30 (25)	40 (33.33)	---	120 (100)
b	Casting of vote	---	50 (41.67)	30 (25)	40 (33.33)	---	120 (100)
<b>Child Related Decision</b>							
a	Deciding children's school	---	65 (54.16)	50 (41.67)	5 (4.16)	---	120 (100)
b	Deciding children's marriage	---	10 (8.33)	60 (50)	47 (39.16)	3 (2.50)	120 (100)
<b>Total</b>			<b>700 (53.03)</b>	<b>405 (30.69)</b>	<b>162 (12.27)</b>	<b>53 (4.01)</b>	<b>1320 (100)</b>

Source: Compiled by the author

(Note: The figures in the brackets indicate percentage of the total)

#### **Decision making pattern of men and women in domestic activities:**

Present study revealed that married women in the study area play an insignificant role in decision making related to domestic matters. Majority of women said that their decision is not taken or mostly not agree with them in decisions related to domestic affairs. Most of the women stated that their husbands have taken final decision independently in these matters and in some case a few percentage of women said that male members did agree with their decisions.

#### **Participation in decision making in money related matters:**

Participation of women is much less in money related matters. Less than one third women respondents said that their advice is listened to in money related matters such as buying daily necessities, deciding saving of money, taking or giving loan and buying and sale of different items. In most of money related matters in the household women's decision were not taking.

#### **Participation in Household related Decision:**

In matters related to construction of new house, in less than 50 percent cases decision is taken by jointly or with consent of female members of the house. No single woman was found who took decision alone or independently. The extent of participation of women in case of matters related to any repairing or renovation works in house, out of total respondent only 33.33 percent cases decision is taken by jointly or with consent of

female members of the house. 41 percent women respondents said that their advice is listened or decision is taken by jointly in case of purchasing of household articles.

#### **Child related decision:**

41.67 percent of respondents said that their advice is listened in case of matters related to education of children and deciding children's school. But in matters related to children's marriage 50 percent cases decision is taken by jointly or with consent of female members of the house and another around 46 percent cases decision is taken along with the family members.

#### **Participation in political related decision:**

In case of choosing of political leader and casting of vote maximum decision is taken by the husband or male member of the family independently. Another 33.33 percent respondent said that decision is taken along with the family. Only 25 percent respondent said that their advice is listened or taken when choosing of leader.

It has been observed that a large percentage of women do not have power to take any decision without discussion with husband. Presents study indicates that very less respondents had found who can take decision independently or by alone. They cannot take decisions independently not even related to their own life. They have get permission from male members for each and every issue in the household. In most instances it is seen that they do not speak anything or remain silent in important household matters and in matter of their own marriage. Above discussion makes it clear that lack of education or poor educational status resulted in the married women depending on their husbands for undertaking any decisions concerning the family. It is also seen that women perspectives was not included in housing policies, purchasing household articles, money matter decisions etc.

Thus it is evident from the above table that majority of women in the study area do not enjoy a high degree of autonomy in decision making in the family in spite of their significant contribution to household activities. Moreover, it has been observed the patriarchic forms of decision making and dominance over women still continue in the study area.

The hypothesis of the present study is that patriarchic form of decision making and dominance over women is one of the leading responsible factors for subordination status of women. In the case of decision making, it has been clearly observed that a greater percentage of women are said that they do not have the power to take any decision independently and not even related to their own life. Moreover, they have got permission from male members for each and every issue. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that most of the women under study depend on their husbands for undertaking any decisions concerning the family. Thus it is evident that majority of women in the study area do not enjoy a high degree of autonomy in decision making in the family in spite of their significant contribution to household activities. We can say, decision making patterns regarding any domestic and other activities revealed it to be more or less male domain. Now as a note on the findings, a conclusion may be made as follows:

#### **Conclusion & Recommendation:**

To conclude, it appears that women in the study area do not enjoy a high degree of freedom and autonomy in decision making in the family in spite of their significant contribution to household and other activities. Only in some purely domestic matters like decoration of house, purchase of domestic goods, marriage of children, etc. women are given some freedom to take their own decisions. But in matters related to children's education and occupation and money related matters, they enjoy limited freedom. The autonomy is less regarding the movement of women outside home. Thus, the patriarchic forms of decision making and dominance over women still continue in the study area. These attitudes have to undergo a change before women are able to fully enjoy autonomy as an individual. Education and improvement in their economic independence will help in increasing women's involvement in decision-making in family.

Finally it may be suggested that more and more sociological study and research in the field of issues of women should be carried out so as to discover more and more facts about the problems and prospects of women and proper remedial measures need to be adopted to check, solve problems and stop gender inequalities.

#### **REFERENCES:**

1. Good, W. J. and P. K. Hatt., 1952: "Methods in Social Research", McGraw-Hill, New York.
2. Gosh, B. N., 2006: "Scientific Method and Social Research", Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi p.p. 261.
3. Census of India 2011, Report
4. Butler J. Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity: routledge; 2011.
5. Lerner G. *The Creation of Patriarchy* New York: Oxford University Press. 1986. [Google Scholar]
6. Lerner G. *The Creation of Patriarchy* New York: Oxford University Press. 1986. [Google Scholar]
7. Shepherd LJ. *Handbook on gender and violence*: Edward Elgar Publishing; 2019. [Google Scholar]
8. UNDP; (United Nations Development Programme), 1995: Human Development Report 1995, Gender and Human Development. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

9. UNDP; (United Nations Development Programme), 2020: Human Development Report 2020, The Next Frontier, Human Development and the anthropocene, 1 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA.
10. World Bank, 2001: Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, **Resources**, and Voice. New York: Oxford University Press.
11. District Census Handbook, 2011: Lakhimpur Village and Town Directory Series-19 Part XII- A, Published By Directorate of Census Operations Assam.
12. Banu, F., 2017: Article published on "Educational Status of Muslim Women in India: An Overview", IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 22, Issue 6, Ver. 3 (June. 2017) PP 10-13.
13. Haque, R., 2003: Unpublished PhD Thesis on "Purdah of the heart and the eyes: an examination of Purdah as an institution in Pakistan", Women's & Gender Studies Program and the School of Social Work, University of New South Wales, Australia.
14. Hussain, M, Khan, A and Khan, K. A., 2018: Research article on "Educational Status of Muslim Women in India: Issues and Challenges" Published on Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences ©Scholars Academic and Scientific Publishers (SAS Publishers), A Unit of Scholars Academic and Scientific Society, India, ISSN 2347-9493(Print), ISSN 2347-5374(Online).
15. Narayan, S.S and Sharmistha, B., 2011: Research paper on "Economic Security: A Study in the Garhwal Himalayas, India" Mountain Research and Development (MRD), an international, peer-reviewed open access journal published by the International Mountain Society (IMS) Or URL: <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-10-00010.1>
16. Pandey, V., 2016: "Indian Society and Culture", Rawat Publications, Satyam Apts, Jawaharnagar, Jaipur-302004 (India)
17. Sachar Committee Report: Prime Minister's High Level Committee, (Government of India 2006), Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India. New Delhi: Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.