

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study concerning interrelationships of the variables as determinants in the extent of involvement in decision making process are discussed in the following portion.

As very scant investigations related to involvement in decision making process had been carried out in the past, there were very few supportive studies that could be quoted, to backup the results of the present study.

The numerical and percentage figures through summary tables have been reported earlier in this chapter, and in the following paragraphs discussion of the findings is presented.

### I. Demographic description of the sample

AGE AND EDUCATION : The demographic profile of the sample revealed that most of the respondents belonged to the younger age group in all three land holding groups, while most of heads of the families belonged to the middle age group. The heads of the families and respondents of LLH group had a higher formal education than the heads of the families belonging to SLH group. Perhaps, the latter were not as economically well off as the former, to get well educated.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS : Employment status seemed to be an important variable influencing decision making. A large number of respondents of SLH

and LLH group were self employed specially in agricultural work, compared to MLH group, where more number of respondents of MLH group were gainfully employed. The reason was that the respondents of LLH group had to spend more time on large size farm with labourers. Respondents of SLH group had to do all agricultural operations by themselves, hence they spent most of the time on farm. Women belonging to joint families, could spare time for gainful employment and contribute to the family income.

In the case of head of the family most of the heads of all three land holding groups were involved in farming, and in government services, but mostly the heads of MLH group as compared to SLH and LLH group were involved in private sector jobs.

FAMILY SIZE AND TYPE : Data on family type revealed that joint families existed more among MLH group and therefore more families of MLH group had 6 to 9 members in the family compared to SLH and LLH groups. Family type and family size, seemed to have a definite bearing on the participation of respondents in household, farm, livestock and income generating activities. The presence of more members in the family, naturally called for each member's participation in such activities. Therefore, the extent of participation of each member might have been reduced.

FAMILY MEMBERS WORKING AT FARM : Most of the respondents worked with their family member and/or with servants. This was true in the case of 73.91 per cent of respondents of LLH group and 70.31 per cent respondents of MLH group. Since, the farm size was big, all the family members had to work on farm and or had to appoint servants to help them. In the case of MLH group more family members were involved, as most of them belonged to joint families.

INCOME SOURCE OF THE FAMILY : All the families belonging to LLH group earned money from farm. They were not at all involved in any type of business or income generating activities whereas more respondents of MLH group were involved in income generating activities as well as in gainful employment. The reason may be that most of the families of MLH group were in joint families, therefore respondents could find time to work outside since the household chores were attended to by other family members also.

EARNING MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY : Three or more than three earning members were found in MLH group but the number was less in the other two land holding groups. The reason may be that since there were joint families prevailed in MLH group, more members of the family went out to earn money. These families could afford to earn from other income generating activities also.

## II. Household decision making and decision implementing

### 1. DECISION MAKING ROLE OF RESPONDENTS IN HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

Involvement of respondent of all three land holding groups was found to be high in decisions related to planning of menu for routine meals as well as for the special occasions. This finding was different from the findings of Arya, (1964) who reported that decisions related to food on festivals and special occasions were male dominated. This shows that previously women were not given a chance to make decisions related to food management on special occasions but now they have started taking such decision. The reasons for this change may be their education and employment status.

Only 19.0 per cent respondents on the whole were involved in taking independent decisions related to the bulk purchase of food products. This was similar to the findings of Badiger and Rao, (1980) who found that decision making of the respondents on bulk purchase was limited. The reason reported by respondents was that this decision involved more expenditure of money.

Almost all the major decisions related to clothing management were taken by most of the male members in the family. Only minor decisions such as care of clothes and renovation of clothes were taken by

respondents. Similar findings were reported by Arya, (1964); Puri and Deshpandey, (1986). whereas it was a joint decision according to Craven, (1963); Dubey, (1972); Rajgopal and Jangharel, (1973); Gill, (1972); Kahlon, et al., (1973); Baltej, (1976); Singal and Goel, (1985); Singh Sharma, (1988); Giriappa, (1988); Kataria, (1989); Sudhar and Gupta, (1990). Since, most of these above studies were conducted in rural areas, it is noted that not much change was found in decision making involvement of rural women related to clothing. The reason was their low level of education, less exposure and contact with urban areas.

On the whole independent decisions taken by respondents related to maintenance and decoration of house were few. Involvement of the respondents of SLH group was found to be just. 1.75 to 5.30 per cent. Decisions like additions to be made in the house, new installations and construction in the house and selection of furnishing materials which were major decisions were taken partially by respondents of all land holding groups. The findings of Kahlon, et al., (1973) and Baltej, (1976), revealed a similar trend. Thus there is no perceptible increase in the extent of participation of women in decisions related to house maintenance and furnishing during the past few years. The reason may be the position of women in the family where male domination is prevalent.

It was revealed that relational position of the respondents in the family was found to be influencing the extent of involvement in decision making ( $T = 2.64$ , Sig. at  $.001$ ,  $df = 3,196$ ) where wives were involved both in independent and group decisions, but daughters-in-law had low involvement.

It was found that most of the major decisions related to money matters were made by male members in the families of all land holding groups, and the involvement of respondents was very low. A few who took independent decisions related to money matters were either female heads of the family or wives of migrant husbands. There was a significant influence of women being head of the family ( $T = 8.94$ , sig. at  $.001$ ,  $df = 2,193$ ), which revealed that woman heads of the family had more say in decision making in the family. These women were more involved in independent decisions.

The decisions like money to be spent on food, clothing, shelter, social and religious occasions, education and occupation of the children, marriage of the children, health of the family members, recreation for the family members were male dominated.

Except major decisions about purchasing of National Savings Certificates which was a joint affair, all other decisions related to savings, investment and

taking of credit were taken by male members and a few women heads of the family independently. The reasons was the subordinate position of women in the family, low educational level and lack of knowledge and intelligence.

It was found that education of the respondent was an important variable affecting the extent of involvement in decision making as was evident from the "T" values ( $T = 2.90$  Sig.  $0.005$ ,  $df = 5,194$ ). This result was substantiated by the studies conducted by Arya, (1964); Menon, (1963); Sunita, (1977) and Kaur (1987). Also some of the traits found to be influencing the involvement in decision making process, these were risk taking, communicating skills, resourcefulness and self confidence. Among these four, the most influencing trait was risk taking. Those women who were more resourceful, confident and had good communicating skill, could take risk and so, were more involved in decision making process.

Most of the rural women hardly get time to go to cities to get the bank and post office work done, as they were over burdened with various household activities. No extension programme related to management of money was run by experts in these areas to educate them. Several earlier studies showed similar results (Puri, Deshpande, 1968; Katariya, 1973; Baltej, 1976; Verma, 1984). This shows no change in the

involvement of rural women from earlier time till today. About the decisions related to recreation, the facilities were not available to rural folk, and due to long distances and their heavy work schedule they hardly get time for the recreational activities therefore there was not much scope for such decisions.

Involvement of the respondents in independent decisions related to education and occupation of the children was very low, among SLH and MLH groups, and male members played leading role specially in major decisions. Most of the respondents had less knowledge about types of schools and job opportunities for the children, the reasons were illiteracy and lack of exposure.

This finding is in harmony with the earlier findings reported by Gill, (1972); Kahlon, (1973); Baltej, (1976); Kaur, (1981); Verma, (1984); Kataria, (1989) and Gupta and Sudhan, (1990), which shows that there was no change in the rural women's involvement in decisions related to education and occupation of children.

Most of the decisions, both major and minor, related to marriage were mostly taken jointly by the respondents with husband and family members. Only 7.50 to 11 per cent respondents, most of them of LLH group took independent decisions and the reason was their



being heads of the family. Decisions such as whether the marriage should be simple or with pomp and show and place of marriage showed more involvement of male members. Only 11 per cent respondents took independent decisions. Most of these women respondents were of LLH group. These results were strongly supported by earlier studies Gill; (1972); Rani and Bhave, (1981), which reported that the above mentioned decisions were male dominated.

With the increase in the size of the land holding, involvement of respondents in independent decisions related to arranging of social and religious activities increased but on the whole most of them took joint decisions on above activities, except those related to purchasing of type of gifts in which more than 50 per cent respondents were not involved. Studies conducted by Sandhu and Renuka, (1981); Singal and Goel, (1985) support the results. Therefore the trend was the same as it was in 1980's.

Large number of respondents of SLH, MLH and LLH groups were involved in independent decisions related to family size. But decisions related to child rearing were jointly taken by them. Whereas the study conducted in Punjab by Sandhu and Renuka, (1981) showed that the decision regarding family size was a joint one. The reason for taking independent decisions by the sample of hill regions under study was that their family

members and husband did not cooperate with them in this matter and since they had to take care of house and farm besides some tedious jobs, they took this risk. Earlier it was found that 82 per cent respondents possessed risk taking trait. These respondents were ready to face the consequences of taking independent decisions regarding family size as they were more exposed to rural developmental programmes ( $T = 2.02$ , Sig. at 0.05,  $df=4,195$  showing positive influence on extent of decision making. Those respondents who were exposed to various rural developmental programmes related to skill development, family planning programmes etc. were involved more in decisions than those who were not involved in any developmental programmes.

Since no extension programmes related to hygiene were taken up by the extension workers in these selected villages which were situated on high hills, the respondents' knowledge about advantages of health and hygiene was very low. Therefore, on the whole few respondents of all land holding groups were less involved in above decisions. The involvement of respondents of SLH group who were economically poor was very low in above decision. According to the study of Renuka and Sudhar, (1981); Gupta and Sudhar (1990), the involvement of the respondent in above decisions was independent or joint with the family members.

There was not much scope for decisions related to recreation activities for the family because such activities were not at all prevalent in the hills. But in some of the minor decisions like going to temples, fairs and sightseeing, few respondents were partially involved. Generally men took the decision in all cases. The study conducted by Gupta and Sudhar, (1990) reported that in all land holding groups, decisions related to recreation of families were made jointly by family members.

Decision implementing in household management includes the role played by the women in initiating, controlling and supervision of household activities.

Respondents' participation in buying activities was mostly joint, but in household chores, social and religious activities their participation was mostly high. Respondents' participation in controlling activities was low. This result was supported by the findings of the studies by Sandhu, (1970); Sandhu, (1972); Kaur, (1982); Grewal, (1982); Aujha, et al., (1984); Munjal et al., (1984); Sandhu, (1985); Saikia, (1985); Kaur, (1986); Devadas, et al., (1988) and Gill, (1989). They reported that women were the major performers of all activities except the economic functions.

The variables education (Chi-square = 14.33, sig. at 0.01, df=4), employment status (Chi-square=16.07, sig. at 0.01, df=2), and family size (Chi-square=13.57, sig. at 0.05, df=4) showed an association with the extent of participation of respondents in household activities. Respondents who were educated and gainfully employed participated less in household activities. Those who belonged to large size families, had to bear less burden of household activities. This finding was supported by the study of Kaur, (1983), and Kaur and Sharma, (1985). Factors like age, women as head of the family, caste, family type, socio-economic status of the family, size of land holding, family income, relational position of the respondents, ordinal position and exposure to developmental programmes had no association with participation of respondents in household. It is inferred that respondents irrespective of their age, caste, whether belonging to lower/high socio-economic status and of any land holding group had to perform household activities. Respondents whether they were wives in nuclear families or daughters-in-law in joint families, eldest or youngest had to work at home.

#### I. DECISIONS MAKING ROLE OF RESPONDENTS IN FARM MANAGEMENT

Since long it had been noted that involvement of women in farm decisions is low, inspite of the fact that they were playing significant role in farm

activities and working more than men. But when the question of decision making arises they are excluded. Somehow the orthodox belief, that farm work is the domain of men and household the domain of women prevails in the society without any regards paid to the contribution made by women in farming. This belief obviously influences the decisions regarding farm related activities taken in the farmers' families.

Respondents' involvement in major decisions like purchase of land, machines, agricultural implements, purchase of insecticides, seeds, buying of new land and selling of land was very low. Respondents involvement in decisions related to selection of market to sell the products and selling of products, selling of surplus farm products, level of crop production and method to be used for sowing was also low. In decisions related to installation of hand pump and tubewell, methods of harvesting the crop, use of plant protection measures, frequency of spraying insecticides, purchase of new implements and taking farm credit was nil in some cases and very low in others among all land holding groups. These above decisions were male dominated. The trend is not new but has been the same as evident from many studies Radhudkar and Jonghare, (1962); Puri, (1971); Dhillon, (1980); Rani and Bhavé, (1981); Singh and Khan, (1981); Verma, (1984); Nimbalkar and thorat, (1984), Ghosh, (1985); Kaur, (1984); Dak, (1986) and

Puri, (1992). Where almost all the decisions pertaining to the farm were taken by men and women had very little say.

Respondents' involvement in decisions related to money to be spent on the purchase of farm machines, implements, seeds, pesticides was found to be nil. This finding was supported by the studies carried out by Sharma, (1988) and Kaur, (1983) who reported that all major decisions related to money matters were taken by men only. These findings showed that, since long time, women were excluded when any decisions related to money to be spent on farm were made.

All the decisions in which some technical knowledge and huge investment were required, were taken by the male members and involvement of the respondents was nil in some cases and in others it was very low. These decisions were like level of crop production, frequency of spraying of pesticides and use of plant protective measures among all land holding groups. The reason was illiteracy, lack of knowledge and lack of training which is required for a farm woman. The training programmes are run for the farmers only. In spite of the introduction of many new methods and technologies for crop production, the women of hill regions are ignorant, as information and programmes do not reach them. Therefore, whenever the decisions

requiring technical knowledge were made, women were excluded.

Respondents' involvement in decisions like cropping pattern, use of fertilizers, irrigation facilities to be provided and threshing of crops was partial in joint decisions in all land holding groups. But in decisions like storing of farm products, harvesting, storing of fodder, making of bundles, transportating crops, they played an important role. The findings of many studies carried out in Punjab and Haryana showed that women participate equally with men in harvesting operations. Not only this some other studies Kahlon and Brar, (1967); Kahlon, (1971); Agarwal, (1971); Malik, (1972); Devadas, (1975) Arora; (1978); Singh and Sharma, (1981); Yadav, (1983); and Kataria and Oberoi, (1989), mostly carried out in Punjab and Haryana showed that women were consulted when decisions were taken related to ploughing, sowing, application of farm manure, harvesting, maintenance of plants, selection of crops to be sown, selection of seeds, harvesting, storage of farm produce, cropping pattern and selection of seeds.

Regarding decision implementation, on the whole there was high participation of respondents in initiating of most of the farm activities with the exception of some of the activities which required more manual efforts i.e. ploughing, and which were more

technical like applying of pesticides. Respondents' participation in supervision of farm tasks was low. Also their participation decreased in marketing of products and controlling activities like keeping of accounts and taking of loans. Two studies conducted by Shanta, (1983) and Mukhopadhyay, (1984) reported that there was a significant role of women in all farm activities, except the ploughing activity, but their participation in economic activities was very low, support the results.

Age (Chi-square = 15.57, sig. at 0.01, df=4), employment status (Chi-square = 16.01, sig. at 0.01, df=2), relational position (Chi-square=15.82, sig. at 0.01, df=4), socio-economic status (Chi-square=18.84, sig. at .01, df=4) and size of land holding (Chi-square=8.76, sig. at .05, df=4), were found to be the variables associated with extent of respondents' participation in farm activities.

Generally younger respondents were more involved in farm activities. It was supported by the findings of Sirohi, (1985). Those who were employed could devote less time on farm. Low caste people participated more in farm activities. The finding was supported by studies conducted by Sirohi, (1985); Goyal and Bajwa, (1984); Ghosh, (1985); Laxmi Devi and Reddy, (1984); Bardhan, (1978); Kaur, (1984); Awasthy, (1982); Mitra, (1985); Pandey, et al., (1986); Kaur and Sharma,



(1985); who reported that contribution of low caste women was higher than that of high caste women.

It was found that respondents of SLH group were more involved in farm tasks because they had small land size and were managing tasks alone or with family members. Sirohi, (1985); Laxmi Devi and Reddy, (1984); Kaur, (1983); Rani and Singh, (1979); Aruon, (1981), reported that women of small land size were participating more in farm activities than women of large land size. The wives were performing more work compared to daughters-in-law or daughters who got help from other family members. But for wives mostly help was given by husbands.

### III. DECISION MAKING ROLE OF RESPONDENTS IN LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Involvement of the respondents of all land holding groups in major decisions like number of livestock to be kept, selling of livestock, medicines for the livestock, bathing and feeding arrangement to be made was low. Some of these decisions required knowledge and in some decisions men felt that it was their job and women had to do nothing with decisions like selling of livestock and number of livestock to be kept. The results were supported by past studies by Badigar and Rao, (1980); Rani and Bhavi, (1981); and Verma, (1984). But Yadav, (1983) reported that decisions related to

livestock management in tribal families were taken by most of the men heads of the family. The reason may be low position of women in the family and illiteracy.

For studying the decision implementing, the initiation of tasks related to livestock management it was observed that respondents of all land holding groups did not participate much in buying and selling of livestock, which were male domain tasks. But respondents played significant role in care of livestock. Their participation was also high in disposal of milk and milk products and keeping of accounts and supervision of work. The findings were supported by studies by Alli, (1970); Sharma, (1981); Verma, (1978); Singh, (1978); Dhillon, (1981); Waghmare and Choudhari, (1983); Dhillon, (1984); Azad, et al., (1985) and Rath and Das, (1988). They reported that women did all the work of care of livestock. But according to Deshpande and Singh, (1988), this task was male dominated.

Employment status of the respondents (Chi-square=13.31, sig. at 0.01, df=3), land size (Chi-square=18.30, sig. at 0.05, df=4), family size (Chi-square=16.53, sig. at 0.01, df=2), family type (Chi-square=12.56, sig. at 0.01, df=2), and family income (chi-square=15.36, sig. at 0.01, df=4) were found to have positive association with extent of participation in livestock activities. The employed women could

spend much time for the care of livestock. Low caste families participated more in activities related to livestock care. This finding was supported by Nandwani, (1982), Singh and Bhatti, (1987) and Kaur; (1984) who reported that the percentage participation of lower caste was highest in animal husbandry. The larger the size of land holding, the more families kept livestock. Nuclear families with small size land holding had to participate more in livestock related tasks. This result is substantiated by the studies conducted by Kaur and Sharma, (1983); Kaur, (1984) and Rath Das, (1985), who reported that in most of the nuclear families women were more involved in care of livestock. The families of high income group kept more livestock, therefore their participation in livestock related tasks was also more.

#### IV. DECISIONS RELATED TO INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Respondents' involvement in decisions related to income generating activities like growing of vegetables, flowers and fruits was nil, because in these activities men were participating. Respondents were performing activities like hoeing, application of fertilizers, watering, plucking of fruits, vegetables, flowers and storing of the products ready for sale. But when the decisions like the type of activities to be started, its size, acquisition and control of inputs, purchase of raw material, marketing of

products, keeping of accounts and using of money were taken, respondents were excluded. But in other income generating activities like beekeeping, poultry keeping, stitching, processing of cinnamon and bay leaves, keeping of accounts and using of money some decisions were taken independently. The reason was that in such activities respondents were totally responsible for all the tasks. The results of a study Badiger and Rao, (1980) also reported that very few women made independent decisions related to income generating activities and they were mainly male dominated decisions.

Regarding decision implementing although participation of respondents in income generating activities was more, their participation was low in controlling of activities like estimating future products, fixing of price of products and keeping of accounts. Their role was also less in activities like marketing of products and storing of ready products. Bardhan, (1983); Devadas, Sundaram and Sithalakshmi, (1985), reported that women put in a lot of work for income generating activities and controlling the income. The findings of the present study were different. The reason for respondents' control over income may be due to their education level and type of family. Most of the these respondents were educated and belonged to mostly joint families in which

participation profile of respondents in household activities was found to be moderate. The reason was that in some of the families, husbands or other male members helped in household tasks like looking after the children, washing clothes, cleaning surroundings, preparing food, buying of food materials this reduced the women's work load.

Respondents' participation in income generating activities was found to be associated with age (Chi-square=15.50, sig. at 0.01, df=4), education (Chi-square=13.17 sig.at 0.01, df=2), employment status (Chi-square=18.97, sig.at 0.01, df=2), size of land holding (Chi-square=22.33, sig. at 0.01, df=4) and family income (Chi-square=20.54, sig. at 0.01, df=4). The young respondents mostly took up income generating activities. Those respondents who were gainfully employed could not attend to such activities. This result was supported by the study conducted by Kaur, (1984). Respondents of large size land holding and of high income groups were found to have high participation in these activities. The reason was that in such families income generating activities like growing of vegetables, fruits, flowers and processing of cinnamon and bay leaves were run at large scale. Therefore husbands and other members of the family were also participating in these activities. Similar findings were revealed in the studies conducted by Kaur

and Sharma, (1983); Kaur, (1989) and Rath and Das, (1988). The families studied by above researchers had large scale production, therefore, the work related to production was carried out jointly.

#### EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING AND DECISION IMPLEMENTING

The relationship between the extent of respondents' involvement in decision making and decision implementing in various areas of work was studied. It revealed that a positive relationship resulted between the extent of decision making with participation in household activities ( $r=.638$ , sig. at  $0.01$ ,  $df=198$ ) and livestock activities ( $r=.457$ , sig. at  $.01$ ,  $df=198$ ). Respondents' increase in participation in the implementation of decisions related to farm and income generating activities did not show any relationship with the involvement in decision making related to above activities.

Further analysis was done on those respondents who were contributing money in the family i.e. their role in money matters related to their own earnings and decision making involvement.

The significant 'T' values show that respondents who managed money ( $T=4.23$ , sig.  $.001$   $df=197$ ), and controlled money ( $T=5.71$ , Sig.  $.001$ ,  $df=198$ ), were free to use money ( $T=3.10$ , Sig.  $.001$ ,  $df=196$ ), considered as

important earning hands ( $T=3.84$ ,  $\text{Sig}.0.001$ ,  $\text{df}=197$ ) more involved in decision making in the family. Lalitha, (1982) and Kaur, (1983) stated that those women who had control over money, and had freedom in spending money in the family, their involvement in decision process was high. This finding supported the present findings.

It was revealed that more number of wives were managing money earned by them, controlling the earnings, and were free to use their earnings. The wives were considered by family members as more resourceful members and important contributors in the family than the daughters-in-law. The wives were more consulted than daughters-in-law when any problem arose in the family. This result was supported by the study conducted by Dhesi, et al, (1975).