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### **Women's Empowerment In Household Decision –Making: A Comparative Study In Bhopal**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Although Women are becoming more empowered due to enhancement in their education, exposure towards media, awareness, high access to resources, strong communication with their husbands, self-dependence and employment, freedom from domestic violence and freedom of movement. The present study aims at comparing the women's empowerment in household decision making among women (15-49 years age) residing in selected urban and rural area of Bhopal. For the present study 100 married women (aged 15-49 years) were sampled from selected urban and rural area of Bhopal. The stratified random sampling was used. The data was collected by using Structured Interview Schedule and standardized WE-MEASR CARE ( ) tool (one section). The results shows that women's empowerment in household decision making is significantly associated with age of women, present age of husband, occupational status of women, occupational status of husband in urban area. Whereas women from rural area have less empowerment in household decision making in rural area (\* $p < 0.05$ ). There should be balance of power between men and women. There is still a need to enhance women's empowerment in household decision making for better participation and contribution of women's in further development of the country like India.

**KEY WORDS:** women's empowerment, Decision Making, Household activities, urban and rural, Bhopal.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A woman is considered as the one who is the care taker of the family .she works outside as well as manages the entire household still the society imposes restrictions on her which confines her inside the house and she is seen as a secondary being<sup>1</sup>. Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Many world leaders, socialist, economist and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>2</sup>. Before the popularization of word 'empowerment' , women were speak about holding control over their lives, and participating in making the decisions that affect them in home and community<sup>3</sup>. Women's empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied<sup>3</sup>. Women exert control over their own lives within families in which they live at a given point in time<sup>4</sup>. Empowerment can be defined in many ways; however, when talking about women's empowerment, empowerment means accepting and allowing women who are on the outside of the decision-making process into it. "This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere; on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making.<sup>5</sup> Empowerment is an individual aspect of power that appears more frequently in quantitative literature on gender and power. Educated women have more control over resources as compare to the illiterate women<sup>6</sup>. Studies of the some developing countries shows that increased age of women and family structure are the strongest determinants of women's empowerment in decision making <sup>7</sup>. Women from middle and higher class have the least decision –making power, which suggests involving them in education and suitable employment to decrease their dependency on the community, family members and husband. In the household, husband –wife relations are central to women empowerment in decision making, and improved communication between them can deserve sustained support.

In the rural areas women's participation in income generation activities is another aspect of women's empowerment ,and it can be done by supporting them in self employment , including improved access to property and financial asset ,training ,microcredit and markets .There is a need for a specially designed empowerment program for women in the rural area<sup>8</sup>. **Dharma Raj et at (2014)** study revealed that in the North India approximately 25% of the women have less empowerment and about half of them are highly empowered. <sup>9</sup>

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

For this study Non experimental comparative survey research study design were adopted. The study was approved by Research Advisory Committee and Institutional Ethics Committee of Peoples College of Nursing and Research Centre Bhopal. Total 100 married women were selected through proportionate simple random sampling technique. Sample was selected from one rural area (village Bhauri) and one urban area (Chandbad) of Bhopal on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria. After selecting the participants, explained them about the study .written consent was obtained from the study participants. Researcher constructed a well-Structured Interview Schedule which consist of ten item related to socio-demographic characteristics of respondent and adopted standardized WE-MEASR(Women's Empowerment Multidimensional Evaluation of Agency, Social Capital and Relation) care tools one section **“Women's participation In Household Decision-Making Power Scale”** for assessing house hold decision making aspect of women empowerment. For the standardized tool the written permission were obtained from the agency. Descriptive statistic namely, frequency and percentage used to assess socio demographic variables. Inferential statistics namely, f test and Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) were used to study the association between women empowerment in house hold decision making power and their socio demographic variables.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table1. shows the socio demographic data of the study participant, the age of women in urban and rural area finding shows that the majority of women 29(58%) belongs to age group of 25-34 year and 22(44%) women belongs to age group of 15-24 year in urban and rural respectively. Regarding the age of her husband shows that the majority 30 (60%) of husbands belongs to age group of 28-37 year and 20 (40%) of husbands belongs to age group of 18-27 year in urban and rural respectively. Majority 29(58%) of the women got married at the age of 20-24 year and 33(66%) women got married at the age of 15-19 years respectively in urban and rural area About the age of the husband at the time of marriage 34(68%) got married at the age of 28-32 year in urban area where as 33(66%) were got married at the age of 18-22 years in rural area .Regarding the duration of marriage majority 24(48%) had completed 6-8 years ,whereas 22 (44%) completed more than 8 years in urban and rural area. Regarding the religion majority 43(86%) were belongs to Hindu religion in urban, whereas in rural all participants were belong to the Hindu religion.

About the educational status of wife most of 16(32) have graduates or post graduates and

11(22%) had high school certificate and middle school certificate in urban and rural area .Education status of husbands revealed that majority 22(44%)of husband had graduate or post graduate and 17 (34%) had high school certificate respectively in urban and rural area .

**Table 1. Associationbetween Women Empowerment with their socio demographic characters**

Item	Urban(n=50)			Rural(n=50)		
	Freq	F value	$\chi^2$	Freq	F value	$\chi^2$
<b>Present Age of Women</b>						
15-24 Years	7			22		
25-34 Years	29	3.384	.042*	17	0.426	0.655
35-44 Years	14		S	11		
<b>Present Age of Husband</b>						
18-27 Years	7			20		
28-37 Years	30	4.383	.009*	18		
38-47 Years	9		S	11	1.233	0.309
>47 Years	4			1		
<b>Educational status of Wife husband</b>						
Profession or Honors	7			0		
Graduates or Post Graduate	16			10		
Intermediate or Post High School Diploma	1			7		
High School Certificate	3	.368	.895	11	0.837	0.531
Middle School Certificate	6			11		NS
Primary School Certificate	12			9		
Illiterate	5			2		
<b>Educational status of husband</b>						
Profession or Honors	2			3		
Graduates or Post Graduate	22			12		
Intermediate or Post High School Diploma	-			6		
High School Certificate	-	4.026	.007*	17	1.435	0.224
Middle School Certificate	8		S	6		NS
Primary School Certificate	17			5		
Illiterate	1			1		

\* Significant at the P= (<0.05)

Table 2 shows the occupational status of the women the majority 21(42%) women were housewives,11(26.2%) were professionals ,and majority 36 (72%) women were housewives,6(12%) were skilled worker , in urban and rural respectively . Husbands occupational status indicated that majority 21(50%) of husband were unskilled work,(28.6%) were professionals and most of 32 (64%) husband were skilled worker,8 (16%) were semi-skilled worker , in urban and rural area. regarding the family income of the participants majority 12 (28.6%) had family income betweenRs 4810-8009, 10(23.8%) were had Rs1601-4809, and majority 18 (36%) were family income between Rs8010-12019, 16(32%) were had Rs 4810-8009 income per month in urban and Rural area respectively regarding the no of children majority 24(57.1%) were had 1-2 children,10(23.8) were had 3-4 children and majority 35(70%) were had 1-2 children,7,7(14%) were had 3-4 children

respectively in urban and rural area.

Table.1 and 2 reveals that the calculated f and p value is significantly associated with the present age of women ,present age of husband ,educational status of husband ,occupational status of wife and husband both in urban area .**Namdeo Pushpa R. (2017)** study findings concluded that educated women Decision-making ability is more than uneducated women.<sup>10</sup> Further the calculated F and P value is only significantly associated with family income in rural area. **Acharya et al (2010)**study finding also suggested that area of residence has stronger association with decision making power women .their study findings depicted that urban women are more empowered as compare to rural women in household decision making.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 2.Associationbetween Women Empowerment with their socio demographic characters**

Item	Urban(n=50)			Rural(n=50)		
	Freq	F value	$\chi^2$	Freq	F value	$\chi^2$
<b>Occupational status of Wife</b>						
Professional	15			4		
Semi Profession	4			6		
Clerical, Shop Owner, Farmer	2	3.141	0.023*	1		
Skilled Worker			S	1	1.009	0.424
Semi Skilled Worker	8			2		NS
Unskilled Worker	21			36		
Housewife	15			4		
<b>Occupational status of Husband</b>						
Professional	18			4		
Semi Profession	1			1		
Clerical, Shop Owner, Farmer	2	3.047	0.014*	4		
Skilled Worker	3		S	32	0.942	0.463
Semi Skilled Worker	21			8		NS
Unskilled Worker	3			0		
Unemployed	2			1		
<b>Family income</b>						
>32050 RS	11	.160	.976	1		
16020 – 32049 RS	7			4		
12020 – 16019 RS	2		NS	2		
8010 - 12019 RS	8			18		
4810 - 8009RS	12			16	<b>2.360</b>	<b>0.047*</b>
1601 - 4809RS	10			6		<b>S</b>
≤ 1600 RS				3		
<b>No of children's</b>						
No children	8			7		
1-2 children	31			35		
3-4 children	10	0.775	0.514	7	0.318	
More than 4 children	1			1		

\* Significant at the P= (<0.05)

Data presented in the Table .3 revealed that majority of 30(60%), 22(44%) mother or father in law and women usually make decision about her health care in urban and rural area. Whereas

31(62%) ,22(44%) mother or father in law and women and her husband together usually makes decisions about making large household purchase in urban and rural area . Majority 29(58%) ,15(30%) women and her husband together usually makes decisions about making household purchases for daily needs in urban and rural area . Majority 22(44%) 14(28%) %) women and her husband together and women herself usually makes decisions about when she will visit family/relatives/friends in urban and rural area .further the data revealed that most of 28(56%), 18(44%) women and her husband ,mother or father in law usually makes decision about when their whole household will visit family/relatives/friends in urban and rural area. Majority 29(58%) ,15(30%) women and her husband together and mother or father in law usually makes decisions about how to use the money that women bring into the household and her husband brings into the household in urban and rural area.

**Table 3.Women’sparticipation in household decision-making power scale**

S.NO	ITEM	Responses	Urban(n=50)		Rural(n=50)	
			N	%	N	%
1	which member of your household usually makes decisions about your health care	Mother or Father	1	2.0%	6	12.0%
		Someone Else	1	2.0%	5	10.0%
		Mother –or Father in-law	30	60.0%	2	4.0%
		You and your husband together	3	6.0%	15	30.0%
		You	15	30.0%	22	44.0%
2	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about making large household purchases	Mother or Father	4	8.0%	5	10.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	4	8.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	31	62.0%	9	18.0%
		You and your husband together	9	18.0%	22	44.0%
		You	6	12.0%	10	20.0%
3	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about making household purchases for daily needs	Mother or Father	3	6.0%	3	6.0%
		Someone Else	2	4.0%	6	12.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	10	20.0%	14	28.0%
		You and your husband together	29	58.0%	15	30.0%
		You	6	12.0%	12	24.0%
4	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about when you will visit family/relatives/friends	Mother or Father	4	8.0%	7	14.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	3	6.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	17	34.0%	15	30.0%
		You and your husband together	22	44.0%	11	22.0%
		You	7	14.0%	14	28.0%
5	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about when your whole household will visit family/relatives/friends	Mother or Father	4	8.0%	8	16.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	2	4.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	15	30.0%	18	36.0%
		You and your husband together	28	56.0%	11	22.0%
		You	3	6.0%	11	22.0%
6	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about how to use the money that you bring into the household	Mother or Father	3	6.0%	6	12.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	4	8.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	15	30.0%	15	30.0%
		You and your husband together	29	58.0%	15	30.0%
		You	3	6.0%	10	20.0%
7	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about how to use the money your husband brings into the household	Mother or Father	3	6.0%	2	4.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	5	10.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	12	24.0%	15	30.0%
		You and your husband together	29	58.0%	15	30.0%
		You	3	6.0%	10	20.0%

	You	6	12.0%	13	26.0%
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Table 4.data revealed that 33(66%), 19 (38%) women and her husband usually makes decision about when their family will sell a large asset in urban and rural area. Again it indicated that 32(64%) ,17(34%) women and her husband together usually makes decisions about when their family will sell a small asset in urban and rural area .whereas 29 (58%) 20(40%) women and her husband together and women herself usually makes decisions about whether she can work to earn money. Majority 30(60%) 15(30%) women and her husband together and mother or father in law respectively makes decisions about whether she and her husband use family planning in urban and rural area respectively .revealed that majority of 22(44%), 20 (40%) women and her husband and women herself usually makes decision about what she can wear in urban and rural area. Majority 23(46%) mother or father in law and women herself makes decisions about how she can spend time within urban and rural area .Majority 31 (62%), 18 (36%) mother or father in law and women herself makes decisions about how she spend her time in urban and rural area.

**Table .4 Women’ sparticipation In Household Decision-Making Power Scale**

S.NO.	ITEM	RESPONSES	Urban(n=50)		Rural(n=50)	
			N	%	N	%
8	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about when your family will sell a large asset	Mother or Father	4	8.0%	7	14.0%
		Someone Else	2	4.0%	3	6.0%
		Mother –or Father in-law	8	16.0%	12	24.0%
		You and your husband together	33	66.0%	19	38.0%
		You	3	6.0%	9	18.0%
9	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about when your family will sell a small asset	Mother or Father	3	6.0%	4	8.0%
		someone Else	2	4.0%	5	10.0%
		mother –or father in-law	9	18.0%	15	30.0%
		You and your husband together	32	64.0%	17	34.0%
		You	4	8.0%	9	18.0%
10	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about whether you can work to earn money	Mother or Father	3	6.0%	5	10.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	2	4.0%
		Mother –or Father in-law	12	24.0%	10	20.0%
		You and your husband together	29	58.0%	13	26.0%
		You	6	12.0%	20	40.0%
11	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about whether you and your husband use family planning	Mother or Father	1	2.0%	5	10.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	4	8.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	16	32.0%	15	30.0%
		you and your husband together	30	60.0%	15	30.0%
		You	3	6.0%	11	22.0%
12	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about what you can wear	Mother or Father	1	2.0%	10	20.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	2	4.0%
		Mother –or Father in-law	11	22.0%	4	8.0%
		You and your husband together	22	44.0%	14	28.0%
		You	16	32.0%	20	40.0%
13	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about who you can spend time with	Mother or Father	2	4.0%	7	14.0%
		Sombeone Else	0	0.0%	3	6.0%
		Mother –or father in-law	18	36.0%	5	10.0%

		You and your husband together	15	30.0%	12	24.0%
		You	15	30.0%	23	46.0%
14	Which member of your household usually makes decisions about how you spend your time	Mother or Father	1	2.0%	9	18.0%
		Someone Else	0	0.0%	3	6.0%
		Mother –or Father in-law	31	62.0%	5	10.0%
		You and your husband together	3	6.0%	15	30.0%
		You	15	30.0%	18	36.0%

## CONCLUSION:

India is still a patriarchal country where decision making powers are in the hands of parents, In-laws and husband. But with the passage of time education, financial strength, women movement from house to workplace has made some difference in the power distribution. Women in the urban area are able to take some household decisions on their own but the scenario in the rural area is different where the women need to be empowered more. This can be brought about with the help of education, increasing age of marriage and making herself dependent.

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