

Model of Decision Making Power (DMP) for Women

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Abstract

Women plays an important role in decision making. This paper aims at constructing new model of decision making and devises an inventory in order to measure accurately decision making power among women. The model and inventory is applicable o all women from adolescents to old aged. He paper identifies five important decision making powes i.e., egalitarian decision makers, feminine decision makers, masculine decision makers, familial decision makers and non-specific decision makers. This paper presents seven important dimensions to decision making power among women i.e., Self Identity Decisions (SID), Family and Household Decisions (FHD), Social Decisions (SD), Financial Decisions (FD), Legal and Political Decisions (LPD), Sex, Marriage and Reproductive Decisions (SMRD), and Descendant Decisions (DD).

Keywords:

Introduction

The participation of women in decision-making should be assessed because their active participation in decisions will help their families to meet challenges at socio-economic front. Families use a variety of processes for actually reaching a decision. Many families have a habitual process that they use regularly whenever they need to make a decision. Other families vary in the way they approach decision making depending on the type of decision, their mood, and their stage of development. In this context, there are four major theoretical models in family decision-making process:

Resource Theory

The beginning of formal research into family decision-making can be traced to the work of Herbst (1952). Much of the early research in family decision-making, however, relied on the resource theory model advanced by Blood and Wolfe (1960). Resource theory posits that the relative power which a spouse wields in the family decision-making process varies directly with the socio-economic resources contributed by that spouse, rather than being based on traditional patriarchal ideas. While a number of studies have supported this view (Kandel & Lesser, 1972; Weeks, 1973), some researchers found that increases in the economic resources of husbands resulted either in no increase in his power or in a decrease in his power (Scanzoni, 1979a). In attempting to understand the relationship between resource contribution and power within the family, Rodman (1967, 1972) formulated the normative resource theory as an extension of the resource theory. Rodman (1972) model asserted that marital power is affected not only by the resource contribution of the parties in the marital dyad, but also by cultural norms which define marital power. A study by Burr et al. (1977), however, contradicted Rodman's hypothesis. This study indicates that resources are strongly related to power when norms related to authority are more patriarchal than egalitarian. Hill (1981) noted that there are three major domains of power which are relevant to organizing concepts related to family relationships. The first domain is related to the resource that an individual contributes since that affects the ability to exercise power in a given decision-making situation. The second domain is related to the power processes and focuses on the interaction of family members at various stages in the decision-making process. The third domain is related to power outcomes and focuses upon who makes the final decisions and who wins the discussion or the argument. McDonald (1980) asserted that power relationships have implications for the presence or absence of conflict in families. McDonald (1980) argued that differences in power may suppress conflict situations and so may help shape the family system. From this perspective, Arnett (1987) argued that there is a relationship between power and the marital patterns and roles that the spouses adopt. Deal

(1984) asserted that differences in the power wielded by the partners may result in the stronger party taking advantage of the weaker party. This in turn affects the degree to which family decisions can be negotiated.

Social Exchange Theory

McDonald (1980) asserted that the social exchange theory has become the framework most often used to assess family power and decision-making. Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) argued that decision-making may be viewed as problem solving or conflict resolution. Exchange theory assumes that people are actors as well as reactors who make decisions and initiate action rather than being passive reactors to environmental stimuli. Further, people act in a manner which will maximize rewards and minimize costs. Scanzoni (1979b) noted that the concept of maximum joint profit is relevant to family decision-making because the actors are usually willing to negotiate in order to arrive at decisions that are for the good of the group. Scanzoni (1979a) observed that reciprocity, as it relates to decision-making, is also an important aspect of exchange theory. Since complete repayment is not possible in social exchanges, members look to feelings of gratitude in contributing to the maintenance and stability of the family unit. This trust, or the confidence that some form of reward will be forthcoming from others, is an important aspect of the family decision-making process. Kingsbury (1983) noted that trust can lead to the emergence of non-legitimate power if a family member uses force to get others to act in a certain manner.

Role Theory

Role theory has also been used to explain family decision-making processes. Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) noted that traditionally based family decision-making tends to be structured. There are accepted roles in the family and family members know and accept these roles. Because everyone within the family knows what is expected of them there is little or no need for negotiation in the decision-making process. Scanzoni (1979a) asserted that gender roles may be measured along a continuum from traditional to modern. With traditional roles, the interest of the husband is of greatest importance; children come second, and the interest of the wife is left for last. Within this framework, husbands hold legitimate power and decision-making is mainly husband dominated. With modern roles, the lines of family power are not as clearly defined and family decisions are negotiable.

The Process-Oriented Model

Arguing for the inclusion of interactive observational procedures and self-reporting or behavioral measures for examining the complex family decision-making process, researchers have developed a social psychological or process-oriented model of family decision-making which is useful in studying family power relationships because it does not focus only on decision outcomes (Scanzoni & Polonko, 1980). This model analyzes the family decision-making process and also examines the changing nature of sex roles and its inherent effect

upon family decision-making. Unlike previous models, this model focuses upon joint decision-making and considers the husband-wife dyad as the unit of analysis. However, individual data is used to determine if the "within couples" or the "within individual" data contribute more toward the prediction of the decision-making process and its outcomes. Subjective utility theory brings together the important elements from symbolic interaction, social exchange, and social conflict theories. The approach holds that social arrangements are a function of subjective preferences and the decision-making processes. In joint decision-making, the parties are aware that individual preferences cannot be satisfied without simultaneously taking the other person's preferences into account (Scanzoni & Szinovacz, 1980).

Strauss (1978) noted that this perspective is influenced by three elements: the context, the process, and the outcome. The context is the tangible and intangible resources, attitudes, and history which couples bring to the decision-making process. The process phase of the approach is the interaction or give-and-take which occurs between the couple. Scanzoni and Polonko (1980) noted that the contextual factors exert an ongoing influence that affects the decision outcome. In summarizing the major steps in the model, Kingsbury (1983) states Hill and Scanzoni (1982) asserted that the process-oriented model is applicable to a wide range of topics related to family decision-making. For example, Hill (1981) used the model to study the decision-making behaviors of couples who received training in communication skills and couples who had not had such training. Although no data about the reliability and validity of the model have been reported, Hill (1981) claimed that the model is conceptually and theoretically valid.

Related Literature

Bala, et al (1993) in their study on participation of rural women in decision making revealed that more than 90 per cent of the decisions, the participation of women was only of supportive nature. Illiteracy, lack of knowledge and awareness were found to be major reasons for lower participation. Sharma, et. al (2013) stated that men dominated in majority of the farm decisions in rural families. Decisions related to buying and selling of land, machines and other agricultural implements; improvements of harvest and livestock management were mainly taken by head of the family or husbands. Naqvi and Ibrar (2015) elicited that in majority of the rural family most of the decisions regarding household and agricultural matter are taken up by the family head alone. Wife is consulted for only households matter and not being involved for taking independent or joint decision in the agricultural matters. In a negligible proportion the wife takes independent decisions. In most of the cases women acted as initiators in deciding about some major household affairs but final decisions were being taken ultimately by men. In rural India, even though women participate in economic activities they have little role in decision making particularly in matters related to agriculture and financial matters (Baliyan, 2014). Gogdand and

Hembade (2014) findings clearly showed that no women make decisions without the permission of their husband for selling the animals. For milk consumption at home a whole decision is taken by the husband therefore no women make their own decisions (Gogdand & Hembade, 2014). Sabina Bano (2014) stated that participation of women in Ray Titus, Debashish Sengupta, and Sahana Madan 1383 decision making is likely to be affected by socio-economic status of women. Gender differences led women to suppress in the decision making on various issues occurring in their daily activities. Roles and responsibilities of women and their choices are restricted to specific sphere (Bano, 2014).

A number of economic, sociological and attitudinal factors were identified as accounting for role structure differences regarding financial decision in families (Wolgast 1958; Ferber and Nicosia 1972). Research has focused on the impact of sex role attitudes and wife's employment status in financial decisions. Sex role attitudes may be thought of as arrayed along a continuum from traditional to modern, where "traditional" views reflect sharply dichotomous roles for males and females and "modern" views reflect a greater sharing of roles between the sexes (Rosen and Granbois 1983). The beliefs spouses hold on the importance of a wife's career and sharing of household responsibilities have been found to differentiate patterns of financial management (Schaninger, Buss and Grover 1982). Sex role attitudes have also been found to affect the implementation of financial decisions (e.g., bill payment), but not the manner in which these decisions are actually made (Rosen and Granbois 1983). The extent and nature of family financial planning, patterns of saving, the relationship between financial planning and consumption decisions, the relationship between family life cycle stages and financial management, the effect of lifestyle factors on financial management, and the success associated with different types of family financial practices; were associated with financial decisions within families (Granbois, Rosen and Acito 1986; Hopper 1984).

As women get older they gain autonomy in household decision making (Senarath and Gunawardena, 2009). A newly married daughter-in-law has less decision making power in the household and she is expected to perform household duties under the supervision of her mother-in-law who is the primary decision maker (Dali, et. al, 1999). Some possible factor behind this autonomy is that the older women move out of extended family responsibility, or that women fear that attempts to discuss issues around decision-making to control their own sexuality and reproduction with their husband may lead to aggression (Hof and Ritchers, 1995). The issue of security and fulfilment of desire also becomes of less importance as women gets older and lose contact with their natal kin and become more likely to be independent in decision making. Nevertheless, in some Asian countries, such as Sri Lanka, there is a more collective responsibility around decision-making between men and women in majority of the households (Weerasinghe, 2005). Similar findings have been obtained for many other parts of

the world (Kishor, 2000; Kritz et al., 2000). David et al. (2005) found that in joint families, mothers are given negligible importance in deciding educational status of their children. Ming and Jui (2008) investigated the influence of working wives on their family decision making, which shows that there is no significant difference for the influence on their family decision between working wives and non-working wives. Western working wives are taking more active roles in their family decision making, whereas, Asian working wives behave differently in this context. There is no consensus regarding the effect of working status of wives on family buying decision making. It may indicate that there is cultural difference between Eastern, Western and Asian families. Hou (2011, 2013) found that when women have more decision-making power at home, households tend to spend more on women's preferred goods (such as clothing and education), family members eat more non-grain food items, and children, particularly girls, are more likely to be enrolled in school. The relationship between changes in women's power and changes in household expenditures differs slightly in rural and urban areas. For example, when rural women have more power, they tend to spend more on fuel and lighting, but women in urban households spend more on transportation. This result suggests that when women gain more power over decisions about household spending, they tend to spend more money on the activities they pursue the most. In both urban and rural areas, however, households spend more on education when women have more power. When women have more power, households tend to consume better calories. Quality of food is as important as the quantity of food. When a women's decision making power increases, there is no significant difference in per capita calorie availability, after controlling for household expenditures. Sharma et. al. (2013) studied extent of involvement of women in decision making related to farm and income generating activities among 200 farm women belonging to three different villages of Jammu district. It was found that men dominated in majority of the farm decisions in rural families. Decisions related to buying and selling of land, machines and other agricultural implements; improvements of harvest and livestock management were mainly taken by head of the family or husbands.

Objectives of Study

1. To construct an inventory measuring decision making power among women
2. To provide a new model of Decision making power among women

Methodology

The model and inventory is devised with following methodology in consideration:

Indicators of Decision Making Power (DMP)

DMP is a self reporting inventory. The responses may also be based on past experiences and future assumption of the respondent herself. Items of the inventory are in question form demanding information for each either in one or combinations of more than one options mentioned below;

1. Self

2. Grand Mother
3. Grand Father
4. Father
5. Mother
6. Brother(s)
7. Sister(s)
8. Siblings
9. Husband
10. Grand Father-in-law
11. Grand Mother-in-law
12. Mother-in-law
13. Father-in-law
14. Brother(s)-in-law
15. Sister(s)-in-law
16. Son(s)
17. Daughter(s)
18. Sons(s)-in-law
19. Daughter(s)-in-law
20. Uncle(s) living within the family
21. Aunt(s) living within the family
22. Uncle(s) living outside the family
23. Aunt(s) living outside the family
24. Relative(s) living within the family
25. Relative(s) living outside the family
26. Neighbour(s)
27. Friend(s)
28. Guardian(s)
29. Other Relations (Specify)

Based on these options, the decision making power (DMP) among women comprises following indicators:

1. Egalitarian decision-making power
2. Feminine decision-making power
3. Masculine decision-making power
4. Familial decision-making power
5. Non-specific decision-making power

Feminine DMP

Feminine is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with girls and women. Feminine means decisions taken by the female gender herself. Thus Feminine DMP means decisions taken exclusively by the respondent herself under the option of "Self".

Egalitarian DMP

Egalitarian means believing in or based on the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities. Egalitarian is a trend of thought that favors equality for all people. Therefore Egalitarian DMP includes mutual decisions taken by respondent i.e. "Self" in combination with other relation(s) in family i.e. Parents ("Father", "Mother", or both), Grand Parents ("Grand Father", Grand Mother", or both), "Brother(s)", Sister(s)", Sibling(s)", etc. and/or all.—in case of never married, divorced, widow and/or separated women living in their parental homes— "Husband", Grand Parents-in-law ("Mother-in-law", "Father-in-law", or both), "Brother(s)-in-law", "Sister(s)-in-law", Son(s), Daughter(s), Son(s)-in-law, Daughter(s)-in-law, etc. and/or all —in case of ever married women living with their husband, children, and/or in-laws.

Familial DMP

Familial means relating to a family and occurring or tending to occur among members of a

family, usually by heredity. Familial DMP encompasses decisions taken by one or combination of family members excluding the respondent, i.e. Parents ("Father" and "Mother"), Grand Parents ("Grand Father" and Grand Mother"), Siblings ("Brother(s)" and "Sister(s)"), "Uncle(s)" and "Aunt(s)" living within the family", and/or all within family excluding respondent—in case of never married, divorced, widow and/or separated women living in their paternal homes— Grand Parents-in-law ("Mother-in-law", "Father-in-law", or both), Parents-in-law ("Father-in-law", "Mother-in-law", or both), Son(s), Daughter(s), Son(s)-in-law, Daughter(s)-in-law, "Brother(s)-in-law", "Sister(s)-in-law", "Uncle(s) living within the family", "Aunt(s) living within the family", and/or all within family excluding respondents —in case of ever married women living with their husband, children and/or in-laws.

Masculine DMP

Masculine comprises qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men. It refers to a set of qualities, characteristics or roles generally considered typical of, or appropriate to, a man. Therefore, Masculine DMP represents decisions taken solely by "Father", "Grand Father", "Brother(s)", "Uncle(s) living within the family" or any other male member(s) within the family—in case of never married, divorced, widow and/or separated women living in their parental homes— "Husband", "Grand Father-in-law", Father-in-law", Brother(s)-in-law", Son(s), Son(s)-in-law, etc "Uncle(s) living within the family" or any other male member(s) in the family—in case of ever married women living with their husband, children and/or in-laws.

Non-Specific

DMP It indicates relations outside the family ambit and comprises decisions taken by "Uncle(s) living outside the family", "Aunt(s) living outside the family", "Relatives within Family", "Relatives outside the Family", "Guardians", "Neighbours", "Friends", and/or others. For ever married respondent living with her husband and/or in-laws; "Grand Parents", "Parents", "Brother(s)", "Sister(s)", "Siblings", present non-specific decision makers. Similarly, in case of never married but under the bound of engagement, divorced, widow and/or separated women living in their paternal homes; "Fiancé", "Husband", "In-laws", also present non-specific decision makers.

Scoring of DMP Inventory

The scoring of the inventory is based on sum of each indicator i.e. Egalitarian, Feminine, Masculine, Familial, and Non-specific Decision Makers. The sum under these indicators must be mentioned in the scoring sheet of the inventory. However, each statement under each dimension can be scored at 5 points i.e.

1. 5 for Egalitarian Decision Maker;
2. 4 for Feminine Decision Maker;
3. 3 for Familial Decision Maker;
4. 2 for Masculine Decision Maker; and
5. 1 for Non-Specific Decision Maker

Applicability of the Inventory

This inventory is applicable to Indian women comprising:

1. Women of All Groups Irrespective of Caste, Colour, Race, Creed and/or Occupation
2. Age of 18 Years and Above
3. Literate, Educated and /or Illiterate Women
4. Rural, Tribal, Urban and Sub-Urban Women
5. Low, Middle and High Socio-Economic Group of Women
6. Unmarried, Married (With or Without Children), Separated, Divorced and Widow Women
7. Working and Non-Working Women

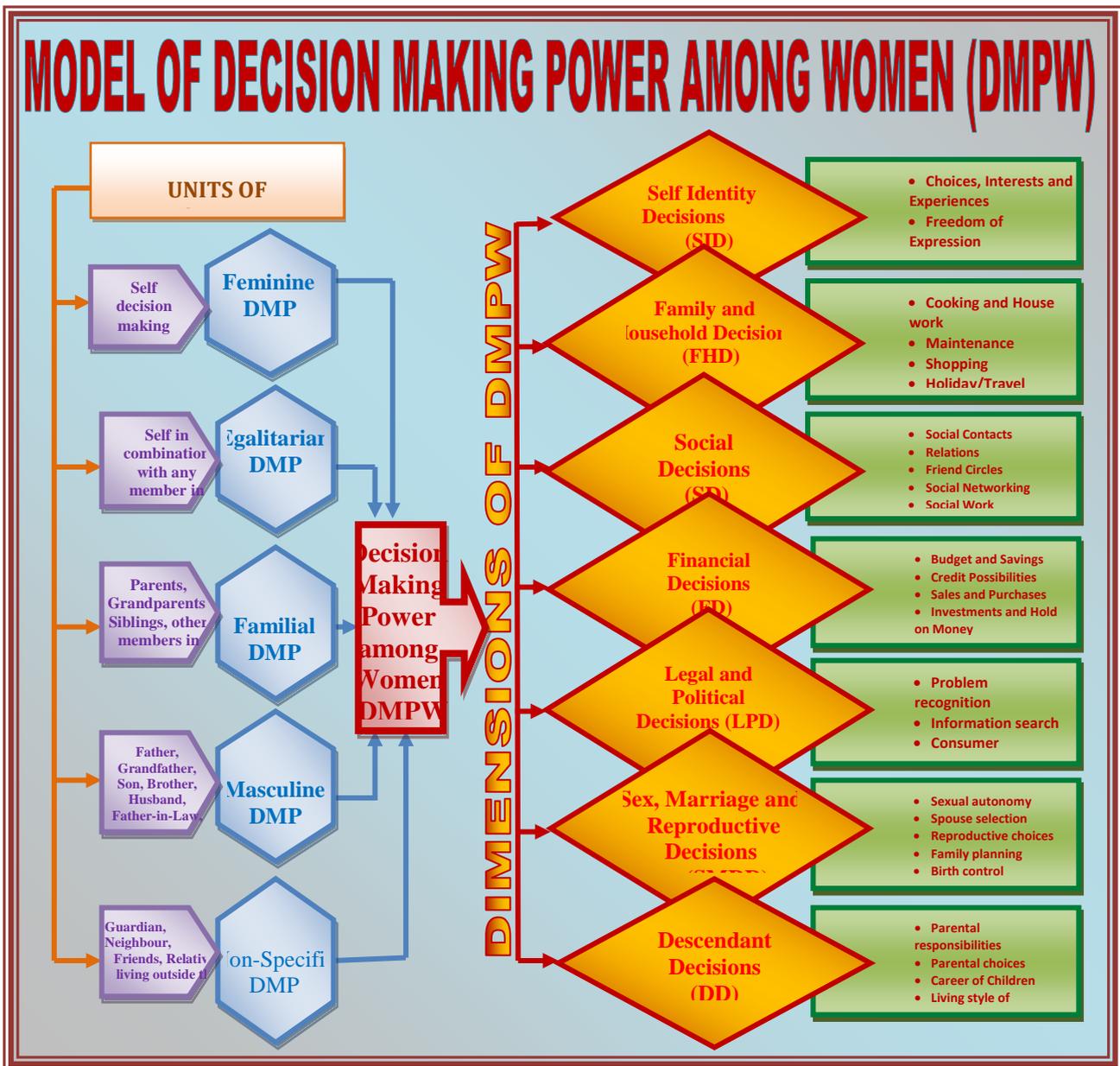
Model of Decision Making Process

In this paper, a new model of Decision Making Power (DMP) is designed to increase the

Model of Decision Making Power

opportunities for women to improve their status through involvement in decision-making processes. This model contributes knowledge on following Dimensions:

1. Self Identity Decisions (SID)
2. Family and Household Decisions (FHD)
3. Social Decisions (SD)
4. Financial Decisions (FD)
5. Legal and Political Decisions (LPD)
6. Sex, Marriage and Reproductive Decisions (SMRD)
7. Descendant Decisions (DD)
8. Overall Decision Making Power among Women (DMPW)



Self Identity Decisions (SID)

Self identity is a collection of beliefs about oneself that includes elements related to self. Generally self identity embodies the answer to "who am I?" Self identity is made up of one's self-schemas, and interacts with self esteem, self knowledge, and the social self to form the self as a whole. It includes the past, present, and future selves, where future selves (or possible selves) represent women's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, or what they are afraid of becoming. Possible selves may function as incentives for certain behaviour. The perception women have about their past or future selves is related to the perception of their current self. Therefore, Self Identity Decisions (SID) is an internal model of this inventory that uses self-assessment in order to define one's self-schemas, self-beliefs, goals, values, attitudes and emotional states. Features related to woman's food, travel, apparel, academics, recreation, hobbies and self care, are explored through relations who intervene in their decisions and are assessed and applied to their self schemas, which are ideas of oneself in a particular dimension. A collection of relations of decision makers make up one's overall SID. A woman's self identity decisions may change with time as reassessment occurs, which in extreme cases can lead to identity crises. Despite differing opinions about the one's self concept development, researchers agree on the importance of woman's self identity, which influence their behaviour and cognitive and emotional outcomes including (but not limited to) academic achievements, levels of happiness, anxiety, social integration, self esteem and life satisfaction. Research shows that in terms of self identity decisions, men tend to be more independent, while women tend to be more interdependent.

Family and House Hold Decisions (FHD)

A family household means members in a family and includes any related people residing there. Family and household decision making is a skill. Thinking about what to do is a skill. Learning to make good choices is a skill. Family influences this process. This process begins at birth and continues throughout life. Parents are often responsible for making all decisions related to their family. Women regularly decide what a couple eats, where they live, when they have children, where they go on holiday and how they spend their money. By contrast men are quite often only ever involved in decisions about what car a couple owns and what they watch on television, the research revealed. Women also have more of a handle on mundane day-to-day decisions like choosing how to spend spare time, when to go to bed and even the temperature of the home. Therefore, Family and Household Decisions (FHD) under this inventory revolve round the short term, medium term and long term goals for the family, family purchases, arrangements for family gatherings/ parties, education of children, family travel, etc. Family and household Decisions impart lifestyle and consumption values to their members, influential in consumption decisions, make several joint purchase decisions, and prime target market for goods and services.

Household decision making is also different from individual decision making. Family role structure orientation influences. Nature of good or service to be purchased and consumed influences household decision making. FHD influence may depend role structure orientation, stage of the decision making process and may be husband-dominated, wife-dominated, autonomous or unilateral, or joint decision.

Social Decisions (SD)

The term social refers to a characteristic of living organisms as applied to populations of humans and other animals. It always refers to the interaction of organisms with other organisms and to their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not, and irrespective of whether the interaction is voluntary or involuntary. Social decision making is about developing the necessary skills to address problems that might encounter in daily lives. Social Decisions (SD) involve skills facilitating interaction and communication with others. It also involves social rules created, communicated, and changed in verbal and non-verbal ways. It includes decisions related to social contacts, social gatherings, social responsibilities, social issues and social work.

Financial Decisions (FD)

Financial decision (FD) is the process of managing money and other assets in a manner that is considered productive and in the best interests of the individual or family. Being proficient at the task of finance and money management involves cultivating a mindset that makes it possible to look beyond the wants of today in order to provide for the needs of tomorrow. The process of FD begins with understanding the difference between needs and wants. Making this distinction helps to ensure that the more important purchases are taken care of, while goods and services that are not essential to maintaining a decent quality of life are acquired after needs are met. Some examples of needs that would apply to most people include food, clothing, and shelter. After differentiating between wants and needs, FD involves learning what to do with money left over once those basic living needs are met. Saving money should be a priority when evaluating ways to spend surplus income. Thus FD involves decisions that determine proper amount of expenditure, selecting priorities and arranging money funds on the most favorable terms possible. FD revolves round expenditure of wages, salaries, profits, interests payments, rents and other forms of earnings received, credit opportunities and family and social expenditures.

Legal and Political Decisions (LPD)

Legal and political decisions are about problems that draws attention to global issues, national concerns and provincial and state laws and cultures within nations. Such decisions are based on a foundation of knowledge and sound reasoning. LPD entail more external factors and involve higher levels of conflict and a tendency to focus on ends rather than means. Legal and political decisions are influenced by family values, understanding of political phenomena, and grasp of public policy alternatives. LPD encompasses the machinery available to

decision makers, consequences of public policy decisions, socio-political conflicts to be resolved and sense of identity with various different groups. LPD determines who gets to participate and what kind of standing they have with respect to the decision-making process. However, the major concern in LPD is information quality, because political decisions often entail agendas that do not relate directly to the decision task at hand. LPD are determined by psychological and economical factors, and are influenced by environmental factors such as cultural, group, and social values.

Sex, Marriage and Reproductive Decisions (SMRD)

The decisions on reproductive issues in marriages has been overlooked those that are advocating for the promotion of reproductive rights and gender equality as a whole. The effects of male decision making on reproductive issues have adverse consequences on women and the whole of humankind. Studies have shown that the unhappiest people in a marriage are often those who have the burden of making decisions alone. In the most successful marriages, decision making is a shared activity. An important characteristic of successful marriage is that both partners are sincerely concerned about the wishes and personal preferences of the other. They are both willing to go more than halfway in reaching mutually satisfying compromises. Decisions or compromises that are made are made willingly instead of grudgingly. SMRD should be usually mutual decisions. When SMRD are taken in the wrong way, sex can cause guilt, anxiety, depression, disease and low self-esteem. It involves commitment, control, values, ideals and adequate planning. SMRD include decisions regarding legal or safe abortion, birth control, good-quality reproductive healthcare, and education and access in order to make free and informed reproductive choices. It also includes decisions about use of contraception protection from gender-based practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). Control over sex, marriage and reproduction is a basic right for all women. Linked as it is to women's health and social status, as well as the powerful social structures of religion, state control and administrative inertia, and private profit, it is from the perspective of women that this right can best be understood and affirmed and women know that childbearing is a social, not a purely personal, phenomenon. Reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all women to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. They also include the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.

Descendant Decisions (DD)

Right childcare is an important decision for any parent. Parents have the responsibility and authority to make decisions on behalf of their children. Children generally fare best when they have the emotional and financial support and ongoing

involvement of both parents. The lack of involvement of one or both parents may lead to developmental problems later on in the child's life. Mothers have a special place in their children's lives because of the bondage that starts from pregnancy and develops through childhood, youth, and adolescence. A mother's involvement with her children is unique and different because there is a strong emotional and social bonding occurring in between. Frequently, cultural practices discriminate against women. Even today, many women are unable to exercise their social and economic rights, including rights to decide about even basic necessities for their children such as food, health care, and education. DD indicate the relative contributions of each parent to decisions regarding four broad matters pertaining to their child: education, health care, religion or cultural ties, and sporting or social activities.

Overall Decision Making Power (DMP) among Women

The study of decision making attempts to understand women's fundamental ability to process multiple alternatives and to choose an optimal course of action, an ability that has been studied by various disciplines with different theoretical assumptions and measurement techniques, although with relatively little integration of findings. Decision Making Power (DMP) among Women takes into consideration all the dimensions of decision making, i.e., Self Identity Decisions (SID), Family and Household Decisions (FHD), Social Decisions (SD), Financial Decisions (FD), Legal and Political Decisions (LPD), Sex, Marriage and Reproductive Decisions (SMRD), Descendant Decisions (DD).

Significance of Model

The model brought forward following inferences and significances:

1. Self Identity Decisions (SID) comprises 33 items of the inventory. These items represent the dimension by 50 per cent to 71 per cent with highly significant differences. The mean scores of all the items of SID revolve between masculine and feminine decision makers. However, significant familial decisions are also observed in this dimension.
2. Family and Household Decisions (FHD) involve 27 items of the inventory and its items represent to the dimension by 71 per cent to 87 per cent, with highly significant differences. The mean scores of its items range from masculine to feminine decision makers, though most of the mean scores also reveal familial decision makers.
3. Social Decisions (SD) includes 22 items with 78 per cent to 90 per cent representation to its dimension, having highly significant differences. The mean scores of all its items mostly revolve around familial decision power.
4. Financial Decisions (FD) comprises 32 items with 74 per cent to 87 per cent representation to the dimension having highly significant differences. The mean scores of items of this dimension depict masculine decision power.
5. Legal and Political Decisions (LPD) revolves around 20 items of the inventory. These items

represent the dimension by 76 per cent to 92 per cent with highly significant differences. The mean scores of its items mainly represent masculine decision making power.

6. Sex, Marriage and Reproductive Decisions (SMRD) are represented by 12 items with 40 per cent to 72 per cent representation to its dimension, having highly significant differences. The mean scores are scattered around masculine, familial and feminine decision makers.
7. Descendent Decisions (DD) includes 20 items with 54 per cent to 83 per cent representation to its dimension, showing highly significant differences. The mean scores show male dominance on Descendent Decisions (DD).
8. Overall, Decision Making Power (DMP) among Women comprises 166 items of inventory with 70 per cent to 90 per cent representation. All its items in seven dimensions have shown highly significant differences. The mean scores DMP most depict masculine and familial decision making power in the family.
9. The achieved reliability on all 166 items of inventory of DMP is almost equal to standard reliability measurements on different dimensions of DMP. The high reliability (95 per cent to 99 per cent) is found on all dimensions of DMP.
10. The initial Eigen values are found equal to extraction sums of squared loadings and the scree plot supports the Eigen values at all 166 items of the inventory.
11. Data is skewed and kurtotic among all dimensions of inventory and does not differ significantly from normality. The scores of DMP are approximately normally distributed for all its dimensions.
12. The dimensions of inventory reveal less correlation with each other, supporting the factor loadings through principal component analysis.

Conclusion

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their family, social, economic, political, and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. The full participation and partnership of both women and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household. In all parts of the world, women are facing threats to their lives, health and well-being as a result of being overburdened with work and of their lack of power and influence. Domestic violence continues to pose the greatest obstacle to women's participation in decision-making. However, a number of studies have shown that when women's decision making power within households increases, they use it to direct more household resources toward the care and feeding of their children. The authority of the "man of the house" — whether he is the father, husband or brother— is not the only seat of power that is beginning to be challenged. Motherhood is also starting to be held in less esteem. Women's role as mothers, which used to be regarded as their prime function, has traditionally

been a source of power and status. The reduction of family size, the possibility of deciding how many children to have and when, as well as the right to act on these decisions, and the increasing degree to which the socialization of children takes place outside the sphere of the family all have the effect of altering power relations within the family and spurring it to adapt to new circumstances. Therefore, a new model of 'Decision Making Power' is devised in order to assess women's level of empowerment through 'Decision Making Power.

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