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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### STUDY OF AUTONOMY OF WOMEN'S DECISION MAKING AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Dr. Neha Tiwari<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Jiju N. Vyas<sup>2</sup>

1. Scientist, KVK, JAU Amreli Gujarat.
2. Associate Professor SDAU Dantiwada Gujarat.

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#### Abstract

Women decision making is giving legitimate power or authority to perform the tasks. If women were free to take their own decisions, they would be able to participate in the planning and decision making task and contribute to the development programmes and activities individually. The process of freedom of decision making should start from our own home. Women's position in the household determines women's autonomy in the family. It is worth to examine whether she can decide about household matters like buying household assets and jewellerys, having access to money, having mobility to go to relatives' house or getting health care facilities. Present study evaluates the perception of females with respect to their freedom of decision making at household front. This paper also explains how the freedom of decision making of females at household level is influenced by various other factors and their contribution in decision making freedom to the women. The present study was undertaken in the city of Ahmedabad city and it reflect various dimensions of women decision making at household level.

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#### Introduction:-

A woman's role, responsibilities, and activities in household production and, particularly, in agricultural production are time consuming and physically demanding, requiring significant energy and physical capacity. This implies that women's ability to effectively undertake these agricultural and household production activities is greatly influenced by their physical capability and their health status. Smith et al. (2003) states that improving women's health status can effectively enhance their performance in their socioeconomic responsibilities, including increasing agricultural production by becoming more efficient and skilled laborers. A woman's health status is influenced by her access to and control over resources that affect food availability and her ability to be responsible for her health care needs (Mabsout 2011, Sahn and Younger 2009). Therefore, the empowerment of women to have more decision rights over the dimensions of their lives that affect their health and capability in performing income generating and care giver responsibilities.

Women have a distinct role to play in the development of the nation. In the role of mother, she shapes the personality and character of children, then and hence as housewife, she maintains the productivity of the human capital, and is therefore, capable of making a contribution to the economy of the nation. Freedom to take decision is a process which generates changes in our ideas and perceptions and creates awareness about rights and opportunities for self-development in all important spheres of life. Women decision making freedom is an important issue addressed by all

nations who prepare themselves for national development. Women constitute nearly half of our population, so they cannot be left out of any endeavor for building up the nation. One of the challenges of 21st century is to empower women so that they would be able to regulate their day to day lives in the social, political and economic terms. The Indian constitution granted gender equality. The central government directed the states to take various steps to maintain the equality of decision making authority.

### Objectives:-

- 1) To study major determinants of women's freedom of decision making at household level.
- 2) To evaluate impact of various factors of determinants on decision making freedom to women at household level.
- 3) To analyse holistic impact of all the determining factors, when measured together on women's decision making as a model framework.

### Methodology:-

Present research was conducted in the Ahmedabad city and non-working married women are taken as population frame for the study. Total sample of 950 housewives were taken for the study. Data collection was done with the help of structured closed ended questionnaire by doing personal interview as survey method.

### Result Analysis And Interpretation:-

Person correlation was performed first to make base for the multiple regression. Table provides the Coefficient of relation between all independent variables and dependent variable.

Correlation							
	Autonomy of Decision	Freedom of Buying decision	Freedom of Economic	Freedom of Social Decisions	Freedom of Education	Freedom of Personal	Freedom of Career Decisions
Autonomy of Decision Making	1.000	.912	.894	.945	.886	.901	.873
Freedom of Buying decision	.912	1.000	.938	.967	.982	.983	.967
Freedom of Economic Decision	.894	.938	1.000	.973	.986	.963	.979
Freedom of Social Decisions	.945	.967	.973	1.000	.977	.967	.966
Freedom of Educational decisions	.886	.982	.986	.977	1.000	.973	.965
Freedom of Personal Decisions	.901	.983	.963	.967	.973	1.000	.985
Freedom of Career Decisions	.873	.967	.979	.966	.965	.985	1.000

N= 950, All Correlation are statistically significant at 5% level of significant

Coefficient of correlation was positive for all the variables and varied between 0.963 to 0.986. All coefficient of correlation were statistically significant at 5% level of the significant. Correlation summary provides the good base for the multiple regression.

The model summary of Autonomy of Decision Making and all six explored variables is given in Table and it shows the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) under model which is 0.977, which meant all six factors combine explained 97.7 percent of the variations in Autonomy of Decision Making.

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.987 <sup>a</sup>	.977	.956	.24958	.897	623.207	6	943	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Freedom of Career Decisions, Freedom of Social Decisions, Freedom of Economic Decision, Freedom of Educational decisions, Freedom of Buying decision, Freedom of Personal Decisions

b. Dependent Variable: Autonomy of Decision Making

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	186.213	6	32.37	623.207	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	24.823	943	.062		
	Total	221.036	949			
a. Dependent Variable: Autonomy of Decision Making						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Freedom of Career Decisions, Freedom of Social Decisions, Freedom of Economic Decision, Freedom of Educational decisions, Freedom of Buying decision, Freedom of Personal Decisions						

The ANOVA Table is used to assess the overall significance of the regression model. In Table, the F-value (623.207) and the p-value is 0.000. This meant that model is significant as p-values less than 0.05 at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. It further said that explored six variables significantly contribute in the variation of the Autonomy of Decision Making.

### Conclusion:-

The study provides the coefficient of the model. According to the table it can be said that all explored factors is significantly influence on the Autonomy of Decision Making. All factors are statistically significant as the p value of all the factors are less than 0.05. Among all the factors Freedom of Social Decisions, Freedom of Personal Decisions and Freedom of Buying decision are mainly contributors which influence mostly in the Autonomy of Decision Making. Other factors are also statistically significant but the intensity of the influence is low compare to other factors.

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