An Analytical Study of Decision - Making Power of Women at Home in India: With Special Reference to Agra District

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Abstract: *Women are the most important and beautiful creations of the world. Earlier women don't have access to education so they were not aware of their rights but as time changed, they got the education which influenced their decision - making power both at home and at the workplace. Women Empowerment refers to the "ability of women to make their decisions on their own and fulfill their all needs so that they can get equal opportunities as men." Nowadays as the Feminist wave is getting exposure, most women can take their own decisions but the rest of them needs support. This Research paper analyzed the role of women in decision - making at home regarding the following factors - Financial decisions, Cooking, conceiving children/ Use of protection, Family Planning, Visiting Parent's home after marriage, travelling to places, and spending cash on buying important things for the home and for self - care. This study covers 50 domestic decision - making women aged 20 - 50 years in the Agra district of U. P. It includes Descriptive research which includes Primary data collection using an Interview Schedule and Case - Study.*

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Education, Decision - making, Family Planning, Role of Women

1. Introduction

"You educate a man, you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation."

Brigham Young

The above quotation tries to explain the fact that an educated woman can teach many generations as they hold the capacity to teach and manage everyone in the family whereas an educated man can only teach himself or his life partner.

Women play an important role in everyone's life and hence they are very important as family members. Women are considered an important asset for the economy of any nation, especially for developing nations. But women are considered less capable than men for ages as a result of which the decision - making power of women is considerably less than men. Women had to fight for their rights since the beginning, whether regarding education, marriage, rituals, decision - making, career, etc.

In India, the revolution of women's decision - making power started during the 19th century. Acts like the **Abolition of Sati Act of 1829**, the **Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856,** etc came into the scenario. Many articles of the Indian Constitution talked about equality between men and women which is still on paper but not applicable in real life.

"No struggle can ever succeed without women participation side by side with men. There are 2 powers in the world. One is the sword; one is the pen. There is a third power, stronger than both, that of women."

Malala Yousafzai

As stated above by Malala Yousafzai the strongest power in the world is that of women and latter comes the power of pen and sword. The participation of women plays an important role irrespective of the sector in which women are involved.

In the era of sustainable development, the main focus is women empowerment in every sector, whether at home or at the workplace. Many government schemes are introduced for the empowerment and education of women. The status of women in society can be contemplated by their legal rights, educational standards, health status, employment position and decision - making.

Empowerment in decision - making implies (a) control over self and critical thinking (b) self - actualization (c) awareness regarding one's rights and proper utilization of those rights (d) equity between men and women. It is clearly seen that the word **"Women Empowerment"** is clearly associated with the struggle of women for social justice and equality. **Karl (1995)** defined **Empowerment** as enjoying participation in decision - making while controlling the self. But unfortunately, women are deprived of decision - making whether at home or at the workplace in one way or another.

But still, at home, the agency of women is very weak as compared to the workplace. There are very few homes where women can take their own decisions in order to manage home affairs. They have to take permission for little things when it comes to home for example - decisions regarding dinner, involvement in family planning, financial decisions of home, the decision regarding the choice of the stream during board exams, decisions regarding choosing a life partner etc.

Very few women are able to take care of their health whether they are unmarried or married. Many studies have shown that in order to take care of others, women neglect their health

issues and as a result of which they have to suffer a lot. Many home - makers neglect their health when they are pregnant and as a result of which **Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)** increased a lot. To improve the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), the government had brought many schemes so that women will get aware of the importance of their health and start taking precautions for it. According to the latest statistics, India contributes **48.53% of female residents** but the status of women remains lower as compared to the male population. **Census 2011** shows that the **Female Workforce Participation Rate (FWPR)** for women is solely **25.51%** in opposition to **53.26% of males** (Census 2011).

Recently many initiatives are taken by the Government of India such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign, Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (PMUY), Triple Talaq Ordinance 2017, Nirbhaya Act etc. set one's sights on the improvement of women's status in India. But despite these initiatives by the Government of India, women are not able to rise in the context of decision making whether at home or at the workplace due to societal norms and expectations from women. They are playing dual roles and still not getting the rights that they deserve. Sociologists like **Talcott Parsons** argued that men are supposed to be instrumental leaders while women are expressive leaders and they both have complementary roles towards each other. But the question is in the 21st century, women are also earning and hence they are becoming both instrumental as well as expressive leaders and hence with the changing time, women need recognition for their decision - making skills and for that, they need to take a stand for themselves.

2. Theoretical Analysis

1) **Functionalism theory** implies that if women are not given credit for their work, then it's okay as our society's structure only works like that. According to functionalists, the patriarchal system is good, and they don't have any issues with women becoming proletariats having no say whether it's their workplace or their home.
2) **Marxist theory** implies that women were living in false consciousness for ages and they didn't have any say regarding their point of view whether at home or at the workplace which was very problematic. But slowly women started raising their voices and revolution happened within decades but still, the condition of women is not very good.
3) **Symbolic Interactionist Theory** implies that symbols play a vital role in the life of women. It can be both negative as well as positive. It shows the hidden meaning of symbols which indicates the suppression of women's point of view and their say.
4) **Feminist Theory** implies that women should get equal rights as that of men. It simply denotes that everyone should get social, political and economic equality irrespective of their sex. It promotes **Gender Equality, End of Gender oppression and structural oppression, expanding human choices, ends sexual violence and promotes sexual freedom.** There are many waves of Feminist theory which are as follows -
   - **First wave of Feminism -** It started from the women's suffrage movement which demanded women's voting rights. It started in **1848** in **New York** City under the leadership of **Susan B Anthony** and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**. **Emmeline Pankhurst**, the leading figure of the suffragettes in Britain was regarded as one of the most important figures of this movement as she founded the **Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).** The tragedy was that after such a long movement for equality to vote, only white women from the privileged background were allowed to vote while black and minorities were allowed to vote later on.
   - **2nd wave of feminism** focused on the social roles of women in the **1960s**. Sociologists like **Simone de Beauvoir** laid the foundation of feminism by stating that **"one is not born but becomes a woman"** in her book **"The Second Sex"** where she described the process of womanhood which states that socialization teaches a girl how to behave and how not to behave. It is during this time that the debate got broadened to include a wider range of issues like sexuality, family, reproductive rights, legal inequalities and divorce laws. Acts like the **Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Civil Rights Act of 1964** etc. introduced in this wave only. **Roe v. Wade** was introduced to protect women's rights in regard to abortion in **1973** during this wave.
   - **3rd wave of feminism** started in the 1990s and involved fighting against workplace sexual harassment while the aim of this wave was to increase the number of women who are holding positions in power. Sociologists like **Kimberle Crenshaw** coined the term **Intersectionality** which highlighted various situations in which women were being oppressed and have different struggles in their life.
   - **4th wave feminism** started in **2012** and highlighted the issues of sexual abuse and harassment at the workplace which gave birth to the **#metoo movement** and "*Everyday sexism project"* led by **Laura Bates**. It is basically an internet - oriented movement to highlight the suffrage of women happening in different places of the world.

It is digitally driven and inclusive in nature and hence includes any sexual orientation, ethnicity and trans individuals.

2.1 Types of Feminism

1) **Radical Feminism** believes that power is the key to gender oppression and hence the main problem is **patriarchal society**. **Andrea Dworkin (1981)** stated that men have secured power over women through rape, violence and pornography.
   - **Rosemarie Tong (1998)** distinguishes between 2 groups of Radical Feminists -
   a) **Radical Libertarian Feminists** believed that it is possible as well as desirable that gender differences should be eradicated or should be greatly reduced and the state of androgyny should be established in which both men and women are equal and they are not different.
   b) **Radical - Cultural Feminists** believed in celebrating the characteristics associated with femininity such as emotions, and are adverse to the characteristics associated with masculinity. Some

Radical feminists practice **Political Lesbianism** or **Political Celibacy**.

2) **Marxist Feminism** is based on the idea of **Karl Marx** and hence they believe that Capitalism is the main cause of exploitation of the oppressed class and women are being oppressed because of the patriarchal system which emerges in society due to capitalism at its roots. Women are considered as only commodities for consumption as property. Men deny giving her freedom in the ownership of resources that's why women did not become free from exploitation in all spheres of the social world. These feminists believe that women are reserve bank for the workforce and they are exploited for their unpaid labour as socialization is done for free and are expected to bring the next generation of the labour force also.

3) **Liberal Feminism** believes that both genders are being harmed not because of the structure of society but because of the values and culture of society. It is because of the socialization of gender roles that inequality emerges in the values of both genders. These feminists believe that women hold the same power of ability in agency as well as moral reasoning as men hold but patriarchal society does not give them the opportunity to practice it and hence women are left behind in the boundaries of their homes and hence are excluded from participating in public life. They try to remove the concept of gender inequality and sexism from the books of their children so that the next generation can live in a society where both genders are equal.

4) **Post - Modern Feminism** believes that earlier schools of Feminism created false images by creating the wrong concepts and highlighted the concept of **Intersectionality** which states that all women have different struggles and were being oppressed in different ways. Post - Modern Feminism deals with the discourse of language and highlighted the relationship between power and knowledge. This school of feminism focuses on different experiences of women being oppressed in different ways and hence bringing awareness regarding different ways in which women are being oppressed.

- **Glass Ceiling Theory of Feminism** was popularized by **Marilyn Loden** at the **Women's Exposition in New York** in **1948** which was later popularized by **The Wall Street Journal**. The word **Glass Ceiling** refers to a metaphorical barrier that is not visible and is meant for stopping the promotion of women to the managerial or administrative level. This phrase is used to describe the challenges women had to face when she is trying to reach at the higher level but the organisation does not want to promote them. It was found that qualified women and minorities were denied for getting access to promotions in their careers due to gender biases and stereotypes in the workplace. For Example - **Kamala Harris** broke the glass ceiling by becoming 1st Woman Vice - President of the United States and was also the 1st black person and the 1st person of South Asian descent to be elected for the role of Vice President.

- **Glass Cliff Theory of Feminism** stated that women are being promoted during tough times like recession or crisis in leadership roles. From the outside, it seems progressive but the main hidden motive of the company is the failure of women in that particular position so that they can replace women with men who are comparatively capable for the leadership roles in the company.

3. Literature Review

- **Khare (2021)** showed in her research paper entitled **"Impact of Women's education on decision - making regarding their children affairs"** that the education of women has a great impact on their decision - making power. She had taken various variables like "Educated women", "Uneducated women", "Working women", "Housewife" etc, and showed in her research that educated women are more able to take decisions as compared to uneducated women. She also showed that the occupation of women plays an important role in decision - making power. Educated women are more capable of choosing schools and colleges for their children while uneducated or housewives do not take decisions regarding this aspect of their children.

- **K. Damodaran (2022)** analyzed the role of women in decision - making on household expenditure, health care, purchase, visits, access to money, and credit and showed that in financial cases women are less likely to make decisions alone in North - East states of India.

In the context of health care, purchase, and visits he showed that 79.5 % of women have agency regarding this and the rest have to be dependent on their husband's permission. In his research, he showed that women in the North - East and West parts of the country enjoy more autonomy in deciding their healthcare.

In the case of taking decisions regarding access to money and credit card, only 78% of women have a bank account, 51% know about micro - credit, 51% of women have the right to have and use money, 22% of women use mobile to have e - transactions and only 11% of women have right to take a loan.

Comparing different zones of India, he showed that West and North India have the right to have money and use them independently. In owning bank accounts and use rights, South and North India have more women account holders as compared to other regions of India.

He concluded that women still have to take permission from their husbands to have and spend money which clearly shows the inequality between men and women. Different zones of India have different levels of autonomy for women.

- **Mehta (2020)** in her research paper entitled **"Decision - making Power and social status of Women in Indian Society"** showed that women only have decision - making power when it comes to decorating the home, purchase of domestic goods, marriage of children, etc otherwise they don't have decision - making power regarding economic activities, travelling outside the home, family planning, etc. She concluded in her study that education plays an important role in the decision - making power of women.

- **Pandey, Purnima et. al (2021)** in their research paper entitled **"The involvement of women as the domestic**

decision maker: A study of Patna Metropolitan City, Bihar, India" showed that there are various factors that influence decision - making power including Education, Age, Religion, Occupation, etc. This research also showed that the history of a particular place also affects the domestic decision - making power of women.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows -
- To identify the factors which influence the domestic decision - making ability among women
- To study the comparative agencies of educated women and uneducated women regarding domestic decision - making power in the Agra district, U. P

4. Research Methodology

This study would be a combination of Qualitative and Quantitative methods. The **Primary data** has been collected by the researcher in the form of an **Interview Schedule** while **Secondary data** has been used as the researcher has read many articles, journals, etc to get aware of the topic. To know the rights given to women and to be aware of women's situation in the past as well as in the present Researcher has visited many libraries including **Central Library, DEI (Agra), Central Library of Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)** and other local libraries.

To get knowledge from the grassroots level, the Researcher has designed an Interview Schedule and collected data from **50 samples** within the **Agra district of Uttar Pradesh (U. P).** The researcher has divided the Agra district into 3 zones and applied **Multistage Cluster Sampling** to choose her respondents aged **25 - 50 years.** Along with it, the **Case study** method has also been used. **Descriptive Research** is used as facts are shown as it is in this research paper.

Population & Sample

According to Census 2011, it has been faced that the Total population of Agra district is **4, 418,** 797, of which **2, 364, 953** are **Males** and the rest females are **2, 053,** 844. The Population of the study includes women from the **Agra district of Uttar Pradesh**. Based on geographical mapping, the Agra district is divided into **15 Blocks and 6 Tehsils.** According to the Census of Agra, the district is 10, 863 sq. km. The total number of **Gram Sabha** stands at **695** while **Nyaya Panchayats** in the district is **114.** (**Source: https: //agra. nic. in/district - profile/).**

The researcher chooses the Agra district to know the condition of women's decision - making power before and after marriage. For this, she chooses the Purposive and Convenience sampling method of **50 women** as a sample of 25 - 50 years. The Researcher tried to interview 70 respondents but due to the patriarchal system of society,

respondents were not ready to co - operate hence the sample size of this Research is 50.

Distribution of the Sample

The Researcher has sub - divided the area of Agra district to cover women from all areas into 6 areas as mentioned below:

Variables

The researcher took the following variables during her study:

Independent Variable
- Decision - Making Power

Dependent Variable
- Age
- Category
- Education
- Type of Family
- Socialization
- Exposure
- Financial Independence

Data Collection

The Research study has focused on women's decision - making power irrespective of whether they are unmarried or married, house - maker or working women. Different variables have been taken by the Researcher including **Caste**, **Education level**, **Age, and Occupation**.

This study includes 50 respondents - **09 respondents** from the **Shankar Colony, 10 respondents** from **the Post Office Colony, 16 respondents** from the **School in the Khandari campus, 8 respondents** from **North Idgah Colony, 4 respondents** from the **Sant Nagar Colony** and **3 respondents** from **New Agra Colony** (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Distribution of Respondents in Agra district

S. No.	Area	Number of Respondents
1.	Shankar Colony	09
2.	Post Office Colony	10
3.	School (Khandari Campus)	16
4.	North Idgah	08
5.	Sant Nagar Colony	04
6.	New Agra	03
	Total	50

Table 1.2 shows that **15 respondents** (**30%**) were from the General category of 25 respondents while **16 respondents (32%)** belonged to **Scheduled Caste (SC), 5 respondents (10%)** were of **Scheduled Tribe (ST), 8 respondents (16%)** belong to **OBC** and rest **6 respondents (12%)** belong from **other caste** category.

Table 1.2: Category of Respondents in Agra district

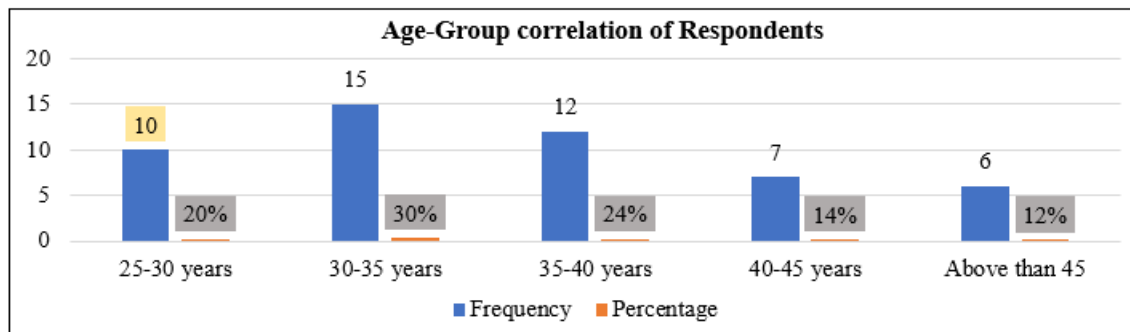| General	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Class (OBC)	Other Category
15 (30%)	16 (32%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)

Figure 1.1: Correlation between the Age - group of Respondents and the Decision - making power of Women

The data in the above Table (Fig 1.1) shows the relation between the age group of respondents and their decision - making power. It can be seen that **6 respondents (12%)** belong to the age group of **45 years and above, 7 respondents (14%)** belong to the age group of **40 - 45 years**, **12 respondents (24%)** belong to age - group of **35 - 40 years, 15 respondents (30%)** belong to **30 - 35 years** and **10 respondents (20%)** belong to **25 - 30 years.**

The Researcher observed that the condition of women is not good in the Agra district whether they are educated or uneducated, working or non - working. Most of the decisions were taken by family members, who don't have a say regarding their own decisions. Some of the women had to fight for decision - making power. Below is the ratio of **working** and **non - working women**.
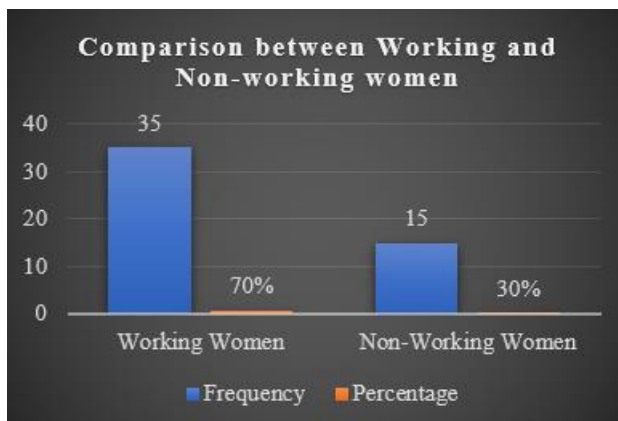

Figure 1.2: Working and Non - Working Respondents

As it is seen from the above data mentioned in **Table 1.2**, out of 50 Respondents **35 are Working** while **15 are non - working** or are retired. It is clearly seen that working respondents can make decisions regarding their lives more independently as compared to non - working respondents. Most of the respondents are working in the Education sector while some are doing Private jobs in other sectors.
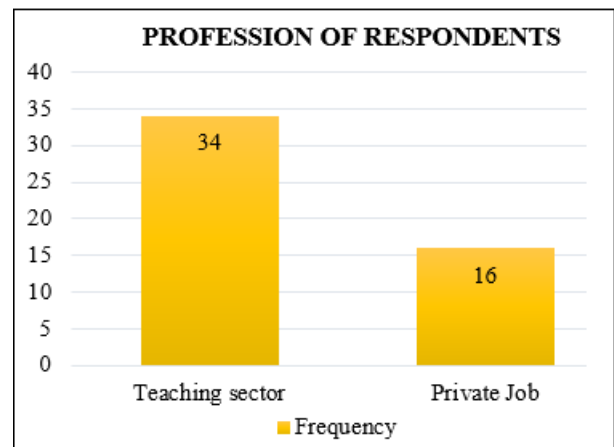

Figure 1.3: Working Sector of Respondents

The data in **Fig 1.3** shows that out of **50 working women,** most of the respondents are doing jobs in the Teaching sector and the rest of them are working in the private sector in some other field. It is observed that decisions regarding the choice of job were taken by family members most of the time and it is suggested for women respondents that they should work in the Teaching sector or banking sector if they want to be independent. The stereotype of jobs for women can be still visible in the family members of society and women have to mold themselves according to their thinking. Very few women take the stand and go out of the box in terms of choosing their careers.

Table 1.3: Decision - Making Power of Respondents

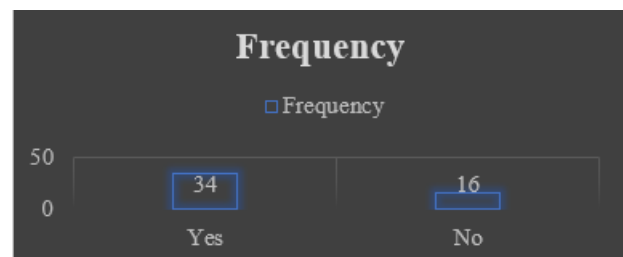| Decision - Making Power	Yes	No
	34	16

Figure 1.4: Decision - making power of Respondents at Home

The data given in **Table 1.3** and **Figure 1.4** clearly shows that **16 respondents** are not allowed to take decisions regarding home while the rest **34 respondents** take decisions regarding home. This clearly states the decision - making power related to home lies in the hands of women. Decisions related to the

home include managing the budget of household shopping, giving responsibilities to others, designing the home, etc.

Figure 1.5: Dominated by Life Partner/Father/Brother

The data given in **Fig 1.5** shows that **36 respondents** are being dominated by their life partner or parents while only **14 respondents** are not being dominated by anyone. When asked how they are being dominated most of the women respondents said that they are emotionally, verbally, and physically dominated either by their parents or by their husbands and in - laws.
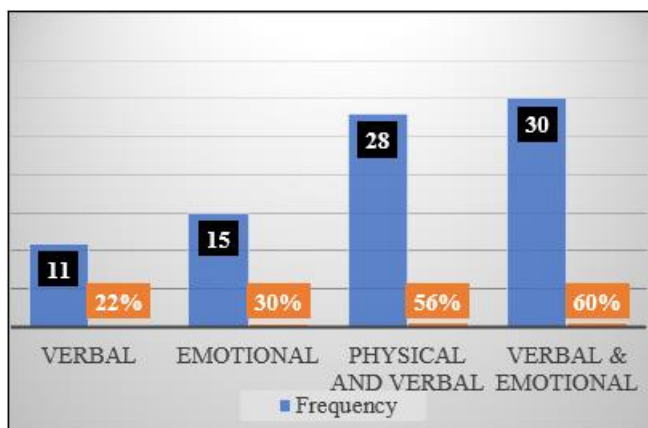

Figure 1.6: Types of Domination Faced by Respondents

The data mentioned in Fig 1.6 shows the type of domination faced by respondents so that male members can dominate female members of their homes. This study includes both unmarried and married respondents. As it is clearly seen in the data mentioned in **Fig 1.6**, **verbal and emotional domination (60%)** can be seen highest among respondents, and **Physical and Verbal domination (56%)** can be seen as the second highest among the respondents.

In the above - mentioned types of domination, the following are included -
1) **Verbal Domination**
a) **Making Invisible -** When women are forgotten, overlooked, or ignored in a discussion. It robs women of their identity and once again reminds them that they are inferior, insignificant, and have no influence. Making someone invisible means that a person chooses to treat an individual or a group as if the person or group were not there.
b) It is a very common form of verbal domination in Indian households whether it's daughter, wife, sister, etc. and

most of the time women are not asked for their advice during the discussion, and if asked their point of view is been ignored easily.
c) **Ridiculing -** Ridiculing occurs when a women's efforts get scorned, made fun of, or likened to animals (e. g., chickens), when women are presented as being especially emotional or sexual, or when women are rejected as cold, illogical, or manipulative.
d) **Double Punishment** - Double Punishment occurs when it's wrong if a woman does something - and wrong if she doesn't. This domination technique is used against the victims of prejudices and stereotypes. For example - "Anita is a working woman and mother of 2 children. She has to attend an important meeting and asked her In - laws to take care of her children. Her in - laws commented that you should focus on your children more rather than focusing on your meetings. She is used to listening to this kind of statement. At the office, she is asked to join a meeting but she said "Sorry, but I have promised my children to be with them at this time." But her boss and colleagues mock her for this statement and call her 'unprofessional' for this thing."
e) **Heaping blame and putting to shame -** This technique is inflicted through ridicule and double punishment. It occurs when women are told that they are "not good enough" and the reason may be -
   • They think women behave differently from men and in novel ways or,
   • Women don't have access to information that men have controlled.

2) **Emotional domination**
Emotional domination includes -
   • Name - calling and derogatory nicknames
   • Character assassination
   • Yelling
   • Patronizing
   • Public embarrassment
   • Dismissiveness
   • Joking
   • Insulting your appearance
   • Putting down your interests
   • **Pushing your buttons** - Once someone gets to know your weak point or things that annoy you the most, people (including family, friends etc.) begin to mention it every chance they will get.

Physical domination
Physical domination may include -
   • Hitting
   • Punching
   • Kicking
   • Slapping
   • Strangling
   • Smothering
   • Shoving
   • Interrupting your sleep
   • Destroying property
   • Denying medical treatment

The above - mentioned types of domination come under **Violence Against Women (VAW)** which gets starts from the day girl is born until the day when she died. **Progress of**

South Asian Women, 2005 traces the causes of violence against women to interactive roles of the family, community, and the State. It observes -

• "The family socializes its members to accept hierarchical gender relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over allocation of resources;

• The community (through social, economic, religious, and cultural institutions) provides the mechanisms for perpetuating male control over women's sexuality, mobility, and labour;

• The state, finally, legitimizes the proprietary rights of men over women, providing a legal basis to the family and the community to perpetuate those relations. A State can do this through the enactment of discriminatory applications of laws." (Progress of South Asian Women, 2005, UNIFEM, New Delhi, 2005, p.26)
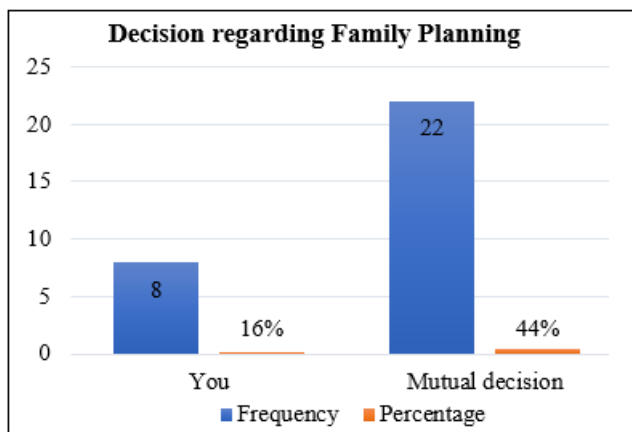

Figure 1.7: Decision Regarding Family Planning

The data mentioned in **Fig 1.7** shows that among 50 respondents, **30 respondents are married** out of which **08 respondents** took decisions regarding family planning on their own while **22 respondents** said that their decision

regarding family planning was mutual. This clearly shows that out of 22 women, some might be uncomfortable admitting the dominance of their family and husband regarding family planning while others take mutual decisions in reality.
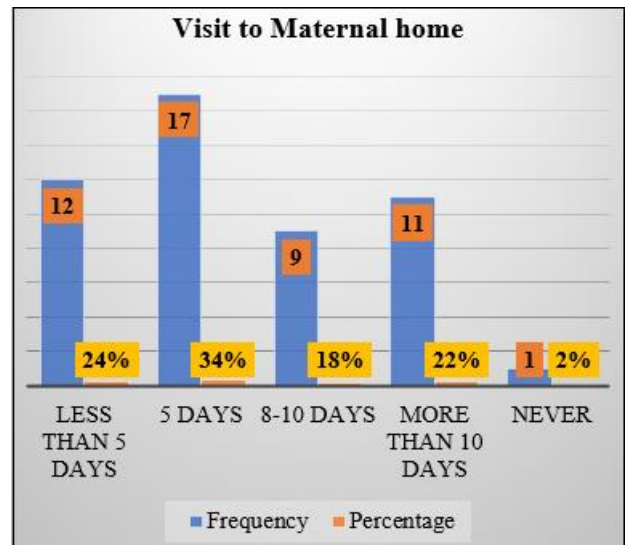

Figure 1.8: Visit to Maternal Home after Marriage

When asked by the Researcher, for how many days respondents visit their home after marriage, **12 respondents** said for **less than 5 days**, **1 respondent never** visited her home, **17 respondents** said that they visited their home for **5 days**, **09 respondents** agreed that they visit their home for **8 - 10 days** and **11 respondents** said that they visit their maternal home for **more than 10 days** as shown in **Fig 1.8.** So, it can be clearly seen that most of the respondents visit their maternal home for 5 days and that too occasionally which clearly shows the poor decision - making power of women after marriage.
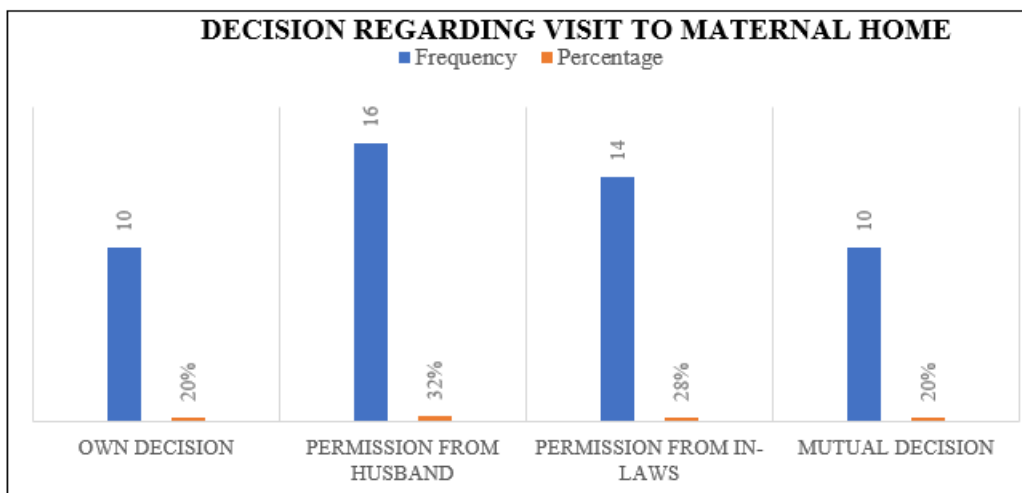

Figure 1.9: Decision - Making Regarding the Visit to Maternal Home

The data given in **Fig 1.9** shows the decision - making power of women regarding visits to the maternal home after marriage. Only **10 respondents** made decisions on their own out of 50 respondents. 1**0 respondents** said that they take the mutual decision regarding visits to their maternal home and their husbands go along with them as they enjoy visiting their in - law's homes while **16 respondents** admitted that they

take permission from their husbands and **14 respondents** take permission from their in - laws.

All 50 respondents agree that education plays an important role in decision - making and girls should get proper education before getting married and even after marriage also. When the researcher asked the reason for the same, some

common reasons were - **awareness, help in adjustment, give maturity, help in socialization, increases confidence level, develops interest, provide knowledge, etc.**
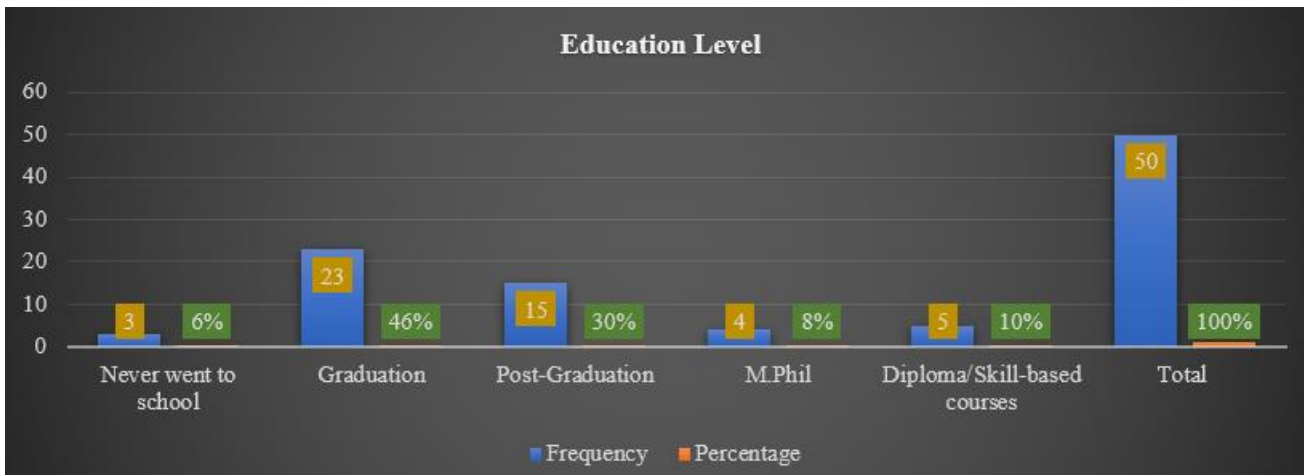

Figure 1.10: Education level of Respondents

Fig.1.10 shows the education level of respondents according to which 23 respondents have graduated **(UG)** while 15 respondents have done **Post - Graduation (PG),** 4 respondents have done M. Phil. and 5 respondents have done a **skill - based course** while **3 respondents** have **never been to school**. This clearly shows that most of the respondents are either graduated or post - graduated.

Table 1.4: Correlation between the education of respondents and their working status

	Never went to school	Graduation	Post - Graduation	M. Phil.	Skill - based course
Working	3	15	13	2	3
Non - Working		8	2	2	2

Table 1.4 shows the correlation between the education level of respondents and their working status. Out of **23 graduated respondents**, 15 are working while 8 respondents are homemakers. Out of **15 post - graduated respondents,** 13 are working women while 2 are homemakers. Hence, we can say that the higher the education level of a woman is, the higher the possibility that she would take a stand for her career.
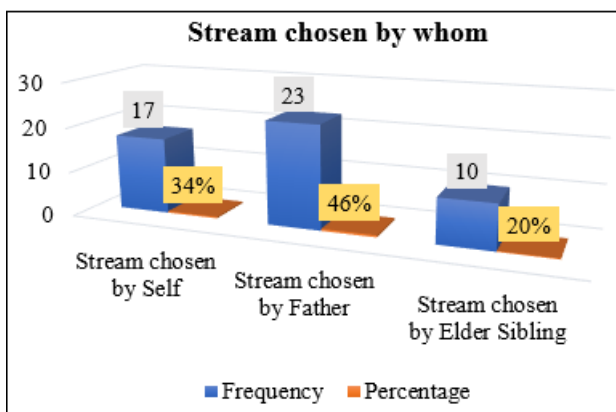

Figure 1.11: Respondent's stream was chosen by whom?

The data given in Fig.1.11 shows that out of 50 respondents, 17 chose their stream after the 10th on their own, while 23 respondents' stream was chosen by their father and 10 respondent's stream was chosen by their elder sibling. This clearly shows that most respondents knew their area of interest and chose their stream accordingly in the 11th and 12th standards.

5. Case Studies

The Researcher came across many different situations in which respondents survived and hereby is mentioning a few Case studies that she found unique and inspiring in their own sense. Here are some important case studies -

Case Study 1
Mrs. Bharti Jadaun, Kshatriya by caste, aged 34 years, who is a proper resident of Agra has done LLB and had proper rights regarding her education. She had chosen her stream in 10th class by herself only but after marriage, she is not working nor practising law. Before marriage her family environment was totally strict, she had freedom regarding only 2 things and that is to study and for doing outings with friends. But after marriage her family environment is free and she chooses how much money to spend on her own. When did the Researcher asked that after getting a proper education, why she is not doing the job or practising law? Respondent replied that "If my husband is earning well enough then what is the need of me to do the job?"

Case Study 2
Mrs. Leela Lalwani, Hindu by caste, who is above 60 years, is educated till Post - Graduation in Economics but due to some circumstances, she was not allowed to pursue her career after marriage. Her In - Laws were orthodox and believed that a good Daughter - In - Law should remain at home and serve their in - laws. She wasn't allowed to attend the Parents - Teacher Meetings of their children. But she had made up her mind that she will be liberal with her daughters - in - laws.

Her Mother used to curse her and she had gone through **verbal, emotional and physical violence**. Later her life

became a little bit easier and she joined the kitty party to relieve her stress. Currently, she is the eldest at home and joined the spirituality club and does social service with an NGO. She has 2 daughters - in - laws who are enjoying their life in freedom but she is still being dominated by her husband. When she visited Ram Lal Old Age Home, she didn't tell anyone about that as everyone will stop her to go there including her son and she will not get permission to go on the path of spirituality.

Case Study 3
Mrs Meena, Hindu by caste, who is around 50 years of age, is illiterate. She had a case of forced marriage at an early age when she was not even aware of the concept of marriage. Earlier her husband used to drink and beat her but later when she started earning by doing work like cleaning and cooking at other's homes, she took the stand for herself and replied back to her husband whenever they had an argument. She used to earn money and her husband used to spend it on alcohol but life taught her how to control her circumstances and as a result of which she became a dominant earning member at home and then at the whole basti. Now whenever anyone has any problem, they come to consult her. She told that earlier her husband used to dominate her verbally as well as physically but later she took a stand for herself.

Now she is the breadwinner of her family including her daughter and 2 sons. Her husband is in a paralyzed condition now due to some disease. She never used contraceptive pills as she was not aware of it. She takes financial decisions at home and takes care of her health. She has immense knowledge of ayurvedic oils and therefore works at 2 homes regarding the health of women. She is still learning how to use Nokia mobile phone in the modern era of smartphones. She told that whatever she learned she was able to learn because she worked in different houses with people of different cultures. She never attended the parent - teacher meetings of her children and gave them liberal socialization.

Case Study 4
Jyoti, who is Rajput by caste and is 34 years old woman, got an education till her Master's but was not allowed to do a job after marriage as her in - laws are into business. She had done MBA and got a job in a well - known company but she had to leave it after marriage. She told that before marriage, her socialization was free, she used to do whatever she wants to but after marriage, the environment becomes strict. She had chosen her stream on her own and was good at her studies. Family planning was the decision of both husband and wife. On asking about the financial decision, she said that it is always mutual and not independent. She visits her maternal home on her own by taking the decision and staying there for around 10 days. She had gone to private school and her parents never supported her in competitive exams but she had to take a stand for her own studies by taking tuition and joined coaching by earning money.

She has the right regarding whatever she wants to wear after marriage also. When asked about choosing a life partner, she said that their decision was mutual which means the respondent and her parents had both mutually chosen the groom. She spends money on her dresses and self - care which includes her health also and education. When asked about the socialization of her children she said that she had decided that she will give free parenting to her children, will teach them in private school, will attend their PTM and will take decisions regarding the child's education. She also told that her family members take her suggestions seriously as she is well - educated.

6. Observing Remarks (Conclusion)

The researcher in this research paper analyzed the decisions that were taken by women regarding their lives whether they are married or unmarried. From the data collection and case studies, it can be seen that most of the women in the Agra district are exposed to education but still, they are being dominated by their parents before marriage and by their in - laws and husband after marriage.

Out of 50 respondents, the maximum respondents belonged to the age group of 30 - 35 years and 35 were figured out as working women. It is observed that the illiterate respondents are working as they don't have any choice in their life so it can be said that education is not playing an important role in the working status of women it was observed that illiterate women were bound to do work no matter what the circumstances were.

Only 17 respondents chose stream on their own after the 10th class. The rest of the respondents said that either their father chose stream on their behalf or their brother or any other relatives chose it on their behalf without their consent.

Out of 50 respondents, 30 respondents faced verbal and emotional domination by their guardian or husband such as Ridiculing, Making Invisible, Name calling, Making derogatory comments etc. It is clearly visible that verbal, emotional, and physical domination is most common after marriage in the life of women and this kind of domination has a long - lasting impact on the mental health of women which can lead to stress, anxiety, disorder, etc. which is a barrier in the path of women empowerment and personality development.

Decisions like the choice of wearing their favourite clothes, choosing their life partner, spending money on their health and basic needs are still not yet taken by women. They still have to get permission for things like spending money, going out with friends/colleagues, etc. But still, one thing that is common among all respondents is that they believe that education plays an important role in decision - making at home and answers regarding this question are almost the same. Illiterate or uneducated women also believed that education is important and they will educate their children so that they can live a better life.

Restrictions are still imposed on women in the name of socialization, respect for elders, labelling of women, etc. There is a need to spread awareness regarding education so that most of the backward women who cannot afford to study can get exposure to education and take a stand for their own life decisions. It can be seen that most of the women respondents had to sacrifice their careers after their marriage and this needs to be changed because women are educated then they should go ahead in their careers.

Most of the respondents who were post - graduate sacrificed their careers either for their in - laws or for their kids and were not able to do work again and named it as destiny. Some respondents who had done Masters in Economics and an MBA are bound to choose family over their career.

Hence it can be concluded that despite of many government schemes and policy regarding education of women and workplace, women are still bound to sacrifice their career for the sake of their family and those who are working women have to face double discrimination - one at workplace and other at home. Decision - making power of women is still at stake and most of the decisions were taken by their guardian and later by their in - laws or husband.

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