



The Effects Of Employment And Age On The Empowerment Of Women In The Family

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Abstract: This study explores the effects of employment and age on the empowerment of women within their families. Focusing on educated women with at least a graduate degree, the research investigates the impact of employment status and age on their decision-making power in areas such as finance, household matters, luxury purchases, children's education, and health. Using descriptive research and mixed methods, the study examines the differences between employed and unemployed women and compares women aged 21-35 years with those aged 36-60 years. Findings reveal that employed women have greater autonomy over financial decisions, children's education, and health-related matters, while older women exhibit more control in household decisions and purchasing luxury goods. Despite their education, many women still face limitations in decision-making, with societal and patriarchal structures playing a significant role. The study concludes that while education is a key factor, true empowerment requires the freedom to make independent decisions, urging a societal shift towards greater support for women's autonomy.

Index Terms -Women empowerment, decision making power, employment, unemployment.

I. INTRODUCTION

In any society, it is necessary that both men and women have equal rights, provisions and opportunities in all aspects of life, not just in words or policy documents but in practice as well. Both men and women ought to have equally important responsibilities to run the family and the society to its fullest. National and international organizations are more concerned about gender equality which is now a global issue (PratikshayaTripathi, 2017). Economic responsibilities have always been taken by the men which seems to be much of postcolonial effect (Rosanna Rorstrom, 2010). To break the patriarchal norms, Government of India has come up with many policies, programmes and initiatives and practice 'positive discrimination' in favour of women and their empowerment. The aim if women's empowerment is to come up with a society where women can breathe freely without being persecuted, exploited, discriminated against or victimized (K.V. Shoba, 2021). Achieving gender equality and building a more equitable and inclusive society require the empowerment of women. Giving women the means and chances to engage fully and equally in all facets of life—the social, political, economic, and personal—is the definition of empowering them (Disha Sharma, 2023).

Women who have an education are more likely to be exposed to the media, to be aware of their rights, to have greater access to resources, and to have better communication skills. In addition, economic empowerment gives women more negotiating power within the family and more influence over financial decisions. The survey found that many educated women faced difficulties while making decisions about their children's education, their careers, whether to coach or attend college, etc. Women's ability to make decisions was positively correlated with their level of education, occupation, and income (Dr. Happy P.V., 2018).

Women with higher levels of education are better able to enhance both their personal wellbeing and that of their families. They are more suited to create new opportunities, roles, and support systems as well as to make the most of currently offered services and opportunities (Bhukya, 2014). Women are now able to make independent financial decisions since they have access to opportunities and resources. Gaining financial autonomy has also been made possible for women by property rights, credit availability, and employment prospects. To achieve actual financial independence, Indian women must have more discussions about this issue. They still have challenges because many of the males in their immediate vicinity might not find this mentality change pleasant (The Economic Times, 2024).

Women's empowerment is not just giving them equal rights and added advantage but also providing them with opportunities to exercise these rights. Even though the status of women has been considerably improved, it has been seen that women are held back in decisive roles in every sphere of life. This signifies the need for interrogation concerning the empowerment of women. The social environment in which homes function and implicit gender norms that distinguish between men's and women's positions inside households limit the influence of women in intra-household financial decision-making (Guiso and Zaccaria, 2021). One argument based on skills is that women are less financially literate than males. (Lusardi and Mitchell, 2008; Bucher-Koenen et al., 2017; Hasler and Lusardi, 2017) and therefore may be unwilling to take on the responsibility of financial decision-making. Age, place of residence, regions, wealth index, education, occupation of the spouse, number of children, consanguinity, age gap between husband and wife, ownership of a home and land, and inheritance of a home are the factors that determine empowerment. (Lassi, Z. S., Ali, A., & Meherali, S., 2021). Women make decisions based on a variety of factors, including their age, occupation, job position, family structure, partner's demeanor, and degree of education. Due to their responsibility as caregivers, even less educated women make independent decisions about home spending. Of all household products, 80% are purchased by women. Even though it's sometimes minimized, it's undeniable that women have a significant amount of purchasing power, or influence, in the market (S. Ganapathy and Sakkariya K K, 2021).

Being empowered is all about being confident and making independent decisions. But here the question arises whether educated women are actually empowered or they still rely on their male counterparts for the important decisions of their life, like on finance related matters or health related matters? Does educated women have equal participation in decision-making within the family? In this patriarchy society, it is seen that it is an added privilege for women to attain higher education given by their male counterparts. Hence, there is a need to recognize educated women's reality of being equalized to empowered women. The study undertaken would help to create awareness about the status of educated women in decision making in various spheres of life. The present study tries to portray the real picture of the society. It tries to recognize other factors than education that are the parameters to decide on the status of women regarding decision making within the family.

I. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The study undertaken presently is **“THE EFFECTS OF EMPLOYMENT AND AGE ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY.”**

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

- To study empowerment of women in their own family.
- To investigate the difference between status of employed and unemployed women within their family.
- To investigate women's decision-making power on the basis of their age.
- To study on women's decision-making power on financial matters.
- To study on women's decision-making power on household matters.
- To study on women's decision-making power on purchase of luxury items.
- To study on women's decision-making power about their children's education. To study on women's decision-making power on health-related matters.'

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the educational qualification of the sample taken was minimum graduation level. The present study is descriptive research, where quota sampling has been used. It is a non-probability sampling technique, where there is selection of non-random predetermined number of units from the population. Researchers choose these individuals according to specific traits or qualities (called quota). Here, the quota is to be graduate and above graduate working and non-working women. These samples can be generalized to the entire population.

- **Tools used-**

To collect data for the present study, interviews and self-made questionnaire has been administered.

- **Research approach used-**

A mixed method of research is used, as it gives a more comprehensive understanding of the research area under study. The study describes the parameters being studied and also represents it graphically.

IV. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study has been conducted on women with minimum graduation level.
- The study has been conducted on women of urban population only.
- The study has been conducted on women between the age 21-60 years.
- The study is related to employment status and age as determinants to interpret
- empowerment of women in their family.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

ON THE BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS-

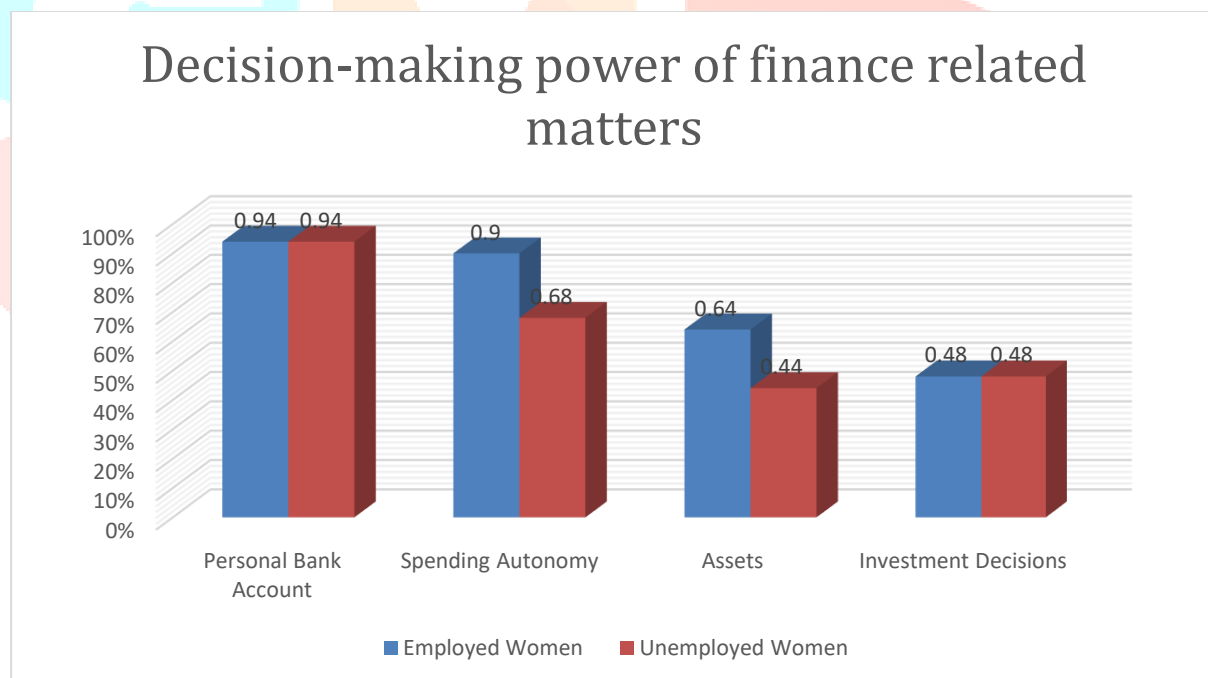


Fig. 1: Comparison of decision-making power of employed and unemployed women related to finance

Fig. 1 shows that 94% of employed and unemployed women have their own personal bank accounts. 90% of the employed women has their spending autonomy, but in case of unemployed women only 68% of them can spend money freely. Next it shows, that 64% of the employed women and 44% of unemployed women have assets. Only 48% of women participate in decision making in relation to different kinds of investments irrespective of their employment status.

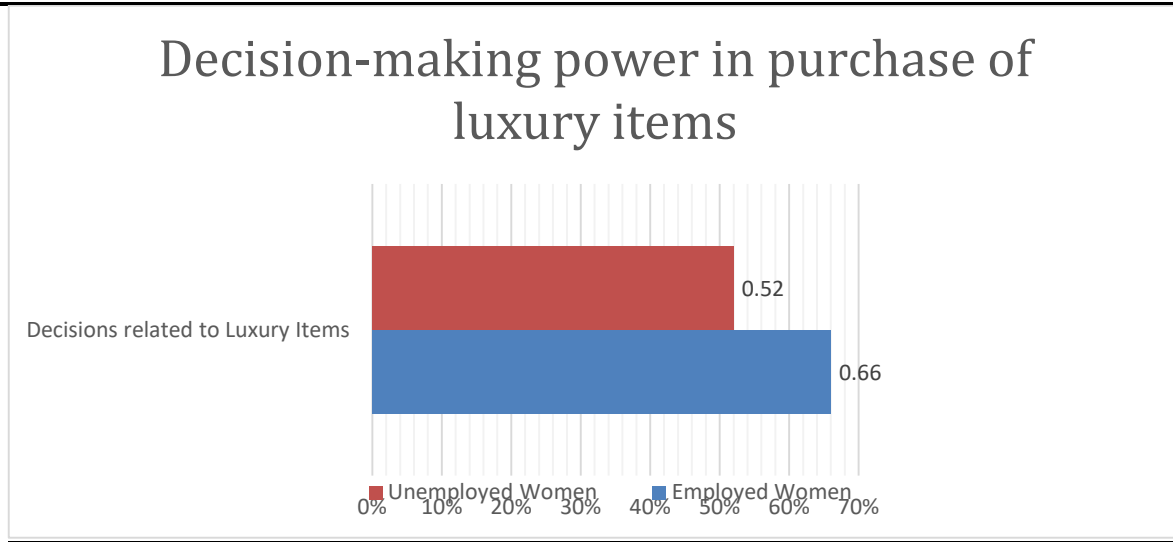


Fig. 2: Comparison of decision-making power of employed and unemployed women related to purchase of luxury goods

Fig. 2 shows that 66% of employed women and 52% of unemployed women takes decision related to purchase of luxury items. This shows that employed women have more purchasing power of luxury goods than unemployed women.

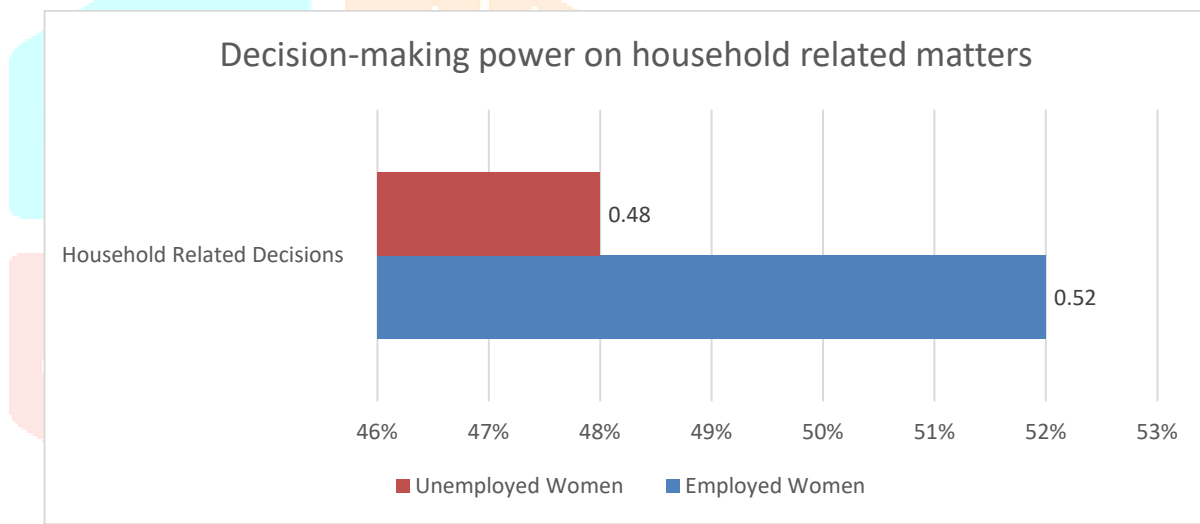


Fig. 3: Comparison of decision-making power of employed and unemployed women in household related matters

Fig 3 shows that 52% of employed women and 48% of unemployed women takes decisions related to household matters. This shows that being employed does not advantage women much in making decisions related to household matters.

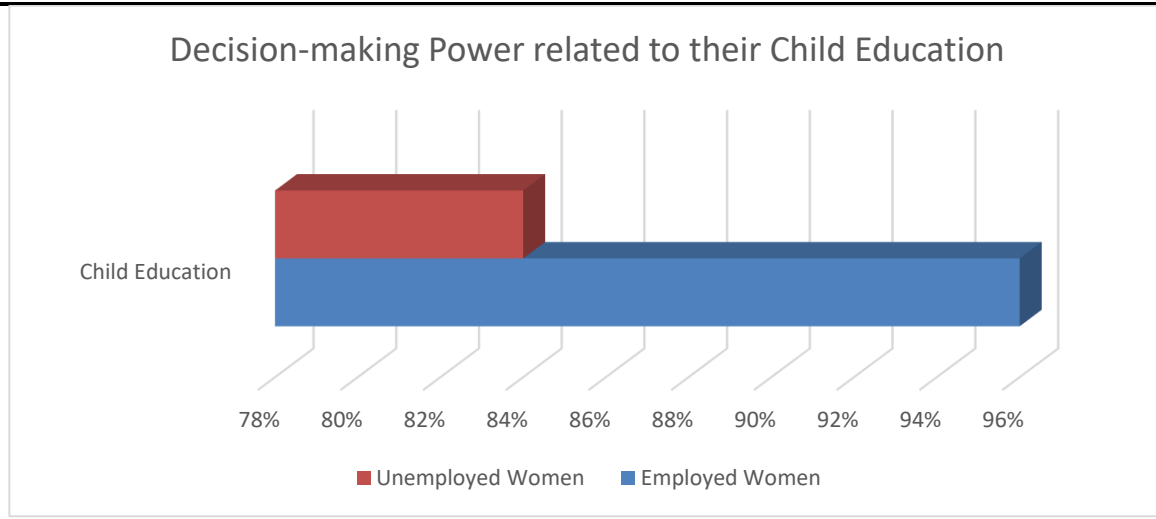


Fig. 4: Comparison of decision-making power of employed and unemployed women in relation to their child's education

Fig. 4 shows that 96% of employed women and 84% of unemployed women are involved in making decisions regarding their child's education. This shows superiority of employed women over unemployed women in making decisions related to their child's education as they are more exposed to different experiences and opportunities.

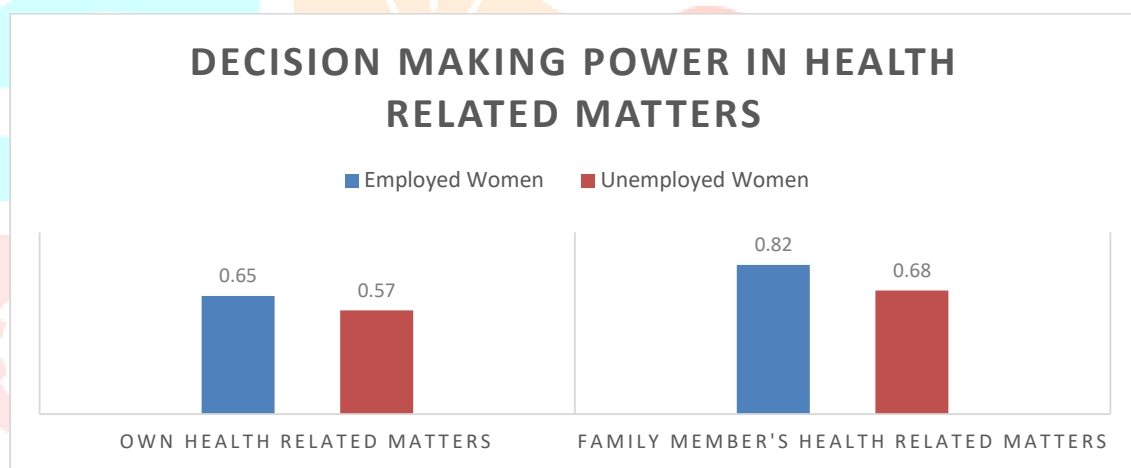


Fig. 5: Comparison of decision-making power of employed and unemployed women in health-related matters

Fig. 5 shows that 65% of the employed women and 57% of unemployed women takes independent decisions in relation to their physical health and well-being. Next, it shows that 82% of employed women and 68% of unemployed women are consulted regarding the health of other family members. This shows that employed women have greater decision-making power in health-related matters as they may be the ones who finance in health care for themselves as well as their family members.

ON THE BASIS OF AGE-

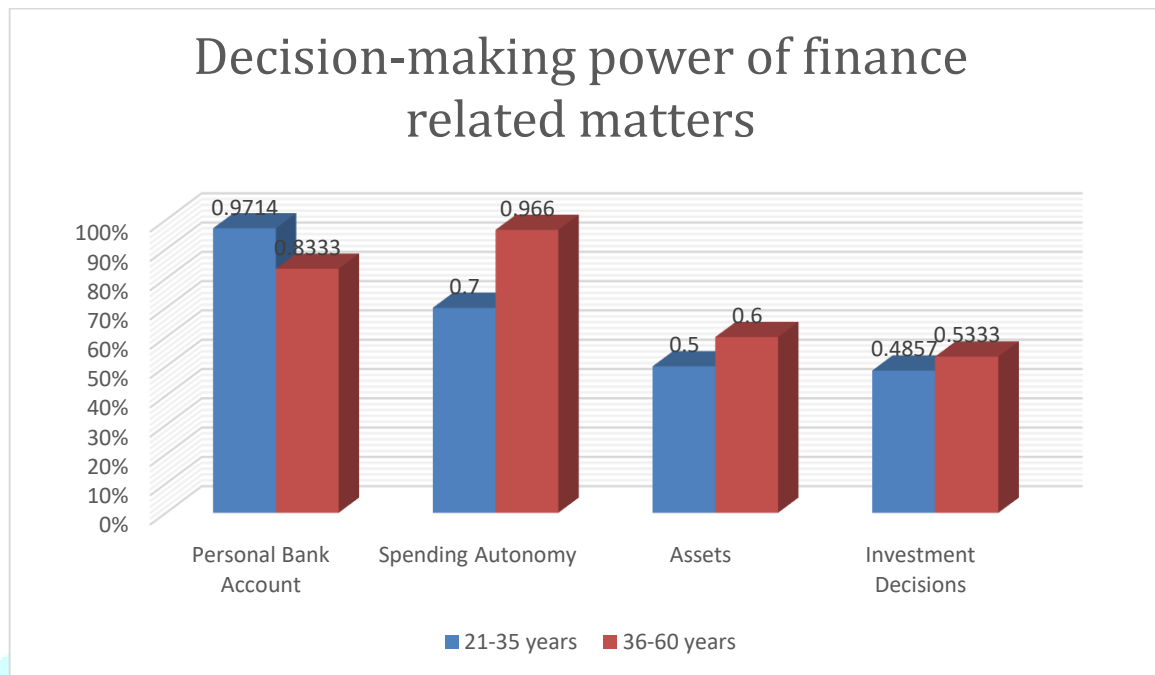


Fig. 6: Comparison of decision-making power of women between age group 21-35 years and 36-60 years related to finance

Fig. 6 shows that 97% of women of age group 21-35 years and 83% of women of age group 36-60 years have their personal bank account. Even though 97% of women in the age group 21-35 years have their personal bank accounts, but only 70% of them have liberty to spend money on their own terms. But in case of women between the age group 36-60 years have 97% of spending autonomy. This shows that even though a smaller number of women in the age group 36-60 years have bank accounts, but they have more autonomy in spending their money. Next, the graph shows that 50% of the women between the age group 21-35 years and 60% of the women between the age group 36-60 years have assets. Further, the graph shows that 49% of women in the age group 21-35 years and 53% of the women in the age group 36-60 years participate in decisions related to various kinds of financial investments. This shows that around only 50% of women of any group participate in decisions related to financial investments.

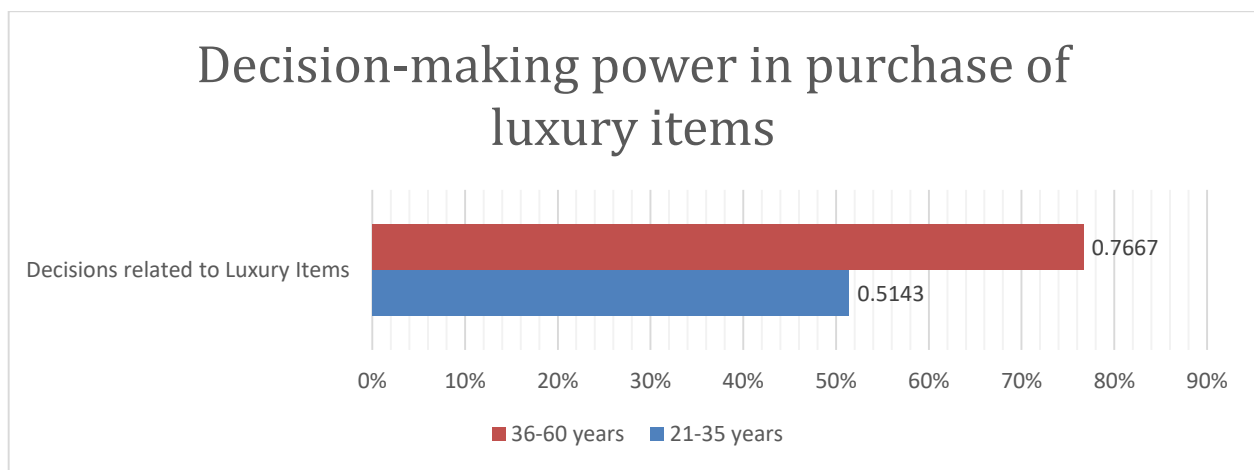


Fig. 7: Comparison of decision-making power of women between age group 21-35 years and 36-60 years related to purchase of luxury goods

Fig. 7 shows that women between the age group 36-60 years more dominantly plays role in decision-making in relation to purchase of luxury items than the women in the age group 21-35 years, as 77% of women in the age group 36-60 years participate in decision-making related to purchase of luxury items whereas, only 51% of women of age group 21-35 years do so.

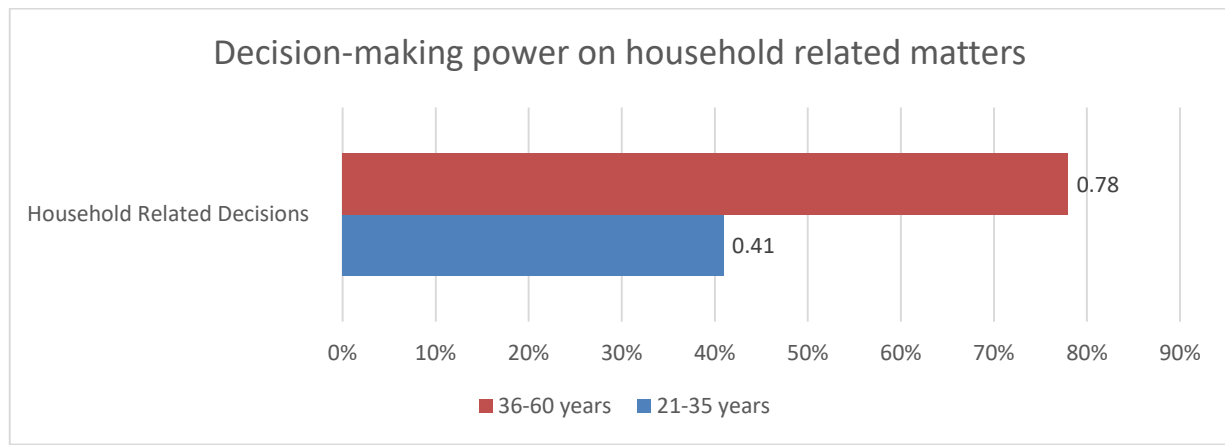


Fig. 8: Comparison of decision-making power of women between age group 21-35 years and 36-60 years in household related matters

Fig. 8 shows that 41% of women in the age group 21-35 years and 78% of women in the age group 36-60 years takes household related decisions. The vast difference shows that older women are superior in making household related.

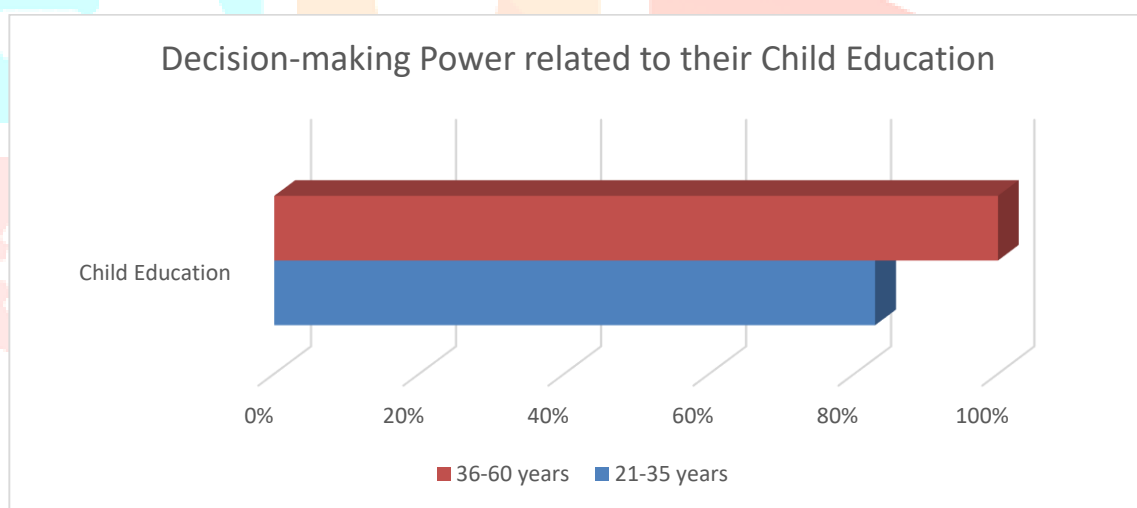


Fig. 9: Comparison of decision-making power of women between age group 21-35 years and 36-60 years in relation to their child's education

Fig. 9 shows that 83% of women in the age group 21-35 years and 100% of women in the age group 36-60 years plays a decisive role in their child's education.

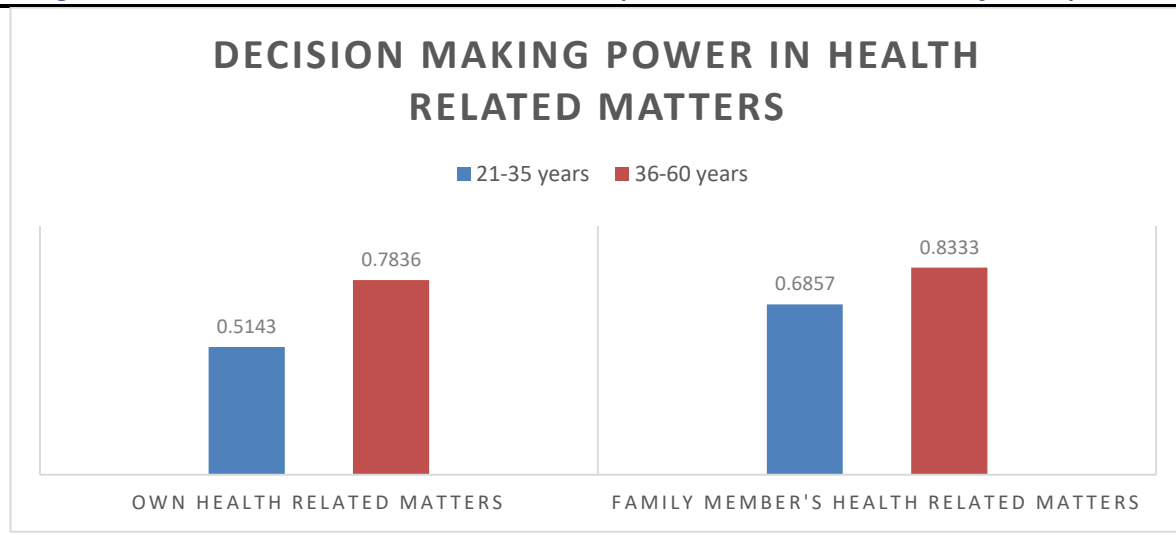


Fig. 10: Comparison of decision-making power of women between age group 21-35 years and 36-60 years in health-related matters

Fig. 10 shows that 51% of women in the age group 21-35 years and 78% of women in the age group 36-60 years takes independent decisions in relation to their health. This shows that almost 50% of women in the age group 21-35 years are dependent on others in relation to their health-related matters. Next, it has been seen that 69% of women in the age group 21-35 years and 83% of women in the age group 36-60 years are consulted in decisions related to health of family members.

VI. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The educational implications of the present study are:

- It can help to educate the members of the society about the importance of women's empowerment in its true essence.
- To understand the fact that women's empowerment is not just about equal rights but the psychological makeup of the people of society.
- To understand how patriarchy is deeply rooted in our society which affects women's empowerment.
- To understand that women's empowerment is not only about women's education, but their free decision-making power.
- It can enable to enhance the educational environment by fostering inclusivity.
- If women are empowered, they can contribute to the well-being of their family and society as a whole.
- Women's autonomy is important because it will create an equitable society in every sphere of life.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is assumed that education is the most powerful tool for women's empowerment. In the present study, women chosen were all graduate or above graduate, but still it has been seen in the study that most educated women have their personal bank accounts, but many of them do not have autonomy to make decisions to spend their money on their own terms, rather it is controlled by their family members. Women who are older in age and those who are employed have much more control over their spending. Even being educated only around 50% of the women from the sample are considered when their family is making financial investments. With the purchase of luxury goods, it has been seen that women who are older than 35 years of age are more involved in such decisions than younger or employed women. This demonstrates that growing age is the primary factor that gives them the power of decision-making in relation to purchase of luxury goods where education plays a secondary role. With regard to decisions in relation to household related matters, a similar trait is observed where women who are older than 35 years have greater autonomy in making decisions. Educated women are much concerned regarding their child's education where a good number of women play a decisive role. Even

being educated, decisions regarding health of young women are mostly controlled by the family which is seen less in women above the age of 35 years.

Only being educated does not lead to women's empowerment. To practice women's empowerment in its true essence, every family needs to stand for the woman of their own house and provide them liberty to practice independent decision-making, as the true meaning of women's empowerment is not only to make women educated but to make independent decisions, think and act independently which ultimately leads to their autonomy, power, self-confidence and increase in status.

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