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HYPOTHESES

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DOES EDUCATED WOMEN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY FROM KOLKATA SLUM AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, it was found that role of women in household decision making was very minimal. This has come through a societal process, which makes us belief that it is the male segment, who is the ultimate decision maker and women segment is the follower. And the situation is more visible among poor segment of the society. Still, There are lot of factors like age of the women member in the household, income of the women member, nature of occupation, non representation of male counter part (e.g. in case of a widow) etc., which may affect the participation of women in this decision making process. In our research, out of these different factors, we have taken level of education as the important criteria in household decision making process and examined whether level of education among women segment, can influence their participation in household decision making or not. In our study the target respondents are from the women segment living in Kolkata Municipal Corporation's slum areas and the primary data has been collected by applying random sampling Method. Here we identify some household decision making variables, like, role of women, in household savings decision, household expenditure decision, availing household healthcare services, children education and family planning decision. We test the hypothesis to find out the association of these above mentioned variables with the level of education by applying Chi-Square Test with the help of statistical software SPSS version 15. Our Analysis shows that, level of education has played significant role in shaping women's decision making regarding household savings, family expenditure, and family planning decision. But it plays no role in availing healthcare services and children's education.

KEYWORDS

Chi-Square, Education, Household Decision Making, Random sampling.

INTRODUCTION

here is a distinction difference between family decision making and household decision making. When an individual belongs to a family, role of individual decision making decreases and family decision making started playing an important role. Many family decisions like purchasing a costly products or services, households take the decisions jointly. They judge the product or service, evaluate it, analyze it and then take the decision, whether to purchase it or not. So, household decision making involves more than one member's contribution to take a meaningful decision for the betterment of the family. The situation which we have studied in Kolkata slum areas, are more visible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different household theories gave different opinions related to family decision making. According to unitary model of household decision, it is assumed that although household constitutes different individuals with different choice factors, but their behavior remains same with respect to household decisions. On the other hand we can say, their individual preferences does not play significant role in family decision making. But this theory lacks the economic welfare aspect of the society. The argument put forward by the collective models (non – unitary) discuss the issue on the basis of the assumption that household members react differently in different household decisions and come to an agreement after a thorough argument with each and every member of the family. Thus, the decision is supposed to be more effective and leads to an optimal utilization of resources (Carlsson, Martinsson, Qin, Sutter (2009).

Normally, it was found that major household decisions, like household savings, household expenditure, family healthcare choice, education of children, family planning decisions are controlled by that individual who controls the income of that household. Sector wise there may be some variations but the things are more visible among poor section of the society where it is controlled by the male member of the household. This variation is found in rural China, where a study concluded that income of female member of the household has a significant positive impact on availing better healthcare facilities and providing good education to their children (Qian – 2008). In another research study, Nava **Ashraf (Spousal Control and Intra-Household Decision Making: An Experimental Study in the Philippines Harvard Business School)** found that household savings and investments typically depend on how decision making power distributed between men and women. It also analyzes the fact financial decisions of the household are greatly affected by the fact that the income is known to spouses or not. If it is not known there is a tendency that they will not disclose it to other partner. Even if, this information has been shared between spouses, it is very much likely that the income earning partner will transfer the income to other partner, normally, women member of the family, who control the savings. In a different study, emphasis was given to pool family income, which gathered from all the earning members of the family and then re-distributes it to maximize the single objective function of that family, in this model whether any particular member controls the household income or not is irrelevant (Lund Berg, Pollak, Wales(December, 1996). Most of the literature related to household decision failed highlight conclusively whether women really playing an influential role and whether educated women participating more in family decisions, which our topic of discussion in this paper.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF KOLKATA SLUM AREAS AND EDUCATION STATUS OF SLUM DWELLERS

According to the Slum Area (Improvement and clearance) Act of 1956, slums are defined as those areas buildings are not fit for human living. In case of Kolkata it was observed that more than 41% of slum people living in these areas for over two generations, 24% migrated from adjacent states and approximately 17% migrated from Bangladesh. If we look at the educational status of the people living in slum areas, the picture is quite dismal. It was found that overall 28.5% male were literate and 14.5% is female. It was also observed in 2001 census that illiteracy level is higher with increase in age of the people living in slum areas. This rate is higher among women segment vis-à-vis male segment. This emphasize on the fact that need for women education is vital and most important for the development of the entire household.¹

¹ The data has been extracted from "Understanding Slums: Case Studies for Global Report on Human Settlements (2003): Urban Slums India: The Case of Kolkata India" by Dr. Nitai Kundu and Census India 2001 data.

EDUCATED WOMEN'S ROLE IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

Women empowerment is a most happening thing all over the world, mostly in the developing countries like India. Autonomy is the ability to take decisions of its own and implement it in the society where the individual is living. Traditionally, it was found that, women segments are the most vulnerable in terms of social injustice, unequal distribution of wealth. They also failed to get equal opportunity in case of education, health, gender discrimination in other aspects. Other developing country's evidence shows that women's decision making role mainly depends on their age and family structure. If the family does not have any male member or the female member is very old, they are considered as the family head. But most of the young women's (both educated as well as uneducated) participation in family decision making is minimal. One of the important parameter of the women empowerment is considered as level of education. In the National Family Health Survey (NFHS – 3), it was found that the in the year 2005 -06, 71% of children age 6 – 17, attended the school, Out of which 77% in urban areas and 69% in rural areas. The same has been depicted in the figure below:

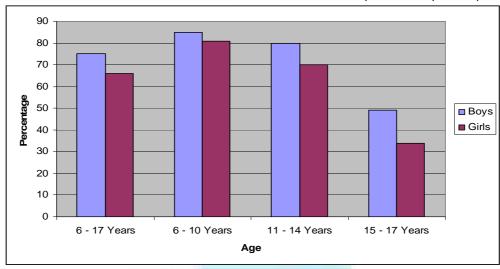


FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS ATTENDING SCHOOL IN THE 2005 - 06, SCHOOL YEAR, NFHS - 3, INDIA

Source: National Family and Health Survey - 3, India

The figure also depicts that, with the increase in age, the level of education decreases more among girls as compared to boys. So, gender discrimination is still present in India and it certainly affects their role in various decisions making. This is because we do consider that education can play an influential role in household decision making. According to the survey both demand side as well as supply side factors ensures the proper education. Factors like accessibility, availability and quality of good schools can be termed as supply side factors. On the other hand education of household members, wealth can be termed as demand side factors. In case of demand side factors, it was found that family with educated members shown more interest to educate their children.

Thus it can be concluded that greater investment in women education can increase the labor force participation and bring equality in the household. It also help to improve the overall decision making, as traditionally it was found that women are more sensitive and caring towards their own household, so better education will improve their decision making ability and hence improve their living condition.

Given the above analysis, we will try to focus on the issue whether women education will play any important role, considering some of the household decision making variables.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

There are lot of factors like age of the women member in the household, income of the women member, nature of occupation, non representation of male counter part (e.g. in case of a widow) etc., which may affect the participation of women in this decision making process. In our research, out of these different factors, we have taken level of education as the important criteria in household decision making process. That is, we want to see, whether level of education among women segment, can influence their participation in household decision making. And the variables that we have considered here are as follows:

- Role of educated women in family planning
- Role of educated women in family savings
- Role of educated women in family expenditure
- Role of educated women in family health care
- Role of educated women in children's education

DATA CHARACTERISTICS

This study was based on primary data, which was undertaken from the female respondents, living in Kolkata slum areas under Kolkata Municipal Corporation and the sample size was 100. A random sampling method was used to select the respondents. Independent variable for this study was the literacy rate of women which was categorized into two: Literate and Illiterate. The dependent variables are the characteristics of family decision making variables which was measured in terms of five elements: i) Responsibility in family planning, ii) Role in savings, iii) Role in volume of expenditure, iv) Decision in health care and v) Decision in children education. The first four dependent variables are categorized into three: High, low and No Role, whereas the last one was categorized into two: yes and no.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To understand the role of women education in family decision making process we have used several statistical and analytical tools. At first we have used the Cross-Tabulations and Chi-square test for independence of attributes to explore the degree of association between the educational status of women and its role in different decision making progress in family such as taking decision in family planning, savings, Expenditure and Healthcare. We have also used Multinomial logistic regression and binary logistic regression to predict the presence or absence of a characteristic or outcome based on values of a set of predictor variables. Statistical Analysis was conducted by using SPSS Version 15.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

CHI-SQUARE TEST OF INDEPENDENCE

The Chi-Square Test is one of the Non-Parametric Tests where we do not take the assumption of normality of the population distribution.

The chi square test of independence is a test of whether there is a relationship between subjects' attributes on one variable and their attributes on another. As its name suggests, the test is based on the chi square distribution.

Here, H_0 : There is no dependency between the two attributes

Against H1: Dependency exists between the two attributes, that is, two attributes are related.

The Chi-Square Test-Statistic is given by:

 $\lambda^2 = \sum (O-E)^2/E \sim \lambda^2$ with (r-1) (c-1) Degree of Freedom.

Where: O: Observed Frequency

- E: Expected Frequency
- r: No. of Rows

c: No. of Columns
Then we reject or accept the Null Hypothesis based on the Critical value of the Chi-Square with the corresponding degrees of freedom.

RESULTS OF CHI-SQUARE TEST OF INDEPENDENCE

In this study we calculated four Chi-Square tests to measure the degree of association between women's education, which is characterized by two ordinal values (0: Illiterate, 1: Literate) and the dependent variables which is characterized by three dummy variables (1: high, 2: low and 3: No role).

A) CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND FAMILY PLANNING

TABLE 1

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.980	2	.007
Likelihood Ratio	10.234	2	.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.605	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	100		

From the above table of Chi-square tests we see that, the calculated value of Pearson Chi-square is 9.98 and the P-value of Chi-Square is 0.007 (<0.05) is significant. It indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis and we conclude that, association exists between women's education level and level of family planning.

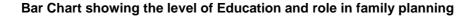
Now to examine the whether the literate women are more involved in decision making in family planning we have to look at the following Cross-Tabulation Table of Education and Family Planning.

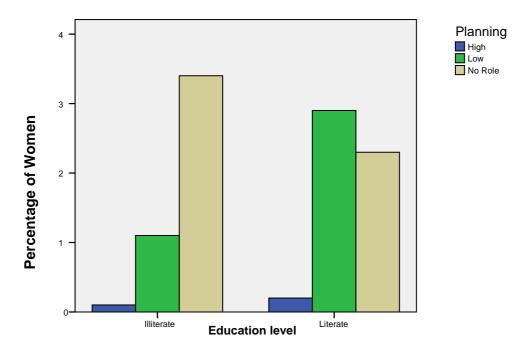
TABLE 2: CROSS-TABULATION TABLE OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

			Planning			Total
			High	Low	No Role	
Education	Illiterate	Count	1	11	34	46
		Expected Count	1.4	18.4	26.2	46.0
		% within Ed	2.2%	23.9%	73.9%	100.0%
		% within Planning	33.3%	27.5%	59.6%	46.0%
		% of Total	1.0%	11.0%	34.0%	46.0%
	Literate Count		2	29	23	54
		Expected Count	1.6	21.6	30.8	54.0
		% within Ed	3.7%	53.7%	42.6%	100.0%
		% within Planning	66.7%	72.5%	40.4%	54.0%
		% of Total	2.0%	29.0%	23.0%	54.0%
Total		Count	3	40	57	100
		Expected Count	3.0	40.0	57.0	100.0
		% within Ed	3.0%	40.0%	57.0%	100.0%
		% within Planning	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	3.0%	40.0%	57.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: Primary data Survey from KMC Slum Areas

TABLE 3





From the Cross-Tabulation Table and the above graph interestingly we observe that, Women with education have a higher role in taking decision in family planning compared to the women with no education. Literate women have a higher participation rate in high (3.7%) and in low (53.7%) compared to 2.2% and 23.9% respectively for Illiterate women. In contrast 42.6% illiterate women have no role in family planning compared to 73.9% of literate women.

B) CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND FAMILY SAVINGS:

TABLE 4
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.725	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	20.127	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.535	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

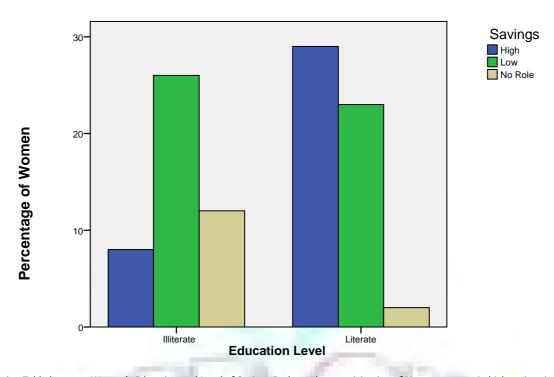
The critical P-value of Pearson Chi-Square is 0.000 which is <0.05, i.e. the P-value is very highly significant. We can reject the Null Hypothesis and we say that, the level of Women Education and Level of Savings are dependent to each other.

CROSS TABULATION TABLE OF LEVEL OF SAVINGS AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

ГΔ	RI	F	E

			Savings			Total
			High	Low	No Role	
Education	Illiterate	Count	8	26	12	46
		Expected Count	17.0	22.5	6.4	46.0
		% within Ed	17.4%	56.5%	26.1%	100.0%
		% within Savings	21.6%	53.1%	85.7%	46.0%
		% of Total	8.0%	26.0%	12.0%	46.0%
	Literate	Count	29	23	2	54
		Expected Count	20.0	26.5	7.6	54.0
		% within Ed	53.7%	42.6%	3.7%	100.0%
		% within Savings	78.4%	46.9%	14.3%	54.0%
		% of Total	29.0%	23.0%	2.0%	54.0%
Total		Count	37	49	14	100
		Expected Count	37.0	49.0	14.0	100.0
		% within Ed	37.0%	49.0%	14.0%	100.0%
		% within Savings	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	37.0%	49.0%	14.0%	100.0%

Bar Chart showing the level of Education and level of savings



The Cross-Tabulation Table between Women's Education and Level of Savings Explores that, participation of Literate women in high savings is 53.7% as against to 17.4% for Illiterate Women. Percentage of Illiterate Women in taking 'no role' in family savings is higher (26.1%) than that of Literate Women (3.7%). The Above Graph also shows the same picture of the Cross-Tabulation Table.

C) CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND LEVEL OF FAMILY EXPENDITURE:

TABLE 6

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.445	2	.024
Likelihood Ratio	7.636	2	.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.803	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	100		

The P-values of Pearson Chi-square statistic between women's education and level of savings and women's education and level of family expenditure are 0.000 and 0.024, i.e. both are less that 0.05. It also indicates the rejection of the Null Hypothesis and the dependency between women's education and level of savings and women's education and level of family expenditure.

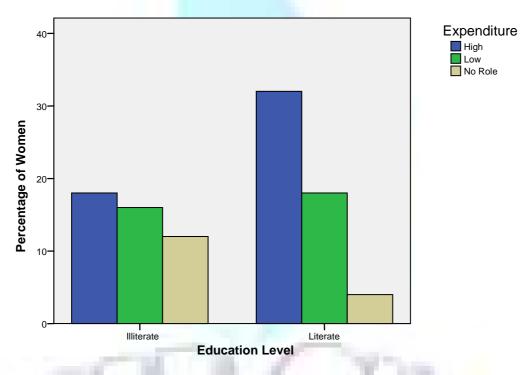
CROSS TABULATION TABLE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND LEVEL OF FAMILY EXPENDITURE

TABLE 7

		TABLE	Expendit	ure		Total
			High	Low	No Role	
Education	Illiterate	Count	18	16	12	46
		Expected Count	23.0	15.6	7.4	46.0
		% within Ed	39.1%	34.8%	26.1%	100.0%
		% within Expenditure	36.0%	47.1%	75.0%	46.0%
		% of Total	18.0%	16.0%	12.0%	46.0%
	Literate	Count	32	18	4	54
		Expected Count	27.0	18.4	8.6	54.0
		% within Ed	59.3%	33.3%	7.4%	100.0%
		% within Expenditure	64.0%	52.9%	25.0%	54.0%
		% of Total	32.0%	18.0%	4.0%	54.0%
Total		Count	50	34	16	100
		Expected Count	50.0	34.0	16.0	100.0
		% within Ed	50.0%	34.0%	16.0%	100.0%
		% within Expenditure	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	50.0%	34.0%	16.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: Primary data Survey from KMC Slum Areas

Bar Chart showing the Level of Women's Education and Level of Expenditure



When we consider the level of Expenditure as one of the characteristics of family decision making variable, literate women have 59.3% participation rate, when level of family expenditure was 'High', which is lower (39.1%) for Illiterate Women. 26.1% Illiterate Women have no role to take decisions regarding level of family expenditure and only 7.4% literate women have no role in making the level of family Expenditure.

D) CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND HEALTHCARE DECISION

TABLE 8

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.060	2	.357
Likelihood Ratio	2.060	2	.357
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.502	1	.220
N of Valid Cases	100		

From the above table of Chi-Square tests we observe that the P-value of Pearson Chi-Square (2.06) is 0.357 (i.e. P>0.05). This suggested no existence of a relationship between education of women and healthcare decision hence accepting the Null Hypothesis.

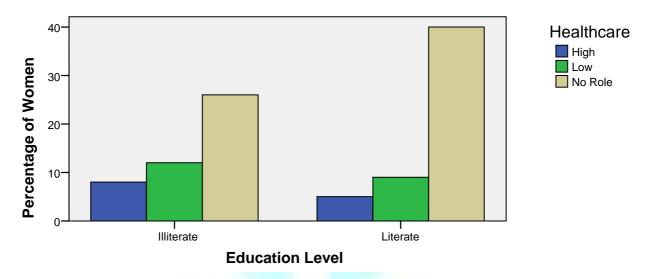
CROSS TABULATION TABLE BETWEEN WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE DECISION

TABLE 9

			Healthca	ire		Total
			High	Low	No Role	
Education Illiterate Count		Count	8	12	26	46
		Expected Count	6.0	9.7	30.4	46.0
		% within Ed	17.4%	26.1%	56.5%	100.0%
		% within Healthcare	61.5%	57.1%	39.4%	46.0%
		% of Total	8.0%	12.0%	26.0%	46.0%
	Literate	Count	5	9	40	54
Exp		Expected Count	7.0	11.3	35.6	54.0
		% within Ed	9.3%	16.7%	74.1%	100.0%
9		% within Healthcare	38.5%	42.9%	60.6%	54.0%
		% of Total	5.0%	9.0%	40.0%	54.0%
Total		Count	13	21	66	100
		Expected Count	13.0	21.0	66.0	100.0
		% within Ed	13.0%	21.0%	66.0%	100.0%
		% within Healthcare	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	13.0%	21.0%	66.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: Primary data Survey from KMC Slum Area

Bar Chart showing women's Education and Decision in Healthcare



Out of all the respondents most of the respondents (both literate and Illiterate) have no role in Healthcare Decision, because higher percentage figure falls in this category. Illiterate Women have greater role in 'high role' in Healthcare Decision with the percentage of 17.4% compared to the Literate Person (9.3%).

D) CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND HEALTHCARE DECISION

TABLE 10: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.620	1	.057
Likelihood Ratio	3.632	1	.057
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.583	1	.058

The P-value of Chi-Square (=0.057) is grater than 0.05 implies the acceptance of Chi-Square Statistic at 5% level of significance. That is there is no dependency between the Level of Women education and its role in children education.

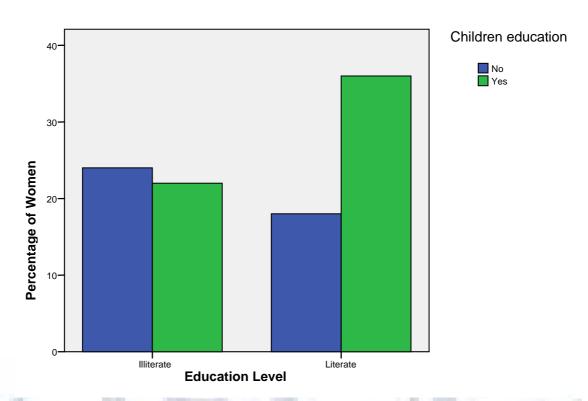
CROSS TABULATION TABLE OF LEVEL OF WOMEN EDUCATION AND ROLE IN CHILDREN EDUCATION

TABLE 11

			Children education		Total
			No	Yes	
Education	Illiterate	Count	24	22	46
		Expected Count	19.3	26.7	46.0
		% within Ed	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
		% within Children education	57.1%	37.9%	46.0%
		% of Total	24.0%	22.0%	46.0%
	Literate	Count	18	36	54
		Expected Count	22.7	31.3	54.0
		% within Ed	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Children education	42.9%	62.1%	54.0%
		% of Total	18.0%	36.0%	54.0%
Total		Count	42	58	100
		Expected Count	42.0	58.0	100.0
		% within Ed	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%
		% within Children education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: Primary data Survey from KMC Slum Area

Bar Chart showing the Level of Women Education and Role in Children Education



The Literate women are more likely to take decisions in children education with the percentage of 66.7% compared to the Illiterate women with the percentage of 47.8%. In contrast 33.3% literate women have no role in taking decisions in children Education and 52.2% Illiterate Women have no role in children education.

CONCLUSION

The women's involvement in taking part in decision making in the family is insignificant, but it is one of the important aspect of women's empowerment. Different factors (like, age, Occupation, Education, income etc) affect the women's involvement in the decision making progress in the household. The present study clearly indicates that, the level of Education is strongly associated with the decision making variable such as family planning, level of savings and level of expenditure, whereas it has no role in case of health care and Children Education, i.e. Educated women are more likely to take part in decision making. So, Education always empowers a woman and has a positive impact on decision making in the family. Emphasis should be given to increase the Women empowerment and reduce the gender inequality among men and women and to do that; some policy initiative should be taken for those women, who did not attend the school. As a nutshell, we say that, the women from the poorer class have the least decision-making power, which suggests involving them in education to lessen the Dependency on the male member in the family and to increase the self-confidence. The major problems in the Kolkata slum areas, where the research has been conducted is the low level of educational facilities. When we studied it was found that, many of them willing to go to school, but availability of schools were not there.

It might be interesting for future studies to look at the effect of other elements on family Decision making variables, for example the effect of nature of occupation on family decision making, or the effect of age and income on family decision making.

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