

# Fisher women with the decision making in household task, their children education and marriage

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**ABSTRACT :** Fisheries as an occupation includes capture, culture, handling and processing of fish, marketing, distribution, accounting and management. Women play a key role in the development of fisheries sector in addition to their role as sole household managers in most fisher families. Although the involvement of women is limited in capture fisheries, their supportive role in active fishing has increased manifold with the advent of mechanization and enhancement of multi-day fishing in marine fisheries. Matasya-Mahilavadi (fisherwomen's Forum), at South Chellanam, a fishing village in cochin, is an example of how rural women can be motivated to participate in planning and implementing their own development options. Under Indian social system, decision making is said to be a men's affair, however, many a times women are consulted by men before making any important decision. Many a times farm women are also required to take certain decision independently. It was therefore, felt necessary to determine the participation of fisher women in making decision about household task, their children education and marriage.

**KEY WORDS :** Fisherwomen, Home expenditure, Marriage, Education, Decision

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## INTRODUCTION

Women play a crucial role in the economic welfare of the family. Women perform different tasks depending on their Socio-economic structure, number of people in the family, the nature of professions they are involved in and many other factors (Reddy and Reddy, 1987). Decisions made in home management ranges in importance from major once in a lifetime. For example, choice of a marriage partner is indeed an important decision and not to be taken lightly, but it is only in fairy tales that they live happily ever after (Knoll, 1973). In the upper income groups, the type of home and the duties of women may vary greatly in the conservative or traditional home and in the modern home (Megha, 1990). The authoritarian character of the traditional joint family entails decision making powers

concentrated, in the position of the eldest male members (Rao, 1982). Women are traditionally less involved in decision making at all levels. Their important role is not recognised and, therefore, still not accepted in decision-making. The share of women in community decision-making structure is still very low and their participation is mostly stressed by political parties, more as elements of their own publicity and proof of democratisation, than as a real interest and need. For example, only 3 per cent women are members of political parties. They are also less active in professional associations and bodies (Slovenia, 1998). Without the active participation of women and incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality development and peace cannot be achieved (Karl, 1995).

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Women are considered sociologically, physically and psychologically a weaker section and hence, they have been the object of exploitation in spite of the fact that there are several laws passed for their welfare in our country. They are denied to participate in decision-making while the entire household activities, agricultural operations and fisheries activities are done by them. Women are considered to be pioneers in all sorts of development, as they play a key role in shaping the character of young generation whom we call as the future of the nation. Women contribute nearly equally along with men, in the economic development of our country. The contribution of a woman in agriculture is estimated to be about 50 to 60 per cent.

Women play a valuable role in the development of the household, society and hence country. Mostly her contributions were not quantified (and can't be justifiably valued also by any means) and also not recognized. The role of women in the economy and their contribution therefore, has been receiving attention in a much lesser pace than what they deserve. Presently, women continue to excel men in many fields. For the educated employed women there has been some relief by virtue of their position in society, but who cares much about women who are illiterates, living in rural and coastal areas and strive hard to earn their bread? The answer will be a silent no.

The need to study on the focus was how far women have developed in the rural areas, how far they have advance in taking part in different matters of fisheries activities and what were the changing impact on status of rural women towards the society and their family members. To answer all these queries, an extensive study amongst the fisherwomen was necessary. With a view to this, the present study was undertaken among the women. The participation in decision-making certainly affects their efficiency in work and in the development of fishery enterprise.

According to Mumtaz and Aysha (1982) there are various family matters on which men generally take decisions. Women are quite often not even consulted. This is because of the feeling among men that women are incapable of expressing their decisions, due to illiteracy among them. Singh (1992) conducted a study on modernity and decision making in upbringing of the children, and the study revealed that 69.5 per cent of the respondents of all categories expressed that both husband and wife should take decisions on this matter. No respondent perceived that wife only should be a decision maker in giving education to the children. Malkit (1988) conducted study on decision making power among women, related to social obligations, which include decisions regarding age at marriage, mate selection, dowry. Expenditure on marriage and education of children also showed relatively high role of women.

It is hoped that the present research study would reveal some of the facts about the level of participation of fisher women of fisheries operation activities and the extent of their

decision making.

## METHODOLOGY

A researcher was studying in Junagadh, therefore, Junagadh district in Gujarat was chosen for this study. Ten villages were purposively selected from fourteen talukas. For this study 120 fisher women were selected randomly from those 6 villages *i.e.* 20 fisher women from each village. To know the various characteristics of fisher women results was measured with using well structure schedule. Measurements of participation of fisher women in decision making related to house hold task and their children education and marriage done by interview schedule.

The respondents were asked about their participation in decision-making related to farm operations, home works and children's welfare. Decision-making pattern were grouped into five groups, *viz.*, husband alone, wife alone, husband and wife jointly, friends and neighbours, and relatives taking decisions.

Sr. No.	Decision-making	Score
1.	Husband alone	5
2.	Wife alone	4
3.	Husband and wife jointly	3
4.	Friends and neighbours	2
5.	Relatives	1

The scores were assigned to decision-making is given in Table A.

On the basis of total decision making score of individual fisher women, decision making index (DMI) was calculated by using the following formula:

$$DMI = \frac{\text{Decision making score of the fisher women}}{\text{Maximum possible decision making score}} \times 100$$

## OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

The experimental findings obtained from the present study have been discussed in following heads:

### **Decision making pattern with respect to home expenditure :**

The data in respect of participation of the fisher women in decision making about home expenditure are presented in Table 1.

The data from Table 1 indicate that more than half (55.00 %) of the fisher women took joint decision with about husband for the amount to be spent on food material; followed by 26.67 per cent of them did not participate about amount to be spent on food material. However, 18.33 per cent of them participated in taking independent decision in this regard. While none of them were concern relatives and friends for taking decision about amount to be spent on food material.

The data further shows that majority (63.33 %) of the fisher women participated in taking independent decision about place purchasing of food material, followed by joint decision with husband (18.33 %) and 05.83 per cent of them did not participate in taking decision about such activities. While, 08.33 per cent and 04.18 per cent of them concerned neighbors/friends and relatives in taking decision about place of purchasing food material.

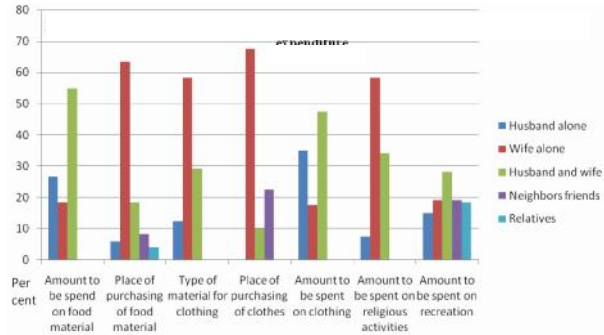


Fig. 1: Participation of the fisher women in decision making pattern with respect to home expenditure

It can also be observed that majority (58.33 %) and (67.50 %) of the fisher women participated in taking independent decision about type of material for clothing and place of purchasing clothes, respectively. Whereas, 29.17 per cent and 10.00 per cent of them took joint decision for type of material for clothing and place of purchasing clothes, respectively.

Moreover, in case of amount to be spent on clothing data stated that majority (47.50 %) of the fisher women took joint decision with husband regarding amount to be spend on clothing followed by husband alone (35.00 %). Whereas 17.50 per cent of them took independent decision in this regards.

While none of them were consulted relatives and friends for taking decision about amount to be spent on clothing.

Further it also shows that majority (58.33%) of the fisher women took independent decision about amount to be spend on religious activities followed by joint decision with husband (34.17%) and very few (07.50 %) of them were not participated for taking decision about amount to be spend on religious activities.

**Decision making in children education :**

The data in respect of participation of the fisher women in decision making in children education are presented in Table 2.

It can be observed from the data in Table 2 that majority (45.83 %) and (50.83 %) of the fisher women took joint decision with husband regarding health and hygiene practices and sending children to school, respectively. While nearly equal (36.67%) of the fisher women take independent decision related to health and hygiene practices and sending children to

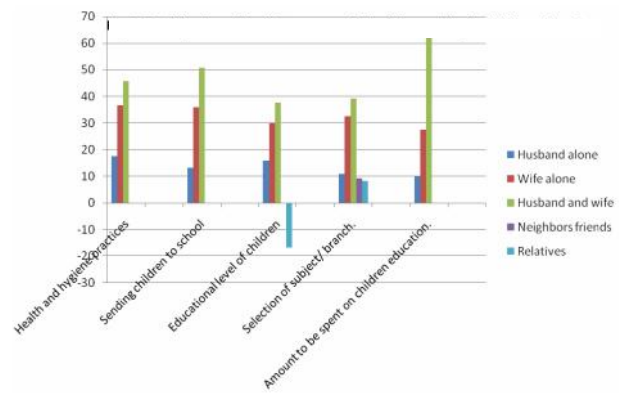


Fig. 2: participation of the fisher women in decision making in children education

Sr. No.	Item	Husband alone	Wife alone	Husband and wife	Neighbors friends	Relatives
1.	Amount to be spend on food material	32 (26.67)	22(18.33)	66(55.00)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
2.	Place of purchasing of food material	7(05.83)	76(63.33)	22(18.33)	10(08.33)	05(04.18)
3.	Type of material for clothing	15(12.50)	70(58.33)	35(29.17)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
4.	Place of purchasing of clothes	00(00.00)	81(67.50)	12(10.00)	27(22.50)	00(00.00)
5.	Amount to be spent on clothing	42(35.00)	21(17.50)	57(47.50)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
6.	Amount to be spent on religious activities	9(07.50)	70(58.33)	41(34.17)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
7.	Amount to be spent on recreation	18(15.00)	23(19.17)	34(28.33)	23(19.17)	22(18.33)

Sr. No.	Item	Husband alone	Wife alone	Husband and wife	Neighbors friends	Relatives
1.	Health and hygiene practices	21(17.50)	44(36.67)	55(45.83)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
2.	Sending children to school	16(13.33)	43(35.84)	61(50.83)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
3.	Educational level of children	19(15.83)	36(30.00)	45(37.50)	00(00.00)	20(16.67)
4.	Selection of subject/ branch.	13(10.83)	39(32.50)	47(39.17)	11(09.17)	10(08.33)
5.	Amount to be spent on children education.	12(10.00)	33(27.50)	75(62.50)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)

school. Whereas (17.50%) and (13.33%) of them not participated for taking decision related to health and hygiene practices and sending children to school, respectively.

Further it also shows that majority (37.50 %) and (39.17%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding educational level of children and selection of subject / branch, respectively. While nearly equal (30.00 %) of the fisher women take independent decision related to educational level of children and selection of subject / branch. Whereas (15.83 %) and (10.83 %) of them not participated for taking decision related to educational level of children and selection of subject / branch, respectively.

Table 2 indicates that majority (62.50%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding amount to be spent on children education followed by independent (27.50%) and not participated (10.00%) in this regards. While none of them were consulted relatives and friends for taking decision about amount to be spend on children education.

### Decision making in marriage of children :

The data in respect of participation of the fisher women in decision making in marriage of children are presented in Table 3.

It can be observed from the data in Table 3 that majority (46.67 %) and (41.67 %) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding desired marriage age for boys and girls and selection of the match, respectively. While 20.00 per cent and 35.83 per cent of the fisher women take independent decision related to desired marriage age for boys and girls and selection of the match, respectively. Very few (06.67%) and (05.00 %) of them not participated for taking decision related to desired marriage age for boys and girls and selection of the match, respectively.

Table 3 indicates that majority (89.17%) of the fisher women took independent decision regarding amount to be spent on marriage followed by joint (05.83%) and not participated (05.00%) in this regards. While none of them were concern relatives and friends for taking decision about amount to be spend on marriage.

Table 3 indicates that majority (85.00%) of the fisher women took joint decision with husband regarding form of marriage followed by independent (09.17%) and not participated (05.83 %) in this regards. While, none of them were consulted relatives and friends for taking decision about

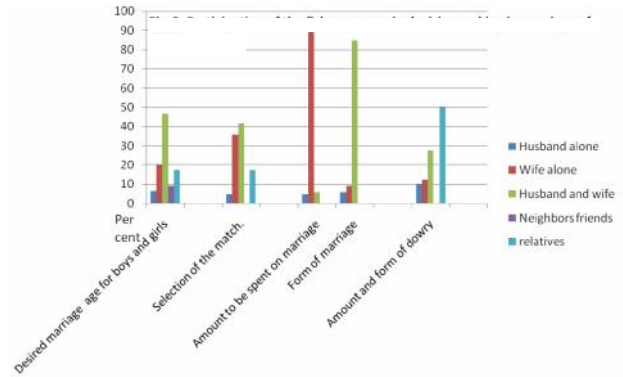


Fig. 3: participation of the fisher women in decision making in marriage of children

form of marriage.

Hedman *et al.* (1996) found that the family has the challenging task of educating and socialising children.

Table 3 shows that majority (50.00 %) of the fisher women take joint decision with relatives regarding amount and form of dowry followed by joint decision with husband (27.50 % ), independent decision (12.50 %) and not participated (10.00 %) in this regards.

In the present study an attempt was also made to categories the fisher women on the basis of decision making index to know their level of participation in decision making. The data in this respect are presented in Table 4.

It can be noticed from the data in the Table 4 that majority (80.00%) of the fisher women had medium participation in decision making. However, 9.16 per cent and 10.84 per cent of the fisher women had low and high participation in making decision. This clearly shows that most of the fisher women had medium level of participation in making decision. The probable reason might be that Indian society is a male

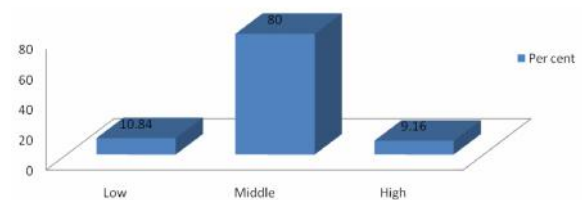


Fig.4: Fisher women according to their overall decision making

Sr. No.	Item	Husband alone	Wife alone	Husband and wife	Neighbors friends	Relatives
1.	Desired marriage age for boys and girls	08(06.67)	24(20.00)	56(46.67)	11(09.16)	21(17.50)
2.	Selection of the match.	06(05.00)	43(35.83)	50(41.67)	00(00.00)	21(17.50)
3.	Amount to be spent on marriage	06(05.00)	107(89.17)	07(05.83)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
4.	Form of marriage	07(05.83)	11(09.17)	102(85.00)	00(00.00)	00(00.00)
5.	Amount and form of dowry	12(10.00)	15(12.50)	33(27.50)	00(00.00)	60(50.00)

**Table 4 : Distribution of the fisher women according to their overall decision making (n=120)**

Sr. No.	Overall decision making	Number	Per cent
1.	Low (less than 56.28 score)	13	10.84
2.	Medium (between 56.28 to 80.36 score)	96	80.00
3.	High (above 80.36 score)	11	9.16
Total		120	100.00
Mean= 68.33		S.D. = 12.04	

dominant society where women are not fully independent to take decision.

### Conclusion:

Decision making pattern with respect to home expenditure

- More than half (55.00 %) the fisher women took joint decision with husband amount to be spent on food material.
- Majority (63.33%) of the fisher women participated in taking independent decision about place of purchase of food material.
- Majority (58.33%) and (67.50%) of the fisher women participated in taking independent decision about type of material for clothing and place of purchase of clothes, respectively.
- Majority (47.50%) of the fisher women took joint decision with husband regarding amount to be spend on clothing.
- Majority (58.33%) of the fisher women were took independent decision about amount to be spent on religious activities.

### Decision making in children education :

- Majority (45.83%) and (50.83%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding health and hygiene practices and sending children to school, respectively.
- Majority (37.50 %) and (39.17%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding educational level of children and selection of subject / branch, respectively.
- Majority (62.50%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding amount to be spend on children education.

### Decision making in marriage of children :

- Majority (46.67%) and (41.67%) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding desired marriage age for boys and girls and selection of the

match, respectively.

- Majority (89.17%) of the fisher women take independent decision regarding amount to be spend on marriage.
- Majority (85.00 %) of the fisher women take joint decision with husband regarding form of marriage.
- Majority (50.00 %) of the fisher women take joint decision with relatives regarding amount and form of dowry.
- Majority (57.50 %) of the fisher women had medium participation in decision making. However, 23.33 per cent and 19.17 per cent of the fisher women had high and low participation in making decision.

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