



## A STUDY OF URBAN WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH DECISIONS WITHIN SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PAKISTAN

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### **Abstract**

The present study examines women's decision-making power in their reproductive health matters. Women's reproductive health decisions comprise various aspects, including decision to conceive, contraceptive use, family planning and maternal health care (delivery and pre- & post-natal care). A qualitative research method was used to explore attitudes and hurdles caused by family and societal pressure and perceptions about socio-cultural and religious norms and beliefs. The interviews consisted of semi-structured questions. For the present research, a small sample, eight working and non-working women were selected for semi-structured interviews by using self-constructed questions composed of eighteen items. Approximately sixteen sub-themes emerged after analyzing transcripts, which gave rise to four major themes, i.e. 1) *Power in economic, negotiation & mobility domains*; 2) *decision making & reproductive health care*; 3) *hurdles due to family influence*; and 4) *socio-cultural & religious factors*. The present research revealed that in urban society, despite their higher socio-economic status, women's decision-making power in reproductive health is still suppressed by socio-cultural and religious factors prevailing all over the country.. The study explored reasons behind suppression of their reproductive health decisions and perceptions about existing socio-cultural and religious factors supporting oppression of women in urban society.

### **Keywords**

Decision-making power, reproductive health, contraceptive use, family planning, maternal health care, socio-cultural and religious factor