

Study of Measure of Political Empowerment and its Impact on Women Empowerment in India

*¹Smita Shankerlal Raval & ²Dr. Malde Menand Odedara

¹PhD. Research Scholar, Sociology, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat (India)

²PhD. Guide, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat (India)

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*Corresponding Author

Email: srjoshi69[at]yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

In social work, empowerment forms a practical approach of resource-oriented intervention. In the field of citizenship education and democratic education, empowerment is seen as a tool to increase the responsibility of the citizen. Empowerment is a key concept in the discourse on promoting civic engagement. Women's political participation has been considered a major measure of women's empowerment. Globally, through histories of the world we have records of very few regents, sovereigns, and active agents in nobility who were women. Champions of liberalism like John Stuart Mill had advocated women's participation in governance by the struggle for women suffrage in the self avowed liberal west very well illustrates the entrenched nature of Patriarchical resistance to women's empowerment. Present paper refracts situation of political empowerment of women in India.

INTRODUCTION

In the last century, more women heads of state could be counted in Asia as compared to Europe and the struggle for women suffrage in India was physically less violent but this is not reflective of greater acceptance of women in decision-making in public spaces. To measure women's empowerment now GEM takes 3 indicators, women's participation in economic, political and professional activities. Within political power what is measured is mainly women in parliament, judiciary or in local bodies.

Women's empowerment or disempowerment has to be seen in all areas physical, socio cultural religious, political legal and economic. It is also now often pointed out that women's empowerment must be seen as a process where in we must consider women's awareness consciousness, choices with live alternatives, resources at their disposal, voice, agency and participation. These are all related to enhancement of women's capabilities and decisions they take individually or collectively for themselves. Several programmes in India like Mahila Samakhya have accepted the process nature of women's empowerment. The understandings of empowerment in PACS has also been similar but planning of activity, time and budgets to ensure the empowering processes need greater scrutiny.

Women's education, livelihood and personal exercise of agency have to be systematically promoted. The 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution have impacted nearly 600 million Indian people in 500,000 villages. Interestingly the percentage of women at various levels of political activity have risen from 4-5% to 25-40%. Both nationally as well as at the state and local levels women in elected bodies have been very few and even those who have been elected when observed from closer quarters present a complex picture. The money and muscle associated with the electoral process inhibits a large number of women from joining politics. Restriction on mobility, lack of control over resources and low literacy rates are well known obstacles but recent panchayat elections have

evidenced a phenomenally large number of elected leaders much beyond reserved 33% seats. Areas where PACS, Mahila Samakhya or other CSO initiatives are working women are more articulate and vigilant and have used opportunity to improve ICPS centres, primary schools sanitation and have also publicly dealt with issues of misbehaviour with girls, violence and alcoholism as well as sensitive issues of widowed women dressing in coloured clothes.

Women are increasingly demanding not only basis but also land literacy and fuller longer trainings instead of being short changed through orientations. It is obvious that a more active Gram Sabha which is sensitive to women's specific issues is a much desired goal as a woman sarpanch or BDC member in a gender hostile panchayat may not be able to accomplish and sustain much for the benefit of women or the village community at large. More women in grass root organizations; better law and order will ensure better engagement of women in decision-making. More than one million women have now entered political life in India and 43% of the seats are occupied by them district, province and national level. Women's participation is understood in terms of voter turn out, number of women contestants apart from the number of those who succeeded in winning. In an interesting study sponsored by State Planning Commission in U.P. 20015 about 45% women both rural and urban reported being influenced by men of the family (father/husband) in decision-making in the exercise of their ballot. 9 per cent reported external influence while 46 per cent exercise independent choice. However, the battle to make the PRI's affective instruments of local rural governance is a battle, a struggle of the grass roots, population (women and men) against administrative apathy and listlessness, against ignorance and low awareness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Yogendrarajah & Rathirane, (2013) Women empowerment is giving legitimate power or authority to perform the tasks. If women were empowered they would be

able to participate in the planning and decision making task and contribute to the development programmes and activities individually. This study focuses on women empowerment through decision making authority at household level. The male headed household in Sri Lanka is the norm, and it is not accepted culturally to be female headed household. The concept of the head of the husband is not defined in anywhere. Further in the census record, ration card and other family survey reports also the name of the male has been given under head of the household and it is obviously stated that he is the breadwinner and the chief decision maker. In some cases where the wife is the breadwinner but the husband is the decision maker. The prime objective of this study is to examine the women empowerment through decision making power at household level. It has been assumed that there is a positive relationship between women empowerment and decision making at household level. The study recognizes that there is a strong relationship between decision making authority and women empowerment. However women are not allowed to take the decisions at household level due to the cultural norms and other personal issues.

Kabutiei (2012) Women's participation in micro-finance activities as well as women's groups, generally, puts them in precarious positions where they are able to access credit. With access to great increasing, the women get empowered economically to the extent that they are able to make decisions on the use of the credit thus building on their capacities to make decisions at higher echelons such as on reproductive issues, cultural issues in the society as well as socio-economic spheres of their life. This leads to a positive relationship between women's access to credit and the decision-making roles they play. A significant relationship exists between women's mobility in public space and their decision-making roles. When women have the freedom to move interact with each other and the public, they get opportunities to learn from each other through cross-cultural and cross-boundary platforms. Such spaces empower women to the extent that they become more knowledgeable about the roles they need to play both at the family level and in the larger society, albeit getting influenced by those who already have such capacities.

Mohanty et. al. (2013) Decision-making capacity of a woman is measured as one of the principal components of empowerment, and decision regarding savings of income is considered as capacity building. The present study addresses the rural Odisha women's decision making and capacity building through participation in Self Help Groups and microenterprises. The research has been carried out in the Banki block and Tigriria block of Cuttack District, Odisha, India. Field data were collected through survey cum interview and focus group discussion from rural women based on their working pattern, socio-economic condition, family background, education level, and size of the family. Statistical analyses including percentage, average, mean, standard deviation and Chi square test were applied to draw meaningful interpretation of the collected information. The results reveal that the range of economic activities led by the microenterprises helped the rural Odisha women to earn income of their own. The economic decision-making has been enhanced with mobilization of women in organized collectives as SHGs and their participation in microenterprises. Capacity building of women in terms of saving some income and spent on their personal items without any hesitation is also encouraging.

Fantahun et al. (2012) This study gave equal weight to all components of household decision making and social capital

variables as there was no indication in the FGDs of differences in the importance of the components. If there are differences in the importance of the components, our findings may have underestimated or overestimated the association to a certain extent and this is another limitation that might be addressed by future studies. However, even if there were differences in importance, the direction of association would not change as the cases had lower scores than the referents in all components. This study found that any level of women's involvement in decision making is related to reduction of under-five mortality. Some authors have indicated that different levels of involvement in decision making may have different empowerment outcomes and women may formally ascribe decision making to husbands while detailed investigations may suggest that women's involvement had occurred. While the latter may undermine the informal decision-making agency women exercise, it is unlikely to influence the association between decision-making and child mortality in this study. We elicited several aspects of household decision-making for which different answers were obtained and we have observed large and significant differences between the comparison groups. Nevertheless, further studies may need to be conducted to assess the degrees of women's involvement in decision-making and their effects

Mariam Sohil (2014) Women having rights are more confident, have better living standard and they can make their own decisions. For the development of the economy women and men both should work together and women should utilize their skills. Women should use their hidden abilities. Women empowerment reduces poverty from the society because they can spend more on their families and don't depend on others. A society where women are having their rights is developed. Same wages and salaries should be given to men and women for the same nature of work. There should be no gender discrimination at work place. For women empowerment first thing to do is to change the thinking of the people. Women must have access to all resources and credits. Women are always ignored in our society. Without women contribution society cannot develop. Women have obstacles in every aspect of life. Empowering women has dual benefits, first to the women and second to the society. When we empower a woman, actually we are empowering family. In empowering women education plays an important role. Education is the basic right of women. Men do not want women to get educated and make their career. Male dominance should be minimized because it's compulsory for empowering women. Women should have higher education and career opportunities. No one will speak for women; they should fight for their own rights. Silence of women will not give them their rights.

Assad et al. (2014) this research deals with women's empowerment as an outcome of interest by defining the different individual and socio-demographic determinants that affect women's empowerment in the Indian society. The paper analyzed two dimensions of women's empowerment; the decision-making and the mobility aspects of Indian women. Using the Indian Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS) 2012, we estimated a decision-making index and a mobility index. Our results came in line with the literature; age, education, employment, poverty status, number of children, having an adult son in addition to a woman's husband, and her father's characteristics appeared as significant determinants of empowerment. Further, most of these determinants, showed varying impact depending on the dimension of empowerment studied. The regional context was found to be very important in explaining Indian women's empowerment. Context was not

only found to be an important determinant of women’s empowerment as measured by our two indices, but it was also found to affect the impact of the other individual and socio demographic determinants on women’s empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is more of descriptive and causal in nature as in this study an effort is made to understand relationship amongst various determinants and women empowerment. The causal design is also used in the research as it explains cause and effect relationship between determinants and women empowerment.

3.1 Research Objective

Major objective of this research is to understand level of Political Empowerment amongst Indian Women

3.2 Hypothesis

H0= Political Empowerment provides very high level of women empowerment amongst Indian women.

H1= Political Empowerment doesn’t provide very high level of women empowerment amongst Indian women.

3.3 Sampling and Contact Method

Sample size of 300 was taken to study level of political empowerment that leads to women empowerment. Contact method used in the study was Personal interview of respondent.

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Details

		AGE	ORIGIN	INCOME	EDUCATION	MARITAL	CAST
N	Valid	300	300	300	300	300	300
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.36	1.50	2.55	3.00	1.72	2.54
Std. Deviation		1.034	.501	1.134	1.362	.568	1.137
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		4	2	4	5	4	4

Above table shows distribution of samples on various demographic variables like age, origin, income, education marital status, cast etc. as the proposed sample size is 300 it can be seen from above table that all the demographic variables fulfill the same requirement and there is no missing variable or sample during survey.

4.2 Simple and Multiple Regressions

Major research objectives of the study are to find nature and strength of relationships between dependent and independent variables. After studying strength and nature of relationships between variables it is necessary to compare measures of

relationships between females. As far as present study is concerned women empowerment is considered as dependent variable whereas, political empowerment is Independent variable.

4.2.1 Political Empowerment and Women Empowerment

The relationship between political empowerment and women empowerment was examined using OLS method of estimation in simple linear regression. In the simple regression Average score of the social inserted as the independent variable and Average women empowerment treated as the dependent variable.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.740 ^a	.594	.391	.63006
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean POL				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.324	1	28.324	713.49	.000 ^b
	Residual	117.902	297	.397		
	Total	146.226	298			
a. Dependent Variable: Mean WEM						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean POL						

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.597	.246		6.492	.000
	MeanPOL	.580	.069	.740	8.447	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Mean WEM						

The model summary of Political empowerment and Women empowerment is given in Table and it shows the coefficient of determination (R²) under model which is 0.594, which meant

the Political Empowerment explained 59.4 percent of the variations in Women Empowerment.

The ANOVA Table is used to assess the overall significance of the regression model. In Table, the F-value (713.490) and the p-value is 0.000. This meant that model is significant as p-values less than 0.05 at $\alpha = 0.05$ level, so it provides enough evidence for the significant of the model.

Further Table provides the coefficient of the model. According to the table it can be said that social factor is significantly influence on the Women empowerment with the standardized beta weight of 0.740.

So, looking at the values of R, R square and significance level it can be said that there is very significant level of relation between education and women empowerment

Ho is accepted, there is significant influence of political empowerment on women empowerment

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

Education of women in India has been a major issue for both the government and civil society, as the educated women play a very important role in the development of the country. India, at present has largest number of illiterates in the world. As we all know that education is must for everyone but unfortunately, in this male dominating society, the education of women has been neglected for a long time. Mostly people think

that to spend money on daughters would be vain. Now, we see the change in people's mentality that they are worried about the future of their daughters and they are ready to give the same place to position their daughters as they want for their sons. But in rural areas, we see that there are negligible changes in rural people's thinking. Most of the villagers provide education to their daughters but not as much as they want for their sons. If their daughters learn to read or write the letters or count the money, they think that it is sufficient and feel proud that they have done their duty very well.

A higher women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside home, by encouraging and promoting education of children, especially female children, and helps in reducing the infant mortality rate. It is true that empowerment can be gained with the help of education because it gives the knowledge of right and wrong, truth and lie. Women constitute almost half the human race. Education has been recognized as an essential agent of social change and development in any society of any country. Education is considered as a potential instrument through which processes of modernization and social change come to existence. Education exposes people to new thoughts and ideas which provide necessary skills. Study concludes that increase in education and other measures leads to increase in political empowerment of the Indian women that will add value to real sense of women empowerment.

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