

Measuring the Level of Empowerment of Rural Scheduled Caste Women: A Case Study of Mathabhanga Sub-Division of Koch Bihar District, West Bengal.

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ABSTRACT

The empowerment is the multidimensional processes which enable the women to realize their full potentiality and power in all aspect of life. Empowering women and promoting gender equality is a major concern for India. The low status of women in India has been a matter of concern for many decades. Especially the rural society acted as a hindrance for the development of women, which ultimately obstruct the pathway of women empowerment. So the present study has dealt to understand the level of empowerment of the rural scheduled caste women and caste wise variation of the Mathabhanga sub-division of Koch Bihar district. This may help to understand the present status of women empowerment of selected communities and the causes for the variation in the level of empowerment. For measuring the level of empowerment five indicators have been taken into the consideration, these are welfare, access, awareness, participation and control. Based on the indicators, firstly dimension index has been used for the reduction of dimension then the composite score has been calculated and categorized the composite score in four levels (very low, low, moderate and high) to see the level of empowerment based on the mean and standard deviation method. The study show that level of empowerment is low in the study area and it's varies from caste to caste based on the education and economic condition of the respondents. The women from Dhopa community and Rajbanshi community have high level of empowerment than Namasudra and Jaliakaibartta community in the study area.

1. Introduction

Empowerment is basically the expansion of freedom of choice and action, meaning thereby increasing one's authority and control over resources and decision that affects one's life (Linda, 2002). Empowerment of women is a necessity for the very development of a society, since it enhances both the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. There are several vital reasons for evaluating, promoting and monitoring the level of women's empowerment. Enhancing women's status and their empowerment can play a decisive role in the success of many development programmes and bring about positive social changes (Gupta & Yesudian, 2006). A number of terms and concepts have been proposed to explain the position of women across different socio-cultural groups. Early studies used a more general term "women's status" to bring into focus the disparities that exist between men and women with respect to development indicators such as education, work-participation, occupational structure, mortality, and health. Later studies (Mason, 1998; Mason and Smith, 2000; Jejeebhoy, 2000) have used status, autonomy, empowerment and gender stratification interchangeably and without much conceptual clarity. There is a growing consensus that "empowerment" is a more relevant and appropriate term than "status" or "autonomy" (Malhotra and Mather, 1997; Govindasamy and Malhotra, 1996; Kabeer, 1998). Women constitute nearly half of the country's population (Census, 2011). Empowering women and promoting gender equality is a major concern for India. The low status of women in India has been a matter of concern for many years, and the Indian government has implemented various policies and programs over a time periods to improve their situations (Gupta &

Yesudian, 2006). But the empowerment of women in India, in the every sphere of the society is still not achieved. Especially the rural society acted as a hindrance for the development of women. Though the education plays a significant role in the socio-economic development and empowerment of women, yet, many of them have faced barriers in accessing education, including poverty, negative attitudes towards educating a daughter, social norms, fear of threats to chastity, and fear of violence (Sundaram et. al., 2014; Velkoff, 1998; Moser, 1998). The present study has made to understand the level of empowerment among the rural women of schedule caste communities residing in the Mathabhanga sub-division of Koch Bihar district. This may help to understand the present status of women empowerment among the women of selected communities and the causes for the variation in the level of empowerment.

2. Study area

Koch Bihar district is situated in the north eastern part of West Bengal and it is the last district after that the Assam state has started. The district is surrounded by Alipurduar and Bhutan in north, Assam in east and Bangladesh in south. Mathabhanga sub-division is one of the five sub-division of Koch Bihar district. The sub-division is located in the western part of the district head quarter and it bounded by Koch Bihar Sadar sub-division in the east, Mekhliganj sub-division and Jalpaiguri district in the west, Alipurduar district in the north and Bangladesh in the south. The sub-division have 3 blocks namely, Mathabhanga-I, Mathabhanga-II and Sitalkuchi. The latitudinal and longitudinal extension of the sub-division is 26° 4' north to 26° 33' north and 89° 3' east to 89° 20' east.

3. Objectives

- I. To analysis the level of empowerment of the rural scheduled caste women.
- II. To see the variation of level of empowerment within the scheduled caste community and the main reasons behind it.

4. Data based and methodology

The data has been used for the study is mainly based on the primary survey. The primary data has been collected from field survey with the help of scheduled questionnaire by direct interview methods randomly without replacement. The sub-division has 3 blocks firstly 5% villages have been selected randomly then 2% Scheduled Caste households have been

surveyed randomly. Total villages of these three blocks are 261 and 5% of these village means 13. The total Scheduled Caste households of the 13 selected villages are 6280 and its 2% means 125 household. So total 125 is the sample size. Secondary data has been collected from various published articles.

Statistical technique

To the progress of the study some statistical techniques have been used like Dimension Index for the reduction of the dimensions of the data. Composite index has been used for the calculation of the five indicator of empowerment and the final outcome of the level empowerment. The Pearson chi square test has been done for testing the significant level and Cramer's V test has been used for calculating the strength of the association.

❖ *The χ^2 Square Test*

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where,

O= Observed Frequencies

E= Expected Frequencies

❖ *Dimension Index*

$$\text{Dimension Index} = \frac{\text{Observed Value} - \text{Minimum Value}}{\text{Maximum Value} - \text{Minimum Value}} \text{ (UNDP, 2016)}$$

❖ *Composite Index*

$$\text{Composite Index} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + \dots + X_n}{\text{No. of Variables}} \text{ (Iyengar \& Sudarshan's, 1982)}$$

❖ *Level of Empowerment* = $\frac{\text{Welfare} + \text{Access} + \text{Awareness} + \text{Participation} + \text{Control}}{5}$

For measuring the level of empowerment, the researcher has followed the methods of Rao (1996) and Parvin (2005). In this method five indicators have been used for calculation the level of empowerment with the equal weightage method. These are welfare, access, awareness, participation and control.

List of indicators for measuring the women empowerment.

Welfare		Participation	
X1	Type of House	X1	Participation in economic activity
X2	Ownership of House	X2	Participation in education
X3	Availability of electricity	X3	Participation in cultural activities
X4	Availability of sanitation facility	X4	Participation in sports
X5	Affordability of clothes	X5	Participation in politics
X6	take proper nutrition food	X6	Participation in social organisation
X7	Harassment in the family		
Access		Control	
X1	Access to income or money	X1	Decision about buying and selling of property
X2	Access to land property	X2	Decision about child marriage
X3	Access to asset	X3	Decision about visiting neighbour house
X4	Access to knowledge or education	X4	Decision about visiting market
X5	Access to health care	X5	Decision about own employment
Awareness			
X1	Awareness about various welfare schemes		
X2	Awareness about reservation policy		
X3	Awareness about legal rights		

5. Result and discussion

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Rural Scheduled Castes Women						
Age Group		Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total
Young Age	Count	32	10	4	3	49
	%	35.6%	45.5%	44.4%	75.0%	39.2%
Lower Middle Age	Count	37	6	4	0	47
	%	41.1%	27.3%	44.4%	0.0%	37.6%
Middle Age	Count	21	6	1	1	29
	%	23.3%	27.3%	11.1%	25.0%	23.2%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Educational Level						
Illiterate	Count	6	1	1	0	8
	%	6.7%	4.5%	11.1%	0.0%	6.4%
Primary	Count	64	13	6	2	85
	%	71.1%	59.1%	66.7%	50.0%	68.0%
Secondary	Count	11	7	0	1	19
	%	12.2%	31.8%	0.0%	25.0%	15.2%
Higher Secondary & Above	Count	9	1	2	1	13
	%	10.0%	4.5%	22.2%	25.0%	10.4%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Occupation						
House Wife	Count	37	19	6	2	64
	%	41.1%	86.4%	66.7%	50.0%	51.2%
Cultivator	Count	23	2	0	0	25
	%	25.6%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Agricultural Labour	Count	16	0	2	0	18
	%	17.8%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	14.4%
Business	Count	3	0	1	0	4
	%	3.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	3.2%
Service	Count	3	0	0	0	3
	%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Other Worker	Count	8	1	0	2	11
	%	8.9%	4.5%	0.0%	50.0%	8.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Employment Status						
Non Paid Worker	Count	60	21	6	2	89
	%	66.7%	95.5%	66.7%	50.0%	71.2%
Paid Worker	Count	30	1	3	2	36
	%	33.3%	4.5%	33.3%	50.0%	28.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

		Income Level				
No Income	Count	61	20	6	2	89
	%	67.8%	90.9%	66.7%	50.0%	71.2%
Rs.1-Rs.3000	Count	11	0	0	0	11
	%	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.8%
Rs.3001-Rs.6000	Count	12	2	2	2	18
	%	13.3%	9.1%	22.2%	50.0%	14.4%
>Rs.6000	Count	6	0	1	0	7
	%	6.7%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	5.6%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 1 represents the demographic profile of the respondents of Mathabhanga sub-division of Koch Bihar District. Within the demographic parameter age of the respondents, educational level, occupation, employment status and income level these five parameters have been taken into consideration which are mostly related to the decision making capacity of the women, based on the decision making capacity the level of empowerment has been measured. The table shows caste wise age group of the respondents. From the data it is observed that out of 125 respondents 90 are belongs to the Rajbanshi community which is 72.00 percent and 17.60 percent of the respondents are belongs to Namasudra community, 7.20 percent of the respondents are from Jaliakaibartta community and rest 3.20 percent of the respondents women are belongs to Dhopa community. The sub caste of the scheduled caste population is mainly based on their occupation like cultivation is the main occupation of the Rajbanshi and Namasudra people and as the sub-division is suitable for cultivation and the economy of the entire district is mainly based on the agriculture, so including these two communities, it is 89.60 percent. The main occupation of the Jaliakaibartta community is fishing and Dhopa means the washer man.

The age of the respondents are ranges from 19 to 57 years in the study area and all the respondents are married. Age group wise the respondents are categorized in three categories based on the National Youth Policy, 2014 classification. Here the young age means those who below 35 years age, the lower middle age group means the respondents in between 35 to 45 years age groups and middle age group means the respondents in between 45 to 59 years age groups. From the study it is observed that most of the respondents are from young age groups which is 39.20 percent followed by lower middle (37.60 percent) and middle age group respondents (23.20 percent). In case of sub caste wise distribution of the age of the respondents young age respondents are high among Dhopa community which is 75.00 percent followed by Namasudra and Rajbanshi community have the lowest young age group respondents. Among the lower middle age group respondents Jaliakaibartta has take the first position (44.40 percent) and Dhopa has the lowest percentage (0.00). The Namasudra community has the highest percentage (27.30) of middle age group respondents and Jaliakaibartta has the lowest percentage (11.10).

The Educational level of the respondents means their highest level of the education. From the study it is observed that 68.00 percent of the respondents are studied upto primary level which is maximum, 15.20 percent of the respondents are studied upto secondary level and only 10.40 percent of the respondents are studied above higher secondary and rest 6.40 percent of the respondents are illiterate which is minimum among all the category. Illiterate is maximum among Jaliakaibartta community i.e. 11.10 percent and minimum among Dhopa Community. The most of the respondents (71.10 percent) among Rajbanshi community are studied upto primary level and higher secondary and above is maximum among the Dhopa community (25.00 percent).

The employment status of the respondents is also shown in the table. From the table it is reveals that 71.20 percent of the respondents are non-paid worker and only 28.80 percent of the respondents are paid worker. Among the non –paid respondents most of them are engaged in their own agricultural field so they did not get any money for their work. After the details analysis of occupation of the respondents it is observed that 51.20 percent of the respondents are housewife which is maximum and 20 percent of the respondents are cultivator and all the respondents work their own agricultural field so they are unpaid worker. Rest 14.40 percent of the respondents are Agriculture labour followed by Business (3.20 percent) and Service (2.40 percent) and rest is Other Worker which is 8.80 percent. Housewife is maximum among the Namasudra community (86.40 percent) followed by the Jaliakaibartta (66.70 percent) and among the Rajbanshi community the percentage of housewife is minimum as most of the Rajbanshi women engaged themselves in the agricultural activity like in cultivation (25.60 percent) which is highest among all the other caste in the study area and agricultural labour (17.80 percent) as the main work of the Rajbanshi's are agriculture. Agricultural labour is maximum among Jaliakaibartta community (22.20 percent) and lowest among Namasudra and Dhopa community (0.00 percent). On the other hand business is maximum among Jaliakaibartta community (11.10) and service is maximum among Rajbanshi community (3.30 percent).

The table also reveals about the income of the respondents. About 70.10 percent of the respondents have no income, 8.80 percent of the respondents earn in between Rs. 1 to Rs. 3000. About 14.40 percent of the respondents are earn in between Rs.3000 to Rs.6000 and only 5.60 percent of the respondents

earn more than Rs. 6000 per month. After observing the sub caste wise distribution of income level of the respondents it is observed that most of the high income group (>Rs.6000)

respondents are belongs to the Jaliakaibartta community (11.10 percent) and lowest among Namasudra community.

Table 2: Measure of Women Empowerment

Welfare		Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total
Very Low	Count	13	3	0	0	16
	%	14.4%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	12.8%
Low	Count	48	7	4	2	61
	%	53.3%	31.8%	44.4%	50.0%	48.8%
Moderate	Count	10	8	4	0	22
	%	11.1%	36.4%	44.4%	0.0%	17.6%
High	Count	19	4	1	2	26
	%	21.1%	18.2%	11.1%	50.0%	20.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Access						
		Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total
Very Low	Count	18	3	1	0	22
	%	20.0%	13.6%	11.1%	0.0%	17.6%
Low	Count	31	10	2	0	43
	%	34.4%	45.5%	22.2%	0.0%	34.4%
Moderate	Count	34	8	4	1	47
	%	37.8%	36.4%	44.4%	25.0%	37.6%
High	Count	7	1	2	3	13
	%	7.8%	4.5%	22.2%	75.0%	10.4%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Awareness						
		Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total
Very Low	Count	24	5	1	0	30
	%	26.7%	22.7%	11.1%	0.0%	24.0%
Low	Count	39	11	2	0	52
	%	43.3%	50.0%	22.2%	0.0%	41.6%
Moderate	Count	8	1	2	1	12
	%	8.9%	4.5%	22.2%	25.0%	9.6%
High	Count	19	5	4	3	31
	%	21.1%	22.7%	44.4%	75.0%	24.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Participation						
		Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total
Very Low	Count	63	16	2	1	82
	%	70.0%	72.7%	22.2%	25.0%	65.6%
Low	Count	27	5	3	2	37
	%	30.0%	22.7%	33.3%	50.0%	29.6%
Moderate	Count	0	1	3	1	5
	%	0.0%	4.5%	33.3%	25.0%	4.0%
High	Count	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	.8%

Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Control						
Very Low	Count	23	7	2	0	32
	%	25.6%	31.8%	22.2%	0.0%	25.6%
Low	Count	27	9	2	0	38
	%	30.0%	40.9%	22.2%	0.0%	30.4%
Moderate	Count	24	3	4	3	34
	%	26.7%	13.6%	44.4%	75.0%	27.2%
High	Count	16	3	1	1	21
	%	17.8%	13.6%	11.1%	25.0%	16.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 is representing the measures of the level of women empowerment. The measures are welfare, access, awareness, participation and control. The table show the indicator of women development and its variation among the different scheduled caste of the study area. The welfare includes basic needs of the women like own house, better living space, availability of electricity, drinking water, sanitation, cloths, food etc. The Composite score of welfare is divided into four categories based on the mean and standard deviation method. Out of the 125 respondents 61 respondents get low level welfare which is 48.80 percent of the respondents, 20.80 percent of the respondents get high welfare in the sub-division and 17.60 percent of the respondents get moderate level of welfare. Rest 12.80 percent get very low level welfare. The high level of welfare is maximum among the Dhopa community (50.00 percent) followed by Rajbanshi (21.1 percent) and Namasudra (18.20 percent).

Access means wheatear the women get equal access and facilities of resource with men, it is one of the most important component of the empowerment of women. Here access in terms of education, money, employment, health care facility or any other resources. The table shows that 37.60 percent of the respondents have moderate access and only 10.40 percent of the respondents have high access and including low and very low access it is 52.00 percent which clearly shows that the women in that area is not able to access all resource equally with men. The caste wise variation of the respondents shows that the women of the Dhopa community (75.00) are in the better position than the other scheduled caste community in terms of access as most the women of Dhopa community have better educational status and the position of the Rajbanshi women are worse in terms of access 20.00 percent of the respondents have very low access although their educational and economic status is better than other.

Awareness is another indicator of empowerment of women. It helps to understand the discrimination among

women and the women can feel and look into their surroundings. Through the awareness the gender discrimination could be reduced. The study shows that in terms of awareness the women in the area are not in the good position. Most of the respondents i.e. 41.60 percent have low awareness and 24 percent have very low level of awareness including this two it is 65.60 percent which shows the worse condition of the women. Only 24.8 percent of the women are highly aware.

Among the Dhopa community awareness is maximum (75.00 percent) followed by Jaliakaibartta community (44.40 percent) and Namasudra (22.70 percent) and low among the Namasudra (50.00 percent) followed by Rajbanshi (43.30 percent).

In them of participation the situation of the women of the area is worse than the other indicators. The participation levels of the respondents are very low whether in political participation, cultural participation or participation in sports activity. Most of the women participated in education and economic but beside that their participation is not satisfactory. The situation is similar among all the scheduled caste community. High participation is found only among the Jaliakaibartta community. Only two women have found they are political leader and one woman is found who played Khokho in the state level. So it clearly shows that the area is backward in terms of participation in sports, culture and politics.

Control means the ability to influence or direct the event. Here control means the control over resources, money, their decision making etc. are included. From the data it is observed that most of the respondents have low control (30.40 percent) and 25.60 percent of the respondents have very low control, including these two it is 56 percent which is huge and only 16.80 percent of the respondents have high control over resources and decision making. Sub caste wise high control is observed among Dhopa community (25.00 percent) followed by the Rajbanshi community (17.8 percent).

Table 3: Level of Women Empowerment

Empowerment	Rajbanshi	Namasudra	Jaliakaibartta	Dhopa	Total	
Very Low	Count	13	3	0	1	17

	%	14.4%	13.6%	0.0%	25.0%	12.8%
Low	Count	44	11	2	0	57
	%	48.9%	50.0%	22.2%	0.0%	45.6%
Moderate	Count	19	6	6	1	32
	%	21.1%	27.3%	66.7%	25.0%	24.8%
High	Count	14	2	1	2	19
	%	15.6%	9.1%	11.1%	50.0%	16.8%
Total	Count	90	22	9	4	125
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3 shows the level of women empowerment of the rural scheduled caste women of the study area. The level of empowerment has been calculated based on the five indicators welfare, access, awareness, participation and control. The composite score of the level of empowerment has been divided in four categories based on the mean and standard deviation of the data. From the table it is reveals that 45.60 percent of the respondents are low empowered followed by moderate

empowered (24.80 percent). Only 16.80 percent of the respondents are highly empowered and rest 12.80 percent of the respondents are very low empowered. Among the four scheduled caste community Dhopa community are highly empowered as they are educated more than higher secondary and above followed by the Rajbanshi community (15.6 percent) and low level of empowerment is low maximum among the Namasudra community (50.00 percent).

Table 4: Age groups and the level of empowerment of the women

Age Groups		Level of Empowerment				Total
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	
Young Age	Count	4	18	15	12	49
	%	8.20%	36.70%	30.60%	24.50%	100.00%
Lower Middle Age	Count	2	25	14	6	47
	%	4.30%	53.20%	29.80%	12.80%	100.00%
Middle Age	Count	10	14	2	3	29
	%	34.50%	48.30%	6.90%	10.30%	100.00%
Total	Count	16	57	31	21	125
	%	12.80%	45.60%	24.80%	16.80%	100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table 4 shows the age group and the level of empowerment of the rural scheduled caste women of Mathabhanga Dub-division. The table reveals that very low level of empowerment is less among the young age (8.20 percent) than the Middle age group women (34.50 percent) similarly the low level of empowerment is high among middle age group people (48.30 percent) than the young age (36.70 percent) women. On the other hand high level of empowerment is observed maximum among the young age group (24.50

percent) women and minimum among the middle age group women (10.30 percent) and with increasing the age group their level of empowerment is decreasing. Pearson chi square test has been done for the table which shows there is a significant ($X^2= 23.426$, $df=6$ at 0.05 significance level) association between age of the respondents and level of empowerment and as per the Cramer's V (0.31) the level of empowerment is depend on the age by 30 percent.

Table 5: Educational Status and Level of Empowerment

Educational Status		Level of Empowerment			Total	
		Very Low	Low	Moderate		High
Illiterate	Count	2	6	0	0	8
	%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Primary	Count	14	46	21	4	85
	%	16.50%	54.10%	24.70%	4.70%	100.00%
Secondary	Count	0	5	9	5	19

	%	0.00%	26.30%	47.40%	26.30%	100.00%
Higher Secondary & Above	Count	0	0	1	12	13
	%	0.00%	0.00%	7.70%	92.30%	100.00%
Total	Count	16	57	31	21	125
	%	12.80%	45.60%	24.80%	16.80%	100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The table 5 represents the educational status and level of empowerment of the respondents. From the table it is observed that most of the illiterate respondents (75.00 percent) have low level of empowerment and the respondents who have high educational status means those who completed the higher secondary and above level of education their level of empowerment is high (92.30 percent). The table clearly shows that the high level of empowerment is depend on the

educational status of the respondents as with increasing the educational level their level of empowerment has increased and vice versa. The Pearson chi square test ($X^2= 77.574$, $df=9$ at 0.05 significance level) show that there is a significant association between the level of empowerment and educational status of the respondents and the educational status could be explain level of empowerment by 45 percent (Cramer's $V=0.445$).

Table 6: Level of Income and Level of Empowerment of Women

Level of Income		Women Empowerment				Total
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	
No Income	Count	11	42	23	13	89
	%	12.40%	47.20%	25.80%	14.60%	100.00%
Rs.1-Rs.3000	Count	2	7	2	0	11
	%	18.20%	63.60%	18.20%	0.00%	100.00%
Rs.3001-Rs.6000	Count	3	7	5	3	18
	%	16.70%	38.90%	27.80%	16.70%	100.00%
>Rs.6000	Count	0	1	1	5	7
	%	0.00%	14.30%	14.30%	71.40%	100.00%
Total	Count	16	57	31	21	125
	%	12.80%	45.60%	24.80%	16.80%	100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The relation between level of empowerment and level of income has been explained by the table 6. From the table it is observed that in case of no income respondents most of them (47.20 percent) have low level of empowerment and only 14.60 percent of the respondents of no income group have high level of empowerment. On the other hand the respondent who earn more than Rs.6000 per month they have maximum in terms of high level of empowerment (71.40 percent) and 14.30 percent of the respondents have low level of empowerment and there is no respondents found in the very low level of empowerment in the income level (>Rs.6000). The table show that with increasing the income level their level of empowerment also increased but some time it so the opposite, although the Pearson chi square test shows the significant association ($X^2= 19.033$, $df=9$ at 0.05 significance level) between the income level and the level of empowerment but the level of empowerment of the respondents could be explain by the income level only by 22 percent (Cramer's $V= 0.225$).

6. Conclusion

The level of empowerment of the women shows their power of decision making in all sphere of their life whether they can get equal access to the education, health care,

employment, money, land or any other property, etc. and it also shows that weather they have access to their basic need like house, sanitation, electricity and safe drinking water along with their decision making capacity in their household as we as in the society and about their own life. From the study it is clearly observed that most of the rural scheduled caste women in the sub-division are not get equal access on the resources and money and they even can't take decision about their own life but those who have high level of education and those who have high level of income they feel more freedom in their family as well as in the society although the number of the women in this category are few. The study also show that the level of empowerment is also related to their age, most of the young age women take more decision regarding their own life and their family, the main reason behind is the education as the young age respondents are more educated than the middle age group women and they are more aware about their rights so their level of empowerment is high. So in conclusion it could be said that to increase the level of empowerment of the women education and employment plays a very important role which give the women more freedom economically and help them to become self-dependent and give more confident in decision making which finally make them empower.

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