



**TO ANALYSE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF POOR HOUSEHOLDS'
WOMEN: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

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ABSTRACT:

The empowerment of women is a matter that garners attention from the international community. Poverty is one of the principal contributors to the absence of empowerment among women. Although poverty alleviation facilitates the improvement of women's quality of life, it does not elevate the status of female household members. Domestic violence against women and workplace and office exploitation of women continue to be significant issues. As a result of this study, which assessed the social and economic obstacles encountered by women residing in low-income households, the empowerment of women is currently the most prominent topic of discussion. In addition, the concept of women's empowerment is susceptible to a variety of interpretations, some of which are examined briefly in this study. A thorough examination was conducted during the course of this literature review, focusing specifically on the empowerment of women in regards to social and economic concerns. Descriptive methodology is utilized to examine the power dynamics, social environments, and economic circumstances that are employed to characterize the expanding demands for women's empowerment in the twenty-first century, as well as strategies that offer comprehensive approaches to empowering women in the context of their contribution to welfare improvement.

Keywords: women empowerment, social, economic, poor households

INTRODUCTION

Farming, earning wages, and starting their own businesses are all major roles that women play in the nation's rural economy. Furthermore, they assume the obligation of ensuring the health and happiness of the members of their families, which includes the supply of food and the care of youngsters and the elderly. Most of the time, rural women's unpaid employment consists of gathering water and wood, particularly in households that are economically disadvantaged.

Women who are members of indigenous and grassroots groups are frequently also the keepers of traditional knowledge, which is essential for the livelihoods, resilience, and culture of their communities. In order to have a better understanding of what is required to improve the situation of women who are impoverished, vulnerable, and powerless, the notion of women's empowerment is becoming increasingly popular. It does not appear that the status of women, particularly in the third world and in developing countries, is particularly favorable. In terms of making decisions about their lives, they have fewer possibilities and fewer options available to them.

There are a variety of factors that contribute to the absence of women's agency in developing nations. Prosperity is one of the primary reasons behind this. It is vital to have a solid understanding of the term "empowerment" before I proceed with my discussion of the connection between the reduction of poverty and the empowerment of women. Rowlands (1995) asserts that the ability to exert influence and control over others typically serves as a measure of one's power. The dominance of men over other men, men over women, and the dominant social, political, and economic class over those who are marginalized are all examples of individuals who exercise control over others. Individuals will tend to absorb the denial of power that they have been subjected to in a society if they are consistently denied power and influence. The concept of "internalized oppression" is one that Rowlands employs. People who are marginalized develop a tolerance for it as a means of ensuring their continued existence within a dominant social, economic, or political elite.

Researchers, governments, and industry actors are currently concentrating their emphasis primarily on the empowerment of women, particularly with regard to women who come from low-income homes. Several different interpretations might be attached to the idea of women's empowerment. Throughout the course of this literature study, a comprehensive investigation was carried out, particularly with relation to the empowerment of women and gender equality. One of the factors that contributes to the low level of women's participation in the economy is the low level of women's participation in the education sector.

The limited employment opportunities and access that women have to resources for economic empowerment like technology, knowledge, markets, and working capital serve as evidence of

this. Women are still perceived as additional breadwinners and family workers, despite the fact that the income of women workers makes a major contribution to the income and welfare of families. There is a correlation between all of these presumptions and the low levels of participation, access, and benefits that women have in the field of development. The structure that can be found within the community is another issue that has to be addressed (Prantiasih, 2014). This structure does not yet enable the attainment of gender equality and justice. Since the year 2000, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), along with partners from the United Nations and the entire global community, has made gender equality the focal point of research, and they have made significant progress. The majority of regions have completed the process of achieving gender equality in basic education, and there are today more females attending school than there were fifteen years ago. Up to the current decade, the majority of women were contributors to the labor force, accounting for 41 percent of those who were paid outside of the agricultural sector. This is in contrast to the situation in 1990, when only 35 percent of laborers were women. The goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to improve the achievement of abolishing discrimination against women and girls all throughout the world.

There are still significant disparities in the job market in many locations, with women persistently refusing to accept equal access to the employment sector. All of these issues continue to be a significant barrier, including sexual abuse and exploitation, unequal distribution of health care and domestic work, and discrimination in the public sector. In order to accomplish this objective, it is essential to work toward the aim of providing women with equal rights to economic resources such as land and property. In addition to this, it guarantees all individuals access to the sexual and reproductive health community. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2018), there are currently more women holding public office than at any other time in history. This, in turn, is motivating women's leaders to assist in the strengthening of stronger gender equality policies and legislation. Throughout the course of history, many ideologies concerning poverty and the vulnerabilities or strengths of women have been the driving force behind waves of rival organizational efforts. But the funders and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that drive the development sector have a tendency to rely on simplistic techniques that involve clustering women in groups. Furthermore,

they tend to favor women's groups that are organized by projects in order to provide services and results that are precisely defined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kabeer (2003) argues that earlier attempts to improve the status of women either included women in development projects or initiatives for women-specific development projects; however, these earlier attempts did not address the issues of gender discrimination. In response to this, the Global Agenda for Development promotes the formation of a well-balanced policy for the eradication of poverty. The study of the material conditions of both genders, their socially structured behaviors, and the inherent opportunities and limitations that society generates in their lives are all aspects of GAD that are not just focused on women but also on men. The Global Agenda for Development (GAD) advanced the objective of achieving equity-based development through the empowerment of women, as is clear from the statement of DAWN. One definition of empowerment describes it as "a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation of women, to greater decision-making, power, and control, and to transformative action" (Karl, 1995: 14).

According to Lewis and Wallace (2000), the desire to provide services as delivery agents and to lessen the role of governments by establishing alternative ways of thinking and approaches to alleviating poverty drove the growth of non-governmental organizations in the 1980s. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are considered to be agents that may address the issues that are prevalent in developing countries and their capacity to reach the underprivileged in order to address their issues. In developing nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been given preference to solve problems such as alleviating poverty, altering gender relations, and other issues (Lewis, 2005; Thomas & Allen, 2000). This is because modernization efforts in these countries have proved to be unsuccessful. There was a call from donor agencies for more space for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address issues of poverty and inequality. There is a change in donors' attention towards non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for a number of different causes. To begin, there is evidence that the government has programs in place to provide services and address issues that are occurring at the grassroots level. Second,

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are seen to be more efficient, democratic, and cost-effective sources of service delivery (Ibrahim, 2003; and Manji, 2000).

The term "empowerment" describes circumstances in which those who are powerless acquire a higher degree of influence over resources and ideology. A number of concepts, including autonomy, power, prestige, and agency, have been linked to it. The Indian constitution has made it very apparent that women are being provided with an equal playing field, and it has also instructed the authorities to formulate rules and regulations in order to protect their legitimate rights. During the 1970s, feminist scholars endeavored to challenge patriarchy by adopting a radical approach that aimed to transform power relations in favor of women's rights and gender equality. This approach was further developed in the 1980s (Batliwala, 1994, 2007) and as an individual process of self-transformation during the 1990s (Batliwala, 1994; Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1997; Sen, 1997). The aforementioned statements shed light on the intricate and mutually beneficial relationship that exists between women's self-understanding (Kabeer, 1994) and their ability to express themselves (Sen, 1997), in addition to women's access to and control over material resources.

It is generally accepted that women's empowerment is a process that occurs over a period of time, resulting in women becoming agents who are able to construct choices, control resources, and make strategic decisions regarding their lives (Lee-Rife, 2010). She placed a strong emphasis on the strategic life choices that are considered to be first-order choices, such as the choice of livelihood, the decision to marry, and the decision to have children. She also discussed the impact that these choices have on second-order choices, which are less consequential, such as instilling values in children, making decisions about the daily household, and managing the well-being of the family.

One way to think about efforts to empower women is as an effort to increase the proportion of economic and noneconomic resources that women own and control. The following are some of the things that can be done in order to make the development program a reality within the context of empowering women (Muhajir, 2005): (1) Priority in rural women's organizations is due to the fact that their potential has not been utilized to its fullest extent. With the provision of capital facilities for women who run small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in rural

and coastal areas, this plan is anticipated to be a stimulant for acceleration and economic recovery. Specifically, this strategy will focus on providing these facilities to women. It is anticipated that the circulation of money in adequate amounts across the entirety of the nation will have the effect of boosting the economic activities of women in rural areas and assisting women in entering the market through exchange activities that involve the use of money transactions. (2) It is anticipated that the provision of capital for women's groups and the quantity of capital facilities that are accessible will be adequate. This is to ensure that the utilization of technology that has the potential to enhance both the quantity and quality of products that are produced by women's business groups will not be excluded. (3) Enhancing rural communication facilities and infrastructure in order to facilitate the spread of access to new information that is more accurate for women who are involved in small and medium organizations. Rural communities will be better able to direct the use of resources owned by companies that produce commodities and that have the potential to deliver appropriate and profitable benefits with the use of up-to-date and accurate information. Fourth, it is anticipated that additional acceleration of the economic recovery will be achieved by optimizing the function of all female human resources. It is anticipated that the rise in the number of women participating in the market will result in an increase in the contribution of women to the family economy, which will, in addition to enhancing the quality of life for women, enhance the resistance of households to economic hardship and the level of community welfare.

According to Mayoux (1998), the findings presented in the study describe five primary aspects that must be taken into consideration during the process of women's empowerment: (1) The welfare system is an essential component of the initiatives that aim to promote the empowerment of women. Women's economic involvement, educational attainment, and health successes are all included in the welfare program in question. (2) Access, which is defined as the capacity of women to get rights and access to productive resources such as land, credit, training, marketing facilities, labor, and all public services that are equal to women. Access pertains to the ability of women to obtain these resources. Another essential component is having access to various forms of technology and information. (3) The ability to concentrate is dependent on having an awareness of the disparities in gender roles. The equality of women's participation in the processes of decision-making, policy-making, planning, and administration is the basis of the

fourth principle, which is participation. When we talk about women's involvement, we are referring to their equal representation in the structure of decision-making. When it comes to equality, namely in terms of the power of production factors and the distribution of profits, both women and men are in a position of dominance.

According to Suharto (2010), not only does empowerment involve the strengthening of individual members of society, but it also involves the strengthening of institutions. One of the most important aspects of empowerment is the inculcation of contemporary cultural values, which include the qualities of hard work, self-reliance, efficiency, openness, and a responsible attitude. Furthermore, the objective of empowerment is to enhance the power of the community, particularly the weaker groups that are powerless due to internal conditions (such as their own perceptions) or external conditions (such as being oppressed by unfair societal structures). This is especially true for the weaker groups that are powerless.

Kappelman (2016) examines the impact that gender inequality has on the amount of happiness experienced by women in South Africa. He does this by evaluating the impact that different levels of empowerment have on the subjective and emotional well-being of women. To be more specific, the research attempted to determine if the effect of pure empowerment or the effect of empowerment on wellbeing was influenced by maintaining consistent consumption. As a result of the findings of the study, it was discovered that a higher level of empowerment appears to further diminish the level of welfare that women experience. Although there are some models that do not appear to offer any evidence that there is a significant negative association between the impacts of true empowerment and well-being, there are others that do reveal such a relationship.

Additionally, Kahneman and Deaton (2010) make the discussion of the utilization of subjective well-being as a means of describing economic prosperity even more challenging. According to the findings of his study, there was a positive correlation between higher income and both economic well-being and subjective well-being. This effect was observed even when other potential factors that influence well-being were taken into consideration. The findings of a study conducted by Hoop and colleagues (2010) in Orissa, India, about the quasi-experimental impact of women's self-help groups on the subjective well-being of the participants. The findings of the

study indicated that participation in self-help groups did not, on average, have an impact on the individual's subjective well-being. Nevertheless, the findings of the study also demonstrated that members who had recently gained their autonomy had a significant reduction in their subjective well-being when they were brought together with social gender norms that were relatively conservative among those who were not now members. These results provide evidence that members of self-help groups have lost their ability to experience a diverse range of sentiments related to their identities. When expanding women's autonomy involves a deeper breach of societal gender norms, the loss of identity is significantly more severe than it would otherwise be. A cross-scientific qualitative research study in the field of women's empowerment demonstrates that the social sanction mechanism plays a significant part in overcoming the unfavorable heterogeneous influence on subjective well-being. The fact that the mechanism is crucial to this proves it.

According to Huis et al. (2017), the empowerment of women can take place in three distinct dimensions: Personal empowerment can be noticed on a micro level, which refers to the ideas and actions of individuals on a personal level. The second level is the meso level, which refers to beliefs and acts in relation to other relevant people. This is the level where relational empowerment can be noticed. The third level is the macro level, which refers to results in a more general societal context for which social empowerment may be observed. Time and culture are just two of the fundamental factors that have a big impact on women's empowerment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper has following objectives:

1. To study about the Women Empowerment and its different perspectives
2. To analyse the social and economic perspectives of women: Poor households

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses descriptive method where we have collected data from survey and analysed using SPSS v.27 where we use frequency tabling techniques to justify the social and economic problem of women in poor households.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this research data have been collected from the survey.

Demographic Variables:

It was noted that out of 300 respondents, 96.0% of respondents were male and 4.0% of respondents were female.

Gender of respondent		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	288	96.0
Male	12	4.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 1: - Gender of respondent

It was noted that out of 300 respondents, 27.7% of respondents were between 20 – 30 years in age, 41.0% of respondents were between 31 – 40 years in age, 28.0% of respondents were between 41 - 50 years in age and 3.3% of respondents were 51 or above years in age.

Age of respondent		
	Frequency	Percent
20-30	83	27.7
31-40	123	41.0
41-50	84	28.0
51 or above	10	3.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 2: - Age of respondent

It was noted that out of 300 respondents, 3.0% of respondents had higher education, 30.7% of respondents had done university graduate, 65.0% of respondents had done postgraduate and 1.3% of respondents had done M.Phil.

Educational Qualification of respondent		
	Frequency	Percent
Higher Education	9	3.0
University Graduate (UG)	92	30.7
Postgraduate (PG)	195	65.0
M.Phil.	4	1.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 3: - Educational Qualification of respondent

Social and Economic Problems of women: Poor Households

When the women were asked about their social position whether they attend social gathering with their friend circle, then out of 300 respondents, 4.0% of respondents were strongly disagreed with ‘I attend social gatherings’, 3.7% of respondents were disagreed with ‘I attend social gatherings’, 12.0% of respondents were neutral with ‘I attend social gatherings’, 46.7% of respondents were agreed with ‘I attend social gatherings’ and 33.7% of respondents were strongly agree with ‘I attend social gatherings’.

I attend social gatherings		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	4.0
Disagree	11	3.7
Neutral	36	12.0
Agree	140	46.7
Strongly agree	101	33.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 4: - I attend social gatherings

From the table 4, it was seen that 7.7% respondents were not agree with the statement, they belong to poor households and 12% respondents were neutral means either they did not want to disclose the facts they face in their home while more than 80% respondents were agreed with the social gathering they were rich households women.

Regarding economic conditions, the respondents were asked about their earning and income if they go outside in any organization to work. Working women get their identity in society. out of 300 respondents, 8.7% of respondents were strongly disagreed with ‘My confidence level increased after being independent’, 5.0% of respondents were disagreed with ‘My confidence level increased after being independent’, 10.3% of respondents were neutral with ‘My confidence level increased after being independent’, 40.7% of respondents were agreed with ‘My confidence level increased after being independent’ and 35.3% of respondents were strongly agree with ‘My confidence level increased after being independent’.

My confidence level increased after being independent.		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	26	8.7
Disagree	15	5.0
Neutral	31	10.3
Agree	122	40.7
Strongly agree	106	35.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 5: - My confidence level increased after being independent

Also, it was concluded that out of 300 respondents, 4.7% of respondents were strongly disagreed with ‘I spend my earnings more on myself than my family’, 6.0% of respondents were disagreed with ‘I spend my earnings more on myself than my family’, 13.0% of respondents were neutral ‘I spend my earnings more on myself than my family’, 44.3% of respondents were agreed with ‘I spend my earnings more on myself than my family’ and 32.0% of respondents were strongly agree with ‘I spend my earnings more on myself than my family’.

I spend my earnings more on myself than my family		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	14	4.7
Disagree	18	6.0

(An open access scholarly, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, monthly, and fully refereed journal.)

Neutral	39	13.0
Agree	133	44.3
Strongly agree	96	32.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 6: - I spend my earnings more on myself than my family

The women were asked about quality of life being improved by income, it was concluded that out of 300 respondents, 5.3% of respondents were strongly disagreed with ‘I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings’, 7.0% of respondents were disagreed with ‘I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings’, 14.7% of respondents were neutral with ‘I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings’, 44.3% of respondents were agreed with ‘I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings’ and 28.7% of respondents were strongly agree with ‘I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings’.

I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings		
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	16	5.3
Disagree	21	7.0
Neutral	44	14.7
Agree	133	44.3
Strongly agree	86	28.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 7: - I am able to improve my quality of life through my earnings.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings

The social norms and family structures that are prevalent in developing nations like India are what manifest and maintain the subservient status of women of poor household. From the table 7, it was found out that 12.3% were disagreed with because they belong to poor households while 14.7% were neutral means they didn’t disclose the reality of their family while more than 72% were agreed with the statement as they belong to rich family background. From table 5, it

was also observed that the economic conditions improvement or financially independency didn't develop confidence among poor households as more than 13% respondents were disagreed straight way.

The phenomenon of violence against women among poor household has evolved into a worldwide epidemic, which has had a negative impact on the physical, psychological, sexual, and economic aspects of the lives of women can also be observed from the table 4 where the women can't attend social gathering. Not only does this constitute a violation of human rights, but it also has significant repercussions for a woman's physical, emotional, social, and sexual health. The growth of a nation is subtly but significantly impacted by domestic violence, which is a burden on a number of different sectors of the social structure.

Conclusion

In recent years, domestic violence has garnered the attention it deserves as a significant social issue. However, in order to explain the origin of this negative occurrence, there are a few alternative ways that can be utilized, each of which is derived from a distinct theory. It is well-known that domestic abuse trauma has a negative impact on one's quality of life as well as their physical and mental health. It is possible to reduce the incidence of domestic violence by implementing the tactics of women's empowerment that are mentioned in the chapter and also analysed for both poor and rich households. A process that is known as women's empowerment is one in which women elaborate and reconstruct what it is that they are capable of being, doing, and accomplishing in a situation in which they were previously denied. It is necessary to provide women with the ability to fully engage in economic activity across all sectors in order to establish stronger economies, fulfil internationally agreed-upon goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women. In order to achieve economic empowerment and gender equality for women of poor households, it will be necessary for a wide range of global stakeholders to implement policies that are both proactive and transformative. Hence, the women's empowerment has undergone a complete transformation, shifting from an approach that is welfare-oriented to an approach that is equity-oriented in both poor and rich households.

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