

A Sociological Study of Empowerment of Women through Education in South Kashmir with Special Reference to District Shopian

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Abstract: *The present study has been examined in district Shopian and is based on empowerment of women through education. The sample in this content consists of 115 female respondents and self-made questionnaire has been used for data collection. The group of sample is divided into working and non-working women. Working women comprises of employed married respondents and non-working women consisted of unemployed married respondents. The study in the entire area aims to assess empowerment of women through various parameters like education, employment and decision making status. Previously, women do not have any idea about their investment outlets and they have been discriminated everywhere and treated as second class citizens. But the whole scenario has totally changed via education and employment. Therefore, the present study attempts to find out the how education and employment helps the empowerment of women and their decision making status.*

Keywords: Education, Employment, Empowerment of Women, South Kashmir

Introduction

Historically speaking, women have been regarded as constituting a weaker section in society. They have been treated as “second grade citizens”. They have been pictured and presented as “home makers” who are good in household chores. The image of women has been changing everywhere. Extension of the voting right to women in Britain and America in the beginning of 20th century brought about a series of changes in the status of women especially in the western world. Many of their disabilities, inequalities came to an end in due course. The quest for quality was pursued consistently by the western women. The term empowerment of women has become popular especially after 1980s. It refers to the process of strengthening the hands of women who have been suffering from various disabilities, inequalities and gender discrimination. It refers to the process of providing power to women to become free from the control of others, that is, to assume power to control her own life and to determine her own conditions. Women’s empowerment could also be understood as the process of providing equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and power positions to women so that they are able to play a role on par with men in society.

Indian families are undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Women of the early centuries were mostly confined to their kitchens and those who were employed worked in factories, farms, or shop works. Very few women had the access to higher education and they were forced to be at the mercy of their fathers’ or husbands’ attitudes towards women and work. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. At the present time, Indian women’s exposure to educational opportunities is sustainability higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban setting. Work life balance of women employee has become an important subject since the women are equally sharing the earning responsibility for the betterment for their family.

The education status of women in Kashmir like their counterpart elsewhere in the country is also depressing and quite dismal. Women in the traditional Kashmir society were generally subjected to discrimination, in equality and oppression. The role of women remained confined to domestic affairs and so they were also debarred from education. People were highly conservative and the realization that women need to be educated was totally lacking. Self-Reliance and strong determination in life has a central role to achieve women’s equality and empowerment both in the family as well as community; lack of education, information and low level of literacy are some setbacks. Education helps in generating awareness among women about their legal, social, political, and economic rights, provisions and privileges to fight against all sort of social discrimination. It enables to realize their potentialities, developing skills, seeking employment and improving their nutritional and healthy conditions, education helps women in lightening the burden of tradition of ignorance and strict seclusion within the home. Therefore, education of women encourages not only their

political participation, but it also helps participation of women in income generation activities lends them to satisfy their home needs to greater extent.

The position of women in Kashmir, in spite of legislations and policies, continues to be subordinate with all economic and social indicators pointing towards their unequal access to various resources, Viz. health, education, employment, property right etc. It is a well-established statistical fact that participation and involvement of women in productive and promotional activities is very unfavorably disproportional to their total percentage in Indian population. The position of women becomes further adverse due to societal behaviors in terms of denial of access to material resources and deprivation of social resources like education, health, care etc. Much of women's work remains unvalued, undervalued and unrecognized. They share the major burden in human development, but get very little of its benefits. Dandekan (1986) has described, "Empowerment as a multifaceted process, which involves four parallel aspects. These are - • The woman's economic / resource base; • The public/political arena allowed to her by society; • Her family structure and the strengths and limitations it imposes on her; and • Perhaps most important, the psychological / ideological 'sense' about women in her society, which in turn shapes her own perception of herself and the options she allows herself to consider. "Empowering of women pre-supposes a drastic, dynamic and democratic change in the perception of the expectation from women in our society. To help women to attain economic independence is the first pursuit for such a change. When a woman attains economic independence she naturally becomes the mistress of her own body and author of her own decisions."

Review of Literature

As per Stacki and Monkman (2003), it is commonly deployed as a synonym for enabling, Participating, and speaking out. The notion that education leads to women's empowerment has gained popularity, although we still have much to learn about how education actually empowers women (Stromquist, 2002; DaCosta, 2008; Murphy-Graham, 2008). Nevertheless, in the past 10 years, the goal of women's empowerment (often linked with women's education) has received serious attention, as well as funding by donors and international agencies (Unterhalter, 2007; Mosedale, 2005; Malhotra et al., 2002; Papart et al., 2002; Oxaal and Baden, 1997). Despite its widespread use and occasional abuse, there is some agreement (e.g. Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra et al., 2002; Mosedale, 2005) that empowerment.

Need and Importance of the Present Study: Not a single research a "Sociological study Empowerment of Women in Kashmir-A study in Shopian district" has been undertaken. So the present study aims at examining or assessing empowerment of women in Kashmir in context with parameters like education, employment, decision making status of women (within and outside family), social and family relations, and various problems faced by women etc.

Statement of the Problem: The problem for the present investigation was titled as "Sociological study of Empowerment of Women through Education in Kashmir – A study of District Shopian".

Scope of the Study: Empowerment of women is a long drawn issue, receiving much importance during last few years. The main concern in this regard is to bring women out of the boundary of four walls and to widen their role beyond child and family care to the wider aspects of socioeconomic and cultural activities of the society.

Objectives of the Present Study: The present study aims at studying empowerment of women in Shopian District with parameters like education, employment, decision making (within and outside family), social and family relations and various problems faced by women.

- To study how education changes the status and position of women in society
- To study the role of women on taking decisions within and outside family

Hypothesis of the Study

- Education is a major step which enhances the status of women empowerment.
- Economic empowerment helps women to take their own decisions.

Delimitation of the Study

The present study on “Empowerment of women in Kashmir - A study in Shopian District” has been carried out in District Shopian only.

Research Methodology

The Study: The study makes the use of primary and secondary data. Secondary data for the study was collected from journals, articles, books and online sources. Simple random sampling technique was used for sample collection from district Shopian of Jammu and Kashmir.

Tools for data collection: A self-designed questionnaire has been prepared for the study of which consists of three parts. Part A consists of demographic variables, part B consists of close ended questions and part C of the questionnaire consists of statements measuring the responses on a five point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The study sample consists of 115 female respondents. The sample group is further divided into working and non-working women. Working women consists of 41 employed married respondents and 74 non-working women consisted of unemployed married respondents, hence the ratio between them was 35:65. Since area is large so a representative sample was taken. . A. Profile of the respondents. B. Women and Education C. Economic participation/ Employment D. Decision making power A Profile of the respondents the maximum numbers of respondents were in the age group of 32 - 37 years. This indicates that the age of marriage is increasing due to higher education of females. Majority of non-working women i.e. 53.46 percent were living in joint families as compared to 48.14 percent working women. The study sample of working respondents consisted of 15.25 percent teachers, 8.13 percent clerical/secretarial, 6.75 percent professionals, 3.82 percent bank employees and 2.76 percent worked as administrators.

Result and Discussion

In the pilot study principle component method of factor analysis was applied to determine the minimum number of factors that will account for maximum variance in the date. This initial solution is then rotated by using varimax method with Kaizer normalization to select the variables with high loading on a particular factor. Generally, factor loading represents how much factor explains a variable. High loading indicates that the factor strongly influences the variable. The pilot study resulted in working and non-working pressure and health issues of a women empowerment. Work stress affects the health, no time to pursue the fitness activities. Now days working women are affected by the health issues such as stress, headaches etc. the obligation towards the families and expectations of the organizations and constant struggle to maintain a balance between work and family can have serious implications on the life of an individual by affecting their well-being and overall quality of life. Work pressure comprises of various items namely, take the work home, difficulty in finding the quality time to spend with family, too tired with any family input, difficult to relax due to work pressure. The factors affect the education as well as the empowerment of women.

HYPOTHESIS	ACADEMIC		WORKING FACTORS		Z CAL	Reject/not Reject
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
H1,1	3.05	0.937	3.92	1.98	0.593	Not rejected
H1,2	3.56	0.635	2.74	1.112	0.464	Not rejected

Education gives way to employment which enhances their status within family and outside family. This finding confirms the study hypothesis: “Education enhances status and is a major step for empowerment of women”. Regarding necessity of education to both the sexes, 85.24 percent were in favor that education should be imparted to male and female equally. Only 14.76 percent were of the view that priority of education should be given to males first as they are bread earners of family. The reasons for giving less education to girls as reported by respondents were that most parents believed that education tends to make a girl less attentive towards household work. Also families preferred to spent money for education of sons because the returns to these investments would finally remain within their families. Data revealed 70 percent each of the respondents agreed that property rights, education and employment help women in achieving equal status to men, 53.20 percent women took employment to be economically independent, 46.30 percent utilized their education for employment, 43, 10 percent preferred employment for less income of their family and to supplement their family income, 28.30 percent preferred employment to improve their socio economic status.

Results of the study also show that higher the educational status of women the more is the decision making power especially those who are working. Analysis of the nature of decision making in accordance to women's financial contribution to family income revealed that working women enjoyed more decision making power as they supplemented and supported their families economically. Women who contributed 50 percent to their families were found to take more decisions than those women who contributed financially nothing to their families. A clear distinction in the nature of decisions amongst working and non-working women was observed. This was due to the education and employment status of women which plays an important role in taking decisions in the family. Thus education leads women to better decision making, greater participation, better economic opportunities, hence better income levels which in turn leads to their equality and empowerment.

This finding of present study confirms the hypotheses: "Women's work outside home (i.e. employment) is the primary avenue for their empowerment" and "Economic empowerment helps women to take her own decisions" as per the result both the hypothesis has been accepted in all cases in the present study.

Conclusion

The present discourse revealed both education and employment helps in empowering women and clear distinction was found in working and non-working women. Education and employment may impact on empowerment and decision making status of working women. Hence both of these factors help her in decision making process in the family and also provide some degree of freedom and economic independence. Therefore employed women are financially independent and have earnings of their own and day by day through education women are becoming more knowledgeable and their capacity of taking decision has increased. Also they are becoming more analytical in their investment behavior.

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