

Original Research Article

Constraints in Empowerment of Rural Women in Sahibganj District of Jharkhand, India

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as society. Rajmahal block of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand was selected for the present study. Three villages were selected randomly from the block Rajmahal. Proportionate random sampling technique was used for selection of respondents. 25 women selected randomly from each village. The total no. of respondents was 75. The semi-structured schedule was used to collect the data from rural women. Data was analyzed in terms of percentage, mean and correlation coefficient of contingency. The study concludes that women are discriminated in family. They are provided less opportunity than males in education, employments and in other fields. The study finds that women are discriminated in all walks of life and making them handicapped and obstructing their empowerment. Women are considered as burden and debarred from their fundamental rights. There is a need of promoting education particularly of women, provision of employment opportunities, and eradication of gender-based discrimination. There is a need of harmonizing male dominancy, to make sure equivalent voice of women, ensuring protection at place of work, elimination of health inequalities, discarding limitations on women's participation, harmonizing role of women in the domestic setting and elimination of unnecessary cultural taboos. Functional literacy to rural women should be provided. Strict Government and social compulsion should be there for educating the girls. Training should be given to the rural women about income generating enterprises, so as to engage them in self-employment. Reservation of women is necessary in every area of development. There should be implementation of various programs for empowering the women, both economically and socially.

Keywords

Constraints,
Empowerment,
Rural Women etc.

Introduction

Women empowerment can be defined in very simple words that it is making women powerful so that they can take their own decisions regarding their lives and well being in the family and society. It is empowering women to make them able to get their real rights in the society.

As we all know that India is a male dominated country where males are

dominated in every area and females are forced to be responsible for only family care and live in the home including other many restrictions. Almost 50% of the population in India is covered by the female only so the full development of the country depends on the half population means women, who are not empowered and still restricted by many social taboos. In such condition, we cannot say that our country would be a developed in

the future without empowering its half population means women. If we want to make our country a developed country, first of all it is very necessary to empower women by the efforts of men, government, laws and women too. The need of women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination in the Indian society since ancient time. Women are being suppressed by their family members and society for many reasons. They have been targeted for many types of violence and discriminatory practices by the male members in the family and society in India and other countries as well. Wrong and old practices for the women in the society from ancient time have taken the form of well developed customs and traditions. There is a tradition worshipping many female goddesses in India including giving honor to the women forms in the society like mother, sister, daughter, wife and other female relatives or friends. But, it does not mean that only respecting or honoring women can fulfill the need of development in the country. It needs the empowerment of the rest half population of the country in every walk of life. India is a famous country proving the common proverb like 'Unity is diversity', where people of many religious beliefs are in the Indian society. Women have been given a special place in every religion which is working as a big curtain covering the eyes of people and help in the continuation of many ill practices against women as a norm since ages. In the ancient Indian society, there was a custom of sati partha, nagar vadhu system, dowry system, sexual violence, domestic violence, female infanticide, parda partha, wife burning, sexual harassment at work place, child marriage, child labor, devadashi pratha, etc including other discriminatory practices. All such type of ill practices is because of male superiority complex and patriarchal system of the society.

In order to really bring women empowerment in the Indian society, it needs to understand and eliminate the main cause of the ill practices against women which are patriarchal and male dominated system of the society. It needs to be open-minded and change the old mind set against women together with the constitutional and other provisions. The present study on constraints in empowerment of rural women was undertaken keeping in view the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-personal and economic status of rural women
2. To find out the constraints faced by rural women
3. To identify the correlation coefficient (r) between different variables and overall constraints about empowerment of rural women.

Materials and Methods

Rajmahal block of Sahibganj districts, Jharkhand was selected for the present study. Three village were selected randomly from the block Rajmahal. Proportionate random sampling technique was used for selection of respondents. 25 women selected randomly from each village. The total no. of respondents was 75. The semi-structured schedule was used to collect the data from rural women. Data was analyzed in terms of percentage, mean and correlation coefficient of contingency.

Results and Discussion

The research was planned to analyze the constraints in empowerment of rural women. Therefore, the socio-personal and economic profile of respondents was studied in depth and is presents in following Table 1. It is clear from the table 1 that maximum 58.66 per cent of the respondents are in the age

group of 18-26, 36.00 per cent of the respondents were illiterate and only 06.66 per cent respondents who were educated above matric, 56.00 per cent belong to Backward caste, majority of 53.33 per cent respondents belonged to nuclear family and rest 46.33 per cent had joint family showing the declining trend of joint family. It is also clear from the table that majority of the respondents have large (41.33%) and medium (40.00%) family. Among all the respondents all most all engagement in their household activities, while 05.33 per cent of them were engage as business followed by 04.00 per cent who were service holders. 04.00 percent engaged in agricultural laborer and only 02.66 per cent of them were engaged in their respective caste occupation. In the case of land holding majority of the respondents (41.33%) possessed marginal size of land while (36.00%) were landless, 70.66 per cent possessed 1 to 4 animals, more than half of the respondents were having income level 25,001 to 50,000 per annum, 44.00 per cent respondents had katcha type of house. The findings also revealed that majority of respondents (42.66%) were the members of one organization. In the case Cosmo politeness respondents were having low to medium level of Cosmo politeness.

Table2 indicate that the social constraints social taboos, tradition and customs hinder in women empowerment was ranked first (4.25), followed by the family members unanimously oppose the gender to participate in social activities ranked II (4.13), dependable nature of women suppress them in their empowerment was ranked III (3.99), lack of gender based academic institutions causes women illiteracy was ranked IV (3.84) and the right of free avenues of expression to women lack was ranked V (3.76). The mean score of

each constrains indicates the degree of seriousness which caused poor empowerment of rural women.

Economic constraints in empowerment of rural women

Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's right and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. It is about creating just and equitable societies. Women often face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities. With some women experience multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as ethnicity of caste. Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment increase women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, property, and other productive assets, skill development and market information (OECD, 2012).

From the table 3 we conclude that the rank order of economic constraints viz, male often operate the bank accounts of the family was ranked I (4.22), followed by ownership of family income and finance generally in male hands was ranked II (4.02), hindrance in implementation of women rights for sharing in family property was ranked III (3.88), lack of agro-based and rural industries for the income generation and employment of rural women was ranked IV (3.76) and the women of the family in service are not free to spend their income independently was ranked V (3.54).

Table.1 Socio-personal and economic profile of the respondents

SL.NO.	VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	MEAN
1.	Age group of respondents			
	18-25	44	58.66	31.69
	27-35	23	30.66	
	36-45	08	10.66	
2.	Education of respondents			
	Illiterate	27	36.00	02.10
	Can read only	08	10.66	
	Can read & write	12	16.00	
	Primary	06	08.00	
	Middle	07	09.33	
	High	10	13.33	
	Above matric	15	06.66	
3.	Caste			
	General	30	40.00	
	Backward	42	56.00	
	Schedule caste	03	04.00	
	Schedule tribe caste	00	00.00	
4.	Type of family			
	Nuclear	40	53.33	
	Joint	35	46.33	
5.	Size of the family			
	Small (up to 4 members)	14	18.66	07.60
	Medium (5-8 members)	30	40.00	
	Large (more than 8 members)	31	41.33	
6.	Occupation of respondents			
	Agricultural labor	03	04.00	
	Caste occupation	02	02.66	
	Business	04	05.33	
	Service	03	04.00	
	Housewife	75	100.00	
7.	Size of land holding			
	Land less	27	36.00	03.39
	Marginal (up to 02.50 acres)	31	41.33	
	Small (02.51 to 05.00 acres)	14	18.66	
	Medium (05.10 to 10.00 acres)	03	04.00	
	Large (more than 10.00 acres)	00	00.00	
8.	Livestock possession			
	No animals	19	25.33	01.41
	1 to 4 animals	53	70.66	
	5 to 8 animals	03	04.00	
9.	Family income per annum			
	Below poverty line, 11,000	01	01.33	6026.66

	Very low 11,001 to 25,000	11	14.66	
	Low 25,001 to 50,000	43	57.44	
	Medium 50,001 to 75,000	13	17.33	
	High 75,001 and above	07	09.33	
10.	Type of house			
	Katcha	30	40.00	
	Mixed	12	16.00	
	Pucca	33	44.00	
11.	Social participation			
	No membership	31	41.33	00.74
	Members of one organization	32	42.66	
	Members of more than one organization	12	16.66	
12.	Cosmo politeness			
	Low	33	44.00	04.33
	Medium	36	48.00	
	High	06	08.00	

Table.2 Social constraints in empowerment of rural women N=75

SL. NO.	SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS	MEAN SCORE VALUES	RANK
1.	Lack of gender based academic institutions causes women illiteracy	3.84	IV
2.	Dependable nature of women suppress them in their empowerment	3.99	III
3.	The right of free avenues of expression to women lack	3.76	V
4.	Social taboos, superstitions, tradition and customs hinder in women empowerment	4.25	I
5.	The family members unanimously oppose the gender to participate in social activities	4.13	II

Table.3 Economic constraints in empowerment of rural women

SL.NO.	ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1.	Lack of Agro-based and rural industries for the income generation and employment of rural women	3.76	IV
2.	Hindrance in implementation of women rights for sharing in family property	3.88	III
3.	Ownership of family income and finance and generally in male hands	4.02	II
4.	Males often operate the bank accounts of the family only	4.22	I
5.	The women of the family in service are not free to spend their income independently	3.54	V

Table.4 Political constraints in empowerment of rural women

SL.NO.	POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1.	Harassment and exploitation of women leaders by officials, social workers and other. Who dishearten them in their empowerment	3.76	IV
2.	Women generally by nature avoid to lead the group organization and the society	4.12	II
3.	The political provisions for gender leadership are either not implemented or encroached by men, if implement	3.56	V
4.	The ill motive people misguide the women leaders in their vested interest and thus weaken them	3.98	III
5.	The male dominated society does not digest the women coming forward to lead	4.44	I

Table.5 Correlation coefficient (r) between different socio-personal and economic variables and overall constraints in empowerment of rural women

SL. NO.	VARIABLES	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (r)
1.	Age	0.1312
2.	Caste	0.0070
3.	Family type	0.2194
4.	Family size	0.1166
5.	Occupation	0.1254
6.	Education	0.3098**
7.	Size of land holdings	0.2810**
8.	Livestock possession	-0.0455
9.	Family income per annum	0.6924**
10.	Type of house	-0.1149
11.	Social participation	0.6082**
12.	Cosmo politeness	0.4585**
13.	Risk orientation	0.4553**
14.	Social constraints	-0.3138**
15.	Economic constraints	-0.3123**
16.	Political constraints	-0.3393**

** Significant at 0.01 level of probability

* Significant at 0.05 level of probability

Table 4 revealed that the male dominated society does not digest the women coming forward to lead was ranked I (4.44), Women generally by nature avoid to lead the group organization and the society was ranked II (4.12), The ill motive people misguide the

women leaders in their vested interest and thus weaken them was ranked III (3.98), Harassment and exploitation of women leaders by officials, social workers and other. Who dishearten them in their empowerment? Was ranked IV (3.76) and

the political provisions for gender leadership are either not implemented or encroached by men, if implemented was ranked V (3.56).

The table 5 reveals that out of sixteen variables studied, as many as six variables were found positively correlated with the empowerment of rural women. These variables are education, size of land holdings, family income per annum, social participation, Cosmo-politeness and risk orientation. Social constraints, economic constraints and political constraints were negatively correlated with the empowerment of rural women that means when different types of constraints increased the empowerment of the rural women decreases. Whereas, age, caste, family type, family size, occupation, livestock possession, and house type were not found to have significant correlation with the empowerment of rural women. The effect of these variables were found non-significant

The study concludes that women are discriminated in family. They are provided less opportunity than males in education, employments and in other fields. The study finds that women are discriminated in all walks of life and making them handicapped and obstructing their empowerment. Women are considered as burden and debarred from their fundamental rights.

There is a need of promoting education particularly of women, provision of employment opportunities, and eradication of gender-based discrimination. There is a need of harmonizing male dominancy, to make sure equivalent voice of women, ensuring protection at place of work, elimination of health inequalities, discarding limitations on women's participation, harmonizing role of women in the domestic

setting and elimination of unnecessary cultural taboos. Functional literacy to rural women should be provided. Strict Government and social compulsion should be there for educating the girls. Training should be given to the rural women about income generating enterprises, so as to engage them in self-employment. Reservation of women is necessary in every area of development. There should be implementation of various programs for empowering the women, both economically and socially.

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