

ASSESSING HEALTHY LIVING AND MEASURING EMPOWERMENT LEVEL OF WOMEN USING INDEX

A.Nasima* & Dr. P.Shalini**

** Ph.D. Scholar, School of Management Studies, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS) Chennai, India. Email-Nasimakhaleel7@gmail.com*

***Corresponding Author, Professor, School of Management Studies, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS) Chennai, India. Email-shalini.sms@velsuniv.ac.in*

Abstract:

Background of the study: The term Women empowerment is a method of increasing women's right to manage over tactical life spans, which influence them to access chances that make them understand their abilities. Empowering Women is essential for the economic development of a nation as per the year 2020 world records, female pilots are more in India compared to other nationals. We are somewhere high at a similar phase still our nation women are struggling to attain Gender Equality. This is because of our patriarchal society.

Objective: The key objective of this study is to determine the level of women empowerment in domain base, individual, and overall.

Methodology: This study focuses on women empowerment using an index with five domains to find the level of Individual, overall, and domain wise. The Questionnaire was distributed to 300 rural women in Chengalpattu district, the data collection was done by using a close-ended questionnaire with a structured interview method using purposive sampling the result was further derived using an index method.

Findings: The study found using the index indicates that rural women in Chengalpattu district are overall empowered; they have reached > .8 adequate levels, by domain wise empowerment levels first, came the knowledge second, the domestic Third, the health fourth, the Activity and finally Fifth, the social interaction. Activity domain and social interaction have a very low level of empowerment special care should be taken to overcome this issue.

Keywords: *Women Empowerment Index, Activity, Knowledge, Health, DomesticAutonomy Social Interaction*

Introduction: We have passed two decades in this 21st century still Empowering Women is a necessary issue, In the UN 2030 Agenda the 5th goal is about Gender Equality this goal itself speaks on how women are still backward globally. India is still a developing nation and the problem persists due to Gender inequality. Participation of women labour force will increase the GDP growth rate; India has a 50% of women population so the equal opportunity is needed. As per the 2020 statistics of Gender Gap report, India has dropped down 4 places from 108th in 2018 to 112th place in 2020 in a total of 153 countries. To overcome this issue based on many articles, news, and current statistics and found some of the domains which are very important to raise the level of empowerment of individuals as well as overall. The domains are divided into two, Input Domain as Knowledge, Activity, and Health, and Output domain as, Social interaction, Domestic Autonomy.

Knowledge domain talks about literacy skills. The main access to empowering women is Education. If you educate women you educate a family, if you educate a girl, you educate the imminent. Education is considered as a primary factor to empower women. Education gives self-confidence to women to take proper decisions on time and to handle situations. A women's Education is the Education of a generation. This tool helps women to enroll in the labour force which not only helps in empowerment but also results in the good economic growth of the Nation. Empowerment defines by the United Nations as the method in which women yield and manage the rights of their lives through the growth of their choices. To survive in this spirited earth women need to be allowed Socially, Economically, and Politically.

Women's Health is an important factor, nowadays, because of poor health conditions, Women aren't able to take part in Family decisions and also not participating in social activities which is vital for the growth of women. Health is considered as the overall well-being of women. Healthy women can perform their tasks without any interruption. Health is defined by the WHO as "a shape of overall comfort like physically mentally and socially and not just a lack of illness or disability".

Social Interaction of women is considered an essential factor for the empowerment of women. The United Nations, (1995) has defined social participation as the society for all, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. The involvement of social participation of a woman holistically denotes empowerment.

Domestic Autonomy is the autonomy of moving freely in the society without waiting for the approval of husband/family members to go out to the market or health facility center and to decide about bearing a baby, deciding on household purchases without any consultation.

Activity domain which talks about the handling of finance. Women who are earning and controlling their earnings (money) incline to have an increased level of empowerment. This is a dream of the UN to participate in all women in the labour force will automatically increase the level of empowerment.

Women empowerment index was initially formed by the United Nation Development Program in 1995. “GDI-Gender related development Index “ and “GEM- Gender Empowerment Measure” tool are the two tools of Index, This gender development Index helps to find the gender gaps like education, income based on their measure life expectancy, etc., (**Chandan Roy et.al., 2018**) Additionally found the index to find The level of empowerment and It helps us to measure the accurate empowerment level of women and then measure individually through separate domains like input and output domains and finally able to find the overall empowerment of women. It also provides information if the level of empowerment is adequate or not.

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify the women empowerment level of women using domains like Activity, Knowledge, Health, Domestic Autonomy, and Social interaction using the Index method.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Activity Domain:

(Balasubramanian, Kuppusamy, & Natarajan, 2019) suggested that women who have more wealth quintiles are having good financial inclusion and women who are not having the land on their own are not getting credit access. They are forcibly backed to get access through the family members, especially, Men. (**Holloway, Niazi, & Rouse, 2017**) suggested that an increase in the

usage of fiscal goods and amenities will help in economic growth and poverty alleviation. This helps women to take a risk in their business and invest more in education and improvement of the home. **(Robert, Tilman, & Nina, 2014)** has explained that financial inclusion only dissolves poverty and will help in closing the gap of job opportunities and stepping out from the dependent life provided by the husband will help them to overcome the lack of economic resources.

Knowledge Domain:

(Yasun, 2018) suggested based on his study in Diyarbakir city Turkey that Education is a key factor to empower women because it is the originator of other factors that impacts empowerment. Illiterate people are not able to exercise their rights and benefits more than literate people. To improve their socio-economic status, the important tool of education is a mandatory one. **(Barman & Bengal, 2018)** emphasize that the first crucial role played to empower women is Education. Education is a pivotal one for the economically weaker women and most backward classes. The people who are well educated have a better decision-making skills than illiterate people. **(Abrar-ul-haq, Jali, & Islam, 2017)** found in his study that Education is a basic human right that rights across the religious caste, etc., it helps women not only in attaining gender equality but also helps in taking own decision regarding their personal growth, job opportunities. Education makes a big difference at all levels. Women should treat equally that too in the regions of rural, education should be considered mandatory due to prevailing low socio-economic status.

Health:

(Ross, Zereyesus, Shanoyan, & Amanor-Boadu, 2015) found from his study that the women are enrolling in credit access like loan property in their name, their involvement in production agriculture, this increase their financial autonomy and household decision authority, income and freedom to spend the money according to their wish will. This will result in a good positive impact on them, and will automatically lead to a good effect on health which improves productivity in the agricultural sector. **(Batool, Talat, & Ali, 2014)** from the study that psychological health is an important factor when we analyze empowerment. A person's freedom and decision-making power ensure empowerment not only results in psychological wellbeing and also helps in a person's growth of Self-confidence will give good mental health. **(Varkey,**

Kureshi, & Lesnick, 2010)Explores in his study that women are the caretaker of the family as they play a major role in concentrating health issues of the family which results in a good impact on health in the larger community.

Domestic Autonomy:

(Cherayi & Jose, 2016), found from the study that domestic autonomy has a direct relation with social participation and economic resources like job opportunities rise their approach to fiscal chances, with commercial amenities, careers, assets, and other industrious assets, **(Goldin & Lawrence, 2002)** found from his study that rural women have less domestic autonomy due to fewer job opportunities. Unavailability of proper transport facilities then lacks in training their traditional minds and many responsibilities at home stop women empowerment. **(Kabeer, 1999)**emphasize that Contribution of women in labour force or involvement in any self-employment will have access to handling social materials and resources. This gives women equal importance will automatically lead to improving the status of women and empowerment.

Social interaction:

(Kakati & Behera, 2014)reveals in his study that empowerment is a process of involving women not only in household decisions but also involve in the society which only leads to empowerment **(Bayeh, 2016)**stated that if women are involved as active participants that leads to improvement in social development and increased self –satisfaction, which increases empowerment. **(Bhatia & Mehandiratta, 2014)** found that giving a good positive environment of society gives the enormous development of women that make them independent in deciding societal activities that enhance empowerment.

INDEX:

(Roy, Chatterjee, & Gupta, 2019) has explicitly explained in their study that the Empowerment level of women can be measured using the tool index, for SHG(self-help group) members. The results confirm that educated women are adequately empowered while the SHG leaders are also adequately empowered because of taking financial decisions on their own, these women are against domestic violence and they decide on children's education and marriage. **(Roy, C, and Roy Mukherjee, S 2014)** explain in their study that the index is divided into two ways like ”

Social empowerment index” SEI and “Family Empowerment index “FEI. To determine the FEI score individually like the decision about the production, Income Spending on Health and education. SEI will be determined through the members of the self-help group, Non-governmental organization members, and the members of a local political party. Based on these aspects (**Banerjee & Chakrabarti, 2013**) in his study named empowerment as capability enhancement in which 3 domains namely Education, Health, and Autonomy are considered as proposed indicators. The scaling items of Knowledge Education are an application of knowledge, family planning, and functional literacy. For health, intake of food, then their BMI level and the HB level. Finally the autonomy questions like decision making, permission needed, and perceived freedom are negative indicators. Based on these dimensions will result in appropriate weights of individual and overall empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

This study is focused on finding the empowerment level of women in the rural region of Chengalpattu locality. The study has surveyed 300 rural women by using the questionnaire method with the purposive sampling technique to full- fill the purpose of the study.

Respondents and data collection

The population of this research was targeted to low-income group women whose Annual income is below 80,000 per annum as per the India statistics report, and the women who are working, Doing their own business at home, agriculture work, etc., from Chengalpattu district. The rural areas are Neelamangalam, Padalam, Agaram, and Madambakkam. The questionnaire was collected from 300 rural women and data collection was done by using the purposive sampling technique with an interview method.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items, in which 5 questions based on demographic and 3 items per domain totally 5 domain equals 15 items with Yes or No option. There was an adequate level of empowerment found in the study.

The five domains questionnaires are tabulated below table 1. To determine the relation of domains in women empowerment and its level in overall as well as the individual level of empowerment.

Index Calculation

Table 1:Empowerment index table based on Chandan Roy, Chatterjee& Gupta 2018

Factor	Items	Power
<u>Exogenous Factor (Eni)</u>	(Enij)	(wtk)
1)Activity Domain(En1)	Do you have direct credit access (En₁₁)	wt1
	Will you decide business resource utilization(En₁₂)	wt2
	Will you take repayment decision in the micro credit business (En₁₃)	wt3
2)KnowledgeDomain(En2)	Do you have financial literacy (En₂₁)	wt4
	Have you completed elementary education(En₂₂)	wt5
	Are you aware of family planning (En₂₃)	wt6
3)Health Domain (En3)	If your BMI>18.5; (En₃₁)	wt7
	If you are free from anemia Hb>11.0 mg/dL (En₃₂)	wt8
	Do you have sanitation and safe drinking water facility; (En₃₃)	wt9
Endogenous Factor (ExI)	(Exij)	
1). Domestic Autonomy (Ex1)	Do you take protest against domestic violence & alcoholism within household (Ex₁₁)	wt10
	Do you take purchase or sales decision about domestic resources; (Ex₁₂)	wt11
	Do you take household decision about resource, health and education(Ex₁₃)	wt12
2). Social Interaction (Ex2)	Are you a member in local political party / NGO (Ex₂₁)	wt13
	Will you increase voice besides communal corruptions (Ex₂₂)	wt14
	Do you have autonomy to step out securely in the society. (Ex₂₃)	wt15

Individual Empowerment Index:

$$IEI = \sum_{i=1, j=1, k=1}^{3,3,9} (W_{tk} En_{ij}) + \sum_{i=1, j=1, k=10}^{3,3,15} (W_{tk} Ex_{ij})$$

En₁₁ = 1, if means woman having direct credit right;
= 0, otherwise;

En₁₂ = 1, meanstaking the decision regarding business resource operations;
= 0, otherwise;

En 13 = 1, means taking repayment decisionsto micro credit corporate
= 0, otherwise;
En 21 = 1, means woman has knowledge about economic literacy;
= 0, otherwise;
En 22 = 1, means women who completes the fundamental education
= 0, otherwise;
En 23 = 1, means proper awareness for family planning;
= 0, otherwise;
En 31 = 1, means her Body Mass Index>18.5;
= 0, otherwise;
En 32 = 1, means free from anemia , i.e., Hb>11.0 mg/dL;
= 0, otherwise;
En 33 = 1, means having water and sanitation facility;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex11 = 1, means in home protesting against alcoholism, domestic violence;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex 12 = 1, means handling household decisions regarding education health and the resources;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex 13 = 1, means having deciding autonomy in sales or purchase decision in domestic resources;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex 21 = 1, means she is the member in NGO or political party ;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex 22 = 1, means Will you increase voice besides communal corruptions;
= 0, otherwise;
Ex 23 = 1, means having autonomy to step out securely in the society;
= 0, otherwise

Measures:

- After Entering Data,The formula derived and calculated using Microsoft Excel for accurate Findings of the Study.
- Based on the above method, the index of individual women in rural has been calculated individually. The Rural women whose score is >0.8 are considered as an acceptable level of Empowerment whereas <0.8 is considered to be an unacceptable level of empowerment.
- Then finally group empowerment is calculated by the following method based on the following method.

Table 2 This method is based on WEAI by Alkire et al.

Women Empowerment Index Rural [WEmI _{Rural}] Wem +Wen (Da)	0.73+0.274(40) 0.73+0.1096 0.8396 (>.8 infers that women are empowered)
Wem= The % of women whose empowerment level is adequate.	72.6%
Wen= The % of women who are without adequate empowerment=(1-Wem)	27.4
Da= The % of Variables where disempowered women who are adequate empowerment.	In 5 domain 3 has good empowerment level 2 has low value. =2/5=40%

Table 3 Shows the empowerment level of women in Domain wise

S.no	Domain Name	300 women
1	Activity Domain	126
2	Knowledge Domain	212
3	Health Domain	177
4	Domestic autonomy	181
5	Social interaction	56

FINDINGS:

- From the above results of table 2, it is concluded that 72.6% of women i.e. (Wem) has an adequate level of empowerment, 27.4% of women i.e. (Wen) are an inadequate level of empowerment. This result itself proves that women in this study area are in good empowerment levels in overall domains. The % of Variables where disempowered women who are adequate empowerment is (Da) here three domains have a good level of empowerment remaining two domains has below 50% value which shows an inadequate level of empowerment. Then Women Empowerment Index Rural [WEmI_{Rural}] Wem +Wen

(Da)in deriving this index method refer table 2.Finally the study reveals the overall index is 0.8396 which is >0.8 which shows an adequate level of empowerment.

- Using the Index method from Table 3, it has been concluded that, knowledge domain has 212 women who are empowered which is good majority empowerment compared to other domains this knowledge domain has items like financial literacy, whether they completed elementary education, and their awareness regarding family planning. In Domestic autonomy 181 women are having good autonomy, which has items like protesting against domestic violence, purchase, and sales decisions, then decisions regarding health education, etc., Then Health domain which says 177 women are leading a good healthy life, which has items like sanitation and safe drinking water facility, whether they are anemic free, they are conscious about their height and weight. This shows their self-caring. Whereas the Activity domain which has only 126 women is empowered and has a low level of empowerment because of items like credit access, business resource utilization, and taking decisions on repayment. Finally, women's social interaction in which only 56 women are empowered and have an extremely low level of empowerment. The items are members of local parties, raising voice against social crimes, and enjoying freedom in society without asking permission. Here the special care to be taken to these two domains namely the activity domain and especially the Social interaction domain which is very important to empower women. If women have equal enrollment in political parties is good women empowerment. (Fadia, 2014) Suggested that women have been empowered enormously in all sectors this political participation of women is less not only a national issue it is an international issue. After the amendment that one-third of women's seats to be allotted all political parties implementing to get the support but in less proportion should give actual strength which will result in good Women empowerment is not beneficial for women but also directly influential to men and children.

DISCUSSIONS:

Compared to other Factors, the Knowledge Domain has an Adequate level of empowerment. That is one of the essential factors of Empowerment As emphasized by (Barman & Bengal, 2018) for the empowerment of women education is a key factor, Nowadays, Women are

educating in various areas and support is initiated by the government. Then Domestic Autonomy which talks about the autonomy that prevails inside the home like decisions regarding purchase or sales within the household

(**Yogendrarajah,2014**) Suggested that women decision making power in home influence empowerment and its initially starts from home.(**Holloway et al., 2017**) also infer that financial access makes and feel women highly empowered.(**Storm, Xi, & Khan, 2018**) have inferred that Health plays an important role in empowerment to destroy gender inequality (**Bushra&Wajiha, 2015**) reveal that social participation of women has a direct impact on women empowerment which helps to increase and enhance women's role in society.

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

This study was performed based on quantitative research, Due to lack of time sample collected was restricted to 300. The study should include non-working women that help to find the disparity between working women and non-working women. Further study was directed to perform in qualitative analysis. Many other factors are there to check the individual level of women empowerment like self-esteem, culture, income, property, etc., the study has not taken marginalized women and women in tribes into consideration.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that women in rural areas are empowered marginally. Their main empowerment tool is considered as their knowledge which includes School attainment, having financial literacy, then their awareness regarding family planning which enhances them to empower. Secondly, they have autonomy at home by deciding on their home regarding household purchases then protesting against domestic violence like alcoholism. Thirdly they are conscious about their health like they have an accurate weight according to height, their HB levels, and maintaining anemia-free health. Finally, the other two domains are the activity domain which includes credit access utilization of resources, and taking decisions regarding repayment. The other domain is Social interaction which has a very less level of empowerment which speaks about the involvement of women in the society like a member in political parties, raising voice regarding social crimes, and the freedom of mobility without asking permissions.

Evaluating this study suggests that social interaction of women is more important to empower women and it is a very important factor to bring about a big impact on society (Shalini & Sudha, 2019) United Nation one goal is also to enroll women in politics is very less if that increases which are considered as the empowerment of women.

References

- Abrar-ul-haq, M., Jali, M. R. M., & Islam, G. M. N. (2017). Decision-Making Ability as a Source of Empowerment Among Rural Women of Pakistan. *Global Social Welfare*, 4(3), 117–125. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-017-0091-7>
- Balasubramanian, S. A., Kuppusamy, T., & Natarajan, T. (2019). Financial inclusion and land ownership status of women. *International Journal of Development Issues*, 18(1), 51–69. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJDI-06-2018-0091>
- Banerjee, S., & Chakrabarti, A. (2013). Development and sustainability: India in a global perspective. *Development and Sustainability: India in a Global Perspective*, (April 2016), 1–617. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-81-322-1124-2>
- Barman, B., & Bengal, W. (2018). Educational impact on empowerment of Scheduled Caste Women of Kochbihardistrict , West Bengal Educational Impact on Empowerment of Scheduled Caste Women of Koch Bihar District , West Bengal, (August).
- Batool, A., Talat, A., & Ali, F. (n.d.). Assessing Psychological Health and Empowerment in Women.
- Bayeh, E. (2016). The role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development of Ethiopia. *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 37–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psrb.2016.09.013>
- Bhatia, A., & Mehandiratta, K. (2014). Empowering Socio- Cultural Environment of Women- An Empirical Study Of Female Professionals of District Faridabad. *International Journal of Application or Innovation in Engineering & Management (IJAIEM)*, 3(2), 1–7. Retrieved from <http://ijaiem.org/volume3issue2/IJAIEM-2014-02-06-004.pdf>
- Bushra, A., & Wajiha, N. (2015). ScienceDirect Assessing the Socio-Economic Determinants of Women Empowerment in Pakistan, 177(July 2014), 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.02.321>
- Cherayi, S., & Jose, J. P. (2016). Empowerment and social inclusion of Muslim women:

- Towards a new conceptual model. *Journal of Rural Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.04.003>
- Fadia, K. (2014). Women's Empowerment Through Political Participation in India. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 60(3), 537–548.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0019556120140313>
- Goldin, C., & Lawrence, F. (2002). The Power of the Pill : Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions.
- Holloway, K., Niazi, Z., & Rouse, R. (2017). Women's Economic Empowerment Through Financial Inclusion. A Review of Existing Evidence and Remaining Knowledge Gaps, (Innovations for Poverty Action), 12. Retrieved from <https://www.poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/publications/Womens-Economic-Empowerment-Through-Financial-Inclusion.pdf>
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources , Agency , Achievements : Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment, 30(May), 435–464.
- Kakati, B. K., & Behera, M. C. (2014). Women workers and their status in MGNREG programme: A study in Jharkhand. *Journal of Rural Development*, 33(3), 281–290.
- Robert, C., Tilman, E., & Nina, H. (2014). Financial inclusion and development: Recent impact evidence. *Focus Note*, 92(April), 1–12. Retrieved from <http://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/FocusNote-Financial-Inclusion-and-Development-April-2014.pdf>
- Ross, K. L., Zereyesus, Y. A., Shanoyan, A., & Amanor-Boadu, V. (2015). The health effects of women empowerment: Recent evidence from northern Ghana. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 18(1), 127–144.
<https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.197777>
- Roy, C., Chatterjee, S., & Dutta Gupta, S. (2019). Women Empowerment Index: Construction of a Tool to Measure Rural Women Empowerment Level in India. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3357543>
- Roy, C., Chatterjee, S., & Gupta, S. D. (2018). Women Empowerment Index : Construction of a Tool to Measure Rural Women Empowerment Level in India, 7(1), 199–212.
<https://doi.org/10.15410/ajm/2018/v7i1/>
- Shalini, P., & Sudha, S. (2019). Antecedents of women empowerment in rural india.

International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering, 8(3), 4503–4506.
<https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.C6812.098319>

Storm, M., Xi, A., & Khan, A. (2018). *Women's empowerment in India: assessment of women's confidence before and after training as a lay provider*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(18\)30173-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30173-6)

Varkey, P., Kureshi, S., & Lesnick, T. (2010). Empowerment of women and its association with the health of the community. *Journal of Women's Health*, 19(1), 71–76.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2009.1444>

Yasun, S. (2018). Does education enable underprivileged women to achieve real equality in property rights? A case study of inheritance rights of women in Turkey. *Women's Studies International Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.05.013>

Yogendrarajah, R. (n.d.). Women Empowerment Through Decision Making: Abstract Background of the Study :, 1–9.