

A PRAGMATIC STUDY: WOMEN FARMER EMPOWERMENT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract: The empowerment of the women is a highly significant issue in today's scenario for the gender equity and nations development. Several schemes and government policies are designed to take step ahead of the situation and prepare grounds for the empowerment of women in all walks of human life. The empowerment of women is a multi-dimensional aspect which demands active participation of various stakeholders in a developing nation. In the present times women studies has become an important branch of academic mainstream in India. Recently series of innovative approaches are adopted to ensure equality of opportunity and empowerment of women in all respects. Gender justice is considered as a vital necessity in India. According to last census, India had a total women population of 45.2 per cent of the total population. Out of this population, about 70 per cent were rural and the remaining 30 per cent were urban. In rural India, the percentage of women who depend on agriculture for their livelihood is as high as 84%. Women make up about 33% of cultivators and about 47% percent of agricultural laborers as, majority of the women come from rural areas, they are considered as the nation builders of tomorrow. This important section of the rural population is women farmers and they can respond to the needs of country only if they are offered fruitful opportunities for growing up as useful citizens. Women farmers have been playing quite a significant role in almost every country of the world as they possess the zeal and vigor necessary to create opportunities for national development. At present, the women farmers are having civic engagement, different needs, aspirations, attitudes, habits and values of life. The development of personal, social, economical and spiritual aspects of rural women are possible, only when they will empowered and their needs, aspirations, health, habits and values of life are recognized early and guided properly. Women farmers also played very vital role in poverty reduction and coping with draught. Therefore, the development and harnessing of the participation and energies of women farmers towards constructive channels has always engaged the attention of a country's planners and policy markers. One of the most effective ways of development and channeling the potentials of women farmers' creative purpose is through the civic engagement. They help themselves to develop physically, mentally, socially and economically and prepare them to meet effectively the future challenges of life. Therefore, in this study some of these aspects are considered and which would be useful to the agencies involved in the development of rural youth. There is less number of studies in this area of research in Maharashtra. Hence, an attempt will be made in this study to know the significance of civic engagement for economic and social empowerment of women farmers.

Keywords: civic engagement, Women farmers, Socio-economic empowerment, Spiritual, Aspirations.

Introduction: *"To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior: Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?"*

Mahatma Gandhi

Women farmers are key in the society and their role is very important in the world. They have a significant contribution not only in the family but also in the society. In developed and most of the developing countries both men and women work together in the same positions and they contribute politically, socially, economically without gender imbalance. However some countries would have

influenced by social, cultural and religious rigid they are unable to give equal opportunity to the women in all sphere. Therefore, nowadays the women empowerment is the important context in the world. Women empowerment means giving lawful power or authority to perform. If women farmers will empowered they would be able to participate in the planning and decision making and contribute to the development programmes individually. Women empowerment is defined as a process to enhance women's capacity for self-determination to meet their practical needs and strategic needs by achieving equal rights, power and authority and resources like men in the society as well as economy.

Empowerment of women farmers in the context of knowledge societies is under-stood as building the ability and skills of women to gain insight of actions and issues in the external environment which influence them, and to build their capacity to get involved and voice their concerns in these external

processes, to make informed decisions. It entails building up capacities of women to overcome social and institutional barriers and strengthening their participation in the economic and political processes for an overall improvement in the quality of their life. (Jain, 2010) In addition, Women become empowered through collective reflection and decision-making. Its parameters are – building a positive self-image and self-confidence; developing the ability to think critically; building up group cohesion, and action; ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change; encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society; providing the wherewithal for economic independence (Saba, 2005)

Objectives:

1. To ascertain significant predictor of civic engagement.
2. To discover the consequences of civic engagement for economic and social empowerment of women farmers.
3. To evaluate the impact of civic engagement on domestic violence, poverty reduction and agricultural development across socio-economic profile of women farmers.
4. To examine the arbitrate relationship between civic engagement and gender equality through socio-economic empowerment.
5. To identify the Barriers to women farmers Empowerment

Research Methodology: The study was conducted in Solapur district of Maharashtra State. This district was purposively chosen for the study because it is surrounded by maximum rural and farmer communities which are mainly familiar of agriculture sector. A multiple cross sectional descriptive type of research was designed for the study. Convenient sampling was used as the sampling technique and a total of 100 women farmers were selected. Primary data was used in the study, and interview method of data collection technique was undertaken. Period of study was during Jan-March 2016. A structured pre-tested questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Pretesting of the questionnaire was done among small group of women farmers. Various dimensions were determined by presenting before the respondents an inventory of 22 different views of farmers towards draught condition. Views were designed by referring to the literature and prepared 22 statements reflecting empowerment due to their civic engagement. The women farmers were requested to rank the statements on a 5-point Likert scale basis (1= strongly agree & 5 = strongly disagree) factor analysis technique was used to analyze the primary data. Obtained data through the

questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS (20) software package in 95 % confidence interval

Data Analysis: Factor Analysis: Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Trimming a large number of variables to reach at few factors to explain the original data more economically and efficiently factors analysis, a widely used multivariate technique in research. It is important tool for resolving this confusion and identifying factors from an array of seemingly important variables.

Adequacy of the data is tested on the basis of results the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity (homogeneity of variance) provided. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.969 (shown in Table- 1) which indicates the present data suitable for factor analysis.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests the hypothesis whether the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix. The existence of the identity matrix puts the correctness of the factor analysis under suspicion. Table 1 shows that chi square statistic is 5715.443 with 169 degree of freedom. This value is significant at 0.05 levels. The results, KMO statistic and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicate an appropriate factor analysis model.

These data were analyzed through principal component analysis. The data was divided into six heads: Economical, Political, Social, Legal, Spiritual Empowerment & Health Aspects related factor. Factor analysis was done for these six heads to identify the factors that explain the pattern of correlation within a set of observed variables. The alpha coefficient of reliability value was 0.899. This indicates that the scale is highly reliable. The result of factor analysis is presented below.

Amongst the 22 items 6 components has been extracted. The first components consist of five variables (I have control to allocate the income for the expenses, I have control on Household expenditures, I have control on Cash expenditures for household activities, I make decision on House hold budget, I make arrangements for Sale of goods and Pawning) which are related to Economic empowerment factor. Second components comprises of four variables (I make decisions on Cooking, I go to my relatives' and friends' house alone without permission of my husband / family, I go to shops to purchase goods alone, I go to shops to purchase goods alone) which are related to Social empowerment factors, similarly third components consist of three variables (I make decisions on the No. of children, I make decisions on Children's education, I make decisions on Children's marriage) related to Health aspect factor these three components are contributed about 54.373 variations

independently. The fourth components consist of three variables (No violence in my family, I voice on dowry and child marriage, Activities outside of the home, relative freedom from harassment in public spaces, interaction with men) which are related to Legal empowerment factor. Fifth components comprises of four variables (I make decision in political participation in village, political reservation, media institutions, social organizations, judicial organizations, non-government organizations, control over material and intangible resources such

as farm property) which are related to Political empowerment factor, similarly sixth components consist of five factors (Self-confidence, controlling spending money, enhanced status in the family, has/controls/spends money, participation in/makes decisions on allocation of resources, not dominated by others, emancipation from superstitions, misbelieves, traditions and unhealthy practices that safeguard the interest of women) related to Spiritual empowerment factors these three components are contributed about 83.055 variations independently.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.969
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	Df
	Sig.
	5715.443
	169
	.000

Table 2: Communalities

Variables	Initial	Extraction
I have control to allocate the income for the expenses	1.000	.859
I have control on Household expenditures	1.000	.542
I make decisions on Cooking	1.000	.387
I make decisions on the No. of children	1.000	.558
I make decisions on Children's education	1.000	.697
I make decisions on Children's marriage	1.000	.529
I have control on Cash expenditures for household activities	1.000	.554
I make decision on House hold budget	1.000	.524
I make arrangements for Sale of goods and Pawning	1.000	.486
I go to my relatives' and friends' house alone without permission of my husband / family	1.000	.402
I go to festivals and ceremonies alone without permission of my husband	1.000	.532
I go to shops to purchase goods alone without permission of family	1.000	.685
No violence in my family	1.000	.730
I voice on dowry and child marriage	1.000	.578
Activities outside of the home, relative freedom from harassment in public spaces, interaction with men.	1.000	.669
Traditions and unhealthy practices that safeguard the interest of women	1.000	.859
I make decision in political participation in village	1.000	.755
Political reservation	1.000	.569
Media institutions, social organizations, Judicial organizations	1.000	.749
control over material and intangible resources such as farm property	1.000	.454
Self-confidence, not dominated by others	1.000	.560
Emancipation from superstitions, misbelieves	1.000	.759
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 3 :Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	of Cumulative %
1	5.446	27.230	27.230	5.446	27.230	27.230	3.018	15.090	15.090
2	1.868	9.339	36.569	1.868	9.339	36.569	2.756	13.778	28.869
3	1.561	7.804	44.373	1.561	7.804	54.373	1.999	9.996	38.864
4	1.541	7.706	52.080	1.541	7.706	62.080	1.885	9.423	48.288
5	1.182	5.909	57.989	1.182	5.909	77.989	1.775	8.873	57.161
6	1.013	5.066	63.055	1.013	5.066	83.055	1.179	5.894	63.055
7	.965	4.826	67.881						
8	.880	4.398	72.279						
9	.801	4.006	76.285						
10	.704	3.519	79.804						
11	.645	3.224	83.028						
12	.607	3.037	86.064						
13	.575	2.876	88.940						
14	.489	2.444	91.384						
15	.409	2.047	93.431						
16	.394	1.972	95.404						
17	.330	1.650	97.054						
18	.275	1.373	98.427						
19	.204	1.018	99.446						
20	.111	.554	100.00						
21	.707	4.037	76.064						
22	.240	2.650	87.054						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have control to allocate the income for the expenses	.778	.172	.172	.322	.113	.034
I have control on Household expenditures	-.881	.433	.348	.260	-.038	-.315
I make decisions on Cooking	-.015	.813	.120	.280	.291	.138
I make decisions on the No. of children	.212	.234	.733	-.087	-.017	.218
I make decisions on Children's education	.191	.053	.861	.168	.139	.027
I make decisions on Children's marriage	.326	.119	.684	.063	.008	-.080
I have control on Cash expenditures for household act.	.697	.360	.003	.361	.014	.160
I make decision on House hold budget	-.857	.149	-.040	-.324	.010	-.150
I make arrangements for Sale of goods and Pawning	.996	.236	.404	.373	.104	-.188
I go to my relatives' and friends' house alone	.123	-.732	.402	.054	.006	.108
I go to festivals and ceremonies alone	.056	.925	.272	.183	.369	.132
I go to shops to purchase goods alone	.122	.754	.080	.287	.039	-.029
No violence in my family	.238	.110	.185	.901	.074	.300
I voice on dowry and child marriage	.366	.184	.057	.747	-.005	-.139
Activities outside of the home, interaction with men.	.198	.320	.230	.852	.210	-.051
Traditions and unhealthy practices that safeguard	.071	.214	.347	-.220	.197	.840
I make decision in political participation in village	.248	.202	-.009	.412	.840	.186
Political reservation	.049	-.022	.028	.010	.919	.407
Media institutions, Social organizations	.143	.398	.135	-.016	.551	.258
control over material and intangible resources	.091	.032	.023	.137	.611	.211
Self-confidence, not dominated by others	.212	.234	.133	-.087	-.017	.718
Emancipation from superstitions, misbelieves	.122	.454	.080	.287	.039	-.629

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