RESEARCH ARTICLE

Personal correlations of empowerment of women

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in twelve villages of six development blocks of three districts of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state on 120 women respondents with an object to study the personal, socioeconomic and psychological characteristics and the level of empowerment of rural women. The result of the study depicted that majority of the respondents were found in the category of middle age group, middle school level of education, belonging to schedule caste, nuclear family, small farmer's families and married. The maximum percentage of respondents were possessing agriculture + labour who were earning annual income between Rs.20,001/- to 40,000/-. The social participation, cosmopoliteness and use of information sources were observed to be of medium level. Majority of respondents belonged to medium level of women empowerment followed by low and high empowerment. It was observed that age, education, marital status, land holding, annual income, social participation, cosmopolitans and use of sources of information were positively and significantly related with empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment can serve as a powerful instrument for women to achieve upward social and economic mobility and achieve power and status in society. It is a source of mobility, equality and emancipation, both at the individual and at the societal level. Empowering women is important and it indirectly leads to a growing demand for education for girls and enhancing their participation in informal and alternative education system. Empowerment of women for facilitating self-confidence, increasing their income generating opportunities, provision for increased employment, awareness about their rights and to avoid misbehaviour from male dominated society. The women need to be empowered. Realising the need, the research was undertaken with the following specific objectives : to study the personal, socio-economical and psychological characteristics of rural women.. to study the level of women empowerment programmes and to study the relationship between personal characteristics of women with their empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in randomly selected Parbhani, Hingoli and Nanded districts of Marathwada region in Maharashtra state. From each district, two development blocks were randomly selected.

From each of the development blocks, two villages out of those in which the beneficiaries were receiving benefits during the last two years were randomly selected. The list of women beneficiaries was obtained from the ICDS office in each Panchayat Samiti. Twelve villages, having highest number of women beneficiaries of developmental programmes, were selected. Then from each village, 10 beneficiary women were selected from among the total beneficiaries in the village. Thus, the final sample comprised of 120 beneficiaries. The data were collected by personally interviewing the respondents. The percentage and coefficient of correlation were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the sampled respondents were women beneficiaries of empowerment programme, following were the characteristics of beneficiary women (Table 1). Half of the respondents (50.00 %) were found in middle age group, maximum number of beneficiary women (29.16 %) had Middle School level of education, followed by High School (27.50 %). Maximum number of beneficiary rural women (35.00 %) were belonging to schedule caste, followed by open category (33.34 %). Majority of the beneficiaries (80.00 %) were found to be married. Over half of the respondents (56.67 %) were belonging to nuclear family and

Table 1: Profile characteristics of rural women			
Sr. No.	Category	Number	Per cent
Age			
1.	Young (upto 35)	53	44.17
2.	Middle (36 to 55)	60	50.00
3.	Old (56 and above)	07	05.83
Education			
1.	Illiterate	16	13.34
2.	Can only read and write	17	14.16
3.	Primary School	15	12.50
4.	Middle School	35	29.16
5.	High School	33	27.50
6.	Graduate level	04	03.34
Caste			
1.	SC	42	35.00
2.	ST/NT/SBC	17	14.16
3.	OBC	21	17.50
4.	Open	40	33.34
Marital Status			
1.	Unmarried	20	16.67
2.	Married	96	80.00
3.	Widows	04	03.33
Type of family			
1.	Nuclear family	68	56.67
2.	Joint family	52	43.33
Occupation			
1.	Labour	06	05.00
2.	Agril. + labour	49	40.84
3.	Caste occupation	00	00.00
4.	Agril. + caste occupation	00	00.00
5.	Business	00	00.00
6.	Exclusively agriculture	47	39.16
7.	Agril. + business	12	10.00
8.	Agril. + service	06	05.00
Land holding			
1.	Landless	10	08.34
2.	Marginal	33	27.50
3.	Small	57	47.50
4.	Semi-medium	19	15.83
5.	Medium	01	00.83
6.	Big	00	00
Annual income			
1.	Up to 20,000	23	19.16
2.	20,001 to 40,000	65	54.18
3.	40,001 to 60,000	32	26.66
Social participation			
1.	Low	20	16.66
2.	Medium	78	65.00
3.	High	22	18.34
Cosmopoliteness			
1.	Low	16	13.33
2.	Medium	82	68.33
3.	High	22	18.34
Use of sources of information			
1.	Low	28	23.33
2.	Medium	72	60.00
3.	High	20	16.67

remaining to joint family. Maximum number of sampled beneficiary women respondents (40.84%) were professing agriculture + labour. Nearly half of the respondent women (47.50 %) belonged to small farmers' families following the land between 1.01 to 2 ha. Over half of the respondents (54.18 %) had their annual income between Rs. 20001 to 40000, followed by 26.66 per cent in Rs. 40,001 to 60,000 category. Nearly two third of the respondents (65.00%) were found to have medium social participation. A little more than two - third respondents (68.33 %) had medium cosmopoliteness, followed by 18.34 per cent in high category. Sixty per cent respondents had an access to the different sources of information for seeking information about women-empowerment programmes.

Application of the women-empowerment scale:

It was observed that majority (65.00 %) of respondents belonged to the medium empowerment category. The percentage of respondents belonging to low empowerment category was 20.00 per cent. As much as 15.00 per cent of respondents were found in high empowerment category in the village community. None of the beneficiaries were found to belong to very low and very high categories of women-empowerment. It could be concluded that majority of the respondents had medium category of women empowerment.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by women-empowerment scale			
Sr. No.	Empowerment categories	Number	Per cent
1.	Very low (upto 54)	00	0.00
2.	Low (55 to 62)	24	20.00
2.	Medium (63 to 70)	78	65.00
3.	High (71 to 78)	18	15.00
4.	Very high (above 78)	00	0.00
	Total	120	100.00
	Mean	70.04	
	S.D.	16.23	

Relational analysis:

A cursory look at Table 3 indicates that almost the independent variables like age (-0.26), education (0.295), social participation (0.265), cosmopoliteness (0.306) and use of sources of information (0.436) were positively and significantly related with the empowerment at 0.01 level of probability. While marital status (0.211), occupation (0.208), land holding (0.221) and annual income (0.199) were positively and significantly related with empowerment at 0.05 level of probability. However, variables *viz.,* caste and type of family could not establish

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Table 3: Relationship of the personal and socio-economical characteristics with women-empowerment		
Sr. No.	Characters	Coefficient of correlation
1.	Age	-0.26**
2.	Education	0.295**
3.	Caste	-0.065
4.	Marital status	0.211*
5.	Type o family	0.010
6.	Occupation	0.208*
7.	Land holding	0.221*
8.	Annual income	0.199*
9.	Social participation	0.265**
10.	Cosmopoliteness	0.306**
11.	Use of sources of information	0.436**

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively.

any relationship with the empowerment of women empowerment programmes.

Multiple regression analysis:

It is revealed from Table 4 that the 'F' value was 7.96 which was significant and coefficient of determination was 0.736 meaning that 73.60 per cent

Table 4: Multiple regressions of the personal and socio-economic characteristics with empowerment			
Sr. No.	Variables	B (i)	S.E.	't' value
1.	Age	-0.380	0.286	-1.331
2.	Education	1.461	1.917	7.620**
3.	Caste	-1.075	1.891	5.689**
4.	Marital status	1.196	8.402	1.424
5.	Type of family	1.933	4.717	4.099**
6.	Occupation	2.611	1.114	2.342*
7.	Land holding	-0.604	0.175	3.424**
8.	Annual income	2.795	3.759	7.435**
9.	Social participation	0.439	2.121	2.071*
10.	Cosmopoliteness	3.720	2.728	3.633**
11.	Use of source's of information	2.915	8.415	3.464**

$R^2 = 0.736$ F - value = 7.96

* and ** indicate significance of values at P= 0.05 and 0.01, respectively

variation in the empowerment was explained by the set of selected eleven independent variables. The unexplained variation of 26.40 per cent may be attributed to the factors not included in the study.

Further, it is concluded that out of eleven variables, nine variables *viz.,* education, caste, type of family, occupation, land holding, annual income, social participation, cosmopoliteness and sources of information had significant positive contribution to empowerment. Kamble (1998) and Suryawanshi (2002) have also conducted some studies on women development programmes in Maharastra.

Conclusion:

Women should be educated through mass-media, meetings and trainings about legislation for women and be made aware of existing political institutions. Education is a key factor for empowerment of women that identifies their innate potentials and channelizes them in right direction. It is therefore, necessary to educate women by involving them in literacy and continuing education programmes.

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