



Impact of Economic and Non-Economic factors on Women Empowerment in India- A study in north coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh

1. Dr. Sivasankar Mandal Baidya
Assistant Professor
Department of Social sciences and Humanities
Vignan's Foundation for Science Technology and Research
Vadlamudi, Guntur District
2. Dr. K. Geetanjali
Lecturer in Economics
Visakha Government Degree College for Women
Visakhapatnam.
3. Shaik Shabana Azmi
M.Sc. Psychology , Counselling Psychologist
Vignan's Foundation for Science Technology and Research
Vadlamudi, Guntur District
4. A. Maruthi
M.Ed. Special Education (ID)
Assistant Professor
Shahara Institute of rehabilitation and Development Studies.
- 5..Dr. P. Jayalakshmi
Former HOD, Dept. of Economics
St. Joseph's College for Women (A)
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
Jayavinod9@gmail.com

Abstract:

The national policy for empowerment of women (NPEW) was formulated with an aim about women's advancement, development and empowerment. The Government of India has declared 2001 as women's empowerment year. Women are the most important real resources to ensure any nation's development. In the words of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi sir, "empowering women tantamount to empowering the entire family." Women empowerment is an essential prerequisite to economic development in any developing economy. Empowerment is the main process of social development which can enable women to participate in social, economic and political sustainable development of the emerging economies in the world. Women empowerment is the key instrument to increase women's ability to have resources and to make constructive life choices. It is the way of protecting them from all forms of violence. This study attempts to analyse the impact of economic and non-economic factors on empowerment of women in the north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh in



India. This study is based on primary and secondary data. It is found that economic factors are more impacted than non-economic factors. This research finally observed that economic independence is the main factor to women empowerment. A quantitative approach is used along with appropriate statistical methods in the research study.

Keywords: Women empowerment, social development, Economic and Non-economic factors, constructive life choices

Introduction:

Women empowerment in India even after 75 years of Independence is still an issue. Empowerment of women means making women to be economically independent, self-reliant, and have a positive self-confidence to face any difficult situation. Women empowerment is a key issue in the present scenario. Women empowerment is influenced by both economic and non-economic factors, whereas economic factors are more influenced in the real world.

Woman empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which intersects the woman's personal, family, social, cultural, economic and political space. Moreover, it is a latent variable that along with its components cannot be directly observed or measured. Evidence on the impact of microfinance on women empowerment has been well documented by comprehensive studies. Empowerment of women is playing a crucial role to get the overall development of our economy. So this research classifies the various types women empowerments require to grow our country. In this study all types of empowerment are influenced by various factors, these are classified into two types, Economic and non-economic. Actually these two are interlinked factors we cannot define exactly. For more understanding purposes this classification was framed by the author. **Economic Factors** are supported by economic empowerment of the individual like earnings, savings, value of assets, amount of borrowings and role in decision making in financial matters, consumption levels and family wellbeing. Here, the empowerment of women through Self Help Groups would lead to benefits not only to the individual woman and women groups but also for the families and community as a whole through group activities for development. Women empowerment is not just for getting economic needs but also to have holistic social development because man is a social animal. **Non-economic factors** are influenced by social empowerment of the individual women in the society. These non-economic factors are like age, marital status, educational qualifications, psychological strengths and legal aspects.

Rationale of the study:

Since independence a number of innovative programmes and policies were implemented for the upliftment of women. There has been a perceptible shift from viewing women from conventional non-



participative to active participative and critical agents for socio-economic and political development. Andhra Pradesh state government has taken up the issue of women's employment as one of the main agenda items to tackle rural poverty through social mobilization through self-help groups (SHG) movement. Women empowerment leads to economic development in the developing countries in the Globe. Integration of women development and their empowerment are inevitable for the development of any economy. Empowerment enables women to face any situation and to participate in the developmental activities of the nation. Woman empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which intersects the woman's personal, family, social, cultural, economic and political space. Moreover, it is a latent variable that along with its components cannot be directly observed or measured. The present study is a significant attempt to evaluate empowerment of women which will prove helpful to analyse problems in the developing economy like India.

Objectives of the study:

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the role of Economic factors (i.e., income of the individual, family income, savings, wellness of the family, consumption levels etc.) in empowerment of women with the help of respondents' views of the study.
2. To know the empowerment level of members in the study area and to observe the Non-Economic factors (age, education qualification, community participation, legal knowledge and psychological strength) influence on empowerment of women among the study sample.

Hypothesis of the Study: Based on the information about women empowerment available in researcher, the following hypotheses were proposed assessing the group differences in women empowerment in selected areas.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between economic and non-economic factors and their level of women empowerment.

Review of Literature:

Savitha (2004) research reported that economic empowerment was high for agricultural laborers followed by small farmers and landless farmers through SHGs. Rosalinda (2005) evaluated that micro credit provides scope for personal, social and political empowerment. Prasad (2006) stated that the micro-credit mechanism of self-help groups has facilitated socio-economic empowerment of weaker sections including women folk. Garikipati *et al.* (2016) reviewed the claim of the impact of SHGs in promoting gender equality. The study reports positive impact. Sami (2017) measured the impact of SHG programs on women empowerment in five districts of North India and confirmed that there is a significant impact of microfinance on women empowerment. Nirmala (2018) examined the efficacy of SHGs of SC women, and suggested that the formation of SHGs not ultimately a micro-credit project but an empowerment process. Shanti and Murthy (2019) found that women with high



qualification are getting more empowered and earning more income compared to women with less education qualification. Haritha , Raviteja and Nagaraju (2020) the study revealed that the OSHG members are observed better empowerment when compared to NSHG in socio, economic and political dimensions, and also found that being a member in SHGs for a long time helps to improve women empowerment.

Hypothesis of the Study: Based on the information about women empowerment available in researcher, the following hypotheses were proposed assessing the group differences in women empowerment in selected areas.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between economic and non-economic factors and their level of women empowerment.

Methodology of the study:

Research Design:

The research study is exploratory and descriptive in nature pursuing into the assessment of the role of economic and non-economic factors in the empowerment of women in the study area.

Data Base;

The data for this study has been collected from the primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary data: Primary data were collected through interview schedule method

Secondary data: Secondary data were collected from various sources like District Chief planning Officer, Journals, News Papers, magazines, books, reports and websites etc.

Sampling Design: The researcher selected a sample of 600 self-help group members for her study in the selected north coastal districts (Visakhapatnam , Vizianagaram and Srikakulam) of AP. A sample random sampling is adopted for her study. The sampling frame for this study includes 200 women from each district of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam of Andhra Pradesh. A sample of 600 is collected based on sample random sampling method where in 507 sample elements are finalized. In the Present study, empowerment of women is classified into two spheres namely, economic and non-economic. It helped to explore the impact of economic and non-economic variables on the empowerment of women. The respondents were all females chosen including married or unmarried of the age group of 18-55 and above.

Limitations: The sample size was limited to 507 and the study is restricted to two north coastal districts (Visakhapatnam Vizianagaram and Srikakulam) of Andhra Pradesh only. The accuracy of the figures and data are subject to the selected sample respondent's opinions only. The sample of the study is limited to 200 from each district only. Some of the sample respondents did not fill the questionnaire interestingly.



Statistical Tools Applied: The major tool for the study is structured questionnaire information; it includes questions which measure the main variables of women empowerment. After collecting the primary data, the researcher thoroughly verified the data and edited and coded them in a master table. Then they were converted into suitable tables and statistical tools such as Krushal willi's Test.

Research gap: After reviewing the literature on the study area, in the year 2020, Women empowerment through SHGs among three north coastal districts of AP, there is no significant studies in this area in north coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh during four years. During this period COVID is also one of the reasons for absence of research.

Analysis of the Study:

The statistical tools, Krushal Wallis Test is applied or H value and the statistical analysis was carried with the help of SPSS.

Kruskal Wallis Test ((or) H value)

In order to test the significant difference in the perception score of different groups of respondent's based on personal variables, the Kruskal Wallis Test has been used.

Where,

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} (R_1^2/n_1 + R_2^2/n_2 + \dots + R_k^2/n_k) - 3(N+1)$$

n_1, n_2, \dots, n_k are the number in each K samples

$N = n_1 + n_2 + \dots + n_k$ and R_1, R_2, \dots, R_k are rank sums of each sample

Relationship between Annual Income and Level of Empowerment of Respondents

In order to test whether there is any relationship between Annual income of members and the level of women empowerment in the study area.

To test the null hypothesis the kruskal wallis Test has been applied and the result is show in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between Annual Income and Level of Women Empowerment

Sl. No	Factors	H.Value	Level of Significance	Results
1	Economic empowerment	2.589	0.459	Not significant
2	Social empowerment	0.153	0.985	Not significant
3	Political empowerment	3.119	0.374	Not significant
4	Psychological empowerment	3.199	0.362	Not significant
5	Legal empowerment	0.546	0.909	Not significant
	Over all	0.964	0.810	Not significant

Source: Primary data



The above Table 1 show that, the level of significance for Economic empowerment, Social empowerment, Political empowerment, Psychological empowerment and Legal empowerment are more than p value (0.05) .The Annual income of members does not influence the level of empowerment. It is clear from the Table that, as the level of significance for the overall levels of empowerment overall more than p value (0.05).The null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between Age and Perception of Empowerment of Respondents:

In order to test whether there is any relationship between age and the levels of women empowerment in the study area. To test the null hypothesis, the kruskal wallis Test has been applied and the result is in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Age and Level of Women Empowerment

Serial No	Factor	H value	Level of Significance	Significant/ Not Significant
1	Economic empowerment	3.447	0.328	Not Significant
2	Social empowerment	8.702	0.340	Not Significant
3	Political empowerment	7.814	0.050	Significant
4	Psychological empowerment	11.517	0.008	Significant
5	Legal empowerment	5.611	0.132	Not Significant
	Overall	9.504	0.024	Significant

Source: Primary data

The above table revealed that, the level of significance of political and psychological empowerment are the less than P value (0.05), the age factor determines the empowerment levels of women. It indicates that the level of significance for the empowerment levels like economic empowerment is more than P value (0.05). The age factor does not influence these levels of empowerment. It is evident from the Table that as the level of significance for overall levels of empowerment is less than P value (0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Relationship between Marital Status and Level of Empowerment of Respondents

In order to test whether there is any relationship between marital status of members and the level of women empowerment in the study area. To test the null hypothesis the kruskal wallis Test has been applied and the result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Marital Status and Levels of Women Empowerment

Serial No	Factor	H Value	Level of Significance	Significant / Not significant
1	Economic empowerment	22.040	0.000	Significant



2	Social empowerment	27.771	0.000	Significant
3	Political empowerment	23.214	0.000	Significant
4	Psychological empowerment	27.991	0.000	Significant
5	Legal empowerment	19.484	0.000	Significant
	Overall	32.053	0.000	Significant

Source: Primary data

Table 3 reveals that, as the level of significance for the levels of Economic empowerment, Social empowerment, Political empowerment, Psychological empowerment and Legal empowerment are less than p value (0.05) The Marital status of members determines the levels of women empowerment. It is depicted from Table that, the level of significance for the level of empowerment overall is less than p value (0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Relationship between Education Status and Level of Empowerment Respondents

In order to test whether there is any relationship between Educational status of members and the level of women empowerment in the study area. To test the null hypothesis the kruskal Wallis Test has been applied and the result is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between Educational Qualification and Levels of Women Empowerment

Serial No	Factor	H Value	Level of Significance	Significant / Not significant
1	Economic empowerment	3.954	0.412	Not significant
2	Social empowerment	2.944	0.567	Not significant
3	Political empowerment	2.662	0.615	Not significant
4	Psychological empowerment	3.002	0.557	Not significant
5	Legal empowerment	3.257	0.517	Not significant
	Overall	2.884	0.577	Not significant

Source: Primary data

The above Table-4 depicts that, the level of significance for the levels of economic, social empowerment, political empowerment, psychological empowerment and legal empowerment are more than P value (0.05). The educational qualifications of the respondents does not influence on these level of employment. It is evident from the table that, the level of significance for the overall levels of empowerment more than P value (0.05) the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between Society and Levels of Empowerment of Respondents: In order to test whether there is any relationship between community and levels of women empowerment in the study



area. To test the null hypothesis the kruskal wallis Test has been applied and result is show in the Table-5

Table 5: Relationship between Society and Levels of Women Empowerment

Serial No	Factor	H Value	Level of significance	Significance / Not significant
1	Economic empowerment	9.878	0.020	Significant
2	Social empowerment	17.734	0.000	Significant
3	Political empowerment	15.114	0.002	Significant
4	Psychological empowerment	8.948	0.030	Significant
5	Legal empowerment	13.575	0.004	Significant
	Overall	15.916	0.001	Significant

Source: Primary data

It is revealed from Table 5 that, the level of significance for Economic empowerment, Social empowerment, Political empowerment, Psychological empowerment and legal empowerment are less than p value (0.05). The Society of respondents determines of the levels of women empowerment. It is depicted from the above Table-5 that, the level of significance for the overall levels of empowerment is less than p value (0.05). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion:

The final conclusions of the study are that the empowerment level of members is determined by various personal factors. These Factors may have positive and negative influences. The negative factors should be converted into positive one. Personal Factors like Age, Society, and Marital status are evidence for significant factors in deciding the positive level of empowerment variables and Education income and Annual income does not have any significant influence on the level of women empowerment. There is a significant difference between the age of respondents and their levels of empowerment in the study area. Age Factor influences levels of women empowerment, Society of respondents and their levels of empowerment in the study area. Community factor influences levels of women empowerment, marital status of respondents and their levels of empowerment in the study area. Marital status factors influence the levels of women empowerment. There is no significant difference between the educational qualification of respondents and their levels of women empowerment. Educational status does not influence the levels of women empowerment, the Annual income of respondents and their level of women empowerment. Annual income does not influence the levels of women empowerment.

Recommendations:



1. Self Help Group is a powerful tool to enrich the savings activities and poverty alleviation. In this situation, to support by the government and uplift the women through Self Help group oriented developments.

2. It is recommended that financial assistance should be provided to the SHGs, in addition to this capacity building programs must be organised to enhance the capabilities of women.

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