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Pranjali Dighe



EMANCIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN OF GUJARAT STATE THROUGH POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF EMPOWERMENT



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ABSTRACT

Encroachment in the education and the knowledge tells about the well being and upliftment of the nation. To know the real development of the country, empowerment of the women is must. The crux of the advancement lies in the real progress of the rural women which helps in achieving the overall development of the country. Empowerment in the rural India will help in building the economy of the country. To achieve innovative and sustainable development of the country it is important to strengthen the decision making power of women in every aspect. Decision making power lies in the empowerment which is a multidimensional process. The process becomes easy and interesting when the women have self confidence and control over their own lives. Most of the women's group, governmental and nongovernmental organizations refer empowerment as their goal, but to measure the term is difficult. Till now a tool has not been developed to measure it. The Ministry of Women and child development have also come up with various schemes for the empowerment of women and the girls especially who are from the backward section of the society.

The paper has analysed the three aspects or the dimensions, in which political empowerment sheds light towards the ability of the women to examine the surrounding environment through political means. The economic component had shed light on the skills of women to achieve the financial autonomy of the women. The third physical component had look after the control of women on her body. Through these dimensions an attempt has been made by the researcher to understand the position of women in the Gujarat state. Two taluka and 18 villages of Gujarat state had been taken as the study area and a survey has been done through the help of questionnaire. Theoretical basis had

been prepared and empirical analysis has done to understand the ground position of the women in the three different aspects of empowerment. The paper seeks the primary data and reviews the secondary information both to understand the aspects of empowerment.

KEYWORDS :Empowerment, Economic empowerment, Political empowerment, Physical Empowerment, Multidimensional process.

1.INTRODUCTION

The modern India paves a path for development which should lead to the growth of the economy and the country. The term empowerment plays a major role in this. The nature of empowerment renders it difficult to define. On the one hand, it is often referred to as an objective for many development programmes and projects. On the other hand, it can also be conceived as a process that people undergo, which eventually leads to changes. (Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, 1993) .The definitions of empowerment were given by various scholars. Peter and Richard in their book named 'To empower' (1977) proposed empowerment as a way of convalescing the welfare services by means of mediating the social institutions. According to the Government of India Report, 'Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power'. There can be various aspects of empowerment through which the goal can be achieved. Government of India has constructed many policies for the empowerment of women. The Ninth five year plan (1997-2002) formulated by the planning commission envisaged the empowerment of women and strengthening efforts to build self reliance. (commision, 2002). Later in 2001 National Policy for the Empowerment of women was formulated to empower women and mainstream a gender perspective in the development process. The policy was designed in such a way that it tries to cover all the major prescriptions from decision making to environment. Amartya Sen, a renowned economists has contributed speculative attention to women's empowerment by describing it as 'one of the central issues in the process of development for many countries in the world today'. (Sen, 1999).

Women's work in every sector is essential, whether it is primary, Secondary or tertiary. Especially those women who are living in the rural area are generally having lack of information regarding the schemes and projects of government. To empower those women might be a challenge in the path of development. This paper is emphasising the three most important aspects of the empowerment, Political, Economic and Physical.

1.1THE STATISTICS OF THE INDIA AND THE STATE

As per 2011 census, the population of India is 1210.19 million comprising 586.47 million (48.5%) females and 623.72 million (51.5%) males. Females have a share of 48.1% in the urban population and of 48.6% in the rural population.

TABLE1: LITERACY POPULATION RATE IN GUJARAT CENSUS (2011)

	Person	Male	Female
Total	79.01	86.29	64.02
Rural	71.71	81.61	57.78
Urban	86.31	90.98	70.26

The figures shown above are in the percentages (%)

2.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the level of political empowerment among the rural women of the selected villages.
- To know the level of economic empowerment among the rural women of the selected villages.
- To know the level of physical empowerment among the rural women of the selected village.
- To know the awareness among the women regarding the decision making power in the family and the society.

3.RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to have a good quality study, from the Gujarat state two districts were incorporated and two taluka were chosen. Random sampling method was used to collect the sample. During the pilot survey it was noted that the below villages are not very developed and are at the interior parts of the taluka. Women in the villages are facing lack of information and not educated even. The tool of the study was Interviews and the questionnaire method which was asked to women. The questions were divided into the three different sections of political, economic and the physical empowerment, so that the proper findings and conclusion can be drawn out. From each village 100 women were taken as the sample unit.

Ahmedabad district lies in the central part of the Gujarat state. It is one of the popular district and the seventh largest city. Dholka is one of the taluka of the city. Patan district is located in the northern Gujarat and one among the 33 districts. Harij taluka is located at the west side. All the eighteen selected villages have approximately population 1500-2000 each.

4. Geographical representation of the state

The geographical presentation is done to understand the exact location of the taluka in the Gujarat state.



TABLE 2: NAME OF THE DISTRICTS, TALUKA AND VILLAGES

<u>District Ahmedabad</u>	<u>District Patan</u>
Taluka Dholka	Taluka Harij
Anandpura	Bhalana
Begwa	Chabkha
Girund	Jasomov
Kaliyapura	Jaswantpura
Khatripur	Masa
Mujpur	Paloli
Raipur	Piluvada
Samani	Tharod
Shikhdi	Tornipur

5.THE NOTION OF EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment focuses on the empowerment of the young women. It is a modern phenomenon and continues to develop around the world. The Beijing declaration and the conferences provided the move towards the action of women empowerment. The actual term 'empowerment' was first commonly used in association with the women's movement, within a discourse of feminism that drew on the influence of popular education. (Cecilia Luttrell, Sitna Quiroz, Claire Scrutton, Kate Bird, 2009) The MDG (Millennium Development Goals), 2000 further crusade for women's rights. (Bui Chung, Kulvatee Kantachote, Asmah Mallick, Rachel Polster, Kelsey Roets, 2013) Empowerment makes a person able to choose and able to stipulate. It makes the person able to choose her goals, generate opportunities to reach the goals and determine the overall direction of her life. This makes the notion of empowerment a interesting and powerful one. (Lazo, 1993) The growth of women's education in the rural area is extremely slow. Information and awareness among women can boot them to achieve development and empowerment. Empowered women always contribute towards the health and dignity of the family and the society. Once the participation of women is increased in the country, there will be affirmative change in the nation.

"You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation."

- Brigham Young

6.BRIEFING ABOUT THE DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

There are various magnitudes which focus on the multidimensional process which is known as empowerment.

a.Political Empowerment: The capacity of the women to mobilize and analyse the society. Awareness

regarding the political issues which are going through.

Voting right of a women.

Eagerness for the political exercise.

Information about the rights given to women by the constitution.

Knowledge about the schemes regarding the ministries.

b.Economic Empowerment: It talks about the ability of the women to improve in the financial condition and to gain resources. Also have an autonomy to exercise the financial power.

Access of education and employment.

The right to control and the use of income.

Access to financial services and knowledge about it.

Equal participation and access of decision making about the use of money.

c.Physical Empowerment: it underlines the capacity of the self development in the women. The awareness about the rights and the power to make decisions about self.

Subordination women face in the household.

Awareness regarding sexual exploitation

Sexual harassment in post or pre marital life.

Constraints imposed by the family regarding the birth of girl child.

7.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data was collected from the 18 villages of the two taluka. From each village 100 women were taken as the sample unit. Total women were 1800 and questionnaire tool was used. During the survey it was found that the literacy rate among the women was very less as compared to men. The lack of information among women was clearly seen. Tables below shown are relieving the data of the women regarding the Political, Economic and Physical empowerment.

TABLE 2: STATUS OF POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AMONG THE WOMEN OF SELECTED VILLAGES

Villages of Dholka taluka	Awareness and voting rights	Political participation	Awareness about the constitutional rights	Knowledge about the schemes of govt.
Anandpura	10	2	1	2
Begwa	13	6	2	3
Girund	15	8	6	3
Kaliyapura	30	10	3	5
Khatripur	22	6	5	9
Mujpur	14	12	1	4
Raipur	14	21	5	12
Samani	35	9	3	5
Shikhdi	31	4	3	6
Villages of Harij taluka				
Bhalana	29	13	6	3
Chabkha	10	4	1	6
Jasomov	35	25	2	9
Jaswantpura	18	17	5	9
Masa	29	2	3	5
Paloli	32	31	4	6
Piluvada	24	5	5	6
Tharod	33	9	9	8
Tornipur	27	5	2	12

The figures in the table are in the form of percentages (%) and are collected through the survey method in the field by the researcher.

The above table is showing the responses of the women in the villages regarding the political

participation in the society. It can be clearly seen that in all the villages of Dholka taluka and Harij the awareness among the women is less. Only few women know that voting is a right and it should be done by every individual. The political participation of women means indulging themselves in the political are or discussion about them is also very negligible. The reason could be women are not aware of these things and as they are not aware it does not interests them to discuss.

The constitution has granted several rights to women to exercise but the women at the interior parts of the villages do not know about it. They are having televisions at their home, through which they are only aware about the constitution but not about the rights which are given by it. Women sometimes go to Panchayat due to attend the meetings but they are still unaware of the schemes and programmes by the government. In villages like Khatripur and Raiur of Dholka and Tornipur of Harij women are having 'Maa' card (the card which is given to BPL people to get health incentives) but due to lack of information they are not able to use it properly. In the villages they go to anganwadis to take the nutritious food which is supplied by the government to adolescent girls and pregnant women. The awareness regarding the schemes for women is lacking in all the villages of the selected talukas.

TABLE 3: STATUS OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AMONG THE WOMEN OF SELECTED VILLAGES

Villages of Dholka taluka	Access to employment	Use of income	Knowledge about the financial services	Decision making about the use of money
Anandpura	62	23	52	2
Begwa	36	50	65	13
Girund	55	32	43	12
Kaliyapura	70	22	68	8
Khatripur	69	41	37	10
Mujpur	66	39	55	6
Raipur	39	51	63	9
Samani	88	44	29	25
Shikhdi	69	39	46	20
Villages of Harij taluka				
Bhalana	82	62	63	5
Chabkha	74	48	48	20
Jasomov	68	26	53	24
Jaswantpura	66	46	47	15
Masa	91	37	33	30
Paloli	88	29	65	26
Piluvada	62	27	39	8
Tharod	70	43	40	9
Tornipur	76	40	20	30

The figures in the table are in the form of percentages (%) and are collected through the survey

method in the field by the researcher.

The above table is showing the data related to the economic empowerment of women. In both the taluka and in 18 villages the access to employment of women is higher. For the employment they do the agriculture work and earn on daily basis. Women committed that due to poverty and lack of money they have to work in the fields. They earn 150 to 200 rupees as the daily wages. They are not involved in any skilled jobs. Women are not allowed to use the income without the permission of their husband. They are able to spend some minimum amount of 30-50 rupees but for more amounts they have to take the consent of their husband.

If we talk about the financial services, only the women of Bhalana villages shoes the higher percentages in the knowledge. Rest other villages are lacking in this consent. Women only know about the banks and the post offices which keep the money safe in their accounts. To access the banks and post departments, women have to go to the cities because in the villages banks are not available neither the post offices. Even women lack behind in the information related to the financial services and the financial literacy, hence they do not take much interest in it and their husbands deal with it. The equal participation about the money matters is very necessary in the family but the women do not participate in it. According to them, they are not asked by their husbands and they do not have any knowledge about the bank services. So, the percentage is less as compared to the other questions.

Villages of Dholka taluka	Subordination faced in the household	Awareness regarding sexual exploitation	Sexual harassment	Upset on the birth of Girl child
Anandpura	77	25	10	59
Begwa	90	36	15	60
Girund	85	44	17	63
Kaliyapura	84	25	23	70
Khatripur	76	40	25	56
Mujpur	91	50	27	49
Raipur	55	31	20	55
Samani	79	52	11	60
Shikhdi	69	24	26	40
Villages of Harij taluka				
Bhalana	88	35	26	61
Chabkha	93	20	17	55
Jasomov	88	19	20	35
Jaswantpura	63	26	21	62
Masa	60	30	30	50
Paloli	80	50	22	48
Piluvada	50	45	19	39
Tharod	79	30	15	54
Tornipur	68	22	20	29

TABLE 4: STATUS OF PHYSICAL EMPOWERMENT AMONG THE WOMEN OF SELECTED VILLAGES

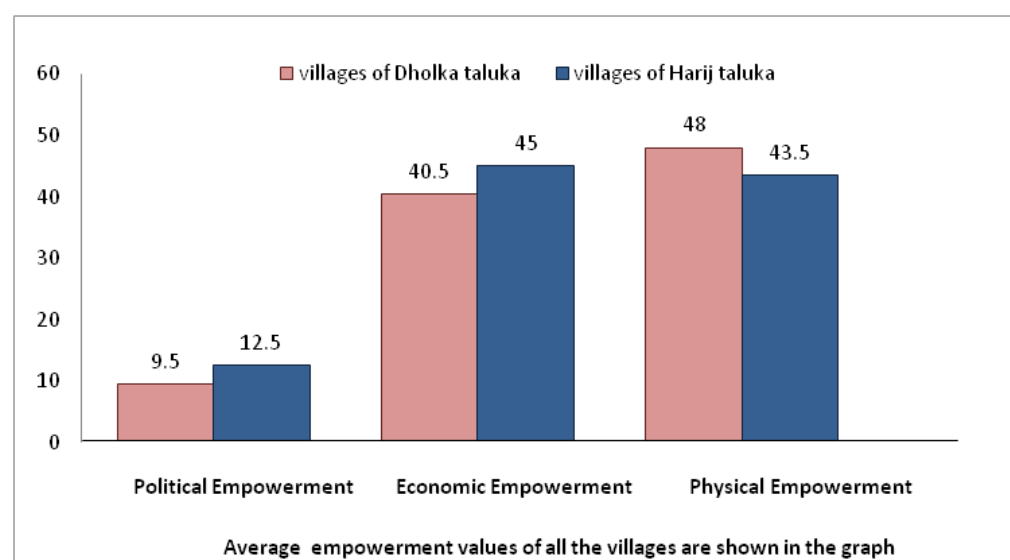
The figures in the table are in the form of percentages (%) and are collected through the survey method in the field by the researcher.

Statistics of physical empowerment can be clearly seen in the above table. In the villages of Dholka and Harij women face subordination in their own household. The figures are high as shown. Some of the women respondents committed that they are not involved in the decision of the household. Especially when the decision is related to the money matters. The male members of the household take the decision. Even when sometimes the health condition of women is not good, they have to do the household chores and take care of the children. Women seem unanswered when they were asked about the question of awareness regarding sexual exploitation. Very few women from both the taluka answered that they are aware because at times they have watched the advertisements regarding this and also the opposition of such activities. Rest of the women said they don't know anything about this and kept silent.

Again on the question of sexual exploitation, women did not spoke anything. Only few women said that sometimes they face it, but they think it's better to keep their mouth shut because they think as we are women we have to face such things. The response on the last question regarding the birth of the girl child, women responded that it is a norm that in the household there should be a boy. So the couple keep waiting till the birth of the boy in the family.

8. GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT IN THE TWO TALUKA.

FIGURE: 1 THE EMPOWERMENT VALUES OF THE TWO DIFFERENT TALUKA.



The above averages have been derived from the data which was obtained from the field by the researcher.

The process of empowerment does not take place in vacuum. Women need some awareness and power to take the decisions. It can be seen from the figure that the political empowerment among the women in both the taluka are low. Women are also not interested in the political affairs of the country. The rate of discussion between them is also less. Women in the villages think that the political issues are very complicated and they also don't have proper information about it. Hence the political

empowerment is low. The Economic empowerment is higher but to some extent only because women are not allowed to take major decisions regarding the finance. It can be said that women can take the decisions but they have still not reached up to the mark. Women are very less physically empowered because still in the backward areas there is a notion that on the birth of the girl child, family members are not very happy. Many of the women are even not able to recognize their rights. Women are still facing subordination towards the head of the family (male member).

9. BARRIERS TO EMPOWERMENT

If we talk about the rural women, poor women are generally busy in serving the needs of the family and children. They spend their vigour in the household chores and rest with the wage work. They also face the authoritarian family members and the spouse control on them and also the exploitation. In such conditions it becomes very difficult to take out time for themselves. Even most of the women are illiterate in the rural population or very less educated. In such a life style of women to find out time and to regenerating the awareness and information among women is a complex task. Some of the constraining factors can be:

- Heavy work load on women.
- Discrimination against women.
- Subordination towards men.
- Traditional values and limitations of women.
- Lack of education or information.
- Lack of participation in the decision making.
- Unavailability of the NGO's (Non Governmental Organization) in the villages to help women.
- Lack of financial resources and proper skills among women.
- Exploitation in unorganized sectors.
- Lack of social awareness.
- Gender gaps persisting in the society.
- Unequal distribution of political and economic powers.

10. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

World Bank has identified empowerment as a prerequisite for development. It is a mutual process which led towards the growth of the country. If we look at the rural and the backward area of the country, still there is lack of development. Women are not properly aware of their rights. Here, illiteracy plays a big role. Women are only allowed to go to school up to 8th standard. The higher secondary schools are outside the villages and girls are not allowed to move out of the village. There are various schemes and programmes by the government which are currently running. The five year plans of the government and the millennium development goals have objectives regarding the empowerment of the women. Still there are some loop holes and gaps which the interior section of the society is facing. To achieve development and empowerment the grassroots level needs to be strengthening. The awareness generation campaign could be one of the good solutions to make women know about their rights in the society. Positive discrimination for women will help in creating a gender just society in the future.

Some more empirical researches after the implementation of the programmes need to be done to understand the after effects, the outputs and the outcomes which have been achieved. More groundwork in this area is necessary to achieve the escalation.

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