



## **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EMPOWERMENT STATUS OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDUSTRIAL TOWN OF JAMSHEDPUR**

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*The present paper attempts to compare the empowerment status of working and non-working women in the industrial town of Jamshedpur by computing multiple women empowerment indices (dimension as well as domain wise). On the basis of literature review the study identified four domain of women empowerment namely Personal domain, Economic domain, Social domain and Political domain and each domain consists five dimensions such as decision making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role. The study measured women empowerment in all four domains and dimensions and finally presented a Composite Empowerment Index (CEI) by using the simple average method for all its domain indices and dimension indices. Equal weight was assigned for computing all the domains and dimensions. The study found that the working women are more empowered than that of non-working women. The overall comparison of empowerment of working and non-working women (domain and dimension wise) reveals that working women enjoyed more than non-working women in each and every domain and dimension except social access to and control over resources.*

**Keywords:** Dimensions, Domains, Empowerment, Working and Non-working Women

### **INTRODUCTION**

Women constitute almost half of the total population but they are overshadowed by men. In the developing countries like India where patriarchy is in the root, women face discrimination from birth till death in all sphere of life such as familial, economic, social and political. Their role is considered as subordinate to men. But women have skill, intelligence and talent as equal as men. Hence, they have also right to live a dignified life.

Gender equality and women empowerment are the matter of human rights, which are mandatory to achieve the millennium development goal. Also, the goal of sustainable development cannot be achieved without full participation of all its human resources (men and women) equally. Women play dual role in the process of development of a nation. In the one hand women who are engaged in paid work directly contribute to the country's GDP, while their counterpart who are non-working also play a crucial role to improve the quality of lives of human beings such as health, nutrition, education etc. Hence the empowerment of women is of utmost necessity for overall development. Amartya Sen (2012) also said that 'Empowering women and girls with more choices and more freedom is crucial to achieve a better for all'.

Nowadays the status of empowerment of women has been a matter of concern throughout the world. The importance of women empowerment in International Development Programs is

evident from the policy reports, for example Beijing Platform for Action, the Beijing Declaration (1995) and Resolution, The Cairo Program for Action, the Millennium Development Goal and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). All these conferences have documented gender equality in their development objectives. First time the UNDP in its World Conference (1990) recognized that women empowerment is necessary for the success of development programs. The Government of India also had declared the year 2001 as the 'Women Empowerment Year'. Despite all these programs and efforts 60% of world's poorest people are still women, less than 16% of the world's parliamentarians are women, two-thirds of children shut outside the school gates are girls and, women are the victims of abuse both in times of armed conflict and within the home (UNDP, 2009). Hence, the report of UNDP reveals that the status of women is not equal as men, therefore it can be said that women empowerment is still a distant dream.

To view critically the both sides i.e., the importance of women in development process and woman's suppression conditions, it become necessary to enhance the women's condition and create the environment where they can empower themselves.

It is believed that paid work is one of the important aspects to empower women [Akram (2017), Sheikh et al. (2016)]. The working women are enjoyed high status as compared to non-working women [Sultana et al. (2013), Hossain and Tisdell (2005)]. Studies with Bengali women in India and with poor women in Bangladesh report that paid work empowers women as they have decision making power in home, control resources, have greater mobility and are better able to accumulate assets and secure their own well-being (Dutta 2000, Salway 2005). But, for women, working does not necessarily allow them to challenge the gender power relation that prevent their agency and full participation in society (Kabeer 1997, Batliwala 1994). Kabeer (1997), stated that women's workforce participation or earnings only contributes to their share of household resources rather than their decision-making power. Since, women empowerment is a multidimensional, hence it cannot be said that if a woman is access to a single dimension, she is empowered. For example, if a woman is highly educated and engaged in a paid job but she has no freedom of movement, autonomy, or decision-making power than she cannot be treated as empowered women. Hence, there is need for measuring women empowerment in every dimension.

The focus of this paper is to measure and compare empowerment status of working and non-working women, where the study area i.e., Jamshedpur town has fulfilled the criteria for the research. Since Jamshedpur is the first well planned industrial city in India, which is the home to the first private Iron and Steel Company of the nation (6th largest in the world). There are bigger corporate houses like TISCO, TELCO and thousands of the other companies. There exist ample job opportunities for women in Jamshedpur as there are many educational institutions such as, schools, colleges, art & cultural institute, banks, and malls. Most of women prefer to work in these sectors. Also, the census data reveals that majority of female population of Jamshedpur town i.e., 90.4 percent are non-working women. Hence, in the study area both working and non-working women exist and play their crucial role in the society.

The present study is planned as follows; section 2 provides the review of literature. section 3 presents the objective of the study. The data and methodology are discussed in section 4. Section 5 deals with identification of dimension of women empowerment. Section 6 deals with the computing women empowerment indices. Empirical findings and discussions are presented in section 7 and the final conclusions and suggestions are exhibited in section 8.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The term 'women empowerment' has been conceptualized by various scholars as an active multidimensional process of life. Sen (1999), Kabeer (2001) and Narayan (2002) in their writing viewed women empowerment as developing capabilities to strengthen their power from within, so that they can make purposeful choices and make decision on their own. While, for some scholars it is about remove the gender disparity. As Kapur and Narayan (2020), Tirupal (2016), Suguna (2006), Murthy et al (2002), and Batliwala (1994) define women empowerment as the process of challenging existing gender power relation as well as stereotype system that create inequalities and exclusion and creatively trying to shape different social relations as well as getting greater control over the resources of power. In Kushwah (2016) and Pillai (1995)'s view empowerment enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all sphere of life such as all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women, their full and equal participation in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life.

From the above definition it is clear that there is no common definition of empowerment because women empowerment is a latent variable; it is a multi-domain and multi-dimensional concept. Thus, it become necessary to be identified the various dimension of women empowerment. Many scholars in their study have identified various dimensions, where women can be empowered. This includes 'Decision making' [Akram (2017), Sheikh et al. (2016)], 'Mobility' [Mahmud et al. (2012), Assaad et al (2014)], 'Communication' [Khan et al. (2010)], Educational attainment', 'health care and well-being' [Sundaram (2012)], 'Control over resources' [Audinarayana (2013) and Bahuguna and Semwal (2009), Claros and Zahidi (2005)], 'Resources, agency and achievements' [Kabeer (1999)], 'Governance, Media' [Bui Chung et al (2013)], 'Autonomy' [Chaudhry and Nosheen (2009)], Ownership [Abbas et al (2021)], Interpersonal coercive control items [Mason (2005)], Physical, Religious [Wieringa (2006)], 'Socio-economic' [Parveen and Leonhauser's (2004)], 'Socio-cultural, Familial, Psychological, Legal' [Pillai and Asalatha (2012) and Malhotra et al. (2000)], 'Self-esteem' [Musonera and Heshmati (2016),] and 'Political' [World bank project (2017) and Varghese (2012)] as the dimension of women empowerment.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are :

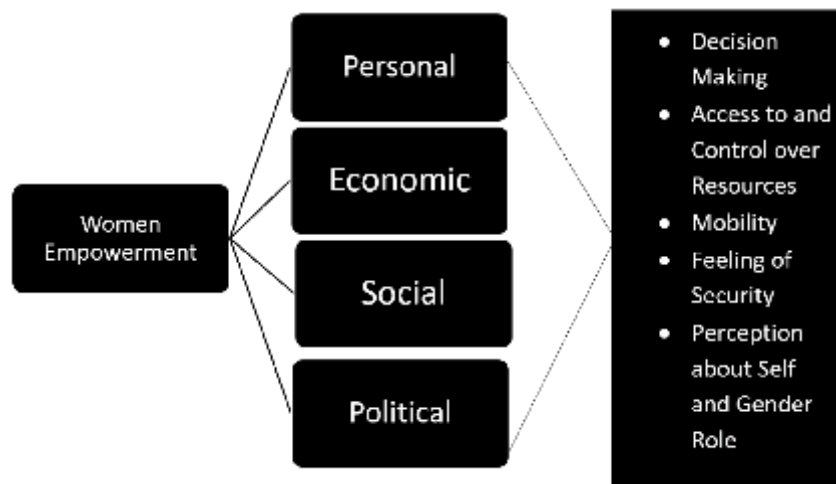
1. To identify the dimension where women can be empowered.
2. To compute women empowerment indices.
3. To compare the status of empowerment of working and non-working women in industrial town of Jamshedpur.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is empirical in nature. For an empirical analysis an adequate and reliable source of data are very important. The study used primary data collected through multi stage stratified random sampling technique. The first stratification had been done on the basis of work status. Equal no of sample was selected for working and non-working women (i.e., 120 working and 120 non-working). In second stage working group had been categorized into two groups i.e., Organised and unorganised sector. In the last stage organised sector had been categorized into two groups i.e., public and private. And, unorganised sector is divided into three groups such as self-employed, house maid and women working in shop. Equal no of sample was selected for each stratum. As the purpose of the proposed research work is to compare the empowerment status of working and non-working women, hence equal sample for each group had been taken. A total of 240 women (working 120 and 120 non-working women) were interviewed directly. The schedule method was used for data collection.

### **Identification of Dimension of Women Empowerment**

Since women empowerment is multidimensional process and many studies have shown that women may be empowered in one sphere while not in another [Kishore (2004) and Malhotra (1997)]. Hence, from the basis of previous study present study measures the status of empowerment of women into four domains, i.e., 'Personal domain', 'Economic domain', 'Social domain' and 'Political domain' and each domain has five dimensions such as 'Decision-making', 'Access to and control over resources', 'Mobility', 'Feeling of security' and last, 'Perception about self and gender role'.



### **Computing Women Empowerment Indices**

To assess women empowerment in selected domains and dimensions, the data were collected through a pre-designed questionnaire consisting of 76 questions for each group (working and non-working). The Cumulative Women Empowerment Index computed by



calculating women empowerment indices in each domain by using simple average method. The method of computing women empowerment index was based upon the works of Das Gupta and Srivastava (2011), Musonera and Heshmati (2016), Awan and Zertashia (2015).

(A total of 76 questions comprises of the questionnaire, where details are attached in the Appendix.)

### **Indexing 'Personal Empowerment Index' (CPEI)**

Personal domain consists five dimensions i.e., decision making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role. Each dimension consists different number of issues to assess women empowerment indices. To compute 'Composite Personal Empowerment Index (CPEI)', the women empowerment indices for each dimension which come under personal domain has been constructed individually for single respondents (The individual index for single woman has calculated by adding total score of a single respondent and divided it by total number of questions), thereafter each personal dimension was constructed by adding these values and divided it by number of respondents (sample size). Total five indices for five dimensions of personal domain were computed. Finally, after calculating all the dimension individually, the 'Composite Personal Empowerment Index' (CPEI) is computed by applying simple average method. The index value lies between 0 to 1. The closer the value 0 indicates the low level of empowerment, while nearer the value 1 represents higher level of empowerment.

$$CPEI = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^n X_{pi}$$

i= five dimensions of women empowerment (decision-making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role)

n= number of dimensions

p= personal domain

### **Economic Empowerment Index (CEEI)**

The second domain of the study is 'Economic Domain'. Economic empowerment is one of the crucial aspects for women to achieve their potential and advance their rights. Therefore, it became crucial to measure women's empowerment in economic domain. But economic empowerment is multifaceted. Hence the 'Composite Economic Empowerment Index' (CEEI) consist five dimensions where women's economic empowerment can be measured, these dimensions are- economic decision making (Xe), economic control over and access to resources (Ye), economic mobility (Ze), economic feeling of security (Ue) and economic perception about self and gender role (Ve). Each of these dimensions has various numbers of issues to ask. For constructing the 'Economic Empowerment Index' (CEEI), all five dimensions were indexing separately by applying simple average method. Thereafter the Composite Economic Empowerment Index is prepared by applying following formula.

$$CEEI = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^n X_{ei}$$

i= five dimensions of women empowerment (decision-making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role)

n= number of dimensions

e= economic domain

### **Social Empowerment Index (CSEI)**

Social empowerment shows an equitable social status for women in society, where they are free from patriarchy attitudes and stereotype social norms. Social empowerment is one of the crucial aspects for women to gain the ability to participate in community life equally. Therefore, it became crucial to measure women's empowerment in social domain. Since social empowerment of women consists many aspects, hence the 'Composite Social Empowerment Index' consist five dimensions where women's social empowerment can be measured, these dimensions are- social decision making (Xs), social control over and access to resources (Ys), social mobility (Zs), social feeling of security (Us) and social perception about self and gender role (Vs). Each of these dimensions has various numbers of issues to ask. All five indices of social domain were calculated separately by using simple average method. Thereafter the 'Composite Social Empowerment Index' (CSEI) has developed by adding the total average score of all five indices and divided it by total number of dimensions i.e., 5.

$$CSEI = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^n X_{si}$$

i= five dimensions of women empowerment (decision-making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role)

n= number of dimensions

s= social domain

### **Political Empowerment Index (CPIEI)**

Political empowerment is one of the crucial issues of women empowerment, which plays a relative role in overall process of empowerment. Political empowerment enhances women's visibility in public area and increases the position in social community and also help to break the gender power relationship. In this study, 'Political domain' has identified as a fourth domain of women empowerment. Hence, to assess the political empowerment a 'Composite Political Empowerment Index' (indicated by CPIEI) has been constructed by applying simple average method. The CPIEI is based on five dimensions of political domain. Political decision-making (Xpl), access to and control over resources (Ypl), mobility (Zpl), feeling of security (Upl) and perception about self and gender role (Vpl). The women empowerment

indices for each dimension (total five indices) which come under political domain has been constructed individually for single respondents (The individual index for single woman has calculated by adding total score of a single respondent and divided it by total number of questions), thereafter each dimension was constructed by adding these values and divided it by number of respondents (sample size). After calculating all the dimension individually, the 'Composite Political Empowerment Index' (CPIEI) is computed by applying simple average method.

$$CPIEI = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^n X_{pli}$$

i= five dimensions of women empowerment (decision-making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role)

n= number of dimensions

pl= political domain

#### **Computation of 'Composite Empowerment Index' (CEI)**

After calculating all the four domains separately, where each domain has five dimensions. [Thus 5\*4=20 indices and 4 composite indices (domain wise) of women empowerment], finally one 'Composite Empowerment Index' (CEI) of women empowerment had been prepared by using simple average method. Where the score of all four domain has been added and divided it by number of domains (four). While computing all the domains and dimensions equal weight were assigned.

$$CEI = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^n X_i$$

X= Composite index,

i = Domain,

n= Number of Domain

The value of the index laying between 1 to 0 scale. where's, score of the index closer to 1 reveal more empowerment and a value nearer to 0 indicates less empowerment of women. The value 0.75 to 1 reveals highly empowered, 0.5 to 0.75 shows moderate level of empowerment and the value of less than 0.50 has shown less empowerment.

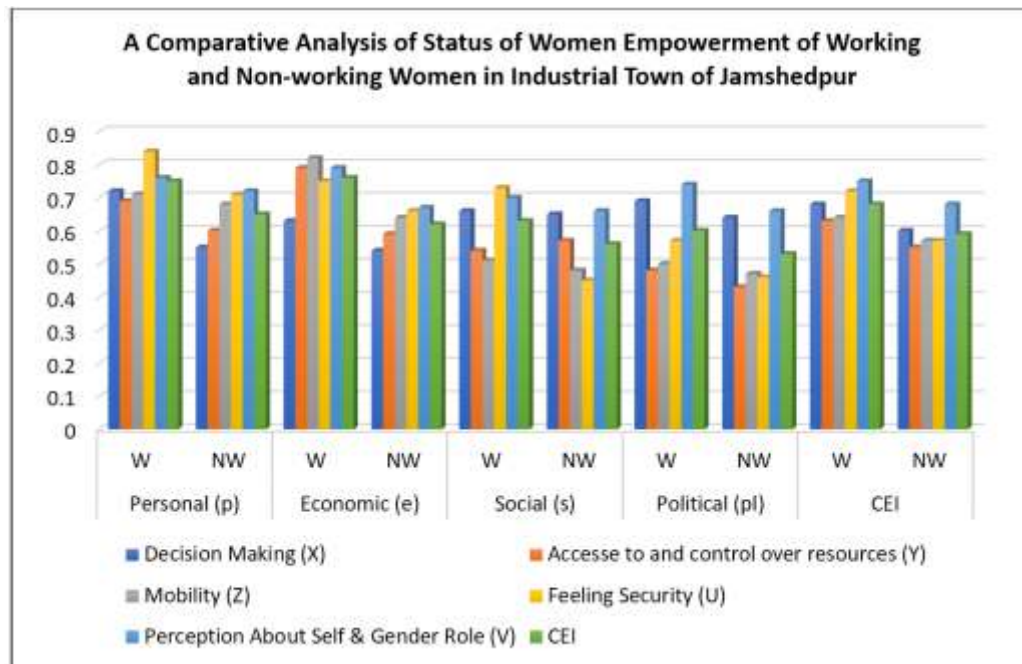
#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Results of comparative study of empowerment status of working and non-working women are presented in the tabular and graphical form below.

**Table: 2 A Comparative Analysis of status of Women Empowerment of Working and Non-working Women in Industrial Town of Jamshedpur**

Dimension	Domain	Personal (p)		Economic (e)		Social (s)		Political (pl)		CEI	
Group		W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Decision Making (X)		0.72	0.55	0.63	0.54	0.66	0.65	0.69	0.64	0.68	0.6
Access to and control over resources (Y)		0.69	0.6	0.79	0.59	0.54	0.57	0.48	0.43	0.63	0.55
Mobility (Z)		0.71	0.68	0.82	0.64	0.51	0.48	0.5	0.47	0.64	0.57
Feeling Security (U)		0.84	0.71	0.75	0.66	0.73	0.45	0.57	0.46	0.72	0.57
Perception About Self & Gender Role (V)		0.76	0.72	0.79	0.67	0.7	0.66	0.74	0.66	0.75	0.68
CEI		0.75	0.65	0.76	0.62	0.63	0.56	0.60	0.53	0.68	0.59

Source: Primary Data



Source: Primary Data

The result suggests the overall picture of the study area (Jamshedpur town), which provides useful insights about the empowerment status of the working and non-working women in various domains and dimensions. On the basis of the above result a rough estimation of the

empowerment status of working and non-working women can be determined for the town of Jamshedpur, further which is important to shape policies.

1. The study revealed that working women are more empowered than non-working women. As the composite women empowerment index score of the working women is 0.68 and for non-working women it is 0.59.
2. As the four domains of empowerment are concerned working women are more empowered than non-working women in all four dimension of women empowerment i.e., personal, economic, social and political.
3. The study shows that working women are more empowered in all five dimensions i.e., decision making, access to and control over resources, mobility, feeling of security and perception about self and gender role.
4. The result shows that working women are more empowered in all domain and dimension as whole but in the 'access to and control over resources' dimension which came under 'social domain' are less empowered than non-working women. the reason behind this is they get less free time and not associated with social activities or members in any social organization, even it was found that they do not socialize much.

#### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The main objective of the study is to compare the status of women empowerment of working and non-working women in various domain and dimension of empowerment. The result shows the low level of empowerment status of non-working women in every domain and dimension, except access to and control over resources dimension in social domain. As it is well known that the non-working women plays a crucial role in improving the quality of lives of human being like health, nutrition, education, etc. Therefore, their empowerment is necessary for ensuring not just their own welfare, but the well-being of the entire household. Also, it is crucial to know that the total non-working female population of Jamshedpur town is 90.4 percent and working female population is 9.6 percent. Which means the majority of total female population need to enhance the status of empowerment. Government has made many policies for uplifting the status of women but it is high time to run some ground level policies where women get the environment to use their full capacity and take charge of their lives. Non-government organization also can play an important role for improve the status of women.

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