

In Quest of Relationship between Education and Political Empowerment among Women: A Correlational Study

Dr. Arfi Anjoon

Teaching Faculty, Department of Education, Salar K.K. Girls' H.S. School, Salar, Murshidabad, West Bengal, India

Dr. Pankaj Kumar Paul*

Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Education, Gourav Guin Memorial College (Govt. Aided & Affiliated to Vidyasagar University), C.K. Road, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India

*Corresponding Author & Mentor

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 20-02-2025

Published: 14-03-2025

Keywords:

Education, Political awareness, Capacity building, Political rights, Empowerment

ABSTRACT

The idea of women's empowerment appears to be a popular and overused one in the twenty-first century. The media, local and national governments, decision-makers, and individuals from all over the world discuss it. When it comes to full and equal participation in public policy decisions that affect their lives, women are still notably under-represented. There are severe consequences when decision-making organizations lack enough political engagement. Occasionally, crucial decisions pertaining to the nation's interests and finances overlook or under-represent women's opinions. This deprives women of their basic rights and civic obligations. We must make significant efforts to fortify institutional frameworks and capacities, institutional memory, and organisational and individual commitment to enhance women's empowerment. Furthermore, we must immediately address the challenging issue of insufficient financial, human, and material resources.

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15030558>



Introduction

The stated goals and the actual circumstances faced by Indian women continue to diverge significantly. People have repeatedly emphasized the importance of strengthening legal structures to eradicate all forms of discrimination. In the first five-year plan, women's growth was considered from a welfare perspective. To tackle this issue, the subsequent programs incorporated a strategy aimed at empowering women. These programs and policies need to be modified to become social, political, economic, and educational, even though there is a framework for women's empowerment. It was widely believed that women would eventually join decision-making organizations as their socioeconomic indicators improved and their engagement in various employment sectors increased. However, this does not appear to be the case, and there is increasing agreement that increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies requires affirmative action. With an emphasis on the impact of global trends, laws, and legislative initiatives, this article attempts to give an overview of the development of women's political empowerment in Murshidabad district in West Bengal, India.

Significance of the Study

Girls now have the chance to participate in politics and build their reputations, thanks to women's empowerment. By assuming leadership positions and engaging in political decision-making, girls can gain more influence. In order to increase awareness of their rights, girls have participated in a variety of political activities both before and after independence. Women's empowerment has achieved gender equality in the political sphere. Since women make up roughly half of society, their participation in politics is essential. By working together, girls involved in politics may transform society. Girls' political consciousness facilitates a strong society (Kaul & Sahani, 2009).

Brief Review of Literature

Kabeer (2005 & 2009) revealed in another study that opinions on the effectiveness of microfinance vary, with some viewing it as a "magic bullet" for women's empowerment and others discounting its potential as a development panacea. This study looks at the actual data on how microfinance helps disadvantaged women become more empowered and reduce poverty. It becomes clear that, in contrast to other interventions like education and political quotas that aim to bring about the radical structural transformation that true empowerment entails, access to financial services does not "automatically" empower women, even though it can and does make a significant contribution to the economic productivity and social well-being of impoverished women and their households. **Elliott and**



Colleagues (2005) endeavored to establish a connection between philosophy (trauma theory, empowerment, and relational theory) and practice (service delivery). In particular, the article lists ten criteria that characterize trauma-informed care, examines the demand for such services, and lists some traits of these services across eight distinct human services domains. Outreach and involvement, screening and evaluation, resource management and advocacy, crisis management, mental health and drug addiction services, trauma-focused programs, parental assistance, and healthcare are among the topics covered. The experiences of the nine sites that participated in the 5-year grant study, Women, Co-occurring Disorders and Violence Study, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, are evaluated here, along with a recommendation to incorporate consumers in the planning and assessment of services. **Sridevi (2005)** talked about how, regardless of the nation where a social planner attempts to bring about sustainable development, women's empowerment is a modern issue. Although it is not a sufficient requirement, women's empowerment is nevertheless required to stabilize the development process and ensure its sustainability. By describing women's empowerment, it seeks to establish a quantitative definition of empowerment. The measure used in this research is defended as scientific since it demonstrates more realistic the theoretical model is by creating an additional empirical model that captures women's perceptions of themselves and contributes to their empowerment.

Objectives

1. To find out the difference in attitude between APL & BPL households towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;
2. To find out the difference in attitude between male and female towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;
3. To find out the interrelationship between education and political empowerment of women.

Data Source & Methodology

The data is primary in nature collected from 610 households from Murshidabad district in West Bengal, India in 2023-2024. We further gathered information for this research from both online and offline sources. We have examined numerous books, periodicals, scholarly articles, and government reports. We have examined numerous websites pertaining to our country's political system and the participation of Indian women. We questioned a number of leaders and members of governmental and non-governmental organizations to gain a deeper understanding of their efforts to promote women's political



participation and its potential to empower them in various ways. We contacted a number of influential political figures about potential strategies the government could employ to develop a more effective roadmap for Indian women to actively engage in politics.

Hypothesis

⁰H₁: No significant difference in attitude exists between APL & BPL households towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;

⁰H₂: No significant difference in attitude exists between male and female towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;

⁰H₃: No significant interrelationship exists between education and political empowerment of women.

Variables of the Study

Dependent Variable: Women Empowerment

Independent Variable: Education

The present study also included several Socio-economic and demographic variables like this:

1. Economic status (APL and BPL)
2. Gender (Male and Female)

Analysis & Discussion

Analysis Pertaining to Hypothesis ⁰H₁: No significant difference in attitude exists between APL and BPL towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;

Table -1: Comparing Mean, SD, t-value, and SED value about the level of Political empowerment according to Economic status of the respondents

| Variables | APL | | BPL | | t-value | df | SED | Critical Value | Decision |
|------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|---------|-----|------|----------------|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | | | |
| Political Empowerment | 99.36 | 5.26 | 82.10 | 2.93 | 44.26 | 608 | 0.15 | 2.58 | Null hypothesis rejected, Significant difference exists (P < .01) |

Source: Calculation based on Field Survey, 2023-24

Table 1 demonstrated that APL households have a higher mean score than BPL households, indicating a greater degree of political empowerment in these households. APL households have a mean value of 99.36, while BPL households have a mean value of 82.10. The t-value, at the 0.01 level of significance, is higher than the crucial value of 44.26. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there are notable distinctions between APL and BPL households regarding the influence of education on women's political empowerment.

Analysis Pertaining to Hypothesis ⁰H₂: No significant difference in attitude exists between male and female towards the impact of education on political empowerment of women;

Table -2: Comparing Mean, SD, t-value, and SED value about the level of Political empowerment according to Gender of the respondents

| Variables | Male | | Female | | t-value | df | SED | Critical Value | Decision |
|------------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|---------|-----|------|----------------|--|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | | | |
| Political Empowerment | 107.25 | 5.24 | 98.16 | 3.13 | 25.97 | 608 | 0.12 | 2.58 | Null hypothesis rejected, Significant diff. exists (P < .01) |

Source: Calculation based on Field Survey, 2023-24

It can be seen from table -2 that the mean values for political empowerment differ for men and women. The mean value for a guy is 107.25, while it is 98.16 for a female. The mean value for men is greater than the mean value for women. Therefore, male respondents have a high level of political empowerment. Once more, at the 0.01 level, the t-value is 3.13, which is more than the table value. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a substantial attitude gap between men and women on the contribution of education to women's political empowerment.

Box-1: Education: A Turning Point of Payel for Political Empowerment

A college degree is a prerequisite for political empowerment. I will now talk about the first-hand information I learnt from the field survey in my capacity as a researcher. Payel is from a low-income family in the Murshidabad area of West Bengal. She is determined to enter politics as soon as possible, despite her family's dire financial circumstances. After graduating from high school, she



concentrated on pursuing an economics degree. She graduated from Burdwan University with a master's degree in this discipline. She is actively involved in politics and presently holds the position of municipal representative in Panchayat. This incident serves as a concrete example of how education gave Payel the ability to become politically empowered.

Pertaining to Hypothesis ⁰H₃: No significant interrelationship exists between education and political empowerment of women;

Table -5: Particulars Explaining the relationship between education and Political Empowerment

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r-value | t _r -value | Decision |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|-------|---------|-----------------------|---|
| Education | 610 | 7.24 | 5.03 | 0.88 | 46.17 | Null hypothesis rejected, Significant relation exists (P < .01) |
| Political Empowerment | 610 | 97.33 | 25.39 | | | |

Source: Calculation based on Field Survey, 2023-24

Table 3 focuses on the connection between women's political empowerment and education. The averages for political empowerment and education are 97.33 and 7.24, respectively. At the 0.01 level, the t-value of 46.17 is more than the critical value. As a result, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that education and women's political empowerment are significantly correlated.

Conclusion

To sum up it demonstrates that women's political empowerment has progressed, especially in light of a heightened awareness and comprehension of women's issues across all societal strata. However, long-term strategies are essential to empowering women. Improving women's basic literacy, particularly in civic and political competencies, human rights, leadership, and other practical skills; changing laws and policy frameworks to support women's empowerment and involvement in governance; increasing public awareness and sensitivity to the roles that women currently play in society; and promoting societal acceptance of women as leaders and heads of households are all ways to support women's equal participation in politics alongside men.

References

- Bardhan Pranab, Mookherjee Dilip. (eds.) Decentralisation and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007.3.
- Behar Amitabh, Kumar Yogesh. Decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, India: from Panchayat Raj to Gram Swaraj (1995 to 2001), Working Paper 170, ODI, London, UK, 2002.5.
- Behar Amitabh. Madhya Pradesh Gram Swaraj: Experiment in Direct Democracy', Economic and Political Weekly, 2001.6.
- Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra, Duflo, Esther. Impact of Reservation in Panchayati Raj: Evidence from a Nationwide Randomised Experiment, Economic and Political Weekly, 2004.9.
- Elliott, D. E., Bjelajac, P., Fallo, R. D., Markoff, L. S., & Reed, B. G. (2005). Trauma-informed or trauma-denied: Principles and implementation of trauma-informed services for women. *Journal of community psychology*, 33(4), 461-477.
- Haris Jamil (2017), why aren't we dealing with the lack of women in Indian politics, the wire.in
- Jha SN, Mathur PC. Decentralisation and Local Politics-Readings in Indian Government and Politics-2, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999.13.
- Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and change*, 30(3), 435-464.
- Kabeer, N. (2005). Is microfinance a'magicbullet'for women's empowerment? Analysis of findings from South Asia. *Economic and Political weekly*, 4709-4718.
- Kazembe, L. N. (2020). Women empowerment in Namibia: Measurement, determinants and geographical disparities. *World Development Perspectives*, 19, 100211.
- Kothari Rajni. Panchayati Raj: Re Assessment, Economic and Political Weekly. 1961; 13:757.
- Kaul, Shashi; Shradha Sahni (2009). "Study on the Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution". *Studies on Home and Community Science* 3 (1): 29–38.
- Mohini Giri, V. Emancipation and Empowerment of Women. Gyan Books, 1998
- Sridevi, T. O. (2005). Empowerment of women: A systematic analysis. *India Development Foundation IDF Discussion Paper*.