

ABSTRACT

MOTHER'S EMPOWERMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: A STUDY OF RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF KARIMGANJ DISTRICT

**AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED TO ASSAM UNIVERSITY IN
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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Empowerment is a process of awareness and awakening of capacity building leading to greater participation, greater effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. Empowerment of women is one of the most important factors of economic development. Empowerment has become the key solution to many social problems like high population growth rates, environment degradation, and low status of women. “Power” is the key word of the term “Empowerment” which means ‘control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology.

The empowerment of women occurs in reality when women achieve increased control and participation in decision making that leads to their better access to resources, and therefore, results in improved socio-economic status. Woman’s level of empowerment varies from individual to individual on account of differences in her class or caste, ethnicity, relative wealth, age, family position, etc. Hence, any analysis of women’s empowerment must appreciate these contributory dimensions.

Empowerment is both a means to an end and an end in itself. The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among individual classes and communities. It is theories of social change in particular, a change from a hierarchical to egalitarian type of society. It is based on democratic society, which is based on recognition of equal rights to all individuals in its place. Empowerment is to change the society through rearrangement of power. So there is a need for empowerment through civic, political and social rights of citizens. HDR 2014 introduces a Gender Development Index (GDI) for the first time, which measures gender development gaps among 148 countries. India’s rank is the lowest at 57 in female HDI rank (UNDP, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Women empowerment is an issue of great concern in almost all settings of life and in all countries of the world. Without empowering women problems like gender discrimination, violence against women, mother's health etc cannot be tackled properly. It is evident that both men and women are agents of economic development and deprivation of one agent will hinder the process of economic development as a whole. Existing literature suggests that women and men do not have equal access to and control over resources such as money, transport and time. Since the decision making power within the family is unequal with men enjoying privileges and women are denied, women's access to different types of services is restricted. The consequences are many for the women such as poor health, poor education, poor access to jobs and businesses. Women are, because of this unequal power sharing, often subjected to physical torture, humiliation and violence. Much of the women's work also remains unrecognized and undervalued. A review of 31 countries pointed out that women work longer hours than men in nearly every country but most of the women's work remains unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued (HDR, 1995).

Research studies have demonstrated a universal fact that there exist a wide gap between men and women in their role, performance and achievements in almost all sectors of the economy. In Barak valley also the socioeconomic position of women is still very low. Keeping this in view, the present study seeks to investigate the overall status of women in Karimganj District of the valley by measuring the empowerment level of them. The role of women in children's educational attainments is also a well researched area of study. Large number of studies pointed out that mother's workforce participation and education are two important factors that determine children's educational attainments. It is commonly observed that children of parents with higher levels of education do better in standard tests of school attainment than those of parents with less education and education have stronger

impact on children's overall educational attainments. Educated mothers invest more in their children's cognitive development and thereby, contribute to the welfare of the next generation. An increase in mother's decision making ability within the family can have a positive impact on her children's welfare (Thomas 1990; Thomas et al. 2002). Thomas (1990) finds that in Brazil mother's education has a significantly stronger effect on girls' health than that of sons, but that father's education has a stronger effect on boys' health. On the other hand, in Java (Thomas et al. 2002) and Cote d'Ivoire (Haddad and Hodinott 1994), women with greater earned income allocate more resources to sons' health. There is less evidence on the effect of women's decision-making power on children's education or on differences in investments in the schooling of boys and girls. While some studies suggest that mother's education (in Peru: King and Bellew 1988) or income from employment (in China: Qian 2008) has a larger positive effect on the education of daughters than that of sons, others find that the reverse is true for father's education (Quisumbing and Maluccio 2003) in some countries.

Objectives of the Study

The basic objectives of the present study are as follows

- (i) To measure Mother's Empowerment level.
- (ii) To identify factors affecting Mother's Empowerment level.
- (iii) To examine the Impact of Mother's Empowerment level on children's education.
- (iv) To examine the relationship between Mother's Empowerment and gender differential, if any, in Children's Educational attainments.
- (v) To make a comparative analysis of rural-urban scenario so far as Mother's Empowerment and its link with Children's Education is concerned.

Research Questions

On the basis of the objectives of the study the following two research questions which are framed to give direction to the research to meet its objectives.

- (i) Is there any impact of place of residence on mother's empowerment level?
- (ii) Does mother's empowerment contribute most towards educational attainments of female children?

Methodology

The present study seeks to examine the level of empowerment of mothers, the women at centre at household level, and educational attainments of their children at household level of Karimganj district of Barak Valley. The study is based on primary data collected from selected households of rural and urban areas of Karimganj in the year 2013(January to May 2013).However, a household having both mother and children of school going ages have been taken into consideration. Empowerment level of mother is measured with the help of recognized dimensions such as Decision making power of mother within family, mother's freedom of movement, political participation of mother, mother's decision regarding control over economic resources, husband relation with wife, mother's willingness for change etc. Each dimension has separate number of indicators which is based on extensive review of literature which determined empowerment level of mother within family.

Sample of the Study

As such the sample of the study comprise of 250 households where mothers are currently present and living with their children, minor, of school going ages and above. The rural-urban share of such selected households is approximately sixty-forty. Purposive simple random sampling technique is followed for selection of sample households purposively from all parts of the district to make the sample a representative one. However, a household

having both mother and children of school going ages have been only be taken into consideration.

Data

The data is collected with the help of a structured pre-tested schedule through personal interview method and household survey. The schedule is framed in such a way as to collect data on all aspects that define women empowerment. Data is also be collected on the schooling attainments of all the children of the mother of the selected household. It also contain information about proximate determinants of women empowerment such as family structure, nature of workforce participation of women etc.

Data Analysis Techniques

Simple statistical methods, graphs, diagrams, tables are used for sample data analysis purpose. Further, to meet the objectives and hypothesis of the study Principal Component Analysis technique is used to quantify mother's empowerment, Regression analysis (OLS) is applied to identify the determinants of mother's empowerment level and to find the impact of mother's empowerment level on children's education t test for small sample and multinomial logistic regression is applied in the study.

The Variables of the study

The field survey schedule contains information about the status of the respondents as well as other family members and their income, household assets, education level, personal habits and household background characteristics etc. On the basis of the conceptual frame work of the study and an extensive review of literature, some variables are identified and estimated as indicators of mother's empowerment. These variables are arrayed against a large number of variables which are considered as possible determinants of empowerment.

Definition of the Variables

Variables taken in the study in objective wise are listed below.

The first objective of the study is to measure Mother's Empowerment level. It is measured by framing different indices. The variables taken in each indices are listed below:

Mother Empowerment Index: (MEI)

Mother Empowerment is measured by six different indices. These are:

a. Mother's Decision Making Power within Family Index (MDMPWFI)

It is constructed with the help of nine indicators. These are as follows:

Mother's Decision Regarding (a) Family Health Care (FHC), (b) Making Large Household Purchases (MLHP), (c) Making Routine Household Purchases (MRHP), (d) Family Size (FS), (e) Family Planning Services (FPS), (f) Job of Women (JOW), (g) Going Outside of Home (GOH), (h) Family Day to Day Expenditure (FDTDE), (i) Spending Personal Income (SPI).

b. Mother's Freedom of Movement Index (Mobility of Mother) (MFOMI)

It is measured with the help of the following variables

Mother's mobility to Local Market for Purchases (LMFP), Local Health Center/Local Doctor Clinic (LHC/LDC), Home of Relatives/Home of Friends (HOR/HOF), Other City or Other Villages (OC/OV), Cinema/Festival/Village Fair (C/F/VF), Visiting Parental Home (VPH), Participate in Cultural Programmes of Village/Town (PICP), Participate in Religious Programmes of Village/Town (PIRP), Participate in the Meetings of Women Organizations (PIMOWO). These are quantified by the following way.

c. Mother's Political Participation Index (MPPI): In this area mother's empowerment is measured by the variables Caste Vote in Election (CVIE), Vote to candidate of own Choice

(VCOOC), Attend the Speeches of Election Contestants (ASEC), Update herself About Changing Political Situation (UACPS), Discuss the Problems of Local People at any Forum (DPOLPF), Feel Herself Contesting in Election (FYCIE), Should Women Contest Election? (own Opinion) (SWCEOP)

d. Mother's Decision Regarding Control Over Economic Resources Index

(MDRCOERI): In this area mother's empowerment is measured by the variables Routine Household Spending (RHS), Purchasing Jewelry/Bonds/Shares (PJ/B/S), Purchasing Gifts for Relatives (PGFR), Control on Expenditure for Purchasing Daily Necessities (COEFPDN), Purchasing Clothes and Makeup Articles (PCMA), Control the Wastage of Commodities for Use (CWOCFU), Sale or Exchange of Land (S/EOL), Educational and other Expenses on Children (E/EOC), Purchasing Daily Food (PDF), Purchase of Land (POL).

e. Husband's Cooperation With Wife Index (Husband's Relation with Wife)

(HRWWI): In this area mother's empowerment is measured by the variables Husband Deals With Respondent Politely (HDWRP), Husband Helps in Household Work (HHHW), Husband Shares the Problem with Respondent (HSPWR), Husband Respects Respondent's Parents (HRRP), Husband Appreciates Respondent's Household Work (HARHW), Husband Takes Care of Respondent (HTCOR), Husband Gives Importance to Respondent Opinion (HGITRO), Husband Trust Respondent (HTR), Husband Ignore Respondent Mistakes (HIRM), Husband Helps With Childcare (HHWC), Husband Allows Respondent to go outside home (HARTGOH).

f. Mother's Willingness for Change Index (MWFCI):

In this area mother's empowerment is measured by the variables Statement of Respondent about (a) Women Have A Right To Spend Their Life According To Their Will (WRSLAW) (b) Higher Education is Necessary For Women (HEDNFW) (c) Women Should Be Allowed To Go For

Job Out Side Their Home (WATGFJ) (d) Women Should Be Allowed To Join Women Associations Or Organizations (WTJWO) (e) Husband Should Share The Household Work With His Wife (HSHWWW)

For identifying the factors affecting Mother's Empowerment level, Descriptive Analysis and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method is used where Mothers' Empowerment Index (MEI) is the dependent variable and the independent variables are listed below.

Mother's Education in Years (MEDU), Religion (RLGN) is a dummy variable 1 for Hindu, 0 otherwise, Family Type (FT) is also a dummy Variable 1 for nuclear, 0 otherwise, Mother's Age (MA), Place of Residence (POR) is a dummy variable 1 for urban, 0 otherwise, Category (CATRYOBC) is a dummy variable 1 for OBC, 0 otherwise, Category (CATRYSC) is also a dummy variable 1 for SC, 0 otherwise and CATRYGEN is the reference group, Property Owned by Mother (POM) quantified as number of property in the name of mother, Husband living with wife (HLWW) is a dummy variable 1 for yes, 0 otherwise, Mother's Have bank or post office account (MBPA) is a dummy variable 1 for yes, 0 otherwise and Mother's Yearly Income (MYI)

Other variables taken in the study are listed below:

Male Children Average Education (MCAEDU), Feale Children Average Education (FCAEDU),

Mean Difference in Children's Education (MDICEDU), Average Mother's empowerment (AME) (the MEI index value) Annual Family Income (AFI in Rs.)

Mother's Decision Making Power Regarding Children Education Index (MDMPCEDUI)

To find the impact of mother's empowerment on their children's education a new index is constructed i.e. Mother's Decision Making Power Regarding Children's Education Index (MDMPCEDUI). This index is separately calculated for male and female children in a

household by using Principal Component Analysis. The indicators of this index are listed below.

Mother's Decision Making Power Regarding (a) Selection of Schools/Colleges for Children (SOS/SOCFC), (b) Selection of Course of Study of Children (SOCOSOC), (c) Accompany Children for Schools/Colleges related matter (ACFS/CRM), (d) Higher Education Of Children (HEDUOC), (e) Marriage of Children (MOC), (f) Choice Between Marriage and Higher education of Children (CBMHEDUOC).

Models used in the study

To fulfill the objectives of the study various models is used in the study which is listed below

1. Principal Component Analysis

There are six components of mother's empowerment. Mother's Empowerment is determined as a composite of her decision making power within family, her freedom of mobility, political participation, decision regarding control over economic resources, her relation with husband and her willingness for change in some selected aspects. Principal Component analysis is used to construct the indices of different component of Mother's as mentioned above and to find the relative weights of the selected indicators of mother's empowerment regarding different components in Karimganj District of Assam.

A composite index is developed by using the formula

$$E_m = \frac{\sum Z_i W_i}{\sum W_i} \quad \forall i = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

For comparison this index is standardized to a scale of 0 to 1.

Standardized index of jth household is

$$I_j = (H_j - H_{\text{minimum}}) / (H_{\text{maximum}} - H_{\text{minimum}}) \quad \forall j = 1, 2, \dots, j$$

Mothers' Empowerment Index (MEI)

The overall Mother's Empowerment Index (MEI) is measured by assigning equal weight to each of the six aspects of participation/ decision making. Therefore,

$$\text{MEI} = 1/6 [\text{MDMPWFI} + \text{MFOMI} + \text{MPPI} + \text{MDRCOERI} + \text{HRWWI} + \text{MWFCI}].$$

2. Regression Analysis

For identifying the factors affecting Mother's Empowerment level, Descriptive Analysis and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method is used. The regression equation is specified as,

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{MEDU} + \beta_2 \text{RLGN} + \beta_3 \text{FT} + \beta_4 \text{MA} + \beta_5 \text{POR} + \beta_6 \text{D}_1 \text{CARTYOBC} + \beta_7 \text{D}_2 \text{CARTYSC} + \beta_8 \text{MOP} + \beta_9 \text{HLWW} + \beta_{10} \text{MBPA} + \beta_{11} \text{MYI} + \mu$$

3. 't' test for small sample

To find the difference in the impact of mother's empowerment level on children's education, we used test for equality of two means where standard deviation is unknown.

The test comparing two independent population means with unknown standard deviations is called the Fisher's t-test which follows t distribution with degrees of freedom $(n_1 + n_2 - 2)$.

The hypothesis that the means are equal i.e. mean of male education = mean of female education. $H_0: (\mu_1 = \mu_2)$ is tested against alternative hypothesis that $H_1: (\mu_1 \neq \mu_2)$

If two population standard deviations are assumed to be equal, an unbiased estimator of the common variance is given by,

$$s^2 = n_1 S_1^2 + n_2 S_2^2 / n_1 + n_2 - 2$$

where S_1 and S_2 are the sample standard deviations. Thus the statistic is

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

4. Correlation Co-efficient

The word "correlation" is used to denote the degree of association between variables. If two variables x and y are so related that variations in the magnitude of one variable tend to be

accompanied by variations in the magnitude of the other variable, they are said to be correlated.

Let $(x_1, y_1), (x_2, y_2) \dots (x_n, y_n)$ be a given set of pairs of observations on two variables x and y . The correlation coefficient between x and y is then defined as,

$$r = \frac{cov(x,y)}{\sigma_x \cdot \sigma_y}$$

In order to investigate the connection between mother's empowerment level and the educational attainment of male and female children, the correlation coefficient between Male Children Average Education (MCAEDU) and Average Mother's Empowerment (AME), Female Children Average Education (FCAEDU) and Average Mother's Empowerment (AME) and finally Average Mother's Empowerment (AME) and Mean Difference in Children's Education (MDICEDU) is calculated.

5. Multinomial Logistic Regression

Suppose we have 'n' independent observation with 'p' explanatory variables. The qualitative response variable has k categories. To construct the logits in the multinomial case one of the categories is considered the base level and all the logits are constructed relative to it. Any category can be taken as the base level. We will take category k as the base level in our description of the method. Since there is no ordering, it is apparent that any category may be leveled k . Let π_j denote the multinomial probability of an observation falling in the j th category. We want to find the relationship between this probability and the p explanatory variables, $X_1, X_2 \dots \dots \dots X_p$.

The multinomial logistic regression model then is

$$\log \left(\frac{\pi_j(x_i)}{\pi_k(x_i)} \right) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}x_{1i} + \beta_{2j}x_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{pj}x_{pi}; \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, (k - 1), i = 1, 2, \dots, n.$$

Since all the π 's add to unity, this reduces to

$$\log(\pi_j(x_i)) = \frac{\exp(\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}x_{1i} + \beta_{2j}x_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{pj}x_{pi})}{1 + \sum_{j=1}^{k-1} \exp(\beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}x_{1i} + \beta_{2j}x_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{pj}x_{pi})}$$

for j = 1, 2, ..., (k - 1)

In order to examine further the connection between children's (male and female) education and mother's empowerment level, a multinomial logistic model is constructed where the dependent variables are categorical in nature and values from 0 to 3 are assigned to the categorical values variables. Here the model is based on a subsample which is drawn as follows. One child from each household is drawn at random.

Dependent variable: Children's Education in categorical form as,

Completion of elementary including illiterate = 0, Up to the Completion of high school = 1, Up to the completion of higher secondary = 2, Up to the completion of graduation and above = 3

Results and Discussion

The result of the study shows that Caste-wise, out of 250 respondents, 12 percent are SCs, 10 percent are OBCs, and remaining 78 percent are in general category. Religion-wise, 68 percent are Hindus and 32 percent are Muslims. In case of parents education fathers in the households are advanced in education in both rural and urban areas than the mothers of study area. Average education of father in rural and urban area is 10.3 years and 11.34 years respectively. Whereas, average mothers' education in rural and urban areas is 9.35 year and 10.84 years respectively. Thus educationally urban fathers and mothers are better off in education in comparison to the fathers and mothers of rural areas. In case of their children's education, there is a margin difference in both their son's and daughter's education. Male children's average education is higher in both rural and urban areas than female children's average education. In rural areas male children's average education is 9.24 years whereas in urban areas it is 9.34 years. Female children's average education in rural areas is 8.35 years

and in urban areas it is 8.47 years. Most of the respondents are housewives in the sample. Average family size of sample households of rural areas is 6.06 which is higher than the average family size of urban areas which is 4.95. Number of children per household is 3.28 in rural areas which is again larger than number of children per household in urban areas i.e., 2.22. Average land holding (in katha) of sample households in rural areas is greater (107.05 katha) than in case of urban areas (44.42 katha). Average annual per capita income of sample households in rural areas is Rs.57821.43 is lower than urban areas i.e., Rs.82929.81. Highest number of the rural households are having separate pucca sanitation whereas in urban areas there is no household having kutchha sanitation. In case of both rural areas, 86.87 percent households are having electricity in the study whereas, only 13.33 percent households have no-electricity. All households in urban areas are having electricity in their houses. In case of rural areas, 64 percent households have Deep tube well, 40 percent households have pond and well and 28.67 percent households have water supply. Furthermore, 31.33 percent households are having these sources of drinking water inside their houses whereas 68.67 percent households are having these sources of drinking water outside their houses. In case of urban areas of Karimganj, 93 percent households are having water supply and 83 percent households are having deep tube well. Further, 84 percent households in urban areas are having these drinking water sources inside their houses and only 16 percent households are having these drinking water sources outside their houses. In case of number of assets under possession, 6 to 9 assets are available in maximum households (71 in number) in rural areas, followed by 4 to 5 assets in 43 households and 1 to 3 assets in 26 households. No household is there that is having 15 to 17 assets in rural areas. Only few households (i.e. 10 in number) are having 10 to 14 assets in rural areas. In case of urban areas, maximum households (52 in number) have 6 to 9 assets households followed by 10 to 14 assets in 22 households and 4 to 5 assets in 16 households. Only 10

households have 1 to 3 assets. No household is there that is having 15 to 17 assets in urban areas also. In case of rural areas, highest number of households has 4 to 5 rooms i.e. 68 households followed by 42 households which have 1 to 3 rooms and 38 households have 6 to 9 rooms. Only 2 households have 10 to 14 rooms. No households have 15 to 17 rooms in rural areas in the study. In case of urban areas, maximum households have 4 to 5 rooms i.e. 49 households followed by 25 households which have 6 to 9 rooms and 20 households have 1 to 3 rooms. Only 5 households have 10 to 14 rooms and only one household has 15 rooms in urban Karimganj in the study.

The result of first objective of the study that is the value of Mother's Empowerment Index (MEI) is 0.583 which implies that there is a medium level of empowerment of mothers in Karimganj district of Assam. However the index value of Decision making Power within family dimension of mother empowerment is 0.501 implies that there is a moderate level empowerment of mother in Karimganj District regarding Decision making Power within family dimension. Again, in the dimension, Decision making Power within family, the variable 'Family Size (FS)' has lowest weight and 'Going outside of Home (GOH)' has highest weight indicating that decision of mother regarding 'Going outside of Home (GOH)' has improved the empowerment level of mother. The index value of Mother's Freedom of Mobility is 0.561 implies that there is also a moderate level empowerment of mother of Karimganj District regarding their Freedom of Mobility dimension. In component of Mother's Freedom of Mobility, the variable 'Visiting Parental Home (VPH)' has lowest weight and 'Participation in Cultural Programme (PICP)' has highest weight indicating that 'Participation in Cultural Programme (PICP)' has improved the empowerment level of mother in the district. The Index value of Political Participation of mother is 0.459 which implies that there is low level of empowerment of mother regarding Political Participation in Karimganj District. In the dimension, Political Participation of mother, the variable

‘Update herself About Changing Political Situation (UACPS)’ has lowest weight and ‘Discuss the Problems of Local People at any Forum (DPOLPF)’ has highest weight indicating that ‘Discuss the Problems of Local People at any Forum (DPOLPF)’ has improved the empowerment level of mother regarding political participation. The Index value of decision regarding Control over Economic Resources or economic matter is 0.514 which implies that there is moderate level of empowerment of mother regarding her Control over Economic Resources or economic matter in Karimganj District. In the dimension, Mother’s Decision regarding Control over Economic Resources the variable ‘Purchasing Gifts for Relatives (PGFR)’ has lowest weight and ‘Sale or Exchange of Land (S/EOL)’ has highest weight indicating that decision of mother regarding ‘Sale or Exchange of Land (S/EOL)’ has improved the empowerment level of mother in the area of her Control over Economic Resources. The index value of Husband’s Cooperation with wife is 0.742 which implies that there is moderately high level of empowerment of mother of Karimganj district regarding the constituent Husband’s Cooperation. In the component Husband’s Cooperation with wife, the variable Husband’s Helps in Household Works (HHHW) has lowest weight and Husband Deals With Wife Politely (HDWWP) variable has highest weight indicating that husband’s polite behaviour has improved the empowerment of mother (wife in this case). The index value of mother’s willingness for change (for some selected variables) is 0.719 implies that there is moderately high level of empowerment of mother regarding willingness for change in Karimganj District. However in the dimension, mother’s willingness for change, the variable, ‘Higher Education is Necessary For Women (HEDNFW)’ has lowest weight and ‘Women Should Be Allowed To Join Women Associations Or Organizations (WATJWO)’ has highest weight indicating that women willingness for change about joining Women Associations Or Organizations will improve the empowerment level of women in Karimganj district.

The regression result shows that the variable Religion (RLGN) has significant positive influence on MEI implying that mothers of Hindu religion are more empowered than Muslims. Education Level of mother, has also significant positive influence on MEI implying that educated mothers have higher level of empowerment. Mother's Age has also significant positive influence on MEI implying mothers belonging to older cohorts have higher level of empowerment. MPO has also significant positive influence on MEI. The other variables i.e., FT, POR, CATRYOBC, CATRYSC, HLWW, MBPA, RYI, have no significant influence on MEI. An index is separately calculated for male and female children in a household. This is because mother's opinion regarding her male and female children (child) was recorded separately at the time of survey. Index value of mother's decision about male children's education is 0.690 implies that there is moderately high level of empowerment of mother of Karimganj district regarding decision making about male children's education and the index value of mother's decision making about female children's education is 0.589 implies that there is moderate level of decision making power of mother of Karimganj district regarding decision about female children's education. To find the impact of mother's empowerment and mother's decision making power regarding children education on children's educational attainment five age group of children are categorized and the test is applied in five different age group of children. The t test result for 1st group of children i.e.14-16 age group is insignificant which implies that there is no difference between the mean education of male and female children at moderate level of mother's empowerment. The t test result for the next age group 17-18 of children is significant at 1% level which implies that there is a difference between the mean education level of male and female children and in this category the empowerment level of mother is higher than the previous category of children. It implies that as empowerment level of mother increases children education also increases and the male children's mean education

becomes statistically significantly different than female children. In case of age group 19-21 of children the t test result is significant at less than 1% level which implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean education of male and female children at high level of empowerment of mother. It implies that as empowerment of mother increases the difference in male and female children mean education becomes statistically significant. In the next age group of children i.e. 22-23 the t test result is significant at less than 5% level which implies that there is statistically significant difference in the mean education of male and female children at high level of empowerment of mother. In the last age group of children i.e. 24-27, the t test result for this group of children is significant at less than 1% level which implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean education of male and female children at high level of empowerment of mother. Thus, The average empowerment level of mother is higher for higher cohort group of children and for this groups of children the male-female difference in the average education of children is statistically significant. This implies that there exists a statistically significant difference in the mean educational attainments of male and female children and for this corresponding groups the average empowerment level of mother is relatively higher than the group for which such difference is found to be statistically insignificant. However, except for the group of children belonging to age group 24-27, the difference in the average education of male and female children is nominal. The correlation coefficient is estimated between variables MCAEDU, AME and FCAEDU, AME. Both these results show that there exists statistically significant very high degree of association between MCAEDU and AME ($r = 0.879$ significant at 1% level). The correlation coefficient between FCAEDU and AME is also found to be positive and statistically significant at 1% ($r = 0.885$, statistically significant at 1%). This point is further investigated by finding out the correlation coefficient between MDICEDU and AME. The correlation coefficient between these two

variables is found to be statistically significant at 10 percent level and two variables are negatively associated. ($r = -0.461$). All these results substantiate the observation made in the preceding paragraphs that educational attainment of both male and female children has positive association with mother's empowerment level and as empowerment level increases mean difference between male and female children's education decreases. It means higher the empowerment level of mother less will be gender difference in educational attainments of children. Finally, by using multinomial regression it is observed in the study that mother's empowerment has a positive statistically significant (at 10 percent) impact on the successful completion of higher secondary level of their son's education in comparison to category 1. But in case of male children's high school completion and above higher secondary level of education, the multinomial log odds are negative and statistically insignificant. Mother's empowerment level is found to have improved their daughter's level of education. The multinomial log odds to girl's students is expected to increase if mother's empowerment increases when holding other variables constant. This is true for girl's students in case of completion of high school and completion of higher secondary school in comparison to the base category. Here it is also observed that the impact of mother's decision making regarding their girl's children's education is found to be more fruitful for their daughter's education than their son's education at this level. The multinomial log odds for both male and female students at this level are very high and positively significant. However, in case of other categories this log odds ratio is very low which implies that the impact of mother's decision making on their children's education is not that affective. Another variable that has significant impact on only the girl's education level is mother's age. The result shows that the log odds improve in case of female children of category 3 and category 4 as mother's age increases (the result being positive and statistically significant). Surprisingly, income is found to be a non-crucial determinant for

the level of education of both male and female children. The extent of the impact of family income on the level of their children's education at all levels is very low and insignificant. At last to compare by comparing analysis of rural –urban scenario of mother's empowerment and children's education in karimganj district we find that in case of rural areas empowerment of mother is comparatively low than in urban areas and educational attainment of children is also low in rural Karimganj than in Urban Karimganj. However, in case of mother's empowerment and its link with children's education, at the moderate level of mother's empowerment in rural Karimganj educational attainments of male children is higher than female children. Whereas, in Urban Karimganj at the moderately high level of empowerment, there is no difference in the educational attainment of both male and female children except in the age group 24-27 of children. In urban areas, the difference between mean education level of male and female children is found statistically insignificant for age groups 14-16, 17-18, 19-21 and 22-23. But it is statistically significant for age group 24-27 implying gender differential in educational attainments of children in the past. In rural areas, however, the gender differential in the educational attainments of children prevails even among the children of younger cohorts.

This study found that socio-economic variables have a significant influence on Empowerment level of mothers in Karimganj district of Assam. Mother's Education, Religion, Family type, Mother's Age, Place of Residence, Category (dummy variable), Property owned by mother, Husband living with wife, Mother's have bank or post office account, Mother's Yearly income etc are taken into consideration for identifying the important determinants of mother's empowerment in Karimganj district of Assam. The study reveals that mothers of Hindu religion are more empowered than Muslims, educated mothers have higher level of empowerment, mothers belonging to older cohorts have higher level of empowerment and property owned by mother has positive influence on mother's

empowerment. The study found that there is a moderate level of empowerment of mother in the district. The correlation result shows that educational attainment of both male and female children has positive association with mother's empowerment level and as the empowerment level increases mean difference between male and female children's education decreases which means higher the mother's empowerment less will be gender difference in educational attainment of children. Furthermore, the multinomial result shows that mother's empowerment level improved their daughter's level of education. Again, it is observed that the impact of mother's decision making regarding their girl's children's education is found to be more fruitful for their daughter's education than their son's education.

Conclusion

This study found that socio-economic variables have a significant influence on Empowerment level of mothers in Karimganj district of Assam. Mother's Education, Religion, Family type, Mother's Age, Place of Residence, Category (dummy variable), Property owned by mother, Husband living with wife (i.e. Mother of the study), Mother's having bank or post office account, Mother's Yearly income etc are taken into consideration for identifying the important determinants of mother's empowerment in Karimganj district of Assam. The study reveals that mothers practicing Hindu religion are more empowered than Muslims, educated mothers have higher level of empowerment, mothers belonging to older cohorts have higher level of empowerment and property owned by mother has positive influence on mother's empowerment. The study found that there is a moderate level of empowerment of mother in the district. The correlation result shows that educational attainment of both male and female children has positive association with mother's empowerment level and as the empowerment level increases mean difference between male and female children's education decreases which means higher the mother's empowerment

less will be gender difference in educational attainment of children. Furthermore, the multinomial result shows that mother's empowerment level improved their daughter's level of education. Again, it is observed that the impact of mother's decision making regarding their girl's children's education is found to be more fruitful for their daughter's education than their son's education. Thus the study leaves enough impression towards the fact that education of mother plays a determining role in their empowerment which in turn influences the educational attainments of their children specially girl children. Thus the policy intervention for enhancing mother's empowerment level is required since this will improve the education levels of their progenies particularly those of girls.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following suggestions are put forward to further improve women empowerment in the society.

In Factor analysis result, in the dimension of Decision Making Power within Family, the variable 'Going outside of Home (GOH)' has highest weight which indicates that decision of mother regarding 'Going outside of Home (GOH)' is a decisive factor in enhancing the empowerment level of mother. 'Spending Personal Income (SPI)' has the second highest weight which means that the decision of mother regarding spending personal income (either real or hypothetical) is also crucial in increasing the empowerment level of mother. Hence, Government should take some affirmative steps to encourage women empowerment in these areas of decision making.

In the dimension Freedom of Mobility of Women, the variable 'Participation in Cultural Programme (PICP)' has highest weight. This means that 'Participation of women in Cultural Programme (PICP)' has improved the empowerment level of mother. The variable, 'Participation in Religious Programme (PIRP)' has second highest weight which means that 'Participation in Religious Programme (PIRP)' has also improved the empowerment level

of mother. So, Government should also take concerted efforts to improve awareness in the society for improved participation of women in these types of activities.

In the dimension Political Participation of Women the indicator ‘Discuss The Problem Of Local People At Any Forum (DPOLPF)’ has highest weight and the indicator ‘Attend the Speeches of Election Contestants (ASEC)’ has second highest weight which implies that both the indicators will raise the empowerment level of mother in households. Hence Government should take appropriate steps to encourage women in households to participate in above mentioned areas so that women will be more empowered.

In the dimension, Mother’s Decision Regarding Control over Economic Resources, the indicator ‘Sale or Exchange of Land (S/EOL)’ have highest weight and the indicator ‘Purchasing Jewelry/ Bonds/Shares (PJ/B/S)’ has the second highest weight. This means that decision of mother regarding ‘Sale or Exchange of Land (S/EOL)’ and ‘Purchasing Jewelry/ Bonds/Shares (PJ/B/S)’ have improved the empowerment level of mother in the area of her Control over Economic Resources. These variables actually reflect on asset position of mothers. Hence more attention must be given by the planners and government for appropriate implementation of decision making power of women in households regarding the above mentioned areas so that empowerment level can be raised.

In the dimension of Husband’s Relation With wife, the variable ‘Husband Deals with Wife Politely (HDWWP)’ have highest weight and the variable ‘Husband Trust Wife (HTW)’ has the second highest weight. This means that mother’s empowerment level will increase if her relation with her husband regarding the above mentioned areas is good. So Government should take appropriate steps to control over the domestic violence in households against women so that the relation between husband and wife will be cordial and women empowerment (psychological) will raise. If necessary Government should take steps for the

implementation of appropriate laws for policy purpose regarding the above mentioned areas.

In the dimension of Mother's Willingness for Change, the variable, 'Women Should Be allowed to Join Women associations or organizations (WATJWO)' has the highest weight and the variable 'Husband should Share the Household Work with his Wife (HSHWWW)' has the second highest weight. This means that most of the women think (as states by them) that the empowerment level will increase if the participation of women in such organizations increases and also if Husband Shares the Household Work with his Wife. Hence Government should take care of the statement of women regarding this matter and should take appropriate policy for participation of women in women organizations so that women empowerment can increase.

In the Dimension of Mother's Decision regarding Male Children's Education, the variable Decision Making Power of Mother Regarding 'Accompany Male Child for School or College Related Matters (AMCFS/CRM)' has highest weight and the variable Decision making Power of Mother Regarding 'Higher Education of Male Child (HEDUMC)' has the second highest weight. Similarly, in the Dimension of Mother's Decision regarding 'Female Children's Education', the variable 'Decision Making Power of Mother Regarding Accompany Female Child for School or College Related Matters (AMCFS/CRM)', regarding 'Selection of Course of Studies For Female Children (SOCOSFFC)', and regarding 'Higher Education of Female Children (HEDUFC)' all have highest weights and the variable Decision Making Power of Mother regarding 'Marriage of Female Children (MFC)' has the second highest weight. This means that if mother who are more able to take decision in these areas are more empowered. Hence Government should take measures for enabling mothers to take decision in these areas which will increase her empowerment level and at the same time will contribute to improve children's education.

The regression result shows that Mother's Education (MEDU), Mother's Age (MA) and Property owned by Mother (POM) all these have positive significant impact on Mother's Empowerment level. Hence education of women needs to be improved as a policy measure to improve the empowerment level of women and overall social condition and economic growth in our economy. Equal provision of education for men and women will go a long way in enhancing empowerment of women.

'Mother's Age (MA)' is also a factor that contribute positively for enhancement of women empowerment. This implies that women of older cohorts have higher level of empowerment. The result actually indicates that the process of empowerment is a long run continuous process and it increases along with age. The further implication of this result is that if the process of empowerment starts early in the life of women, then even at early age of women they may be educatedly empowered in regard to decision making in different areas of their life. The government should take appropriate steps for improving enrollment of girls in primary schools etc and should frame policy measure which will encourage women to take part in decision making right from the early stage of their life. The multinomial regression output results also corroborate the facts.

Regarding Property owned by mother, in most of the households property are not in the name of mother although by law she has an equal right on the property. Hence government should take appropriate policy regarding ensuring women's property right.

In correlation result we found that the educational attainment of both male and female children has positive association with mother's empowerment level and as empowerment level increases mean difference between male and female children's education decreases. Thus, if empowerment of mother increases, gender difference in educational attainment of children decreases. Hence more attention must be given by the planners and government to increase the empowerment level of mother.

The multinomial logistic regression result show that impact of mother's empowerment has a positive statistically significant (at 10 percent) (Table- 5.36) impact on the successful completion of higher secondary level of their son's education in comparison to category 1 (illiterate or having elementary level of education). But in case of male children's high school completion and above higher secondary level of education, the multinomial log odds are negative and statistically insignificant. Mother's empowerment level is found to improve their daughter's level of education up to Higher Secondary stage of education. The multinomial log odds to girl's student's education are expected to increase if mother's empowerment increases holding other variables constant. This is true for girl's students in case of completion of high school and completion of higher secondary school in comparison to the base category (illiterate or having elementary level of education). In these cases the result shows positive and statistically significant impact of mother's empowerment level on category 2(children completed high school education) and category 3 (children completed higher secondary education) female children. Hence if mothers are empowered then girl's children's educational attainment has higher probability than that of the boys. Mother's empowerment, in that sense, is more important for enhancing girl's education at household level. The variable 'Mother's Decision Making Regarding Male Child in multinomial logistic regression output result also supports this observation.

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