

CHAPTER VI

Summary and Conclusions

Indian women have had little representation in institutional politics since independence. There was more concern in the last two decades towards increasing women's participation in political institutions thereby leading to empowerment. Affirmative action has been accepted as a means of political empowerment. Leadership is necessary not just to govern but to change the nature of governance. Unfortunately affirmative action and women participation have failed to move beyond local government in India.

The Research Problem and Rationale of the Study

According to Kabeer's (2001)¹ understanding there are two essential elements of women empowerment, i.e., process and agency. A process is defined as the series of events that produce gradual change. The process of women empowerment leads to expansion in their ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. The agency element of women empowerment describes that women themselves are the significant actors in the process of change. Kabeer (1999)² explained that women's empowerment refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices, acquire such ability. The ability to exercise choices incorporates three inter-related dimensions: Resources, which include access as well as future claims to both material and social resources; Agency, which includes the process of decision-making, negotiation, deception and manipulation and achievements. Kabeer's (2001) understanding of agency is mainly based on Sen's study. Agency is defined as an actor's ability and involvement to make meaningful choices. It encompasses the ability to formulate strategic choices, to control resources and decisions that affect important life outcomes.

¹Kabeer, N. (2001), "Conflict over Credit: Re-evaluating the Empowerment Potential of Loans to Women in Rural Bangladesh", *World Development*, 29(1): 63-84.

²Kabeer, N. (1999), "The Conditions and Consequences of Choice: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment", Discussion Paper, No. 108, *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*, Geneva.

Longwe and Clarke (1994)³ explained women empowerment as an on-going cyclical process having five stages. The first stage is welfare stage and at this stage the women's resources are not fully recognized and met. The second is access stage, where women recognise it and take action to gain access to these resources. The third stage is the conscientisation level stage, where women realise that their lack of access to resources and their general subordinate status are due to socially constructed beliefs and phenomena. The fourth stage is participation level stage, where women become actively involved in decision-making processes within their households, communities and societies. The final stage is control stage, in which women get control over access to resources and distribution of benefits by increasing their participation. This control increases women's power and respect within their households and societies at large.

From the above discussion it is clear that the empowerment of women regarding social, economic and political are interrelated. The most significant aspect of women empowerment starts with the involvement of decision making process in the household activities. Self-help groups have been started with this motive to create awareness among women in all the areas. First they built confidence among women by encouraging them to cultivate the habit of saving which gives them financial support. If women got economic empowerment then they stand on their own feet and fight for the other two viz., social and political empowerment. There are so many studies focusing on the contribution of self-help groups towards economic empowerment of women. Thus, this study is focused on political empowerment of women in respect of self-help groups in North Coastal Andhra districts.

³Longwe, S. H.; and Clarke, R. (1994), "Women in Development, Culture and Youth: Workshop Readings", *Longwe Clarke and Associates*, Lusaka, Zambia.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the socio-economic aspects of SHG women in the study area.
2. To observe the level of social empowerment of SHG women in the study area.
3. To observe the level of economic empowerment of SHG women in the study area.
4. To analyse the political empowerment of SHG women in the study area.
5. To find out the determinants of political empowerment of SHG women in the study area

Hypotheses

H0: There is no relationship between Socio-economic factors and empowerment.

H1 There is a relationship between Socio-economic factors and empowerment.

H0: There is no variation between rural and tribal regarding empowerment.

H2 There is variation between rural and tribal regarding empowerment.

H0: Socio-economic factors do not determine political participation.

H3: Socio-economic factors determine political participation.

H0: Socio-economic factors do not determine political empowerment.

H4: Socio-economic factors determine political empowerment.

Sampling

This research study is embodied with both primary and secondary data. As far as secondary data is concerned they were sought from various books, journals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, unpublished sources, internet etc. The study also embodied a sizeable primary data, which was collected by way of canvassing a questionnaire among selected sample of respondents.

From each sampled Revenue Mandal, three villages were selected at random. The selection of villages was finalized on the basis of the indicators

published in Hand book of statistics, and after consultations with the concerned Block Mandla Mahila Samskya officials. Thus 18 vilages in total were selected which comprised the third stage in our sampling design.

From each chosen vilage, 25 households were selected on the basis of systematic sampling from the SHGs list from Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) reports. The SHGs list was colected from the SERP official website. Thus, from 18 vilages, 450 households were selected in North Costal Andhra. Out of 450 households 225 for rural area and 225 for tribal are total were selected.

Finally, from the SHGs list of each vilage, 25 households were selected on the basis of systematic sampling. In this way, 75 households from rural area and 75from tribal area, i.e. a total of 150 households from each selected district were surveyed. Thus from three districts, 450 households (225 from rural are and 225 from tribal area) were surveyed for collection of data.

Relevant data, following personal interview method was collected during January, 2012 to December, 2012. The entire survey period is divided into two sub-rounds of 4 months each. January - April 2012 and September - December 2012.

Techniques of Analysis

Likert's Scaling Technique is employed to collect the level of response regarding empowerment of sample respondents. Chi-square test is used to assess the association between the selected variables and the level of empowerment. F-test is used to calculate the variance between rural and tribal areas with reference to social, economic and political empowerment. Logistic regression is used to capture the variables which have influence for political participation. Multiple regression technique is used to find out the determinants of political empowerment of the sample respondents in the study area. Indices are formulated for social, economic and political empowerment of sample respondents.

Chapterisation

The first chapter presented the research problem, objectives and research methodology. The second chapter is devoted to review of literature. The third chapter presented the profile of the three districts and basic characteristics of sample respondents. The fourth chapter deals with the socio-economic empowerment of sample respondents. The fifth chapter discussed the political empowerment of sample respondents as well as determinants of political empowerment. The sixth chapter outlined the summary of the study and offered summary and conclusions. Finally bibliography is presented.

Major Findings of the Study

Out of a total of 450 sample respondents majority belong to ST community followed by BC community, SC community and OC community. More number of respondents belongs to 40-49 age group followed by 50-59 age group, 18-39 age group and 60 & above age group. Majority of sample respondents belong to 1-4 family size group followed by 5-6 family size group and 7 & above family size group. Among the 74.2 percentage of literate sample respondents, more respondents are educated up to primary level followed by secondary level, post-secondary level and technical education. 78.4 per cent have chosen agricultural labour as main occupation followed by salaried people and professionals. Out of a total of 450 sample respondents 8.4 per cent belong to lowest total income group i.e., below Rs.10000 while 41.8 per cent belong to highest total income group i.e., more than Rs.30000. Out of a total of 450 sample respondents 91.8 per cent are workers, only 32.4 per cent are having assets and only 34.2 per cent respondents are having position at various levels.

Out of 450 sample respondents a majority have said that they have good improvement through SHGs in bargaining power only. But more number of respondents expressed that they have moderate improvement in their self-confidence through SHGs, in respect of attitude towards the education of daughters, attitude towards the education of sons, in respect of decision making in the family, decision making in the group, regarding credit worthiness, freedom

from money lenders, self-employment potential, banking habits, reduction in wasteful expenditure, reduction in consumption expenditure and purchase of household durables.

Out of 450 sample respondents a majority have said that they have little improvement through SHGs in reduction of alcoholic habits, with respect to access to markets, in adoption of small family norm, reduction in domestic violence, with respect to awareness of property rights, marketing skills, productive skills and regarding mobility.

Out of 450 sample respondents, majority are said that they have no improvement through SHGs in respect of discontinuation of early marriages, child labour discontinuation, status in the family, status in the society, aware of rights of women, communication skills and access to control over family resources.

Out of 450 sample respondents, more respondents are belongs to medium empowered social group followed by very high empowered, high empowered and less empowered. Out of 450 sample respondents, majority belong to very high economic empowered group followed by medium empowered, less empowered and high empowered. Out of 450 sample respondents, majority belong to high socio-economic empowered group followed by medium empowered, less empowered and very high empowered groups.

The z test is used here to observe the difference of means between rural and tribal areas of the three districts regarding social, economic and socio-economic empowerment indexes. The Z test results clearly show that in all the three districts in respect of social empowerment index there are significant differences between the means of rural and tribal areas. The same kind of conclusion emerges with regard to economic and socio-economic empowerment indexes.

To observe the differences between mean values of rural and tribal areas regarding economic, social and economic-social empowerment indexes (ANOVA) F value have been taken into consideration. In Visakhapatnam district the F value is significant for it shows that the mean values of rural and tribal areas are not equal for the three indexes considered. The same conclusions are noticed for the

Vizianagaram, Srikakulam districts as well as all districts for the three indexes under study.

Out of 450 sample respondents, more number of respondents expressed that there is no improvement in their access to local leaders through SHGs, regarding participation in development programmes and in their ability to meet government officials. Out of 450 sample respondents majority said that they have little improvement through SHGs regarding access to M.P. and M.L.A, political participation, impact on voting, participation in election, interest in political news, public participation and in meeting non-government officials. Out of 450 sample respondents, more number of respondents expressed that they have moderate improvement regarding discussion of political issues through SHGs and information on government programmes. Out of 450 sample respondents, more number of respondents expressed that they have good improvement regarding impact on political participation through SHGs only.

Z test results for political empowerment on district-wise inter regional disparities shows that there are significant disparities existing between rural and tribal areas regarding political empowerment in the three districts as well as total sample respondents. ANOVA results for political empowerment on district-wise inter-regional differences show that there are differences among rural and tribal areas respectively regarding political empowerment.

Age, education, family size, caste, working status, income, expenditure, saving and total assets are independent variables while position held or not is considered as dependent variable to examine the political participation in rural, tribal and total sample respondents by employing logistic regression analysis. In rural area, age, education, BC and SC castes, income, expenditure and total assets variables have more impact than other variables on political participation. In tribal area, saving, income, expenditure and total assets have more impact than other variables on political participation. Over all, age, education, OC, BC and SC castes, income, expenditure and total assets variables have more impact than other variables on political participation.

Political empowerment is taken as dependent variable while age, education, family size, social community, working status, position held, income, expenditure and saving are chosen as independent variables to examine the determinants of political empowerment through multiple regression analysis for rural, tribal and total areas respectively. In rural areas except expenditure and saving variables all the other variables positive influence on political empowerment. In tribal areas age, education, position held and saving are the significant determinants of political empowerment. In total area education, family size, social community, position held and income are the significant determinants of political empowerment.

Conclusion

Sample respondents have no improvement through SHGs in respect of social, economic and political aspects such as discontinuation of early marriages, child labour discontinuation, status in the family, access to control over family resources, access to local leaders etc. Sample respondents have little improvement through SHGs in social, economic and political aspects such as reduction in alcoholism, in adoption of small family norm, reduction in domestic violence, with regard to access to markets, with respect to awareness of property rights, marketing skills, productive skills, access to M.P. and M.L.A, participation in election and able to meet non-government officials.

The results clearly show that in all the three districts in respect of social empowerment index there are significant differences between the means of rural and tribal areas. The same kind of conclusion emerges with regard to economic and socio-economic empowerment indexes. Results for political empowerment on district-wise inter regional disparities show that there are significant disparities existing between rural and tribal areas regarding political empowerment in the three districts as well as total sample respondents.

In rural area, age, education, BC and SC castes, income, expenditure and total assets variables have more impact than other variables on political participation. In tribal area, saving, income, expenditure and total assets have

more impact than other variables on political participation. Over all, age, education, OC, BC and SC castes, income, expenditure and total assets variables have more impact than other variables on political participation. In rural areas except expenditure and saving variables all the other variables are have positive influence on political empowerment. In tribal areas age, education, position held and saving are the significant determinants of political empowerment. Over all, education, family size, social community, position held and income are the significant determinants of political empowerment.

Suggestions

Basing on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offer:

- ❖ Non-governmental organizations/government which is running SHGs may motivate enthusiastic women members to get into the local administration as these members would be better representatives taking their experience from the SHG platform. The NGOs working in the area could also organize training /awareness programmes on empowerment of women and importance of becoming a member may be made clear.
- ❖ Programmes could be drafted keeping in view the limitations of the women and the inputs to be given. Special training programmes may be organized periodically for the elected women representatives.
- ❖ The rural population and all the others concerned should understand the cause of women empowerment and should work to achieve the same. In other words, there must be a multi-thronged approach to alleviate the problems of women and bring them to the mainstream.
- ❖ To enhance women participation in social, economic and political activities government must effectively implement the policies and programmes designed especially for the benefit of women community.
- ❖ From the study it is found that education is one of the significant determinants of political empowerment of women. But pathetically almost 75 per cent of women are illiterate. So the government must take this issue

seriously and try to monitor the programmes implemented for the increase of the literacy in the study area.

- ❖ Position held also has significant impact on women's political empowerment. From the study it is found that 65 per cent of women have no position at various organisations. Hence, it is recommended that the local government must implement the 33 per cent reservation policy properly.