

ARE THE WORKING WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZED SECTOR ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED? A DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING WOMEN IN KOLKATA, INDIA

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Introduction

The process of empowering women is complex and dynamic, assisting them in realizing their full potential as leaders and individuals in all spheres of life. It is generally defined as the ownership of material possessions, financial means, and ideological beliefs. The process through which women increase their alternatives and take charge of their life is known as empowerment. The ability of women to actively participate in life decisions through leadership development, coaching, guidance and the provision of tools to support them in managing their communities, states, and countries is known as women's empowerment. Empowerment gives women the strength and self-reliance to take charge of their lives and actions, allowing them to participate completely and effectively in political, economic, social, and cultural life. A far wider range of ideas are required for effective women's empowerment, such as encouraging women to be self-sufficient and self-assured so they can face the challenges of living in a patriarchal society with courage and dignity, as well as effective participation in various development programs. Women workforce participation is one of the leading indicators to enhance overall progress. Women employed specially in the formal sector are capable of making wise decisions in all spheres of life and are knowledgeable of the regulations. This covers the continuous struggle in the social, political, economic, and religious spheres for women's emancipation. Because gender equality guarantees that men and women in society have an equal opportunity to meet development goals that have been agreed upon worldwide.

According to the Census of India (2001-2011), Himachal Pradesh had the second-highest female labor force participation(LFP) rate in 2001, whereas West Bengal was ranked 28th in 2001 but rose to 26th in 2011. Female labor force participation has remained stable in both urban and rural areas for the past decade in West Bengal. In the last ten years, female LFP has remained largely unchanged in both urban and rural locations. According to Article 38 of the Indian Constitution, the state aims to improve people's welfare by

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promoting social, economic, and political justice, as well as reducing income inequality. Several key schemes, including Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra, Women Helpline, Nand Ghar Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana are implemented by the Government of India.

West Bengal has traditionally been recognized as one of India's most developed states. The Department of Women Development and Social Welfare in West Bengal aims to protect, include, and promote equity for marginalized populations based on gender, age, disability, or other factors. This includes marginalized populations such as women, seniors, people with disabilities, transgender people, and the homeless. Kanyashree Prakalpa, Rupashree Prakalpa, Laksmir Bhandar Prakalpa. The Department of Women Development and Social Welfare of West Bengal has implemented these projects to assist women.

Working women's participation in the organised sector contributes to a city's economic development through family decision-making capacity. Because the terms and conditions of employment are primarily based on actions and tenets that have been chosen and organized by the government, the organized sector can be defined as one in which service conditions are predefined and common, and where workers are given safe working conditions. This empowerment has trickle-down effect towards the overall development of a city and this can be studied for the Kolkata, India to explore the contribution and the economic development through economic empowerment. Women's economic empowerment includes equal access to and control over productive resources, respectable employment, and sovereignty over their own time, life, and body. Women must also have more agency, voice, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels, from the household to international organizations. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires empowering women economically and closing the gender gap in the workplace.

Working women in the organised sector contribute to a city's economic development through their family decision-making power. This empowerment has a concurring impact on a city's entire growth, which may be researched for Kolkata, India, to compare their contributions and economic progress through economic empowerment. The objective of the research is to find the

F Status of economic empowerment of working women in the organised sector of Kolkata, India.

F Factors influencing working women's economic empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The entire development of women and their empowerment are causally related, according to a 2012 study by Chaudhary, Chani, and Pervaiz. Golla et al.'s (2011) study

was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Department of International Development (DFID), the ExxonMobil Foundation, and the International Center for Research on Women. This study presents a matrix that can be used to evaluate women's economic empowerment and illustrates the several levels at which sample indicators may be used to analyze results.

By looking at five indicators, control over one's own income, control over one's own savings, awareness of saving decisions, decision-making regarding how to spend money, and finally, decision-making regarding large household expenditures like furniture and other items Haque et al. (2011) evaluate the economic empowerment or autonomy of women workers in the formal sector in economic decision-making.

To promote women's empowerment in Oman, Varghese (2011) investigated the degree of women's freedom of movement, economic decision-making ability, and household decision-making ability in Oman. In the Sohar area of the Sultanate of Oman, 150 women provided information using a structured questionnaire.

Priyadharshini & Muthusamy(2016) investigates the situation of women's empowerment. The Indian government announced the Start-up India, Made in India project to improve the nation, however there are still many obstacles standing in the way of Indian women's growth. In spite of this, women work in a wide range of fields, including engineering, medical, and defense, and they are heavily exposed to them. If all women in the nation are to meet a standard, then women must be empowered. The objective of women's empowerment is to enable every woman in the country to be self-reliant in all areas of society, conscious of her rights, and knowledgeable about her physical protection. Women's empowerment will contribute to India's growth.

Ghose (2020) aims to evaluate the amount of economic, social, and political empowerment among working women in Patna. Additionally, the study compares the varied degrees of empowerment among skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers, and delves into the gender equity that exists within these groups. As part of a field study, 300 working women in Patna were interviewed: 100 were semi-professionals (beauticians, boutique employees, gas station attendants, midwives, etc.), 100 were professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.), and 100 were unskilled workers (maids, vendors, sweepers, and construction workers).

In their analysis of Bangalore, India's status of women's empowerment, Menon & Sharma (2020) take into consideration a number of previously mentioned characteristics, such as women's financial independence, freedom of mobility, political engagement, and ability to make decisions in the household. The level of women's empowerment was assessed

using a standardized questionnaire and a sample of 100 women connected to various organizations, institutions, and email groups.

In 2022, Jyothi and Godase explored the impact of educational interventions on women's empowerment in South India. The research is based on a descriptive design. This study design can be used to describe the population or phenomenon. The main focus of the strategy is an intervention technique that produces a longitudinal design.

The aforementioned research validates the notion that quantifying women's economic empowerment is not unique. In order to measure economic empowerment, which strengthens the financial capacity of the family, society, and nation and gives women the agency and power to achieve empowerment for sustainable development in a gender-equal society, studies on women empowerment for urban working women in the organized sector can investigate these areas.

METHODOLOGY:

The number of working women in the organized sector in Kolkata, India, is not known. A sample size that is between 30 and 500 is acceptable according to Sekaran (2003). This study was conducted by taking 226 women as sampling unit. Quota sampling technique is followed with income group earning below and above 5000 rupees per month. As we construct women economic empowerment index the objective is to also look in to the women categorized as per income and according to the pilot study the representation of data is decided accordingly with 60% above 50000 and 40 % below 50000 Rupees per month. For the first research objective WEEI calculation has adopted the Human Development Index's building methodology, each indicator's performance is expressed as the lowest and highest number between 0 and 1 (UNDP, 2005). The WEEI minimum and maximum values that should be selected for every underlying indicator are calculated.

$$\text{WEEI} = (\text{Actual value} - \text{minimum value}) / (\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value})$$

The possible values for this value are 0 and 1. Human development indices, as defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2005), have the following values: 0 represents no development, 1 represents proper development, 0-0.5 denotes a marginal level of development, 0.6-0.7 denotes a medium stage of development, and 0.8 or higher denotes a high level of development.

The idea behind WEEI is to examine women's empowerment for urban women in Bangladesh and India through the prism of economic independence.

In order to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, we have also selected five hypotheses to test. In our investigation, we also employed

inferential and descriptive statistics. In order to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, we have selected five hypotheses to test.

The study further progresses with

1. Calculation of WEEI for Kolkata, India
2. To find Effect of demographic variable on WEEI for Kolkata, India the following hypotheses are tested.

Hypothesis No.1:H0: There is no significant relation between income level and WEEI

Hypothesis No.2:H0: There is no significant relation between women's educational qualification and WEEI

Hypothesis No.3:H0: There is no significant relation between women`s work experience and WEEI

Hypothesis No.4:H0: There is no significant relation between age and WEEI

RESULTS:

To calculate the WEEI Control over your own income, control over own Savings, decision of your savings portfolios, decisions on how to spend your income, decision on large household expenditure, types of saving account, acquisition of assets, access to your social media account, control on the password of Internet banking, decision on how to use your savings, use of own ATM card are considered as the dimensions. The results section should present the key findings of the study, usually in the form of tables, figures, or charts, accompanied by a brief description and interpretation of the results.

Table 1: WEEI according to demographic classification

				WEEI	WEEI
Kolkata, India N= 226				Mean	Standard Deviation
		Count	Table N %		
Occupation	Self Employed	36	19.9%	0.91	0.11
	Govt Service	40	17.7%	0.96	0.07
	Private service	141	62.4%	0.88	0.16
Working Experience	less than 1 year	26	11.5%	0.79	0.22
	1-5 year	95	42.0%	0.89	0.12
	6-10 year	61	27.0%	0.95	0.09
	Above 10 year	44	19.5%	0.93	0.16
Educational Qualification	below secondary	3	1.3%	0.82	0.16
	Secondary	10	4.4%	0.91	0.07
	Higher Secondary	18	8.0%	0.88	0.16
	Graduate	122	54.0%	0.88	0.16
	Post Graduate	73	32.3%	0.94	0.11

Religion	Islam	15	6.6%	0.80	0.20
	Hindu	204	90.3%	0.91	0.14
	Buddhism	2	0.9%	0.86	0.19
	Christianity	5	2.2%	0.93	0.04
Age	18-24	35	15.5%	0.78	0.21
	25-29	57	25.2%	0.89	0.13
	30-39	62	27.4%	0.93	0.08
	40-49	50	22.1%	0.95	0.08
	50-59	20	8.8%	0.93	0.18
	60 and above	2	0.9%	0.77	0.19
Marital Status	Unmarried	50	22.1%	0.81	0.17
	Married	166	73.5%	0.93	0.12
	Divorced	2	0.9%	0.91	0.00
	Widowed	8	3.5%	0.89	0.14
Monthly Income	less than 50000	136	60%	0.88	0.15
	50000 above	90	40%	0.94	0.11

Data from Table 1 shows that most of the working women are working in the private sector and highest experience is between 1-5 years. 54% of the women have graduate qualification and 73.5% of the sample population is married. With the WEEI score calculation it is evident that WEEI rises with the work experience, age, years of education and income. The results of hypothesis are described below with Table 2.

Table 2: Results of hypothesis

Variable	R square	ANOVA (sig)	Coefficient	
			B	Sig
Working Experience	.080	.000	.043	.000
Age	.079	.000	.004	.000
Educational qualification	.132	.047	.132	.047
Income	.131	.049	.017	.049

The ANOVA results shown in table 2 demonstrated a significant relationship between WEEI and work experience, age, educational qualification, and income and the level of significant is 0.05, $P < 0.05$. With The simple linear regression results when R Square = .080, .079, .132, .131 it can be explained that 8% , 7%, 13%, 13% variation of WEEI is explained by work experience, age, educational qualification and income. So, the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternative hypotheses are accepted. All the above results show that work experience, age, educational qualification and income have significant relation with WEEI.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

From the above results since work ex, marital status, age, education and income all has positive association with WEEI so the policy should focus on the demographic factors so that women can participate more in the labour force. Formal-sector working women understand the rules and can make informed decisions in all aspects of their lives. This includes the ongoing struggle for women's empowerment at the social, political, economic, and religious levels. Gender equality is the only way to ensure that everyone, male and female, has an equal opportunity to contribute to society's welfare.

The World Bank Group's Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2007-2010 (Müller, 2009) presents a commercial case for expanding women's economic opportunities. The GAP decided that increased support and investments in women's economic empowerment were needed to accelerate economic development efforts and accomplish the MDGs, notably objectives 1 and 3. Under initiatives like Kanyashree and Rupashree by the Govt of west Bengal, which encourage girls to stay in school and postpone marriage till age 18, the state government has been supporting initiatives aimed at empowering women. In order to advance this agenda item, the state would like to look for proactive ways to encourage women to enter the workforce. Women labour force participation in formal sector will not only reduce the gender gap but also contribute towards reducing the dependency ratio in West Bengal where this problem is more vigilant with the more aging population. So for a sustainable city, with more gender equality, policy towards prime factors those building women economic empowerment will require more focus and attention of the policy makers.

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