

## Constraints in Empowerment of Rural Women in District Kanpur Dehat U.P.

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### ABSTRACT

Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multilayered concept. With regards to women, empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources- material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, and ideas and financial like money- and control over decision making in the home and community. Rural women still do not have ownership on land and the pattas are allotted in the name of their husband. In spite of numberless efforts from government and other developmental agencies women empowerment is still a dream waiting to be reality. Present study was conducted on 240 randomly selected rural women of Bakhariya and Phoolpur villages of Maitha block of district Kanpur Dehat through personal interview method. Results revealed that major constraints towards social empowerment were illiteracy or minimal literacy along with, limited access to mass media. Limited access to credit facilities and gender discrimination were major factors which hampered economical empowerment. Perception of society and Nepotism were the factors that checked political empowerment of rural women. It is suggested to have policy for compulsory education of girls up to intermediate. Gender mainstreaming through agriprenurship could be great aid towards economic empowerment. Trainings and awareness of governmental policies can play crucial role in political empowerment of rural women.

**Keywords:** Constraints, Control, Empowerment, Intellectual, Knowledge, Resources

### INTRODUCTION

Women play a significant role in agriculture development and allied fields. The nature and extent of women's involvement in agriculture varies greatly from region to region, they comprise largest percentage of the workforce in agriculture sector, but do not have access and control over land and productive resources. For time immemorial women in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in relation to men, rural women still do not have ownership on land and the *pattas* are allotted in the name of their husband. Rural women are key agents for achieving the economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited

access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. Empowering them is a key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity Duflo (2012). For sustainable development it is essential to let women develop equally as men. In spite of numberless efforts from government and other developmental agencies women empowerment is still a dream waiting to be reality. Women are the vital human infrastructure and their economical, political and technical empowerment would hasten the pace of social development. Investing in women's "capabilities" and empowering them to achieve their "choices" and "opportunities" are the surest way to contribute to

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economic growth and overall development (Patnaik, 2000). An investigation of constraints in empowerment of rural women was conducted to figure out the degree and extent of problems hampering women empowerment in District Kanpur Dehat (U.P.).

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on 240 randomly selected farm women of Phoolpur and Bakhariya villages of Maitha Block and Daheli and Jyodi villages of Rasoolabad block of District Kanpur Dehat as a pre-requisite of KVK's interventions related to doubling farmer's income programme. Sixty Farm women from each of the village were randomly selected and personally interviewed for the purpose of data collection. A list of problems related to empowerment was prepared on the basis of PRA conducted and responses were sought on 3 point scale- Always (3), Sometimes (2) and Never (1) and mean Score was calculated for each of the problem and presented in rank order wise.

$$\text{Weighted M.S. (i}^{\text{th}} \text{ factor)} = \frac{\text{Total score earned by respondents}}{\text{Total no. of respondents}}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{w_1 \times 1 + w_2 \times 2 + \dots + w_n \times n}{w_1 + w_2 + \dots + w_n}$$

Where, x is the repeating value, w is the number of occurrences of x weight and  $\bar{x}$  is the weighted mean

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1, it is clear that major constraint in social empowerment were illiteracy/ or minimal literacy (M.S. 3.41, rank I) and gender biasness (M.S. 3.23, rank II). Limited access to mass media with M.S. 2.90 on rank III and fear of society were also contributory factors that checked social empowerment of women. Dependency and introvert nature due to family pressure with M.S. 2.50 was on rank XI. Religious and cultural belief of always walking behind the man was least affecting factor (M.S. 2.45, rank XII). Rural women under study were also found unaware about policies and ordinance meant for them, about 45 per cent farm women 'always' faced this problem, while more than 75 per cent accepted that

**Table 1: Constraint in social empowerment of rural women (N=240)**

S.No.	Items	M.S.	Rank
1	Illiteracy/ Minimal Literacy	3.41	I
2	Dependency	2.50	XI
3	Lack of Self confidence	2.78	VII
4	Introvert nature due to family pressure	2.50	XI
5	Fear of Society (Log Kya kahenge)	2.88	IV
6	Gender Biasness	3.23	II
7	Social taboos/superstitions	2.83	V
8	Unaware about women's right	2.56	X
9	Unaware about Policies and ordinance made for women empowerment	2.73	IX
10	Lack of education facilities	2.76	VIII
11	Co-education system hampers education	2.80	VI
12	Religious and cultural beliefs	2.45	XII
13	Limited access to mass media	2.90	III

co-education system 'always' hampers their education. Results of the study are in concurrence with findings of Field *et al.* (2010) where it was quoted that gender differences in education and access to business networks could limit women's ability to benefit from physical support.

The barriers begin with comparatively low investment in female education and health, that continued with restricted access to services and assets, Data presented in Table 2 states that 'limited access to resources', was the most affecting factor in economic empowerment of rural women with M.S. 3.47, followed by 'gender discrimination in wage rates' and 'greater vulnerability to exploitation and abuse' with M.S. 3.32. Further no/ less participation in decision making (M.S. 3.27) also limited economic empowerment of rural women. Respondents were found unaware about input and infrastructure needed for an enterprise up to some extent hence, economic empowerment of rural women was not much affected by this constraint.

Data envisaged in Table 3 reveals that 'lack of social mobility because of restriction in the family' was maximum faced constraint and that hampered technological empowerment with M.S. 3.01, whereas,

**Table 2: Constraint in economic empowerment of rural women (N=240)**

S.No.	Items	M.S.	Rank
1	Limited access to resources	2.90	VIII
2	Limited access to credit facilities	3.47	I
3	Inadequate technical competency	3.05	VI
4	Poor participation in decision making	3.24	IV
5	Greater vulnerability to exploitation and abuse	3.32	II
6	Gender Discrimination in wage rates	3.32	II
7	No /less participation in decision making	3.27	III
8	Lack of employment opportunities	3.19	V
9	Lack of training / capacity building	2.81	IX
10	Lack of support from family	2.98	VII
11	Unaware about input and infrastructure needed for an enterprise	2.54	X

“limited access to training and extension services” (M.S. 2.35) was less faced constraint in technological empowerment. “Unavailability of technical support at door step” was also contributing factor in technological empowerment with M.S. 2.56. “Lack of knowledge and awareness of improved agricultural practices was ‘always’ faced by 65 per cent respondents while less than 25 per cent faced it ‘sometimes’. Lack of gender friendly tool also hampered technological empowerment as little less than sixty per cent always faced this problem whereas, about 35 per cent sometimes underwent with this issue. “Lack of opportunity to access technology” and “lack of gender friendly tools” were 3<sup>rd</sup> important constraints that checked technological empowerment of rural women. It is relevant to understand that information

and communication technology was not a solution in itself and cannot solve all the problems but it could alleviate the gap by bringing new information resources and communication channels for women. Archana and Singh (2002) also found similar results while studying SHGs.

Data given in Table 4 indicated that Nepotism with means score 3.28, was the biggest problem in political empowerment of rural women, generally family members of those already in politics used to given opportunity instead of testing new person. As per the PRA conducted before the study politics was not considered as a dignified job in our society, “perception of society was not good about politics” with M.S. 3.12 was another major constraint in political empowerment. Even after so much efforts from Government, politics was still a male dominating work therefore male dominance and greater chance of being exploited (M.S. 3.10) were the factors

**Table 4: Constraints in political empowerment of rural women**

S.No.	Items	M.S.	Rank
1	Doubts regarding women’s capabilities	2.88	V
2	Women are over burdened with dual responsibility of managing household and economic activities	2.45	VIII
3	Nepotism	3.28	I
4	Perception of Society is not good about politics	3.12	II
5	Male dominance	3.10	III
6	Great Chance of being Exploited	3.10	III
7	Lack of motivation	2.90	IV
8	Lack of Family Support	2.76	VI
9	Lack of leadership quality	2.53	VII

**Table 3: Constraint in technical empowerment of rural women (N=240)**

S.No.	Items	M.S.	Rank
1	Limited access to training and extension services	2.35	V
2	Lack of knowledge and awareness about improve agricultural practices	2.36	VI
3	Lack of social mobility because of restrictions in the family	3.01	I
4	Unavailability of technical support at door step	2.56	II
5	Lack of gender friendly technologies	2.48	III
6	Lack of opportunity to access technology	2.48	III
7	Lack of ICT centers at nearby areas	2.40	IV

which check political empowerment of rural women. 53 per cent respondents complained that they always faced 'lack of motivation' followed by 50 per cent who faced 'doubts regarding their capabilities'. More than 55 per cent women accepted that they were 'always' not getting family support to get in politics while 30 per cent faced 'sometimes'. Women's participation in political process is important for strengthening democracy. Kaur *et al.* (2007); Kumari (2018) also found similar results. If women are to be empowered, it is imperative for them to be in the corridors of power so that they can represent their problem in a better way and negotiate. Empowerment of women in political field is crucial for their advancement and for building a gender equal society. It will enable them to strengthen their struggle against marginalization, trivialization and exploitation.

### CONCLUSION

It is concluded that social empowerment was most affected by illiteracy or minimal literacy, gender biasness and limited access to mass media, while, least affect by 'religious and cultural belief'. Major Constraints towards Economic Empowerment were 'limited access to credit facilities', 'gender discrimination in wage rates' and 'greater vulnerability to exploitation and abuse'. Technical Empowerment was checked by 'lack of social mobility because of restrictions in the family' and "unavailability of technical support at their door step". Nepotism and "perception of society is not good about politics" were the major barrier in political empowerment of Rural women. The best way of empowerment is inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they get share in income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. The empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at national level but also at the international level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a

sense of equality. Factually education of girls is made free but still education of girls has not reached to the level where it should be, so not only free education along with educating girls up to intermediate should be made compulsory with social and governmental compulsions. Gender mainstreaming through agripreneurship could be great aid towards economic empowerment. Women should be motivated to interfere in politics and trainings should be organized to develop leadership qualities. Latest technology should be made available at their door step it may lead to technical empowerment of rural women.

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