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Perceived empowerment of tribal women through livestock enterprises in Tripura

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Abstract

A study was conducted on Jamatia and Debbarma tribal women of Tripura predominantly inhabiting Sepahijala and Gomati district to assess their empowerment level through livestock enterprises by selecting four villages from each district and 25 respondents from each village making the sample size 200. In pooled sample 80.00%, 12.00% and 7.50% of the respondents had medium, low and high level of economic empowerment. The corresponding figures in socio-cultural empowerment were 74.00%, 20.50% and 5.50%. In politico-legal empowerment 70.50% fell in medium category followed by 18.00% high and 11.50% low. In decision making empowerment 82.00%, 10.50% and 7.50% had medium, high and low empowerment level. Psychological empowerment witnessed 76.50%, 14.00% and 9.50% respondents with medium, low and high level of empowerment. Large number of Jamatia tribal women perceived medium level of empowerment in all the dimensions in comparison to their Debbarma counterpart, there was no statistically significant difference between the two.

Keywords: Tribal, women, livestock, empowerment, enterprise

Introduction

Empower involves the action of boosting the status of women through literacy, education, training and raising awareness (Alvarez and Lopez, 2013) [1]. The concept of empowerment of women as a goal of development projects and programmes has been gaining wider acceptance especially since the last few decades. Empowerment is a process through which change in power balance can be achieved. In every society, there are powerful and powerless individuals and groups. This power operates in all field of life as economic, social, political, religious and educational etc (Grover and Grover, 2002) [4]. Empowerment may be defined as the multi-dimensional process of making the women realize their identity, rights, position, status in various field of our society. Different studies and surveys have revealed that tribal women are less empowered in almost all aspects of their life. Besides education, the tribal women need some stimulus for boosting their income generation by different means like weaving, horticulture, sericulture, fisheries, agriculture, animal husbandry and poultry etc. The tribal women in Tripura are acquainted with livestock enterprise since time immemorial. They have been rearing livestock and poultry from generation to generation as livestock produce and product meet their animal protein requirements and also play a pivotal role in their socio-cultural life. In this study, an attempt has been made to assess the role played by livestock in empowering tribal women in Tripura with the following objective- To evaluate the perceived empowerment level of tribal women in Tripura through livestock enterprises.

Materials and method

A tribal woman rearing at least 2 pigs or 2 goats or 10 poultry or 1 cattle was considered eligible as respondent of the present study. Out of the 19 major tribes in Tripura two tribes viz. DebBarma and Jamatia were purposively selected for this study. The two contiguous districts of Tripura viz. Sepahijala and Gomati were also purposively selected as the area of the study. The Jamatia tribe is predominant in Gomati whereas Debbarma is predominant in Sepahijala district. A total of 100 respondents were selected by snowball sampling method from each of the two districts to make the sample size 200.

In this study women's empowerment was measured by constructing women's empowerment index using the dimensions in line with (Mahmud *et. al.* 2012) [8] with minor modifications. The dimensions are-economic empowerment, socio- cultural empowerment, politico-legal

empowerment, decision making empowerment and psychological empowerment. Each dimension further contains various indicators which have been spotted according to (Islam *et. al.* 2012) [5]. Each indicator further contains several questions pertaining to practical situation. Responses were received on the basis of four-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 2= to some extent, 3= to an average extent, 4= to a great extent). For each respondent score of all individual items were summed up to get the total scores. Thus the respondents were categorized as low, medium and high in the five dimensions. Pre-testing was conducted on 20 non-sample respondents to estimate the reliability of the scale. On the other hand content validity was ascertained to test the validity of the scale.

Results and Discussion

The results in Table 1 revealed that in Debbarma tribe majority of the respondents perceived medium level of economic empowerment (79.00 per cent) followed by low (13.00 per cent) and high (8.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation for this variable were 33.31 and 3.826, respectively.

An exactly similar trend was observed in Jamatia tribe where a fairly large majority of the respondents (81.00 per cent) perceived medium level of economic empowerment followed by low (12.00 per cent) and high (7.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation for this variable were 32.93 and 4.176 respectively.

In pooled value, it showed that majority of the respondents (80.00 per cent) perceived medium level of economic empowerment followed by low (12.50 per cent) and high (7.50 per cent). The mean and standard deviation were 33.12 and 3.999 respectively. The 't' value (1.377) was found to be non-significant.

The economic empowerment derived by the tribal women from livestock enterprises was medium for majority of the respondents. This might be due to the fact that they followed traditional practices and could earn from these enterprises for sustenance of their families but non-adoption of modern technologies and scientific management and absence of large farms precluded them from deriving higher economic empowerment. This was almost similar in both the tribes hence no significance difference was observed.

A glance on same table showed that majority of the Debbarma respondents perceived medium (61.00 per cent) level of socio-cultural empowerment followed by those having low (32.00 per cent) and high (7.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation were found to be 86.73 and 8.894 respectively. The range was 64-105. On the contrary, a fairly large majority of respondents from Jamatia tribe perceived medium (87.00 per cent) level of socio-cultural empowerment followed by those with low (9.00 per cent) and high (4.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation were 91.86 and 5.942 respectively. The range was from 68-106.

From the pooled sample it was revealed that majority (74.00 per cent) of the respondents perceived medium level of socio-cultural empowerment followed by those with low (20.50 per cent) and high (5.50 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation were 89.295 and 7.970 respectively. The 't' value (0.261) was found to be non-significant. The mean showed that Jamatia tribe was more socio-culturally empowered compared to Debbarma tribe. The reason could be due to their participation in religious organization which might have increased their social participation level.

In respect of politico-legal empowerment It was observed that majority (59.00 per cent) of the respondents fell in medium category followed by those with low (28.00 per cent) and high (13.00 per cent) in case of Debbarma tribe. The mean and standard deviation were found to be 34.31 and 4.186 respectively. In contrasting to the above phenomenon the number of respondents from Jamatia tribe who perceived medium level of politico-legal empowerment was as high as 82.00 per cent followed by those with high (10.00 per cent) and low (8.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation were 35.19 and 3.716 respectively.

In the pooled data, it was revealed that majority of the respondents perceived medium level of politico-legal empowerment (70.50 per cent) followed by those with high (18.00 percent) and low (11.50 per cent) level. The 't' value (1.51) was found to be non-significant. The pooled mean and standard deviation were 34.75 and 3.973 respectively. Regarding these political and legal issues the awareness of the respondents of the both tribes is almost same and hence there is no significant difference between the two.

Another dimension in the study was decision making empowerment and it was observed in the above-mentioned table that in Debbarma tribe a large majority of the respondents perceived medium level of decision-making empowerment (78.00 per cent) followed by those with high (17.00 per cent) and low (5.00 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation for this variable were 56.6 and 5.276 respectively. In Jamatia tribe a large majority of the respondents (86.00 per cent) perceived medium level of decision-making empowerment followed by those with low (10.00 per cent) and high (4.00 per cent). The mean and standard deviation for this variable were 54.08 and 4.308 respectively.

In pooled value, it showed that majority of the respondents (82.00 per cent) perceived medium level of decision-making empowerment followed by those with high (10.50 per cent) and low (7.50 per cent) level. The mean and standard deviation were 55.34 and 4.967 respectively. The 't' value (1.699) was found to be non-significant. When a person can share decision-making process of a group, family or society he develops the feeling of inclusion and hence feels empowered.

Since, the women in both the tribes are governed by the same set of social norms, custom and traditions therefore their pattern of participation in decision making in their respective almost similar and hence there was no significant difference.

The finding was supported by the finding of (Kemprai, 2009) [7] who revealed that 42.22 per cent of farm women were involved in decision making regarding pig rearing practices at moderate level followed by high level (38.88 per cent) and low level (18.88 per cent). She also revealed that average level of involvement of farm women in decision making was found to be 69.61 per cent which implied that most of the farm women were moderately engaged in case of pig rearing practices and also found that majority (52.22 per cent) of respondents were involved in decision making with regard to poultry rearing practices at moderate level followed by high level (38.88 per cent) and low level (18.88 per cent). Further, she revealed that the average participation in decision making in poultry rearing was found to be 68.85 per cent indicating moderate involvement of women. (Islam 2012)[6] also revealed that majority of rural women had increased their decision making, confidence, self-respect and knowledge after availing microfinance. (Patel *et al.* 2017)[10] also revealed that

majority (80.57 per cent and 80.11 per cent) of farm women involved in decision making about milking and preparation of milk products and management of milch animals, respectively followed by (72.97 per cent and 68.00 per cent) in breeding practices and feeding practices, respectively. Further, it was revealed that majority (64.12 per cent) of farm women were engaged in decision making about health care practices of milch animals and 55.94 per cent regarding general aspects in dairy farming. (Talukdar 2012)^[11] also found in her study that 60.00 percent of the women were included in the decision-making process in the family compared to 40.00 per cent who were not included in the decision-making process in the family. (Bala 2003)^[2] also revealed that women had to play as a second fiddle to men in decision-making and also found that farm women did not decide independently about any farm operation but participated in almost all the decisions and dominated only decisions more related to home sphere i.e. storage of farm produce, purchase/sale of animal and credit. (Chaudhury 2004)^[3] also reported that the status of women in the family as well as society was reflected by their extent of participation in the decision-making activities in household and agriculture related and other socio-cultural affairs. (Vaneth 2006)^[12] also found that more than three-fourth of the farm women (76.67 per cent) made joint decision by getting consultation with husband or family members regarding farms and home activities.

In the case of psychological empowerment, it was observed that majority of the respondents from Debbarma tribe (71.00 per cent) fell in medium category followed by those with low (15.00 per cent) and high (14.00 per cent) level. The mean

and standard deviation were 37.64 and 3.186 respectively. However, the number of respondents perceiving medium level of psychological empowerment from Jamatia tribe was 82.00 per cent followed by those with low (13.00 per cent) and high (5.00 per cent). The mean and standard deviation were 36.95 and 3.102 respectively. In pooled data it was found that majority of the respondents perceived medium (76.50 per cent) level of psychological empowerment followed by those with low (14.00 per cent) and high (9.50 per cent) level. The pooled mean and standard deviation were 37.295 and 3.155 respectively. The 't' value (3.103) was obtained as non-significant. Psychological empowerment is a mental process which results from various associated factors ranging from social, personal, economic and financial, etc. The 't' value (3.103) was non-significant which indicative that there is no difference between these two tribe in term of psychological empowerment.

Conclusion

Finally it may be concluded that a large majority of the Jamatia tribal women (more than 80 percent) perceived medium level of women empowerment from livestock enterprises. Though a similar trend was observed in Debbarma tribe, interestingly the corresponding percentages in the five dimensions were less than 80 percent. However, the difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be safely surmised that the perception of the tribal women in both the tribes was almost similar in so far as their empowerment was concerned from livestock enterprises.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of their Perceived Level of Empowerment

Dimensions/Traits	Category	Debbarma n= 100	Jamatia n= 100	Pooled N= 200	Mean	SD	't' value
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)			
Economic Empowerment	Low (<29.12)	13(13.00)	12 (12.00)	25(12.50)	33.12	3.999	1.377 ^{NS}
	Medium (29.12-37.12)	79(79.00)	81 (81.00)	160(80.00)			
	High (>37.12)	8 (8.00)	7 (7.00)	15 (7.50)			
	Range	24-47	19-47	19-47			
Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Low (<81.324)	32 (32.00)	9 (9.00)	41(20.50)	89.295	7.970	0.261 ^{NS}
	Medium (81.324-97.265)	61 (61.00)	87(87.00)	148(74.00)			
	High (>97.265)	7 (7.00)	4 (4.00)	11(5.50)			
	Range	64-105	68-106	64-106			
Politico-Legal Empowerment	Low (<30.776)	28(28.00)	8 (8.00)	36(18.00)	34.75	3.973	1.51 ^{NS}
	Medium (30.776-38.723)	59(59.00)	82 (82.00)	141(70.50)			
	High (>38.723)	13(13.00)	10(10.00)	23(11.50)			
	Range	25-48	25-49	25-49			
Decision-Making Empowerment	Low (<50.372)	5 (5.00)	10 (10.00)	15(7.50)	55.34	4.967	1.699 ^{NS}
	Medium (50.372-60.307)	78 (78.00)	86 (86.00)	164(82.00)			
	High (>60.307)	17 (17.00)	4 (4.00)	21(10.50)			
	Range	44-77	41-74	41-77			
Psychological Empowerment	Low (<34.139)	15(15.00)	13 (13.00)	28(14.00)	37.295	3.155	1.103 ^{NS}
	Medium (34.139-40.450)	71(71.00)	82 (82.00)	153(76.50)			
	High (>40.450)	14(14.00)	5 (5.00)	19(9.50)			
	Range	31-49	28-49	28-49			

*Figure in the parentheses indicate percentage

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