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Research Paper

SOCIO CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT OF UNORGANISED WOMEN WORKERS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to know the socio-cultural empowerment of unorganised women workers in Tirunelveli District. The study is based on primary data. Primary data were collected from Handicraft, Handloom, Palm Works, Pot making, tailoring, construction workers, street vendors and domestic workers with the help of an interview schedule. Appropriate statistical were used for analyzing the data. It is found that among the unorganized women workers who are in the age group of above 50 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the married unorganized women workers are lack of faith on failure and poor support of family members. Women workers in the unorganised sector in different occupations such as Handicraft, Handloom, Palm Works, Pot making, tailoring, construction workers, street vendors and domestic workers etc., are paid less than men for the same or similar work. Legislations which are providing health and welfare measures, maternity benefits etc., are not implemented effectively because women employees do not get the stipulated benefits and facilities to their desired extent. Hence, appropriate efforts should be taken to make women employees conscious about their rights for improvement in socio economic conditions.

KEYWORDS: Unorganised women workers and Socio-Cultural Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Globally, women are poorer and more underprivileged as compared to men. Women make up around 70% of world's poorest people just because of gender inequality. Because of their limited or complete lack of access to education, property and economic rights, many women have few opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve self-determination. Empowerment of women is one of very important issue in developing countries. As women are essential part of society, her status and participation in decision making as well as economic activities is very low. Working women contribute to national income of the country and maintain a sustainable livelihood of the families and communities, throughout the world.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Unorganised women workers face many socio-cultural attitude, legal barriers, lack of education and personal difficulties. Traditionally, women have been marginalized. They are rarely financially independent and often they are

more vulnerable members of society. Yet they have no access to credit and other financial services. The role of women in overall development has not been fully understood, nor has it been given its full weight in the struggle to eliminate poverty, hunger, inequality and injustice at the national as well as the international level. The continued assumption that the responsibility for child rearing and for family needs lies with women alone, as well as the persistence of intra household inequalities, place severe strains on women's health, limit their chances for a fair share in the benefits of society. It is perceived that majority of the poor belongs to the rural settings and most of these poor are women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to present the socio-cultural empowerment of unorganised women workers in Tirunelveli District.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The population comprises women workers of unorganised sectors in Tirunelveli District. Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample units for this study.



The whole population was divided into five segments such as Handicraft, Handloom, Palm Works, Pot making, Tailoring, Construction, Street vendors and Domestic workers. Table 1

presents the stratified unorganized women workers, workers engaged in each category of work and the samples selected from each category.

Table 1
Sample selected for the study

Sl. No	Type of Workers	Number of Workers	Number of Samples
1.	Handicraft, Handloom, Palm Works, Pot making workers	19935	199
2.	Tailoring workers	14675	147
3.	Construction workers	24465	245
4.	Street vendors	10,456	105
5.	Domestic workers	4545	45
	Total	74076	741

The data has been collected from 741 sample respondents. The size of the sample works out 1 per cent of the total population. The desired size of the sample for this study according to the Morgon Table at 95 per cent confidence level is 383.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Age group of Respondents

Unorganised women workers of different age groups have different socio-cultural empowerment. In order to find

out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different age group of respondents in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different age group of respondents in Tirunelveli district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Age group of Respondents

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Age Group (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Above 50 years	
Participation in social programmes	3.3019	3.7508	3.7149	3.7391	2.720*
Member in social organisation	3.0189	3.0699	3.0317	3.1014	0.121
Interaction with the society	3.0943	3.2614	3.4570	3.0942	2.492
Awareness on fundamental rights	4.0189	3.5380	3.5928	3.6739	2.606
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.9623	3.7052	3.5747	3.5217	2.306
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.8491	3.7538	3.5611	3.7609	1.486
Attending social functions	3.7547	3.5775	3.4706	3.3043	2.858*
Exercising the voting rights	4.1887	3.9119	3.8733	3.5507	3.934*
Attending cultural programmes	4.2830	3.9635	3.8778	3.5580	5.546*
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.6604	3.6079	3.6109	3.5362	0.208
Organising local festivals	2.9245	3.3222	3.2851	3.3623	2.933*
Political empowerment	3.3774	3.5532	3.6742	3.6087	1.135
Extending the support for social causes	3.8491	3.9726	4.1584	3.9565	1.618

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

Table 2 shows the mean score of socio-cultural empowerment among different age groups of respondents along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents in the age group of 20 to 30 years are 'attending cultural programmes' and 'exercising the voting rights' since their respective mean scores are 4.2830 and 4.1887. Among the respondents in the age group of 30 to 40 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are 'extending the support for social causes' and 'attending cultural programmes' since their respective mean scores are 3.9726 and 3.9635. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents in the age group

of 40 to 50 years are 'extending the support for social causes' and 'attending cultural programmes' since their respective mean scores are 4.1584 and 3.8778. Among the respondents in the age group of above 50 years, the important socio-cultural empowerment are 'extending the support for social causes' and 'participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities' since their respective mean scores are 3.9565 and 3.7609. Regarding the socio-cultural empowerment, significant difference among the different age group of respondents, are identified in the case of participation in social programmes, attending social functions, exercising the voting rights and attending cultural programmes since the

respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different educational qualification of Respondents

Unorganised women workers of different educational qualification have different socio-cultural

empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different educational qualification of respondents in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different educational qualification of respondents in Tirunelveli district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Educational Qualification of Respondents

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Educational Qualification (Mean Score)				F- Statistics
	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary	
Participation in social programmes	3.6619	3.8100	3.6111	3.8366	1.577
Member in social organisation	3.0430	3.0681	3.1389	3.3244	0.140
Interaction with the society	3.2493	3.3405	3.4028	3.9537	2.803*
Awareness on fundamental rights	3.6046	3.5771	3.8056	3.6098	0.706
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.6705	3.6201	3.5278	3.9024	0.906
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.6762	3.6882	3.6667	4.1224	1.640
Attending social functions	3.2731	3.3907	3.5972	3.9854	2.990*
Exercising the voting rights	3.8089	3.8351	3.9167	4.2439	1.445
Attending cultural programmes	3.8309	3.9510	3.8056	4.0000	0.748
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.5642	3.6237	3.6389	3.6585	0.219
Organising local festivals	3.3209	3.2939	3.2194	3.9512	2.830*
Political empowerment	3.5960	3.6022	3.5833	3.4146	0.333
Extending the support for social causes	4.0287	4.0143	3.9028	4.1220	0.328

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

Table 3 shows the mean score of socio-cultural empowerment among different educational qualification of respondents along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents had primary education are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 4.0287 and 3.8309. Among the respondents had middle school education, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 4.0143 and 3.9510. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents had high school education are exercising the voting rights and extending the support for social causes since their respective mean scores are 3.9167 and 3.9028. Among the respondents had higher secondary education, the important socio-cultural empowerment are exercising the voting rights and participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities

since their respective mean scores are 4.2439 and 4.1224. Regarding the socio-cultural empowerment, the significant difference among the different educational qualification of respondents, are identified in the case of interaction with the society, attending social functions and organising local festivals since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different religion of Respondents

Unorganised women workers of different religion have different socio-cultural empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different religion of respondents in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different religion of respondents in Tirunelveli district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Religion of Respondents

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Religion (Mean Score)			F-Statistics
	Hindu	Christian	Muslim	
Participation in social programmes	3.7151	3.6772	3.7241	0.089
Member in social organization	3.0975	2.9947	2.8276	1.055
Interaction with the society	3.2428	3.3810	3.2069	0.762
Awareness on fundamental rights	3.6214	3.5556	3.8621	0.853
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.6119	3.7169	3.9544	1.221
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.6826	3.7513	3.7931	0.288
Attending social functions	3.2455	3.5402	3.9586	2.926*
Exercising the voting rights	3.2524	3.4021	3.8414	2.852*
Attending cultural programmes	3.5411	3.6825	3.7931	2.509
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.9981	4.0529	4.1034	0.454
Organising local festivals	3.5354	3.8413	3.6552	1.709
Political empowerment	3.7878	3.8571	3.8966	1.554
Extending the support for social causes	3.6444	3.7196	3.6897	0.221

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

Table 4 shows the mean score of socio-cultural empowerment among different religion of respondents along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents belongs to Hindu are encouraging the promotion of culture and political empowerment since their respective mean scores are 3.9981 and 3.7878. Among the respondents belong to Christian, the important socio-cultural empowerment is encouraging the promotion of culture and political empowerment since their respective mean scores are 4.0529 and 3.8571. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents belong to Muslim are encouraging the promotion of culture and attending social functions since their respective mean scores are 4.1034 and 3.9586. Regarding the socio-cultural empowerment, the significant difference among

the different religion of respondents, are identified in the case of 'attending social functions' and 'exercising the voting rights' since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different caste of Respondents

Unorganised women workers of different caste have different socio-cultural empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different caste of respondents in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different caste of respondents in Tirunelveli district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Caste of Unorganised women workers

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Caste (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	BC	MBC	SC/ST	OC	
Participation in social programmes	3.6349	3.8026	3.7233	3.6486	0.827
Member in social organisation	2.9444	3.0395	3.1167	3.7865	2.932*
Interaction with the society	3.1389	3.2039	3.4133	3.4054	2.157
Awareness on fundamental rights	3.6032	3.7961	3.5533	3.4324	1.716
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.5794	3.6645	3.7100	3.5946	0.586
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.6627	3.8487	3.6300	4.0000	1.834
Attending social functions	3.4643	3.5658	3.5333	3.3514	0.545
Exercising the voting rights	3.7976	3.9342	3.8567	3.8649	0.349
Attending cultural programmes	3.8175	3.9868	3.8833	3.9459	0.618
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.4762	3.6908	3.6133	4.2992	2.812*
Organising local festivals	3.2103	3.2895	3.3400	3.4324	1.108
Political empowerment	3.4683	3.6974	3.6267	3.6216	1.513
Extending the support for social causes	3.9365	4.1645	3.9867	4.1892	1.444

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

Table 5 shows the mean score of socio-cultural empowerment among different caste of respondents along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents belong to BC are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 3.9365 and 3.8175. Among the respondents belong to MBC, the important socio-cultural empowerment are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 4.1645 and 3.9868. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the respondents belong to SC/ST are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 3.9867 and 3.8833. Among the respondents belong to OC, the important socio-cultural empowerment are encouraging the promotion of culture and extending the support for social causes since their respective mean scores are 4.2992 and 4.1892. Regarding the socio-

cultural empowerment, the significant difference among the different caste of respondents, are identified in the case of member in social organisation and encouraging the promotion of culture since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different marital status of Respondents

Unorganised women workers of different marital status have different socio-cultural empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different marital status of respondents in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in socio-cultural empowerment among different marital status of respondents in Tirunelveli district". The result of 'ANOVA' test is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Socio-Cultural Empowerment among different Marital Status of Respondents

Socio-Cultural Empowerment	Marital Status (Mean Score)				F- Statistics
	Married	Unmarried	Widowed	Divorced	
Participation in social programmes	3.7541	3.2121	3.5593	3.8667	3.748*
Member in social organization	3.0716	2.5152	3.1186	3.1778	2.481
Interaction with the society	3.2642	2.7273	3.3644	3.6000	2.869*
Awareness on fundamental rights	3.6092	3.6970	3.6695	3.4667	0.365
Participation in the meeting of local bodies	3.6679	3.4242	3.6356	3.6444	0.444
Participation in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social activities	3.7450	3.8182	3.5339	3.5778	1.179
Attending social functions	3.5578	3.6364	3.3898	3.1111	2.801*
Exercising the voting rights	3.8844	3.7879	3.7288	3.8444	0.490
Attending cultural programmes	3.9064	3.8465	3.8136	3.8853	0.209
Encouraging the promotion of culture	3.5963	3.4848	3.6695	3.5333	0.315
Organising local festivals	3.3101	3.0000	3.2797	3.2889	1.075
Political empowerment	3.5963	3.0909	3.5508	3.9333	3.534*
Extending the support for social causes	3.9890	3.3939	4.1525	4.4444	5.496*

Source: Primary data

*Significant at five per cent level

Table 6 shows the mean score of socio-cultural empowerment among different marital status of respondents along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the married respondents are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 3.9890 and 3.9064. Among the unmarried respondents, the important socio-cultural empowerment are attending cultural programmes and participating in the awareness programmes to eradicate anti social programmes since their respective mean scores are 3.8465 and 3.8182. The important socio-cultural empowerment among the widowed respondents are extending the support for social causes and attending cultural programmes since their respective mean scores are 4.1525 and 3.8136. Among the divorced respondents, the important socio-cultural empowerment variables are extending the support for social causes and political empowerment since

their respective mean scores are 4.4444 and 3.9333. Regarding the socio-cultural empowerment, the significant difference among the different marital status of respondents, are identified in the case of participation in social programmes, interaction with the society, attending social functions, political empowerment and extending the support for social causes since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

SUGGESTIONS

- Long term security and special insurance programmes for these workers will still improve standard of living. Since most of them are from SC, ST and OBC group a sense of self-esteem has to be developed. So that they will feel secure and respected in social life also.

- A supervisory body should be established to monitor the proper implementation of legislation and provisions related to women workers.
- Mass media should be used to communicate the social message relating to women's equality
- Efforts shall be made to change social outlook towards women in general and women workers in particular. Mass media can play a great role to change social outlook towards women workers.
- To reduce the work stress in the work place, they can also work by listening songs or singing songs etc. It will reduce the stress in the work place.

CONCLUSION

Women workers in the unorganised sector in different occupations such as Handicraft, Handloom, Palm Works, Pot making, tailoring, construction workers, street vendors and domestic workers etc., are paid less than men for the same or similar work. Legislations which are providing health and welfare measures, maternity benefits etc., are not implemented effectively because women employees do not get the stipulated benefits and facilities to their desired extent.

This is a sign of vulnerability and exploitation. Despite all the labour laws, a majority of women employees lack proper education and ignorance of statutory provisions, which is the thrust area affecting the development and welfare of women employees. Hence, appropriate efforts should be taken to make women employees conscious about their rights for improvement in socio economic conditions.

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