

## **ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The level of participation of women in the decision making process within the family is an important indicator of their empowerment. The present study aims at understanding the relationship between women's engagement in Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and their participation in the decision making process. Married, widow/divorced/separated and unmarried women are the three categories of women referred to in this paper. The study has taken into consideration decisions regarding the purchase of major household goods, purchase of daily household requirements, their health care, freedom of movement, their rights over their earnings and the earnings of their spouses or the primary male earner of their family.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Income Generating Activities, Decision making process, Women empowerment*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Women's autonomy in decision making is positively associated with their employment. Education is one major element of opportunity and empowerment. The present study aims at understanding the relationship between women's engagement in Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and their participation in the decision making process within the family. Empowerment of women can be assessed from the changes that occur in the level of their participation in the decision making process within the family. Women's economic empowerment is a process that increases women's access to and control over economic resources and opportunities, skills development and market information.

Women empowerment has been explicitly recognized as the key not only to the health of nations, but also to social and economic development (IIPS, 2007). Women empowerment in the Indian context seeks to overcome negative

consequences of patriarchal structures that undermine gender-equitable practices (Alsop et al., 2006) Most women empowerment strategies promise to develop women's self-esteem and increase their household 'bargaining power' without looking inside the household dynamics (Paterson, 2008).

Kripa and Surendranathan (2008) have studied women's participation in farming activities and their empowerment for the case of Kerala, India. Their study has come up with the conclusion that women's participation in such earning activities leads women to improve their social status and also to prove their capabilities.

Trivedi et al. (2011) has studied women's empowerment through their economic empowerment by promoting the dairy sector in which women could put more labour and could avail better money earning opportunities. It has been concluded in the study that cooperative dairies can play a positive role in empowering women through economic self reliance.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To understand the relationship between women's engagement in Income Generating Activities and their participation in the decision making process.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

It has been tentatively hypothesized that engagement of women in income generating activities has no effect on their decision regarding purchase of major household goods.

The sample design adopted for the study is that of a random technique, fitted to the requirement of the study. With time and resource constraint, the study is confined to the Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam. Here Guwahati city (urban area of the district) and the two development blocks- Chandrapur Development block and Rani Development block (part), (rural areas of the district) have been further selected. For collection of data from Guwahati city, the multistage sampling method has been used. In the first stage the six zones of the Guwahati Municipality Corporation (GMC) has been selected. In the second stage one ward has been selected randomly from each zone and in the third stage employed women has been selected from each ward using convenience sampling method. The six zones and

wards selected are Central Zone (ward number 18), Dispur (ward number 26), East Zone (ward number 20), Lokra (ward number 16), South Zone (ward number 13) and West Zone (ward number 07). The method of quota sampling has been used in deciding the number of samples to be drawn from each ward. Quotas have been allotted in proportion to the number of households/ assessee in each ward.

For the rural areas of the district too multi stage sampling has been used. Rani Development Block (part) and Chandrapur Development block have been randomly selected in the first stage. In the second stage 10 percent of the villages have been selected from each block. For Rani Development block 2 villages (viz. Deurali and Pamehi) and for Chandrapur development block 4 villages (viz. Thakurkuchigaon, Thakurkuchi NC, 2 no. Panikhaiti and Kurkuria Grant) have been randomly selected. In the third stage employed women has been selected from each village using convenience sampling method. The sample size drawn from each village is in accordance to the number of households in each village.

100 samples have been drawn from Guwahati city and 40 samples each have been drawn from the Rani Development block and the Chandrapur Development block respectively making the total sample size of 180 samples.

**Table 1: Marital Status of the respondents, 2017-18**

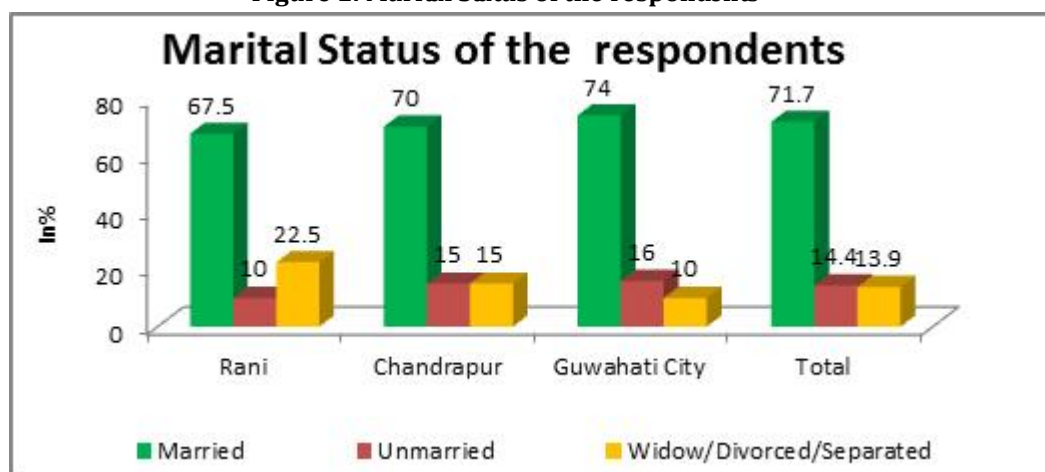
Marital Status	Area			Total
	Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
Married	67.5(27)	70.0(28)	74.0(74)	71.7(129)
Unmarried	10.0(4)	15.0(6)	16.0(16)	14.4(26)
Widow/Divorced/Separated	22.5(9)	15.0(6)	10.0(10)	13.9(25)
Total	100.0(40)	100.0(40)	100.0(100)	100.0(180)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number  
Source: Field Study

The marital status of the respondents is given in Table 1. 72% of the respondents are married, 14% are unmarried and

14 % of them are either a widow or divorced or separated. Figure 1 depicts the marital status of the respondents.

**Figure 1: Marital Status of the respondents**



## DECISION MAKING IN CASE OF MARRIED WOMEN

The areas looked into for married women are regarding the purchase of major household goods and goods for daily needs, size of the family, their health care, freedom of movement, their rights over their earnings and their spouse's earnings. Table 2 shows that there is a visible change that has occurred in the level of participation of married women in the

decision making process within the family. Before engaging in IGAs for married women only 4% of them had a greater say than their spouses regarding the decision to make major household purchases but after engaging in IGAs it had increased to 10%. Joint decision has increased from 67% to 76 %.

**Table 2: Decision making in case of married women, 2017-18****(in percentage terms)**

Decision making		Area			Total
		Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
<b>A: Decision - Regarding purchase of major household goods</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	3.7(1)	10.7(3)	1.4(1)	3.9(5)
	Equal say	63.0(17)	67.9(19)	68.9(51)	67.4(87)
	Lesser say than spouse	33.3(9)	21.4(6)	29.7(22)	28.7(37)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	7.4(2)	17.9(5)	8.1(6)	10.1(13)
	Equal say	74.1(20)	64.3(18)	83.8(62)	77.5(100)
	Lesser say than spouse	18.5(5)	17.9(5)	8.1(6)	12.4(16)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
<b>B: Decision - Regarding purchase of daily household requirements</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	3.7(1)	7.1(2)	1.4(1)	3.1(4)
	Equal say	63.0(17)	64.3(18)	64.9(48)	64.3(83)
	Lesser say than spouse	33.3(9)	28.6(8)	33.8(25)	32.6(42)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	11.1(3)	21.4(6)	10.8(8)	13.2(17)
	Equal say	70.4(19)	67.9(19)	81.1(60)	76.0(98)
	Lesser say than spouse	18.5(5)	10.7(3)	8.1(6)	10.8(14)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
<b>C: Decision - Regarding visits to family, friends or relatives</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	7.1(2)	2.7(2)	3.1(4)
	Equal say	63.0(17)	57.2(16)	82.4(61)	72.8(94)
	Lesser say than spouse	37.0(10)	35.7(10)	14.9(11)	24.0(31)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	3.7(1)	7.1(2)	2.7(2)	3.9(5)
	Equal say	77.8(21)	71.5(20)	91.9(68)	84.5(109)
	Lesser say than spouse	18.5(5)	21.4(6)	5.4(4)	11.6(15)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)

<b>D: Decision - Regarding the number of children to give birth to</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Equal say	88.9(24)	85.7(24)	95.9(71)	92.2(119)
	Lesser say than spouse	11.1(3)	14.3(4)	4.1(3)	7.8(10)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	3.6(1)	0.0(0)	0.8(1)
	Equal say	92.6(25)	85.7(24)	97.3(72)	93.8(121)
	Lesser say than spouse	7.4(2)	10.7(3)	2.7(2)	5.4(7)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
<b>E: Decision - Regarding own health care</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	7.1(2)	8.1(6)	6.2(8)
	Equal say	88.9(24)	89.3(25)	90.5(67)	89.9(116)
	Lesser say than spouse	11.1(3)	3.6(1)	1.4(1)	3.9(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	10.7(3)	9.5(7)	7.8(10)
	Equal say	92.6(25)	82.1(23)	89.2(66)	88.4(114)
	Lesser say than spouse	7.4(2)	7.1(2)	1.4(1)	3.8(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
<b>F: Decision - Related to own earnings</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	4.1(3)	2.3(3)
	Equal say	66.7(18)	82.1(23)	83.7(62)	79.8(103)
	Lesser say than spouse	33.3(9)	17.9(5)	12.2(9)	17.9(23)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	10.7(3)	5.4(4)	5.4(7)
	Equal say	85.2(23)	82.1(23)	89.2(66)	86.8(112)
	Lesser say than spouse	14.8(4)	7.1(2)	5.4(4)	7.8(10)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
<b>G: Decision - Related to spouse's earnings</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Equal say	29.6(8)	17.9(5)	23.0(17)	23.3(30)
	Lesser say than spouse	70.4(19)	82.1(23)	77.0(57)	76.7(99)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than spouse	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Equal say	33.3(9)	39.3(11)	47.3(35)	42.6(55)
	Lesser say than spouse	66.7(18)	60.7(17)	52.7(39)	57.4(74)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(27)	100.0(28)	100.0(74)	100.0(129)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number

Source: Field Study

**DECISION MAKING IN CASE OF WIDOW/DIVORCED/SEPARATED WOMEN**

For widows, separated and divorced women the study has taken into consideration decisions regarding the purchase of major household goods and goods of daily needs, their health care, freedom of movement, their rights over their

earnings and the earnings of the primary male earner of their family. With regard to their own health care 76% of the widows/divorced/separated women have made their own decisions before engaging in IGAs which increased to 84 % after their engagement in IGAs as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Decision making in case of widow/divorced/separated women, 2017-18****(in percentage terms)**

Decision making		Area			Total
		Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
<b>A: Decision - Regarding purchase of major household goods</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	76.0(19)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	20.0(2)	20.0(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	66.6(4)	90.0(9)	88.0(22)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	10.0(1)	8.0(2)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
<b>B: Decision - Regarding purchase of daily household requirements</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	76.0(19)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	20.0(2)	20.0(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	66.6(4)	90.0(9)	88.0(22)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	10.0(1)	8.0(2)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
<b>C: Decision - Regarding visits to family, friends or relatives</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	76.0(19)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	0.0(0)	12.0(3)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	20.0(2)	12.0(3)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	50.0(3)	90.0(9)	84.0(21)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	0.0(0)	12.0(3)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	10.0(1)	4.0(1)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)

<b>D: Decision - Regarding own health care</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	76.0(19)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	66.7(4)	10.0(1)	20.0(5)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	10.0(1)	4.0(1)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	100.0(9)	50.0(3)	90.0(9)	84.0(21)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	10.0(1)	16.0(4)
	Lesser say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
<b>E: Decision - Related to own earnings</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	88.9(8)	33.3(2)	80.0(8)	72.0(18)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	20.0(2)	20.0(5)
	Lesser say than other family members	11.1(1)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	8.0(2)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	88.9(8)	100.0(6)	80.0(8)	88.0(22)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	20.0(2)	8.0(2)
	Lesser say than other family members	11.1(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
<b>F: Decision - Related to earnings of the family's primary male earner</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	77.8(7)	16.7(1)	30.0(3)	44.0(11)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	20.0(2)	20.0(5)
	Lesser say than other family members	22.2(2)	33.3(2)	50.0(5)	36.0(9)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	77.8(7)	16.7(1)	30.0(3)	44.0(11)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	50.0(3)	20.0(2)	20.0(5)
	Lesser say than other family members	22.2(2)	33.3(2)	50.0(5)	36.0(9)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(9)	100.0(6)	100.0(10)	100.0(25)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number

Source: Field Study

**DECISION MAKING IN CASE OF UNMARRIED WOMEN**

With regard to unmarried women the present study has taken the decisions regarding the purchase of major household goods and goods of daily needs, their health care, freedom of

movement, their rights over their earnings and the earnings of the primary male earner of their family (Table 4). In case of unmarried women only 4% of them had an equal say with regard to visits to family and relatives which increased to 27% after their engagement in IGAs.

**Table 4: Decision making in case of unmarried women, 2017-18****(in percentage terms)**

Decision making		Area			Total
		Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
<b>A: Decision - Regarding purchase of major household goods</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	25.0(4)	15.4(4)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	12.5(2)	11.5(3)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	83.3(5)	62.5(10)	73.1(19)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.3(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	83.3(5)	31.3(5)	38.5(10)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	16.7(1)	37.4(6)	42.3(11)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
<b>B: Decision - Regarding purchase of daily household requirements</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	25.0(4)	15.4(4)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	6.3(1)	7.7(2)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	83.3(5)	68.7(11)	76.9(20)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	25.0(4)	15.4(4)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	83.3(5)	25.0(4)	34.6(9)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	16.7(1)	50.0(8)	50.0(13)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
<b>C: Decision - Regarding visits to family , friends or relatives</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.2(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	0.0(0)	3.8(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	83.3(5)	68.8(11)	77.0(20)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.2(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	66.7(4)	18.8(3)	26.9(7)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	33.3(2)	50.0(8)	53.8(14)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)



<b>D: Decision - Regarding own health care</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.2(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	75.0(3)	66.7(4)	56.3(9)	61.6(16)
	Lesser say than other family members	25.0(1)	33.3(2)	12.5(2)	19.2(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.2(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	75.0(3)	83.3(5)	62.5(10)	69.3(18)
	Lesser say than other family members	25.0(1)	16.7(1)	6.3(1)	11.5(3)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
<b>E: Decision - Related to own earnings</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	31.2(5)	19.2(5)
	Equal say	50.0(2)	33.3(2)	56.3(9)	50.0(13)
	Lesser say than other family members	50.0(2)	66.7(4)	12.5(2)	30.8(8)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	16.7(1)	31.2(5)	23.1(6)
	Equal say	75.0(3)	50.0(3)	56.3(9)	57.7(15)
	Lesser say than other family members	25.0(1)	33.3(2)	12.5(2)	19.2(5)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
<b>F: Decision - Related to earnings of the family's primary male earner</b>					
Before engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.25(1)	3.8(1)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.25(1)	3.8(1)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	87.5(14)	92.4(24)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)
After engaging in IGAs	Greater say than other family members	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.3(1)	3.8(1)
	Equal say	0.0(0)	83.3(5)	81.2(13)	69.2(18)
	Lesser say than other family members	100.0(4)	16.7(1)	12.5(2)	27.0(7)
	No response	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)
	Total	100.0(4)	100.0(6)	100.0(16)	100.0(26)



### Engagement of the women in income generating activities and decision-making role with regard to the purchase of major household goods

Viewed as an apparatus of women empowerment, a stylized hypothesis has been framed that participation in income generating activities helps women empowerment by facilitating a positive decision making role amongst women. The study attempted at empirically looking into this linkage between engaging in income generating activities and decision making by women with the aid of a set of queries via direct responses. The responses were elicited from the sampled women. The sampled women were further classified in three categories – currently married, unmarried and widows/separated/divorced. Accordingly, looking at pre-post differences in responses assessed different aspects of decision-making role.

The aspect of decision-making role was assessed in terms of purchases of major household goods. The pre-post cross-tabulation of the responses for all three groups of women is presented in the table below. The role of participation can be evaluated through the cross-table based chi-square measure. If the chi-square is found to be statistically insignificant at 5 percent level, then any role of participation between pre and post situations (i.e. before engagement and after engagement in income generating activities) can be denied. If, however, chi-square is found to be statistically significant at the given level of significances, the role of engagement in income generating activities may be stressed upon.

It has been tentatively hypothesized that engagement of women in income generating activities has no effect on their decision regarding purchase of major household goods.

Under this null hypothesis the appropriate test statistics is

$$\text{chi-square} = \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Now the contingency table is

	Greater say than spouse/ other family members	Equal say	Lesser say than spouse/ other family members	Total
Before joining IGAs	28	91	61	180
After joining IGAs	40	111	29	180
Total	68	202	90	360

The chi-square Table is

$O_i$	$E_i$	$O_i - E_i$	$(O_i - E_i)^2$	$(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
28	34	-6	36	1.06
91	101	-10	100	0.99
61	45	16	256	5.69
40	34	6	36	1.06
111	101	10	100	0.99
29	45	-16	256	5.69
Total				15.48

Here degree of freedom is  $(2-1)(3-1)=2$

The tabulated value of chi-square at 5 % level of significance is 5.99. Since the calculated value is more than the tabulated value so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that engagement of the sampled women in IGAs has enhanced their decision making role with respect to purchase of major household goods.

Thus from the above analysis it may be concluded that being engaged in Income Generating Activities has affected the decision making role of the females positively. Engagement of women in IGAs has increased the production of goods and services and generation of income which has resulted in their economic empowerment.

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