

**PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AT Sirkali in
Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu**

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Abstract

Empowering women are the most effective tool for development as well as for poverty reduction. Women, who are educated and have been given a chance, have proved that they excel in their professions and careers. Educated and enlightened women can look after families better, make societies compassionate and make nations progressive. Since women's empowerment is the key to socio-economic development of the community; bringing women into the small stream of national development has been a major concern of government. The success of any strategy of women empowerment depends upon the Level of education, hard work; Social custom; Family planning, and small family; Health, medical services and cleanliness; Environment, tree growing and kitchen gardening. The access of women-particularly those belonging to the weaker sections, including Schedule Tribes, majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganized sector - to education, health and productive resources, among others is inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded. Women's equality (in general all women) in power - sharing and active participation in decision-making, including decision-making in political processes at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment.

Key words: women, Empowerment, women's Equality

Introduction

Empowerment is an ongoing and dynamic process which challenges traditional power equations as well as relations. It enhances women's abilities or any other, marginalized and alienated group's abilities to change the structures and ideologies that keep them subordinate. Sen and Batliwala (2000) have defined it as "Empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both controls over resources and over ideology ... includes, in addition to extrinsic control a growing intrinsic capability greater self-confidence, and all inner transformation of one's consciousness that enable one to overcome external barriers. Thus, empowerment is not about power over others, but power to achieve goals and ends.

According to World Bank (2004) empowerment is the process of enhancing an individual s or group's capacity to make choice and transform those into desired actions and outcomes. In short, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation to greater decision-making, power and central and to transformative action. The term empowerment has been widely used in relating to women and historically. The parameters of empowerment are multifaced and multidimensional for the real upliftment of the down-trodden and weaker section like women. They include:

- ❖ To enhance self-esteem and self-confidence in women –Enabling women to gain equal access to control and over resources.
- ❖ To faster decision-making and action through collective process
- ❖ To provide information, knowledge and skill for economic independence.
- ❖ Transforming the institutions such as family education, religion, media etc. and structures such as legal, political, economic and social etc. Through which ideology and practice of subordination is reinforced and reproduced.)

Women Empowerment in India

In India, women play an important role in agriculture operations undertaking 60 per cent of farm work and contribute in a big way to food production and economic growth. Women have also increased their participation in high-end vocations. India's economic planning process for women has evolved over the years from a purely "welfare" approach, where women were regarded as objects of charity, to a "development" oriented phase and currently to the plank of "empowerment" that seeks to promote gender equality.

A major milestone in women's empowerment in India has been the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement with over 2.2 million Self –Help Groups at the grassroots level throughout the country, which translates into more than 33 million households. Help through collateral free loans to these SHGs many government programmes are also run through these SHGs.

The Ministry of Rural Development has special components for women in its programmes. Funds are earmarked as "Women's component" to ensure flow of adequate resources for the same. Besides Swarnajayanti Grameen Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Ministry of Rural Development is implementing other scheme having women's component. They are the Indira A'was Yojana (IAn, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Restructured Rural Sanitation Programme, Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) the (erstwhile) Integrated Rural Development

Programme (IRDP), the (erstwhile) Development of Women and Children Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana ORY).

Women Empowerment: Why?

Even the UN Human Development Report quoted by Marina Pinto (1995), revealed the fact in this concern, "development must be participatory and for this people must have the opportunity to participate and to invest in the development of their capabilities. They also must have the opportunity to put their capabilities to use, to be fully involved in all aspects of life, to express them freely and collectively." The Third World sees people as its greatest asset and believes that true development must centre round people but the Third World wiblesses the fact that development has not only bypassed women, but also made them victims of it. Participatory development leads to empowerment supported by economic independence.

Our Ex-President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has rightly observed "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women are essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation" (quoted by Sheetal Shamla, 2008).

Problem and Challenges

(i) Challenging Economic Empowerment

It is clear that women's choices about their activity and their ability to increase incomes are seriously constrained by gender inequalities in access to other resources for investment, responsibility for household subsistence expenditure, lack of time because of unpaid domestic work and low levels of mobility, constraints on sexuality and sexual violence which limit access to markets in many cultures.

(ii) Challenging Well-Being and Intra-Household Relation

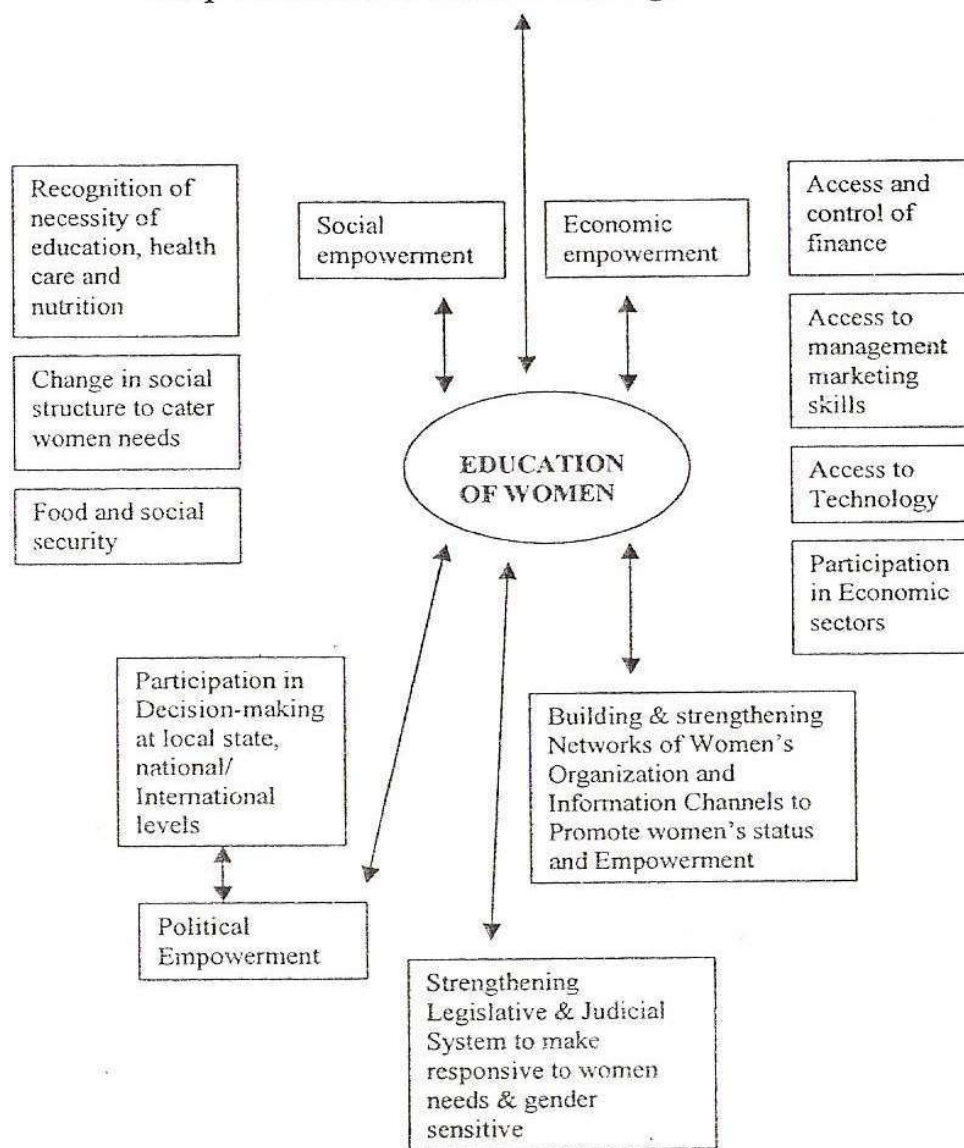
Savings provide women with a means of building up an asset base. Women themselves also often value the opportunity to be seen and making a greater contribution to household well-being giving them greater confidence and sense of self-worth.

(iii) Challenging Social and Political Empowerment

There is no necessary link between women's individual economic empowerment and/ or participation in micro finance groups and social and political empowerment. These changes are not an automatic consequence of micro-finance per se. As noted above, women's increased productive role has also often had its costs.

India with its vision of a new economic regime has an urgency to guarantee the spirit of equality and social justice envisioned in the constitution. The greater awareness of human rights and the need to realize such rights without any barriers has also been accepted as a goal in all the sectors of development. In the coming twenty years, the social environment conducive for realizing human rights, equality and justice, therefore, assumes great importance.

Empowerment of Women Through Education



Strategy of Women Empowerment

In view of low literacy rate of women and the gigantic task of educating rural women a suitable strategy will have to be planned. The major task is to identify the areas where these groups in fact, are facing problems because at this stage only the problem solving adult learning technique will

attract these rural poor to improve their working and income. The success of any strategy of women empowerment depends upon the following factors:

1. Level of education, hard work
2. Social custom
3. Family planning, and small family
4. Health, medical services and cleanliness
5. Environment, tree growing and kitchen gardening

Statement of the problem

Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives communities and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Empowering women put the spot light on education and employment, which are an essential element to sustainable development. Since women's empowerment is the key to socio-economic development of the community; brining women into mainstream of national development has been a major concern of government.

India with its vision of a new economic regime has an urgency to guarantee the sprit of equality and social justice envisioned in the constitutions. The national policy for empowerment of women, 2001, sets pace for creating a gender just society for human resource development and the elimination of all dissemination to make place for capacity building, access and improvement. There is also need for positive additional change and mental makeup of human society in favour of women participation in al spheres of life. Media NGOs SHGs, women organizations have a significant role to play n this context. These groups should generate awareness about the importance of women empowerment so that the participation of women in each and every field will be real and were significant. In this context, present research has made an attempt to study the public distribution system initiate and trigger to attain the social, economic and gender equity in the Sirkali. The aim of present study is to examine the existing nature of women empowerment and factors existing women development in this area particularly Sirkali enables women to become active players in their all spheres of life.

Objectives

1. To study about the socio-economic background of women at Sirkali;
2. To find out the level of awareness and knowledge on empowerment of study population; and
3. To assess the role of training programmes for women empowerment

Methodology

The present study was conducted based on the primary data collected through field survey with the well structured interview schedule and purposive sampling. This research is a pioneer work in the Sirkali of Tamil Nadu, the research used an exploratory research design. The collected data was collected between the periods of January- March 2021 and analyzed with the use of SPSS package and suitable statistical analysis was done. Based upon the result, the researchers suggest the policy makers to adopt such for the protection and rehabilitation of women.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPERTITION

Table - 1

Distribution of the Respondents by their Age, Caste and Marital Status

S. No	Age	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Below 25	4	8%
2.	25-35	14	28%
3.	35 and above	32	64%
S. No	Caste	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage
1.	BC	15	30%
2.	MBC	8	16%
3.	SC/ST	27	54%
S. No	Marital Status	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage
1.	Married	39	78
2.	Single	7	14
3.	Widow	4	8

**Source: computed from primary data*

Age

The above table reveals that the majority 32 (64%) of the respondents were belongs to age group of 35 and above; the remaining 14 (28%) and 4 (8%) of them were come under the age group of 25-30 and 20-25 in the study area respectively.

Caste

It is clear from the above table that majority 27 (54%) of the respondents belong to lowest strata of scheduled caste women; followed by that 15 (30%) and 8 (16%) of them were belong to BC and MBC caste women respectively.

Marital Status

It is clear from the above table that a good majority 39 (78%) of the respondents were married the remaining 7 (14%) and 4 (8%) of them were unmarried; and widow respectively.

Table - 2
Distribution of the Respondents by their Education, Annual Income and Type of House

S. No	Education	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Illiterate	8	16%
2.	Primary education	15	30%
3.	High school	20	40%
4.	Higher secondary	5	10%
5.	Collage level	2	4%
S. No	Annual Income	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	5001-10,000	32	64%
2.	10,000 & above	12	24%
3.	Below 5,000	6	12%
S. No	Type of House	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Pucca	20	40
2.	Tiled	25	50
3.	Thatched	5	10

**Source: computed from primary data*

Education

A study of the data in table 4 reports the respondent's educational background. Out of the total 50 respondents the majority 20 (40%) were of them were attained high school level of education; followed by that 15 (30%), 8 (16%), 5 (10%) and 2 (4%) of them had completed up to only primary school level of education; illiterates; higher secondary and college level education in the study area respectively.

Annual Income

The above table reveals that the annual family income of the respondents. Out of the total 50 respondents the majority 32 (64%) of the respondents annual family income was Rs. 5000-10,000; the remaining 12 (24%) and 6 (12%) of them were earned above Rs. 10,000 and below Rs. 5000/- in the study area. It is deducted from the above discussion that majority of them are earned below Rs, 10,000 as their annual income to manage their domestic life respectively.

Type of House

It is clear from the above table that the majority 25 (50%) of the respondents were dwelling in the tiled house; followed by that 20 (40%) and 5 (10%) of them were dwelling in the pucca house only 10% of the women's family were residing in the poor thatched house respectively.

Table - 3
Distribution of the Respondents by their Nature of House and Type of Family

S. No	Nature of House	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Own house	30	60%
2.	Rented house	17	34%
3.	Others	3	6%
S. No	Type of Family	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Joint family	12	29%
2.	Nuclear family	38	76%

**Source: computed from primary data*

Nature of House

It is reported that the majority 30 (60%) of the respondents were residing in their own houses; followed by that 17 (34%) and 3 (6%) of them were residing in the rented house and only 6 per cent of them were living in other housing nature in the study area respectively.

Type of Family

It could be seen from the above table that the majority 38 (76%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear families back ground and the remaining 12 (29%) of them belong to the Indian tradition oriented joint family system.

Table - 4
Distribution of the respondents based on use hold applications

S. No	Particulars	Yes	No	Total
1.	Electricity	45 (90%)	15 (30%)	50 (100%)
2.	Drinking water	46 (92%)	4 (8%)	50 (100%)
3.	Toilet	36 (72%)	14 (28%)	50 (100%)
4.	Separate kitchen	34 (68%)	16 (32%)	50 (100%)
5.	Mass media	43 (86%)	7 (14%)	50 (100%)
6.	Vehicles	38 (76%)	12 (24%)	50 (100%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents are having adequate facilities such as electricity (90%) and drinking water (92%) toilet (72%) separate kitchen (68%) modern communication tools (86%) and transport vehicle (76%).

It is deducted from discussion that separate kitchen and toilet facilities are not reached in the rural commune of union territories.

Table - 5

Distribution of the respondents Particulars about economic independence and equality

S. No	Particulars	No of respondents		Total
		Yes	No	
1.	Bank account	50 (100%)	0	50 (100%)
2.	Insurance	6 (12%)	44 (88%)	50 (100%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

It could be seen from the study of the table that all the respondents are having Saving Bank Account at various nationalized banks. It is noted that only 12 per cent of them are having life insurance policy.

Knowledge on women empowerment

Women empowerment is a global issue and it is a social process that neutralizes women's oppression. In this section, the search student has presenting the information bank the women respondents views on the concept of women empowerments in various aspects.

Table - 6

Distribution of the respondents' Information on women development

S. No	Particulars	No of respondents	
		Yes	No
1.	Self employment	13 (26%)	37 (74%)
2.	Family planning	41 (82%)	9 (18%)
3.	Decision making for family management	32 (64%)	18 (76%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

It is clear from the above table that 26 per cent of the women's respondents are doing business, a good majority of the respondents (82%) have done family planning in the right time. It is observed that the remaining respondents also ready to adopt family planning but low age. It is interested to note that 64 per cent of the respondents are involved their family decision making activities without any discrimination.

Table - 7

Distribution of the respondents by their opinion on knowledge of social reform

S. No	Particulars	No of respondents	
		Yes	No
1.	Women re-marriage	33 (66%)	17 (34%)
2.	Giving and receiving Dowry	29 (58%)	21 (42%)

3.	Necessity of gender equity	41 (82%)	9 (18%)
4.	Favour to women education	48 (96%)	2 (4%)
5.	Women security legislation	32 (64%)	18 (36%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

It is clear from the above table that a large number of respondents are opined favorably the necessity of gender equity and women education. It is noted that giving and receiving dowry is not favoured because all are utilized the benefit of dowry and also it is observed that the custom is deep rooted in Indian society irrespective of caste, religion and economic status. It is reported that most of the respondents are not willing and favour to women remarriage only 64 percent of the respondents are known about women security legislation in the study area.

Table - 8

Distribution of the respondents by their opinion on women economic development

S. No	Particulars	No of respondents	
		Yes	No
1.	Necessity of women employment	34 (68%)	16 (32%)
2.	Necessity of economic freedom to women	41(82%)	9 (18%)
3.	Factor to enter women in all spheres of employment	43 (86%)	7 (14%)
4.	Knowledge on women development schemes	34 (68%)	16 (32%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

It could be seen from the study of the above table that a good majority of the respondents are supported the statement regarding economic independence for women and entering women in all spheres of life. It is noted that 68 per cent of women respondents are supported women employment other than home making and adequate knowledge about various women development schemes which are implemented by central and union tertiary governments.

Table - 9

Distribution of the respondents by their opinion on importance political involvement and knowledge

S. No	Particulars	No of respondents	
		Yes	No
1.	Involvement in public activities	29 (58%)	21 (12%)
2.	Liberty to cast voting	47 (96%)	3 (6%)
3.	Knowing reservation of 33% in PRI for women	39 (78%)	11 (28%)
4.	Interested in involving election	27 (54%)	23 (46%)

**Source: computed from primary data*

It could be seen from the study of the table that 94 per cent of the respondents have casted their votes without any matriarchal pressure. It is noted that 58 per cent of the women respondents are involved in the public welfare activates interestingly. A good majority of the respondents (78%) are well known about the reservation for women in PRI. It is significant to note that 54 per cent of the respondents are interested to compete in election and political activities.

Findings of the Study

- ❖ The majority 32 (64%) of the respondents were belongs to age group of 35 and above; the remaining 14 (28%) and 4 (8%) of them were come under the age group of 25-30 and 20-25 in the study area respectively.
- ❖ It is clear from that majority 27 (54%) of the respondents belong to lowest strata of scheduled caste women; followed by that 15 (30%) and 8 (16%) of them were belong to BC and MBC caste women respectively.
- ❖ It is clear from that a good majority 39 (78%) of the respondents were married the remaining 7 (14%) and 4 (8%) of them were unmarried; and widow respectively.
- ❖ A study of the data in table 4 reports the respondent's educational background. Out of the total 50 respondents the majority 20 (40%) were of them were attained high school level of education; followed by that 15 (30%), 8 (16%), 5 (10%) and 2 (4%) of them had completed up to only primary school level of education; illiterates; higher secondary and college level education in the study area respectively.
- ❖ The annual family income of the respondents. Out of the total 50 respondents the majority 32 (64%) of the respondents annual family income was Rs. 5000-10,000; the remaining 12 (24%) and 6 (12%) of them were earned above Rs. 10,000 and below Rs. 5000/- in the study area. It is deducted from the above discussion that majority of them are earned below Rs, 10,000 as their annual income to manage their domestic life respectively.
- ❖ It is clear from that the majority 25 (50%) of the respondents were dwelling in the tiled house; followed by that 20 (40%) and 5 (10%) of them were dwelling in the pucca house only 10% of the women's family were residing in the poor thatched house respectively.
- ❖ It is reported that the majority 30 (60%) of the respondents were residing in their own houses; followed by that 17 (34%) and 3 (6%) of them were residing in the rented house and only 6 per cent of them were living in other housing nature in the study area respectively.

- ❖ It could be seen from that the majority 38 (76%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear families back ground and the remaining 12 (29%) of them belong to the Indian tradition oriented joint family system.
- ❖ The majority of the respondents are having adequate facilities such as electricity (90%) and drinking water (92%) toilet (72%) separate kitchen (68%) modern communication tools (86%) and transport vehicle (76%). It is deducted from discussion that separate kitchen and toilet facilities are not reached in the rural commune of union territorys.
- ❖ It could be seen from the study all the respondents are having Saving Bank Account at various nationalized banks. It is noted that only 12 per cent of them are having life insurance policy.
- ❖ It is clear from that 26 per cent of the women's respondents are doing business, a good majority of the respondents (82%) have done family planning in the right time. It is observed that the remaining respondents also ready to adopt family planning but low age. It is interested to note that 64 per cent of the respondents are involved their family decision making activities without any discrimination.
- ❖ It is clear from that a large number of respondents are opined favorably the necessity of gender equity and women education. It is noted that giving and receiving dowry is not favoured because all are utilized the benefit of dowry and also it is observed that the custom is deep rooted in Indian society irrespective of caste, religion and economic status. It is reported that most of the respondents are not willing and favour to women remarriage only 64 percent of the respondents are known about women security legislation in the study area.
- ❖ It could be seen from the study that a good majority of the respondents are supported the statement regarding economic independence for women and entering women in all spheres of life. It is noted that 68 per cent of women respondents are supported women employment other than home making and adequate knowledge about various women development schemes which are implemented by central and union tertiary governments.
- ❖ It could be seen from the study that 94 per cent of the respondents have casted their votes without any matriarchal pressure. It is noted that 58 per cent of the women respondents are involved in the public welfare activates interestingly. A good majority of the respondents (78%) are well known about the reservation for women in PRI. It is significant to note that 54 per cent of the respondents are interested to compete in election and political activities.

Conclusion

The social scenario of gender inequalities, disparities and discrimination provoked women

entrepreneurial activities for women development with some space of their own and opportunities to explore and express their feelings and emotions. This was the genesis of socio-economic transformation and gender equity where the women found to an opportunity and proved their capabilities voice their opinion, skill and empowerment about the prevailing social environment. It is helped for wonderful to earn and sustain their living with dignity. The concept of women empowerment has recently come into focus and provision in the Indian constitutions well as five year plans for women empowerment have been considered in the formation of research problem. It is reflected from the study that the trigger the women folks involvement and participation in public activities, interested in involving political activities in the study area. It is observed from the investigation that the strive to bring the multidimensional women empowerment towards making knowledge revolution enhancing self esteem and social prestige, crating awareness on health care and safety, developing entrepreneurial skill, stressing the needs for social equality and economic independence with high quality of life.

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