

Socio-Economic Status and Achievements of Women: A Study of District Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their own lives. It is a process, which promotes their status and makes them sovereign of their birthrights up to social rights by taking into consideration the rest of the aspects like the use of power, their own community and the society. Further, empowerment is a result of participation in decision-making. The women empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire recognition on par with men to participate in the developmental process of the society through the political participation, educational fields, industrial jobs and most influential is proving highly them in the corporate world. This folk do not remain stereotyped and abandoned anymore, the world in the present era bit them a new prestige, honor, and status in all of its elements. Women used to be considered a domestic and physical slave in past has rejuvenated and generated the outlook of the world very positive and liberal in their favor. They are not confined to their domestic and traditional compulsions anymore. Now the entire world is quite desperately appreciating their talent and participation in any of its fields. In this paper, we will try to explore the present situation and achievements of women in different sects in district Baramulla of the states of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Empowerment, social status, development, participation, fields.

INTRODUCTION

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution and in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties, and directive principles. The constitution not only grants equality to women but also empower the state to adopt measures to positive discrimination in favor of women. Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their own communities and in their own society. Women empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire recognition on par with men to participate in the development process of society through their active role in politics, education, industries and in different fields. In ancient time they were not allowed to work with male dominant society and their role in society was limited to their respective doors. The 73rd constitutional amendment act came to provide them an opportunity to refresh their complaints and to take part in the decision-making process at the local level. The 73rd and 74th amendment (1993) of the constitution of India has provided reservation of seats for women in the local bodies of panchayat and municipalities. From the fifth five-year plan (1974-78) onwards there has been a remarkable shift in the approach to women issues from welfare to development. The national commission for women was set up by an (Act of Parliament in 1990) to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women.

Objectives of the study:

The primary objective of the paper is to study the present socio-economic status and achievements of women in the Baramulla district and the second objective is to study the participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic spheres of her life.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

As the approach followed in most social science research present study is based on both primary as well as a secondary source of the data collection. The former represents the primary data which was directly collected from the respondents and the latter represents the secondary data which was collected from textbooks, newspapers, periodicals, publications, websites, Journals etc. There are many research designs to carry out the research or fieldwork on a particular type of research problems such as experimental research design, exploratory research design, and exploratory research design. As far as our research is concerned, descriptive research, the design has been used in the present work. The techniques used in this research is based on a sampling method and interview schedule. Interview schedule had taken as a tool for the collection of primary data for the present research.

Map of district Baramulla:
Map: 1



The present study is being made towards the “Women Empowerment: An Inspiring Change (A study of district Baramulla of J&K). The research study is carried out in different blocks of District Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sampling procedure:

For the purpose of collecting data and information, the study of a sample of one hundred (100) respondents was selected from the concerned fieldwork area of District Baramulla. We took samples from east, west, north, south and central parts of District Baramulla. We selected two blocks accordingly, in each block we took five villages and in each village we took 10 households so that the sample size is around 100. The samples were randomly selected from the blocks of district Baramulla. The technique used in this research is based on the interview schedule.

Demography:

In Kashmir division, District Baramulla is one of the largest districts with respect to population or land is concerned. The total population of the district as per census 2011 is 1008039 persons. It consists of 534733 males and 473306 females. The rural sector of the district is inhabited by 432399 males and 393140 females. The district constitutes 8 tehsils and 12 community Development blocks. (Census, 2011). Baramulla is as old as the valley of Kashmir. In ancient times called Varamulla, it is situated at a distance of 55 km from the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir State, in the north, east of Srinagar. It is surrounded by mountains from three sides, which give this town an extraordinary beautiful look. Baramulla being the district headquarters comprises of 8 tehsils. This district has been divided into 12 Community Development Blocks. The total numbers of villages are 518 (Census, 2011)

Profile of Respondents:

Table-01

Selected Villages of the district	Marital Status		Educational Status		Age status		
	Ma	Um	Lit.	Ilit.	18-28	29-39	40-above
Dangerpora	06	04	09	01	05	03	02
Duroo	05	05	08	02	06	03	01
Shiva	04	06	07	03	07	02	01
Warpora	04	06	09	01	06	02	02
Bomai	08	02	06	04	05	03	02
Tujar	07	03	08	02	07	02	01
Nowpora	05	05	08	02	07	01	02
Wadoora	03	07	09	01	06	03	01
Zaloor	07	03	07	03	06	02	02
Zonipora	05	05	09	01	05	02	03
Total	52	48	80	20	60	23	17

Note: Ma=Married, Um=Unmarried, Lit=Literate, Ilit=Illiterate, 18-28, 29-39, 40 above Age Group.

From the above-mentioned table (table-1) the respondents were selected from ten villages of district Baramulla and from each village, we have taken 10 respondents and the total number of respondents is 100, in which all are female respondents because the research is being made on females so that is the reason behind the selection of females. On the basis of marital status among 100 respondents, 52 are married and 48 are unmarried and by the educational wise distribution 80 are literates and 20 are illiterates. And the above table graph shows that out of 100 respondents, 60 belongs to 18-28 age group, 23 belongs to 29-39 age groups and 17 are belongs to 40 above group.

Analysis:

Women and decision-making:

Table-02

Women in decision making Process	Frequency	Percentage
No	12	12
Sometimes	28	28
Yes	60	60
Total	100	100

It is very important to mention it here that women are taking part in every field of life and they are also taking part in decision-making processes either in family, office, society or their personal life is concerned. Now women are not bound anymore. They are taking part in all activities at all levels for the achievement of the goals of empowerment. The 60 percent number of respondents agreed that they were taking part in every decision making processes and 28 percent respondents used to say that sometimes they take part in decision making and the least number of respondents were with the statement of (No) and the total number of respondents was 12 percent. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision-making bodies at every level including, legislative, judiciary, corporate, family, society, education and also the decision of their life too.

Women and politics:

Table 3:

Women interested in politics	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	55
To some extent	26	26
No	19	19
Total	100	100

The 73rd and 74th amendment (1993) of the constitution of India has provided reservation of seats for women in the local bodies of panchayat and municipalities. From the fifth five-year plan (1974-78) onwards there has been a remarkable shift in the approach to women issues from welfare to development. In Kashmir valley, the women folk are interested to take part in political activities and are also interesting to cast their votes but due to unrest and some social and political disturbance women are not in such position to show and favor their interests. The tabled data shows that 55 percent respondents are interested in politics and 26 percent are with second statement (To some extent) and last but not least statement (No) that only 19 percent agreed with this statement.

Economic empowerment of women

Women and economy:

Table 04:

Present socio-economic conditions of womens	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	38	38
Agree	26	26
Undecided	5	5
Strongly disagree	14	14
Disagree	17	17
Total	100	100

From pre-independence to post-independence era essential changes were happening in women's socio-economic conditions. They are not now dependent on male society for day to day needs. They are doing different kinds of jobs with male dominant society and are somehow economically self-independent. About 38% respondents strongly agreed that the present socio-economic conditions of women's in the present study area are all right and 26 percent

respondents agreed, 5 percent respondents say undecided, 14% respondents strongly disagree and 17 percent respondents were with the statement of disagreeing respectively. In order to enhance women's, access to credit for use and production, the establishment of new and rise of existing microcredit mechanism and microfinance institutions will be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is throughout existing financial institutions and banks so that all women below the poverty line have easy access to credit.

Women and agriculture:

Table 05:

Women in agricultural activities	Frequency	Percentage
Never	6	6
Rarely	8	8
Sometimes	17	17
Occasionally	28	28
Always	41	41
Total	100	100

Rural women still believe in agriculture in Kashmir valley for their dependence is concerned because the agriculture sector is the main source of income and employment. They are not hesitating in helping their families in agriculture or allied sectors and they are playing their active role in boosting the level of socio-economic development of their family. The 41 percent of respondents were with the statement (Always) and 28 percent respondents agreed with the (Occasionally) statement, 17 percent of respondents were with sometimes statement, the number of respondents with rarely statement is 8 percent and 5 percent of respondents denied that they did not help their family members in carrying out their business activities. Rural women also having a good knowledge of things like the use of insecticides, pesticides, fertilizers, and seeds. The need of the hour is the government should introduce some programmes related to training the women folk that will be helpful in expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

Women and industry:

Table 06:

Women doing jobs	Frequency	Percentage
No	21	21
Some times	27	27
Yes	52	52
Total	100	100

Some decades before women were not allowed to come out from their respective homes and contribute to country development. Some interesting changes were happening in women society as they fight with male dominant society in every field like education, economy, and politics and so far industry jobs (like private banks, private educational institutions, and private companies) are concerned they are not less in number. The 21 percent respondents say (No), 27 percent respondents agreed with (Sometimes) and the majority of respondents were agreed with the (Yes) statement and the total numbers of respondents were 52 percent respectively. The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro-industry and textile has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labor legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industries. Women at present cannot work in night shifts in factories even if they wish to suitable measures will be taken to enable women to work in the night shifts in factories. This can be accompanied with support services from government, security, and transportation etc.

Social empowerment of women:

Equal access to education for women and girls will be safeguarded. Special methods will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize of education, eradication illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive education system, increase enrolment and improve the quality of education to facilitate lifelong learning as well as the development of occupation, vocation, technical skills women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area with a special focus on girls and women particularly belonging to the weaker sections. The gender-sensitive curriculum would be developed at all levels of the education system in order to address the cause of gender discrimination.

Women and Health:

Table 07:

Health services provided to womens	Frequency	Percentage
No	13	13
To some extent	48	48
Yes	39	39

An important approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services will be adopted. Special attention will be given to the needs of women and the girls at all stages of the life circle. In view of the high risk of malnutrition that women face at all the three stages viz. infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase and need of the hour is that special attention would be paid to meeting the needs of women at all the stages of the life circle. This is also important to view the critical link between the health of children. As per health services are concerned the government is not paying any good attention towards the health problems and facilities provided to female patients especially pregnant women's in government hospitals. About 13 percent respondents say (No). From the field, it was observed that proper health facilities are not available in rural areas and the number of respondents that are with the statement (To some extent) is 48 percent and 39 percent says (Yes). Special efforts should be made to tackle the problems of macro and micronutrient deficiencies especially amongst the pregnant women's as it leads to various diseases and disabilities.

Women and science technology:

Table 08:

Taking part in Science and technology	Frequency	Percentage
No	11	11
Some times	23	23
Yes	66	66
Total	100	100

Apart from socio, economic and political field women are not any way far away from science and technology. Science and technology play their active role in bringing out some instrumental changes as far as their self-dependency and development of the country is concerned. The respondents believe in science and technology and are taking part in it and the numbers of respondents with this statement are 66 percent. The less number of respondents agreed with the statement of (Sometimes) are 23 percent and 11 percent says (No). The prime need is that programs will be strengthened to bring about a greater involvement of women in science and technology. These will include motivating girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs involve women fully. Special efforts would be taken for their training in areas where they have special skills like communication and information technology. Efforts to develop appropriate technologies suited to women's needs as well as to reduce their struggle will be given special attention too.

Violence against women:

Table 09:

Voilence against women	Frequency	Percentage
No	17	17
Can't say	61	61
Yes	22	22
Total	100	100

The violence against women is the great challenge the world is facing. The women folk also face many challenges in the present world like violence, harassment, women trafficking so and so on. From the field, it was observed that women's did not want to expose the levels of violence's as they are feeling shyness and decrease of moral respect. In the table, it was clear that about 61 percent of respondents favor this statement. The rest of the respondents answer in favor of (No) and (Yes) statement and the number of respondents is 17 percent and 22 percent respectively. All forms of violence against women like physical and mental whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs shall be apportioned with effectively with a view to eliminating its incidences. Such institutions and mechanism should be created for prevention of such violence's including sexual harassment at

workplaces and customs like dowry, for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the performer of such violence. Special importance will also be laid on programmes and measures to deal with the trafficking of women and girls.

Mass media and women:

Table10:

Women and mass media	Frequency	Percentage
No	18	18
To some extent	29	29
Yes	53	53
Total	100	100

Media is said to be the key element in order to reduce gender discrimination and violence's against women at all levels. Women's are becoming the active members of mass media and it becomes easy for them to highlight the issues related to women discrimination at local, national and at international level. The data reveals that 53 percent of respondents participate in mass media activities. About 29 percent agreed with the second statement (To some extent) and the respondents denied to taking part in mass media activities are less in number and are 18 percent. The media is having the power to raise any issue related to women discrimination or harassment at local, national or international level. The media house should be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines, and other self-regulatory mechanisms to remove gender-based differences and promote a balanced environment both for women and men.

CONCLUSION

It is noteworthy to say that great changes were witnessed in the status of women and their active participation in different fields of life. They became the members of parliament and the first lady chief minister of the states of Jammu and Kashmir is the best example of women's activeness and empowerment. Further, empowerment is a result of participation in decision making. The women acquire recognition on par with men to participate in the developmental process of the society through political participation, educational fields, industrial jobs and most influential is proving highly them in the corporate world. This folk don't remain stereotyped and abandoned anymore, the world in the present era bit them a new prestige, honor, and status in all of its elements. Women used to be considered a domestic and physical slave in past has rejuvenated and generated the outlook of the world very positive and liberal in their favor. They are not confined to their domestic and traditional compulsions anymore. Now the entire world is quite desperately appreciating their talent and participation in any of its fields.

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