

WOMEN WORK PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DECISION MAKING

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the women work participation and empowerment through decision making. The different individuals have used different methodologies of empowerment. Radhakrishna Rao¹ (2001) suggested a triangular model of empowerment. This study indicates that the empowerment encompasses a wide variety of factors – economic, political and social. The present chapter makes an attempt to analyse the following objectives:

1. To analyse the extent to which women work participation empower them through decision-making.
2. To find out the variation in monthly income between different groups of women workers
3. To analyse the women worker contribution towards Family income:

Economic empowerment of women is mainly based on their participation in decision making process with regard to raising and distribution of income, investments and expenditure at all levels. The entire efforts of empowering women are to help them to exercise their rights in decision making at all levels and in every sphere, both within and outside the households as equal partners in the society.

¹Radja Krishna Rao, “Kerala Model of Women’s Empowerment”, *Social Welfare*, Vol.47, No.11, 2001, pp.35-41.

Efforts are on to enhance the capacity of women to earn and ensure that they get access to and control/ownership of all family/community assets.

5.1 THE ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK

The empowerment of women in the present study has been measured in terms of their decision making capacity which has been classified on the basis of By self (by the respondent), By spouse / family members and By jointly. These three aspects are applicable for nine variables which are identified for measuring the decision making power of women. The identified variables are (i) professional career, (ii) preparation of the family budget, (iii) schooling of children, (iv) career of children, (v) health and medicine, (vi) leisure activities, (vii) purchase of home appliances, (viii) giving away gifts to others and (ix) personal needs. The responses have been obtained from the sample women work participants in three aspects for each variable. The responses observed for each variable have been scored. To secure the total empowerment score of a woman work participant, three points are given for “By self (respondents)”, 2 points for “By spouse / family members” one point is given for “By jointly”. Thus the total empowerment score of a respondent is obtained by adding up the scores of all 9 variables.

One way ANOVA was carried out to examine whether women working in different sectors have caused significant variation in empowerment.

5.2. ANALYSIS OF EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DECISION MAKING

This section attempts to analyse the decision making power enjoyed by women work participants on the variables namely (i) professional career, (ii) preparation of the family budget, (iii) schooling of children, (iv) career of children, (v) health and medicine, (vi) leisure activities, (vii) purchase of home appliances, (viii) giving away gifts to others and (ix) personal needs.

5.2.1 Professional Career

The professional career is a important factor which determines the future of the family. So, the professional career is an important factor for measuring empowerment of women. Table 5.1 clearly exhibits the decision taken relating to professional career.

TABLE 5.1
DECISION MAKING ON PROFESSIONAL CAREER

SI. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	225 (75.00)	675	183 (61.00)	549
2.	Spouse /Family members	53 (17.70)	106	58 (19.30)	116
3.	Jointly	22 (7.30)	22	59 (19.70)	59
	Total	300 (100)	803	300 (100)	724

Figures in brackets are percentage to total.

It is inferred from Table 5.1 that nearly 75 per cent of the women working in public sector and 61.00 per cent in private sector take independent decisions relating to the selection of professional career. Independent decision making was found less in private sector when compared to public sector. Joint discussions were taken by 19.70 per cent of families in the case of private sector while their percentage was 7.30 per cent in public sector. Spouse or family member alone taking decision was 19.30 per cent in private sector and 17.70 per cent in public sector. Thus, it is inferred from the total score that majority of working women could take decisions

independently relating to professional career in both the public and private sector organizations.

5.2.2. Family Budgeting:

Family budgeting here refers to the various items to be purchased, duty and the amount of money to be spent on each item, variation in the terms of consumption and the like. The decision making of women work participants on preparation of the family budget is presented in Table 5.2

TABLE 5.2

DECISION MAKING ON PREPARATION OF THE FAMILY BUDGET

Sl. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	109 (36.30)	327	78 (26.00)	234
2.	Spouse /Family members	122 (40.70)	244	144 (48.00)	288
3.	Jointly	69 (23.00)	69	78 (26.00)	78
	Total	300 (100)	640	300 (100)	600

Figures in brackets are percentage to total.

It is found from Table 5.2 that nearly 48 per cent of the women working in private sector and 40.70 per cent in public sector take decisions relating to the family budget by spouse/family members. Independent decision making was found less in private sector when compared to public sector. Joint discussions were taken by 26.00 per cent of families in the case of private sector while their percentage was 23.00 per cent in public sector. Thus, it is inferred from the total score that majority of working women could take decisions independently relating to family budget only in public sector organizations.

5.2.3. Schooling of Children

Education is a crucial factor which determines the future of a person. Decisions concerning education of children are an important factor for measuring empowerment of women. Table 5.3 clearly exhibits the decision taken relating to education of children.

TABLE 5.3
DECISION MAKING ON SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN

Sl. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
	No children/ Unmarried	86 (28.70)		128 (42.70)	
1.	Self (Respondents)	121 (40.30)	363	81 (27.00)	243
2.	Spouse /Family members	37 (12.30)	74	38 (12.70)	76
3.	Jointly	56 (18.70)	56	53 (17.70)	53
	Total	300 (100)	493	300 (100)	372

Figures in brackets represent t-value.

Table 5.3 reveals that 40.30 per cent and 27.00 per cent of women in public and private sectors respectively take decisions independently relating to schooling of children in their family. The percentages of women who jointly decide the education of their children in public and private sector is 18.70 and 17.70 respectively. The percentage of spouse and family members taking decisions in this respect was 12.30 and 12.70 in the case of public and private sector respectively. Thus it is understood on the basis of total score value that the women in both sectors decide the education of their children independently.

5.2.4. Career of Children

The career of children is a vital factor which determines the future of a person. Decisions concerning the career children are an important factor for measuring empowerment of women. Table 5.4 clearly exhibits the decision taken relating to education of children.

TABLE 5.4
DECISION MAKING ON CAREER OF CHILDREN

SI. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
	No children/Unmarried	86 (28.70)		128 (42.70)	
1.	Self (Respondents)	76 (25.30)	228	40 (13.30)	120
2.	Spouse /Family members	37 (12.30)	74	47 (15.70)	94
3.	Jointly	101 (33.70)	101	85 (28.30)	85
	Total	300 (100)	403	300 (100)	299

Figures in brackets represent t-value.

It is inferred from Table 5.4. that 25.30 per cent and 13.30 per cent of women in public and private sector respectively take decisions independently relating to the career of children in their family. The percentages of women who jointly decide the

career of children in public and private sector are 33.70 per cent and 28.30 per cent respectively. The percentage of spouse and family members taking decisions in this respect was 12.30 and 15.70 in the case of public and private sectors respectively. Thus it is understood on the basis of total score value that the women in both sectors decide the career of their children jointly.

5.2.5 Health and Medicine

Women have an important part to look after her family members' health. The details of decision making of women on health and medicines are furnished in Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5
DECISION MAKING ON HEALTH AND MEDICINE

SI. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	108 (36.00)	324	87 (29.00)	261
2.	Spouse /Family members	117 (39.00)	234	118 (39.30)	236
3.	Jointly	75 (25.00)	75	95 (31.70)	95
	Total	300 (100)	633	300 (100)	592

Figures in brackets represent t-value.

Table 5.5 clearly indicates that 36 per cent of the women working in public sector and about 29 per cent in private sector take independent decisions regarding health and medicine. Independent decision making was found more in public sector when compared to private sector. Joint decisions were taken by 25.00 per cent of

families in the case of public sector while their percentage was 31.70 in private sector. Spouse or family member alone taking decision was 39.00 per cent in public sector and 39.30 per cent in private sector. Thus, it is clear from the total score that majority of working women could take decisions by spouse or family members regarding their health and medicine.

5.2.6. Leisure Activities

The leisure activities in families are another important factor of our life. The decision making on leisure activities are given in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6
DECISION MAKING ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES

SI. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	231 (77.00)	693	178 (59.30)	534
2.	Spouse /Family members	20 (6.70)	40	75 (25.00)	150
3.	Jointly	49 (16.30)	49	47 (15.70)	47
	Total	300 (100)	782	300 (100)	731

Figures in brackets are percentage to total

Table 5.6 shows that 77.00 per cent and 59.30 per cent of women in public and private sector respectively take decisions independently regarding leisure activities in their family. When public sector is compared with private sector, independent decision making was found more in public sector. The percentages of

women who jointly decide the leisure activities in public and private sectors are 16.30 and 15.70 respectively. The percentage of spouse or family members taking decisions in this regard is 6.70 and 25.00 in the case of public and private sector respectively. Thus it is observed on the basis of total score value that working women decide the leisure activities in both public and private sectors.

5.2.7. Purchase of Home Appliances

The purchase of home appliances is one of the important factor of our life. The decision making on purchase of home appliances are shown in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7

DECISION MAKING ON PURCHASE OF HOME APPLIANCES

SI. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	127 (42.30)	381	94 (31.30)	282
2.	Spouse /Family members	88 (29.30)	176	126 (42.00)	252
3.	Jointly	85 (28.40)	85	80 (26.70)	80
	Total	300 (100)	642	300 (100)	614

Figures in brackets are percentage to total

It is understood from the Table 5.7 that 42.30 per cent in public sector and 31.30 per cent in private sector were in a position to purchase home appliances on their own decision. Joint decisions were taken by 28.40 per cent in the case of public sector and 26.70 per cent in private sector. Spouse or family member alone taking

decision rating to home appliance was 29.30 per cent and 42.00 per cent in public and private sector respectively. It is inferred from the analysis that independent decision was found to be dominant in public sector and spouse or family members decision in private sector regarding the purchase of home appliances in the study area.

5.2.8 Giving away Gifts

There is some sort of pleasure in giving and receiving gifts. As members of the society, we have to give gifts to others on many occasions like wedding, birthday and the like. It is a well-known fact that give and take policy enriches the friendship harmony, mutual help and the like among people. But women face a limitation in this respect. They cannot take independent decisions on most occasions without the consent of the men in their families. On many occasions, women are hesitant to attend social functions due to the lack of presents. Table 5.8 presents some interesting results of decision making on giving away gifts to others.

TABLE 5.8
DECISION MAKING ON GIVING AWAY GIFTS TO OTHERS

Sl. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	186 (62.00)	558	129 (43.00)	387
2.	Spouse /Family members	55 (18.30)	110	94 (31.30)	188
3.	Jointly	59 (19.70)	59	77 (25.70)	77
	Total	300 (100)	727	300 (100)	652

Figures in brackets are percentage to total

It is depicted from the Table 5.8 that 62.00 per cent of women in public sector and 43.00 per cent in private sector could purchase and give gifts to others, according to their own decision. 19.70 per cent and 25.70 per cent of women in public and private sector respectively reported that they took the decisions jointly. It is observed during the survey that many women have said that if they had money, they would also be able to buy gifts for others.

5.2.9 Personal Needs

The details of decision making on personal needs of women are presented in Table 5.9.

TABLE 5.9
DECISION MAKING ON PERSONAL NEEDS

Sl. No.	Final Decision Taken	Public		Private	
		Number of Respondents	Total Score	Number of Respondents	Total Score
1.	Self (Respondents)	267 (89.00)	801	210 (70.00)	630
2.	Spouse /Family members	--	--	59 (19.70)	118
3.	Jointly	33 (11.00)	33	31 (10.30)	31
	Total	300 (100)	834	300 (100)	779

Figures in brackets are percentage to total

Table 5.9 exhibits that 89.00 per cent of women working in public sector and 70.00 per cent working in private sector taking decision by herself regarding their personal needs. The percentage of score value was less in private sector when compared to public sector decision making of women. 11.00 per cent of women working in public sector and 10.30 per cent of women working in private sector took decisions jointly. In case of spouse or family members' decision on their personal needs, 19.70 per cent in private sector alone had their decisions. Thus it may be inferred from the score value that majority of personal need decisions of women worker could be taken independently.

5.2.10 Analysis of One Way ANOVA

In order to ascertain whether women working in different sectors have caused significant variation in empowerment scores, one way ANOVA test was carried out. The computed results of one way ANOVA for women work participants are given in Table 5.10.

TABLE 5.10
ONE WAY ANOVA TEST RESULTS OF EMPOWERMENT SCORES
AMONG WOMEN WORK PARTICIPANTS IN SERVICE SECTORS

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Total Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F – value	F _{0.05}
Between groups	1	6531.86	6531.86	14.92*	3.00
Within groups	597	65152.92	109.13		
Total	599	71684.78			

* Significant at 5 per cent level.

The results presented in Table 5.10 revealed that there was a significant variation in empowerment scores between public and private sector women employees in the study area. Thus it may be concluded that the empowerment of women varied with different sectors among women workers.

5.3. VARIATION IN MONTHLY INCOME BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF WOMEN WORKERS

In this section, an attempt has been made to examine the variation in monthly income of women workers between public and private sector, banking, telecommunication and postal. For this one way ANOVA was applied separately and the results are presented in Table 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13.

TABLE 5.11
ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST RESULTS OF MONTHLY INCOME AMONG
WOMEN WORKERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Source of Variation	Total Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F- ratio	Table F _{0.05}
Between groups	489720	1	489720	6.86*	3.84
Within group	41271240	598	69015.45		
Total	41760960	599			

* Significant at 5 per cent level.

The results of Table 5.11 revealed that there was a significant variation in the monthly income of women workers between public and private sectors. Hence, it may be concluded that the monthly income varied significantly for sector among women workers.

The results of one-way ANOVA test for women workers in banking, telecommunication and postal under public sector are presented in Table 5.12.

TABLE 5.12
ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST RESULTS OF MONTHLY INCOME AMONG
WOMEN WORKERS IN BANKING, TELECOMMUNICATION AND
POSTAL UNDER PUBLIC SECTOR

Source of Variation	Total Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F- value	Table F_{0.05}
Between groups	394860	2	197430	6.20*	3.84
Within group	10257310	297	34536.40		
Total	10652170	299			

* Significant at 5 per cent level.

It is revealed from Table 5.12 that there was a significant variation in the monthly income between banking, telecommunication and postal of women employees working in public sector. Hence, it may be concluded that the monthly income varied significantly between banking, telecommunication and postal.

Table 5.13 exhibits the results of one-way ANOVA test for women working in banking, telecommunication and postal services under private sector.

TABLE 5.13
ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST RESULTS OF MONTHLY INCOME AMONG
WOMEN WORKERS IN BANKING, TELECOMMUNICATION AND
POSTAL UNDER PRIVATE SECTOR

Source of Variation	Total Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F- value	Table F_{0.05}
Between groups	346230	2	173115	1.68	3.84
Within group	9732512	297	32769.40		
Total	10078742	299			

* Significant at 5 per cent level.

It is found from Table 5.13 that there was no significant variation in the monthly income between banking, telecommunication and postal services of women employees working in private sector. Hence, it may be concluded that the monthly income does not vary significantly between three service sectors namely banking, telecommunication and postal services under private sector.

5.4. ANALYSIS OF WOMEN WORKER CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS FAMILY INCOME:

In order to assess the contribution of women workers to family income, the following multiple regression analysis is applied:

$$\text{Log } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log X_1 + \beta_2 \log X_2 + u$$

Where,

Y = Total family income in (rupees)

X₁ = Earnings of women workers (in rupees)

X₂ = Earning of their spouses (in rupees)

U = Error term or unexplained variation of total family income associated with the left out variables.

β_0 , β_1 and β_2 are the parameters to be estimated.

The above model was estimated separately for women work participants of the public and private sectors by the method of least squares. The estimated results are presented in Table 5.14 and 5.15.

TABLE 5.14
ESTIMATED REGRESSION RESULTS FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN
PUBLIC SECTOR

Variable	Banking	Telecommunication	Postal
Intercept	1.3212	1.7516	1.4816
X ₁	0.0917* (3.0142)	0.0812* (2.9271)	0.0866* (3.6972)
X ₂	0.0938* (3.6972)	0.0799* (4.0171)	0.0851* (3.1471)
R ²	0.8016	0.7763	0.7912
F – value	132.74	96.72	118.71
No. of observations	100	100	100

Figures in brackets represent t- values

* Indicates that the coefficients are statistically significant at 5 per cent level.

It could be observed from Table 5.14 that the independent variables included in the model for banking, telecommunication and postal under public sector have indicated 77 to 80 per cent variations in total family income. In the case of banking, the co-efficient of multiple determinations (R²) was 0.8016 indicating 80.16 per cent variation in total income. The regression co-efficient of variables namely earnings of women workers and their spouses' earnings were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. One unit increase in these variables could increase the total family income by 0.0917 per cent and 0.0938 per cent respectively.

In the case of women workers in telecommunication, two independent variables are jointly responsible for 77.63 per cent of total family income. The co-efficients of earnings of women workers and their spouses were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It implies that one unit increase in these variables may lead to 0.0812 per cent and 0.0799 per cent increase in total family income.

In postal services, R^2 indicates that 79.12 per cent variations are explained by the two independent variables included in the model. Both the variables were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It means that an additional unit of these variables could increase total family income by 0.0866 per cent and 0.0851 per cent respectively. The F value indicates that estimated regression model is statistically significant at one per cent in three cases.

Table 5.15 shows the estimated values of regression equations for banking, telecommunication and postal services under private sector.

TABLE 5.15
ESTIMATED REGRESSION RESULTS FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN
PRIVATE SECTOR

Variable	Banking	Telecommunication	Postal
Intercept	1.0716	1.3247	1.1873
X ₁	0.0654* (4.6231)	0.0597* (3.7962)	0.0617* (4.1234)
X ₂	0.0723* (5.6761)	0.0687* (4.9214)	0.0698* (5.1061)
R ²	0.7569	0.7149	0.7371
F – value	138.16	108.74	121.36
No. of observations	100	100	100

Figures in brackets represent t- values

* Indicates that the co-efficients are statistically significant at 5 per cent level.

Table 5.15 reveals that in the case of banking under private sectors, all the variables included in the regression model jointly explain about 75.69 per cent variations in total family income. The regression co-efficient of variables namely earnings of women workers and earnings of their spouses were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It indicates that an addition unit in these variables could increase total family income by 0.0654 per cent and 0.0723 per cent respectively.

In the case of telecommunication, R² value was 0.7149 indicating 71.49 per cent variation in total family income. The co-efficient of earnings of women workers and earnings of their spouses were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It means that one unit increase in these variables may affect 0.0597 per cent and 0.0687 per cent increase in total family income.

In postal service, R² indicates that 73.71 per cent variations in the dependent variable are explained by all the explanatory variables. The variables namely earnings of women workers and earnings of their spouses were statistically significant at 5 per cent level. It implies that for one unit increase in these variables, total family income could be increased by 0.0617 per cent and 0.0698 per cent respectively. As per F value given in tables 2, the regression model fitted is found to be significant at one percent level in three cases.

5.5 SUMMARY

It may be concluded from the above analysis that the contribution of women workers towards family income is more than the earnings of their spouses. Therefore, the earnings of women workers contribute more towards family income.