

## Empowerment Level amongst the Adolescent Girls in Agra District

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### ABSTRACT

*Education is one of the most important ways to empower the women. So, present study has been undertaken to know the current status of empowerment level like pertaining to their decision making, power in home, political and legal awareness and other such related variables of adolescent girls studying in class 11<sup>th</sup> living in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh. The study was conducted on 120 adolescents' girls. The sample was selected by multistage stratified random sample technique. Standardized tool was used in this study. Significant association was observed between distribution of rural and urban subjects according to empowerment level ( $\chi^2=9.49$ ). Significant association was observed between frequency of empowerment level of adolescent girls belonged to working and non- working mothers ( $\chi^2=11.7$ ). The mean score of empowerment level above 17 year girls (190.15) was higher than below 17 year girls (171.62). This difference was also found to be significant ( $t=2.17$   $P<0.05$ ). However, the present study shows that non-significant difference was found between empowerment level of above 30000 monthly parental income group girls and below 30000 monthly parental income group girls. This difference was also found to be non- significant ( $t=1.52$ ). Conclusions derived were that, subjects living in urban area, having working mothers, are more empowered in comparison to their rural and non-working mother counterparts. In the present study results show that age factors also affect the empowerment level.*

**Key words:** Education; Empowerment; Decision making; Adolescent girls;

In India a large percentage of women did not have power. They cannot take decisions independently not even related to their own life. They had to take permission of male members for each and every issue. They did not have any say in important household matters and not in matter of their own marriage *Kardam, (2012)*. They equally share responsibilities with men in all religious ceremonies and social functions yet the cultural differences are vast with regard to their conduct and are based on traditional adult roles stereotypes. In India, girls are raised with inferior status, and lesser privileges as compared to a male child *Goswami, (2013)*.

But the present time has been changed. It is heartening to note that the percentage increase in number of female literacy is remarkable in all over the India. But interstate disparities of female literacy rate are still observed *Nagaraja, (2013)*. Education is one of the most important ways to empower the women. So, this study has been undertaken to analyze the current status of

empowerment level of adolescent girls in Agra District of Uttar Pradesh.

To analyze the empowerment level of adolescent girls with respect to urban and rural areas, working and non-working mothers, type of family, religion, age and economic status.

### METHODOLOGY

The samples were selected by multistage stratified random sample technique. Agra District was conveniently selected. Agra district is divided into rural and urban area. The rural area of Agra is divided into 16 blocks, out of these; one block was selected randomly by lottery method. According to Sabhasad of Agra there are ninety wards, from these ninety wards one ward was selected randomly by lottery method. In selected block and ward four (two from block, two from ward) girls intermediate college were selected by chit lottery method. One section of 11<sup>th</sup> class was randomly selected from each selected

school. 30 students were randomly selected from each selected 11<sup>th</sup> class. Thus, a total of 120 students were selected randomly from the four selected girl's intermediate college. Standardized tool was used in this study. "Adolescent girls' empowerment scale" (AGES) created by Devendra Singh Sisodia and Alpana Singh scale (Sisodia *et al*, 2005) consists 49 items in seven sections.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows empowerment level of adolescent girls according to their locale of residence, working status of mother and family pattern. The table shows that the girls of rural background were less empowered as compared to their counterparts. This is evident as 51.53 per cent girls were in the low empowerment category and only 18.92 per cent girls were in the high empowerment category. The results are the opposite in case of urban subjects 19.28 per cent girls were in the low empowered category and 43.37 per cent girls' belonged high empowered category. In urban community has more number of high empowered adolescence girls. Reasons for more empowerment of urban girls could be due to environmental differences like less conservative adults, more emphasis on equality of genders, educated parents, western influence etc and women of urban community has more opportunity for using electronic and print media for availing useful information. Through media they can more aware regarding political and legal

issues and right to justice.

Similar result has been reported in the study conducted by *Pandey et. al (2010)* where it was reported that women of urban community are more confident as compared to rural women. Because women of urban community have more awareness about their own rights and responsibilities. Significant association was observed between distribution of rural /urban subjects according to empowerment level ( $\chi^2=9.49$ ).

In the present study 101 girls had non-working mothers and only 19 girls had working mothers. The Table 1 depicts that daughters of working mothers were (36.84%) less empowered and only 10.53 per cent girls belonged to high empowered category. In their counterpart few (20.79%) daughter of non-working mother has belonged to low empowered category and 43.57 per cent girls of non-working mother belonged to high empowered category. It is heartening to note that the high empowered adolescent girls belonged to non-working mothers. Perhaps its reason those non-working mothers spend more quality time with their daughters. This helps in their personality development and self-defense. Significant association was observed between frequency of empowerment level of adolescent girls belonged to working and non-working mother ( $\chi^2=11.7$ ).

Only 22.45 per cent adolescent girls were belonged to low empowered category and as compare to high

**Table 1. Distribution of subjects of different background status according to empowerment level**

Background factor	Empowerment level			$\chi^2$	df	$\rho$
	Low No (%)	Moderate No (%)	High No (%)			
Rural subjects (Total No =37)	19 (51.53)	11(29.73)	7(18.92)	9.49	2	<0.01
Urban subjects (Total No =83)	16(19.28)	31(37.35)	36(43.47)			
Daughter of working mothers (Total No =19)	7(36.84)	10(52.63)	2(10.53)	11.7	2	<0.01
Daughter of non-working mothers (Total No =101)	21(20.79)	36(35.64)	44(43.57)			
Nuclear family (Total No =49)	11(22.45)	17(34.69)	21(42.86)	.02	2	NS
Joint family (Total No =71)	16(22.54)	26(36.62)	29(40.84)			

**Table 2. Mean scores of empowerment level of adolescent girls according to their background factors**

Background factors		No.	Mean	SD	t-value	$\rho$
Religion	Only Hindu	78	175.78	41.97	0.19	NS
	Other	22	177.41	33.93		
Age	Below Seventeen	93	171.62	36.42	2.17	<0.05
	Above seventeen	27	190.15	39.75		
Parental income	Above 30000 Thousand	44	183	33.14	1.52	NS
	Below 30000 Thousand	76	172.45	41.96		

42.86 per cent girls belong to high empowered category in nuclear family. Similarly, 22.54 per cent adolescent girls were belonged to low empowered category and as compare to high 40.84 per cent girls belong to high empowered category in joint family. Insignificant association was observed between distributions of nuclear and joint family subjects according to empowerment level ( $\chi^2=.02$ ). The reason could be that individual personality is now more influenced by media, socialization, innovations and modernization. It helps to develop own personality and decision making capacity.

Above Table 2 depicts the difference in empowerment level of adolescent girls from different background characteristics. Empowerment level of adolescent girls in Hindu religion was also similar adolescent girls of the other religions. It shows that non-significant difference of empowerment level was found between adolescent girls of Hindu religion and adolescent girls of other religion. However, *Suguna, (2011)* found in his study that religion also affects the empowerment level. Because every religion has carried own custom and culture.

However, there was great difference was found in empowerment level between below 17 year girls and above 17 year girls. The mean score of above 17 year girls (190.15) was higher than below seventeen year girls (171.62). This difference was also found to be significant

at .05 level ( $t=2.17$ ). Age increased the empowerment level of girls. May be some factors responsible could be multiple responsibilities due to early marriage and unemployment status of parents can also responsible of influence of empowerment level. *Baruah, (2013)* has also reported that age increased capacity building and decision making activities and thereby increasing the variety of roles played in society.

Empowerment level of girls having parental income above 30000 per month was also similar to those girls with parental income below 30000 per month. Thus non-significant difference was found. The reasons for empowerment could be family back ground, social status etc. of the girls apart from the paternal income itself. However, *Hazarika, (2011)* found that higher income group women have more power in home as compare to low income group.

## CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that the subjects living in urban area, having non-working mothers are more empowered in comparison to their rural and working mother counterparts. Parental income plays no role in empowerment of adolescent girls. In the present study results show that age factors also affect the empowerment level.

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