

# Is Women's Economic Empowerment Really Worthwhile to the Men Counterpart?

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## Abstract

Compared to the earlier decade's women are increasingly entering the workforce particularly in the professional works and organized sectors still there remains a large number of invisible women workers in unorganized sectors. Today, many women have established their own economy i.e., entrepreneurial empire and are now ruling their world as they wished to. According to the World Bank 2011 report women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property. Women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men. Women are becoming empowered in various fields, though still inequality between men and women runs across the board, including in education, economic opportunities, representation in governance, family life and other fields also. Hence the present study aims to identify men's perception towards women economic empowerment.

**Keywords:** Men's perception, Women empowerment, Economic activities of women

## Introduction

Economic empowerment of women is an indicator of human and social development. Women are being recognized by the world as equivalent to men in almost all occupations. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. Our Indian constitution Article 14 deals - Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. But practically speaking it is very difficult to achieve gender equality in all spheres of our Indian society. According to United Nations statistics: Women earn ten percentage of world's income and also they own less than one percent of world's property. India has one of the highest world percentages of professional women, less than 3% of women occupy managerial positions. AmartyaSen (2001) states "Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of Women". Recently, the 2012 World Development Report highlighted the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality work as both ends in themselves as well as 'smart economics' - a key lever for development impact and poverty reduction. Financial Independence is an important step towards empowerment of women. In the last two decades; working women have made great strides toward economic equality with men. Most women work in low administrative positions and many of the young women migrating to urban centers mostly work in service and retail industries, although more women are entering the IT and

other technical sectors. On equal economic opportunities and women's participation in the labor force, India ranked 127th and 122nd respectively. In the educational field about 30 percent of the teachers at the primary and at the secondary level are women. Making the most of the talent pool ensures that men and women have an equal chance to contribute both at home and in the workplace, thereby enhancing their well-being and that of society. Women are expected to devote all their time, energy and earnings to the family. Many Indian women seek their husband's permission when they wish to purchase something for themselves.

#### **Women's Economic participation - Statistical report**

- Globally, women represent 49.6% of the total population, but only 40.8% of the total workforce in the formal sector.
- Women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property. (Women, Business and the Law, World Bank, 2011)
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development reports state that Labour force participation rate is 0.356% for the year of 2012.
- National Sample Survey (68th Round) results indicate that the worker population ratio for females in rural sector was 24.8 in 2011-12 and 54.3 for males. In Urban sector, the ratio is 14.7 for females and 54.6 for males.
- According to United Nations statistics: Women earn ten percentage of world's income and also they own less than one percent of world's property.
- As per Census 2011, the workforce participation rate for females is 25.51% against 53.26% for males. Rural sector has a better female workforce participation rate of 30.02% compared with 53.03% for males whereas for urban sector.
- A total of 20.5% women were employed in the organized sector in 2011 with 18.1% working in the public sector and 24.3% in the private.
- In tamilnadu according to census 2011 work force participation rate of female is 31.80 %. Among major states, Tamil Nadu reported the highest number of women jobseekers (540.1 thousand).
- Worker population ratio in the year of 2011 and 2012 in rural in Tamilnadu 37.8 for females 59.5 for males, in urban sector 20.1 for females 58.7 for males.
- In the year of 2011 tamilnadu plays 14<sup>th</sup> rank in the state wise female work participation rate.

#### **Objectives**

- To identify the men's perception on the economic empowerment of women.
- To access the role of economic empowerment of women in running family issues.
- To define the women's role in decision making power in family life.

#### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is that, it establishes in identifying men's perception on women's economic empowerment. The study intends to provide knowledge regarding the key variables that influence, responsible for maintaining the structure of women's decision making and handling the ways of family issues. The research outcome could be used for men to have awareness on empowering women in the society and in their family.

## Literature Survey

According to Tornqvist & Schmitz (2009), Women's economic empowerment defined it as 'the process which increases women's real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society. Women's economic empowerment can be achieved through equal access to and control over critical economic resources and opportunities, and the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labour market including a better sharing of unpaid care work.

According to Briges, Das et al (2011), it is clear that poverty is a major factor driving women's labour force participation rates. While there is some regional variation in the economic activity rates of women from more affluent households, women from poorer households in most regions are either economically active or seeking to become so. In cultures like South Asia where there are strict norms of female seclusion, there is in fact a strong association between household poverty and women's labour force participation (Bennett, 1992; Das, 2006; Srivastava and Srivastava, 2009; Sathar and Desai, 1996 for Pakistan; Hossain and Sen, 1991; Bridges et al 2011 for Bangladesh).

According to James Heintz (2012) working women are disproportionately engaged in the informal economy. The informal economy is heterogeneous and stratified, and there is a close association between the quality of jobs and gender – with men dominating the upper echelons of the hierarchy and women over-represented in the lower echelons – along with other markers of social inequality, like caste, ethnicity, race, and legal status.

Women owning property have a greater say in decisions regarding their employment, accessing health facilities for themselves, and use of their money. (Hema Swaminathan, Rahul Lahoti and Suchitra J.Y.2012)

## Methodology Adopted

The study is descriptive in nature. Working Men (their spouse working in these three sectors respectively Teaching, Information technology and Bank) in Coimbatore were selected for the study. From each sector 20 respondents were selected randomly. Totally 60 respondents were selected for this study. The participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored by Strongly Agree (5 point) and Strongly Disagree (1 point) for positive statements and for negative statements Strongly Agree (1 point) and Strongly Disagree (5 point) for each item. The tools used for data collection was based on review of literature. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS.

Table 1 : Personal Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Variables	Category	Percentage	Mean	SD
1	Age	25 years to 34 years	35.0	1.90	.775
		35 years to 44 years	40.0		
		45 years & above	25.0		
2	Education	10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	15.0	3.60	1.554
		12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	5.0		
		Diploma	15.0		

		Under graduate	26.7		
		Post graduate	26.7		
		Professional degree	11.7		
3	Occupation	Unorganized sector	23.3	1.98	.676
		Organized sector	55.0		
		Own Business	21.7		
4	Monthly Income	Rs.10,000 to 20,000	30.0	2.13	.929
		Rs.20,001 to 30,000	33.3		
		Rs.30,001 to 40,000	30.0		
		Rs.40,001 & above	6.7		
5	Spouse Education	10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	5.0	3.67	1.230
		12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	5.0		
		Diploma	11.7		
		Under graduate	40.0		
		Post graduate	30.0		
		Professional degree	8.3		
6	Total family Income	Up to Rs.40,000	43.3	1.90	1.003
		Rs.40,001 to 60,000	33.3		
		Rs.60,001 to 80,000	15.0		
		Rs.80,001 to Rs.1,00000	6.7		
		Rs.1,00001 & above	1.7		
7	Type of Family	Nuclear family	60.0	1.40	.494
		Joint family	40.0		
8	Number of Children	One children	28.3	1.18	.948
		Two children	35.0		
		Three children	6.7		
		Nil	30.0		

### Interpretation

As observed from the above table 1, two-fifth of the respondents was in the age group of 35 years to 44 years. More than half of the respondents are educated up to under graduation level and post graduation level. More than half of the respondents are working in organized sector. One-third of the respondent's income level is between Rs.20, 001 and Rs.30, 000. Two-fifth of the respondent's spouse was educated up to under graduation level. Nearly half of the respondent's total family income is up to Rs. 40, 000. More than half of the respondents are in Nuclear family. More than one-third of the respondents are having two children.

Table 2 : Chi Square Results

Variables	Economic Empowerment
Age	.175
Education	.053
Occupation	.031
Monthly Income	.008
Spouse Education	.009
Spouse Occupation	.003
Total family Income	.228
Type of Family	.549
Number of Children	.336

### Interpretation

The above table -2 shows that women's economic empowerment has significance difference in association with occupation, monthly income, spouse education and spouse occupation of the male respondents.

Table – 3

Economic Empowerment of Women	Percentage
Low (44 to 54)	10.0
Moderate (55 to 64)	41.7
High (65 and above)	48.3

### Interpretation

The above table 3 shows that nearly half of the respondents felt that women should enhance in economic empowerment for the better of the family and society.

### Conclusion

Economic empowerment of women develops the family as well as the society. In the present scenario, men have awareness on economic empowerment of women. Hence they are willing to encourage women for their economic empowerment. The result shows that nearly half of the respondents felt that women should be enhanced in economic empowerment for the better of the family and society.

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