A STUDY OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THEIR LOCALITY OF LIVING, SOCIAL STATUS, AND RELIGION

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ABSTRACT

This research paper studies the life skills awareness of prospective teachers with their mode of admission, marital status, and religion in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. Empowerment of Women Teachers concerning Their Locality of Living, Social Status and Religion in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The sample was chosen by the researcher using a simple random sampling method. In the Bhimavaram educational division of W.G., a sample of 355 female teachers was chosen from 75 schools, including elementary and secondary ones, from five mandalas. Malini and Yeshodhara (2015) created and standardized the original Women Empowerment Scale. It includes 49 statements and eight factors. The reliability coefficient of correlation (r), according to the researcher, was calculated using the split-half method and the Spearman Prophecy formula to be 0.69.   The results found that 18% of female teachers have a low level of women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is moderate in 66% of the sample, while it is high in the remaining 16% of the sample. Hence, it may be said that women teachers differ in their levels of empowerment. Women teachers don't make a significant difference in their empowerment based on the locality of living, whereas the social status and religion of women teachers make a significant difference in their empowerment.

Keywords: Empowerment, Women Empowerment, and Women Teachers

Introduction

Teachers need to be given greater power so they may become competent to manage their development and find solutions to issues that arise in their daily work. to acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary for reaching crucial judgments in a group setting, as well as to demonstrate dedication, both of which will open up opportunities for major group participation and democratic understanding. It gives educators the ability to govern their own lives in the classroom and even to defy restrictions that would harm their productivity.

According to research (Barth, 1990; Blase & Blase, 2001), teacher empowerment is associated with higher organizational effectiveness. According to Smith & Lotven (1993), teacher empowerment is also described as the possession and use of authority for the sake of professional autonomy, educational improvement, and occupational advancement. Simply being able to affect change is another definition of empowerment (Kreisberg, 1992). According to the criteria given above, empowerment is the capacity to act

as well as the understanding that one can affect change (Kreisberg, 1992). According to Dunst (1991), empowerment entails two things: (i) providing individuals with enabling experiences inside an organization that promotes autonomy, choice, control, and responsibility; and (ii) allowing them to demonstrate pre-existing competencies that support and strengthen functioning. According to Starratt (2004), a leader's "enabling presence" may enable teachers to take an active role in resolving educational challenges, take responsibility for their professional growth, and contribute their gifts and creativity to the effort of school reform.

The capacity to command people is less important in education than professionalism among teachers (Blase & Blase, 2001). It is the capacity to carry out one's professional duties with calm assurance and to contribute significantly to the formulation of policies and decision-making processes (Maeroff, 1988). Additionally, according to Blase & Blase (2001), teachers who feel empowered exhibit higher levels of motivation, self-esteem, confidence, dedication, inventiveness, autonomy, and introspection. To empower teachers, according to Bolin (1989), one must "invest in teachers the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and the right to exercise professional judgment about the content of the curriculum and means of instruction." The ability to choose and act independently at work gives instructors the chance to show off their abilities as educators (Short, 1994; Zimmerman & Rappat, 1988). The capacity to act, the opportunity to act, and the willingness to act are the three main components of teacher empowerment, according to Kirby (1991). Both organizational and personal factors are involved in empowerment. The focus of empowerment is on a person's ability to improve their competence and the possibilities that exist for them to do so inside the business (Short, 1998). In other words, empowered instructors are extremely competent and work in institutions that provide them the chance to demonstrate their proficiency (Short, 1998). A school that prioritizes teacher and student empowerment will be more successful in locating and developing resources than a school that rejects or rejects this attitude (Short, 1998). According to Glenn (1990), the true strength behind the idea of teacher empowerment comes from the instructor's control over the subject matter and their mastery of the fundamental skills required to properly instruct pupils. Teachers who feel empowered think they have the abilities and expertise to act and make a situation better (Short, 1994) (as cited in Singh & Attri. 2020).

Role of Teachers in Women's Empowerment

There are many reasons why teachers are a fundamental part of every culture. The youth of society are educated by teachers, who prepare them to become the leaders of the next generation. Children learn from their instructors while they are young, and what they learn from them is likely to stick with them in some way for the rest of their lives. instructors are the persons who instruct children and transfer information to them during their most impressionable years. Therefore, teachers unquestionably have a huge impact on the growth of young children as well as even older children, as they instruct them and aid in the development of their knowledge so that they can go on in life and become accountable and useful members of society.

The younger generation is one of the most crucial components of any civilization since they stand for the future and the course that society will follow. Teachers can educate the next generation of kids to make the world a better, safer place for everyone to live in the future. Everyone can speak to the fact that the appropriate teacher who genuinely cares about his or her profession may have a tremendous impact on his or her students since everyone has attended school up until at least a certain point in their lives. If a teacher is

genuinely passionate about what they are teaching, students become much more engaged in what they are learning. If a teacher can discover a method to keep his or her pupils' attention while still imparting useful information, then all of that teacher's students will undoubtedly acquire a hunger for knowledge. A teacher who may foster in a young pupil respect and value for other people, as well as the importance of learning and a good education, is providing a huge service to that child as well as society at large. The more those youngsters respect and esteem one another, the more willing they are to study and become smarter than they already are.

Strategies Adopted by Teachers to Empower Women:

The finest time in a child's life is during the primary school years. At this period, a child's personality will have fully grown provided the nurturing is done properly. Here, children revere their instructors like gods or goddesses. If the teacher-student relationship is solid, the kid will mature fully and turn into a productive member of society. The initial step in addressing concerns of women's empowerment should be taken by the schoolteacher through her interactions with students and instructional techniques. She might start by implementing the following tactics and methods to promote empowerment.

1. ***Democratic Atmosphere***: On a fresh day, every youngster is a brand-new person. The task of fostering democracy in the classroom falls on the educator. She encourages the kids to respect and pay attention to each other's opinions in the classroom. She must be an excellent listener herself. Boys and girls alike are encouraged to pay attention to, value, and respect each other's opinions. This is how mutual respect is created in the primary school setting.

2. ***Inculcation of the feeling of oneness***: The teacher fosters a sense of unity and community among children by coming up with various group activities. Boys and girls both learn how to collaborate and support one another. They develop the ability to cooperate cooperatively and accept one another's differences.

3. ***Task-based activities***: When students are assigned tasks to perform, they work together to finish the assignment. The students gain tolerance and patience in this way.

4. ***Emulation***: Emulation is the best way for all kids to learn. Students learn to respect one another in the same way in a classroom when the instructor herself respects the sentiments of her pupils. She ought to treat both boys and girls equally and ought not to make any distinctions between them. In this manner, even the students learn to treat one another fairly and justly.

5. ***Building self-confidence***: Self-confidence is essential for empowering women. When a teacher supports a girl student in the classroom when she excels or when she faces challenges, the student's self-confidence is increased, allowing her to stand tall among her male peers in the classroom and later in society as she matures. The caring attitudes of the instructor may occasionally have a long-lasting favorable or bad impact on the children. Because it can inspire goals for future academic achievement in their imaginations, this could boost students' self-esteem.

6. ***Inculcating a sense of security***: In India, a daughter learns to dread her father, her uncles, her brothers, and subsequently, after marriage, her husband and in-laws. She is taken to school, where the guys bully and repress her as well. She has feelings of insecurity. She develops in a setting where she is led to believe that she is weak on all fronts—mentally, emotionally, and physically. It is the job of the elementary school teacher to instill a sense of security in the student. Only when the youngster sees her as a confidante, a friend, and a mentor can this be accomplished? She gets the impression from the teacher that no one can hurt or bully her in class. She is strong enough to battle against it if it does occur. Giving boys and girls the same opportunity to participate in games and other activities can help to develop this once more.

Need and Significance of the Study

"Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all" is the UN's top priority. Making women equally responsible participants in the educational process is essential if the goal of education is to empower every person to live in harmony. In the academic community, it is held that women teachers can completely transform the teaching and learning situations and make the classroom more vibrant. However, some important issues must be addressed, such as persistent gender inequality, high dropout rates among girl students in many communities and areas, safety concerns for girl students, and concerns about the quality of education. They can inspire female pupils and serve as role models. In addition, parents feel more secure sending their girls to school if they know a female teacher

will be there. They are more at ease. Girls will study better and receive the proper attention from female teachers, who will also improve the learning environment for them.

Women can take on a motherly role for girls at school in both primary and secondary education, ensuring that they receive the right advice and learning environments. Girls often find it easier to talk about their difficulties with women than with males, which is a well-known truth. Knowing they can always turn to a female instructor for help encourages them to speak more freely and to feel more at ease. We urgently need to include more and more female instructors in the teaching and learning process since there are now fewer female teachers than male teachers. Many communities' educational environments are not favourable enough to draw more and more female teachers. To make schools more appealing to female teachers, several additional concerns need to be addressed. All of this is only possible if female instructors have the confidence to step up to any situation and overcome any obstacles, whether they be professional or otherwise. The recruiting and training processes, compensation packages, chances for career progression, a safe workplace, working conditions, and many other similar concerns all play a role in the empowerment of women teachers. We may believe that female teachers will empower other women if given the chance.

Review of the Related Literature

In their *2016* research, **Rasekh and Safaei** examined the connection between job fatigue and empowerment. The findings showed that fatigue and empowerment had a very strong negative association. The regression study for predicting work burnout from empowerment revealed that empowerment only accounts for a very tiny 7.4 % of the variation in job burnout. **Babu and Fathima (2017)** researched to evaluate the level of women's empowerment and family adjustment. According to the survey, family adjustment and levels of empowerment were quite high. The empowerment of female teachers and family adjustment have been demonstrated to have a weakly positive and significant link. Based on the kind of school, **Pandey and Khamari (2018)** conducted a comparison study on female teen empowerment in Chhattisgarh. Based on the results, it was determined that adolescent girls attending private schools had a lot more authority than those attending government institutions. From the perspective of socioeconomic dynamics, **Batool et al. (2020)** conducted a case study on women's empowerment in Northern Punjab, Pakistan. The study found that women's empowerment in the home was influenced by their employment, cosmopolitan attitudes, clean and hygienic environments, awareness of legal rights and medical access, active participation in politics and the capacity to exercise free will, and marriage with women's consent. The mixed family system severely reduces women's empowerment in northern Punjab.

Statement of the Problem

The title of the present investigation *is "A Study of Empowerment of Women Teachers in Relation to Their Locality of Living, Social Status and Religion".*

Operational Definitions

a) **Empowerment:** Empowerment is defined by Business Dictionary as "a management practice of sharing knowledge, rewards, and power with workers so that they may take the initiative and make decisions to solve issues and enhance service and performance. Giving workers the right tools, authority,

opportunities, and motivation—as well as holding them accountable for the results of their actions—will increase their competence and happiness, according to the theory behind empowerment.

Other definitions of empowerment include the following: "The term empowerment refers to a spectrum of acts ranging from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest, and mobilization that challenge underlying power relations. For people and groups whose access to resources and power is determined by factors such as class, caste, ethnicity, and gender, empowerment starts when they not only acknowledge the structural forces that oppress them but also take steps to alter the current power structures. Therefore, empowerment is a process aimed at altering the character and direction of the systemic dynamics that, in a particular environment, marginalize women and other underrepresented groups. "It is granting legitimate authority or power to act. People would be able to take part in the planning, carrying out, and implementing of developmental programmes if they were given more authority. Economic and social empowerment are equally important to political empowerment. Development and empowerment go hand in hand. The development follows empowerment and leads to even greater empowerment.

b) **Women Empowerment:** Women's empowerment, according to the U.N., is defined as "What, then, is women's empowerment? Five elements make up women's empowerment: Women's sense of self-worth; 2. Their right to make and exercise choices; 3. Their right to access opportunities and resources; 4. Their right to the ability to make decisions that affect their lives, both inside and outside the home; and 5. Their capacity to shape social change to establish a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally.

c) **Teachers' empowerment:** Giving teachers the power to make decisions regarding the curriculum and methods of instruction to be employed, as well as the opportunity to participate in the establishment of school goals and policies, is what is meant by teacher empowerment. The only success in the teaching profession is hard labour that produces valuable results. Teachers are more likely to express their happiness to their students when they are happy with their teaching efforts, the knowledge they have imparted, as well as the skills they have acquired and improved. For the best educational practices to be implemented to satisfy the varied needs of the educated, instructors must be empowered. It also contributes to the achievement of positive educational results by working towards a shared objective of efficient operation. Teachers who feel highly empowered are more likely to use creative teaching strategies and effective teaching techniques that promote student autonomy and responsibility for managing classroom issues. Thus, the current investigation is highly necessary and significant.

d) **Women Teachers:** This term is used to indicate the women teachers, who are handling classes I to X in the primary and secondary stages.

Objectives of the Study:

The following objectives were formulated for the present investigation.

1. To find out the empowerment level of women teachers.

2. To find out whether there is any difference in the empowerment of women teachers in relation to the following variables.

a) Locality of living   b) Social Status   c) Religion

Hypotheses of the Study:

The following hypotheses were formulated to test the stated objectives.

1. Women teachers do not differ in their levels of empowerment.

2. There is no significant difference in the empowerment of women teachers in relation to the following variables.

a) Locality of living   b) Social Status   c) Religion

Limitations of the Present Study

1. In this study, multiple variables such as age, teaching experience, designation, academic qualifications, professional qualifications, marital status, type of family, and the medium of instruction are not taken into consideration.

2. For the interpretation, computations were made variable-wise, within-variable-wise, and factor- and dimension-wise.

3. This study's significance level is set at 0.05.

4. One of Andhra Pradesh's 13 districts, West Godavari, was the only region the research covered geographically.

5. Only 75 elementary and secondary schools in the West Godavari district of AP are included in the current study.

6. The scope of the current study is limited to Bhimavaram, which includes 5 mandalas, as a single educational division.

Methodology of the Study

a) **Method of study:** The normative survey method was adopted in this investigation as it is the appropriate method for the present study.

b) **Population:** 1195 female teachers who work in the Bhimavaram educational division in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh make up the population for the present study.

c) **Sample:** The sample was chosen by the researcher using a simple random sampling method. In the Bhimavaram educational division of W.G., a sample of 355 female teachers was chosen from 75 schools, including elementary and secondary ones, from five mandalas.

d) **A tool used:** Malini and Yeshodhara (2015) created and standardized the original Women Empowerment Scale. The researcher re-standardized this scale. It includes 49 statements and eight factors, including self-reliance, self-respect, & dignity of women, decision-making ability, acceptance of small family norms, better care of health for herself & her children, better consciousness of their rights, gender equity awareness, and women's participation & involvement in job performance. Each sentence has three alternative responses: "agree," "undecided," and "disagree." The reliability coefficient of correlation (r), according to the researcher, was calculated using the split-half method and the Spearman Prophecy formula to be 0.69.

e) **Statistical Techniques Used:** Mean, Standard Deviation, Critical Ratio, and ANOVA were used in the study to analyze the data.

Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Results

H$_2$: Women teachers do not differ in their levels of empowerment.

To verify this hypothesis, the following process is used. For the women's empowerment scale, the mean and standard deviation of the entire sample was calculated. The calculated mean and standard deviation are 119 and 8, respectively. In addition, the entire sample was divided into three degrees of women's empowerment: "high" (above M + 1SD), "moderate" (between M - 1SD and M + 1SD), and "low" (below M - 1SD). Table 1 presents the information for the aforementioned three categories along with a written description of each. Women teachers who score below the value 111 are categorized as having low levels of women empowerment. Their total is 64. Women teachers are categorized as having high levels of women empowerment when their scores exceed the value 126. Their total is 56, while the remaining fall under the category of moderate levels of women's empowerment.

Table 1: *Classification of Whole Sample on Empowerment of Women Teachers*

Range	N	%	Classifications
111 and below scores	064	18	Low
Between 112 and 126	235	66	Moderate
127 and above scores	056	16	High
Total	355	100	

Table 1 shows that 18% of female teachers (N = 64) have a low level of women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is moderate in 66% (N = 235) of the sample, while it is high in the remaining 16% (N = 56) of the sample. Hence, it may be said that women teachers differ in their levels of empowerment.

H₂: The locality of living of women teachers doesn't make a significant difference in their empowerment.

Table 2: *Women Empowerment – Locality of Living - Mean - SD - CR*

Locality of Living	N	Mean	SD	D	σ_D	CR	Remarks
Rural	104	120.17	6.98	1.26	0.84		NS
Urban	251	118.91	7.66			1.50*	@ 0.05 level

From Table 1, the obtained C.R. value of 1.50 is lower than the table value of 1.96. It is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. It can be stated that women teachers don't make a significant difference in their empowerment based on the locality of living.

H₃: Social status of women teachers doesn't make a significant difference in their empowerment.

Table 3: *Women Empowerment - Social status – Means – SDS – ANOVA - F-value*

Social status	N	Mean	SD	F-value	Remarks
BC	140	118.66	7.76		
OC	133	120.19	7.26		
SC	054	117.52	7.40		
ST	028	121.46	6.44		* S
ANOVA Summary				2.81*	@ 0.05 level
Source of variation	SS	df	MS		
Between groups	464.291	003	154.764		
Within groups	19349.717	351	55.127		
Total	19814.008	354			

From Table 3, the obtained F-value of 2.40 with df = 3 and 351 is higher than the table value of 2.63, which is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be assumed that the social status of women teachers makes a significant difference in their empowerment. Given the statistical significance of the ANOVA, it is recommended that the researcher carry out a Tukey's HSD (also known as the multiple comparisons test) post-hoc test to determine whether the means of the various subgroups of social status varied concerning the empowerment of women teachers.

Table 4: *Women Empowerment - Social Status - Post Hoc Analysis of Tukey-Kramer Test for Differences of Means*

Social status				Mean Differences	SE 55.13	Q-sat.
BC N = 140	OC N =133	SC N = 054	ST N = 028			
118.66	120.19	---	---	1.53	0.63	2.43*
118.66	---	117.52	---	1.14	0.84	1.36*
118.66	---	---	121.46	2.80	1.09	2.57*
---	120.19	117.52	---	2.67	0.84	3.18*
---	120.19	---	121.46	1.27	1.09	1.17*
---	---	117.52	121.46	3.94	1.22	2.23*

* Not significant at 0.05 level

All post-hoc analysis results with df = 3 and 351 are shown in Table 4 to be lower than the CV of 3.31. At the 0.05 level, they are not significant. The null hypotheses are therefore retained. Therefore, women teachers who are members of the BC community do not differ substantially from their counterparts who are members of the OC, SC, and ST communities, whereas women teachers who are members of the OC community do not differ significantly from their counterparts who are members of the SC and ST communities. Additionally, there is no discernible difference between ST and SC community women teachers in terms of their empowerment.

H₄: The religion of women teachers doesn't make a significant difference in their empowerment.

Table 5: *Women Empowerment - Religion – Means – SDS – ANOVA - F-value*

Religion	N	Mean	SD	F-value	Remarks
Christian	048	117.94	7.73		
Hindu	287	119.23	7.41		
Muslims	020	123.25	6.80		* S
ANOVA Summary				3.65**	@ 0.05
Source of variation	SS	df	MS		level
Between groups	402.123	002	201.061		
Within groups	19390.663	352	55.087		
Total	19792.786	354			

From Table 5, the obtained F-value of 3.65 with df = 2 and 352 is higher than the table value of 2.63, which is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be assumed that the religion of women teachers makes a significant difference in their empowerment. Given the statistical significance of the ANOVA, it is recommended that the researcher carry out a Tukey's HSD (also known as the multiple comparisons test) post-hoc test to determine whether the means of the various subgroups of religion varied concerning the empowerment of women teachers.

Table 6: *Women Empowerment - Religion - Post Hoc Analysis of Tukey-Kramer Test for Differences of Means*

Religion			Mean Differences	SE	Q-sat.
Christian N = 48	Hindu N = 287	Muslims N = 020			
117.94	119.23	---	1.29	0.82	1.57*
117.94	---	123.25	5.31	1.40	3.79***
---	119.23	123.25	4.02	1.21	3.32**

 * Not significant at 0.05 level　　　**Significant at 0.05 level　　　***Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 shows that the post-hoc analysis values with df = 2 and 352 (3.79 and 3.32) are higher than the respective CVs of 3.64 and 2.77. The 0.01 and 0.05 values indicate that they are significant. The null hypotheses are therefore disproved. Therefore, Muslim women teachers are very different from women teachers of the Christian and Hindu religions. The average discrepancies (5.31 and 4.02) advantage Muslim female teachers. Compared to their colleagues, Muslim women teachers are more empowered.

With df = 2 and 352, the remaining post-hoc analysis value (1.57) is less than the CV of 2.77. The 0.05 level of significance does not apply. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Therefore, there aren't many differences between Christian and Hindu women professors in terms of their empowerment.

Major Findings of the Study

1. 18% of female teachers have a low level of women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is moderate in 66% of the sample, while it is high in the remaining 16% of the sample. Hence, it may be said that women teachers differ in their levels of empowerment.
2. Women teachers don't make a significant difference in their empowerment based on the locality of living.
3. social status and religion of women teachers make a significant difference in their empowerment.

Educational Implications

As levels of empowerment for women teachers vary and are affected by variables including social status, religion, and locality do not influence the empowerment of women teachers. The measures may be started in the in-service training programmes to help women teachers, especially younger women teachers, gain more and more awareness of their rights, obligations, and legal requirements that are being implemented from time to time.

Recommendations for Further Studies

1. It is advised that actions be taken to increase the knowledge of teachers' rights, obligations, and legal requirements that are periodically put into force, especially for younger teachers who are women.
2. Women teachers' in-service training modules need to include dynamic personality development programmes.
3. More autonomy in making professional judgments must be given to female teachers.

Conclusion:

Women's status and place in society have always been considered the best way to understand a civilization, its strengths, and its faults. Government policies and laws have long sought to elevate the

position of women. Improving women's status through defensive and proactive legislative planning is essential for enhancing women's economic security. These include the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act, the 1986 Women's Indecent Representation Act, the 1987 Sati Act, the 2002 Prenatal Diagnostic Procedure Act, the 1961 Maternity Profit Act, and the 2002 Domestic Disease Protection Act. (2011) Sankaran and Madhav. The social position of women in India is a product of several social circumstances and forces. No established autonomous position for women exists in Indian society. The standing of women is seen to complement that of males.

Women's empowerment in India still needs a lot of work in several areas, nevertheless. A major shift in national mindset is required before people can properly comprehend what women's empowerment entails. This can only be accomplished by instilling a sense of empowerment at the most fundamental level, something that the schoolteacher accomplishes through instructing and educating the students. Men must also become aware of the trend towards equality and fairness in the globe, not only women alone. For our benefit, this should be accepted sooner rather than later. The empowerment of women is significantly influenced by the school teacher. She is the one who promotes in the male students a sense of fairness, deference, and tolerance for their female classmates. Women cannot be empowered as adults until and unless they are empowered at the most fundamental level. "Arise, awake, and stop not until the goal is reached," said Swami Vivekananda once. Thus, with the support of the school teacher, our nation should be propelled towards the horizon of women's emancipation and bask in its splendor. India's future would be better the day our professors serve as role models for promoting women's empowerment.

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