

## IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: SWOT ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Empowerment is a process that involves changes in existing power structure and moves from disempowerment to empowerment. Women's empowerment is the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources. To bring women into the mainstream of economy, Government is trying to bring gender equality by creating more employment opportunities for women.*

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**Keywords:** *Women's Empowerment, Power Structure, Disempowerment, SWOT Analysis.*

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### Introduction

Will Employment always bring empowerment of women? Unfortunately, Positive empowerment effects are not necessary an automatic consequence of employment among women. In male dominated society, men may use women to gain access to funds / loans and woman have to hold additional responsibilities that ultimately affect her health. The main aim of this paper is to explore the potential of employment in bringing women into the main stream of economy with the help of SWOT analysis.

### Review of Literature

Women empowerment through employment/ self employment is not a new concept. A number of academic studies and applied researches have been inducted across various countries along with India to work out various dimensions of women empowerment e.g. education, employment and entrepreneurship etc

**Brooke Shannan West (2006)** studied upon the relationship between employment and empowerment. Using secondary data, he analyzed the relationship between these two in India and found that working is important to empowerment but the strength of the relationship varies by empowerment indicator and the occupation of the women.<sup>1</sup>

**Afrin Sultana and S.K. Sharafat Hossen (2013)** studied upon role of employment in women empowerment in Khulana city of Bangladesh and found that employment has a positive effect on women empowerment but it is not always guarantee.<sup>2</sup>

**Haque M.S. and Lamao, M. (2008)** studied upon 'Can micro credit Alleviate Rural Poverty in Bangladesh' and found that the extreme poor women had negative impact on saving due to joining Self Help Group as their consumption expenditure increased more than increase in income.<sup>3</sup>

**Patra S.** Studied upon 'Micro Credit, Self Help Groups and Empowerment of women' in 2008. He studied upon 75 Self Help Groups in Orissa and found that due to SHGs, regular monthly saving of women is enhanced and it helped in their empowerment.<sup>4</sup>

### Methodology

To find out the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Employment on Women, a well structured questionnaire was prepared and responses from employed and control group women were collected.

On the basis of the analysis of responses of employed and unemployed women (control group), the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of employment for women are as under:

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### Strengths

About 12 aspects of strength of employment for empowerment of women have emerged that can bring positive change in women's life and can make them more empowered. These are as follows:

- **More Confident:** Employed women have to go outside everyday for job and there they have to perform various other types of work except the conventional age old household chores and they have to interact with different kinds of people. This provides women more confidence. .
- **More Innovative and Techno-friendly:** When women perform various kinds of jobs, they become more innovative and creative. In fact, this becomes her need to be innovative, otherwise she can't survive in competitive era. She becomes more techno-friendly also because she has to finish a lot of work in very limited time.
- **Financial Independence:** This is the most important strength that women get due to employment. When women depend financially on her husband or others, she has to accept all kinds of wrongs, whether she agrees or not. Due to this, she can take decisions for children's education and health.
- **Gain respect:** Due to employment, women get respect at home, in family and in society. In Indian age old patriarchal system, gaining respect for a woman is really a challenge, to some extent employment helps women in it.
- **Job Providers:** During survey, scholar found that most of the women keep maids and cook to assist them in household chores and like this, they become job providers for others. This feel of providing job give them strength and boost their confidence.
- **Awareness increase:** When woman daily goes outside and comes in contact with so many people, her awareness about various government programme, health, education and other career related issues increases and she can take more appropriate decision for herself as well as for her family.
- **Regular Income:** Due to employment, women get regular income that becomes her strength in almost all spheres of life. Due to regular income, woman's risk taking capacity increase and many times, she can convert this risk into financial gain.
- **Creditability/ Loaning/ Lending capacity increase:** Women's Employment increases their loaning / lending capacity and hence their financial creditability increases and with this financial creditability they can take part in big financial decisions effectively at home and this becomes strength of a woman in family.
- **More adaptability:** Due to employment, women come across with various types of people and adverse situations and they have to find the path to come out of these. This increases their adaptability with people and circumstances.
- **More Assets:** During field survey, it is found that employed women have more assets in form of ornament, land and house etc. This is quite obvious, more income provide more purchasing power and these things can easily be brought, still many women feel their strength in all these things when they compare themselves with others.
- **Institutional Support:** Employment provides an institutional support to woman. When women go outside home, she has to face various kinds of challenges and institution provides them strength in disguise.
- **Work Life Balance:** Due to job, she has to maintain work life balance, she has to decide every time that which one should be preferred and this quality provide her strength.

### Weaknesses

- **Less Quality Time for Family Members:** Women have to spend 10-12 hrs. for job responsibilities, so she has very less time for family members and whatever time she has, she remains most of the time physically or mentally exhausted, so quality time is further less, and this affect her family life as well as health.
- **Over Burdened:** Most of the women have to do all house-hold chores e.g. cleaning, cooking, taking care of elders and children etc. and due to this she always find herself over burdened. Although she can hire someone for domestic help, yet management of that is also difficult in this region.

- **Social Relations:** It is difficult for employed women to maintain her social relations and many times she has to pay a lot due to this. She finds herself alone in social gatherings.
- **Guilt:** Since working women do not always have convenience to attend their children, they remain in guilt for that and many times they feel themselves to take right decision for their children and for themselves also.
- **Less Awareness:** Employed women feel it difficult to remain always updated with latest development of their field and they feel that their techniques are obsolete and this becomes their weakness.
- **Less Mobility:** Employed women have dual responsibility upon them, so their mobility from work place is very limited. She always remain scared about transfer and this becomes her weakness at work place as well as at home.
- **Lack of Legal Awareness:** Employed women have very limited legal awareness and due to this she has to face a lot at home as well as at work place.
- **Low Risk Taking Capacity:** Employed women have dual responsibilities, and this reduces her risk taking capacity at home and at work place.

### Opportunities

Most of the women beneficiaries are conscious of opportunities available due to their employment. During survey few opportunities reported by women are as follows:

- **Awareness about Government Scheme:** About 60% to 70% women reported that due to job they come in contact with many people and they get opportunity to discuss various matters. During this, they come to know about various Government schemes either education oriented, health oriented or employment oriented.
- **Training:** Department arrange various training programme for skill improvement of women. These training enhance various types of skills among women. These skills help women to become successful person.
- **Institutional Linkage:** Due to employment, women get better opportunities to link with institutions e.g. banks, NGOs or other department. These linkages are very helpful for women while performing various kinds of responsibilities.
- **More Savings:** Saving is an essential and integral part for everyone. When women earn, her household income increase and she can save more, this increased saving provide her opportunities to take decisions and they can face other challenges also easily.
- **More Exposure:** Employment provides exposure to working women and due to this, they can think more logically and can take right decisions at right time.

### Threats

To identify threat factors is necessary for any organization to sustain. Threat factors make members alert to confront and tackle the systematic problems. Few threat factors are as follows:-

- **Lack of Family Support:** Family support is essential for employed women to perform all responsibilities. Many times, women have different capabilities but due to lack of family support, they cannot participate in any development activity.
- **Conflicts:** About 30% to 40% employed women reported they feel it difficult to survive due to conflict among colleagues. These conflict may be on any issue other than job still these affect their efficiency at work place. Gender difference can easily be experienced in almost all types of jobs.
- **Easy Accessibility of Loans:** Due to easy accessibility of loan for government employed women, their family members or spouse force the woman to take loan and many times loan money is used for unproductive activities and burden of repaying the loan remain on woman only and she has to repay the loan from her salary.
- **Increased Family Income:** During survey, scholar came across with many such cases where increased family incomes have become threat for women. As mentioned in case studies, male members of the family started cheating women financially as well as in relationship and women have to tolerate everything in this male dominated society and this make woman even disempowered.

- **Work Place Politics:** During survey, it is observed that employed women face various types of work place politics and women cannot remain always aware with these and she has to pay a lot for that.
- **Lack of Gender Sensitive Environment:** Gender sensitive environment is essential for employed as well as self employed women. Many issues related to women is still treated as 'Taboo' in society and this is a major threat for women.

At last it can be concluded that although employment is giving strength to women it is bringing many weaknesses, opportunities and Threats also. For empowerment, women have to be conscious and aware about that.

#### References

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