



## Empowerment of Rural Women through the Activities of Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** The present study was conducted in Nagpur district of Vidarbha region, Maharashtra State, with sample size of 120 women respondents from of 12 villages. The data regarding the activities of Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) and empowerment of rural women with the help of these activities were collected using pre-tested interview schedule. Majority of respondents performing the activities were thrift activity (51.66%), record maintenance (45.83%), grading and packaging (42.50%), sale of produce (33.33%) and goat keeping (29.16%). Due to the participation in MAVIM activities the overall empowerment of majority rural women (58.33%) were found to be high. Out of 10 independent variables education, caste, land holding, family income were significantly correlated in explaining overall empowerment, at 0.01 level of probability. Similarly variable family occupation is also significant in explaining overall empowerment at 0.05 level of probability.

### INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Women empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources-material, human and intellectual and financial resources and control over decision making in the home, community, society, nation and to gain power. According to a report of the government of India, empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. In this process, women should be empowered socially, economically, educationally and politically that can help them take self decision regarding education, mobility, economic independence, political participation, public speaking and awareness to exercise rights. Women empowerment and their full participation as the basis of equality in all spheres of society are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace. The empowerment process encompasses several mutually reinforcing components but begins with and is supported by economic independence which implies access to and control over production resources. According to Karl (1995) empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation to greater decision making and control to transformative action. MAVIM is working with the objectives of development of women empowerment, increase participation of women in education, develop self confidence, provide employment and market and develop knowledge and skills among the rural women. Hence, the study was formulated with an objective to study the empowerment of rural women and the relationship with their personal, socio-economic and situational profile.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Nagpur district of Vidarbha region in Maharashtra State with the help of exploratory research design of social research. The data was collected from 12 villages of Nagpur district, where MAVIM activities were conducted. The list of villages having women self help groups were obtained from the office of the Nagpur Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal. Thus, the 12 villages were selected purposively where MAVIM based women SHG were established. The data were collected personally by the researcher with the help of structured interview schedule developed for this purpose. The women respondents were contacted at their home or their work place. Total 120 women respondents were interviewed and their responses were recorded in the schedule. For the measurement of empowerment of rural women a scale developed by Tayade and Chole (2007)

along with the procedure of scoring was used. The collected data was then analyzed with the help of suitable statistical methods.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Enterprise or activity adopted by rural women

Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal has provided trainings to the women of SHGs regarding livelihood and enterprise development to empower the rural women. MAVIM has also supported the women to start the new enterprise. The women respondents who had adopted different enterprises were studied and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Activities performed by the women members of MAVIM**

Sr. No.	Name of the activity	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage
1	Chili powder making	06	05.00
2	Dairy occupation	25	20.83
3	Vegetable growing	15	12.50
4	Poultry keeping	32	26.66
5	Livestock management	28	23.33
6	Papad making	13	10.83
7	Pickle making	09	07.50
8	Tailoring	15	12.50
9	Sale of produce	40	33.33
10	Grading and packaging	51	42.50
11	Promoting thrift activity	62	51.66
12	Goat keeping	35	29.16
13	Arranging competition	12	10.00
14	Bangle business	02	01.66
15	Maintenance of records	55	45.83

It revealed from the data presented in Table 1 that majority of respondents were involved in promoting thrift activity (51.66%) and maintenance of records (45.83%). This was followed by, grading and packaging (42.50%), sale of produce (33.33%) and goat keeping (29.16%).

About one fourth respondents (20.83% and 23.33%) were engaged in dairy occupation and livestock management, respectively. The tailoring and vegetable growing activities were done by same percentage of women i.e. 12.50 per

cent. The papad making, arranging competitions, pickles making, chili powder making and bangle business activities had performed by 10.83, 10.00, 07.50, 05.00, and 01.66, respectively.

Thus, it could be inferred that majority of respondents had involved in promoting thrift activity, maintenance of record, grading and packaging, sale of produce. However, a few respondents had involved in chili powder, pickle making and bangle business.

**Women empowerment**

The empowerment of rural women through Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal was studied on five dimensions, individually and the overall empowerment of rural women was also assessed by consolidating the empowerment of rural women on the five dimensions.

The results with regards to indicator wise empowerment through Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal have been furnished in Table 2.

**Table 2. Distribution of women respondents according to the indicators of women empowerment**

Sr. No.	Indicators/items	Respondents (N = 120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
<b>A) Psychological empowerment</b>			
1.	Self confidence	120	100.00
2.	Courage	115	95.83
3.	Self reliance	120	100.00
4.	Feeling of self security in family	120	100.00
5.	Career ambition	109	90.83
6.	Self image	110	91.66
<b>B) Cultural empowerment</b>			
1.	Freedom to interact with male outside the family	107	89.16
2.	Freedom For taking of food	116	96.66
3.	Actual participation in festivals	120	100.00
4.	Freedom for performing festivals ceremonies	118	98.33
5.	Freedom for wearing a kind of dress	80	66.66
6.	Freedom for attending pilgrims / religious place	109	90.00
7.	Freedom to deciding (food) menu	119	99.16
8.	Liberty to attend marriage ceremony	118	98.33
<b>C) Social empowerment</b>			
1.	Increase in self education	110	91.66
2.	Get freedom to work outside the family	98	81.66
3.	Get freedom to visit hospital / doctor	118	98.33
4.	Get freedom for adopting practices for maintaining health	119	99.16
5.	Participation in decision about family planning (welfare)	100	83.33
6.	Participation in community action	104	86.66
7.	Feeling of social security	111	92.50
8.	Participation in decision about education of children	120	100.00
9.	Participation in decision about girls marriage	98	81.66
10.	Possessing desired social status	112	93.33
11.	Increase in/making healthy social environment	118	98.33
12.	Appreciation by family members for significant contribution	115	95.83
13.	Get access to modern technology	116	96.66
14.	Get freedom to mix with (women) friends	120	100.00
15.	Get access to water	118	98.33
16.	Get access to fuel / energy	120	100.00
<b>D) Economic empowerment</b>			
1.	Get opportunity for economic development	120	100.00
2.	Get freedom for selection of job	118	98.33

3.	Increase personal saving in the form of fixed deposit	90	75.00
4.	Able to operate personal account in bank	89	74.16
5.	Participation in decision about adoption of modern technology	114	95.00
6.	Participation in decision about purchasing building / house	113	94.16
7.	Participation in decision about marketing of produce	117	97.50
8.	Participation in purchase of input for family enterprise	110	91.66
9.	Get authority to employ labourers	115	95.83
10.	Get freedom for spending on entertainment of guest	117	97.50
11.	Get freedom for offering present to relatives	118	98.33
<b>E) Political empowerment</b>			
1.	Holding a political position at present	28	23.33
2.	freedom for participation in active politics	80	66.66
3.	About awareness of human rights	88	73.33
4.	Increase in awareness about legislation about women	98	81.66
5.	Increase in awareness of political situation	110	91.66

**Psychological empowerment**

The data in Table 2 showed that cent per cent women respondents were self confident, self reliance and filling self security in the family. It was followed by 95.83 per cent respondents had courage 91.66 per cent had self image and 90.83 per cent were career ambitions.

**Cultural empowerment**

All the women respondents (100.00%) were actually participating in festivals, followed by almost all women respondents (91.16%) had freedom to decide (food) menu, 98.33 per cent women had freedom for performing festival ceremonies and liberty to attend marriage ceremony, 96.66 per cent women had freedom for taking food,90.00 per cent had freedom to attend pilgrims/ religious place, 89.16 per cent had freedom to interact with male outside the family, and 66.66 per cent women respondents had freedom for wearing kind of dresses. It clearly indicated that women participated in MAVIM activities became culturally empowered.

**Social empowerment**

From Table 2 it was observed that cent per cent women respondents had participation in decision about children education, get freedom to mix with (women) friends and get access to fuel/energy. It was followed by 98.33 per cent respondents get freedom to visit hospital/ doctor, increase in making healthy social environment and get access to water. While, 96.66 per cent get access to modern technology, 95.83 per cent had appreciated by family for significant contribution,93.33 per cent women possessed desired social status, 92.50 per cent had feeling for social security, where as 83.33 per cent and 81.66 per cent had participation in decision about family planning (welfare) and participation in decision about girls marriage.

**Economic empowerment**

From the information in Table 2 it was concluded that 98.33 per cent respondents were observed increase freedom to start the business, 00.00 per cent in opportunity for economic development, 95.00 per cent in participation in decision about adoption of modern technology in home and participation in decision about marketing of regarding economic empowerment all women respondents got opportunity for economic development. It was followed by 98.33 per cent women get freedom for selection of job and offering present to relatives. Again above ninety per cent women respondents get freedom for spending on entertainment of guest (97.50%), participation in decision about marketing of produce (97.50%), got authority to employ labours (95.83%), participation in decision about adoption of modern tech-

nology (95.00%) and participation in purchase of input for family enterprise (91.66%). Rest of women respondents had increase personal saving in the form of deposit (75.00%) and able to operate personal account in bank (74.16%).

#### Political empowerment

It was noticed from Table 2 that 91.66 per cent women respondents become aware about political institution, 66.66 per cent recorded freedom for participation in active politics, 81.66 per cent women aware about legislation about women, 73.33 per cent become aware about human rights, and 23.33 per cent holding a political position in active politics.

#### Overall empowerment

The overall empowerment of rural women through participation in MAVIM activities was calculated by summing value of the mean difference in index with regard to the five dimensions i.e. psychological, cultural, social, economic and political empowerment indices and it is categorized on the basis of mean index values calculated in Table 3.

**Table 3. Overall empowerment of rural women through MAVIM activities**

Sr. No.	Overall empowerment	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage
1	No empowerment	00	00.00
2	Low empowerment	18	15.00
3	Medium empowerment	32	26.66
4	High empowerment	70	58.33
	Total	120	100

The data in Table 3 revealed that high empowerment of rural women through MAVIM could be noticed among nearly 58.33 per cent women respondents. This was followed by 26.66 per cent of them appearing in medium category of empowerment. The percentage of respondents appearing in low category of empowerment was found to be 15.00 per cent. It was important to note that none of the women respondents belonged to no empowerment category. It is noted that the MAVIM could have a medium empowerment on its women members in terms of psychological, cultural, social economic and political empowerment.

#### Relational analysis

Coefficient of correlation of independent variables with dependent variable empowerment of rural women is given in Table 4.

**Table 4. Relationship of selected characteristics of respondents with women empowerment**

Sr. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient 'r' value
1.	Age	-0.108
2.	Education	0.338**
3.	caste	0.254**
4.	Type of family	-0.100
5.	Size of family	0.015
6.	Family occupation	0.189*
7.	Land holding	0.247**
8.	Family income	0.252**
9.	Social participation	0.235**
10	Extension participation	0.0171

\* =Significant at 0.05 level of probability, \*\* =Significant at 0.01 level of probability

From the observation in Table 4, out of 10 variables education, caste, land holding, family income, social participation showed the positive and significant correlation with women empowerment at 0.01 level of probability and variables namely family occupation showed the positive and significant correlation with women empowerment at 0.05 level of probability. Remaining variables size of family and extension participation had positively non-significant with overall empowerment.

It is evident from Table 4 that education, caste, family income, and land holding had positive and significant correlation with women empowerment. It is important to note that education showed highly significant association with overall empowerment of rural women. This meant that women with higher education had more chance to empowerment with the help of MAVIM activities. Income of the family was also significant with over all empowerment, it is because when family income becomes more, women can invest in various income generating activities and achieve a better socioeconomic status.

Social participation had also positive and significant correlation with empowerment. When social urge of women has been satisfied and their self confidence is naturally increased.

The present findings are in accordance with the findings reported by Katole (2001), Gunjkar (2005), Bharathamma et al. (2006) and Tayde (2006).

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