

A Study On Decision Making And Empowerment Of Adolescent Girls

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Abstract

Present investigation was intended to study the level of empowerment of adolescent girls studying in degree girls' colleges of Kamrup district of Assam in the age group of 16-18 years only on decision making. By adopting descriptive survey method study was conducted on 195 adolescent girls. Data was collected by adopting adolescent girl's empowerment scale constructed and standardized by Sisodia and Singh (2009). Data was analyzed by t-test. It is evident from the analysis that rural adolescent girls are less empowered than urban adolescent girls on decision making.

Keywords: *Adolescent girls, Empowerment, Decision making etc.*

INTRODUCTION

The International Women's Conference held at Nairobi in 1985 first raised the issue of Women Empowerment. It defined women empowerment as "redistribution of social power and control of resources in favor of women". It indicates that women empowerment can be achieved only when they have access as well as control over the resources like education, employment, participation in administration, health and nutrition and decision making etc.

The present era is an era of socio cultural transition and it has been deeply realized that in this era, empowerment of women is vital in the socio economic and political progress of society. As a result lots of effort and attention have been given to the crucial issue of women empowerment all over the world. The issue has received full attention with global paradigm shift from a growth oriented to a human development approach.

In India women constitute half of the country's population (accounting for 58 core 65 lakh in absolute number as per census report of 2011) and it is clear that there can be no development unless their needs and interest are fully taken into account. "The hands that rock the cradle rule the world" is a significant statement in the present day scenario applicable to women. Women as a motherhood of nation should be strong, aware and alert and this should be the main motto in the development strategy of the country.

But in spite of multifaceted actions and efforts on the part of government and other concerned organizations, it has been felt that there is a vast gap between ideal and existing status of women. The 21st century is regain as the "people's country". As witness in this 21st century, the status of women in India is at low ebb and empowerment yet to achieve. Women are still struggling at the lower ebb of the society. They are mostly subject to the subjugation and oppression of a patriarchal order even today. Discrimination still prevails in every aspect of

life knowingly or unknowingly. The question of gender equality still appears to be crying in wilderness. Injustice against women in our society takes place at birth with the preference for male child and continues till the end of her life.

In our society adolescent girls comprise nearly 1/4th of the growing period in human life. Thus empowering adolescent girls becomes the major challenge of the present day society. For that education is playing a significant role in enabling them to make proper decisions and control over their lives. Adolescent girls need to be empowered because the empowered adolescent girls can be motivator of their own capability to develop and to exercise choices to set their own agenda to be strong enough to challenge and change their subordinate position in the society.

Women and girls express agency in **decision-making** when they influence and make decisions and when they establish and act on goals. Key decisions that affect women and girls' lives and futures occur in both the private and public spheres and often entail a process that includes negotiation and compromise. A woman or girl exercises empowered decision-making when she uses her voice to influence key decisions and is aware of, and can act upon, a full array of choices. Decision making is the process of making a choice between a numbers of options and committing to a future course of actions. Considering this an attempt has been made by the researcher to study the level of empowerment of the adolescent girl in regard to decision making capacity studying in higher education institution in Kamrup District of Assam.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Girls are a critical demographic for social change and global development, representing a large and underserved population in the developing world. People under the age of 25 make up 43 percent of the world population and 60 percent of the population in the worlds least developed countries. The current cohort of adolescent girls is the largest in the human history. According to a recent multi –country analysis, closing the gender gap during adolescence in education, economic activity and health would significantly increase national economic growth and well being. Considering this an attempt has been made by the researcher to study the level of empowerment of the adolescent girl in regard to decision making capacity studying in higher education institution in Kamrup District of Assam

Considering this an attempt has been made by the researcher to study the factors that affect the awareness level of the adolescent girl in the area of Kamrup District. The study tries to focus on one of the important area of life of adolescent girls which have far reaching effects on the process of making them aware about their own self in particular and of women empowerment in general.

The findings of the study will be helpful to explore the ideas which will enhance the level of empowerment of the adolescent girl students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem selected for the present investigation is, 'A Study on decision making and empowerment of Adolescent Girls.' This study is an endeavor to find out the level of empowerment of adolescent girl on decision making belonging to the age group of 16 to 18 yrs.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

The definitions of the term used in the present study are given below-

Empowerment: - Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, and take action work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of their life. Empowerment can be viewed as a means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices individually or collectively for social transformation.

Adolescence:-Adolescent girls are a very important section of our society as they are our potential mothers and future homemakers. Adolescents comprise nearly half of the growing period in man. The term adolescence has been defined by WHO as a period of life where a series of varied, rapid and extensive changes occur. It is a crucial phase to catch up growth in the life cycle of girls after infancy. Adolescent girl's empowerment is a need of today as they have to lead a qualitative life to frame a satisfied and successful society.

REVIEWS:

- **Singh, B., Rathee, I., Malik, N. (2014)**, attempted to find out the empowerment level of rural and urban adolescent girls studying in government and non- government senior secondary schools. A sample of 400 girls studying at senior secondary schools aged 16 to 19 years were selected randomly from rural and urban areas of six districts of Haryana state. Seven areas of adolescent girls empowerment- power and entitlements, autonomy and self- reliance, decision making, participation in social activities, capacity building, social, political and legal awareness, and exposure to information were assessed using Adolescent Girls Empowerment Scale developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpana Singh. The major findings were that the adolescent girls studying at senior secondary schools in rural and urban areas differ significantly on two dimensions out of the seven and on rest of the dimensions they showed no significant differences. The study also found no significant differences for all the dimensions of empowerment in case of adolescent girls studying at senior secondary schools in government and non- government schools.
- **Naik, P. K., & Khatoon, G. (2014)**, in their research paper asserted that girl in the context of human rights, basic needs, economic security, capacity building, decision making, choice and also links with awareness, knowledge about skills, health consciousness, and education. The main objective of the study was to find out the difference of different dimensions of girls Empowerment among the girls of government and private higher secondary schools. A sample size of 120 girls from government and private higher secondary school were selected for the study. Adolescent girls Empowerment scale (AGES) standardized by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpana Singh was used for the study. The study revealed no significant difference in five dimensions i.e., power and entitlement, decision- making, participation in social and developmental activities, social, political and legal awareness, exposure to information media and significant difference in 2 dimensions i.e., autonomy and self-reliance, and capacity building dimensions of girl's empowerment among the girls of government and non- government schools.

OBJECTIVES:

The following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To find out the level of empowerment of the adolescent girl students in regard to decision making.
2. To study the difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in regard to decision making.

HYPOTHESIS:

The following hypothesis was formulated for the present study:

- Ho: There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in regard to decision making.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1. The present study will remain confined to the provincialised general degree girls' colleges of Kamrup district of Assam only.
2. The study will take the girl students belonging to the age group of 16 to 18 yrs.
3. The study will take higher secondary level students only.

METHODOLOGY:

In the present study the descriptive survey method is used to study the empowerment level of higher secondary school adolescent girls

❖ Sample :

Purposive random sampling technique had been used by the researcher to draw the sample from colleges. Study was conducted on 195 higher secondary level (10+2) adolescent girls studying in urban and rural areas of Kamrup District of Assam.

❖ Statistical Techniques used:

In this investigation, the researcher uses the following statistical techniques as-

- Tabulation of data
- Mean score of calculation
- t test
- standard deviation
- Graphical representation

❖ Data gathering tool:

For the present study, the data has been collected by using the following tool for achieving the objectives of the study.

A standardized scale on “adolescent girl empowerment scale” developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpna Singh.

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION:

Since the data was quantitative in nature thus appropriate statistical techniques were applied including the mean, standard deviation, t-value etc. The significance level for the t-test was taken to be 0.01. The scores obtained from the adolescents of the rural and urban girls' colleges were independently grouped to calculate the mean and the standard deviation. The t-test was then administered on the same to examine the differences between the rural and urban adolescent girls' empowerment level in regard to decision making.

Objective no.1: To study the first objective, level of empowerment of adolescent girl in regard to decision making the following divisions are considered such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree, and it follows that the level of empowerment which can be numerically denoted as shown in the Table no.1 to know the ranges of adolescent girl students empowerment level.

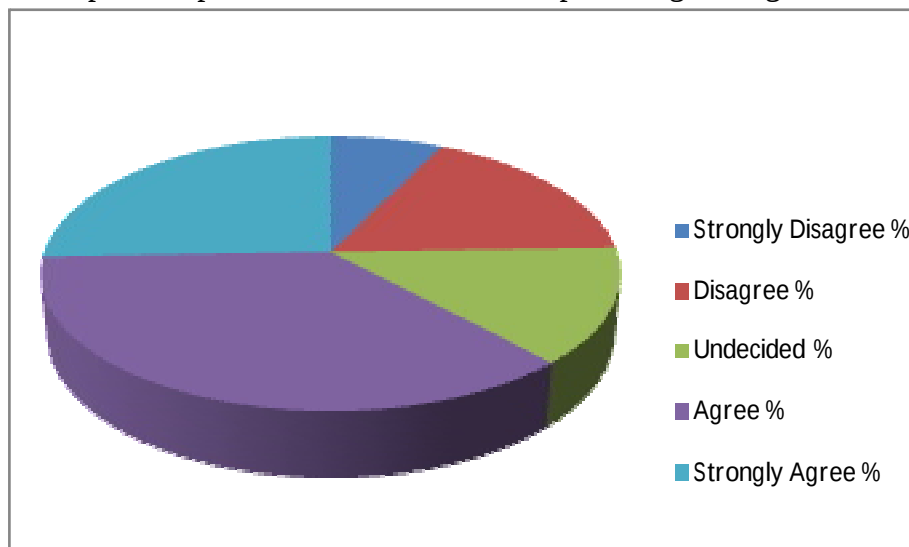
Table no.1:

Frequencies and percentages of responses given by the adolescent girl students on decision making on AGES

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
C1	7	3.6	27	13.8	15	7.7	100	51.3	46	23.6	195	100
C2	19	9.7	56	28.7	27	13.8	58	29.7	35	17.9	195	100
C3	14	7.2	38	19.5	33	16.9	45	23.1	65	33.3	195	100
C4	11	5.6	26	13.3	27	13.8	75	38.5	56	28.7	195	100
C5	20	10.3	34	17.4	28	14.4	70	35.9	43	22.1	195	100
C6	13	6.7	21	10.8	23	11.8	74	37.9	64	32.8	195	100
C7	15	7.7	33	16.9	33	16.9	73	37.4	41	21.0	195	100
	99	7.3	235	17.2	186	13.6	495	36.3	350	25.6	1,365	

From the above table, it is found that 7.3% strongly disagree, 17.2% disagree, 13.6% undecided, 36.3% agree and 25.6% strongly agree in the area of decision making.

Figure 1: Graphical representation of the result of percentage in regard to decision making



Objective no.2: To study the difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in regard to decision making.

- Ho: There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in regard to decision making.
To test the hypothesis, the mean score of rural and urban adolescent girl students has been taken and 't' value is calculated on the basis of some divisions. The following table shows the difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in decision making.

Table no.2

Difference between Rural and Urban adolescent girl students in decision making

Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Rural	85	23.29	4.911	-2.860	-4.140	193	.000
Urban	110	26.15	4.685				

It has been found from the table no. 2 that the mean score obtained by the rural students (85) is 23.29 with SD 4.911 while the mean score obtained by the urban students (110) is 26.15 with SD 4.685 the mean score of urban student is higher than the rural student. However to know the difference between rural and urban students, 't' value is calculated in which the mean difference of -2.860. The calculated 't' value -4.140 is much greater than tabulated value which is significant at 0.01 level. The result shows that there is a difference between rural and urban students in regard to decision making. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis “There exists no significant difference between rural and urban adolescent girl students in regard to decision making” is rejected. Findings indicate that rural adolescent girls are less empowered than their counterparts in urban adolescent girls in regard to decision making. Also, the difference in the mean values is significant enough, thus the adolescent girls in the urban and the rural colleges have different Awareness levels in regard to decision making. The greater value of the mean of urban adolescent girls shows that the girls there have more awareness with respect to the concerned dimension. Family environment and parenting style in rural area needs to be improved. Other researches have shown that family environment offers opportunities for personal autonomy and encourages the early adolescent's role in family decision making which are associated with positive outcomes such as self esteem, self reliance, satisfaction with adolescent and student teacher relations, positive adjustment and advanced moral reasoning.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis it could be concluded that there is a positive relationship between decision making power and women empowerment. To empower rural girls is the need of present situation. Environment which ensures their security should be made functional in all rural institutions; it will minimize security threat among girl students. Family environment and parenting style in rural area needs to be improved. Rural adolescent development programme can be organized with aim to create opportunities in case of leadership and mental illumination. Institutions in urban areas should be used blogs, social media as teaching tools which helps in developing the empowerment level of the adolescent girls. Also the change of attitude of women and men is very important to empower women by giving decision making authority to them.

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