

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 7; Issue 7; July 2024; Page No. 292-296

Received: 23-05-2024
Accepted: 26-06-2024

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Assess the level of empowerment of women vegetable sellers through Ima market

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2024.v7.i7d.814>

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in the Ima Market situated in the Imphal West District of Manipur during the 2023-2024 period to assess the level of empowerment among female vegetable sellers present in the market. A total of one twenty respondents were selected for this study. The market is completely run by women making it one of a kind. Women from various community and places of the state come together under the same roof and carry out the business activity daily. The study revealed that majority 51.67 percent of the respondents are of middle age group, 32.50 percent of the respondents were educated up to junior high school, 58.33 percent of the respondents were involved in business as well as agriculture as occupation. Majority 50.83 percent of the respondents were widows, 55.00 percent of the respondents are from joint family, majority 52.5 percent of the respondents have semi-cemented housing pattern, 51.67 percent of the respondents have Rs 1,00,966 to Rs 2,05,374 as their annual income, 44.17 percent of the respondents have 1-2 acres of land. It was observed that 48.33 percent of the respondents had high level of mass media exposure, 50.00 percent of the respondents have medium level of contact with extension personnel. It was also observed that 52.5 percent of the respondent started the business as their own choice. Age, education, occupation, housing pattern, annual income, land holding, mass-media exposure, extension contact and reason for employment found positively and significantly correlated with the overall empowerment of the respondents.

Keywords: Ima market, empowerment

Introduction

A woman is identified as a mother, a wife, daughter-in-law or a daughter, but she is not identified as an independent person. Women constitute almost half of the population, perform nearly two-third of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one hundredth of the world property. By the time a young girl has reached age of five years, she assumes adult responsibilities, both inside and outside of the household.

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 (knowledge, information and ideas) and financial resources and control over decision making in the home, community, society, and nation and to gain 'power'. According to a report of 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 independency, political participation and awareness to exercise rights.

Means of Empowerment

- Economic Empowerment
- Social
- Cultural

- Political

Ima market is one of the biggest markets of its kind in the world, where the whole market is run and controlled by women only. The word "Ima" in Manipuri translates to mother. This market is also known as Khwairamband bazaar. About 3500 women are carrying out their business on a regular basis. This market is an important trading spot for the people of the state. Majority of the women entrepreneurs involved in trading are due to obligation to support their families.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research design was followed for the present study. Imphal west district of Manipur was selected purposively for investigation of the study as the said women's market is situated at Imphal west district of the state.

Materials and Methods

A pre-tested structured interview schedule directed towards the objectives of the study was developed for primary data collection. The secondary data was obtained from books, journals, research paper, etc. The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analysed according to the objectives.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio economic profile of the respondents

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Below 35 years	0	0
		(36-55) years	62	51.67
		Above 55 years	58	48.33
2.	Education	Illiterate	17	14.16
		Can read and write	32	26.67
		Primary	20	16.67
		Junior High School	39	32.50
		Intermediate	9	7.50
		Graduate& above	3	2.50
3.	Occupatin	Bussiness	50	41.67
		Business+agriculture	70	58.33
		Business+Labour	0	0
4.	Marital status	Married	54	45.00
		Unmarried	0	0
		Widow	61	50.83
		Divorce	5	4.17
5.	Type of dwelling	Kachcha	46	38.33
		Semi-cemented	63	52.50
		Cemented	11	9.17
6.	Land Holding	Landless	9	7.50
		Up to 1 acre	39	32.50
		1.01-2.00 acre	53	44.17
		Above 2.00 acre	19	15.83
7.	Type of family	Joint	66	55.00
		Nuclear	54	45.08
Annual Income		Low (< 100965)	48	40.00
		Medium (100966 –205374)	62	51.67
		High (>205374)	10	8.33
8.	Reason for employment	Husband's choice	5	4.17
		Poverty	52	43.33
		Own choice	63	52.50
9.	Mass media exposure	Low (6-9)	15	12.50
		Medium (10-14)	47	39.17
		High (15-18)	58	48.33
10.	Contact with extension personnel	Low (7 -11)	47	37.17
		Medium (12 – 16)	60	50.00
		High (17-21)	13	19.83

The above Table 1. shows that majority i.e. 51.67 percent of the respondents are of middle age group, 32.50 percent of the respondents were educated up to junior high school, 58.33 percent of the respondents were involved in business as well as agriculture as occupation. Majority 50.83 percent of the respondents were widows, 55.00 percent of the respondents are from joint family, majority 52.50 percent of the respondents have semi-cemented housing pattern, 51.67

percent of the respondents have Rs 1,00,966 to Rs 2,05,374 as their annual income, 44.17 percent of the respondents have 1-2 acres of land. It was observed that 48.33 percent of the respondents had high level of mass media exposure, 50.00 percent of the respondents have medium level of contact with extension personnel. It was also observed that 52.5 percent of the respondent started the business as their own choice.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their economic empowerment.

S.no	Indicators of economic empowerment	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
1.	Standard of living has improved	69 (57.00)	51 (42.50)	0
2.	Understand banking operation better	62 (51.66)	35 (29.17)	23 (19.17)
3.	Increase in personal saving	46 (38.33)	51 (42.50)	23 (19.17)
4.	Consulted in major expenditure of family	42 (35.00)	29 (24.16)	49 (40.83)
5.	Spend money on purchase of personal belongings.	45 (37.50)	53 (44.17)	22 (18.33)

F-Frequency, %-Percentage

The data pertaining to economic empowerment are presented in Table 2 which shows that only 57.00 percent of the respondents felt that their standard of living has

improved after joining the market and 51.00 percent had better understanding of the banking system, 38.33 percent of women agreed that there was increase in personal saving.

Table 3 representing the level of economic empowerment shows that majority (44.17%) of the respondents belong to the medium category of economic empowerment followed by 37.50 percent of respondents who belong to the high level category. Remaining 18.33 percent of the respondents were under the low level of empowerment category.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the level of economic empowerment through the market

Empowerment Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low (6-8)	22	18.33
Medium(9-12)	53	44.17
High(13-15)	45	37.50
Total	120	100.00

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their social empowerment

S. No	Indicators of social empowerment	Agree F (%)	Undecided F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1.	Increase in participation in discussion about social activities.	47 (39.17)	35 (29.17)	38 (31.66)
2.	Participation in social development programmes has increased.	84 (70.00)	35 (29.17)	1 (0.83)
3.	Participate in public speaking	35 (29.17)	45 (37.50)	40 (33.33)
4.	Awareness on social problems	82 (68.33)	35 (29.17)	24 (20.00)
5.	Free to attend social social functions	113 (94.17)	7 (5.83)	0
6.	Feeling social security	110 (91.67)	10 (8.33)	0
7.	More freedom to visit doctors	83 (69.17)	37 (30.83)	1 (0.83)

F-Frequency %-Percentage

In view with social indicator, 39.17 percent of the women agreed that there has been increase in participation regarding social activities, 70.00 percent women agreed that there has been increase in the participation in the social

activities. 91.67 percent them improvement in social security. It has been observed that there had been significant increase in freedom to attend social functions and visit doctors.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the level of social empowerment through the market

Empowerment level	Frequency	Percentage
Low (13-15)	24	20.00
Medium(16-18)	54	45.00
High(19-21)	42	35.00
Total	120	100.00

Table 5. depicts that majority (45.00%) of the respondents belongs to the medium category of social empowerment followed by 35.50 percent of respondents who belong to the

high level category. Remaining 20.00 percent of the respondents were under the low level of empowerment category.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their political empowerment

S. No	Indicators of political empowerment	Agree F (%)	Undecided F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1.	Cast votes	120 (100)	0	0
2.	Support political parties	84 (70.00)	22 (18.33)	14 (11.67)
3.	Awareness to legal rights of women	54 (45.00)	20 (16.67)	46 (38.33)
4.	Attending political meetings	61 (50.83)	51 (42.50)	8 (6.67)
5.	Contested in panchayat election	0	1 (0.83)	119 (99.17)

F-Frequency %-Percentage

In reference with political indicator, there has been significant increment in the casting of votes, 61.00 percent of the respondents agreed to have increase in attending

political meetings, while 54.00 percent of the women accepted that they became more aware of the legal rights of women then earlier.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to the level of political empowerment through the market

Empowerment Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low (6-8)	22	18.33
Medium (9-11)	54	45.00
High (12-14)	44	36.67
Total	120	100.00

It is evident from the above table 7. that majority (45.00%) of the respondents belongs to the medium category of political empowerment followed by 36.67 percent of

respondents who belong to the high level category. Remaining 18.33 percent of the respondents were under the low level of empowerment category.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to their cultural empowerment

S. No	Indicators of cultural empowerment	Agree F (%)	Undecided F (%)	Disagree F (%)
1.	Freedom to attend social gathering	47 (39.17)	51 (42.50)	22 (18.33)
2.	Decision regarding marriage of sons/ Daughters Freedom to visit religious places	34 (28.33)	66 (55.00)	20 (16.67)
3.	Daughters Freedom to visit religious places	17 (14.17)	37 (30.83)	66 (55.00)
4.	Liberty to attend marriage ceremony	39 (32.50)	58 (48.33)	23 (19.17)

F-Frequency %-Percentage

In accordance to cultural indicator, 39.17 percent of the respondent felt they had gained more freedom to attend social gatherings. 28.33 percent of the women felt more included in taking decisions regarding son/daughter marriages while 55% felt no significant in the same. Among them 32.50 percent of the women felt more liberty to attend marriage ceremony.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to the level of cultural empowerment through the market

Empowerment Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low(4-6)	28	23.33
Medium(7-9)	72	60.00
High (10-12)	20	16.67
Total	120	100.00

Table 9 shows that the majority (60.00%) of the respondents belongs to the medium category of cultural empowerment followed by 23.33 percent of respondents who belong to the low level category. Remaining 16.67 percent of the respondents were under the high level of empowerment category.

Overall empowerment level through the market

Overall empowerment of the in the Ima market is calculated by summing the value of low, medium and high categories and finding their mean with regard to the four dimensions i.e. economical, social, political and cultural empowerment indices and it is categorized as given below in Table 10.

Table 10: Distribution of the respondent according to their overall empowerment level

S. No	Empowerment Level	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Low	24	20.00
2.	Medium	59	49.17
3.	High	37	30.83
Total		120	100

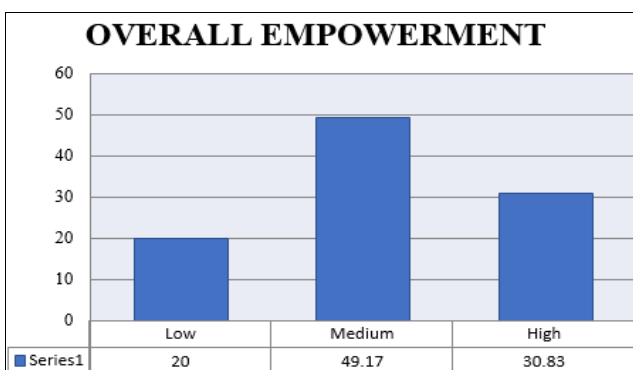


Fig 1: Overall empowerment of the women through Ima market

The data in table 10 revealed that 49.17 of the respondents belonged to medium category of empowerment. This was

followed by 30.83 percent of the respondents appearing in high category of empowerment. The percentage of respondents appearing in low category of empowerment was found to be 20.00 percent.

Table 11: Association between selected independent and dependent variables

S. No	Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)
1.	Age	0.2036*
2.	Education	0.3435*
3.	Occupation	0.4154*
4.	Marital status	0.2593*
5.	Type of dwelling	0.4562**
6.	Type of family	0.6656*
7.	Land holding	0.2801**
8.	Annual income	0.3991*
9.	Reason for employment	0.65962**
10.	Mass media exposure	0.6060**
11.	Contact with extension personnel	0.4061*

*= Correlation significant at 0.05 level of probability; ** = Correlation significant at 0.01 level of probability; NS = Non Significant

Based on the analysis of table 11 it was observed that several variables, are positively and significantly correlated with the empowerment of the women in the market. These variables include land holding, mass media exposure and reason for employment. The correlation was found to be statistically significant at a probability level 0.01%. Additionally, education, occupation and contact with extension personnel also positively and significantly correlated with the respondents' overall empowerment but at a slightly lower probability level of 0.05%.

Conclusion

It was concluded that majority of the respondents are of middle age group and attended junior high school, are from joint family, have semi-cemented housing pattern, are engaged in business along with agriculture, having Rs 1,00,966 to Rs 2,05,375 as their annual income, have above 1 acre -2 acres of land, have high level of mass media exposure and medium level extension personnel. Majority of the respondent belonged to the medium level category of empowerment. The factors influencing the empowerment of the women are education, occupation, housing pattern, annual income, land holding, mass media exposure and contact with extension personnel, which were directly correlated.

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