



Socio-Demographic Variables as Predictors of Women Social Freedom

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Abstract

Today the role of women in the society is changing and the change in their traditional role is great demand of time. It has rapidly gained momentum since the government of India has declared the year 2001 as 'Women Empowerment Year'. It is a well known fact that in almost all developed country women has played equal role in its development. It is a great challenge for the women of 21st century to face the resistance shown by conservative people of closed type society like India. Women have equal rights to enjoy freedom in terms of social, personal and professional life. Women empowerment is meaningless if it is not equated with their social freedom. Although our constitution has provide several laws and orders to in favour of women but the situation is critical yet. Women are still socially deprived from their rights of taking decision about career and life and have to phase violence either at domestic , professional or at physical level it may arises in the form of sexual harassment or may take cases of honour killing. People still consider the housekeeping and serving their families as the prime important work for women. Keeping in view the importance and seriousness of the above cited matter the investigator has decided to put forth a small sketch about women social freedom in the current status The study aimed at to examine the women social freedom in relation to some socio-demographic variables like locality, marital status, type of family, educational qualifications and profession. Descriptive survey method was employed. A sample of 160 women from different educational institutes and locality (rural and urban area) of Rohtak district of Haryana state was selected by random sampling technique. Women Social Freedom Scale constructed and standardized by Bhusan, L. (2014) was used for collection of data. It has been revealed from the analysis and interpretations of the present study that desire for social freedom is not influenced by locality and type of family, but marital status; educational qualifications and profession have a significant influence.

Keywords: Women social freedom.

Introduction

"If All men are borne free, how is it that all women are born slaves?" Astell Marry¹

"Social freedom is the desire to be free from social taboos, conventions, rituals and roles, which impose conventional roles and restrictions on girls/women"². Social freedom means the will of women. Obtaining freedom from social customs - tradition, religious ritual which give them a lower status in the society. It may be in any form like financial freedom, political rights, self -reliant, freedom from bonds of cast, freedom from orthodox thoughts, own options for selection of life partner, participation in decision making etc³. Today the role of women in the society is changing and the change in their traditional role is great demand of time. The transition in women's role has rapidly gained momentum since the government of India has declared the year 2001 as 'Women Empowerment Year'. It is a great challenge for the women of 21st century to face the resistance shown by conservative people of closed society of India. Women have equal rights to enjoy freedom in terms of social, personal and professional life. Women empowerment is meaningless if it is not equated with their social freedom. Undoubtedly women have equal participation in the development of human race. But she has been consistently

ignored in the society and placed secondary to men. Women are not treated with respect as in the ancient Indian society. Mishra⁴ found in his study "Towards Gender Equality" that in ancient India women enjoy similar status with men, in all aspects of life. Patanjali, Katyayana and Astadhyayi had brought forth the fact that in the early Vedic time women were subjected to take education just like men. Majumdar and Pusalker⁵ revealed from Rigvedic text that women were free to choose their own life partners. Invasion of Muslim community in India had caused a great harm to the social freedom of Indian women that they had enjoyed in the ancient India.

Now women have got good status as the voices for women empowerment raises high at national and international level. From higher education to scientific research none can be credited to only men's monotony Kanjiya and Joshi³. Perhaps hardly remained any field in which women have not shown their worthiness. Now women enjoy their right to vote, seek appointments in public office, take part in politics and play contest for parliament and assembly, participate in sports, provided with education, achieve good positions in media, art and culture, service sectors and even scientific and technological sections etc. They occupied high positions in parliament, become president, opposition's party leaders to the

chair of prime minister etc. Rao⁶ noticed that over the past few millennia the status of women has been subjected to several great changes. They have acquired more liberty to participate in the affairs of the country. They have now acquainted with equal freedom with men to shape their future and to share their responsibilities whether related to their families, themselves or related with the progress of their country⁷. Women's rights are also secured under the Constitution of India mainly in bringing equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination; further, India has various statutes governing the rights of women. Indian constitution has restricted any discrimination on the basis of caste, sex, religion, race and place of birth through Article 15. Some of the other provisions that safeguard the women rights are as follows: i. Equality before law for women has been maintained in Article 14. ii. Article 15 (3) direct the State to make special provision in favor of women and children. iii. Article 16 ensures equal opportunities of employment to any office under the State for all citizens and State should make provisions to frame policies to secure for men and women equally. iv. Article 39 (a) maintains the right to have adequate means of livelihood. v. Article 39 (d) safeguard the right of equal pay for equal work for both men and women). vi. Article 39 A commence that to promote justice, a provision of providing a free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme is maintained to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by economic or other disabilities. vii. Article 42 directs the State to secure the humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. viii. According to Hindu Code Bill son and daughter will have equal share in the property. ix. The Marriage Act provides the marriage as a personal affair. It further states that if a partner feels dissatisfied she or he has the right of divorce etc.

Several are there other constitutional and legal provisions which are far beyond the limits of this paper. But by merely passing of laws is something different from its implementation and absorption in the collective thinking of society. These legal provisions, laws and orders have seen to be failed in protecting women from becoming a of victim through rape, violence through acid attacks, burning alive and harassment for dowry even some times killing of girl/women, and crimes like trafficking of young girls making them to commit prostitution⁸. It is a sad reality that women are still slaves as they were ages ago. It is pleasant to talk about women liberation; but, no one has really given them real freedom despite all the laws.

It is a well known fact that in the last fifty years, women in India have made a considerable progress still they have to face many hardships in the forms of social evils in the male dominated and closed Indian society⁷. Women are believed as maid or goddess who is dependent on men. Larger sections of Indian society don't provide higher education to girls and they are not permitted to roam around, works or dealing outside. They believe that women or girls should have to work inside four walls of house and bringing up the children. Earlier traditional family patriarchal style is still rooted in depth³. Even

in modern India, several boundations have been found to be made for women. She has to face a lot of domestic violence and other kind of harassments. Nandal Vikas and Rajnish⁹ expressed that even in the era of modernization, technological advancement, and globalization the status of women is falling. According to NCRB¹⁰ data in every three minutes a crime is committed against women in India. The crime report has also uncovered the fact that from 2011 to 2012 incidents of reported rapes in has been increased by 3% and in every 29 minutes a woman is raped. It has been found that 70% of women have to face domestic violence, 65% men think that women should silently accept the violence to keep family unite and sometimes they desired to be beaten, In every 77 minutes a death occurs due to dowry instances and in every nine minutes 1 case of cruelty is committed either by husband or relatives of the hus¹⁰. Social evils like honour killing, raping a girl only to teach her a lesson reflect the orthodox thinking of a country which is running on developing paths. Honour killing is one of a very serious issue in which a family member is killed who brought shame and dishonour for the family. It is committed if there is any deny against an arrange marriage, if a family member choose a partner by own which the family has not approved of or having a desire to marry a partner of other caste, committing premarital sexual activities, and if a girl/ women has become a victim of rape. Our society does not let such women to enjoy equal social freedom that the men enjoy. Honour killing crimes are generally silently accepted by both local and neighbouring villagers.

The citations given below drawn from the documentary directed by Udwin¹¹ would enough to provide evidence that how conservative mind the Indian male dominating society is. "If my daughter or sister engaged in premarital activities and disgraced herself and allowed herself to loose face and character by doing such things, I would most certainly take this sort of sister or daughters to my farm house and in from of my entire family, I would put petrol on her and set her alight"¹¹. "A decent girl won't roam around at nine o'clock at night, house work and housekeeping is for girls, not roaming in discos and bars at night doing wrong things, wearing wrong clothes". These two statements clearly reflect what a man thinks of social freedom of women in India either a high profile lawyer of Supreme Court or a criminal behind the bars. It is evident from the above statements that female should denounced their will and their freedom.

No doubt that women in India is enjoying liberty and much flexibilities are found in religious ritual, social methods and customs of castes which is being seen. But in reality it has to face the dual standards of society. Children is the primary duty of women either they doing job or not. Women used to face many obstacles in the promotion at their jobs also. Dealing or political works can't be assigned to them after all they are capable of it, educated or uneducated all they have to be in rules and limitations. Batliwala¹²; Kabeer¹³ and Sen, Gita and Caren Grown¹⁴ have made arguments that; "women- empowerment

requires a systemic transformation not only in one institution, but fundamentally in those which supports patriarchal structures". Constitutional and legal provisions are not enough to bring a respectable position for women in society. Certain changes are pre-requisites in the mind of both men as well as of women to understand the universal truth of division of labour in the society. Everyone has to perform certain role essential for the welfare of society. Therefore women should not be considered secondary to men. Any change within the society can be brought by changing the attitude within one's own self.

Rationale of the Study: Women in India have been found to occupy a category of individuals that overlaps with all other deprived and disadvantaged sections stated by Narayan D¹⁵. Threatens to women's empowerment circumrotates around the household responsibilities, giving prime importance to rear their children and to maintain their interfamilial relationships. Women in India have taken up new roles and are working and are economically independent². In spite of enhance in the status of women several social evils like dowry, lack of awareness, economic slavery and illiteracy have not eradicated from Indian culture. A few literatures have been found on the present issue for research purpose. The reviewed undertaken to conduct the study shows that women do not constitute a central position in literature on social inclusion or women social freedom. Narrow and orthodox thinking, religious rules and unavoidable responsibilities are bringing depression, anxiety, guilt and nostalgia³. Therefore it is essential to find out the desire existing in women regarding freedom from social boundations, customs and rituals and their desire for participation in decision-making and equal status to men. The study will help in determining the social predictors that influence the women social freedom. It may help in framing the desired, policies and constitutional provision for the betterment of women society. Keeping in view the importance of social freedom among Indian women, the investigator has undertaken the proposed study in relation to some socio-demographic variables like: their locality, type of family (nuclear or joint) marital-status, educational qualifications and profession.

Objectives: To compare the social freedom among women belonging to rural and urban area. To compare the social freedom among married and unmarried women. To compare the social freedom among women belonging to nuclear and joint family. To compare the social freedom among high qualified and low qualified women. To study the difference among women in relation to their profession on social freedom

Hypotheses: H₁ There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among women belonging to rural and urban area. H₂ There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among married and unmarried women. H₃ There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among women belonging to nuclear and joint family. H₄ There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among high qualified and low qualified women. H₅ There exists no

significant difference among women in relation to their profession on social freedom

Variables: Dependent Variable: Women Social Freedom. Independent Variables: locality, marital status, type of family (nuclear or joint), educational qualifications and profession (working, housewife and students).

Methodology

Material: Women Social Freedom Scale (WSFS) developed and standardized by Bhusan L.I¹⁶ was used. The scale has a total 24 items with response options of agree, disagree. The split half reliability coefficient was found to be 0.83. The scale possesses high construct validity. The investigator employed descriptive survey method of research for the present study.

Sampling: A sample of 160 women (working, household and students) belonging to rural and urban locality was collected from Rohtak district of (Haryana State). The data was also stratified in 80 of each on the basis of educational qualifications, type of families (nuclear or joint) and their marital status. The women who possess graduate degree or diploma were placed under low qualified category while those who possess post-graduation and above post-graduation were place under high qualified strata. The data was further subjected to analysis on the basis of profession of women i.e working (52), housewife (52), and students (56). The obtained scores on the women social freedom scale were tabulated and analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques.

Statistical Techniques Used: Means, S.Ds and t-test and One way ANOVA

Results and Discussion

Analysis and Interpretation: The collected data were classified, tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis using Mean, S.Ds, 't' test and ANOVA. The interpretation of the collected data is as follows:

H₁ There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among women belonging to urban and rural area: Table-1 depicts that the mean score of urban women is 13.32 and of rural women is 13.81 respectively. The t-value is 1.10 which is found to be statistically insignificant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that women belonging to urban and rural area have equal desire for social freedom. Hence the above proposed hypothesis is retained (figure-1).

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among married and unmarried women: It can be evident from table-1, that the mean score of married women is 12.77 and of unmarried women are 14.54. The calculated t-value is 6.14 which are found to be statistically

significant. Therefore, it can be interpreted that there is exists a significant difference between the married and unmarried women desire for social freedom. The unmarried women scores high on Women Social Freedom Scale in comparison to their counterpart. It can be deduced that unmarried women shows high desire for social freedom in comparison to married one. Hence the above proposed hypothesis is rejected (figure-1).

Hypothesis 3: There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among women belonging to nuclear and joint family: Table-1 Depicts that women from nuclear family have mean score 13.82 on Women Social freedom Scale while women from joint family have score 13.81. The calculated t-value is 1.14 which is found to be statistically insignificant at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained from the analysis of data exhibit that women belonging to nuclear and joint families do not differ in their desire for social freedom. Both groups possess similar desire for social freedom. Therefore the above stated hypothesis is retained (figure-1).

Hypothesis 4: There exists no significant difference in the social freedom among high qualified and low qualified women: That the mean score of high qualified women is higher (14.35) than the low qualified women (12.80).The calculated t-value is 3.59 (table-1.) which is found to be statistically

significant. It is evident from the scores of both groups that there occurs a significant difference in desire of social freedom among high and low qualified women. The results show that high qualified women have high desire for social freedom comparison low qualified women. Therefore, it can be deduced that unmarried women shows high desire for social freedom in comparison to married one. Therefore, the above framed hypothesis is rejected (figure-1).

Hypothesis 5: There exists no significant difference among women in relation to their profession on social freedom: Table-2 shows the variance between all the three groups of women belonging to their profession The mean scores of working women is 13.44, housewife is 12.15 and students is 15.02 respectively. The F-value obtained shows a significant difference among the three groups.

Women who are not doing any job and are students scores highest among the all groups followed by working women. Housewives exhibit lowest mean among all the groups. Therefore, it can be safely interpreted that the women who are students show high desire for social freedom in comparison to working and housewives. Hence the proposed hypothesis is rejected (figure-2 Graphically showing the Mean Scores and S.Ds of different groups).

Table-1
Means, S.Ds and t-ratios of Different Socio-Demographic Variables on Women Social Freedom Scale

Variables	Groups of	N	Means	S.D's	Df	t-values
Locality	Urban	80	13.32	3.08	158	1.10
	Rural	80	13.81	2.49		
Marital status	Married	80	12.77	2.66	158	6.14*
	Unmarried	80	14.54	2.67		
Type of family	Nuclear	80	13.82	2.96	158	1.14
	Joint	80	13.31	2.66		
Qualifications	High Qualified	80	14.35	2.70	158	3.59*
	Low Qualified	80	12.80	2.75		

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table-2
Showing One Way ANOVA with Descriptive statistics and F- values of Profession on Social Freedom Among Women

Profession	N	Mean	Standard Deviation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Working	52	13.44	2.477	Between Groups	222.522	2	111.26	16.884	.000
Housewife	52	12.15	2.761	Within Groups	1034.578	157	6.590		
Students	56	15.02	2.461	Total	1257.100	159			
Total	160	13.58	2.812						

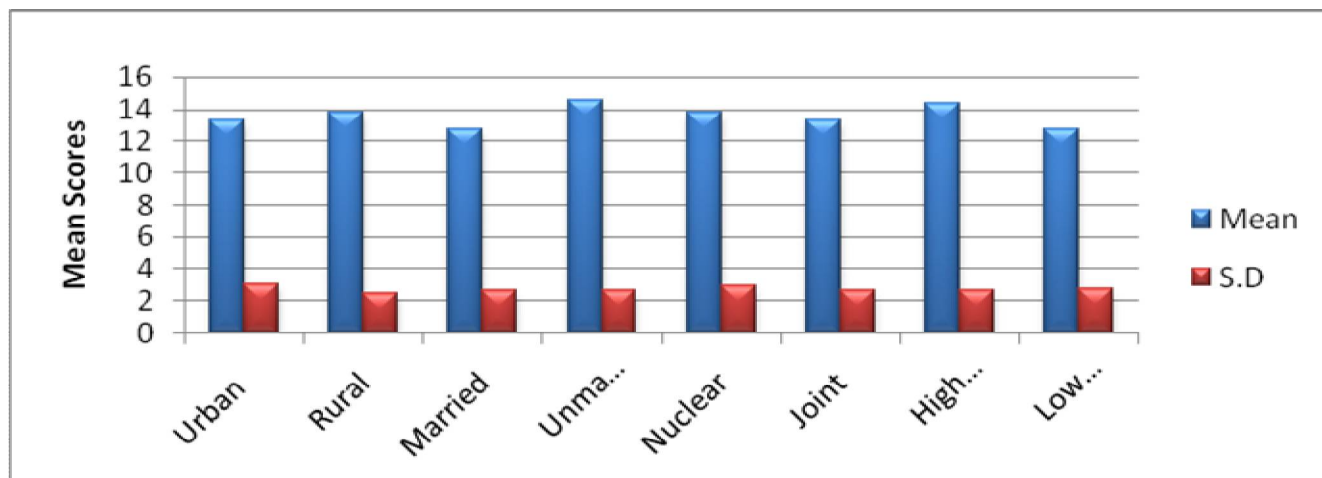


Figure-1
 Comparison among all the Groups Together

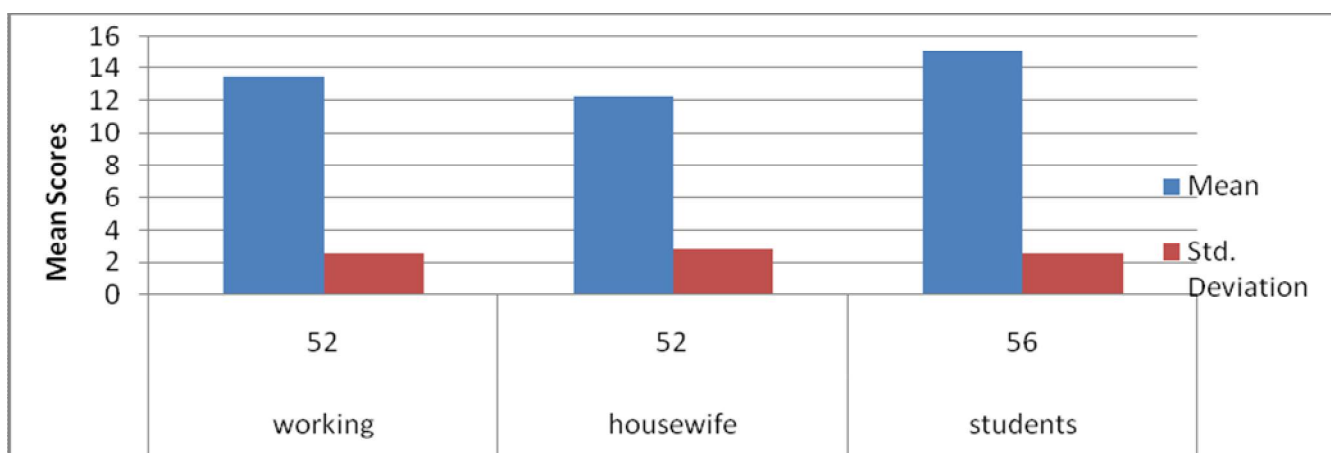


Figure-2

Comparison of Mean Scores and S.Ds of Different Groups on Women Social Freedom Scale on the Basis of Their Profession

Conclusions

i. Locality significantly does not influence the social freedom among women. Women from both urban as well as rural have similar desire on social freedom. ii. Unmarried women have a significant desire for social freedom in comparison to married women. iii. Types of families have found no significant influence on social freedom among women. Women belonging to nuclear as well as joint families have similar desire for social freedom. iv. Educational Qualifications have been found to be a significant influencing factor among women on social freedom scale. High qualified women have been found to show high desire for social freedom in comparison to low qualified women. v. Profession has been found to influence the desire for social freedom among. Students exhibited high urge for social freedom in comparison to working and housewife women. Housewives exhibit least desire for social freedom in comparison to students and working.

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