

# EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN RELATION TO THEIR SOCIAL FREEDOM

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study reveals empowerment of women in relation to their social freedom of Ludhiana district. For this study 150 women were taken. Women Empowerment questionnaire and Women Social Freedom questionnaire prepared by the investigator are used to collect the data. Significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district was found. Also a significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment was found among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district but significant difference in the mean scores of Social freedom was found among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district. Further a significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment as well as social freedom among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district*

**Keywords:** *Women Empowerment, Social Freedom and Women*

In our country gender equality is first and foremost human right. A woman is authorized to live in dignity and freedom from fear. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and to improved prospects for the next generation. The importance of gender equality is underscored by its inclusion as one of the eight-millennium development goals. Gender equality is acknowledged as being a key to achieving the other seven goals. The word empowerment has become one of the most widely used development terms. Empowerment of women in the first section and in the second section we deal with a specific but the most important determinant of empowerment of women i.e., decision making capacity or autonomy in decision making.

Sengupta (2003) concluded study to examine the socio-cultural determinants of the low representation of women in top managerial positions in Asian Organizations, and also studied the issues from individual and organizational perspective. Findings revealed that both male and female respondents perceived that societal culture has an important bearing on our thought processes and Working nature. In Asian Society, men are perceived to be assertive and commanding, whereas women

are expected to comply, obey and be submissive and docile. Males and females perceive themselves to have different roles in the social space. As per Kabeer, 2001 view, empowerment is the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. Choices will vary across class, time and space. Moreover, impacts on empowerment perceived by outsiders might not necessarily be those most valued by women themselves.

Kaur (2013) conducted research to study the relationship of women empowerment in Kashmir with the social freedom. It was also found that women empowerment and women social freedom in Kashmir are not significantly related to each other. The reason may be the threading and suppressed culture of Kashmir in which the women who are enjoying social freedom do not feel empowered due to their snubbed voices at some levels. Similarly Sharma (2015) concluded that Socio-Demographic Variables as Predictors of Women Social Freedom. 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.

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Thus it may be concluded by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality (Waghsmode and Kalyan, 2014).

### Significance of the Study

Threatens to women's empowerment circumrotated around the household responsibilities, giving prime importance to rear their children and to maintain their inter familial relationships. In spite of enhancement in the status of women several social evils like dowry, lack of awareness, economic slavery and illiteracy have not eradicated from Indian culture. Narrow and orthodox thinking, religious rules and unavoidable responsibility are bringing depression, anxiety, guilt and nostalgia. Therefore it is essential to find out the desire existing in women regarding freedom from social foundations, 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 of the Problem

1. To study the relationship between empowerment and social freedom among women.
  - a) With respect to locale.
  - b) With respect to marital status.
2. To study the significant difference in mean scores of empowerment among women.
  - a) in regard to locale.
  - b) in regard to marital status.
3. To study the significant difference in mean scores of social freedom among women.
  - a) in regard to locale.
  - b) in regard to marital status.

### Hypotheses of the Problem

1. There exists significant relationship between empowerment and social freedom among women.
  - a) With respect to locale.
  - b) With respect to marital status.
2. There exists significant difference in mean scores of empowerment among women.
  - a) in regard to locale.
  - b) in regard to marital status.
3. There exists significant difference in mean scores of social freedom of women.
  - a) in regard to locale.
  - b) in regard to marital status.

### Methodology

In the present study, descriptive method of research was employed to study empowerment of women of Ludhiana district in relation to their social freedom. Keeping in mind, limited source only 150 women of Ludhiana district were randomly selected and that too on the basis of locale and marital status.

### Tools Used for Data Collection

The selection of suitable tool or instrument is of vital importance for the collection of data in any research study. The investigator selected the following tools, for the present study:

- Women Empowerment questionnaire (prepared by the investigator)
- Women Social Freedom questionnaire (prepared by the investigator)

### Description of the Tools

**Women Empowerment Questionnaire-** Women empowerment questionnaire was prepared by investigator. It consists of 14 items, which are easy to understand (even by low literates) in Punjabi language. Initial draft of questionnaire consisted of 20 items. The questionnaire was given for expert opinion to 3 educators. There are 5 response alternative- strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree is to be scored 5 for strongly, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. This draft was sent to experts for their mentoring. The experts gave them various views which were considered and a final

draft was prepared. The final draft consisted of 14 items.

**Social Freedom Questionnaire-** Social freedom questionnaire was prepared by investigator. It consists of 21 items, which are easy to understand (even by low literates) in Punjabi language. Initial draft of questionnaire consisted of 24 items. The questionnaire was given for expert opinion to 3 educators. There are no response alternative- agree and no agree.

## Results and Interpretation

**Table 1: Coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district**

Sample	N	r
Total	150	0.232 <sup>**</sup>
Urban	89	0.047 <sup>NS</sup>
Rural	66	0.075 <sup>NS</sup>
Married	65	0.071 <sup>NS</sup>
Unmarried	90	0.132 <sup>NS</sup>

<sup>\*\*</sup>-Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence

NS- Non Significant

Table 1 represents the coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district. The value of coefficient of correlation is 0.232 which is significant at both levels of confidence. This indicates that there exists significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (1) stating, "There exists significant relationship between empowerment of women and social freedom among women of Ludhiana district" stands unsupported.

Table 1 represents the coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among urban women of Ludhiana district. The value of coefficient of correlation is 0.047 which is not significant at both levels of confidence that is 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there exists no significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (1a) stating, "There exists no significant relationship in the mean scores of empowerment and social freedom among urban women of Ludhiana district" stands unsupported.

Table 1 represents the coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among rural women of Ludhiana district. The value of coefficient of correlation is 0.075 which is not significant at both levels of confidence that is 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. This indicates that no significant relationship exists between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among rural women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (1b) stating, "There exist significant relationship between empowerment of women and social freedom among rural women of Ludhiana district" stands unsupported.

Table 1 represents the coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among married women of Ludhiana district. The value of coefficient of correlation is 0.045 which is not significant at both levels of confidence that is 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there exists no significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among married women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (1c) stating, "There exists no significant relationship in the mean scores of empowerment of women and social freedom among married of Ludhiana district" stands unsupported.

Table 1 represents the coefficient of correlation between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among unmarried women of Ludhiana district. The value of coefficient of correlation is 0.071 which is not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that there exists no significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among unmarried women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (1d) stating, "There exists no significant relationship in the mean scores of empowerment of women and social freedom among unmarried women of Ludhiana district," stands unsupported.

**Table 2: Mean scores of Empowerment of women among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district**

N	Locale	Mean	SD	S.E. <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio	Results
89	Urban	52.77	7.33	1.21	2.066*	significant at 0.05 level of significance
66	Rural	50.27	7.35			
65	Married	52.88	7.95	1.24	2.016*	significant at 0.05 level of significance
90	Unmarried	50.38	7.15			

Table 2 shows mean scores of Empowerment of women among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Empowerment of women among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district are 52.77 and 50.27 respectively. SD for urban and rural women are 7.33 and 7.35 respectively and t-ratio value is 2.066 which is more than the table value at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that significant difference exists in the mean scores of Empowerment of women among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district at 0.05 level. Hence hypothesis (2a) stating, "There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment of women among women of Ludhiana district with respect to locale" stands supported at 0.05 level. Further it is observed that the mean scores of Empowerment of women of urban area are more than that of rural area of Ludhiana district. This may be due to the fact women of urban area get more opportunities to empower themselves.

Table 2 shows Mean scores of Empowerment of women among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Empowerment of women among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district are 52.88 and 50.38 respectively. SD for married and unmarried women are 7.95 and 7.15 respectively and t-ratio value is 0.40 which is less than the table value at both levels of confidence. This indicates that no significant difference exists in the mean scores of Empowerment of women among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (2b) stating, "There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment among women of Ludhiana district with respect to marital" stands supported. Further it is observed that the mean scores of Empowerment of married women unmarried women almost same.

**Table 3: Mean scores of Social freedom among women of urban and rural area of Ludhiana district**

N	Locale	Mean	SD	S.E. <sub>d</sub>	t-ratio	Results
89	Urban	13.51	2.14	0.32	4.021**	Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance
66	Rural	11.66	1.80			
65	Married	13.62	1.85	0.37	5.567**	Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance
90	Unmarried	11.56	2.15			

Table 3 shows Mean scores of Social freedom among women of urban and rural area of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Social freedom among women urban and rural areas of Ludhiana district are 13.51 and 11.66 respectively. SD for women of areas urban and rural areas are 2.14 and 1.80 respectively and t-ratio value is 4.021 which is more than the table value at 0.05 level 0.01 level of confidence which indicates that significant difference exists in the mean scores of Social freedom among women of urban and rural areas of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (3a) stating, "There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district with respect to locale" stands supported. Further it is observed that the mean scores of Social freedom among rural women are less than that of urban women of Ludhiana district. This probably is due to awareness attitude of urban areas as compare to rural people towards women.

Table 3 shows Mean scores of Social freedom among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Empowerment of women among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district are 13.62 and 11.56 respectively. SD for married and unmarried women are 1.85 and 2.15 respectively and t-ratio value is 5.567 which is more than the table value at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that significant difference exists in the mean scores of Social freedom among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. Hence hypothesis (3b) stating, "There exists significant difference in the mean scores of social freedom among women of Ludhiana district with respect to marital status" stands supported. Further it is observed that the mean scores of Social freedom of married women is more than that of unmarried women of Ludhiana district. This may be due to the fact that married women are given more freedom as they are given more opportunities to socialize.

## Conclusions

- There exist no significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among women of Ludhiana district. Also no significant relationship

between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among rural and urban women of Ludhiana district as well as no significant relationship between Empowerment of women and Social freedom among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district.

- The mean scores of women empowerment show that women are empowered to quite an extent (above average). There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment among urban and rural women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Empowerment of women of urban areas are more than that of rural areas of Ludhiana district. There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Empowerment among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Empowerment of married women and unmarried women are almost same.
- The scores of Social Freedom among women indicate average freedom. There exist significant difference in the mean scores of Social freedom among women of urban and rural areas of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Social freedom among rural women are more than that of urban women of Ludhiana district. There exist significant difference in the mean scores of Social freedom among married and unmarried women of Ludhiana district. The mean scores of Social freedom of married women are more than that of unmarried women of Ludhiana district.

### Educational Implications

The mean scores of women empowerment show that women are empowered to an above average extent. Hence this serves as a source of motivation for other women to be empowered. Also average level of social freedom among women motivates the parents, community members to provide sufficient opportunities for social freedom to women. It helps the parents, guidance workers, community members to spread awareness regarding empowerment and social freedom among women.

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