

# Assessing and Understanding Women Empowerment through Personality Traits

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## Abstract

As women represent half of the population of India, Women Empowerment is one of the most focused issues in the present world. We can see easily that in villages as well as in cities women contributing equally, still they are unable to get equal position in society alike man, specifically in the developing countries. Women Empowerment is a widely used but rarely defined word due to its multiplicity and widespread uses. That is the reason why it is a striking area of research. Researcher at various point of time and in different contexts, have highlighted that Income and Education is a well-built factors that is affecting women empowerment. Research highlighted five components i.e. women's sense of self-worth; right to determine choices; right to access to opportunities and resources and right to have live their life in her own way, ability to be a icon of social change, as strong indicator of Women Empowerment. All Such indicators symbolize personality traits like openness to experience and extroversion. Thus the present paper has been framed to analyse women's empowerment in India on the basis of different personality traits. Based on the finding, various suggestions have been made.

**Keywords:** Personality traits, women empowerment, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness.

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## Introduction

Women Empowerment is first and foremost need of developing countries. As women represent half of the population, women empowerment is one of the most focused issues, in the present world. Though women have a great contribution in the development process, still they are unable to get equal position in society alike man, specifically in the

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developing countries (Khan et al, 2010). Women Empowerment is a widely used but rarely defined word due to its multiplicity and widespread uses. (Kumar, 2007). Empowerment is not only conferring the sense of decision making power or freedom of movement but, it is a process to give power to women for exercise of the different kind of right and enjoy equality with the men from which they are deprived till now (Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender, 2002).

In general notion women empowerment consist of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making in order to enable women to have greater ability to plan their lives or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives.(GU,2005).Women Empowerment means the participation of women in household decision making process and contribution to the family income ( Hossain and Yaim,2011 ; and Yusuf, 2010).

Some literature indicates that “empowerment” uses interchangeable “Autonomy” by defining empowerment as the capacity to resist arbitrary controls and the denial of just right. (Dixon-Mueller, 1998).

UN population Network (1995) has highlighted five components, i.e. women's sense of self-worth; right to determine choices; right to access to opportunities and resources; right to have the power to control their own live, both inside and outside the home, ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally i.e. these all indicator are associated with different personality traits as women's sense of self-worth, their right to have and to determine choices being purposeful, strong-willed and determined relates with traits conscientiousness, open to experience necessary to have access to opportunities and resources and their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change is a sign of Extraversion (Rothmann, 2003). Further various studies focused that personality traits are better predictors of empowerment (Solot, 2013 & Moghaddam, 2016).

The Big Five Model of personality is the most widely accepted theory of personality among the researchers. (Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five Model consists of five main dimensions of personality extraversion agreeableness and conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experiences.

Extraversion: A person with extraversion personality is positive, social, energetic, cheerful, dominant Assertive and caring to others individuals high in extraversion are likely to have greater confidence in their work-related abilities (Judge & Ilies, 2002). It makes sense that extraversion, which is strongly associated with higher level of energy (Costa & McCrae, 1992). They feel self-worth and put their view point openly.

Agreeableness: An agreeable person is fundamentally altruistic, sympathetic to others and eager to help them and in return believes that others will be equally helpful. Agreeableness is often recognized as a social trait (Judge & Bono, 2000). Agreeable employees, on the other hand, generally have more affection for others and have tendency to see others in more positive lights (Kammrath & Scholer, 2011; Bono & Judge, 2004),

thereby, it is likely that agreeable women sense of great support love and affection with their family and they play supportive role and like to tie within family.

Conscientiousness refers to discipline, order and reliability are the virtues of conscientious people. Self-control and the active process of planning, organising and carrying out tasks is a characters of Conscientious Individual (Barrick & Mount, 1993). Judge and Ilies' (2002) explore that a meta-analysis of fourteen empirical studies also showed positive significant association between conscientiousness and self-efficacy. So, it is expected that more conscientious leads to more particular to words their thoughts and act.

Neuroticism is a dimension of normal personality indicating the general tendency to experience negative effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt and disgust.

The Openness to experience involves personality features such as scientific and artistic creativity, divergent thinking, imagination, originality, sophistication and a high sense of wonder (Erdheim, Wang & Zickar, 2006; Barrick & Mount, 2001). So, it is likely that employees high in openness to experience believe in their work-related competencies and hence are more empowered.

Taking all such consideration into accounts, the present paper has been structured to explore association between Personality and Women Empowerment. Accordingly the next section unveils literature in this context.

## **Literature Review**

According to Shannan (2006) Empowerment is mere not a state but it is a state of mind. Only freedom of movement and decision making power is not sign of empowerment. In real sense women should have capacity to think differently and execute accordingly. To provide them such a status, education, awareness, protection at workplace and guarantees of women rights is necessary.

Khan et al. (2010) also found that education is a key to empowerment, when women are educated, they will more aware towards her rights. They can easily access the job opportunities. Income has been accepted as a sign of increasing self-confidence and self-esteem. Earning income as an entrepreneur change the attitude and behaviour of family member and society towards.

Further Al-Hossienie (2011) & Sultana et al (2013) also supported that income related activities is a key Indicator of Women Empowerment. Its provide confidence to take household decision, control over resources and development activities. Kumar et. al (2007) also suggested that women themselves should critically review their own situation in society. Women Empowerment is a way by which we can bring the women is mainstream of economy.

Reza et al (2014) explored that it is impossible to achieve the target of a poverty-free society without incorporation of women in the mainstream economy.

Sivanesan (2014) explored Education, size of family, annual income as the important factors to analyses the challenges and prospects of women entrepreneurs. Empowerment is multifaceted and decision-making power, freedom of movement, control over resources. Waghmode (2014) and Shettar (2015) highlighted that education and employment have significant relationship with empowerment. Further Thomas and Velthouse (1990) have offered a full definition of empowerment and they have added the term of psychological to it. According to them, the psychological empowerment is as a set of cognitive motivational domains cognitive domains. The three domains are: a sense of autonomy (choice), a sense of being meaningful and effective. Kaur et al (2015) explore in her study that extension contacts, scientific orientation, group cohesiveness, achievement motivation and risk bearing capacity had positive and significant relationship with women empowerment. Apart from these traits, there are other factors like group interaction, group cooperation and interpersonal traits also effect the women empowerment.

Solot, (2013) has validated by multivariate analysis that two of the big five personality traits, openness to experience and extraversion, both predict empowerment desire.

Moghaddam, (2016) state that the results show that in general there is no significant relationship between Personality traits of administrators and teachers' empowerment, and among the five dimensions of personality, there is only one trait found significant relationship between the characteristic of administrators' agreeableness and teachers' empowerment. The results suggested a way to improve knowledge and skills of teachers a top priority administrator consider. In addition, the performance of teachers affected by the performance of the executive directors, so it is necessary to improve their yield towering notice.

A report of UN population Network (1995) has highlighted that women's empowerment has five components i.e. women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. All this is all very closely related with traits of personality. So there is a need to examine association between personality traits and women empowerment.

## **Research Methodology**

The survey questionnaire was prepared based on extensive literature review and studied definitions. The questionnaire was divided in two parts. First parts contain questions measuring different personality traits and another part contains questions to measuring women empowerment. Women Empowerment has been assessed through 8 items and divided in to two parts, namely decision making power and freedom of movement. Personality has been analysed on big five personality model used by Caliendo (2011) and Fathimath (2015) with total 32 items the survey was focused on working women residing in Gurgaon city and the data have been collected during the month of May-August 2016 based on convenience sampling .A total of 175 questionnaires has

been distributed and collected. While only 160 questionnaires has been retained for the purpose of analysis owing to its complete responses.

### **Scale Validity and Reliability**

The constructs developed in the study, have been tested against normality, reliability and validity norms. To analyze data normality, descriptive statistics have been examined. The values of standard deviation; skewness and kurtosis falls in acceptable range (that is, standard deviation has been reported close to 1 and skewness & kurtosis lies within the range of +3 to -3 as specified by Hair et al.(2011), thereby, depicting about data normality. Further, the item-to-item correlation and Cronbach's alpha statistics has been employed to purify the constructs wherein the correlation statistics has depicted significant correlation between items representing same construct However, based on the Cronbach's statistics, two items have been deleted from the construct of empowerment 'If item deleted criterion', thereby, reducing the 8 item scale. Likewise, two item from the construct of agreeableness has also been deleted based on Cronbach's alpha statistics, whereas, no item has been deleted from the scale of extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Furthermore, the values of Cronbach's alpha for all the four aforementioned constructs ranges from 0.62 to 0.80, thereby, depicting internal consistency of the items assessing the representative constructs. Also, the dimensionality of the constructs has been tested by employing exploratory factor analysis (EFA). For that purpose, with minimum cut off of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2011) with principal component analysis following varimax rotation approach has been performed on all the six aforementioned scales. Accordingly, the results have highlighted that the measure of sampling adequacy were strong as the value of KMO has been reported to be far above the acceptable range of 0.5(Field, 2005). Further, the statistics pertaining to Bartlett's test of sphericity has 853.826 at significance level 0.01. Furthermore, the communalities statistics, for the items depicting the aforesaid six constructs, has been reported to be above the prescribed limit of 0.50. Also, the analysis of latent root criteria (i.e. eign value = or > 1) has resulted into single factor solutions in case of all the six aforementioned constructs for which -cumulative variance equals to 82.32 Per cent, 78.076 per cent; 86.84 per cent; 88.16 per cent 80.06 per cent, 84.32 per cent, per cent in case of Women Empowerment, agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience, thereby, establishing dimensionality of all the six constructs.

Besides, to serve the purpose of the present study, sampled respondents have been categorized into two groups, that is respondents with low empowerment and those with high empowerment. For that reason, the aggregate score of empowerment of each respondent for all the different dimensions related to empowerment has been calculated .This aggregate score is used to estimate Z-score for which each respondent has same mean (mean=0) and standard deviation (S.D.=1) where in positive values indicate respondent with high empowerment and negative values indicate low empowerment.

Further, the two independent sample t-test is applied to identify whether a significant difference exist between categories of women segregated based on their empowerment for which the result were found to be statistically significant at 1 per cent level of significance ( refer Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Independent t-test for women Empowerment propensity

Variable	N	Mean	F-value	t-value	df
Low Empowerment	80	1.45	21.948*	18.56*	158
High Empowerment	80	3.04			

Note: 1. Source: Primary Source

2. \*significant at 1 per cent level,

### Personality traits and Empowerment

Accordingly, the null hypothesis set to serve this purpose includes:

H<sub>0.1</sub>: There is no significant association between empowerment and extroversion

H<sub>0.2</sub>: There is no significant association between empowerment and agreeableness

H<sub>0.3</sub>: There is no significant association between empowerment and conscientiousness

H<sub>0.4</sub>: There is no significant association between empowerment and neuroticism

H<sub>0.5</sub>: There is no significant association between empowerment and open to experience.

To test H<sub>0.1</sub>, H<sub>0.2</sub>, H<sub>0.3</sub>, H<sub>0.4</sub>, H<sub>0.5</sub>, independent t-test statistics has been employed. The results (refer Table 2) point out that the respondents with high empowerment includes those who are more extroverted in nature. Significant difference found between two categories of women with reference to extroversion as a traits of personality. High extraversion is likely to have greater confidence in work-related abilities of respondent their ability to influence the direction of social change is a sign of extraversion (Rothmann, 2003, Judge & Ilies, 2002).

Further, the results also highlight statistically significant difference between agreeableness and Women empowerment. Respondents who are more agreeable are less empowered because they easily give their consent on other's verdict and does not try to keep their points as against. Women who are less agreeable found more empowered. The results are found to be significant at 1 per cent level of significance. Generally have more affection for others and have tendency to see others in more positive lights (Kammrath & Scholer, 2011; Bono & Judge, 2004).

Table 2. Personality traits and Empowerment Propensity

Variables			t-test for Equality of Means			
Personality	Empowerment	Mean		F-value	t-value	df
Extroversion	Low	3.31	Equal variances assumed	8.76**	2.4**	1199
	High	3.64	Equal variances not assumed		2.4**	758.9
Agreeableness	Low	4.58	Equal variances assumed	10.99*	2.33**	1199
	High	4.38	Equal variances not assumed		2.33**	777.04
Conscientiousness	Low	3.59	Equal variances assumed	8.68**	3.05*	1199
	High	3.93	Equal variances not assumed		3.05*	1198.02
Neuroticism	Low	2.79	Equal variances assumed	1.11	1.64	1199
	High	2.53	Equal variances not assumed		1.64	1198.02
Openness to experience	Low	2.79	Equal variances assumed	1.14	1..63	1199
	High	2.52	Equal variances not assumed		1.63	1198.02

Note: 1. Source: Primary Source

2. \*significant at 1per cent level, \*\*significant at 5 per cent level

Furthermore, respondents with more conscientious traits are found to be more empowered. Conscientious individuals are self-disciplined, responsible, punctual, purposeful, reliable, and dependable (Bono & Judge, 2004; Driskell et al., 2006). Conscientiousness is manifested by achievement orientation (hardworking and persistent), dependability (responsible and careful) and orderliness (planful and organised) have reported high mean on Conscientious thereby, revealing that respondents, who are more Conscientious is more empowered and vice-versa.

Further, no statistically significant association has been found between women empowerment and other two personality traits i.e. Neuroticism and openness

### Implication and Conclusion

Various studies have been done to assess impact of personality on different dimension of life as personality characteristics and the decision to become and stay self-Employed, The Relationship between Personality Traits with Life satisfaction, personality and trust, personality and social change, personality traits and psychological empowerment as well as many research and studies have been conducted on empowerment and many models

have been proposed for empowerment, but very least evidence of direct study of Personality and women Empowerment. Some research found to through light on association of empowerment indicators with personality. (UN population Network, 1995, Solot, 2013 & Moghaddam, 2016).

The study explores significant association of extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness with women empowerment. Recently, personality and social psychologists have been paying increased attention to the influence of broader societal change on psychological processes. Some have asserted that it is necessary to link social change to individual lives to understand personality development more adequately (Stewart & Healy, 1989).

To the best of our knowledge, the present study is novel in with focus on exploring difference in women empowerment on the basis of personality traits. Such exploration will enable the concerned organizations and parties to seen empowerment level of women based on their personality traits.

So that appropriate actions can be taken to appraise their level of empowerment.

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